

# INSTRUCTIONS

## 1. Photograph Your Exhibit

- You should photograph your actual exhibit. If you don't have your exhibit, it is OKAY for someone else to take pictures.
- Turn on the lights or go near a window
- Hold your camera steady
- Make sure you get close-ups of each panel and section

## 2. Replace Sample Photographs in the Template

- Delete the sample images
- Add your images to the correct slides

## 3. Fill Out the Title Slide

- Add your information (name, title, etc.)
- **Optional:** Add links to any media you may have included in your exhibit. *If these are links to Google Drive files, be sure they are viewable by anyone with the link and not private!*

## 4. Process Paper and Bibliography

- You will upload this as one PDF when you submit.

## 5. Add Your Narrative

- Copy your text into the boxes on each of the “close-up” slides. Include your words and any quotes you typed out on your exhibit.
- Add your thesis to the “thesis” slide
- It's okay if the text in your image doesn't match your physical exhibit. Judges will refer to the text in the slide for the “final” version to judge.

## 6. Done? Save as PDF

- You will upload your presentation as a PDF. File > Download As > PDF. Save your file with your last name(s) in the file name before uploading!

## Is your project 3D or rotating?

Start with the template and divide your project into sections to photograph and share. You may need to include more than one photograph on the “overall” slide to capture different views of your project.

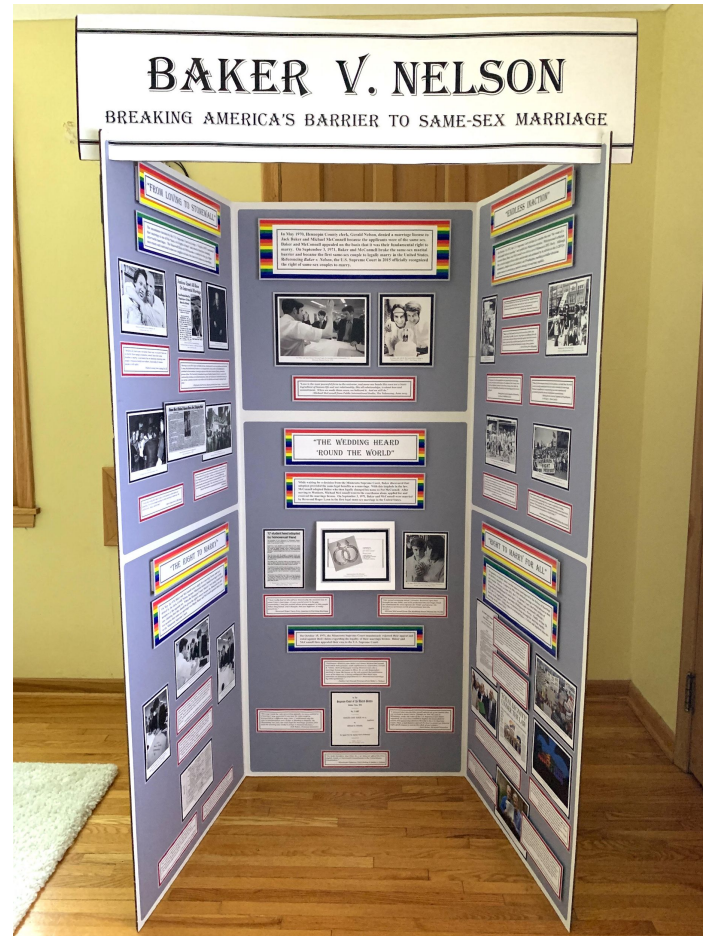
# VIRTUAL EXHIBIT DISPLAY

<b>Title:</b>	Baker v. Nelson: Breaking America's Barrier to Same-Sex Marriage
<b>Name(s):</b>	Alexander Her
<b>Division:</b> (Junior/Senior)	Junior Division
<b>Individual/ Group:</b>	Individual
Number of Student Composed Words in Exhibit:	499 words
<b>(Optional)</b> Link to Any Media in Exhibit (no more than 3 minutes total):	N/A

