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Arizona legalizes same-sex marriage

Maricopa couple at heart of legal fight 'longed for this day for years'

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Submitted

Terry Pochert and Joe Connolly

Maricopa residents Terry Pochert and Joe Connolly are seen during their first attempt to obtain marriage licenses in Arizona.



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After Horne's Friday morning announcement that he would not appeal Judge John Sedwick's ruling that the recent Ninth Circuit Court decision to strike down Nevada and Idaho's gay marriage ban also applies to Arizona, the Maricopa couple who started it all reflected on the momentous verdict.

Joe Connolly and Terry Pochert, the men who sued the state last December to recognize their 2008 California marriage, released a joint statement Friday morning:

Posted: Tuesday, October 21, 2014 10:52 am

By SARAH RUF, Staff Writer @sarah_ruf | 0 comments

A lot can change in 24 hours.

If a gay couple stopped by the Clerk of the Superior Court in Pinal County on Oct. 16 to pick up a marriage license, they would have been turned away.

One day later, all it took was \$76 for marriage-bound gay and lesbian couples here to obtain a marriage license.

Odette Apodaca, case management director of the Clerk of the Superior Court, said once she receives the news from Arizona Attorney General Tom Horne (whose staff did indeed send out the go-ahead email Friday morning), her office is prepared to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

"We have our forms ready," Apodaca said.

Just after the office opened for business on Friday morning, the clerks received the first call from someone asking if they could come on down for their license, Apodaca said.

While the clerk's office still needs to order the elegant, wedding-esque pieces of license paper stating "applicant" instead of "bride" or "groom" from an outside company, couples can get a license and then return to the office at a later date to switch it out.

Capitol Media Services reported Friday morning that gay rights advocates have stationed ministers at all 15 county courthouses for gay couples wishing to wed immediately after receiving their license on Friday.

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"Today's ruling by Judge John Sedwick has granted Arizona same-sex couples the same rights and privileges our opposite sex counterparts have enjoyed for years. We have longed for this day for years; for ourselves, for others who have gone before us and for those who will come after us. Opponents who blocked marriage equality through local, state and federal laws and through our court system learned today that legislators and the voting population cannot discriminate. The "will of the people" can never trounce on the rights of a minority."

"...As people of faith, it is our wish and hope that all couples will carefully, thoughtfully and prayerfully take their own reflective journey toward marriage, civil or religious. We hope you will plan a wedding that represents your uniqueness and speaks to your families, friends and co-workers. Celebrate with a wedding that consummates your engagement.

"Enter into marriage with your eyes open, thoughts for the future and plan a celebration befitting of your love."

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