



Presents

Tying The Knot

a film by Jim de Sève

82 minutes, color

Official Selection Tribeca Film Festival
Best Documentary Frameline, San Francisco LGBT Film Festival
Official Selection NewFest, New York LGBT Film Festival
Official Selection Outfest, Los Angeles LGBT Film Festival
Official Selection Philadelphia LGBT Film Festival
Official Section, Provincetown Film Festival

BRIEF SYNOPSIS

Three years in the making, *Tying The Knot* documents the political war between gay people who want to marry and those determined to stop them. When a bank robber's bullet ends the life of cop Lois Marrero, her wife of thirteen years, Mickie, discovers a police department willing to accept the women's relationship, but unwilling to release Lois's pension. When Sam, an Oklahoma rancher loses his husband of 25 years, cousins of his deceased spouse challenge his will and move to evict Sam from his home. As Mickie and Sam take up battle stations to defend their lives, *Tying the Knot* digs deeply into the meaning of marriage today. From an historical trip to the Middle Ages, to gay hippies storming the Manhattan marriage bureau in 1971, this eye-opening exploration of the embattled institution looks at rights, privilege and love as gay activists and right-wing politicians lock horns in the fight for marriage.

EXTENDED SYNOPSIS

Mickie Mashburn married fellow police officer Lois Marrero in 1991 under the happy gazes of Lois's sister Brenda and her husband. Ten years later an armed robber gunned down Lois, and she died in the line of duty. Friends and family supported the grieving Mickie after Lois's tragic death, but all that changed when she did what any widow would do: file for her spouse's pension. Lois's sister Brenda intervened and the Tampa Police Pension Board granted Lois's benefits to her family. Mickie intends to keep fighting.

Meanwhile Sam thought he was protected when Earl, his husband of 22 years, passed away. Earl left their Oklahoma ranch to Sam—or so they thought. Earl's cousins contested his will and won in court on a legal technicality: Earl's will needed a third signature. Broke and white-knuckled, Sam clutches onto the ranch, the place where he and Earl raised Sam's three biological sons from a former marriage. His life crumbles in front of the camera, and he tries to hold back tears as he asks his sister-in-law for a loan.

Both Mickie and Sam now undergo daily strife and humiliation that they wouldn't have to face had their marriages been recognized under the law. But struggles like theirs happen every day. Gay and lesbian Americans have been fighting against this discrimination for decades. In 1971, members of the Gay Activists Alliance took over Manhattan's marriage bureau in a daring act of public disobedience. Thirty-three years later, the same office turns away same-sex couples demanding marriage licenses.

Current domestic partnership regulations, offered by several municipalities, and the Vermont Civil Unions provide protections only at the city or state level. No wills or beneficiary paperwork provide same-sex couples the 1,138 federal rights—such as social security benefits and immigration rights—afforded to married heterosexual couples. As a result, many gay and lesbian widows and widowers, including victims of the 9/11 attacks, have had to endure the devastating consequences of not being allowed into civil marriage. This sort of intolerance facing millions of citizens today echoes the discrimination of the 1958 civil rights case that questioned the legality of Richard Loving and Mildred Jeter's interracial marriage.

Giving context to the arguments for and against same-sex unions, historian EJ Graff explains the history of marriage, what “traditional marriage” means and what impact public marriage philosophies in divorce and contraception have on same-sex unions. Legal expert Kees Waaldijk argues that opening marriage for same-sex couples is a relatively small change compared to other big changes in marriage, such as divorce and the recognition of women's rights within marriage.

Tying the Knot juxtaposes what's happening in the U.S. against the climate in Holland and Canada, where same-sex couples have been granted marital parity. Because Canada doesn't have citizenship requirements for same-sex couples to marry, scores of gay and lesbian Americans travel to Canada to protect their families through legal marriage.

As this civil war unfurls across America, it creates a new meaning for the term “continental divide.” On one side are the men and women wanting to provide for their families. Opposing them are the religious conservatives who feel threatened. Gay couples previously challenged

the law in Hawaii and were on the brink of victory when Bob Barr led the Congressional backlash in 1996 with the passage of the Defense of Marriage Act. Today James Dobson leads Focus on The Family, the largest Christian right-wing organization in the U.S., to oppose gay peoples' right to legally marry. But same-sex couples continue to make progress. Vermont in 2000 passed its Civil Unions law, which provides most marriage rights at the state level. The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Courts in 2003 ruled that same-sex couples had the constitutional right to marry. The Christian fundamentalists unleash their power to lobby for a constitutional amendment, their last resort to halt this civil right movement.

