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DEWEYSQUAREGROUP

**"Freedom To Marry" Ad Campaign Media Coverage
June 2, 2007 – June 15, 2007**

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The Miami Herald

Opponents of gay unions featured in 'Freedom to Marry' ad

By Leslie Clark

June 2, 2007

Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, the poster child for gay marriage? How about Sen. Mel Martinez, the Florida Republican who once accused an opponent of playing to the "radical homosexual lobby"?

A coalition of civil rights groups that back gay marriage is using photos of prominent couples like the former Republican governor and his Mexican-born wife, Columba, along with the Cuban-born Martinez and his American-born wife, Kitty, in an advertising campaign marking the 40th anniversary of Loving vs. Virginia, a U.S. Supreme Court decision that gave interracial couples the right to marry.

Neither of the politicians responded to requests for comment, but the groups say they hope to use the couples and the court case to bolster their contention that marriage is a civil right that should know no bounds -- even for those of the same sex.

"We're honoring and celebrating something that just over 40 years ago some Americans said was immoral and wrong and could not happen," said Jimmy Creech, executive director of Faith in America, a gay rights advocacy group that is bankrolling the ad campaign. "We're celebrating the wisdom that prejudice and bigotry was removed from the law books and Americans were given the right to marry the person they loved, regardless of race."

The "Freedom to Marry" campaign -- to be launched Monday -- consists of six ads that will run in two Capitol Hill publications, Roll Call and Politico. They feature photos of interracial couples like golfer Tiger Woods and his wife, Elin, and former U.S. Defense Secretary Bill Cohen and his wife, Janet Langhart, who have written a book about their marriage, *Love in Black and White*. Couples of different ethnicities, like Bush and Martinez, also are featured.

Others in the ad: Republican Senate Leader Mitch McConnell and his wife, Labor Secretary Elaine Chao, and Sen. Jim Webb, D-Va., and his wife, Hong Le.

The ads note that 16 states still banned interracial marriages until the Supreme Court struck down a Virginia law in 1967, finding "the freedom to marry has long been recognized as one of the vital personal rights essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness by free men.

"Jeb and Columba Bush couldn't marry today if discrimination were still the law of the land," the ad that features the former Florida First Couple reads.

John Stemberger, an Orlando attorney who is leading a petition drive to put a gay marriage ban on Florida's ballot in 2008, called the ads "a little bit silly." And he suggested that no laws would have prevented people of differing ethnicities to wed.

"The ruling did not redefine the definition of marriage, it affirmed it and said that any male and any female has a right to marry, irrespective of race," Stemberger said. "Segregation was clearly a social ill."

And Stemberger suggested the ad puts the Florida couples in a "false light."

While Bush was governor, the state Republican Party gave \$300,000 to the same-sex marriage ban petition drive, and Martinez last year co-sponsored a constitutional amendment to declare marriage as strictly between a man and a woman.

In addition to the Raleigh, N.C.-based Faith in America, the campaign's sponsors include the Asian American Justice Center, Freedom to Marry, Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, the Hispanic National Bar Association, Lambda Legal, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the National Black Justice Coalition and the National Center for Lesbian Rights.

Herndon Davis, a spokesman for the National Black Justice Coalition, a nationwide lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender civil rights organization, said many Americans have no idea that interracial marriages were illegal in many states just 40 years ago.

"We want to draw some parallels and comparisons to show that oppression is oppression and intolerance is intolerance," Davis said. "Forty years ago, there were a lot of situations that weren't tolerated, and, as we have thankfully evolved around race and ethnicity, there's still intolerance."

ROLL CALL

The Black and White of Gay Marriage

By Josh Kurtz

June 11, 2007

The ads seem benign at first glance.

Placed in Capitol Hill newspapers over the past several days, they celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision that struck down anti-miscegenation laws, and invite readers to a reception Tuesday evening in the Capitol.

They also feature photographs of several prominent interracial couples, including Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and his wife, Labor Secretary Elaine Chao; Sen. Jim Webb (D-Va.) and his wife, Hong Le Webb; and Sen. Mel Martinez (R-Fla.) and his wife, Kitty. Without that landmark case, *Loving v. Virginia*, the ads say, these couples may not have been able to get married.

But that’s just part of the message: The ads are also an in-your-face — and yours, and yours and yours — pitch for gay marriage. And the man who paid for them doesn’t hesitate to call the officials pictured in the ads “bigots and hypocrites.”

“These are incredible hypocrites,” said Mitchell Gold, president of Faith in America, one of the 10 groups that bought the ads and are hosting Tuesday’s celebration of the 40th anniversary of the *Loving* decision. “What’s good for them is not good for another.”

It is an unconventionally frank lobbying campaign, to say the least. But Gold is unapologetic.

“We think we’ve created a way to talk about this that will give people pause,” he said.

That may be an understatement.

Instead of pausing to consider the merits of extending marriage rights to gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered individuals, the lawmakers are instead discussing the groups’ tactics.

Jessica Smith, a spokesman for Webb — who supports civil unions for gay couples but not full marital rights — said the Senator was upset because he wasn’t notified that his picture would be in the ads (Gold insists his group gave heads-up calls to everyone whose image appears in the ads).

Martinez, a gay-marriage opponent, took a somewhat lighter approach.

“It’s a very lovely picture of Kitty and me,” he told “Naked Politics,” the Miami Herald’s political blog, on Thursday. “I’ll take it home to her this weekend.”

Martinez called the other couples whose photos appear in the ads — former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush (R) and his wife, golfing megastar Tiger Woods and his wife, and former Sen. William Cohen (R-Maine) and his wife — “nice people.”

It is an interesting time for Gold to be boosting his profile on Capitol Hill. Gold and his life and business partner, Bob Williams, are the co-owners of Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams, a wildly successful furniture chain that opened its first retail store in Washington, D.C., near Logan Circle, in April.

The company held a grand opening reception at the new store just two weeks ago, and because its factory is in Taylorville, N.C. — where Gold and Williams live — two of the most conservative Members of Congress, Sen. Richard Burr (R-N.C.) and Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.), made an appearance.

Gold said he usually confines his conversations with Burr and Foxx to business, not politics. But his push to legalize gay marriage is a hyperpolitical — and multipronged — effort. One of the goals of Faith in America, Gold said, is to expose religious leaders who use their faith — and cite scripture — to preach against gay marriage.

