

Remembering Del Martin

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Though all of us in the queer community was saddened yesterday by the news that Del Martin had passed away, I echo Pam Spaulding's sentiments:

"You have to rejoice that Del Martin was able to live to see the day when she could legally marry her long-time partner and fellow activist Phyllis Lyon in California."

Kate Kendell of the National Center for Lesbian Rights said: "Today the LGBT movement lost a real hero. Her last act of public activism was her most personal—marrying the love of her life after 55 years. In the wake of losing her, we recognize with heightened clarity the most poignant and responsible way to honor her legacy is to preserve the right of marriage for same-sex couples, thereby providing the dignity and respect that Del and Phyllis' love deserved."

From Rea Carey, executive director for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force:

"They spoke the unspeakable, wrote the unthinkable, and lived their lives as few before them ever had: open and proud lesbians in 1950s America. ... Del and Phyllis were inspiration in action, living openly and proudly as a loving couple long before many others felt safe to stand with them. Their love for each other gave them strength and sustained them; that same love, courage and grace have left an indelible mark on our movement, and in each of our hearts."

Ben Finzel of Out Front Blog wrote that he's pleasantly surprised that the mainstream media picked up the story of Phyllis and Del; first, with their second wedding this past June, and second with the death of Del.

"I have been struck by the wide variety of "mainstream" online outlets (including cnn.com) that reported on Del's death with fairly substantive background about her life and contributions to history," he wrote.

"if ever there was an icon for the union of the personal and the political, it was lesbian activist Del Martin," wrote favorite-of-mine ladyblog Jezebel.