Now this battle has reached the highest level, involving the President and his attempt to rewrite the U.S. Constitution. In response, thousands of Americans in San Francisco and many other cities have come out to take a stand in favor of same-sex marriages. Shot in the United States, the Netherlands and Canada, *Tying the Knot* is the film about the fight.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

1967

Virginia Loving v. Virginia lawsuit results in the legalization of interracial marriage in Virginia.

1971

New York Gay Activists Alliance takes over Manhattan's marriage bureau in a daring act of public disobedience.

1991

Florida Mickie Mashburn and Lois Marrero, a lesbian couple, get married.

1996

Hawaii Plaintiffs Nina Baehr and Genora Dancel win the right to marry, spurring the creation of the national Defense of Marriage Act.

2000

Vermont The Vermont legislature passes the Vermont Civil Union Law, the first in the country.

Oklahoma Earl dies. In his will, Earl leaves behind his ranch for his husband of 22 years, Sam. Earl's cousins challenge the will in court and win the estate.

2001

Holland Holland becomes the first country to legally recognize same-sex marriages.

Florida Tampa Police Officer Lois Marrero dies in the line of duty. Her surviving wife Mickie Mashburn is denied Lois's pension.

2003

CA & NY Same-sex couples apply for marriage licenses on Valentine's Day in Los Angeles and New York City, but the clerks refuse to issue them.

Canada The Ontario Court of Appeal, the highest court in Canada's largest province, opens marriage for same-sex couples in June.

Massachusetts The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court declares in November that same-sex couples have the constitutional right to marry in Massachusetts.

Larry King Live James Dobson, president of Focus on The Family, warns that these "fads" will destroy marriage and western civilization.

Washington, DC The Federal Marriage Amendment, banning same-sex marriages, goes to the House in May and the Senate in November.

2004

California President Bush supports a Federal Constitutional Amendment against marriages in his State of the Union Address. San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom issues marriage licenses to same-sex couples starting February 12; a host of other municipalities follow suit.

Washington, DC President Bush officially endorses a Constitutional ban on same-sex marriages on February 24.

Q & A WITH FILMMAKER JIM de SÈVE

Q: What made you decide to make this film?

Jim de Sève: I started this project with a personal discovery in mind. Two years after my boyfriend Kian Tjong and I got together, I started to think about our future as a family. Both of us were brought up by married, heterosexual parents, so the meaning and the reality of marriage are very familiar but personally foreign because we're not allowed into this civil institution.

Near the start of the film in 2001, the Netherlands became the first country to open marriage for same-sex couples. We went there and talked to politicians and gay couples who married legally. As I learned about what marriage meant to them, I began to encounter passionate movements in the world, especially in the U.S., to open marriage. As the battles for marriage got more intense and fast-paced, I was completely absorbed in filming every important event I could. It's not until I sat down to edit that *Tying the Knot* took shape.

Q: What are the unique challenges you face in the making this film?

Jim de Sève: The toughest part was coming up with an organic flow to so much material. We didn't want to make a complete historical compendium but to try to show how history and personal struggles interrelate. It was a painstaking process to arrive at the final cut. But I'm very happy with the final result. I'm still in awe that we managed to construct a piece that feels solid, captivating and emotional.

Also, Sam's life fell apart in front of my eyes—it was very emotional and hard to just play the role of documenter. Keeping professional distance is tricky. But for whatever personal involvement I wanted to have I had to keep an eye on the larger picture—helping through this film to end the discrimination.

Q: Did you have a particular point of view in your approach to Tying The Knot? How did you maintain an objective stand?

Jim de Sève: My point of view is that this is a civil rights issue. I don't particularly want to give a voice to bigots or to discrimination. Nobody would suggest making a "balanced and fair" documentary about slavery or women not having the right to vote. It is just a matter of time that people will look back in horror to the days when gay surviving partners could not collect Social Security or pensions, or someone like Sam could be booted off his property.

It would be easy to ridicule the opponents of marriage rights for gays and lesbians. But I worried that people we could reach about the issue might be turned off. I try to be respectful in representing the opposing side. I chose some of the most influential figures. James Dobson is the founder of the largest Christian right-wing group Focus on the Family, with an annual budget of over \$100 million. Millions of Americans listened to his radio talk shows. He has threatened to withdraw his support from the Republican Party. Dobson, together with a number of senators and congress members represented in the film, are the leading force behind the push to ban marriage for gays and lesbians. They are well represented throughout the film.

