

# ZACKIE ACHMAT

b. March 21, 1962

## SOUTH AFRICAN ACTIVIST

*“The desire to know requires courage, patience and persistence because freedom, dignity and equality depend on it.”*

**By organizing protests, Achmat demanded that the government take action to provide AIDS education, prevention and resources for HIV-positive citizens.**

Zackie Achmat is a South African activist whose work has focused on people living with HIV/AIDS, the gay community and combating apartheid. He is a Nobel Peace Prize nominee and a recipient of the Desmond Tutu Leadership Award and the Nelson Mandela Award for Health and Human Rights.

Achmat was raised in Cape Town, South Africa. At age 14, he participated in the 1976 anti-apartheid uprising in Soweto. As an adolescent, he assisted the African National Congress by organizing his peers. He continued to fight against apartheid until its end in 1994.

Achmat became active in South Africa's gay community and founded the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality. In 2000, he directed the documentary “Apostles of Civilised Vice,” chronicling the history of the gay community in South Africa.

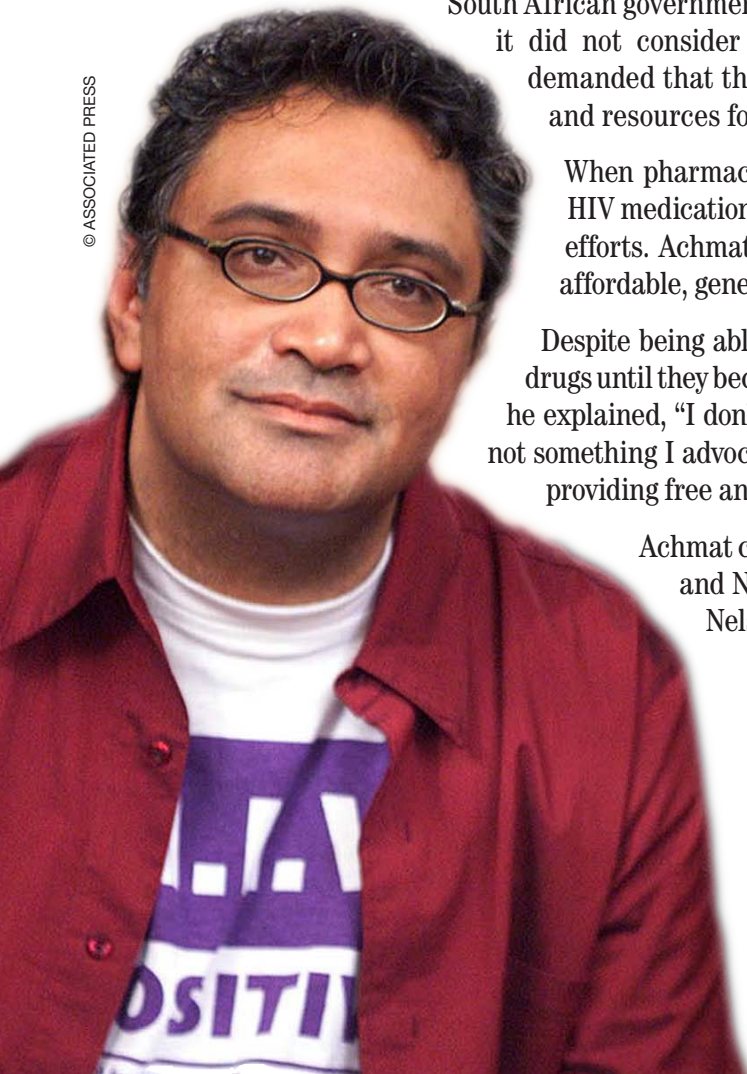
In the late 1990s, Achmat was diagnosed as HIV-positive. It was difficult for him to obtain treatment or medications in South Africa, which had one of the highest rates of infection.

Achmat helped create the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC). TAC led campaigns against the South African government, which was reluctant to get involved with the epidemic because it did not consider AIDS a significant problem. By organizing protests, Achmat demanded that the government take action to provide AIDS education, prevention and resources for HIV-positive citizens.

When pharmaceutical companies filed a lawsuit to block the import of cheaper HIV medications, Achmat and TAC led a successful campaign that thwarted their efforts. Achmat continued to lobby for price reductions and increased access to affordable, generic HIV drugs.

Despite being able to afford antiretroviral medications, Achmat refused to take the drugs until they became available to all South Africans. When asked about this decision, he explained, “I don't think it's noble; I think it's dumb. But it's a conscience issue. It's not something I advocate for anyone else.” In 2003, the South African government began providing free antiretroviral medications to a greater portion of the country.

Achmat cofounded ABIGALE (Association of Bisexuals, Gays, and Lesbians) and Ndifuna Ukwazi (Dare to Know), an education-based organization. Nelson Mandela called Achmat a national hero.



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# EDWARD ALBEE

b. March 12, 1928

## PLAYWRIGHT

*“I think we should all live on the precipice of life, as fully and as dangerously as possible.”*

**Albee made his Broadway debut with “Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?,” which earned him his first Tony Award.**

Edward Albee is a celebrated playwright who won three Pulitzer Prizes and three Tony Awards.

“Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?,” his first Broadway play, helped establish Albee as one of America’s greatest playwrights.

Born Edward Harvey in Washington, D.C., he was adopted as an infant by the prominent Albee family of New York. The family’s ownership of a national theater chain nurtured Albee’s passion for the arts.

Albee and his parents were constantly at odds over his desire to pursue a career in theater. After failing out of two private schools, he graduated high school and matriculated to Trinity College.

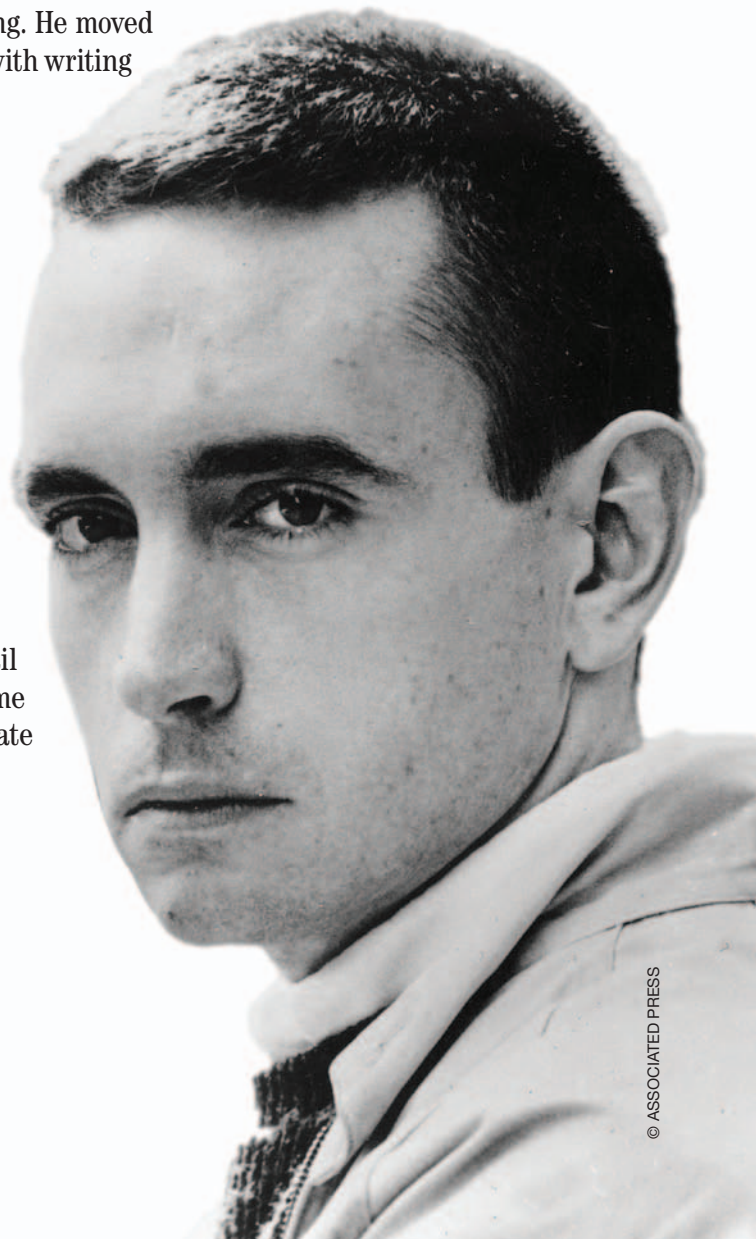
In 1949, Albee dropped out of Trinity to pursue a career in writing. He moved to Greenwich Village, an artistic epicenter. Albee experimented with writing poetry and short fiction before finding a niche in playwrighting.

Albee’s early Off-Broadway shows received praise for their unconventional themes, including homoeroticism. He made his Broadway debut with “Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?,” which earned him his first Tony Award.

Albee has written more than 25 plays. His willingness to experiment with various styles earned him Pulitzer Prizes for “A Delicate Balance,” “Seascape” and “Three Tall Women.” He received two additional Tony Awards for “The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?” and a revival of “Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?”

Since moving to Greenwich Village, he has lived an openly gay life. Recognized for pioneering the depiction of homosexuality on stage, Albee weaves same-sex relationships throughout his work.

He lived for 35 years with Jonathan Thomas, his partner, until Thomas’s death in 2005. Albee received a Special Tony Lifetime Achievement Award and The Academy of Achievement’s Golden Plate Award for exceptional accomplishment in the arts.



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# GWEN ARAUJO

b. February 24, 1985

d. October 3, 2002

## TRANSGENDER HERO

**Araujo's murder helped bring awareness to the incidence of violence against transgender people and the "panic defense."**

*"Live as though this is your last day."*

Gwen Araujo was a transgender teen who was the victim of a brutal murder. Her attack brought national attention to the issue of violence against transgender people.

Born in the San Francisco Bay area, Edward Araujo Jr. underwent hormone therapy in high school and adopted the name Gwen Amber Rose Araujo. She left school because of incessant bullying and ridicule.

The night Araujo was murdered, she attended a party at the home of Jose Merél. According to police reports, there were four young men involved in the attack—Michael Magidson, Jose Merél, Jaron Nabors and Jason Casarez. At trial, Nabors testified that Araujo had consensual sex with a few of the men before it was revealed that she was biologically male. Araujo was beaten and strangled to death, hog-tied, wrapped in a blanket and buried in the Sierra Nevada foothills.

In exchange for his testimony against the other defendants, Nabors pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter. The other three men, charged with first-degree murder and committing a hate crime, invoked the transgender "panic defense," claiming that the victim provoked the attack by having sex under false pretenses. By invoking this defense, Magidson and Merél were convicted of second-degree murder and acquitted of the hate crime. Casarez pleaded no contest to voluntary manslaughter.

Araujo's murder helped bring awareness to the incidence of violence against transgender people and the "panic defense." In 2006, California enacted the Gwen Araujo Justice for Victims Act. The law allows a judge to instruct jurors not to consider their anti-LGBT biases during deliberations. That same year, Lifetime aired an original movie, "A Girl Like Me: The Gwen Araujo Story." The case was the subject of a 2007 documentary, "Trained in the Ways of Men."

