

TROY MASTERS

LGBTQ PUBLISHER

b. April 13, 1961

d. December 11, 2024

“It’s a perilous time ... reporting from a journalistic perspective about things that are happening in the community is so important.”

He was the pioneering publisher of several leading LGBTQ+ publications.

Troy Davis Masters was a pioneering American LGBTQ+ journalist and publisher. He played a leading role in founding what became Gay City News—a free New York newspaper—and the Los Angeles Blade, among other publications. He spent more than 35 years passionately advocating for the LGBTQ+ community.

Masters was born in Gallatin, Tennessee. His parents divorced when he was young, and his mother remarried a musician who performed at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. Masters’s childhood was steeped in conservative values, racism, and anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment.

In 1973, at age 12, Masters realized he was gay. About a year later, he was raped on a train by a dining-car employee. Fearing stigmatization, he told no one, including his parents. He left home at 17 and, in 1986, earned a bachelor’s degree in communication from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

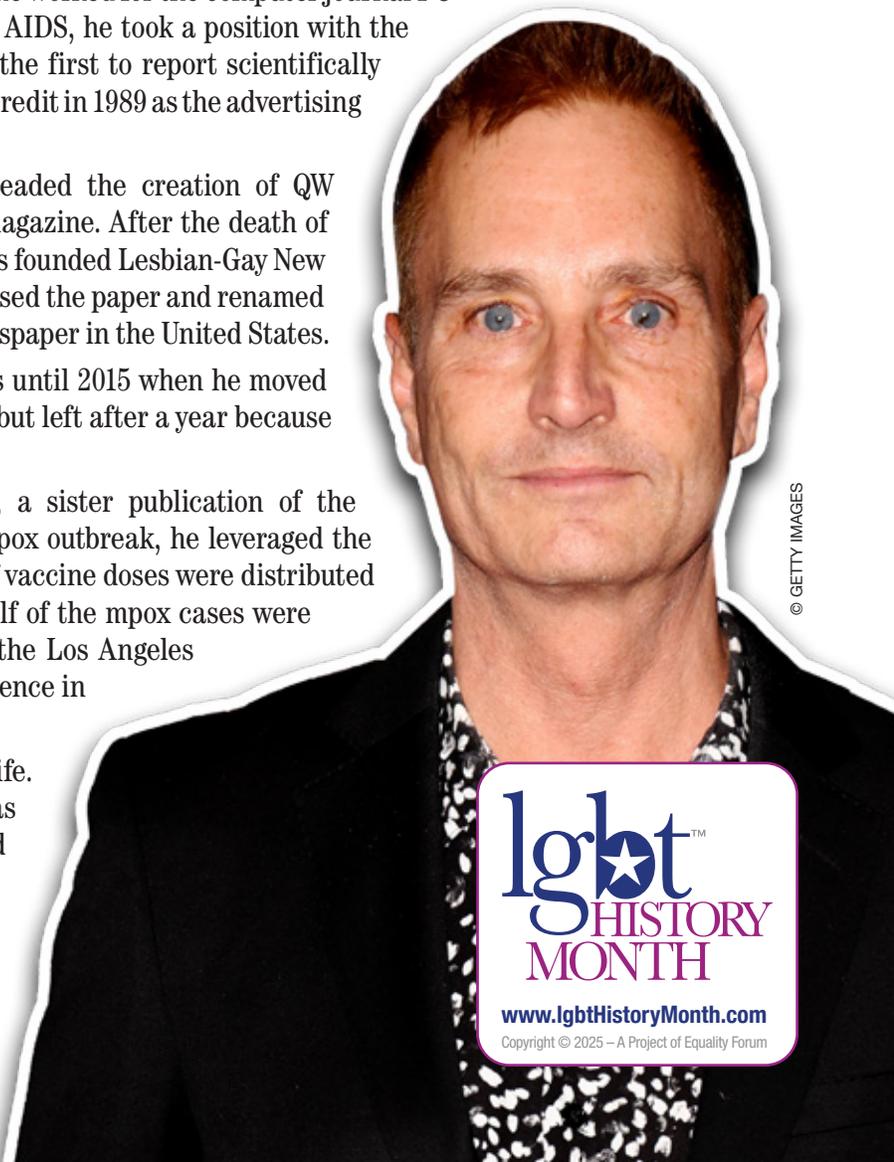
In the 1980s, Masters moved to New York City, where he worked for the computer journal PC Magazine. After watching many of his friends die of AIDS, he took a position with the activist newsmagazine Outweek, which was among the first to report scientifically about the AIDS crisis. He received his first masthead credit in 1989 as the advertising account executive.

After Outweek shuttered in 1991, Masters spearheaded the creation of QW (QueerWeek), the LGBTQ community’s first glossy magazine. After the death of its funder, QW closed two years later. In 1994, Masters founded Lesbian-Gay New York (LGNY). In 2002, Community Media LLC purchased the paper and renamed it Gay City News. Today, it is the largest LGBTQ+ newspaper in the United States.

Masters continued as the publisher of Gay City News until 2015 when he moved to Los Angeles. There, he co-launched The Pride LA but left after a year because of political disagreements.

In 2017, Masters founded the Los Angeles Blade, a sister publication of the Washington Blade. In 2022, during the California mpox outbreak, he leveraged the newspaper to help ensure that the limited number of vaccine doses were distributed to those most at risk. At the time, approximately half of the mpox cases were found among bisexual or gay Latino men. In 2023, the Los Angeles Blade received the Barbara Gittings Award for Excellence in LGBTQ Media from GLAAD.

Masters remained with the Blade for the rest of his life. His death at the age of 63 was ruled a suicide. He was discovered in his apartment by his close friend and former partner, Arturo Jiminez. The New York Times published his obituary.



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