



MEDIA RELEASE

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William Waybourn,
Managing Director

Contact: Alan Klein (212) 807-1700
Pager: (800) 601-5483 (please include area code)
Email: klein@glaad.org

ELLEN COMES OUT OF THE CLOSET ON APRIL 30 GLAAD APPLAUDS ABC AND DISNEY FOR HISTORY-MAKING MOVE

▼ Los Angeles
8455 Beverly Blvd
Suite 305
Los Angeles, CA 90048
213-658-6775
fax. 213-658-6776

Los Angeles, March 4, 1997— Following a successful nationwide campaign organized by the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), ABC-TV announced this week that Ellen DeGeneres' title character on her popular sitcom *Ellen* will reveal that she is a lesbian. The landmark "coming out" episode is scheduled to air on the network on Wednesday, April 30, 1997, during the show's original 9:30 PM timeslot.

▼ New York
150 West 26th Street
Suite 503
New York, NY 10001
212-807-1700
fax. 212-807-1806

According to GLAAD, this move by ABC will make television history. Ellen Morgan, the character played by DeGeneres, is the first-ever lesbian or gay lead in an American sitcom. In the episode, Ellen Morgan finds herself attracted to an old college chum's lesbian friend (played by Laura Dern) and begins to explore her own sexual orientation. Oprah Winfrey will guest star as Ellen's therapist who helps her understand her feeling and to come out.

▼ Northampton
10 West Street
Northampton, MA 01060
413-586-8928
fax. 413-586-5185

"After months of speculation, ABC, Disney and the producers of *Ellen* have taken a decisive stand for programming that reflects the true America, which includes lesbians and gay men," said GLAAD's Entertainment Media Director Chastity Bono. "The public has voiced their desire to see Ellen Morgan come out, and now we can finally celebrate this truly groundbreaking event."

▼ Portland
707 Southwest Washington
St Suite 350
Portland, OR 97205
503-224-5285
fax. 503-224-5480

GLAAD maintains an "Ellen Watch" World Wide Web site at <http://www.glaad.org>.

▼ Washington, DC
1875 Connecticut Ave,
Northwest, Suite 640
Washington, DC 20009
202-986-1360
fax. 202-667-0902

GLAAD is the nation's lesbian and gay news bureau and the only national lesbian and gay media watchdog organization. GLAAD promotes fair, accurate, and inclusive representation as a means of challenging discrimination based on sexual orientation or identity.