Q: Notably missing are gay people who do not support marriage?

Jim de Sève: Neither did I include straight people who don't want marriage for themselves. People, straight or gay, can always have that choice, even after gay and lesbian couples win the right to marry. *Tying The Knot* argues for the right to have a choice to marry the person we love. The keyword here is choice. This is not a gay documentary. I don't feel the need to represent an opinion simply based on a person's sexual orientation or identity.

Q: What's your perspective on civil union and why is it not discussed in the film?

Jim de Sève: Civil union doesn't provide any of over 1,000 federal protections that come with civil marriage. In fact, the reason Vermont has civil union is because same-sex couples sued for marriage. Civil Marriage has always been the driving force in this debate. *Tying the Knot* focuses on civil marriage because there is nothing equal to civil marriage but civil marriage. I want to sustain audience's attention to the main issue and the main characters, Sam and Mickie. In the end, that's what matters, the impact of this unequal treatment to everyday Americans.

Many people argue that asking for civil union and thus, avoiding the word "marriage" would spare us a harsh backlash from the religious fundamentalists. I don't think this is a better strategy. To begin with, civil union is very unequal compared to civil marriage. A lot of us don't realize that civil marriage coexists with religious marriage. In fact, the Catholic Church only declared marriage as a sacrament in the 13th century. The religious fundamentalists have fought against every gay right. Asking for less will get us nothing. Even if there's a hypothetical civil union bill that provides the same legal rights and protections as civil marriage, one must question the virtue of creating a separate institution if the motivation is to discriminate. Separate is not equal.

Q: Who is your audience?

Jim de Sève: We're fortunate that *Tying the Knot* has elements that appeal to different people. Mickie's story is about a murder, family betrayal and an emotional courtroom drama, which will appeal to a mass audience. I think many Americans will relate to Sam. He could be your father or uncle. And the daring civil disobedience actions are suspenseful and humorous. The political battles are very mentally energetic. In our current political climate, every American has an opinion on this subject.

Q: What was the most surprising thing to you in making Tying The Knot?

Jim de Sève: I was stunned that the marriage issue would explode right in front of me as I was making this film. It was frantic—being in a state of urgency almost all the time, not knowing what would happen next. By documenting events as they happen, you get an interesting view on the people working to change things. Very different from making a historical documentary.

Q: What were your goals in making Tying The Knot?

Jim de Sève: I want to share my discovery of marriage with my audience. I have been given trust in Mickie's and Sam's lives, when they should be grieving, to tell their stories. I want to share my experience knowing these two accidental participants in history. I hope their inspiring stories, despite their heartbreaking losses, will lift us, especially in America, to be better people, tolerant and loving to others.

Throughout history, through false accusation and campaigns of fear, many lives have been unnecessarily destroyed. I feel that if we're not careful, we will repeat history, especially in this time, after September 11. A film can reach out to millions, allowing my experience to transcend to them. I'd like to involve as many people in outreach and education.

TYING THE KNOT PRODUCTION TEAM

Director Jim de Sève
Producers Jim de Sève, Stephen D. Pelletier, Kian Tjong
Co-producers Joshua Koffman, Justin Tan, Matt Lavine
Editors Jim de Sève, Constance Rodgers, Stephen D. Pelletier
Music Steve de Sève

Jim de Sève

Working from the frontlines of independent filmmaking Jim de Sève is the chronicler of America's new culture war—the divisive battle over marriage. His home base is Brooklyn, NY, and he has produced work for Nickelodeon, the American Museum of Natural History and the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Jim's documentary, *Burying the Saints*, is a personal portrait of his eccentric aunts' search for lost history. In his PBS short, *Sigrid and Rudi Do New York*, two Bavarian tourists experience danger and love in New York's mean, magical streets. Jim was the DP for *Seeds*, about a revolutionary summer camp for ethnic enemies. Finally, Jim teaches courses in digital filmmaking and directing documentaries at Film Video Arts in New York. *Tying the Knot* takes "activist filmmaking" back to its roots of affecting lasting change, and the film is an example for independent producers on creating networks of support and reaching out to build community through the filmmaker's vision for social justice.

