

# In My Own Words

GLENN V. BRUMBY

*For two years, Vandy Beth Glenn worked for the Georgia General Assembly's Office of Legislative Counsel as an editor and proofreader. After informing her supervisor of her Gender Identity Disorder diagnosis and her intent to transition, she was called "immoral" and was immediately dismissed. Here is her story.*

I was about 11 years old when I noticed that I was different. It was around the time that the usual hormonal changes happen, but I felt something unusual. I knew that other people saw me as a boy, but I wanted to be a girl and, eventually, a woman. As I went through adolescence and grew into adulthood, I dealt with this in a variety of ways. Mostly, I put it out of mind. Sometimes I imagined myself living my life as a woman.

In 2005 I began seeing a therapist to sort through my distress with being male. I was diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder (GID), a serious medical condition, and I prepared to undergo a course of professionally guided treatments, which included gender transition. I was heartened to discover that the American Medical Association and other medical authorities recognize treatment as crucial to relieve the suffering that GID can cause. Though my family and friends went through the initial shock and struggle to accept my transition, they ultimately offered me their compassion and love. When it came to my colleagues, I knew that people might have questions. But I had honestly expected to be treated fairly by my superiors and my co-workers. Shortly after informing them of my decision to transition, I instead found myself out of a job.

I had worked for two years in the General Assembly's Office of Legislative Counsel in Atlanta, Georgia, as an editor and proofreader. I lived as a woman outside of work for a couple of years, but I hadn't transitioned in the workplace. I felt that

it was time to take the final step and live as the woman that I am — completely open, 24/7. I loved my job and had no desire to leave. In 2006, I informed my immediate supervisor that I was transgender with a female identity and that I planned to transition in 2007. She was sympathetic and indicated that she didn't foresee a problem. I decided to test the waters at the office on Halloween, when many staff members came to work dressed in costumes. I dressed as I did every day outside of the office, as a woman. I wore a red turtleneck sweater, a black knee-length skirt, black boots and tights. When the senior legislative counsel saw me, he said I was inappropriately dressed and promptly sent me home. I was stunned and embarrassed. But that was just a taste of what was to come.

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I gave my supervisor an album of photos of me as a woman and educational materials about workplace gender transitions. She looked through the packet and then passed it on to the senior attorney who'd sent me home. I was told he would consult with the leaders of the General Assembly concerning my transition. Soon after, we met. After confirming that I was indeed intending to transition from male to female and present myself as a woman in the workplace, he



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fired me immediately. He said that my gender transition would be seen as "immoral" and could "not happen appropriately" in the workplace. After I was fired, I turned to Lambda Legal for help in getting my job back.

The motto of the state of Georgia is "Wisdom, Justice, and Moderation." The Georgia General Assembly's treatment of my situation lacked any of these virtues. I am fully aware that, as a transgender woman, I will often have to deal with obstacles and indignities, but I think that most residents of Georgia believe that people should be judged only on their ability to do their job. My career with the Georgia General Assembly was cut short because of reasons completely irrelevant to my professionalism and ability to do my job efficiently.

So I will stand up for my rights as a transgender woman. Taking a stand is just another step forward in living life as I must: fully and fiercely, without compromise. **L**