

# RON ANSIN

b. March 28, 1934

d. June 28, 2023

## PHILANTHROPIST & ACTIVIST

*“Find the best people — who push you, support you, and share your values.”*

Ron Ansin was a passionate philanthropist and often anonymous benefactor, a business and civic leader, and an activist. He played a pivotal role in North Central Massachusetts, where he bolstered the economy; supported the arts, education, health care, and multiple charities; and helped advance LGBTQ rights.

Ansin was born in Worcester, Massachusetts. His family moved to Miami Beach when he was 7. Ansin attended Phillips Academy Andover, an esteemed Massachusetts boarding school. He received his bachelor's degree from Harvard College and attended Yale Law School, where he earned his J.D. in 1959. The year before he graduated, Ansin married Betsey Kander. The couple settled in the state and had four children together.

**He was a prominent philanthropist and LGBTQ activist.**

After completing his degree at Yale, Ansin took over the family business, the Anwelt Shoe Company, in Fitchburg, Mass. Under his leadership, Anwelt became one of the nation's most successful shoe companies and Cole Haan one of its most respected national brands. Ansin served as a footwear industry advisor to the U.S. Office of the President. In 1996 he was inducted

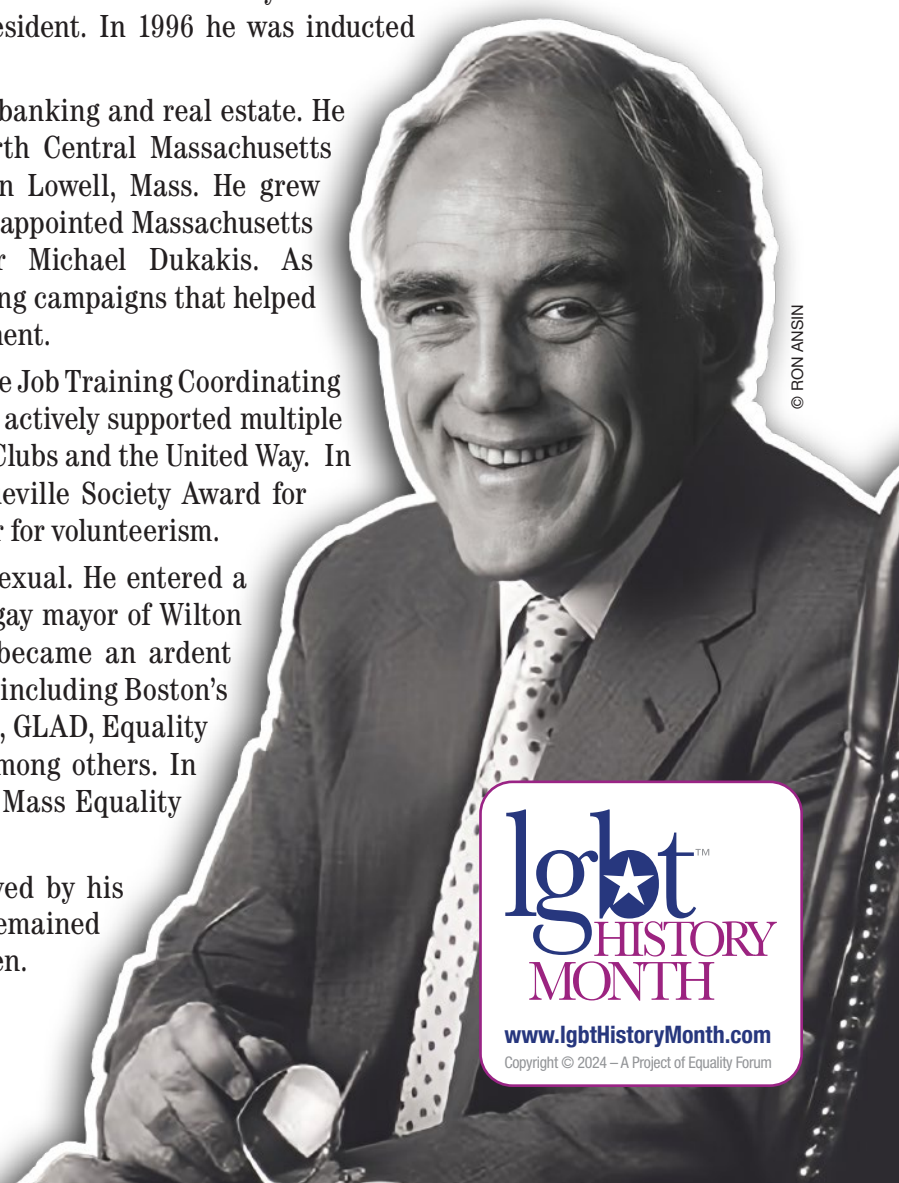
into the Footwear Industry Hall of Fame.

In addition to shoe manufacturing, Ansin pursued banking and real estate. He was named chairman of Merchant's Bank in North Central Massachusetts and helped establish the first Enterprise Bank in Lowell, Mass. He grew increasingly interested in politics, and in 1983 was appointed Massachusetts Commissioner of Commerce by then Governor Michael Dukakis. As commissioner, Ansin launched iconic state marketing campaigns that helped drive tourism and significantly reduced unemployment.

Ansin served on numerous statewide boards, from the Job Training Coordinating Council to the American Civil Liberties Union, and actively supported multiple issues and charities, including the Boys' and Girls' Clubs and the United Way. In 1999 Ansin received the National Alexis de Tocqueville Society Award for Community Service, the United Way's highest honor for volunteerism.

In the early 2000s, Ansin came out publicly as bisexual. He entered a romantic relationship with Jim Stork, the openly gay mayor of Wilton Manors, Florida, whom he later married. Ansin became an ardent supporter of LGBTQ organizations and individuals, including Boston's Fenway Community Health Center, GLSEN, GLAAD, GLAD, Equality Forum, and the National Stonewall Democrats, among others. In 2012 he received the prestigious Icon Award from Mass Equality for his work toward marriage equality.

Ansin died in 2023 at the age of 89. He is survived by his husband, his four children with whom he always remained close, 10 grandchildren, and two great grandchildren.



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# LAPHONZA BUTLER

b. May 11, 1979

## FIRST OUT BLACK U.S. SENATOR

*“Our strength lies in our unity. When we stand together, we are unstoppable.”*

**She is the first  
out Black  
U.S. senator.**

Laphonza Romantique Butler is a former community activist, union organizer, and political strategist. In 2023 she became the first Black openly LGBTQ member of the United States Senate.

Butler was born and raised in Magnolia, Mississippi. Her father died of heart disease when she was 16. Her mother worked multiple jobs to keep the family afloat. Butler graduated salutatorian from public high school in 1997 and earned her bachelor's degree in political science from Jackson State University in 2001.

After college, Butler became a union organizer for nurses, janitors, and hospital workers along the East Coast and Midwest. She moved to California in 2009, where she held top positions at the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), before assuming the role of president of SEIU Local 15 at the age of 30. SEIU Local 15 is the largest union in California and the largest union of long-term-care employees in the nation. She served as its president for more than a decade.

In 2018 Jerry Brown, then governor of California, appointed Butler to the University of California Board of Regents. In this role, Butler collaborated on university decisions governing subjects such as tuition, admissions, and employee and land management.

In 2019 Butler became a partner at SCRB Strategies, a communications firm dealing with complex corporate issues and political campaigns. Among other high-profile clients, she worked with Kamala Harris on her 2020 presidential bid and with the rideshare app Uber, advising them on the classification of their drivers as employees. Butler left SCRB to serve as the director of North American public policy for Airbnb.

In 2021 Butler was named the first Black president of EMILY's List, the country's largest political action committee aimed at electing Democratic women who support abortion rights. The following year, Butler joined the board of directors for Vision to Learn, an organization providing optometry services to low-income children.

In October 2023, Governor Gavin Newsom of California selected Butler to fill the vacant Senate seat previously held by the late Dianne Feinstein. The appointment made Butler the first Black LGBTQ U.S. Senator. Butler serves on the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. She fights for equality, reproductive rights, labor rights, gun reform, affordable housing, and other progressive issues.

Butler identifies as a lesbian and is married to Neneki Lee. They have one daughter together and share homes in California and Maryland.



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# MAKI CARROUSEL

b. July 7, 1940

d. April 28, 2021

## JAPANESE TRANSGENDER ACTOR

Maki Carrousel is a transgender Japanese actor. She has appeared in approximately two dozen television productions and theatrical films since she began her career in 1969.

Assigned male at birth, Carrousel studied ballet as a child. At age 11, she appeared in Los Angeles in the New York City Ballet's 1953 production of "The Nutcracker."

**She is a  
groundbreaking  
transgender  
Japanese actor.**

Carrousel left home at the age of 15 and began working odd jobs at gay bars and nightclubs across Japan—first in Sapporo and later in Osaka at a bar named Carrousel. At 19, she came out as a transgender woman, changing her name to Hirahara Maki and assuming the stage name Maki Carrousel as an homage to her former place of employment.

In the 1960s, Carrousel's ambitions turned to acting. At age 27, she found her first role in the 1969 horror film, "Orgies of Edo." She went on to act on television and in movies and to perform in nightclubs.

In 1973 Carrousel completed her transition, undergoing groundbreaking gender affirmation surgery in Morocco. She was one of the first people in Japan to publicly disclose their gender reassignment at a time when transgender individuals were scorned as freaks. When traveling outside her country, she wore a hat and loose clothing to conceal her body and avoid harassment.

In 2001 Carrousel was arrested for drug possession. Because her official documents listed her gender at birth, she was forced to spend 41 grueling days in a male prison. She published her autobiography in 2022. She was legally recognized as a woman two years later.

Carrousel's filmography includes more than 20 roles. She stars in the film "Voice," released in February 2024.



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# DESMOND CHILD

b. October 28, 1953

## AWARD-WINNING SONGWRITER

**He is a Top 40  
hitmaker, famous for  
his collaborations  
with music-industry  
superstars.**

*“I love the process of working with an artist ...  
it’s like taking an X-ray of their soul.”*

Desmond Child is an award-winning gay Cuban American songwriter, singer, and producer. He is most famous for his collaborations on smash hits with top artists like Bon Jovi, Aerosmith, and Ricky Martin.

Born John Charles Barrett in Gainesville, Florida, Child graduated from high school in Miami Beach and attended Miami-Dade Community College. In 1973 he formed a pop group, Desmond Child & Rouge, with three female friends. After completing college in 1974, Child and the band moved to New York City.

In 1976 Child earned a B.A. in music education from New York University. Two years later, Capitol Records signed his band. They released two albums, one with a Top 40 hit that launched a national tour and an SNL appearance.

In his early years in New York, Child caught the attention of KISS guitarist Paul Stanley. Together they co-wrote “I Was Made For Lovin’ You.” Released in 1979, the song reached No. 11 on the U.S. Billboard singles chart. Child’s first No. 1 hit came in 1986 when he co-wrote “You Give Love a Bad Name” with Bon Jovi.

During this period, Child secured a reputation as a sought-after hitmaker. He worked with a variety of rock artists on chart-topping tracks like Bon Jovi’s “Livin’ on a Prayer,” Aerosmith’s “Dude Looks Like a Lady,” and Joan Jett’s “I Hate Myself for Loving You,” along with the entirety of Alice Cooper’s LP “Trash.”

Child’s collaborations span genres. He has worked on tracks with Cher, Cyndi Lauper, Katy Perry, Garth Brooks, and a host of other superstars. He collaborated with Ricky Martin on “Livin’ la Vida Loca” and “The Cup of Life” and co-wrote six songs for and produced Meat Loaf’s 2006 album “Bat Out of Hell III: The Monster is Loose.”

Credited on more than 80 Top 40 hits, Child was nominated for three Grammy Awards in 2000 for his work with Ricky Martin. He won a Latin Grammy for Rock Album of the Year (artist Alejandra Guzmán) in 2001 and received a 2003 Emmy nomination for the Muppets song “Everyone Matters.” He was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2008. Child cofounded the Latin Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2013 and was inducted himself in 2022. The same year, the U.S. Library of Congress added “Livin’ la Vida Loca” to its National Registry.

Child lives in Nashville, Tennessee, with his husband, Curtis Shaw, and twin boys. In 2013 Child released a documentary about raising his sons. He published his autobiography, “Livin’ on a Prayer: Big Songs Big Life,” in 2023.



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# MARGARET CHUNG

b. October 2, 1889

d. January 5, 1959

## FIRST FEMALE CHINESE AMERICAN DOCTOR

*"I used to be ladylike and deferential but found it didn't pay."*

**She was the first  
female Chinese  
American physician in  
the United States.**

Margaret "Mom" Chung, M.D., was the first female Chinese American medical doctor in the United States. She is best known for the care she gave to scores of World War II servicemen whom she called her "adopted sons."

The eldest of 11 children born to Chinese immigrant parents in Santa Barbara, California, Chung cultivated her nurturing skills caring for her siblings. When she was 13, the family moved to Los Angeles.

Chung worked her way through both college and medical school at the University of Southern California (USC). At USC she dressed in men's clothing and called herself "Mike." She dropped the name when she graduated in 1916.

Hindered by her race and gender, Chung struggled to find work as a physician. She obtained a position as a surgical nurse at the Santa Fe Railroad Hospital in Los Angeles. After a few months, she managed to secure an internship and then a medical residency in Chicago. She subsequently served as the resident assistant in psychiatry at the Juvenile Psychopathic Institute of the State of Illinois at Cook County Hospital.

