



## Where Do Black Leaders Stand On Marriage Equality? They Support It.



### **Coretta Scott King, Civil Rights Leader**

"I still hear people say that I should not be talking about the rights of lesbian and gay people and I should stick to the issue of racial justice. But I hasten to remind them that Martin Luther King Jr. said, 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.' I appeal to everyone who believes in Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream to make room at the table of brother- and sisterhood for lesbian and gay people." (Reuters, 3/31/98)



### **Rep. John Lewis, (D-GA)**

"It is time to say forthrightly that the government's exclusion of our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters from civil marriage officially degrades them and their families. It denies them the basic human right to marry the person they love. It denies them numerous legal protections for their families." (Boston Globe, 11/25/03)



### **Rev. Al Sharpton, Presidential Candidate**

"I believe in equal human rights, before the law, for all human beings, and race, gender, disability, class or sexual orientation should not be a factor under the law. Even though we live under the law in a secular democratic society, religious groups must still be able to maintain their spiritual and moral option to either give or withhold a religious or sacred blessing to such unions. However, the government should not have that option. It must affirm the human and legal rights of everyone." (HRC Presidential Candidates' Questionnaire, 07/03)



### **Carol Moseley Braun, Ambassador**

"I believe this is a civil rights issue...My aunt, married a white man in the 1950s when their marriage was illegal in half the states of this country. Indeed, my uncle, had he taken his wife across the wrong state line, would have been guilty of a criminal violation.

It seems to me that if people want to marry a person of a different race that's no different than somebody wanting to marry someone of the same sex." (Democratic Debate, Des Moines, IA, 11/24/03)



### **Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Harvard University Professor**

"I don't understand why the movement to legitimize gay marriage would bother people so much...We have to fight to educate people and transform that visceral response because one of the strengths of the black civil rights movement is that it's served as a model for so many other movements. We who have suffered so much should also be the most compassionate." (St. Petersburg Times, 1/18/04)



### **Rev. Peter Gomes, Harvard University Chaplain**

"If society waited for majority opinion and legislative action, African-Americans, for example, would still be enduring the indignities of separate but equal accommodation and the other manifestations of legal, social, and political segregation. If the decision of the Supreme Judicial Court in Goodridge is "judicial tyranny," let there be more of it..." (Boston Globe, 2/8/04)



### **Clarence Page, Columnist**

"The president vowed to 'do what is legally necessary to defend the sanctity of marriage.' He did not explain precisely how gays and lesbians are attacking the sanctity of marriage by wishing to be bound by it. In fact, same-sex marriages are not likely to have any impact on the sanctity of the president's marriage or my marriage or any other heterosexual's marriage. My wife and I would still be married and so would the president and the first lady--for better or worse, in sickness and in health, 'til death do us part, etc., etc." (Chicago Tribune, 12/03/03)



### **Rev. William Sinkford, President, Unitarian Universalist Church**

"The Unitarian Universalist Association has a long-standing and deeply held religious commitment to support full equality for bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender people, and today's ruling is a significant step forward in guaranteeing that the rights enjoyed by heterosexual couples in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are also available to its bisexual, gay, lesbian and transgender citizens....Unitarian Universalists today celebrate this ruling, and we again dedicate ourselves to work for justice, grounded in faith, which calls us to support everyone's full humanity, everyone's ability to love, and everyone's value in the world." (Unitarian Universalist Church website, 11/18/03)



### **Julian Bond, Civil Rights Leader**

"I see this as a civil rights issue. That means I support gay civil marriage." (News Release, NBJC, 2/2/04)