Each November, communities across the nation hold a Transgender Day of Remembrance to memorialize the dozens of transgender people like Gwen Araujo who are murdered every year.



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# REINALDO ARENAS

b. July 16, 1943

d. December 7, 1990

## CUBAN AUTHOR

*“If you cannot live the way you want,  
there is no point in living.”*

**Arenas's writing gained popularity during the height of the AIDS epidemic when readers connected with his oppression.**

Reinaldo Arenas was a Cuban poet, novelist and essayist whose work focused on political and social injustices.

Arenas was born into poverty in the Cuban countryside. He wrote his first poems by carving words into tree trunks.

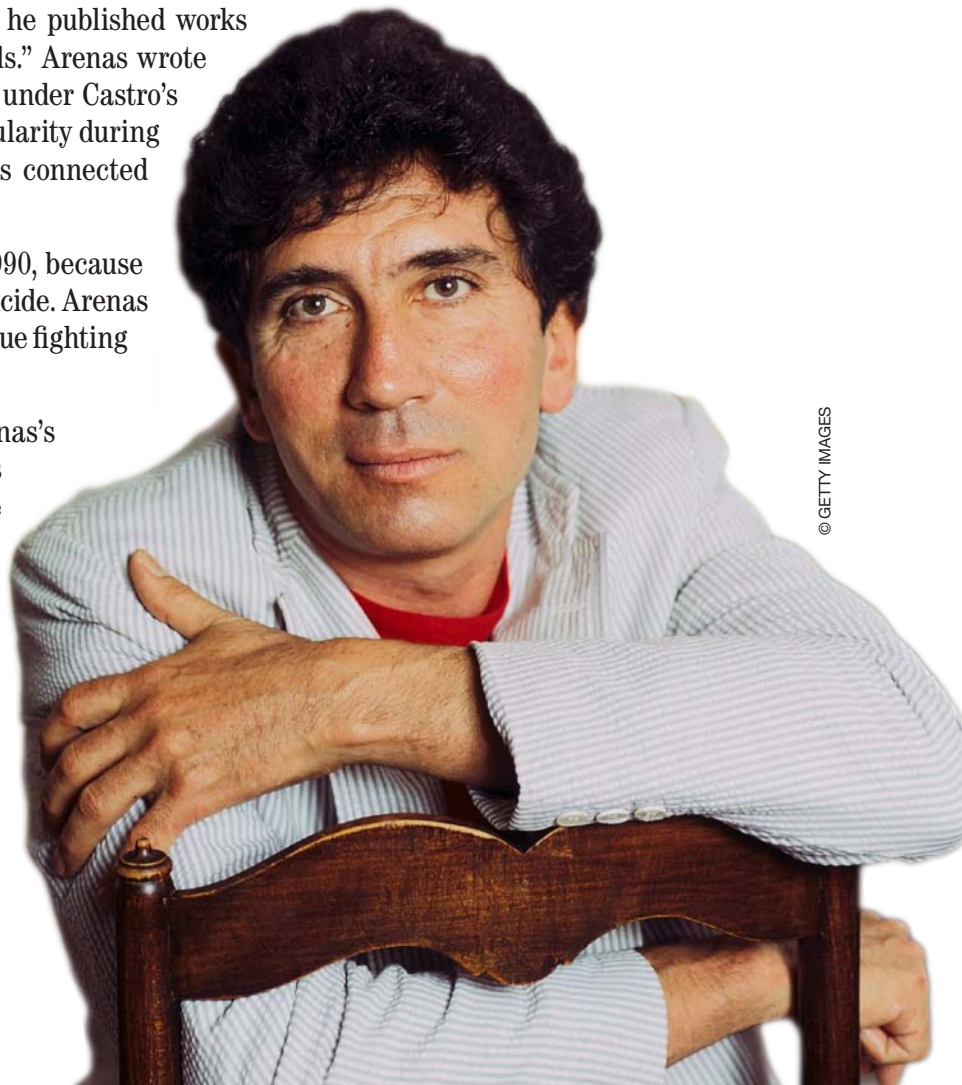
In 1961, Arenas moved to Havana and joined Fidel Castro's revolutionary forces. He studied philosophy and literature at the University of Havana, but did not graduate. In 1966, his novel "Hallucinations" received a First Honorable Mention award from the National Union of Cuban Writers and Artists.

The following year, Arenas was persecuted by the Castro regime for his openly gay lifestyle. Many of his works were not reprinted in Cuba, but were published in other countries. In 1974, Arenas was imprisoned for publishing abroad without consent. He escaped from prison and tried to flee Cuba, but was captured and sent to the infamous El Morro prison. While imprisoned, he secretly wrote "Farewell to the Sea," regarded by critics as one of his best works.

He was released in 1976 after being forced to renounce his writings. In 1980, Arenas fled to the United States, where he published works including his autobiography, "Before Night Falls." Arenas wrote about government control and social injustices under Castro's regime and in America. His writing gained popularity during the height of the AIDS epidemic when readers connected with Arenas's oppression.

In 1987, Arenas was diagnosed with AIDS. In 1990, because he was no longer able to write, he committed suicide. Arenas left behind a letter urging Cuban exiles to continue fighting against Castro's rule.

"Before Night Falls," a film based on Arenas's autobiography, was released in 2000. It was showcased at the Toronto Film Festival and the Venice International Film Festival and was screened around the world.



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# AXEL AXGIL

b. April 3, 1915

d. October 29, 2011

## ACTIVIST

**In 1989, after years of lobbying by the Axgils, Denmark became the first nation to recognize same-sex domestic partnerships.**

*“We realized the historic significance of what we were doing.”*

Axel Axcil was a Danish gay activist and cofounder of Europe’s first gay rights organization. After Denmark became the first nation to legalize same-sex domestic partnerships, he and his partner Eigil Eskildsen were the first couple to register.

Born Axel Lundahl-Madsen, he came out in the 1940s after meeting Eigil. The two men would later adopt the surname “Axcil”—a combination of Eigil and Axel—to acknowledge their commitment to one another.

Inspired in 1948 by the United Nations’ adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which included sexual orientation, Axcil cofounded Forbundet af 48 (F-48), Europe’s first gay rights organization. By 1951, F-48 had more than a thousand members and branches in Sweden and Norway.

The couple founded Vennen (The Friend), a gay magazine. In addition to producing the publication, Axcil ran a small publishing company that sold nude male photographs. In 1955, Axcil was arrested for distributing the photos.

The investigation into Vennen led to a scandal and arrests of gay men. After his release from prison, Axcil founded the International Homosexual World Organization (IHW0). In 1970, IHW0 successfully appealed to the German Federal Chancellor, who discontinued the seizure of nude male photographs.

In 1989, after years of lobbying by the Axcils, Denmark became the first nation to recognize same-sex domestic partnerships. The law gave same-sex couples most of the rights and obligations of marriage, excluding the right to adopt. On October 1, 1989, the Axcils and 10 couples held a commitment ceremony that attracted worldwide media attention.

Axcil continued his activism and ran a gay-friendly bed and breakfast until Eigil’s death in 1995. In 2012, as a result of the groundwork laid by Axcil, Denmark legalized same-sex marriage.



# DJUNA BARNES

b. June 12, 1892

d. June 18, 1982

## AUTHOR

*“The truth is how you say it, and to be ‘one’s self’ is the most shocking custom of all.”*

**Writers such as Truman Capote and Bertha Harris have cited Barnes as an inspiration for their works.**

Djuna Barnes was a prominent modernist writer known for her experimental style and edgy themes.

Born in Cornwall-on-Hudson, New York, to a polygamist family, she was inspired to write by her grandmother, a feminist writer and journalist. As a child, Barnes was sexually abused by family members. In 1909, she was forced to marry her father’s brother-in-law. Two months later, she left him.

In 1912, Barnes moved to Greenwich Village and began writing for magazines and newspapers. She had affairs with men and women. She wrote novels, including “The Book of Repulsive Woman: 8 Rhythms and 5 Drawings” and “Paprika Johnson.”

She moved to Paris, where she lived with Thelma Wood, her lover and fellow artist. Barnes became involved in the Parisian lesbian community, which is depicted in her privately printed novel, “Ladies Almanack.”

In 1931, after her relationship with Wood ended, Barnes relocated to England. She stayed in a country manor with other writers and literary critics. She wrote “Nightwood,” her best-known novel, which received attention for its stylistic excellence. So impressed by the book, T.S. Elliot wrote the introduction and became involved in its publication. “Nightwood” depicts desire between women and challenges the gender binary.

In 1939, Barnes returned to New York, where she lived in relative solitude for the remainder of her life. She continued writing plays and poetry that challenged heteronormativity and the lifestyles of the upper class. She often drew from her own life experiences, exploring themes of abuse and sexuality in a number of her works.

Barnes’s writing had a significant impact on modernist literature. Writers such as Truman Capote and Bertha Harris have cited Barnes as an inspiration for their works. She is recognized as a pioneer of lesbian literature.



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# JOSEPH BEAM

b. December 30, 1954

d. December 27, 1988

## ACTIVIST

*“We are black men who are proudly gay.”*

Joseph Beam was a gay rights activist who helped build a black LGBT community in the 1980s. He was the editor of “In the Life,” the first collection of nonfiction works by and about black gay men.

A native of Philadelphia, Beam attended Franklin College in Indiana, where he studied journalism. He was an active member of the black student union and the Black Power movement. After college, Beam received his master’s degree in communications.

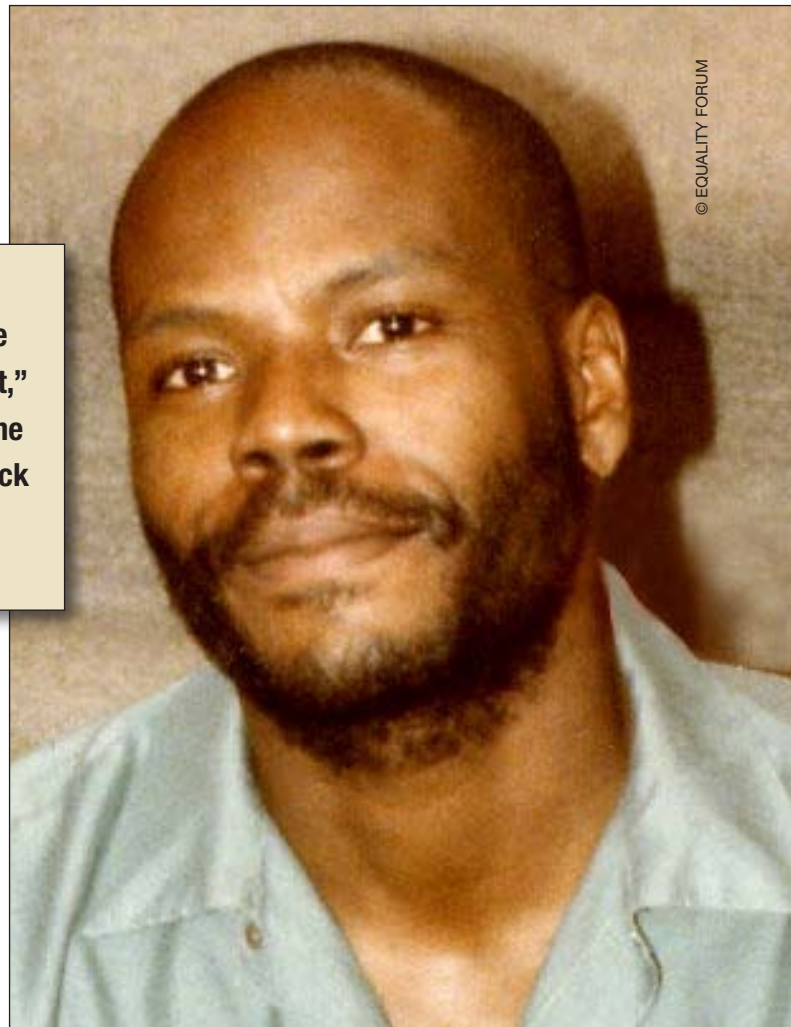
In 1979, he returned to Philadelphia. He explored literature on gay figures and institutions while working at Giovanni’s Room, an LGBT bookstore. Discouraged by the lack of community for black gay men and lesbians, Beam began writing articles and short stories for gay publications.

