

Marriage Equality:  
Breaking Barriers for LGBTQ+

Katelyn E. Hurtz  
Senior Division  
Individual Exhibit  
Process Paper: 372 words

## Process Paper

1. I wanted to do something influential and relevant. I came to the realization that many other students would go back in history, and would have covered something many others had done before them. I desired to do something more recent, while maintaining the strength of theme for Breaking Barriers. For these reasons, I chose the development of marriage equality for the LGBTQ+.
2. Due to the nature of my topic, much of the context and content covering my topic was recorded electronically, and much less so in the manner of books. Many of the documents found online were posted at the time of these events, and can be/are considered primary documents in this matter. I did have a book source, however, most of my documents were from digital sources, but I do not think that this fact undervalues the content due to the fact that this did occur during the digital age.
3. In deciding the medium that I should use to create my project, I found that the subject material, seeing as much of the material people use to show pride is very colorful, eye catching, I hoped that the topic convince people to stay and learn about this topic. Much of it's construction required trial and error in finding the correct size of materials in order to display all of my material. It was quite a find to work with so much color, as much of my other exhibits lent themselves to far more serious colorschemes, And although i also take this particular subject seriously, it was relevant for me to use a much more vibrant presentation of information.
4. The fight for rights in regards to the LGBTQ+ has a long and contrived history. And though the right to marry is indeed a huge leap for equality, there yet remains other matters of equality that need to be handled. Issues such as discrimination are not a new concept to american history, and to exclude the matters of sex, gender, and sexuality as targets for descimination would be woefully neglectful. Much like Loving v. Virginia, a case such as this supports our society in a a possative way, and hopefully, marriage between same sex couples will continue to be validated and accepted.

## Primary Documents

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Source Taken from a database dedicated to Minnesota History. Used for Context

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Chappell, Bill. “Supreme Court Declares Same-Sex Marriage Legal In All 50 States.” *NPR*,

NPR, 26 June 2015,

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A timeline of the events towards marriage equality

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Shows some of the positive gay marriage can have

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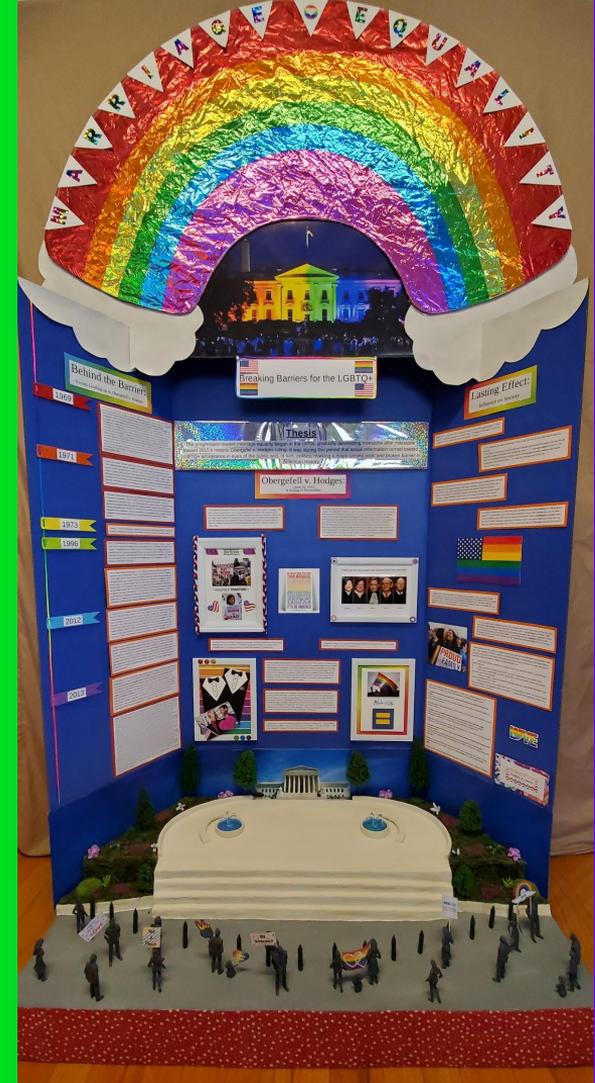
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# Marriage Equality: Breaking Barriers for LGBTQ+

