Celebrating LGBTQIA+ Voices and Culture, and Supporting the Community’s Rights

As we near the end of June, Pride Month, we pause to again recognize and commemorate the impact of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual (LGBTQIA+) community on the world.

Did you know?

On June 28, 1969, police raided the Stonewall Inn New York City bar that served the gay, lesbian, and transgender community. These types of raids occurred frequently across the nation as bars and restaurants could get shut down for serving gay patrons or even having gay employees. On this particular night, the patrons of the Stonewall Inn decided to fight back. The following year, on June 28, 1970, individuals returned to Christopher Street to march. This would launch what we know today as the Pride Movement (History.com and CNN).

One Hundred Fifty-Seven Years Later...

“We have flown the air like birds and swum the sea like fishes, but have yet to learn the simple act of walking the earth like brothers.”

—Martin Luther King Jr.

We bid a thoughtful and thankful farewell to this year’s Juneteenth, with even greater anticipation of the next. Every Juneteenth, the Black community celebrates progress. Though progress is often delayed, the community’s resilience and perseverance through history marshals it forward.

Juneteenth commemorates June 19th in 1865, when enslaved people in Galveston, Texas, were finally notified that slavery had ended in the United States. By the time President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, 2½ years had passed since slavery had ended in the United States.

After the Emancipation Proclamation, there was still much work to be done to ensure that all individuals were free from the burden of systemic racism and inequality. Despite the progress made since 1865, the fight for equality and justice continues today.

LOVE—What’s Color Got to Do With It?

Every year on June 12th, people around the world observe “Loving Day,” a celebration of the 1967 landmark Supreme Court decision in the case of Loving v. Virginia. What is Loving Day and why is it significant? To answer these questions, we need to take a step back in time to the year 1958.

Mildred and Richard, a interracial couple, were arrested in Virginia and found guilty of violating Virginia’s law that prohibited marriages between people of different races. They appealed the judgment and the U.S. Supreme Court reversed the decision in Loving v. Virginia.

The couple’s journey has inspired many others to fight for equality and justice. They are an example of how love and determination can overcome systemic racism and inequality.

Shortly after their return, the couple was arrested. Mildred and Richard were able to avoid jail time by leaving Virginia and agreeing not to return together for a period of 25 years. With a heavy heart, the couple moved to Washington, D.C.

Despite their hopes for a new start, the move to Washington, D.C., presented its own challenges and the couple longed to return to Virginia and raise their three children. The two began writing to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) for help. Attorneys Bernard Cohen and Philip Hirschkop, both up-and-coming ACLU lawyers, took the Loving’s case and brought it all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Attorneys Cohen and Hirschkop argued that the Virginia laws violated the Equal Protection Clause of 14th Amendment to the Constitution. The Equal
Almost all of the victims were Black. LYNCHING—violent public acts that were used to terrorize and control Black people in the 19th and 20th centuries, particularly in the South (Naacp.org)—was declared a federal hate crime only months ago, on March 29, 2022. It has taken more than 100 years and 200 failed attempts for the United States to pass a bill that criminalizes lynching. The new Emmett Till Anti-Lynching Act makes lynching punishable by up to 30 years in prison, can carry a fine, or both (Npr.org).

Our country is not alone in its deplorable deeds. Black people in many nations continue to face racism and discrimination. Even as the world watches with sadness and heartache as Ukrainians continue to flee their country, Black people face barriers to their safety. In the midst of war, there are many reports of Black people being turned away at border crossings. There are even reports of people being allowed on trains before Africans. Black Lives Matter.

May Institute’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council continues to work towards inclusion, equality, equity, and justice. The Council stands in solidarity with those who speak out against systemic racism and oppression and are working to dismantle it. We continue to stand with the African American and Black communities.

Protection Clause guarantees all citizens the right to due process and equal protection under the law. On June 12, 1967, the Supreme Court unanimously declared that bans on interracial marriage were unconstitutional, striking a major blow to segregation and Jim Crow laws. Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote the opinion for the court, stating that, “Under our Constitution the freedom to marry, or not marry, a person of another race resides with the individual, and cannot be infringed by the state.” In honor of Mildred and Richard and their legacy, let’s take time to petition our local government for official recognition of Loving Day!

What is the impact of the Lovings on your union? Significance, love, and inclusion—LGBTQIA+ Voices

With the advancement of the Pride Movement, including a newer flag, progress and representation waves for all in its community. The Progress Pride flag was developed in 2018 by non-binary American artist Daniel Quasar. Based on the iconic rainbow flag from 1978, the redesign celebrates the diversity of the LGBTQIA+ community and calls for a more inclusive society. Quasar added a five-colored chevron to the classic rainbow flag to place a greater emphasis on inclusion and representation. With the advancement of the Pride Movement, including a newer flag, progress and representation waves for all in its community. The Progress Pride flag was developed in 2018 by non-binary American artist Daniel Quasar. Based on the iconic rainbow flag from 1978, the redesign celebrates the diversity of the LGBTQIA+ community and calls for a more inclusive society. Quasar added a five-colored chevron to the classic rainbow flag to place a greater emphasis on inclusion and representation.

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