In 1984, he received an award for outstanding achievement by a minority journalist from The Lesbian and Gay Press Association. In 1985, he became the first editor of “Black/Out,” a journal produced by the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays. He served as a consultant for the Gay and Lesbian Task Force of the American Friends Service Committee.

Beam continued to collect materials about being black and gay. In 1986, he produced the first collection written by black gay men, called “In the Life: A Black Gay Anthology.”

In 1988, while compiling “Brother to Brother,” a sequel to his anthology, Beam died from AIDS-related complications. His mother, Dorothy Beam, and the gay poet Essex Hemphill completed the work, which was published in 1991.

**In 1985, he became the first editor of “Black/Out,” a journal produced by the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays.**



# GAD BECK

b. June 30, 1923

d. June 24, 2012

## HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR

*“Even today we are not liberated.  
We are just beginning.”*

**He was openly gay during a period when the subject was taboo.**

Gad Beck was a Holocaust survivor who helped gays and Jews escape the Nazis.

He was born in Berlin to a Jewish father and a Protestant mother who converted to Judaism. In 1943, Beck and his father were seized by the Nazis. The Gentile wives protested and convinced the Nazis to release the prisoners. Beck joined an underground movement to help Jews escape to Switzerland. He relied on non-Jewish gays to help hide the Jews. Beck was not deported because he was not considered fully Jewish.

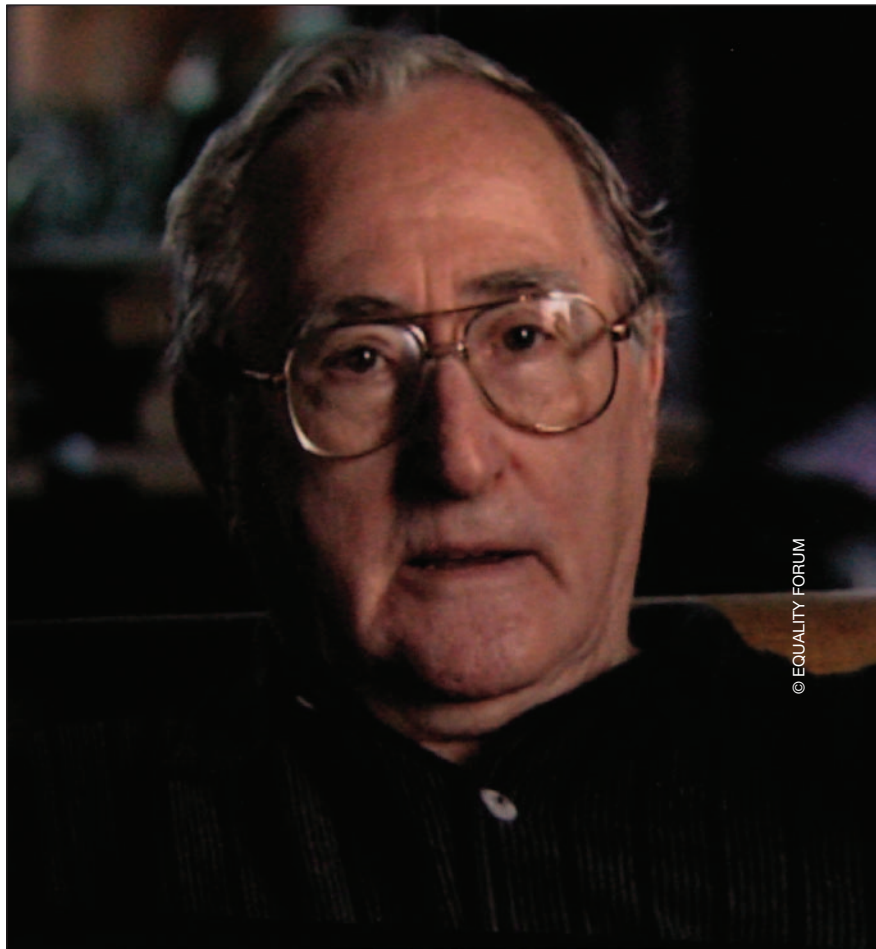
When the Nazis captured his lover, Manfred Lewin, Beck tried to save him by impersonating a Hitler youth. Lewin refused the opportunity to escape because he did not want to leave his family. Lewin and his family were deported to Auschwitz, where they were murdered.

Beck led a Zionist group called “Chug Chaluzi” (Circle of Pioneers). The organization helped shelter, feed and transport Jews to safety. In 1945, he was betrayed by a Jewish spy for the Gestapo and sent to a holding camp in Berlin. He was freed when the Allies defeated the Nazis.

The German government continued to repress homosexuals. Although gays were liberated from the Nazis, they were subject to incarceration because homosexuality was criminal. Beck helped gay German Jews escape prosecution by taking them to Israel. In 1979, he returned to Germany and continued his activism in the gay and Jewish communities. He was the director of the Jewish Adult Education Center in Berlin.

In 2000, Beck’s autobiography, “An Underground Life: Memoirs of a Gay Jew in Nazi Berlin,” was published. In 2006, the film “The Story of Gad Beck” was released. Beck was featured in “Paragraph 175,” an HBO documentary about gay Holocaust survivors.

Beck is survived by Julius Laufer, his partner of 35 years.



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# JOAN BIREN

b. July 13, 1944

## DOCUMENTARIAN

**Her film “A Simple Matter of Justice” documented the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights.**

*“My thing was to take pictures to make visible what was invisible.”*

Joan Biren is an internationally recognized photographer and filmmaker who chronicles gay life. Her photographs are on display in the Library of Congress.

Raised in Washington, D.C., Biren received her bachelor’s degree in political science from Mount Holyoke College and her master’s degree in communications from American University. After studying politics and sociology at Oxford University, Biren returned to the U.S., where she taught herself photography.

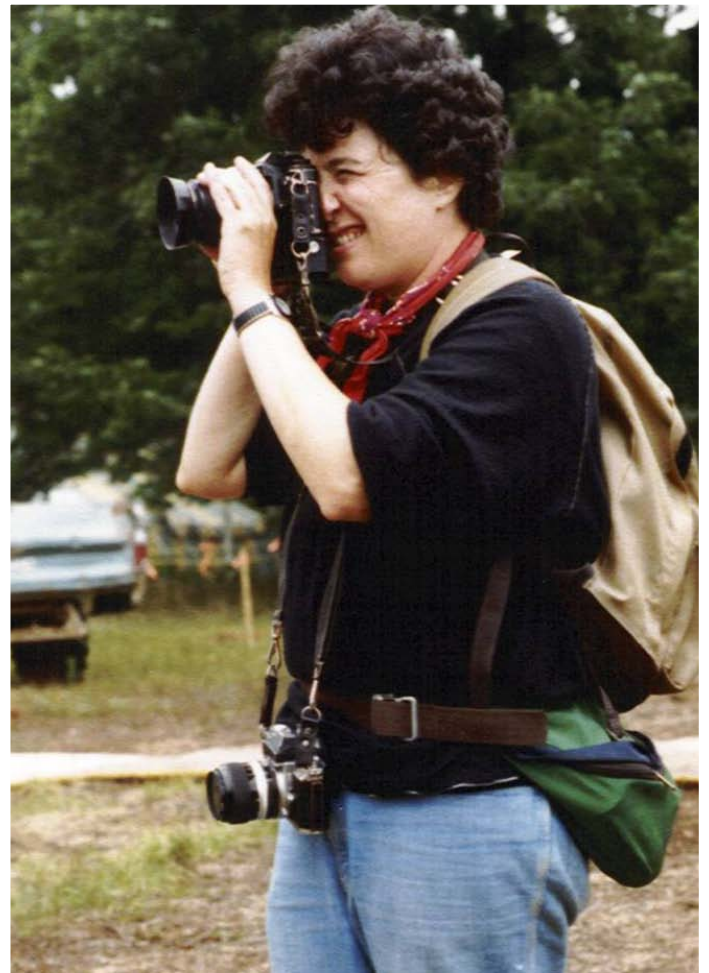
In 1969, Biren joined the women’s liberation movement. As one of that movement’s first out lesbians, she cofounded The Furies Collective, a lesbian separatist organization. The Collective published *The Furies*, a newspaper that had a profound impact on lesbian thought.

The Collective enabled Biren to photograph lesbians for *The Furies*. After the organization disbanded in 1973, Biren continued photographing LGBT life, eventually publishing two collections: “Eye to Eye: Portraits of Lesbians” (1979) and “Making a Way: Lesbians Out Front” (1987). Both collections received praise for bringing groundbreaking visibility to lesbian life.

After a nationwide tour of “Lesbian Images in Photography, 1850 to the Present,” Biren transitioned to filmmaking. Her film “A Simple Matter of Justice” documented the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights.

In 2003, Biren released “No Secret Anymore: The Times of Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon,” a film chronicling the lives of two pioneering leaders of the lesbian civil rights movement. The film won awards at both LGBT and mainstream film festivals.

Biren lives in Silver Spring, Maryland, where she continues to document LGBT lives through photography and film.



© JOAN E. BIREN



# PATRICK CALIFIA

b. March 8, 1954

## AUTHOR

*“By coming out to ourselves, we free up the energy we spent keeping a part of ourselves hidden.”*

**In 1999, Califia transitioned from female to male, noting that “neither one is really a very good fit for me.”**

Patrick Califia is a transgender author of fiction, nonfiction and poetry. His writings explore sexuality and gender identity and have included lesbian erotica and works about BDSM subculture.

Califia was born female and raised by Mormon parents in Corpus Christi, Texas. He started writing stories and poems in his youth. He graduated a year early from high school and matriculated to the University of Utah. While in college, Califia—who was still living as a woman—came out as a lesbian to his parents. They placed him in a mental institution.

In 1973, Califia moved to California and joined the women’s liberation and anti-war movements. He joined the lesbian separatist movement, but was rejected for his interest in S&M. In 1978, Califia cofounded a lesbian S&M group.

In 1980, his book “Sapphisty: The Book of Lesbian Sexuality” was published. He wrote many works on gender theory, erotica and LGBT issues. He received a bachelor’s degree in psychology and a master’s degree in counseling from San Francisco State University.

