

NEWLYWED: a tradition continued with the progress of equality



Following the removal of the ban on same-sex marriage, Clackamas English instructor, Carol Burnell (right) and spouse Karyln Rood were able to celebrate their eleventh year anniversary in Portland, Ore. on May 31, 2014, in their own back yard.

Photo contributed by Carol Burnell

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TCP: How did you feel when it was overturned?

Burnell: When it was overturned that was a pretty big let down for a lot of people, but it was especially insulting because they sent us back our money [for the marriage license.] ... I was angry, disappointed and it was pretty crushing. You finally think you've achieved recognition and then they say "no, no you haven't." I think it was one of the steps that probably had to happen. When you're not a part of a minority group it can seem really removed from you unless you know people. Once you know people and you know that they've been discriminated against, it's very hard to continue to say that it doesn't matter.

"In my day-to-day life what part of my identity is wrapped up in being a lesbian? What does that have to do with anything, really? It becomes a big deal because our culture makes it be that way."

—CAROL BURNELL

TCP: When was the third time you got married?

Burnell: It was when Oregon passed domestic partnership. It was the same thing with the paperwork. We had to get it notarized, which I thought was interesting because you don't have to get a marriage license notarized... We did that and turned in our money and then we were domestic partners. With that paperwork we have some of the same rights; we have many of the same rights in the state but certainly not any federal recognition.

TCP: And now you two have decided to get married a fourth time?

Burnell: We have finally decided "you know, Washington made it legal maybe we should just go to Washington." We could have done it last year, which would have been our 10th anniversary but I wanted to hold out for Oregon.

Then we started reading in the news that the judge was going to make a decision and it was going to happen in May, so we were just waiting to see if he would make the decision and he did... It's a little romantic to get married again, but at the same time it's also anticlimactic because it's a paper anniversary. This isn't our real wedding, we've already had that; we're an old married couple already. We've been married for 11 years, it's not the same as our first wedding but it is still very important.

TCP: Do you think it is strange that some people in society see being gay as "weird"?

Burnell: I've always found it weird that people thought that it was a big deal, or that you would need to call that out as an identifying feature. In my day-to-day life what part of my

identity is wrapped up in being a lesbian? What does that have to do with anything, really? It becomes a big deal because our culture makes it be that way. In terms of how I'm deciding to raise my kid or my job, how does it affect those things? It doesn't, unless there is some kind of artificial barrier... I don't get, I never thought it made sense.

TCP: What do you see next for marriage equality?

Burnell: It's always been a state thing [marriage]. States have always been the ones that decided; "this is how you get a license, this is how much it costs" and who can do your ceremony. Other states have always had to recognize marriages from other states except for gay marriage. That makes things tricky. You could go to another state, say someone was transferred to another job and all of sudden they're not married anymore?

That makes no sense, that doesn't work for our country, [and] I do foresee that changing. I think within five years that'll be a done deal. It's just a matter of time before all states have gay marriage, and then people can stop talking about it and live their lives.

Carol Burnell is co-advisor to the GSA club. Meetings will start up again for students in the fall but there is a Facebook group available to students. To join email carolb@clackamas.edu or bruces@clackamas.edu

OREGON SAME SEX MARRIAGE TIMELINE

2004—Measure 36 qualifies for the ballot

2004—Measure 36 passes and Oregon's Constitution is amended, banning gay marriage

2012—Marriage campaigns in four other states are able to secure victories at the ballot.

2014—Attorneys General in Oregon and Nevada (both 9th Circuit states) announce they will not defend their respective same-sex marriage bans.

2014—U.S. District Judge Michael McShane legalizes

same-sex marriage.

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