

JEWELLE GOMEZ

b. September 11, 1948

NOVELIST

She is an award-winning author and a founding member of GLAAD.

“No one of us should feel we can leave someone behind in the struggle for liberation.”

Jewelle Gomez is an author and activist whose writing centers on the experiences of LGBTQ women of color. Her books include the double Lambda Award-winning novel “The Gilda Stories.” Gomez was a founding member of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD).

Born in Boston, Massachusetts, Gomez was raised by her great-grandmother, a woman of African and Native American descent. Gomez attended Northeastern University on a full scholarship. As one of the university’s few black students, she began her lifetime of activism participating in protests over campus inequality. She received a Ford Foundation Fellowship to study at Columbia University School of Journalism and worked as a production assistant on “Say Brother,” one of the first black weekly television shows in the United States.

Gomez’s feminist and intersectional activism shapes her creative voice. After several of her poetry collections were published, the first of her many novels, “The Gilda Stories,” was released in 1991. The story, which spans 200 years in the life of Gilda, a vampire who escapes slavery, reframes traditional vampire mythology from a black lesbian feminist perspective. After winning the Lambda Award, Gomez adapted the book into a theatrical production, “Bone and Ash,” which was performed in 13 U.S. cities. More than a hundred anthologies include Gomez’s fiction and poetry, and numerous publications, such as The New York Times, The Village Voice and Essence Magazine, have published her work.

On behalf of LGBTQ rights, Gomez’s activism is “grounded in the history of race and gender in America.” She wrote, “No one of us should feel we can leave someone behind in the struggle for liberation.” From 1985 to 1987, she served as a founding member of GLAAD. She has since served on the boards of numerous women’s and LGBTQ philanthropic and cultural organizations and as a commencement speaker for multiple educational institutions. She and her partner were among the litigants who sued the state of California for the right to legal same-sex marriage, and several of her articles were quoted extensively during the case.

Gomez received a literature fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts and two fellowships from the California Arts Council. She has served on literature panels for the National Endowment for the Arts, the Illinois Arts Council and the California Arts Council.

She lives in San Francisco with her partner, Dr. Diane Sabin.



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