

KYE ALLUMS

b. October 23, 1989

ATHLETE

"I've always felt most comfortable dressing like a boy, but my mom would take all of my clothes and force me to wear girl clothes."

"I had to come out because it was too hard not being myself."

Kye Allums is the first openly transgender athlete to play NCAA Division I college basketball. Allums was a star shooting guard on the George Washington University (GWU) women's basketball team.

Born Kyler Kelcian Allums in Daytona Beach, Florida, he was the oldest of four children. Nicknamed Kay-Kay, Allums was a self-described tomboy, who identified as male from childhood. "I've always felt most comfortable dressing like a boy, but my mom would take all of my clothes and force me to wear girl clothes," he says. Allums would put boys' clothes in his backpack and change before going to school, then change back before he got home. He says it was the only way he could go to school.

Allums received a basketball scholarship to GWU. In his freshman year, he played in 11 games for the Colonials and missed the final 20 due to injury. As a sophomore, he started 20 of 26 games.

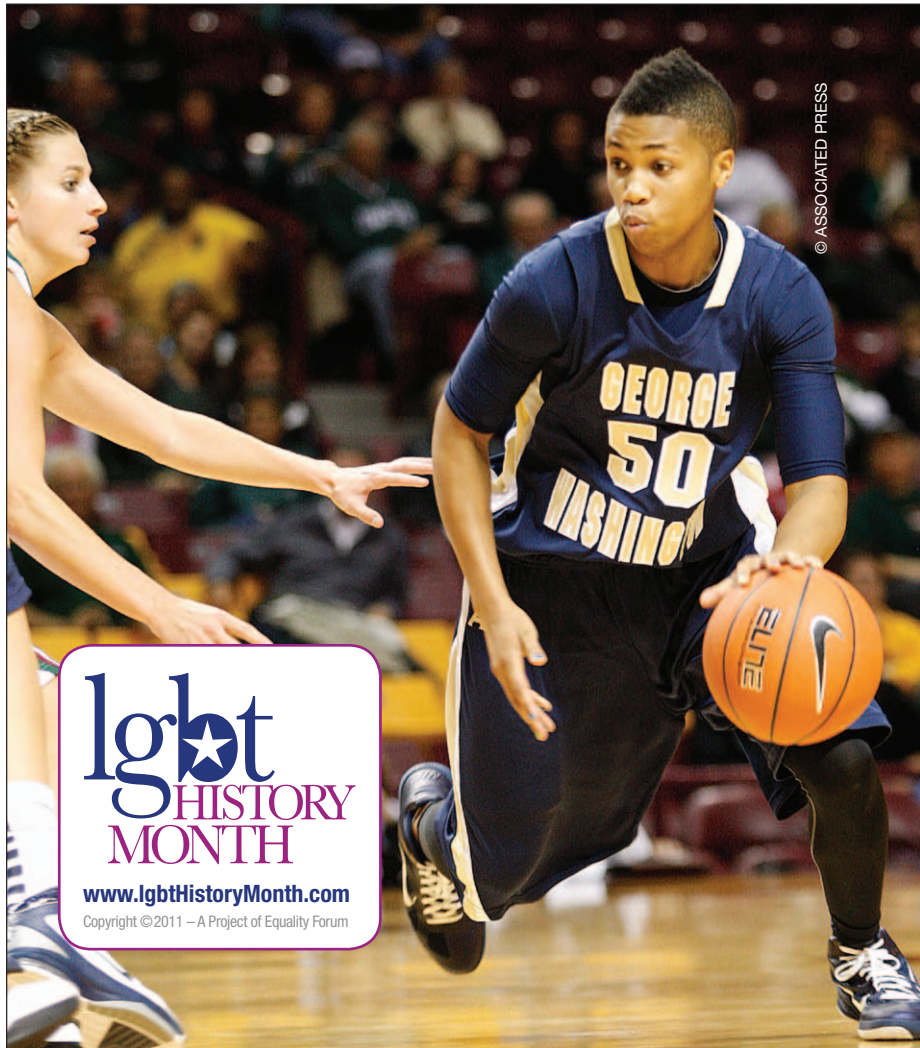
That same year, Allums began to distance himself from Kay-Kay and opened up to some of his teammates. "I do not like being called a girl. I'm a guy in a girl's body," he said. Thereafter, he told his head coach Mike Bozeman. Allums says his teammates, coach and family have all been supportive.

Allums was advised not to begin taking male hormones or undergo gender reassignment surgery while remaining on the women's team. If he did, he would risk losing his scholarship and ending his college basketball career. Allums says he's undecided about when he will continue his transition.

After suffering a total of eight concussions and not starting any games his junior year, Allums announced he would not be returning to the Colonials for his senior season. "I alone came to this decision and I thank the athletic department for respecting my wishes," he said.

In 2011, Allums began telling his story at speaking engagements and other forums. "It meant a lot to me to help and affect others in a positive way," he says about sharing his experience with young people struggling with similar issues.

As for his future, Allums says, "I'll just be trying to make some kind of difference in the world and look forward to my life."



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JOHN ASHBERY

b. July 28, 1927

POET

His Pulitzer Prize-winning poem “Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror,” which also won the National Book Award and the National Critics Circle Award, is unique for its triple prize status.

*“My poetry is disjunct,
but then so is life.”*

John Ashbery is one of the most successful 20th century poets. He has won almost every major American literary award, including the 1975 Pulitzer Prize for poetry.

Ashbery graduated from Harvard University, where he studied English and served on the editorial board of the Harvard Advocate. He received his master's degree from Columbia University. After graduating, Ashbery spent three years in publishing before moving to Paris on a Fulbright scholarship.

Returning to the U.S. in 1957, Ashbery attended graduate classes at New York University. Thereafter, he returned to Paris, where he supported himself as an editor. He eventually moved back to the U.S. to become the executive editor of ARTnews magazine.

Ashbery's success began with frequent publication of his poems in magazines such as Furioso and Poetry New York. While

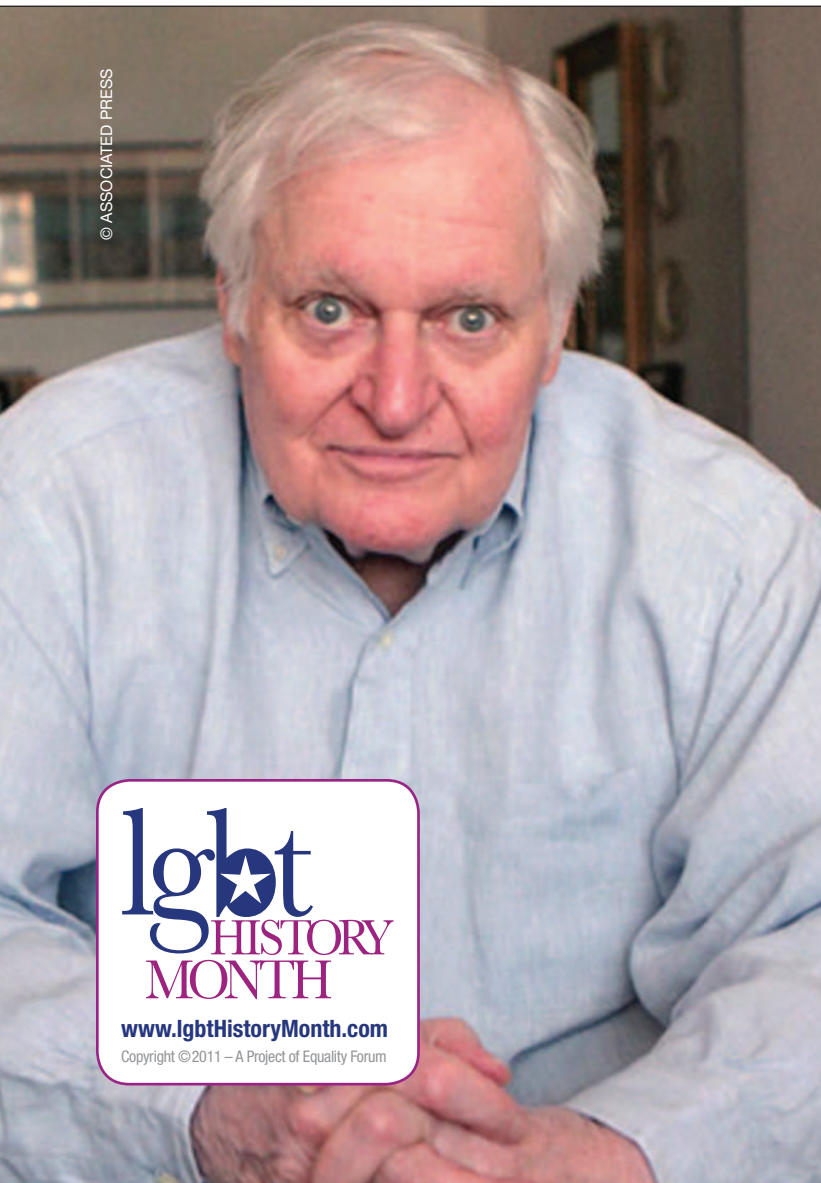
in France, his book “Some Trees” won the Yale Younger Poet's Prize. He has won many awards, including the Bollingen Prize and the McArthur Foundation's “Genius Award.”

His Pulitzer Prize-winning poem “Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror,” which also won the National Book Award and the National Critics Circle Award, is unique for its triple prize status. The poem pulls together his favored themes: creating poetry and the influence of visual arts on his work.

Ashbery's career has been marked by controversy. Response to his poetry ranges from praise for his brilliant expressionism and use of language to condemnation for his work's nonsensical and elusive nature.

A prolific writer, he has published over 20 books of poetry, beginning with “Tourandot and Other Poems.” His work has been compared to modernist painters such as Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning. Critics assert that he is trying to translate visual modern art into written language.

Since 1974, he has supported himself through teaching positions, the last of which was as the Charles P. Stevens, Jr. Professor of Language and Literature at Bard College. He lives in upstate New York, where he continues to write poetry.



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ALISON BECHDEL

b. September 10, 1960

CARTOONIST

“The [comic] strip is about all kinds of things, not just gay and lesbian issues—births, deaths and everything in-between happen to everyone.”

With her signature subtle wit, Bechdel took on the complex and often stereotyped world of lesbian relationships through her comic alter ego, Mo.

Alison Bechdel is a celebrated cartoonist and author of the long-running comic strip, “Dykes To Watch Out For.” Her groundbreaking graphic memoir, “Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic,” was awarded the GLAAD Media Award for Outstanding Comic Book.

