

The Times will announce same sex marriages

By Jose L. Llanes, *Hoy*, 19 August 2002. Translated from Spanish by Hillary Hawkins.

Homosexuals in the Big Apple will soon see one of their biggest aspirations come to fruition: the announcements of weddings between gays and lesbians in the mainstream press.

Yesterday, the New York Times newspaper revealed that as of September, it will publish announcements of weddings and ceremonies between couples of the same sex in its regular Sunday "Styles" section.

"We acknowledge that the newsworthiness of a growing and visible trend in society toward public celebrations of commitment by gay and lesbian couples—celebrations important to many of our readers, their families and their friends," said Howell Raines, executive editor of the Times.

"We recognize that society seems divided as to the legal and religious meaning of matrimony and therefore our news columnists will remain impartial in this debate," Raines said.

Reacting, residents and visitors of the Big Apple, all affected by the measure, prepared a statement on the Time's controversial announcement.

"It's a big step forward for us and I hope that many newspapers in different states do the same thing," said Ali Baz in passing, a Hispanic lawyer for the city who is single.

Baz has participated in homosexual wedding ceremonies and "the celebrations are very intimate, touching, equally if not more genuine than the heterosexual weddings," the attorney said.

The discussion about the right of the homosexuals in New York acquired new nuances after September 11th.

Members, of same sex couples who lost partners during the attacks, filed suit against the state and city because they did not receive the same treatment and compensation as the familial survivors of heterosexual marriages.

"The announcements are merely recognition of what's really going on, but not everyone knows it," declared Reinaldo (Rey) Gil, who lives in Washington Heights.

Gil and his partner celebrated their nuptials four years ago "because we wanted to profess our union before the most supportive people," said Gil, a 35-year-old Met Life accountant who grew up in Miami.

"Personally I got married because I longed for elements that all marriages, including that of my parents, who have been married 42 years, share: recognition, respect and security. We are human beings even though some people don't think so," said William Alvarez, a musical theater actor and pastry shop chef.

Gila and Alvarez live together, are godparents of a beautiful boy, share medical insurance, and they plan to buy a house and adopt a child, they said.

For Pedro Rius, a boricua law student, the Times decision is perfectly legal even though same sex marriages may not be recognized by New York State.

"It's obvious that the measure is looking to appease the homosexual community in this city. I imagine that now many heterosexual marriages will not be announced in the style section of the Times," said Rius.

Even though their wedding, and the announcement, is over, Gil hopes to appear in the Times' announcements anyway. "There is still time for our silver and golden anniversaries," Gil concluded.

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Controversia/nueva York

Anunciarán bodas del mismo sexo

José L. Llanes

Los homosexuales en la Gran Manzana verán cumplidos próximamente una de sus mayores aspiraciones: los anuncios de bodas entre gays y lesbianas en la prensa establecida.

Ayer, el rotativo The New York Times reveló que a partir de septiembre publicará anuncios de bodas y ceremonias entre parejas de un mismo sexo en su sección habitual de "Estilo" que se publica los domingos.

"Reconocemos la existencia de una tendencia creciente en la sociedad a favor de los compromisos públicos entre parejas homosexuales", dijo Howell Raines, editor ejecutivo del Times.

Los ejecutivos dijeron que "reconocemos que la sociedad permanece dividida en cuanto a la definición legal y religiosa del matrimonio y por ello nuestros columnistas de noticias se mantendrán imparciales en este debate".

Reaccionando afectados por la medida, residentes y visitantes de la Gran Manzana se aprestaron a opinar sobre el polémico anuncio del Times.

"Es un gran paso de avance para nosotros y ojalá que muchos periódicos en diferentes estados hicieran lo mismo", dijo Ali Baz, una abogada hispana de paso por la ciudad de Nueva York y quien permanece soltera.

Baz ha participado en ceremonias de matrimonios entre homosexuales y "son celebraciones muy íntimas, conmovedoras, tan o más genuinas que las bodas entre heterosexuales", aseguró la abogada.

La discusión sobre el derecho de los homosexuales en Nueva York adquirió nuevos matices después del 11 de septiembre.

Miembros de parejas de un mismo sexo, desmembradas por la muerte de uno de sus integrantes durante los ataques han demandado al estado y la ciudad, respectivamente, por no

recibir el mismo tratamiento y compensación que los familiares sobrevivientes de matrimonios heterosexuales.

"Los anuncios no son más que un reconocimiento a lo que en realidad pasa y la gente no conoce", declaró Reinaldo (Rey) Gil, un contador gay residente en Washington Heights, Manhattan.

Gil y su pareja celebraron sus nupcias hace cuatro años "porque queríamos profesar nuestra unión ante los seres más allegados", dijo el contador de Met Life, de 35 años y crecido en Miami.

"Personalmente me casé porque aspiro a lo que todos los matrimonios tienen, incluidos mis padres, quienes llevan unidos 42 años: reconocimiento, respeto y seguridad. Somos seres humanos aunque algunos no lo crean", dijo William Alvarez, actor de teatro musical y maestro de repostería.

William y Ray viven juntos, son padrinos de un hermoso niño, comparten el mismo seguro médico, planean comprar una casa y adoptar un hijo.

Para Pedro Ríus, un estudiante boricua de derecho, la decisión del Times es perfectamente legal aun cuando los matrimonios entre parejas de un mismo sexo no sean reconocidos por el estado de Nueva York.

"Es obvio que la medida busca apaciguar a la comunidad homosexual de esta ciudad. Imagino que ahora muchos matrimonios heterosexuales no se anunciarán en la sección de estilo del Times", dijo Ríus.

Aunque el tiempo de anunciarlo ya pasó, Reinaldo Gil no abandona la esperanza de poder usar ese derecho. "Todavía queda tiempo para nuestras Bodas de Plata Oro y de Plata", concluyó Gil.