

# ERIC FIDELIS ALVA

b. April 1, 1971

## HERO/ACTIVIST

*"I joined the military because I wanted to serve.  
I was patriotic, idealistic; I was also gay."*

**Having survived a war injury, Eric Alva felt he'd been given a second chance at life. He discovered a new calling. "I had to use my voice," he says.**

Retired Staff Sergeant Eric Alva was the first American soldier wounded in the Iraq War. He is a GLBT civil rights activist and a national spokesman for the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

Alva is a native of San Antonio, Texas. He inherited his middle name from his grandfather and father, both Marine veterans named Fidelis. "Semper Fidelis," the official Marine Corps motto, means "always faithful." Serving in the military was Alva's dream.

In 1990, the 5-foot-1-inch-tall Alva enlisted in the Marine Corps. He made it through the rigors of boot camp and went on to serve for 13 years. In 2000, he was promoted to Staff Sergeant.

In 2003, on the first day of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Alva was with his battalion in Iraq when he stepped on a land mine. The explosion shattered his right arm and damaged his right leg so severely it had to be amputated.

Alva received a medical discharge and was presented with a Purple Heart by President George W. Bush. He was the Iraq War's first Purple Heart recipient.

Having survived a war injury, Alva felt he'd been given a second chance at life. He discovered a new calling. "I had to use my voice," he says. "I had fought and nearly died to secure rights for others that I was not free to enjoy. I had proudly served a country that was not proud of me."

In 2003, Alva received the Heroes and Heritage Award from La Raza. People magazine honored him with the Heroes Among Us Award (2004). He received the Patriot Award from the city of San Antonio (2004) and the Public Citizen Award from the National Association of Social Workers (2008).

Alva earned a Bachelor of Social Work in 2008, and is studying for a master's degree in that field. He lives in San Antonio with his long-term partner, Darrell Parsons.



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# GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER

b. January, 1864

d. January 5, 1943

## SCIENTIST

**George Washington Carver is best known for his advances in the agricultural field. He devised and taught impoverished farmers uses for nutritious, commonly grown crops.**

*“Where there is no vision, there is no hope.”*

George Washington Carver was a groundbreaking agricultural scientist, known for discovering innovative uses for peanuts, sweet potatoes and clay. A black man born during the Civil War, Carver overcame racism to establish himself as a preeminent scientist and renowned academic.

Carver was born a slave in southwest Missouri. As an infant, he was kidnapped by slave raiders, and then abandoned when they discovered he suffered from whooping cough. His mother's former owners, Moses and Susan Carver, adopted and raised him.

At the age of 13, Carver left home to attend a school for African-Americans. In 1890, he matriculated to Simpson College in Iowa, where he was the only black student. In 1891, he transferred to Iowa State College to focus on his passion for agriculture. After graduating, he served as the only black member of the Iowa State faculty. Carver was invited to head the agriculture department at the Tuskegee Institute, a university for black students founded by Booker T. Washington.

As a professor, Carver encouraged students to think creatively and independently. He emphasized self-sufficiency and resilience, and he pursued broad interests, including painting and religion. Throughout his life, he maintained a positive approach. Even in the face of overt racism, Carver said, “I can’t do my work if my heart is bitter.”

Carver is best known for his advances in the agricultural field. He devised and taught impoverished farmers uses for nutritious, commonly grown crops. He was the first scientist to discover multiple uses for peanuts, developing products as diverse as flour, ink and face cream. He experimented with developing rubber from the sweet potato. Carver’s discoveries are seen as the basis for many products, including biofuels and fruit-based cleaning products.

In 1916, Carver was offered membership in the Royal Society of London. In 1923, he was awarded a Spingarn Medal by the NAACP. Simpson College awarded him an honorary degree in 1932.

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# GEORGE EASTMAN

b. July 12, 1854

d. March 14, 1932

## ENTREPRENEUR

*“What we do during our working hours determines what we have; what we do in our leisure hours determines what we are.”*

**George Eastman is the father of modern photography and the inventor of motion picture film. He founded the Eastman Kodak Company and became a philanthropist.**

George Eastman is the father of modern photography and the inventor of motion picture film. He founded the Eastman Kodak Company and became a philanthropist to organizations involved in technology, medicine, music and theater.

Born in Waterville, New York, Eastman moved with his family to Rochester. His father died when George was 7. Eastman dropped out of school at age 14, and took a job with an insurance company to support his mother and two sisters, one of whom was severely disabled.

Eastman began working in banking, but it was his passion for photography that made him a household name. His ingenuity and marketing savvy transformed photography from a pricey hobby to an affordable, popular pastime.

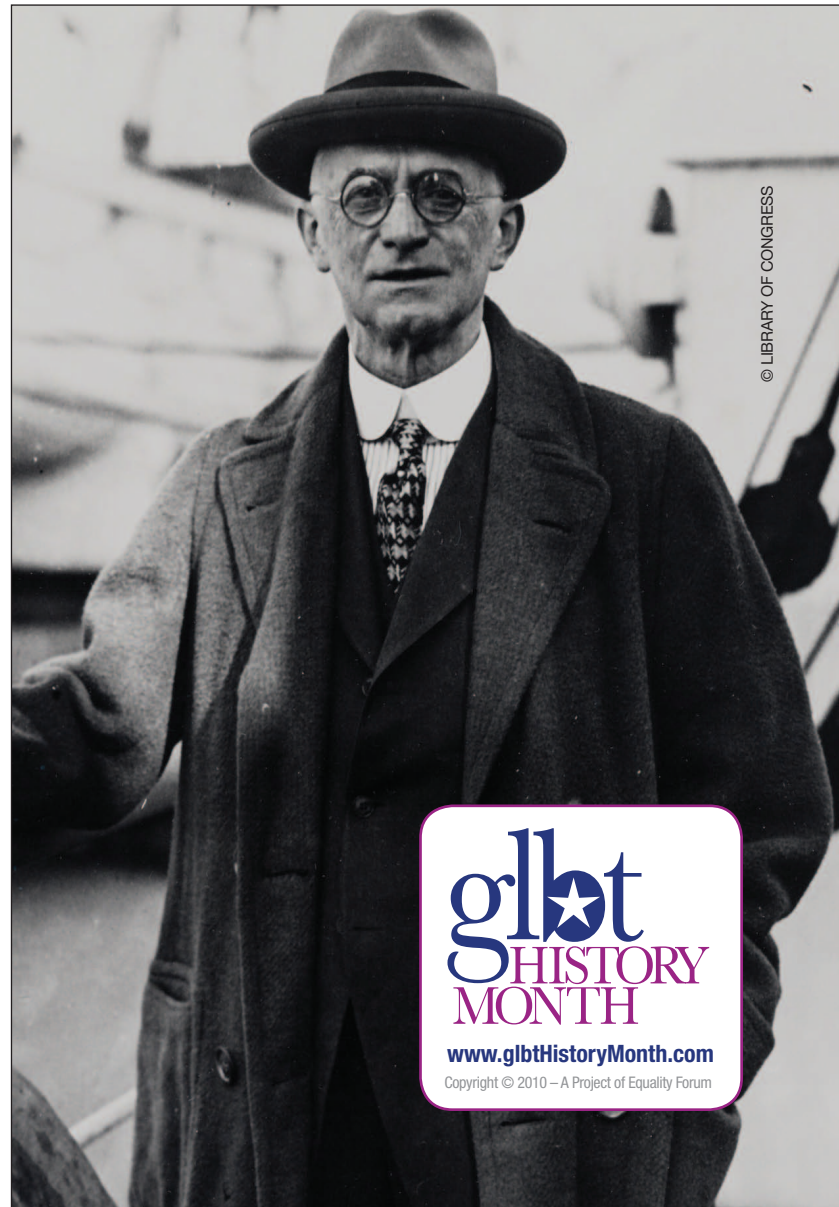
In the business world, Eastman was a leader. His company was among the first to offer its employees retirement and insurance benefits, as well as profit sharing.

Eastman is nearly as famous for his philanthropy. In addition to contributing millions to the University of Rochester, M.I.T. and the Tuskegee Institute, he established and supported the Eastman School of Music, one of the nation's preeminent music institutions.

Despite his achievements in the world of photography, few pictures of Eastman exist. He was a shy, unassuming man who steered clear of publicity.

In 1946, Eastman's home became the George Eastman International Museum, housing the world's leading collections of photography and film.

In the final years of his life, Eastman suffered from severe pain caused by a degenerative disorder of the spine. At age 77, depressed over his inability to lead an active life, Eastman killed himself with a gunshot to the heart. His suicide note read, “To my friends. My work is done, why wait?”



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# SHARON FARMER

b. June 10, 1951

## WHITE HOUSE PHOTOGRAPHER

*“Never turn down a chance to show what you can do.”*

Sharon Farmer was a White House photographer during both terms of the Clinton presidency. She was the first woman and first African-American to direct the office charged with chronicling nearly every second—from the mundane to the monumental—of the nation’s highest office.

Born in Washington, D.C., in 1951, Farmer was interested in photography from a young age. She discovered the power of the medium looking at pictures in her family’s encyclopedia. She attended Ohio State University, intending to study bassoon, but quickly switched her major to photography and honed her skills on the yearbook staff.

The Associated Press hired Farmer for a photojournalism internship during her senior year in college. After graduation, she returned to her hometown, where she became a freelancer and a photographer of album covers.

In 1993, she was hired as a White House photographer, a fast-paced job in which she used approximately 3,000 rolls of film per year and traveled the globe on a moment’s notice. In 1999, she was promoted to director of White House photography.

During her stint at the White House, Farmer captured many prominent events, including the handshake between Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, and the swearing in of Nelson Mandela as the president of South Africa.

