

SYLVIA RIVERA

b. 7/9/1951

d. 2/19/2002

TRANSGENDER ACTIVIST

"I'm not missing a minute of this, it's the revolution!"

**Sylvia Rivera
co-founded STAR (Street
Transvestite Action
Revolutionaries) to help
homeless youth.**

Sylvia Rivera was an early LGBT activist.

After the Stonewall uprising in 1969, Rivera joined the Gay Activists Alliance (GAA) and worked energetically on its campaign to pass the New York City Gay Rights Bill. She was famously arrested for climbing the walls of City Hall in a dress and high heels to crash a closed-door meeting on the bill.

In time the GAA eliminated drag and transvestite concerns from their agenda as they sought to broaden their political base. Years later Rivera told an interviewer, "When things started getting more mainstream, it was like, 'We don't need you no more.'" But, she added, "Hell hath no fury like a drag queen scorned."

Sylvia Rivera (née Ray Rivera Mendosa) was a persistent and vocal advocate for transgender rights. Her activist zeal was fueled by her own struggles to find food, shelter and safety in the urban streets from the time she left home at the age of 10. In 1970 Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson co-founded STAR (Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries) to help homeless youth.

The Sylvia Rivera Law Project (SRLP), an organization dedicated to ending poverty and gender identity discrimination, carries on Rivera's work on behalf of marginalized people.

In 2005 a street in Greenwich Village near the Stonewall Inn was renamed in Sylvia Rivera's honor.



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