

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 10, 2021
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Book Released About Gerry Crane - Gay High School Music Teacher

On January 12, 2021, at 6:30 pm, Books & Mortar Bookstore will host the launch of the book, *Private Love, Public School – Gay Teacher Under Fire*, written by Christine A. Yared. Yared will be interviewed by ACLU of Michigan attorney Jay Kaplan, who wrote the foreword. The Zoom link for the event is: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83593313286>

Gerry Crane taught music at Byron Center High School, located in a suburb of Grand Rapids, Michigan. In 1995, after Gerry and his partner held a private commitment ceremony, the once loved teacher was vilified. Parents removed their children from his classes. The school board publicly declared that “individuals who espouse homosexuality do not constitute proper role models as teachers” and pledged to investigate and monitor Gerry.

Disturbing and deeply moving, *Private Love, Public School* recounts the true story of what happened when members of a midwestern community demanded that their religious beliefs be imposed on a public school—and the school followed suit.

The story was covered by national media, including *Time* magazine and ABC’s *20/20*. The local paper, the *Grand Rapids Press*, reported that it received more letters to the editor about the Byron Center/Crane controversy than in its more than 100-year history.

Yared is an attorney, writer, educator, and activist. For over thirty years Christine’s work has centered on LGBTQ+ legal, political, and social issues. As a member of the board of the Lesbian, Gay, & Bisexual Community Network of West Michigan, Yared had a front row seat to the controversy.

“Gerry’s story is a crucial part of Michigan and national LGBTQ+ history. LGBTQ+ teachers continue to pay a heavy price at the hands of homophobic and transphobic school officials, parents, and communities.” Yared said.

Yared continued, “Gerry’s story illustrates what happens when people remain silent in the face of oppression. Silence becomes complicity. Or, as stated in the fight against AIDS/HIV in the 1980s and 1990s, and arguably in Gerry’s case, “Silence Equals Death.” This historical truth continues to be played out as recently as this past week with the attack of the capitol and has been a part of U.S. history with the treatment of African Americans.”

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