Stephen D. Pelletier

Stephen has worn many hats in his career including director, editor, producer and consultant. He is responsible for the production of more than 800 commercials and has overseen the taping of numerous live concerts and events. His clients have included The Democratic Party and Clear Channel Orlando.

Constance Rodgers

Constance began her career editing commercials and moved to art films: *The Beauty Brothers* (dir. Bruce Weber); documentaries: *Broken Noses*, *Let's Get Lost*, *Amish: Not To Be Proud*; features: *Killer Dead*, *Igor and the Lunatics*; and countless industrials: *World Financial Center: Winter Garden* and trailers: *Lair of the White Worm*. Constance cuts on flatbeds and digitally. She teaches American and world cinema and guerrilla moviemaking to urban teens.

Kian Tjong

Tying the Knot is Kian's first film; he views it as the perfect combination of his interests in human rights activism and filmmaking. Kian received his MBA from the University of Hawaii.

Justin Tan

Justin writes, directs and produces. He recently co-produced *Burma: Anatomy of Terror*, and he created and co-produced the biannual Huge Issue, a conference where gay and lesbian filmmakers collaborate in a 1-2-3 production mantra: 1 day to shoot and 2 days to edit a 3-minute piece. Justin is also producing *Birds Nest Game: The Story Of Bernard Baran*.

Joshua Koffman

Joshua has been in production in New York for seven years. His projects include PBS/WNET's *Nuyoricans: Puerto Ricans in New York*, the Food Network's documentary/reality series *Top 5*, Lifetime's *Intimate Portrait* series, HBO Family's *Middle School Diaries*, and the History Channel's *History Lost and Found* and *What Happened After*. His latest film is *After X*, produced by his company Shuttlecock Films. Joshua has a B.A. in Film from Vassar College.

WHO'S WHO IN TYING THE KNOT

FLORIDA

Mickie Mashburn joined the Tampa Police Department in 1986. There, she met Lois Marrero, with whom she lived with for 13 years. They held a commitment ceremony on May 25, 1991. After Lois died on July 6, 2001, Mickie applied for the survivor spouse's pension benefit. The Tampa Police Pension Board denied her request in August 2001 and again at the appeal in February 2002. They granted Lois' pension benefit to her family. In April 2002, Mickie filed a lawsuit in Hillsborough County Circuit Court. The court ruled in April 2004 that Mickie was not entitled to Lois' pension.

Lois Marrero was a Tampa Police officer for 19 years. She was killed in the line of duty while chasing a suspected bank robber on July 6, 2001. She was 15 months away from retirement.

Brenda Marrero, Lois' sister, and her husband, Steve Ayoub, attended Mickie and Lois' commitment ceremony and even handed them the wedding rings. Now she claims that Lois was involved with an unidentified woman in Texas. The Marrero family applied for and was granted Lois' pension benefit. Half of the sum was given to their father who left the family when Lois was 14 years old. In February 2003, the family filed notice that they planned to file wrongful death lawsuit against the Tampa Police Department.

OKLAHOMA

Sam, a U.S. Air Force Veteran and now a farmer in rural Oklahoma, met Earl on a pier by the Arkansas River; they lived together 22 years, raising Sam's three biological sons from his previous marriage.

Earl, Sam's life partner, was a comptroller for the local Kwikset factory. Earl died on September 13, 2000, leaving his ranch to Sam in his will. He also designated Sam as the beneficiary of his 401(K) retirement fund.

Kennegth is the oldest of Earl and Sam's (biological) three sons. Kennegth lives on the ranch, helping Sam in farm works.

CR is the youngest of Earl and Sam's three sons. He is married with two kids. He asked that his face be blurred in the film to protect his kids at school.

HAWAII/ DEFENSE OF MARRIAGE ACT

Ninia Baehr and **Genora Dancel**, together with two other gay couples, applied for marriage licenses in 1990 from the Hawaii Department of Health but were denied. They sued the State and in 1993, Hawaii Supreme Court ruled that prohibiting same-sex couples from marrying might violate Hawaii Constitution's ban on sex discrimination. It sent back the case for further hearings. In the 1996 trial, Hawaii Circuit Court ruled that the state failed to show a compelling reason to ban same-sex marriage. In 1998, Hawaii legislature proposed a constitutional amendment that would allow the legislature to restrict marriage to different-sex couples. Before

Hawaii Supreme Court could issue final ruling, voters passed the amendment by sixty-nine percent.

