

Don't miss this year's Loving Civil Rights Award Dinner!

APRIL 25, 2018 BY SHANNON HOUSTON

It's hard to believe that this year is the Center's 10th annual **Mildred & Richard Loving Civil Rights Award Dinner!** Whether you've been coming since the beginning or you're thinking about joining us for the first time, here are a few **frequently asked questions** about this annual event:

What's with the long name?

In 1958, just five weeks after they were married, Mildred and Richard Loving were arrested in their Virginia home in the middle of the night. Their crime? Living together as an interracial couple. A judge gave them a choice: go to jail or leave the state of Virginia. They chose the latter, leaving behind friends and family and the close-knit community where they'd spent their entire lives. It was the ultimate form of housing discrimination. For years, the Lovings lived in exile in Washington, D.C., barred from even visiting their hometown. They started a family of their own and tried to move on, but never stopped dreaming of the day they could return home.



Mildred and Richard Loving

By the mid-1960s, the Civil Rights Movement was making national headlines, and Mildred Loving was inspired to write to Attorney General Robert Kennedy to ask for help. He directed her to the ACLU, which took on the Lovings' case – eventually all the way to the Supreme Court. The landmark 1967 decision in *Loving v. Virginia* effectively overturned bans on interracial marriage in 16 states.

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Like most of the clients we serve here at the Center, the Lovings were regular people who never intended to become civil rights activists. They simply wanted to live their lives together in the place they chose to call home. But thanks to their courage and persistence, they not only won the right to move back home to Virginia, but ensured that no other family in America would face the same kind of discrimination – at least not legally – again. It seemed quite fitting to name our annual civil rights award after them.

Learn more about the Lovings in the Oscar-nominated [2016 feature film](#) or the [2012 documentary](#) by 2014 Loving honoree, Susie Ruth Powell.

Where does my money go?

All proceeds from the Loving Award Dinner benefit the Center's work to ensure that all people have equal access to housing opportunities in Connecticut, free from discrimination. When you register for the dinner, bid on our live auction items (more on those in a minute), buy a roll of tickets for a chance to win our House of Wine (\$20 gets you an arm's length of tickets to win 50 bottles!), or donate in other ways throughout the night, you're helping us to:

- Provide information and free legal assistance to over 1,100 Connecticut residents each year facing housing discrimination or home foreclosure – people like [Towanna, Natalie, Charles, Mavis, and so many others](#). We [continue to see housing discrimination](#) against people with disabilities, people of color, families with children, people with housing vouchers, and other protected groups every day, in every corner of the state. CT's foreclosure rate remains in the top 10 in the country.
- Conduct research, testing, and analysis to assess [systemic barriers to fair housing](#) in Connecticut's housing markets, and we challenge those barriers when we uncover them.
- Provide education and outreach on the fair housing laws to thousands of residents, housing providers, social service providers, and others, and organize foreclosure prevention clinics statewide.
- Advocate for policies and practices that protect equal access to housing, defend homeowners' rights, and promote integrated, inclusive communities.

What will I see in this year's auction?

If you've attended in past years, you'll find a mix of old favorites and new items to bid on! Here are just a few:

- Winner's Choice – Authentic Mexican Dinner for 8 in Your Home *OR* Mexican Cooking Class in Your Kitchen!
- Family ticket pack to [Hershey Park](#) + \$250 gift card towards your lodging or meals!
- Champagne Brunch in a Treehouse – a perennial favorite!
- Family Fun packages – sporting events, museum memberships, ski passes, and more!
- Local Theater & Dinner Packages
- And more unique and fun items!

Plus, don't forget about our famous House of Wine – a chance to win a hand-selected mix of 50 reds and whites, enough to stock your wine cellar (everyone has one of those, right?) for a year... or



Be sure to get your House of Wine tickets at the dinner!



What will you bid on this year?

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Today, we celebrate the 4th Anniversary of SCOTUS' [@ICPMobility](#) ruling to [#ProtectDisparateImpact](#) under the Fair Housing Act. This ruling protects communities and neighborhoods nationwide! Learn more at [nationalfairhousing.org/disparateimpact](#). [#DefendCivilRights](#)



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maybe just for the summer – we won't judge.

Who's being honored this year?

