

CHAZ BONO

b. March 4, 1969

TRANSGENDER ACTIVIST

“A lot of parents never speak to their transgender kids again; that’s not the case in my family.”

Chaz Bono is a transgender activist and author.

Chaz Bono, born Chastity Bono, is the only child of American entertainers Sonny and Cher. In 2008 Bono began undergoing gender reassignment procedures, publicly discussing the experience in the Emmy-nominated documentary “Becoming Chaz.”

A native of Los Angeles, Bono grew up in the spotlight, often appearing on his parents’ popular variety show. Later he said he felt uncomfortable wearing dresses on TV and remembered wanting to be more like his father.

After his parents divorced in 1975, Bono split his time between them and later moved to New York City to attend college and pursue a career in music. He formed the band Ceremony, for which he sang lead vocals and played guitar and drums. The band released an album

called “Hang Out Your Poetry,” which featured guest appearances by Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead and Bono’s parents.

By 1990 the tabloids began speculating that Bono was a lesbian. Bono came out publicly five years later in The Advocate, eventually becoming the entertainment director for the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD). Bono published “Family Outing,” a book that explores his coming out and gender issues.

In his next book, “The End of Innocence,” published in 2002, Bono provided insights into the music business and his relationship with an older woman.

Bono went public with his substance abuse problems before becoming sober in 2004. He appeared on the reality show “Celebrity Fit Club” to address body issues, and later competed as the first transgender contestant on “Dancing With the Stars.”

After completing his transition in 2010, Bono legally changed his first name to Chaz. He shared his experiences in the best-selling book “Transition: The Story of How I Became a Man” (2011). He also starred in a television special about his transition called “Being Chaz.” His mother, Cher, said that she initially had difficulty accepting Bono’s sexuality, though she has since become an outspoken advocate for LGBT rights.

Bono is a leading transgender advocate and speaks out worldwide for LGBT rights.



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