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Statement of Gloria Allred

Today, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 5-4 in the case of Obergefell v. Hodges that marriage equality is now the law of our land and that same sex couples are entitled to the equal protection of the law. This is a landmark historic U.S. Supreme Court decision which we celebrate today and which is long overdue.

As Supreme Court Justice Kennedy said "under the constitution, same-sex couples seek in marriage the same legal treatment as opposite sex couples and it would disparage their choices and diminish their personhood to deny them that right."

I was the first attorney in California in 2004 to announce that if Robin Tyler and Diane Olson were denied a marriage license that I would file a lawsuit on their behalf challenging the ban on same sex marriage in California. They were denied a marriage license. My law firm and I took their case all the way to the California Supreme Court. We won and as a result Robin and Diane became the first same-sex couple to be permitted to marry in Los Angeles County.

In addition, I recently honored the couple (April DeBoer and Jayne Rowse) whose case was decided by the U.S. Supreme Court today (DeBoer v. Snyder). They rode in my car at the recent Christopher Street West Gay and Lesbian Pride Parade in West Hollywood on June 14, 2015. The Women's Equal

Rights Legal Defense and Education Fund, of which I am President, is listed as an Amicus (friend of the court) on a brief in support of April and Jayne in their U.S. Supreme Court Case.

April and Jayne, a Michigan couple who are R.N.'s, simply wanted to be able to adopt children, some of whom had special needs. They learned that both of them would not be permitted to adopt because Michigan banned the right to marry for same sex couples. Today they have won and we are so proud to support them.

As Justice Kennedy concluded in his eloquently written majority opinion today “No union is more profound than marriage, for it embodies the highest ideals of love, fidelity, devotion, sacrifice, and family. In forming a marital union, two people become something greater than once they were...marriage embodies a love that may endure even past death. It would misunderstand these men and women to say they disrespect the idea of marriage. Their plea is that they do respect it, respect it so deeply that they seek to find its fulfillment for themselves. Their hope is not to be condemned to live in loneliness, excluded from one of civilization’s oldest institutions. They ask for dignity in the eyes of the law. The constitution grants them that right.”

I am so proud of our Supreme Court and of our country today. I have been fighting the battle for equal rights for gay and lesbian individuals and couples for almost 40 years. This ruling is as a result of decades of small steps by courageous individuals, their families, their co-workers and civil rights pioneers. I am so happy that they will no longer have to suffer the indignity of being second class

citizens under the law. They will no longer have to endure the humiliation and the disrespect that accompanies second class personhood.

I thank God that I have lived to see this day and can share in the joy that it brings to millions of Americans.

Gloria Allred
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