By Jen Colletta and Ryan Kasley
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The ruling mandated marriage equality in the states that had yet to sanction it, making the United States the 21st country to fully allow same-sex marriage in all jurisdictions.

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“The imposition of this disability on gays and lesbians serves to disrespect and subordinate them,” he continued. “The Equal Protection Clause, like the Due Process Clause, prohibits this unjustified infringement of the fundamental right to marry.”

Joining Kennedy were Justices Ruth Bader Ginsberg, Sonia Sotomayor, Stephen Breyer and Elena Kagan. Dissenting was Chief Justice John Roberts, Justices Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia, who wrote a scathing dissent calling the decision a “threat to American democracy.”

President Barack Obama was among the countless public figures who hailed the historic ruling. In an address outside the White House, Obama called the decision 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,” the

Marriage equality comes to America

Philadelphia Gay News

By Jen Colletta
jen@epgn.com

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Independence Mall

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Before a backdrop of Independence Hall, a handful of community and political leaders took to the podium, including Mayor Michael Nutter, who had stepped off a plane from Rome less than a half-hour before the rally.

“Buongiorno,” he greeted the crowd, which joined in cheers when the mayor announced the city had quickly raised the rainbow flag outside City Hall after the ruling.

Nutter noted that, while the community and its allies should celebrate the ruling, they shouldn’t lose sight of the other battles still to be won.

Philadelphia reacts to SCOTUS ruling

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SCOTUS serendipity

Breaking news and special issues are probably the two biggest headaches for the PGN staff. This past week, we had a lot of both — but their confluence is a welcome stress.

We have long been planning to produce a double special issue this week — our coverage of this weekend’s Annual Reminder Day anniversary celebration, running simultaneously with our second-annual Special Section on LGBTQ Older Adults. What better way to mark the work of our earliest pioneers than with a section written by and for LGBTQ older adults — the people who have, for decades, fought for our right to be a community, yet who are often ignored by that same community?

As this edition approached, another possibility began taking shape: The U.S. Supreme Court was expected to rule in late June on national marriage equality, with many pundits predicting a June 26 decision. Lucky for us, our photographer was slated to be in Washington, D.C., that day to receive a national photography award. Timeliness ultimately won out, with our photographer able to capture the historic moments outside the SCOTUS building.

That all of these events converged in this one issue is serendipitous, to say the least.

In planning for this edition, we were eager to pay tribute to the pioneers who weathered seemingly insurmountable obstacles to make a better future for our community. We wanted to highlight what America in 1965 looked like to convey just how daring their demonstrating was, let alone their commitment to simply publicly identifying as LGBT people. And we hoped to illustrate how those first steps those pioneers took, as they marched outside of Independence Hall, put us on a journey toward the creation of today’s modern LGBT community.

Those aims were immeasurably strengthened by the SCOTUS ruling.

In just about a 50-year span, our community went from demonstrating outside Independence Hall for basic respect for LGBT people to rallying outside that same spot in celebration of nationwide marriage equality. In those five decades, our community’s issues have been championed in the streets, in courtrooms, in the media, in legislative chambers, in homes and in countless other spaces. But all of the progress we’ve seen — and the unprecedented pace of that progress in the past decade — could not have been possible without our earliest champions.

So we thank our pioneers — from the Reminder Day marchers to all LGBT people who weathered inequality and injustice. Every person who strove for the right to embrace his or her identity has helped move our community toward the history-making place we find ourselves in today.

Creep of the Week

Rick Snyder

Fact: Michigan’s Republicans, who are literally in charge of every branch of state government, do not give a shit about kids.

In case that wasn’t clear to the world, the Republicans rammed through a religious-exemption bill so that adoption agencies that receive taxpayer money could discriminate against LGBT folks looking to adopt or foster children based on their agencies’ so-called sincerely held religious beliefs. It’s important to note that faith-based agencies handle a big bulk of foster-care placements in the state.

And now Michigan has just made that more difficult by allowing ideology to trump what’s best for kids. All so Republicans can give gays and lesbians in the state yet another middle finger.

Rumor has it that Snyder might have signed the antigay adoption bill in order to get support for a road-funding bill he wants. Trading kids for pavement. That’s not a moderate move, and it’s not befiting of anyone who wants to call himself a leader, let alone a decent human being.

