

ANN NORTHROP

b. April 29, 1948

PIONEERING AIDS ACTIVIST & JOURNALIST

*As a teenager I didn't see any positive gay images.
... But I remember getting excited by characters in
books who were marginally alluded to as gay."*

Ann Northrop is a pioneering journalist and news producer who spearheaded media strategy for ACT UP and AIDS awareness during the height of the epidemic. She has been arrested roughly two dozen times for her activism.

Born in Hartford, Connecticut, Northrop was raised with conservative Republican values. She entered Vassar College in 1966, where she embraced politically progressive views.

Northrop began her journalism career immediately after graduation, reporting for a year and a half on the federal government at The National Journal in Washington, D.C. She moved to New York City to work for "Woman," a morning talk show on the WCBS-TV network. During that time, she became a feminist activist and Vietnam War protester.

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Over the next several years, Northrop held a variety of jobs in television and wrote for publications such as Ms. magazine and Ladies' Home Journal. While writing for Ms., she fell in love with a woman and came out as a lesbian. The two remained a couple for 17 years.

In the early '80s, Northrop worked as a writer and producer for ABC's "Good Morning America," a talk show covering topics from politics to entertainment. For five years thereafter, she produced the "CBS Morning News."

In 1987, during the early part of the AIDS crisis, Northrop placed her media career on hold to teach students about HIV/AIDS and LGBT issues at the Hetrick-Martin Institute for lesbian and gay youth in New York. The following year she joined the AIDS advocacy organization ACT UP. In 1989 she helped ACT UP organize a national media event, "Stop the Church," in which 4,500 activists protested at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York. The protest challenged the Catholic Church's opposition to condom use and sex education. The story captured major news coverage.

Northrop served as the only LGBT delegate from New York at the 1992 Democratic National Convention. She was an active board member of the 1994 Gay Games in New York City.

In 1996 Northrop returned to television to co-host and co-executive produce "Gay USA." The one-hour weekly news show airs on national cable channels and covers national and international LGBT topics.

Northrop was a founding member of the Institute for Gay and Lesbian Strategic Studies, a think tank now known as the Williams Institute, and she helped found the Lesbian and Gay Alumnae Association of Vassar College. She has trained countless activists in dealing with the media and has spoken at many high-profile LGBT events. Northrop has appeared in several documentaries, including two in 2012: "How to Survive a Plague" and "United in Anger: A History of ACT UP."

