

# JANE ADDAMS

b. September 6, 1860

d. May 21, 1935

## ACTIVIST

*“Social advance depends as much upon the process through which it is secured as upon the result itself.”*

**In 1931 she became the first woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.**

In 1889 Jane Addams cofounded Hull House, a social settlement on Chicago's Near West Side. Social settlements were established to attract educated, middle- and upper-class people to poor urban areas. Addams also cofounded the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), a nonpartisan nonprofit organization created in 1920 to defend and preserve individual rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

After graduating from college, Addams studied medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. She eventually turned her attention to women's issues. She and several other women founded Hull House as an educational hub for neighborhood residents, most of whom were recent immigrants. Addams lived and worked at Hull House until her death.

Throughout her life, Addams was dedicated to improving the lives of those on the fringes of society, becoming one of the most important social reformers during the Progressive Era in America. She became a leading advocate for women's rights, immigrants' rights, better housing, fair labor practices, improvements in public welfare and stricter child labor laws. She and other Hull House residents helped pass legislation and influenced critical social policies in many of these areas. Addams also worked for the Chicago Board of Health and served as the first vice president of the Playground Association of America. She advocated for black rights, becoming a charter member of the NAACP.

In 1894 Addams became the first woman appointed as sanitary inspector of Chicago's 19th Ward and was instrumental in reducing disease and death in the city. She was also a charter member of the American Sociological Society and lectured widely about women's rights.

In 1931 Addams became the first woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. On December 10, 2007, Illinois celebrated the first Jane Addams Day. A Jane Addams Memorial Park was also established near the Navy Pier in Chicago. She was inducted into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame in 2008.

Her close companion was Mary Rozet Smith.



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# MIRIAM BEN-SHALOM

b. May 3, 1948

## SOLDIER

*“A reporter asked me how it felt to be a gay person in the military, and I couldn’t see any reason to lie.”*

**In 1993 she chained herself to the White House fence to protest “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT).**

Miriam Ben-Shalom is the first openly lesbian service member to be reinstated by the U.S. Army after she was discharged in 1976 for being gay.

Ben-Shalom took the Army to court over the matter. In 1980 a judge with the U.S. District Court in Chicago ruled that her dismissal violated the First, Fifth and Ninth Amendments of the Constitution. The Army refused to honor the ruling, resulting in a seven-year court battle that ultimately forced her reinstatement. The former staff sergeant—one of only two female drill sergeants in the 84th Division of the U.S. Army Reserve—then returned to service until 1990.

Ben-Shalom was one of six openly LGBT veterans who cofounded the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Veterans of America (GLBVA), known today as the American Veterans for Equal Rights. She spent many years advocating against the military’s LGBT ban. In 1993 she chained herself to the White House fence to protest “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT), the military policy that required soldiers to remain closeted in order to serve. In 2010 Ben-Shalom was arrested for again chaining herself to the fence, along with fellow activist Dan Choi, to urge President Barack Obama to end DADT. The president signed the repeal of DADT later that year.

“I hope my community will take time to remember those who came before and those who fought recently and lost,” she said when the act was repealed. “Remember, too, and remain watchful. Merely because something ends does not mean it will end well. Ask any of us who helped to make history about that.”

Born in Wisconsin, Ben-Shalom also became an Israeli citizen when she was 19 and served in the Israeli Army during the War of Attrition. She is now a member of the New England Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Veterans and the California Alexander Hamilton American Legion. She lives in Milwaukee with her partner, Karen Weiss.



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# RICHARD BLANCO

b. February 15, 1968

## INAUGURAL POET

*"I don't exclusively align myself with any one particular group — Latino, Cuban, gay or 'white' — but I embrace them all."*

**He is the youngest,  
the first Latino and  
the first openly  
gay person to be  
named a U.S.  
inaugural poet.**

Richard Blanco is the youngest, the first Latino and the first openly gay person to be named a U.S. inaugural poet. He read his poem "One Today," written soon after the mass shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, at President Barack Obama's second inauguration. He describes the poem as "a unique snapshot of where we are as a country."

Blanco was born in Madrid to Cuban exiles. Shortly thereafter, the family immigrated to New York and later settled in Miami, where Blanco was raised. He graduated from Florida International University with a degree in civil engineering and worked initially as a consulting civil engineer. His creative yearnings eventually sent him back to his alma mater, where he earned an MFA in creative writing.

His first book of poetry, "City of a Hundred Fires," published in 1998, won the Agnes Lynch Starrett Poetry Prize from the University of Pittsburgh. After the book's success, Blanco accepted a creative writing professorship at Central Connecticut State University. Subsequently, he taught at Georgetown University, American University and at the Writer's Center.

Blanco's poetry explores his cultural heritage and sexuality, most notably in "Looking for the Gulf Motel," published in 2012. "It's trying to understand how I fit between negotiating the world, between being mainstream gay and being Cuban gay," he says.

His work has been published in The Nation, Ploughshares, New England Review, Americas Review and many other poetry journals and publications. He received the PEN Open Book Award for "Directions to the Beach of the Dead" in 2006 and the Thom Gunn Award for Gay Poetry for "Looking for the Gulf Motel" in 2013. He wrote and read the poem, "Matters of the Sea," for the reopening ceremony of the U.S. embassy in Havana, Cuba, in 2015.

Blanco has participated in many charitable causes, including Freedom to Marry and One Fund, an organization that benefits victims of the Boston Marathon bombing. He lives in Bethel, Maine, with his partner, Dr. Mark Neveu, a research scientist.



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# STACEYANN CHIN

b. December 25, 1972

## POET/PERFORMER

*"I want to erase the lines so I can be me."*

**She has earned much recognition for her poetry and performance, which she calls "activist driven."**

Staceyann Chin is a spoken-word poet and performance artist dedicated to LGBT rights. She has been out since 1998, soon after co-writing and performing in the Tony-nominated Russell Simmons "Def Poetry Jam" on Broadway. She has also appeared in one-woman Off-Broadway shows and at the famed Nuyorican Poets Café. Her work has been featured in more than 21 publications, including The New York Times and The Washington Post.

Born in Jamaica, Chin is of Chinese- and African-Jamaican descent, a subject she has written about often. She appeared on the "Oprah Winfrey Show" to discuss what it was like growing up gay in Jamaica.

The Brooklyn resident announced in 2011 that she was pregnant with her first child, the result of in vitro fertilization. She eventually wrote about her experiences as a single pregnant lesbian for The Huffington Post. She also contributes to "She Said What?"—an online show on AfterEllen—and to Centric TV's "My Two Cents."

Chin has earned much recognition for her poetry and performance, which she calls "activist driven." She won the 1998 Lambda Poetry Slam and the 1999 Chicago People of Color Poetry Slam.

In 2009 she published her autobiographical novel, "The Other Side of Paradise: A Memoir," in which she recounts being raised by a single mother and coming out in a country where she had few, if any, role models. "I am mostly proud of the path I have taken," she writes. "I am learning one never puts a turbulent childhood completely to rest."



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# JASON COLLINS

b. December 2, 1978

## BASKETBALL PLAYER

*"I want to do the right thing and not hide anymore."*

**He is the first  
openly gay athlete  
to play on  
any professional  
sports team in  
North America.**

Jason Collins is a retired professional American basketball player who played for 13 seasons with the NBA. During the 2012-13 season, Collins came out in Sports Illustrated before signing with the New Jersey Nets, making him the first openly gay athlete to play on any professional sports team in North America.

"If I had my way, someone else would have already done this," he said when he came out. "Nobody has, which is why I'm raising my hand."

During his career, Collins played for the Houston Rockets, the Memphis Grizzlies, the Minnesota Timberwolves, the Atlanta Hawks, the Boston Celtics, the Washington Wizards and the Brooklyn Nets before retiring in 2014. He wore number 98 on his jersey

in honor of Matthew Shepard, the young gay man who was murdered in 1998 in Laramie, Wyoming. Collins's jersey broke records at the NBA Store; it became a best seller with the proceeds of signed jerseys benefiting the Matthew Shepard Foundation and the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN).

In 2013 Collins was inducted into the National Gay and Lesbian Sports Hall of Fame. The following year, he was featured on the cover of Time magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the World.

Collins was born in California. He has a twin brother who is also an athlete.



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# LAVERNE COX

b. May 29, 1984

## TRANSGENDER ACTRESS

*"It is revolutionary for any trans person to choose to be seen and visible in a world that tells us we should not exist."*

**Time magazine  
included her on its  
2015 list of the  
100 Most Influential  
People in the World.**

Laverne Cox is an American actress, producer and LGBT advocate best known for her role as a transgender prison inmate in the Netflix series "Orange Is the New Black." She is the first openly transgender person to be nominated for an Emmy Award for acting and the first to appear on the cover of Time magazine.

Cox was born a twin in Mobile, Alabama. She was "majorly bullied" as a child for being feminine. Cox begged for dance lessons, which she began in third grade. She went on to earn a BFA in dance from Marymount Manhattan College, where her twin brother, musician M Lamar, pursued visual art. He has also appeared in "Orange Is the New Black," playing the role of Cox's character before she transitioned.

Cox is the first trans woman of color to produce and star in her own TV show, the makeover series "TRANSform Me." She has appeared on VH1's "Want to Work for Diddy" and on

programs such as "Law & Order: SVU" and "Bored to Death." She plays a supporting role in the 2015 film "Grandma," starring Lily Tomlin.

Cox has earned numerous awards and honors for her work as well as her activism, including the 2013 Courage Award from the Anti-Violence Project. In 2014—the year her hour-long documentary, "Laverne Cox Presents: The T Word," aired simultaneously on MTV and Logo—she received a GLAAD Media Award. She was also named Glamour's Woman of the Year and included on the EBONY Power 100 List.

In 2015 Cox was named to the OUT Power 50 List and as one of People magazine's Most Beautiful Women. Time magazine included her on its 2015 list of the 100 Most Influential People in the World.



