

## ***EQIL INSIDER SCOOP      DECEMBER 2013***

# Happy Holidays from Equality Illinois

***In the December EQIL Insider Scoop:***

<b>AFFECTING YOU NOW</b>	<b>UP NEXT</b>	<b>JUST HAPPENED</b>
<a href="#"><u>Marriage Report</u></a> <a href="#"><u>EQIL Gala 2014 Tickets</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Honoring Our Heroes</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Before the Walk</u></a> <a href="#"><u>The First Marriage</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Our Work Continues</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>New Year's Eve</u></a> <a href="#"><u>First Friday</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Six Months After DOMA</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Big Gay Gathering</u></a> <a href="#"><u>What the Future Holds</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Achieving Victory</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Municipal Equality Index</u></a>

**MARRIAGE REPORT** = For the better part of a year, we've reported in this space in great depth about the marriage campaign and everything you could do to help. This report is much briefer:



Photo courtesy of Governor's Office

So let's look ahead by celebrating the victory and learning about our new freedom to marry. First, let's plan to celebrate at the 2014 Equality Illinois Gala.



Tickets are now on sale for the biggest and most glamorous formal LGBT event in the Midwest

Plan now to attend the Equality Illinois 2014 Gala in the Hilton Chicago

[CLICK HERE TO PURCHASE TICKETS TODAY](#)

Learn more about the always popular silent auction and the program book

Go to [www.eqil.org/Gala2/gala2.html](http://www.eqil.org/Gala2/gala2.html) for all the information.

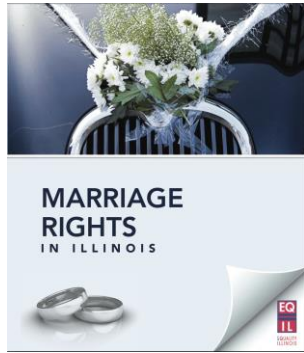


**HONORING OUR HEROES** = Adding to the festive atmosphere are the people and organizations that will be honored on gala night. We are proud to announce that the first of the 2014 Freedom Awards will be given to the **Chicago Urban League**, one of the oldest civil rights organizations in the country, for spreading the message of fairness and equality throughout the state. [Read more about the Chicago Urban League here](#). More 2014 Freedom Award honorees will be announced in the days ahead.

**BEFORE YOU WALK DOWN THE AISLE** = So, how does this thing work? What if we already have a civil union, or were married elsewhere? Where do we get a license and what do we need to bring? Equality Illinois is ready to help you find the answers to those and many other questions. Here's how:



[Attend](#) an Equality Illinois Marriage Forum. Thirteen are scheduled throughout the state in December and January. Scroll down to the calendar for the list of cities and to register, or [CLICK HERE for information & to register](#). (At left, EQIL's Randy Hannig speaks at the first Marriage Forum at Oak Park Temple.)



[Read](#) the Equality Illinois Marriage Guide. This handy pamphlet answers many of your questions about getting married in Illinois. [Click here to see the FAQs.](#)



[Contact us](#) with your question. The EQIL Marriage Help Desk can take your questions at [info@eqil.org](mailto:info@eqil.org).

**POPPING THE QUESTION—AND THE CHAMPAGNE CORKS** = The annual New Year's Eve party at Sidetrack is a good place to pop the question and Unlock Your Future. The biggest party on Halsted Street always sells out, so best plan ahead. [Click HERE to get your tickets now.](#) (21+ with ID)

NYE • TUESDAY • DEC 31 • 2013

# UNLOCK YOUR FUTURE

1	9	0	3
2	0	1	4
3	1	2	5

**SIDETRACK**®

TO BENEFIT: **EQ IL** = **QUALITY ILLINOIS**



**FIRST FRIDAY** = And as we celebrate our success, let's take a moment to help others not so fortunate during this festive season. The holiday edition of the Equality Illinois PAC First Friday monthly social, on Friday, December 6, offers the usual fun, but we are partnering this month with The Night Ministry, a local service organization that works in of our community. In the spirit of the holidays, we are asking for you to also consider bringing clothing or personal care items from their [wish list](#) of needs.