Throughout history, proponents of segregation have used the Bible to justify their support for segregation, like the Virginia trial judge in the Loving case, Leon Bazille. The ad quotes a line from his decision: “Almighty God created the races white, yellow, malay and red, and he placed them on separate continents.”

Gold said it has taken courageous religious leaders to spark the abolitionist, women’s suffrage and civil rights movements.

The executive director of Faith in America, Jimmy Creech, is a former Methodist minister in rural North Carolina who was put on trial by the church for celebrating gay unions and was later stripped of his clergy credentials after 29 years as a minister.

In addition to the ad campaign and its presence on Capitol Hill, Faith in America is setting up political operations in Ames, Iowa, Reno, Nev., Manchester, N.H., and Greenville, S.C. — sites of the four earliest presidential nominating contests. The group is paying for ads in local newspapers, billboards and canvassers who will go door to door soliciting support for gay marriage. Activists plan to question the White House contenders at their public events in these cities.

Gold said the 40th anniversary of the Loving decision is rife with symbolism for gay-marriage advocates, and not just because of the couple’s name.

Richard and Mildred Loving were an interracial couple who married in Washington, D.C., in 1958 because interracial marriage was illegal in their home state of Virginia. When they returned home they were arrested and briefly jailed. Eventually, they pleaded guilty to a charge of unlawful cohabitation, and accepted a judge’s sentence that they leave the state.

Years later, the Lovings went to court to appeal the Virginia law. On June 12, 1967, the Supreme Court unanimously struck down all laws banning interracial marriage — 19 states still had them on the books at that point.

“The 40th anniversary of the decision gives us a good opportunity to educate people,” Gold said, “and to celebrate a decision to allow loving couples to marry.”

Reps. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) and John Lewis (D-Ga.) have introduced a resolution hailing the 40th anniversary of the case. It is scheduled to be debated this evening, and some gay-rights advocates expect Baldwin — the only open lesbian in Congress — to make the connection between the Lovings and gay marriage.

Jerilyn Goodman, a spokeswoman for Baldwin, said she was not certain that the Congresswoman would go that far.

“This resolution is intended to recognize one of the most significant court decisions in the country’s history — one that the sponsors felt deserved attention on this 40th anniversary,” Goodman said. “The resolution and the Congresswoman’s remarks on Monday are meant to highlight this landmark in civil rights.”

Baldwin also is scheduled to speak at the Capitol Hill reception. Organizers are hoping to entice Mildred Loving — her husband died in a car crash in the 1970s — to attend the celebration as well.

And Gold says the opponents of gay marriage who are pictured in his group’s ads are also more than welcome tomorrow night.

“It’ll be interesting to see if they show up,” he said.



A landmark ruling

By Jenice Armstrong

June 12, 2007

Sen. Barack Obama: Mixed parentage.

SOME OF the biggest stars in America are the offspring of interracial marriages - presidential contender Sen. Barack Obama, "American Idol" Jordin Sparks, golf superstar Tiger Woods and Academy Award-winning actress Halle Berry.

These are A-listers, people in the forefront of news and pop culture.

It's ironic when you stop to think that just 40 years ago - depending upon where the parents of these American superstars lived - it would have been illegal for them to marry simply because they were different races. This is beyond ridiculous, especially when you consider how commonplace interracial marriage has become in certain circles.

Thankfully, as a nation, we have learned a little something about tolerance.

But before that, there was the Loving case. You may have seen the 1996 Showtime movie "Mr. & Mrs. Loving," starring Lela Rochon and Timothy Hutton, about the Supreme Court decision handed down exactly four decades ago today. That landmark case cleared the way for Americans to legally marry without regard to skin color and effectively declared miscegenation laws unconstitutional.

If you don't recall the facts, here's a quick refresher. Richard Loving, a white man, and Mildred Jeter, a black woman, were childhood friends who fell in love in 1958. Recognizing the legal prohibition against interracial marriage in Virginia, they drove 80 miles to Washington, D.C., to get married. Not long after they returned home, the Lovings were awakened during the wee hours, arrested and jailed.

Hoping to avoid a year behind bars, the Lovings agreed to leave Virginia on condition that they not be seen there together for a period of 25 years. Frustrated, the couple challenged the ruling, and their court case made its way all the way to the Supreme Court.

"They were people who had no interest in changing the world. They simply wanted to be married," said Phyl Newbeck, author of "Virginia Hasn't Always Been for Lovers." "There were 41 states that had these laws at some point or another."

After the hoopla surrounding their case died down, the Lovings mostly faded into obscurity. Richard Loving was killed by a drunk driver in 1975, and his wife lost an eye in the accident. Mildred Loving, who's notoriously press-shy, declines most interview requests. But she recently told the Associated Press that she doesn't celebrate the anniversary of the ruling.

"Just another day," she told the reporter. "Sometimes I forget."

But a lot of others remember. Smart-thinking gay-rights advocates have linked their efforts pushing for the freedom to marry to the 1967 Loving vs. Virginia case.

Yesterday, one group launched an ad campaign in some Washington publications using the images of famous couples of mixed ethnicities to make their point. One ad reads, "Jeb and Columba Bush couldn't marry today if discrimination were still the law of the land."

Although opponents will counter with the usual tired arguments about how marriage is supposed to be only between a man and woman, gay-marriage proponents need only point to the Lovings to affirm their position. In that case, the court wrote that "marriage is one of the basic civil rights of man . . ." Being gay or a mixed-race couple doesn't negate that. *



Gay marriage advocates celebrate '60s interracial marriage case

By Ashley Matthews

June 13, 2007

Washington - Civil rights organizations gathered at the Capitol Tuesday to celebrate a landmark Supreme Court case they say might aid the cause of gay marriage.

They marked the 40th anniversary of *Loving v. Virginia* Supreme Court, the case that allowed interracial couples to marry.

The story started simply enough. Richard Loving and Mildred Jeter were in love.

Loving, who was white, and Mildred Jeter, who is black, found something they felt crossed racial boundaries. They got married in 1958. Their joy was short-lived, however. After returning home to Virginia from their marriage in Washington, they were arrested and jailed under an anti-miscegenation law that prohibited interracial marriages.

Nine years later, the Supreme Court overruled Virginia's law, under which the court ordered them not to reside in Virginia for 25 years.

"*Loving v. Virginia* didn't just happen overnight. People had to fight for it," said Evan Wolfson, executive director of Freedom to Marry. "Some said it was too soon, that it was against God's will, that it was impractical, that it just wasn't worth it. Fortunately, couples and advocates spoke up and our country changed."

