

# LAW & JUSTICE

## Court Ruling Affirms Gay Marriage

Judge says ban rooted in stereotypes, prejudices

(AP)—A judge has struck down California's same-sex marriage ban as an unconstitutional violation of gay couples' civil rights.

Chief U.S. District Judge Vaughn Walker overturned the voter-approved ban known as Proposition 8 Aug. 4, declaring that limiting marriage to a man and a woman serves no legitimate purpose and is an "artifact" rooted in "unfounded stereotypes and prejudices."

"Rather than being different, same-sex and opposite-sex unions are, for all purposes relevant to California law, exactly the same," Walker wrote in an unequivocal and strongly worded 136-page ruling. "The evidence shows conclusively that moral and religious views form the only basis for a belief that same-sex couples are different from opposite-sex couples."

While the ruling affects only California, the appeal will go to the



sex marriage ban as unconstitutional.

9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which has jurisdiction over nine Western states. The outcome there eventually could force the U.S. Supreme Court to confront the question of whether gays have a constitutional right to wed.

Currently, same-sex couples can legally wed only in Massachusetts,

Iowa, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire and Washington, D.C.

Protect Marriage, the coalition of religious and conservative groups that sponsored Proposition 8 — and wound up defending it in court after Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Attorney General Jerry Brown refused to — immediately appealed

the decision.

Hundreds of same-sex marriage supporters celebrated the verdict at public gatherings in San Francisco, West Hollywood and New York City, while acknowledging they have watched court victories evaporate before. California voters passed Proposition 8 five months after the

state Supreme Court legalized same-sex unions and an estimated 18,000 same-sex couples already had tied the knot.

The 13-day trial was the first in a federal court to examine if the U.S. Constitution prevents states from denying gays the right to wed.

Former U.S. Solicitor General Theodore Olson teamed up with David Boies to argue for the two same-sex couples who brought the suit, bringing together a pair of litigators best known as adversaries who respectively represented George W. Bush and Al Gore in the disputed 2000 election.

Defense lawyers argued at trial that the ban was necessary to safeguard the traditional understanding of marriage and to encourage responsible childbearing.

But in declaring Proposition 8 unconstitutional, Walker accepted every argument advanced by the plaintiffs and methodically rejected every claim made by the defense. Preventing gays from marrying does nothing to strengthen heterosexual unions or serve any purpose that justifies its discriminatory effect, but harms children with same-sex parents and "the state's interest in equality," he wrote.

## Hire to Lead Diversity Effort

Charged with making PSU more inclusive

Portland State University has appointed Jilma Meneses as the college's chief diversity officer, a new position created to build a more inclusive, diverse campus.

"Diversity is a fundamental component of the university's identity," said Meneses. "It must be part of our goals, performance reviews, course work, and behavior. In order to make it part of our campus culture, we must also recruit, retain, and develop high-performing faculty, staff, and students from diverse backgrounds. I look forward to leading PSU in these efforts."

Meneses will support a wide range of diversity-related programs at PSU, including the office of diversity and equity; the office of affirmative action; and work in partnership with the office of the ombuds and dozens of student groups.

"We created this new position," said Wim Wiewel, president of PSU, "because as a society and as an institution we all still have much



Jilma Meneses

to learn about how we practice and live diversity."

Meneses has over 18 years of

administrative and business experience, including 10 years at Oregon Health & Science University. She currently serves as director of risk management at OHSU and was previously the director of Affirmative Action & Equal Opportunity. Prior to OHSU, she served as civil rights director at TriMet.

She is the founder and chief executive officer of Our Family Adoptions, a humanitarian aid organization providing resources to orphans in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

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