With an open heart and an open mind, The Night Ministry provides housing, healthcare and human connection to members of the Chicago community who are struggling with poverty or homelessness.

A big crowd always joins us for First Friday, so please come by for the fun, cocktails, and prize drawings—and your donation of clothing or personal care items. For a \$10 donation to the Equality Illinois PAC, you receive two drink tickets and a ticket for a door prize drawing. Friday, December 6, 6–8pm @ Sidetrack, 3349 North Halsted Street in Chicago (21+ with ID). Find out more on [Facebook](#).

*Contributions support Equality Illinois PAC. Paid for by Equality Illinois PAC. Contributions are not tax deductible. A copy of our report filed with the State Board of Elections is (or will be) available on the Board's official website, [elections.il.gov](http://elections.il.gov), or for purchase from the State Board of Elections, Springfield, Illinois. State law requires that we report the occupation and name of the employer of any individual who contributes over \$500.00.*



Judge Patricia Logue presides as Vernita Gray (r) and Patricia Ewert (l) make history as the first same-sex couple wed in Illinois.

*Photo courtesy of Hal Baim/Windy City Times*

## **MAKING HISTORY =**

Longtime LGBT-rights activists Vernita Gray (a former EQIL board member) and Patricia Ewert were wed last Wednesday, and we celebrated as a community the first same-sex wedding in Illinois. But our joy was combined with sadness over what necessitated a compassionate order from federal judge Thomas Durkin and the cooperation of Cook County Clerk David Orr to move up the effective date for the couple from June 1, 2014: Gray suffers from a terminal cancer diagnosis. The ceremony was a powerful event, reports [Windy City Times, whose coverage includes a photo album and video](#).



**OUR WORK CONTINUES** = Within days of the marriage victory, Equality Illinois convened leaders of other Midwestern statewide equality organizations in the Hilton Chicago. As we celebrated the Illinois marriage victory, the leaders, allied under the national Equality Federation coalition, also discussed furthering the marriage campaign in other states and issues such as non-discrimination bills, transgender rights and safe schools. "While we can take pride in the string of successes the movement has enjoyed, we are by no means complacent about the challenges that remain," said Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois, seen above addressing the meeting. [Read more here.](#)



**SIX MONTHS AFTER DOMA** = The freedom to marry carries with it a lot of new rights, opportunities and responsibilities. Equality Illinois and Quarles & Brady are hosting a panel discussion six months after the Supreme Court decision that ordered that same-sex married

couples should be treated equally under federal law. [Registration is required](#) for the forum at Quarles & Brady, 300 N. LaSalle St., Chicago at 11:30 am-1 pm on Wednesday, December 11, which includes lunch. Lawyers on the panel will address how federal agencies are implementing U.S recognition of same-sex marriages and how Illinoisans can take advantage of their newly recognized rights. [Click here to register.](#)

**BIG GAY GATHERING** = Elmhurst College welcomes its annual Big Gay Gathering for high school students, a night of networking, education, support, and fun, hosted by Elmhurst

College Queers and Allies. The full evening also includes food and music and participation by local LGBT groups and Gay-Straight Alliances. Stop by and chat with Patty Dillon, the EQIL Director of Field Operations. There is still time to sign up for the evening on Friday, Dec. 6, 5:45-10 pm at Elmhurst College, Illinois Hall, 190 S. Prospect Ave., Elmhurst by emailing [bggelmhurst@gmail.com](mailto:bggelmhurst@gmail.com).

## **WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS** = Calendar of Upcoming Events

### **DECEMBER 2013**

3 DECEMBER – Marriage Forum in Aurora – <http://tinyurl.com/auroraIL-forum>

4 DECEMBER – Marriage Forum in Palatine – <http://tinyurl.com/palatine-forum>

6 DECEMBER – Big Gay Gathering – Networking event for high schoolers – 5:30 pm @ Elmhurst College (190 S. Prospect, Elmhurst)