Wolfson is hoping history will repeat itself, this time for same-sex marriage. Many civil rights organizations and activists see the *Loving v. Virginia* case as a precedent for legalizing same-sex marriage.

The groups were pleased to have Mildred Loving endorse their cause, although she could not attend the party. Her husband died in the 1970s.

"We were in love, and we wanted to be married," she said in a rare public statement read at the party. "I am proud that Richard's and my name are on a court case that can help reinforce the love, the commitment, the fairness, and the family that so many people, black or white, young or old, gay or straight, seek in life. I support the freedom to marry for all."

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Texas, attended the reception to support the groups.

"Difference is wonderful, and I believe that difference is what is lacking in this place we call the 'people's house,'" she said.

She also praised ads supporting gay marriage placed in Capitol Hill newspapers this week showcasing powerful interracial couples, including former senator and defense secretary Richard Cohen and Janet Langhart, and Sen. Barack Obama, whose mother is white and father is black. Wolfson said those pictured were told about the ads, but none of them has endorsed the campaign.

"I love it every time I see it," the congresswoman said.

Stuart Gaffney, 44, a public policy analyst at the University of California at San Francisco, and his partner, John Lewis, are plaintiffs in a California lawsuit seeking marriage equality for same-sex couples. He and Lewis, 48, a lawyer, have been partners for 20 years.

"Really, we're struggling for the same cause," he said.

In 2004, the couple married within the first hour that San Francisco issued marriage licenses to same-sex couples. Six months later, the California Supreme Court ruled that San Francisco lacked the authority to marry same-sex couples.

Gaffney realized he and his parents share an unfortunate legacy.

His Chinese-American mother, Estelle Lau, married his white father, Mason Gaffney, in the early 1950s in California. When they moved to Missouri, they found out their marriage was illegal. Only in 1967, with *Loving v. Virginia*, did their marriage become legal.

Lau called those who oppose gay marriage "narrow-minded and bigoted people."

"We get a lot of courage from his parents," Lewis said. "We just emulate their courage and their strength, and we continue to tell our story."

Jon W. Davidson, legal director of Lambda Legal, nonprofit group that fights for equality for "lesbians, gays, and people with HIV," according to its Web site, is co-counsel in the California case seeking marriage equality.

"The Lovings didn't give up," Davidson said. "They had faith in the constitutional promises of equality and liberty."

Wolfson said the government should not block marriages, adding, "The main lesson of *Loving* is that there is enough love to go around, and that means there is enough marriage to go around, too."

BAY AREA REPORTER

Marriage activists mark *Loving* anniversary

By Bob Roehr

June 14, 2007

Advocates for gay and lesbian equal rights to marriage Tuesday, June 12 celebrated the 40th anniversary of the historic U.S. Supreme Court decision of *Loving v. Virginia*, which struck down the last remaining state laws banning interracial marriage.

The activities included a news conference at the National Press Club in Washington; launching a video on YouTube by the National Black Justice Coalition; and a Capitol Hill briefing and reception for Congress members and their staffs.

Richard and Mildred Loving went to Washington, D.C., in 1958 to marry because they were in love and Virginia, where they lived, prohibited their marriage. Richard was white and Mildred of African American and American Indian heritage. They did not intend to make a political statement. But one night as they slept at home in their bed, the couple were awakened and arrested, charged with violating the Virginia marriage law. They were sentenced to one year in prison. The Lovings appealed their conviction and the case went all the way to the Supreme Court, which ruled in their favor on June 12, 1967.

Mildred Loving has always shied away from the role of an activist. Now aging and infirmed, she declined an invitation to participate in the Washington news conference but she did provide a statement for the event. Richard Loving died in a 1975 car accident.

"My generation was bitterly divided over something that should have been so clear and right," she said in the statement. "The majority believed what the [trial] judge said, that it was God's plan to keep people apart, and that government should discriminate against people in love. But I have lived long enough now to see big changes.

"Not a day goes by that I don't think of Richard and our love, our right to marry, and how much it meant to me to have that freedom to marry the person precious to me, even if others thought he was the 'wrong kind of person' for me to marry.

"I believe that all Americans, no matter their race, no matter their sex, no matter their sexual orientation, should have that same freedom to marry. Government has no business imposing some people's religious beliefs over others. Especially if it denies people's civil rights," she wrote.

Among those on hand Tuesday were San Francisco residents Stuart Gaffney and his longtime partner, John Lewis. Gaffney, who is biracial, has long used the example of his parents when discussing the fight for marriage equality.

When the California Supreme Court declared that state's interracial marriage law unconstitutional in 1948, it said, "The essence of the right to marry is the freedom to marry the person you choose, the person who is irreplaceable to you."

Dr. Estelle Lau, Gaffney's mother, is Chinese and was not able to marry her Caucasian husband until that law was struck down. Even after marrying, when the couple moved to Missouri, that marriage was deemed illegal.

Gaffney and Lewis were one of the first couples to marry at San Francisco City Hall in February 2004. They are plaintiffs in the lawsuit that seeks to strike down the prohibition on same-sex marriage as a violation of the California Constitution.

Religion

Some of the speakers Tuesday decried how religion has been used in the fight against same-sex marriage as well as other issues over the years.

"Religious teachings and beliefs have been misused to deny American citizens their fundamental rights and freedom to marry the person they love. The United States Constitution has been compromised by prejudice in the name of religion," said Mitchell Gold, the founder of the group Faith in America.

"Religion has been used in our history to support slavery, racial segregation, and deny women the right to vote. Today, we know that use of religion was misguided and wrong," said the Reverend Irene Monroe. "The use of religion to deny same-sex couples the freedom to marry, with all of its important protections and responsibilities, is no less wrong."

Representative Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisconsin), the only out lesbian serving in Congress, said, "In our nation's long march toward equality, *Loving v. Virginia* is truly a landmark." She called the decision "a beacon of hope" in the LGBT struggle for marriage equality.

The decision personally resonates with her because "my American Jewish grandfather married my British Anglican grandmother and brought her to this country at the onset of World War II. If it were not for the *Loving* decision, it would have broken the law in many states when their daughter met and married an African American man who became my stepfather."

"Today, I, as a lesbian, am not allowed to enjoy the same rights, to marry my life partner because of societal taboos, homophobia fears against same-sex marriage that are untenable today," Baldwin said.