Around 1919 Chung moved back to California, returning to the Santa Fe Railroad Hospital as a surgeon. In the early 1920s, she opened one of the first Western medicine practices in San Francisco's Chinatown, where she hoped to treat Chinese women. Suspecting her of being a lesbian, the community largely shunned her. Celebrities embraced her and soon flocked to Chung's clinic seeking "Oriental" medicine. Many, including well-known lesbians, befriended her.

In 1937 Japan invaded China. Chung wanted to volunteer as a battlefield surgeon. Denied the opportunity, she was assigned instead to secretly recruit volunteer U.S. pilots (popularly known as the Flying Tigers) to assist the Chinese.

Throughout World War II, Chung earned considerable accolades for her patriotism. She "adopted" well over a thousand troops, including the entire VF-2 squadron. She sent letters, gifts, and care packages to the front and held Sunday dinners at her home where servicemen mingled with celebrities and politicians. She leveraged her powerful connections to advocate for creation of the WAVES, the U.S. women's Navy Reserves, established in 1942.

Chung never received credit for the WAVES and was denied acceptance to the corps herself, due to her race and rumored sexuality.

Chung is believed to have had romantic relationships with the poet Elsa Gidlow and the famous performer Sophie Tucker. When Chung retired in 1947, her "adopted sons" bought her a home in Marin County, California. She died 12 years later.



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# CHRISTIAN COOPER

b. 1963

WRITER &  
NYC BIRDER

*“As long as [it] helps move the ball forward in terms of finally addressing racial bias ... I’ll keep talking.”*

**He is a pioneering  
Black comic book writer  
and avid birdwatcher.**

Christian Cooper is a pioneering comic book and science writer, an LGBTQ activist, and an avid New York City birder. He came to prominence after he was falsely accused of threatening a woman in Central Park, where he was birdwatching.

Born on Long Island, New York, Cooper grew up as a self-described closeted gay nerd, passionate about birds and superheroes. He studied government at Harvard University and served as president of the Harvard Ornithological Club.

Cooper came out at Harvard and became an LGBTQ activist. Shortly thereafter, he served as a board co-chair of GLAAD.

In 1990 Cooper landed a dream job at Marvel Comics. He worked on numerous series, including Marvel Comics Presents and X-Men Excalibur. One of Marvel’s earliest gay writer-editors, Cooper helped introduce Marvel’s first LGBT characters: Northstar in the Alpha Flight series; the first gay human in Star Trek history in Starfleet Academy; and the first lesbian character in the Marvel Universe. Starfleet Academy was later nominated for a GLAAD Media Award.

Cooper left Marvel in 1996. He authored the satirical webcomic Queer Nation, as online comics surged in popularity, and worked as a biomedical editor at a science publication for the next 20 years.

On May 25, 2020, when Cooper was birdwatching in Central Park, he asked a white woman if she would kindly leash her dog to protect the plants and wildlife (unleashed dogs are prohibited in that area of the park). She refused. When Cooper began filming the interaction on his phone, the woman called the police, claiming an African American man was threatening her. She was charged with filing a false report and publicly excoriated. On that same day in Minneapolis, police murdered George Floyd. The coinciding incidents sparked national outrage and served as a flashpoint for the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement.

After the Central Park incident, DC Comics approached Cooper to create “It’s a Bird.” Cooper’s script featured a Black birder whose magic binoculars illuminate BLM headlines: the police slayings of George Floyd, Breona Taylor, and Amadou Diallo. The year before his own infamous encounter, Cooper was arrested for protesting Diallo’s murder.

Penguin Random House published Cooper’s memoir, “Better Living Through Birding: Notes from a Black Man in the Natural World” in 2023. The same year, he became the host and consulting producer of the National Geographic documentary series “Extraordinary Birder.”

Cooper lives in New York City with his partner, John Zaia. He is a board member of NYC Audubon, a bird conservation organization.



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# RIVER GALLO

b. 1990

## INTERSEX FILMMAKER & ACTIVIST

**They are an award-winning Salvadorian American filmmaker, actor, and intersex rights activist.**

*“Being a misfit can be one’s greatest gift.”*

River Gallo (they/them) is an award-winning Salvadorian American filmmaker, model, actor, and intersex rights activist, best known for the pioneering intersex crime drama “Ponyboi.”

A New Jersey native raised as a boy, Gallo was born without testicles. At the age of 12, Gallo underwent hormone therapy and testicular implant surgery without their consent. Doctors recommended the procedure so Gallo would present as an anatomically “complete” cisgender male.

After high school, Gallo studied experimental theater at New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts. They subsequently earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in film and TV production from the University of Southern California (USC) School of Cinematic Arts.

At USC Gallo wrote and starred in the groundbreaking short film, “Ponyboi,” co-directed with a close friend and classmate, Sadé Clacken Joseph, and executive produced by the English actors Stephen Fry and Emma Thompson. A narrative drama about an intersex character, played by an intersex actor, it was the first film of its kind.

After years of hiding their identity, Gallo discovered the term “intersex” in graduate school. Recognizing and owning it, Gallo used “Ponyboi” as vehicle to come out. “Ponyboi” debuted at the 2019 Tribeca Film Festival and appeared internationally. The project served as a career catalyst for Gallo.

In 2021 Gallo participated in the Sundance Institute’s first Trans Possibilities Intensive. Gallo reworked “Ponyboi,” and with the help of a Sundance grant, produced it as a feature-length film. It premiered in 2024 at the Sundance Film Festival. Gallo starred again in the title role, supported by a talented cast.

Gallo is the founder of GapToof Entertainment, an LGBT/POC production company. In addition to their personal film projects, Gallo was featured in the 2023 Focus Films documentary “Every Body.” Gallo has also performed on Broadway and appeared in a 2020 episode of the Hulu original series “Love, Victor,” a spinoff of the 2018 film “Love, Simon.” Gallo has partnered with and modeled for Abercrombie & Fitch and Crocs and walked the runway for Chromat during New York Fashion Week.

Gallo is an outspoken intersex advocate, passionate about ending unnecessary surgeries performed on children with atypical genitalia.

Among other accolades for entertainment and advocacy work, Gallo received a GLAAD Rising Star Media Award, was recognized on the OUT 100 list, and was named as one of Out magazine’s “Most Exciting Queers to Follow on Instagram.” In 2023 Indiewire named Gallo one of 10 LGBTQIA+ Film and TV Creators on the Rise.

Gallo identifies as nonbinary and trans fem.

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# ROBERT GARCIA

b. December 2, 1977

## CONGRESSMAN

*"The American people deserve a government who works for them."*

**He is the first LGBTQ immigrant to serve in Congress.**

Robert Julio Garcia is the U.S. representative for California's 42nd District. A Democrat, he is the first LGBTQ immigrant elected to Congress.

Garcia was born in Lima, Peru. When he was 5, he immigrated to the United States with his mother. Garcia attended Covina High School and graduated from California State University, Long Beach, with a bachelor's degree in communication studies. He received his master's degree from the University of Southern California (USC) and accepted a job as a public information officer at Long Beach City College.

Garcia became a U.S. citizen in his 20s. Around the age of 30, he founded the Long Beach Post, a local news and sports website, which brought him a measure of celebrity.

Garcia earned his Ph.D. in education from California State University, Long Beach, in 2010. The year before, while serving as a faculty member at USC, Garcia won a seat on the Long Beach City Council. In 2012 he was elected to a two-year term as City Council vice mayor. It made him the first Latino and youngest person to hold the position in the city's history.

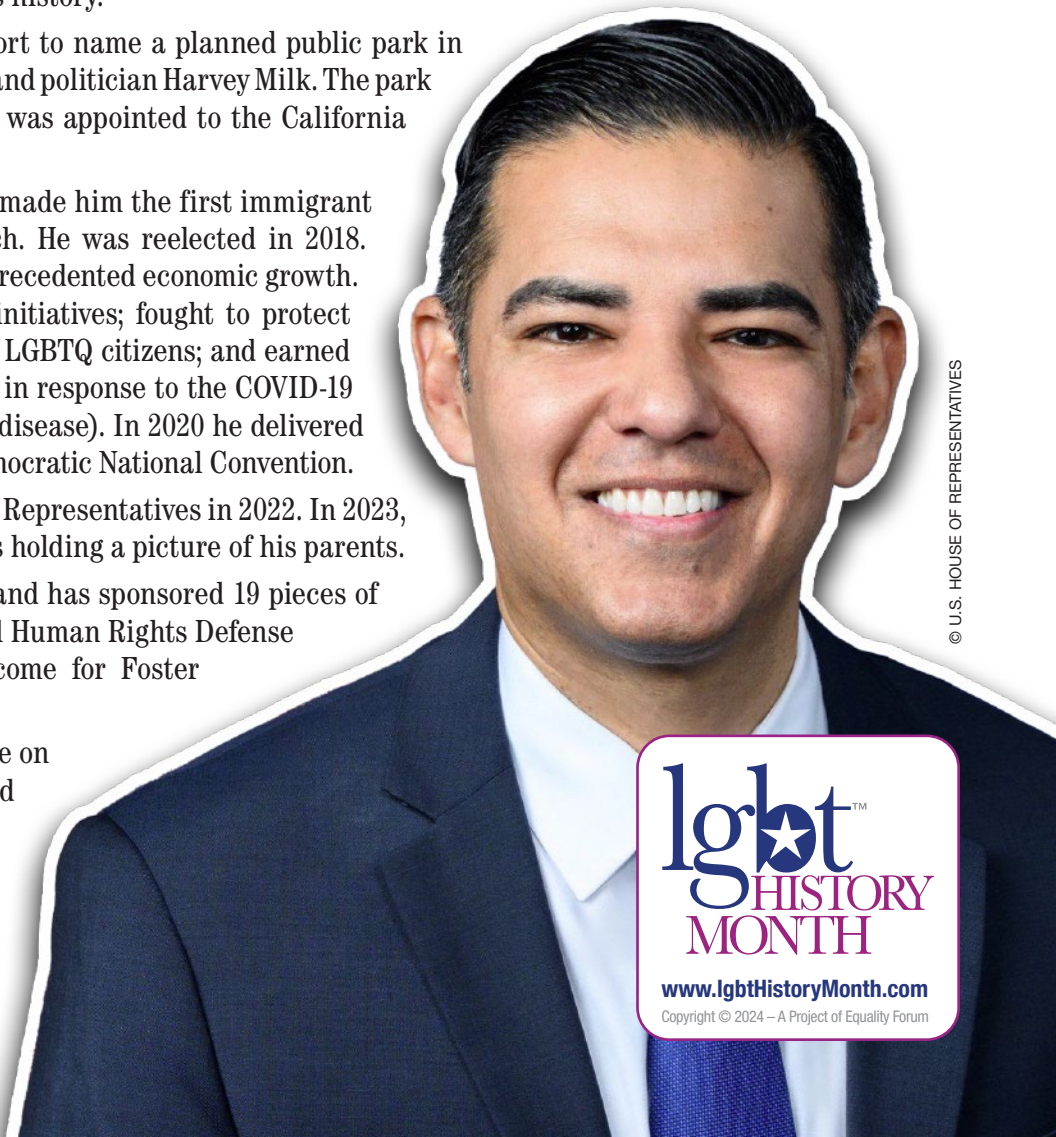
In 2011 Garcia successfully led an effort to name a planned public park in Long Beach after the slain gay activist and politician Harvey Milk. The park opened in 2013, the same year Garcia was appointed to the California Coastal Commission.

In 2014 Garcia ran for mayor. The win made him the first immigrant and first LGBTQ mayor of Long Beach. He was reelected in 2018. During his tenure, Garcia oversaw unprecedented economic growth. He passed aggressive environmental initiatives; fought to protect the rights of workers, immigrants, and LGBTQ citizens; and earned national recognition for his leadership in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (he lost both parents to the disease). In 2020 he delivered one of the keynote speeches at the Democratic National Convention.

Garcia was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2022. In 2023, when he took the oath of office, he was holding a picture of his parents.

Garcia sits on five House committees and has sponsored 19 pieces of legislation, including the International Human Rights Defense Act of 2023 and the Guaranteed Income for Foster Youth Act.

Garcia was recognized by The Advocate on its "40 Under 40" list, and CNN featured him in a special presentation, "Latino in America." He has been married to Matthew Mendez, a professor, since 2022. The couple lives in Long Beach.



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# ROB HALFORD HEAVY METAL MUSICIAN

b. August 25, 1951

*“Unconditional love will accept you for who you are, and I think that was the blessing I had from the fans.”*

**Dubbed the “Metal God,” he is the first out gay heavy metal artist.**

Rob Halford is a Grammy-winning English rock singer and songwriter, best known as the front man of Judas Priest. Dubbed the “Metal God” by his fans—a nickname he later trademarked—Halford is the first out gay artist in the hyper-masculine heavy metal genre.

Halford was born in Birmingham, England, and raised in the working-class town of Walsall, where he sang in the school choir. In his early 20s, while jamming with his amateur band, Halford met his sister’s boyfriend, the bassist and cofounder of Judas Priest, Ian Hill. In 1973 Halford joined Priest as lead vocalist.

Halford made his recording debut in 1974 on Judas Priest’s first album, “Rocka Rolla.” The band achieved widespread commercial success with their groundbreaking sixth studio album, “British Steel.” Halford recorded and toured with Priest throughout the ’70s and ’80s, defining the studded-leather look and vocal style of metal music.

In 1992 Halford left Judas Priest to pursue his own projects and the more aggressive American metal sound. He formed the band Fight, who released their first album in 1993. Fight produced a second album and toured twice before disbanding in the mid ’90s.

