

Virginia District Court declares same-sex marriage ban to be unconstitutional

Since Amendment One passed in North Carolina on May 8, 2012, when inequality won and love lost, my faith in my country has plummeted to an all time low.

Born and raised in the South, I have always been ashamed of our conservatism, especially towards gay marriage that affects many of my loved ones. Even when it is not a personal matter, it is still disturbing to think about.

On Feb. 13, though, things began looking up.

U.S. District Court Judge Arenda L. Wright Allen for the Eastern District of Virginia overturned Virginia's statutory same-sex marriage ban, finding it unconstitutional. This is one of the strongest legal reversals yet of restrictive marriage amendments in the South.

Since the Defense of Marriage Act was overturned by the Supreme Court, there have been 12 cases before federal judges fighting for marriage equality. In every case, equality has won.

Of course, the South is no stranger to struggling with civil rights.

"We look at the history of marriage rights in the U.S., and it was once illegal for African-Americans to get married, and interracial marriage has been outlawed previously," said junior Shelby Smith.



BY ALLISON STALBERG
Staff Writer

Today, we still have bigotry and oppression lasting from our dark history. What may be different between then and now is time.

"(Marriage equality is) one of the fastest movements that we've seen in civil rights," said Cara Messina, secretary of Guilford PRIDE.

Many believe religious institutions are bound to slow down the freedom of marriage, but today churches are changing from within.

Jenny Shultz, associate pastor at United Church of Chapel Hill, married her wife during the Amendment One campaign at her own church.

"I believe that the truest form of the separation of church and state will eventually be what frees this country from her own demise," said Shultz in an email interview with The Guilfordian. "While the government holds the 'seal' of marriage and the church, the 'sacrament,' there will continue to be controversy."

Shultz is not the only one who married in North Carolina despite the lack of legality.

Garrett Hall, a private equity investor for AlpInvest Partners, met his partner at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and wanted to marry there with his friends and family present. With the legal stuff done in New York, he had the party in North Carolina.

"I hear the argument over states' rights, that states should be able to decide these sorts of things," said Hall in a phone interview with The Guilfordian. "But I think back to civil

rights movements, and if states were allowed to decide these things then we might be in a very different place — a place I don't think we, with our American values, would want to be."

The counties that voted against Amendment One were the homes of universities.

Some claimed this resulted from highly educated people voting against Amendment One.

I think a clearer conclusion could be age.

"As younger people become voters across the country, the issue of same sex-marriage and equal rights for non-heterosexuals are not the wedge issues that they used to be," said gay rights activist Nancy Sableski, school program runner for the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, in an email interview with The Guilfordian.

I am not the only optimist. Leaders, ministers, students and people of all classes, races and sexualities are growing hopeful as well.

"Marriage equality cases are now pending in all but eight of the 33 states that currently forbid gay couples to marry," said director of communications for Equality NC Jen Jones in an email interview with The Guilfordian.

"This avalanche of lawsuits, as well as meteoric shifts in public support for the freedom to marry, puts incredible pressure on the Supreme Court to sooner rather than later take up the issue of whether equal actually means equal."

I believe that with the way things are going in this country, the question of legality of same-sex marriage is no longer "if," but "when."

Core Value of the Week: integrity & the new president

Integrity

Integrity is defined as the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles, moral uprightness.

In what ways do you believe that the next president may help our college achieve this core value?

"Integrity would be to take care of the alumni who can't contribute huge checks each year ... We don't even have a parking space for us to come on campus without getting a ticket. Guilford will milk the last dime from you and use the term 'integrity' to defend it."

— Michael Hyatt '05

"I consider the word 'integrity' to be specious in most references and do so in the case of Guilford College's current president and senior staff. They pose well but act in an insistent way that does not allow a point of view other than their own ... This current administration addressed crumbling bricks, not crumbling minds. The administration dressed up the College with all the pretty things but stripped the place of integrity."

— William McCarver, Tutor and Lecturer, Learning Commons

"Integrity, like all the core values, means little at Guilford. We use the core values as a marketing tool, while many ignore ethics and integrity altogether. Integrity must mean that we market our college as we are and not as some utopian vision of what we should be."

— Billy Millman, senior

"A cornerstone of integrity is transparency. Our next president could institute true transparency in the College's finances and allocation of resources."

— Diya Abdo, department chair and associate professor of English

"A key understanding of the Quaker testimony of integrity relates to the root meaning of 'integrity;' wholeness. Think back to algebra in school: 'integer.' Integrity means making life a whole — one piece ... All of Guilford should reflect our core values; all of Guilford should be a 'whole.'"

"The next president can not only insist on that — s/he can model it! The president should be someone who embodies all our core values, not just give lip service to them."

— Max Carter, director of the Friends Center/campus ministry coordinator