

Lawfully Wed || Gay Marriage

Scene

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ried within minutes of receiving their license outside an office of the county clerk of the Superior Court.

Patterson was in such a rush that he arrived from the gym without the wedding ring for his spouse.

The pastor who performed the ceremony, the Rev. John Dorhauer, quickly slipped off his own ring to use as a substitute.

Across Arizona, court clerks took the historic step of issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples. Licenses were quickly updated with new wording, including a third option of "spouse" in addition to "bride" and "groom."

Several couples held marriage ceremonies within minutes or hours of getting their certificates. Others began making plans for more-formal ceremonies with families and friends.

The concrete patio outside the Maricopa County clerk of the Superior Court's office, near Fifth Avenue and Jackson Street, became the scene of a pop-up wedding chapel by midmorning Friday.

Couples leaving the office with certificates in hand were greeted by ministers offering to perform the ceremony on the spot. Some held up signs that said, in red letters: "We stand ready to marry you!"

Ceremonies dotted the small plaza. Photographers and TV camera crews hustled into place to get a good angle for the brief exchanges of vows. Every few minutes, clapping marked the end of one ceremony, then whooping and shouting would end another.

One person drove by in a car and taunted couples. The driver of the next vehicle beeped the horn in support.

At Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton's office, a couple who have been together for 12 years were married by an openly gay judge who said he had previously refused to officiate weddings in Arizona because same-sex unions were prohibited.

Maricopa County Superior Court Judge Kevin Kane said he was honored to have the opportunity to perform the ceremony.

"It's about time," he said.

Tim Pawlak and Jason Bannecker, together for more than a decade, exchanged rings about five years ago. Exchanging vows was something neither said they needed to solidify their relationship. But they were thrilled to have the opportunity.

Stanton said that their union marked a historic day in Arizona but that there are more to come.

"It's a civil march moving forward. I'm glad you chose us. Today is a day about love," he said.

At Coconino County Superior Court in Flagstaff, Gary Dunn, 62, and Dwayne



Jamie Chapman-Whelan (left) places a wedding ring on Laura Anne Chapman-Whelan as Judge Howard Grodman marries the pair Friday at the Coconino County Courthouse in Flagstaff.

Conn, 50, had a marriage license in hand within 10 minutes. But after being together 18 years, they didn't know when they would put the piece of paper to use.

"We filed a mortgage together 15 years ago," Dunn said. "How much more married can you get?"

Erika Alvarez, 31, and Abby Ortiz, 33, were among the first couples to get licenses at the Coconino County courthouse. They returned later in the day for a marriage ceremony in one of the courtrooms.

Before the ceremony, Alvarez reflected on what the day meant to her.

"(From now on) I'm going to be married," she said. "I'm not less than that couple or that couple or that couple. I won't have to say, 'She's my partner.' I can say, 'She's my wife.'"

She held Ortiz's face in her hands during the brief ceremony, which was filled with smiles and tears.

Howard Grodman, a judge in the Flagstaff Justice Court, ended with slightly new wording.

"Now, by the authority that was newly vested in me today, by the state of Arizona, I pronounce you spouses."

Two dozen observers hooted and hollered.

In Tucson, the Rev. Delle McCormick, senior minister of Rincon Congregational Church, arrived at Pima County Superior Court at about 10 a.m. with the intention of marrying as many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender couples as possible.

McCormick, who is a lesbian, was

married in Massachusetts to her partner of nine years. Her marriage became legal Friday in Arizona.

Katherine Harrison, 37, and Jennifer Shelton, 35, arrived at the same courthouse later that morning. Friday's legal decision worked out perfectly for them — they already had a (less official) wedding planned for today.

"We got a cup of coffee and just raced right on over," Harrison said. "We haven't even had breakfast yet."

They emerged at noon with a license, headed to their wedding-rehearsal dinner later Friday. Their ceremony was to go ahead as planned this evening.

Now, they said they are thinking about adopting a child.

"Way to go, Arizona," Harrison said.

At least six wedding ceremonies had taken place by midafternoon outside the Pima County courthouse.

Officials at the Maricopa County Northwest Regional Court Center in Surprise began setting up clipboards for marriage licenses shortly after Arizona Attorney General Tom Horne announced he would not appeal the federal ruling.

