

# Minister takes debate to heart

## Reverend marries and is married in village

**By Kathianne Boniello**  
Poughkeepsie Journal

A minister who helped oversee more than a dozen same-sex marriages in New Paltz Saturday said it's important to stand up for what you believe.

"I always worked for social justice," said the Rev. Kay Greenleaf, 64, who has been the minister at Poughkeepsie's Unitarian Universalist Fellowship since 1998. "I've spent most of my career working with poor people, or those who need help. It's just a natural place for me to be."

But the Florida native, who has lived in several states and considers Ohio home, doesn't consider herself an activist.

"I do think in this culture, in spite of the fact that we are really proud of our freedoms, we instill a great deal of fear in people about speaking out and calling attention to themselves," she said. "I just believe in what I'm doing."

Greenleaf has been with her partner, Pat Sullivan, 61, for 17 years. The two met at a mutual friend's Thanksgiving dinner and eventually became a couple.

### It's not the first time

The two women had a Unitarian service in Ohio in 1989 and went to Vermont for a civil union in 2000. They were also married Saturday by the Rev. Dawn Sangrey, a pastor of the Fourth Unitarian Society of Westchester in Mohegan Lake, in hopes these New York ceremonies would eventually be upheld as legal.

Sullivan, a registered nurse, said neither of them wanted to seek out the spotlight.

"I respect her for standing up for what she believes in and what I believe in," she said.

### Caring translates

A graduate of Ball State University in Indiana, Greenleaf worked as a teacher and social worker before becoming a minister in 1996.

"It just made sense in terms of what I had been doing all my life," she said of her decision to become a minister. "Being a social worker is not terribly different than being a minister."

And her congregation in Poughkeepsie thinks highly of her, said Paula Greenspan, president of the board of trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Poughkeepsie.

"She's a good minister, she's caring, she's warm," Greenspan said. "I'm really proud that she stood up for something she believed in and did something that I hope will advance respect and equal rights for all people."

Greenleaf praised New Paltz Mayor Jason West, who brought the village onto the national stage by performing 25 same-sex marriages Feb. 27.

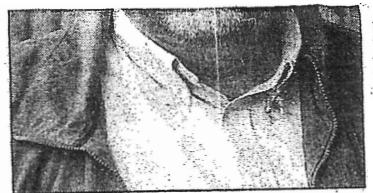
The minister offered to help perform the same-sex ceremonies during the mayor's efforts last week. West called her Friday after he was restricted from performing such ceremonies by a court order.

"I believe he's absolutely right in what he's saying and what he's doing," she said. "I just really think Jason West is a courageous young man."

## QUOTES

*The Journal conducted interviews in the Village of New Paltz Saturday morning to get opinions of those who work or live there.*

*People were asked: "What has been the effect of the gay marriage issue on New Paltz?"*



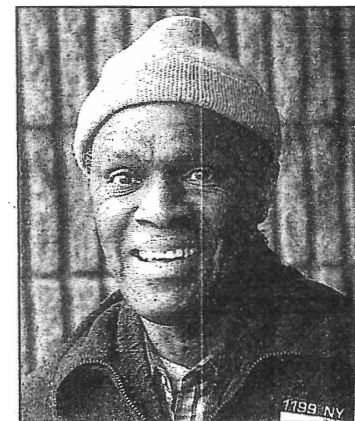
**'I believe how (Mayor Jason West) approached it was completely wrong and illegal. I don't know why he felt this was the way to approach it.'**

**Gary Gagliano**  
does business in the Village of New Paltz,  
Town of Lloyd resident



**'There's more people in town and the mayor's got more publicity. The way I look at it, there's too many break-ups and single parents, so good for them (same-sex couples) trying to get married.'**

**Tony Vuocolo**  
works in the Village of New Paltz,  
Gardiner resident



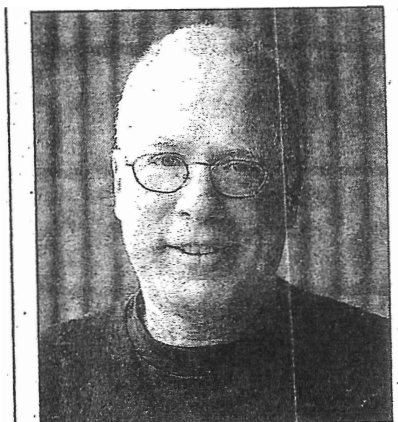
**'We're on the map. Everybody knows New Paltz.'**

**A.J. Williams-Myers**  
SUNY New Paltz professor



**'It hasn't changed going grocery shopping, it hasn't changed stopping to get a bite to eat. It's certainly fun to have people ask where Main Street is when we really have only one street.'**

**Janine Ermilio**  
Village of New Paltz



**'I think we got hundreds of millions of dollars of free publicity for the town — that means more business. From a social perspective, I have no problem.'**

**Steve Auerbach**  
Village of New Paltz