

ANGELICA ROSS

b. November 28, 1980

TRANSGENDER RIGHTS ADVOCATE

“My mission is to prove that everyone has the right to pursue their dreams.”

She is a businesswoman, a transgender rights advocate and an actress.

Angelica Ross is a television actress and the founder and CEO of TransTech Social Enterprises, an organization that helps transgender people find work in the technology industry.

Born male, Ross grew up in Racine, Wisconsin. Perceived as feminine by the eighth grade, she came out as gay at age 17. Her evangelical Christian mother responded so negatively, Ross attempted suicide.

Ross entered the University of Wisconsin-Parkside but dropped out after one semester and joined the U.S. Navy to qualify for the G.I. Bill. After six months of service and harassment, Ross requested and received a discharge under the “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” policy.

At age 19, Ross transitioned to female. Her mother and stepfather rejected her gender identity. Ross eventually went to live with her biological father in Roanoke, Virginia, where she waitressed so she could attend cosmetology school. After facing discrimination in Roanoke, she moved to Hollywood, Florida, where she overhauled a website for her employer and taught herself computer code. She used the experience to start her own web design and consulting firm, while she studied acting.

Ross later found a position as the employment coordinator at the Trans Life Center in Chicago, helping transgender people secure jobs and health care. In 2014 she launched her own nonprofit, TransTech Social Enterprises, to train transgender workers in technical computer skills and help them find employment. In 2015 she participated in the White House LGBTQ Tech and Innovation Summit as a featured speaker.

In 2016 Ross landed a role in “Her Story,” a web series about transgender women in Los Angeles. The same year, the program was nominated for an Emmy Award for Outstanding Short Form Comedy or Drama. Ross also served as executive producer and star of the short film “Missed Connections,” a black transgender love story. “Missed Connections” was an official selection at the 2017 Outflix and Outfest film festivals.

In 2018 Ross joined the cast of the critically acclaimed television series “Pose,” about New York City’s underground black and Latinx LGBT ballroom culture of the 1980s. The following year she starred as a psychologist in the FX television network series “American Horror Story.”

In 2018 the Financial Times named Ross a top 10 LGBT executive. In 2019 she served as a celebrity ambassador of the 50th Anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. Late in 2019, she became the first transgender person to host a national presidential candidate forum, when she hosted the official discussion of LGBTQ+ issues with the 2020 Democratic candidates. In January 2020, the luxury brand Louis Vuitton featured Ross in its ad campaign.

© GETTY IMAGES

lgbt
HISTORY
MONTH

www.lgbtHistoryMonth.com

Copyright © 2020 – A Project of Equality Forum