A native of central Pennsylvania, Bechdel and her siblings grew up in a small town. Her parents both taught at the local high school and her father, the subject of her first memoir, was the town’s mortician. Bechdel attended Oberlin College, where she graduated with a B.A. in 1981.

“Dykes to Watch Out For” was published in 1983 and became a syndicated comic strip in 1985. With her signature subtle wit, Bechdel took on the complex and

often stereotyped world of lesbian relationships through her comic alter ego, Mo. The strip has become a cult classic.

In the late 1990’s, Bechdel began work on her first graphic memoir about her family, “Fun Home.” The memoir focuses on her relationship with her father and his death. Time Magazine honored “Fun Home” as No. 1 of the 10 Best Books of 2006, calling it “a masterpiece about two people who live in the same house but different worlds, and their mysterious debts to each other.” The book won a Lambda Book Award, an Eisner Award and the 2006 Publishing Triangle’s Judy Grahn Nonfiction Award. It was nominated for a National Book Critics Circle Award.

“Dykes to Watch Out For” continued production for 25 years. In 2008, Bechdel suspended work on the award-winning comic strip to create a graphic memoir about relationships. The same year, Houghton Mifflin published a complete collection of her work, “The Essential Dykes to Watch Out For.”

Bechdel resides outside of Burlington, Vermont.



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JOHN BERRY

b. June 10, 1951

GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL

“Each time we act against discrimination, we add a ring of life to the American tree of liberty.”

John Berry is the director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM). He is the highest-ranking openly gay federal employee in U.S. history.

Born in Rockville, Maryland, Berry is the son of two federal government employees. His father served in the U.S. Marine Corps and his mother worked for the U.S. Census Bureau.

Berry earned his Bachelor of Arts in government from the University of Maryland and a Master of Public Administration from Syracuse University. His first federal government job was as legislative director for U.S. Representative Steny Hoyer. Thereafter, he served as deputy assistant secretary for law enforcement at the U.S. Treasury Department.

After two years as director of government relations at the Smithsonian Institution, Berry was appointed assistant secretary for policy, management and budget at the U.S. Department of the Interior in the Clinton administration.

Prior to joining the Obama administration, Berry pursued his interest in environmental conservation as the director of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and subsequently as director of the National Zoo.

In 2009, President Obama appointed Berry to his current position, where he is responsible for recruiting, hiring and benefits policies for 1.9 million federal employees.

There is a mountain in Antarctica named after him: the Berry Bastion.

With Berry's appointment came accolades from the LGBT and mainstream community. “The selection of John Berry is a meaningful step forward for the LGBT community,” said Joe Solmonese, president of the Humans Rights Campaign. John Gage, president of the American Federation of Government Employees, described Berry as the “perfect choice for the OPM. He's smart, courageous, and has all the right experience in policy and in politics.”

In 2009, Berry served as the keynote speaker for the International Gay & Lesbian Leadership Conference in San Francisco.

One of the few Americans to stand on both the North and South Poles, Berry's government career has taken him around the globe and literally to the ends of the earth. There is a mountain in Antarctica named after him: the Berry Bastion.

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DUSTIN LANCE BLACK

b. June 10, 1974

SCREENWRITER

"I heard the story of Harvey Milk and it gave me hope that I could live my life openly as who I am."

In 2009, Black topped The Advocate's list of the "Forty under 40" most influential openly gay people.

Dustin Lance Black is a screenwriter, director and producer. In 2009, he received an Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay for "Milk," about openly gay San Francisco politician Harvey Milk.

Black grew up in a devout Mormon household in San Antonio, Texas. After his mother remarried, he moved to Salinas, California. As a young boy, Black knew he was gay. He believed he would be "hurt and brought down" because of it and that he was going to hell. He says his "acute awareness" of his sexual orientation made him gloomy and sometimes suicidal.

In high school he fostered a love of the dramatic arts and began working on theatrical productions. He enrolled at UCLA's School of Theater, Film and Television and graduated with honors. In 2000, he wrote and directed two gay-themed films, "The Journey of Jared Price" and "Something Close to Heaven." Black was the only Mormon writer for the HBO series about polygamy, "Big Love," for which he received two Writers Guild of America Awards.

Captivated by the story of Harvey Milk, Black researched Milk's life for three years, culminating in a screenplay. Academy Award-nominated director Gus Van Sant signed on with the project. In 2009, "Milk" received eight Academy Award nominations and won two. Black received an Oscar for his screenplay and Sean Penn won for best actor.

Black's recent works include the screenplay for "Pedro," profiling AIDS activist and MTV personality Pedro Zamora. He is the screenwriter for "J. Edgar," a film about FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, directed by Clint Eastwood and starring Leonardo DiCaprio.

In 2009, Black topped The Advocate's list of the "Forty under 40" most influential openly gay people. He is an outspoken LGBT activist, serving on the boards of The Trevor Project and the American Foundation for Equal Rights. Black frequently speaks about gay rights to college students across the country.

He resides in Los Angeles.



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KEITH BOYKIN

b. August 28, 1965

COMMENTATOR

"I'm not on a show with a pink triangle or rainbow flag—which means that being gay is just a part of who I am."

Keith Boykin is a political commentator, a New York Times best-selling author and a veteran of two presidential campaigns. He is the editor of The Daily Voice and has appeared on CNN, MSNBC and BET.

Born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri, Boykin became politically focused working on local campaigns while in high school. At Dartmouth he was the editor of the daily newspaper and graduated with a B.A. in government.

After college, Boykin worked on the Dukakis presidential campaign. Thereafter, he attended Harvard Law School and continued working on campaigns, including the 1992 presidential campaign of Bill Clinton. Boykin worked as special assistant to the president and served as President Clinton's liaison to the LGBT community.

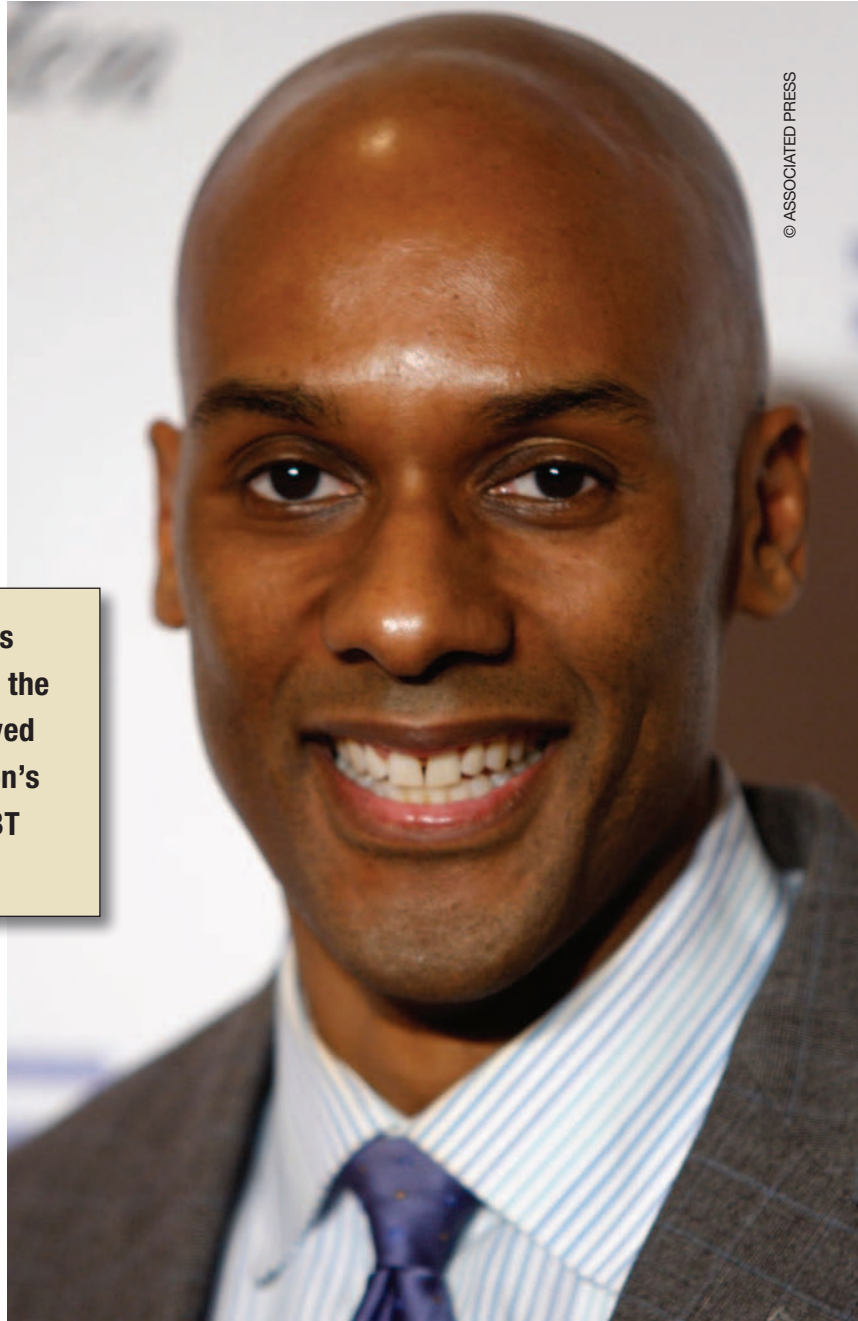
In 1994, Boykin became the executive director of the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum and completed his first book, "One More River to Cross: Black and Gay in America." In 1997, he served with Coretta Scott King and the Rev. Jesse Jackson on the U.S. presidential trade delegation to Zimbabwe.

Boykin wrote two other books, "Respecting the Soul" (1999) and "Beyond the Down Low: Sex, Lies and Denial in Black America" (2005). His work shed light on AIDS, internalized homophobia and black men on the "down low."

Boykin is a commentator on major political talk shows. In 2004, he starred on Showtime's "American Candidate" and hosted BET's "My Two Cents."

Keith Boykin is working on a fourth book, "For Colored Boys Who Have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow Is Still Not Enough." He lives in New York City.

Boykin worked as special assistant to the president and served as President Clinton's liaison to the LGBT community.



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RITA MAE BROWN

b. November 28, 1944

AUTHOR

*“Don’t ask to live in tranquil times.
Literature doesn’t grow there.”*

An author and screenwriter, Rita Mae Brown is best known for her semi-autobiographical lesbian-themed novel, “Rubyfruit Jungle.” She is a groundbreaking activist for lesbian and civil rights.