Farmer also chronicled many political races, from local to national. In 2004, she served as the head photographer for Senator John Kerry’s presidential campaign.

In addition to being featured in individual shows and group exhibitions nationwide, Farmer has lectured for National Geographic and the Smithsonian Institution and has taught at American University. She resides in Washington, D.C.

**During her stint at the White House, Sharon Farmer captured many prominent events, including the swearing in of Nelson Mandela as the president of South Africa.**

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# LESLIE FEINBERG

b. September 1, 1949

## AUTHOR/ACTIVIST

**Leslie Feinberg is well known for forging a strong bond between the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities, and other oppressed minorities.**

*“Gender is the poetry each of us makes out of the language we are taught.”*

Leslie Feinberg is a leading transgender activist, speaker and writer. She is a national leader in the Workers World Party and a managing editor of Workers World newspaper.

Feinberg was born in Kansas City, Missouri, into a working-class family. In the 1960's, she came of age in the gay bars of Buffalo, New York.

Now surgically female-to-male transgender, Feinberg is an outspoken opponent of traditional Western concepts about how a “real man” or a “real woman” should look and act. Feinberg supports the use of gender-neutral pronouns such as “ze” instead of he or she, and “hir” instead of him or her.

Feinberg is well known for forging a strong bond between the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities, and other oppressed minorities. “Everyone who is under the gun of reaction and economic violence is a potential ally,” Feinberg says.

“Stone Butch Blues” (1993), Feinberg’s widely acclaimed first book, is a semi-autobiographical novel about a lesbian questioning her gender identity. It received an American Literary Association Award for Gay and Lesbian Literature and the Lambda Small Press Literary Award.

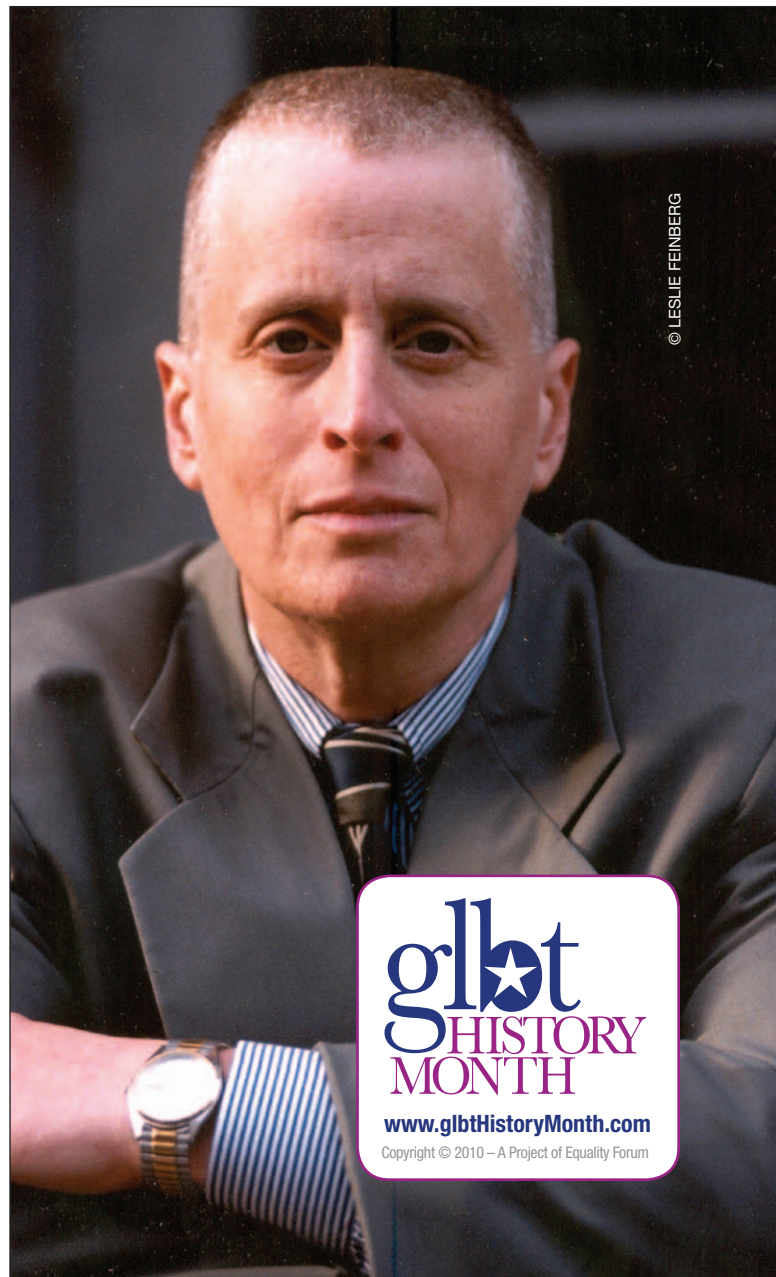
“Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Ru Paul” (1996), Feinberg’s first nonfiction work, examines the structures of societies that welcome or are threatened by gender variance. The book was selected as one of The Publishing Triangle’s “100 Best Lesbian and Gay Nonfiction Books.”

“Trans Liberation: Beyond Pink or Blue” (1998), another nonfiction work, documents Feinberg’s near-death experience after being denied medical treatment for a heart problem. The doctor, after discovering his patient was transgender, turned hir away.

“Drag King Dreams” (2006), Feinberg’s second novel, picks up where “Stone Butch Blues” left off, chronicling the issues of transgender life today.

In 2008, after Feinberg became disabled from a degenerative disease, the author began telling hir stories through photography. Feinberg was named one of the “15 Most Influential” in the battle for gay and lesbian rights by Curve Magazine. The celebrated author has delivered speeches at colleges, universities, conferences and Pride festivals across the country.

Feinberg is married to poet and activist Minnie Bruce Pratt.



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# TOM FORD

b. August 27, 1961

## FASHION DESIGNER/ FILMMAKER

*“All I’ve done my entire life is fulfill my destiny.”*

Tom Ford is a prominent creative entrepreneur whose accomplishments—first in the fashion world and later in the film industry—have earned him worldwide acclaim.

Born in Austin, Texas, Ford grew up in Santa Fe, New Mexico. At 17, he moved to New York to study art history at New York University, but was smitten with fashion and design. He graduated with a degree in architecture from what is now Parsons The New School for Design.

His first foray into fashion was in Paris, where he interned for Chloe. He worked for American designer Cathy Hardwick next, before moving on to Perry Ellis.

Ford moved to Milan in 1990, where he served as Gucci’s head women’s designer. Two years later, he was named design director. In 1994, he became creative director of Gucci’s Italian label. Ford is credited with turning around the historic fashion house in his short time at the company. In 2000, he was granted new responsibilities at sister label Yves Saint Laurent, where he served as the creative director for YSL Rive Gauche and YSL Beaute.

In 2005, Ford left Gucci and formed his own fashion brand, TOM FORD. Two years later, his flagship store opened in New York. By the summer of 2010, TOM FORD had opened 20 more stores worldwide. In addition to his remarkable financial success, Ford has won many prestigious awards, including five from the Council of Fashion Designers of America.

Ford’s lifetime ambition, however, was to make a film. He says, “I guess I’m just one of these people who when I decide I’m going to do something, I just do it.” In 2009, he wrote, produced, financed and directed “A Single Man,” an adaptation of Christopher Isherwood’s 1964 novel. The movie centers on a gay man’s mourning over his partner’s tragic death. The film premiered at the Venice Film

Festival and was nominated for numerous awards, including a Best Actor Academy Award nomination for Colin Firth.

Ford lives with his partner of more than 20 years, journalist Richard Buckley, in their London, Santa Fe and Los Angeles homes.

**Tom Ford is a prominent creative entrepreneur whose accomplishments—first in the fashion world and later in the film industry—have earned him worldwide acclaim.**

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# E. LYNN HARRIS

b. June 20, 1955

d. July 23, 2009

## AUTHOR

*“I want people to know they don’t have to live their lives in a permanent ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ existence. Truth is a powerful tool.”*

E. Lynn Harris is one of the nation’s most popular authors. Considered a literary pioneer, Harris introduced millions of readers to characters rarely seen in literature—black gay men who are affluent, complex and sometimes troubled. With 10 consecutive New York Times best sellers, he remains one of the most successful African-American novelists.

Harris was born Everette Lynn Jeter in Flint, Michigan, to unmarried parents. At age 3, he moved with his mother to Little Rock, Arkansas. Everette’s surname was changed to Harris after his mother married Ben Harris. When Everette was 13, his mother divorced his stepfather, who had abused the boy for years.

Harris attended the University of Arkansas. In 1977, he graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism. He was the school’s first black cheerleader.

After graduation, Harris worked as a sales executive for IBM, eventually settling in Atlanta. He remained in the closet for many years, which led to depression, heavy drinking and a suicide attempt in 1990. Writing helped him find the will to live.

His first novel, “Invisible Life” (1991), was self-published and quickly rose to the top of the Blackboard bestseller list of African-American titles. Harris sold the books door-to-door from the trunk of his car to local beauty salons and bookstores. After the success of his first book, Doubleday signed Harris and became his long-term publishing company.

“‘Invisible Life’ had to be the first book out of me,” Harris said. “It helped me deal with my own sexuality.”

Harris wrote more than a dozen novels and paved the way for the next generation of African-American novelists. His books are accessible to the masses and appeal to a diverse audience. He always made time for his fans, whom he said changed his life. He would answer up to 200 e-mails from readers every day.

Harris received numerous awards. His honors include three Blackboard Novel of the Year Awards, the James Baldwin Award for Literacy Excellence and three nominations for NAACP Image Awards.

Harris died from heart disease. “People loved him,” said Tina McElroy Ansa, a fellow author and friend. “A spirit of joy followed him through his life.”