And now Michigan has made that more difficult by allowing ideology to trump what’s best for kids.

All so Republicans can give gays and lesbians in the state yet another middle finger.

D’Anne Witkowski has been gay for pay since 2003. She’s a freelance writer and poet (believe it!). When she’s not taking on the creeps of the week, she reviews rock and roll shows in Detroit with her twin sister and teaches writing at the University of Michigan.

We want to know!

If you are celebrating an anniversary, engagement, wedding, adoption or other life event, we would be happy to help you announce it to the community. Send your contact information and a brief description of the event to editor@epgn.com.
The historic June 26 U.S. Supreme Court decision on marriage equality has given the LGBT community and our country a new civil right, placing the ruling firmly alongside Brown v. Board of Education and Loving v. Virginia in history. Unfortunately, equality does not mean acceptance and the reality is that the SCOTUS ruling will likely produce new conflicts and intensify old ones.

The most important new conflict will be in deciding where our 14th-Amendment right to marriage begins and where the First Amendment right to religious liberty of people like Ted Cruz and Rick Santorum ends? The minute the decision came down, states like Mississippi, Texas and Alabama refused to issue marriage licenses and other states are introducing laws that allow clerks to refuse to sign or issue a marriage license based on religious objections. Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal (R), a possible 2016 presidential contender, plans to support his state’s Marriage and Conscience Act, which would allow both private- and public-sector employees to refuse to recognize same-sex marriages for religious reasons. While the law tries to ensure that an LGBT couple can proceed through the required steps, it’s possible (and actually likely) that all of the clerks in a particular county could refuse on religious grounds, thereby forcing people to shop from county to county in search of someone willing to sign their marriage license.

To be clear, the majority opinion upholds the First Amendment, but the dissenters, and every religious conservative I’ve spoken to this week, are more skeptical. Chief Justice Roberts went so far as to state that “people of faith can take no comfort” in the ruling, despite the clear language by Justice Kennedy, who emphasized that “religions, and those who adhere to religious doctrines, may continue to advocate with utmost, sincere conviction that, by divine precepts, same-sex marriage should not be condoned.” His statements on religious freedoms seem pretty straight-forward (no pun intended!) but somehow Roberts found a way to read into what’s not there. He argued in his dissent that while “[t]he majority graciously suggests that religious believers may continue to ‘advocate’ their views of marriage, the First Amendment guarantees the freedom to ‘exercise’ religion and, ominously, that is not a word the majority uses.”

Fundamentally, Roberts is arguing that Obergefell vs. Hodges has somehow curtailed the First Amendment and, along with the other three dissenters, have created a firestorm among the conservative right which, in my opinion, will breathe new life into all of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act cases we saw back in April. Amid the “bakery,” “pizza” and “wedding gown” cases where LGBT individuals were denied services for their weddings based on private business owners’ religious beliefs, more than 100 anti-LGBT bills were introduced in 29 states — all centered on religious freedoms and all intentionally vague.

Many people have asked me how the conservative right can undo or dull the effects of Obergefell vs. Hodges. Last year’s Hobby Lobby decision may be the legal precedent that LGBT opponents rely on. In this case, SCOTUS ruled that “closely held corporations” can decline to provide coverage for birth control in health-care plans they offer to their female employees if the coverage would violate the owners’ religious beliefs, prompting a firestorm between religious groups and LGBT-rights advocates. Within days, President Obama received a letter signed by more than 100 religious leaders, asking him to “respect this vital element of religious freedom” by exempting religiously affiliated groups from adhering to the LGBT nondiscrimination protections contained in his executive order prohibiting federal contractors from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

The next presidential election will be significant, as it is likely that the next president will appoint several Supreme Court justices. Roberts is the youngest and will likely be with us for the long haul. If the court is filled with Roberts and Scalia-esque appointees, not only will future litigation be decided against LGBT rights but, over time, Obergefell vs. Hodges’ holding could be chipped away. I implore the entire LGBT community to not become complacent at this very important juncture, especially the young LGBT generation, who has grown up in a predominantly safe and accepting world. Bigotry disguised as religious liberty is still bigotry, and the fight for newly minted constitutional rights is about to intensify.