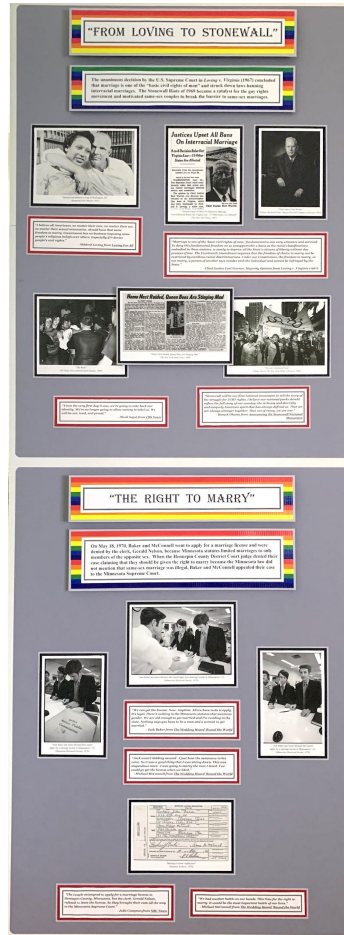
# THESIS

In May 1970, Hennepin County clerk, Gerald Nelson, denied a marriage license to Jack Baker and Michael McConnell because the applicants were of the same sex. Baker and McConnell appealed on the basis that it was their fundamental right to marry. On September 3, 1971, Baker and McConnell broke the same-sex marital barrier and became the first same-sex couple to legally marry in the United States. Referencing *Baker v. Nelson*, the U.S. Supreme Court in 2015 officially recognized the right of same-sex couples to marry.

# OVERALL EXHIBIT



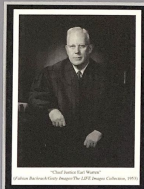
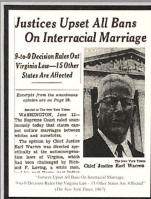
# LEFT PANEL OF EXHIBIT: OVERALL



# LEFT PANEL: TOP

## "FROM LOVING TO STONEWALL"

The unanimous decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Loving v. Virginia* (1967) concluded that marriage is one of the "basic civil rights of man" and struck down laws banning interracial marriages. The Stonewall Riots of 1969 became a catalyst for the gay rights movement and motivated same-sex couples to break the barrier to same-sex marriages.



"I believe 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."

—Mildred Loving from *Loving for All*

"Marriage is one of the 'basic civil rights of man,' fundamental to our very existence and survival. To deny this fundamental freedom on so unsupportable a basis as the racial classifications embodied in these statutes, is surely to deprive all the State's citizens of liberty without due process of law. The Fourteenth Amendment requires that the freedom of choice to marry not be restricted by invidious racial discriminations. Under our Constitution, the freedom to marry or not marry, a person of another race resides with the individual and cannot be infringed by the State."

—Chief Justice Earl Warren, Majority Opinion from *Loving v. Virginia* (1967)



"From the very first day it rains, we're going to take back our identity. We're no longer going to allow society to beat us. We will be out, loud, and proud."

—Mark Singer from *CBS News*

"Stonewall will be our first national movement to tell the story of the struggle for LGBT rights. I believe our national parks should reflect the full story of our country's richness and diversity and uniquely American spirit that has always defined us. That we are always stronger together. That out of fear, we are one."

—Barack Obama from *Announcing the Stonewall National Monument*

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"Marriage is one of the 'basic civil rights of man,' fundamental to our very existence and survival. To deny this fundamental freedom on so unsupportable a basis as the racial classifications embodied in these statutes, classifications so directly subversive of the principle of equality at the heart of the Fourteenth Amendment, is surely to deprive all the State's citizens of liberty without due process of law. The Fourteenth Amendment requires that the freedom of choice to marry not be restricted by invidious racial discriminations. Under our Constitution, the freedom to marry, or not marry, a person of another race resides with the individual and cannot be infringed by the State."

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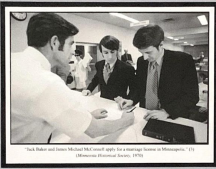




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## "THE RIGHT TO MARRY"

On May 18, 1970, Baker and McConnell went to apply for a marriage license and were denied by the clerk, Gerald Nelson, because Minnesota statutes limited marriages to only members of the opposite sex. When the Hennepin County District Court judge denied their case claiming that they should be given the right to marry because the Minnesota law did not mention that same-sex marriage was illegal, Baker and McConnell appealed their case to the Minnesota Supreme Court.



Jack Baker and James Michael McConnell apply for a marriage license in Hennepin County, Minnesota. (Hennepin County Historical Society, 1970)

"We can get the license. Now. Anytime. All we have to do is apply. It's legal. There's nothing in the Minnesota statutes that mentions gender. We are old enough to get married and I'm residing in the state. Nothing says you have to be a man and a woman to get married."

