

THE CURRENT POSITION OF WILMINGTON YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS
April 2016

In 1997 at Yearly Meeting sessions, the following is recorded in the Minute Book:

Reports of the Permanent Board sessions on Feb. 15 and June 28 were presented the Yearly Meeting. At the June 28 sessions, a statement on same gender marriages was adopted with representatives of Community, Wilmington, Eastern Hills and Dover Meetings and five individuals recorded as "standing aside". The individuals are Tom Hill, James Ellis, John Hubbard, Mike Miller and Neil Snarr. The adopted statement said:

"Wilmington Yearly Meeting recognizes the diversity of views held by Friends concerning sexual ethics, but remains committed to the traditional Quaker understanding and practice that sexual expression is confined to the context of marriage between one man and one woman. We, as monthly meetings within Wilmington Yearly Meeting will not bless same gender unions. We also continue to support the rights of all regardless of sexual orientation and to oppose violence against homosexual people whether verbal or physical. One of the realities which we have to acknowledge is that 'all have sinned and come short of the glory of God'. Given that reality, the question faced by Christians is how to express redemptive and healing love that will draw men and women into the life of wholeness and purity which God desires for us. We believe that such ministry must combine the 'grace and truth' that Jesus came to bring (John 1:17)"

Franchot Ballinger, clerk of Community Monthly Meeting said he could not accept that statement. He added that he did not think that Community Meeting would say that it would not again bless a same sex union. Franchot said he would not stand aside. Several person spoke on the issue. This discussion prompted Neil to say that "there are very kind, loving people here today with a whole different feeling. It was agreed that there could be unity without unanimity.

Friends APPROVED the report of the actions of the Permanent Board and the document, accepting the report as a working document.