

AMY SCHNEIDER

b. May 29, 1979

“JEOPARDY!” CHAMPION

**Her 40-game
“Jeopardy!” winning
streak was the second
longest in history.**

“The best part for me has been being on TV as my true self.”

Amy Schneider is a “Jeopardy!” champion whose 40-game winning streak was the second longest in the show’s history. The most successful woman contestant ever to compete on “Jeopardy!” and the first transgender person to qualify for the Tournament of Champions, she helped positively influence perceptions of transgender people.

Assigned male at birth, Schneider grew up in Dayton, Ohio, as part of a practicing Catholic family. She didn’t know transgender people existed until she moved to the San Francisco Bay Area, where she recognized her own identity. Then living as a married heterosexual man, Schneider separated from her wife in 2016 and transitioned the following year.

Voted most likely to appear on “Jeopardy!” by her eighth-grade class, Schneider always dreamed of being a contestant. She spent more than a decade auditioning unsuccessfully. She was chosen only after she decided to live openly. “I do think part of the reason I finally did get selected was that ... I was living my true identity,” Schneider said. “Looking back, I realized that I was hiding so much of myself. I was a very closed-off person before that.”

Taking a leave of absence from her job as a software engineer, Schneider began her historic run on “Jeopardy!” in November 2021. Before the show, she decided to speak in her natural register rather than effect a more “feminine voice.” She hoped the decision would help other transgender people feel more comfortable being themselves.

Initially anxious about her open authenticity, Schneider found that her wit, warmth and confidence quickly endeared her to wide audience, including an older, more conservative demographic who were likely seeing an openly transgender person for the first time on national television. She received many positive messages from LGBTQ fans, including one person who said that because of Schneider’s presence, their grandfather for the first time used the correct pronouns for a transgender person.

Seemingly unflappable in her signature pearls — a gift from her girlfriend, Genevieve Davis — Schneider’s combination of accuracy, speed and traditional strategy secured her an undefeated 40-episode run. She ended the competition in January 2022, winning \$1.3 million. That same month, she received a GLAAD Special Recognition Award for her performance on the show. On March 31, 2022, as part of transgender day of visibility, she was invited to the White House. She used the occasion to speak out against recent bills that negatively affect the transgender community.

Schneider and her fiancé married in May 2022. The couple lives in Oakland, California.



© GETTY IMAGES