This year, we're commemorating the **50th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act**. Because this work is far from over, our 2018 honorees are continuing the fight for fair housing today.

- **Betsy Julian** is our 2018 Loving Civil Rights Award recipient. In 2015, her organization, [Inclusive Communities Project](#), won one of the most important fair housing cases to reach the Supreme Court in years. The decision ruled that policies which even inadvertently cause racial segregation or negatively impact a protected class – such as when a city concentrates all of its affordable housing in a neighborhood of color (“disparate impact”) – are illegal under the Fair Housing Act. This landmark ruling will help to fully realize the original goals of the Fair Housing Act to not only prevent individual housing discrimination but also address the decades of systemic discrimination that led to segregated communities across the country—paving the way for more integrated communities that welcome all people. Ms. Julian will also be this year's keynote speaker. [Read more about the Inclusive Communities case here.](#)
- **CT Dept. of Housing Commissioner Evonne Klein and State Rep. Roland Lemar** are the recipients of this year's Edward M. Kennedy Legislative Advocacy Award. They are co-chairs of the state's new Fair Housing Working Group, bipartisan group of legislators, housing policy experts, fair housing advocates (including the Center) and developers formed in September 2017. The goal of the working group is to help remove systemic barriers to fair housing choice that have been in place for decades. Under the leadership of Commissioner Klein and Rep. Lemar, the working group has already sent multiple proposals to the state's general assembly aimed at improving accountability and enforcement for fair and affordable housing policy, promoting inclusionary zoning and supporting transit-oriented development. The group will continue its work and hopes to address more systemic barriers to fair housing choice in the future.
- **Open Communities Alliance (OCA), Crystal Carter, and Tiara Moore** are the recipients of one of this year's Empowering Communities Awards. In October 2017, they were co-plaintiffs in a lawsuit against HUD after it suspended its Small Area Fair Market Rent (SAFMR) Rule, which had been adopted in 2016. The rule was designed to give families with housing choice vouchers greater access to higher-opportunity neighborhoods and promote residential integration. The previous formula for calculating the value of housing vouchers had “effectively confined low income families to under-resourced neighborhoods by capping rents using a regional ‘average’ rent,” according to OCA. The new rule was created to provide voucher holders with access to a wider range of housing options outside of segregated areas, by instead using average rents within zip codes to calculate the vouchers' value. In December, a federal judge ordered HUD to implement the SAFMR rule as of January 1st of this year. The Center applauds this important win, which will promote integration and give low-income families across the country greater access to opportunity. We especially recognize the courage of Ms. Carter and Ms. Moore, voucher holders directly impacted by the new rule, in standing up not only for their own fair housing rights, but for the rights of housing choice voucher holders across the country.
- The [Hartford History Center at Hartford Public Library](#) is the other Empowering Communities Award recipient this year. The HHC provided invaluable assistance to the Center when we were developing our [Fair Housing Tour of Hartford](#), an educational project of the Center that takes participants on a bus tour of Hartford to see the way policies and decisions over the past 100 years created the segregated region we see today. Without access to the HHC's treasure trove of Hartford photos, maps, and records, and help from their expert staff, the Center would not have been able to bring this project to life.



Betsy Julian, 2018 Loving
Award honoree

We guarantee you'll leave feeling inspired to keep fighting for the rights of all people to live where they choose, free from discrimination because of who they are.

That all sounds great. But what is there to eat?

This year, we're excited to be able to offer new menu choices:

- Flatiron Steak with Demi Glaze
- Chicken Artichoke
- Mahi Mahi with Mango Salsa
- Stuffed Portabello Mushroom w/Spinach & Boursin

...All served with warm bread, a mesclun greens salad with poached pears, feta, and balsamic, scalloped potatoes with caramelized onions, grilled asparagus, and in case you're still hungry, New York cheesecake with cherries & whipped cream. Yum! Feel free to let us know about any allergies or dietary restrictions when you register.

A cash bar will be available throughout the event, or you can just wait to take home the House of Wine (good luck!).



Join us May 10th at the Bond Ballroom!

Learn more about this year's Loving Dinner and register here by May 4th! Hurry, seats are filling up fast and tickets won't be sold at the door!

More questions about this year's event, or prefer to register by phone? Call Letty Ortiz at 860-247-4400.

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