**With 10 consecutive New York Times best sellers, E. Lynn Harris remains one of the most successful African-American novelists.**

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# DAVID HUEBNER

b. May 7, 1960

## AMBASSADOR TO NEW ZEALAND

**David Huebner is the United States ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa. He is the third openly gay ambassador in United States history.**

David Huebner is the United States ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa. He is the third openly gay ambassador in United States history.

A native of Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania, Huebner graduated summa cum laude from Princeton University, where he studied at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. He earned a J.D. from Yale Law School. While at Yale, he served as a special assistant to the Hon. Koji Kakizawa, the former Japanese foreign minister.

Licensed to practice in three United States jurisdictions as well as England and Wales, Huebner was chairman of Coudert Brothers, an international law firm. He was later hired as a partner in the Shanghai office of Sheppard Mullin Richter

& Hampton, where he led the firm's Chinese operations and its International Disputes practice. He has taught courses on intellectual property and international arbitration at the University of Southern California Gould School of Law.

President Obama nominated Huebner as an ambassador on October 8, 2009. With his partner by his side, Huebner was sworn in by Vice President Biden, who told him, "You've lived the American dream. I can think of nobody better to represent our nation to the people of New Zealand and Samoa than you."

Huebner has a long record of public service. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger selected him to chair California's Law Review Commission. Huebner served as president of the Los Angeles Quality & Productivity Commission, and he was a founding board member and chief counsel for GLAAD.

When not on diplomatic assignment, Huebner and his partner of more than 20 years, psychiatrist Duane McWaine, live in Los Angeles.



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# KEVIN JENNINGS

b. May 8, 1963

## EDUCATOR/ACTIVIST

*"We know that students learn best in a school where they feel truly safe. I am here to make that happen for more kids."*

**Kevin Jennings founded the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), the nation's first organization combating discrimination against GLBT students.**

A monumental leader and crusader, Kevin Jennings has dedicated his career to ensuring safe schools for all students. In 1990, he founded the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), the nation's first organization combating discrimination against GLBT students. Jennings currently serves as the assistant deputy secretary for the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools at the U.S. Department of Education.

The youngest of five children, Jennings experienced a childhood deeply rooted in conservative ideology. Poor and in a continual state of transition, his family moved so often that Jennings attended 11 schools in four states. While he displayed impressive academic aptitude, he suffered daily from mental and physical abuse by classmates.

"School was a place I both loved and hated," recalls Jennings. "I loved it because I loved learning. I hated it because I was targeted at a pretty young age for bullying and harassment."

In 1985, Jennings earned a bachelor's degree magna cum laude from Harvard University, becoming the first member of his family to graduate from college. Later, he earned master's degrees from both Columbia University and New York University.

Following his graduation from Harvard, Jennings pursued a career in education. In 1988, while he was a history teacher at a Massachusetts high school, he spearheaded the country's first Gay Straight Alliance (GSA), a coalition of students fighting against harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Two years later, Jennings expanded the movement to encompass parents, teachers and community members, creating GLSEN. Beginning as a grassroots volunteers group, GLSEN has developed into a national organization with more than 40 chapters and over 4,500 schools nationwide.

As co-chair of the Education Committee of the Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth, Jennings challenged the Massachusetts State Board of Education to adopt new policies protecting GLBT students. In 1993, his efforts led to the country's first state law prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation in public schools.

Named by Newsweek one of the top 100 people likely to make a difference in the 21st century, Jennings has authored six books and received a Lambda Literary Award for "Telling Tales Out of School." He co-wrote and produced the documentary "Out of the Past," which won the 1998 Sundance Film Festival Audience Award for Best Documentary.

"The process of change is like a relay race," says Jennings. "My job is to ensure that we're further ahead in the race and, like a good relay team member, ready to pass that baton to the next person with a lead toward the end goal of a safe school for every child."



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# MARA KEISLING

b. September 29, 1959

## TRANSGENDER ACTIVIST

*“What’s important is that transgender people are respected as members of the community—that they are safe from discrimination and violence and disrespect.”*

Mara Keisling is a leading transgender activist. She is the executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, the largest transgender rights organization.

One of seven siblings, Keisling grew up as Mark in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. His father was the governor’s chief of staff. Mark was a reticent boy. “During junior high, I was shy to the point where I feared giving a book report in front of the class,” Keisling says.

Keisling became more extroverted after joining the school’s Model U.N. Club, where he found his calling in the political arena. He graduated from Penn State and pursued post-graduate work in American Government at Harvard University.

In the 1990’s, after Keisling told friends and family he’d felt like a woman since childhood, he began his transition to Mara. Keisling soon turned to activism after seeing the discrimination transgender people face. Keisling co-chaired the Pennsylvania Gender Rights Coalition and served on the steering committee of the Statewide Pennsylvania Rights Coalition.

In 2003, recognizing the need for a cohesive voice in Washington for transgender people, Mara Keisling founded the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE), a social justice organization dedicated to advancing equality through advocacy, collaboration and empowerment.

Keisling and NCTE were among the leaders of UnitedENDA, a coalition of more than 400 GLBT organizations lobbying for a trans-inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act.

Keisling has over 25 years of professional experience in social marketing and opinion research. In 2005, Harvard University named her Outstanding LGBT Person of the Year.

**In 2003, Mara Keisling founded the National Center for Transgender Equality, a social justice organization dedicated to advancing equality through advocacy, collaboration and empowerment.**



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# KIYOSHI KUROMIYA

b. May 9, 1943

d. May 10, 2000

**AUTHOR/  
AIDS ACTIVIST**

*“I really believe that activism is therapeutic.”*

Kiyoshi Kuromiya was a Gay Pioneer and an early HIV/AIDS expert.

Kuromiya was born in a Japanese internment camp in rural Wyoming during World War II. He became active in the civil rights and antiwar movements as a student at the University of Pennsylvania.

Kuromiya participated with Frank Kameny, Barbara Gittings and other Gay Pioneers in the first organized gay and lesbian civil rights demonstrations. These “Annual Reminders,” held at Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell each Fourth of July from 1965 to 1969, laid the groundwork for the Stonewall Riots and the GLBT civil rights movement.

In 1970, Kuromiya served as an openly gay delegate to the Black Panthers convention, where the organization endorsed the GLBT liberation struggle. He assisted Buckminster Fuller in writing “Critical Path” (1981), an influential book about technology and its potential to improve the world.

Diagnosed with AIDS in 1989, Kuromiya became a self-taught expert on the disease, operating under the mantra “information is power.” He founded the Critical Path Project, which provided resources to people living with HIV and AIDS, including a newsletter, a library and a 24-hour phone line. Around the same time, Kuromiya helped found

ACT UP Philadelphia, a pioneering organization that helped bring AIDS to the national consciousness. He worked with many AIDS organizations, including We the People Living with AIDS/HIV.

In addition to his service-oriented work and street-level advocacy, Kuromiya was involved in impact litigation, including a successful challenge to the Communications

Decency Act, which criminalized the circulation of “patently offensive” sexual material. He was the lead plaintiff in a federal class action lawsuit on behalf of patients seeking permission to use medical marijuana.

Kuromiya was a nationally ranked Scrabble player. He died at 57 from AIDS-related complications.

**Diagnosed with AIDS in 1989, Kiyoshi Kuromiya became a self-taught expert on the disease, operating under the mantra “information is power.”**

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# SHARON J. LUBINSKI

b. July 11, 1952

## U.S. MARSHAL

*“Hopefully my coming out will dispel any myths that you can’t be gay and in uniform.”*

In 2010, Sharon Lubinski became the nation’s first openly gay United States Marshal. She is the first female to hold this post in Minnesota.

A native of Green Bay, Wisconsin, Lubinski received a bachelor’s degree from the University of Wisconsin in 1974, and a master’s degree from Hamline University in 1992. She has served for 32 years in law enforcement, including 12 years of command experience as precinct commander of downtown Minneapolis and as deputy chief of patrol. From 2006 to 2010, Lubinski managed the Minneapolis Police Department’s daily operations as assistant chief of police.

In 2009, Senator Amy Klobuchar recommended Lubinski to the post of United States Marshal for the District of Minnesota stating, “Her mix of experience managing a large, urban police department and working in a rural sheriff’s office makes her uniquely qualified to serve in this role.” United States Marshals are responsible for running the enforcement

arm of the federal courts. They protect court officers, apprehend fugitives, transport federal prisoners and protect federal witnesses.

After nominating Lubinski, President Obama stated, “She has dedicated her career to the noble cause of protecting her fellow Americans. She has displayed exceptional courage in the pursuit of justice, and I am honored to nominate her today to continue her selfless work as a U.S. Marshal for the District of Minnesota.”

Lubinski is a member of the community faculty at the Metropolitan State University School of Criminal Justice and is a doctoral candidate in Public Administration at Hamline University.

**In 2010, Sharon J. Lubinski  
became the nation’s  
first openly gay  
United States Marshal.**

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# JANE LYNCH

b. July 14, 1960

## ACTRESS

Jane Lynch has appeared in more than 50 films, including “Best in Show,” “The 40-Year-Old Virgin,” “Julie and Julia,” “Alvin and the Chipmunks,” “Talladega Nights” and “The Fugitive.”

*“As for being out in Hollywood—I never thought about it. I never hid who I was.”*

Jane Lynch is an award-winning theater, film and television actress. In 2010, she shared a Screen Actors Guild Award for Best Comedy Ensemble for the hit television series “Glee.” She also received a Golden Globe nomination and won an Emmy for her role on the show.

Lynch grew up in Dolton, Illinois, outside Chicago. She received a Bachelor of Arts in Theater from Illinois State University and a Master of Fine Arts in Theater from Cornell.

