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By Ray Stern



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News

# Historic Legal Same-Sex Weddings Begin in Arizona

By Ray Stern Fri., Oct. 17 2014 at 3:40 PM  
Categories: **News**

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Images: Ray Stern

Vivian and Rochelle Mccarty exchange a kiss after being married in downtown Phoenix today.

In a festive and history-making scene, some of the first legal same-sex weddings in Arizona took place today next to a government building in downtown Phoenix.

The small plaza at 6th Avenue and Jackson Street east of the Maricopa County Clerk of the Superior Court Customer Service Center is normally just a place people walk through on the way to obtain court records -- or a marriage license. But after the state's same-sex marriage ban was struck down today, joyous couples purchased licenses and soon took their vows in the public setting to the cheers of a gathering crowd.

See also:

- Same-Sex Marriage Legal in Arizona
- Legal Same-Sex Marriages in Arizona Could Take Place by Year's End Due to Ruling
- Phoenix-Area Religious Leaders Gather to Perform State's First Legal Gay Marriages

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From the Vault

Vivian and Rochelle Mccarty of Phoenix, surrounded by TV cameras, witnesses and reporters, were among the first to be married in an ultra-casual ceremony that lasted less than three minutes. Reverend James Pennington of the First Congregational United Church of Christ, who was wearing a gray suit jacket and white stole decorated with a crucifix and rainbows, performed the service.

"So if you're willing to seek love, compassion and forgiveness and you pledge your loyalty to each other as spouses, please say 'I do,'" Pennington told the couple after a brief introduction and reading of a Bible passage.

"I do," they said. Having dated for about five years, they were already wearing rings. They removed them, then put them on again ceremoniously.

"I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faith," Rochelle repeated after Pennington.

"You better," Vivian joked, to general laughter.

Pennington put a hand on Rochelle's shoulder. "Oh good and Holy God we are grateful today to Vivian and Rochelle, for the love they've shared over the last five years. And that today, this love is considered legal in the eyes of Arizona. We are grateful, we are blessed... We ask you to bless their union in Jesus' name."

"Amen," they said.

"So now, Rochelle and Vivian, because you've chosen each other, and you've promised each other your love and devotion, and have symbolized this with the receiving and giving of rings, by the authority invested me by the church and by the state, I pronounce you wife and wife."



Vivian and Rochelle Mccarty, with Reverend James Pennington

The happy couple shouted, "We did it!" and pumped their fists in the air after exchanging their first kiss as a legally married couple.

"We've been dating for five years," Vivian Mccarty said after the ceremony. "We finally got our day."

Like others marrying today, the couple had first purchased a marriage license for \$76 that was historic itself. The license, as well as the application for the license, for the first time gives the engaged couple three choices to check: bride, groom or the generic "spouse."

Following the decision by U.S. District Court Judge John Sedwick that Arizona's ban on same-sex marriage was unconstitutional, Clerk of the Court Michael Jeanes, issued a news release saying his office would comply with the court's decision.

"The staff at the Clerk's Office excel at treating all customers with dignity and respect," Jeanes said in a statement. "We're ready."

Couples began lining up at the marriage-license counter on Friday morning. With paperwork in hand, partners joined up with the several pastors from various faiths on hand at the plaza and took the plunge. The ceremonies were short and sweet

Alex Kuhn, 45, and Kimberly Lacount, 37, decided just this morning to get married and left their rings at home. **Pastor Vernon Meyer** of the Sun Lakes United Church of Christ performed their ceremony. (Pictures of the service below.)



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Kuhn and Lacount have six children, including one adopted child and five biological kids that Lacount had in a previous heterosexual relationship before she began dating Kuhn 10

years ago. This is actually the couple's second wedding; the first was in Hawaii earlier this year.

At one point, multiple weddings were going on at once at the plaza, with each concluding to the sound of cheering and laughter.

No gay-marriage opponents were on hand to spoil the street-side ceremonies.

"It's just fantastic that love does win out," Kimberly Lacount said.



#### **After-publication addition:**

Plaintiffs and their lawyers in the federal court case that resulted in Judge Sedwick's ruling today (see below for document) gave statements to the media and posed for photographs.

"We're delighted that Judge Sedwick moved so quickly to strike down Arizona's discriminatory marriage ban," said Carmina Ocampo of Lambda League Defense and Education, Inc., who represented the plaintiffs along with lawyers from Perkins Coie LLP. She praised Arizona Attorney General Tom Horne "for not appealing and not standing in the way of progress."

