



1319 Apple Avenue
Silver Spring, MD
20910
301.587.7500
www.equalitymarvl

Civil Rights Leaders on Marriage Equality

U.S. Rep. John Lewis

"We cannot keep turning our backs on gay and lesbian Americans. I have fought too hard and too long against discrimination based on race and color not to stand up against discrimination based on sexual orientation. I've heard the reasons for opposing civil marriage for same-sex couples. Cut through the distractions, and they stink of the same fear, hatred, and intolerance I have known in racism and in bigotry."

Rev. Joseph Lowery

Lowery said he is "in the valley of prayer on the issue of gay marriage." But, as a black man who was deeply involved in the struggle for equal rights, he is willing to "err on the side of inclusiveness, and not exclusion. I'm going to follow Jesus and say, Whosoever will, let them come. And I'm going to extend rights to all of God's children. And if I'm wrong, God will have to judge me."

Coretta Scott King

"...I still hear people say that I should not be talking about the rights of lesbian and gay people and I should stick to the issue of racial justice. But I hasten to remind them that Martin Luther King, Jr., said, 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere'... I appeal to everyone who believes in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream to make room at the table of brotherhood and sisterhood for lesbian and gay people. Gays and lesbians stood up for civil rights in

Montgomery, Selma, in Albany, GA. And St. Augustine, FL.,...fighting for my freedom at a time when they could find few voices for their own, and I salute their contributions."

Julian Bond

"Discrimination is discrimination - no matter who the victim is, and it is always wrong," "There are no 'special rights' in America, despite the attempts by many to divide blacks and the gay community with the argument that the latter are seeking some imaginary 'special rights' at the expense of blacks."

"When others gain these rights, my rights are not reduced in any way. Luckily, "civil rights" are a win/win game; the more civil rights are won by others, the stronger the army defending my rights becomes. My rights are not diluted when my neighbor enjoys protection from the law--he becomes my ally in defending the rights we share."

"Objections to "gay rights" take many forms. For some, comparisons between the African-American Civil Rights Movement and the movement for gay and lesbian rights seem to diminish our long historical struggle with all its suffering, sacrifices and endless toil. However, we ought to be flattered that our movement has provided so much inspiration for others, that it has been so widely imitated, and that our tactics, methods, heroines and heroes, even our songs, have been appropriated by or served as models for others."

"You can believe whatever you want to believe but marriage is a CIVIL affair, and you don't have a right to impose your rights on the civil society. If you want to say gay people can't be married in your church, OK. But you can't say they can't be married in City Hall because of something you read in the Bible."