In 1997 Halford and the guitarist John Lowery formed 2wo. They released one album in 1998. That same year, in an MTV interview, Halford inadvertently referred to himself as a gay man. After spending his entire life closeted, the spontaneous revelation thrilled and liberated him. He became known as metal’s gay icon.

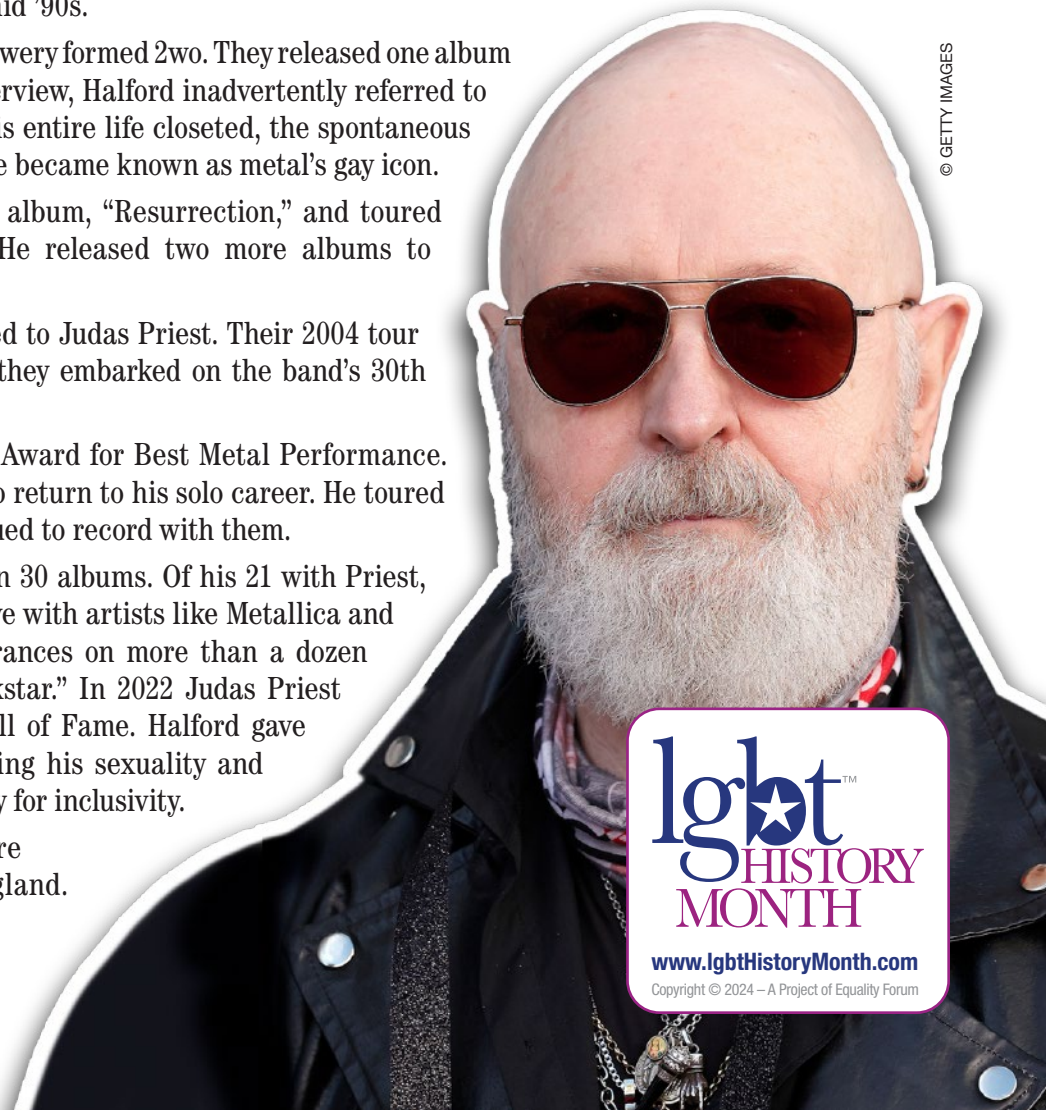
In 2000 Halford released his first solo album, “Resurrection,” and toured with Iron Maiden and Queensrÿche. He released two more albums to critical acclaim.

After an 11-year hiatus, Halford returned to Judas Priest. Their 2004 tour celebrated his comeback, and in 2005 they embarked on the band’s 30th anniversary world tour.

In 2010 Judas Priest won the Grammy Award for Best Metal Performance. A year later, Halford announced plans to return to his solo career. He toured with Priest for his final time but continued to record with them.

All told, Halford has released more than 30 albums. Of his 21 with Priest, six went platinum. He has performed live with artists like Metallica and Black Sabbath and made guest appearances on more than a dozen albums, including Dolly Parton’s “Rockstar.” In 2022 Judas Priest was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. Halford gave a rousing acceptance speech, referencing his sexuality and praising the metal community’s capacity for inclusivity.

Halford and his husband, Thomas, share residences in the U.S. and Walsall, England.



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# JEANNE HOFF

b. October 16, 1938

d. October 26, 2023

## TRANSGENDER TRAILBLAZER

*If you are meddling in the life and freedom of someone else, you ought to ... make sure that you're entitled to do so and that they'll be better off for your having been there."*

**Her courageous work laid the foundation for today's gender-affirming health care.**

Jeanne Hoff was the first known openly transgender psychiatrist to treat trans patients. At a time of societal and medical ignorance regarding gender identity, her courageous, revolutionary work laid the foundation for today's trans health care.

Hoff was assigned male at birth in St. Louis, Missouri. Her father, a laborer, reportedly suffered from alcoholism. Hoff spent time in the Coast Guard before she was offered a partial scholarship from Washington University in St. Louis, where she earned her bachelor's degree in 1960. She received a master's degree from Yale University,

followed by a medical degree from Columbia University in 1963. Hoff began teaching pathology at Washington University School of Medicine in 1971. She completed her residency in psychiatry there a few years later.

As a psychiatrist, Hoff collaborated with Dr. Harry Benjamin, an endocrinologist and sexologist considered the father of transgender care in the U.S. Among others, Benjamin treated Christine Jorgensen, one of the first nationally publicized people to undergo gender transition.

In the throes of transitioning herself, Hoff took over Benjamin's New York City practice in 1976, just before starting her own. Working from her home in SoHo, NY, Hoff treated primarily gay and transgender patients, treating the whole person, both psychologically and physically. Around this same time, she publicly debated Dr.

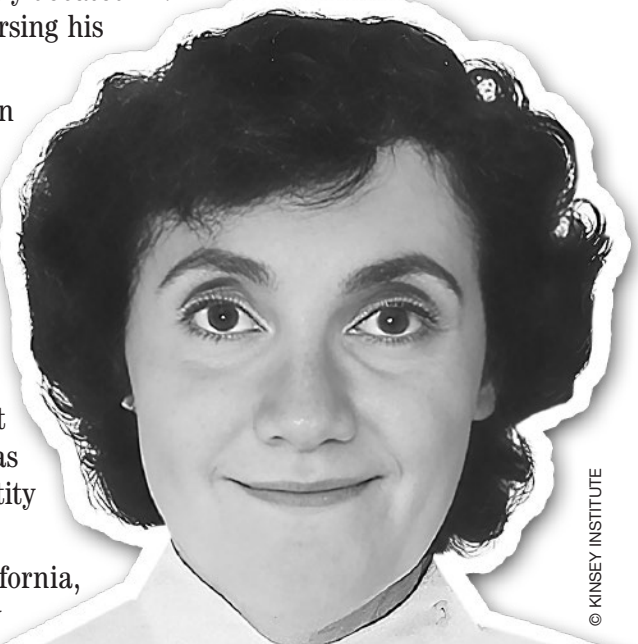
Charles Socarides, an infamously anti-gay psychiatrist intent on reversing his profession's decision to stop pathologizing homosexuality.

Hoff underwent gender affirmation surgery in 1977. Putting herself on the line, she permitted a crew to film the procedure. She hoped it would both empower her patients to live openly and enlighten the medical community. The footage became part of the award-winning 1978 television documentary "Becoming Jeanne: A Search for Sexual Identity," cohosted by the actor Lynn Redgrave. In it, Hoff described her own struggle to find the informed health care she needed.

In 1979 Hoff became an inaugural member of the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association, which developed the first evidence-based standards of gender-queer care. It adopted what was then the widely discounted position that biological sex and gender identity exist independently.

Hoff gave up her private practice in 1983. She relocated to California, where she treated former convicts in Oakland and then death-row prisoners at San Quentin. She retired in 1999, after an inmate assaulted her.

Hoff donated her archives to the Kinsey Institute, dedicated to the study of human sexuality and gender. Aged 85, Hoff died in San Francisco from Parkinson's disease. The New York Times published her obituary.



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# SUSAN LOVE

b. February 9, 1948

d. July 2, 2023

## BREAST-HEALTH PIONEER

*“Take care of yourself mentally, physically, and spiritually so that you can take care of the world.”*

**She was a pioneering breast cancer researcher and women’s health advocate.**

Susan M. Love, M.D., was a surgeon, a pioneering women’s breast-health advocate and researcher, and the cofounder of the National Breast Cancer Coalition. She also served as a clinical professor of surgery at Harvard and UCLA.

Love was born in New Jersey and grew up in Puerto Rico and Mexico, where her father’s job took the family. Her interest in science began in Catholic high school. She studied pre-med in college for two years, then dropped out to join a convent. After six months, she left to continue her education.

In 1974 Love earned her M.D. with honors from State University of New York Downstate Medical School. She completed her residency at Beth Israel Medical Center in Boston and became its first female general surgeon. At Beth Israel, she met her life partner, Dr. Helen Cooksey. A critic of the male-dominated medical establishment’s approach to women’s health, Love became a trailblazing advocate for breast conservation surgery at a time when radical mastectomy was the standard and largely unnecessary treatment for breast cancer. She worked for leading cancer institutes and was recruited to establish Boston’s Faulkner Breast Center in 1988. Staffed solely by female physicians, it was the first facility of its kind in the nation.

In 1989, after Love gave birth to a daughter, she and Cooksey waged a four-year legal battle to jointly adopt their child and for the birth certificate to list them as co-parents. In a groundbreaking decision, years before same-sex marriage was legal, the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled in their favor. The experience prompted Love to advocate for the rights of other LGBT parents.

In 1990 Love published “Dr. Susan Love’s Breast Book,” the definitive resource for women with breast cancer. The following year, she cofounded the National Breast Cancer Coalition. Its advocacy helped increase federal funding for breast cancer research by nearly 500 percent.

Love gave up surgical practice in 1996 to focus on the causes and prevention of breast cancer through her own research foundation. Her work led to the publication of “Dr. Susan Love’s Menopause and Hormone Book” in 1998. The same year, she earned an executive MBA from UCLA, and President Clinton appointed her to the National Cancer Advisory Board, where she served until 2004. In 2008 she launched the Love Research Army, which recruited hundreds of thousands of volunteers for breast cancer research.

Love and Cooksey wed in San Francisco in 2004, when Mayor Gavin Newsom was defiantly issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples. Love died of leukemia in 2023. The New York Times published her obituary.



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# GEORGE MICHAEL

## POP SUPERSTAR

b. June 25, 1963

d. December 25, 2016

**He was a multi-award-winning British popstar and philanthropist.**

*“You’ll never find peace of mind until you listen to your heart.”*

George Michael was a multi-award-winning British singer, songwriter, and philanthropist. One of the world’s best-selling artists, he rose to international fame in the 1980s with his pop duo Wham! followed by decades of solo superstardom.

The child of Greek-Cypriot and English parents, Michael (née Georgios Kyriacos Panayiotou) was born in North London. In high school, he moved with his family to Radlett, where he befriended Andrew Ridgeley. The pair landed a recording contract as Wham! in 1981.

In 1984 Wham! scored their first U.S. No. 1 single and worldwide hit, “Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go.” Appearing on their second album, it accompanied other top hits, such as the bluesy “Careless Whisperer.”

The duo’s charisma and good looks quickly made them teen idols. In 1985 they became the first Western artists to perform in China. Wham! disbanded amicably in 1986.

Michael launched his solo career with the Grammy-winning single “I Knew You Were Waiting (For Me).” It was the first duet between Aretha Franklin and a white male artist. Michael’s debut solo album, “Faith,” captured the 1988 Grammy for Album of the Year. Along with the title track, it featured five other No. 1 hits, including “Father Figure,” “I Want Your Sex,” and “One More Try.”

In the early '90s, Michael met his first love, Anselmo Feleppa, while performing in Brazil. Feleppa tested HIV-positive and died 1993. Devastated, Michael wrote the melancholic hit “Jesus to a Child” (1994) as a tribute to him.

In 1998, while in a relationship with Kenny Goss, Michael was arrested by an undercover officer in Beverly Hills, Calif., for “lewd conduct” in a public restroom. He came out publicly during the ensuing media frenzy. His career survived, and he and Goss remained together for a decade. Mutual substance abuse contributed to their split.

Michael toured globally and produced hits throughout his career. He won dozens of awards in the U.S. and internationally, including Grammys, American Music Awards, MTV Awards, and two British Ivor Novello Awards for songwriting. He released 16 Top 10 hits, sold 120 million albums (seven multi-platinum), and often leveraged his music, mostly without fanfare, for philanthropic causes. He contributed to the 1984 Band Aid single for Ethiopian famine relief, “Do They Know It's Christmas?” and donated the proceeds from his own holiday release, “Last Christmas,” to the same cause. He supported AIDS prevention and LGBTQ rights, among many other issues.

Michael’s heart and liver gradually deteriorated. In 2016 he died alone in his bed on Christmas Day. He was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2023.