Gold added, "Too often at the intersection of faith and politics we find discrimination. We want to open up the conversation and remind people of the history of this country of discrimination, often time at its core, people found religious beliefs. Those religious beliefs cannot dictate civil law."

The fight

Alexander Robinson, executive director of the National Black Justice Coalition, read a statement from the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. It argued, "The basic 14th Amendment principles that apply to *Loving* should be applied to any state effort to deny any person the right to marry the person he or she loves."

In a video created by the coalition, NAACP Chairman Julian Bond said, "Marriage is a civil ceremony that apportions some rights and responsibilities to both parties. I ought not be denied that simply because of someone else's religious bigotry."

"If for some reason you don't want me to marry in your church, that's okay, it's your church. But don't bring your religious bigotry into city hall. Everyone has a right to marry the person of their choice," Bond said in the video.

Jon Davidson, legal director of the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, reminded those in attendance that it often takes failure – courts in 14 states had rejected a challenge to interracial marriage laws prior to the *Loving* decision – but advocates kept pressing "until the arguments against the freedom to marry the person of one's choice were recognized as unworthy of our great nation."

"Equality doesn't just happen," Davidson said. "Equality can become a reality, rather than just a dream, only through the efforts of many."

Evan Wolfson, the founder of Freedom to Marry, said, "America is involved in a civil rights conversation right now across kitchen tables, courts, and legislatures as people grapple with the questions we have addressed here today. It begins with understanding that real people's lives are at stake."

Dallas VOICE

The Community Newspaper For Gay & Lesbian Dallas

‘Loving and loving’ — what it’s all about

By Ben Briscoe

June 14, 2007

The plaintiff in *Loving v. Virginia*, the 1967 landmark court case that resulted in striking down laws banning interracial marriage, spoke out for marriage equality for lesbians and gays during a press conference on Tuesday, June 12, celebrating the 40th anniversary of the ruling.

“Not a day goes by that I don’t think of Richard and our love, and how much it meant to me to have that freedom to marry the person precious to me, even if others thought he was the ‘wrong kind of person’ for me to marry,” Mildred Loving said. “I believe all Americas, no matter their race, no matter their sex, no matter their sexual orientation, should have that same freedom to marry.”

Loving went on to say that she was honored to be a part of the struggle for marriage equality for all.

“I am proud that Richard’s and my name are on a court case that can help reinforce the love, the commitment, the fairness and the family that so many people, black or white, young or old, gay or straight, seek in life,” she said. “I support the freedom to marry for all. That’s what Loving, and loving are all about.”



Mildred Loving in 1965

This comes just days after the announcement that New Hampshire will now offer civil unions for lesbians and gays, a move that some critics are saying is good but not enough — like Kathryn Omarkhail, whose commitment ceremony to her partner Denise Bennett was featured in “Truths & Transformations,” documentary that had its world premiere at last month’s QCinema, the Forth Worth gay and lesbian film festival.

After Omarkhail and Bennett had a commitment ceremony in June 2005 attended by their friends and family in Texas, it was personally important to them to be married legally in another venue.

“It was key to us to have the marriage certificate with female-female on it and to be recognized in that way by some government entity,” Omarkhail said.

“Even though it might not be recognized in the Lone Star State, that added a seriousness and official tone to our vows which we both felt was necessary.”

When the two were deciding where to hold their legal wedding, they immediately ruled out the only state to offer

full-fledged marriage rights, Massachusetts, because it had a residency requirement at the time. They were also quick to cross off the then-three other states, including the District of Columbia, that offered civil unions.

“We ended up getting married in Canada because a civil union wasn’t good enough,” Omarkhail said. “It is still people saying we are less than, and I don’t think I should be told because of my sexual orientation that I am not worthy of calling myself married.”

But the issue of civil unions versus marriage is not just an issue of semantics.

Last week, with the release of New Hampshire’s news, GLAD updated the “Marriage and Civil Unions: What’s the Difference?” section of the organization’s Web site. In it, they outline 10 key differences between the two, despite the fact that legislators in New Hampshire promised that the civil unions would have the same rights and responsibilities as marriage.

The differences start with the portability of rights. Marriage is automatically recognized in all states that don’t have a specific guideline in their constitutions that marriage is between a man and woman only. Civil Unions have no guarantee of recognition, whether or not the constitution defines who can be married.

Three other differences listed fall under this problem: medical decisions in times of emergency, rights to divorce and spousal and child support after a divorce. All three of these are not guaranteed outside of the state where the civil union took place.

The next four biggest issues deal with taxes. Both gifts and inheritance from one partner to another are fully taxed by the federal government under civil unions. Under marriage they are not. Also on the federal level, the couple must file their tax returns individually; an act that has the possibility of costing the couple large amounts of money. Plus, under civil unions, when one partner dies, there is no continuation of payment of social security and veteran death benefits, like there would be with marriage.

The ninth difference deals with immigration benefits. Under marriage, U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents can sponsor their spouse and other family members for immigration into the country. Under civil unions, they do not have this right.

Finally, the tenth difference deals with the wording itself. GLAD says that marriage “is the ultimate expression of love and commitment. People understand and respect it.” Whereas, “civil unions are unfamiliar. People don’t understand them or know how to treat them.

It was this final point that swayed Omarkhail and Bennett from entering into a civil union.

“It’s a step forward, but it is still discrimination, Omarkhail said. “I figured people would have learned by now that separate but equal just doesn’t work. We won’t be happy until everyone has full marriage rights, just like Ms. Loving is advocating.”



Mitchell Gold on the Bible and Gay Rights

Arguing for marriage equality for everyone, an activist group started by furniture designer Mitchell Gold seeks to remind Americans that interracial marriage was banned just a few decades ago.

