

EVAN WOLFSON

b. February 4, 1957

MARRIAGE EQUALITY ADVOCATE

*"I'm not in this just to change the law.
It's about changing society."*

He is the founder of Freedom to Marry, a group that advocates for same-sex marriage rights in the United States.

Evan Wolfson is the founder of Freedom to Marry, a group that advocates for same-sex marriage rights in the United States. He is one of the first attorneys to publicly champion marriage equality and the author of the book "Why Marriage Matters: America, Equality and Gay People's Right to Marry." Wolfson was named one of Time magazine's 100 Most Influential People. As a lawyer, he argued *Boy Scouts of America v. Dale* before the Supreme Court.

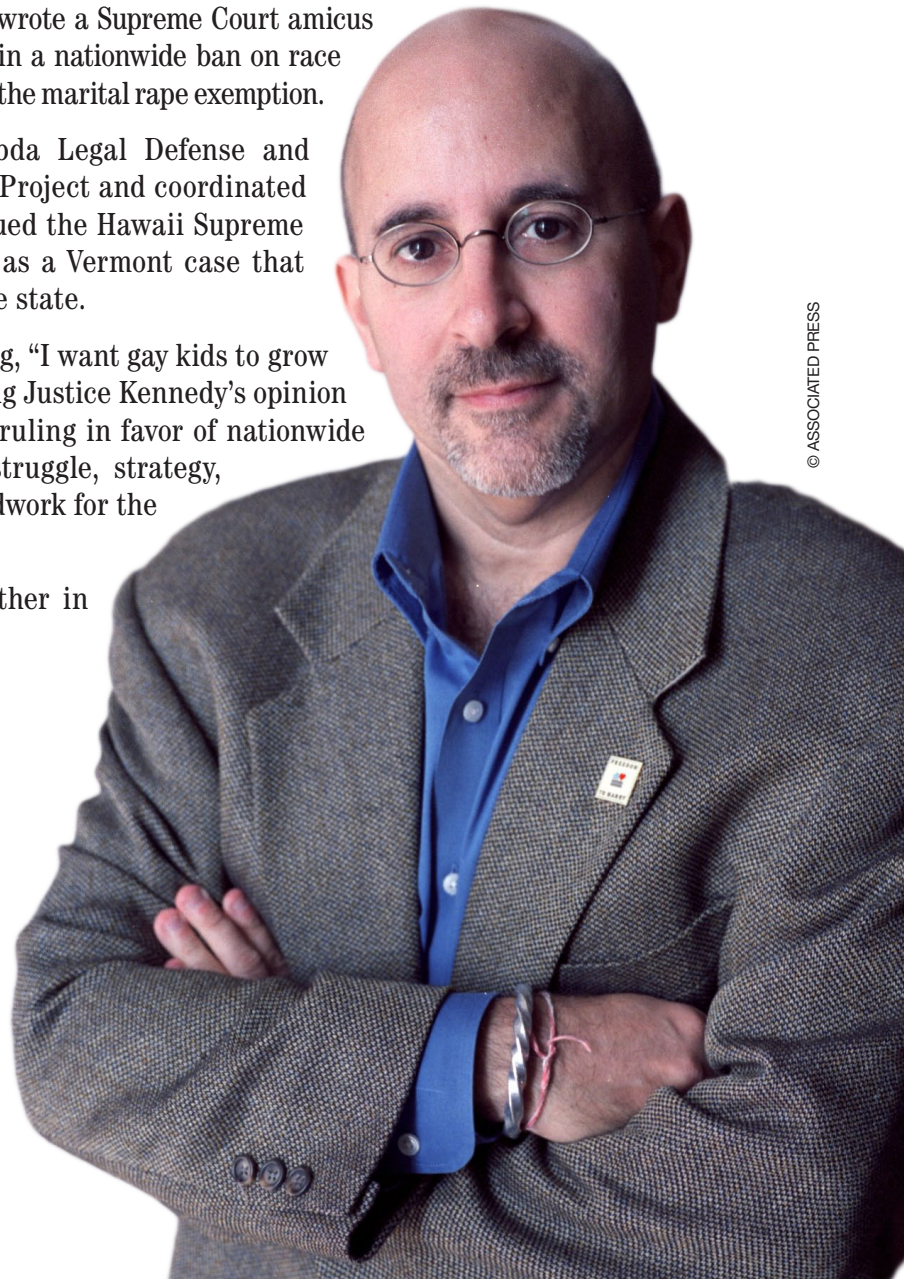
LGBT rights became an important part of Wolfson's advocacy early in his career. He wrote his 1983 thesis at Harvard University on the legal question of same-sex marriage. He also publicly debated the issue at Yale University. As a young lawyer, he wrote a Supreme Court amicus brief that helped win a nationwide ban on race

discrimination in jury selection and helped eliminate the marital rape exemption.

For many years, Wolfson worked for the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, where he directed the Marriage Project and coordinated the National Freedom to Marry Coalition. He argued the Hawaii Supreme Court case involving same-sex marriage as well as a Vermont case that eventually led to the creation of civil unions in the state.

Wolfson launched Freedom to Marry in 2001, saying, "I want gay kids to grow up believing they can get married." He wept reading Justice Kennedy's opinion in *Obergefell v. Hodges* (the 2015 Supreme Court ruling in favor of nationwide marriage equality), remembering the years of struggle, strategy, arguments and previous cases that laid the groundwork for the landmark *Obergefell* decision.

Wolfson is married to Cheng He. They live together in New York City.



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