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# KEVIN NAFF

b. October 11, 1970

## WASHINGTON BLADE EDITOR

*“Not a week has gone by ... that I didn’t think of the generation of gay men before me who didn’t live to see all of this progress.”*

**He is the award-winning editor of the Washington Blade, the nation’s oldest LGBTQ newspaper.**

Kevin Naff is an award-winning American journalist and the editor and co-owner of the Washington Blade, the nation’s oldest and most acclaimed LGBTQ news outlet.

Born in Baltimore, Maryland, Naff earned his bachelor’s degree in journalism from Pennsylvania State University in 1992. He received a master’s certificate in public policy from the Legislative Studies Institute, a collaboration between Columbia and Georgetown Universities.

Naff started his career in business development for the Verizon Wireless data group. He subsequently worked for The Baltimore Sun, where he launched its website in 1996, and served as an editor and business reporter for Reuters in New York.

In 2002 the Washington Blade hired Naff, aged 32, to serve as its editor. Founded in the aftermath of the Stonewall uprising in 1969, and circulated initially as a newsletter, the Blade evolved into the LGBTQ community’s acclaimed “newspaper of record.”

In 2009, when the Blade’s parent company filed for bankruptcy, the publication nearly went under. With an outpouring of support from the community—and as far away as Europe—Naff, along with Blade publisher Lynne Brown and sales executive Brian Pitts, assumed ownership. Today, Brown Naff Pitts Omnimedia also runs ancillary enterprises, including the Los Angeles Blade and a full-service ad agency.

Under Naff’s 22 years of editorship, the Blade has won numerous prestigious awards, including GLAAD’s highest honor and a commendation from the White House Correspondents’ Association. Naff helped the Blade secure the first dedicated seat for an LGBTQ outlet in the White House briefing room.

Naff’s journalistic work has been published in The Washington Post, the HuffPost, The Baltimore Sun, and other leading outlets. He has been honored for 10 years running for his editorial writing by the Society of Professional Journalists.

Naff serves on numerous boards, including the D.C. Chapter of the National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association, the Maryland Corporate Council, and Live Baltimore. He has appeared on national cable news channels, including CNN and Fox, and is featured in the award-winning documentary “Outrage,” about the hypocrisy of closeted Washington politicians who support anti-gay legislation.

In 2023 Naff published his first book, “How We Won the War for LGBTQ Equality: And How Our Enemies Could Take It All Away,” an inside look at a 20-year span of unprecedented progress in the LGBTQ civil rights movement and the disturbing trends that now jeopardize it.

Naff lives in Baltimore, Maryland, and Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, with his husband of 25 years, Brian Buebel.

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# FABIAN NELSON

b. July 17, 1985

## MISSISSIPPI STATE REPRESENTATIVE

*“It’s OK to disagree with a person’s lifestyle, but it is not OK to impose on that person’s civil liberties and civil rights.”*

**He is Mississippi’s  
first openly LGBTQ  
lawmaker.**

Fabian Nelson is Mississippi’s first openly LGBTQ lawmaker. A realtor turned legislator, he assumed office in January 2024.

Born in Yazoo City, Mississippi, Nelson grew up in a politically active family. His father was a dentist and a community leader. Both parents continually worked to improve the lives of less fortunate neighbors. Nelson recalls visiting the state Capitol in grade school. Seeing the politicians on the House floor, he told his teacher he would one day sit among them.

Nelson earned his bachelor’s degree from Jackson State University in 2011. After obtaining a master’s degree in business administration from American Public University in 2016, he pursued a career in realty and started his own firm.

For Nelson, the real estate business only accentuated the housing and socioeconomic inequities in his community. He began his advocacy work assisting low-income first-time home buyers.

In a 2020 special election, Nelson made a bid for the Mississippi House of Representatives District 66, which includes part of Jackson, the state’s capital. He received only a handful of votes, a result he attributes to his lack of name recognition and inability to effectively canvas during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

When Nelson decided to run again for the seat in 2023, he didn’t have a platform. He instead visited thousands of homes district-wide, surveying constituents on the issues most important to them. He used their input to establish his legislative priorities: Medicaid expansion, full funding for the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP), economic development, and universal broadband access.

In August 2023 Nelson won the Democratic primary with more than two thirds of the vote and endorsements from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and the LGBTQ+ Victory Fund. In November he ran unopposed, securing the seat. The win made him the first openly LGBTQ lawmaker in Mississippi’s history. Mississippi was one of only two states that had yet to elect an openly gay legislator. Louisiana remained the sole outlier.

In addition to his stated campaign priorities, Nelson is pro-choice and a longtime advocate for underserved and LGBTQ+ communities. As a politician, he continues to fight the ongoing barrage of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation in his deeply conservative state. Nelson sits on the HIV planning council for the Mississippi Department of Health and on the board of the LGBTQ+ civic organization Capital City Pride, where he co-chairs the advocacy committee.

Nelson lives in Byram, Mississippi. He is the father of four foster children.

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# YANNICK NÉZET-SÉGUIN

b. March 6, 1975

## RENOWNED CONDUCTOR

**He is the award-winning conductor of The Philadelphia Orchestra.**

*“... I want our audiences to hear the orchestra in new ways and to expand [its] boundaries.”*

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is an award-winning openly gay international conductor, regarded as one of the top talents of his generation. He leads The Philadelphia Orchestra, the Metropolitan Opera, and the Orchestre Métropolitain.

Born in Montreal, Canada, the son of two professors, Nézet-Séguin took up the piano at the age of 5. By aged 10, he had set his sights on conducting.

Nézet-Séguin studied piano, conducting, composition, and chamber music at the Quebec Conservatory of Music in Montreal. He pursued choral conducting at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey.

At 19, Nézet-Séguin shadowed the renowned conductor Carlo Maria Giulini. The experience led Nézet-Séguin to his first position in 1994 as musical director of the Chœur Phonique de Montréal. He subsequently started his own orchestra and vocal ensemble, which he led until 2002. From 1998 to 2002, he also served as the chorus master and assistant conductor of the Opéra de Montréal.

In 2008 Nézet-Séguin began a 10-year run as principal conductor of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra in the Netherlands. For six of those years, he also served as principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic.

In 2010 Nézet-Séguin was named music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra. Philadelphia extended his contract three times, until 2030, and added artistic director to his title. The Metropolitan Opera, New York, named him its third music director in 2018, and a year later, he also signed a lifetime commitment to Montreal's Orchestre Métropolitain as artistic director and principal conductor. He is an honorary member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and an honorary conductor of the Rotterdam Philharmonic.

Lauded by The New York Times as “phenomenal,” Nézet-Séguin has sold out engagements with the world's leading orchestras and with opera houses from New York to Milan. He has released numerous albums on international labels. Under his leadership, The Philadelphia Orchestra's recording of Florence Price Symphonies Nos. 1 & 3 won a 2021 Grammy.

Among other official recognition, Nézet-Séguin was appointed a Companion of the Order of Canada—one of the country's highest civilian honors—and received the Prix Denise-Pelletier, the Quebec government's highest arts award. His many accolades also include the Royal Philharmonic Society Award and Canada's National Arts Centre Award. Eight prestigious universities have presented him with honorary doctorates.

Nézet-Séguin is the subject of the 2021 documentary “Yannick: An Artist's Journey.” In 2023 he served as the conducting consultant on two films: Bradley Cooper's Oscar-nominated “Maestro” and the Canadian film “Days of Happiness.”

Nézet-Séguin lives in Montréal and Philadelphia with his husband, Pierre Tourville, a professional violist.

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# ROBYN OCHS

b. October 5, 1958

## BISEXUAL ACTIVIST

*“Activists are cultural artists. They envision a world that does not yet exist, and then take creative action to create that world.”*

**She is an influential bisexual activist, educator, speaker, and editor.**

Robyn Ochs is a prominent grassroots activist, educator, and speaker, and the editor of *Bi Women Quarterly* and two bi anthologies. She is known for her bisexual advocacy, working to illuminate the complexities of sexuality, dispel bi+ misconceptions, and shatter stereotypes.

Born in San Antonio, Texas, Ochs grew up during a period when bisexuality was largely invisible. By the time she entered State University of New York, Purchase, she had only heard the word “bisexual” once. In her first month as an undergrad, she fell “madly in love” with a woman. She concluded she was bisexual, and the idea frightened her. She remained silent about it for five years.

Ochs earned her bachelor’s degree in 1980 and moved Boston. After attending a women’s group that discussed bisexuality as one of its weekly topics, her activism took root. She promptly cofounded a support group, the BiVocals.

In 1983 Ochs became an administrator at Harvard University, where she eventually earned her master’s degree in education. Also in 1983, she cofounded the Boston Bisexual Network. She cofounded the Bisexual Resource Center two years later.

Ochs worked at Harvard until 2009. She served as the faculty advisor to the student LGBTQ organization, and she cofounded the LGBT Faculty and Staff Group and the LGBTQ Lunches lecture series.

An intersectional coalition builder, Ochs served on the Mass Equality Board of Directors for 12 years and as commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth for three. Her definition of bisexuality: “The potential to be attracted—romantically and/or sexually—to people of more than one gender, not necessarily at the same time, in the same way, or to the same degree” has been adopted by bi+ activists and organizations worldwide. She has taught courses and led workshops across the United States and in 15 countries on subjects such as the politics of sexual orientation and the experiences of those who defy artificially imposed binaries (e.g., sexual orientation, gender expression, race).

Among other honors and awards, *Teen Vogue* named Ochs one of “9 Bisexual Women Who Are Making History” and *The Advocate* named her to its list of 50 States, 50 Heroes. She has received the Susan J. Hyde Activism Award for Longevity in the Movement and the Harvard Gay & Lesbian Caucus’s Lifetime Achievement Award.

In 2004 Ochs married Peg Preble. They were among the first same-sex couples to marry legally in Massachusetts. Initially, news coverage described the marriage as a “lesbian wedding.” Ochs called out the media for bisexual erasure.



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# PAT PARKER

b. January 20, 1944

d. June 17, 1989

## POET & ACTIVIST

*“After my first relationship with a woman, I knew where I was going.”*

**She was a Black lesbian poet and activist who used her writing to further the causes of racial and gender equality.**

Pat Parker was a Black lesbian feminist poet and activist. Her identity and life traumas, including poverty, assault, and the murder of her sister, fueled her writing and her quest for social justice and equality.

Parker (née Patricia Cooks) was born and raised in Houston, Texas. Her mother was a domestic worker and her father retreaded tires. Her childhood was marred by poverty and sexual assault. At 17, Parker moved to California where she attended Los Angeles City College and then San Francisco State College, where she studied creative writing. She never earned a degree.

Aged 18, Parker married the playwright Ed Bullins, who physically abused her. After she became pregnant, he pushed her down the stairs and she miscarried. They

divorced, and she quickly married again, this time to the writer and publisher Robert F. Parker.

Although she had been writing for years, Parker performed her poetry for the first time publicly in 1963. Thereafter, she traveled to various feminist venues, where she continued to present her work. She developed close friendships with her contemporaries, including Audre Lorde. Parker's work became influential in the Black, gay, and feminist movements, and their intersections.

During the 1960s, Parker joined the Black Panthers, a militant Black power party founded in Oakland, California. She soon decided marriage was not for her and divorced her second husband. By the late '60s, she had begun to identify as a lesbian. Experiencing newfound freedom, Parker moved to Oakland to focus more on her writing and activism.

The 1970s and '80s were especially productive for Parker. She joined the Women's Press Collective, published five books of her own work, and contributed to numerous anthologies. She started the Black Women's Revolutionary Council in 1980, and from 1978 to 1988, she served as the executive director and medical coordinator of the Oakland Feminist Women's Health Center.

A lifelong champion of civil rights, women's rights, and LGBTQ rights, Parker continued her activism and writing until her death at 45 from breast cancer. She was survived by her partner, Marty Dunham, and two daughters.

Pat Parker Place, a Chicago community center; the Pat Parker/Vito Russo Center (LGBTQ+) Library; and the Pat Parker Poetry Award, presented annually to a Black lesbian poet, were established in her honor. Parker was among the inaugural 50 Americans whose names appear on the National LGBTQ Wall of Honor at the Stonewall National Monument.



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# MARK POCAN

b. August 14, 1964

## CONGRESSMAN

*“As we celebrate the considerable progress we’ve made toward full equality in our military, we cannot forget about those who continue to suffer because of the discriminatory policies of our past.”*

**He is a progressive out gay congressman and the chair of the Congressional Equality Caucus.**

Mark Pocan is an openly gay U.S. representative for Wisconsin’s 2nd Congressional District. A progressive Democrat, small business owner, and member of the AFL-CIO, he chairs the Congressional Equality Caucus.

Born and raised in the working-class city of Kenosha, Wisconsin, Pocan was elected senior class president of his high school. He attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he majored in journalism and honed his political skills as a member of the College Democrats. As an openly gay young man, he engaged deeply with the issues of social justice and equality. After graduating in 1986, Pocan started a union printing company, Budget Signs & Specialties. Around this time, as he was leaving a gay bar, two men followed him and beat

him with a baseball bat. The incident intensified his activism.