By Julie Scelfo
Web Exclusive

June 8, 2007

For years, Mitchell Gold, a founder of the popular furniture company Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams, has been irritated by what he sees as fundamentalist Christians’ use of the Bible to justify withholding civil rights from gays. Scripture, Gold argues, was used in the past to defend slavery, prohibit interracial marriage and prevent women from voting. Frustrated that few politicians dare to confront anyone brandishing a Bible, in 2005 Gold formed the group Faith In America (FIA), which says its goals are to educate people about the past “misuse” of religion and scripture. FIA’s latest campaign is centered on next week’s 40th anniversary of Loving v. Virginia, the Supreme Court decision that overturned Virginia’s ban on interracial marriage, which had been supported by a Virginia judge who ruled the intention of “Almighty God” was to keep the races separate. This week, FIA ran a series of full-page ads in Roll Call, the Capitol Hill newspaper, featuring a photo of former Florida governor Jeb Bush and his wife, Columba, a Mexican native, over a caption that says “they reside in Florida, where interracial marriage was illegal prior to 1967.” Gold hopes that reminding people about the Loving decision—and how social arrangements considered morally unacceptable just a few years ago are acceptable today—will help them see it’s wrong to make policy decisions based on some individuals’ interpretation of the Bible. (Photos of other public figures with interracial marriages and/or parents, like Barack Obama, Tiger Woods and Sen. Mitch McConnell, also appear in the ads; some of them have objected to gay marriage in the past.) NEWSWEEK’s Julie Scelfo spoke with Gold about the campaign. Excerpts:

NEWSWEEK: Why do you think reminding people that interracial marriage used to be illegal will help end anti-gay sentiments?

Mitchell Gold: Most people acknowledge today that it was wrong 40 years ago to deny couples who loved each other the right to marry, the freedom to marry, simply because of one’s own religious belief. We want to remind people of past mistakes. This 40th anniversary of Loving is the perfect opportunity to do that. The similarity [to anti-gay rhetoric] is it’s religious-based discrimination. In 1959, when the Virginia judge handed down the decision prohibiting interracial marriage, he quoted from scripture that it was God’s will. And that is similar to today, whether it’s the president of the United States or senators and congresspeople that invoke the name of their God or religion to deny gay and lesbian couples the legal right to marry.

How has the issue of gay rights touched your life?

In 1989, Bob Williams and I founded our company with \$60,000 and over 10 years it grew into a \$40 million business [that provides furniture to stores like Crate & Barrel, Pottery Barn and Restoration Hardware]. But because

we were gay and couldn't marry, we realized if one of us should die, the other would have to pay huge inheritance tax—and may not be able to afford it. So, we decided the only way to protect ourselves was to sell the company which was really emotionally difficult. It was our baby. If we were a heterosexual couple we would not have had to think about that. We subsequently bought it back in 2004 with the help of investors, but it's still not the same. Now, we have a lot more financial stability—and we're also not a couple anymore—so we're less concerned about the tax issue.

The ad campaign also includes other people who have interracial marriages like former Defense secretary Bill Cohen and Tiger Woods, or who have interracial parents like Barack Obama. Did those folks consent to letting you use the photos?

We didn't ask. We notified them that we were using them, but because they're all people in the public domain, those are images you can buy from stock-photography companies. I would hope they would be happy to be included and be pleased to be part of an effort to provide the freedom to marry that they have with others.

Have you heard from any of them?

No, to my surprise. They're laying low.

What has the reaction been like so far?

Well, it's been great actually. Everywhere I go people tell me they're happy [my group] is talking about the history of discrimination in America. There's so much talk today in politics about religion, and frankly too often at that intersection is discrimination. I also found it interesting that we haven't had a flood of negative calls to say that's a horrible argument or isn't valid. In fact, I've had nobody say that.

Previously, you've said fundamentalist Christians have been waging a war against homosexuality and few people fight back. Why do you think that's the case?

I think many politicians are afraid to say somebody using their Bible is wrong. Secular civil-rights groups are very uncomfortable. And we feel enough harm has been done, it's time to stop this, to stand up and have the courage to say to folks, this really is not right, to think back about what types of harm this kind of religious thinking has done in the past. When he realized the harm he was causing, Jerry Falwell in the 1970s apologized to African-Americans for [previously] supporting segregation. We're hoping that good Americans today will recognize if they're using their biblical beliefs to deny gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender people of their full and equal rights, that's it's wrong and harmful.

It seems like this issue is really personal for you.

[Far too many] kids commit suicide because they're gay, because they find the world untenable for themselves. I can understand because I was almost one of those statistics. But I was fortunate to get help when I needed it. When you're growing up and you're 14 years old—I can tell you—and your parents, your church and your government are telling you you're wrong, you're not equal, that's a tough nut.



Gay Rights Groups Take Heart In Ruling That Struck Down Bans On Interracial Marriage

By 365Gay.com, Newscenter Staff

June 12, 2007

(Washington) LGBT civil rights groups marked the 40th anniversary of the Supreme Court ruling that struck down state laws banning interracial marriage saying that ultimately bans on same-sex marriage also will be ruled unconstitutional.

The case, called Loving v. Virginia, began when Richard and Mildred Loving, an interracial couple, were arrested in Virginia after they returned from their wedding in Washington, DC.

They were sentenced to one year in prison.

The Lovings appealed the conviction all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which struck down restrictions on who could marry whom.

On June 12, 1967, the Court ruled that: “The freedom to marry has long been recognized as one of the vital personal rights essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness by free men.”

Tuesday on Capitol Hill gay rights, civil rights groups and Rep Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) held a news conference to point out the similarities between the fight to end the prohibition of interracial marriage and the one against bans on same-sex marriage.

The National Black Justice Coalition also unveiled a video available on YouTube featuring interracial couples pointing out that the interracial bans were "bigotry often justified disguised as religious truth."

At the time the Lovings began their fight to have their marriage recognized a majority of Americans believed blocking interracial marriage was acceptable. And the groups on the Hill noted that as attitudes toward interracial marriage have changed since the Supreme Court ruling, ultimately Americans will become accepting of gay marriage.

Also marking the anniversary of Loving is a two day ad campaign in Roll Call and The Politico featuring images of well-known interracial couples who would have been denied marriage but for the Loving case.

The ads were paid for by Faith in America, a gay rights advocacy group.

Lambda Legal Director Jon Davidson noted that the fight for interracial marriage was not won over night and gay couples seeking the right to marry will have it no easier.:

"All success takes is, first, the willingness of those denied equal rights to stand up for themselves and to secure the support of allies; second, perseverance in insisting that the rights afforded to some be provided to all; and, last, regardless of how long it takes or how much resistance is encountered, unwavering faith that the promises of our Constitution will be fulfilled one day," said Davidson.

Currently Massachusetts is the only state where same-sex marriage is legal. Gay marriage cases are currently before state courts in California, Connecticut and Maryland and Iowa. Ultimately, like Loving, the issue of gay marriage will make its way to the US Supreme Court.

Last July the New York State's highest court, ruled that same-sex couples do not have a constitutional right to marry but said that the issue, however, could be taken up by the Legislature. A bill is presently before the Assembly.