Angela D. Giampolo, principal of Giampolo Law Group, maintains offices in New Jersey and Pennsylvania and specializes in LGBT law, family law, business law, real-estate law and civil rights. Her website is www.giampololaw.com and she maintains a blog at www.phillygaylawyer.com. Reach out to Angela with your legal questions at 215-645-2415 or angela@giampololaw.com.
MARRIAGE EQUALITY

SCOTUS from page 1

president said.

Almost immediately after Friday’s ruling, same-sex couples rushed to clerks’ offices in the 13 states that had previously banned marriage equality: Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas and Nebraska. Officials in Louisiana and Mississippi initially said they needed to wait for judicial orders from the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals before licenses could be issued to same-sex couples, but the states finally fell in line on Monday.

Obergfell v. Hodges was a challenge to Ohio’s ban on marriage equality that was consolidated with cases from Tennessee, Kentucky and Michigan. The four fell under the purview of the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, which upheld Ohio’s ban — dissenting with other federal appellate courts and giving SCOTUS the split it needed to finally act on the issue.

The ruling came two years to the day after SCOTUS issued another landmark ruling in a case brought by Philadelphia native Edie Windsor, which struck down a key portion of the federal ban on same-sex marriage. That decision allowed legally married same-sex couples access to some federal benefits but left open the question of whether states could ban same-sex marriage. June 26 was also the day, 12 years ago, when, in Lawrence v. Texas, SCOTUS shook down sodomy laws across the country. Kennedy authored both opinions.

The Williams Institute estimated that about 150,000 same-sex couples live in the states that had lacked marriage equality; the organization puts the total number of same-sex couples in the nation at about 1 million.

Pennsylvania became the 19th state to sanction marriage equality on May 20, 2014, when a federal judge overturned the state’s ban on same-sex marriage. A landslide of court decisions followed, bringing the total number of U.S. states with marriage equality to 37, plus Washington, D.C., prior to this week’s landmark ruling.

Community leaders in Pennsylvania praised the ruling but cautioned that LGBT Pennsylvanians still had a way to go for full equality, given the state’s lack of an LGBT-inclusive nondiscrimination law.

“It’s a truly great day when every person in America is treated equally when it comes to marrying the person you love. We couldn’t be more pleased with the court’s decision and this will mean a lot to couples and their families all across the country,” said Equality Pennsylvania executive director Todd Martin. “However, this victory is bittersweet here in Pennsylvania, because, as most Pennsylvanians are shocked to learn, it is still legal to be fired from your job, turned away from a business or evicted from an apartment just because of who you are or who you love.”

Mazzoni Center legal-services director Thomas Ude also lauded the ruling while remaining mindful of the work ahead.

“It’s a terrific, great ruling and another tremendous step forward for same-sex couples. It takes us the furthest towards equality yet,” Ude said. “Pennsylvanians can now be assured that their marriage will be respected in all 50 states they travel to or through. But there is still a lot of work to be done to make sure people’s lived experiences match that equality.”

Even though federal equal-opportunity law does protect from discrimination based on sex, through which Ude said precedent has been set to protect LGBT individuals in certain cases, state-level laws are still necessary in Pennsylvania and the 30 other states that lack measures covering both sexual orientation and gender identity.

“Explicit protections like [those in] HB 300 that Sen. Farnese and others plan to re-introduce remain incredibly important and will continue to be,” Ude said. “While there is some remedy through federal sex-based discrimination laws, people need more immediate protection.”

State Rep. Brian Sims (D-182nd Dist.) echoed Martin and Ude’s excitement and caution.

“I am thrilled for our country that the Supreme Court has come down on the side of equality. At the same time, I am concerned for people who are at risk of getting fired for getting married,” said Sims.

“In most of Pennsylvania and many other states, it is still legal to fire someone or deny them an apartment, a hotel room or a table in a restaurant because they are LGBT.”

RALLY from page 1

“Enjoy the happiness of the moment but none of us can be free until we’re all free, none of us have rights until all of us have rights,” he said. “Let us end discrimination because that’s who we are — that’s why none of us have rights until all of us have rights.”

The significance of the 50th anniversary of the loss of your job,” he said, prompting ongoing activism.

