VIRGINIA APUZZO
b. June 26, 1941

“I thought I’d have to live my life with this deep, dark secret.”

Virginia Apuzzo co-authored the first gay and lesbian civil rights plank for the Democratic Party.
JOSEPHINE BAKER
b. June 3, 1906
d. April 12, 1975

“People … can learn to live together in peace if they are not brought up in prejudice.”

Josephine Baker was an American entertainer who found fame in Paris and fought segregation at home.
XAVIER BETTEL
b. March 3, 1973

“I didn’t get up one morning and say, ‘Hey, I’m gay.’ It’s not a choice.”

Xavier Bettel is the prime minister of Luxembourg and the country’s first openly gay leader.
CHARLES BLOW
b. August 11, 1970

“One thing the gay rights movement taught the world is the importance of being visible.”

Charles Blow is a columnist for The New York Times and a television commentator.
Brian Bond

ACTIVIST AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL

“Coming out isn’t easy, but it is getting easier with each passing day.”

Brian Bond was an early executive director of the Victory Fund.
Chaz Bono
b. March 4, 1969

“A lot of parents never speak to their transgender kids again; that’s not the case in my family.”

Chaz Bono is a transgender activist and author.
DAVID BOWIE
b. January 8, 1947
d. January 10, 2016

“It’s true—I’m bisexual.
… I suppose it’s the best thing
that ever happened to me.”

David Bowie was a trendsetting international rock icon who helped define androgyny.
James Buchanan

b. April 23, 1791
d. June 1, 1868

“The test of leadership is not to put greatness into humanity, but to elicit it, for the greatness is already there.”

James Buchanan served as the 15th president of the United States.
JEANNE CÓRDOVA
b. July 18, 1948
d. January 10, 2016

“It’s the job of the young to push the societal envelope.”

Jeanne Córdova helped found the Gay and Lesbian Caucus of the Democratic Party.
MIDGE COSTANZA
b. November 28, 1931
d. March 23, 2010

“It is the link from the present to the past that gives us a spirit to address the future.”

Midge Costanza was a political activist and an adviser to President Jimmy Carter.
LILI ELBE
b. December 28, 1882
d. September 13, 1931

“... The one hundred percent male and the one hundred percent female are theoretical.”

Lili Elbe was a renowned Danish painter who underwent one of the first gender-reassignment surgeries.
Uzi Even
b. October 18, 1940

“You no longer have to be ashamed. You can even be elected.”

Uzi Even is an Israeli gay pioneer and the first openly gay member of parliament.
Malcolm Forbes was an internationally famous entrepreneur and the publisher of Forbes magazine.

“Failure is success if we learn from it.”

Malcolm Forbes
b. August 19, 1919
d. February 24, 1990
JOHN FRYER
b. November 7, 1937
d. February 21, 2003

“I am a homosexual. I am a psychiatrist.”

Dr. John Fryer was instrumental in declassifying homosexuality as a mental illness.
ESSEX HEMPHILL

b. April 16, 1957
d. November 4, 1995

“It is not enough to tell us that one was a brilliant poet, scientist, educator or rebel. Whom did he love? It makes a difference.”

Essex Hemphill was a prominent American poet who wrote about race and identity.
ASHOK ROW KAVI
b. June 1, 1947

“Coming out was a natural defense mechanism.”

Ashok Row Kavi is a journalist and the first gay man in India to speak publicly about his sexuality.
FRANCES KELLOR  SOCIAL ACTIVIST
b. October 20, 1873
d. January 4, 1952

“No effective program can be made until we set our own house in order.”

Frances Kellor was an American social reformer dedicated to women’s issues and immigrants.
JIM KEPNER
b. August 19, 1923
d. November 15, 1997

“I always had an innate sense that what I was doing was important.”

Jim Kepner was a pioneering journalist who helped research and chronicle the American gay rights movement.
Kay Lahusen
b. January 30, 1930

“Whatever the Founding Fathers envisioned as the rights and privileges of our citizens, we wanted for ourselves.”

Kay Lahusen is a gay pioneer and the first openly lesbian American photojournalist.
Terrence McNally
b. November 3, 1938

“I think the theatre teaches us who we are, what our society is, where we are going.”

Terrence McNally is a Tony award-winning American playwright and screenwriter.
JANET MOCK
b. March 10, 1983

“My genital reconstructive surgery did not make me a girl. I was always a girl.”

Janet Mock is a New York Times best-selling author, television host and transgender advocate.
Sherri Murrell is a pioneering out NCAA women’s Division I basketball coach.

“Just because I’m a gay coach doesn’t mean I’m going to have gay players … or turn my players gay.”
DIANA NYAD
b. August 22, 1949

“All of us suffer difficulties in our lives. And if you say to yourself ‘find a way,’ you’ll make it through.”

Diana Nyad is a record-breaking long-distance swimmer who swam from Cuba to Florida.
JEAN O’LEARY
b. March 4, 1948
d. June 4, 2005

“I wanted to do something special, to have an impact on the world.”

Jean O’Leary was a pioneering LGBT activist and the cofounder of National Coming Out Day.
“We have to stand up and say we’ve had enough.”

James Obergefell is the plaintiff in the U.S. Supreme Court decision that legalized same-sex marriage.
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ELLEN PAGE
b. February 21, 1987

“I’m tired of hiding and I’m tired of lying by omission.”

Ellen Page is an Academy Award-nominated actress and an LGBT activist.
OLIVER SACKS
b. July 9, 1933
d. August 30, 2015

“We speak not only to tell other people what we think, but to tell ourselves what we think.”

Oliver Sacks was an internationally renowned neurologist and best-selling author.
Tammy Smith is the first out lesbian general in the U.S. military.

“Anyone who has ever busted through a glass ceiling got cut a little.”
Andrew Tobias

b. April 20, 1947

“I wanted to tell young gay and lesbian kids and their parents that you can have a good, happy, productive life.”

Andrew Tobias is a best-selling author and the treasurer of the Democratic National Committee.
Jose Antonio Vargas

b. February 3, 1981

“I am an American. I just don’t have the right papers.”

Jose Antonio Vargas is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, a filmmaker and an immigration rights activist.
Bruce Voeller was a pioneering HIV researcher and a cofounder of the National Gay Task Force.

Bruce Voeller was a biologist and AIDS activist.

b. May 12, 1934

d. February 13, 1994

“We are everywhere.”