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# Behind the Barrier:

Events Leading up to Obergefell v. Hodges

1969

"At 1:20 A.M. on the night of June 28, 1969, eight officers from the Public Morals Section of the First Division of the New York City Police Department raided the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar located on Christopher Street, just off Seventh Avenue, in Greenwich Village. The Stonewall was a less-than-respectable establishment, even by the standards of gay bars of the time. It was owned by the Mafia. It was a hangout for drag queens and teenage hustlers, and on weekend night, a go-go boy dance on top of the bar."... "The raid on Stonewall that evening followed the usual pattern of police harassment of gay bars in New York."... "Usually, in such raids (four Village gay bars had been raided in the preceding few weeks), those given permission to leave would file out docilely, to avoid further tempting arrest or exposure. However, this evening, instead of going home, the patrons began to congregate outside the bar. The mood was festive."... "The police took refuge within the bar. Outside, someone uprooted a parking meter and tried to break down the Stonewall's front door. Someone else squirted lighter fluid through the window, followed by a few matches. From inside the bar, the police clearly rattled-turned a fire hose on the crowd."... "By the time order was restored, thirteen people had been arrested."... "Then, exactly one month after the events at Stonewall, three or four hundred gays and lesbians gathered at Washington Square and marched to the site of the riots, chanting, 'Gay power!' and singing 'We Shall Overcome.' The gay revolution-the last of the revolutions of the 1960s-had finally arrived." (Miller, Neil)

1971

"Late in 1970, Baker and McConnell filed a case against the Hennepin County District Court. They argued that since same-sex marriage was not explicitly illegal under Minnesota law, they must be issued a marriage license. In January of 1971, the District Court judge denied their motion without comment. Baker and McConnell appealed their case, known as *Baker v. Nelson*, to the Minnesota Supreme Court, claiming a constitutional right to marry."... "Baker and McConnell appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, asking them to rule on the issue of same-sex marriage for the first time. On October 10, 1972, the Supreme Court dismissed the case "for want of a substantial federal question" and upheld the state's decision." ("*Baker v. Nelson*.")

The progression  
toward 2015's historic  
LGBTQ+ acceptance

1973

"Petitioners, Richard John Baker and James Michael McConnell, both adult male persons, made application to respondent, Gerald R. Nelson, clerk of Hennepin County District Court, for a marriage license, pursuant to Minn. St. 517.08. Respondent declined to issue the license on the sole ground that petitioners were of the same sex, it being undisputed that there were otherwise no statutory impediments to a heterosexual marriage by either petitioner. The trial court, quashing an alternative writ of mandamus, ruled that respondent was not required to issue a marriage license to petitioners and specifically directed that a marriage license not be issued to them." (*Baker v. Nelson*)

January 1, 1973: The Maryland Legislature passes a statute restricting marriage to different-sex couples, becoming the first state in the country to pass such a statute. ("Freedom to Marry")

1996

"SEC. 3. DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE. (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 1 of title 1, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following: "§ 7. Definition of 'marriage' and 'spouse' "In determining the meaning of any Act of Congress, or of any ruling, regulation, or interpretation of the various administrative bureaus and agencies of the United States, the word 'marriage' means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the word 'spouse' refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife.'" (Defence of Marriage Act of 1996)

"The so-called "Defense of Marriage Act," or DOMA, was passed in 1996 by Congress and signed into law by President Bill Clinton. The part that was struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court is called "Section Three," which prevented the federal government from recognizing any marriages, even if those couples are considered legally married by their home state. The other significant part of DOMA makes it so that individual states do not legally have to acknowledge the relationships of gay and lesbian couples who were married in another state. Only the section that dealt with federal recognition was ruled unconstitutional."..."Section Three is the part that prevented the federal government from recognizing any marriages between gay or lesbian couples for the purpose of federal laws or programs, even if those couples are considered legally married by their home state." ("Frequently Asked Questions: Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA).")