Kevin Taylor and Jeff Becker, both 33, said they were still reeling.

“My boss got an email update and I grabbed the mouse and clicked out and almost passed out in his office. I was so happy,” Taylor laughed about hearing the news of the SCOTUS ruling.

“It’s nice to know that I can go anywhere in this country now and not have to worry that I’ll become magically unmarried at the border of the state,” Becker said.

The couple got married Oct. 26, 2013, and said they experienced firsthand the dangers of marriage inequality while on their honeymoon in Florida.

“Jeff got really sick on the honeymoon so we had to go to the emergency room in the middle of the night. I was very well aware of what the laws were like in Florida and was so terrified the whole way to the hospital that the doctors wouldn’t give me medical information on my husband,” Taylor said. “It turned out fine but I’m so grateful now that no one in this country is ever going to have to experience something like that again.”

“Surreal” was a word echoed by many at the rally.

“It’s emotional and it’s great but it means,” he said. “My boss got an email update and I said they were still reeling.

“We can now marry in all 50 states but, in many states, that marriage can result in the loss of your job,” he said, prompting chants of “shame” from the audience.

“Many other important protections still do not exist for the LGBT community: transgender equality, immigration reform and economic justice are just a few of the major pieces of work still to be addressed. So let’s enjoy this sweet moment of success and celebration and then take the energy and passion we have used with such effect to continue to pursue the path of full equality set forth in front of Independence Hall 50 years ago,” Bartlett said, referring to the Annual Reminder Day marches that took place in Philadelphia five decades ago.

The significance of the 50th anniversary was addressed by many on the speaker list, which included: GALAEI executive director Elicia Gonzales, Democratic mayoral nominee Jim Kenney, American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania executive director Reggie Shuford, Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations executive director Rue Landau, youth leader DeAngelo Carbott, the Rev. Jeffrey Haskins and business leader Christopher Labonte.

The Philadelphia Gay Men’s Chorus closed out the rally with a performance of “Chapel of Love.”

The hundreds who gathered included seniors, families, allies and even 50 elementary-school students from out of state.
When the past and the future met

By Scott A. Drake

By a fortunate coincidence, my boyfriend Michae and I were already planning to be in Washington, D.C., the night of June 26 for an awards ceremony. Taken on its own, the honor and delight of receiving a nationally recognized award at the National Press Club was something I had only imagined during my decades in photography. But when the long-awaited marriage-equality ruling wound through and towards the end of June, and the speculation of that anniversary date being the big day, we couldn’t pass on the possibility and opportunity of being at the Supreme Court as the decision was announced.

When we arrived at the Supreme Court steps around 9 a.m., there was a crowd of about 300 people milling about and a press campsite established, with a line next to it a half-block long of people still hoping to get inside the building, long after the doors had been opened for admittance and closed.

There were people from across the country — Vermont, Michigan, Washington, Texas, California, Ohio, Alaska and more. There were people from Puerto Rico, Canada and England and probably other countries as well, all comingled with security, media and tourists. Several families visiting D.C. even stopped to learn what was going on.

As minutes crawled, the constrained excitement of the crowd was almost palpable. Would the ruling be today? Would we be victorious? Would there be stunned silence and incomprehension if the case went against us?

The tension reached the critical point just before 10 a.m. Hundreds more had arrived to witness history being made and the crowd swelled to easily over 3,000 people. All eyes were on the Supreme Court building waiting for the “running of the interns,” that time-honored delivery system of the word from on high to the common folk on the street.

My thoughts turned towards the marchers at Independence Hall from almost exactly 50 years prior. We were again standing up for our rights and our beliefs, this time waiting for the outcome of a fight that had consumed decades. It was as if we were at a juncture between history and the promises of the future.

Then they came. Sprinting from the courthouse towards each of their respective news outlets they ran. In those seconds, my joy and pride in being a part of this elite group as millions of other LGBT brothers and sisters waited for news was unparalleled. The crowd cheered the runners even before the decision was announced.

Seconds later, it got louder — the joyful cheers of thousands of LGBTQA people who were getting word one by one and in small groups that victory had been declared, and we were now all equals to the masses who were already granted marriage rights. It did not subside for at least a full minute. It was as if we were in a massive group hug and love was pouring through the crowd.