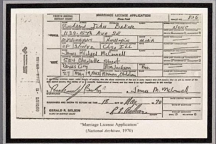
- Jack Baker from *The Wedding Heard 'Round the World*

"Jack wasn't kidding around - I just hear the assurance in his voice. So it was a good thing that I was sitting down. This was stupendous news - I was going to marry the man I loved. You could go get the license when we liked."

- Michael McConnell from *The Wedding Heard 'Round the World*



Jack Baker and James Michael McConnell standing together. (Hennepin County Historical Society, 1970)



Marriage License Application Form for Jack Baker and James Michael McConnell. (Hennepin County Historical Society, 1970)

"The couple attempted to apply for a marriage license in Hennepin County, Minnesota, but the clerk, Gerald Nelson, refused to issue the license. So they brought their case all the way to the Minnesota Supreme Court."

- Julie Compton from *NBC News*

"We had another battle on our hands. This time for the right to marry. It would be the most important battle of our lives."

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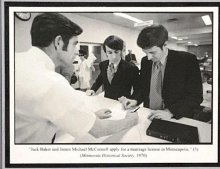
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Jack Baker and James Michael McConnell apply for a marriage license in Hennepin County, Minnesota, 1970.  
(Hennepin Historical Society, 1970)

"We can get the license. Now, anytime. All we have to do is apply. It's legal. There's nothing in the Minnesota statutes that mention gender. We are old enough to get married and I'm willing to be the man. Nothing says you have to be a man and a woman to get married."

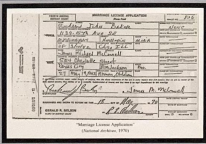
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Jack Baker and James Michael McConnell stand together in Hennepin County, Minnesota, 1970.  
(Hennepin Historical Society, 1970)



Marriage License Application, Hennepin County, Minnesota, 1970.

"The couple attempted to apply for a marriage license in Hennepin County, Minnesota, but the clerk, Gerald Nelson, refused to issue the license. So they brought their case all the way to the Minnesota Supreme Court."

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# MIDDLE PANEL OF EXHIBIT: OVERALL

In May 1976, Beaumont County Clerk, Gerald Nelson, denied a marriage license to Jack Baker and Michael McConnell because the applicants were of the same sex. Baker and McConnell appealed on the basis that it was their fundamental right to marry. On September 1, 1971, Baker and McConnell broke the same-sex marital barrier and became the first same-sex couple to legally marry in the United States. Reversing *Baker v. Nelson*, the U.S. Supreme Court in 2015 officially recognized the right of same-sex couples to marry.

Below is the historical record of the wedding, and you can find the wedding license and the marriage certificate. The wedding was held at the home of Michael McConnell's mother, Mrs. Gerald Nelson, in the community of Baker, Minnesota.

## "THE WEDDING HEARD 'ROUND THE WORLD"

With nothing for a decision from the Minnesota Supreme Court, Baker and McConnell appealed their case to the U.S. Supreme Court. The Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision, ruled in favor of Baker and McConnell, stating that the Minnesota law was unconstitutional. This decision was a landmark moment in the history of LGBTQ+ rights in the United States.

**"A landmark decision by the Supreme Court"**

The Supreme Court's decision in *Baker v. Nelson* was a landmark moment in the history of LGBTQ+ rights in the United States. It was the first time the Supreme Court had ruled on a case involving the rights of a minority group.

On May 12, 1972, the Supreme Court issued its decision in *Baker v. Nelson*. The Court ruled that the Minnesota law was unconstitutional, and Baker and McConnell were allowed to remain married.

The Supreme Court's decision in *Baker v. Nelson* was a landmark moment in the history of LGBTQ+ rights in the United States. It was the first time the Supreme Court had ruled on a case involving the rights of a minority group.

On October 12, 1972, the Minnesota Supreme Court unanimously rejected the appeal and ruled against Baker and McConnell. The Court ruled that the Minnesota law was constitutional, and Baker and McConnell were not allowed to remain married.

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**A Supreme Court Case in Brief**

**Baker v. Nelson**  
1972  
5-4  
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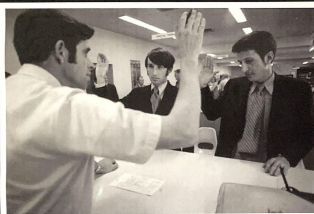
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"Jack Baker and James Michael McConnell apply for a marriage license in Minneapolis." (10 Minnesota Historical Society, 1970)



"The Baker, right, and Mr. McConnell at their wedding in Minneapolis on Sept. 3, 1971." (Paul Haggis, 1971)

"Love is the most powerful force in the universe, and same-sex bonds like ours are a basic ingredient of human life and our relationship, like all relationships, is about love and commitment. When we made those vows, we believed it. And we still do."