Last October the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled same-sex couples must have all the rights of marriage but left it to the legislature to decide if it should be called marriage or civil unions. Lawmakers opted for civil unions.

THE HUFFINGTON POST

Loving Equality

By Bernard Cohen and Evan Wolfson

June 12, 2007

On June 12, America celebrates the 40th anniversary of *Loving v. Virginia*, in which the U.S. Supreme Court struck down race restrictions on marriage. As lawyers on two landmark cases for the freedom to marry in America, we feel a special connection to *Loving*. One of us, Bernard S. Cohen, litigated *Loving*, and the younger of us, Evan Wolfson, was co-counsel in *Baehr v. Lewin*, the groundbreaking Hawaii challenge on behalf of same-sex couples seeking to marry.

Both *Loving* and *Baehr* continue to reverberate in our nation's struggle against exclusion from marriage, and for equality and inclusion for all Americans. Here in California, the State Supreme Court is now considering a marriage case brought by same-sex couples while the State Assembly again passed a marriage equality bill last week.

Loving began when Mildred Jeter, part African-American and part Cherokee, and Richard Loving, a white man, left their home state, Virginia, in order to get married where their love was allowed. Upon return, the couple was arrested in their bedroom for the "crime" of violating Virginia's race restrictions on who could marry whom, convicted of marrying the "wrong" kind of person, and given a choice of a year in prison or 25 years exile from their home state. The Lovings chose exile and then sued to defend their marriage. The Virginia Supreme Court upheld the trial court's ruling that, "Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, Malay, and red, and he placed them on separate continents.... The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix." On appeal, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down race restrictions on marriage, declaring, "The freedom to marry has long been recognized as one of the vital personal rights essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness by free men."

In 1991, three same-sex couples likewise challenged their exclusion from marriage. After a thorough trial in 1996, Judge Kevin Chang found that denying gay people the freedom to marry recognized in *Loving* as a "basic civil right" serves no legitimate government purpose. The state constitution was subsequently amended to prevent the courts from ordering marriage licenses. Nevertheless, the *Baehr* case launched a nationwide, indeed international, discussion that led to the 2003 marriage equality by the Massachusetts high court and the first same-sex couples marrying in that state. The Massachusetts court cited *Loving* and *Baehr*, as have courts and legislators in the other places that have ended marriage discrimination, including South Africa, Spain, and Canada.

When the U.S. Supreme Court got *Loving* right, the polls showed 70 percent still opposed to interracial marriage. Imagine the injury to our nation if the Court had flinched, or if the opposition had prevailed with arguments like "let the people vote" or attacks on "activist judges," and had cemented discrimination into our Constitution, as in Hawaii.

Last year, the NAACP LDF filed a brief in support of ending the different-sex restriction on marriage. The NAACP LDF invoked Loving's repudiation of the same-race restriction on marriage, stating, "In a step forward - a step that at the time was the subject of bitter controversy, but now seems obvious - the Supreme Court tore down this lasting and notorious vestige of discrimination[.] There is no reason... to treat marriage between persons of the same sex any differently."

Today we rightly celebrate *Loving v. Virginia* as a milestone in racial equality, an important vindication of marriage as a cherished civil right, and a testament to the importance of fighting for equality, rather than sitting by silently, indifferently, or complacently in the face of cruel exclusion.

When in 1948 the California Supreme Court became the first in the country to strike down race discrimination in marriage -- before *Loving* -- it declared, "the essence of the right to marry is freedom to join in marriage with the person of one's choice." Hopefully, legislators and judges will find their courage, and our nation won't need too many lawyers working too much longer on behalf of too many couples and their kids before we end ongoing marriage discrimination -- the best way to celebrate the anniversary of what *Loving* is really all about.



Landmark case fulfills promise of the freedom to marry

The 40th anniversary of the case granting interracial marriage shows promise for an equal future, granting gay marriage.

By Kevin Cathcart and H. Alexander Robinson
An Advocate.com exclusive

June 12, 2007

Just forty years ago it was against the law in sixteen states for people of different races to marry. On June 12, 1967 the United States Supreme Court struck down all bans on interracial marriage in the landmark case, *Loving v. Virginia*. The decision sparked fiery controversy—today it is seen as a triumph for racial justice and the freedom to marry.

Today we invoke the spirit of the *Loving* decision as we seek to move the wheels of justice forward again. For today, lesbian and gay couples seek the right to marry the person they choose, just as other couples do.

Ask Karen Woolbright what is at stake. She entered into an interracial marriage in the 1960s. Now, she fights for the rights of her gay son, Curtis, who wishes to marry the man he loves:

"Many of the same reasons I heard in the 1960s as to why I should not have the right to marry my husband I hear today as to why my son should not have the right to marry Daniel," she said. "When my husband and I started out as a couple, we heard people say that black and white races were not meant to mix, that we were an aberration, that our relationship was immoral, that marriage was not meant to include interracial couples. The reasons for denying me the right to marry, like the ones I hear today are based on fear."

Loving says that people of different races are human beings who are entitled to the fundamental liberty of choosing to marry each other. But before this decision, Woolbright was forced to move from her home to a different state where she was legally permitted to marry interracially.

There are parallels and lessons to be learned from our nation's shameful history of overt racial injustices and legalized discrimination. The tragic legacies of slavery and later Jim Crow laws and their profound impact on enduring economic disparities continue to teach our country hard lessons about prejudice, exclusion, and injustice. In our history it has most often been race that has led courts to first profoundly articulate important antidiscrimination principles. Courts have then later applied these same principles to other cases involving other forms of discrimination.

Lesbian and gay Americans have not faced the same level of institutional and legal exclusion that ignited what we now call the Civil Rights Movement, but the promise of liberty for all people is the same. Today we understand that

our quest to achieve justice and civil rights for all Americans is an evolving struggle which requires real and substantive action by we the people. With each court decision that helps to ensure America's promise of liberty, we are also faced with the question of how we can fully realize these principles and apply them to all people.

In the *Loving* decision, the Supreme Court wrote that although "*Loving* arose in the context of racial discrimination, prior and subsequent decisions of this Court confirm that the right to marry is of fundamental importance for all individuals."

