

Arizona Same-Sex Marriage Pioneers Profiled in Flagstaff Exhibit

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Steve Shadley, KNAU

Twenty women who have faced extraordinary challenges and have overcome hardships are profiled in a new documentary-style exhibit at Flagstaff's Pioneer Museum. It's called "Resilience: Women in Flagstaff's Past and Present."

KNAU's Steve Shadley had a chance to meet two women featured in the exhibit. Meagan and Natalie Metz. A few years ago they joined a lawsuit together with a few other gay who wanted to legalize same-sex marriages in Arizona. Meagan and Natalie, thank you for joining us...

Meagan and Natalie: "Thank You for having us..."

Shadley: "Natalie, you dated Meagan for six years before you decided to get married, although you said you knew right away she was the right person for you...but before the U.S. Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriages in 2015, you decided to tie the knot in Washington state because it was not yet possible in Arizona, so what happened?"

Natalie: “So, Megan and I actually got married in 2013 in Washington state because it was legal in Washington state before Arizona. And, so we honestly just couldn’t wait anymore to be married. So we were one of the couples that was technically legally married when we joined the lawsuit but in the eyes of Arizona we still were not married...”

Meagan: “But, along with when Arizona granted same-sex marriage legal for Arizona, they also acknowledged other states, so we didn’t have to get re-married in Arizona they just acknowledged our marriage from Washington state.”

Shadley: “But, did you still want to have the Arizona marriage license? Does that mean something to you?”

Meagan: “You know, we thought a lot about that and we didn’t think about it at the time. We were really enjoying all of our friends who were getting married for the first time and it was a really exciting time that we were just submersed in for everyone else and I didn’t...we didn’t really think about that. We have talked about definitely at some point renewing our vows in Arizona state. Because, yes, that’s something that would be very special to us but no we haven’t done that yet...”

Shadley: “Well, let’s pick up on this theme of strength. So, resiliency...I think strength...immediately. So, what advice might you have for other women, females who might be listening right now and they are coping with difficult times...what’s the best advice you could provide them to be resilient?”

Meagan: “I think the best advice I could give them is to really use the community that you have to help heal you. Shortly after our wedding, my brother who was our officiant who was one of my closest confidants and he took his life. And, that was one of the hardest experiences I’ve ever had to go through. And, I think there’s a part of me that just wanted to kind of hide under a rock to heal from that experience...but you know I...after a little bit of time...I kind of opened up to some people and opened up to the community of Flagstaff and through support groups in Flagstaff and things like that that normally you wouldn’t think of...and I gained so much strength through the community and listening to other people’s experiences...”

Natalie: “We’re truly honored that our story gets shared but maybe our story will reach someone who is in a similar situation or someone who feels that they’ve been bullied for being LGBT, and maybe they can see that there is a happy ending. You just kind of got to stick it out through the hard things and there are happy endings...”

Shadley: “Hey, I want to thank both of you...”

Meagan: “Thank you so much for having us...”

Natalie: “Thanks for your time...”

Shadley: Meagan and Natalie Metz. Their legal battle to get same-sex marriage approved in Arizona is among 20 profiles featured at Flagstaff’s Pioneer Museum in the exhibit: “Resilience: Women in Flagstaff’s Past and Present.”