



## ***THE LAVENDER SCREEN***

By Pride Entertainment Online

### **MARRIAGE EQUALITY HITS DAYTIME IN *ONE LIFE TO LIVE* STORYLINE**

By Rob Jackson; Pride Entertainment Online

Daytime television is often known for turning up the heat on hot button issues by showcasing them in major storylines. ABC has been on the forefront in this.



Several years back *General Hospital* brought the character of Robin Scorpio back, making her the first HIV-positive character to appear as a main character on a daytime drama. In 2006 *All My Children* introduced the character of Zarf and capably discussed Transgender issues. And we cannot forget that several years prior the character of Bianca Montgomery (played by Eden Reigel) came out of the closet and earlier this year was joined in civil union with her lover, Reese Williams (played by Tamara Braun). Bianca would later have a baby and move off camera to Paris.

Over the past year one of ABC's soaps has introduced several characters that have come out of the closet, one during a recent front burner story. Recently, the soap has begun to address some of the issues these

characters might face -- Issues that their straight counterparts take for granted.

ABC's *One Life To Live* is the one pulling out all the stops with one of these issues -- Equal marriage rights for gays and lesbians.

With the National Marriage Equality March on Washington the weekend of October 10<sup>th</sup> still fresh in our minds, and with the possibility of a vote on gay marriage coming to the NY State Senate floor, the topic couldn't come to *One Life To Live* at a more opportune time.

Recently the hit daytime drama began to address this issue - and will continue the storyline over the coming weeks. Already this show has been turning up the heat.

As we watch Dorian Lord marry her partner the show will also have a mass wedding of same-sex couples. Sorry folks, soon-to-be power couple Oliver Fish and Kyle Lewis (affectionately known as KISH among show fans) will not be among them!

With several of the cast members of OLTL public supporters of gay marriage, among them Robin Strasser (Dorian Lord) and Jason Tam (Maarko Rivera), the topic is a welcome subject.

My identification as a person, politically, is with the right of all people to have choice and equality when it comes to life partnerships. I believe in equal rights and protection under the law. Says Strasser. I want to be respectful and supportive and non-exclusionary, so when Dorian appears to be manipulating the gay community, with whom I have great empathy and sympathy and, may I say with great pride, a following, I become alert and very careful about the choices I make when playing her.



However, as in reality, the topic of equal marriage rights is not without controversy behind the scenes. Patricia Mauceri the actress that originated the role of Carlotta Vega was recently fired from the show after speaking out on her character being pro-gay.

This controversy is one thing of which those behind the scenes are well aware.

"I always have that fear about how far ABC will let me go," said OLTL head-writer Ron Carlivati. "Is the network going to be concerned with any kind of backlash? They've supported the Kyle and Oliver story so far because it's a good love story."

"The important thing is that we have a big cast of characters so this is not our only story." Continues the OLTL scribe "We don't want to drive people away if they are turned off by it, but hopefully, if they don't like it, maybe they'll like what's happening with Todd or with Rex. I can't please everybody in the audience. We certainly *try* to. We *hope* to. It's not a story that's on every day."

Top: Bianca & Reese Wedding Feb 2009 Bottom: Dorian & Alicia Wedding Oct 2009 Photos Courtesy of ABC Media Relations
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