

Lee
& Doug

For Lee Harrison Ledbetter and Douglas John Mefert, it wasn't a matter of love or intent, but legality that kept them from getting married. That all changed on June 26, 2015, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the fundamental right to marry was guaranteed to same-sex couples.

When Lee got home from a business trip that night, Doug didn't waste time. "Doug sat next to me and took my hand and asked me to marry him," Lee said.

The couple had been together for more than 16 years. They'd previously discussed marriage, even exchanging promise rings on their fifth anniversary with a commitment to marry if it were ever legal to do so in Louisiana.

Once the path was clear, the couple thought they'd have the ceremony at a courthouse, but their parents, siblings and relatives convinced them to change their plans.



In the end, they kept the party small, with just close friends and family gathered to help them tie the knot on April 16, 2016. The ceremony and reception was held at their home, an International Style residence designed in 1963 by architect Nathaniel "Buster" Curtis Jr. and renovated and decorated recently by Ledbetter. The home, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, was featured in the April issue of *Architectural Digest*, the same month as the wedding.

The family-and-friends theme continued throughout the wedding: Lee's sister, the Rev. Dr. Anne Ledbetter, was the officiant. (Their grandfather, Dr. John Samuel Land, was the founding pastor of St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church.) Lee's nephew Land Ledbetter performed on the guitar during the reception, as did Lee's brother, Woody Ledbetter. Doug's nephew,



Matthew Becher, read from "The Velveteen Rabbit," and two other nephews, Mason and Tyler Meffert, served as ushers.

Laura Arrowood, who caters the couple's parties, created food for the event, and Ellen Johnson and Dr. Ronnie Swartz lent their 1957 Mercedes (nicknamed "Luscious") for after-wedding fun the next day.

Photographer Alex Harris, whose work is in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, documented the event. He was so discreet that Lee and Doug barely noticed him taking photos. Alex is married to Lee's lifelong friend, Margaret Sartor, author of "Miss American Pie," a bestselling memoir.

The honeymoon was in Venice, Italy, where for seven days, Lee and Doug roamed the famed city, with



Ledbetter and his mother, Helen

some help of a guide recommended by New Orleans Museum of Art's Brooke Minto.

Why Venice? Lee, an architect, interior designer and owner of Lee Ledbetter & Associates, had studied in Venice 35 years earlier and hadn't been back, and Doug, vice president of the National Audubon Society, had always wanted to see the water city due to his wetlands expertise and water management experience. Needless to say, it was the perfect start of their new married life.

— Sue Strachan, Social Scene columnist



INVITATION

Scriptura

SUITS

Canali, made to order from Saks Fifth Avenue

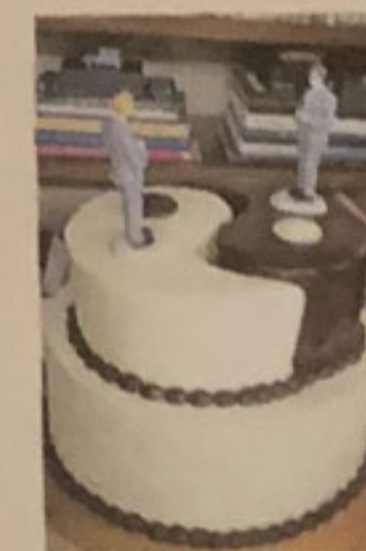


RINGS

Adler's

FLOWERS

Mitch's Flowers



CAKE

Bittersweet Confections

FOOD

Laura Arrowood

PHOTOGRAPHY

Alex Harris

MUSIC

BELOW: Land Ledbetter (Lee Ledbetter's nephew), guitar; Harry Hardin, string trio

OFFICIANT

The Rev. Dr. Anne Ledbetter (Lee Ledbetter's sister)

LOCATION

Home of Lee Ledbetter and Doug Meffert, designed in 1963 by architect Nathaniel "Buster" Curtis Jr. and now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

