

Sneed: 11-year-old thrilled her dad and daddy finally getting married

BY MICHAEL SNEED June 19, 2014 1:04AM



David (top left) and Lee Neubecker with their children, Michael and Braiden. | Photo provided by David Neubecker

The family circle . . .

It's going to happen.

Dad and Daddy are finally getting married.

And their 11-year-old daughter, **Braiden**, whose fourth-grade essay on same-sex marriage was included in the legal briefs filed with the U.S. Supreme Court last year — is getting her wish.

On Saturday, **Lee** and **David Neubecker**, who adopted Braiden and her 10-year-old brother, **Michael**, in 2009 after they were shuttled among five foster homes, are getting married at the Unitarian Universalist Unity Temple in Oak Park.

The Neubeckers, major advocates for gay marriage in Illinois, traveled to San Francisco in 2004 to be married, but their marriage was nullified a few months later when a court ruled their license invalid.

Now that it's legal in Illinois, the Neubeckers are getting hitched.

"Braiden and Michael will enter the ceremony first holding hands, Lee and I are going to follow behind them, then we're having a sing-along . . . and a Hawaiian luau . . . We want this to be fun, be full of love," David Neubecker said.

"We invited [State Rep.] **Sara Feigenholtz**. She is an adoptee herself. She had such a strong connection to the kids through this whole ordeal," he added. "And we did extend an invite to the governor. We felt without his leadership, this wouldn't be possible for our family."

◆ Sneed note: Gov. **Pat Quinn** will not be able to attend but "is personally calling the Neubeckers to deliver his regrets," a representative for Quinn said. "He was moved by their daughter Braiden's powerful voice throughout the fight for marriage equality in Illinois and is thrilled they get to celebrate together as a family this weekend."

Braiden's letter has been used in the court filings for gay marriage efforts in a number of other states, including Michigan, according to Neubecker.

"My two dads should be able to be married and have the same rights as any married couple. How would you feel if you couldn't marry someone just because the government said you weren't allowed to. If I loved someone and wasn't allowed to marry them, I would be really sad," Braiden wrote. "Before I lived with my two dads, my life was horrible.

"I moved five times until my dad and daddy found me," she wrote. "They also promised that they would always love me and keep me safe and they would treat me equal to my brother. I was four when I met them. Now I am ten and they have kept their promises. They do so much for me. They never hurt me or my brother. I feel so safe.

"My family has taught me that even if you don't agree with someone, you should still be kind and respectful. The government should too. Also, my church tells me that you should treat other people the way you want to be treated."

Happiness, all.

Trump 'em . . .

Sneed feels like weighing in on the kvetching and wretching over real estate mogul **Donald Trump** stamping his last name in capital letters on the side of his Trump Tower building — which is built on the footprint of the old Sun-Times building.

I like it.

Finding Sherlock . . .

News via PBS “Masterpiece Theatre” producer **Rebecca Eaton** that hot Brit actor **Benedict Cumberbatch**, who stars in the hit TV series “Sherlock,” has a new girlfriend — and it’s time for the “Cumberb----” fan base to move on — has sparked a tabloid frenzy to locate the mysterious love interest.

◆ The kicker: No identification yet in the Brit tabloid press. Stay tuned.

Sneedlings . . .

Congratulations to **Fred** and **Gigi Barbara** on the impending nuptials this Saturday of their daughter, **Jacqueline**, to **Robert Evenboer** at St. Mary Catholic Church in Evanston . . . Thursday’s birthdays: **Phylicia Rashad**, 66; **Zoe Saldana**, 36, and **Macklemore**, 31.