Looking back at how we got here

June 26, 2015 — U.S. Supreme Court rules in favor of a nationwide right to marry for all same-sex couples.

May 22, 2015 — Marriage equality wins in a landslide vote in Ireland, making the country the first in the world to legalize same-sex marriage through public referendum.

April 28, 2015 — SCOTUS hears oral arguments from both sides in the Sixth Circuit cases, consolidated as Obergefell v. Hodges.

Jan. 16, 2015 — SCOTUS agrees to hear four marriage-equality cases from the Sixth Circuit.

Nov. 19, 2014 — A federal judge in Montana overturns that state’s ban on marriage equality.

Nov. 12, 2014 — A federal judge in South Carolina overturns that state’s ban on marriage equality.

Nov. 6, 2014 — The Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals upholds marriage-equality bans in Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee, the first federal-appeals court to do so.

June 26, 2015, will go down in history as one of the most significant days in LGBT history. While the country’s marriage-equality laws changed almost instantly with the U.S. Supreme Court’s seminal ruling, that day was decades in the making. For years, LGBT-rights advocates have lobbied, lawmakers have debated, voters have flocked to the polls, attorneys have argued, allies have educated and, every day, LGBT people have courageously put a face to the issue. From legislative successes to court rulings to public-opinion advances, the pinnacle of victory we experienced last Friday stands on the shoulders of years of individual battles bravely fought by our advocates and allies.
**SCOTUS Fast Facts**

**Marriage:** Same-sex couples should now be able to legally wed in all 50 states. Undoubtedly, some clerk or probate judge is going to refuse to issue a marriage license (likely citing a religious objection). If this happens, contact agencies like the American Civil Liberties Union or Human Rights Campaign.

**Domestic-Partner Benefits:** While it may seem like there is no longer a need for domestic partnerships now that marriage is legal across the country, HRC has recommended employers keep these benefits in place, mainly because of the lack of LGBT-inclusive nondiscrimination legislation in certain states that leaves LGBTs vulnerable to adverse employment action. Employees are strongly encouraged to examine the benefits of marriage versus domestic-partner benefits at their place of employment.

**Parent-Child Relationships:** Same-sex marriage will guarantee equal parental rights, right? Not necessarily. Again it depends on what state you live in, and your biological relationship to the child (or lack thereof). It is still strongly recommended that every parent who is not a biological parent — married or not — get an adoption or, if possible, a court judgment of parentage.

**Taxes:** If your state, like Pennsylvania, already allowed same-sex marriage, then nothing changes when filing your taxes this year. If your state previously banned marriage equality, you and your same-sex spouse will now be able to file as “married” on your state return.

**Health Insurance:** Newly married couples in their home state will be able to enroll for health insurance through the federal marketplace during a 60-day “special-enrollment” period. Married same-sex couples already have the right to enroll in any Affordable Care Act “family” or “spousal” plan. If your employer offers insurance to employees and their spouses, same-sex spouses must have equal access to these benefits.

“*We recognize that same-sex marriage makes some people deeply uncomfortable. However, inertia and apprehension are not legitimate bases for denying same-sex couples due process and equal protection of the laws.*”

— Fourth Circuit Court, July 28, 2014
FROM PHILLY, WITH LOVE: Hundreds gathered outside Independence Visitor Center June 26 for a Decision Day rally to celebrate the landmark U.S. Supreme Court ruling. Sponsored by dozens of local organizations, the rally included remarks by political, business and faith leaders, many of whom remarked on the stunning success of the day but urged LGBTs and allies to continue to press for issues like LGBT nondiscrimination protections and transgender equality. The event was held across the street from Independence Hall where, just about 50 years ago, the Annual Reminder Day marches staged one of the nation’s first LGBT-rights demonstrations, imagery referred to by many of the speakers. Photos: Jen Colletta

July 18, 2014 — The 10th Circuit Court of Appeals upholds the lower court’s ruling striking Oklahoma’s ban on marriage equality.

June 25, 2014 — The 10th Circuit Court of Appeals upholds the lower court’s ruling striking Utah’s marriage ban, becoming the first appellate court to rule on marriage equality since DOMA was struck down.

