

Wedded Bliss



How sweet it was

In line at the Multnomah Building on March 3

by Meg Daly • Quotes compiled by Meg Daly and Floyd Sklaver • Photos by Marty Davis

It's not the way some would dream of getting married: outside a dull brick building in the rain, with microphones and cameras for a chuppah and a delusional Christian hatemonger serenading from the street. But, damn, was it romantic when the Rev. Glenna Shepherd of Metropolitan Community Church of Portland performed her first two lesbian weddings of the day on the steps of the Multnomah Building. There were flowers, kisses, cheers and none too many a dry eye.

Shepherd, a silver-haired and sprightly woman, had dressed in her reverential best: black suit with white collar. Her first couple had been waiting in line since 3 a.m. for their license and, bleary-eyed, stepped into the spotlight.

"In the name of God I take you to be my life partner," recited Abby Haywood, following Shepherd's prompting. "To give and receive...to inspire and respond..." A cone of silence had descended on

the scene. The crowd was aware of witnessing history, and also something sacred and private.

"Abby, I give you this ring as a sign of my vow," repeated Jamie Bolyard, Haywood's partner of two years. "With all that I am and all that I have..."

The rings they had brought were now placed on one another's fingers. And then a big, passionate kiss sealed the deal, caught on camera for all the world to see. The new brides were besieged with reporters afterward, learning the hard way what straight couples have bemoaned for years: Your wedding is never just for you.

"Marriage to me is like the ultimate commitment," one woman in line remarked.

She and her partner have been together more than two decades and had longed for this day to come. They stood in stark contrast to the 20-something lesbian couple next in line, for whom the right to marry

can now be a founding aspect of their relationship, rather than a denied privilege.

Not all the queers outside the county building felt so misty about the institution of marriage. Some were matter-of-fact about their desire to just get the goods a marriage license would confer. "We had a commitment ceremony last year in San Francisco," one male couple said. "So we've done the pomp and circumstance, and now we want all the legal rights that are entitled to us."

Others weren't so sure about the whole "forever" thing. Through a mouthful of bagel, one woman joked that the only way she could have gotten her partner to marry her is if it were a political action. So, she said, she had lucked out.

"I think what marriage means to same-sex couples in a lot of ways is exactly the same thing it means for heterosexual couples," a 52-year-old soon-to-be wife opined. And that meaning, as we all know, is more varied than, well, even a rainbow. **J**

"I just love this town."

—Julia Ryan

"I feel like I'm in line at a Disneyland ride."

—Shannon Lemly

"We fought over the dress and so we compromised on the tuxedo."

—Rick Raymen, who was dressed in formal wear while waiting in line



"I just feel like an American."

—David Reed

"It's no longer feeling like a second-class citizen."

—Yusef Parker

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