

MEDIA ADVISORY

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MARRIAGETRIAL.COM PARTNERS WITH HISTORIC PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN: *TESTIMONY*

SAN FRANCISCO – As attorneys prepare their Closing Arguments in the Perry v. Schwarzenegger case challenging California’s Proposition 8 in federal district court, everyday citizens across the country are learning their lines for a massive re-enactment of the testimony from the case. MarriageTrial.com announced today its official sponsorship of the Courage Campaign’s *Testimony: Equality on Trial* project, which seeks to activate everyday Americans to provide their own testimony on the issue of marriage equality for gays and lesbians.

“When the Supreme Court ruled in January that the Prop 8 trial could not be televised, we knew what we had to do,” says John Ireland. “Ainsworth and I had the resources available to put this on YouTube where everyone could see our justice system at work on this very important issue.” Ireland and co-producer John Ainsworth arranged for a courtroom set, contacted actor friends and began shooting each day’s testimony.

“Within a few weeks, we had cast 22 attorneys, 15 witnesses, 4 plaintiffs and one judge... 42 actors in all,” says Ainsworth. He continues, “Now, with the *Testimony* project, the cast will grow to thousands. Everyday people will be acting out portions from the transcript of this trial... and even more significantly, preparing three minutes of their own testimony about how the passage of Proposition 8 affects their lives.”

“The emotions are real. The hurt is authentic. I could feel the issue take shape when I spoke Sandy’s words,” says actress Tess Harper (*Tender Mercies*), who performed the role of plaintiff Sandy Stier in the MarriageTrial.com re-enactment. The Emmy winning actress connected deeply with the testimony. She adds, “All Americans are connected on this issue. When we deny Sandy and Kristin [Plaintiff Perry] the right to raise their kids in a stable married relationship, we are doing a great harm.”

Actor Gedde Watanabe, perhaps best known as Long Duk Dong in the film *Sixteen Candles*, portrayed Dr. William Tam, a proponent of Proposition 8 who testified only reluctantly after fearing the attention his appearance would bring. In fact, Tam’s attorneys have recently filed a motion to strike significant portions of his testimony from the record. Watanabe points out, “Even if my character’s words are struck from the record, they are permanently available in our re-enactment. He spoke them in open court, just as he spoke out publicly against equality during the campaign.” Ainsworth and Ireland confirm they do not intend to edit any portions out of the re-enactment.

“Our guiding principle in creating MarriageTrial.com was to provide a definitive re-enactment of the trial from start to finish.” Ainsworth says. He adds, “The partnership with Courage Campaign makes this 60+ hour resource available to all who wish to re-enact portions of the trial.”

As the case inevitably travels through the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and ultimately to the U.S Supreme Court, the Courage Campaign’s *Testimony* project will provide a way for the American people to bear witness and to participate in the most transformative trial in modern U.S. history.

[NOTE: Many of the MarriageTrial.com actors are available for comment.]