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# CLIVE DAVIS

b. April 4, 1932

## RECORD PRODUCER

*“To call me anything other than bisexual would be inaccurate.”*

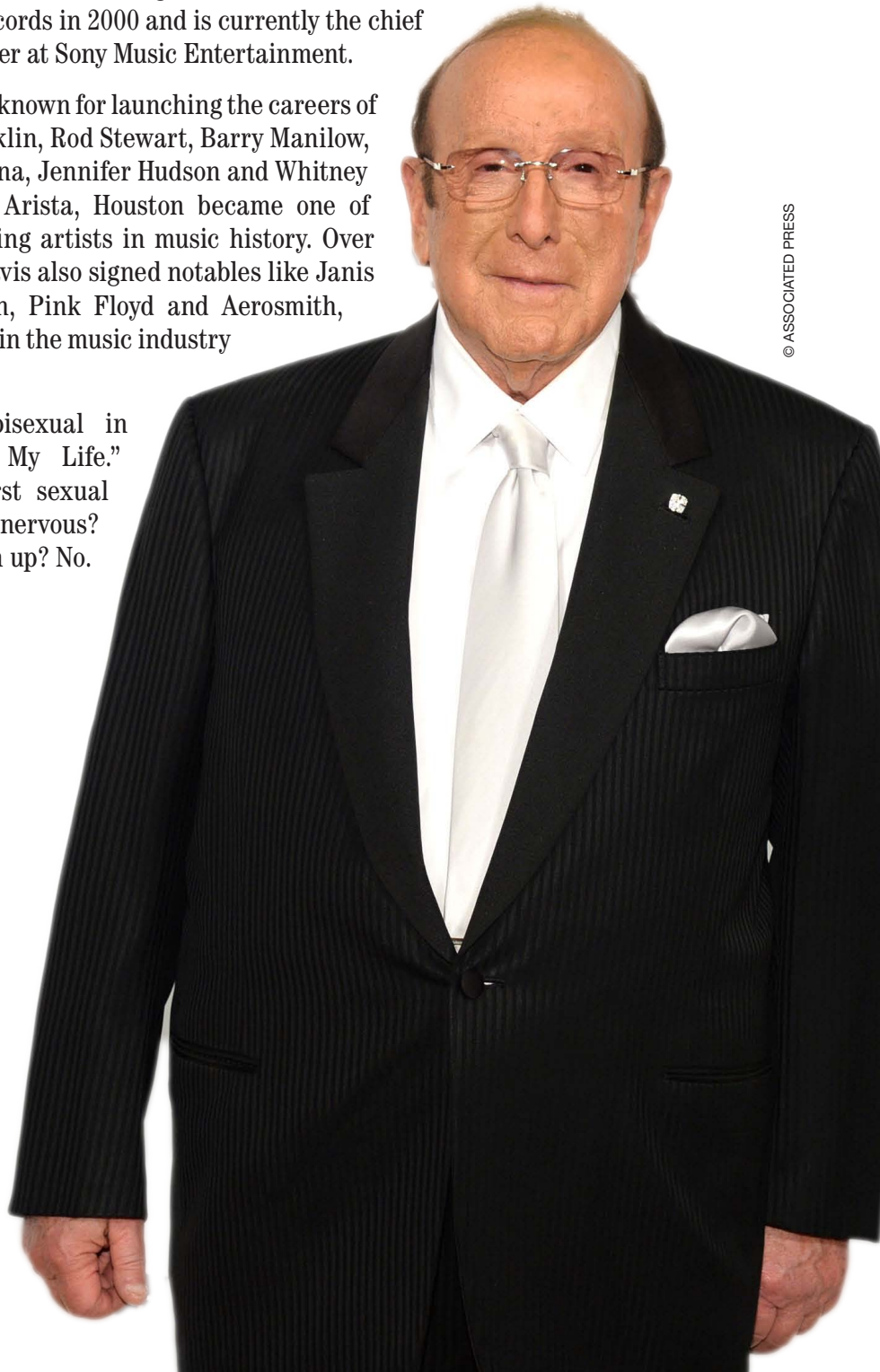
**He is best known for launching the careers of artists like Aretha Franklin, Rod Stewart and Whitney Houston.**

Clive Davis is a record producer who has won five Grammy Awards and is a member of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. He was the president of Columbia Records from 1967 to 1973 before founding Arista Records in 1975. He created J Records in 2000 and is currently the chief creative officer at Sony Music Entertainment.

Davis is best known for launching the careers of Aretha Franklin, Rod Stewart, Barry Manilow, Carlos Santana, Jennifer Hudson and Whitney Houston. At Arista, Houston became one of the best-selling artists in music history. Over the years, Davis also signed notables like Janis

Joplin, Dionne Warwick, Bruce Springsteen, Pink Floyd and Aerosmith, helping to establish rock, pop and folk trends in the music industry for decades.

In 2013 Davis publicly came out as bisexual in his autobiography, “The Soundtrack of My Life.” In the book, he admits to having his first sexual experience with a man in the 1970s. “Was I nervous? Absolutely,” he writes. “Did the heavens open up? No. But it was satisfying.”



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# SAMUEL DELANY

b. April 1, 1942

**AUTHOR**

*“Science fiction isn’t just thinking about the world out there. It’s also thinking about how that world might be.”*

**In 2013 the  
Science Fiction  
Writers of America  
named him its 30th  
Grand Master.**

Samuel “Chip” Delany is a renowned author, literary critic and professor, best known for his science fiction writing. First published at age 20, he has written more than two dozen books. His most celebrated novels include “Babel-17,” “Nova,” “Return to Neveryon,” and “Dhalgren,” which sold more than a million copies.

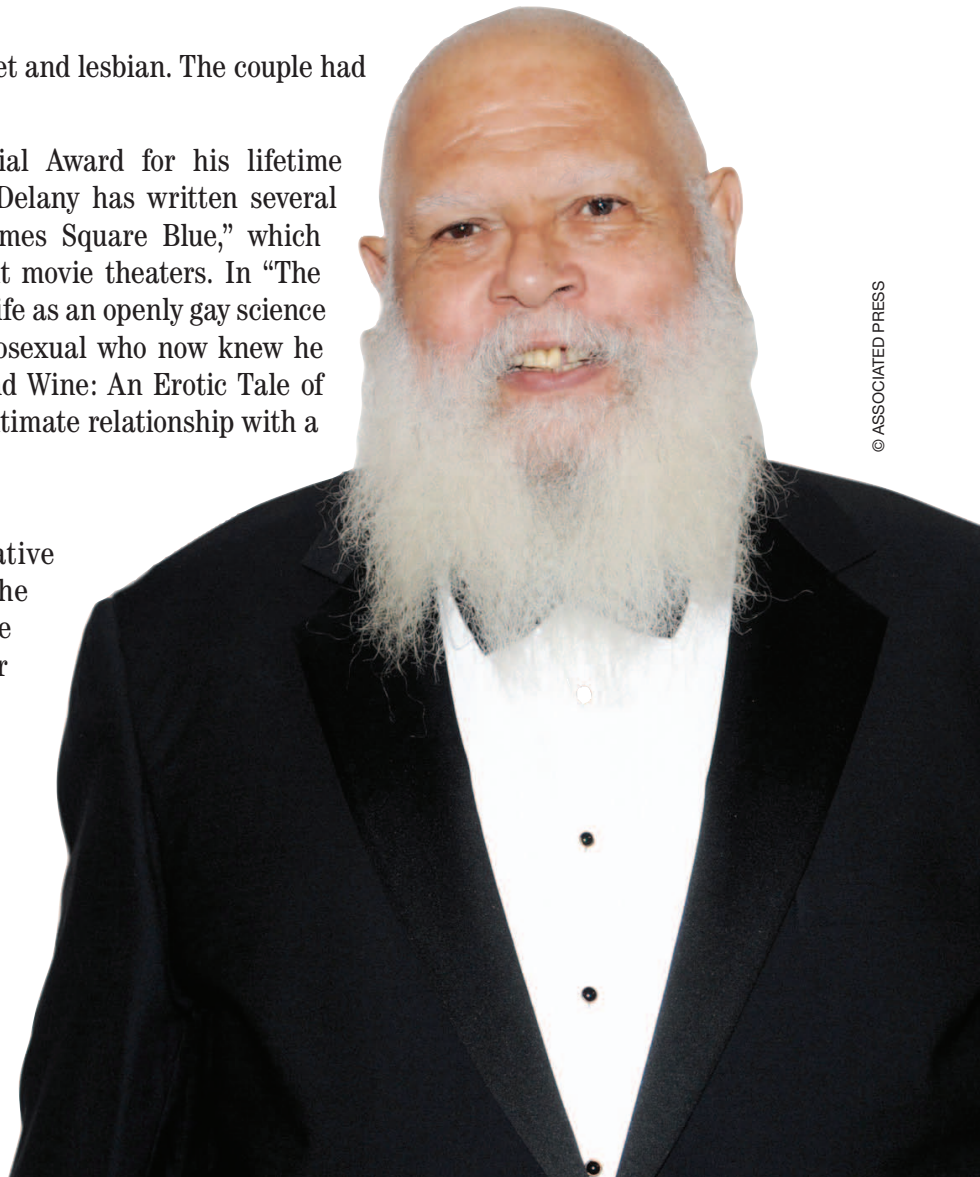
Delany has won four Nebula Awards, two Hugo Awards and a Stonewall Book Award. Among many other honors, he was inducted into the Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame, and in 2013 the Science Fiction Writers of America named him its 30th Grand Master.

Delany was born and raised in Harlem. His aunts, Sadie and Bessie Delany, were civil rights pioneers who inspired characters in his collection of semiautobiographical novellas, “Atlantis: Three Tales.” Henry Beard Delany, his grandfather, was the first black bishop of the Episcopal Church.

In 1961 Delany married Marilyn Hacker, a poet and lesbian. The couple had a daughter before separating in 1975.

Winner of the William Whitehead Memorial Award for his lifetime contribution to gay and lesbian literature, Delany has written several memoirs, including “Times Square Red, Times Square Blue,” which examines the subculture of New York’s adult movie theaters. In “The Motion of Light and Water,” he describes his life as an openly gay science fiction writer; in it he writes, “I was a homosexual who now knew he could function heterosexually.” In “Bread and Wine: An Erotic Tale of New York City,” he famously documents his intimate relationship with a homeless book vendor.

Though he does not have a college degree, Delany was a professor of English and creative writing at Temple University for 14 years; he retired in 2015. He taught previously at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst for more than a decade.



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# ELSIE DE WOLFE

b. December 20, 1865

d. July 2, 1950

## INTERIOR DESIGNER

*"I opened the doors and windows of America,  
and let in the air and sunshine."*

**Her clients included  
Amy Vanderbilt, Cole  
Porter and  
the Duke and  
Duchess of Windsor.**

Elsie de Wolfe, later known as Lady Mendl, introduced the world to the art of interior design. She saw the home as a medium for self-expression.

The native New Yorker began her career as an actress before becoming a prominent figure in London and Parisian high society. After a decade in the theater, she shifted her creative energies to decorating. She started a business in 1905 and quickly landed her first big job: New York's Colony Club, an exclusive new club for women.

As an interior designer, de Wolfe's clients included Amy Vanderbilt, Cole Porter and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. She helped set the style for the world's elite, introducing

a light color scheme and chintz fabrics at a time when dark wood and heavy Victorian curtains were in vogue. She also helped popularize animal prints, faux finishes and chaise longues. In her autobiography, "After All," she called herself a "rebel in an ugly world," saying, "I opened the doors and windows of America, and let in the air and sunshine."