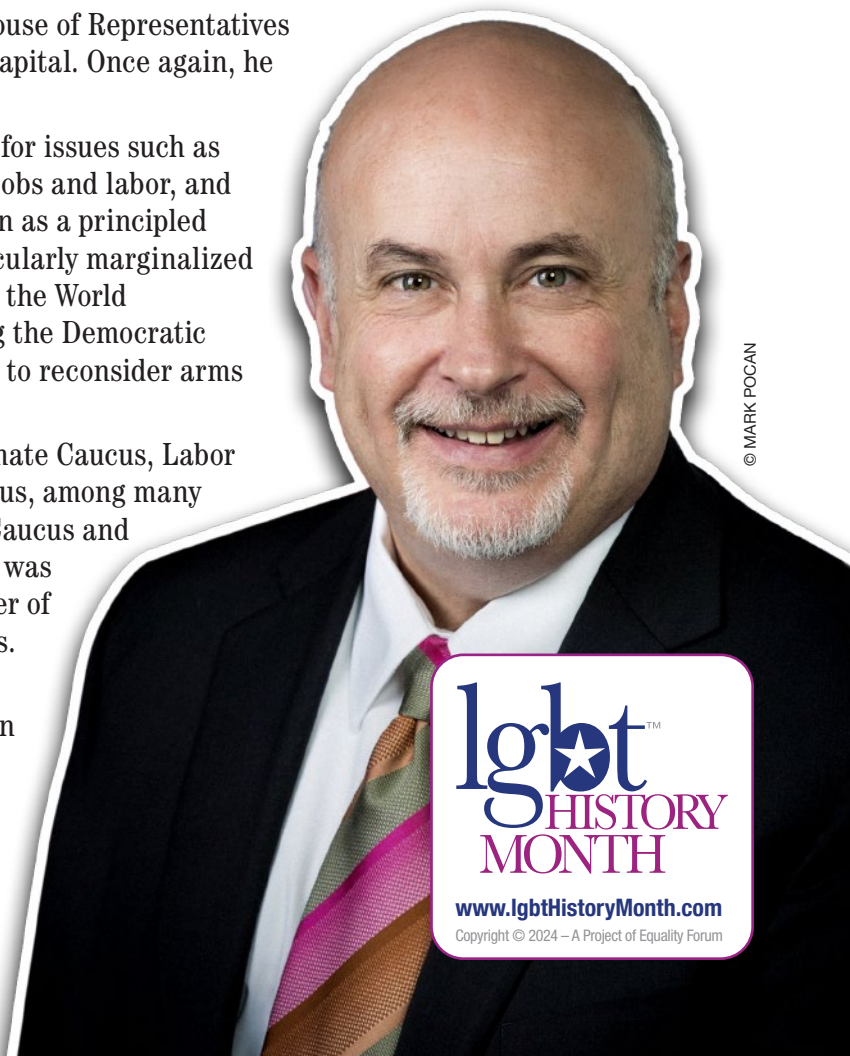
Impelled to advocacy, Pocan worked in various political capacities. He served as a member of the Dane County Board of Supervisors for three terms beginning in 1991 and the Wisconsin State Assembly from 1999 to 2013. He was elected to the State Assembly seat vacated by his longtime friend and ally, Tammy Baldwin, who left to run for Congress.

In 2012 Pocan successfully ran for the United States House of Representatives for Wisconsin’s 2nd District, which includes the state capital. Once again, he succeeded Tammy Baldwin.

Since assuming office, Pocan has staunchly advocated for issues such as health care, LGBTQ rights, environmental protection, jobs and labor, and social and economic justice. He has earned a reputation as a principled leader who fights for the rights of all Americans, particularly marginalized communities. In April 2024, after the Israeli strikes on the World Central Kitchen aid workers in Gaza, Pocan was among the Democratic Congressional members who exhorted President Biden to reconsider arms shipments to Israel.

Pocan participates in the Pro-Choice Caucus, Safe Climate Caucus, Labor Caucus, and the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) Caucus, among many others. He is the cofounder and co-chair of the Labor Caucus and chair of the Congressional Equality Caucus. In 2014 he was named the Congressional Progressive Caucus Newcomer of the Year, and now serves as the caucus’s chair emeritus.

Pocan married Philip Frank in Toronto, Canada, in 2006. With his husband, Pocan continues to run his sign printing business in Madison, Wisconsin.



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# HERB RITTS

b. August 13, 1952

d. December 26, 2002

## ACCLAIMED PHOTOGRAPHER

*“You’re trying to get one moment with one frame that may eventually speak for your generation.”*

**He was an internationally acclaimed celebrity portrait, fashion, and homoerotic photographer.**

Herb Ritts was an acclaimed photographer and art director best known for his imaginative approach to predominantly black-and-white celebrity portraiture, fashion, and homoerotic photos. He emerged in the 1980s as one of the world’s top photographers.

Ritts was born in Brentwood section of Los Angeles, California. His father, Herbert Sr., was a professional furniture designer, and his mother designed interiors. Together, they helped popularize the use of rattan and other mid-century furnishings. The family lived next door to the actor Steve McQueen, whom Ritts regarded as a second father.

Ritts’s parents nurtured his creativity. As a bar mitzvah gift, his father gave him his first camera. After attending high school in California, Ritts moved to Upstate New York to study economics and art history at Bard College.

Ritts graduated from Bard in 1975 and moved back to the West Coast to help with the family business. The following year, he bought his first “real” camera and photographed his friend, the up-and-coming actor Richard Gere. The portraits of Gere garnered attention, helping to launch Ritts’s career, particularly as a celebrity photographer.

Ritts famously photographed countless personalities, including entertainers like Elizabeth Taylor, Brooke Shields, Brad Pitt, Tom Cruise, and David Bowie, and public figures like His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, and President Nelson Mandela of South Africa. He photographed the album covers for Olivia Newton-John’s “Physical,” Madonna’s “True Blue,” and Tina Turner’s “Break Every Rule.” His work with models like Cindy Crawford, Naomi Campbell, and Stephanie Seymour helped establish the “supermodel” as a mainstay of the fashion industry and popular culture.

Throughout his career, Ritts worked with some of the top magazines in the world, including Rolling Stone, Time, Vogue, Elle, Vanity Fair, and Harper’s Bazaar. He helped create iconic advertising campaigns for dozens of brands, such as Giorgio Armani, Valentino, Chanel, and Revlon. He published many books of his photos, and his work has been featured in high-profile museum exhibitions and solo shows, both during his life and posthumously.

In addition to his photography, Ritts also directed several music videos, most notably Michael Jackson’s “In the Closet” and Madonna’s “Cherish.”

Ritts was openly gay. He was diagnosed with HIV in 1989 but did not discuss it publicly.

He contracted pneumonia in 2002, and died at the age of 50.

Ritts was survived by his partner, Erik Hyman.



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# BETH ROBINSON

b. March 6, 1965

## U.S. COURT OF APPEALS JUDGE

*“... Robinson has been rightfully hailed as a tireless champion for equal rights and equal justice.”*

*– Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont*

Beth Robinson is a groundbreaking litigator, marriage equality champion, and former associate justice on the Vermont Supreme Court. In 2021 she became the first openly lesbian U.S. Court of Appeals Judge.

**She is the first out lesbian judge to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals.**

Born to American parents in Karachi, Pakistan, Robinson was raised in Indiana. She attended a Jesuit prep school in Indianapolis where she excelled in mathematics and oratory, graduating as a National Merit Scholar.

Robinson studied philosophy and government at Dartmouth College. She graduated summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa in 1986. She attended the University of Chicago Law School on a full merit scholarship and served as an associate editor of the Law Review. She received her Juris Doctor in 1989.

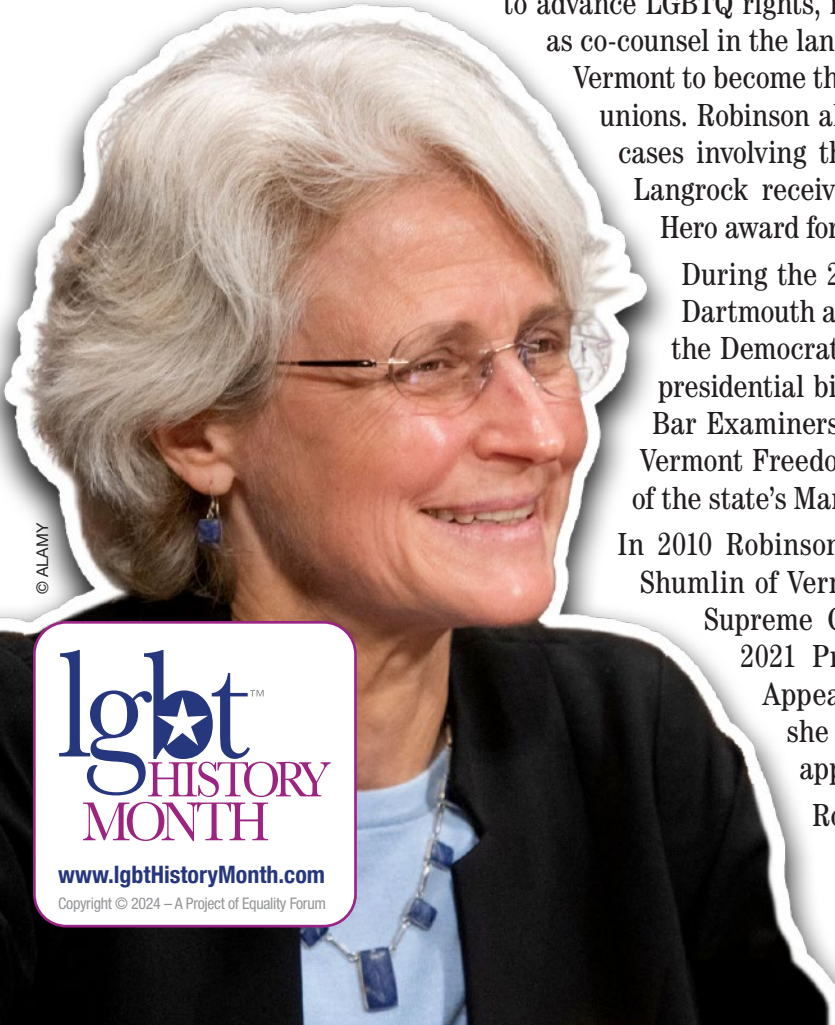
Robinson began her legal career clerking for a federal judge in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, followed by a year as an associate attorney at a D.C. law firm. She worked in private practice until 1993, when she accepted a position as an associate with the Vermont law firm Langrock, Sperry & Wool. The firm later made her a partner.

For the next 18 years, until she became a judge, Robinson remained at Langrock. Her practice focused on family law, employment law, worker's compensation, and personal injury. She also worked pro bono to advance LGBTQ rights, most notably same-sex marriage. In 1999 she served as co-counsel in the landmark case of Baker v. State. The Baker decision led Vermont to become the first state in the nation to recognize same-sex civil unions. Robinson also successfully litigated adoption and child custody cases involving the rights of transgender and nonbiological parents. Langrock received the American Bar Association's Human Rights Hero award for Robinson's trailblazing work.

During the 2000s, Robinson also worked as a senior lecturer at Dartmouth and a justice of the peace. She served as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention supporting Hillary Clinton's presidential bid and held several positions on the state's Board of Bar Examiners, eventually becoming its chair. Later, she chaired Vermont Freedom to Marry, working with policymakers on passage of the state's Marriage Equality Act in 2009.

In 2010 Robinson assumed the role of counsel to Governor Peter Shumlin of Vermont. Gov. Shumlin nominated her to the Vermont Supreme Court, where she served for 10 years. In August 2021 President Biden nominated her to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit. After Senate confirmation, she became the first out lesbian to serve on a federal appeals court in America.

Robinson lives in Vermont with her wife, Kym Boyman.



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# RICHARD SCHNEIDER

b. Sept. 18, 1951

## EDITOR & PUBLISHER

*“There was a huge niche or vacuum in gay and lesbian letters which I hope we somewhat filled.”*

**He is the founder  
and editor of The Gay  
& Lesbian Review  
Worldwide.**

Richard G. Schneider Jr. is the founder, editor in chief, and publisher of The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide, a bimonthly print and web journal featuring essays by LGBTQ writers, historians, political figures, cultural commentators, and scholars.

Schneider earned a Ph.D. in sociology from Harvard University in 1981. He taught anthropology and sociology for the European Division of the University of Maryland before returning to Boston to become director of research for a consulting firm, The Center for Strategy Research.

Schneider honed his editing and publishing skills after he was enlisted to create a newsletter for the Harvard Gay & Lesbian Caucus (HGLC) alumni organization.

Soon after, the publication’s potential for broader readership became clear.