The courthouse had its first marriage license by noon, with nine licenses issued and five marriage ceremonies performed near the doorstep by midafternoon.

Ann Vanacore and Helen Dunlap were the first gay couple issued a marriage license in Surprise. They have been together for 41 years, most of which was lived in silence for fear of losing

their jobs as elementary-school teachers in Connecticut.

They only recently broke their silence, and they attribute that to a local choir group they joined and Phoenix Mercury star Brittney Griner.

The Rev. Terry Sims, who married couples in front of the Surprise courthouse, said it was a bold new day for justice and civil rights in Arizona.

"The trend has been in favor of gay marriage for a number of years. This doesn't mean there won't be pockets of resistance," he said. "But the tide is definitely shifting."

Jimi Olmstead and Jim Harland were married in Los Angeles in 2008. But Olmstead said they wanted to be married in the state where they live, which they did in Surprise on Friday.

They moved to Sun City West recently to be with Olmstead's father, who had become ill.

They met 38 years ago in a gay bar in West Hollywood. The disco song "You Should Be Dancing" by the Bee Gees was playing. They danced — and they have never been apart since.

Maricopa County's software system for printing licenses was up and running, allowing a third option — "spouse" — in addition to "bride" and "groom."

"A couple can come in, and it can be bride-bride, groom-groom, spouse-spouse or whatever the couple chooses," said Michael Jeanes, Maricopa County clerk of Superior Court.

In downtown Phoenix, a business awards luncheon turned into a celebration.

Just as servers were setting out entrees in the ballroom at the Downtown Phoenix Sheraton Hotel, couples Sue Wieger and Sheila Kloeffkorn and Bonnie Meyer and Katharine Halpin were married by Phoenix Municipal Judge Marianne Bayardi.

The weddings were a surprise for the more than 600 guests at the One Community awards luncheon, celebrating partnerships between the gay community and Arizona businesses.

Bayardi got a call at 9:30 a.m. Friday asking her to perform the wedding, an hour before Horne made his announcement.

The room broke into shouts, clapping, whooping and cheers when Bayardi pronounced the legally married couples.

Wieger held Kloeffkorn's hand and said, "Now I can take care of her for the rest of my life," and kissed the back of her hand.

As the two couples posed for photos, servers passed out plates of vanilla layer cake frosted with a single word: "Love."

Republic reporters Tyler Fingert, Ryan Van Velzer, Mariana Dale, Megan Finnerty, Richard Ruelas, Jim Walsh, Sean Holstege, Philip Haldiman, Yihyun Jeong, Dianna M. Nãñez, Maria Polletta, Caitlin McGlade, Michelle Ye Hee Lee and Dustin Gardiner contributed to this article.

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OPINION

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MARRIAGE LICENSES AND CEREMONIES

Offices in Maricopa County where same-sex marriage certificates may be obtained:

- » Clerk of Court, downtown Phoenix: 601 W. Jackson, Phoenix.
 - » Northeast Regional Court Center: 18380 N. 40th St., #120, Phoenix.
 - » Northwest Regional Court Center: 14264 W. Tierra Buena Lane, Surprise.
 - » Southeast Court Complex: 222 E. Javelina Ave., Mesa.
 - » Agua Fria Justice Court: 9550 W. Van Buren, #6, Tolleson.
 - » Highland Justice Court: 55 E. Civic Center Drive, #55, Gilbert.
 - » Ironwood Justice Court: 209 E. Pima St., Gila Bend.
 - » Maryvale Justice Court: 4622 W. Indian School Rd., #10, Phoenix.
 - » San Marcos Justice Court: 201 E. Chicago St., #103, Chandler.
 - » San Tan Justice Court: 201 E. Chicago St., #102, Chandler.
 - » White Tank Justice Court: 21749 W. Yuma Road, Buckeye.
 - » Youngtown City Court: 12033 N. Clubhouse Square (112th and Alabama avenues), Youngtown.
- For licensing locations in other counties, visit azcentral.com.

Weekend weddings

This weekend's Phoenix Rainbows Festival will celebrate legalization of same-sex marriage by marrying couples who want to participate in ceremonies at 1 p.m. today.

Festival details: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. today and Sunday. Heritage Square Park, 115 N. Sixth St., Phoenix.

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