An only child, Brown was adopted and raised in York, Pennsylvania. At age 11, her family moved to Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Brown’s interest in political activism began with the black civil rights movement. In 1964, after losing her scholarship at the University of Florida due to her involvement in a rally, Brown was forced to drop out of school. She hitchhiked to New York where she lived in an abandoned car before enrolling at New York University (NYU).

At NYU, Brown cofounded the Student Homophile League. In 1968, she joined the National Organization of Women (NOW). She worked there until a schism over whether or not to support lesbian issues caused her to resign. She says she was “kicked out” for raising the gay issue.

Betty Friedan is largely blamed for Brown’s expulsion from NOW. Years later, Friedan publicly apologized and admitted her actions were wrong.

In addition to more than 50 books, Brown has written numerous television screenplays. She received Emmy nominations for the variety show “I Love Liberty” and the miniseries “The Long Hot Summer.”

After severing ties with NOW, Brown joined the Redstockings, a liberal feminist group. She helped form the lesbian feminist newspaper Furies Collective. Thereafter, she earned a Ph.D. in political science from the Institute for Policy Studies, a progressive think tank in Washington, D.C.

Brown’s coming-of-age lesbian novel, “Rubyfruit Jungle,” sold over 70,000 copies and made her a champion of lesbian rights. The book’s success encouraged her to author other lesbian novels.

In addition to more than 50 books, Brown has written numerous television screenplays. She received Emmy nominations for the variety show “I Love Liberty” and the miniseries “The Long Hot Summer.”

Brown lives on a farm outside of Charlottesville, Virginia. She is a Master of Fox Hounds and advocates for animal rescue.

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DAN CHOI

b. February 22, 1981

ACTIVIST

In 2009, Choi appeared on the “The Rachel Maddow Show” and said something that would change his life forever: “I am gay.”

“Action and sacrifice speak much more loudly than the best crafted, eloquent speech.”

Lt. Dan Choi is a West Point graduate, Iraq War veteran and Arabic linguist. He was the nation's leading activist for the repeal of “Don't Ask, Don't Tell” (DADT).

Choi was born in Orange County, California, and raised in an evangelical Korean-American household. His father is a Baptist minister; his mother is a nurse. Inspired by the film “Saving Private Ryan,” Choi decided to attend West Point.

After graduating from West Point with degrees in Arabic linguistics and environmental engineering, Choi served as an Army infantry officer in Iraq. In 2008, he transferred from active duty to the Army National Guard. That same year, Choi and a group of West Point alumni founded Knights Out, an organization supporting the rights of LGBT soldiers.

In 2009, Choi appeared on the “The Rachel Maddow Show” and said something that would change his life forever: “I am gay.” Within a month, the U.S. Army notified him that he was being discharged under “Don't Ask, Don't Tell.”

When he received his discharge papers, Choi knew he had to fight back. He wrote an open letter asking President Obama to repeal the policy and reinstate him, calling his discharge “a slap in the face.”

Choi sent his West Point graduation ring to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid. It was a reminder to the senator of a promise he made to repeal the ban on gays and lesbians in the military.

Choi became the leading activist and national spokesman for the repeal of DADT. His media savvy drew attention to the issue. In 2010, he was arrested three times for handcuffing himself to the White House fence during protests.

Later in 2010, Choi was invited to the White House to witness President Obama signing the bill repealing “Don't Ask, Don't Tell” into law. Afterward, Senator Reid invited Choi to his office, where he returned Choi's West Point ring. “The next time I get a ring from a man,” Choi responded, “I expect it to be for full, equal American marriage.”

Choi continues to advocate for LGBT civil rights and for veteran's health benefits. He is a graduate student at Harvard University. He resides in New York City.

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AARON COPLAND

b. November 14, 1900

d. December 2, 1990

COMPOSER

“To stop the flow of music would be like the stopping of time itself, incredible and inconceivable.”

Copland's compositions are famous for rejection of the neo-Romantic form and his creation of a unique American style.

Aaron Copland was a world-renowned composer, teacher, writer and conductor. He was a key figure in forming the early 20th century American style of music and composition.

The youngest of five children, Copland was born in Brooklyn to Eastern European Jewish immigrants. Encouraged by his mother, he became interested in music. His older sister taught him to play the piano. At 16, Copland began lessons with composer Rubin Goldmark, who introduced him to the American style of music.

After graduating high school, Copland played and composed works for dance bands. Inspired by modern European music, he moved to France and attended the American Conservatory at Fontainebleau. There he studied under Nadia Boulanger, who was his muse throughout his time in France.

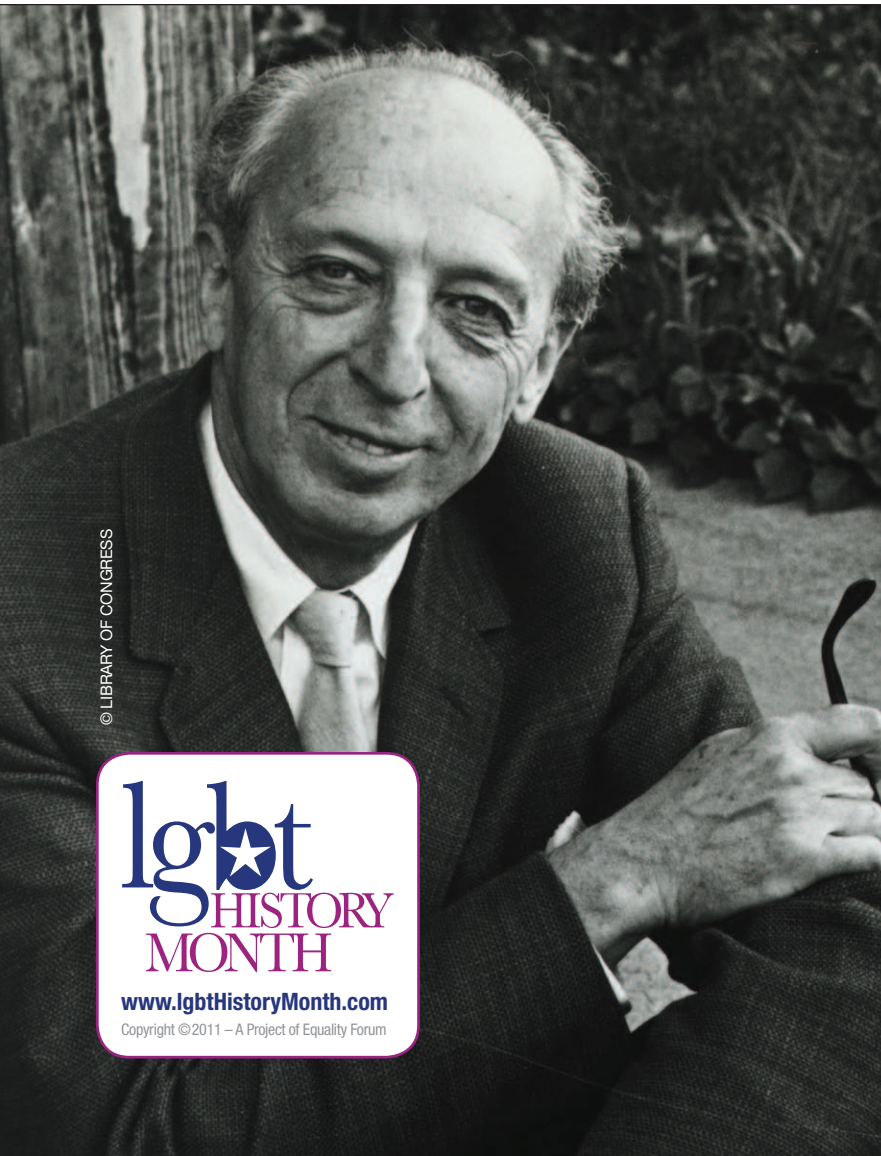
Copland's compositions are famous for rejection of the neo-Romantic form and his creation of a unique American style. He composed a wide variety of music, including piano and orchestral arrangements, ballets, and Hollywood film scores.

His compositions for film include “Of Mice and Men” (1939), “Our Town” (1940) and “The Heiress” (1949), which won him an Academy Award for best score. His score for Martha Graham's ballet “Appalachian Spring” (1944) earned him a Pulitzer Prize.

During the communist witch hunts of the 1950's, Copland was brought before Congress and questioned about whether he was affiliated with the Communist party. Although he was cleared of charges, Hollywood blacklisted him. His composition “A Lincoln Portrait” was withdrawn as part of the inaugural concert for President Eisenhower.

Copland dedicated the remainder of his life to composing, conducting and teaching. He had a major influence on the style of the next generation of American composers. His protégé, Leonard Bernstein, is considered the best conductor of Copland's work.

Copland died in Sleepy Hollow, New York. His estate established the Aaron Copland Fund for Composers, which annually bestows over \$500,000 in grants.



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ALAN CUMMING

b. January 27, 1965

ACTOR

"We need to do everything we can to counteract hatred and shame and we need to be strong in this fight."

Alan Cumming is an award-winning film, television and stage actor. He has appeared in more than 100 films and television series, as well as major theatrical productions in London and on Broadway.

Cumming grew up on the east coast of Scotland, the son of a forester and a secretary. As a teenager, he began appearing in high school plays and local theater productions. In 1982, he enrolled at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, where he received a B.A. in dramatic studies.

After graduation, Cumming worked in Scottish theater and television before moving to London. In 1985, he married fellow acting student Hilary Lyon. The couple divorced eight years later.

In London, Cumming performed with the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Royal National Theatre. He received two Olivier Awards, including Best Actor in a Musical for playing the Emcee in "Cabaret." In 1998, he reprised this role on Broadway, receiving a Tony Award for his performance.