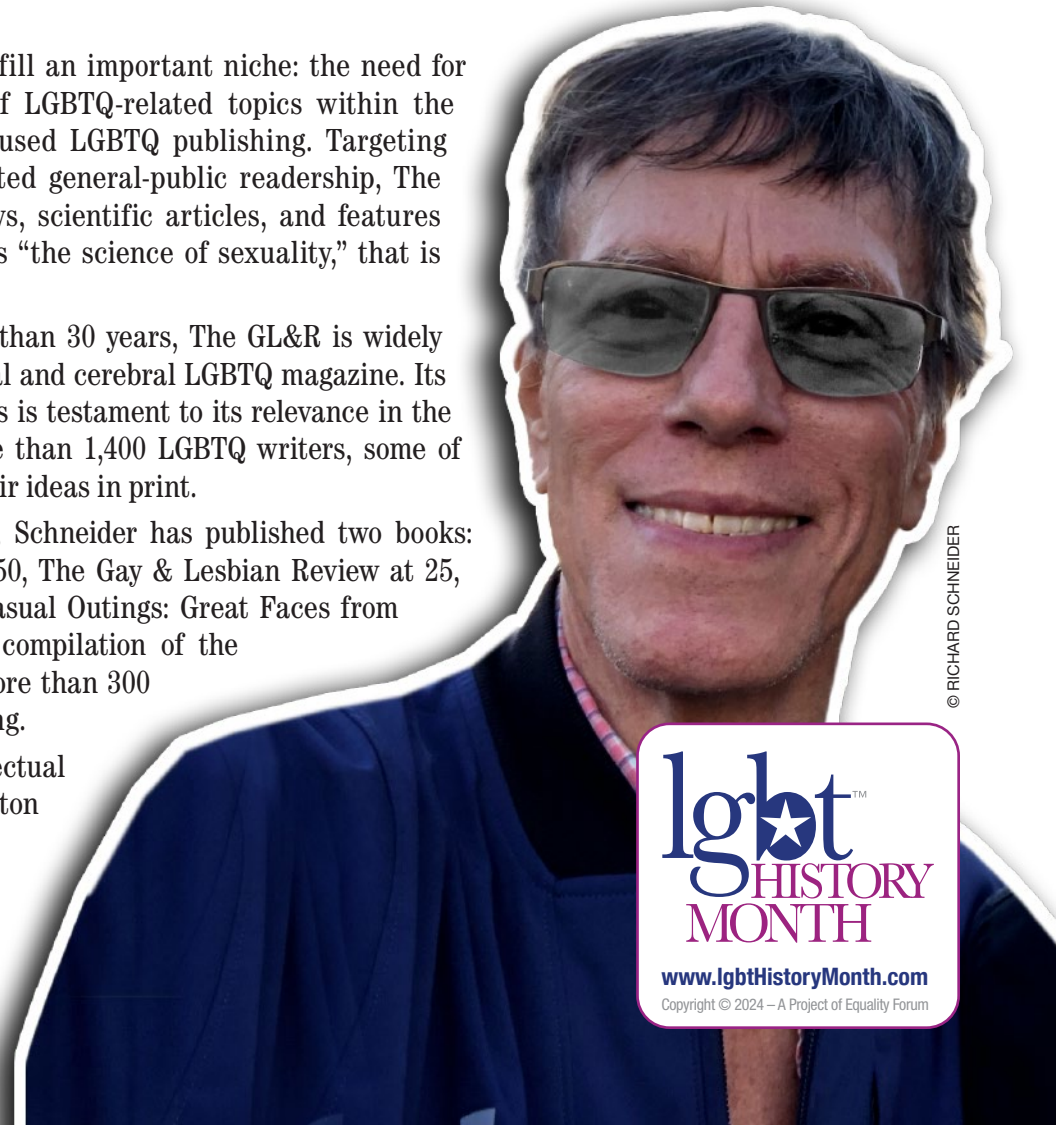
In 1994 Schneider founded The Harvard Gay & Lesbian Review (GL&R). Four years later, it was reorganized as a nonprofit, relinquishing its Harvard ties. Schneider volunteered his time until 1999, when he left his job to dedicate himself to the publication. It was renamed The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide in 2000.

With The GL&R, Schneider aimed to fill an important niche: the need for more literate, scholarly discussion of LGBTQ-related topics within the wider field of largely pop-culture-focused LGBTQ publishing. Targeting both intellectual LGBTQ and interested general-public readership, The GL&R includes essays, poems, reviews, scientific articles, and features based on a conceptual theme, such as “the science of sexuality,” that is unique to each issue.

With Schneider at the helm for more than 30 years, The GL&R is widely considered the nation’s leading cultural and cerebral LGBTQ magazine. Its circulation of roughly 9,000 subscribers is testament to its relevance in the digital age. It has given voice to more than 1,400 LGBTQ writers, some of whom may not otherwise have seen their ideas in print.

Mining the publication’s rich content, Schneider has published two books: “In Search of Stonewall: The Riots at 50, The Gay & Lesbian Review at 25, Best Essays 1994-2018” (2019) and “Casual Outings: Great Faces from the Annals of The G&LR” (2021), a compilation of the best portraits and caricatures from more than 300 contributed by the artist Charles Hefling.

Schneider received the HGLC Intellectual Innovator Award in 2006. He lives in Boston with his partner, Stephen Hemrick.



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# ROBT MARTIN SEDA-SCHREIBER

b. October 20, 1969

## SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTIVIST

*“We will never speak for anyone  
but with everyone.”*

**He is the founder and chief  
activist of the Bayard Rustin  
Center for Social Justice.**

Robt Martin Seda-Schreiber is an artist and the founder and chief activist of The Bayard Rustin Center for Social Justice in Princeton, New Jersey. He has dedicated his career to developing LGBTQ+ support programs.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Seda-Schreiber grew up in East Windsor Township, New Jersey. Named Robert Martin, after Kennedy and King, he credits his parents for his activist bent. He says he “marched for peace and equality with them, whilst still in the womb.”

Seda-Schreiber began his social-justice work at the height of the AIDS crisis. He founded the Creatures of Awareness Theatre Co., a nonprofit community theater group to raise money for HIV/AIDS. He taught art in the East Windsor Regional School District for 25 years, where he created the first gay-straight alliance (GSA) in a New Jersey middle school. He has helped schools across the nation do the same.

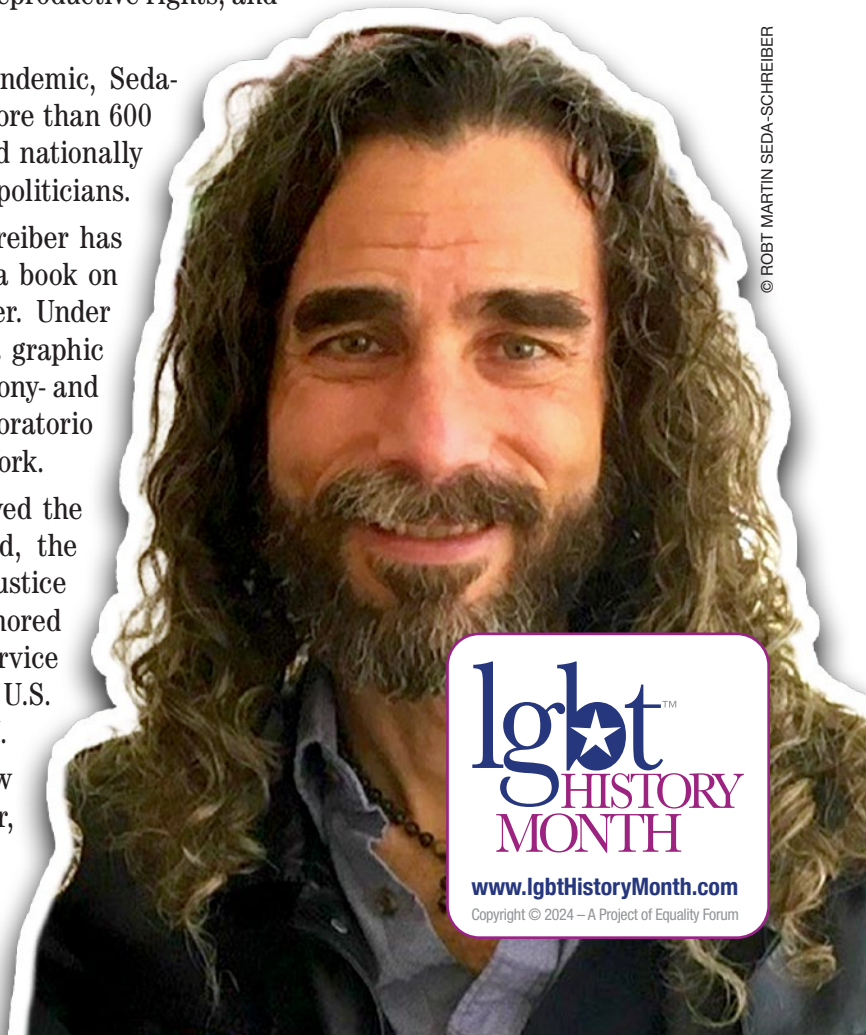
In 2018 Seda-Schreiber founded The Bayard Rustin Center for Social Justice (BRCSJ). Dedicated to preserving the legacy of the gay civil rights leader Bayard Rustin, it serves as a community activist hub and educational safe space for LGBTQ+ youth, intersectional families, and other marginalized communities. The BRCSJ provides free therapy and counseling for at-risk kids, plans rallies and events—including Princeton’s first pride parade—and offers programming around subjects such as gender identity, trans health, reproductive rights, and other issues.

To connect the community during the COVID-19 pandemic, Seda-Schreiber hosted the Social Justice Power Hour. Its more than 600 shows featured inspirational interviews with local and nationally known figures, including activists, artists, actors, and politicians.

An internationally recognized visual artist, Seda-Schreiber has created two works featured in “Design For Obama,” a book on permanent display at the Obama Presidential Center. Under the auspices of The BRCSJ, he is currently writing a graphic novel about Bayard Rustin and is partnering with the Tony- and Grammy-winning musician Bryan Carter to create the oratorio “Rustin in Renaissance” at the Lincoln Center in New York.

Among many other honors, Seda-Schreiber has received the Martin Luther King Jr. Champion for Justice award, the Jefferson Award for Public Service, and the Social Justice Activist of the Year award from the NEA. He was honored with two Senate Proclamations recognizing his service as a teacher, along with a Senate Resolution and a U.S. Congressional Proclamation for his work at The BRCSJ.

Seda-Schreiber identifies as bisexual. He lives in New Jersey with his partner, Cyndi, a deputy public defender, and his son, Jack Marley, a musician.



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# JACKIE SHANE

# TRANSGENDER SINGER

b. May 15, 1940

d. February 21, 2019

*“I guide my life. ... No matter what anyone says, I’m going to be Jackie. That’s all I can be.”*

**She was a pioneering transgender R&B and soul singer.**

Jackie Shane was a pioneering American transgender R&B and soul singer who rose to fame in Toronto, Canada, during the 1960s.

Assigned male at birth in Nashville, Tennessee, Shane knew she was trans in early adolescence. Her single mother supported her gender expression in an era when growing up Black in the segregated South was difficult and crossdressing was illegal. Shane grew her hair and wore traditionally female clothing, jewelry, and makeup — even to school.

Musically gifted, Shane sang in the church choir and began performing professionally in the 1950s. Remarkably, in those days the Southern R&B circuit accommodated gender-nonconforming entertainers. At first, Shane played drums as a studio musician for Excello Records and in a nightclub house band. She also sang and danced in tent shows.

In 1959 Shane performed in Montreal, Canada. Upon hearing her sing, an American expat musician, Frank Motley, asked her to front his band and she agreed. Falling in love with the less overtly racist Canadians, Shane moved to Toronto where her career took off. Singing with Motley’s group, she is credited with bringing the Black R&B sound to the city. Her big break came with the release of her 1962 single, “Any Other Way,” which climbed to No. 2 on the Canadian hit parade.

Shane’s dynamic stage presence, novel appearance, and obvious talent drew packed houses and comparisons to James Brown and Little Richard, whom she revered. Fully made up and outfitted in sequined suits, Shane was perceived publicly as a man in drag. Much later, she came out as trans.

Throughout the 1960s, Shane’s career flourished. She toured North America, squelching harassment and occasional heckling with exceptional aplomb. Shane appeared on U.S. television, but declined an invitation to perform on the famous “Ed Sullivan Show,” because producers insisted she present as male.

In 1970 Shane mysteriously disappeared from the music scene, departing discreetly to care for her mother in Los Angeles before retiring in Nashville. Most people suspected the worst.

During the height of her career, Shane released several records, including six singles and a live album. Despite her undeniable contributions, her musical legacy remained largely overlooked. In 2010, while still in self-imposed professional exile, she was remembered by her friends and bandmates in the documentary “Jackie Shane: Any Other Way,” which aired on CBC radio. The program prompted her comeback. Shane released a retrospective of her music, earning scores of new fans and a Grammy nomination for Best Historical Album in 2018.

Shane died at home the following year. The New York Times published her obituary.



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# ARI SHAPIRO

b. September 30, 1978

## NPR HOST & PERFORMER

*“... I believe in the importance of news. Democracy depends on accurate and truthful stories.”*

**He is a cohost of National Public Radio's flagship newsmagazine, "All Things Considered."**

Ari Shapiro is an award-winning openly gay broadcaster and journalist, a singer, and a best-selling author. He is best known as a cohost of National Public Radio's flagship news program, "All Things Considered."

Ari Michael Shapiro was born in Fargo, North Dakota, and moved to Oregon at the age of 8. He began his journalism career at Yale University, where he contributed to the student-run radio station. After earning his degree in English literature, magna cum laude, Shapiro worked briefly at various news outlets before landing his first position at National Public Radio (NPR) in 2001.

Shapiro rose rapidly through the ranks. Starting as an intern for award-winning Legal Affairs Correspondent Nina Totenberg, he soon became an editorial assistant, then a regional reporter. When NPR made him a justice correspondent, he was the first person under 30 to hold the position. He subsequently spent four years as White House correspondent during the Obama administration, followed by two years as NPR's international correspondent based in London.

In 2015 Shapiro joined NPR's daily afternoon drive-time newsmagazine, "All Things Considered." It is one of the nation's most listened-to and highly regarded radio programs. As a popular cohost, Shapiro covers a wide range of topics, from foreign wars and other hard news to cultural commentary. He has filed stories from five continents. Shapiro also hosts NPR's daily news podcast, "Consider This," and contributes to publications such as The Atlantic, Slate, and The Washington Post.

Shapiro moonlights as an entertainer. He is a regular guest vocalist with the band Pink Martini and sings on four of their albums. He has accompanied them to world-renowned venues in the U.S. and Europe, served as a featured performer in other musical productions, and had two solo shows of his own. Since 2019 Shapiro has toured with the Tony Award-winning actor Alan Cumming in their co-created stage show, "Och & Oy! A Considered Cabaret."

