

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

February 6, 2021
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Virtual Book Discussion - Gay High School Teacher Gerry Crane

On March 3, at 7 pm, Affirmations is hosting a virtual book event about Christine Yared's recently released book, *Private Love, Public School – Gay Teacher Under Fire*. ACLU attorney Jay Kaplan, who wrote a foreword for the book, and Yared will be discussing the book.

The book recounts the story of former high school teacher Gerry Crane and the effect his experience had on LGBTQ+ people, including students at the school. Twenty-five years ago, Byron Center Schools, located in Michigan, declared that homosexuals “do not constitute proper role models as teachers.” The school board issued this statement after its talented high school music teacher, Crane, was outed as being gay. Seven months later Crane was forced to resign.

The story was covered by media, including *Time* magazine, ABC's *20/20*, and *Between the Lines*, Michigan's weekly LGBTQ newspaper.

“A generation later, LGBTQ+ people in Michigan and in many other states continue to fight to add ‘sexual orientation’ and ‘gender identity’ to their state’s civil rights laws. Efforts to obtain federal legislation with similar protections have failed.” Yared said.

Yared continued, “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. Gerry’s story illustrates what happens when people remain silent in the face of oppression. Silence becomes complicity.”

Yared is an attorney, educator, and activist. For over thirty years her work has centered on LGBTQ+ legal, political, and social issues. She served on the board of directors of the Lesbian, Gay, & Bisexual Community Network of West Michigan at the time of the Byron Center controversy.

Affirmations Event Link: <https://www.facebook.com/events/816301642293538/>

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Other Information

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