

Discrimination against singles topic of debate

Honors society hosts discussion

by DORIS FRIERSON

SUNDIAL STAFF

The discrimination unmarried persons face in the U.S. was the topic of discussion at the Spring Intellectual Exchange sponsored by the honor society of Phi Kappa Phi, in the University Club April 12.

The exchange featured speakers Nora Baladerian, a clinical psychologist and president of the American Association for Single People as well as Thomas Coleman, executive director of the AASP and a practicing attorney. Each highlighted topics of discrimination that single people face in society today.

"We began looking at ways of discrimination in families because of their structure," said Baladerian who graduated with a master's degree in educational psychology from CSUN. "We found there is another class of neglected people, those who are not married. Single people are one of the groups without recognition."

Baladerian and Coleman covered issues of different types of discrimination that affect single people.

Baladerian said that these forms of discrimination include legal and social aspects, which are meant to make single people feel there is something wrong with them by societal standards if they've never been married.

"Part of what we're dealing with is to promote or enhance self esteem," said Coleman. "We want

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— Nora Baladerian
clinical psychologist

people to feel it's OK to be single... to just be who they are."

Children are also subject to discrimination because of their parent's single status, said Baladerian. She said there are 41 states that still have laws that refer to these children as bastards and illegitimates.

Coleman said single people deal with discrimination when trying to acquire housing. He said some landlord's won't rent or sell to unmarried people because they are screening them by their religious beliefs.

There is also discrimination found in the area of employment said Coleman, especially where benefits packages do not compensate for people living out of wedlock. He said most employers are stuck in the marriage model and this governs benefit packages, ignoring those who are not married.

"We don't want to detonate the nuclear family," said Coleman "We want to help people in the life situations they are in. If they want to get married, that should be up to them; if they want to stay single that's up to them to."

Coleman said that there are single people from every aspect of society. Their association is trying to kill single people stereotypes by proving there are all kinds of single people. He said they are documenting more than 550 single discrimination stories from around the globe.

"We don't want to do too much," said Baladerian. "Just change society."

The AASP provides more information about their organization on their Web site: <http://www.singlesrights.com>.

The PKP Honor Society holds intellectual exchanges relevant to community issues each semester. The next exchange is scheduled for June 10.