Shapiro's journalism has earned him numerous accolades, including three Edward R. Murrow Awards and the inaugural American Judges Association's American Gavel Award. He was twice listed among Out magazine's Out100, and in 2023 the NLGJA (the association of LGBTQ+ journalists) named him Journalist of the Year.

In 2023 Shapiro's memoir, "The Best Strangers in the World: Stories from a Life Spent Listening," hit bookshelves. It became an instant New York Times best seller.

Shapiro married Michael Gottlieb, a lawyer, in 2004.



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# SAM SMITH

b. May 19, 1992

## SINGER & SONGWRITER

*“I didn’t become successful until I became myself.”*

**They are a Grammy and Academy Award-winning nonbinary singer and songwriter.**

Sam Smith (they/them) is a Grammy and Academy Award-winning English pop singer and songwriter, most celebrated in the U.S. for his 2015 hit “Stay With Me.” Smith came out as nonbinary and adopted they/them pronouns in 2019.

Born in London, Smith was raised in Cambridgeshire, England. Smith’s father drove a truck, and his mother worked as a banker. As a youth, Smith took singing lessons with a local jazz artist and performed in various theater productions. Overweight and bullied for having “breasts,” Smith underwent chest liposuction at the age of 12.

Aged 18, Smith left for London to pursue a music career. Two years later, the music duo Disclosure featured Smith on their breakout single “Latch.” The track, which showcased Smith’s fluid tenor vocals, peaked at number 11 on the UK Singles Chart and received international attention. Smith’s next big break came in 2013, collaborating with Naughty Boy on the hit single “La La La” which soared to No. 1 in the UK.

In 2014 Capitol Records released Smith’s debut studio album, “In the Lonely Hour.” It achieved critical and commercial success, driven by hits such as “Money on My Mind,” “I’m Not the Only One,” and “Stay With Me.” An international smash, “Stay With Me” reached No. 1 in the UK and No. 2 on the U.S. Billboard Hot 100. The song was nominated for six Grammy Awards and won four: Best New Artist, Record of the Year, Song of the Year, and Best Pop Vocal Album.

In 2015 the James Bond movie “Spectre” used Smith’s “Writing’s on the Wall” as its theme song, winning Smith both a Golden Globe and an Academy Award for Best Original Song. In 2022 Smith captured a fifth Grammy for their first U.S. No. 1 single, “Unholy” (with Kim Petras).

To date, Smith’s four studio albums and more than 35 singles have earned numerous additional nominations and awards, including an American Music Award, three Billboard Awards, four Brit Awards, and more than a dozen BMI London Awards.

Beyond music, Smith has been a conspicuous advocate for LGBTQ+ and gender-identity rights, particularly in the UK. In 2014 Smith came out as gay. Four years later, they came out as genderqueer. Smith has since performed in elaborate outfits, unabashedly celebrating their nonbinary identity and sexuality, perhaps most proudly in the 2023 music video “I’m Not Here to Make Friends.”



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# WILLIAM DORSEY SWANN

b. Circa 1860

d. December 1925

## PIONEERING DRAG QUEEN

**He was a former slave and the first self-described drag queen in America.**

William Dorsey Swann was a formerly enslaved person and the first known American to identify as a drag queen. He was also the first American on record to request a presidential pardon for drag-related offenses.

Born into slavery in Hancock, Maryland, Swann was emancipated after the Civil War, sometime in the late 1860s. History suggests that Swann, as a 19th-century

Black man, spent his entire adult life fearlessly committed to queer self-expression at a time of immense homophobia and racial oppression.

Around aged 20, Swann moved to Washington, D.C., where he discovered a vibrant LGBTQ community comprising many formerly enslaved men. Less than a block from the White House, Swann organized elaborate drag balls at his “House of Swann,” featuring extravagant costumes, live music, and exuberant dancing. Dubbing himself the “Queen of Drag,” Swann attracted partygoers from across the city.

Swann was employed as a janitor at a business college. In 1882 he received a combined seven-month sentence for stealing several objects from his employer and books from the Washington Library Company. Shortly after his conviction, the injured parties together petitioned the U.S. president for Swann’s pardon, citing his courtesy, diligence, and desire only to further his education and support his family. It is unclear whether clemency was granted.

In 1896 police raided Swann’s birthday drag ball and arrested over a dozen men, falsely charging Swann with running a brothel. The Washington Post’s account of the incident described Swann as a “big negro arrayed in a gorgeous dress of cream-colored satin.” It marked the first documented arrest of a “female impersonator” in America.

Swann pleaded not guilty. After receiving a 10-month sentence, he boldly applied for his own presidential pardon. Thirty of his allies signed the petition. The U.S. attorney adamantly rejected the request, stating that Swann represented an “evil” and “corrupting” influence.

Swann’s clemency petition represents a seminal feat of LGBTQ activism. In effect, he and his cohorts had asserted their right to gather, particularly in drag, without criminalization. After his incarceration, Swann resumed his drag balls and continued them well into the 20th century.

It was not until the latter part of the 20th century that scholars and activists began to uncover Swann’s historical legacy, recognizing him as trailblazing intersectional drag figure who helped pave the way for LGBTQ rights more than seven decades before the Stonewall riots.

Aged 65, Swann died in Hancock, Maryland. In 2022 a Washington, D.C., resolution decreed that a street already named Swann would henceforth serve to honor William Dorsey Swann.



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# PETER TATCHELL

b. January 25, 1952

## HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST

**He is a controversial,  
lifelong international  
LGBTQ and human  
rights activist.**

*“Don’t accept the world as it is. Dream of what the world could be—and then help make it happen.”*

Peter Tatchell is a lifelong human rights activist dedicated to the fight for equality, democracy, and the liberation of LGBTQ and other marginalized populations worldwide.

Born in Melbourne, Australia, Tatchell became an activist in his mid-teens. Among other causes, he campaigned against the death penalty and for aboriginal rights.

Tatchell came out around 1969 and immediately committed himself to gay rights. Aged 19, he moved to London and joined the Gay Liberation Front, where he became a

leader and organizer. He protested the classification of homosexuality as a mental illness, staged sit-ins against pubs refusing to serve gay people, and crusaded against other forms of discrimination. In 1972 he helped organize the United Kingdom’s first pride parade and has participated annually ever since.

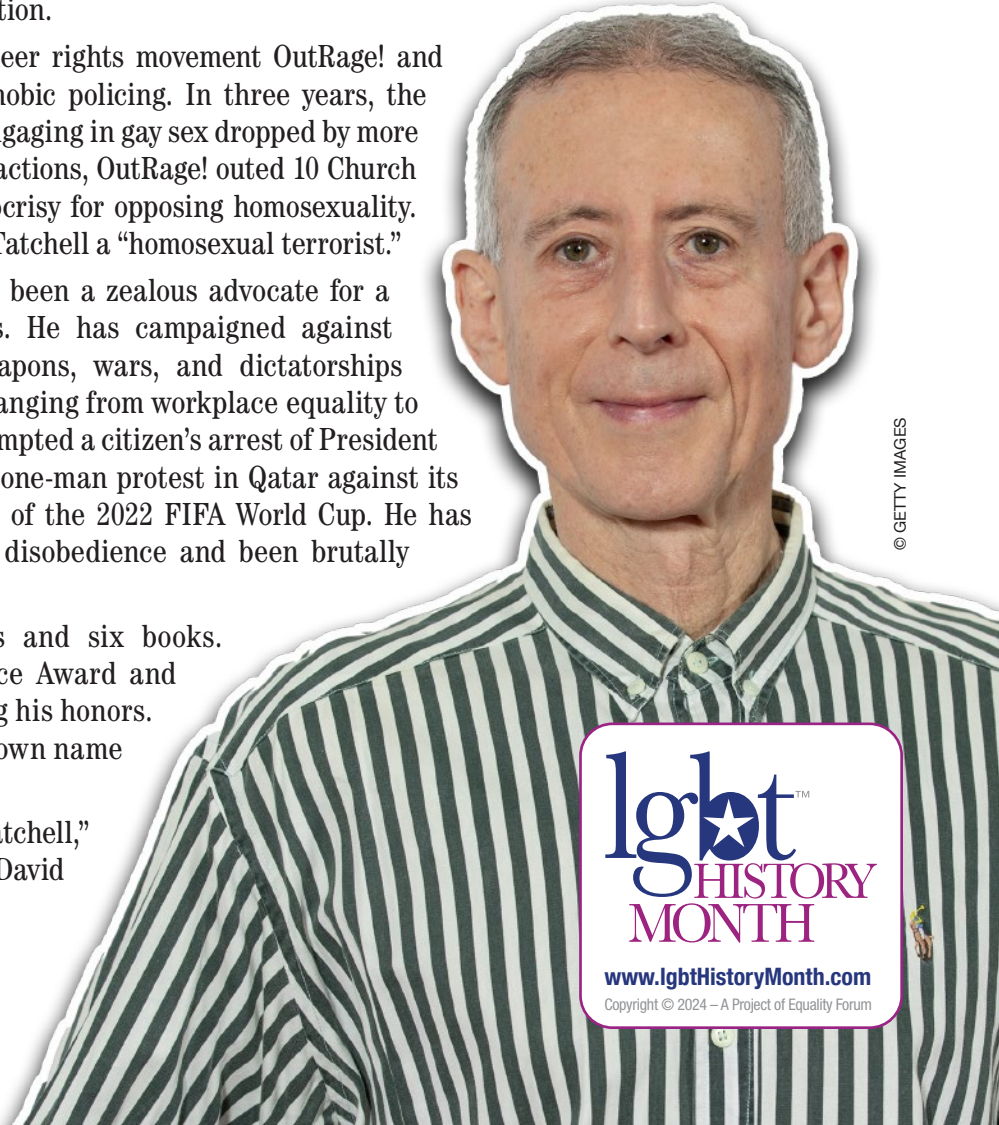
During the 1980s, Tatchell was instrumental in the London chapter of the AIDS awareness organization ACT UP. He authored the seminal self-help book “AIDS: A Guide to Survival” (1986) and founded the UK AIDS Vigil Organization—the first association devoted to protecting the rights of people with HIV. In 1988 he persuaded the 148-nation World Summit of Ministers of Health for Programs on AIDS Prevention to include an antidiscrimination statement in its declaration.

In 1990 Tatchell cofounded the radical queer rights movement OutRage! and spearheaded its campaign against homophobic policing. In three years, the number of men convicted of consensually engaging in gay sex dropped by more than 60%. Among its more infamous direct actions, OutRage! outed 10 Church of England bishops, accusing them of hypocrisy for opposing homosexuality. Members of the British Parliament labeled Tatchell a “homosexual terrorist.”

For more than 50 years, Tatchell has also been a zealous advocate for a wide range of other social justice issues. He has campaigned against racism, sexism, imperialism, nuclear weapons, wars, and dictatorships around the globe and championed causes ranging from workplace equality to environmental sustainability. He twice attempted a citizen’s arrest of President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and staged a one-man protest in Qatar against its human rights record, just before the start of the 2022 FIFA World Cup. He has engaged in more than 3,000 acts of civil disobedience and been brutally beaten and arrested for doing so.

Tatchell is the author of 3,000 articles and six books. He counts the Gandhi International Peace Award and the UK’s Secularist of the Year prize among his honors. He launched a nonprofit foundation in his own name in 2011, where he continues his work.

The bio documentary “Hating Peter Tatchell,” executive produced by Elton John and David Furnish, premiered in 2021.



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# DIANA TAURASI

b. June 11, 1982

## WNBA SUPERSTAR

*“We will not lose another tournament game while I’m wearing this uniform.”*

**She is a 10-time WNBA All-Star voted the greatest player of all time.**

Diana Taurasi is a 10-time WNBA All-Star, a four-time USA Basketball Female Athlete of the Year, and a six-time U.S. Olympic gold medalist. In 2021, as part of the 25th anniversary of the WNBA, fans voted her the GOAT—the greatest player of all time.

Born in Glendale, California, Taurasi is the daughter of Argentinian and Italian immigrants. She grew up speaking Spanish at home. Taurasi’s father played professional soccer in Italy.

Taurasi attended high school in Chico, California, where she led the girls’ basketball team. Before she graduated in 2000, she received the Cheryl Miller Award for best player in Southern California. She was named the Naismith and Parade magazine National High School Player of the Year and the Most Valuable Player (MVP) of the WBCA High School All-America game.

Taurasi attended the University of Connecticut (UCONN), joining the school’s top-ranked team. One of the most dominant players in the history of women’s college basketball, she became UCONN’s first two-time National Player of the Year. During her tenure, Taurasi steered the Huskies to three consecutive NCAA championships and a 139-8 record, with a personal total of 2,000 points. Her accolades included two Naismith College Player of the Year Awards and an Associated Press Player of the Year Award. When she graduated from UCONN in 2004, she was the first person in her family to earn a college degree. She said it meant as much to her as winning any game or medal.

The first overall 2004 WNBA pick, Taurasi was drafted by the Phoenix Mercury and won Rookie of the Year her first season. She completed her 20th season with the team in 2024.

With the Mercury, Taurasi has won three WNBA titles, two Finals MVP Awards, and an WNBA MVP Award. She counts six ESPYs among her numerous other honors. A leading record holder, she has scored over 10,000 career points—the most in WNBA history.

On the world stage, Taurasi has represented the United States with distinction. She is the second-most decorated International Basketball Federation (FIBA) athlete on earth. In addition to her six Olympic gold medals, Taurasi has captured the gold in three FIBA World Cups and a FIBA Americas Championship, along with other trophies.