2013

...being fighting on my behalf and yet feel constrained, even now that "don't ask, don't tell" is gone, because they are not able to commit themselves in a marriage." ("President Obama Supports Same-Sex Marriage")

"On October 18, 2012, the Second Circuit issued an opinion striking down the so-called "Defense of Marriage Act" in the ACLU and NYCLU's *Windsor v. United States* case. The court decided that when government discriminates against lesbians and gay men, the discrimination should be presumed to be unconstitutional and the government has to have a very good reason for the discrimination. This is the first federal appeals court to decide that a higher standard of review applies to sexual orientation discrimination. On December 7, 2012, the Supreme Court agreed to hear Edie Windsor's challenge to the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). Oral arguments took place on March 27, 2013. On June 26, 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that section three of the so-called "Defense of Marriage Act" (DOMA) is unconstitutional and that the federal government cannot discriminate against married lesbian and gay couples for the purposes of determining federal benefits and protections." ("*Windsor v. United States.*")

DOMA seeks to injure the very class New York seeks to protect. By doing so it violates basic due process and equal protection principles applicable to the Federal Government. See U. S. Const., Amdt. 5; *Bolling v. Sharpe*, 347 U. S. 497 (1954). The Constitution's guarantee of equality "must at the very least mean that a bare congressional desire to harm a politically unpopular group cannot" justify disparate treatment of that group. *Department of Agriculture v. Moreno*, 413 U. S. 528, 534-535 (1973). In determining whether a law is motivated by an improper animus or purpose, "[d]iscriminations of an unusual character" especially require careful consideration. *Supra*, at 19 (quoting *Romer*, *supra*, at 633). DOMA cannot survive under these principles. The responsibility of the States for the regulation of domestic relations is an important indicator of the substantial societal impact the State's classifications have in the daily lives and customs of its people. DOMA's unusual deviation from the usual tradition of recognizing and accepting state definitions of marriage here operates to deprive same-sex couples of the benefits and responsibilities that come with the federal recognition of their marriages. This is strong evidence of a law having the purpose and effect of disapproval of that class. The avowed purpose and practical effect of the law here in question are to impose a disadvantage, a separate status, and so a stigma upon all who enter into same-sex marriages made lawful by the unquestioned authority of the States. For certain married couples, DOMA's unequal effects are even more serious. The federal penal code makes it a crime to "assault[ ], kidnap[ ], or murder[ ] . . . a member of the immediate family" of "a United States official, a United States judge, [or] a Federal law enforcement officer;" 18 U. S. C. §115(a)(1)(A), with the intent to influence or retaliate against that official, §115(a)(1). Although a "spouse" qualifies as a member of the officer's "immediate family," §115(c)(2), DOMA makes this protection inapplicable to same-sex spouses. . . . The power the Constitution grants it also restrains. And though Congress has great authority to design laws to fit its own conception of sound national policy, it cannot deny the liberty protected by the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment. What has been explained to this point should more than suffice to establish that the principal purpose and the necessary effect of this law are to demean those persons who are in a lawful same-sex marriage. This requires the Court to hold, as it now does, that DOMA is unconstitutional as a deprivation of the liberty of the person protected by the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution. (*United States v. Windsor*)



# Thesis

The progression toward marriage equality began in the 1970s, gradually developing milestone after milestone toward 2015's historic Obergefell v. Hodges ruling. It was during this period that social reformation turned toward LGBTQ+ acceptance in eyes of the public and, in turn, politics, marking a major turning point and broken barrier in American History.

## Obergefell v. Hodges:

June 26, 2015  
A Ruling to Remember

"The Supreme Court ruled 5-4 that the Constitution guarantees a right to same-sex marriage. At the center of the case was the love story of Jim Obergefell and John Arthur, who married in 2013. When Mr. Arthur died, Ohio refused to list Mr. Obergefell as his spouse on the death certificate. In the ruling, Justice Anthony M. Kennedy wrote: "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." (Padnani, Amisha, and Celina Fang)