De Wolfe regularly wrote for popular magazines of the day, such as *Good Housekeeping* and *The Delineator*. Her articles were assembled into an influential book, "The House in Good Taste" (1913), which became a best seller.

During World War I, she volunteered as a nurse in France and was awarded the Croix de Guerre for her heroism.

In 1926 at the age of 61, de Wolfe surprised many when she married Sir Charles Mendl, a British diplomat in Paris. Since 1892 de Wolfe had been living openly in a lesbian relationship with Elisabeth Marbury—a successful theatrical and literary agent, who became one of the first female Broadway producers. The women remained together until Marbury's death in 1933.



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# ARTHUR DONG

b. October 30, 1953

## FILMMAKER

*“If I can encourage adjustments or a wider sphere of thoughts or questioning, then I will feel that I’ve done something.”*

**“Stories from the War on Homosexuality” (2005), Dong’s first DVD collection, features a trilogy of films focused on gay issues.**

Arthur Dong is an Academy Award-nominated documentary filmmaker best known for chronicling Asian-American history and LGBT life. He earned an Oscar nomination in 1984 for “Sewing Woman,” about his mother’s immigration to America from China, which he produced as film student at San Francisco State University. As a result of the film’s success, he founded DeepFocus Productions to produce, direct and write projects close to his heart.

“Stories from the War on Homosexuality” (2005), Dong’s first DVD collection, features a trilogy of films focused on gay issues, including “Coming Out Under Fire” (1994), his Peabody Award-winning documentary about policies impacting gay and lesbian service members; “Licensed to Kill” (1997), a study of convicted murderers of gay men; and “Family Fundamentals” (2002), a look at conservative Christian families with gay children.

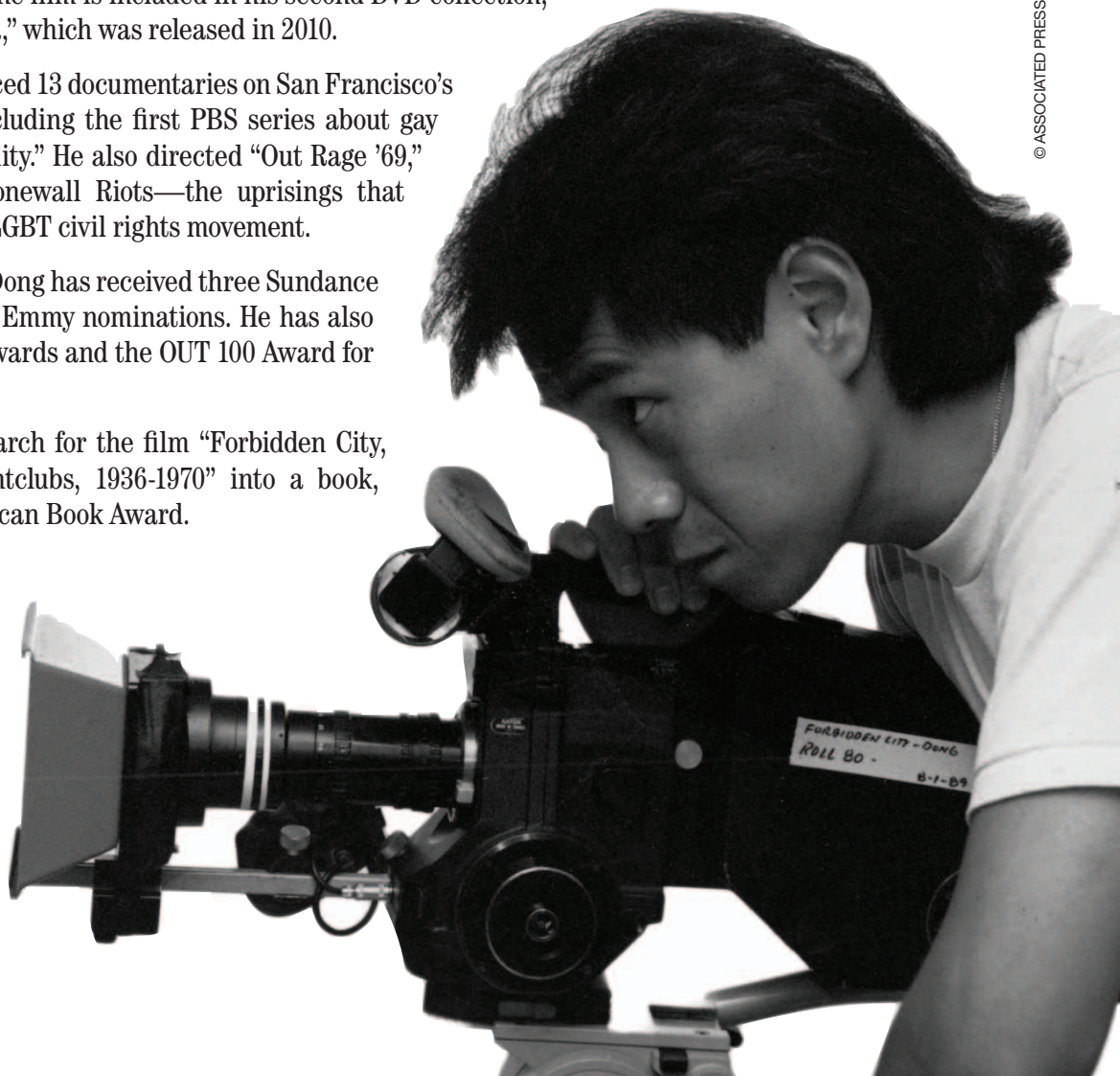
Dong’s 2007 documentary “Hollywood Chinese” was featured on the PBS series “American Masters” in 2009. The film is included in his second DVD collection, “Stories from Chinese America,” which was released in 2010.

In the early 1990s, Dong produced 13 documentaries on San Francisco’s KCET-TV’s “Life & Times,” including the first PBS series about gay issues: “The Question of Equality.” He also directed “Out Rage ’69,” about New York’s famous Stonewall Riots—the uprisings that helped galvanize the modern LGBT civil rights movement.

Along with other recognition, Dong has received three Sundance Film Festival Awards and five Emmy nominations. He has also received two GLAAD Media Awards and the OUT 100 Award for his work on “Licensed to Kill.”

In 2014 Dong turned his research for the film “Forbidden City, USA: Chinese American Nightclubs, 1936-1970” into a book, which received the 2015 American Book Award.

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# EMERY HETRICK & DAMIEN MARTIN

Emery Hetrick b. 1931 d. 1987

Damien Martin b. 1933 d. 1991

## EDUCATORS

*“Blacks, Jews, and Hispanics are not thrown out of their families or religion at adolescence. ... Gay and lesbian kids are.” – Damien Martin*

**They founded the Hetrick-Martin Institute, a nonprofit organization in New York, originally named the Institute for the Protection of Lesbian and Gay Youth.**

In 1979 Dr. Emery Hetrick and Dr. Damien Martin founded the Hetrick-Martin Institute, a nonprofit organization in New York, originally named the Institute for the Protection of Lesbian and Gay Youth. The doctors created the institute to advocate for at-risk youth aged 13 to 21. The idea came after hearing about a 15-year-old boy who had been beaten and thrown out of an emergency shelter because he was gay.

In 1985 the institute established the Harvey Milk High School in cooperation with the New York City Department of Education. Named for the slain gay San Francisco city councilman, the school provides an alternative public education for LGBT youth. It is the largest school of its kind in the world. Programs include job training, HIV education and internships. Martin said the school was founded “for gay youths, partly because violence inflicted on young homosexuals made it impossible for some to stay in other schools.”

Hetrick and Martin helped establish a network of social service agencies serving New York’s LGBT community. Hetrick, an Ohio native, was a former medical director at the drug company Pfizer and a psychiatric specialist who worked at both Harlem Hospital Center and the Gouverneur Diagnostic and Treatment Center.

Martin, a native Philadelphian, was active in many gay rights organizations, including the Governor’s Task Force on Teen Suicide and the Child Welfare League of America’s Task Force on AIDS. He taught speech pathology at New York University.

Both men, life partners, died of AIDS-related complications.



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# MICK JAGGER

b. July 26, 1943

## ROCK STAR

*"I wasn't trying to be rebellious ... I was just being me."*

**He is credited  
with opening up  
"definitions of  
gendered  
masculinity."**

Mick Jagger is the lead singer of the Rolling Stones, a British rock band whose popularity has spanned more than 50 years. As one of the most influential and charismatic front men in history, Jagger has received many awards and accolades. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1989 and was knighted in 2003. Rolling Stone magazine names him among the top 20 on its List of 100 Greatest Singers.

Immersed in the counterculture of the 1960s, Jagger and his bandmates became famous after releasing a string of successful albums and making TV and live concert appearances around the world. They collaborated with fellow superstars throughout the '70s and '80s, rubbing elbows with the famous and infamous, including Andy Warhol, the gay pop artist who created a portrait series of Jagger.

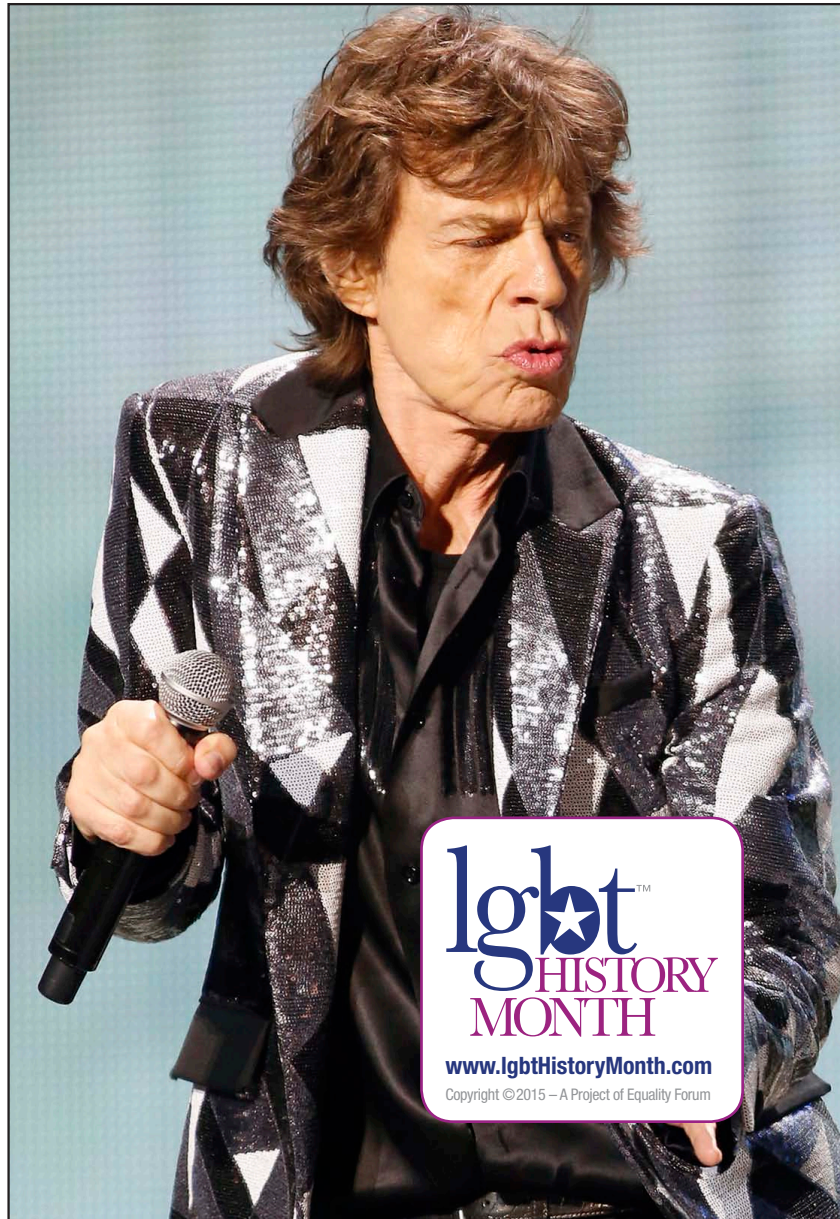
During the 1970s, Jagger adopted a gender-nonconforming stage persona, experimenting with makeup and glam-rock fashion. He became a fixture at New York's famed Studio 54, often seen with gay icons like writer Truman Capote, fashion designer Halston and dancer Rudolf Nureyev. Jagger is credited with opening up "definitions of gendered masculinity."

