



## Welcome to Virginia Township Justice Court

Located in the historical Storey County Courthouse at 26 South B Street, Virginia City, Nevada

Justice of the Peace Eileen Herrington and her staff are happy to serve you.

The following are choices for the opening statement, vows, exchange of rings, and the declaration of marriage. You are welcome to choose more than one opening statement. If you have special words that you wish to say or have read,

please let the judge know prior to the ceremony. Sample Reaffirmation is on Page 11.

We are gathered here in the presence of (witnesses) to join \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in the bonds of matrimony....

### Opening Statement

1.

"True marriage is more than joining the bonds of marriage of two persons; it is the union of two hearts. It lives on the love you give each other and never grows old, but thrives on the joy of each new day. Marriage is love. May you always be able to talk things over, to confide in each other, to laugh with each other, to enjoy life together, and to share moments of quiet and peace, when the day is done. May you be blessed with a lifetime of happiness and a home of warmth and understanding."

2.

"True marriage begins well before the wedding day, and the efforts of marriage continue well beyond the ceremony's end. A brief moment in time and the stroke of the pen are all that is required to create the legal bond of marriage, but it takes a lifetime of love, commitment, and compromise to make marriage durable and everlasting. Today you declare your commitment to each other before family and friends, your yesterdays were the path to this moment, and your journey to a future of togetherness becomes a little clearer with each new day."

3.

"Marriage is a vital social institution. The exclusive commitment of two individuals to each other nurtures love and mutual support; it brings stability to our society. For those who choose to marry, and for their children, marriage provides an abundance of social benefits, as well as obligations - a "social institution of the highest importance."

4.

"Love should have no other desire but to fulfill itself. But if your love and needs must have desires, let these be your desires: To melt and be like a running brook that sings its melody to the night. To know the pain of too much tenderness. To be wounded by your own understanding of love; And to bleed willingly and joyfully. To wake at dawn with a winged heart and give thanks for another day of loving; To rest at the noon hour and meditate love's ecstasy; To return home at eventide with gratitude; Then to sleep with a vision of the beloved in your heart and a song of love on your lips."

5.

"\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, remember to treat yourselves and each other with respect, and remind yourselves often of what brought you together. Take responsibility for making the other feel safe, and give the highest priority to the tenderness, gentleness and kindness that your connection deserves. When frustration, difficulty and fear assail your relationship, as they threaten all relationships at some time or another, remember to focus on what is right between you, not just the part that seems wrong. In this way, you can survive the times when clouds drift across the face of the sun in your lives, remembering that, just because you may lose sight of it for a moment, does not mean the sun has gone away. And, if each of you takes responsibility for the quality of your life together, it will be marked by abundance and delight."

6.

"May you always need one another, not to fill an emptiness, but to help each other know your fullness. May you want one another, but not out of lack. May you embrace one another, but not encircle one another. May you succeed in all important ways with each other, and not fail in the little graces. May you have happiness, and may you find it in making one another happy. May you have love, and may you find it in loving one another."

7.

"No other human ties are more tender and no other vows more important than those you are about to take. Both of you come to this day with the deep realization that the contract of marriage is sacred as are all of its obligations and responsibilities"

8.

"Ultimately there comes a moment when a decision must be made. Two people who love each other must ask themselves how much they hope for as their love grows and deepens, and how much risk they are willing to take. Commitment may well be a fearful gamble. Because it is the nature of love to create, a marriage itself is something which has to be created, such that as we come together in marriage, we become a new creature."

9.

"When you love someone, you do not love them all the time, in exactly the same way, from moment to moment. Such is impossibility, and even a lie to pretend to. And yet this is exactly what most of us demand. We have so little faith in the ebb and flow of life, of love, of relationships. We leap at the flow of the tide and resist in terror its ebb. We are afraid it will never return. We insist on permanency, on duration, on continuity; when the only continuity possible, in life as in love, is in growth, in fluidity - in freedom, in the sense that the dancers are free, barely touching as they pass, but partners in the same pattern."

10.

