
Freedom to Marry is a national non-profit organization founded in New York City in 2002. Its stated mission is ‘working to win marriage equality nationwide.’ It works through litigation, legislation, and community education. The organization sponsors Freedom to Marry Week, a weeklong national event from the 11th to the 15th of February, celebrating same-sex partnerships and the importance of marriage equality. Among other topics, they discuss the strength of the same-sex family and why marriage equality matters. Bucknell’s Office of LGBT Awareness and FLAG&BiT continue in 2008 to celebrate this important week. We will have a table in the LC Mall to give out gay marriage ribbons, have students sign letters to congressmen regarding marriage equality, and give out free marriage equality buttons. We also have a wide variety of panels and discussions during the week, including, “Campus Speak: Dialogue on What Marriage Means to You”, an informal dialogue on what marriage means to you (do you believe in gay marriage, straight marriage, no marriage and why?), a video screening of “One Wedding and a Revolution,” with discussion to follow; a video about the first same-sex couple married by U.S. government officials, “Talk It Out Dialogue: Gay Marriage, Civil Unions and Why?,” presenting the differences between gay marriage, civil unions, legal partnerships and marriage as an institution in an educational and academic setting, and finally, a video screening of “Daddy and Papa” with discussion to follow; a video on LGBT parenting and its challenges and joys.

Schedule of Events:

**Table in the LC Mall**
Free marriage equality buttons/gay marriage ribbons and sign a letter to your congressman about the importance of marriage equality
Monday-Friday, February 11-15
LC Mall
11am-1pm

**Campus Speak: Dialogue on What Marriage Means to You**
An informal dialogue revolving around questions on why marriage matters to you. Whether you believe in gay marriage, straight marriage or no marriage, we want to have your opinion voiced at the dialogue.
Monday February 11
Arches Lounge, LC
12-1 pm

“One Wedding and a Revolution”
Video and Discussion with Professor Renee Gosson
A video about the first same-sex couple married by U.S. government officials
Tuesday February 12
Gallery Theatre, LC
7-9 pm

“Talk It Out Dialogue: Gay Marriage, Civil Unions and Why?”
An academic/educational discussion and dialogue on gay marriage, civil unions, domestic partnerships, and marriage as an institution. This is not an “either or” discussion but rather to educate our campus community about the advantages, disadvantages, etc. of each and to dialogue over the why’s of each or none.
Wednesday February 13
Walls Lounge, LC
5-7 pm

“Daddy and Papa”
Video and Discussion with Dean Robert Midkiff
A video on gay parenting; the challenges and joys
Thursday February 14
Gallery Theatre, LC
7-9 pm
Bucknellians Stories and Insights about Gay Marriage

Dear Bucknellians,

There is no better way to communicate who we are and the depths of our commitment to our partners, our families, and our friends than by telling the truth of our lives. Whether LGBT identified or not, stories are personal, concrete ways we communicate. The stories that follow explain specific incidents of injustice and hardship encountered due to the denial of Social Security, health coverage, respect at work or school, and so on. They explain how the denial of marriage harms families.

With a wonderful father who identifies as gay, and his partner, I have come to understand the harsh realities and hundreds of rights denied to such couples because of their sexual orientation. It is hard to understand an issue, or a cause, without have a personal connection with it. Stories can serve as this connection. Undertaking this project has continued to open my eyes to what the denial of marriage to those who identify as LGBT can do. I know I am not the only one affected by this denial. Below are other Bucknell students and faculty who are sharing their stories with you. Take the time to read them. Their voices and personal experiences can help us spread the word about the hardships people who identify as LGBT face due to the denial of marriage. Sharing our stories and showing our faces helps the rest of America identify with our cause. Enjoy.

~Alex

Dear Bucknellians,

I consider myself a clear, concise and well-balanced person. I am not too mature but I am not a child. I try to learn everyday so that I can become a better person, because I really believe in people’s ideas. In fact, I think that a person is a person because of their ideas. If you do not have them, you are no one. That is why I really try to make myself a good person, because I think it is the only thing which can make me behave as a person, be myself.