Two of the plaintiffs, Nelda Majors and Karen Bailey, standing next to her, "have been waiting since Eisenhower was president to get married, and now they don't have to wait anymore," Ocampo said. "They just got their license today, and finally there's justice and equality in Arizona."



Nelda Majors and Karen Bailey

"We feel this is a major victory to the faith community as well," said Terry Pochert, 66, one of the plaintiffs, crying with emotion. "We're just so grateful to everybody."

"We are now responsible for upholding the sanctity of marriage," said Pochert's partner, Joseph Connolly, 55. Both men live in the city of Maricopa. He suggests gay partners who marry dwell deeply on what they're doing -- but also to "have a great party."



(Left to right) Jeremy Zegas, project director for Why Marriage Matters Arizona; Carmina Ocampo of Lambda League; and Heather Macre of Aiken Schenk (another law firm assisting with the Arizona federal case. At the right are Joseph Connolly (red shirt), and Terry Pochert, (blue shirt).



Scottsdale residents David Chaney and Clark Rowley with their Maricopa County marriage license.

[Click here for Judge Sedwick's decision in PDF format.](#)

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Phoenix-Area Religious Leaders Gather to Perform State's First Legal Gay Marriages

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Dustin Ishmael from Facebook

1 hour ago

Who in there right mind wants to see that shit smh

Like Reply



Amy Doering from Facebook

1 hour ago

What do people care how other people live theirs lives and if they are happy or who they sleep with ? Why should it matter ? Everyone should be able to marry who they love. No matter gender or anything Else

Like Reply



Desiree N James HaynesVincent from Facebook

1 hour ago

It's saddens me how hateful people are. You'd think we would've learned from our history and be better people today. Everyone has a right to be who they are, and no one has a right to take that away. NO ONE. People need to get use to change and not freak out over equal rights. I'm so happy for ANYONE of any race or gender finding love!!! All of you haters are just miserable and angry people... I feel sorry for you.

Like Reply

**Cindy Daniell** from Facebook  
Sick..

2 hours ago

Like Reply



**david\_saint01**

1 hour ago

lol boy, that was epic..this isnt 1955 anymore, get over it

Like Reply

**Nancy C. Parker** from Facebook  
I am still not on the bandwagon on Gay Marriage, please don't put pictures like this in our faces.

2 hours ago

Like Reply



**david\_saint01**

1 hour ago

lol then dont freaking look at them. smh

Like Reply

**sdahewte**

3 hours ago

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**Melissa Kline** from Facebook

4 hours ago

Have you been to prison...???Probably not stfu

Like Reply

**Andrew Malouff** from Facebook

4 hours ago

who cares about the picture ?get over it dumbasses

1  Like Reply

**Dorian Demetrulias** from Facebook

4 hours ago

Close minded red neck bigot fuckers GET OUT. This is your cue to leave the state. Go.

1  Like Reply

**Gary Trayler** from Facebook

5 hours ago

Two freaks of nature - sex like dogs. The media is so proud

Like Reply



**david\_saint01**

1 hour ago

lol that was probably the most ignorant comment i have ever seen. And you seem so proud of it

Like Reply

**Gary Mcwilliams Jr.** from Facebook

5 hours ago

Steve, Casey freakin owns you. Your arguement is Invalid! Lol

Like Reply

**Travis Estes** from Facebook

5 hours ago

Jerk Cook, bestiality is already legal in something like 20 states. But to compare the marriage of two consenting adults to the rape of an animal is pretty ignorant and offensive as well. But based on your other comments I see you are just a racist, bigoted asshole. You're probably to stupid to even see how illogical your statement s are.

2   Like Reply



**Zach Ramsden** from Facebook

6 hours ago

haha! Yes!!

Like Reply



**Jerk Cook** from Facebook

6 hours ago

Next thing you know they will try to make bestiality legal.

Like Reply



**Jerk Cook** from Facebook

6 hours ago

They must have met in prison. ;)

Like Reply



**Matt Barton** from Facebook 6 hours ago  
Shannon you are a fucking moron.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)

**Theresa Perry** from Facebook 6 hours ago  
Exactly. So sad and so true...

[Like](#) [Reply](#)

**Steve Kalan** from Facebook 9 hours ago  
Horrible

[Like](#) [Reply](#)

**Erica Nix** from Facebook 9 hours ago  
Congrats it's about time (:

1 [Like](#) [Reply](#)

**Leah Greer** from Facebook 9 hours ago  
Hey I am getting married tomorrow...to the opposite sex....can the news crew be there to cover it please????