Califia received Lambda Literary Awards for his short story collection, “Macho Sluts” (1988), his novel “Doc and Fluff: The Dystopian Tale of a Girl and Her Biker” (1990) and his columns published in The Advocate Adviser (1991). In 1997, he wrote “Sex Changes: The Politics of Transgenderism,” chronicling gender nonconforming identities through historical and social perspectives.

In 1999, Califia transitioned from female to male, noting that “neither one is really a very good fit for me.”

Califia has published over 20 books. He is a marriage and family therapist practicing in California.



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# MANDY CARTER

b. November 2, 1948

## ACTIVIST

**The National Organization for Women called her “one of the nation’s leading African-American lesbian activists.”**

*“Sometimes you have to be bold and take a risk.”*

Mandy Carter describes herself as an “out, Southern, black, lesbian, social justice activist.” She has been advocating for human rights for more than 45 years.

Born in Albany, New York, Carter was raised in orphanages and the foster care system. After high school, she attended Hudson Valley Community College before dropping out and moving to New York City. She met a group of people at the League for Spiritual Discovery and traveled with them to San Francisco. In 1969, she joined the War Resisters League.

In 1992, Carter became a public policy advocate for the Human Rights Campaign. The following year, she helped establish Southerners on New Ground, an organization that integrates people of color, immigrants, people with disabilities and working class members of the LGBT community in the South. She cofounded the National Black Justice Coalition, the only national organization focused on African-American LGBT civil rights.

In the 2000 election, she participated in the statewide voter empowerment campaign, which produced one of Florida’s largest turnouts of black voters. In 2008, Carter was a National Co-Chair for Obama Pride.

Carter won a Spirit of Justice Award from GLAD for advancing LGBT rights. The National Organization for Women called her “one of the nation’s leading African-American lesbian activists.”

She is the National Coordinator for the Bayard Rustin Commemoration Project of the National Black Justice Coalition. Carter lives in Durham, North Carolina.





# WILLA CATHER

b. December 7, 1873

d. April 24, 1947

## AUTHOR

*“The end is nothing,  
the road is all.”*

**She has been hailed  
as one of the great  
writers, especially for  
her depictions of rural  
American life.**

Willa Cather was a Pulitzer Prize-winning author and one of the most prominent American writers of the early 20th century. She is best known for her novels “O Pioneers!” and “My Antonia.”

Born in Back Creek Valley, Virginia, Cather was the oldest of seven children. At age 10, she and her extended family moved to Red Cloud, Nebraska. During adolescence, Cather was known for her masculine style of dress and referred to herself as “Willie.”

She grew up listening to the stories of immigrants and was fascinated by the people and the nature of prairie life. This experience would inspire much of her novel, “My Antonia,” published in 1918.

Following high school, Cather attended the University of Nebraska with aspirations of becoming a doctor. After one of her essays was published in the Lincoln Journal, Cather decided to pursue writing. Having earned her degree, she relocated to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She worked for newspapers and magazines, and began publishing her poetry and short stories.

Her work caught the attention of famed editor S. S. McClure, who hired her for McClure’s magazine. She moved to New York and became acquainted with many prominent writers. By 1908, Cather was one of the most influential editors in the country. Her first of 12 novels, “Alexander’s Bridge,” was published in 1912. By the 1920s, Cather was considered one of the leading American novelists.

In 1922, Cather received a Pulitzer Prize for her novel “One of Ours.” She received honorary degrees from the University of Michigan, Columbia, and Yale, and became the first woman to receive an honorary degree from Princeton.

From 1908 until Cather’s death in 1947, she lived with Edith Lewis, a prominent New York editor. In her later years, Cather continued writing short stories, novels and nonfiction essays. She has been hailed as one of the great writers, especially for her depictions of rural American life.



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# TRACY CHAPMAN

b. March 30, 1964

## SINGER/SONGWRITER

**Her first No. 1 hit, "Fast Car," was named one of the best songs of all time by Rolling Stone.**

*"I'd like to live as if only love mattered."*

Tracy Chapman is a multi-platinum, four-time Grammy-winning singer/songwriter. Two of her songs have reached the Top 10 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart, and her first No. 1 hit, "Fast Car," was named one of the best songs of all time by Rolling Stone.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, Chapman was raised by her single mother and older sister. During Chapman's childhood, Cleveland began integrating its school systems. Though racial tension was high, Chapman found sanctuary in academics and excelled as a student. At 16, she was awarded a scholarship to a private boarding school in Connecticut.

The scholarship provided Chapman with a unique perspective from both sides of the poverty line. She credits the opportunity as the inspiration for the political awareness in her music. Based on her academic success, Chapman earned a full scholarship to Tufts University.

While in college, Chapman began writing and performing her music. At 22, she signed a recording contract with Elektra Records. Her self-titled first album was released in 1988 and launched her to international stardom. The album earned her Grammy Awards for Best Album and Best New Artist. In 1997, Chapman won her third Grammy Award for the hit single "Give Me One Reason." She has released eight albums and toured the world many times.

Despite her public success, Chapman maintains a private life. During the mid-1990s, she had a romantic relationship with author Alice Walker, which was kept secret until after it ended. Chapman is an outspoken advocate for LGBT, gender and racial equality. She supports numerous AIDS foundations and performs at charity events.

Chapman resides in San Francisco. She continues to write and perform music.



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# TIM COOK

b. November 1, 1960

## ENTREPRENEUR

*“You can focus on things that are barriers or you can focus on scaling the wall.”*

**Forbes magazine named him one of the “World’s Most Powerful People.”**

Tim Cook is an entrepreneur and the CEO of Apple, one of the world’s most valuable companies. In 2011, Steve Jobs handpicked Cook as his successor.

Cook was born in Robertsdale, Alabama. He graduated high school second in his class and matriculated to Auburn University, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in industrial engineering. He received a master’s degree in business administration from Duke University’s Fuqua School of Business, graduating in the top 10 percent of his class.

Before joining Apple, Cook managed manufacturing and distribution as director of North American fulfillment for IBM. He also served as chief operating officer at Intelligent Electronics and as vice president of corporate materials at the Compaq Computer Corporation.

In 1997, Apple reported a loss of a billion dollars and was expected to declare bankruptcy. In 1998, Steve Jobs convinced Cook to accept the position of chief operating officer despite Cook’s reservations. Within a year, Apple reported a profit.

In 2011, Cook became Apple’s CEO and a member of the board of directors. He is one of the highest-paid CEOs. He ranked No. 1 on Out magazine’s “Power 50” list of the most influential LGBT people in the United States. Forbes magazine named him one of the “World’s Most Powerful People.”

Cook has kept his personal life private.





# ANDERSON COOPER

b. June 3, 1967

## JOURNALIST

**The New York Times referred to him as “the most prominent openly gay journalist in American television.”**

*“I’m gay, always have been, always will be, and I couldn’t be any more happy, comfortable with myself, and proud.”*

Anderson Cooper is an award-winning news anchor, author and talk show host. The New York Times referred to him as “the most prominent openly gay journalist in American television.”

Born in New York City to a prominent family, Anderson Hays Cooper is the son of Wyatt Emory Cooper and heiress and entrepreneur Gloria Vanderbilt. Cooper attended Manhattan’s prestigious Dalton School. He matriculated to Yale, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in political science.

After college, the self-described “news junkie” landed his first journalism job at Channel One, a news agency that produces broadcasts for high school students. In 1995, Cooper became a correspondent for ABC News, where he was later named co-anchor of “World News Now.” In 2000, he took a break from journalism to host an ABC reality show, “The Mole.” Cooper was hired by CNN in 2001 as co-anchor of “American Morning.” A year later, he became a weekend prime-time anchor. In 2003, CNN premiered “Anderson Cooper 360,” a prime-time newscast with in-depth stories from multiple viewpoints.

Cooper is known for his on-the-scene live coverage of major world events, including the tsunami in Southeast Asia, the Cedar Revolution in Beirut and Hurricane Katrina, among many others. Broadcasting & Cable magazine wrote, “In its aftermath, Hurricane Katrina served to usher in a new breed of emotion-journalism, skyrocketing Cooper to superstardom because of his impassioned coverage of the storm.”

His memoir, “Dispatches from the Edge” (2006), topped the New York Times best-seller list. Since 2007, Cooper has been a correspondent for CBS’s “60 Minutes.” In 2011, he launched a syndicated daytime talk show, “Anderson Live.”

In 2012, Cooper came out publicly in a letter to journalist Andrew Sullivan with the following statement: “It’s become clear to me that by remaining silent on certain aspects of my personal life for so long, I have given some the mistaken impression that I am trying to hide something. The tide of history only advances when people make themselves fully visible.”

Anderson Cooper has been recognized with five Emmy Awards for broadcast journalism. In 2013, he received the Vito Russo GLAAD Media Award for promoting LGBT equality.



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# ELIO DI RUPO

b. July 18, 1951

## BELGIUM PRIME MINISTER

**In 2003, with Di Rupo's support, Belgium became the second nation to legalize same-sex marriage.**

*“My life is a fairy tale. You could not make it up.”*

Elio Di Rupo is the prime minister of Belgium and head of the Socialist Party. He is the first openly gay man to lead a nation.

One of seven children born to Italian Catholic immigrants, Di Rupo was raised in a small town in Belgium's French-speaking Wallonia region. His father died when Di Rupo was one year old. Because his illiterate mother was unable to raise seven children, Di Rupo and two of his siblings were raised in an orphanage.

Di Rupo earned a master's degree and a doctorate in chemistry from the University of Mons-Hainaut. As a student, he became active in the Socialist Party. In 1982, his political career began when he became a municipal councillor in Mons, where he later served as mayor.

Di Rupo has served as a member of Parliament, a member of the European Parliament, and as Belgium's deputy prime minister.

In 1996, Di Rupo's personal life came under fire when he was falsely accused of having sex with underage males. During the media frenzy, he recalls being pursued by journalists, one of whom blurted out, “Yet, they say you're a homosexual!” Di Rupo replied, “Yes. So what?” His political future was not hindered. Three years later, he was named president of the Socialist Party.

In 2011, Belgian journalist Francis Van De Woestyne documented Di Rupo's rise from rags to riches in a biography titled “Elio Di Rupo. Une Vie, Une Vision” (One Life, One Vision). In 2012, Di Rupo was appointed prime minister by King Albert II.

Prime Minister Di Rupo is credited with saving his nation from an economic crisis. In 2003, with Di Rupo's support, Belgium became the second nation to legalize same-sex marriage.



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# MARTIN DUBERMAN

b. August 6, 1930

## HISTORIAN

**In 1991, Duberman founded CUNY's Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies (CLAGS) to further LGBT scholarship and curriculum.**

*"I'm overwhelmed at the great distance that we have all traveled."*

Martin Duberman is a historian, a playwright, an LGBT activist and the founder of the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies at the City University of New York (CUNY) Graduate School. He is an acclaimed author of more than 20 books.

Duberman was born in New York City. He graduated with honors from Yale and received his Ph.D. in American history from Harvard. In 1961, Duberman won the prestigious Bancroft Prize in American history and was subsequently named a full professor at Princeton. In 1971, he left Princeton and joined the faculty at CUNY as a Distinguished Professor of History.