- Michael McConnell from Public International Radio, *The Takeaway*, June 2015

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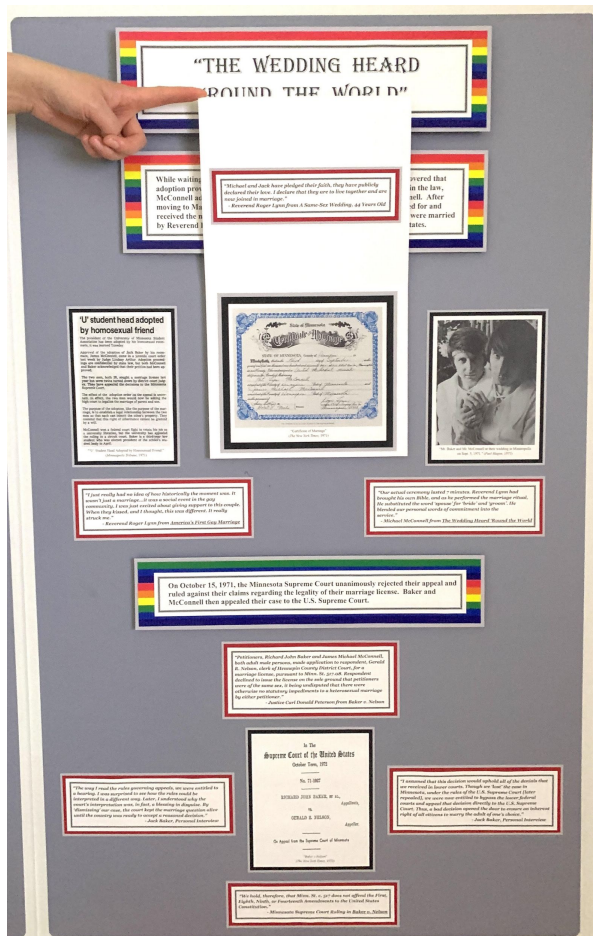
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# MIDDLE PANEL: BOTTOM



## (Flip Up)

“Michael and Jack have pledged their faith, they have publicly declared their love. I declare that they are to live together and are now joined in marriage.”

- Reverend Roger Lynn from *A Same-Sex Wedding, 44 Years Old*

## (On Board)

“I really had no idea of how historically the moment was. It wasn't just a marriage...it was a social event in the gay community. I was just excited about giving support to this couple. When they kissed, and I thought, this was different. It really struck me.”

- Reverend Roger Lynn from *America's First Gay Marriage*

“Our actual ceremony lasted 7 minutes. Reverend Lynn had brought his own Bible, and as he performed the marriage ritual, he substituted the word ‘spouse’ for ‘bride’ and ‘groom’. He blended our personal words of commitment into the service.”

- Michael McConnell from *The Wedding Heard 'Round the World*

“Petitioners, Richard John Baker and James Michael McConnell, both adult male persons, made application to respondent, Gerald R. Nelson, clerk of Hennepin County District Court, for a marriage license, pursuant to Minn. St. 517.08. Respondent declined to issue the license on the sole ground that petitioners were of the same sex, it being undisputed that there were otherwise no statutory impediments to a heterosexual marriage by either petitioner.”

- Justice Carl Donald Peterson from *Baker v. Nelson*

[illegible]

- Jack Baker, Personal Interview

- Jack Baker, Personal Interview

- *Minnesota Supreme Court Ruling in Baker v. Nelson*



## RIGHT PANEL OF EXHIBIT: OVERALL



# RIGHT PANEL: TOP

## "ENDLESS INACTION"

On October 10, 1972, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to consider the case "for want of a substantial federal question" and upheld the Minnesota decision. With increased criticism towards them, Baker and McConnell were driven out of Minnesota's DFL Party. Although they received support from others nationwide and continued to be activists in the LGBTQ+ community, similar cases in Kentucky and Washington, resulting in similar decisions against same-sex marriages, sparked outrage for marriage equality.

"We were labeled the 'crazies' and 'lunatic fringe' and driven out of Minnesota's DFL Party. Not until 1977 did a new generation of lesbians understand the impact of what had happened."

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"Baker and McConnell continued to be activists within their community. By 1980, however, they began to withdraw from the public eye to focus on their private life together and their careers. Baker practiced law and McConnell achieved the position of senior librarian within the Hennepin County Library System."