From the framework of this decision, the Supreme Court established that lesbians and gay men share the same fundamental right to private sexual intimacy that all other adults have, but establishing this right was not easily obtained. In 1998, John Lawrence and Tyron Garner were arrested in Lawrence's home and jailed overnight. The two men were convicted of violating Texas's Homosexual Conduct Law. Lambda Legal represented them, and in a stunning victory in 2003 the Supreme Court found that laws that prohibit sexual intimacy between same sex couples were unconstitutional.

When the highest court in Massachusetts opened the door in 2004 to civil marriage for same sex couples in that state, they understood the path they were traveling from previous historic decisions. Citing both *Loving* and *Lawrence*, the justices wrote, "Whether and whom to marry, how to express sexual intimacy, and whether and how to establish a family—these are among the most basic of every individual's liberty and due process rights.... And central to personal freedom and security is the assurance that the laws will apply equally to persons in similar situations.

We believe it is obviously right that two people of the same sex are human beings who are entitled to the fundamental liberty of choosing to marry each other.

The white-majority racism behind the old bans against interracial marriages still drives ongoing racial discrimination in housing, education, employment, and elsewhere. Likewise, the homophobia behind the bans on marriage for same-sex couples drives sexual-orientation discrimination in many other contexts throughout our society.

The anniversary of *Loving* gives us the opportunity to invite America to rise to its best form and to not give in to fear, thus keeping the promise of liberty for all.

H. Alexander Robinson is the Executive Director of the National Black Justice Coalition. Kevin Cathcart is the Executive Director of Lambda Legal.



Dreaming & Loving

By TerranceDC

June 13, 2007

22:45:37 PM EDT

Yesterday, our family went to a press conference in the morning and I attended a reception in the evening, both celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Supreme Court's Loving v. Virginia ruling, which struck down state laws prohibiting ? even criminalizing ? marriage between people of different races. People like the ones in this video, produced by Faith in America and the National Black Justice Coalition.

I went because I live in a state where forty years ago I could not marry the person I love, because he is white and I am black. I went because today I live in a state where, forty years later I still cannot marry the person I love because we are two men.

I went because as a human being I believe ? I know ? in the marrow of my bones that it is my basic human right to dare to dream, and as an American it is my basic civil right to pursue those dreams, so long as I don't violate anyone else's basic human and civil rights.

I went to protect a dream that once upon a time I didn't dare to dream.

TerranceDC :: Dreaming & Loving

I went because seven years ago, my met a man who won my heart, and we exchanged rings with one another on a beach, alone. In the presence of and witnessed by the ocean, the moon, and the stars, we made promises to one another. The closest thing to a wedding we've ever had.

I went because four years later, we became the parents of a baby boy just four days old. That same night, looking down into his crib as he slept, we made promises to one another again ? unspoken ? and to him too.

I went because fifteen years ago, doing genealogical research, I discovered an ancestor who had been born a slave. I discovered the name of the slaveowner, whose name I still have, and the location of the plantation. It was a connection to an ancestor who lived through a past in which black people couldn't not roam freely without papers, or a "pass" that saying who and what gave them the right to be anywhere. (I remembered, then, that blacks in South Africa required "papers" and "passes" in order to travel between work and home.) To be caught without them could mean disaster.

I went because one year ago, on the day we moved into our home, I got a call from a friend of mine. I'd emailed him because I'd received from him what appeared to be a funeral notice, for his husband's funeral. We'd met them a few years earlier, gone to their wedding, and celebrated their son's adoption with them. Surely, I thought, I'm reading something wrong. But he told me his story, of how his husband ? who had been apparently healthy ? collapsed at work after complaining of a headache and was rushed to the hospital. My friend rushed to the hospital, only to be told when he got there that they could not admit him to see his husband or give him any information unless he could prove their relationship, because he was not "next of kin." My friend drove home, leaving his husband in the hospital without knowing what was wrong with him, retrieved their legal documents, and when he returned to the hospital he was admitted to see his husband. A few days later, his husband died without regaining consciousness.

I went because three years ago, Michael Tartaglia and John Crisci, after 30 years together, were less fortunate when John had to return home to retrieve their legal documents so that he might be allowed to see Michael once he reached the hospital, but arrived only to be greeted by a priest and a doctor.

I went because right now, the religious right in Minnesota is opposing legislation that would give same-sex couples the right to hospital visitation? just one of over 1000 protections granted married heterosexuals ? where now it is really a privilege that can be granted and revoked based on little more than the whims of individual hospital employees.

I went because seven years ago Sam Beaumont lost everything when his partner of 23 years died, because his will was rendered invalid because it has one too few witnesses, where a heterosexual spouse would have been guaranteed an inheritance even in the complete *absence* of a will.

I went because today, I keep copies of our legal documents in my office. My husband keep copies of our legal documents in his office. We have copies in our car. We don't travel without them. To be caught without them could mean disaster.

Two weeks ago, a married heterosexual couple just down the street, we had our neighbors over for dinner with their infant son. It was particularly nice because we'd recommended our adoption agency to them. When I told them the stories above, the wife told me the story of what happened when her husband (who eventually recovered) was rushed to the hospital. She arrived and told hospital personnel, "I'm his wife." And they responded, "Right this way."

I went because 30 years ago I learned a song and kept singing it because something about it resonated with me. I sang it, and when others heard it, I got the chance to sing it on stage. Something about the way I sang it resonated with them. I didn't what it was about then. I knew something about the longing I heard in the voice of the singer who first sang it. But I didn't know what was meant by "dreams that you dare to dream."

I went because twenty-six years ago I learned what it meant to have dreams I *didn't* dare to dream, and because twenty-two years ago I dared to dream them.

I went because one night ago, I sang my son to sleep as I do every time its my turn to put him to bed. Each time he wants a couple more songs. I sang him the one I learned 30 years ago, and now he requests it often. Sometimes, quietly, he'll sing it with me. And then I kissed him goodnight and went downstairs, sat down on the couch, held hands with my husband, caught up on our respective days.

I went because every day I know what it is to have a dream I didn't dare dream, to dream it, and have it become real. I know how fragile it is, because I see the people I love walk out the door each day, knowing how vulnerable they are and how little I can do to protect them. I know that they could be on the other side of a hospital door and I could be

denied the right to see them, and I know there are people who believe I shouldn't have the right to see my husband in the hospital.