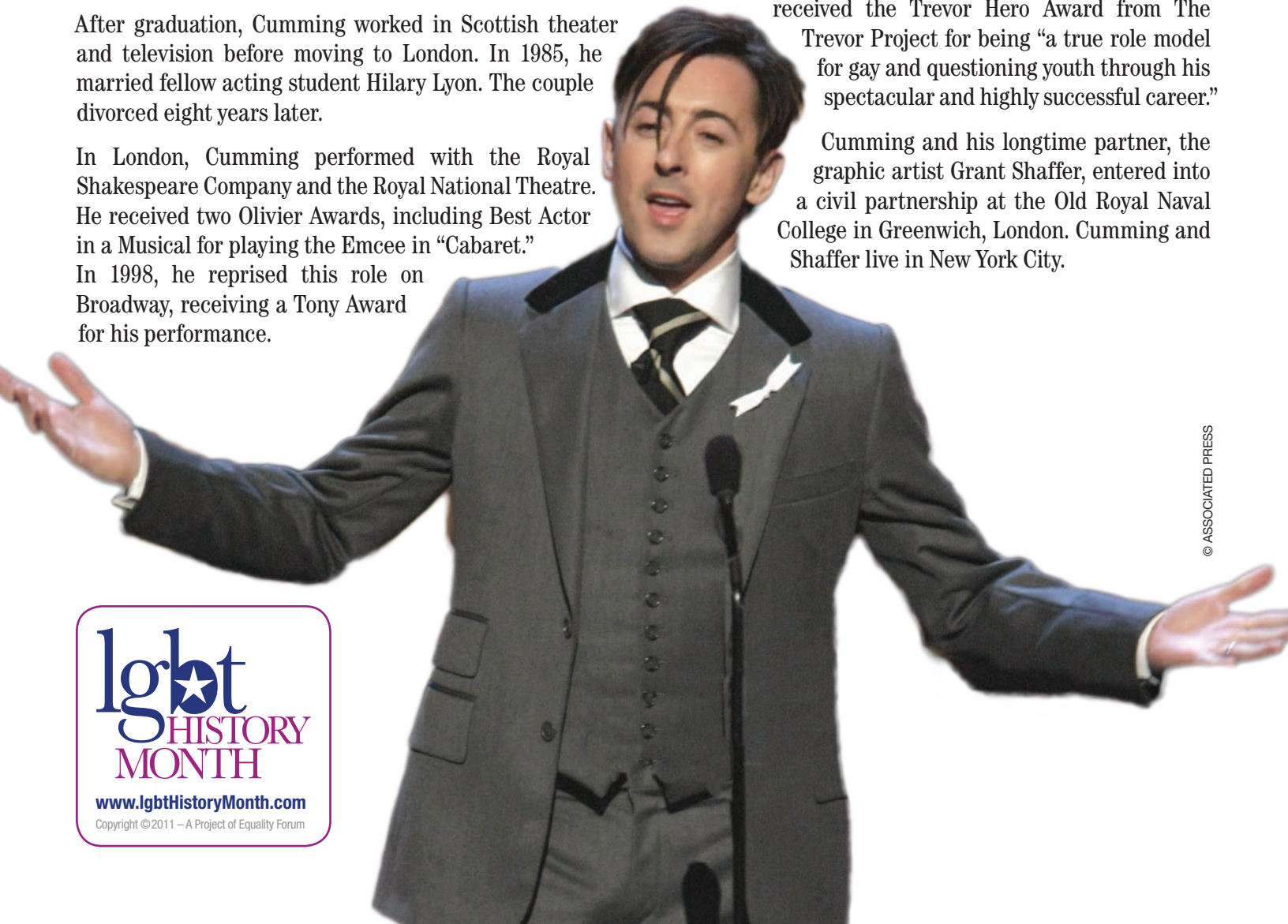
In 1998, Entertainment Weekly named Cumming one of the 100 Most Creative People in the World.

Cumming's many film credits include "Golden Eye," "Emma," "Eyes Wide Shut," "Nicholas Nickleby," "X2," and "Burlesque." On television, he has appeared on "Frasier," "The L Word," "Sex and the City," Logo's "Rick & Steve: The Happiest Gay Couple in All the World," and on the hit series "The Good Wife" as

conniving campaign manager Eli Gold

In 1998, Entertainment Weekly named Cumming one of the 100 Most Creative People in the World. In 2008, he received the Trevor Hero Award from The Trevor Project for being "a true role model for gay and questioning youth through his spectacular and highly successful career."

Cumming and his longtime partner, the graphic artist Grant Shaffer, entered into a civil partnership at the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich, London. Cumming and Shaffer live in New York City.



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DENISE EGER

b. March 14, 1960

RABBI

"I believe God made me just as I am. That is all I need to know, that I am exactly who God created me to be!"

One of the first openly gay rabbis, Denise Eger served as rabbi for the world's first gay and lesbian synagogue. She is the first female and the first openly gay president of the Board of Rabbis of Southern California.

Eger was raised in Memphis, Tennessee. Active in her synagogue, she taught religious school from the time she was 12. She studied opera as a teen, intending to be a voice major in college.

Eger received a bachelor's degree in religion from the University of Southern California and a master's degree from Hebrew Union College (HUC) - Jewish Institute of Religion. In 1988, she was ordained a Reform rabbi.

Following ordination, she served as the first full-time rabbi at Congregation Beth Chayim Chadashim, the first gay and lesbian synagogue. In 1991, Rabbi Eger cofounded West Hollywood's LGBT-welcoming Congregation Kol Ami, which means "all my people."

Rabbi Eger was the founding president of the Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Interfaith Clergy Association. She worked with the Central Conference of American Rabbis to pass the resolution that allowed Reform rabbis to officiate at same-sex commitment ceremonies.

A noted speaker on Judaism, spirituality and LGBT and family issues, Rabbi Eger is a frequent commentator on radio and television. She has written extensively for periodicals, including the Los Angeles Times, The Advocate, the Huffington Post and The Jewish Journal. She has also contributed to a number of books, among them "Twice Blessed: On Being Lesbian, Gay and Jewish," "Positively Gay," and "Lesbian Rabbis: THE FIRST GENERATION."

In 2008, Rabbi Eger officiated at the first legal wedding of a lesbian couple in California. The National Women's Political Caucus named her one of its 12 Remarkable Women in 2010. The Human Rights Campaign presented her with the Community Equality Award in 2011.

Rabbi Eger lives with her son in Los Angeles.

In 1991, Rabbi Eger cofounded West Hollywood's LGBT-welcoming Congregation Kol Ami, which means "all my people."



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LADY GAGA

b. March 28, 1986

SINGER

Lady Gaga has won five Grammy Awards and holds two Guinness World Records.

“I’m just trying to change the world, one sequin at a time.”

Lady Gaga is a world-famous performance artist and singer. She is best known for her chart-topping singles and outrageous costumes. She has had three consecutive best-selling albums and one of the highest-grossing tours.

Born Stefani Germanotta, she is the first of two daughters born to working class parents in Yonkers, New York. She describes her younger self as an “artsy, musical-theatre, nerdy girl who got good grades, who learnt the tricks of self-reinvention, and [had] a look that veered between a bit too sexy and a bit strange.” Raised Roman Catholic, she graduated from Convent of the Sacred Heart School before attending New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts. She left the school after two years to work on her musical career. In 2005, she was signed by Def Jam Recording and worked as a songwriter for Britney Spears and The Pussycat Dolls.

Lady Gaga’s persona is derived from her unique, androgynous, vintage-themed fashion sense and constructing her own costumes. In 2008, Gaga produced her first album, “The Fame.” The album has two international hits, “Just Dance” and “Poker Face.” The Fame Ball Tour premiered Lady Gaga’s innovative use of performance art and glam rock to form a multimedia party.

Her second album, “The Fame Monster,” received critical acclaim. The hit song “Bad Romance” earned Lady Gaga two Grammy Awards for Best Female Pop Vocal Performance and Best Short Form Music Video. Her third album, “Born This Way,” topped the charts within days of its release. She has sold 15 million albums and 51 million singles.

Lady Gaga has won five Grammy Awards and holds two Guinness World Records. She was named 2010 Artist of the Year and the top-selling artist of 2010 by Billboard. In 2010, Time magazine named her Most Influential Artist, and in 2011, Forbes listed her among its World’s Most Powerful.

Openly bisexual, Lady Gaga is an outspoken LGBT equality advocate. She spoke at the 2009 National Equality March in Washington, D.C., calling it “the single most important event” of her career. She was a leading activist for the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” Through her music, concerts and demonstrations, she continues to fight for LGBT rights.



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MICHAEL GUEST

b. October 26, 1957

DIPLOMAT

“Leaders are judged not only by the challenges they tackle, but by those they fail to address.”

In 2001, Secretary of State Colin Powell swore in Guest as ambassador to Romania.

Michael Guest is the first openly gay Senate-confirmed U.S. ambassador. He was nominated by George W. Bush. After serving for 26 years, Guest resigned from the State Department due to its discriminatory policies toward same-sex couples.

Born in South Carolina, Guest received a bachelor's degree in history and political science from Furman University, and a master's degree in foreign affairs from the University of Virginia. In 1982, Guest joined the State Department as a Foreign Service officer. During his early career, he was part of a delegation that facilitated the reunification of Germany.

In 2001, Secretary of State Colin Powell swore in Guest as ambassador to Romania. At the ceremony, Powell recognized Guest's life partner, Alex Nevarez. Advocates expressed hope that this would herald a more inclusive State Department attitude towards LGBT employees and their partners.

Guest's work in Romania was characterized by condemning corruption, advocating for the rule of law and aiding preparations for Romania's entry into NATO. When Guest's ambassadorship ended, Romanian President Ion Iliescu presented him with the Order for Faithful Service in the Rank of Grand Cross.

Guest worked to end the State Department's denial of benefits for same-sex partners. In his farewell speech, he expressed disappointment with the continued discrimination.

When Barack Obama was elected, Guest served on the State Department's transition team.

He advised Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on discriminatory State Department policies. Secretary Clinton changed the policy to provide equal benefits for same-sex couples.

Guest received the Leadership Award from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the Christian Herter Award for Constructive Dissent from the American Foreign Service Association. He also received the State Department's Charles E. Cobb Award for Initiative and Success in Trade Development, the Meritorious Honor Award, and five Superior Honor Awards.

Guest is the senior advisor and cofounder of the Council for Global Equality. He was married in 2011 by U.S. District Court Judge Joe Gale, who is the first openly gay Senate-confirmed federal judge. Guest and his husband reside in Washington, D.C.

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NEIL PATRICK HARRIS

b. June 15, 1973

ACTOR

Harris came out publicly in 2006, telling *People* magazine, “Rather than ignore those who choose to publish their opinions without actually talking to me, I am happy to dispel any rumors or misconceptions.”

“I am quite proud to say that I am a very content gay man living my life to the fullest.”

Neil Patrick Harris is an award-winning television, film and stage actor. Starting at age 16, he has forged an enduring career as a performer in Hollywood and on Broadway.

Harris grew up in Ruidoso, New Mexico, the son of two lawyers who ran a restaurant. He took up acting in the fourth grade, playing the role of Toto in “The Wizard of Oz.” When Harris was 15, the family moved to Albuquerque. That same year, he made his feature film debut in “Clara’s Heart,” for which he received a Golden Globe nomination.

When he was 16, Harris landed the leading role in the television series “Doogie Howser, M.D.” The series ran for four years and earned him a second Golden Globe nomination as well as a People’s Choice Award.

