

AMANDA SIMPSON

b. March 26, 1961

GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL

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“I’d rather not be the first but someone has to be.”

Amanda Simpson is the Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology in the U.S. Department of Defense. She is the first openly transgender female presidential appointee.

Born in the Chicago area, Simpson grew up in Southern California. She holds a bachelor’s degree in physics, and master’s degrees in engineering and business administration.

As an undergraduate, Simpson trained as a pilot. “I quickly realized this was a way to use all the sciences and technology I had been exposed to in the classroom,” she says. “I’ve been lucky to incorporate my love of flight into my career.” Simpson is a certified flight instructor, and has her airline transport pilot (ATP) certificate.

For 27 years, Simpson worked at Raytheon Missile Systems. She spent 20 years as the manager of flight operations and departed as Deputy Director of Advanced Technology Development. In 2005, she successfully advocated for Raytheon to include gender identity and expression in its nondiscrimination policy.

In 2004, Simpson became the first openly transgender person in the United States to win a contested primary by securing a Democratic nomination for the Arizona House of Representatives. In 2008, she was a delegate for Hillary Clinton at the Democratic National Convention.

Simpson has served on the boards of numerous organizations, including the Arizona Human Rights Fund, the Tucson Corporate LGBT Coalition, Out and Equal Workplace Advocates and the National Center for Transgender Equality.

Before she was appointed to her current position, Simpson was Senior Technical Advisor in the U.S. Commerce Department’s Bureau of Industry and Security. As the highest-ranking technical member, she advised on policy issues and monitored the export of weapons technology.

Simpson’s many honors include the 2001 Raytheon Woman on the Move Award, the 2005 Arizona Human Rights Fund Individual Award, the 2010 Louise Young Award, and OUT for Work’s 2010 OUTstanding Individual Award. She resides in Tucson, where she was Grand Marshal of the city’s 2005 Pride Parade.



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