



Archives and Records

Finding Aid

COLLECTION NUMBER: Coll. 22
TITLE: The History Project's Marriage Collection

COLLECTION SUMMARY

Creator(s): The History Project
Title: The History Project
Extent: 1 record carton; 1 oversize
Repository: The History Project, Archives and Records Department

Finding aid prepared for The History Project, Archives and Records Department by Robert Johnston, student in the GSLIS Archives masters degree program at Simmons College, under the supervision of Andrew Elder, Spring 2010.

SUBJECTS TERMS

Subject Names:

MassEquality
GLAD (Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders)
Equal Marriage
KnowThyNeighbor
Greater Boston Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance
Freedom to Marry Boston
Strong Financial Group
Human Rights Campaign

Subject Topics:

Gay Liberation Movement—Massachusetts –Boston
Gay Couples—Legal Status, Laws, etc—Massachusetts
Marriage—Massachusetts
Same Sex Marriage – Law and Legislation – United States

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Terms of Use/Copyright: Unrestricted, though some items in the collection are copyrighted by individuals and/or organizations outside The History Project.

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HISTORICAL NOTE

Goodridge v. Department of Health, a lawsuit filed on April 11th, 2001 by New England's Gay & Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD) on behalf of seven same-sex Massachusetts couples whose marriage licenses were denied by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, eventually made its way to the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court (SJC), where oral arguments were heard on March 4, 2003. On November 18, 2003, in a 4-3 decision, the SJC ruled that:

The Massachusetts Constitution affirms the dignity and equality of all individuals. It forbids the creation of second-class citizens. In reaching our conclusion we have given full deference to the arguments made by the Commonwealth. But it has failed to identify any constitutionally adequate reason for denying civil marriage to same-sex couples.

The justices ordered the state to begin issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples on May 17, 2004, the fiftieth anniversary of one of the greatest civil rights cases of the twentieth century, *Brown v. the Board of Education*. The unintended symmetry was not lost on gay men and lesbians, who had been fighting to overcome their second-class citizenship for more than half a century.

Goodridge shook the nation. By clearly stating that marriage was not defined by opposite-sex partnerships, the decision exacerbated an already bitter cultural divide between religious conservatives and those who believe that secular values underlie America's constitutional liberties. In reaction, a flurry of states proposed legislation to prevent same-sex marriage. At the same time, a few municipal officials challenged state laws by issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples in their cities and counties.

"The answer to the question is 'No.'" With these blunt concluding words in its February 4th, 2004, advisory opinion, the Massachusetts SJC made clear to legislators that they could not, as they had hoped, circumvent the *Goodridge* decision with a civil-unions bill. Marriage, and only marriage, for same-sex couples would pass constitutional muster. For the legislature, that left only one avenue for overturning the court decision: a constitutional amendment defining *marriage* as exclusively heterosexual—a so-called Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA).

The multiyear process for amending the Massachusetts constitution meant that even if the legislators passed an amendment in the 2004 constitutional convention, they could not stop same-sex weddings, which the court had ordered to begin on May 17. Any amendment would have to be voted on again by the legislature in 2005 and approved by the voters in a 2006 ballot referendum.

The countdown to the first second of May 17 began inside and outside Cambridge City Hall, and the city block rocked with cheers at 12:01 a.m. Within the hour, the first couples emerged, waving their completed white application cards to the wild applause of thousands. By the close of business on May 17, Cambridge topped the state in marriage applications, taking in 268, and then issuing licenses to couples who had obtained court waivers on the usual three-day waiting period.

Same-sex marriage had arrived in Massachusetts.

(Bulk of above excerpted from *Courting Equality: A Documentary History of America's First Legal Same-Sex Marriages*, text by Patricia A. Gozemba and Karen Kahn.)

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection consists of newspaper and magazines articles as well as booklets and pamphlets documenting the road to same-sex marriage in Massachusetts, the bulk of which date from 2003 and 2004, along with files for individual same-sex marriages containing marriage licenses, photographs, wedding invitations and other material. There are also files relating to pro-marriage groups and organizations that date back to the mid-1980s. There are also papers and promotional material from a 2005 exhibit and a 2007 launch party hosted by The History Project.

Note: Cover to the June 13, 2004 edition of *The New Yorker* donated by Bill Conrad.

DESCRIPTION OF SERIES

Series I: Articles, Publications and News Reports (newspaper and magazines clippings, DVDs of newcasts)

Series II: Pro-Marriage Groups and Organizations (flyers, pamphlets and other material)

Series III: The History Project Events (documents relating to a pair of events held by The History Project)

Series VI: Individual Marriages (files for specific same-sex marriages)

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Box 1

Series I: Articles, Publications and News Reports

Subseries 1: DVDs

Folder 1: Chronicle/WCVB Channel 5 News DVD, 2004

Folder 2: Mass Matrimony DVD, 2004

Folder 3: Saving Marriage Get Ready DVD, Undated

Subseries 2: Same-Sex Marriage in Chicago

Folder 4: Nancy Davis & Toby Schneiter, "Lesbian Marriage" Seekers, 1975

Subseries 3: Newspaper Clippings

Folder 5: Newspaper Clippings, 1973-1983
Folder 6: Newspaper Clippings, 1991-1999
Folder 7: Newspaper Clippings, 2001-2003
Folder 8: Newspaper Clippings, Jan.-Apr. 2004
Folder 9: Newspaper Clippings, May 2004
Folder 10: Newspaper Clippings, Jun.-Dec. 2004
Folder 11: Newspaper Clippings, 2005
Folder 12: Newspaper Clippings, 2006-2008
Folder 13: Newspaper Clippings, 2009
Folder 14: Unidentified/Undated Newspaper Clippings

