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Community Organizations Celebrate 40th Anniversary of Loving Decision that Ended Ban on Interracial Marriage and Recognize Need to End Similar Ban on Marriages for Same-Sex Couples

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Hayward, California: “Forty years ago, you couldn’t marry someone of a different race and today, you can’t marry someone of the same sex. On the 40th anniversary of the US Supreme Court decision, Loving v Virginia that granted interracial couples the freedom to marry and as a child of an interracial couple, I look to this anniversary with great hope that in our lifetime marriage equality will become a reality for John and I, as it did for my parents,” said Stuart Gaffney, MEUSA’s Asian Pacific Islander Outreach Director and plaintiff in the historic California marriage lawsuit, with his partner of 20 years, John Lewis.

On June 12th, 1967 the Supreme Court ended the exclusion of interracial couples from marriage with their decision entitled Loving v. Virginia. Before that date, states had the right to physically separate couples, deny recognition of interracial relationships and punish interracial couples with imprisonment of up to ten years.

“While we recognize that our histories are different, our struggle for equality is the same. The Loving decision is a part of the civil rights movement that is too often forgotten and its linkages to the similar struggles of same-sex couples today are important to recognize. So we are very pleased to be gathering with a diverse group of community organizations to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of this landmark decision,” said Patricia Kevena Fili of the Lighthouse Community Center. This celebration will take place at the Lighthouse Community Center, 1217 A Street in Hayward on Sunday, June 10th from 1-6 pm.

“Marriage equality is often seen as an issue affecting adults, but it is really an issue that impacts children tremendously,” said Aimee Fischer of Our Family Coalition. “It matters to the children being raised by same-sex parents to have legal protection and be accepted in their community. Domestic partnerships don’t provide the same rights, dignity or respect that marriage does.”

The Loving Day celebration is free to the public and family friendly. The day’s events will include screenings of films highlighting the struggles for marriage equality, interactive story telling activities, and a panel discussion. Also featured at this event is the Marriage Equality Movement Family Story Quilt, a project of Marriage Equality USA that intersperses photos and stories from Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) families and allies. “The quilt reflects the diversity of our families and communities, as well as the urgency of this marriage equality issue,” said Maya Scott Chung, MEUSA Parents Outreach Director and Story Quilt Curator. “The Lighthouse is honored to house this important monument and host this important event”, explains Kevena Fili. “It is a testament to the struggle of courage and a reminder that we have work to do to achieve full equality.”

*It is the mission of the **Lighthouse Community Center (LCC)** to serve the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Questioning (LGBTIQ) Community and Allies in Southern Alameda County. We are a Resource Center and catalyst for community building, providing communication, education, support, and social activities and programs in a safe and substance-free environment.*

*Founded in 1998, **Marriage Equality USA** is a national grassroots organization whose mission is to secure legally recognized civil marriage equality for all, at the federal and state level, without regard to gender identity or sexual orientation.*

***iPride**'s mission is to cultivate positive identity formation in children who are of more than one racial or ethnic heritage and/or who have been transracially adopted. We strive to create a more inclusive and equitable society by educating ourselves, our children, and our communities, about multiethnic families, mixed heritage identity and transracial adoptee experiences.*

*Our mission is to foster positive identity formation and empowerment in children of mixed heritage. To meet this aim, the **Fusion Program** facilitates the exploration of personal identity and community in a safe and nurturing environment and through community outreach.*

***Asian Equality** recognizes the historical legacy of marriage discrimination in the United States and its profound impact on Asian Pacific Islander (API) families. Through community education and coalition building, we seek to empower our API communities to challenge this legacy and to confront present-day marriage discrimination against same-sex couples. In doing so, we want to affirm the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) members of our communities and acknowledge the enriching presence of their love and lives.*

***Our Family Coalition** protects the civil rights and well being of families with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members through education, advocacy, social networking and grassroots community organizing.*