Lynch began her career on stage with the Second City comedy troupe, followed by a stint playing Carol Brady in the touring company of “The Real Live Brady Bunch.” In 1998, Lynch wrote and starred in “Oh Sister, My Sister.” Six years later, Lynch’s play helped launch the Lesbians in Theater program at the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center.

After playing bit parts and acting in commercials, Lynch caught the attention of film director Christopher Guest, who spotted her in a Frosted Flakes commercial and cast her in “Best in Show.” Lynch’s turn as a lesbian dog handler in

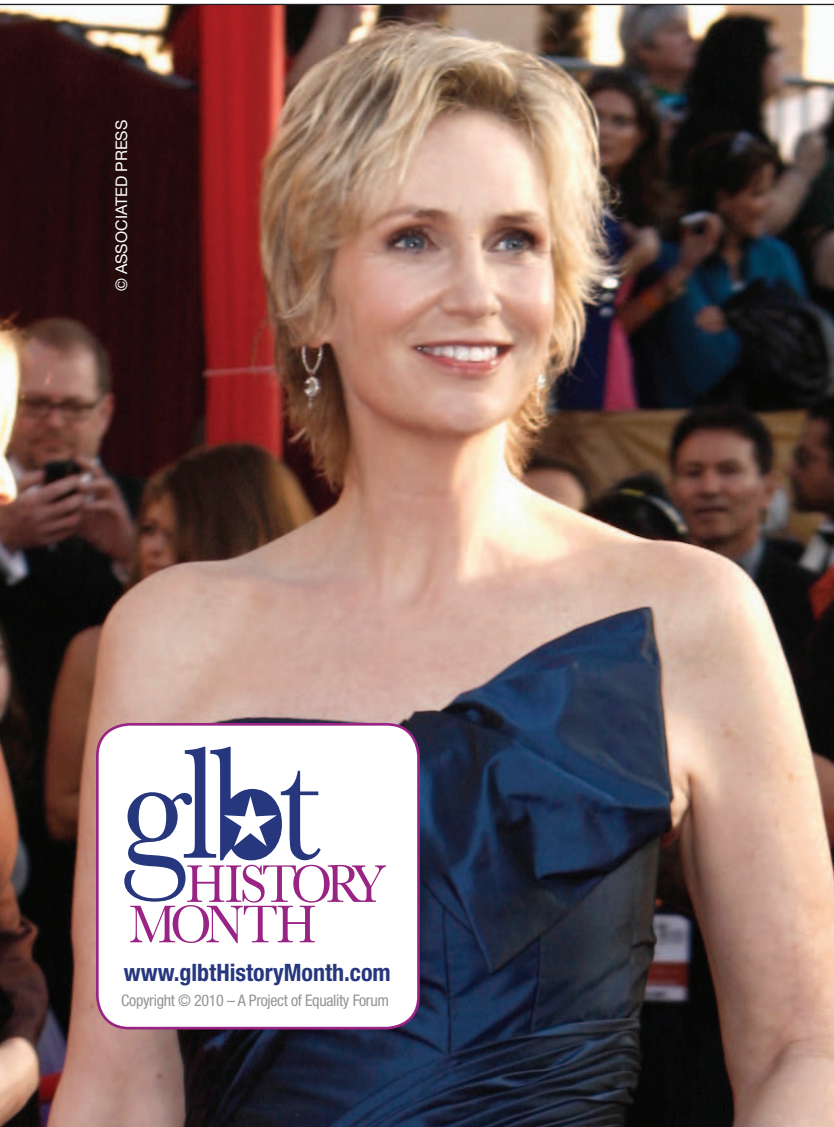
the movie was her breakout role. She has appeared in more than 50 films, including “The 40-Year-Old Virgin,” “Julie and Julia,” “Alvin and the Chipmunks,” “Talladega Nights” and “The Fugitive.”

On television, Lynch guest starred on dozens of series, including “Judging Amy,” “The West Wing,” “Arrested Development” and “Boston Legal.” She played recurring characters on “The L Word,” “Party Down,” “Two and a Half Men,” and “Criminal Minds.”

As Sue Sylvester, the “Glee” cheerleading coach described as “pure evil,” Lynch is receiving rave reviews. Mary McNamara of the Los Angeles Times wrote, “Lynch alone makes ‘Glee’ worth watching.”

In 2005, Jane Lynch was named one of the “10 Amazing Gay Women in Showbiz” by the Professional Organization of Women in Entertainment Reaching Up (POWER UP). In 2010, Outfest, the Los Angeles gay and lesbian film festival, honored Lynch with the 14th annual Achievement Award for her contributions to LGBT film and media.

In 2010, Lynch married her long-term partner, Dr. Lara Embry, in a Massachusetts ceremony.



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# PATSY LYNCH

b. July 21, 1953

## PHOTOGRAPHER

*“If we don’t know our history we’re going to become forgotten.”*

Patsy Lynch is a trailblazing photographer whose work documenting several decades of the GLBT civil rights struggle has provided visibility to the movement and inspired activists worldwide.

A native of Washington, D.C., Lynch received her Bachelor of Arts from Elon University, where she started the college newspaper. She earned two master’s degrees from Gallaudet University.

Working for both The Advocate and the UPI news agency in the 1970’s and 1980’s, Lynch was the first openly gay journalist with a White House credential. She was a founding member of the Washington, D.C., chapter of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association.

Through her lens, Lynch chronicled numerous milestones in the GLBT civil rights struggle. She was one of four official photographers at the 1979 Lesbian and Gay March on Washington.

She captured lasting images of the AIDS activism movement, including a 1987 protest at the White House and a 1988 die-in organized by ACT UP in Washington.

Lynch served as the photographer for the “Community Pioneers” exhibit of Washington residents who contributed to the struggle for equality. “We need to let people know that we are here, and we’re not going away,” Lynch said.

In 1990, the National Gay Press Association named Lynch Photographer of the Year. In 2006, she received a Distinguished Service Award from the Gay and Lesbian Activist Alliance. The following year, she received the Community Pioneer award from the Rainbow History Project. Recently, Lynch has worked on assignment for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), where she documented Hurricane Katrina and the 2010 BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

A resident of the Washington area, Lynch is also a skilled sports photographer, landscape photographer and portrait artist.

**Through her lens, Patsy Lynch chronicled numerous milestones in the GLBT civil rights struggle. She was one of four official photographers at the 1979 Lesbian and Gay March on Washington, and she captured lasting images of the AIDS activism movement.**



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# MATTHEW MITCHAM

b. March 2, 1988

## OLYMPIC DIVER

*“Being ‘out’ for me means being just as I am with nothing to be ashamed about and no reasons to hide.”*

**In Beijing, Matthew Mitcham won an Olympic gold medal in the 10-meter platform dive. After his triumph, he leaped into the stands to hug and kiss his partner, Lachlan Fletcher.**

Australian diver Matthew Mitcham is one of the few openly gay Olympic athletes. At the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, Mitcham won a gold medal after executing the highest-scoring dive in Olympic history.

Mitcham grew up in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. He competed as a trampoline gymnast before being discovered by a diving coach. By the time he was 14, he was a national junior champion in diving. A few years later, he won medals in the World Junior Diving Championships.

In 2006, after battling anxiety and depression, Mitcham decided to retire from diving. The following year, he returned to diving and began training for the Olympics.

In Beijing, Mitcham won an Olympic gold medal in the 10-meter platform dive. It was the first time in over 80 years that an Australian male diver struck Olympic gold. After his triumph, he leaped into the stands to hug and kiss his partner, Lachlan Fletcher.

Mitcham was the first out Australian to compete in the Olympics. There were only 11 openly gay athletes out of a total of over 11,000 competitors in Beijing.

Mitcham was chosen 2008 Sports Performer of the Year by the Australian public. The same year, Australia GQ named him Sportsman of the Year. After accepting the GQ award, Mitcham joked, “Oh, my God, I’m a homo and I just won the sports award!”

Mitcham competed in the 2010 Gay Games in Cologne. He is studying at Sydney University and training for the 2012 Summer Olympics in London.

“I look at the last 20 years as a long, winding path of lessons and some hardship,” Mitcham said in 2008. “I hope I do have more lessons to learn. I look forward to that.”



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# JAMIE NABOZNY

b. October 14, 1975

## YOUTH ACTIVIST

*“Kids are becoming a lot stronger, and with my case I hope they realize that they’re not alone.”*

Jamie Nabozny was the first student to successfully sue a school district for its failure to protect a student from anti-gay harassment. His 1995 lawsuit helped pioneer the Safe Schools Movement for GLBT students.

Nabozny was emotionally bullied and physically abused as a high school student in Ashland, Wisconsin, after he revealed his sexual orientation. Classmates urinated on him, simulated raping him and beat him to the point that he needed surgery. Although he and his parents reported the bullying repeatedly, Nabozny was told that, because he was openly gay, he should expect such behavior.

“I was numb most of the time, and I had to be numb to make it through,” Nabozny says. He left the school, moved to Minnesota with his family, and passed the GED exam.

