

ADRIENNE RICH

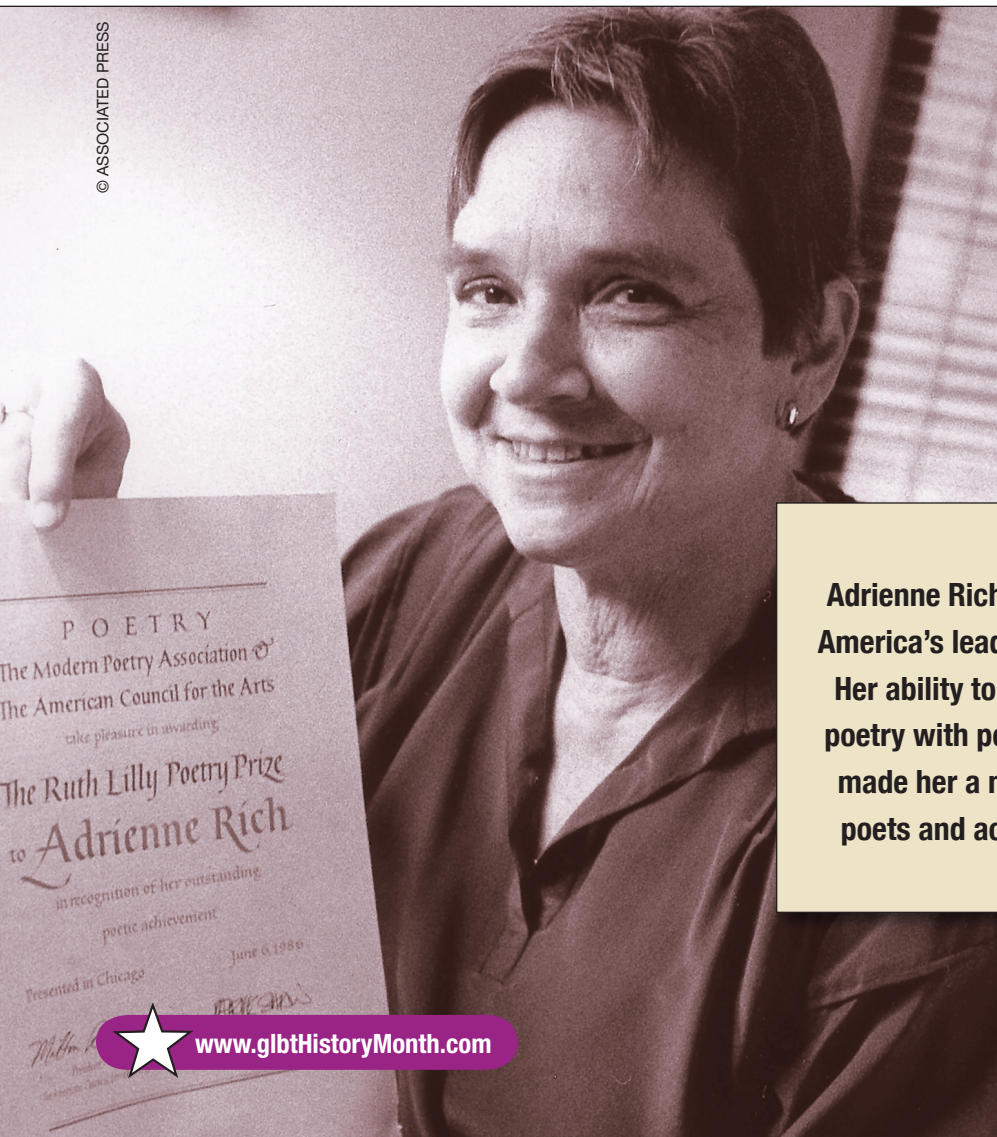
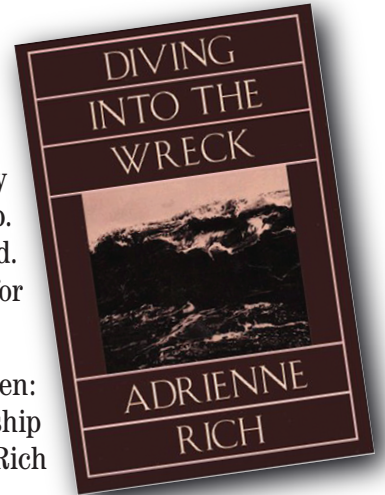
b. 5/16/1929

"The connections between and among women are the most feared, the most problematic, and the most potentially transforming force on the planet."

Adrienne Rich became a published poet in 1951 at the age of 21, when W. H. Auden selected her first book, *A Change of World*, for the Yale Younger Poets Prize. She has published nearly 20 volumes of poetry and several books of nonfiction.

Rich's poetry has been honored with numerous prestigious awards, including the Academy of American Poets Fellowship, two Guggenheim Fellowships and a MacArthur Fellowship. Her collection of poems *Diving into the Wreck* received the 1974 National Book Award. The American Academy of Poets bestowed the Wallace Stevens Award on Rich in 1997 for "outstanding and proven mastery in the art of poetry."

Rich's 1971 celebrated address to the Modern Language Association, "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Revision," challenged many traditional assumptions of literary scholarship and prompted the inclusion of women's studies and feminist criticism in academia. Rich advocated equality for women, gays, and those disenfranchised by race and class.



In 1997, Rich declined the National Medal of Arts, saying: "Art ... means nothing if it simply decorates the dinner table of the power which holds it hostage. The radical disparities of wealth and power in America are widening at a devastating rate. A president cannot meaningfully honor certain token artists while the people at large are so dishonored."

Rich is active in movements for GLBT rights, reproductive freedom and the progressive New Jewish Agenda. In 1981, she received the Fund for Human Dignity Award of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

In 2003, Rich joined other poets in protesting the war in Iraq by refusing to attend a White House symposium on poetry.

Adrienne Rich is one of America's leading poets. Her ability to combine poetry with politics has made her a model for poets and activists.



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