

## [The London Free Press](#)

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By **Rory Leishman**

London author Dawn Stefanowicz has published a compelling memoir entitled *Out From Under: The Impact of Homosexual Parenting*. In this compelling book, she presents an open and honest account of her anguishing experiences as a child growing up in a dysfunctional home dominated by a homosexual father and a submissive mother.

The book is well structured and beautifully written. In her acknowledgements, Stefanowicz expresses appreciation for the painstaking assistance of her editor, *London Free Press* columnist and award-winning playwright, Herman Goodden.

The resulting portrayal of Stefanowicz's harrowing childhood should give pause to everyone from trendy journalists to know-it-all judges who blithely assume that sexually active homosexuals are no less competent to parent a child than are married heterosexuals. That assumption certainly does not accord with Stefanowicz's experience. From early childhood, she was painfully aware that her compulsively promiscuous father was rarely available in the home to provide the care and guidance so desperately needed by his three children.

This is not to suggest that Stefanowicz's father was altogether negligent. One summer, he took the entire family to a cottage for a week-long vacation. Once there, however, he promptly disappeared. Stefanowicz, who was then nine years

old, relates: "It hasn't been work that has called him away, but pleasure. The hard truth that all of us struggle to understand is that Dad prefers the company of other men to that of his wife and children."

Throughout Stefanowicz's childhood, her father exposed the rest of the family to one transient boyfriend after another. She writes: "Though for a few months at a stretch it might appear Dad was settling into a monogamous relationship with just one other man, appearances were deceiving. In fact, Dad's sex life was becoming ever more chaotic and reckless. He still had one-night stands with lovers he'd casually bring home any night of the week."

Dawn Stefanowicz cannot be written off as just an embittered homophobe. To the contrary, she makes clear that, despite everything, she both loved and feared her father. And she also commends his last partner, Ron for standing by her father for 14 years and tending to him "in a tireless and selfless way" during the last agonizing months before he succumbed to AIDS at age 51.

Of course, all too many children have been neglected and abused by philandering heterosexual parents. Could it be, then, that Stefanowicz was just unlucky in having a homosexual father who was exceptionally promiscuous?

Consider the judgment of Mr. Justice James Nevins of the Ontario Court of Justice in *Re K and B* (1995). In this case, he amended the Ontario Child and

Family Services Act to allow for the adoption of children by same sex couples on the ground that homosexuals have an equality right under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to adopt children. In support of this policy, Nevins contended: "Despite stereotypical beliefs to the contrary, there is no evidence to support the suggestion that most gay men and lesbians have unstable or dysfunctional relationships."

That assertion is patently untrue. *Sex in America*, reputedly the most scientifically rigorous survey of the sexual habits of the people of the United States, found that the average number of lifetime sexual partners is 4 for heterosexuals and 50 for homosexuals, while the percentage of monogamous couples who have been 100 per cent faithful to their spouse or partner is 83 per cent for heterosexuals, but less than two per cent for homosexuals.

Nonetheless, several studies purport to show that homosexual couples are no less competent to nurture children than heterosexual couples. These claims are not credible. Given that very few children raised by a homosexual couple have grown to adulthood, it is impossible to prove the competence of homosexuals as parents.

Meanwhile, there is reason to fear that the anguish experienced by Stefanowicz with a homosexual parent is not uncommon. In a prefatory note to her book, Dr. Michelle Cretella, Chair of the Committee on Sexuality of the American College

of Pediatricians in the United States expresses the hope: "May society heed Dawn's courageous testimony and spare other innocents the suffering she and her siblings sustained. We must refuse to sacrifice our children on the altar of diversity."

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Rory Leishman

Author and Freelance Columnist

[www.roryleishman.blogspot.com](http://www.roryleishman.blogspot.com)