- Sarah Shirey from MNopedia



Jack Baker and Larry Schachtel, 1970

"It appears to us that appellants are prevented from marrying, not by the statutes of Kentucky or the refusal of the County Court Clerk to perform a ceremony in some other manner, but rather by their own unavailability of entering into a marriage on that term is defined."

- Ruling from Court of Appeals of Kentucky, in *Jones v. Hallahan* (1972)

"Thus, for the reasons stated in this opinion, we hold that the trial court correctly concluded that the state's denial of a marriage contract to appellants is required by our state's constitution and permitted by both the state and federal constitutions."

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Jack Baker and Larry Schachtel, 1970



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- Sarah Sherry from McQueen



Walking to the Hennepin County Library, 1970

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Lesbian March, 1977



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## "RIGHT TO MARRY FOR ALL"

The question on whether states can ban same-sex marriages led to the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), passed by Congress in 1996, which defined marriage as being between a man and a woman. However, in June 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that sections of DOMA was unconstitutional (*United States v. Windsor*) and overturned California's Proposition 8 banning same-sex marriages (*Hollingsworth v. Perry*). Finally, on June 26, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision, broke through the marriage equality barrier in *Obergefell v. Hodges* when it overturned *Baker v. Nelson* and legalized same-sex marriage in the United States.

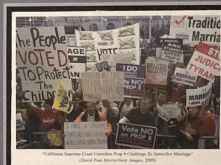
One hundred fourth Congress  
of the  
United States of America  
in SENATE SENATE

"No State, territory, or possession of the United States, or Indian tribe, shall be required to give effect to any public act, record, or judicial proceeding of any other State, territory, possession, or tribe requiring a relationship between persons of the same sex that is treated as a marriage under the laws of such other State, territory, possession, or tribe, or as a right or claim arising from such relationship."

Section 2 from Defense of Marriage Act

"In determining the meaning of any Act of Congress, or of any ruling, regulation, or interpretation of the various administrative rulings, regulations, or interpretations of the United States, the word 'marriage' means a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the word 'spouse' refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife."

Section 3 from Defense of Marriage Act



"The Court now holds that same-sex couples may exercise the fundamental right to marry. No longer may this liberty be denied to them. *Baker v. Nelson* must be and now is overruled, and the same-sex couples have the same rights and obligations as opposite-sex couples."

Justice Anthony Kennedy, Majority Opinion from *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015)

"And this ruling is a victory for America. This decision affirms what millions of Americans already believe in their hearts. When all Americans are treated as equal, we are all more free."

President Barack Obama from the Supreme Court Decision on Marriage Equality Speech

"We must never forget love is the most powerful force in the universe. Love will never give us our true name."

Michael McConnell from The Wallingford Board "Stand the World: America's First Gay Marriage" Book Discussion at the National Archives, 2015



"It was interesting because the very question that we asked in 1971 which they dismissed and what they actually were saying in judicial legal terms was that now is not the time to answer that question, we will answer that question, but not now. And then in 2015, they answered the very question that we asked and that is, do same-sex couples have a right to get married under the Constitution?"

Jack Baker from CBS News Interview

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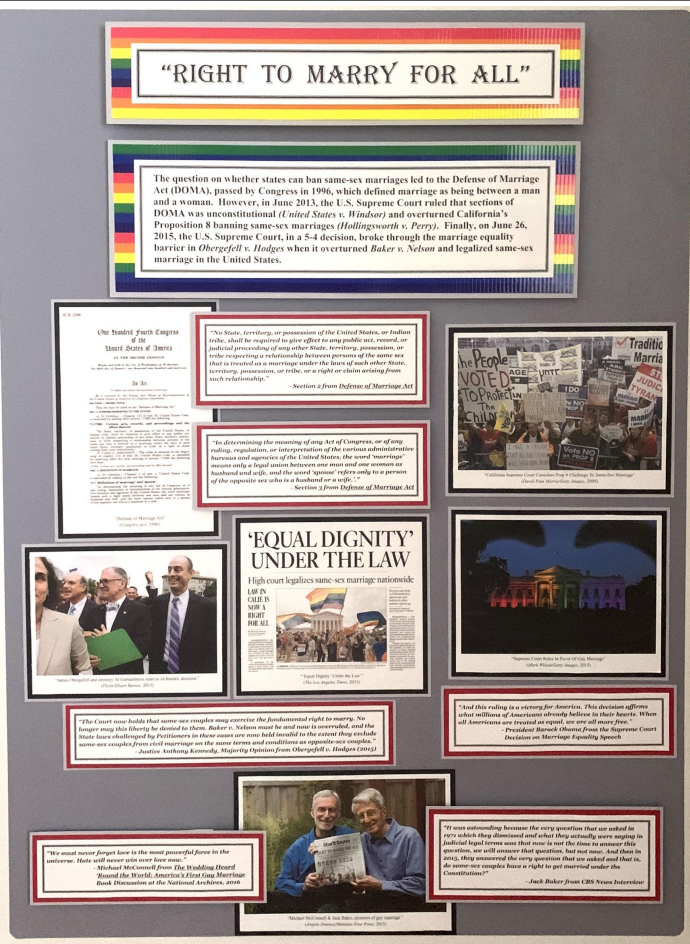
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“The Court now holds that same-sex couples may exercise the fundamental right to marry. No longer may this liberty be denied to them. *Baker v. Nelson* must be and now is overruled, and the State laws challenged by Petitioners in these cases are now held invalid to the extent they exclude same-sex couples from civil marriage on the same terms and conditions as opposite-sex couples.”

