

ELIZABETH BIRCH

b. September 2, 1956

HRC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“It’s all about coming out.”

During her tenure at the HRC, she helped increase membership from 100,000 to more than 1.1 million.

Elizabeth Birch is a prominent LGBT activist. From 1995 to 2004, she served as executive director of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the largest LGBT organization in the United States. Under her leadership, the HRC’s budget quadrupled and its membership increased more than tenfold.

Born at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, Birch was the daughter of a Canadian Air Force officer. She graduated from the University of Hawaii and earned her J.D. from the Santa Clara University School of Law.

Birch began her law career as an associate attorney at McCutchen, Doyle, Brown & Enersen. She joined Apple Inc. in 1989 as the worldwide director of litigation.

Birch’s activism began when she joined the Bay Area Municipal Elections Committee, an LGBT political action group in California. She went on to serve as chair of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force from 1992 to 1994, before accepting the position as the HRC’s executive director in 1995.

With Birch at the helm, the HRC dramatically expanded in size and visibility. During her nine-year tenure, she helped increase membership from 100,000 to more than 1.1 million and helped grow the budget from \$6.5 million to almost \$30 million. She built a 100-person staff and launched key initiatives such as the HRC website, a magazine and youth outreach programs. Birch spearheaded the effort to establish the first major LGBT headquarters in Washington, D.C. The HRC opened the doors to its own building in 2003.

Birch has represented the HRC on television programs such as “Good Morning America,” “Nightline,” “Crossfire” and “The Today Show.” In 2000 she became the first leader of an LGBT organization to address a U.S. political convention, when she delivered a speech at the Democratic National Convention.

After Birch left the HRC in 2004, she launched her own consulting firm. The same year, she became the first recipient of the Elizabeth Birch Equality Award. Presented annually by the HRC, the award honors an individual or organization that has made a significant national contribution to the LGBT community.

Birch and her former partner, Hilary Rosen, are the parents of adopted twins (a son and a daughter).



lgbt[™]
HISTORY
MONTH

www.lgbtHistoryMonth.com

Copyright ©2018 – A Project of Equality Forum