Evan Wolfson is cocounsel in the Hawaii marriage lawsuit. He now leads Freedom To Marry, a gay rights group.

Bob Barr, Congressman, R-GA (1994 - 2002), sponsored the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) to ban federal benefits for gay couples and allow states to disregard same-sex marriage licenses from other states. Barr and Christian fundamentalists acted in anticipation that the Supreme Court of Hawaii would rule in favor of granting marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), signed into law by Bill Clinton in 1996, was fueled by the right wing's fear that the Supreme Court of Hawaii would grant same-sex couples marriage rights. DOMA defines marriage in federal law as a union between one man and one woman. It allows states to not recognize same-sex marriage licenses issued by other states.

MARRIAGE HISTORY

EJ Graff is a journalist and author of *What Is Marriage for?* – an examination of 2,500 years of this central pillar of social life. She argues that same-sex couples belong in the institution today.

James Dobson is founder and president of Focus on the Family, the largest Christian-right wing group in the United States, a multi-media empire on a large campus with its own zip code in Colorado Springs, CO. He also founded the right-wing lobby group Family Research Council in 1982.

Kees Waaldijk works as a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Law of Universiteit Leiden, the Netherlands. He is the head of PhD Studies in the Faculty's EM Meijers Institute of Legal Studies, and a research fellow specializing in the field of law & homosexuality. He coordinates the European Group of Experts on Combating Sexual Orientation Discrimination.

LOVING V. VIRGINIA

Richard Perry Loving and **Mildred Dolores Jeter** got married in 1958 in Washington, DC, and lived together in Caroline County, VA, where they were arrested in their bedroom because of Virginia's antiscegenation law. They were convicted in 1959 and were each sentenced to one year in jail unless they chose to leave Virginia and not return for 25 years. They chose to leave Virginia, and in 1963 they filed a lawsuit from Washington, DC, challenging the constitutionality of the antiscegenation law. In 1966, the case Loving v. Virginia went to the Virginia Supreme Court, which upheld the state's law. But in June of 1967, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled the law unconstitutional, nullifying antiscegenation laws in 16 states. The real Mr. And Mrs. Loving appeared in the end of this section. The re-enactment is from the 1996 film, *Mr. And Mrs. Loving*, starring Timothy Hutton and Lela Rochon.

Antiscegenation laws stated that interracial marriages were illegal.

Charles Canady, Congressman, R-FL (1993 – 2001), voted for DOMA.

Jim Talent, Congressman (1993 – 2001), Senator (2002 –), R-MO, voted for DOMA. As a Congressman, Talent co-sponsored legislation that would have defined life as beginning at the "moment of fertilization," thereby banning abortion without exception.

John Lewis, Congressman, D-GA (1986 –), is currently serving his ninth term. Born in Alabama, he grew up on his family's farm, attended segregated public schools and participated in the "Freedom Rides." He delivered a moving speech in opposition to DOMA.

AMSTERDAM

Louis Rogmans and **Ton Jansen** and three other gay couples—Helene Faasen and Anne-Marie Thus; Peter Lemke and Frank Wittebrood; Dolf Pasker and Gert Kasteel—were the first legally married gay couples in the world. Their marriages were officiated by Amsterdam Mayor Job Cohen as the law became effective at the stroke of midnight of April 1, 2001.

Vinco David and **Adjiedj Bakas**, legally married Dutch gay couple, talked about their reasons to marry and their wedding celebration that incorporated Vinco's Orthodox Jewish and Adjiedj's Hindu backgrounds.

VALENTINE'S DAY PROTEST in LOS ANGELES

Rev. Troy Perry is an openly gay clergyman who in 1968 founded the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), a Christian denomination with a primary ministry to gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered persons and their friends and families. The MCC today is composed of more than 42,000 members in 300 congregations in 16 countries around the world. Rev. Troy Perry was denied a marriage license by the Los Angeles marriage bureau.

VALENTINE'S DAY PROTEST in NEW YORK CITY

Sophie and **Mirabelle** applied for and were denied a marriage license in Manhattan on Valentine's Day 2003.

Rev. Pat Bumgardner, Senior Pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) New York, was among the protesters on Valentine's Day 2003 in New York City Marriage License Bureau.

Victor Robles, city clerk of New York City, met with the protesters on Valentine's Day 2003 in his office.