I went because Mildred and Richard Loving dared to love ? which starts and ends with daring to dream ? and helped make it possible for families like ours to dream the same dream and advance towards it. In support of marriage equality on the anniversary of the decision. In words I could write myself today, Mildred Loving wrote:

When my late husband, Richard, and I got married in Washington, DC in 1958, it wasn't to make a political statement or start a fight. We were in love, and we wanted to be married. Not a day goes by that I don't think about Richard and our love, and how much it meant to me to have that freedom to marry the person precious to me, even if others thought he was "the wrong kind of person" for me to marry. I believe that all Americans, no matter their race, no matter their sex, no matter their sexual orientation. I am proud that Richard's and my name are on a court case that can help reinforce the love, the commitment, the fairness, and the family that so many people, black or white, young or old, gay or straight, seek in life. I support the freedom to marry for all. That's what Loving, and loving, are all about.

I went because so many of us have taken a step forward by building our families and not waiting for the rest of the world to catch up to us. Not to make a political statement or to start a fight, but because we are human beings to whom dreaming comes as naturally as breathing, and from dreaming comes loving. And each dream dared, each family forged brings the day closer when those dreams are easier to keep and protect, because they're deemed just as worthy of keeping and protecting as anyone else's

Interracial marriage bans now seem obviously invidious. But go back far enough and the consensus flips. At one point, most everyone thought such bans were legitimate. The same is true of segregated schooling and discrimination against women. It is true of just about everything the Supreme Court has held that the equal protection clause prohibits: **At one point, all of these practices were seen as legitimate reflections of the world, not as invidious attempts to impose inequality. When the court held these practices unconstitutional, it was neither enforcing a rule that had existed since 1868 nor creating a new rule. It was recognizing that social attitudes had shifted, and with them the understanding about what is reasonable and what is invidious.**

This point connects Loving to current social struggles, most notably the debate over same-sex marriage. **Opponents decry the "activist judges" in Massachusetts who struck down that state's same-sex marriage ban and warn that the Supreme Court will someday follow. So it may -- but, if it does, responsibility will not lie primarily with judges.**

The past few decades have brought a dramatic change in social attitudes about homosexuality. The American Psychiatric Association, which once classified homosexuality as a mental disease, abandoned that position in 1973. Public opinion polls show an increasing acceptance of homosexuality, and state legislatures are beginning to follow. Restricting the benefits of marriage to opposite-sex couples is increasingly seen as invidious, an inequality inflicted for no good reason.

If the trend continues, this view eventually will find expression at the Supreme Court level, just as it did in Loving. **This is not judicial activism. It is how we make the Constitution ours.**

Neither is the act of making commitments and building families activism, and neither is the desire to protect our families. It's just the natural progression of our lives; of anyone's life, really. It's the way we make every change that ever happens. Dreaming our dreams, and then loving them into existence.



IN LOVING MEMORY

June 14, 2007

June 12 marked the 40th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Loving v. Virginia*, the landmark case that threw out the remaining laws barring interracial marriage. Richard and Mildred Loving, an interracial couple, had been arrested in Virginia after their Washington wedding and sentenced to one year in prison. In its ruling, the high court wrote, "The freedom to marry has long been recognized as one of the vital personal rights essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness by free men."

In marking the anniversary, Mildred Loving issued a rare public statement, saying in part, "When my late husband, Richard, and I got married in Washington, D.C. in 1958, it wasn't to make a political statement or start a fight. We were in love, and we wanted to be married... I believe all Americans, no matter their race, no matter their sex, no matter their sexual orientation, should have that same freedom to marry. I am proud that Richard's and my name are on a court case that can help reinforce the love, the commitment, the fairness, and the family that so many people, black or white, young or old, gay or straight, seek in life. I support the freedom to marry for all. That's what Loving, and loving, are all about."

Freedom to Marry Coalition members gathered in Washington Tuesday to mark the anniversary. From left, they are: Shannon Price Minter, National Center for Lesbian Rights; Evan Wolfson, Freedom to Marry; Reverend Irene Monroe, Faith in America; Mitchell Gold, Faith in America; H. Alexander Robinson, National Black Justice Coalition; Lee Swislow, Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders; and Jon Davidson, Lambda Legal.

ScienceBlogs

Terrance on Loving and Gay Marriage

Ed Brayton

Posted on June 15, 2007

Terrance has a [terrific post](#) about the *Loving* decision and gay marriage at Pam's House Blend. He attended a reception for the 40th anniversary of *Loving* and writes eloquently of why he went. I'll post a long excerpt below the fold:

I went because I live in a state where forty years ago I could not marry the person I love, because he is white and I am black. I went because today I live in a state where, forty years later I still cannot marry the person I love because we are two men...

went because seven years ago, my met a man who won my heart, and we exchanged rings with one another on a beach, alone. In the presence of and witnessed by the ocean, the moon, and the stars, we made promises to one another. The closest thing to a wedding we've ever had.

I went because four years later, we became the parents of a baby boy just four days old. That same night, looking down into his crib as he slept, we made promises to one another again - unspoken - and to him too...

I went because one year ago, on the day we moved into our home, I got a call from a friend of mine. I'd emailed him because I'd received from him what appeared to be a funeral notice, for his husband's funeral. We'd met them a few years earlier, gone to their wedding, and celebrated their son's adoption with them. Surely, I thought, I'm reading something wrong. But he told me his story, of how his husband - who had been apparently healthy - collapsed at work after complaining of a headache and was rushed to the hospital. My friend rushed to the hospital, only to be told when he got there that they could not admit him to see his husband or give him any information unless he could prove their relationship, because he was not "next of kin." My friend drove home, leaving his husband in the hospital without knowing what was wrong with him, retrieved their legal documents, and when he returned to the hospital he was admitted to see his husband. A few days later, his husband died without regaining consciousness.

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There's much more, please read it. He also quotes this [wonderful statement](#) from Mildred Loving, whose courageous lawsuit expanded liberty for so many Americans in the late 1960s. She writes:

"When my late husband, Richard, and I got married in Washington, DC in 1958, it wasn't to make a political statement or start a fight. We were in love, and we wanted to be married. Not a day goes by that I don't think of Richard and our love, and how much it meant to me to have that freedom to marry the person precious to me, even if others thought he was the 'wrong kind of person' for me to marry. I believe all Americans, no matter their race, no matter their sex, no matter their sexual orientation, should have that same freedom to marry. I am proud that Richard's and my name are on a court case that can help reinforce the love, the commitment, the fairness, and the family that so many people, black or white, young or old, gay or straight, seek in life. I support the freedom to marry for all. That's what Loving, and loving, are all about."

Thank you, Mildred. That statement says all that needs to be said.