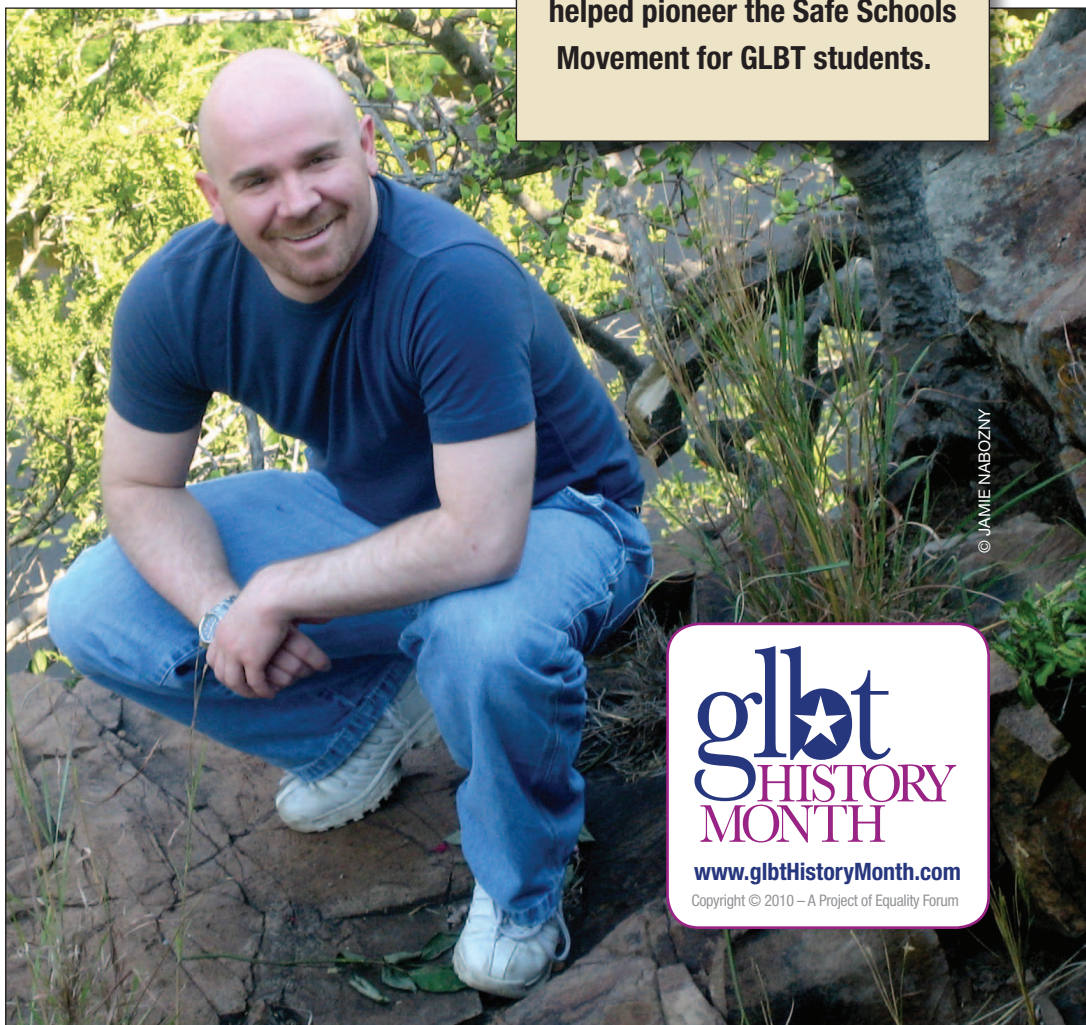
His lawsuit against the school was initially dismissed, but the Nabozny family appealed. The appellate court, basing its ruling on the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution, allowed the lawsuit to go forward. A jury then found the school liable for Nabozny’s injuries; the school district eventually agreed to a nearly \$1 million settlement.

Nabozny’s story is featured in a documentary film and teaching kit produced by the Southern Poverty Law Center. “Bullied: A Student, a School and a Case that Made History” and its accompanying materials have been distributed to schools nationwide.

Nabozny has submitted written testimony to Congress and has lobbied lawmakers about school safety for GLBT youth. He was honored for his pioneering efforts by Equality Forum, which recognized him with its 1997 National Role Model Award.

Nabozny lives in Minneapolis. He travels the country speaking to diverse audiences about his experience and the importance of safe schools.

**Jamie Nabozny’s 1995 lawsuit against his school district helped pioneer the Safe Schools Movement for GLBT students.**



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# CYNTHIA NIXON

b. April 9, 1966

## ACTRESS

*"I never felt like there was an unconscious part of me that woke up or came out of the closet. I met this woman and I fell in love with her."*

**As a college freshman, Cynthia Nixon made theatrical history acting in two Broadway plays at the same time, "The Real Thing" and "Hurlyburly."**

Cynthia Nixon is a television, film and Broadway actress best known for her role as Miranda on "Sex and the City." She is one of only 15 performers to receive a Tony, an Emmy and a Grammy Award.

Nixon is a native New Yorker, the only child of Walter Nixon, a radio journalist, and Anne Kroll, an actress and a researcher on the television series "To Tell the Truth." Cynthia's first television appearance was at age 9 as an imposter on the show.

At age 12, Nixon began her acting career with a role in an ABC Afterschool Special. Her feature film debut came soon after in "Little Darlings" (1980), followed by her first role on Broadway in "The Philadelphia Story."

Nixon graduated from Hunter College High School and attended Barnard College. As a freshman, she made theatrical history acting in two Broadway plays at the same time, "The Real Thing" and "Hurlyburly."

A working actress since the 1980's, Nixon received a Best Supporting Actress Emmy Award in 2004 for "Sex and the City." In 2006, she was honored with a Tony Award for Best Leading Actress in "The Rabbit Hole." In 2008, Nixon received a second Emmy Award for Outstanding Guest Actress on "Law & Order: Special Victims Unit."

In 2008, "Sex and the City" became a movie franchise. Nixon and her television co-stars reprised their roles in the film and a 2010 sequel, "Sex and the City 2."

The original film grossed over \$415 million worldwide, making it one of the most successful R-rated comedies.

Nixon is engaged to Christine Marinoni. The couple plans to tie the knot in Manhattan when same-sex marriage becomes legal in New York State. "We want to get married right here in New York City, where we live, where our kids live," Nixon says. She and Marinoni share parenting responsibilities for Nixon's two children from a previous relationship.

In 2009, Nixon shared a Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word Album for reading Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth." In 2010, Nixon received the Vito Russo GLAAD Media Award for promoting equal rights for the gay community.

Nixon is a breast cancer survivor and a spokeswoman for Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

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# CATHERINE OPIE

b. April 14, 1961

## PHOTOGRAPHER

*“Let’s push the boundaries a little bit here about what you guys think normal is.”*

**“Looking at her pictures can be uncomfortable,” observed the New York Times, “not because of their confrontational content but because they reveal as much about the beholder as the beheld.”**

For over a decade, photographer Catherine Opie has used the power of her lens to create visibility for queer subcultures existing on society’s fringes. Her raw and honest photographs challenge viewers to reevaluate notions of sexuality and societal norms. Her groundbreaking work has adorned gallery walls worldwide, including The Guggenheim in New York and The Photographer’s Gallery in London.

At age 9, Opie decided to become a social documentary photographer after studying the work of Lewis Hine. Inspired by Hine’s use of photography as a means to effect social change around child labor, Opie pursued her passion for documenting the world with her camera. At 18, she left her home in Sandusky, Ohio, to study at the San Francisco Art Institute where she received a B.F.A. in 1985. She earned an M.F.A. from California Institute of the Arts three years later.

In 1995, Opie’s career gained momentum after her provocative portraits of gay fringe groups appeared at the Whitney Biennial, one of the world’s leading art shows. Images of pierced, tattooed and leather-clad members of Opie’s inner circle were presented to the public in a bold and unapologetic fashion. “Looking at her pictures can be uncomfortable,” observed The New York Times, “not because of their confrontational content but because they reveal as much about the beholder as the beheld.”

In addition to documenting sexual minority communities, Opie photographs landscapes and architecture. In her exhibit “Freeways” (1994-95), she explores the intricacies of Los Angeles’s highway system. In “Mini-malls” (1997-98), she reveals the rich ethnic diversity of Southern California’s shopping centers. Combining both landscape and portraiture in her series “Domestic,” Opie traveled nationwide photographing lesbian couples living together.

Opie is a professor of photography at UCLA. She has received various awards, including the Washington University Freud Fellowship in 1999 and the Larry Aldrich Award in 2004. In 2006, she was awarded the prestigious United States Artist Fellowship.

In an exhibit catalog interview, Opie reflects, “I have represented this country and this culture. And I’m glad that there is a queer, out, dyke artist that’s being called an American photographer.”



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# SUNIL BABU PANT

b. June 28, 1972

## NEPALESE POLITICIAN

*“People in general do not wish to discriminate against their fellow neighbors.”*

**In spite of his many accomplishments, Sunil Babu Pant insists that his work is far from complete: “With our progress, however, is the awareness that so many more need to be served.”**

Sunil Babu Pant is the first openly gay politician in Nepal. His 2008 election to the national legislature followed years of activism on behalf of the Nepalese GLBT community.

Trained as a computer engineer, Pant received a scholarship to study in Belarus. It was there that he first heard the word “homosexual” and identified as a gay man. It was also where he was first exposed to entrenched homophobia, inspiring him to fight for equality in his home country.