Domestic Partnership in New York City extends certain rights for city employees and residents such as the rights to visit each other at hospitals and to share health insurance, provided that the company provides domestic-partner benefit. Unlike a spouse, the employed partner pays taxes on the cost of the other's benefits, as if it were extra income. These rights are provided only at the city level, not at the state or federal level.

CANADA

Same-sex marriages were legalized in Canada on June 10, 2003 by the Ontario Court of Appeal, the highest court in Canada's largest province. The appeals court ordered that gay couples seeking legal unions should receive marriage licenses immediately.

Pam and **Jenny** traveled from Tennessee to Toronto to get married.

Michael Leshner and **Michael Stark** are one of the seven Canadian gay couples that spearheaded the lawsuit resulting in the legalizing of marriage for same-sex couple in Canada. At 2003 Toronto Pride, Leshner says “You can’t do that in America yet.”

John Fisher was the Grand Marshall of 2003 Toronto Pride. He is an activist with Canadian gay rights group Égale.

1971 PROTEST, NEW YORK CITY

Gay Activists Alliance (GAA), founded in 1969, broke political silence on gay issues by using a strategy called “zaps”, nonviolent, but militant, face-to-face confrontations with homophobes in positions of authority. It often included humor and theater to build up group morale and gay identity. Members of GAA took over the Manhattan Marriage Bureau in 1971 to protest City Clerk Herman Katz’s threat to sue Father Robert Clement who performed “holy unions” for same-sex couples in his church.

Herman Katz, City Clerk of New York in 1971, found out that Father Robert Clement had performed “holy unions” for same-sex couples in a church in Manhattan. In an interview with *The New York Post*, Katz made unpleasant remarks about gay folks and threatened criminal prosecution of the clergyman.

Arthur Evans is a cofounder of Gay Activists Alliance. Evans took over the phone lines during the 1971 takeover of New York City Marriage License Bureau.

MASSACHUSETTS

Julie and **Hillary Goodridge** and six other gay couples filed state court lawsuit in 2001 seeking the right to marry. Several of the other couples—David Wilson and Robert Compton; Gloria Bailey and Linda Davies; Richard Linnel and Gary Chalmers; Maureen Brodoff and Ellen Wade; Gina Smith and Heidi Norton; Ed Balmelli and Michael Horgan—were seen briefly during the press conference. Their lawsuit is known as Goodridge v. Department of Public Health.

Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court on Nov 18, 2003 ruled in Goodridge v. Department of Public Health that it is unconstitutional for the state to deny marriage license to gay and lesbian couples. The court stayed its decision for 180 days so the legislature could act, presumably to conform the marriage laws to the court decision. Responding to the state senate’s request for more guidance, the same court issued its advisory opinion in February 2004, stating that only full, equal marriage rights for gay couples—rather than civil unions—are constitutional. The Massachusetts case began in 2001, when seven gay couples went to their city and town halls to obtain marriage licenses. All were denied, leading them to sue the state Department of Public Health, which administers the state's marriage laws. Because this ruling is based on the Massachusetts constitution, there is no appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Mary Bonauto, represented the seven gay couples who sued the state, and appeared at the press conference arguing in favor of marriages.

The Federal Marriage Amendment proposal (H.J. Res. 56; S.J. Res. 26) seeks to deny marriage to same-sex couples and deny any state legislature or electorate from ever voting to pass their own state's domestic partnership, civil union or marriage laws. For an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to pass, it needs a two-thirds majority in both the House of Representatives and in the Senate and has to be ratified by 38 of the 50 states.

QUOTATIONS FROM *TYING THE KNOT*

“Last year at this time, she was still alive. For Valentine’s, where you send off for care bears, that’s what she got me last year on February fourteenth. She bought me roses and she had one of those bears sent to me so you sit back and think what a year changes. And it’s hard.”

Mickie Mashburn,
interview with Jim de Sève, 2002

“A minute or so passed and then Mickie said ‘She is gone.’ I said, ‘Mickie, you don’t know that.’ She said ‘I know that. I can feel it in my heart.’”

Officer Betsy Pinkerton,
Tampa Police Pension Board Hearing, 2002

“I miss him. I miss him a lot. If he were here now, I wouldn’t be having all the problems I’m having.”

Sam
interview with Jim de Sève, 2003

“Genora and I have been in love and engaged for six years. It’s been a long engagement. When we first applied for a marriage license, people told us we would never win. But now we’re so close, and we’re absolutely thrilled. This means that we can care for each other not just emotionally but legally and financially once we get married.”