“And this ruling is a victory for America. This decision affirms what millions of Americans already believe in their hearts. When all Americans are treated as equal, we are all more free.”

- Barack Obama from the Supreme Court Decision on Marriage Equality Speech



“We must never forget love is the most powerful force in the universe. Hate will never win over love now.”

*-Michael McConnell from The Wedding Heard 'Round the World: America's First Gay Marriage Book Discussion at the National Archives, 2016*

“It was astounding because the very question that we asked in 1971 which they dismissed and what they actually were saying in judicial legal terms was that now is not the time to answer this question, we will answer that question, but not now. And then in 2015, they answered the very question that we asked and that is, do same-sex couples have a right to get married under the Constitution?”

*- Jack Baker from CBS News Interview*

The question on whether states can ban same-sex marriages led to the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), passed by Congress in 1996, which defined marriage as being between a man and a woman. However, in June 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that sections of DOMA were unconstitutional (*United States v. Windsor*) and overturned California's Proposition 8 banning same-sex marriages (*Hollingsworth v. Perry*). Finally, on June 26, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision, broke through the marriage equality barrier in *Obergefell v. Hodges* when it overturned *Baker v. Nelson* and legalized same-sex marriage in the United States.

Our Hundred fourth Congress  
of the  
United States of America  
AT THE SECOND SESSION

*"No State, territory, or possession of the United States, or Indian tribe, shall be required to give effect to any public act, record, or judicial proceeding of any other State, territory, possession, or tribe respecting a relationship between persons of the same sex that is treated as a marriage under the laws of such other State, territory, possession, or tribe, or a right or claim arising from such relationship."*

*"In determining the meaning of any Act of Congress, or of any ruling, regulation, or interpretation of the various administrative bureaus and agencies of the United States, the word 'marriage' means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the word 'spouse' refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife."*

*"California Supreme Court Considers Prop 8 Challenge To Same-Sex Marriage"*

*David Paul Marlowe/Getty Images*

## 'EQUAL DIGNITY' UNDER THE LAW

*"Supporters of gay rights in front of Gay Marriage"*  
 Gilbert & Sullivan Museum, 2011.

*"The Court now holds that same-sex couples may exercise the fundamental right to marry. No longer may this liberty be denied to them. Baker v. Nelson must be and now is overruled, and the State laws challenged by Petitioners in these cases are now held invalid to the extent they exclude same-sex couples from civil marriage on the same terms and conditions as opposite-sex couples."*

*"And this ruling is a victory for America. This decision affirms what millions of Americans already believe in their hearts. When all Americans are treated as equal, we are all more free."  
- President Barack Obama from the Supreme Court Decision on Marriage Equality Speech*

*"We must never forget love is the most powerful force in the universe. Hate will never win over love now."*  
- Michael McConnell from *The Wedding Hour*  
*'Round the World: America's First Gay Marriage*  
Book Discussion at the National Archives, 2015

*"It was astounding because the very question that we asked in 1971 which they dismissed and what they actually were saying in judicial legal terms was that now is not the time to answer this question, we will answer that question, but not now. And then in 2013, they answered the very question that we asked and that is, do same-sex couples have a right to get married under the Constitution?"*

<sup>1</sup>Michael McConnell & Jack Baker, *promoters of gay marriage*.