

The Wedding Heard 'Round the World

America's First Gay Marriage

Michael McConnell with Jack Baker | As told to Gail Langer Karwoski

October 29, 1966

A mutual friend introduces Michael McConnell and Jack Baker.

March 10, 1967

Jack proposes the couple move in together. Michael agrees on one condition: they get married legally.

May 18, 1970

The couple applies for a marriage license at Hennepin County Courthouse. "There's nothing in the Minnesota statutes that mentions gender . . . whatever isn't prohibited by law is permitted," Jack tells Michael. Hennepin County

Attorney George Scott recommends that the application be denied on the basis of fine print in the statutes regarding procedures: the State of Minnesota had specified that a license was to be issued in the county where the woman lives. Scott interpreted this as

meaning that "if no woman is involved, a license can't be issued." Scott also cited a 1949 ruling by the Minnesota Supreme Court stating "it is the duty of the state, in the conservation of public morals, to guard the (marriage) relation." The couple launches a

precedent-setting lawsuit (*Baker v. Nelson*) for marriage equality.

Aug. 3, 1971

Michael formally adopts Jack. Though their eventual goal is marriage, adoption affords them a measure of legal protection.

Aug. 9, 1971

The couple applies for a marriage license in Blue Earth County, MN. This time, Jack uses the legal name he took when Michael adopted him, Pat Lyn McConnell. The county issues the license, unaware that this is a same-sex couple.

Sept. 3, 1971

Jack and Michael's wedding ceremony takes place in a friend's apartment in front of a dozen guests. Writes Michael: "I wish I could say that our

wedding ceremony transformed the world overnight."

May 13, 2013

Nearly 43 years to the day since the couple's first attempt to obtain

a marriage license, Minnesota laws affirm gay marriage.

June 26, 2015

The United States Supreme Court strikes all bans on gay marriage.

