

TONY KUSHNER

b. July 16, 1956

“The world should be striving to make all its members secure.”

Tony Kushner is an acclaimed playwright and social commentator. His play “Angels in America” won a Pulitzer Prize and profoundly impacted the AIDS crisis.

Tony Kushner is an award-winning political playwright and activist. He is best known for his epic play, “Angels in America.”

Kushner was raised in Lake Charles, Louisiana. His parents were classical musicians who encouraged their children’s interest in the arts; they paid one dollar for every poem the children memorized and recited.

Kushner earned a B.A. in medieval studies from Columbia University in 1978 and an M.F.A. from New York University’s graduate acting program in 1984.

Kushner’s longtime involvement with activist groups like the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) is reflected in his writing. The characters in his plays often deal with oppression related to their being Jewish, black or gay.

In 2002, Kushner wrote the book and lyrics for the musical “Caroline or Change,” about racial turmoil at the end of segregation. The story is told through the relationship of a black maid and her Jewish employers.

“Angels in America” follows two couples that are linked to Roy Cohn, a lawyer involved in the McCarthy trials. The play depicts the characters’ struggles with homosexuality and AIDS during the Reagan administration. HBO later adapted the stage version into a miniseries starring Meryl Streep, Emma Thompson and Al Pacino.

Kushner’s long list of commendations includes two Tony Awards, an Emmy Award, a Pulitzer Prize for Drama, an Oscar nomination, an Arts Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Spirit of Justice Award from the Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, and an honorary doctorate from Brandeis University.

In 2003, Kushner exchanged vows with his partner, Mark Harris, editor at large of Entertainment Weekly, in a commitment ceremony. They were the first gay couple to be featured in The New York Times “Vows” column.



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