

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON**

PROCLAMATION NO. 2021-040

Proclaiming June 12, 2021 as Loving Day in Multnomah County, Oregon.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:

- a. In 1958, Mildred Jeter, an African American woman, and Richard Loving, a white man, married in Washington, D.C. When the Lovings returned to their home in Virginia, they were arrested and sentenced to a year in jail for breaking the state's anti-miscegenation laws banning interracial marriage. The judge suspended the sentence in exchange for the Lovings' agreement to leave Virginia for 25 years.
- b. The Lovings moved to Washington, D.C., where they were legally allowed to be married and live together but faced tremendous discrimination. They had difficulty renting property, experienced racist taunting, and struggled with social isolation away from their extended families in Virginia. Prompted by this and desperate for justice, Mildred Loving wrote a letter to then-U.S. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy.
- c. Mildred's letter sparked a legal battle that would change the course of U.S. laws. Her letter was forwarded to the American Civil Liberties Union in New York, which then connected the Lovings with two lawyers, Bernard S. Cohen and Philip J. Hirschkop, who chose to support and work on the case for free. After going through many levels of the justice system and having their appeal repeatedly denied, their case eventually appeared before the United States Supreme Court.
- d. On June 12, 1967, the U.S. Supreme Court decided unanimously in the Lovings' favor and overturned their convictions in the case of *Loving v. Virginia*. Chief Justice Earl Warren issued the Court's opinion, which marked an important milestone in the era of Jim Crow race discrimination laws; ended bans on interracial marriage in seventeen states; and granted the freedom to marry to interracial couples across the nation.
- e. In 1975, the Lovings' marriage ended tragically when Richard was killed in a car accident; Mildred never remarried. In the year before her own passing in 2008, Mildred stated her and Richard's marriage "wasn't to make a political statement or start a fight. We were in love, and we wanted to be married." She further added, "I am proud that Richard's and my name is on a court case that can help reinforce the love, the commitment, the fairness, and the family that so many people, black or white, young or old, gay or straight seek in life."
- f. Loving Day is celebrated to highlight the monumental court decision reinforcing Mildred and Richard Lovings' love, commitment, and desire to be married. It honors and highlights progress made toward equity and power of people from all backgrounds seeking to marry. Celebrations are held across the country to recognize this landmark civil rights decision and its impact on couples' and families lives.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Proclaims:

June 12, 2021 as Loving Day in Multnomah County, Oregon.

ADOPTED this 10th Day of June, 2021.



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

Deborah Kafoury, County Chair

REVIEWED:

JENNY M. MADKOUR, COUNTY ATTORNEY
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By:

Jenny M. Madkour, County Attorney

SUBMITTED BY: Ben Duncan (he/him), Chief Diversity Officer, Office of Diversity and Equity