

NATIONAL COMMITTEE
FOR
SEXUAL CIVIL LIBERTIES

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FOR RELEASE ON:
Tuesday, October 11th

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SUBJECT: Municipal Court Judge Liberalizes Policy on Gays

Rather than risk a Superior Court order to do so, Municipal Court Judge Jack B. Tso voluntarily agreed to lift the anti-homosexual conditions of probation which he had imposed on Edwin Womble, a Los Angeles gay man. At the request of Judge Tso and Deputy County Counsel David B. Kelsey, Womble appeared with his attorney Steven T. Kelber in Department 109 of the Los Angeles Superior Court today (October 11, 1977).

Kelber, a member of the Hollywood law firm of Coleman and Kelber, acting on behalf of the National Committee for Sexual Civil Liberties, filed legal action last Thursday (October 6th) in Superior Court. The conditions of probation being challenged were: "Do not publicly associate with known homosexuals, and do not frequent places where homosexuals congregate." Judge Tso imposed those conditions notwithstanding the fact that Womble's attorney at the time of sentencing was Thomas F. Coleman, an openly gay attorney. The conditions were challenged on the grounds that they violated the rights of gay people to associate and their right to an attorney of their own choosing.

Coleman and Kelber hope that other gay men who have had similar conditions of probation imposed upon them will now come forward to demand recognition of their rights. In addition, Coleman said, "The County Counsel's office has agreed to formulate a plan with us whereby these conditions are never again imposed in Los Angeles County. This is a victory for all gay people. Even though there has been no leadership in this area by the United States Supreme Court, we are seeing a major change in local judicial attitudes about gay people."

PUBLIC STATEMENT: Womble, along with attorneys Coleman and Kelber, will be available to answer any questions the press may have, immediately preceding and following the court appearance at 9:30 A.M. on Tuesday, October 11th. Department 109 of the Superior Court is located on the 9th Floor of the Criminal Courts Building, 210 W. Temple.

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