May 20, 2014 — A federal judge in Pennsylvania overturns the state’s ban on marriage equality; the governor declines to appeal the following day.

May 19, 2014 — A federal judge in Oregon overturns that state’s ban on marriage equality.

Dec. 19, 2013 — The New Mexico Supreme Court legalizes same-sex marriage.

Nov. 20, 2013 — The Illinois General Assembly approves marriage equality.

Nov. 13, 2013 — The Hawaii legislature approves marriage equality.

United Kingdom (England, Wales, March 13, 2014 Scotland, March 12, 2014)

2014

Marriage equality
Bans overturned, pending litigation
Civil unions

United Kingdom

Luxembourg: June 18, 2014

March 2014

“The Fourteenth Amendment protects the fundamental right to marry, establish a family, raise children and enjoy the full protection of a state’s marital laws. A state may not deny the issuance of a marriage license to two persons, or refuse to recognize their marriage, based solely upon the sex of the persons in the marriage union.”

—10th Circuit Court, June 25, 2014
Sept. 27, 2013 — A state-court judge in New Jersey overturns that state’s ban on marriage equality.

July 24, 2013 — Montgomery County Register of Wills D. Bruce Hanes becomes the first Pennsylvania official to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

July 9, 2013 — The first-ever lawsuit challenging Pennsylvania’s ban on same-sex marriage is filed by the American Civil Liberties Union and Hangley Aronchick.

June 28, 2013 — Same-sex marriages resume in California following the SCOTUS ruling.

June 26, 2013 — In Windsor v. United States, SCOTUS finds Section 3 of the federal Defense of Marriage Act unconstitutional, paving the way for federal benefits for legally married same-sex couples; the court also overturns California’s Prop. 8.

May 14, 2013 — The Minnesota legislature approves marriage equality.

May 7, 2013 — The Delaware General Assembly approves marriage equality.

2013 Delaware vote: House 23-18, Senate 12-9
D.C. D-DAY: Thousands gathered from across the country and beyond to witness history in the making, some arriving hours before the announcement that was delivered shortly after 10 a.m. Even though there was no guarantee that the decision was going to be made that day, or even be in their favor, the crowd was nonetheless energized. A diverse bunch, but young, gay males were the predominant demographic, a testament to the belief in and power of the commitment of marriage. Photos: Scott A. Drake

May 2, 2013 — The Rhode Island General Assembly approves marriage equality.

Nov. 6, 2012 — Voters in Maine, Maryland and Washington legalize marriage equality through public referendums, the first states in the nation to do so. The same day, voters in Minnesota reject an anti-gay-marriage constitutional amendment.

May 9, 2012 — President Barack Obama becomes the first sitting American president to say he supports marriage equality.

June 24, 2011 — The New York legislature approves marriage equality.

August 2010 — CNN releases the first-ever national public-opinion poll to find a majority of Americans in favor of marriage equality.

SCOTUS Sound-Off

Reaction to Friday’s landmark marriage-equality ruling poured in from all corners of the country. Here’s a sampling of what some of our local leaders said about the ruling:

“This is a historic and joyous occasion. We should all be proud of this victory for equality, freedom and love. It is an important step on this country’s journey to full acceptance of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans.” — Reggie Shuford, executive director of the ACLU of Pennsylvania

“Love prevailed in the Supreme Court decision. The pursuit of happiness is a fundamental right that dates back to the very founding of this nation. LGBTQ rights are human rights, and everyone deserves to be able to marry the person they love. I’m proud to support marriage equality in Pennsylvania and beyond.” — Lt. Gov. Mike Stack

“I am thrilled for our country that the Supreme Court has come down on the side of equality. At the same time, I am concerned for people who are at risk of getting fired for getting married. In most of Pennsylvania and many other states, it is still legal to fire someone or deny them an apartment, a hotel room or a table in a restaurant because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.” — State Rep. Brian Sims

“Today’s landmark Supreme Court decision affirming the legality of same-sex marriage is a victory not only for same-sex couples, their families and children, but affirms the rights of all citizens for equal treatment under the law.” — PA Attorney General Kathleen Kane

“There are hardly words to describe how excited we are. Marriage equality is a constitutional right. We’re honored that New Jersey was a leader in the marriage-equality movement, and we’re simply elated to see the rest of the country join us in celebrating love and justice.” — Garden State Equality executive director Andrea Bowen

