

The new law establishing civil unions in New Jersey will take effect on February 20, 2007. Below is a sample civil union ceremony for use by municipal officials who will be performing these ceremonies.

Civil Union Ceremony¹

GREETING

Presiding Official:

We gather here to unite _____ and _____ in a Civil Union, to reflect their commitment to each other. Their decision to commit to each other has not been entered into lightly and today they publicly declare their private devotion to each other.

The essence of this commitment is the acceptance of each other as lover, companion, and friend. A good and balanced relationship is one in which neither person is overpowered nor absorbed by the other, one in which neither person is possessive of the other, one in which both give their love freely and without jealousy. It is, ideally, a sharing of responsibilities, hopes, and dreams. It takes a special effort to grow together, survive hard times, and be loving and unselfish.

This ceremony is the public declaration of the full and legal commitment of _____ and _____ to each other in accord with the Laws of the State of New Jersey.

¹ There is no "official" ceremony script, although a ceremony is required, just as there is no "official" ceremony for a marriage. In some instances those involved may draft their own ceremony. This draft script is provided as a convenience.

PUBLIC VOWS

Presiding Official:

_____ and _____ do you come here freely and without reservation to pledge to share your lives openly with one another, in a committed and binding relationship? Do you promise to honor and tenderly care for one another, cherish and encourage each other, stand together, through sorrows and joys, hardships and triumphs for all the days of your lives?

Response:

We do.

Presiding Official:

Do you pledge to share your love and the joys of your union and commitment to each other with all those around you, so that they may learn from your love and be encouraged to grow in their own lives?

Response:

We do.

PRIVATE VOWS AND EXCHANGE OF RINGS

Presiding Official:

May these rings that you exchange serve as a public symbol of your union. As often as either of you look upon these rings, may you not only be reminded of this moment, but also of the vows you have made and the strength of your commitment to each other.

_____, please repeat after me ...

I, _____ take you _____ as my life partner. I pledge to share my life openly with you, to speak the truth to you in love. I promise to honor and thoughtfully care for you, to cherish and encourage your own fulfillment as an individual, for the rest of my life. This commitment is made in love, kept in faith, lived in hope, and eternally made new. With this ring I commit to our union and pledge to you my love and fidelity.

_____, please repeat after me ...

I, _____ take you _____ as my life partner. I pledge to share my life openly with you, to speak the truth to you in love. I promise to honor and thoughtfully care for you, to cherish and encourage your own fulfillment as an individual, for the rest of my life. This commitment is made in love, kept in faith, lived in hope, and eternally made new. With this ring I commit to our union and pledge to you my love and fidelity.

Presiding Official:

_____ and _____ have made their public commitment to each other to join their lives together and have declared that they will live together as partners devoted to their Union. They have symbolized their Union by joining hands, taking vows and by exchanging rings.

By the authority vested in me by the laws of the State of New Jersey, I hereby declare that _____ and _____ are lawfully joined in a civil union. Go now in peace and love, sharing the most precious gifts you have - the gifts of your lives.

You may now share your first official kiss as a truly united couple.

