On September 29, 1967, *Time* magazine devoted its cover story to the wedding of Margaret Elizabeth Rusk, daughter of then Secretary of State Dean Rusk. Although news magazines have long held a fascination with the nuptials of the young and elite, what landed Peggy Rusk, a Stanford undergrad and past recipient of a D.A.R. prize, on the cover of *Time* was a particular distinction. A foremost member of President Johnson's cabinet, had, in the parlance of the day, "given his…daughter's hand to a Negro." *Time* found the white-gowned Peggy "fetching" and the bridegroom, Guy Gibson Smith, a Georgetown graduate ranked at the top in his ROTC cadet corps, "equally poised." But, as *Time* observed, this wedding was "social history, rather than society-page fare."

Only two decades earlier, before the California Supreme Court's decision in *Perez v. Sharp*, California law would have made the Rusk-Smith union illegal. And, only three months before, when the U.S. Supreme Court in *Loving v. Virginia* eliminated all antimiscegenation laws, 16 states similarly banned interracial marriage. But, while legal authority—and, evidently, the editors of *Time*—unequivocally supported the Rusk-Smith marriage, prevailing social conventions did not. Several publications reported that Secretary Rusk offered to resign from the Johnson cabinet, lest his daughter's marriage prove too scandalous for the administration. In like manner, the Stanford Chapel dean agreed to a shortened ceremony, the guest list was limited to 60, and the groom's parents were the only other African Americans in attendance.

The timeline from *Perez* (1948) to the Rusk-Smith wedding (1967) illustrates what is often the relationship between evolving legal issues and day-to-day realities—namely, that legal developments often precede common perceptions, or, more precisely, our comfort levels. Although Dean Rusk supported his daughter's marriage to the man of her choosing, his sense of loyalty to a Southern president required an offer to relinquish his cabinet position. In preparing this issue of *LAL*, we have been reminded how frequently legal developments have preceded assumptions now taken for granted. The impropriety of a prosecutor summarily dismissing all African Americans from a jury pool, the reality that sexual orientation is not indicative of mental illness, and the manifest unfairness of withholding court access from individuals with disabilities are just a partial list of examples.

Production of this issue also coincided with the California Supreme Court's decision, *In re Marriage Cases*, striking down the ban on same-sex marriage. In June 2007, the LACBA Board of Trustees voted unanimously to join an amicus brief in support of same-sex marriage. The board members concluded this position was consistent with LACBA's longstanding commitment to equal justice, and that, upon rereading *Perez*, the ban on same-sex marriage in 2007 was legally indistinguishable from the antimiscegenation law of 1948.

Nonetheless, it is hardly surprising that this legal development has spurred any number of opponents as well as an effort to rouse popular support for a ballot initiative that would curtail, rather than expand upon, civil liberties. After all, most of us grew up with the notion that whatever marriage was (or was not), it was always between a man a woman. But the lessons of *Perez* and other landmark decisions should make us cautious about opposing legal developments that strike at the heart of our comfort levels. ■