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Repository Citation

Toole, John, "Students burn jeans in protest" (1981). *Social Justice: Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion*. 580. https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/social_justice/580

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Students burn jeans in protest

by John Toole
Staff Writer

A noon time "jeans burning" demonstration by several Corbett Hall students drew about 40 persons to the mall Friday to protest Gay Jeans Day.

Glenn McDonald, leader and organizer of the protest held the jeans which were mounted on a pole, set them on fire, raised the pole above his head and read the following statement:

"I, as well as many other University of Maine students, feel our rights are being infringed upon by the recent campaign by the Wilde-Stein group."

"The method of their protest is not one which may aid support for their cause, but rather put

people in anguish and force them (people who wear jeans) to be unnecessarily ridiculed."

"The fact that a person does or does not wear jeans in no way is a gauge of sexual preference. We are not protesting against the rights of individuals' free choice, however we are protesting their method."

McDonald also displayed a permit authorizing the jeans burning. The permit was issued Thursday by David Fielder, assistant director for fire services.

Pete Caradonna, a resident of Corbett and a member of the protest, read a statement to the press. Caradonna said, "We're not protesting gays or gay rights. We're unhappy with the way the

Wilde-Stein Club has chosen to rally students behind their cause."

Caradonna said, "Look around, hardly anybody is wearing jeans. Some may indeed be showing their support for gay rights--and that is fine, but most are being forced to do something that is perhaps against their will--not wear jeans."

He said the club was infringing upon the rights of students by subjecting them to ridicule because of what they wear.

Stephani Lourie, a Wilde-Stein member, said Gay Jeans Day was important because "we made people more aware of the gay issue."