In 1985 Jagger performed at Live Aid in Philadelphia, where he covered "Dancing in the Street" with David Bowie, another gender-nonconforming rock star with whom he has been romantically linked.

Jagger also launched a successful solo career and acted in several movies, most notably the 1970 British crime drama "Performance," in which he plays a bisexual.

Jagger and the Rolling Stones have been the subject of many documentaries, including "Gimme Shelter," filmed during the band's 1969 U.S. tour, during which several people died; "Sympathy for the Devil" by Jean-Luc-Goddard; and "Shine a Light" by Martin Scorsese.

Jagger has been married twice and is the father of seven children. He has been involved with other women and men over the years.



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# ANGELINA JOLIE

b. June 4, 1975

## ACTRESS

*"I always play women I would date."*

**She has served as a UNHCR goodwill ambassador for over a decade and was promoted to the rank of special envoy in 2012.**

Angelina Jolie is an Academy award-winning actress whose films include "Girl, Interrupted," "Changeling" and "Maleficent." She is among the highest-paid actresses in Hollywood, having cemented her international success portraying such diverse characters as a video game heroine in the "Lara Croft: Tomb Raider" franchise and an HIV-positive supermodel in "Gia." She made her directorial debut with the "Land of Blood and Honey," a drama set during the Bosnian war. She also wrote and produced the film.

Jolie's role in the 2003 film "Beyond Borders," reflects her personal interest in humanitarian work. She made the largest-ever private donation to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 2001. She has since spent her own money and time visiting war-torn communities and bringing attention to international trouble spots.

Jolie has served as a UNHCR goodwill ambassador for over a decade and was promoted to the rank of special envoy in 2012. She has been involved in dozens of field missions around the world, meeting with refugees and advocating on their behalf.

Jolie also lobbies against violence and poverty under the Jolie-Pitt Foundation, an umbrella organization she and her husband, Brad Pitt, founded in 2006. In 2003 she became the first person to be honored with the Citizen of the World Award from the United Nations Correspondents Association.

In 1996 Jolie had a relationship with the lesbian model and actress Jenny Shimizu on the set of "Foxfire." Jolie said, "I would probably have married Jenny if I hadn't married my husband."

In 2003, when Jolie was asked if she was bisexual, she responded, "Of course. If I fell in love with a woman tomorrow, would I feel that it's okay to want to kiss and touch her? If I fell in love with her? Absolutely! Yes!"

Jolie and Pitt have six children.



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# WILLIAM RUFUS KING

b. April 7, 1796

d. April 18, 1853

## U.S. VICE PRESIDENT

*“The law established by the Creator, which has existed from the beginning, extends over the whole globe.”*

**For most of his adult life, he enjoyed a close relationship with James Buchanan, the 15th president of the United States.**

William Rufus King was the 13th vice president of the United States for six weeks before he died of tuberculosis, making him the shortest-serving vice president in American history. He was the third vice president to die in office.

King served in the U.S. Congress for nearly 30 years. He was elected a U.S. representative from North Carolina and a senator from Alabama. He won a record-breaking 11 elections to the position of president pro tempore of the Senate. He also served as minister to France.

A Democrat, King was a Unionist with moderate views on slavery and westward expansion. He helped draft the Compromise of 1850, a series of bills that attempted to diffuse tensions between the North and the South.

A native of North Carolina, King purchased property along the Alabama River. At what came to be known as “King’s Bend,” he operated one of the largest plantations in the state. He and others founded the nearby town of Selma, which King named after a site in a classical legend.

For most of his adult life, King enjoyed a close relationship with James Buchanan, the 15th president of the United States. For 10 years, he and Buchanan (neither of whom ever married) shared a home in Washington, D.C. Nicknamed the “Siamese twins,” they regularly attended social functions together. Andrew Jackson referred to them as “Miss Nancy” and “Miss Fancy.”

In January 1853, vice-president-elect King became gravely ill. He left for Cuba, hoping to regain his health in a warmer climate. When he was unable to return to Washington in time for the inauguration, he took the oath of office in a town near Havana. It is the only time in the nation’s history that an executive official has been sworn in on foreign soil.

King is interred in a mausoleum in Selma. The U.S. Senate displays a bust of him in its collection.



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# JACKIE “MOMS” MABLEY

b. March 19, 1894

d. May 23, 1975

## COMEDIAN

*“The good old days. I was there. Where was they?”*

**She was the first comedian to incorporate lesbian stand-up routines into her act.**

Born Loretta Mary Aiken, Jackie “Moms” Mabley was one of the first, most successful women to work in comedy. Mabley appeared on popular television variety shows like “The Ed Sullivan Show” and “The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour.” A veteran of the African-American vaudeville tradition known as the Chitlin’ Circuit, the comedian overcame a tragic childhood (her parents were killed and she was raped) to become one of the raunchiest, most beloved comedians of her generation.

Known for wearing androgynous clothing, and later her signature housedress and floppy hat, she was the first comedian to incorporate lesbian stand-up routines into her act. She recorded more than 20 comedy albums and appeared in several films, TV shows and in clubs around the country. At one point, Mabley was the highest-paid comedian of

the time, earning more than \$10,000 a week at the famed Apollo Theater in Harlem. She regularly tackled controversial material often deemed too edgy for many mainstream audiences. She helped break down color and gender barriers for the next generation of comedians.

When Mabley was 75 years old, she became the oldest living person ever to have a Top 40 hit in the United States with her cover of “Abraham, Martin and John.”

Mabley was the mother of six children, two of whom she gave up for adoption when she was still a teenager. She is the subject of the Emmy-nominated HBO documentary “Whoopi Goldberg Presents Moms Mabley,” which explores her life, comedy and sexuality.



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# EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY

b. February 22, 1892

d. October 19, 1950

POET

*"I am glad I paid so little attention to good advice; had I abided by it I might have been saved from some of my most valuable mistakes."*

**She was a Pulitzer Prize-winning poet known for her feminism and social activism.**

Edna St. Vincent Millay was a Pulitzer Prize-winning poet known for her feminism and social activism. From an early age, she spoke out against injustices against women, often rebelling against authority at home and at school. She published her first poems when she was 15. By the time she enrolled in Vassar College, which was then exclusively female, she was having affairs with her classmates. Her poem "The Lamp and the Bell" is about the love shared between women.

Millay eventually moved to New York City where she immersed herself in the bohemian culture of Greenwich Village. She worked with the famed Provincetown Players, a theater group founded by Eugene O'Neill. She later helped launch the Cherry Lane

Theater for experimental drama. During her years in New York City, she lived an openly bisexual life and counted among her friends the writers Edmund Wilson and Susan Glaspell.

Millay is most famous for her poem "Renascence" and her 1920 collection, "A Few Figs From Thistles," which explored themes of female sexuality. She won the Pulitzer Prize for "The Ballad of the Harp-Weaver" in 1923, becoming only the third woman ever to win the poetry prize at the time. She was also the sixth person (and second woman) to win the Frost Medal for her contribution to American poetry.

The writer Thomas Hardy said that America had two great attractions: the skyscraper and the poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay. Today, her former residence in upstate New York is a museum dedicated to honoring her legacy in poetry and social activism.



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# FRANK MUGISHA

b. June 17, 1979

## UGANDAN ACTIVIST

*"I am a gay man. I am also Ugandan.  
There is nothing un-African about me."*

**He is one of the most famous advocates for LGBT rights in Uganda, where being gay is a criminal offense.**

Dr. Frank Mugisha is one of the most famous and outspoken advocates for LGBT rights in Uganda, a country where being gay is a criminal offense. He is the executive director of Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) and advocates on behalf of LGBT Ugandans who face prison or even death for being openly gay. He has received both the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award and the Thorolf Rafto Memorial Prize for his work.

When Mugisha was 14, he came out to his strict Catholic family. Many family members and friends disowned him. The rejection later inspired him to create Icebreakers Uganda, a group to help other young people with the coming-out process.

In 2014 he came out publicly about Uganda's anti-homosexuality law, which not only outlawed homosexual acts and compelled citizens to report suspected homosexual activity, but also mandated life imprisonment for LGBT citizens. "I want my fellow Ugandans to understand that homosexuality is not a Western import," Mugisha said, "and our friends in the developed world to recognize that the current trend of homophobia is."

Mugisha was also a plaintiff in a lawsuit against American evangelist Scott Lively for his work on Uganda's anti-homosexuality bill. Mugisha has received death threats for his ongoing advocacy, but he has said, "For me, it is about standing out and speaking in an environment where you are not sure if you will survive the next day; it is this fear that makes me strong, to work hard and fight on to see a better life for LGBTI persons in Uganda."



