

MARY KAY HENRY

b. 1958

LABOR ACTIVIST

“Our local unions and divisions should drive our national priorities, not the other way around.”

**In 2011, CNN
named Henry one of
“Washington’s Most
Powerful Women.”**

Mary Kay Henry is a labor union organizer and the first female president of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU).

Henry grew up in a Detroit suburb as the eldest girl in a family of 10 children. During college, she was a lobbyist for a grassroots advocacy group alongside union activists. In 1979, she earned her bachelor’s degree in urban planning and labor relations from Michigan State University.

In 1980, she started her career at the SEIU California State Council as a researcher. Over the next 10 years, Henry held various positions there.

She helped pioneer the union’s nontraditional collective bargaining agreements and system-wide health care organizing strategies.

Henry moved to SEIU International, where she served as director of the health care division, an executive board member, the chief health care strategist and the executive vice president.

In 2010, she was elected international president of SEIU. Henry advocates for labor, immigrant and LGBT rights. She is a co-founder of the Lavender Caucus for SEIU’s LGBT employees.

Henry serves on the executive board of Families USA, a consumer health care advocacy organization. In 2009, Modern Healthcare magazine named her one of its “Top 25 Women in Healthcare.” In 2011, CNN named Henry one of “Washington’s Most Powerful Women.”

Henry and her partner, Paula Macchello, a senior strategic organizer with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, are outspoken advocates for same-sex marriage. Together for 24 years, they share homes in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco.



© ASSOCIATED PRESS

lgbt
HISTORY
MONTH

www.lgbtHistoryMonth.com

Copyright ©2012 – A Project of Equality Forum