In 1997, Harris accepted the role of Mark in the Los Angeles production of “Rent” and received a Drama League Award for his performance. He made his Broadway debut in 2002 opposite Anne Heche in “Proof.” Thereafter, he appeared as the master of ceremonies in “Cabaret” and as Lee Harvey Oswald in Stephen Sondheim’s musical “Assassins.”

Harris’s films include “Undercover Brother,” “The Next Best Thing,” “Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle” and “Harold and Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay.”

In 2005, Harris joined the television series “How I Met Your Mother” as womanizer Barney Stinson. He received four consecutive Emmy Award nominations for this role.

Harris came out publicly in 2006, telling *People* magazine, “Rather than ignore those who choose to publish their opinions without actually talking to me, I am happy to dispel any rumors or misconceptions.”

Harris has guest starred on dozens of television series, and received an Emmy Award in 2010 for his performance on “Glee.” He has hosted the Academy Awards, the Primetime Emmy Awards and the Tony Awards.

In 2010, he was named one of the 100 Most Influential People by *Time* magazine. Later that year, Harris and his long-term partner, David Burtka, had twins, Gideon Scott and Harper Grace. Harris and his family live in Los Angeles.



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DANIEL HERNANDEZ JR.

b. January 25, 1990

NATIONAL HERO

“I don’t think I’m a hero—the heroes are people who spend their entire lives trying to help others.”

Hernandez became politically energized in response to Arizona’s immigration policies and worked on Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign.

University of Arizona student and congressional intern Daniel Hernandez Jr. garnered national recognition when he saved the life of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords. President Obama acknowledged him for his heroism.

Raised in Tucson, Arizona, Hernandez has two younger sisters. His mother is a Mexican immigrant and his father is a first-generation Hispanic American. Hernandez became politically energized in response to Arizona’s immigration policies and worked on Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign. Thereafter, he began his studies in political science at the University of Arizona. While attending college, Hernandez served as a campaign manager for State Representative Steve Farley, the minority leader in the Arizona State House.

Hernandez is an openly gay member of Tucson’s City Commission on GLBT Issues. He worked with the Arizona Students’ Association to lobby the state legislature for students to be excused on Election Day to vote.

Hernandez met Congresswoman Giffords while working on her 2008 election campaign. He began as her congressional intern shortly before Giffords and 18 other people were shot in January 2011.

Hernandez is credited with saving the congresswoman’s life. He stepped into harm’s way and used his emergency medical training to keep Giffords alive until the paramedics arrived. In his words, “It was probably not the best idea to run toward the gunshots, but people needed help.” His actions resulted in President Obama and others calling him a national hero. He rejects the honor in the belief that any good person would have done exactly the same.

Hernandez spoke to a crowd of more than 27,000 people and 500 media outlets at “Tucson: Together We Thrive,” the memorial event for the shooting victims. At the event, President Obama acknowledged Hernandez and invited him as the guest of the president and first lady to the 2011 State of the Union.

Equality Forum presented Hernandez with the 2011 National Hero Award. He resides in Tucson and plans to devote his career to public service.



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LANGSTON HUGHES

b. February 1, 1902

d. May 22, 1967

POET

Hughes showed impressive literary aptitude.

His breakthrough poem, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," was published shortly after he graduated from high school.

*"What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?
Or does it fester like a sore—and then run?"*

A celebrated poet and novelist, Langston Hughes is one of the most significant voices to emerge from the Harlem Renaissance. A major contributor to American literature, his legacy includes 25 published works.

Hughes was born in Joplin, Missouri. After his parents divorced, he moved to Lawrence, Kansas, where his grandmother raised him until her death. By the time he was 14, he had lived in nine cities with various families.

Hughes showed impressive literary aptitude. In eighth grade, he began writing poetry, short stories and plays and was elected "class poet." His breakthrough poem, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," was published shortly after he graduated from high school.

In 1921, at the urging of his father, Hughes enrolled at Columbia University to study engineering. He left after two semesters due to racial discrimination.

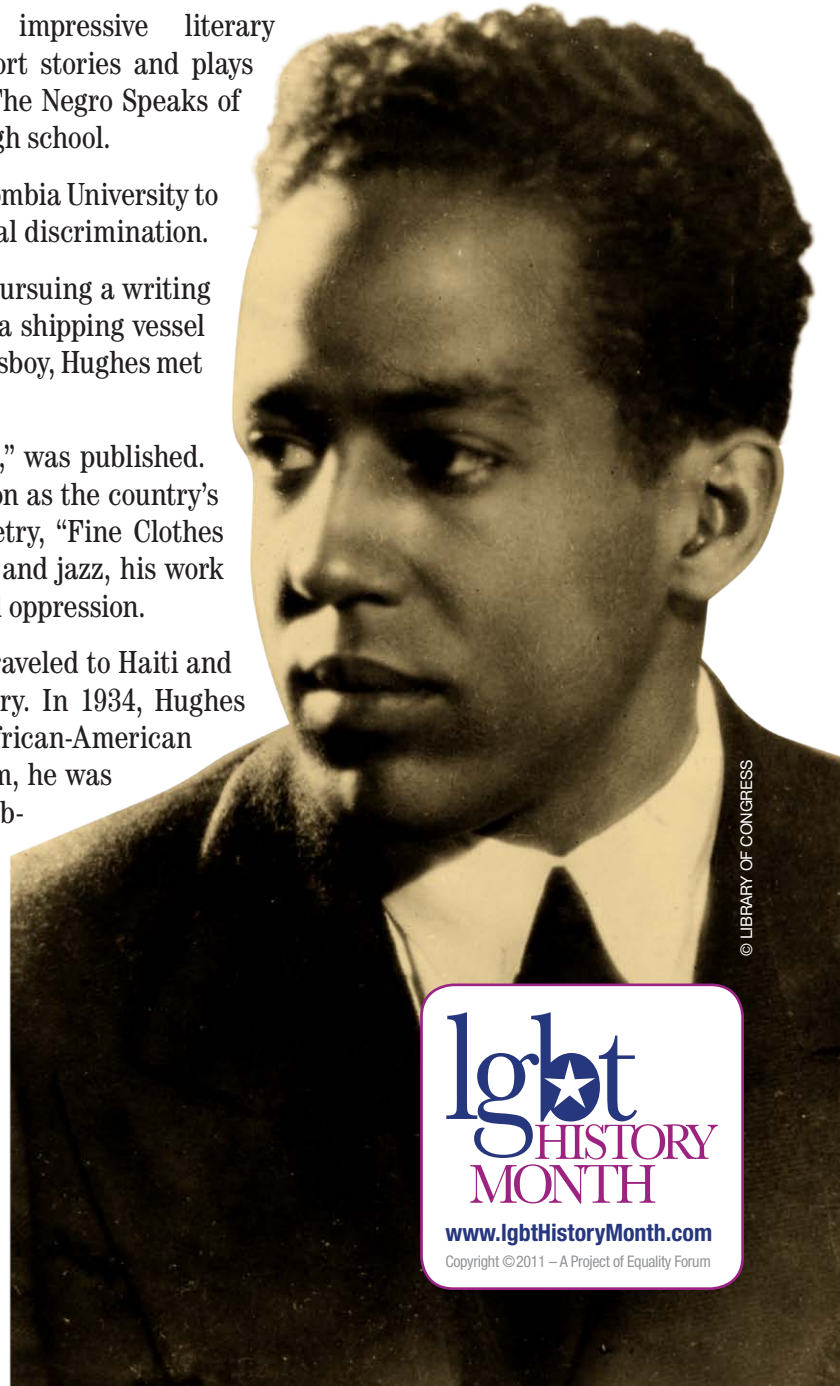
Over the next few years, Hughes worked odd jobs while pursuing a writing career. He traveled to Africa and Europe on the crew of a shipping vessel before moving to Washington, D.C. While employed as a busboy, Hughes met poet Vachel Lindsay, who helped promote his work.

In 1926, Hughes's first book of poetry, "The Weary Blues," was published. Well received by literary critics, it earned him a reputation as the country's leading black poet. A year later, his second book of poetry, "Fine Clothes to the Jews," was published. Heavily influenced by blues and jazz, his work portrayed life in black America and addressed racism and oppression.

In 1929, Hughes graduated from Lincoln University. He traveled to Haiti and to the Soviet Union, where he studied communist theory. In 1934, Hughes became head of the League for Negro Rights, the main African-American branch of the Communist Party. A victim of McCarthyism, he was subpoenaed to appear before the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations in 1953.

Like most artists of his time, Hughes was not open about his sexuality. Literary scholars point to "Montage of a Dream Deferred," "Desire," "Young Sailor" and "Tell Me" as gay-themed works.

Hughes died at age 65 from prostate cancer. His ashes are memorialized in Harlem at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.



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FRIDA KAHLO

b. July 6, 1907

d. July 13, 1954

ARTIST

Kahlo's paintings have been displayed in prestigious international shows, including a solo exhibit that celebrated the 100th anniversary of her birth.

"Painting completed my life."

Frida Kahlo is a renowned Mexican painter, noted for her vibrant colors as well as nationalist and feminist themes. Her paintings have commanded higher prices than any other female artist.

Born in Mexico, Kahlo was the third of Matilda and Guillermo's four daughters. When she was 15, she was sent to the most prestigious national preparatory school.

At age 18, she was in a trolley accident that left her with permanent pain and health problems. This accident crippled her, led to over 30 surgeries, and rendered her unable to bear children. Kahlo's pain is reflected in her works.

In 1929, she married the famous painter and communist Diego Rivera. Twenty years her senior and a noted muralist, Rivera's relationship with Kahlo was a mixture of passion and strife. While they had much in common, Rivera was frequently unfaithful. Kahlo had a series of affairs with men and women. They divorced in early 1940, but remarried later that year.

Her genius as an artist went unrecognized until she was offered a show in New York. It was wildly successful and led to shows in Paris and other international cities.

Her work is celebrated for its Mexican folk art traditions, use of vivid colors, and its subject matter, including self-portraits. Her work has been associated with surrealism, though Kahlo herself renounced the genre saying, "I never painted dreams. I painted my own reality."

In 1944, her health began to rapidly deteriorate. In 1950, she was hospitalized for a year. When Kahlo finally received her first solo show in Mexico, she had to be carried to the opening in bed.

After her death, her work continued to grow in popularity. Kahlo's paintings have been displayed in prestigious international shows including a solo exhibit that celebrated the 100th anniversary of her birth. In 2001, her face graced a U.S. postage stamp. In 2002, her life was made into the Academy Award-winning movie "Frida."