1 [Like](#) [Reply](#)



**david\_saint01** 1 hour ago  
are you one of the first straight couples to get married in AZ? No, so why would it be newsworthy. smh get over yourself

[Like](#) [Reply](#)

**Casey Stanford** from Facebook 10 hours ago  
Only black people go to prison, Steve? I'm sorry; I guess I didn't realize that saying something reminds you of a prison moment is racist.....? Maybe you should try explaining hw it IS racist, smart guy.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)

**Rachel Prystie** from Facebook 12 hours ago  
That awkward kissing position makes my neck ache.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



**Rachel Prystie** from Facebook 12 hours ago  
I didn't find anything racist about Shannon Polomis's comments.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



**Nina Potts** from Facebook 12 hours ago  
Oh no, people kissing, because \*straight\* people never make out, grope, fondle, or even have sex in public, ever. And at their own wedding, how dare they not have a tiny crude little kiss to seal the deal like all of you did?? Not to mention taking a group of already oppressed people and further trying to diminish them for not conforming to your conservative and frigid heteronormative standards. Good job commentors, but Arizona is full on gayed up. All pride, all the time.

1 [Like](#) [Reply](#)



**Marco Cruz** from Facebook 12 hours ago  
They should put you away for saying crazy things!

[Like](#) [Reply](#)

**Mel Urquidi** from Facebook 13 hours ago

Barffff

[Like](#) [Reply](#)

**Dom Villegas** from Facebook  
DAT picture!!!!!!

13 hours ago

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**Justin Skelton** from Facebook  
Media

13 hours ago

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**Michael Cardoza** from Facebook  
Great news, disgusting photo.

13 hours ago

[Like](#) [Reply](#)

**Lennie Hernandez** from Facebook  
I am gay and this pic is horrific. Lol.....

13 hours ago

1  [Like](#) [Reply](#)

**Elle Janette** from Facebook  
Since when are kisses left out of wedding photos?

13 hours ago

[Like](#) [Reply](#)

**Jason Kawamoto** from Facebook  
yeah, that pic is rough. down for the cause, but also down for professional photos. doesn't matter who you love, but gay or straight- excessive pda is excessive pda.


13 hours ago

[Like](#) [Reply](#)

**Shannon Polomis** from Facebook  
Just to be clear I dont agree with what joe said about your pic because you are clearly very beautiful... however.... That was funny as fuck

13 hours ago

[Like](#) [Reply](#)

**Shannon Polomis** from Facebook  
 No one is even bringing up race beside you. However you are also not worth arguing with. I said it was a great thing to celebrate. I concede. You win your argument is better than mine. I lose you win. That's what you want after all so I give up.

14 hours ago

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



**Nathan Schneider** from Facebook  
Whenever we talk about same-sex marriage, why does the media always post pictures of people making out? I'm all for equality, but that doesn't mean I enjoy watching homosexuals kiss.

14 hours ago

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



**Joe Rollins** from Facebook  
Could be worse, they could be jizzing in that whale in your picture.

14 hours ago

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



**Adrian Gonzalez Ciapara** from Facebook  
Mayates

14 hours ago

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



**Brandon Reish** from Facebook

14 hours ago

It's disgusting. It's a gross kiss. Literally looks like a forced prison kiss.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



**Brandon Reish** from Facebook

14 hours ago

It's terrible

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



**Morgan McNally** from Facebook

14 hours ago

No, sorry, that's not how it works, darlin'. Just because there are a handful of racists who agree with your racist opinion does not mean you are in the right. Further, please do explain how your being called out as a racist is "of [my] own insecurities." This picture is a perfectly fine representation of today's ruling - it shows two people engrossed in their own joy. It's candid and perfectly lovely, and I wish them all the happiness in the world.

1 [Like](#) [Reply](#)



**Shannon Polomis** from Facebook

14 hours ago

Read the other opinions I'm not the only one who feels this picture is not a good representation of a monumental moment. If you were sensitive to my comment it's of your own insecurities.

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**Jason Vess** from Facebook

14 hours ago

Ps I did not need to see that picture , fag !

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



**Jason Vess** from Facebook

14 hours ago

Ray Castro is so jealous of this picture he had to post it out of anger , chill bro Love is love & like I told you , it's nature keeping the population down

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**Tommy Holt** from Facebook

14 hours ago

G

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**Tawnie Williams** from Facebook

14 hours ago

Some people might look at your profile pic and be repulsed also Kenny.

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**Patricia Cuestas-James** from Facebook

14 hours ago

So that's the definition of sucking face Imao

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