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# JACK NICHOLS

b. March 16, 1938

d. May 2, 2005

## GAY PIONEER

*“Every person I work with knows something better than me.  
My job is to listen long enough to find it and use it.”*

**In 1967 he became one of  
the first Americans to speak  
openly about being gay  
in the documentary “CBS  
Reports: The Homosexuals.”**

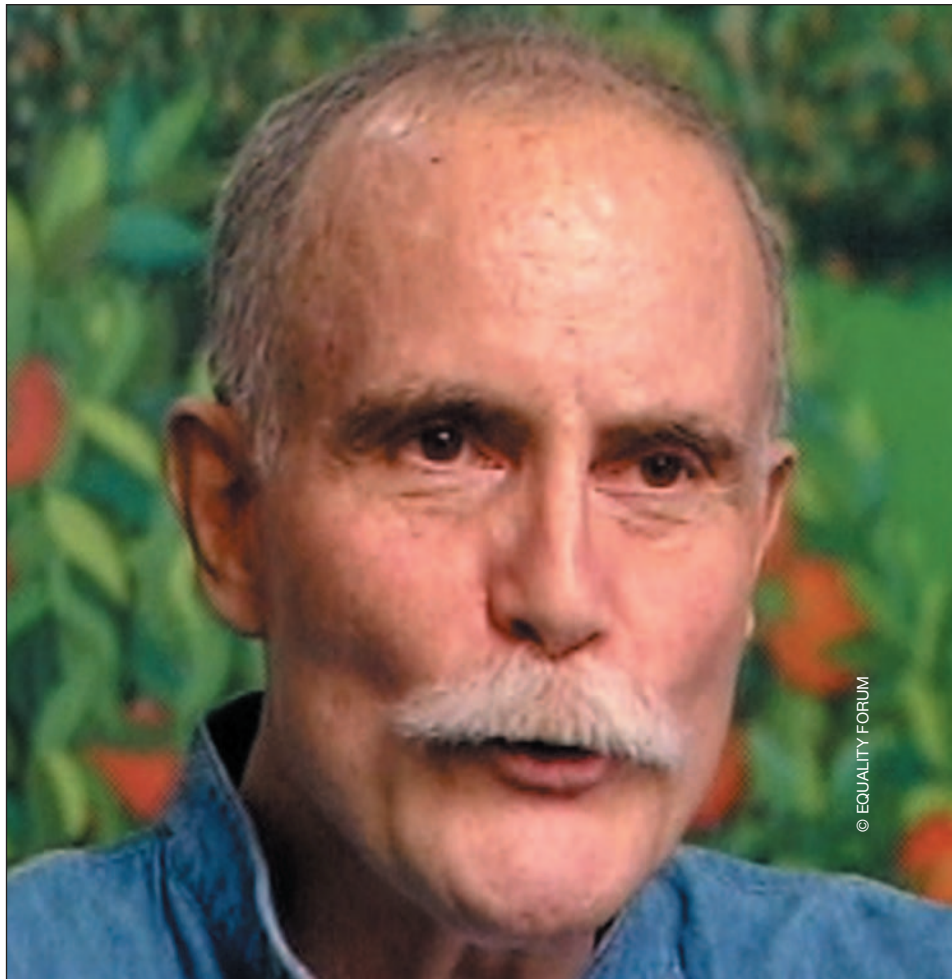
In 1961, along with Frank Kameny, Jack Nichols cofounded the Mattachine Society of Washington, D.C., the the first gay civil rights organization in the nation’s capital. Four years later, Nichols and other members of the organization conducted the first gay rights protest at the White House.

Nichols also participated in the Annual Reminders—pickets held in front of Independence Hall each Fourth of July from 1965 to 1969. The Annual Reminders helped galvanize the organized LGBT civil rights movement, paving the way for the Stonewall Riots in 1969.

Nichols joined Frank Kameny, Barbara Gittings and other activists in a multi-year battle with the American Psychiatric Association (APA) to remove homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses. The APA eventually conceded, after failing to produce scientific evidence to support the classification.

In 1967 Nichols became one of the first Americans to speak openly about being gay in the documentary “CBS Reports: The Homosexuals.” Though he appeared on screen, he said he was forced to use a pseudonym after his father, an FBI agent, threatened him, fearing the U.S. government might discover his son was gay.

Nichols, along with his partner Lige Clarke, wrote the first LGBT interest column, “The Homosexual Citizen,” in a mainstream publication in 1969. The famous couple would later launch GAY, the first weekly gay newspaper in New York City. The publication flourished until Clarke was murdered in Mexico in 1975. Nichols later became an editor for the San Francisco Sentinel and GayToday.com.



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# ELAINE NOBLE

b. January 22, 1944

## POLITICIAN

*“I was elected in spite of being gay.”*

**She was the first-ever openly gay candidate elected to a state office.**

Elaine Noble served in the Massachusetts House of Representatives for two terms starting in 1975, becoming the first-ever openly gay candidate elected to a state office. Noble says that during her controversial, groundbreaking campaign, her windows were shot out, her car was vandalized, and she and her staff suffered ongoing harassment. She still managed to win the election.

“I was elected in an largely Irish Catholic town,” she later said. “There was a level of animosity in all strata of society against homosexuality.” Noble’s victory came three years before Harvey Milk, the gay San Francisco supervisor, was shot to death.

In 1977 Noble was among the first delegation of gays and lesbians invited to the White House by President Jimmy Carter. She helped form the Massachusetts Women’s Political Caucus with Ann Lewis, the sister of former U.S. Congressman Barney Frank. Frank was not out about his sexuality at the time.

Noble ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. Senate and went on to work for Boston Mayor Kevin White. At the time, she was romantically involved with the writer Rita Mae Brown.

In 1986 Noble helped create the Pride Institute, an LGBT alcohol and drug treatment center in Minneapolis. She eventually moved to Florida to teach and sell real estate. She also became involved in the local Democratic Party. In 2009 she helped raise money to build the Palm Beach LGBT Center.



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# ANTONIA PANTOJA

b. September 13, 1922

d. May 24, 2002

## EDUCATOR AND ACTIVIST

*“Somehow I learned that I belonged with my people and that I had a responsibility to contribute to them.”*

**She worked tirelessly to reform the education system in New York City, making it more accessible to immigrants.**

Dr. Antonia Pantoja was an educator and activist dedicated to the improvement of Latino communities through education. Born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Pantoja spent much of her life living and working in New York City. In 1957, after receiving her master's degree from Columbia University, she founded the Puerto Rican Forum (originally called the Hispanic American Youth Association, or HAYA), which helped promote economic equality.

A few years later, Pantoja founded ASPIRA to promote education in the Hispanic community. The organization now operates in eight states and Puerto Rico and serves more than 85,000 students a year. In 1972 ASPIRA filed a successful federal lawsuit demanding that New York City teach transitional Spanish to struggling Latino students. The case represents a landmark in bilingual education in the United States.

During her career as an educator, Pantoja worked tirelessly to reform the education system in New York City, making it more accessible to immigrants. By 1970 she established Universidad Boricua, now known as Boricua College, with three campuses in New York City. She also helped to create the Graduate School of Community Development at San

Diego University. She received the Hispanic Heritage Award from the Hispanic Heritage Foundation and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the New York State Board of Regents.

When President Bill Clinton presented Pantoja with the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1996, she became the first Puerto Rican woman to receive the honor.

In 2002 she came out publicly in her autobiography, “Memoir of a Visionary: Antonia Pantoja.” She died the same year and is survived by her her longtime partner, Dr. Wilhelmina Perry.

In 2012 Pantoja was inducted into the Legacy Walk, a public display in Chicago that honors LGBT people. She is the subject of “Antonia Pantoja: ¡Presente!,” a documentary film produced and directed by Lillian Jiménez.

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# FRANCES PERKINS

b. April 10, 1880

d. May 14, 1965

## U.S. CABINET MEMBER

*“Feminism means revolution and I am a revolutionist.”*

**She established the blueprint for the Social Security Act—considered her greatest accomplishment.**

Frances Perkins was the first woman appointed to the U.S. cabinet, serving as U.S. secretary of labor under Franklin D. Roosevelt from 1933 to 1945—longer than anyone else who held the post.

As the principal architect of FDR’s New Deal, Perkins helped write and lobby for legislation in response to the Great Depression. Her myriad achievements include establishing pensions, unemployment and workers’ compensation, a minimum wage and overtime, the 40-hour workweek, child labor laws, new jobs through public works programs, and the blueprint for the Social Security Act—considered her greatest accomplishment.

During Hitler’s rise to power, Perkins facilitated the entry of tens of thousands of immigrants to the United States, two thirds of whom were European Jews fleeing the Nazis.

Perkins studied economics at The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and earned a master’s degree from

Columbia University. She dedicated her life’s work to reforming labor laws, after witnessing the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in New York City—one of the deadliest industrial disasters in U.S. history.

Perkins married Paul C. Wilson in 1913. She had a long, romantic relationship with Mary Harriman Rumsey, founder of The Junior League. The women, both friends of Eleanor Roosevelt, lived together in Washington, D.C., until Rumsey’s death.

In 1945 President Harry Truman appointed Perkins to the U.S. Civil Service Commission, where she served until 1952. She wrote a best-selling biography of FDR, “The Roosevelt I Knew,” published in 1946. She taught and lectured until the end of her life.

In 1980 the U.S. Department of Labor named its headquarters building after her. In 2009 the Frances Perkins Center was established in Maine (her family home) to preserve and promote her work. Her undergraduate alma mater, Mount Holyoke College, offers a scholarship in her memory.



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# ROBIN ROBERTS

b. November 23, 1960

## TV BROADCASTER

*“It’s about focusing on the fight and not the fright.”*

**She became an outspoken advocate for cancer research, after being diagnosed twice with the disease.**

Robin Roberts is an award-winning broadcast journalist and co-anchor of ABC News’ “Good Morning America.” She became an outspoken advocate for cancer research, after being diagnosed twice with the disease. She won a 2012 Peabody Award for her reporting on the issue.

Born in Alabama, where her father was a Tuskegee Airman, Roberts was an athlete who excelled at school. She was a standout on the Southeastern Louisiana University women’s basketball team. The University retired her number in 2011, and she was inducted into the Women’s Basketball Hall of Fame in 2012.

Early in her broadcast career, Roberts predominately covered sports for Southern television affiliates and radio stations. She joined ESPN in 1990. As a sportscaster, she

became well known for her catch phrase, “Go on with your bad self.”

ABC named Roberts co-anchor of “Good Morning America” with George Stephanopoulos in 2005. The show has since earned four Emmy Awards for Outstanding Morning Program.

Roberts made headlines in 2007 after going public about her breast cancer treatment and again in 2012 when she was diagnosed with MDS, a disease formerly known as pre-leukemia.

After a bone marrow transplant from her sister, she collaborated with the Be the Match registry to publicize the need for bone marrow donors. Since then, more than 56,000 people have registered to donate bone marrow.

Her courage and advocacy have been recognized with numerous honors from organizations like The Congressional Families Cancer Prevention Program and The Susan G. Komen Foundation. She received the Arthur Ashe Courage Award at the ESPY’s in 2013. The same year, she came out as a lesbian on Facebook, saying she was grateful for her “longtime girlfriend Amber Laign.”