(See Box 2 for Oversize Newspapers)

Subseries 4: Magazines and Magazine Articles

Folder 15: Magazines and Magazine Articles, 1989-2008

(See Box 2 for Oversize Magazines)

Subseries 5: Internet Articles

Folder 16: Internet Articles, 1998-2006; Undated

Subseries 6: Publications

Folder 17: Miscellaneous Publications, 1973-2004
Folder 18: Miscellaneous Publications, 2004-2005

Subseries 7: Selective Bibliography

Folder 19: Same-Sex Marriage, A Selective Bibliography of the Legal Literature, Last Updated 2007

Series II: Pro-Marriage Groups and Organizations

Folder 20: Gay and Lesbian Defense Committee, 1985?
Folder 21: Queer Nation Flyer and Sticker, 1992?
Folder 22: Freedom to Marry Boston, 1997
Folder 23: GLAD, 1999-2008
Folder 24: equalmarriage.org, 2003-2005; Undated
Folder 25: equalmarriage.org Boston Pride Bag, 2004
Folder 26: Equal Marriage Solidarity Flyers, 2004
Folder 27: Strong Financial Group, 2004
Folder 28: MassEquality, 2004-2007
Folder 29: Miscellaneous Postcards, Stickers and Pins, 2004-2005; Undated
Folder 30: Raffles, Games and Dinners, 2005; Undated
Folder 31: Films, Plays and Talks, 2005-2006; Undated
Folder 32: City of Cambridge, 2005-2006; 2009
Folder 33: KnowThyNeighbor "To Serve Massachusetts" Parody, 2006
Folder 34: Greater Boston Lesbian/Gay Political Alliance & Committee for Family Protection, Undated
Folder 35: Human Rights Campaign Foundation, Undated

- Folder 36: Alternatives to Marriage Flyer, Undated
- Folder 37: Progressive Caucus of the Campaign to Defend Lesbian and Gay Bill of Rights, Undated
- Folder 38: *New York Blade* "Marry Me!/I Do!" Fan/Sign, Undated

Series III: The History Project Events

- Folder 39: THP Notes, Undated
- Folder 40: THP E-mails, 2003-2009
- Folder 41: THP Exhibit: From Boston Marriage to Equal Marriage, May 14, 2005
- Folder 42: THP Event: Courting Equality Launch Party, May 16, 2007

(See Box 2 for Oversize THP Material)

Series IV: Individual Marriages

- Folder 43: Marcia K. Kadish and Tanya McCloskey, May 17, 2004
- Folder 44: David Wilson and Robert Compton, May 17, 2004
- Folder 45: Marcia Hams and Susan Shepherd, May 23, 2004
- Folder 46: David H. Simpson and Thomas A. Green, May 24, 2004
- Folder 47: Elizabeth Bouvier and Andrea Devine, June 4, 2004
- Folder 38: Carol Jane Van Landingham and Elizabeth Van Schaick Emerson, June 14, 2004
- Folder 39: Margaret T. Andrews and Elaine G. Walsh, June 25, 2004
- Folder 40: Bruce Bell and George Smart, July 10, 2004
- Folder 41: Anne Mulvey and Donna O'Neill, July 24, 2004
- Folder 42: C. Julie Whitlow and Olga M. Merchan, August 13, 2004
- Folder 43: Kathy Bnonofrane and Kara Cohen, August 21, 2004
- Folder 44: Stephen Galante and William Pluckhahn, September 26, 2004
- Folder 45: Rochelle Ruthchild and Vicki Grabiner, October 9, 2004
- Folder 46: Cicely Carter and Nichole Moreau, October 30, 2004
- Folder 47: Elaine Scheer and Donna Spiegelman, November 21, 2004
- Folder 48: Louise Rice and Tess Ewing, 2004?
- Folder 50: Susan Vick and Kate Hogan, February 11, 2005
- Folder 51: Maria Poretta and Adele Machanzi, April 30, 2005
- Folder 52: Tim Kane and Steve Sullivan, June 17, 2005
- Folder 53: Alice Levine and Holly Bishop, June 23, 2007
- Folder 54: Shawn Hartman and Scott Squillace, September 1, 2007
- Folder 55: Valerie Coster and Karen Simon, October 12, 2008
- Folder 56: Maureen Brodoff and Ellen Wade, Undated

Box 2 (Oversize)

- Folder 1: *The Improper Bostonian* and *The Advocate*, 2004
- Folder 2: *Metro*, *One in Ten*, *Boston Herald*, 1996; 2004; 2008
- Folder 3: *The Boston Globe*, 2003
- Folder 4: *Bay Windows Weddings*, 2003-2004
- Folder 5: *InNewsWeekly*, 2004
- Folder 6: *The Boston Phoenix*, 2003-2004
- Folder 7: THP's "From Boston Marriage to Equal Marriage" Oversize, 2005
- Folder 8: THP's *Courting Equality* Posters, 2007

Related Materials/See also: Coll.21 - Bob Wheatly Collection; Coll.23 – Know Thy Neighbor Collection; Coll.27 – Religious Coalition for the Freedom to Marry; Coll.33 – Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD); THP Oral History Collection – features interviews conducted as part of research for *Above + Beyond*.