Taurasi identifies as a lesbian. She married her former teammate, Penny Taylor, in 2017, after eight years together. They are the parents of a son and daughter.



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# COLTON UNDERWOOD

b. January 26, 1992

## ATHLETE & TV PERSONALITY

*“I’m undeniably myself, and I think realizing that is the way to live life.”*

**He is the first star of the TV series “The Bachelor” to come out as gay.**

Colton Underwood is a former NFL player, a philanthropist, a best-selling author, and a television personality. Famous for his appearance on “The Bachelor,” along with two of its spin-offs, he made history as the show’s first star to come out as gay.

Underwood was born in Indianapolis, Indiana, the son of two successful college athletes. He attended his parents’ alma mater, Illinois State University, where he played football, following in his father’s footsteps.

Underwood joined the NFL in 2014 as an undrafted free agent. He signed with the San Diego Chargers and later joined the practice squads of the Philadelphia Eagles and the Oakland Raiders. In 2015 he founded the Colton Underwood Legacy Foundation to provide equipment and resources for people living with cystic fibrosis, after his young cousin was diagnosed with the disease.

Following his release from the Raiders in 2016, Underwood pivoted from football. In 2018 he became a contestant on the 14th season of the ABC hit reality show “The Bachelorette.” Immediately after he was eliminated from the competition, he was cast in season 5 of “Bachelor in Paradise.” In 2019 Underwood was invited to star in “The Bachelor.”

During his stint with the franchise, Underwood publicly discussed his decision to remain a virgin—a claim “The Bachelor” heavily merchandized. Although he did not propose to his “Bachelor” finalist, Cassie Randolph, at the show’s conclusion (the usual result when the star makes his choice), the couple began a two-year relationship. Underwood chronicled his search for love and his relationship with Randolph his 2020 New York Times best-selling memoir, “The First Time.”

Following blackmail attempts to out him, Underwood disclosed that he was gay during an interview in 2021 with Robin Roberts on “Good Morning America.” He is the first star in the history of “The Bachelor” to come out. Underwood further disclosed that he had been with men before his “Bachelor” appearance.

Following his revelation, Underwood signed with Netflix for a six-episode unscripted reality series, “Coming Out Colton,” which chronicled his experience embracing the LGBTQ+ community.

Underwood married Jordan C. Brown, a Democratic strategist, in May 2023. He has shifted the focus of his Legacy Foundation to mental health awareness with an emphasis on student athletes.

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# LUTHER VANDROSS

GRAMMY-WINNING  
SINGER

b. April 20, 1951

d. July 1, 2005

*“Whenever I say goodbye it’s never for long because I believe in the power of love.”*

**He was one of the most influential R&B singers of all time.**

Luther Vandross was an eight-time Grammy Award-winning singer, songwriter, and record producer, rated among the top R&B artists of all time. Known as “The Velvet Voice,” he dominated the charts for more than two decades.

Vandross was born in New York City. His father died when Vandross was a child. Vandross developed an early aptitude for music and took his inspiration from the sounds of Aretha Franklin, Dionne Warwick, and other female singers in the pantheon of Motown superstars.

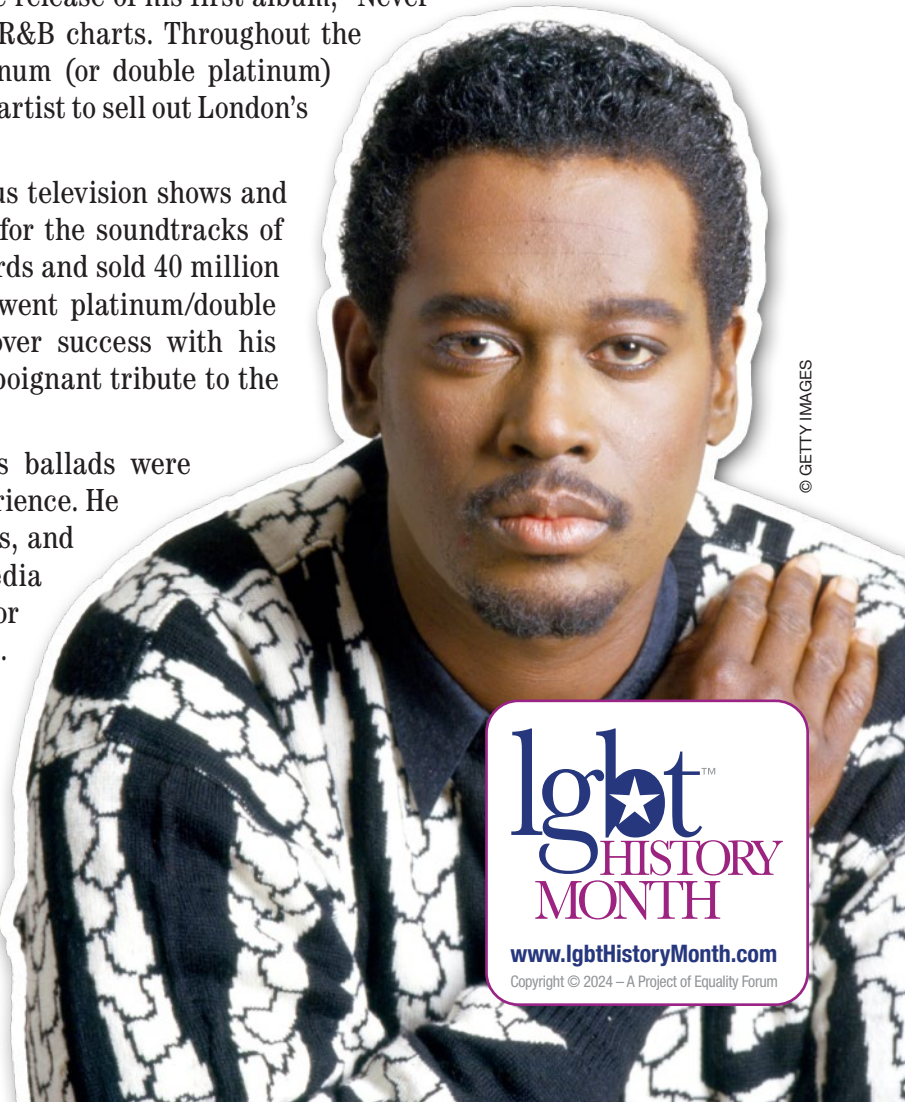
In 1969 Vandross landed a television appearance singing on “Sesame Street,” then a brand-new children’s show. His first big artistic break came in the early 1970s, when he composed songs such as “Everybody Rejoice” for the Broadway musical “The Wiz.” The rocker David Bowie hired him as a backup singer, and Vandross worked on the arrangements for Bowie’s famous 1975 album, “Young Americans.” Bette Midler, Diana Ross, Barbra Streisand and a host of other leading artists also hired Vandross as an arranger, songwriter, and backup singer. Toward the end of the decade, he recorded with a variety of groups, singing on singles such as “Dance, Dance, Dance” by the band Chic.

Vandross launched his solo career in 1981 with the release of his first album, “Never Too Much.” The title track reached No. 1 on the R&B charts. Throughout the 1980s and ’90s, he released 11 consecutive platinum (or double platinum) albums. Also beloved abroad, he was the first male artist to sell out London’s Wembley arena for 10 straight shows.

During his career, Vandross appeared on numerous television shows and performed at prestigious events. He wrote songs for the soundtracks of 16 feature films. Vandross won eight Grammy Awards and sold 40 million records worldwide. Of his 14 studio albums, 13 went platinum/double platinum. In 2003, he achieved ultimate crossover success with his Billboard No. 1 album “Dance With My Father,” a poignant tribute to the parent he lost too soon.

Characterized by their soulful lyrics, Vandross’s ballads were infused with the emotional weight of his own experience. He struggled with his weight and sexuality, loneliness, and the desire for romantic love. Despite ongoing media speculation, he never came out publicly, perhaps for fear of losing his predominantly female audience. In 2017 his close friend, the legendary singer Patti LaBelle, disclosed in a television interview that Vandross had been gay.

Vandross suffered a major stroke in 2003 and died from complications two years later. He was posthumously inducted into the National Rhythm and Blues Hall of Fame. The New York Times published his obituary.



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# JOEL WACHS

b. March 1, 1939

## WARHOL FOUNDATION PRESIDENT

*“... In those days, people were hiding, because the consequences of coming out would be so great.”*

Joel Wachs is a former longstanding member of the Los Angeles City Council and the president of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. He is highly regarded for his lifelong arts advocacy.

Wachs was born in Scranton, Pennsylvania. At the age of 10, he moved to Los Angeles with his parents, who opened a successful chain of women’s clothing stores. Wachs attended UCLA and earned his law degree from Harvard Law School. He received a master’s degree in taxation law from New York University.

**He is a lifelong arts advocate and the president of The Andy Warhol Foundation.**

Wachs worked for five years as a tax attorney at an L.A. law firm before he turned his attention to local politics. In 1971 he was elected by a landslide to the Los Angeles City Council. At the age of 33, he became its youngest member. Reelected seven times by record margins, Wachs served as a councilman for 30 years.

During his tenure, Wachs earned a reputation as L.A.’s foremost champion of the arts, leading legislative initiatives that increased funding and support for cultural institutions and artists. He played a pivotal role in establishing the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, the Los Angeles Arts Commission, and the Los Angeles Endowment for the Arts. He also served as acting chairman of the National League of Cities Task Force on the Arts. In 1981 he was voted City Council president and served a two-year term.

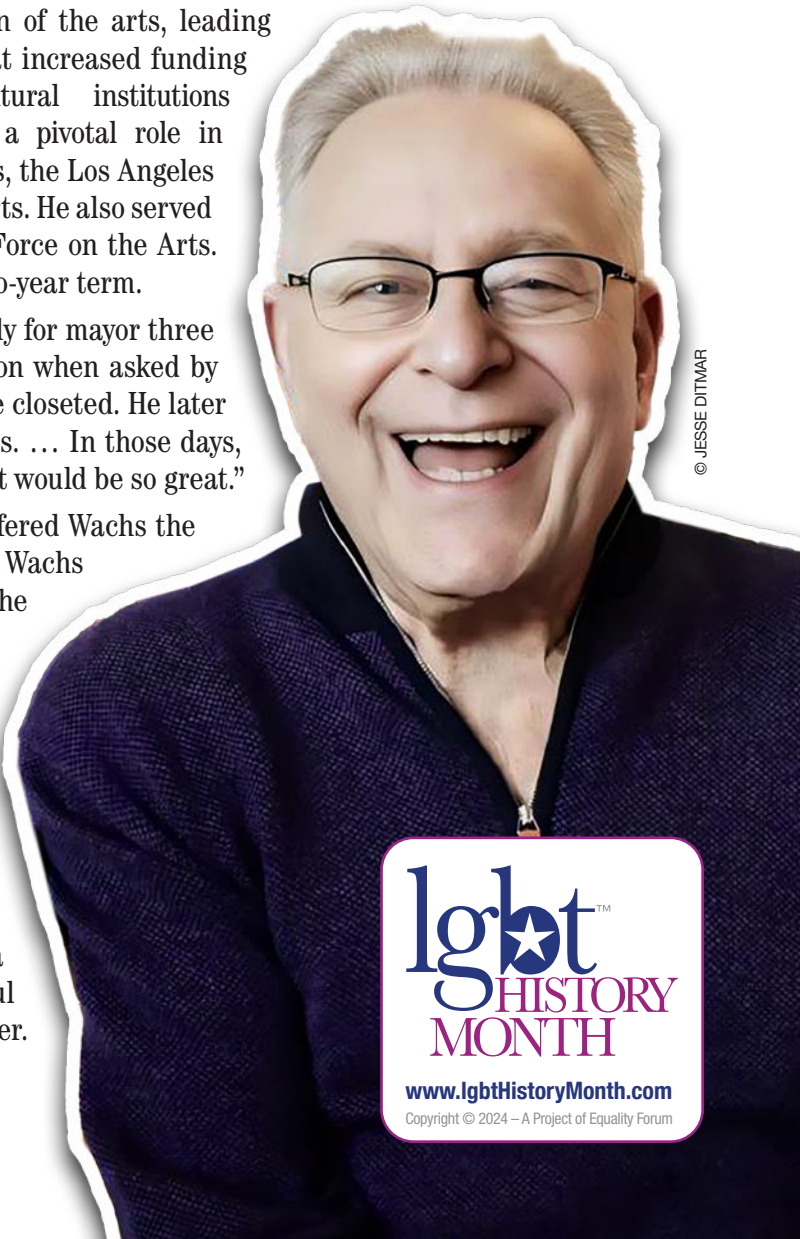
While serving on City Council, Wachs also ran unsuccessfully for mayor three times. Between elections, in 1999, he came out on television when asked by the interviewer if he was gay. At 60, Wachs had spent his life closeted. He later told the Los Angeles Times, “The suppression was enormous. ... In those days, people were hiding, because the consequences of coming out would be so great.”

In 2001 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts offered Wachs the job as president, and he resigned from politics. In this role, Wachs oversees one of the most influential organizations in the contemporary art world. The Warhol Foundation has awarded more than \$300 million in grants to over a thousand arts organizations and has donated over 52,000 works of art to more than 300 arts institutions worldwide.

In 2002 the L.A. City Council named the downtown intersection of West 2nd Street and South Grand Avenue “Joel Wachs Square.”

In the 2021 movie “Licorice Pizza,” set in the 1970s, Benny Safdie plays a closeted Los Angeles politician—a fictionalized version of Wachs. The film’s director, Paul Thomas Anderson, consulted with Wachs about the character.

Wachs lives in Manhattan, New York.



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