

A CELEBRATION OF HEROES AND ROLE MODELS FOR  
LESBIAN AND GAY AMERICANS. THE MEN AND WOMEN  
IN THIS BOOK HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THEIR

# UNCOMMON

COMMUNITIES AND TO SOCIETY AS A WHOLE. EACH OF

THEM SHARES A COMMON THREAD OF EXTRAORDINARY

COURAGE. THEIR STORIES ARE TRANSFORMING PUBLIC

PERCEPTIONS OF THE GAY AND LESBIAN COMMUNITY.



Photographed by Ron Reagan

# Mica England

ACTIVIST

*We must begin to stop the hatred within our own spheres of influence. Hatred and negativity will cause our destruction.*

Standing before the Dallas City Council in July 1989 as they considered a resolution in support of the students in China fighting for democracy, Mica England held up an equal employment opportunity poster and demanded justice: "I responded to an advertisement for Dallas police officers in the *Tulsa Oklahoma World*. Before the recruiters invited me to Dallas to take the examination, I told them I am gay," England said to the Council. "But when I arrived they refused to let me take the test because I openly and willingly admitted that I am gay. Why is there no democracy for *me* in Dallas?"

England's pointed remarks totally disrupted the meeting. One council member demanded the city attorney provide legal basis for the police department's exclusionary ban, and the mayor tried to save face by hastily adjourning the meeting. Another council member asked, "Is this resolution in support of all Chinese students or only the heterosexual ones?" In the uproar, one thing was clear: the Council had no intention of dealing with the issue publicly. But England sued in 1990, and the Council was forced to hold a public hearing in January 1992. Lasting until 2:30 a.m. with six hundred people in attendance, the meeting was angry and emotionally charged. Conservative and religious groups put homophobic slogans and banners all around the room, even placing *No Homo Cops* badges on infants.

The Council voted to continue the hiring ban on gays and lesbians. But weeks after the hearing, England won her lawsuit. The court ruled that the rationale for refusing to hire gay and lesbian officers (the Texas homosexual sodomy law) was unconstitutional, and ordered the Dallas Police Department to allow England to apply for a position. It was a much larger victory than anyone had anticipated. When five gay and lesbian Texans later sued successfully to overturn the state's homosexual sodomy law, the Texas Supreme Court refused to hear the state's appeal, citing England's case as precedent.

Mica England had one desire: she had wanted to be a police officer. Although she used her hard-won legal victory, and applied for a position on the force, she later realized the court case had made her too famous, and her effectiveness would be compromised. Sadly, she abandoned the dream that had set her on her trail-blazing path. But in her single-minded determination to reach a personal goal, England had made Texas history. That's no small thing.

*I am very  
impressed with  
Mica. She's a  
real fighter  
and I'm glad she  
won her case.*

—Larry King  
LARRY KING LIVE