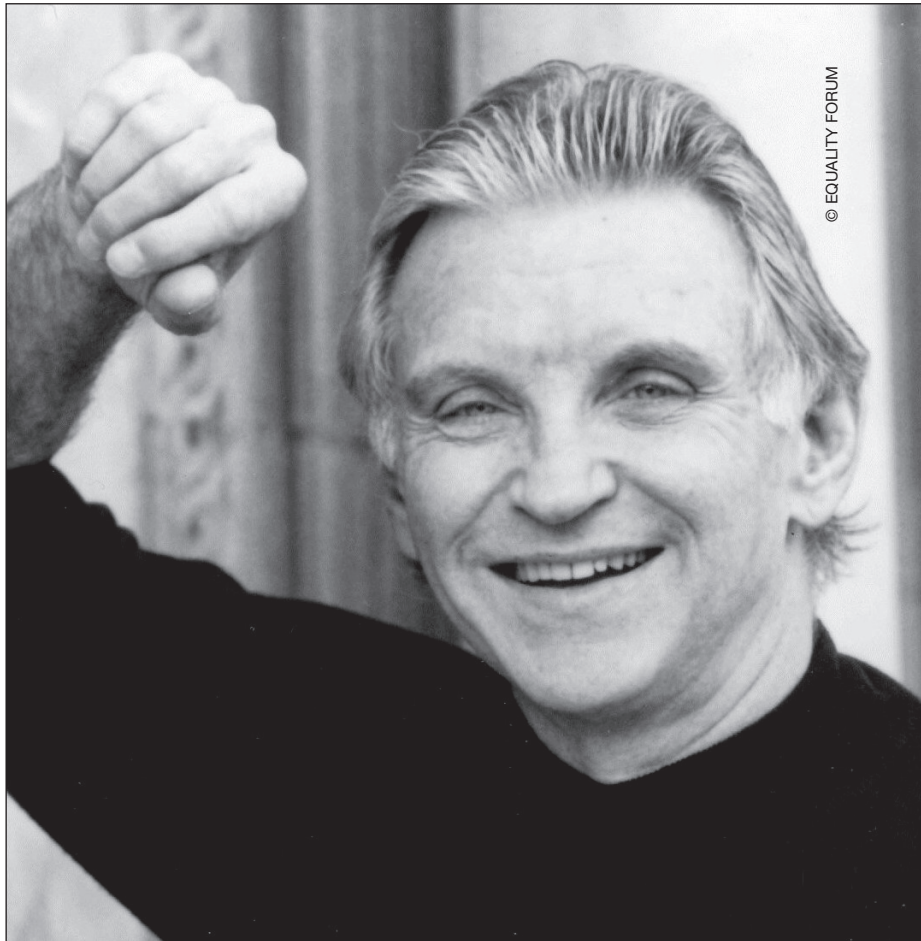
Duberman recounts questioning his sexuality in his 30s. He sought therapy to be "cured." When he accepted his sexual orientation, Duberman began exploring gay activism. He challenged homophobia in academia and society. When he came out in the early '70s, he was one of the few openly gay academics.

A renowned essayist and playwright, Duberman is known for literature on African-American history and abolitionism and for his biography of Paul Robeson. Critics have described his work as "refreshing and inspiring" (The New York Times) and "magnificent" (USA Today). He co-edited and contributed to the anthology "Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past," a standard reference in the field of LGBT studies. Duberman's biography "James Russell Lowell" was a finalist for the 1966 National Book Award.

Duberman wrote plays that deal with gender issues and the construction of male identity. In 1963, his play "In White America" won the Vernon Rice/Drama Desk Award for Best Off-Broadway Production.

In 1991, Duberman founded CUNY's Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies (CLAGS) to further LGBT scholarship and curriculum. CLAGS, one of the first organizations of its kind, hosts conferences and awards research grants.

His most recent publication, "The Martin Duberman Reader," was published in May 2013.



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# TOM OF FINLAND

b. May 8, 1920

d. November 7, 1991

## ARTIST

*“My whole life long I have done nothing but interpret my dreams of ultimate masculinity, and draw them.”*

**Five Tom of Finland’s drawings are featured in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art.**

Tom of Finland was an artist whose sexually charged drawings of musclemen made a significant impact on gay culture. He is known as the most influential creator of homoerotic images.

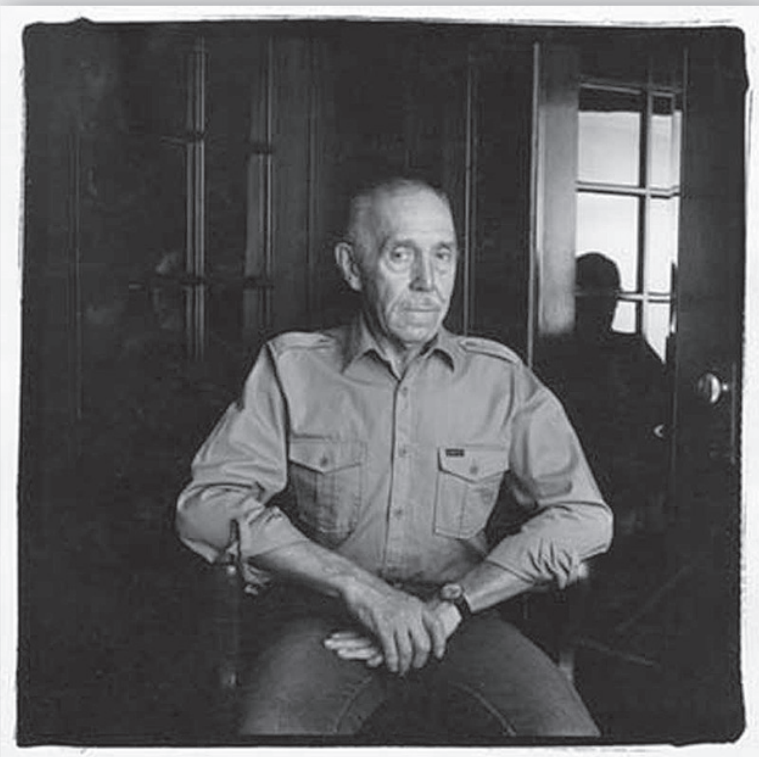
Born Touko Laaksonen in a small Finnish town, he was the son of two school teachers. At 19, Laaksonen moved to Helsinki to study advertising and began drawing erotic images.

In 1957, he submitted drawings to *Physique Pictorial*, an American magazine, under the pseudonym Tom. When his gay-themed illustrations were published, the magazine credited Tom of Finland, a name he assumed for the remainder of his career.

Tom introduced to mainstream culture a stylized masculinity in sharp contrast to the effeminate stereotypes of gay men. His work, which embraced sailors, bikers, lumberjacks and construction workers in leather and jeans, became popular and widely distributed in the gay community.

In the late 1950s, U.S. censorship codes restricted depiction of “overt homosexual acts” and limited the distribution of Tom’s work. In the 1962 case of *MANual Enterprises v. Day*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that nude male photographs were not obscene. As soft-core gay pornography flourished, Tom’s illustrations became more explicit, including exaggerated musculature and genitalia.

By 1973, Tom was publishing erotic comic books and exhibiting his work in the mainstream art world. In 1984, he cofounded the Tom of Finland Foundation, which is dedicated to the preservation of homoerotic artwork. In 1995, the Tom of Finland Clothing Company introduced a fashion line based on his art.



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Tom created more than 3,500 illustrations in his four-decade career. Five Tom of Finland’s drawings are featured in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art. Harvey Miller, an art patron, said, “Tom of Finland is one of the five most influential artists of the 20th century. As an artist he was superb, as an influence he was transcendent.”



# BRENDA HOWARD

b. December 24, 1946

d. June 28, 2005

## ACTIVIST

*“Bi, Poly, Switch—I’m not greedy, I know what I want.”*

**The Brenda Howard Award, created in her memory by PLFAG, is presented annually to a group or individual advocating on behalf of the bisexual community.**

Brenda Howard was an LGBT activist. She organized the first Pride parade and is known as the “Mother of Pride.”

Born in the Bronx, Howard was raised on Long Island. In the 1960s, she became involved in the anti-war and feminist movements.

Howard participated in the 1969 Stonewall riots that marked a turning point in the gay rights movement. A year later, she organized the first Christopher Street Liberation Day March to mark Stonewall’s anniversary. The march was the first Pride parade in the world. Her efforts encouraged other cities and countries to hold similar events, laying the groundwork for Pride parades internationally.

During the 1970s, she chaired the Gay Activists Alliance and was an active member of the Gay Liberation Front. In 1978, she graduated from Manhattan Community College with a degree in nursing. She was actively involved in the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights, successfully lobbying for LGBT rights laws in New York City.

In 1987, Howard cofounded the New York Area Bisexual Network. She also founded the first chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous specifically for bisexual people. She successfully lobbied for the inclusion of bisexuality in the 1993 March on Washington at a time when the movement was focused on gay men and lesbians. Howard participated in ACT UP

protests and other rallies for people living with HIV/AIDS.

The Brenda Howard Award, created in her memory by PLFAG, is presented annually to a group or individual advocating on behalf of the bisexual community. Howard is survived by her partner, Larry Nelson.



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# NATHAN LANE

b. February 3, 1956

## ACTOR

**In 1996, he starred in "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," for which he received his first Tony Award.**

*"I think it is healthy to speak the truth, and be who you are, and be proud of that."*

Nathan Lane is an award-winning film, television and theater actor. He has received three Emmys, two Tony Awards and a Screen Actors Guild Award.