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DAVID KATO

b. February 13, 1964

d. January 26, 2011

ACTIVIST

“What they’re doing now is to make it more harsh on people, anyone promoting homosexuality is being criminalized.”

In 2004, he cofounded Sexual Minorities Uganda Group (SMUG), Uganda’s first LGBT civil rights organization.

David Kato was the founder of Uganda’s LGBT civil rights movement. He was an outspoken advocate for equality in a country with some of the harshest anti-gay laws. His murder brought global attention to the plight of LGBT people in Uganda and Africa.

Kato and his twin brother were raised in a conservative family in a small Ugandan village. He recalled being brainwashed to believe “it was wrong to be in love with a man.” He attended some of Uganda’s best schools before moving to South Africa in the mid-1990’s to pursue a teaching career. Inspired by South Africa’s LGBT civil rights movement, Kato became an activist.

In 1998, intent on dismantling the homophobia, Kato returned to Uganda, where homosexuality is a crime punishable by up to 14 years imprisonment. Uganda’s minister of ethics and integrity stated, “Homosexuals can forget about human rights.”

Despite the risks, Kato held a televised news conference pressing for LGBT civil rights. As a result, he suffered several arrests and beatings.

Undeterred but cautious, Kato continued to lead the movement while supporting himself as a teacher. In 2004, he cofounded Sexual Minorities Uganda Group (SMUG), Uganda’s first LGBT civil rights organization.

In 2009, the Ugandan legislature proposed a bill designating the death penalty for homosexuality. The following year, a Ugandan national newspaper published the names and photographs of gay rights activists, including Kato. It explicitly called for homosexuals to be executed by hanging.

Four months later, Kato was bludgeoned to death in his home. Local authorities claim his death had nothing to do with his sexual orientation.

In response to Kato’s death, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said, “This crime is a reminder of the heroic generosity of the people who advocate for and defend human rights on behalf of the rest of us—and the sacrifices they make.”



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MICHAEL KIRBY

b. March 18, 1939

SUPREME COURT JUSTICE

“If every gay person in Australia stood up and said this is me, get over it, the whole shabby charade would be finished.”

In 1991, Kirby received the Companion of the Order of Australia, the nation’s highest civil honor, and the Australian Human Rights Medal.

Michael Kirby is a former justice of the High Court of Australia. He is the world’s first openly gay justice of a national supreme court. When he retired, he was Australia’s longest-serving judge.

Kirby was born in Sydney, Australia. He attended Fort Street High School, which is renowned for the accomplishments of its graduates. He earned three bachelor’s degrees and a Master of Laws degree from the University of Sydney.

Kirby practiced law for 13 years. In 1975, he was named deputy director of the Australian Conciliation & Arbitration Commission. Subsequently, he served as judge of the Federal Court of Australia, chairman of the Australian Law Reform

Commission and as president of the New South Wales Court. In 1996, he was appointed to the High Court.

A pioneering AIDS activist, Kirby served on the World Health Organization’s Global Commission on AIDS and the United Nations Global Commission on HIV and the Law.

In 1991, Kirby received the Companion of the Order of Australia, the nation’s highest civil honor, and the Australian Human Rights Medal.

In 1999, Kirby came out when he named his long-term partner, Johan van Vloten, in his listing in “Who’s Who in Australia.” The couple has been together since 1969.

In 2010, Kirby received the Gruber Justice Prize for his work on sexual orientation discrimination and international human rights law, including laws relating to privacy and HIV/AIDS. In 2011, his biography, “Michael Kirby: Paradoxes/Principles,” was published.

Kirby lives with his partner in Sydney, where he advocates for LGBT equality and for people with HIV and AIDS.



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VICTORIA KOLAKOWSKI

b. August 29, 1961

JUDGE

Kolakowski co-chaired the Transgender Law Center, an organization dedicated to the well-being and protection of transgender individuals.

“I have been very fortunate to have a successful career as a public servant, and I feel an obligation to serve my community as a role model as well.”

Victoria Kolakowski is the first openly transgender person to be elected a trial judge in the United States.

Born in Queens, New York, Kolakowski graduated from Stuyvesant High School. She was the first person in her family to attend college. Kolakowski earned master's degrees in biomedical engineering, electrical engineering, public administration and divinity. She received a law degree from Louisiana State University.

In 1990, Kolakowski moved to Berkeley, California. She served on the Oakland Budget Advisory Committee and was an administrative law judge for the California Public Utilities Commission.

In 1994, the East Bay Lesbian/Gay Democratic Club named her Woman of the Year. In 1995, she received the Outstanding Woman of Berkeley Award.

In 2010, Kolakowski campaigned for a judgeship on the Superior Court of Alameda County, California. She won by 10,000 votes. Her victory was significant, not only for the transgender community, but also for women, who occupy a small percentage of judgeships. She received Equality California's Equality and Justice Award.

Kolakowski co-chaired the Transgender Law Center, an organization dedicated to the well-being and protection of transgender individuals. She serves on the California Council of Churches and is a volunteer clergy member at the New Spirit Community Church.

In 2004, Kolakowski married Cynthia Laird, editor for the Bay Area Reporter. The couple lives in Oakland, California.



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DAVE KOPAY

b. June 28, 1942

ATHELETE

"I hear from people all over the world that my coming out has empowered them in their search for self."

Dave Kopay made headlines in 1975 when he became the first NFL player and one of the first professional athletes to come out. His autobiography, now in its fifth printing, was a New York Times best seller.

The second of four children, Kopay was born in Chicago into a strict Roman Catholic family. When he was in grammar school, the family moved to North Hollywood, California.

Kopay began his football career at Notre Dame High School in Los Angeles, a school known for its championship athletics. He was named to the all-Catholic conference all-star football team. He enrolled at the University of Washington and as team co-captain led the Huskies to the PAC-10 conference title. The following year, he was named an All-American running back.

In 1964, Kopay was drafted by the San Francisco 49ers. He was the team's leading rusher in his rookie year. He played for five NFL teams in his nine-year career, including the Detroit Lions, the Washington Redskins, the New Orleans Saints and the Green Bay Packers.

While playing for the Redskins, Kopay had relationships with women and men, including teammate Jerry Smith, who died of AIDS in 1986. At the suggestion of his therapist, Kopay married a woman to try to fix what he perceived as a problem. The marriage lasted a year.

Three years after retiring from the NFL, Kopay came out publicly in an interview with the Washington Star. He shared details about his struggle with homophobia and sports in "The David Kopay Story," published in 1977.

Kopay pursued coaching positions with NCAA and NFL teams, but believes he wasn't hired because he is gay. Since 1982, he has worked in his family's business.

A champion of gay rights for more than 30 years, Kopay has given hundreds of speeches and media interviews. In 2007, he donated \$1 million to the University of Washington's LGBT center.

Despite suffering serious injuries during his football career, Kopay still misses the thrill of playing for the NFL. "There's nothing like the rush of playing on Monday Night Football," he says. "There's nothing that will ever fill that void."

Kopay resides in Los Angeles.

Kopay played for five NFL teams in his nine-year career, including the Detroit Lions, the Washington Redskins, the New Orleans Saints and the Green Bay Packers.

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RICKY MARTIN

b. December 24, 1971

SINGER

“I am a fortunate homosexual man. I am very blessed to be who I am.”

In 1999, he released his first English-language recording. The self-titled album sold 22 million copies and launched the No. 1 hit single “Livin’ La Vida Loca.”

Ricky Martin is a Grammy Award-winning pop singer. A professional entertainer since childhood, Martin has sold more than 60 million albums.

He was born Enrique Martin Morales in San Juan, Puerto Rico, into a Roman Catholic family. His mother is an accountant and his father is a psychologist.

Martin’s singing career began at age 12 with the Latin American boy band Menudo. After completing high school, he moved to Mexico City, where he signed a solo record deal with Sony.

After two successful Spanish-language albums and a sold-out concert tour, Martin moved to Los Angeles, where he was cast as a singer/bartender on the popular soap opera “General Hospital.”

In 1999, he released his first English-language recording. The self-titled album sold 22 million copies and launched the No. 1 hit single “Livin’ La Vida Loca.”

That year, Martin performed at the Grammy Awards and received the award for Best Latin Pop Album. With his good looks, sexy dance moves and dynamic performance style, he became an international superstar.

Martin is the founder and president of the Ricky Martin Foundation. The foundation works to prevent the trafficking of children. In 2005, he received the International Humanitarian Award from the International Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

In 2006, Martin was honored with the Latin Recording Academy Person of the Year Award. The following year, he received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

In 2008, Martin had twin sons via a surrogate mother. Two years later, he came out with a post on his Web site, “I am a fortunate homosexual man.”

In 2010, Martin’s memoir, “Me,” was published. In an interview he said, “I want my children to be able to read the book one day and understand the spiritual journey I had to experience.”

Martin lives in Miami with his partner and his two sons.



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AMÉLIE MAURESMO

b. July 5, 1979

ATHLETE

“Whether it’s in the right way or sometimes the wrong way, you learn about life and its lessons.”

Mauresmo is one of only a few tennis players to reach World No. 1 ranking before winning a Grand Slam title.

Amélie Mauresmo was the World No. 1 tennis player. She won 25 career titles including two Grand Slams. In 2004, she received an Olympic Silver medal in tennis singles.

Mauresmo was born in Laye, France, where she began playing tennis at age 4. Her talent on the court was quickly recognized, and her parents enrolled her in private lessons. At 17, she was named Junior World Champion after winning both the French Open and Wimbledon.

In 1999, two years into her professional career, Mauresmo came out during the Australian Open. She publicly embraced her girlfriend after defeating the World No. 1 player,

Lindsay Davenport. Mauresmo credited her on-court success to coming to terms with her sexuality. She is the first tennis player to come out without losing any major sponsors.

Mauresmo is one of only a few tennis players to reach World No. 1 ranking before winning a Grand Slam title. Known for her powerful one-handed backhand and net play, she has defeated top-ranked players such as Venus and Serena Williams, Martina Hingis, and Justine Henin. In 2003, she helped France capture the Fed Cup.

In 2007, the president of France presented Mauresmo with the Legion of Honor. Two years later, she announced her retirement.

Since retiring, Mauresmo has coached other professional tennis players. In 2009, she became ambassador of the Sport for Life Foundation, a Swiss-based organization dedicated to supporting young athletes. “I want to share the experiences I’ve gathered along my career with young people so they cannot walk into traps,” she says. “Respect for values is the foundation for success!”

Mauresmo resides in Geneva, Switzerland.