In 2014 Roberts received the Walter Cronkite Award for Excellence in Journalism and was inducted into the Broadcasting & Cable Hall of Fame.



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# SAHAYKWISA

b. c. 1850

d. c. 1895

## TRANSGENDER NATIVE AMERICAN

**She often told people she had been turned into a man by white man's magic.**

Sahaykwisa was a female Mohave Indian shaman (a healer with supernatural powers), who specialized in the treatment of venereal diseases. Scholars have limited information about her life. She was a gender-nonconforming lesbian, or hwame (a female who chooses to live as a male), and often told people she had been turned into a man by white man's magic. Sahaykwisa was also a hunter and an industrious farmer—jobs typically performed by men.

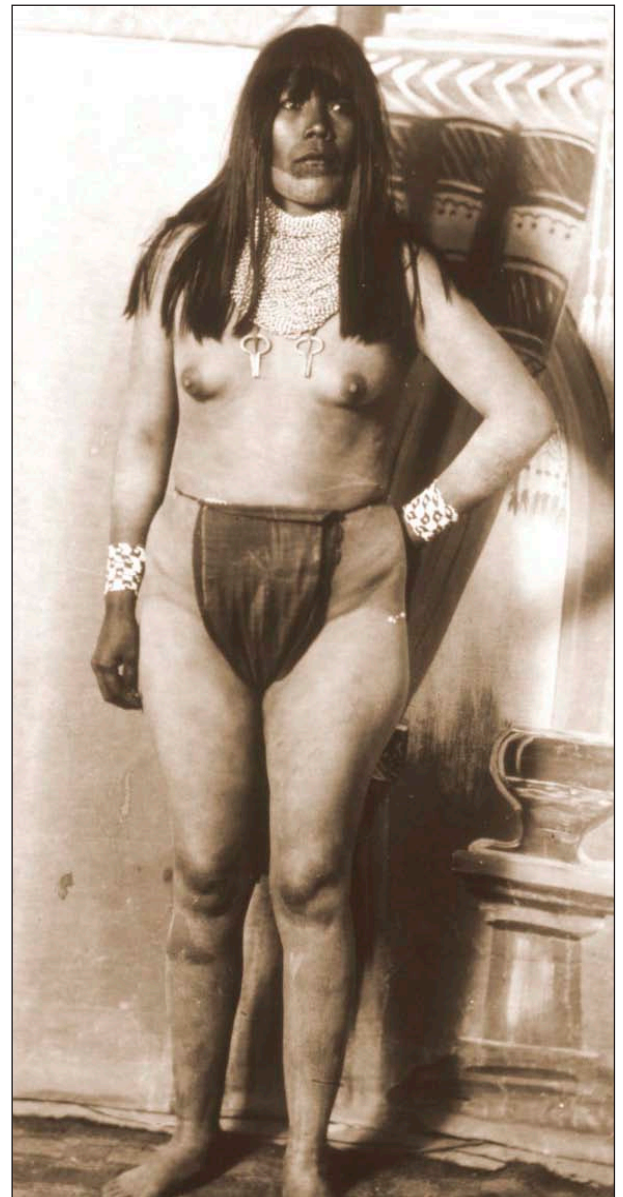
She is known to have been relatively prosperous, a good provider who romanced many wives. She also courted a married woman, which was commonplace among the

Mohave. While it seems most people accepted her sexuality, she was routinely questioned about her gender.

As rumors of her affairs circulated, Sahaykwisa faced frequent ridicule and humiliation for her masculine appearance. The women she married were often subject to mockery and rejection from men.

Sahaykwisa may have posed a threat to males in her tribe. She was the victim of a brutal rape by the former husband of one of her wives. After the episode, she is said to have carried on affairs with men and fallen into alcoholism and depression. She was eventually accused of being a witch and murdered. Accounts tell of her drowning in the Colorado River.

Her story has been used to examine the lives gays and lesbians in early America, most notably in Native American tribes where transgender and homosexual individuals were in some cases accepted. Although there are many accounts of gender-nonconforming indigenous people who lived openly and even happily, it seems Sahaykwisa suffered tragic consequences for simply being herself.



REPRESENTATIVE PHOTO OF  
A TRANSGENDER QUECHAN WOMAN

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# MICHAEL SAM

b. January 7, 1990

## FOOTBALL PLAYER

*"I'm not afraid to tell the world who I am."*

**He is the first openly gay player drafted by the NFL and signed by the CFL.**

In 2014 Michael Sam became the first openly gay player drafted by the NFL. The defensive end was drafted by the St. Louis Rams and spent time on the Dallas Cowboys practice squad. He signed with the Montreal Alouettes in 2015, but stepped away from the team just months later, citing "personal reasons."

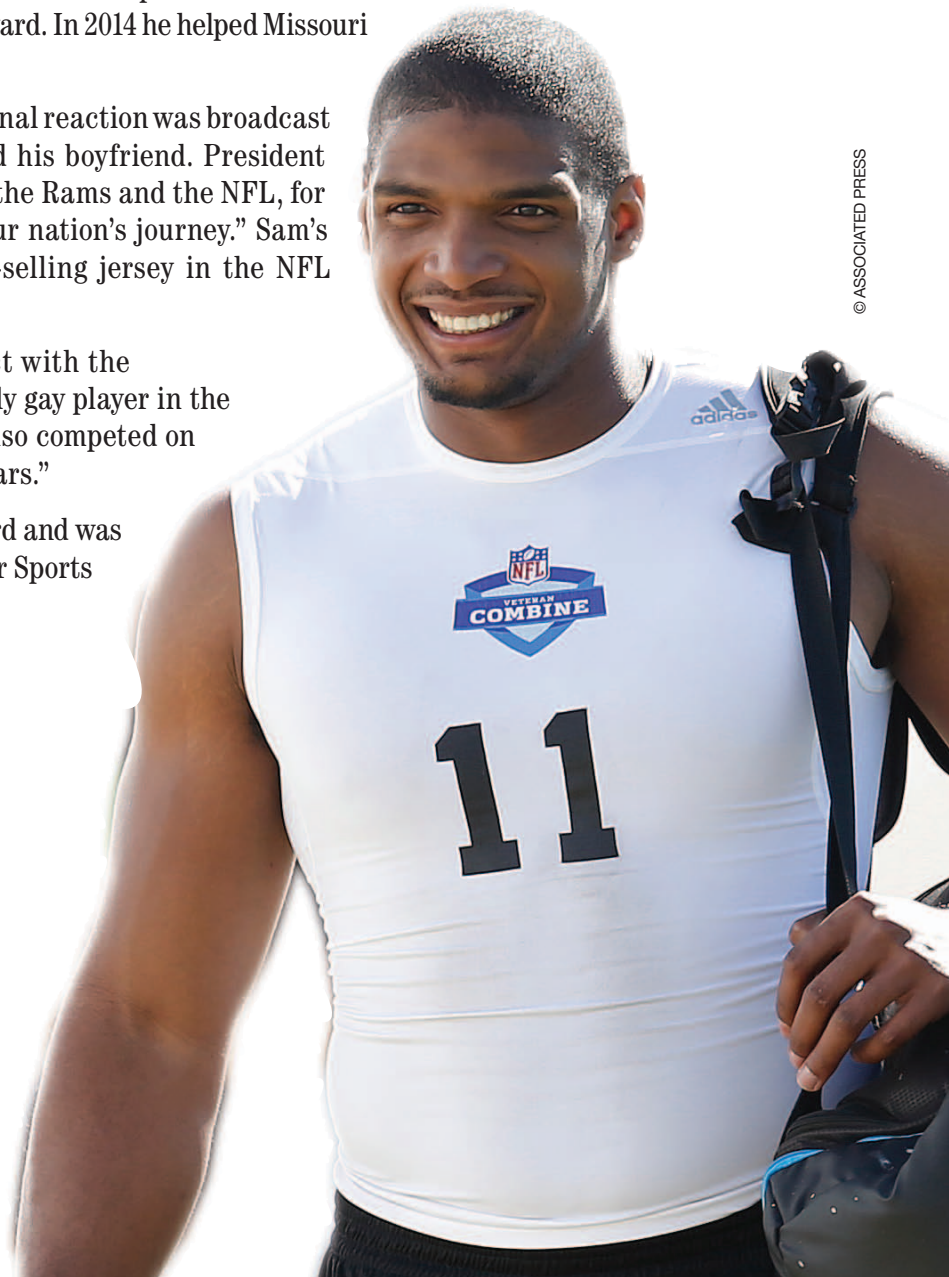
The native Texan overcame a difficult childhood, living at one point in his mother's car. Sam showed talent for football in high school, where he played both defensive and offensive tackle. He was offered several scholarships and chose to attend the University of Missouri to play for the Tigers. He is the first of his family to attend college.

Sam was named first-team All-American by the Walter Camp Football Foundation and was a semifinalist for the Chuck Bednarik Award. In 2014 he helped Missouri beat Oklahoma State in the Cotton Bowl Classic.

When Sam was drafted into the NFL, his emotional reaction was broadcast on national television, during which he kissed his boyfriend. President Barack Obama congratulated him, along with the Rams and the NFL, for "taking an important step forward today in our nation's journey." Sam's name and number 96 became the sixth-best-selling jersey in the NFL that season.

In 2015, when Sam signed a two-year contract with the Montreal Alouettes, it made him the first openly gay player in the Canadian Football League (CFL). In 2015 he also competed on the 20th season of ABC's "Dancing With the Stars."

Sam has received the Arthur Ashe Courage Award and was named GQ's Man of the Year. He was a finalist for Sports Illustrated's Sportsman of the Year.



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# BARBRA SIPERSTEIN

b. 1942

## TRANSGENDER ADVOCATE

*“If gays and lesbians are second-class citizens, what was I as a single transgender person?”*

**She is the first  
openly transgender  
at-large member  
of the Democratic  
National Committee.**

Barbra “Babs” Siperstein is the first openly transgender at-large member of the Democratic National Committee (DNC). Born Barry Siperstein, she transitioned when she was nearly 50 years old. She legally changed her name in 2007. Siperstein is currently a member of the DNC’s executive committee. She serves as deputy vice chair of the New Jersey Democratic State Committee and is the political director of the Gender Rights Advocacy Association of New Jersey.

She has been instrumental in amending the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination to protect transgender people. She also advocated for gender-identity nondiscrimination to be added to the DNC bylaws.

A U.S. Army veteran, Siperstein has spent most of her life as an advocate for equality with an unwavering dedication to transgender rights and awareness. In her home state of New Jersey, she has been involved in more than a half dozen organizations, including the New Jersey Stonewall Democrats and Garden State Equality.

She has been New Jersey’s first transgender delegate to the Democratic National Convention. She served on former Governor John Corbett’s Labor and Workforce Development Policy Group and is the co-author of The Dallas Principles, a set of eight precepts for achieving full LGBT equality.