"Michigan, Kentucky, Ohio, and Tennessee define marriage as a union between one man and one woman. The petitioners, 14 same-sex couples and two men whose same-sex partners are deceased, filed suits in Federal District Courts in their home States, claiming that respondent state officials violate the Fourteenth Amendment by denying them the right to marry or to have marriages lawfully performed in another State given full recognition. Each District Court ruled in petitioners' favor, but the Sixth Circuit consolidated the cases and reversed. "...JUSTICE KENNEDY delivered the opinion of the Court. The Constitution promises liberty to all within its reach, a liberty that includes certain specific rights that allow persons, within a lawful realm, to define and express their identity. The petitioners in these cases seek to find that liberty by marrying someone of the same sex and having their marriages deemed lawful on the same terms and conditions as marriages between persons of the opposite sex." (*Obergefell v. Hodges*)

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"He filed suit because he wasn't allowed to put his name on his late husband John Arthur's death certificate after Arthur died from ALS. Holding a photograph of Arthur as he spoke Friday, Obergefell said, 'No American should have to suffer that indignity.'" (Chappell 2015)

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 EACH. THEY BECOME  
 ALL AS ONE. OF THE PASTORS IN THESE CITIES TO MARRIAGE  
**MARRIAGE EMBODIES A LOVE**  
**THAT MAY ENDURE, EVEN PAST DEATH**  
 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 EQUAL DIGNITY**  
**IN THE EYES OF THE LAW**  
 THE CONSTITUTION GRANTS THEM THAT RIGHT  
 AND DENIES THEM THE CARE OF ONE ANOTHER FOR THE REST OF THEIR LIVES  
**IT IS SO ORDERED**



"Obergefell continued, 'the four words etched onto the front of the Supreme Court — 'equal justice under law' — apply to us, too.'" (Chappell 2015)



"Today's decision shows that decades of attempts to restrain this Court's abuse of its authority have failed. A lesson that some will take from today's decision is that preaching about the proper method of interpreting the Constitution or the virtues of judicial self-restraint and humility cannot compete with the temptation to achieve what is viewed as a noble end by any practicable means. I do not doubt that my colleagues in the majority sincerely see in the Constitution a vision of liberty that happens to coincide with their own. But this sincerity is cause for concern, not comfort. What it evidences is the deep and perhaps irremediable corruption of our legal culture's conception of constitutional interpretation." (*Obergefell v. Hodges*)

"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. As some of the petitioners in these cases demonstrate, 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 equal dignity in the eyes of the law. The Constitution grants them that right." (*Obergefell v. Hodges*)

Comparing the ruling to other landmark decisions, NPR's Nina Totenberg says, "This is probably right up there with *Brown v. Board of Education*, and *Roe v. Wade* — if you like it or hate it — and today, *Obergefell v. Hodges*. This was a historic moment." (Chappell 2015)



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# Start of panel 3

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“Since the U.S. Supreme Court’s Obergefell decision in June 2015, approximately 157,000 same-sex couples have married in the United States.” (“Estimates of Marriages of Same-Sex Couples at the Two-Year Anniversary of Obergefell v. Hodges.”)

“As we approach the fourth anniversary of the ruling, here are five key facts about same-sex marriage:  
1. The share of Americans who favor same sex-marriage grew steadily for most of the last decade, but public support has leveled off in the last few years.”...”2. Although support in the U.S. for same-sex marriage has increased among nearly all demographic groups, there are still sizable demographic and partisan divides.”...”3. Same-sex marriages are on the rise....”  
(Masci, David, et al.)

“Homophobia remains a pervasive issue in countries across the world, including places where gay marriage is legal. But giving same-sex couples legal recognition—which, in many cases, also allows them to access certain other benefits from the state generally awarded to married couples—may actually be a useful tool to change social attitudes and bias toward queer people. According to a [study](#) published in April of 2019 in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, legalizing same-sex marriage reduces anti-gay bias.”(Dunlevy, Leah)

“Everybody benefits from a society that’s more accepting and less discriminating. In affirming the rights of a social minority such as the LGBT community, we are also opening the way for other cultural, political, or any other minority group for that matter. Just as racial equality brought about the rise of women’s liberation, genuine gay liberation can in turn spawn liberation trends that can make our society a more stable one.” (“How Legalizing Same Sex Marriages Benefits Everyone.”)