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CONSTANCE McMILLEN

b. 1992

YOUTH ACTIVIST

McMillen's story received national attention.

She appeared on national television shows including "The Ellen DeGeneres Show," where she received a \$30,000 scholarship.

"Stand up like I did. It was hard but it was worth it."

Constance McMillen became a poster child for LGBT rights after asking permission to bring her girlfriend to the prom. When her school responded by cancelling the prom, McMillen took legal action.

As a senior at Itawamba Agricultural High School in Fulton, Mississippi, McMillen challenged the prom rules forbidding same-sex couples from attending and girls from wearing tuxedos. When the school cancelled the prom, students responded by harassing McMillen.

The ACLU filed a lawsuit requesting that the court order the school to hold an inclusive prom. The case was settled when a U.S. District Court ruled that McMillen's First Amendment rights had been violated. The Itawamba County School District consented to a judgment in which it paid McMillen \$35,000 and \$81,000 in attorney's fees.



After the settlement, the school held a prom. Only McMillen and seven learning disabled students attended. Parents organized a separate prom that all other students attended, but to which McMillen was not invited.

The school district agreed to implement policies that would prevent future discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity for extracurricular and educational activities. This was groundbreaking for a Mississippi school district.

McMillen's story received national attention. Glamour magazine named her Woman of the Year Award in 2010, and she appeared on national television shows including "The Ellen DeGeneres Show," where she received a \$30,000 scholarship. She was invited to the White House and served as Grand Marshal of the New York Gay Pride Parade.

McMillen transferred to a school in Jackson, Mississippi, and graduated in 2011. She enrolled at Northeast Mississippi Community College to study psychology.

RYAN MURPHY

b. November 30, 1965

PRODUCER

“Glee,” a groundbreaking musical comedy series created by Murphy, premiered in 2009.

“I dealt with my sexuality at a very early age. I didn’t have a struggle, and I know so many people who were terrified of dealing with it.”

Ryan Murphy is an award-winning film and television director, writer and producer. He is best known for creating the television series “Glee.”

Murphy grew up in Indianapolis, Indiana, in an Irish Catholic family. His mother was a writer. His father was a newspaper circulation director. At 15, after coming out to his parents, Murphy saw a therapist, who said he was just “too precocious for his own good.”

At Indiana University in Bloomington, Murphy worked on the school newspaper and performed with the “Singing Hoosiers,” the university’s show choir.

Starting out as a journalist, Murphy worked for the Miami Herald, the Los Angeles Times and Entertainment Weekly. He began scriptwriting in the late 1990’s. In 1999, he made his first foray into television, creating the teen comedy series “Popular.” He wrote most of the show’s episodes.

In 2003, Murphy created “Nip/Tuck,” winner of the 2005 Golden Globe for best TV drama series. Murphy wrote and directed many episodes and served as executive producer for the show, which ran for seven seasons. “Nip/Tuck” earned him his first Emmy Award nomination for directing.

“Glee,” a groundbreaking musical comedy series created by Murphy, premiered in 2009. In its second season, the show became a pop culture phenomenon and one of the top-rated programs on television among young adults. That season, “Glee” received four Emmy Awards, including one for Murphy for outstanding directing for a comedy series.

For its honest depictions of LGBT characters and story lines, “Glee” also received the 2010 GLAAD Media Award for outstanding comedy series. The same year, Murphy directed Julia Roberts in a screenplay he co-wrote based on the book “Eat, Pray, Love.” The film grossed over \$200 million worldwide.

Murphy serves on the National Advisory Board of the Young Storytellers Foundation, a Los Angeles area educational program that brings entertainment professionals into the classroom.

Murphy lives in Los Angeles.



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DAN SAVAGE

b. October 7, 1964

JOURNALIST

“I thought, when I was a kid, that my mother and father would be devastated if I ever told them I was gay.”

In 2010, reacting to the suicides of bullied LGBT youth, Savage started “It Gets Better,” which encourages adults to submit videos assuring gay teens that life gets better.

Dan Savage is an award-winning author, journalist, newspaper editor and political commentator. He launched the “It Gets Better” video project to combat bullying and prevent LGBT teen suicides.

Born in Chicago, Savage was the third of four children in an Irish Catholic family. He attended Quigley Prep, which Savage describes as “a Catholic high school for boys thinking of becoming priests.”

At 18, Savage came out to his family. After initially having a difficult time, they became supportive. Savage enrolled at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in theater.

In 1991, Savage’s sex-advice column, “Savage Love,” first appeared in *The Stranger*, an alternative weekly newspaper in Seattle. The internationally syndicated column has been called funny, sarcastic, informative and outrageous.

Savage’s columns were compiled into a book, “Savage Love: Straight Answers from America’s Most Popular Sex Columnist” (1998). He wrote “The Kid: What Happened After My Boyfriend and I Decided to Go Get Pregnant” (1999). He won a Lambda Literary Award for his book “Skipping Towards Gomorrah: The Seven Deadly Sins and the Pursuit of Happiness in America” (2003).

In 2010, reacting to the suicides of bullied LGBT youth, Savage started “It Gets Better,” which encourages adults to submit videos assuring gay teens that life gets better. As of 2011, the project generated more than 5,000 video submissions, including testimonials from President Obama, Ellen DeGeneres, Tim Gunn, Anne Hathaway, Ke\$ha and other celebrities.

For creating “It Gets Better,” Savage received a Webby Special Achievement Award, the leading international award honoring online excellence. He has been a contributor to *Out* magazine and HBO’s “Real Time with Bill Maher.” As a political commentator on LGBT issues, Savage has appeared frequently on CNN and MSNBC.

In 2005, Savage married his long-term partner, Terry Miller. The couple lives in Seattle with their adopted son.



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AMANDA SIMPSON

b. March 26, 1961

GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL

In 2004, Simpson became the first openly transgender person in the United States to win a contested primary.

“I’d rather not be the first but someone has to be.”

Amanda Simpson is the Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology in the U.S. Department of Defense. She is the first openly transgender female presidential appointee.

Born in the Chicago area, Simpson grew up in Southern California. She holds a bachelor’s degree in physics, and master’s degrees in engineering and business administration.

As an undergraduate, Simpson trained as a pilot. “I quickly realized this was a way to use all the sciences and technology I had been exposed to in the classroom,” she says. “I’ve been lucky to incorporate my love of flight into my career.” Simpson is a certified flight instructor, and has her airline transport pilot (ATP) certificate.

For 27 years, Simpson worked at Raytheon Missile Systems. She spent 20 years as the manager of flight operations and departed as Deputy Director of Advanced Technology Development. In 2005, she successfully advocated for Raytheon to include gender identity and expression in its nondiscrimination policy.

In 2004, Simpson became the first openly transgender person in the United States to win a contested primary by securing a Democratic nomination for the Arizona House of Representatives. In 2008, she was a delegate for Hillary Clinton at the Democratic National Convention.

Simpson has served on the boards of numerous organizations, including the Arizona Human Rights Fund, the Tucson Corporate LGBT Coalition, Out and Equal Workplace Advocates and the National Center for Transgender Equality.

Before she was appointed to her current position, Simpson was Senior Technical Advisor in the U.S. Commerce Department’s Bureau of Industry and Security. As the highest-ranking technical member, she advised on policy issues and monitored the export of weapons technology.

Simpson’s many honors include the 2001 Raytheon Woman on the Move Award, the 2005 Arizona Human Rights Fund Individual Award, the 2010 Louise Young Award, and OUT for Work’s 2010 OUTstanding Individual Award. She resides in Tucson, where she was Grand Marshal of the city’s 2005 Pride Parade.



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WANDA SYKES

b. March 7, 1964

COMEDIAN/ACTOR

"They pissed off the wrong group of people. Instead of having gay marriage in California, we're going to get it across the country."

She was a performer and writer for "The Chris Rock Show" and won the 1999 Emmy for outstanding writing for a variety, music or comedy special.

Wanda Sykes is an Emmy Award-winning comedian and actress praised for being one of the most entertaining women of her generation. She was the first African-American and first openly gay master of ceremonies for the White House Correspondents' Dinner.

Sykes was born in Portsmouth, Virginia, and raised in the Washington, D.C., area. Her father, an Army colonel, worked in the Pentagon; her mother worked as a bank manager. At a young age, Sykes discovered her passion for making people laugh. She was outspoken and entertaining in high school. In 1986, she graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in marketing from Hampton University and began working for the National Security Agency (NSA).

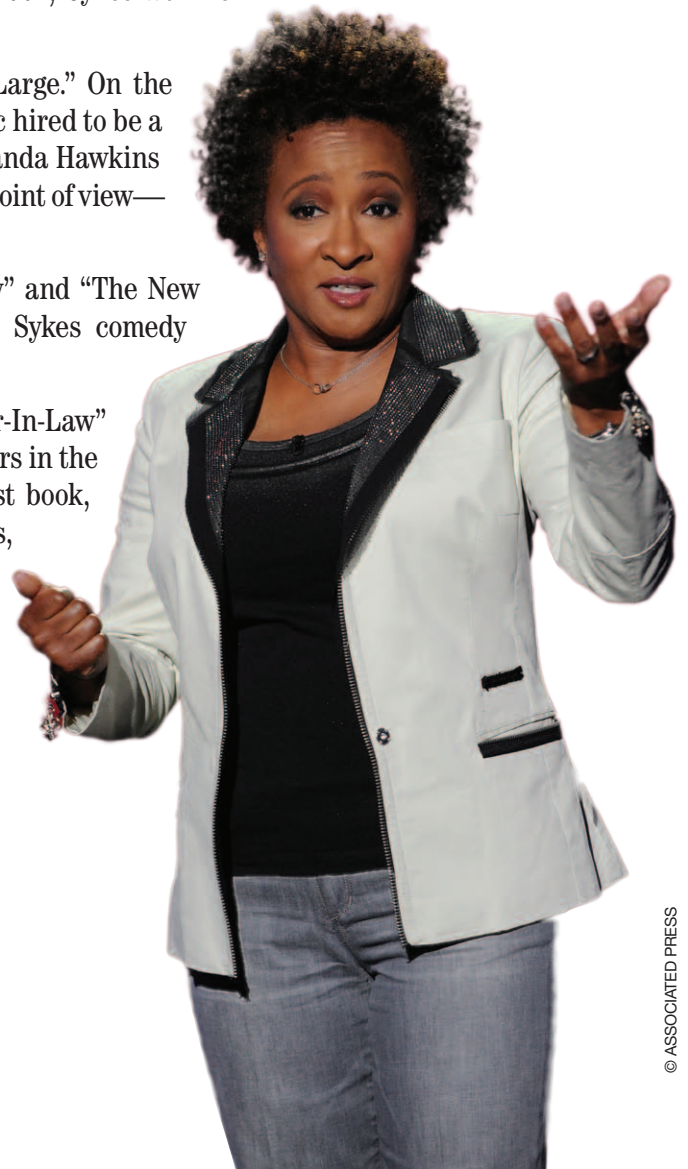
Sykes's stand-up career began spontaneously at a talent showcase. She quickly made close friends in the comedy world, including rising star Chris Rock. She was a performer and writer for "The Chris Rock Show" and won the 1999 Emmy for outstanding writing for a variety, music or comedy special. In 2002, Sykes won her second Emmy for her work on "Inside the NFL."

