

amount of time on each chapter, making them succinct and clear. I suppose the best part about this book is that it finally provides some real historical details in place of the rhetoric and polemics that we most commonly hear when anything to do with marriage comes up. This book does a wonderful job of supplying some much-needed historical grounding of the queer position in this debate and in American society in general.

—Graham Turner

### Same-Sex Marriage Pro and Con

Edited by Andrew Sullivan; Vintage, 1997; \$14 softcover

"I want to let him know that he doesn't have to choose between himself and his family anymore. I want him to know that his love has dignity, that he does indeed have a future.... Only marriage will do that. Only marriage can bring him home."

This is one of the closing lines to a piece written by prolific conservative gay essayist and commentator Andrew Sullivan and included in this reader he compiled about same-sex marriage. His statement is in reference to all the assumedly tortured, self-hating, depressed and lonely gay boys (note that he uses only the masculine pronoun) who cannot seem to reconcile their gay love with their family's bigotry. As Sullivan so adroitly points out, the only way to add real worth and love to a person's life is to get married.

This simple and reductionist understanding of contemporary issues is a Sullivan trademark, and unfortunately for anyone buying his book, the other essays suffer from the same error. He has managed to take almost every single article included and cut it down to about four pages each. What little substantial writing left is hardly worth the reader's time.

The essays are (on the whole) completely uninteresting and provide next to no insight. But if you are looking for a perfect mirror of the current mainstream "debate" surrounding same-sex marriage—and by that I mean shallow and wholly unoriginal—Sullivan's reader is definitely the way to go.



EDITED AND WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY ANDREW SULLIVAN

he has focused his keen intellect on the subject.

Now, Wolfson has done all of us a great service by writing *Why Marriage Matters: America, Equality and Gay People's Right to Marry*. The book addresses the concerns of everyday Americans as they struggle with the issue of marriage equality. He touches on all aspects—from the religious response to the historical argument, from racial equality to what the opponents of marriage equality don't want you to know—in an

easy-to-read, easy-to-follow way. In fact, the book becomes downright compulsive as Wolfson draws the reader into the compelling stories of real people whose lives are affected by society's injustice.

Never didactic or preachy, Wolfson explains carefully and respectfully exactly why marriage matters to the millions of us who can't have it. And he does it in the way that we could (if only we were so articulate). In fact, the next time you're discussing marriage equality

with family or friends and you find you don't have the words, give them *Why Marriage Matters* instead.

—Floyd Sklover

### Civil Wars: A Battle for Gay Marriage

by David Moats; Harcourt, 2004; \$25 hardcover

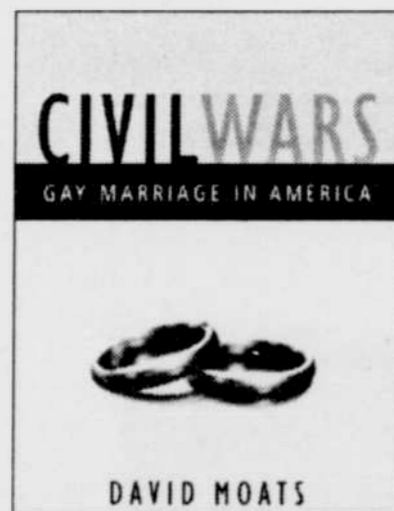
David Moats is the editorial page editor of *The Rutland (Vt.) Herald* and a Pulitzer Prize winner for his editorials in support of civil unions. Although not gay, he wrote *Civil Wars* because of his interest in the debate and the political machinations that resulted in his home state's groundbreaking civil unions.

*Civil Wars* describes the history of the case that led to the legislation—that is, three couples being brave enough to bring suit; a favorable ruling by the Vermont Supreme Court that punted the problem back to the Legislature and demanded it remedy "the exclusion of same-sex couples from the secular benefits and protections offered married couples"; and the storm of politics on both sides as Gov. Howard Dean worked to craft a solution.

Moats also discusses the major events of gay history in the late 20th century—the Stonewall riots, the murder of Harvey Milk, the AIDS epidemic, the fight for gays in the military, the lawsuit brought in Hawaii, the Matthew Shepard murder—and says in the prologue that the Vermont story ranks "with Birmingham and Selma as landmarks of our growth toward a more complete democracy."

Extremely well-written, *Civil Wars* is required reading for anyone with an interest in our history or politics.

—FS jf

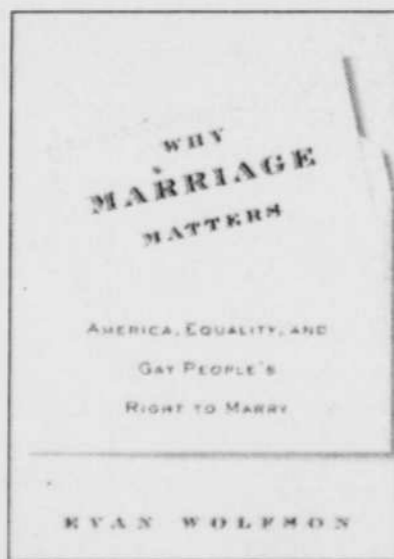


DAVID MOATS

### Why Marriage Matters: America, Equality and Gay People's Right to Marry

by Evan Wolfson; Simon & Schuster, 2004; \$22 hardcover

Evan Wolfson has been called the Martin Luther King Jr. of the gay rights movement. Since 1983, when he wrote his Harvard Law School thesis on the subject of marriage equality,



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