6 DECEMBER – First Friday – 6 pm @ Sidetrack (3349 N. Halsted St., Chicago)

9 DECEMBER – Marriage Forum in the Quad Cities – <http://tinyurl.com/quadcities-forum>

10 DECEMBER – Marriage Forum in Rockford – <http://tinyurl.com/rockford-forum>

10 DECEMBER – Marriage Forum in Chicago – <http://tinyurl.com/lakeview-forum>

11 DECEMBER – Post-DOMA Forum – 11:30 am @ Quarles & Brady (300 N. LaSalle St., Chicago)

11 DECEMBER – Marriage Forum in Champaign-Urbana – <http://tinyurl.com/champaign-forum>

12 DECEMBER – Marriage Forum in Carbondale – <http://tinyurl.com/carbondale-forum>

12 DECEMBER – Marriage Forum in Springfield – <http://tinyurl.com/springfield-forum>

17 DECEMBER – Marriage Forum in Belleville – <http://tinyurl.com/bellevilleIL-forum>

31 DECEMBER – New Year's Eve Party – 7 pm @ Sidetrack (3349 N. Halsted St., Chicago)

### **JANUARY 2014**

3 JANUARY – First Friday – 6 pm @ Sidetrack (3349 N. Halsted St., Chicago)

14 JANUARY – Marriage Forum in Bloomington-Normal – <http://tinyurl.com/bloomington-forum>

**ACHIEVING VICTORY** = Where were you when the House passed the marriage freedom bill, the community celebrated and Gov. Quinn signed it? Here is our album:



Sponsor Rep. Greg Harris (in center) rises in the House to call SB 10.



EQIL CEO Bernard Cherkasov celebrates victory with Gov. Quinn.



Impromptu Sidetrack party when bill passes. ([Chicago Tribune coverage.](#))



Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel dropped in at the impromptu Sidetrack party, where hundreds of celebrants joined to toast the victory as Chicago's media recorded the joyous reaction.



Two days later, an official Sidetrack celebration featured the two chief sponsors of the Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act, state Sen. Heather Steans and state Rep. Greg Harris.



The official toast with (l-r) EQIL's Bernard Cherkasov, Atty. Gen. Lisa Madigan, Cook County State's Atty. Anita Alvarez, Rep. Harris, Sen. Steans, Rep. Sara Feigenholtz and Sen. Daniel Biss.



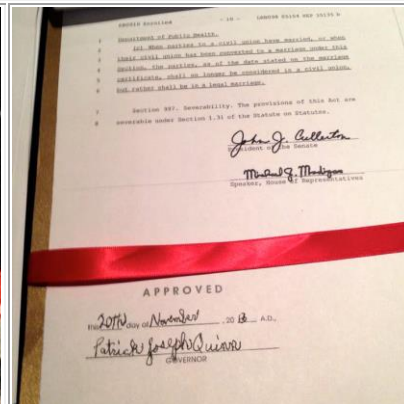
Some of the EQIL staff at the Sidetrack victory party (l-r): Michael Nordman, Patty Dillon, Bernard Cherkasov, Chris Huaracha, Charlie Rice-Minoso and Mitchell Locin. (Missing: Randy Hannig, Angelo Barone and Joy Conklin.)



EQIL CEO Bernard Cherkasov (on right) and husband Danny Cohen at the bill-signing ceremony. (Photo: John Litchfield)



Gov. Pat Quinn raises SB10 in triumph after affixing his signature to the official document. (Photo: Illinois Governor's Office.)



The actual, signed, sealed and delivered marriage fairness law, which took the governor scores of souvenir pens to sign.

**EQUALITY INDEX** = Illinois cities scored above the national average in the annual Municipal Equality Index released last month, with Chicago earning a perfect 100, but with more to do even there and across the state. The study, by the Equality Federation and HRC Foundation, found a national average of 53.7 points in 47 criteria such as non-discrimination laws and municipal leadership, with Springfield scoring 78 points, Champaign at 74, Rockford at 69 and Aurora at 66 points. [Read more about the study.](#)

If you would like an Equality Illinois speaker at your event at work, a local civic organization, on campus, a union meeting, your religious group, a home EQIL fundraiser, or wherever, please contact us at [info@eqil.org](mailto:info@eqil.org) or call 773-477-7173.

Stay informed of LGBT-equality matters by visiting us at [www.eqil.org](http://www.eqil.org). Also, please follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).



We can only succeed in our mission if you stand with us, so please [make a financial contribution](#) today.