

# JOAN BIREN

b. July 13, 1944

## DOCUMENTARIAN

**Her film “A Simple Matter of Justice” documented the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights.**

*“My thing was to take pictures to make visible what was invisible.”*

Joan Biren is an internationally recognized photographer and filmmaker who chronicles gay life. Her photographs are on display in the Library of Congress.

Raised in Washington, D.C., Biren received her bachelor’s degree in political science from Mount Holyoke College and her master’s degree in communications from American University. After studying politics and sociology at Oxford University, Biren returned to the U.S., where she taught herself photography.

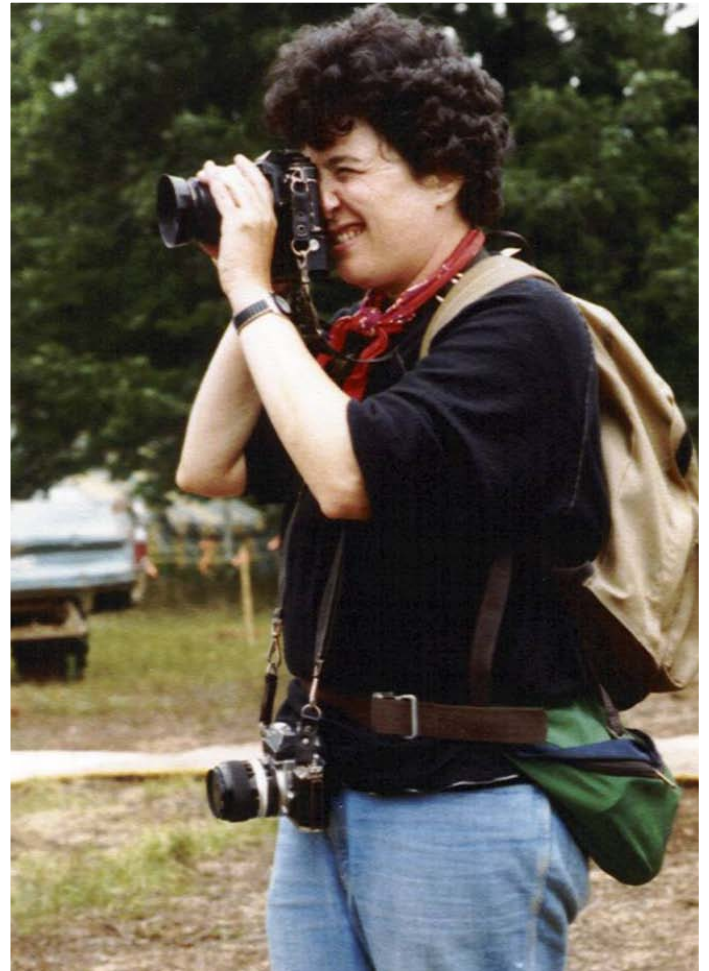
In 1969, Biren joined the women’s liberation movement. As one of that movement’s first out lesbians, she cofounded The Furies Collective, a lesbian separatist organization. The Collective published *The Furies*, a newspaper that had a profound impact on lesbian thought.

The Collective enabled Biren to photograph lesbians for *The Furies*. After the organization disbanded in 1973, Biren continued photographing LGBT life, eventually publishing two collections: “Eye to Eye: Portraits of Lesbians” (1979) and “Making a Way: Lesbians Out Front” (1987). Both collections received praise for bringing groundbreaking visibility to lesbian life.

After a nationwide tour of “Lesbian Images in Photography, 1850 to the Present,” Biren transitioned to filmmaking. Her film “A Simple Matter of Justice” documented the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights.

In 2003, Biren released “No Secret Anymore: The Times of Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon,” a film chronicling the lives of two pioneering leaders of the lesbian civil rights movement. The film won awards at both LGBT and mainstream film festivals.

Biren lives in Silver Spring, Maryland, where she continues to document LGBT lives through photography and film.



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