

RACHEL CRANDALL-CROCKER

b. November 7, 1959

TRANSGENDER ACTIVIST

“I wanted a day that we could focus on the living.”

She is the founder and organizer of International Transgender Day of Visibility.

Rachel Crandall-Crocker is a transgender psychotherapist and activist. She is the cofounder and executive director of Transgender Michigan and the founder and organizer of International Transgender Day of Visibility.

Crandall-Crocker was born to a middle-class Michigan family, the child of a CPA and a stay-at-home mom. From an early age, she felt misidentified as male. At the age of 8, she told her parents she was a girl. They forbade her from speaking about it again, and she remained closeted for decades.

In 1985, Crandall-Crocker received a master's degree in social work from Michigan State University and became a licensed psychotherapist. During her time at MSU, she began a 25-year tenure working with a local crisis intervention center.

After graduation, Crandall-Crocker married a woman and settled in Okemos, Michigan. When alone, she often dressed in women's clothing, applied makeup, and secretly left the house presenting as female.

Crandall-Crocker came out as transgender in 1997. It cost her her marriage, her job, and her home. The same year, to help people like herself feel less alone, she cofounded Transgender Michigan — one of the first groups of its kind in the United States — with Susan Crocker, whom she would later marry. A nonprofit organization, Transgender Michigan, offers connection, advocacy, education, and other services to support the trans and gender-nonconforming community, including coalition building and LGBTQ+ inclusion training. The organization established the nation's first transgender helpline.

In the late 1990s, Crandall-Crocker began shifting her practice to transgender-specific psychotherapy. Today, it is her specialty. She also disclosed that she has Tourette syndrome.

In 2009, after realizing that Transgender Day of Remembrance, which honors those who have died from anti-trans violence, was the only event acknowledging the community, she founded Transgender Day of Visibility to celebrate and empower the living. Held annually on March 31, it has since been embraced by numerous countries, helping to promote awareness and civil rights. In 2021, President Joe Biden issued a formal proclamation of the day and recognized it each subsequent year of his administration.

The recipient of multiple honors, Crandall-Crocker is the first transgender person to receive the Michigan State Bar's Liberty Bell Award for “outstanding citizens within the local community.” In 2024, MSU honored her with its Alumni Service Award.

Crandall-Crocker lives in Michigan with her wife, Susan. They continue to run Transgender Michigan.



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