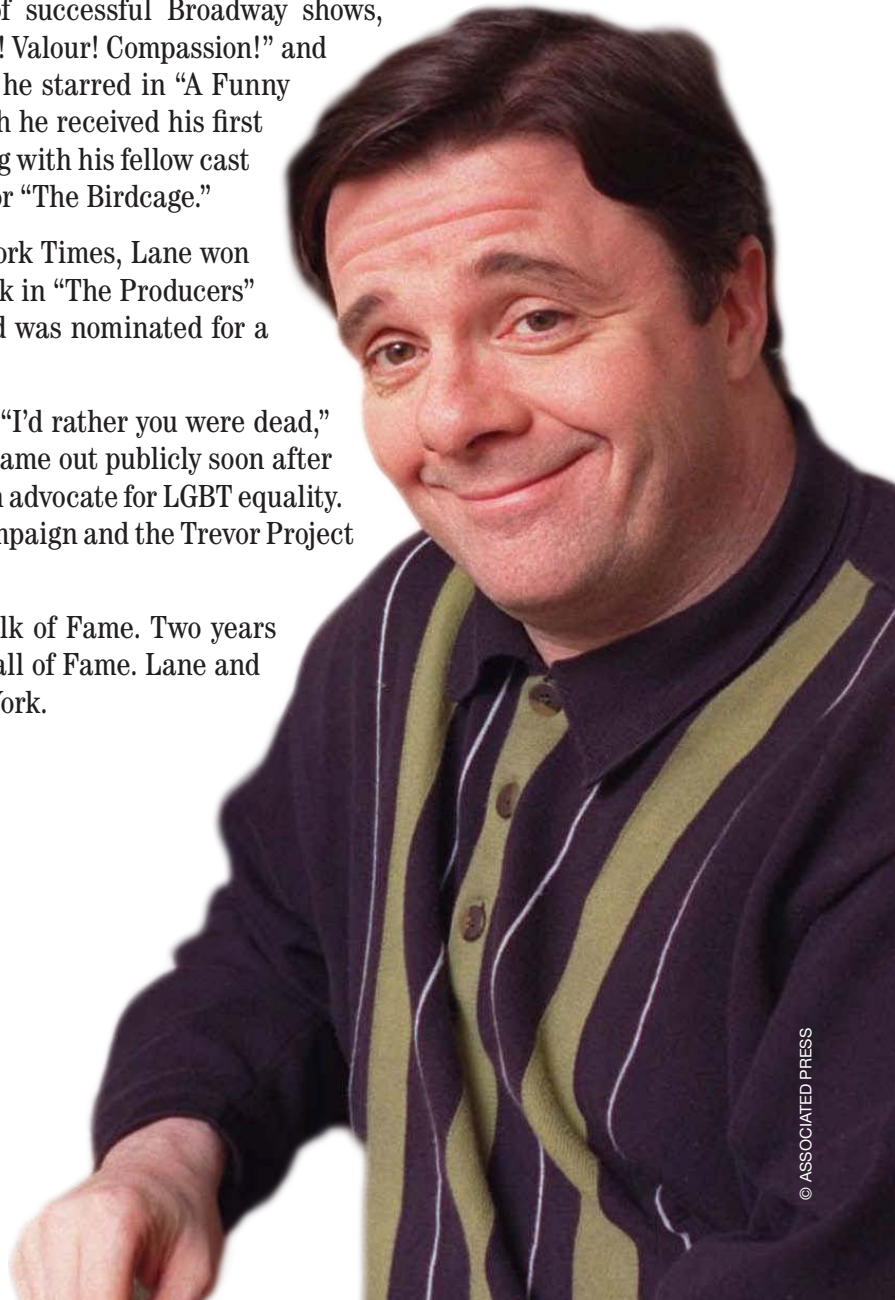
Born Joseph Lane in Jersey City, New Jersey, to an Irish Catholic family, he changed his name to Nathan after the character Nathan Detroit in the musical "Guys and Dolls"—a role he later played on Broadway. After graduating from a Catholic high school, Lane moved to New York City, where he performed as a stand-up comic. In 1982, he was cast in his first television sitcom, "One of the Boys." The following year, he landed his breakout role in a Broadway revival of Noel Coward's "Present Laughter."

Through the 1990s, Lane appeared in a series of successful Broadway shows, including Terrence McNally's gay-themed play "Love! Valour! Compassion!" and Neil Simon's "Laughter on the 23rd Floor." In 1996, he starred in "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," for which he received his first Tony Award. The following year, he was honored along with his fellow cast members with a Screen Actors Guild (SAG) Award for "The Birdcage."

Called "our greatest comic stage star" by the New York Times, Lane won his second Tony Award for his turn as Max Bialystock in "The Producers" in 1995. He reprised the role in the film version and was nominated for a Golden Globe Award for his performance.

When Lane came out to his mother, she responded, "I'd rather you were dead," to which he replied, "I knew you'd understand." He came out publicly soon after Matthew Shepard's death, and has been an outspoken advocate for LGBT equality. He was recognized by GLAAD, the Human Rights Campaign and the Trevor Project for his work on behalf of the LGBT community.

In 2006, Lane received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Two years later, he was inducted into the American Theater Hall of Fame. Lane and his long-term partner, Devlin Elliott, reside in New York.



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# QUEEN LATIFAH

b. March 18, 1970

## ENTERTAINER

*“You have to believe in your ideas and fight for it.”*

**Her breakout role came in the Oscar-winning film version of the musical “Chicago” (2002), playing the part of Matron “Mama” Morton.**

Known as “Hip-Hop’s First Lady,” Queen Latifah is an acclaimed entertainer in music, film and television. She has received a Grammy, a Golden Globe and two Screen Actors Guild (SAG) Awards.

Born Dana Elaine Owens in Newark, New Jersey, she was raised in the Baptist faith and attended Catholic school. At age 8, a Muslim cousin gave her the nickname Latifah, an Arabic word meaning “delicate and sensitive.” In high school, Latifah was a star basketball player and with friends formed a rap group called Ladies Fresh.

At 18, a demo recording of Latifah’s rap song “Princess of the Posse” landed her a recording contract with Tommy Boy Music. In 1989, her debut album, “All Hail to the Queen,” was released and went platinum. She has recorded seven albums, including a collection of soul music and jazz standards titled “The Dana Owens Album.” In 1991, she founded and became CEO of Flavor Unit Records. Three years later, she earned a Grammy Award for Best Solo Rap Performance for “U.N.I.T.Y.”

Her acting career launched on television in the 1990s with a starring role on the sitcom “Living Single.” She then appeared in a series of successful films, including “Set it Off” (1996), “Living Out Loud (1998) and “The Bone Collector” (1999).

Her breakout role came in the Oscar-winning film version of the musical “Chicago” (2002), playing the part of Matron “Mama” Morton. For her performance, Latifah received a SAG Award for Best Supporting Actress and was nominated for an Academy Award, making her the first female hip-hop artist to receive an Oscar nod.

Latifah’s subsequent film appearances include the box office hits “Bringing Down the House” (2003) and “Hairspray” (2006). For her portrayal of an HIV-positive woman in the HBO film “Life Support” (2007), she won a Golden Globe and her second SAG Award.

Queen Latifah received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. A new syndicated talk show, “The Queen Latifah Show,” premiered in September 2013.





# SIMON NKOLI

b. November 26, 1957

d. November 30, 1998

## SOUTH AFRICAN ACTIVIST

*“I am black and I am gay. I cannot separate the two into secondary or primary struggles.”*

**Nkoli cofounded the Gay and Lesbian Organisation of Witwatersrand (GLOW), the first national black LGBT organization in South Africa.**

Simon Nkoli was a South African anti-apartheid, gay rights and AIDS activist. He is recognized as the founder of South Africa’s black gay movement.

Nkoli was born in Soweto. At a young age, he was sent to live on a farm with his grandparents to avoid apartheid. He spent any spare moment in the classroom. Eventually his thirst for education led him to attend school full-time.

At 18, Nkoli came out to his mother. She sent him to a priest to be “argued” out of it. After this and further attempts by psychologists and doctors proved unsuccessful, Nkoli’s mother allowed her son to move in with his boyfriend.

As an activist in the 1970s, he was arrested in the student uprisings against apartheid. In 1979, he joined the Congress of South African Students and the United Democratic Front (UDF).

In 1983, Nkoli—frustrated that most gay venues were in districts reserved for whites—joined the Gay Association of South Africa (GASA), a predominantly white organization. Because GASA would not relocate their activities outside of whites-only facilities, Nkoli founded the Saturday Group, South Africa’s first regional gay black organization.

For opposing apartheid, Nkoli and other UDF members were charged with treason. While awaiting sentencing, he came out to other UDF leaders, prompting them to recognize homophobia as oppression. In 1988, he and his co-defendants were acquitted. After his release, Nkoli cofounded the Gay and Lesbian Organisation of Witwatersrand (GLOW), the first national black LGBT organization in South Africa.

In the 1990s, Nkoli worked with Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress (ANC) to end apartheid. His visibility in the anti-apartheid movement and his association with Mandela helped the gay movement gain support from the ANC. In 1996, South Africa became the first nation to include sexual orientation protection in its constitution.

Nkoli was one of the first South Africans to publicly disclose his HIV status. He cofounded the Township AIDS Project and the Gay Men’s Health Forum. In 1998, he died from AIDS-related complications.



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# BRUCE NUGENT

b. July 2, 1906

d. May 27, 1987

## AUTHOR

*“You’d be surprised how good  
homosexuality is. I love it.”*

**In 1926, he published  
“Smoke, Lilies, and Jade,”  
the first literary work  
by an African-American  
that openly depicted  
homosexuality.**

Bruce Nugent was a writer and artist during the Harlem Renaissance. He was the first out black writer.

He was born Richard Bruce Nugent to a middle class African-American family in Washington, D.C. After his father died in 1920, Nugent moved to New York to live with his mother. When he told her he was going to be an artist, she sent him back to Washington.

Nugent met author Langston Hughes at a salon in poet Georgia Douglas Johnson’s home. In 1925, Hughes found Nugent’s poem “Shadow” in a trash can and had it published. The poem shocked readers because it was about being gay.

Nugent returned to New York, where he moved in with fellow writer Wallace Thurman and pursued art and writing. One of Nugent’s drawings was published on the cover of *Opportunity: Journey of Negro Life*. Along with Hughes and other Harlem Renaissance luminaries, Nugent cofounded *Fire!!*, an African-American art magazine. In 1926, he published “Smoke, Lilies, and Jade,” the first literary work by an African-American that openly depicted homosexuality.

In 1952, Nugent married Grace Marr, who unsuccessfully tried to change his sexuality. They were married nearly 17 years until Marr’s death.

In 1964, Nugent was elected co-chair of Columbia University’s Community Planning Conference, an organization that promoted the arts in Harlem.

Nugent was open about his sexual orientation and was known for his vivacious personality and elegantly erotic style. Called the “Gay Rebel of the Harlem Renaissance,” he is remembered for living unconventionally and for following his own path.



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# MA RAINEY

b. April 26, 1886

d. December 22, 1939

## SINGER

*“You sing ’cause that’s a way of understanding life.”*

**She is recognized as one of the great female blues vocalists.**

Ma Rainey, called the “Mother of the Blues,” was one of the earliest known American blues singers and recording artists. She is recognized as one of the first great female blues vocalists.

Born Gertrude Pridgett in Columbus, Georgia, she was one of five children in a family of performers. From age 14, she sang and danced with traveling minstrel shows. At 18, she married singer Will “Pa” Rainey, and took the stage name Ma Rainey. Billed as the Assassinator of the Blues, the couple toured the Southern minstrel circuit. In 1916, Rainey separated from her husband and began touring the nation with her own band.

In 1923, Paramount Records signed Rainey. Over the next five years, she recorded more than 100 songs with some of the great musicians of her era, including Louis Armstrong and Thomas Dorsey, the “father of black gospel music.”

In 1928, Paramount considered Rainey’s classic style of blues no longer fashionable and terminated her contract. Before that, she recorded one of her last songs for the label, “Prove It On Me Blues,” which was cited as a watershed for its lyrics about lesbian desire. In the mid-1930s, she returned to her hometown, where she was the proprietor of two theaters.

Her song “See See Rider Blues” was included by the National Recording Preservation Board in the Library of Congress National Recording Registry, and was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame.

In 1983, Rainey was inducted into the Blues Foundation’s Hall of Fame. Seven years later, she was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

In 2007, the Gertrude “Ma” Rainey House and Blues Museum in Columbus, Georgia, opened to the public.



