

# Anita Bryant to Appear Here At Request of Area Baptists

By Jane Ziellinski  
News Editor

At the request of the three Richmond Area Baptist Associations, singer Anita Bryant will appear Saturday at the Robins Center in what has been billed "a concert of sacred music."

Bryant will be entertaining at a special rally designed to kick off the ACTION program. This program, according to Dr. Linwood Horne, associate to the chaplain at the University of Richmond, was designed by the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention to assist local churches in recruiting more people for Bible study in their Sunday schools.

Bryant's involvement in the controversy over homosexual rights came after final arrangements were made for the concert appearance.

"A contract had been signed and we didn't feel we could break it in mid-April," said Dr. Winford Hendrix, of the First Baptist Church and coordinator of the event.

"We were somewhat concerned with potential problems involving protests of her views on homosexuality," said Hendrix, "but Bryant was not invited to speak on political or social issues, but to provide Christian testimony in song for ACTION."

Her appearance, according to Hendrix, is not a public one but a church-related one, therefore, there will not be a press con-

ference. Giving Bryant an opportunity to discuss controversial topics would be, said Hendrix, "misusing the situation."

For those attending the concert an autograph session and sale of religious books, including several of Bryant's, will be available.

Approximately 6000 tickets have been sold for the event, according to a spokesman for the Richmond Baptist Association.

"Security for Bryant will be present," said Chief Robert C. Dillard. "And no problems are anticipated."

The controversial nature of Bryant's opinions on homosexuality has recently led many people to believe that a rally by Richmond Citizens for Gay and Lesbian Rights (RCFLR), also planned for Saturday, is an attempt to protest the entertainer's appearance.

In a recent announcement, the RCFLR stated that it is planning "a human rights rally for gay and lesbian rights. Its purpose is to show positive support for gays and lesbians and to attempt to educate through speakers, discrimination that is occurring against gays and lesbians." Finally, said the announcement "we will try to explain the correlations between the gay/lesbian rights' struggle and those of other minority groups."

According to the RCFLR, the group was formed "to answer many of the misguided criticisms of

Miss Bryant's counter-movement and to rally support for gays and lesbians." A spokesman for the organization said that "gays and lesbians are human beings who deserve the dignity and respect of a guarantee of their civil rights just as much as any other minority group in the country."

The rally, which will be held at 2:30 p.m. in Monroe Park, will attempt to gather those people interested in stating what gay rights are all about said another spokesman for RCFLR.

The ACTION program is a "self-serving program," said Horne, and is done throughout the country. Richmond Area Baptist churches will be participating in ACTION during the week of Oct. 9. Volunteers will visit people in specific areas encouraging participation in Bible study classes.

Saturday night's rally, according to Horne, will be the beginning of the ACTION program. "It will be an information and inspiration session," said Horne.

According to Horne many students don't know that Bryant is not being sponsored by the Chaplain's Office. "We are working with Dr. Hendrix in the phase of the program pertaining to the University of Richmond. It is appropriate that we are cooperating with the three Richmond Area Baptist Association in bringing Miss Bryant here because it is a

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Anita Bryant Will "Provide Christian Testimony in Song." Contract Was Signed Before Her Involvement in Homosexual Rights Issue.

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Baptist program and we are a Baptist school," said Horne.

The decision to ask Bryant to Richmond was made following the 1976 meeting in Norfolk of the Southern Baptist Convention. Local representatives attending the convention saw Bryant perform there and immediately decided to invite her to Richmond because of what Horne said was "her personality and attractiveness as a Christian entertainer."

Hendrix, in coordinating the rally, chose the Robins Center for the concert because of the number of people it seats, its West End location and the Baptist affiliation of the school.

Final plans for Bryant's appearance were made in January 1977 with Fishers of Men Opportunities, Inc., a Christ-centered ministry dedicated to "fishing for the souls of men." Robert E. Green, Bryant's husband, is president of the organization.

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