

TOM AMMIANO

b. December 15, 1941

WORKPLACE PIONEER

“I’ve never been interested in standing in the middle. Sure it’s comfortable, but life’s too short for the middle.”

**Tom Ammiano
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Tom Ammiano is an LGBT rights activist and one of the first American politicians to fight discrimination against LGBT schoolteachers. He served as the San Francisco school board president, president of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and a member of the California State Assembly.

Ammiano grew up in Montclair, New Jersey. Classmates and his gym teacher routinely bullied him. He turned to humor and education, earning a bachelor’s degree in communications from Seton Hall University and a master’s degree in special education from San Francisco State University.

Ammiano became a special education teacher in San Francisco and cofounded a gay teachers organization that successfully petitioned the school board to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation. In 1977 he worked successfully with Hank Wilson and Harvey Milk to defeat the Briggs Initiative, which sought to ban gay people from teaching in California.

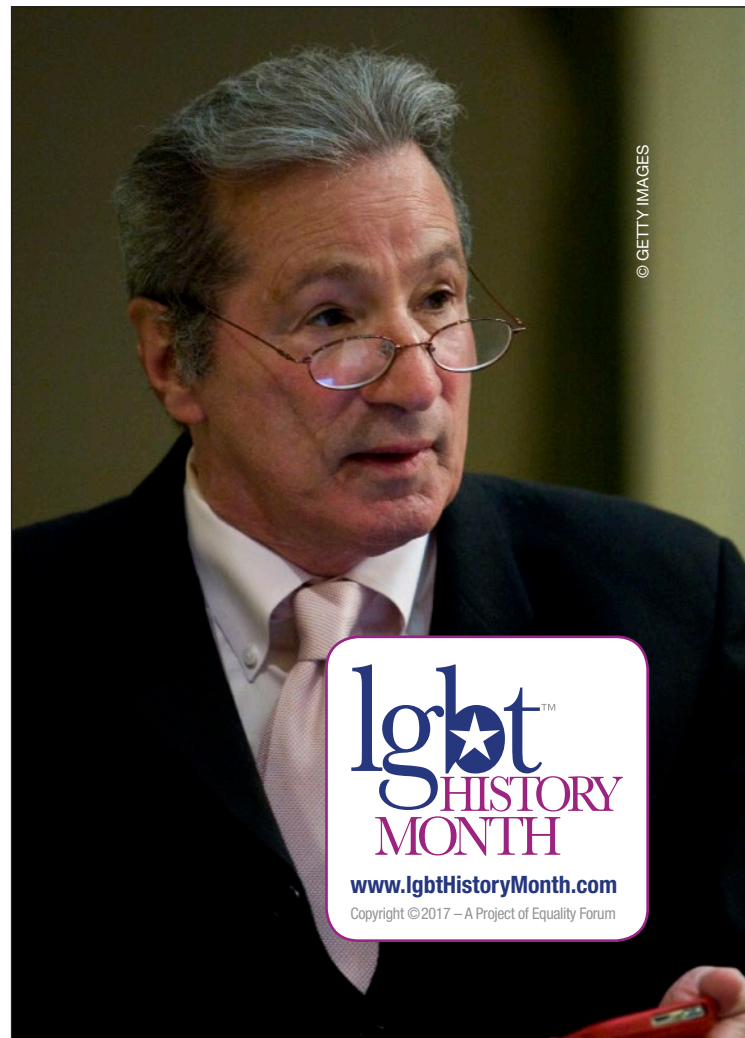
In the 1980s Ammiano worked as a teacher, an activist and a standup comic. In 1990 he was elected to the San Francisco Board of Education and became vice president a year later. He was instrumental in creating gay and lesbian sensitivity training for students in the San Francisco Unified School District. He also made condoms available to middle and high school students and banned the Boy Scouts of America from recruiting and teaching in schools, citing the group’s ban on gay scouts and leaders.

In the mid '90s, Ammiano was elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors where, among other reforms, he pushed for LGBT rights and affordable housing. He helped create the city’s Health Care Security Ordinance, making San Francisco the first city in the country to provide universal healthcare access. He also developed the city’s Domestic Partners Ordinance, which offers benefits to the unmarried domestic partners of employees.

In 1999 Catholic groups criticized Ammiano when he granted the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, an AIDS charity run by drag queens, a permit to participate in Easter Sunday events. The same year, he mounted an impressive write-in campaign for San Francisco mayor. He lost, but his bid was documented in the film “See How They Run.”

Ammiano was elected to the California State Assembly in 2008. During his tenure, he authored the landmark School Success and Opportunity Act, which permits students in sex-segregated programs to participate according to their gender identity. Ammiano played himself in the Academy Award-winning film “Milk” (2008).

In 1994 Ammiano’s longtime partner, Tim Curbo, died from complications of AIDS. Ammiano married Carolis Deal in 2014.



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