“The Philadelphia Bar Association applauds the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling in Obergefell v. Hodges holding that the Fourteenth Amendment requires a state to license a marriage between two people of the same sex and to recognize a marriage between two people of the same sex when their marriage was lawfully licensed and performed out of state.” — The Philadelphia Bar Association

“I join with millions across our great nation in celebrating this landmark decision to affirm marriage equality in the United States of America. This is a monumental step forward in our country’s pursuit of equal rights for all. Today, everyone who has fought so hard for this moment can stand proud knowing that marriage is a fundamental right. It is a proud day for America because love has won.” — PA Congressman Chaka Fattah

“This morning’s Supreme Court decision in Obergefell v. Hodges is the last hurdle for same-sex couples seeking marriage equality. The justices found that the Constitution guarantees equal treatment under the law for LGBT Americans, which is a right extended to state-issued marriage licenses. All Americans can marry whomever they love no matter what state they live in; when they travel from state to state, the legal status of their marriage is recognized by law everywhere. This is a great day for all of Pennsylvania’s families.” — Michael Morrill, executive director of Keystone Progress

“Today’s decision, written by Justice Kennedy, puts America on the right side of history by making clear that the 14th Amendment requires states to license a marriage between people of the same sex. This decision sets our nation one more step forward on the path to full equality under the law. Those of us who have fought for years for marriage equality are overjoyed. We all owe a great deal of gratitude to Mr. Obergefell and his stellar legal team.” — Adrian Shanker, Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center executive director

“Today’s ruling is a tremendous victory, but it is also a call to action. Philadelphians must rally together and demand a statewide nondiscrimination law that protects on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. As one of the most LGBT-friendly cities in the nation, it is our responsibility to continue fighting until complete equality is a reality in every corner of this state and this country.” — Jim Kenney, Democratic nominee for Philadelphia mayor

“In Philadelphia, wise minds settled the matter of equality decades ago, making it illegal to fire people or deny them public accommodations and everyday rights simply based on who they love or how they identify themselves. The U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling today on marriage equality now makes it clear that Pennsylvania and other states must catch up to such thinking, and make equality and nondiscrimination the law of the land.” — Rue Landau, executive director of the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations

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April 7, 2009 — The Vermont General Assembly approves marriage equality.

March 3, 2009 — The Iowa Supreme Court legalizes same-sex marriage.

Nov. 12, 2008 — Same-sex marriage becomes legal in Connecticut following a state-court decision.

Nov. 4, 2008 — Voters in California approve Proposition 8, ending six months of marriage equality in that state.

Sept. 6, 2006 — The California legislature becomes the first state in the nation to approve a marriage-equality bill, which was later vetoed by then-Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Nov. 18, 2003 — The Massachusetts Supreme Court makes that state the first in the nation to sanction same-sex marriage.

Dec. 9, 1999 — The Hawaii Supreme Court, bound by the new restrictive constitutional amendment, dismisses the couples’ challenge and leaves standing the denial of marriage.

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2009

2008 Prop 8: Yes 7,001,084 (52.24 percent) No 6,401,482 (47.76 percent)

2006

2003

“That same-sex couples are willing to embrace marriage’s solemn obligations of exclusivity, mutual support, and commitment to one another is a testament to the enduring place of marriage in our laws and in the human spirit.”

— Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, GoORIDGE vs. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH, Nov. 18, 2003

Spain: July 3, 2005

Canada: July 20, 2005

Belgium: June 1, 2003

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Sweden: May 1, 2009

Norway: January 1, 2009

South Africa: November 30, 2006
Sept. 22, 1999 — California adopts the country’s first domestic-partnership law.

May 1998 — Then-Philadelphia Mayor Ed Rendell signs the city’s domestic-partner measure into law.

Oct. 8, 1996 — Then-Gov. Tom Ridge signs Pennsylvania’s Defense of Marriage Act into law, defining marriage as between one man and one woman.

Sept. 21, 1996 — President Bill Clinton signs the Defense of Marriage Act into law, banning federal recognition of same-sex marriage.

