



Supreme Court Ensures Marriage Equality Nationwide

Today, June 26, 2015, the Supreme Court of the United States struck down all remaining bans on marriage for same-sex couples. Justice Anthony Kennedy, writing for the majority in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, said "The Court, in this decision, holds same-sex couples may exercise the fundamental right to marry in all States. It follows that the Court also must hold-and it now does hold-that there is no lawful basis for a State to refuse to recognize a lawful same-sex marriage performed in another State on the ground of its same-sex character."

[Hanglely Aronchick Segal Pudlin & Schiller](#) has been following *Obergefell* closely. From 2013-2014, the HASPS trial team of [Mark Aronchick](#), [John Stapleton](#), [Dylan Steinberg](#), and [Rebecca Melley](#), and HASPS family law expert, [Helen Casale](#), along with the ACLU of Pennsylvania, the ACLU LGBT Project, and University of Pennsylvania School of Law Professor Seth Kreimer, led the fight in *Whitewood v. Wolf*, which brought marriage equality to Pennsylvania. One day after the Honorable John E. Jones III invalidated Pennsylvania's ban on same-sex marriage in a strongly worded decision, then Governor Thomas W. Corbett, Jr. announced that Pennsylvania would not appeal. *Whitewood*, including Governor Corbett's decision to not appeal, was hailed as a key moment in the nationwide push for marriage equality.

Since *Whitewood*, thousands of couples and families in Pennsylvania have obtained the benefits, protections, and dignity that only the unique institution of marriage affords.



Mark Aronchick

Firm chair and co-lead counsel in *Whitewood*, Mark Aronchick congratulated the victors. "We salute the brave families who served as plaintiffs in *Obergefell* and all other marriage equality cases through the country. We salute our fellow advocates and allies, both those in the spotlight and behind the scenes, who played their part in making this day a reality. Our entire firm has been honored to actually and symbolically march with them on this road to civil rights. The Supreme Court declared what we have known in our hearts: love is love!"

Helen Casale, a leading family law and LGBT rights expert noted that *Obergefell* directly benefits families already living in marriage equality states. She said, "*Obergefell* is still critical even for families in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The Supreme Court has solidified the decisions that brought marriage equality to this region, erasing any ambiguity or lingering unease those couples may have had. And now, those couples know that they can travel freely to all fifty states and not fear that their marriage will vanish merely by crossing certain state lines."



Helen Casale



John Stapleton

Whitewood trial team member John Stapleton pointed out that this is an important victory for businesses, too. "The primary focus has always been on the fact that this was a moral and Constitutional issue, and that's where the focus should be. But marriage for same-sex couples also brings major economic benefits for businesses and communities, in addition to families. Our experts showed this in *Whitewood* with hard data and now the rest of the country can look forward to the positive economic jolts that extending marriage to all loving couples brings."