



Founder of Freedom to Marry Evan Wolfson

“One of the 100 most influential people in the world.”
– *Time Magazine*

Long-time lesbian/gay civil rights leader Evan Wolfson lives in New York City, where he launched **Freedom to Marry**, the gay and non-gay partnership working to end discrimination in marriage nationwide. Wolfson now serves as Freedom to Marry’s Executive Director.

From 1989 until 2001, Wolfson worked full-time at Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund, the nation’s preeminent lesbian/gay legal advocacy group. As director of Lambda’s Marriage Project, Wolfson coordinated the National Freedom to Marry Coalition and led the ongoing national movement for equal marriage rights for same-sex couples. He was co-counsel in the landmark Hawaii marriage case, *Baehr v. Miike*, which launched the current nationwide debate. Wolfson also contributed his expertise to the team in *Baker v. Vermont*, the Vermont Supreme Court ruling that led to the creation of “civil unions,” a new legal marital status for same-sex couples, and to the GLAD team in *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health*, which on May 17, 2004, led to marriage equality in Massachusetts.

On April 26, 2000, Wolfson became the first Lambda attorney to argue before the United States Supreme Court, urging the Justices to reject the Boy Scouts of America’s appeal of a unanimous ruling from the New Jersey Supreme Court striking down their ban on gay members and leaders. Wolfson had represented Eagle Scout James Dale since he was expelled from the BSA in 1990. Following the 5-4 vote, Wolfson helped shape the extraordinary national response from non-gay and gay people and institutions against the BSA’s discrimination, challenging their harmful message to youth.

In other cases, Wolfson championed lesbian and gay military personnel fighting for the right to serve; gay parents wishing to adopt children and preserve visitation rights; a Florida deputy sheriff fired for being gay (Lambda’s first-ever jury trial); a person with AIDS seeking life-saving medical treatment refused by his insurer; a woman denied work as a Dallas police officer because of the state anti-gay “sodomy” law; and New York City employees demanding equal health benefits and recognition for their partners.

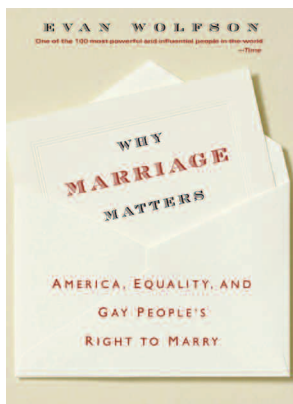
Beginning with his 1983 law school thesis on gay people’s freedom to marry, Wolfson has published numerous articles on sexual orientation and civil rights, and is a frequent speaker on such topics. As a pro bono cooperating attorney for Lambda from 1984 to 1989, Wolfson wrote Lambda’s amicus briefs to the Supreme Court in *Bowers v. Hardwick* and *NGTF v. Board of Education of Oklahoma City*.

Born in Brooklyn and raised in Pittsburgh, Wolfson graduated from Yale College in 1978. For two years, he worked as a Peace Corps volunteer in a village in Togo, West Africa. After graduating from Harvard Law School in 1983, and teaching political philosophy at Harvard College, Wolfson served as assistant district attorney for Kings County (Brooklyn), NY. There, in addition to handling felony trials and appeals, he wrote amicus briefs that helped win the U.S. Supreme Court’s ban on race discrimination in jury selection (*Batson v. Kentucky*), and the New York State high court’s elimination of the marital rape exemption (*People v. Liberta*).

Immediately before joining Lambda, Wolfson served in Washington, D.C., as Associate Counsel to Lawrence Walsh in the Office of Independent Counsel (Iran/Contra). In 1992, he served on the New York State Task Force on Sexual Harassment. Wolfson is an adjunct professor of law at Columbia University, and also has taught at Rutgers University law school. He is a Senior Fellow at the New School’s Wolfson Center for National Affairs.

In 2000, the National Law Journal honored Wolfson’s civil rights leadership by naming him one of “The 100 most influential attorneys in America.” In 2004, he was named one of “The 100 most influential people in the world” by *Time Magazine*.

Wolfson’s first book, *Why Marriage Matters: America, Equality, and Gay People’s Right to Marry*, was originally published by Simon & Schuster in July 2004, and was re-released in paperback with a new forward in June 2005.



“Perhaps the most important gay-marriage primer ever written...”

-*Time Out New York*



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