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# SALLY RIDE

b. May 26, 1951

d. July 23, 2012

## NATIONAL HERO

*“Young girls need to see role models.  
You can’t be what you can’t see.”*

**On June 18, 1983,  
Sally Ride became  
the first American  
woman in space.**

Sally Ride was the first female American astronaut in space.

Born in Los Angeles, Ride excelled in science and sports. She was a nationally ranked junior tennis player and earned a tennis scholarship to a private high school. While playing in college, she got the attention of Billie Jean King, who encouraged Ride to play professionally. Ride decided to finish her education.

Ride earned a master’s degree and a doctorate in physics from Stanford. She responded to a NASA recruiting ad and was one of 35 people—including six women—chosen from more than 8,000 applicants.

Ride was selected as a mission specialist aboard the space shuttle Challenger. On June 18, 1983, she became the first American woman in space. She later became the only person to serve on the presidential commissions investigating both of the nation’s space shuttle tragedies—the Challenger explosion (1986) and the Columbia disaster (2003).

In 1987, Ride retired from NASA and became a science fellow at the Center for International Security and Arms Control at Stanford. In 1989, she joined the faculty at the University of California, San Diego as a professor of physics and director of the California Space Institute. In 2001, she founded Sally Ride Science, which motivates girls and boys to study science and

explore careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

Ride co-authored several books about space and about climate change with Tam O’Shaughnessy, her life partner of 27 years.

In 2013, Ride posthumously received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Barack Obama.



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# MARLON RIGGS

b. February 3, 1957

d. April 5, 1994

## FILMMAKER

**In 1987, he released his first television film, “Ethnic Notions,” for which he received an Emmy Award.**

*“Black men loving black men is THE revolutionary act.”*

Marlon Riggs was a filmmaker, educator, poet and gay rights activist. He examined race and sexuality in his documentaries for which he received an Emmy Award and a Peabody Award.

Born to a military family, Riggs spent most of his childhood living on different bases. At 11, his family moved to West Germany. Riggs remained there until graduating from high school as student-body president.

Riggs attended Harvard, graduating magna cum laude with a bachelor’s degree in history. He earned a master’s degree in journalism from the University of California, Berkeley. After graduating, he joined the faculty.

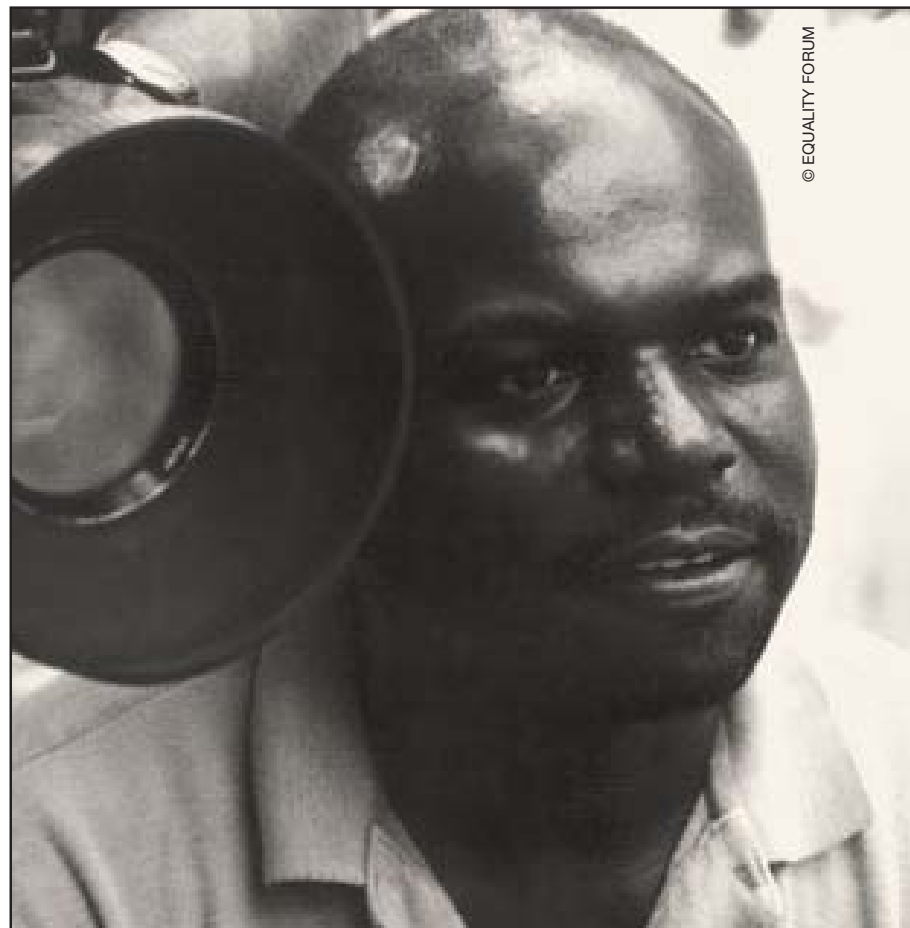
In 1987, he released his first television film, “Ethnic Notions,” for which he received an Emmy Award. He followed this with “Tongues Tied,” the first televised documentary focusing on the black gay experience. During production, Riggs was diagnosed with HIV. Many of his poems about HIV were included in the documentary.

The critically acclaimed film sparked controversy. The religious right objected to the content of the movie and used it to protest public funding of sexually explicit art. Riggs became a leading advocate for independent television that would support controversial topics.

Riggs’s next project, “Color Adjustment,” focused on 40 years of prime-time representations of African-Americans. In 1991, the film received television’s highest honor, the Peabody Award. That same year, Riggs was recognized with the American Film Institute’s Lifetime Achievement Award.

In 1994, Riggs began working on his last film, “Black Is ... Black Ain’t.” During production, his health deteriorated. In the documentary, Riggs appears on screen from his hospital bed saying, “As long as I have work then I’m not going to die, ’cause work is a living spirit in me.”

Riggs died from AIDS-related complications. He is survived by his life partner, Jack Vincent. “Black Is ... Black Ain’t” was completed posthumously by the co-producer and released in 1995.



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# VITO RUSSO

b. July 11, 1946

d. November 7, 1990

## FILM HISTORIAN

**In the early 1970s, he started research for “The Celluloid Closet” (1981), which entailed watching hundreds of films that included gay content and stereotypes.**

*“I never once, not for a second, believed it was wrong to be gay.”*

Vito Russo was a gay rights activist, a film historian and an author best known for his book, “The Celluloid Closet,” a groundbreaking chronicle of gays and lesbians in film.

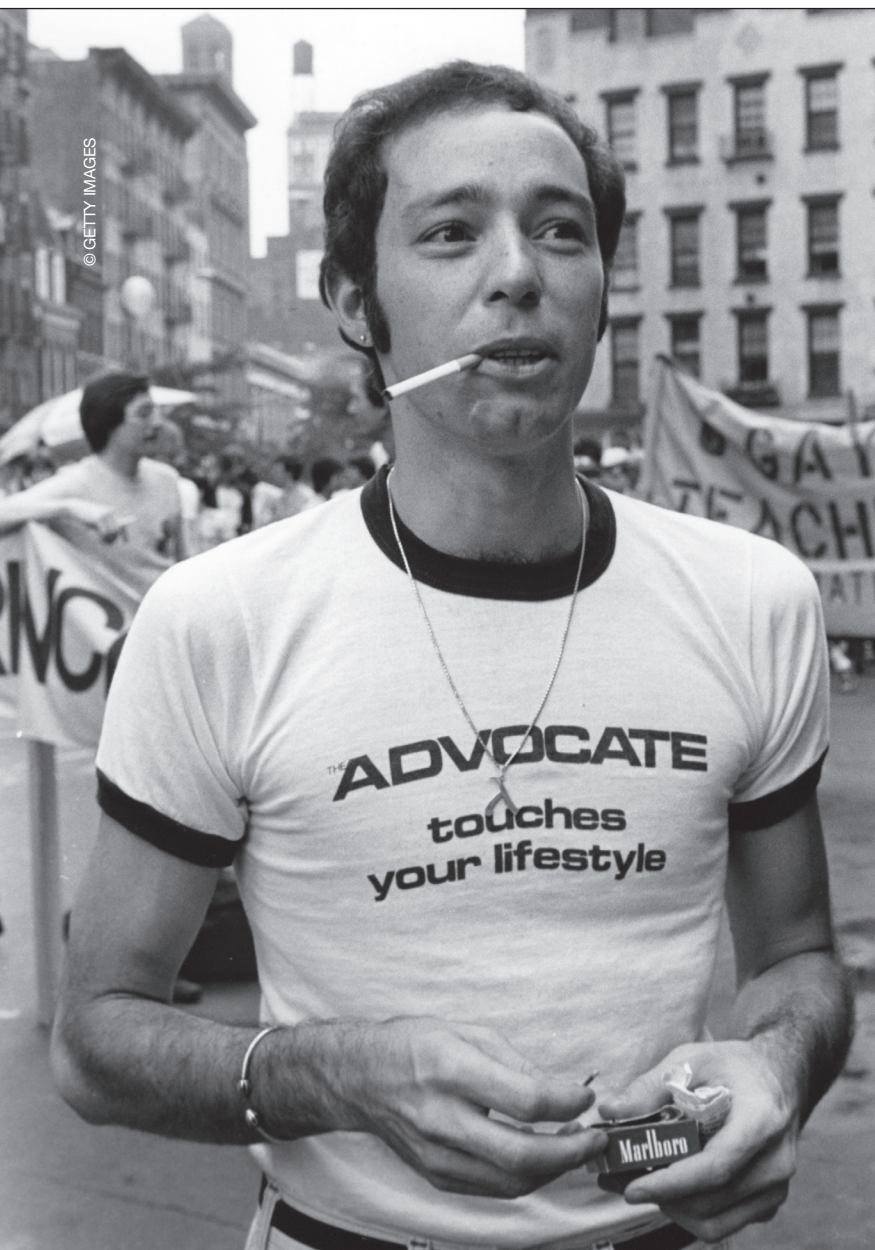
A New York City native, Russo grew up in East Harlem. As a young boy, he would sneak into Manhattan to go to the movies. From an early age, Russo knew he was “different.” A cousin remembers him always talking about Rock Hudson rather than Ava Gardner.

After graduating from New York University, Russo joined the Gay Activists Alliance. In the early 1970s, he started research for “The Celluloid Closet” (1981), which entailed watching hundreds of films that included gay content and stereotypes. What originated as a lecture with film clips became one of the most informative books about gay people and pop culture.

Diagnosed with HIV in 1985, Russo was a frequent protestor with ACT UP. In 1986, Russo lost his longtime partner, Jeffrey Sevcik, to AIDS. Outraged by the media’s inadequate and inaccurate coverage of the pandemic, Russo cofounded GLAAD, an organization that monitors LGBT representation in the media. In his memory, GLAAD created the Vito Russo Media Award to recognize out LGBT media professionals who have made a significant difference promoting equality.

Russo appeared in the 1989 Academy Award-winning documentary, “Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt,” about the life and death of Sevcik and the quilt Russo made for him. A year later, Russo died from AIDS-related complications.

In 1996, “The Celluloid Closet” was made into a documentary that was co-produced and narrated by Lily Tomlin. In 2012, “Vito,” a film about Russo’s life, premiered on HBO.