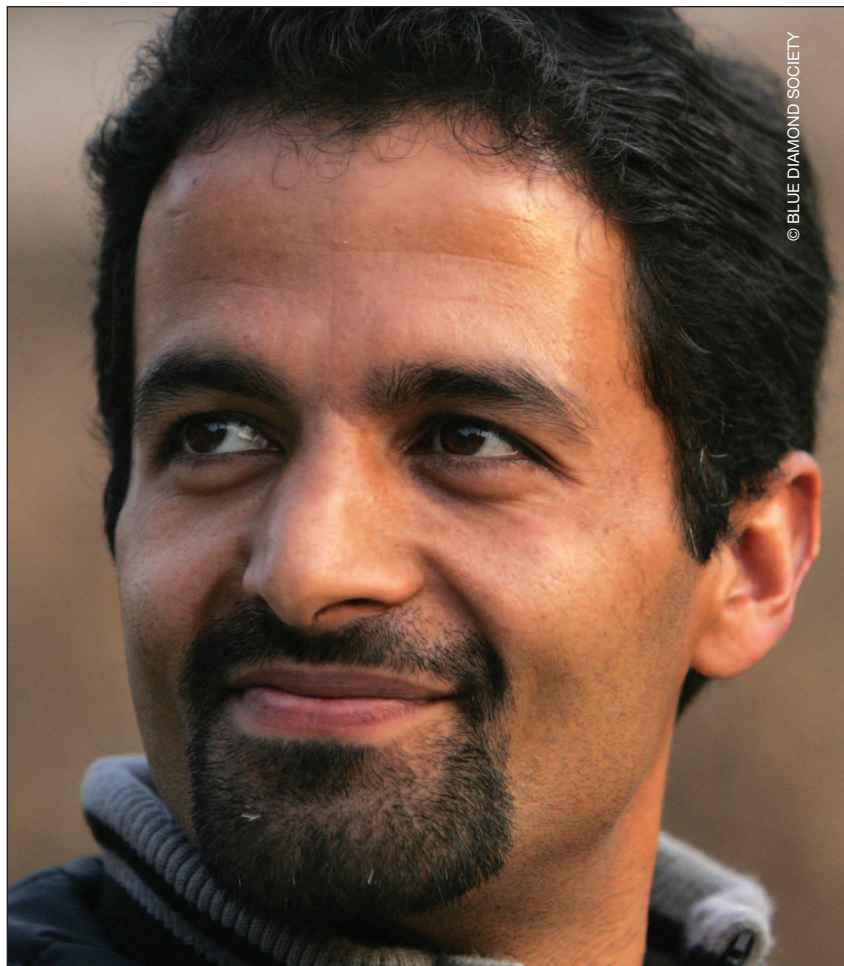
In 2002, Pant founded the Blue Diamond Society. The group consists of more than 20 organizations and 120,000 members representing the interests of the country’s GLBT and HIV/AIDS communities. Leaders and members of the society have continued their advocacy in the face of threats of arrest and violence.

The Blue Diamond Society was party to a 2007 case that led Nepal’s highest court to declare that GLBT individuals were “natural persons” who deserve protection and civil rights. The court also ordered the establishment of a commission to study same-sex marriage, as well as the addition of a third gender option on official government documents.

Pant was elected to Nepal’s Constituent Assembly as a member of Nepal’s Communist Party United. His legislative goals include equal justice and economic rights. He serves on a committee charged with rewriting Nepal’s constitution. In spite of his many accomplishments, Pant insists that his work is far from complete: “With our progress, however, is the awareness that so many more need to be served.”

In 2005, Pant and the Blue Diamond Society were awarded the Utopia Award, Asia’s leading GLBT honor. In 2007, the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission bestowed the group with its Felippa de Souza Award.

Pant, who lives in Nepal’s capital city, Kathmandu, recently founded Pink Mountain, a company that offers GLBT-gearred travel packages to Nepal.



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# ANNISE PARKER

b. May 17, 1956

## MAYOR OF HOUSTON

*“The voters of Houston have opened the door to history. I know what this means to many of us who never thought we could achieve high office.”*

**In 1997, Annise Parker won a seat on the Houston City Council, making her Houston’s first out elected official.**

In 2009, when Annise Parker was elected, Houston became the largest city in the nation with an openly gay mayor. Houston is the fourth most populous city in the United States.

Annise Parker was born and raised in Houston. Her mother was a bookkeeper, and her father worked for the Red Cross. Annise received a National Merit Scholarship to Rice University, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in anthropology and sociology.

After graduation, Parker began a 20-year career as a software analyst in the oil and gas industry. In 1997, she won a seat on the Houston City Council, making her Houston’s first out elected official. In 2003, Parker was elected city controller. She served two additional terms before being elected mayor.

Parker’s mayoral triumph didn’t come without a fight and controversy. Conservative groups criticized her for her “gay agenda” and distributed fliers featuring Parker and her partner, asking the question, “Is this the image Houston wants to portray?” Parker campaigned with her partner, Kathy Hubbard, and their three children.

Despite the attacks, Parker won the election in a city that denies its employees domestic partner benefits, and in a state where gay marriage and civil unions are constitutionally banned.

Parker was recognized as Council Member of the Year by the Houston Police Officers Union. In 2008, Houston Woman Magazine named her one of Houston’s 50 Most Influential Women.



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# JOHN A. PÉREZ

b. September 28, 1969

## SPEAKER OF THE CALIFORNIA ASSEMBLY

*“Yes I’m gay, and I’m a politician. It’s a descriptor. I don’t think it’s a definer.”*

**Describing John Pérez, Assemblywoman Fiona Ma said, “He’s someone who sends a signal to the nation that being gay is no longer a barrier to greatness.”**

John A. Pérez is the openly gay speaker of the California Assembly. He is the first GLBT person of color to hold such a position and only the third out leader of a legislative body in United States history.

Pérez was born in working-class Los Angeles, the son of Felipe, a Mexican immigrant who was disabled from a workplace accident, and Vera, who directed a community clinic. At age 14, Pérez became politically active, motivated by government cuts in disability payments to his father and in government subsidies to his mother’s clinic.

After graduating from the University of California, Berkeley, Pérez spent several years as a labor organizer in Southern California. He served as political director for the United Food and Commercial Workers in Orange County.

Before he held an elective office, Pérez was actively engaged in public service. He was integral in founding California’s statewide GLBT organization, now called Equality California. Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush appointed him to the President’s Advisory Council on HIV and AIDS. Pérez served as a gubernatorial appointee to a panel charged with reforming California’s initiative system and as a mayoral appointee to the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency.

Pérez was elected to the California Assembly in 2008, winning 85 percent of the vote in his Los Angeles district. Two years later, he was selected as speaker by members of the Democratic Party and formally elected by the Assembly. Assemblywoman Fiona Ma said, “He’s someone who sends a signal to the nation that being gay is no longer a barrier to greatness.”

Pérez is a fan of classical music, art museums and the Los Angeles Dodgers.



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# ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

b. October 11, 1884

d. November 7, 1962

## FIRST LADY

**Eleanor Roosevelt served as a delegate to the United Nations, where she was elected chairwoman of the Commission on Human Rights. In that role, she helped draft the influential Universal Declaration on Human Rights.**

*“No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.”*

Eleanor Roosevelt transformed the role of First Lady. She served as a diplomat and a tireless champion of international human rights.

Roosevelt was born into a wealthy family in New York City. Both her parents died before she was 10; thereafter, she moved in with her grandmother in upstate New York. At the age of 15, she lived in England, where she learned to speak French and Italian fluently.

Shortly after her return to New York, Roosevelt met her future husband, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, her father's fifth cousin. Franklin was attending Columbia Law School. The couple married and had six children, five of whom survived infancy. Franklin took his first leap into politics, winning a seat in the New York State Senate. The family moved to Washington, D.C., when he was appointed Assistant Secretary of the Navy by President Wilson.

Life in the nation's capital kindled Eleanor's interests in policy making. In 1924, she joined the board of the League of Women Voters and became involved in Democratic Party politics. In 1928, after her husband was elected governor of New York, she became actively engaged in domestic and international issues. She wrote a syndicated newspaper column titled “My Day.”

In 1933, Roosevelt became First Lady of the United States, a role she held for 12 years. While she assumed traditional duties, she did not allow them to compromise her ideals. In 1939, she announced in her column that she would resign her membership in the Daughters of the American Revolution, after the group refused to allow Marian Anderson, a black singer, to perform in Washington's Constitution Hall. “The basic fact of segregation,” Roosevelt wrote, “is itself discriminatory.”

While First Lady, Roosevelt developed an intimate relationship with Lorena Hickock, a journalist who covered the White House. The relationship lasted for the rest of Roosevelt's life.

Eleanor Roosevelt's commitment to public service continued after her husband's death in 1945. President Truman named her a delegate to the United Nations, where she was elected chairwoman of the Commission on Human Rights. In that position, she helped draft the influential Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

Roosevelt was a member of the Board of Trustees of Brandeis University and delivered the school's first commencement address. She also authored several children's books. In her lifetime, she received many civic awards and honorary degrees.



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# JALAL AL-DIN RUMI

b. September 30, 1207

d. December 17, 1273

## SUFI MYSTIC/POET

*“Only from the heart can you touch the sky.”*

**In 1244, Jalal al-Din Rumi met a man who changed his life. Shams of Tabriz was an older Sufi master who became Rumi’s spiritual mentor and constant companion.**

Jalal al-Din Rumi was a poet, theologian and Sufi mystic. He founded the Order of the Whirling Dervishes, a branch of the Sufi tradition that practices a gyrating dance ritual representing the revolving stages of life.

Rumi was born in the Persian province of Balkh, now part of Afghanistan. Rumi’s father was an author, a religious scholar and a leader in the Sufi movement—the mystical dimension of Islam.

When Rumi was 12, his father moved the family to escape the impending invasion of Mongol armies, eventually setting in Konya, Anatolia, at the westernmost tip of Asia where Turkey is today.

In 1231, after his father died, Rumi began teaching, meditating and helping the poor. He amassed hundreds of disciples who attended his lectures and sermons.

Rumi was married and had one son. After his wife’s death, he remarried and fathered two more children. In 1244, Rumi met a man who changed his life. Shams of Tabriz was an older Sufi master who became Rumi’s spiritual mentor and constant companion. After Shams died, Rumi grieved for years. He began expressing his love and bereavement in poetry, music and dance.

Rumi had two other male companions, but none would replace his beloved Shams. One of Rumi’s major poetic works is named in honor of his master, “The Works of Shams of Tabriz.” Rumi’s best-known work is “Spiritual Couplets,” a six-volume poem often referred to as the greatest work of mystical poetry.