In 2004 Siperstein received the New Jersey Personal Liberty Fund’s Honors Award. In 2011 she became the first recipient of Garden State Equality’s John Adler Icon of Equality Award. Subsequently, she was honored as a Champion of Civil Rights by the New Jersey Chapter of the New Leaders Council; she received the Stonewall Legacy Award from The Pride Network; and she was recognized with the 2015 Advocacy Humanitarian Award by the American Conference on Diversity.

Siperstein came out first to her wife, Carol. The couple remained married until Carol’s death in 2001.

With her daughter Jana, Siperstein owns and operates Siperstein Fords Paints Corp., a specialty coatings supplier and home décor retailer. She has three grandchildren.



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# DUSTY SPRINGFIELD

b. April 16, 1939

d. March 2, 1999

## SINGER

*“My sexuality has never been a problem to me, but I think it has been for other people.”*

Dusty Springfield was an English singer and record producer best known for her sultry, soulful sound. Born Mary Isobel Bernadette O'Brien in London (she got the nickname Dusty for playing football with the boys), Springfield was one of the most successful British female performers in history, with six top 20 singles in the United States and 16 in Europe. She was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the U.K. Music Hall of Fame.

In 1958 Springfield joined her first singing group, The Lana Sisters, later forming The Springfields with her brother. She first received attention for her hit “I Only Want to Be With You,” and later with a string of solo songs like “Wishin’ and Hopin’” and “Son of a Preacher Man.”

Springfield received acclaim in 1969 when she released “Dusty in Memphis,” an album that was awarded a prestigious spot in the Grammy Hall of Fame. She also became known for her blonde bouffant, heavy makeup and colorful evening gowns—a style emblematic of the Swinging Sixties.

Springfield spent many years out of the public eye, reappearing in 1987 to collaborate with the Pet Shop Boys on “What Have I Done to Deserve This,” which topped both the U.S. and U.K. music charts. By the 1990s, Springfield’s music was experiencing a renaissance, appearing on several film soundtracks, including “Pulp Fiction.”

During the late 1960s and early '70s, Springfield was romantically linked to Norma Tanega, a California-born singer-songwriter who wrote a few of Springfield’s songs such as “Go My Love.” During an interview in 1970, Springfield said, “People say that I’m gay, gay, gay, gay, gay, gay, gay, gay. I’m not anything.”

She was linked to many women during her life, including photojournalist Faye Harris and singer Carole Pope. In 1982 she married actress Teda Bracci, whom she met at an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. Though the wedding wasn’t legally recognized, they lived together for two years.

Later in life, Springfield became a camp icon, attracting gay fans and drag impersonators. In 1994 a breast cancer diagnosis took a toll on her career.

Springfield’s inclusion in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame came just two weeks after her death. At the induction, her friend Elton John said, “I just think she was the greatest white singer there has ever been ... Every song she sang, she claimed as her own.”

**She was one of the most successful British female performers in history.**

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# TOM STODDARD

b. 1949

d. 1997

## EQUALITY ATTORNEY

*"I've been very lucky. I always got back more than I gave."*

**Under his leadership, Lambda became one of the most important LGBT legal organizations in the country.**

Tom Stoddard was a lawyer who helped advance LGBT rights in America. He served as an early executive director of the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund in New York from 1986 to 1992, where he fought against discrimination in employment, housing, health care and the military. Under his leadership, Lambda became one of the most important LGBT legal organizations in the country.

Stoddard taught one of the first courses on constitutional law and its impact on the LGBT community. He also authored the successful 1986 bill to protect gay people against bias in housing, employment and public accommodations in New York City.

Former Mayor Ed Koch said of Stoddard, "He was an extraordinary lawyer. Even though he never retreated, he would find a way to explain, to placate and convince opponents that his approach was reasonable, rational and one they could accept. That's a gift."

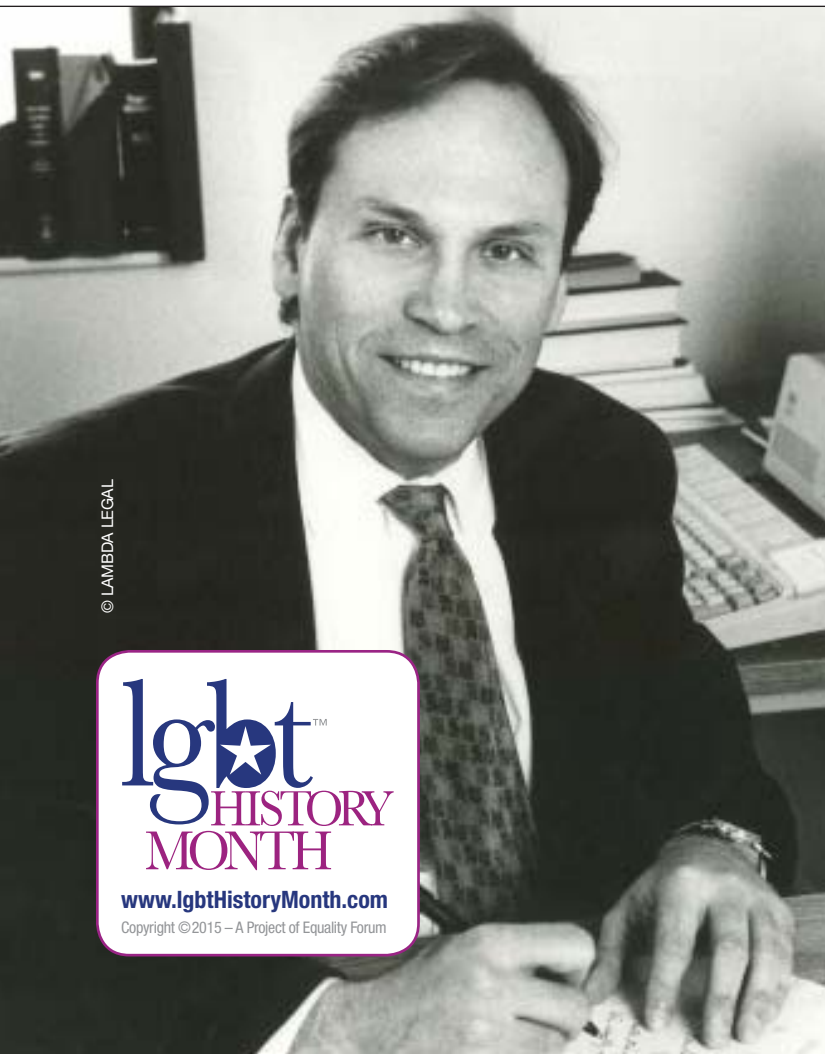
Over the years, Stoddard became an important spokesperson for gay rights and civil liberties, eventually becoming the director of the Campaign for Military Service. In 1993 he asked President Bill Clinton to end the ban on gays and lesbians in the military, only to see the Clinton administration institute the controversial "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

Stoddard had a keen sense of justice throughout his life. He once called the fight against Georgia's sodomy law "our Dred Scott case," and was an early champion of marriage equality. In 1985 he said, "The general public seems to feel that being gay is an individual existence that precludes family life. In fact, it often involves being part of a family in every possible sense: as spouse, as parent, as child. Society needs to foster greater stability in gay relationships."

Stoddard eventually married his partner, Walter Rieman, in 1993. Though the marriage was never legally recognized, they exchanged rings and vows.

Stoddard also became an important advocate for people with AIDS facing discrimination. When he was diagnosed with AIDS himself, he joined the board of the American Foundation for AIDS Research. He attended the first White House Conference on AIDS in 1995 and the 11th International AIDS Conference just before his death.

In 1995 the Tom Stoddard Fellowship was established at New York University. It encourages law students to advocate on behalf of gay civil rights cases in America.



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# WILLIAM “BIG BILL” TILDEN II

b. February 10, 1893

d. June 5, 1953

## TENNIS CHAMPION

*“Never change a winning game; always change a losing one.”*

**He was the No. 1  
player in the world  
for six years, from  
1920 to 1925.**

Bill Tilden is considered one of the greatest men's tennis champions in history. He was the No. 1 player in the world for six years, from 1920 to 1925. During that time, he became the first American to win Wimbledon.

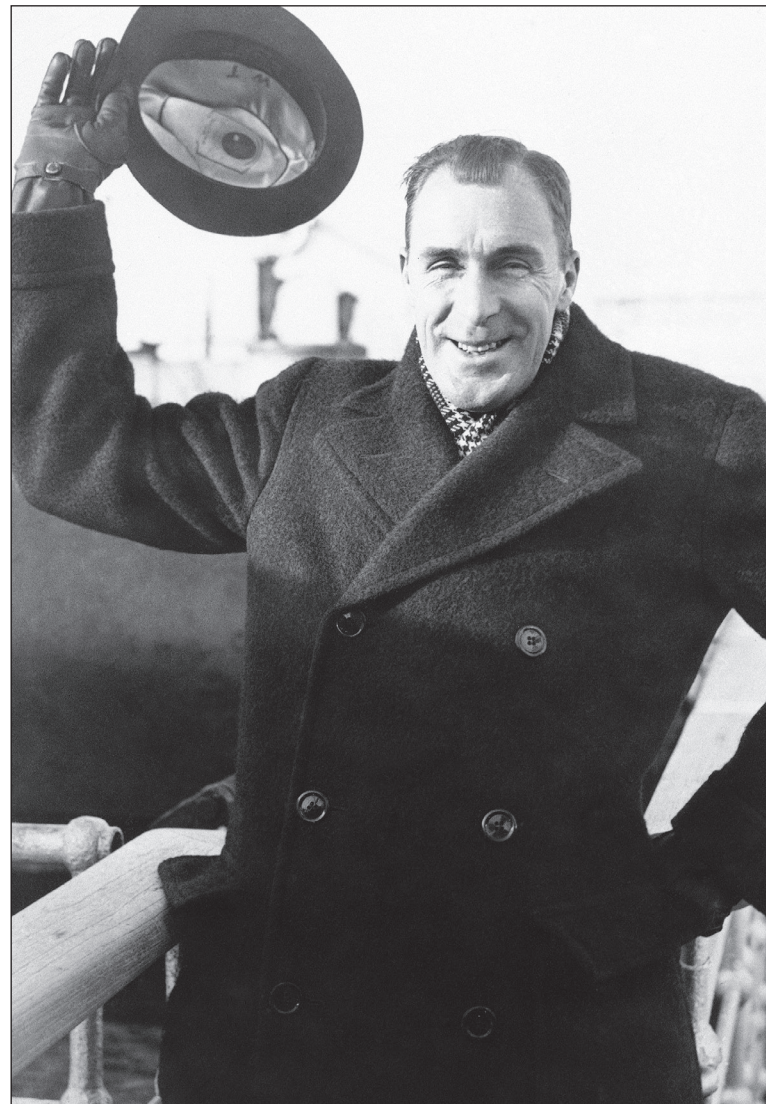
Born to privilege in Philadelphia, he first picked up a racket as a small child. By the time he was 22, he had lost both parents and his brother. Struggling with immense grief, he preoccupied himself with tennis, which became his primary means of recovery. He wrote about the game in several noteworthy books, including “Match Play and the Spin of the Ball.” By 27, he had attained championship status.

