

DARLENE GARNER

b. September 28, 1948, Columbus, Ohio

LGBT ACTIVIST

“One of the things that the United States has never been able to tolerate for long has been injustice and bigotry.”

Garner helped found the National Coalition of Black Gays, the first non-white LGBT organization in the country.

Before Darlene Garner helped found the National Coalition of Black Gays (NCBG)—later known as the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays—“gay” was largely synonymous with “white.” Garner and other early black LGBT leaders were determined to make their voices heard and their unique experiences as LGBT people of color known. “What we were doing had the capacity to change the face of history,” Garner stated. “Our youth and naiveté helped us do it with a boldness. If we had been seasoned activists, we might not have taken it on. We know that if it was not us, there might be no one.” The NCBG became the first non-white LGBT organization in the country.

Following her involvement with the NCBG, Garner entered a seminary to serve the spiritual needs of the LGBT community. As an ordained minister of the Metropolitan

Community Church, Garner devoted herself to religious, racial and LGBT advocacy.

In 2009 when the Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Equality Amendment Act passed in Washington, D.C., Garner and her partner, Candy, were among the first same-sex couples to marry.

Garner helped demonstrate that LGBT issues are not white-only and that LGBT people exist in a rainbow of skin tones.



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