

G&S Reflections: What Does Loving Day mean to David Linhart

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Loving Day, celebrated on June 12, commemorates the Supreme Court's decision in *Loving v. Virginia* to end state bans on interracial marriages between Whites and other races. Virginia's lawyer, Robert D. McIlwaine, III, argued that mixed marriages "hold no promise for a bright and happy future for mankind" and mixed kids are "the victims of intermarried parents." He lost.

This made space for families like mine. My father is a Czech immigrant, and my mother is a Haitian-Dominican immigrant. My older sister's husband is first-generation Chinese, my younger sister's husband is first-generation Indian, and my younger brother's wife is Jewish. My wife is Puerto Rican, and our kids are... mixed. If Walt Whitman didn't say it first, I'd say I contain multitudes.

Race reduces this complexity to literally black and white. My father is White, my mother is Black, and I'm Black. At issue in *Loving v. Virginia* was the protection of White space. Suburbs were settled by White families using racial covenants as a tool to build equity.

When the National Housing Act established the Federal Housing Administration to standardize private mortgages after the Great Depression, a period textbook for home appraisers asked:

In which of the following neighborhoods would you prefer to invest?

- *Neighborhood A: The area is zoned for single-family residences. No deed restrictions are in force.*
- *Neighborhood B: Deed restrictions have been established controlling the types of houses that may be built and restricting occupancy to members of the Caucasian race.*

After starting school in Kingston, Jamaica, I moved to a version of Neighborhood B — a New Jersey suburb within a 2-hour commute of my father's New York City job. Little did the bank know that this White man would take their mortgage and sneak in the only Black family in town. It wasn't a place to make friends. I grew up fiercely individual.

Loving Day left my father with this dilemma: You can have a mixed family, but where will you take them? Today there are more of us, making more places to exist and take up space. As for Mildred Loving, she died in 2008 survived by eight grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren.