

MIDGE COSTANZA

b. November 28, 1931

d. March 23, 2010

PRESIDENTIAL ADVISER

"It is the link from the present to the past that gives us a spirit to address the future."

**Midge Costanza
was a political
activist and an
adviser to President
Jimmy Carter.**

Margaret "Midge" Costanza was a political activist and an adviser to President Jimmy Carter. When Carter ran for president in 1976, Costanza served as co-chair of his New York campaign, delivering a fiery speech for him at the Democratic National Convention. When Carter was elected, she served as the assistant to the president for public liaison with an office next to the Oval Office. At the White House she earned the nickname "Window on America."

Born in New York to Italian immigrants, Costanza began her political career as a volunteer for W. Averell Harriman's gubernatorial campaign; she later served as executive director of Robert F. Kennedy's 1964 Senate campaign.

Costanza became an outspoken advocate for LGBT rights and, in 1973, became the first woman elected to the Rochester (N.Y.) City Council. She then served as vice mayor of the city from 1974 to 1977.

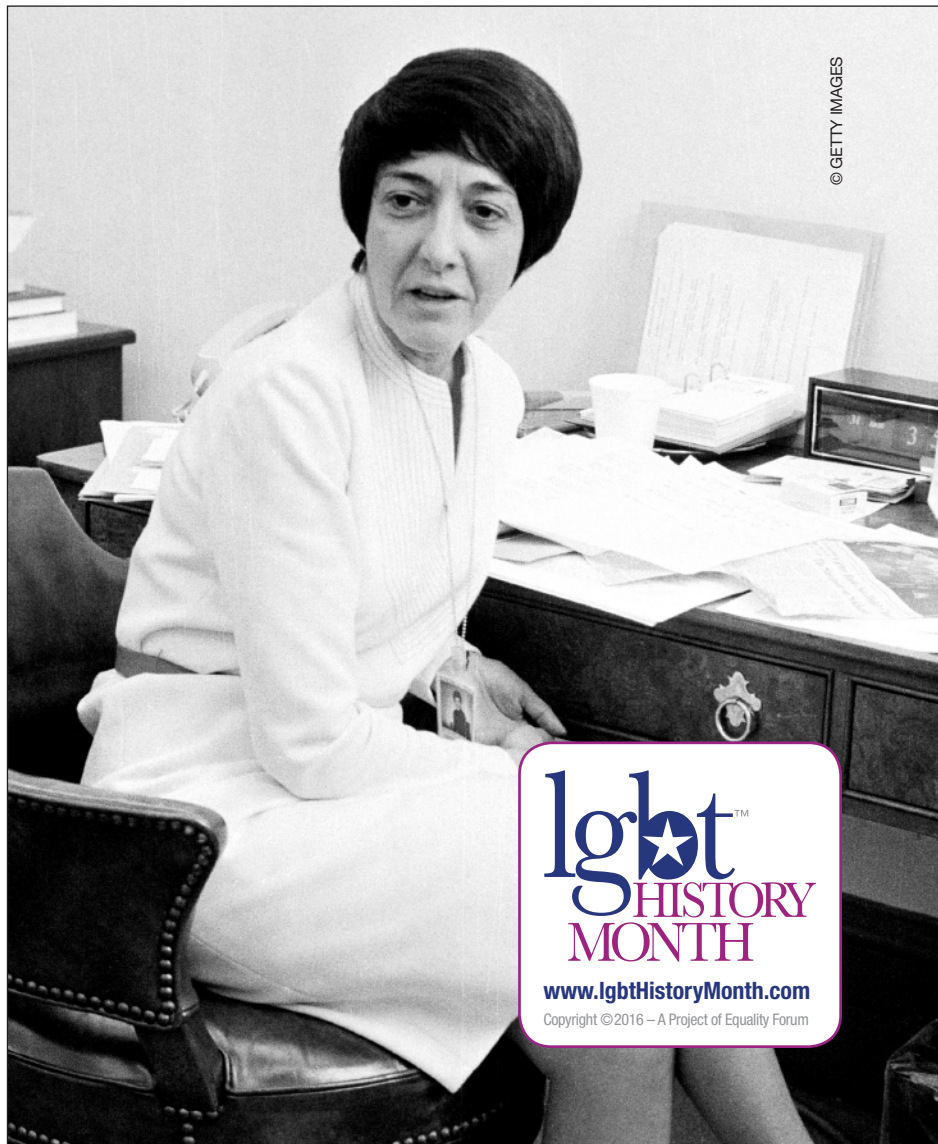
Costanza invited members of the National Gay Task Force to the White House during Anita Bryant's controversial Save Our Children campaign. She also hosted a group of 30 women in protest of the president's opposition to federal abortion funding. She was featured on the cover of Newsweek with the headline "Woman in the White House."

After resigning from her White House post, she coached political candidates in public speaking and worked to get Barbara Boxer elected to the Senate in 1992. California Governor Gray Davis appointed Costanza as a special liaison to women's groups, a position she held until 2003.

Costanza was a professor at San Diego State University, where she worked with the political science and women's studies departments. She created the Midge Costanza Institute at the University of California at San Diego to help young people engage in political and social activism.

Costanza was also active with an AIDS research organization and fought for the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. She worked tirelessly to elect more women to public office. In 2005 she joined the San Diego district attorney's office as public affairs officer focused on the prevention of elder abuse.

In 2011 she was inducted into the San Diego County Women's Hall of Fame at the Women's Museum of California.



lgbtTM
HISTORY
MONTH

www.lgbtHistoryMonth.com

Copyright ©2016 – A Project of Equality Forum