And when people ask me my opinion about something, I try to think and give the best of myself; I have always expressed a point of view. When I believe in something, I really believe in it. It does not mean that I do not listen to different opinions; it is just difficult for others to change my mind.

And when I am asked about LGBT marriage I have an opinion which comes from the ideas I am part of. I am not going to give you a moral argument, because I do not think I have the right to do it. I am not going to tell people what they should think about something or not. I am not going to open people’s minds because that is not my intention. I am just going to give my opinion so people can understand my point of view.

Marriage for me is not more than a signature which means two people want to share their lives. It is like if they wanted to become a unique person, they are not two anymore. I do not have the right to judge people who are so obsessed to get married. That is why I only have to say that they can have their own reasons which should be respected. So my opinion, in this letter, does not have any relation with the way in which I see marriage. I ask myself, why people of the same sex cannot get married. At this point I try to find why there are people who do not support it. They always defend their claim by saying that if two people of the same sex get married, they might have children so, as those parents are so worried and convinced of their brilliant role as educators, they say it is not good for children. But I ask them what is exactly the thing which is not good for children. I have been trying to answer this question, trying to find out what homosexual couples have as “special”, what is the horrible thing they have that makes the children have a bad maturation. I look at a woman and a man together having a child and two women or two men doing the same, and I do not think there is any difference.

When my parents were children and they lived with their own families, things were different. The roles existed. It comes to mean that my grandfather’s way of behaving and taking care of my mother/father is very different from my grandmother’s. In the past, women and men were different. They used to have different roles in society and they received a different education. But nowadays, the masculine or feminine role does not exist, in my opinion, because females and males have the same way of being. With this I do not want to say that a woman is the same as a man, they are different but in the same way that two women or two men cannot be the same because they are different people. To say that a couple composed of two women or two men cannot be married and cannot have children is like if we are saying that they have something inside them that makes them feel incapable of taking care of a child. And sadly I think that we can find bad parents everywhere. To be or not to be gay does not mean you are worse or better at doing things. Everything depends on the education we have received from the very beginning of our lives, and the use that we have done of it.

Education starts when we are born and does not end till we die. Our education is composed of ideas, ideas that others impose on us and then we modify them to create our own. And people express ideas which come from reasoning (that is what makes us different from animals). I simply do not understand why people of the same sex who want to get married and form a family cannot; I do not understand why they are supposed to be worse or better if they are just two people who want to share their lives together.

And I ask myself what is necessary to bring up a child. I think that when I was a child I just needed someone to love me.

With love and respect,

A friend.
**Stories (con't)**

Dear Bucknellians,

Growing up, I never daydreamed about getting married. I remember my older sister always looking at Bridal magazines, so maybe it was simply because I didn’t like dresses. I knew I was a lesbian in college and I still didn’t think much about marriage or more specifically that I wouldn’t be allowed to get married. Even as most of my heterosexual friends got married, there wasn’t much of that was longing for a wedding. Then a funny thing happened, I fell in love and began creating a life with my partner. We own a house together, we share a bank account, we are beneficiaries to each other, etc. but we aren’t married. To many this may seem like enough and it was to me for a long time. We’ve been together over ten years now and if anything is missing in our relationship, it’s the fact that we aren’t married. Do we NEED it? No. But there is something about having our friends and family together just for us. There is something about standing in front of them and committing publicly to one another. I don’t need it to validate our relationship; I want it to celebrate our relationship. But somehow that offends people and I can’t figure out why. There seems like a simple answer, have a ceremony...even if it isn’t recognized as a marriage. I’ve thought about this, many times, but am I somehow confirming that my relationship is less than a straight couple? A man and a woman can meet one day and get married for a long time. We’ve gone through marriage-like contracts. A few years ago my mother and her partner have been together for about 13 years. They have participated in their own commitment ceremony, but because of Virginia’s strict laws cannot even create marriage-like contracts. A few years ago my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. When she first went into surgery, her partner waited anxiously outside. Because she was neither family nor legal spouse, the hospital would not tell her anything that was going on. This made both my mother and her very anxious. Luckily, after the initial surgery, my mom got to know the radiation staff, and came out to them. they were willing to bend hospital policy and keep my mothers life-partner informed. Marriage isn’t just about religion or tax breaks. The status of “married” carries into many aspects of life. Some of the rights that have the most impact on same-sex couples include:

- access to Social Security after spouse’s death
- access to health insurance through spouse’s workplace
- burial determination after the death of a spouse
- ability to file joint home and auto insurance policies
- automatic inheritance of retirement savings tax-free after spouse’s death
- access to tax breaks for married couples
- automatic next-of-kin status for emergency medical decisions and hospital visitation status
- joint parenting rights, such as access to children’s school records

This number signifies the amount of federal rights, protections and benefits that the United States governments grants every union or marriage composed of one man and one woman. This may sound great to any heterosexual couple, but most and almost all of these rights are not granted to same-sex couples in all circumstances. A good proportion of these rights are things that heterosexual couples take advantage of and don’t realize how much it really impacts their lives. Some of the rights that have the most impact on same-sex couples include:

My niece and her partner have been together for 15 years, although they do not have the benefit of living in a state that offers gay marriage as an option. (They live in Minnesota.) Through artificial insemination, one of them carried their 10-year-old boy and the other carried their 5-year-old girl. They are wonderful parents whose children are well-behaved, respectful, creative, and intelligent, both intellectually and emotionally. One thing people often claim is that a boy raised by two women won’t have adequate male role models. My niece’s son has tremendous role models, including his grandfather, who lives only a few blocks away and spends a great deal of time with him, and my nieces male friends, many of whom are very involved fathers. I believe that my niece and her partner are both actually listed on the children’s birth certificates and they went through adoption proceedings so that they both have full parental rights regarding both of the kids.

-Anonymous

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This is completely unjust and leads us to realize that much more needs to be done to end discrimination in civil marriage to give everyone, including same-sex couples, the equal rights they deserve.

~Anonymous
The Office of Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Awareness, is committed to making Bucknell a safe place for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. This is accomplished by supporting student groups and efforts to educating and increase awareness about LGBT issues and current public policy concerns. The office is guided by an Advisory Board comprised of students, faculty, staff, and administrators who are interested in and committed to the mission of the Office.

Given that Bucknell is dedicated to prepare its students to be morally responsible citizens, and given that societal attitudes are changing, the University attempts to promote attitudes and behaviors among its students which will create a climate of mutual respect and empower us all to appreciate diversity.

Spring 2008 Events:

National Freedom to Marry Week
February 11-15th
See page 1 for schedule of events

National Girls and Women in Sports Day Luncheon
February 13, 12pm
Terrace Room, ELC

International Women's Day Luncheon
March 4, 11:45-1pm
Hunt Formal
Tickets available through the Women's Resource Center

“Monday Night in Westerbork”
S. Bear Bergman
March 4, 7:30pm
Uptown
“A difficult, surprisingly funny, often complex and ultimately joyous piece set along the plotlines of the theater group at concentration camp Westerbork. Monday Night In Westerbork finds Bergman solidly in hir storytelling element, investigating points of intersection and impact among identity, art, persecution and resistance.” Visit http://sbearbergman.com/theater/mniw.php for more information

The Bucknell Forum presents Leonard Pitts
March 24, 7:30pm
Trout Auditorium

Diane Rosenfeld
"Rape Js"
April 3, 7pm
Gallery Theatre

Celebration of Diversity
"What Does Diversity Mean to You?"
April 8, 5:30-6:30pm
Sojka Pavilion

Jeans Day
April 10
Wear your "Gay? Fine by me." T-shirts

Current Safe Spaces:

Fraternities:
Chi Phi (Chapter and House)
Delta Upsilon (Chapter and House)
Sigma Phi Epsilon (Chapter)

Sororities:
Chi Omega (Chapter and Suite)
Delta Gamma (Chapter and Suite)
Kappa Alpha Theta (Chapter and Suite)

Other:
Social Justice Residential College
Prospect Research, and Management Office
Bucknell Student Government

Call x7-1609 and schedule a Safe Space program for your hall, group, fraternity, sorority, athletic team or office.

http://www.bucknell.edu/LGBT.xml