Ninia Baehr, plaintiff of Hawaii Marriage case,
news conference, 1996

“Marriage doesn’t mean two men or two women. It just doesn’t mean that.”

Bob Barr, Congressman, R-Georgia,
Congressional debate, 1996,
on Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)

“It is an active hubris to believe that marriage can be infinitely malleable that it can be pushed and pulled around like silly-putty without destroying its essential stability and what it means to our society, and if marriage goes, then the family goes, and if the family goes, we have none of the decency or ordered liberty which Americans have been brought up to enjoy and to appreciate.”

Jim Talent, Congressman, R-Missouri,
Congressional debate, 1996,
on Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)

“Should we tell the children of America that in the eyes of the law, the parties to a homosexual union are entitled to all the rights and privileges and benefits that have always been reserved for a man and a woman united in marriage?”

Charles Canady, Congressman, R-Florida,
Congressional debate, 1996,
on Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)

“When that case came from the Virginia Supreme Court before the United States Supreme Court, the State Attorney was still arguing that the definition of marriage itself meant that this couple could not possibly be married. They argued that if we allowed interracial couples to marry, society would fall apart. They argued that it would be bad for the children. They argued that it would be unfair to different States that didn’t want to allow these kinds of couples to marry. They made very much the same kinds of arguments we hear today made to defend sex discrimination in marriage.”

Evan Wolfson, Executive Director of Freedom to Marry,
interview with Jim de Sève, 2001,
telling the story of Loving v. Virginia

“...the President has a personal belief related to marriage and what it is and he has to act consistent with a personal belief. So that's what he's doing.”

Mike McCurry, White House Spokesperson,
press briefing, 1996,
on Clinton’s intent to sign DOMA into law

“... when I was growing up in the South during the 1940s and the 1950s, the great majority of the people in that region believed that black people should not be able to enter places of public accommodation, and they felt that black people should not be able to register to vote, and many people felt that was right but that was wrong.”

“ Why don’t you want your fellow men and women, your fellow Americans to be happy? Why do you attack them? Why do you want to destroy the love they hold in their hearts? Why do you want to crush their hopes, their dreams, their longings, their aspirations? We are talking about human beings, people like you, people who want to get married, buy a house, and spend their lives with the one they love. They have done no wrong.”

“We are moving toward the 21st century. Let us come together and create one nation, one people, one family, one house, the American house, the American family, the American nation.”

John Lewis, Congressman, D-Georgia,
Congressional debate, 1996,
on Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)

“Why shouldn’t my partner of 30 years be entitled to the same health insurance and survivors’ benefit that individuals around here, my colleagues with second and third wives, are able to give to them?”

Steve Gunderson, Congressman, R-Wisconsin
Congressional debate, 1996,
on Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)

“That will destroy the family, which will destroy the nation, and I think eventually have a major impact on Western civilization. Homosexuals can be, you know, committed to each other. And they have freedom to behave in the ways that they do, but they cannot be a family.”

James Dobson, President of Focus on Family
Larry King Live, 2003
on Massachusetts Supreme Court ruling

“The idea that you can have sex not just for making babies, but for making intimacy, for making love, is the idea that’s endorsed by legal contraception. As a society, we have decided that making love is a legitimate reason for having sex and for being married. This is the philosophy same sex couples fit under.”

EJ Graff, author of *What Is Marriage for?*
interview with Jim de Sève, 2003

“Today is Valentine’s Day in Los Angeles, California and around the nation as well as our friends in Canada. We’re going all out to our county clerk offices to get married. He [Phillip] and I have been together for 18 years and the one thing I want to do before we die is to marry legally.”

Rev Troy Perry, Founder of Metropolitan Community Church,
Valentine’s Day, 2003

“If you don’t like same-sex marriage, don’t have one.”

Kevin Bourassa, Canadian gay activist,
Toronto Pride, 2003,
celebrating Ontario Court ruling, legalizing marriage for same-sex couple

“Marriage is the most intimate bond two people can ever get into. And if you really love each other, that’s what you want, don’t you?”

Luis Rogmans, married gay citizen of The Netherlands,
interview with Jim de Sève, 2001

“In Holland we have a saying that a civilization can be judged on the way it treats its minority. If it treats its minorities well, then it’s a civilized country.”

Adjied Bakas, married gay citizen of The Netherlands,
interview with Jim de Sève, 2001