

An illustration of a man and a woman kissing. The man is on the left, with dark hair and a mustache, wearing a purple shirt. The woman is on the right, with long brown hair, wearing a red top. They are set against a background of horizontal rainbow stripes (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple) with a light blue polka-dot pattern. The text is overlaid on the illustration.

**“I NOW
PRONOUNCE YOU
HUSBAND AND
HUSBAND”**

**A historic ruling
makes gay marriage
legal in Arizona, but LBGT
leaders say much more
must be done here.**

By Ashley Cusick

At 10:36 a.m. on Friday, October 17, Michael Jeanes tweeted his followers: “Welcome All to the Clerk’s Office. Your marriage license awaits, and we are ready to serve you!”

The most important word in the Maricopa County Superior Court clerk’s message was “All.” Soon security officers held open the doors to the clerk’s Customer Service Center downtown, and a line of same-sex couples began to enter.

The first, Nelda Majors and Karen Bailey, have been together for more than five decades. But it wasn’t until that day that the state of Arizona allowed them to obtain marriage licenses.

Next were Kevin Patterson and David Larence, who obtained Maricopa County’s second same-sex marriage license. Larence and Patterson have been together for eight years and are raising two daughters, so they didn’t feel the need to plan a large wedding.

Instead, they married in the courtyard outside the clerk’s office, becoming the first gay couple to legally marry in Maricopa County and perhaps in the state.

John Dorhauer, a United Church of Christ leader overseeing Arizona, New Mexico, and El Paso County in Texas, performed their ceremony. He was riding his bike Friday morning here when he got the call that same-sex marriage was legal. He sped home, took a shower, and headed to the County Clerk’s Office. Dorhauer had performed same-sex unions before, but never a legal marriage.

In the rush to the clerk’s office, Patterson and Larence only remembered to bring one ring, so Dorhauer let the couple borrow his own ring for the ceremony.

After the wedding, the men and their children posed for pictures, huge smiles on their faces.

Larence was not optimistic that this day would ever come: “I’ve lived here my whole life, and Arizona’s always been last when it comes to social change.”

But on that day, things were different. “Being in Arizona, and being a native, I feel an immense sense of pride for my state.”

Soon after the wedding, the family walked down the sidewalk, holding hands: one dad, one daughter, one dad, one daughter.

Larence and Patterson weren’t alone. All day long, couple after couple arrived at the clerk’s office, obtained marriage licenses, and went outside to make their relationships official.

Some of the couples were prepared, wearing matching dress clothes and arriving with family members in tow. Others clearly had scrambled to the clerk’s office as soon as the news broke. They married in tennis shoes, sandals, T-shirts, and shorts.

No matter how they were dressed, the couples all had one thing in common: They had been waiting a long time.

That afternoon, Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton opened his office to couples with licenses wanting to be married by judges. And in the courtyard, at least 10 clergymen and -women representing the Unitarian Universalist Church, Reform Judaism congregations, and the United Church of Christ stood in the courtyard holding signs saying: “We stand ready to MARRY YOU!”

And marry same-sex couples they did. Susan Frederick-Gray, reverend of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Phoenix, was in the courtyard for most of the day. It had been a long time since she had signed a marriage license.