

VAUGHN WALKER

b. 1944

FEDERAL JUDGE

“Proposition 8 fails to advance any rational basis in singling out gay men and lesbians for denial of a marriage license.”

**Vaughn Walker
is a federal judge
who ruled that
same-sex marriage is a
constitutional right.**

As a federal judge in the U.S. District Court of Northern California, Vaughn Walker ruled as unconstitutional California's Prop 8 prohibition of same sex-marriage.

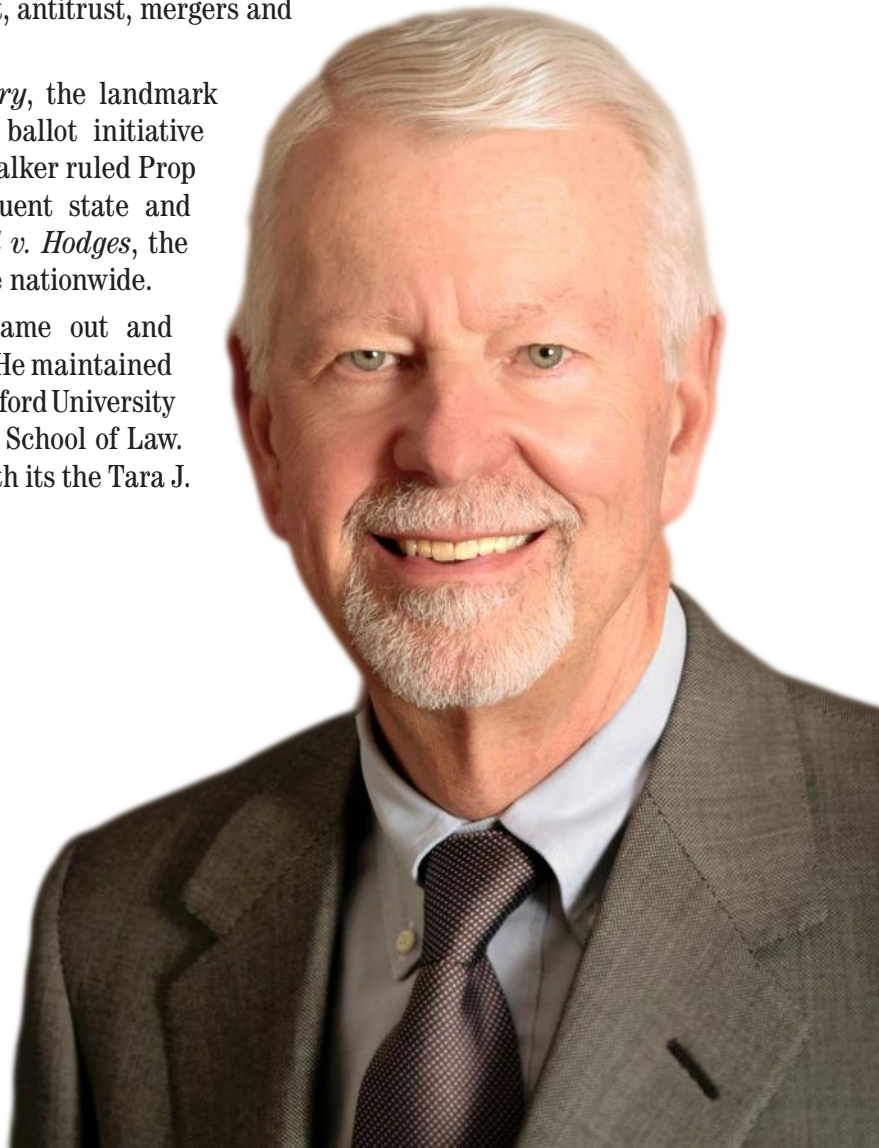
Born in Watseka, Illinois, Walker attended the University of Michigan and was a Woodrow Wilson Fellow in economics at the University of California at Berkeley. He attended Stanford Law School and practiced law in San Francisco.

In 1987 President Ronald Reagan nominated Walker for a judgeship. The nomination was stalled due to Walker's previous representation of the U.S. Olympic Committee in a lawsuit that disallowed the use of the title "Gay Olympics." House Democrats, including Rep. Nancy Pelosi, accused him of being insensitive to the LGBT community.

In 1989 when President George H. W. Bush renominated Walker for a seat on the federal district court, Walker was confirmed unanimously. He presided over numerous important cases, including drug legalization, NSA surveillance without a warrant, antitrust, mergers and copyright infringement.

In 2010 Walker presided over *Hollingsworth v. Perry*, the landmark case that challenged California's Proposition 8, a ballot initiative eliminating the right of same-sex couples to marry. Walker ruled Prop 8 unconstitutional. His decision influenced subsequent state and federal marriage equality cases, including *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the Supreme Court case that legalized same-sex marriage nationwide.

After retiring from the bench in 2011, Walker came out and acknowledged his decade-long same-sex relationship. He maintained a private practice in San Francisco and lectured at Stanford University Law School and the University of California Berkeley School of Law. The Bar Association of San Francisco honored him with its the Tara J. Riedley Barristers Choice Award.



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