

The Friends of the Danvers Committee for Diversity annually choose to honor individuals who best exemplify the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, and they name them Drum Majors for Justice.

On Monday evening, Jan. 17, 2011, the town will celebrate the birthday of Dr. King at an awards dinner at the Danversport Yacht Club where Town Manager **Wayne Marquis**, University of Massachusetts Boston Chancellor **J. Keith Motley** and veteran entertainment journalist and marketing communications practitioner **Fran Weil** will be honored as Drum Majors for Justice.

Fran Weil, the keynote speaker, not only believes in diversity, she practices it every day of her life, whether at work, at home or at Calvary Episcopal Church, where she plays an active role.

Weil, a dog lover who has recently been certified as a pet loss bereavement counselor by the National Organization of Pet Loss and Bereavement, was also the creator of the monthly Perfect Paws Ministry at Calvary.

She has worked hard to ensure that her church is a welcoming church and that people know it. In this endeavor, she has worked with the Rev. Thea Keith-Lucas to initiate social change within the church and the community.

"Fran frequently facilitates conversations with parishioners, community members and politicians by engaging and stimulating discussions about issues within the gay and lesbian community," said Danvers Police Lt. Carole Germano in a letter of nomination. "She encourages a belief in the possibility that things can change for the better.

"Weil also contributes to the Human Rights Campaign, which works to secure equal rights for LGBT individuals and families at the federal and state levels," Germano said.

Fran Weil, who has been legally married to her partner of 28 years, Gail Arnold, since May 2004, after the commonwealth legalized same sex marriages, is also a state registered marriage officiate able to provide couples with more than just an impersonal ceremony.

Fran has performed a number of both thoughtful and spiritual wedding ceremonies for both gay and straight couples," Germano said.

Weil's activist role on behalf of a cause seems to date back to the 1990s when she and songwriter Cris Williamson, plus the Rev. Kim Crawford-Harvie, senior minister of Arlington Street Church in Boston, founded the first Pediatric AIDS volunteer organization in the country, "In the Best Interests of the Children." Weil has served as president of the organization.

In her professional life, Fran Weil is a veteran, award-winning entertainment journalist and marketing communications practitioner. For more than two decades, she was arts and entertainment columnist for the *Record American* and *Boston Herald*. Prior to that, she covered lifestyle stories and the medical beat.

She is principal of The Marketing Collaborative, which provides marketing communications, publicity, publication writing and production supervision, Web design and implementation for profit and nonprofit organizations throughout the Boston area, according to her online biography.

Weil was also the Boston theater correspondent for *Variety*, reviewing all out-of-town productions earmarked for Broadway. Her celebrity profiles were carried nationally on the Heart wire.

Weil has been a frequent contributor to *Playbill Magazine* out of New York, and a contributor to the book, "Close-Ups," a selection of celebrity interviews.

Fran Weil has been named "Columnist of the Year," by the New England Press Association, she was the winner of several Heart Writing awards for celebrity columns carried on the Hearst Wire Service, and she was named a critic fellow to the National critics Institute at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center. She is a graduate of Boston University College of Communication with a major in journalism and was named to the Kappa Tau Alpha Honor Society for journalism and mass communication.