In 2003, Sykes launched her first television show, "Wanda at Large." On the show, she played Wanda Hawkins, an unsuccessful stand-up comic hired to be a correspondent on a political talk show. Sykes acknowledged, "Wanda Hawkins is basically me personified. We have the same attitude, the same point of view—pointing out hypocrisies in the way we see the world."

Sykes has starred in "Wanda Does It," "The Wanda Sykes Show" and "The New Adventures of Old Christine." HBO has produced two Wanda Sykes comedy specials, "Sick & Tired" (2006) and "I'ma Be Me" (2009).

Sykes appeared in the feature films "Evan Almighty," "Monster-In-Law" and "My Super Ex-Girlfriend," and provided the voice for characters in the animated films "Over The Hedge" and "The Barnyard." Her first book, "Yeah, I Said It," is a collection of comedic essays on current events, family and life.

In 2008, Sykes came out when she announced her own marriage while speaking at a rally for gay marriage. She lives in California with her wife, Alex, and their twins, Lucas and Olivia.



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LILLI VINCENZ

b. September 26, 1937

GAY PIONEER

“We were laying the groundwork for what we hoped would be later activism that would give homosexuals equal rights.”

Lilli Vincenz is a pioneering gay rights activist. In 1965, she was the only lesbian to participate in the first White House picket. From 1965 to 1969, Vincenz demonstrated each Fourth of July in front of Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell. These protests, called Annual Reminders, launched the gay and lesbian civil rights movement.

Vincenz was born in Hamburg, Germany, and grew up during World War II. Her father died when she was 2 years old. In 1949, after her mother married an American, the family moved to the United States.

In 1959, Vincenz earned bachelor's degrees in French and German from Douglas College. The following year, she received a master's degree in English from Columbia University.

After college, Vincenz enlisted in the Women's Army Corps and worked at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. After serving nine months, she was outed by her roommate and was discharged for being gay.

In 1963, Vincenz joined the Mattachine Society of Washington (MSW). She was in the MSW delegation that held the first meeting with the Civil Service Commission to discuss discriminatory policies toward gays and lesbians.

In 1971, Vincenz helped launch the Frank Kameny for Congress campaign. This marked the first time an openly gay person ran for public office in the United States.

Vincenz filmed two important gay rights demonstrations: the 1968 Annual Reminder in Philadelphia and the first anniversary of Stonewall, known as the first New York Pride Parade.

From 1971 to 1979, Vincenz hosted a monthly Gay Women's Open House in Washington to provide a safe setting for socializing and discussing common concerns.

In 1990, Vincenz earned a Ph.D. in human development from the University of Maryland. Vincenz has written for numerous publications and has appeared on television and in film.

She resides in Arlington, Virginia, with her partner, Nancy Ruth Davis.

In 1965, she was the only lesbian to participate in the first White House picket.

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VIRGINIA WOOLF

b. January 25, 1882

d. March 28, 1941

AUTHOR

Woolf's modernist style differed from other writers of the day. It concentrated more on communicating impressions and people's inner lives than recreating reality.

"Language is wine upon the lips."

Virginia Woolf was an accomplished 20th century English novelist and one of the founders of the modernist movement. She published nearly 500 essays and nine novels.

Born Adeline Virginia Stephen, she was privately tutored at home and never attended college. She inherited a love of literature from her father, Sir Leslie Stephen, who had an impressive library and was a magazine editor.

Woolf suffered emotional hardships from an early age. When she was 6, her stepbrother began molesting her. The abuse continued into her early adulthood. At 13, she suffered a mental breakdown following her mother's death. At 22, Woolf suffered a second breakdown when her father died.

Upon recovering, Woolf and her siblings moved to Bloomsbury in London. There she involved herself with the Bloomsbury Group, a cadre of intellectuals who met for discussion of politics, art and literature. She began her literary career teaching at Morley College and writing book reviews.

In 1912, Virginia married Leonard Woolf, a member of the Bloomsbury Group. The marriage was described as passionless, but loving. Together they founded the Hogarth Press and published significant books, including Mansfield's "Prelude," T.S. Elliot's "Poems" and her own book "Kew Gardens."



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Woolf had a number of close relationships with women. It is believed there was only one sexual relationship, which was with Vita Sackville-West, on whom she based the protagonist of her book "Orlando." Sackville-West's son described the novel as "the longest and most charming love letter in literature." "Orlando" was made into a movie in 1993.

Woolf's modernist style differed from other writers of the day. It concentrated more on communicating impressions and people's inner lives than recreating reality. It often included techniques such as stream-of-consciousness writing. Many of her works contain strong feminist themes, such as her essay "A Room of One's Own" where she wrote, "A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction."

Over the course of Woolf's life, she was treated for mental illness. She was likely suffering a mental breakdown at the time of her death. After weighing down her pockets with stones, she drowned herself in the River Ouse in Lewes, England. According to her suicide note, she feared her suffering would not end.

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PEDRO ZAMORA

b. May 3, 1971

AIDS ACTIVIST

*“As gay young people, we are marginalized.
As young people who are HIV-positive
and have AIDS, we are totally written off.”*

In 1993, he testified before Congress, arguing for the improvement of AIDS education programs.

Pedro Zamora was an AIDS activist who appeared on MTV's reality series "The Real World." As the first openly gay and openly HIV-positive person on a television series, he brought national attention to HIV/AIDS and LGBT issues.

Zamora was born into poverty in Havana, Cuba, the youngest of eight. The family lived in a small house with a dirt floor.

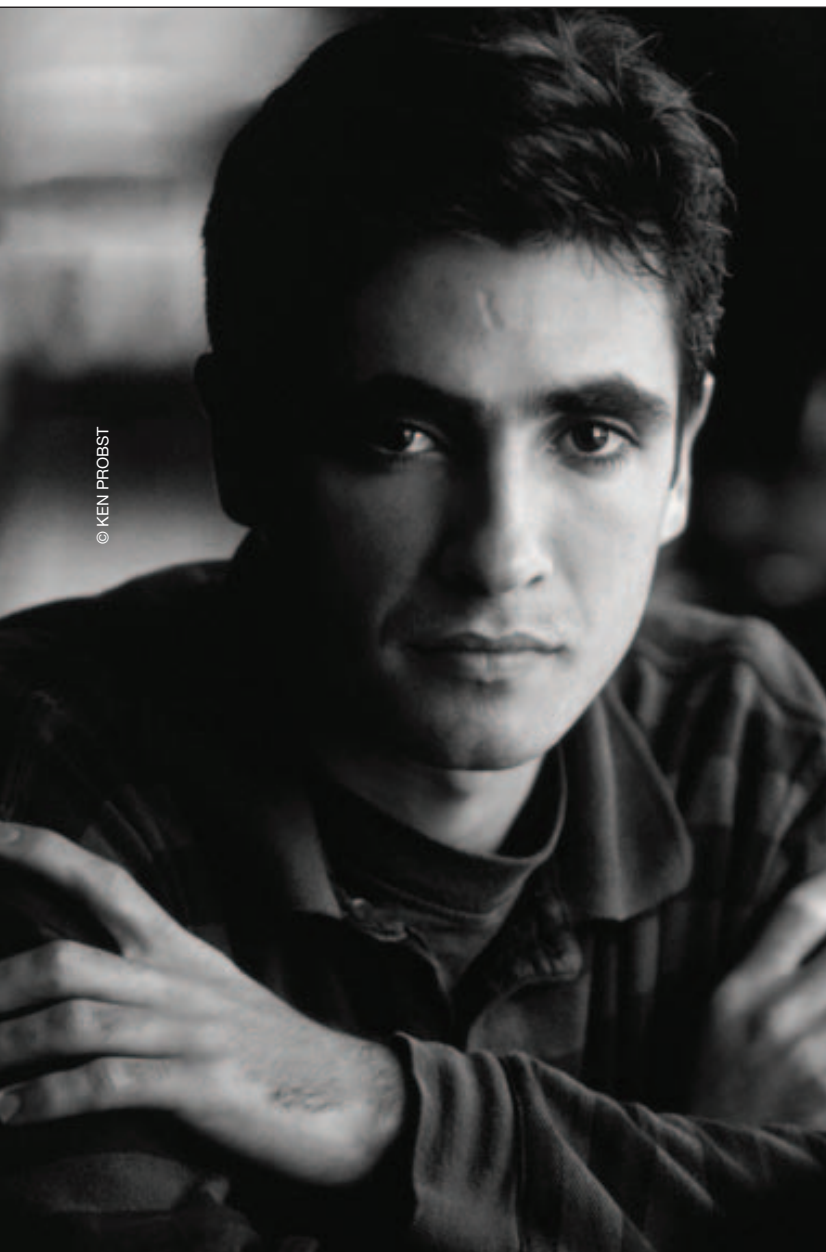
When Zamora was 8, he immigrated to Florida with his parents and two of his siblings as part of the Mariel boatlift. The family settled in Hialeah, Florida. Zamora's mother died when he was 13. He threw himself into schoolwork and extracurricular activities. An honors student and captain of the science club and cross-country team, he became one of the school's most popular students.

Zamora learned he was HIV-positive after donating blood. He decided to pursue a career as an AIDS activist. In 1993, he testified before Congress, arguing for the improvement of AIDS education programs.

In 1994, Zamora joined the cast of MTV's "The Real World: San Francisco." Soon after moving into "The Real World" loft, he fell in love with another HIV-positive AIDS activist, Sean Sasser. The two men exchanged vows in a commitment ceremony in the loft.

The day after the final episode of "The Real World: San Francisco" aired, Zamora died of AIDS-related complications. After his death, he received praise from President Clinton for his leadership in AIDS education and for raising awareness about the disease.

In 1995, a street in Miami was renamed Pedro Zamora Way. In 2008, "Pedro," a feature film, honored his life.



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