ABSTRACT
The racial identity development of multiracial individuals is complex. The problem is multiracial college students experience pressure from the environment to choose only one of their monoracial parent’s race identities as their own race identity (Townsend, Markus, & Bergsieker, 2009; Sanchez, 2010). Multiracial individuals have grown up in a monoracial society in which many people do not have a clear understanding of the full racial identity of a multiracial person. The researcher explored the reason why and how multiracial college students choose to racially identify themselves.

HISTORY OF INTERRACIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE U.S.
• Coined in 1863, miscegenation refers to “a mixture of the races; especially: marriage, cohabitation, or sexual intercourse between a white person and a member of another race” (Merriam Webster online dictionary ref).
• Viewed in a negative light, the threat of race mixing prompted many states to enact anti-miscegenation laws prohibiting interracial marriage, a sentiment that continues today (Shang, 2008).
• Interracial marriage remained illegal, especially in the southern United States, until the landmark 1967 Supreme Court case decision of Loving v. Virginia, which found all state anti-miscegenation laws to be unconstitutional (Hollinger, 2003).

Richard and Mildred Loving
Loving vs. Virginia (1967)

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
• Erickson’s (1959/1980) Eight-Stage Theory of Identity and Psychosocial Development
• Poston’s (1990) Five-Stage Biracial Identity Development Model
• Root’s (1990) Four Resolutions of Tension of Biracial Identity Development

METHODS
• This qualitative study includes the personal stories of participants’ life experiences as multiracial students in a predominantly monoracial society.
• A phenomenological research design was appropriate because the focus was on the multiracial college students’ shared life experiences in growing up and living as a multiracial individual (Creswell, 2007).
• Personal accounts of the students serve as the best way to explore the research question and determine the reasons why a multiracial student chooses a particular racial identity and the impact that decision may have on his or her social and academic life.
• To collect data, the researcher asked 11 open-ended questions during individual audiotaped interviews with each multiracial participant.

RESULTS
• Even though seven of the 13 respondents discussed having issues when first arriving to campus and being accepted by various existing racial circles, nine of 13 respondents experienced various situations on campus where they did not always feel included by their peers due to their racial identity.
• The need to prove one racial identity to peers is a disadvantage as seen by eight of the 13 participants. They felt being multiracial segregated them from identifying with one race.
• Ten of the 13 participants encountered feeling vulnerable with particular stereotypes and limitations of their perceived racial identity with interactions with professors in classrooms.
• On a more positive note was when eight of 13 participants felt they had an advantage over their monoracial peers as they felt more culturally aware and open minded to people of different races and cultures because of their own lived experience.
• Eight of 13 participants enjoyed being educated about their multiracial identity and the background of their entire racial heritage. By learning about the various aspects of their racial heritages, it instilled a sense of pride in them for everyone they represented.

CONCLUSIONS
• Root (1990) reminded society the most important take away in learning about multiracial identity is regardless of whether their physical appearance aligns with what society deems appropriate for particular racial groups, it is up to each multiracial individual to make their own decision.
• The findings of the study are consistent with the research by Renn (2008) and King (2008), amongst others mentioned in the literature review, stating the major factors that lead a multiracial college student to self-identify racially is due to their physical appearance, family influence, and peer culture on campus.
• Educating both monoracial and multiracial people about the complexity of the multiracial racial identity development and existence is imperative in making sure that colleges and universities have inclusive campus where these students feel welcomed by both peers and educators.
• One of the recommendations that resulted from the study’s findings was the creation of a multiracial student organization to provide those students a space to share their lived experiences with each other.
• Researchers showed that multiracial people have felt different and invisible for too long. It is time for hearing their voice and for meeting their needs (Renn, 2000; Root, 1996).
• The parents, family members, educators, peers, and society should avoid placing their own perceptions of how they feel multiracial individuals should racially identify.
• With the steadily increasing population of multiracial students entering college and university campuses, staff, faculty, and higher-level administrators need to consider implementing initiatives that make this group of students feel welcome.

REFERENCES

CONTACT INFORMATION
Dr. Kelley C. Kimple
Associate Director of Multicultural Affairs
Baylor University
Kelley_Kimple@baylor.edu