



UNHEARD VOICES

Stories of LGBT History



Interview Transcript



David Wilson and his partner, Rob Compton, were two of the plaintiffs in *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health*—the landmark state appellate court case in Massachusetts that awarded marriage equality to same-sex couples in the state.

Ten years before the lawsuit, David Wilson was living with his first partner, Ronald Loso, outside of Boston, until November 29th, 1994. Here, Wilson remembers that day.

David Wilson: EMTs arrived within minutes and they called the police because they saw me standing in the driveway, you know, an African American man in a white neighborhood. And when the police arrived, they wanted to arrest me for assault and battery and breaking and entering.

And when I got to the hospital, I found out that they were not going to give me any information because I had no relationship to Ron. As far as they were concerned, I was a stranger. They called Ron's family in Vermont and said, "Can you give permission for us to talk to David?" And his seventy-five year old mom said, "Of course! They're partners." So they came out and they said that he was dead on arrival. My whole world just kind of fell apart and I felt pretty broken. You know, where do I go from here?

So I joined a support group. One meeting I walked a man. That man's name was Rob Compton. Three years later we had a commitment ceremony. Lots of people came and they thought it was our wedding. And we said, "No, this isn't a wedding because we don't have the right to get married." So it was amazing to become a plaintiff in a major lawsuit against the state of Massachusetts.

Part of the decision to be part of the case was to talk with my family. My dad wasn't sure. All of a sudden his only son was going to become this prominent out, gay, black man. So I talked with dad about some of the issues. A couple hours later dad said, "You're doing the right thing."

May 17th, 2004 was the first weddings. Dad said, "Well, you're going to City Hall and you're going to be part of all this excitement. What about me?" I said, "Dad, I'm sending a limo to pick you up." My dad had never been in a limo. He got a new suit, he came down and the limo took him down.

And he was in the front row when we walked down the aisle. Both his arms were in the air. He was eighty-nine at that point. And he didn't see it just for gay people, he saw it for, you know, all people that had been discriminated against, and his whole life he had been discriminated against. And so I think for dad it was just a victory that he could be a part of. He could not have been more proud.

It was a great day.