

Trouble at school

A shocking disclosure about a campus gay leader tears a Midwestern university apart

By Jorge Morales

Eric Moore had settled into the role of big gay man on campus at the University of Kansas when everything started to unravel. Just two weeks shy of completing a one-year term as director of a student gay group, he abruptly resigned April 5 and also ended a student senate campaign. Publicly Moore, 26 and HIV-positive, cited health concerns. But there was another, more pressing reason: The student newspaper, *The University Daily Kansan*, was set to disclose

that to be false. The *Kansan* is in the business of reporting the truth."

Moore, though, said he mistakenly believed that if he left the gay group—Lesbian, Bisexual, and Gay Services of Kansas—and dropped out of the senate race, the *Kansan* would kill the story. "Steve Martino claims to know what the truth is," he said. "He claims to know my motivations better than I do. He claims to know me better than I know myself. The truth is, I was concerned that all of this would have an extremely negative effect on my health. My health was the overriding reason why I re-

white heterosexual males in our society who are allowed to decide for the rest of us what is the truth." (Moore was imprisoned for 2½ years on the charge.)

Actually, said Columbia University journalism ethics professor James W. Carey, Moore's resignation left Martino in "an ethical no-man's-land." Said Carey: "If Moore resigned from the race, the story is no longer of campus relevance. The editor is legally justified in printing the story, but he should not have run it unless he could provide stronger justification."

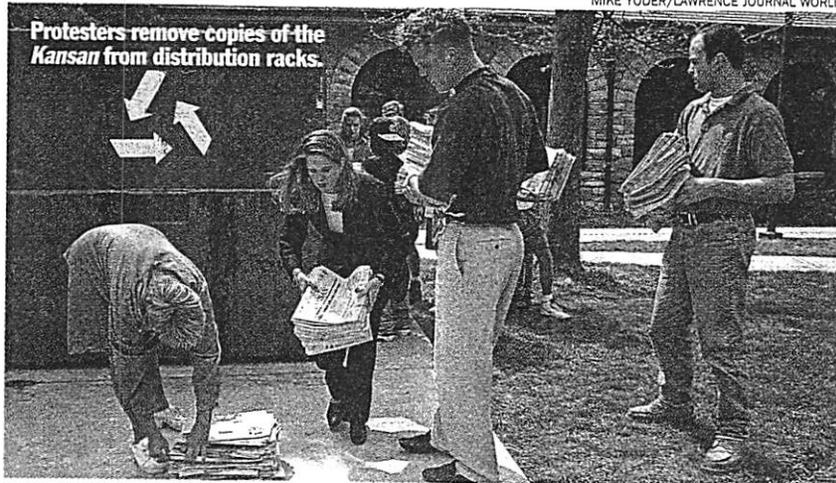
Nonetheless, Moore's exit stunned his colleagues at the gay group, none of whom apparently had known that he had a criminal record. Members say it spurred heated discussion; in the end the group issued a statement denouncing sexual molestation but lauding Moore for his service.

Meanwhile, Moore said he's had unconditional support elsewhere. He will remain in his post as resident adviser in one of the dorms, said university housing officials. Liane Davis, associate dean of the School of Social Welfare, where Moore is a senior, said in a press release that the school had been aware of Moore's criminal record and that the *Kansan's* story only brought "further pain and stigma to a man who has committed his life to helping others."

That may be small consolation to Moore, however. "The queer community has been skittish about this issue, but it's incumbent upon us to recognize that some of the people who do this are lesbian and gay people," he said. In fact, however, a child is more than 100 times more likely to be sexually molested by a heterosexual relative than by a homosexual, according to a study published in 1994 in *Pediatrics*.

"For many years I've been driven to make a positive difference in this world, because I've done a lot of harm to people, and I know I can never escape that," said Moore. "Although I paid my debt to society and made my peace with the family years ago, not a day goes by that I don't think about what I did. Hopefully, redemption is possible." ●

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that in 1990 Moore was convicted of aggravated indecent solicitation of a minor.

"Our hands were tied," said *Kansan* editor Stephen Martino, whose paper published a story detailing the charges April 6. "We had to run with the story. We didn't want to be accused of covering up information." In an editorial accompanying the story, Martino wrote, "The *Kansan* could have reported that health-related concerns were the only reason for [Moore's] stepping aside, but the *Kansan* knew

signed. Everything else is secondary."

Publication of the article sparked demonstrations all over campus. The day the story ran, a small group of protesters collected copies of the newspaper and dumped them in front of the *Kansan* offices.

"Who gets to decide when punishment should stop?" said Scott Manning, Moore's friend and acting director of the campus gay group. "Our justice system already delineates that, but some people have seen fit to go beyond that. Steve Martino is a member of a privileged group of

Philip Elder - 4/14