

Bush Gaffe Proves Their Point, Unmarried Group Says

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President quotes famous unmarried author in speech promoting marriage

In his remarks Thursday at the Fourth National Summit on Fatherhood, President Bush attempted to illustrate the importance of marriage with the words of a famous author who actually wasn't married to her long-term partner.

The Alternatives to Marriage Project, a national nonprofit organization for unmarried people, says the slip proves their point that unmarried relationships are everywhere -- even among our most revered literary figures -- and deserve recognition and fairness.

In the speech, Bush quoted George Eliot (the pen name of Mary Anne Evans), a renowned nineteenth century author. She never married her partner, George Henry Lewes, though their relationship spanned 24 years until Lewes' death. At the summit, Bush spoke of the importance of marriage and then read, "'What greater thing is there for two human souls,' George Eliot wrote, 'than to feel that they are joined for life to strengthen each other in all labor, to rest on each other in all sorrow, to be one with each other in silent, unspeakable memories at the moment of the last parting.'"

"I have to thank President Bush for making our point so beautifully," says Dorian Solot, Executive Director of the Alternatives to Marriage Project. "When the President searched for words that spoke to the power of love and commitment, he found Eliot's." Eliot is cited on the Alternatives to Marriage Project's list of famous unmarried couples.

Nearly 11 million Americans live with an unmarried partner, according to statistics released by the U.S. Census last month.

The Alternatives to Marriage

Project is a national non-profit organization for unmarried people, including people who choose not to marry, cannot marry, or live together before marriage. We work for greater understanding and acceptance of unmarried people.

George Eliot, the pen name for Mary Anne Evans (1819-1880), was a Victorian author best known for her novels *Silas Marner* and *Middlemarch*. Her partner, George Henry Lewes, had been previously married and never divorced. For information about George Eliot's relationship with Lewes, visit this site by the University of Virginia Department of English.

Read President Bush's speech at the Fatherhood Summit.

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