

"You cannot place a label of 'normal' on something as individual and unique as a human being. I believe with great certainty that people who are attracted to people of the same sex are that way because of an innate genetic code. Therefore, that is normal to those who have that particular genetic code or natural, built-in inclination," says Garland. "My child is who she is, innately."

A Growing Acceptance

Since anti-miscegenation laws were deemed unconstitutional, the country has experienced a rise in interracial unions. According to state health records, one in eight Oregon marriages in 2004 was interracial. That number is up from one in 12 from 10 years earlier.

This trend is resulting in record numbers of biracial children in Oregon, contributing to a merging of languages, cultural traditions and religious beliefs.

The most common union, according to a study by *The*

Statesman Journal, is between Latinos and whites. In related findings, white women were more likely than white men to marry a person of another race. In 2001, 37 percent more white women than men joined interracial marriages.

Disapproval persists for some marrying outside their race. Age-old arguments about society's cruelty to biracial children still rings in their ears.

"In one sense, it's fear of the unknown," says Garland. "In another sense, the dominant culture sees it as abnormal, and therefore wrong. Unfortunately, they are very unenlightened, the dominant culture."

Haywood's approach to society's scrutiny of her lifestyle oscillates from frustration to patience.

"I feel sad because people can be so narrow minded," she says. "They haven't gotten the race issue yet, so I don't think they're going to understand [same-sex marriage] totally in one day or one year. This is going to be an uphill battle, and I don't think we would have gone there if we weren't ready to face the challenges."

Separate, Not Equal

Bolyard and Haywood had not considered a commitment ceremony because they say civil unions are separate but not equal.

"We've never had a commitment ceremony because we felt very strongly that we wanted the legal recognition," Bolyard said days after her wedding. "I'm not going to have a ceremony that's just fluff. I live in the United States, in the state of Oregon, and I think it's a pretty big civil right issue. We don't have the same equal rights as heterosexual people, and that's not right."

Aside from the legal benefits and civil recognition of a real marriage, Haywood has another reason for wanting to be married.

"I believe in marriage, and I think family is important," she says. "I grew up with a background in love and marriage. My parents have been together for 35 years, and Jamie's parents have been together even longer."

The couple say they absolutely plan to raise a family and consider adopting children someday.

Bolyard and Haywood, like approximately 3,000 other gay and lesbian couples married in Multnomah County, are in limbo, waiting to find out if the Oregon Supreme Court will overturn their marriages. Last month, Basic Rights Oregon facilitated the filing of a lawsuit by Oregon same-sex couples challenging the constitutionality of Measure 36, the same-sex marriage ban passed during the November general election.

Haywood says married life is better than she could have imagined, and she is scared that something bringing her so much peace and happiness can be taken away.

"What we feel can't be taken away, but it says that what we have is not equal to straight people. If we don't have to worry about our marriage anymore, we can plan our future better, to get going building our own family," Haywood says. "I'm saying I want to promise my heart to Jamie, and the world says no. It just makes me feel diminished." □

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Portland artist Ramey Holsman illustrates her family's multiculturalism in this portrait

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