

Metropolitan Community Churches

Tearing Down Walls! Building Up Hope!

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Rev. Nancy
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MCC'S FOUNDER WINS CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT MARRIAGE CASE! READ REV. TROY PERRY'S REMARKS BELOW

May 15, 2008

Dear MCC Friends:

MCC Founder Rev. Troy Perry has spent a lifetime *changing history* and *making history* -- and today, he did it again.

This morning, the Supreme Court of California ruled in favor of the marriage lawsuit jointly brought by Troy and his spouse, Phillip Ray De Blieck, along with MCC friend and LGBT activist Robin Tyler, and her partner, Diane Olson.

I am thrilled to share Troy and Phillip's heartfelt statement below.

Equality for all people, including marriage equality, has been an integral part of Troy's passion and ministry for almost 40 years. It's worth remembering that in 1969, as the Stonewall Rebellion took place in New York City, Troy was already organizing the LGBT community in Southern California, had already established Metropolitan Community Churches -- and had performed what Time Magazine has credited as the first public same-sex wedding in the United States. All before Stonewall -- amazing!

And in January of 1970, Troy made history again when he filed the first-ever lawsuit in the United States seeking legal recognition of same-gender marriages. The court dismissed the case before it ever came to trial, but it accomplished something profound: It birthed the marriage equality movement, and with it, four decades of debate, activism, struggle, prayer and persistence.

May a new generation of activists rise up and continue Troy's example of changing our world and working for an end to discrimination and injustice -- until our brothers and sisters in Jamaica no longer are attacked and killed solely for their sexual orientation and gender variance, until LGBT people in Pakistan no longer face the threat of death if found to be lesbian or gay, until LGBT people in Moldova can freely march in the streets without being targets

of mob violence, until LGBT people no longer are smeared and ridiculed by the tabloid press in Nigeria, until our brothers and sisters no longer experience rejection from churches and communities of faith, until teens and young adults no longer take their own lives because they believe God hates them.

Until that day, ours is an unfinished world.

And it's a reminder that for Metropolitan Community Churches, ours is an unfinished calling.

Grace and peace,

+ *Nancy*

Rev. Nancy L. Wilson
MCC Moderator

WE WON!

A statement by Rev. Troy D. Perry and Phillip Ray De Blieck
Plaintiffs In The California Supreme Court Marriage Case



WINNING PLAINTIFFS IN THE CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT MARRIAGE CASE AND THEIR ATTORNEY

LEFT TO RIGHT: Rev. Dr. Troy Perry, Attorney Gloria Allred, Phillip Ray De Blieck, Robin Tyler, Diane Olson. Gloria is holding Milos Reifsnnyder-Smith, who has two gay dads. (Photo Credit: Angela Brinskele)

NOTE: Rev. Troy D. Perry is the long-time human rights activist who performed the first public same-sex wedding service in the United States in 1969. In 1970, he sued in the California courts for legal recognition of same-sex marriage. While losing that case, he launched four decades of work and debate on behalf of marriage equality. In July 2003, Rev. Perry and his partner, Phillip Ray De Blieck, were legally married under Canadian law. They subsequently sued the State of California for legal recognition of their Canadian marriage. The Superior Court of California ruled in their favor; the Appeals Court ruled against their lawsuit. Today's historic ruling by the California Supreme Court makes legal marriage available to lesbian and gay couples in California.

STATEMENT:

Today the California Supreme Court ruled to legally recognize our marriage, which took place under Canadian law in Toronto, Canada, on July 16, 2003.

The Court's ruling says that our marriage is not *less than* or *different from* other marriages in this country; the court ruled that our marriage is *equal in the eyes of the law* to all other marriages.

We thank God that our prayers have been answered! This is a battle that our church, the Metropolitan Community Churches, has fought since I performed the first public same-sex wedding ceremony in the United States -- in Huntington Park, California, in 1969.

Today we both give honor to God for this victory.

On this momentous day, we want to acknowledge that we stand on the shoulders of others before us who fought for justice and blazed trails for equality, and who made this day possible.

One of our heroes died this month. Mildred Loving, an African-American who, along with her husband Richard, a white man, won the battle to legalize interracial marriage in the United States. Mildred Loving paid a steep price, solely for marrying the only man she ever loved. She was arrested, convicted, and banished from her home state of Virginia. Mildred, a soft-spoken, gentle woman, avoided the spotlight, but for the issue was always simple. In a 1967 interview on CBS News, she said, "I think marrying who you want is a right and no man should have anything to do with it. It's a God-given right."

Mildred Loving also said, "I am not a political person, but I am proud that Richard's and my name is 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."

We also want to thank Robin Tyler and her partner Diane Olson. We are honored to have partnered with Robin and Diane to become the first two couples to initiate this lawsuit seeking marriage equality for all people in California and California's recognition of same-sex marriages performed in Canada.

We are deeply thankful for our attorney, Gloria Allred, and her law partners, Michael Masoko and John Goldberg, for taking this marriage equality case *pro bono* and arguing it all the way to the California Supreme Court. We could not have won this landmark case had it not been for Gloria Allred's deeply-held conviction that all people deserve equality -- including marriage equality -- under the law. And we are thankful to our denomination of Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC) for underwriting the court filing fees in this case.

We give honor to God for the Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto, under the

direction of The Reverend Dr. Brent Hawkes, and their attorney, Mr. Doug Elliott. These leaders argued before the Supreme Court of Canada and won the right for all persons, including same-sex couples, to be legally married there. Had it not been for their groundbreaking and historic work, Phillip and I would not be married today. Everywhere we go, we proudly show our wedding bands to others and say, "Thank God for Canada!"

Tonight, we will go to the Metropolitan Community Church of Los Angeles (4953 Franklin Avenue, Los Angeles 90027, in the Los Feliz area) to give thanks for this victory for which we have worked and prayed for the past 39 years.

A press conference will take place after a short service of thanksgiving, beginning at 6 PM.

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