Tilden's countless wins include 14 major singles titles: a World Hard Court Championship, 10 Grand Slams and three Pro Slams. He also won a record seven U.S. Championships. His all-time tennis achievements include a career match-winning record and winning percentage at the U.S. National Championships.

Tilden won his third and final Wimbledon in 1930 at age 37, before turning pro. He was the oldest man to win a Wimbledon singles title. He went on to tour and was notorious for holding his own against much younger players. When Tilden was 52, he and his longtime doubles partner, Vinnie Richards, won the professional doubles championship—the same title they had won 27 years earlier.

Tilden was considered quite flamboyant. He dabbled in acting on stage and in film, and rumors about his homosexuality circulated. When he was arrested and imprisoned twice for sexual misbehavior with teenage boys, his world collapsed. He was shunned by his fans and fellow players and banned from teaching tennis at most clubs. Questions remain about whether he was targeted because of his sexuality. At the time, homosexual sex was illegal.

In 1959, Tilden was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame in Newport, Rhode Island.



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# TIM'M T. WEST

b. July 6, 1972

## PERFORMER

*"There are aspects of ourselves that we are encouraged never to reveal, but I'm not a unicorn."*

**He launched  
MyWritingProfessor.  
com and continues to  
advocate for youth with  
Teach for America.**

Tim'm T. West, born Timothy Terrell West, is a hip-hop performance artist, poet, activist and educator. He has produced nine albums, written extensively about hip-hop culture and has been a spokesperson for a new generation of openly gay musicians.

West was born in Cincinnati, Ohio. He had a speech impediment as a child that caused him to stutter and repeat the "m" in his name, which led him to include it in his moniker. West was a respected student and athlete who became interested in music at a young age. He was interviewed by recruiters from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point while in high school, but was rejected when he told them he was gay.

West was an active Boy Scout and a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormon). But when he came out to his bishop and was rejected, he struggled with depression and anxiety and even contemplated suicide. He admitted later that the experience influenced his youth outreach as an adult.

West was a serious college student. He attended Duke and Howard Universities and later The New School for Social Research in New York, where he was exposed to the spoken word and poetry scene. While pursuing his master's degree at Stanford University in 1999, West discovered he was HIV positive. The revelation inspired him to begin his youth advocacy work and to join with friends to launch the queer hip-hop group Deep Dickollective. West coined the term "homohop" to describe homophobia in the hip-hop community.

As a solo artist, West has released music and published many books, including "Red Dirt Revival: a Poetic Memoir in 6 Breaths." He performs, writes poetry and hosts "Front Porch," a spoken word showcase that travels to colleges and universities. He also created a one-man show called "Ready, Set, Grow: A Coming of Age Story" about his life.

He launched MyWritingProfessor.com and continues to advocate for youth with Teach for America, where he combines education and advocacy to improve the experience of LGBT students in public schools. West's daughter, Shannon Rose Matesky, is also a spoken word artist. They both live in Chicago.



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# EDIE WINDSOR

b. June 20, 1929

## MARRIAGE EQUALITY HERO

*"I trust the Constitution. Sometimes there's a mistake but mostly we move forward. I think justice will prevail."*

**She was the lead plaintiff in a landmark legal victory for marriage equality.**

Edith "Edie" Windsor was the lead plaintiff in the Supreme Court case *United States v. Windsor*, a landmark legal victory for marriage equality.

Windsor is a former top-ranking technology manager at IBM, where she began her employment in 1958. In 1987 the National Computing Conference honored her as a Pioneer in Operating Systems.

In 1963 Windsor met Thea Spyer, a psychologist, in New York. The two began a lifelong relationship, which they hid from their employers for many years. The couple were engaged for 42 years.

When Spyer was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, Windsor became her caregiver, eventually entering a domestic partnership with her in New York in 1993. Because the state did not yet offer same-sex marriage rights, the couple wed in Canada in 2007, two years before Spyer's death.

The couple's inability to legally marry prompted Windsor to publicly advocate for marriage equality and to take her case to court. No stranger to LGBT activism, Windsor provided leadership in numerous LGBT organizations and regularly participated with Spyer in history-making LGBT rights events.

In New York, Windsor volunteered for East End gay organizations, the LGBT Community Center, and the 1994 Gay Games. She helped form Old Queens Acting Up, an improv group that uses comedy to address social issues, and she served on the board of the Services & Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE).

Windsor's court battle propelled her into the national spotlight. When she filed a lawsuit in 2010, she sought to claim the federal estate tax exemption for surviving spouses. Although she and her partner were legally wed in Canada, the U.S. Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) limited the federal definition of "spouse" to heterosexual unions only. In 2013 the Supreme Court ruled in Windsor's favor, overturning Section 3 of DOMA and setting a precedent that laid the groundwork for national marriage equality in 2015.

Windsor's story is featured in the 2009 documentary "Edie and Thea: A Very Long Engagement."



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# EVAN WOLFSON

b. February 4, 1957

## MARRIAGE EQUALITY ADVOCATE

*"I'm not in this just to change the law.  
It's about changing society."*

**He is the founder of  
Freedom to Marry, a  
group that advocates  
for same-sex  
marriage rights in  
the United States.**

Evan Wolfson is the founder of Freedom to Marry, a group that advocates for same-sex marriage rights in the United States. He is one of the first attorneys to publicly champion marriage equality and the author of the book "Why Marriage Matters: America, Equality and Gay People's Right to Marry." Wolfson was named one of Time magazine's 100 Most Influential People. As a lawyer, he argued *Boy Scouts of America v. Dale* before the Supreme Court.

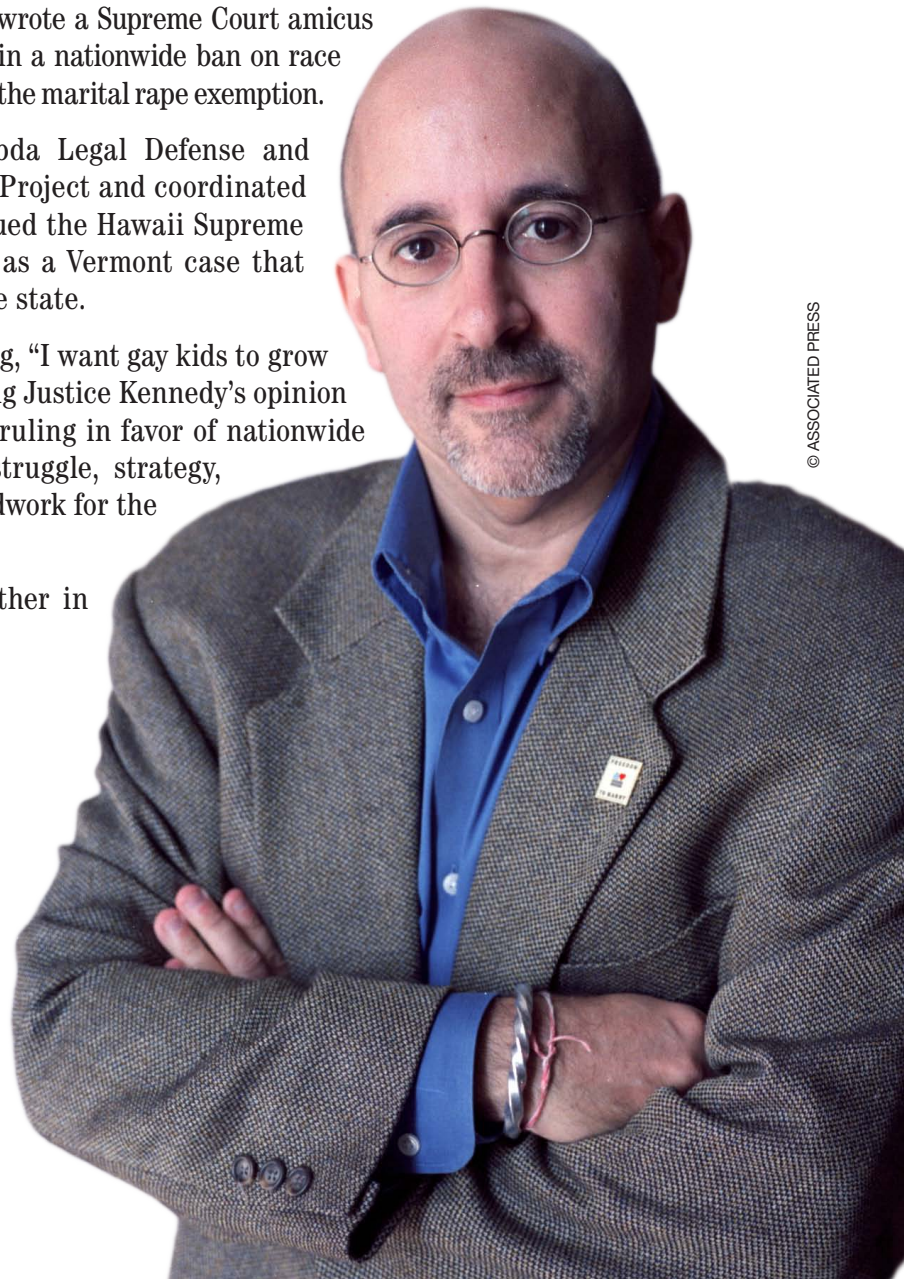
LGBT rights became an important part of Wolfson's advocacy early in his career. He wrote his 1983 thesis at Harvard University on the legal question of same-sex marriage. He also publicly debated the issue at Yale University. As a young lawyer, he wrote a Supreme Court amicus brief that helped win a nationwide ban on race

discrimination in jury selection and helped eliminate the marital rape exemption.

For many years, Wolfson worked for the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, where he directed the Marriage Project and coordinated the National Freedom to Marry Coalition. He argued the Hawaii Supreme Court case involving same-sex marriage as well as a Vermont case that eventually led to the creation of civil unions in the state.

Wolfson launched Freedom to Marry in 2001, saying, "I want gay kids to grow up believing they can get married." He wept reading Justice Kennedy's opinion in *Obergefell v. Hodges* (the 2015 Supreme Court ruling in favor of nationwide marriage equality), remembering the years of struggle, strategy, arguments and previous cases that laid the groundwork for the landmark *Obergefell* decision.

Wolfson is married to Cheng He. They live together in New York City.



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