

TIMELINE OF RICHARD ADAMS AND ANTHONY SULLIVAN

- May 5, 1971 United States citizen Richard Adams and Australian-born Anthony Sullivan meet in Los Angeles gay bar called "The Closet."
- April 21, 1975 Richard Adams and Anthony Sullivan issued a marriage license in Boulder, Colorado, by County Clerk Clela Rorex, and marry the same day.
- April 28, 1975 Richard Adams files petition for alien relative for his lawful spouse, Anthony Sullivan, with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).
- November 24, 1975 INS issues first denial letter. *"You have failed to establish that a bona fide marital relationship can exist between two faggots."*
- December 2, 1975 INS issues second denial letter. *"A marriage between two males is invalid for immigration purposes and cannot be considered a bona fide marital relationship since neither party to the marriage can perform the female functions in marriage."*
- December 3, 1975 Richard Adams appeals the INS decision to the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA).
- July 12, 1976 BIA remands case back to INS for clarification, and ultimately issues its ruling affirming the denial of Richard Adams' petition.
- March 13, 1979 Richard Adams sues the Los Angeles INS District Director for denying him the right to sponsor his spouse for permanent resident status. The case had high visibility in the media at the time as the first ever lawsuit demanding federal recognition of an existing same-sex marriage and was called Adams v Howerton.
- December 18, 1979 Federal District Court Judge Irving Hill rules against Richard and Anthony, stating in part that, "marriage exists for purposes of propagating the species." Richard appeals the decision to the Federal Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.
- February 1980 Deportation proceedings initiated against Anthony Sullivan by the INS in April 1975 were on hold for five years but resumed in February 1980, at which time Anthony filed an application for suspension of deportation, arguing that his deportation would result in "extreme hardship" to himself and to Richard as his spouse. The application was denied by the Immigration Judge and appealed to the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA).

February 1980 BIA rejects their appeal stating that Anthony's separation from Richard would not cause them extreme hardship. Anthony Sullivan appeals this ruling directly to the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

October 7, 1981 Richard Adams and Anthony Sullivan appeal the Federal District Court ruling in Adams v Howerton to the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

February 25, 1982 The Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit rules against them, stating that it is, *"unlikely that Congress intended to give homosexual spouses preferential admission treatment."*

June 28, 1982 United States Supreme Court declines to hear their appeal of the ruling by the the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

September 30, 1985 Judge Anthony Kennedy writes the opinion for the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit dismissing Sullivan's appeal of the BIA ruling against him, finding that the BIA did not abuse its discretion when rejected the application for suspension of deportation finding no extreme hardship. Judge Kennedy's ruling set in motion a sixty day deadline by which Anthony Sullivan was required to voluntarily leave the United States or be deported.

November 5, 1985 Richard Adams and Anthony Sullivan leave the United States.

November 1986 Richard Adams and Anthony Sullivan return to the United States and continue to live together in their Hollywood apartment, eventually becoming active in the growing marriage equality movement.

September 21, 1996 The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) is passed in Congress and signed by President Bill Clinton denying federal recognition to any same-sex marriages. At the time no state permitted same-sex couples to marry.

May 15, 2008 Federal Court rules that disallowing same-sex marriage in the state of California violates the constitution, and is permitted.

November 4, 2008 President Obama is elected and voters approve California's Proposition 8 that eliminates the right of same-sex couples to marry in that state.

December 17, 2012 Richard Adams dies after a short illness. His obituary was published worldwide in hundreds of newspapers.

June 26, 2013 United States Supreme Court rules that a law preventing the federal government from recognizing marriage equality unconstitutional.

July 1, 2013 Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano issues statement, *"Effective immediately, I have directed U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)*

to review immigration visa petitions filed on behalf of a same-sex spouse in the same manner as those filed on behalf of an opposite-sex spouse.”

- April 21, 2014 On the 39th anniversary of his marriage in Boulder, Colorado, Anthony files a Motion to Reopen and Reconsider asking the Los Angeles Field Office of USCIS to reopen his marriage-based green card petition.
- June 19, 2014 Anthony Sullivan writes to President Obama requesting a formal apology to Richard Adams, posthumously, for the offensive 1975 denial letter.
- August 27, 2014 Anthony Sullivan receives letter from Leon Rodriguez, Director of USCIS, issuing an apology for the denial decision letter from INS, and extends condolences for the loss of Richard. *“You have my sincerest apology for the years of hurt caused by the deeply offensive and hateful language used in the November 24, 1975, decision, and my deepest condolences on your loss.”*
- December 1, 2015 Board of Immigration Appeals reopens and remands Richard Adams’ 1975 green card petition to USCIS for reconsideration, nullifying the original denial.
- January 5, 2016 Richard Adams’ original “alien relative petition” filed on April 28, 1975 on behalf of Anthony Sullivan, is approved by USCIS, 41 years after it was filed with the INS.
- May 2016 Anthony Sullivan receives green card at the home he shared with Richard Adams in Hollywood, California.