In “Rumi: The Book of Love Poems of Ecstasy and Longing” (2003), Rumi expresses his perception of true love. “Lovers don’t finally meet somewhere. They’re in each other all along.”

Rumi died surrounded by his family and disciples. His tomb is one of the most revered pilgrimage sites in Islam and is a spiritual center of Turkey.



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# DAVID SEDARIS

b. December 26, 1956

## WRITER/HUMORIST

*“A good short story would take me out of myself and then stuff me back in, outsized, now, and uneasy with the fit.”*

**David Sedaris has been nominated for two Grammy Awards and was named Time magazine’s Humorist of the Year in 2001.**

David Sedaris is an award-winning best-selling author whose short stories depict, variously, the life of a young gay man in 20th century America, the experience of an American living abroad and the comedy of family life.

Sedaris, who is one of six children, was born in Binghamton, New York, and grew up in Raleigh, North Carolina. In 1983, he graduated from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He began writing, and supported himself with odd jobs in Raleigh, in Chicago and eventually in New York. His big break came on National Public Radio, where he read his short stories.

Called the “preeminent humorist of his generation” by Entertainment Weekly, Sedaris is the author of numerous collections: “Barrel Fever” (1994), “Naked” (1997), “Holidays on Ice” (1997), “Me Talk Pretty One Day” (2000), “Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim” (2004) and “When You are Engulfed in Flames” (2008), which ranked number one on the New York Times best-seller list. He edited a 2005 collection of stories called “Children Playing Before a Statue of Hercules,” from which the proceeds benefit a nonprofit writing and tutorial center.

Sedaris is known for his distinctive style, combining elements of memoir, humor and the traditional short story. He is clear that his stories are embellished. “I’m a humorist,” he says. “I’m not a reporter.”

Sedaris is a frequent contributor to the award-winning “This American Life” public radio show. Along with his sister Amy, he is the author of numerous plays written under the name “The Talent Family.” He has been nominated for two Grammy Awards and was named Time magazine’s Humorist of the Year in 2001. In 2008, he delivered the commencement speech at Binghamton University and was awarded an honorary doctorate.

Sedaris lives in London, Paris and Normandy with his longtime partner, Hugh Hamrick.



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# MAURICE SENDAK

b. June 10, 1928

**AUTHOR/  
ILLUSTRATOR**

**PBS describes Maurice Sendak as “one of the most consistently inventive and challenging voices in children’s literature. His books and productions are among the best-loved imaginative works of their time.”**

*“Inside all of us is a Wild Thing.”*

Hailed as the Picasso of children’s literature, Maurice Sendak has captured the imagination of readers young and old for more than 40 years. A prolific author and illustrator, he has published over 100 works of children’s fiction.

Sendak has received numerous awards, including the prestigious Caldecott Medal, the National Book Award and the National Medal of Arts. PBS describes him as “one of the most consistently inventive and challenging voices in children’s literature. His books and productions are among the best-loved imaginative works of their time.”

Born in Brooklyn, New York, to Jewish immigrants, Sendak was plagued with illness in his early childhood. He spent most of his time indoors where he occupied himself with books. Having discovered his creative voice at a young age, he found a perfect outlet in drawing and illustration. At the age of 12, after seeing Disney’s “Fantasia,” the awestruck Sendak decided to become an illustrator.

Sendak is best known for his book “Where the Wild Things Are” (1963). Over 10 million copies have been sold worldwide. In 2009, it was adapted into a critically acclaimed film directed by Spike Jonze.

Sendak’s work has often generated controversy, despite his celebrated career as an illustrator. Over the years, his children’s book “In the Night Kitchen” (1970) has been censored in several states due to illustrations deemed inappropriate. “Where the Wild Things Are” has been condemned by conservatives who claim the book involves witchcraft and supernatural elements. “I thought my career was over,” recalls Sendak. “The kids saved me. They loved the books because they are not afraid of life.”

In addition to writing and illustrating, Sendak has created award-winning set designs for dance, opera and theater, including Mozart’s “The Magic Flute,” Prokofiev’s “Love for Three Oranges” and Tchaikovsky’s ballet “The Nutcracker.” In the 1970’s, he donated nearly 10,000 works of art, photographs, manuscripts and books to the Rosenbach Museum & Library in Philadelphia.

For decades, Sendak hid his sexuality from the public, fearing it would ruin his career. “All I wanted was to be straight so my parents could be happy. They never, never, never knew.” In a 2008 interview with The New York Times, Sendak opened up about his private life and revealed his 50-year relationship with Eugene Glynn, who passed away in 2007.

In 2009, filmmakers Lance Bangs and Spike Jonze teamed up to produce “Tell Them What You Want,” a documentary about the life of Maurice Sendak.

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# MATTHEW SHEPARD

b. December 1, 1976

d. October 12, 1998

## HERO

*“Every American child deserves the strongest protections from some of the country’s most horrifying crimes.” – Judy Shepard*

**Matthew Shepard’s high-profile murder case sparked protests, vigils and calls for federal hate crimes legislation for GLBT victims of violence.**

As a gay college student, Matthew Shepard was the victim of a deadly hate crime. His murder brought national and international attention to the need for GLBT-inclusive hate crimes legislation.

Shepard was born in Casper, Wyoming, to Judy and Dennis Shepard. He was the older of two sons. Matthew completed high school at The American School in Switzerland, and in 1998, he enrolled at the University of Wyoming in Laramie. Soon afterward, he joined the campus gay alliance.

On October 6, 1998, two men—Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson—lured Shepard from a downtown Laramie bar. After Shepard acknowledged that he was gay, McKinney and Henderson beat and tortured him, then tied him to a fence in a remote, rural area and left him for dead. Eighteen hours later, a biker, who thought he saw a scarecrow, found Shepard barely breathing.

Shepard was rushed to the hospital, but never regained consciousness. He died on October 12. Both of Shepard’s killers were convicted of felony murder and are serving two consecutive life sentences.

Despite the outcome of the trial, the men who took Shepard’s life were not charged with a hate crime. Wyoming has no hate crimes law, which protects victims of crimes motivated by bias against a protected class. Shepard’s high-profile murder case sparked protests, vigils and calls for federal hate crimes legislation for GLBT victims of violence.

Shortly after their son’s death, Judy and Dennis Shepard founded The Matthew Shepard Foundation to honor his memory and to “replace hate with understanding, compassion, and acceptance.” Judy Shepard became a GLBT activist and the most recognized voice in the fight for a federal hate crimes bill.

In 2009, more than a decade after Shepard’s murder, The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act (HCPA) was signed into law. HCPA

added sexual orientation and gender identity to the list of protected classes, giving the United States Department of Justice the power to investigate and prosecute bias-motivated violent crimes against GLBT victims.

Dozens of songs have been written and recorded to honor Matthew Shepard’s legacy. Several films, television movies and plays about him have been produced, including “The Laramie Project” (2002) and “The Matthew Shepard Story” (2002).

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# JÓHANNA SIGURÐARDÓTTIR

b. October 4, 1942

## PRIME MINISTER OF ICELAND

**On June 11, 2010, by a vote of 49 to 0, Iceland's Parliament approved same-sex marriage. On June 26, 2010, the first day that legislation became effective, Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir and Jónína Leósdóttir were married.**

*“Egalitarian policies are the best way to unite and empower people.”*

Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir is the first female prime minister of Iceland and the world's first openly GLBT national leader.

Sigurðardóttir was born in Reykjavik, where she received the equivalent of a high school diploma from the Commercial College of Iceland. Her first job was as a flight attendant for what is now Icelandair. After six years in that position, she became a union organizer with the airline—a move that served as her entrée into Icelandic politics.

Sigurðardóttir was elected to Iceland's Parliament in 1978. Viewed as a rising star, she was named Minister of Social Affairs in 1987. In 1990, she ran for the top spot in the Social Democrat Alliance party. She narrowly lost that race, declaring, “My time will come,” which has become a common catchphrase in Iceland.

In January 2009, following the collapse of the nation's economy in the worldwide recession, Iceland's president asked the Social Democrat Alliance to form a new government, which elevated Sigurðardóttir to the office of the prime minister. At the time of her appointment, she was the longest-serving member of Iceland's Parliament.

Four months later, Sigurðardóttir's party, along with its coalition partner, won a majority of seats in the Parliament, handing her a strong mandate to lead Iceland's economic revitalization efforts and to work toward joining the European Union. While focusing on these important tasks, Sigurðardóttir has not forgotten the value of equity in politics. “A society that does not use the intellectual power of its female population fully is not a wise society,” she says.

Sigurðardóttir was married to a man prior to coming out. She and her ex-husband are the parents of two adult children. On June 11, 2010, by a vote of 49 to 0, Iceland's Parliament approved same-sex marriage. On June 26, 2010, the first day that legislation became effective, Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir and Jónína Leósdóttir were married.



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# PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

b. May 7, 1840

d. November 6, 1893

## COMPOSER

*“Music’s triumphant power lies in the fact that it reveals to us beauties we find in no other sphere.”*

**Tchaikovsky’s passionate, emotional compositions represented a departure from traditional Russian music, and his work became popular with Western audiences.**

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky is one of the most popular composers in history. His best-known works include the ballets “Swan Lake,” “The Sleeping Beauty,” and “The Nutcracker”; the operas, “The Queen of Spades” and “Eugene Onegin”; and the widely recognized Fantasy Overture “Romeo and Juliet” and “1812 Overture.”

Tchaikovsky was born in Votinsk, Russia, a small industrial town. His father was a mine inspector. His mother, who was of French and Russian heritage, strongly influenced his education and cultural upbringing.

At age 5, Tchaikovsky began piano lessons. His parents nurtured his musical talents, but had a different career path in mind for their son. In 1850, the family enrolled him at the Imperial School of Jurisprudence in St. Petersburg, where he prepared for a job in civil service.