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# JOSÉ SARRIA

b. December 12, 1923

d. August 19, 2013

## ACTIVIST

**Sarria cofounded the Imperial Court System, an international organization that raises money for people living with HIV/AIDS and other causes.**

*“Why be ashamed of who you are?”*

José Sarria was a drag performer, singer and activist. He was the first openly gay man in the world to run for public office.

Sarria, who was of Latin-American descent, was born in San Francisco. He was raised by his mother and grandmother, who allowed him to dress in women's clothes.

During World War II, Sarria enlisted in the army. His fellow soldiers discriminated against him because he was gay. Sarria became friends with some by giving them tours of San Francisco.

Sarria began performing at “The Black Cat,” a San Francisco gay club. His shows, which included warning guests of police extortion and raids on gay bars, were a hit. Although the messages were often serious, Sarria presented them humorously and with a gay twist. He became famous for his closing song, “God Save Us Nelly Queens.”

In 1961, Sarria became the first openly gay candidate for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. He lost, but received 5,600 votes, demonstrating that a gay voting bloc could wield political power. The possibility of empowerment laid the groundwork for the election of Harvey Milk.

In the 1960s, San Francisco gay bars were being shut down. The Tavern Guild of San Francisco organized a drag ball to protest. Sarria was crowned Queen of the Ball.

Sarria cofounded the Imperial Court System, an international organization that raises money for people living with HIV/AIDS and other causes. In 2006, a street in San Francisco was named in his honor.



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# GEORGE TAKEI

b. April 20, 1937

## ACTOR

**In 1966, he landed the role of Mr. Sulu, helmsman of the Starship Enterprise, on the television series “Star Trek.”**

*“Diversity is one of the strengths of our society.”*

George Takei is an actor best known for his role as Mr. Sulu on “Star Trek.” He is an outspoken advocate for LGBT equality.

Born in Los Angeles to second-generation Japanese-American parents, Takei’s life changed at the start of World War II. From age 4 to 8, he was held with his family in Japanese-American internment camps. Although he did not understand the reasons, Takei recalls feeling like an outsider from early in life.

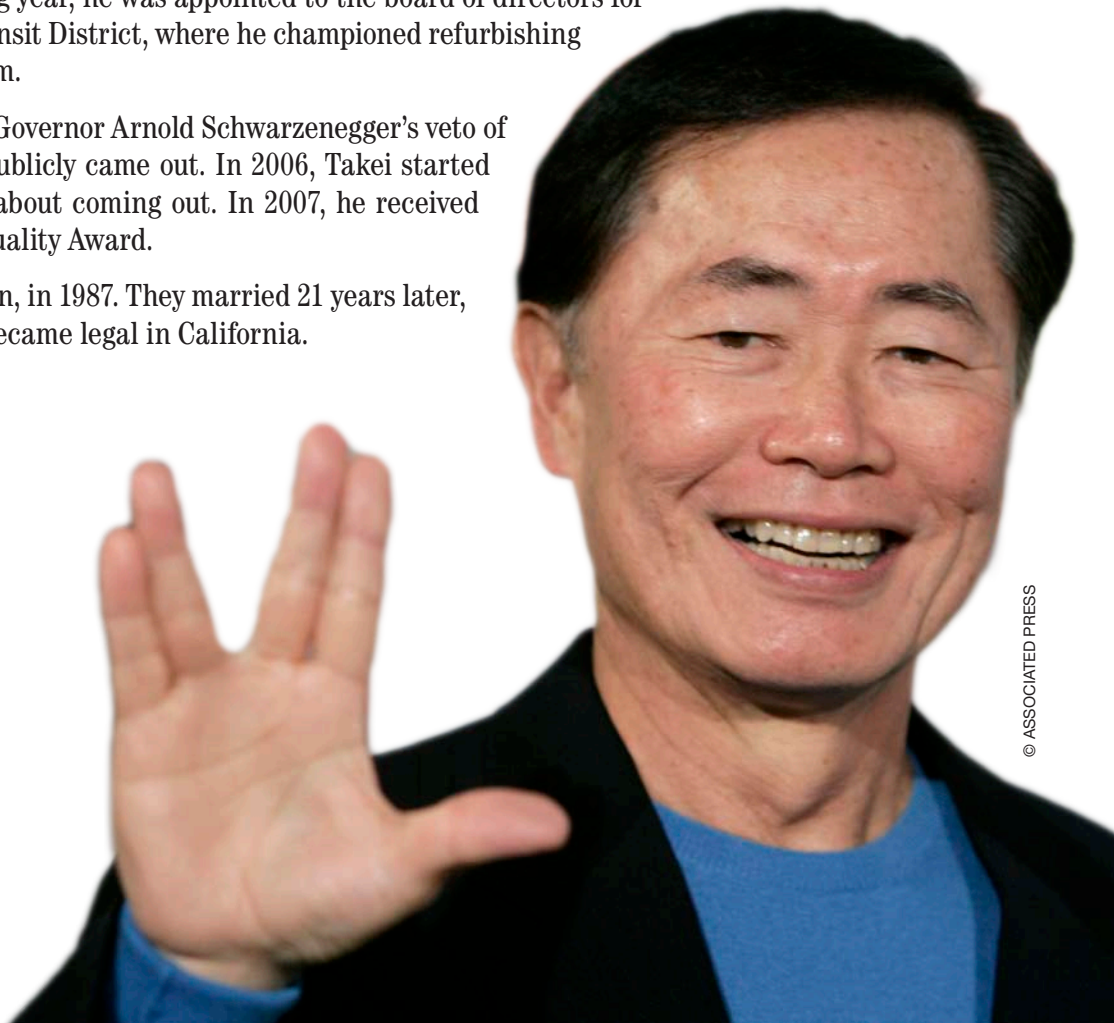
Takei attended the University of California, Berkeley to study architecture. After two years, he transferred to UCLA to pursue his passion for theater. After graduating, he studied at the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-Upon-Avon. Takei returned to California where he earned a master’s degree in theater from his alma mater.

In 1966, he landed the role of Mr. Sulu, helmsman of the Starship Enterprise, on the television series “Star Trek.” He was encouraged by the show’s commitment to diversity, which was a first for a major television series. Producer Gene Roddenberry urged the cast to think of the Starship Enterprise as “a metaphor for the Starship Earth.” Takei continued his role on the television show for three seasons and in subsequent “Star Trek” films.

Takei became involved in local and state politics. In 1972, he served as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention. The following year, he was appointed to the board of directors for the Southern California Rapid Transit District, where he championed refurbishing the Los Angeles Metro Rails system.

In 1995, in response to California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger’s veto of a same-sex marriage bill, Takei publicly came out. In 2006, Takei started “Equality Trek,” a speaking tour about coming out. In 2007, he received the Human Rights Campaign’s Equality Award.

Takei met his partner, Brad Altman, in 1987. They married 21 years later, shortly after same-sex marriage became legal in California.



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# JASON WU

b. September 27, 1982

## DESIGNER

**Wu's inaugural ball gowns for Mrs. Obama are on display at the Smithsonian Institution.**

*“Being able to make history is something I would have never thought I would do.”*

Jason Wu is a fashion designer who became an overnight sensation when the first lady, Michelle Obama, wore one of his gowns to the inaugural ball in 2009. Mrs. Obama chose a Wu design again for the inaugural ball in 2013.

Wu was born in Taipei, Taiwan. His parents, who own an import-export business, recognized his creative talent at age 5. His mother would drive him to bridal stores so he could sketch the dresses. Wu learned to sew by producing doll clothes.

When Wu was 9, the family moved to Vancouver, British Columbia. He attended Loomis Chaffee, a prestigious Connecticut prep school. At 16, he was designing doll clothes for Integrity Toys. A year later, Wu was named the company's creative director. Wu attended the Parsons School of Design in New York. In 2004, he dropped out six months before graduation to intern for designer Narciso Rodriguez.

In 2006, at age 24, Wu launched his own label and presented his first ready-to-wear collection. His clients include Ivana Trump, actresses January Jones and Kerry Washington, and RuPaul, for whom he designed six RuPaul dolls. In 2008, Wu was recognized with the Fashion Group's International Rising Star Award.

Ikram Goldman, of the Chicago boutique Ikram, introduced Wu's designs to Michelle Obama. Wu created a sparkling white chiffon inaugural gown for her and submitted it to Ikram. Wu didn't know until he saw the first lady on television

that she had chosen his design. Wu, who was 26, became the youngest designer to outfit a first lady for the inauguration. “I was over the moon,” he said. “I didn't think it was my turn yet.”

Wu's inaugural ball gowns for Mrs. Obama are on display at the Smithsonian Institution.

Jason Wu lives in New York City with his business partner and boyfriend, Gustavo Rangel. Wu has grown his label into an internationally acclaimed fashion brand.



# JOHN LAWRENCE & TYRON GARNER

John Lawrence

b. 8/2/1943

d. 11/20/2011

Tyron Garner

b. 7/10/1967

d. 9/11/2006

## LEGAL ACTIVISTS

*“When somebody is wronged and they don’t stand up for themselves, they’re going to get wronged again.”*

– John Lawrence

**Garner addressed the significance of the case by saying, “I’m not a hero. But I feel like we’ve done something good for a lot of people.”**

John Geddes Lawrence and Tyron Garner were defendants in the landmark Supreme Court case *Lawrence v. Texas* in which laws prohibiting same-sex sodomy were declared unconstitutional. The 2003 decision, based on the right to privacy, legalized consensual same-sex intimacy.

John Lawrence was raised in a rural town on the coastal plains of Texas. After serving four years in the Navy, Lawrence returned to Texas. He worked as a medical technologist in the Houston area, where he met Tyron Garner, an African-American blue-collar worker.

In September 1998, Garner spent the night at Lawrence’s apartment. Responding to a disturbance complaint, police entered the apartment and witnessed the couple having sex. The two men were arrested and charged with violating the Homosexual Conduct Law. The statute made it a misdemeanor to engage in “deviant sexual intercourse” with a member of the same sex. Those convicted were required to register as sex offenders. After pleading no contest, Lawrence and Garner appealed the conviction and challenged the statute’s constitutionality.

Lawrence and Garner were represented by Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund (Lambda Legal). After five years, Lawrence and Garner’s appeal was heard by the U.S. Supreme Court. In a 6-3 decision, the Court struck down sodomy laws. In the majority opinion, Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote that a law prohibiting sodomy “demeans the lives of homosexual persons” and, under the equal protection and due process guaranteed by the 14th Amendment, could no longer be upheld.

Following the decision, both men led private lives. Although they were no longer a couple, they remained friends. They are remembered through a fellowship program in Garner’s name, established by Lambda Legal. The fellowship supports law students interested in LGBT issues within the African-American community. In one of his few media interviews, Garner addressed the significance of the case by saying, “I’m not a hero. But I feel like we’ve done something good for a lot of people. I kind of feel proud of that.”

June 23, 2013, marked the 10th anniversary of the historic decision in *Lawrence v. Texas*. The case laid the groundwork for the Supreme Court decision in *United States v. Windsor*, which held that the Defense of Marriage Act was unconstitutional.



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