April 21, 1975 — A clerk in Boulder, Colo., becomes the first in the nation to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples, a move that led to the filing of the first lawsuit seeking federal recognition of same-sex marriage.

Jan. 1, 1973 — Maryland is the first state to ban same-sex marriage by statute.

The Netherlands: April 1, 2001
Reminder Days: Starting the march forward

By Jen Colletta  
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They came on buses from Washington, D.C., and New York City. They dressed in suits and ties and dresses. They readied cardboard signs that carried messages whose simplicity underscored the journey that lay ahead of them: “Homosexuals should be judged as individuals,” “Gay is good” and “Equal opportunity for all.”

And at 1 p.m. July 4, 1965, the 40 protesters — 33 men and seven women — set off outside Independence Hall, on Chestnut between Fifth and Sixth streets. On a day in which Americans were celebrating freedom and equality, they marched in a line outside the national symbol for two hours, calling for basic freedom and equality for gay and lesbian citizens.

The effort became known as the Annual Reminder Day marches, a tradition that continued on Independence Day through 1969 — preceding the Stonewall Riots in New York City, often thought of as the birthplace of the modern LGBT-rights movement, by four years.

The tone of the marches, however, was wholly different than that of the famous Stonewall uprising.

Conceived by activist Craig Rodwell, the event was largely spearheaded by Mattachine Society’s Frank Kameny, based in Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia activist Barbara Gittings of Daughters of Bilitis.

Kameny, who died in 2011, told PGN the previous year that the date and location were both selected for their symbolism and inspired, in part, by previous demonstrations earlier that year at the White House and other government buildings in Washington, D.C.

“We thought that Fourth of July just seemed conceptually appropriate and there would be no better place to do them than in front of Independence Hall,” he said.

The marches were all kept to strict dress and behavioral codes: They were expected to present dressed according to gender expectations of the time, and march without rowdiness, including hand-holding or other signs of affection.

The intent of that style of protest was to demonstrate that gay and lesbian people were no different than heterosexuals, marcher Randy Wicker told PGN in 2010 — itself a bold notion.

“It was considered extremely radical just to be out there looking like corporate nonentities, in suits and ties and dresses, representing the masses of gay people that at that time were totally invisible,” Wicker said.

Many of the marchers who participated in the 1965 demonstration came from New York City and D.C., a testament to the notion that many locals were hesitant to take such a public step in their own city.

The march proceeded with little fanfare and no run-ins with police. William Way LGBT Community Center archivist Bob Skiba noted that the police had recently formed a squad to specifically oversee civil-disobedience actions, which were catching steam in the mid-1960s.

“They had just formed this squad to deal with people protesting, chaining themselves to things,” Skiba said. “Barbara and Frank got a permit and when they went back to renew it after that first year, the police chief thanked them for being so well-behaved and said there were no problems at all with the march.”

The number of participants ebbed and flowed throughout its five years: 50 in 1966, 30 in 1967, 75 in 1968 and 150 in 1969, which took place one week after Stonewall.

After that time, Annual Reminder organizers discontinued the Philadelphia demonstration and refocused their efforts on the Christopher Street Liberation Day in New York City, to mark the one-year anniversary of Stonewall.

Oct. 10, 1972 — The U.S. Supreme Court dismisses the first-ever case before it from a same-sex couple seeking the right to marry. The couple had been turned away from a Minnesota clerk, a decision upheld by several courts before it reaches SCOTUS.

June 28, 1970: The Christopher Street Liberation Day march is held in New York City to commemorate the first anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. It, and a simultaneous Los Angeles march, are considered to be the first LGBT Pride parades in the nation.

May 18, 1970: Richard Baker and James McConnell apply for a marriage license from Hennepin County in Minnesota, becoming the first known American same-sex couple to pursue a marriage license.

June 28, 1969: Following a police raid at the Stonewall Inn in New York City’s Greenwich Village, hundreds of LGBTs and allies fight back in a riot that later came to be considered the birth of the modern LGBT-rights movement.

July 4, 1965 — Forty demonstrators conduct one of the nation’s first organized LGBT-rights protests. Held outside Philadelphia’s Independence Hall, the action was organized by Frank Kameny and Barbara Gittings and, over the next four years, came to be known as the Annual Reminder Day marches.