



December 5, 2009

Empress Nicole the Great  
Queen Mother of the Americas  
*For delivery by hand*

Your Majesty:

It is my tremendous pleasure to write you to express my heartfelt gratitude for the extraordinary service and dedication that you and all the members of the Imperial Court System have demonstrated on behalf of the Matthew Shepard Foundation.

During this wonderful partnership, the Foundation staff and I have been profoundly humbled by the passion, determination, and inspiration with which the Courts have pursued their goal of raising funds, and raising awareness, on behalf of our mission to Erase Hate.

The Courts simply would not be deterred - not by the economy, not by the independence of the individual chapters, nor by any other complexity that cropped up along the way. The energy you have all devoted, the stories you have shared with us about your lives, and your individual reasons for pursuing service to the community, are quite simply an inspiration to me, my family, and the Foundation's board and staff. You set a wonderful example for us all.

We have shared a truly remarkable year. After a decade of lobbying, pushing and cajoling Congress, we have finally secured passage of the Matthew Shepard Hate Crime Prevention Act, to protect LGBT Americans from violence directed at them simply for who they are and whom they love. Several more states have granted marriage equality, and progress is being made at the local, state and national level on many more elements of full equality.

The Foundation will never forget all the help the Courts have provided to keep the Foundation strong during these efforts and all the efforts still to come. Through your outstanding campaign, I am proud to announce you have raised more than \$72,000 toward our goal to Replace Hate with Understanding, Compassion, and Acceptance. Your broad network across the U.S. and Canada will help us achieve that.

We look forward to deepening our work together in your communities in the future. Thank you for all that you do to secure dignity for all, regardless of difference.

With deep appreciation,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Judy Shepard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.