



ROBERT D. PARISI
Mayor

TOWNSHIP OF WEST ORANGE

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Mayor Robert Parisi Officiates First Same-Sex Marriage in West Orange, NJ

October 21, 2013 – West Orange, NJ – West Orange Mayor Robert D. Parisi performed the Township's first same-sex marriage Monday afternoon at Town Hall. The wedding of Randall Johnson and Gerard Racioppi is the first of four ceremonies scheduled this week in West Orange following Friday's state Supreme Court decision that it would not put a temporary stay on same-sex marriages at the request of Gov. Chris Christie.

The West Orange Health Department opened its doors early Saturday to begin accepting applications for marriage licenses from same-sex couples following the ruling Friday. Under New Jersey law, all people wishing to be married must file a marriage license application at least 72 hours in advance of the ceremony. Five couples filed their applications early that morning.

New Jersey has recognized civil unions between same-sex couples since 2007, after the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled that the state must allow same-sex couples all the rights and benefits of marriage. It has now become the 14th U.S. state where same-sex marriage is legal.

"This is the fourth time we've committed to each other. We had a domestic partnership ceremony on July 10, 2004, the first day it was allowed in New Jersey. We then had a ceremony at our church in 2004 and a civil union on March 2, 2007. We really wanted to get married today, the first day same-sex marriage became legal, because it is so symbolic," Racioppi said.

"We learned through the Township Facebook page that the health department was going to be open and accepting applications on Saturday morning," said Johnson. We love West Orange and we wanted to make a statement that we're doing it in our hometown."

"It was an honor to perform their ceremony," Parisi said. "There is no bigger moment in a person's life than the day they get married. It is always a pleasure to be a part of that."

Applications can be completed at Town Hall (room 203), located at 66 Main Street. One of the applicants must be a West Orange resident. The fee is \$28 cash or check. Call 973-325-4121 for more information.

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