“Legalisation of same-sex marriage in US states has been linked to a drop in suicide attempts among teenagers. Researchers say suicide attempts among high school students fell by an average of 7% following the implementation of the legislation. The impact was especially significant among gay, lesbian and bisexual teenagers, for whom the passing of same-sex marriage laws was linked to a 14% drop in suicide attempts.” (Davis, Nicola)



“These are high school students, so they aren’t getting married any time soon, for the most part,” lead author Julia Raifman of Johns Hopkins University said in announcing the findings. “Still, permitting same-sex marriage reduces structural stigma associated with sexual orientation. There may be something about having equal rights—even if they have no immediate plans to take advantage of them—that makes students feel less stigmatized and more hopeful for the future.” (Staff, Pacific Standard)

“Some people may have negative attitudes toward gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men. These attitudes can lead to rejection by friends and family, discriminatory acts and violence, and laws and policies with negative consequences. If you are gay, bisexual, or a man who has sex with other men, homophobia, stigma, and discrimination can:

- Affect your income, whether you can get or keep a job, and your ability to get and keep health insurance.
- Limit your access to high quality health care that is responsive to your health issues.
- Add to poor mental health and poor coping skills, such as substance abuse, risky sexual behaviors, and suicide attempts.
- Affect your ability to have and maintain long-term same-sex relationships that lower your chances of getting HIV & STDs.
- Make it harder for you to be open about your sexual orientation, which can increase stress, limit social support, and negatively affect your health.” (“Stigma and Discrimination Affects Gay and Bisexual Men’s Health.”)

equal justice



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- Make it harder for you to be open about your sexual orientation, which can increase stress, limit social support, and negatively affect your health.” (“Stigma and Discrimination Affects Gay and Bisexual Men’s Health.”)

“I have three predictions about the lasting effects of same-sex marriage, based on my observations as a father and a doctor with experience of hundreds of young families.

**1. Children who are born and grow up LGBTIQ will have less stressful lives from the outset.**

Because they will grow up free of the looming deprivation of the right accorded their peers, to marry someone someday.

Marriage equality helps recognise them as full humans, so all domains of life are likely to be less stressful for them.

**2. Children born to LGBTIQ parents will have less stressful lives from the outset.**

Because more people will have moved on from worrying about whether their parents’ relationship is unallowable or harmful. Fewer people will judge or mistreat them.

Bullies take their cues from their seniors, and fear being left out. Once bullies see everyone else has moved on, they will have to tag along too.

**3. All other children will be born into a more tolerant society, and have less stressful lives from the outset.**

Because same-sex marriage leads the way towards treating all human difference with compassion and respect. So kids born with any kind of difference will receive more compassion and respect.

The rest of our kids will grow from treating others with more compassion and respect. And all our kids will grow more securely, in less fear of the possibility they could be different from others.

We will all worry less about being different from others, and get on with life.” (Roberts, Matthew)



Katelyn E. Hurtz





On July 20, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its landmark decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which held that the fundamental right to marry is guaranteed to all Americans, regardless of their sexual orientation. This decision is a landmark moment in the history of the United States, and it is a testament to the power of the American people and the American legal system. The Court's decision is a landmark moment in the history of the United States, and it is a testament to the power of the American people and the American legal system.



"I think it's important to have that decision of marriage to remain the Court's job of the majority vote. I think it's important to have that decision of marriage to remain the Court's job of the majority vote. I think it's important to have that decision of marriage to remain the Court's job of the majority vote."

"This action is more profound than marriage. It is a declaration of the highest ideals of love, equality, freedom, justice, and dignity. It is a declaration of the highest ideals of love, equality, freedom, justice, and dignity. It is a declaration of the highest ideals of love, equality, freedom, justice, and dignity."

Comparing the ruling in other landmark decisions, NPR's Nina Totenberg says, "This is probably right there with *Brown v. Board of Education*, and *Roe v. Wade* — you list it as one of the top three most important Supreme Court cases in the past 100 years."



There have been problems about the timing of the hearing. The hearing is scheduled for 10:30 a.m. on Monday, June 29, 2015. The hearing is scheduled for 10:30 a.m. on Monday, June 29, 2015. The hearing is scheduled for 10:30 a.m. on Monday, June 29, 2015.