Apache Blessing: "Now you will feel no rain, for each of you will be shelter for the other. Now you will feel no cold, for each of you will be warmth to the other. Now there will be no loneliness, for each of you will be companion to the other. Now you are two persons, but there is only one life before you. May beauty surround you both in the journey ahead and through all the years, May happiness be your companion and your days together be good and long upon the earth."

11.

"The only real security is not in owning or possessing, not in demanding or expecting, not in hoping, even. Security in a relationship lies neither in looking back to what was in nostalgia, nor forward to what it might be in dread or anticipation, but living in the present relationship and accepting it as it is now. Relationships must be like islands, one must accept them for what they are here and now, within their limits - islands, surrounded and interrupted by the sea, and continually visited and abandoned by the tides."

12.

"\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, the time has come to forget all the stress of planning this day and simply enjoy your friends and family who have gathered to spend this day with you. This group of loved ones will, likely, never be together in the same place again. Through quiet reflection and nostalgia, think about how each person has touched your life and why they are here with you today." (Note: This reading works best just before the declaration of marriage)

13.

"\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, today you choose each other before your family and friends, to begin your life together. For all the tomorrows that follow, you will choose each other over and again, in the privacy of your hearts. Let your love and friendship guide you, as you learn and grow together. Experience the wonders of the world, even as patience and wisdom calm the restless nature. Through your partnership, triumph over the challenges in your path. Through the comfort of loving arms, may you always find a safe place to call home."

14.

"\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, seek from within yourselves the serenity to accept the things you cannot change, the courage to change the things that you must, and the wisdom to know the difference. Live each day, one day at a time, enjoying your time together, one moment at a time. Seek the wisdom of experience, learning all that you can from each other. Accept hardships as the building blocks of experience, realizing that accepting both the good and bad are simply a part of being alive. Strive to make as many things right as is humanly possible in your life together that you may be reasonably happy in the life you share from this day forward."

Go to next page for Vows.

## Vows

There are three different ways to recite vows:

1. Echo - Officiant says "Please repeat after me", then reads the vow one line at a time, with participant repeating each line, one line at a time, until the vow is complete.
2. I Do - Officiant begins with "Do you", then reads the entire vow, followed by the participant's response of "I do"
3. Recital - a more personal vow, spoken from memory while looking directly into the partner's eyes, and without prompt by officiant. This format can be tricky, especially if the vows are long and complex. A written text (cheat sheet) tucked in a sleeve for backup is a good idea for this option.

A.

"Do you \_\_\_\_\_, take \_\_\_\_\_ to be your lawfully wedded wife/husband, promising to love and cherish, through joy and sorrow, sickness and health, and whatever challenges you may face, for as long as you both shall live?"

B.

Do you \_\_\_\_\_, take \_\_\_\_\_ to be your (wife/husband), to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish; from this day forward until death do you part?"

C.

"Do you \_\_\_\_\_, take \_\_\_\_\_, to be your partner in life and sharing your path; equal in love, a mirror for your true self, promising to honor and cherish, through good times and bad, until death do you part?"

D.

"Do you \_\_\_\_\_ choose \_\_\_\_\_ to be your partner in life, to support and respect (her/him) in (his/her) successes and as well (his/her) failures, to care for (him/her) in sickness and in health, to nurture (him/her), and to grow with (him/her) throughout the seasons of your life together?"

E.

"Do you \_\_\_\_\_, accept \_\_\_\_\_ as your lifemate and one true love, promising to share in all that life offers and suffers, to be there for (him/her) in times of need, to soothe (him/her) in times of pain, and to support (him/her) in all endeavors, big and small."

F.

"I \_\_\_\_\_, accept you \_\_\_\_\_, as my companion and my (wife/husband). I promise to care for you, honor you, and cherish you, for as long as we both shall love."

G.

"I take you to be my spouse, in equal love, as a mirror for my true self, as a partner on my path, to honor and to cherish, in sorrow and in joy, till death do us part."

H.

"I take you as my wedded [wife/husband], to share my life with you, and pledge that I will love, honor, and care for you in tenderness and affection in all the varying circumstances of our lives."

I.

