

LANI KA'AHUMANU

b. October 5, 1943

WRITER & BISEXUAL ACTIVIST

**She is a prominent
figure in the U.S.
bisexual rights
movement.**

*"We have every right to be
in the world exactly as we are."*

Lani Ka'ahumanu is a writer and a leader of the American bisexual rights movement. She was the first openly bisexual board member on the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Born in Edmonton, Canada, and raised in Northern California, Ka'ahumanu is of Native Hawaiian, Japanese, and European heritage. Early personal experience with racial bias helped inspire her lifelong quest for social justice.

At 19, Ka'ahumanu married her high school sweetheart and became a suburban housewife and mother. Emboldened by feminism in the 1960s, she participated in the anti-war and Black Power movements, started taking college courses, and adopted the title "Ms."

After 11 years of marriage, Ka'ahumanu and her husband divorced. She moved to San Francisco and came out as a "lesbian mother." She continued her studies at San Francisco State University, helping to establish the Women's Studies Department there and graduating with a degree in the field in 1979.

During the summer of 1980, Ka'ahumanu entered a relationship with a bisexual man. Returning to San Francisco as an out bisexual, she faced ostracism from many in the lesbian community. Consequently, she cultivated a bisexual community and, in 1983, cofounded BiPOL, the first feminist bisexual political action group in the United States. She also helped establish the San Francisco Bay Area Bisexual Network, which published the first national quarterly bisexual magazine, "Anything That Moves."

In 1990, Ka'ahumanu helped establish BiNet USA, the country's first national bisexual rights organization. San Francisco declared June 23, 1990, Bisexual Pride Day in recognition of the group's founding. Ka'ahumanu proceeded to lead a national campaign to include bisexuals in the March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. In 1993, bi rights were officially added to the march's name and platform, and she was the only out bisexual among the event's 18 speakers.

During the 1990s, Ka'ahumanu focused primarily on the AIDS epidemic. She coordinated the first U.S. HIV/AIDS prevention grant for young high-risk lesbian and bisexual women and co-created the "Peer Safer Sex Slut Team," which was recognized by Ms. Magazine. Among other notable initiatives, she also helped organize BiNet USA's National Institute on Bisexuality HIV/AIDS Summit and a Bisexual People of Color HIV Prevention Summit, hosted by the CDC and the UCLA School of Nursing.

An accomplished poet, author, and editor, Ka'ahumanu is best known for editing the influential feminist anthology "Bi Any Other Name: Bisexual People Speak Out" (1991), which was named among the Top 100 GLBT Books of the 20th Century.



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