



**“I used to be
very opposed to
gay marriage...**

...but not anymore.”

— Don Ross, Wood Village, Oregon



Don and Joanne Ross are native Oregonians and have been happily married for 52 years.

“It took me some time, but now I believe that marriage belongs to everyone.”

— Don Ross, Wood Village, Oregon

There was a time that I was opposed to gay marriage. Not just opposed, mind you, but strongly opposed. I come from a traditional Christian background — my wife and I belonged to a conservative Baptist church. For a long time, we couldn't even begin to get our minds around the idea of same-sex couples getting married.

But times change, and so did we. Part of it was meeting gay and lesbian couples who love each other and are just as committed to each other as my wife and I. In fact, in a time when so many marriages fall apart, their commitment is an example of what it takes

to get through life together. It's the kind of foundation that makes for strong families and strong communities.

As my wife and I talked about it, we began to recognize the pain and unfairness that gay couples suffer because they are legally prohibited from being married. Allowing same-sex couples to join in civil marriage has no impact on our religion, and certainly no impact on our marriage. But marriage can provide long-term committed couples with the ability to care for and protect each other in a way that nothing else can.

I am also reminded of something else from my upbringing: treat others as you would want them to treat you. Living by the Golden Rule is fundamental to me, and I realized that I was falling short. Denying marriage to two adults who love each other and want to commit to each other is just not fair.

Tolerance is a strong Oregon value. I believe that all of us want to do the right thing — sometimes it just takes a while to see what that is. **It took us some time,** but my wife and I believe that opening marriage to all committed couples is the right thing to do.

MARRIAGE MATTERS.



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