

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 248

Recognizing the contributions of Clela Rorex, pioneering county clerk who advanced civil rights for all couples seeking to be married in 1975.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 23, 2023

Mr. NEGUSE (for himself, Mr. POCAN, Mr. CROW, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. PETTERSEN, Ms. CARAVEO, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. BONAMICI, and Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the contributions of Clela Rorex, pioneering county clerk who advanced civil rights for all couples seeking to be married in 1975.

Whereas Clela Ann Rorex was born in Denver on July 23, 1943, to Ruby Rorex, a dance and theater teacher, and Cecil Rorex, who served as Clerk of Routt County, Colorado, for 30 years, where Clela grew up in Steamboat Springs;

Whereas Clela earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Colorado Boulder in 1973 and a master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Colorado Denver in 1981;

Whereas Clela, at the age of 31, became Boulder County Clerk and Recorder in January 1975;

Whereas, in 1975, when a same-sex couple requested a marriage license in Boulder County, Clela consulted the assistant district attorney and learned that Colorado State laws did not specifically prohibit granting a marriage license to a same-sex couple;

Whereas, as a newly elected county clerk, Clela issued a marriage license to Dave McCord and Dave Zamora, the first marriage license issued to a same-sex couple in the United States;

Whereas Clela was quoted in 2016 as saying, “After having been so deeply involved in the women’s rights movements, who was I to then deny a right to anyone else? It wasn’t my job to legislate morality.”;

Whereas, over the next month, Clela issued five more marriage licenses to same-sex couples;

Whereas national news outlets circulated Clela’s groundbreaking story, after which she reported receiving a deluge of death threats and condemnation in hundreds of letters and phone calls to the Boulder County Clerk’s office;

Whereas Clela issued marriage licenses to six same-sex couples in Boulder County, Colorado, in April 1975, 40 years before the Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage nationwide in 2015;

Whereas, in 2014, a series of court rulings cleared the way for same-sex marriages in Colorado;

Whereas, despite the threats and for decades, Clela continued her advocacy efforts on behalf of the LGBTQ community

including marching, volunteering, and donating to LGBTQ efforts;

Whereas Clela was 78 years old when she died on June 19, 2022, in Longmont, Colorado;

Whereas due to her advocacy for human rights, Boulder County, Colorado, declared July 23, 2022, as “Clela Rorex Day”; and

Whereas Clela should be recognized for her leadership as a national civil rights leader, paving the way for countless individuals: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) recognizes—

3 (A) the contributions of Clela Rorex as a
4 pioneer for civil rights and same-sex marriage;

5 (B) the respect and bravery Clela had
6 when issuing the first same-sex marriage license
7 in the United States; and

8 (C) the courage Clela exhibited following
9 the threats she received when she issued mar-
10 riage licenses to same-sex couples; and

11 (2) expresses support for the designation of
12 “Clela Rorex Day”.

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