

ANNISE PARKER

b. May 17, 1956

MAYOR OF HOUSTON

“The voters of Houston have opened the door to history. I know what this means to many of us who never thought we could achieve high office.”

In 1997, Annise Parker won a seat on the Houston City Council, making her Houston’s first out elected official.

In 2009, when Annise Parker was elected, Houston became the largest city in the nation with an openly gay mayor. Houston is the fourth most populous city in the United States.

Annise Parker was born and raised in Houston. Her mother was a bookkeeper, and her father worked for the Red Cross. Annise received a National Merit Scholarship to Rice University, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in anthropology and sociology.

After graduation, Parker began a 20-year career as a software analyst in the oil and gas industry. In 1997, she won a seat on the Houston City Council, making her Houston’s first out elected official. In 2003, Parker was elected city controller. She served two additional terms before being elected mayor.

Parker’s mayoral triumph didn’t come without a fight and controversy. Conservative groups criticized her for her “gay agenda” and distributed fliers featuring Parker and her partner, asking the question, “Is this the image Houston wants to portray?” Parker campaigned with her partner, Kathy Hubbard, and their three children.

Despite the attacks, Parker won the election in a city that denies its employees domestic partner benefits, and in a state where gay marriage and civil unions are constitutionally banned.

Parker was recognized as Council Member of the Year by the Houston Police Officers Union. In 2008, Houston Woman Magazine named her one of Houston’s 50 Most Influential Women.



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