"I acknowledge my love and respect for you and invite you to share my life as I hope to share yours. I promise always to recognize you as an equal individual and always to be conscious of your development as well as my own. I shall seek through kindness and understanding to achieve with you the life we have envisioned."

J.

"I promise to always be there for you, to shelter and hold your love as the most precious gift in my life. I will be truthful and honor you. I will care for you always and stand by you in times of sorrow and joy."

K.

"I, [Name], promise you, [Name], that I will be your [wife/husband] from this day forward, to be faithful and honest in every way, to honor the faith and trust you place in me, to love and respect you in your successes and in your failures, to make you laugh and to be there when you cry, to care for you in sickness and in health, to softly kiss you when you are hurting, and to be your companion and your friend, on this journey that we make together."

L.

"I, (Bride/Groom), take you (Groom/Bride), to be my (wife/husband), to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish; from this day forward until death do us part."

M.

"I, (name), take you, (name), to be my [opt: lawfully wedded] (husband/wife), my constant friend, my faithful partner and my love from this day forward."

N.

I pledge to you endless strength that you can count on when you are weak. I'll be your music when you can't hear, your sunshine when you can't see, or your perfume when you can't smell. You'll never need to look further than me. I'll be your days and nights when you need them filled, your spark of life in the darkness, your hope when you're down and out."

O.

"In the presence of our family and friends, I offer you my solemn vow to be your faithful partner in sickness and in health, in good times and in bad, and in joy as well as in sorrow. I promise to love you unconditionally, to support you in your goals, to honor and respect you, to laugh with you and cry with you, and to cherish you for as long as we both shall live."

P.

"I (name), take you (name) to be my (husband/wife), my partner in life and my one true love. I will cherish our union and love you more each day than I did the day before. I will trust you and respect you, laugh with you and cry with you, loving you faithfully through good times and bad, regardless of the obstacles we may face together. I give you my hand, my heart, and my love, from this day forward for as long as we both shall live."

Q.

"I, [name], choose you [name] to be my [husband/wife], to respect you in your successes and in your failures, to care for you in sickness and in health, to nurture you, and to grow with you throughout the seasons of life."

R.

"I, (name), take you, (name), to be my partner, loving what I know of you, and trusting what I do not yet know. I eagerly anticipate the chance to grow together, getting to know the (man/woman) you will become, and falling in love a little more each day. I promise to love and cherish you through whatever life may bring us."

*Go to next page for Exchange of Rings.*

## Exchange of Rings



How many rings?

Who will be speaking during the ring exchange?

First option is for the one placing the ring to speak their line as they place the ring on the other's finger. In a one ring ceremony, the groom/bride speaks the line while placing the ring on the other's finger.

In the two ring ceremony, this is followed by the bride speaking the line while placing the ring on the groom's finger.

Often, the ring statement by groom/bride is recited (memorized), with or without prompt from officiant. This works well for one liners like "With this ring, I thee wed".

For longer ring statements, echo style works well. Some couples like to give a response to receiving the ring, so examples of those are also provided.

Second option is for the officiant to read a meaningful quote, such as the importance and/or history of the golden band, either before or as the rings are exchanged. This can either be followed by bride/groom statements, or rather instead of. While statements are traditional, it is not required for bride and groom to speak during ring exchange.

X1.

"I (name) give you (name) this ring as an eternal symbol of my love and commitment to you."

X2.

"With this ring, I thee wed."

X3.

"Through this ring, I accept you as my (wife/husband), now and for all time."

X4.

"I give you this ring, as I give to you all that I am, and accept from you, all that you are."  
"With this ring, I thee wed, and with it, I bestow upon thee all the treasures of my mind, heart, and hands."

X5.

"I give you this ring as a symbol of my love and faithfulness. As I place it on your finger, I commit my heart and soul to you. I ask you to wear this ring as a reminder of the vows we have spoken today, our wedding day."

X6.

"This ring is a token of my love. I marry you with this ring, with all that I have and all that I am"

X7.

"I give you this ring as a visible and constant symbol of my promise to be with you, for as long as I live."

X8.

"I give you this ring as a symbol of my love for you. Let it be a reminder that I am always by your side and that I will always be a faithful partner to you."