After working in government for a few years, Tchaikovsky pursued his passion at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. After graduation, he taught music theory at the Moscow Conservatory and worked on new compositions. Tchaikovsky created concertos, symphonies, ballets, chamber music, and concert and theatrical pieces. His passionate, emotional compositions represented a departure from traditional Russian music, and his work became popular with Western audiences.

Despite his career success, Tchaikovsky’s personal life was filled with crises and bouts of depression. After receiving letters of admiration from a former student, Tchaikovsky married her. Historians speculate the marriage took place to dispel rumors that Tchaikovsky was gay. The marriage was a disaster and Tchaikovsky left his wife after nine days.

Tchaikovsky began an unconventional relationship with a wealthy widow, Nadezhda von Mek, who agreed to be his benefactor on one condition: they were never to meet face-to-face. The couple exchanged more than 1,000 letters, until von Mek abruptly ended their 13-year liaison.

The famed composer died suddenly at age 53. The cause of his death, believed by some to be suicide, remains a mystery.



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# RUFUS WAINWRIGHT

b. July 22, 1973

## SINGER/SONGWRITER

**At the age of 14, Rufus Wainwright broke into the entertainment world with a song he composed and sang in the film "Tommy Tricker and the Stamp Traveller," earning him a Juno Award nomination for "Most Promising Male Vocalist of the Year."**

*"It's important for famous people to be an example for gay teens."*

Known for his unique style and daring artistic endeavors, Rufus Wainwright is one of the most accomplished singer/songwriters of his generation. He has produced six albums, and is the recipient of two Juno Awards and five GLAAD Media Awards.

Wainwright's musical talent was shaped by his folksinger parents, Kate McGarrigle and Loudon Wainwright III. He was born in Rhinebeck, New York, and holds dual United States and Canadian citizenship. After his parents divorced, Wainwright spent most of his youth with his mother in Montreal.

At age 14, Wainwright broke into the entertainment world with a song he composed and sang in the film "Tommy Tricker and the Stamp Traveller," earning him a Juno Award nomination for "Most Promising Male Vocalist of the Year." That same year, he was sexually assaulted by a man he met at a bar. Deeply disturbed by the attack, he remained celibate for seven years.

In 1998, following the release of his first album, Wainwright was named "Best New Artist" by Rolling Stone. He composes music for theater, dance and opera, and has contributed to numerous film soundtracks, including "Moulin Rouge" and "Brokeback Mountain." Additionally, he has acted in "The Aviator" and "Heights," among other films.

As a collaborator, Wainwright has worked on albums with music greats Rosanne Cash and Elton John. John hailed him as "the greatest songwriter on the planet."

Wainwright's first opera, "Prima Donna," premiered in 2009 at the Manchester International Festival and was the subject of a documentary film that premiered on Bravo! in 2010.

Despite fame and success, Wainwright struggled with crystal meth addiction, a habit he eventually recovered from in 2002. With two decades of performing under his belt, Wainwright assures his fans that he won't be retiring any time soon: "I am a self-sustaining, vibrant, long-term artist, and I'm not going away!"



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# MEL WHITE

b. July 26, 1940

## MINISTER/ACTIVIST

*"I'm perfectly happy going on TV now and saying I'm a gay man. I'm happy and proud to say that."*

**In 1998, Mel White and his partner of more than 25 years, Gary Nixon, founded Souforce, an organization whose mission is to "seek freedom from religious and political oppression" for GLBT people.**

Mel White is an ordained minister who left his career as an adviser to prominent Christian evangelists when he came out in the mid 1990's. White has dedicated his life to gaining acceptance for GLBT Christians.

In 1962, White graduated from Warner Pacific College. He received a master's degree in communications from the University of Portland and a Doctorate of Ministry from Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, where he also was a professor.

Early in his career, White served as a speechwriter for evangelical leaders Jerry Fallwell and Pat Robertson. He married a woman with whom he had one son. When he realized he was attracted to men, he tried to "cure" his homosexuality

with therapy and exorcism. Acknowledging that nothing could alter his sexual orientation, White attempted suicide.

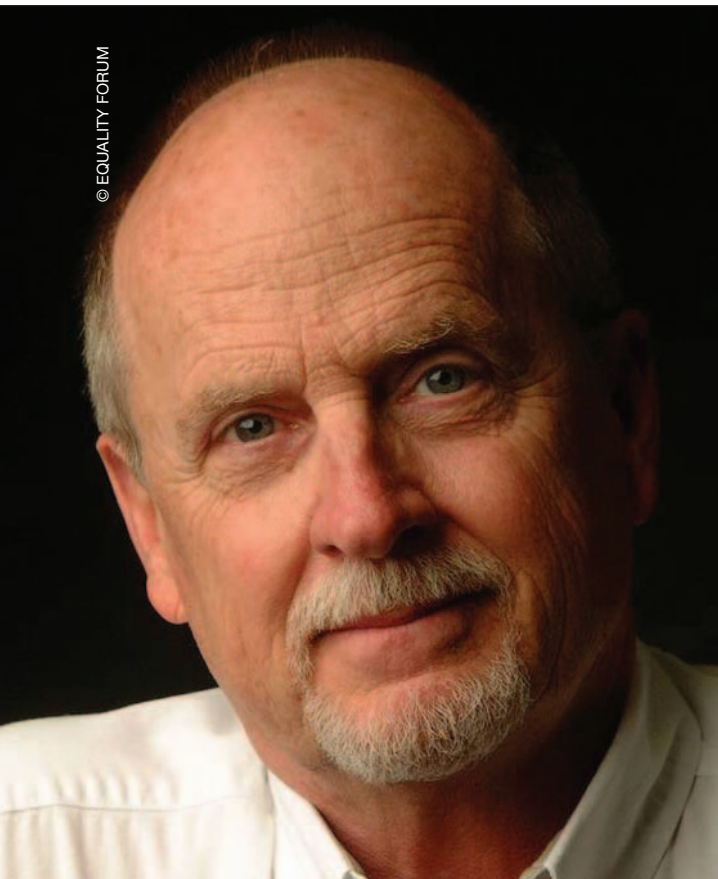
White ultimately accepted his sexuality and amicably divorced his wife. In 1993, he publicly acknowledged that he was gay when he was named dean of the Dallas Cathedral of Hope of the Universal Fellowship at Metropolitan Community Churches. Two years later, he published "Stranger at the Gate," a book that chronicles his struggles as a gay Christian.

In the early 1990's, White shifted his focus to GLBT advocacy, both within and outside of the church. In 1996, White led a two-week fast on the steps of Congress as the Senate considered and ultimately passed the Defense of Marriage Act. He moved the fast to the White House, where he was arrested. "How can we stand by in silent acceptance while the president and the Congress sacrifice lesbian and gay Americans for some 'greater political good'?" he asked.

In 1998, White and his partner of more than 25 years, Gary Nixon, founded Souforce, an organization whose mission is to "seek freedom from religious and political oppression" for GLBT people. Its name comes from "satyagraha," a term meaning "soul force," used by Gandhi to describe his civil rights struggle.

White is the author of nearly 20 books, including "Religion Gone Bad: Hidden Dangers from the Christian Right" (2009). His story is featured in "Friends of God" (2007), a documentary film about evangelical Christians.

In 2008, White and Nixon were legally married in California. In 2009, White and his son, Mike, were a team on the 14th season of "The Amazing Race."



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# EMANUEL XAVIER

b. May 3, 1971

POET

Fellow author Jaime Manrique said, "Once in a generation, a new voice emerges that makes us see the world in a dazzling new light. Emanuel Xavier is that kind of writer."

*"Being Latino and gay gives me much to write about. Anything that oppresses us as artists is always great fodder for art."*

Emanuel Xavier is a poet, author and editor. He is one of the most significant openly gay Latino spoken word artists of his generation.

Xavier was born in Brooklyn, New York, the child of an Ecuadorian mother and a Puerto Rican father who abandoned the family before his son was born. When Xavier was 3, a family member sexually abused him. At 16, when Xavier came out to his mother, she threw him out of the house.

A homeless gay teen on the streets of New York, Xavier soon turned to sex and drugs for money. He became a hustler at the West Side Highway piers and sold drugs in gay clubs. After landing a job at a gay bookstore, A Different Light, he began to write poetry and perform as a spoken word artist.

"Pier Queen" (1997), Xavier's self-published poetry collection, established him in the New York underground arts scene. "Christ Like" (1999), Xavier's novel, was the first coming-of-age story by a gay Nuyorican (Puerto Rican living in New York). The novel earned him a Lambda Literary Award nomination. Fellow author Jaime Manrique said, "Once in a generation, a new voice emerges that makes us see the world in a dazzling new light. Emanuel Xavier is that kind of writer."

"Americano" (2002), another poetry collection and Xavier's first official published work, advanced his prominence within the literary community of color. Xavier edited "Bullets & Butterflies: Queer Spoken Word Poetry" (2005), for which he received a second Lambda Literary Award nomination.

In 2005, Xavier was the victim of a random attack by a group of young men. As a result of the beating, he lost all hearing in his right ear, but continued to write and perform.

Xavier reflects on the assault in his poem "Passage":

*Had they known I was gay they would have killed me  
None of my poems about peace and unity  
would have kept me whole*

Also an activist, Xavier focuses his work on homeless gay youth. He has organized benefits for many organizations including The New York Pier AIDS Education Coalition, Live Out Loud, and Sylvia's Place, a shelter for homeless GLBTQ youth.

Xavier has appeared on HBO's "Russell Simmons Presents Def Poetry" and "In the Life" on PBS. In 2010, his CD "Legendary – The Spoken Word Poetry of Emanuel Xavier" was released to critical acclaim.

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