

# The Arms of Individuals in Same-Sex Marriages

*The text of a ruling by the Kings of Arms dated 29 March 2014*

We, Garter, Clarenceux and Norroy & Ulster King of Arms, do rule, ordain and decree as follows:

(1) A man who contracts a same-sex marriage may impale the arms of his husband with his own on a shield or banner but should bear his own crest rather than the crests of both parties. The coat of arms of each party to the marriage will be distinguishable (1) by the arms of the individual concerned being placed on the dexter side of the shield or banner and (2) by the crest (when included). When one of the parties to the marriage dies, the survivor may continue to bear the combined arms on a shield or banner.

(2) A woman who contracts a same-sex marriage may bear arms on a shield or banner, impaling the arms of her wife with her own or (in cases where the other party is an heraldic heiress) placing the arms of her wife in pretence. The coat of arms of each party to the marriage will be distinguishable by the arms of the individual concerned being placed on the dexter side of the shield or banner (or displayed as the principal arms in cases where the other party is an heraldic heiress whose arms are borne in pretence). When one of the parties to the marriage dies, the survivor may bear the combined arms on a lozenge or banner.

(3) A married man will continue to have the option of bearing his own arms alone. A ruling of the Kings of Arms made on 6 November 1997 allows a married woman to bear her own arms alone differenced by a small escutcheon. That will continue to be the case but the addition of the mark of difference will forthwith be optional.

Thomas Woodcock, Garter

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