X9.

"I have for you a golden ring. The most precious metal symbolizes that your love is the most precious element in my life. The ring has no beginning and no ending, which symbolizes that the love between us will never cease. I place it on your finger as a visible sign of the vows which have made us husband and wife."

X10.

"(Name), give you this ring as a symbol of my love. As it encircles your finger, may it remind you always that you are surrounded by my enduring love."

X11.

"With this ring, I thee wed. With my body, I thee worship. With my heart, I thee cherish. With all that I am, I give unto you. With all that I have, I share with you  
From this day until forever done."

X12.

Response (optional):

"I will forever wear this ring as a sign of my commitment and the desire of my heart"

X13.

"I will wear it gladly. Whenever I look at it, I will remember this joyous day and the vows and commitments that we have made."

X14.

(Officiant, before or as rings are exchanged)

"Wedding rings are made precious by our wearing them. Your rings say that even in your uniqueness you have chosen to be bound together. Let these rings also be a sign that love has substance as well as soul, a present as well as a past, and that, despite its occasional sorrows, love is a circle of happiness, wonder, and delight. May these rings remind you always of the vows you have taken here today."

X15.

"You have for each other a golden ring. This most precious of metals symbolizes that love is the most precious element in your life together. The ring has no beginning and no ending, which symbolizes that the love between you will never cease. You place these rings upon each other's fingers as a visible sign of the vows which, this day, have made you husband and wife."

X16.

Alternate for non-gold rings: "You have for each other special rings – symbols that love is the most precious element in your life together. The ring has no beginning and no ending, which symbolizes that the love between you will never cease. You place these rings upon each other's fingers as a visible sign of your vows this day, which will make you husband and wife."

*Go to next page for Declaration of Marriage.*

## Declaration of Marriage



The officiant will say something like...

"And now, by the power vested in me by the Great State of Nevada, I hereby pronounce you husband and wife. (traditional) \_\_\_\_\_,

"And now, by the power vested in me by the Great State of Nevada, I hereby pronounce you legally married partners in life, love, and all things."

"You may seal your promises with a kiss!"

"You may kiss your bride." (contemporary)

"You may now kiss". Then the first kiss and introduction of the newly joined couple to the attendees: "Ladies and Gentlemen" (or) "Family and Friends", then "I present to you" (and/or) "For the first time" (Mr and Mrs optional) \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

-----  
Note: Traditional introduction uses only the groom's name (i.e. "Mr and Mrs John Doe")

More contemporary: Groom's first and last, bride's first ("John and Jane Doe")

If one spouse is going to be changing his/her name, or if the couple has opted for a hyphenated surname, then the introduction should reflect that choice.

Introduction is generally suffixed by "husband and wife", "newlyweds", partners, or something similar.

## RE-AFFIRMATION

We are gathered together here in celebration and in the presence of these distinguished guests to witness the re-affirmation of the vows of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ exchanged when they were married.

\_\_\_\_\_, since your wedding you have been fulfilled by an appreciation for each other, devoid of pretense or disguise. Together you have created honesty and unit of purpose. You have faced the trials and tribulations of life, and have experienced the love and joy that sharing lives can bring to all of us.

You have made your contribution to the world which is always a part of us and more than us. Your love and respect for each other gave you the energy needed to meet the many responsibilities of married life. You are surrounded by family and loved ones who will always keep a place in their hearts to remember the good things you have all shared.

As you face the years ahead, may you be able to say these things to each other:

Because you have loved me, you have given me faith in myself, and because I have seen the good in you, I have received faith in humanity.

\_\_\_\_\_ Do you pledge to continue to love, cherish and support \_\_\_\_\_ and re-affirm the vows you have made before?

\_\_\_\_\_ Do you pledge to continue to love, cherish and support \_\_\_\_\_ and re-affirm the vows you have made before?

With your pledges spoken before these distinguished guests, may you continue to experience growth, happiness, and tranquility as husband and wife throughout all your days.

And now, in accordance with the laws of the Great State of Nevada and the authority vested in me, I do hereby re-pronounce you husband and wife. You may now kiss the bride.