

MARK LEWIS, et al.,

Plaintiffs-Appellants,

v.

GWENDOLYN L. HARRIS, et al.,

Defendants-Appellees.

SUPREME COURT OF NEW JERSEY

DOCKET NO. 58,389

CIVIL ACTION

**AFFIDAVIT OF  
DENNIS WINSLOW**

State of New Jersey    )  
  : ss.  
County of Hudson        )

Dennis Winslow, having been duly sworn, states as follows:

1. I am one of the plaintiffs in this lawsuit, and I provide this affidavit in support of the Plaintiffs' Motion in Aid of Litigants' Rights.
2. I am 60 years old, and I am in a permanent committed relationship of over 17 years with Mark Lewis, who has also provided an affidavit.
3. Mark and I entered a civil union on May 22, 2007
4. We live in Union City, New Jersey, and I am the rector of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Manhattan. As I detailed in my earlier affidavit in this case, my great-grandfather was a minister, and many of my relatives were missionaries. I always believed I would be a member of the clergy. Having attended seminary right after college, I have served since ordination for 36 years.
5. In 36 years of service, I have officiated at hundreds of weddings, and signed the

requisite marriage licenses. I have given premarital counseling to hundreds of couples considering marriage. With this experience of conducting premarital counseling and weddings, I have seen with my own eyes how marriage enormously shapes the lives of the couples who choose it, as well as the lives of their families and friends. Marriage changes everything, in ways matched by few other choices in life. With this in mind, I take premarital counseling very seriously, with an intense focus on whether the couple communicates effectively so they can be more successful with the momentous choice of getting married. I draw upon my own committed relationship with Mark to provide examples of how to stay together for better or worse.

6. As I explained when I began my participation in this case, I love Mark, and he loves me. We want the same things that non-gay couples want when they choose marriage, no more and no less. For more than 17 years we have lived by the vows that in our role as pastors we ask others to make to each other at weddings, but we cannot express those same vows in a legal commitment of marriage. To give one example of living by the vows, when my father was living with the disabilities of a severe stroke, my siblings and I got together and decided that we would take turns caring for Dad in our own homes for two-week periods. That way Mom would have several breaks during the year and be able to rejuvenate. Mark supported me just as any married spouse should, and likewise helped with the care when Dad was staying with us. Dad viewed him as he would a son-in-law. Later this month, I am flying to Mark's hometown to help his family clear and close his late grandmother's house. Mark's mother says that even though I can't haul heavy boxes around, she wants me to help cook, and to be there for moral support, so I am going. Our support for one another is one example of what I think of when I consider what the marriage vows mean.

7. Being in a civil union has not clarified to the world in the way that I hoped that our relationship should be treated as seriously as those defined by marriage vows. Our friends have asked us whether our civil union “is really marriage,” and said, “If it’s not called ‘marriage,’ what is it?” Even members of our own families do not understand a civil union to be the same as a marriage. My mother considers our civil union to be a little more official than our status before, but not marriage. As a Massachusetts resident, she knows many same-sex married couples. She, along with everyone else, would understand instantly if we were able to use the word “marriage.”

8. We could go get legally married in Massachusetts, where I grew up and where much of my family lives, but we won’t because we are New Jerseyans. While New Jersey wouldn’t recognize a marriage from another state, if we ever moved to another state that would recognize marriage, we would get married there or in Massachusetts.

9. As Mark noted in his affidavit, we had one experience that suggested what it might feel like to be treated as married, when I was hospitalized for several months between August and November 2009 in Albany, New York after a serious fracture of my leg. New York state recognizes marriages from other states. When we told people there that we were partners, some people at the New York hospital simply assumed we had gotten married in a state that would permit it, and when we explained that we had a civil union, they would get confused about what a civil union meant, and wonder why we couldn’t just get married.

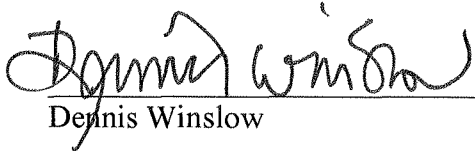
10. Though it felt great to be more respected in that one instance in Albany, we do not lie to anyone and call ourselves “married.” It is factually untrue, and we’re plainly not married. Married is – in the sense we care most about – a legal status which one is either inside or outside. We are outside. We are also deeply aware that traditional theology has much to say

on the source of evil and destruction in the world, and one of the most powerful themes there is calling something by the name of something it is not.

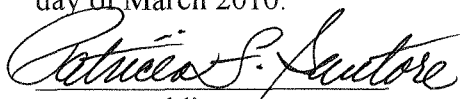
11. With our civil union, we hoped to be getting the same rights as people who are married, but we have instead discovered there are a lot of limitations to civil unions. It remains insulting that I should have to explain why we are like any different-sex couple in terms of the importance of choosing marriage and should be treated equally, especially when a different-sex couple could be together for one day and get married. Mark and I have made a commitment for a lifetime, and we want that commitment to be reflected in a marriage, which best expresses the level of our commitment. We understand that marriage may not be for everybody, but it is what we would choose.

12. Attached to this affidavit is a true and correct copy of a photograph of Mark and myself.

13. I hereby declare, under penalties of perjury, that the facts stated in this affidavit are personally known to me, and that they are true.

  
Dennis Winslow

Sworn to me this 15<sup>TH</sup>  
day of March 2010.

  
Notary Public

**PATRICIA F. SANTORE**  
Notary Public State of New Jersey  
My Commission Expires Oct. 20, 2012



**Mark Lewis and Dennis Winslow**