

Defining Family: The Legal Battle for LGBT Rights in Braschi v. Stahl

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Process Paper

The National History Day theme of 2024-2025 was rights and responsibilities, which provided an extensive range of possible topics. Of course, we still had to pick within the theme's basic ideas. When I heard the word "rights," I immediately thought about the fundamental rights we have today and how I could do further research to find a compelling topic. Still, this project offered lots of freedom, so I decided to go with something I was interested in: rights for the LGBTQIA+ Community.

After a while, I decided to settle with *Braschi v. Stahl Associates Co.*, Because I had heard that it was an essential lawsuit for the rights of LGBTQIA+ couples, especially on legal levels. After more research, I concluded that my chosen topic perfectly fits this year's theme. This is because Braschi and his partner's relationship proved to be identical to one of a married couple, having specific responsibilities both financially and emotionally. Their dedication to one another showed that they deserved to have a right to be recognized as a couple and set a landmark of the first time an openly gay partnership was legally acknowledged as a relationship.

This case wasn't the most well-known, but research still gave good results. At the beginning of the study, there were sufficient sources that helped me grasp a basic understanding of *Braschi v. Stahl*. As I continued to research the topic, I needed more details and found multiple books and articles from law journals that helped. A specific source I liked was the book *From the Closet to the Courtroom* by Carlos A. Ball. This book contained in-depth information and had many perspectives the author could only have obtained through interviews, which I found very helpful. With the needed research done, I started building my website.

The construction of my website was efficient because I was already quite familiar with the NHD Website Builder. While creating my project, I strove to express that *Braschi v. Stahl*

was an influential lawsuit that proved that members of the LGBTQIA+ Community deserve the right to be recognized as a family since they've already fulfilled the responsibilities of such a relationship. Braschi and Blanchard's partnership was financially interdependent and held qualities similar to those of a married couple.

Because of the intimate relationship that Braschi and Blanchard had, the court deemed their relationship to be considered one of a family. This marked *Braschi v. Stahl* as the first time in U.S. history that the government recognized an LGBTQIA+ relationship in court. Although this may not seem like a massive milestone like the acceptance of gay marriage, Braschi's case is where it all began. It was a big success and breakthrough back then, especially when the world was so homophobic. This case provided hope that gay marriage was a possibility in the future, forever changing the history of the LGBTQIA+ Community.