CCH celebrates PRIDE MONTH

Important Figures & Events in LGBTQ+ History

Why We Are PROUD!!!
Sarah McBride (1990-Present)

- In 2020 Sarah McBride is the first transgender state senator in the country, making her the highest-ranking transgender official in United States history.
- She is a Democratic member of the Delaware Senate since January 2021. She is currently the National Press Secretary of the Human Rights Campaign.
- McBride is largely credited with the passage of legislation in Delaware banning discrimination on the basis of gender identity in employment, housing, insurance, and public accommodations. In July 2016, she was a speaker at the Democratic National Convention, becoming the first openly transgender person to address a major party convention in American history.
Barbara Gittings (1932-2007) & the Repeal of the DSM

- Barbara Gittings was born in Austria and lived in Wilmington, DE. She was a prominent American LGBTQ+ activist and was involved in promoting positive literature about homosexuality in libraries, to help other young questioning individuals find affirming LGBTQ information.

- She was a vital part of the movement to get the American Psychiatric Association to drop homosexuality as a mental illness in 1973 in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*, a move that was upheld with a vote by the association’s membership.

- She picketed regularly for LGBTQ civil rights at the White House and Independence Hall, and kissed a woman live while news cameras were rolling.

- She met her lifelong partner Kay Tobin Lahusen in 1961 and they were together for 46 years.

- Her last act as an activist was to come out in the newsletter of the assisted living facility where they resided. She died in Kennett Square, PA.
Mathematician Alan Turing played a pivotal role in cracking intercepted coded messages that enabled the Allies to defeat the Nazis in many crucial moments and in so doing helped win World War Two.

In 1952, Turing was convicted for having a relationship with 19-year-old Arnold Murray. At the time it was illegal to engage in gay sex, and Turing underwent chemical castration.

He took his own life at the age of 41 after using cyanide to poison an apple.

Turing was eventually given a posthumous royal pardon in 2013, which led to new legislation pardoning all gay men under historical gross indecency laws. This was dubbed the “Turing Law”.

He was named ‘The Greatest Person of the 20th Century’ following a public vote on the BBC.

Alan Turing is often credited with creating the foundation of artificial intelligence and computer science.
Stonewall Riots 1969

- In the early morning hours on June 28, 1969, police performed a raid of the Stonewall Inn, a New York City gay bar. The tension from ongoing harassment galvanized the LGBTQ+ community and their supporters to take a stand and riot for six days.
- The “Stonewall riots” are largely considered the start of the LGBTQ+ civil rights movement in the United States.
- A year later, thousands of people marched through the streets of New York City to commemorate the event. It is now memorialized as the annual Gay Pride parades that are now celebrated around the world.
- May, 2016: The Obama administration announced that he would designate New York’s Stonewall Inn as a national monument, the first-ever monument dedicated to LGBTQ+ rights.
James Baldwin (1924-1987)

- In his teen years, American novelist James Baldwin began to feel smothered for being both African-American and gay in a racist and homophobic America. Baldwin eventually escaped to France.
- Using the power of words, he brought to light the challenges and complexities black and LGBTQ+ people had to face at the time. He wrote transformative essays critiquing race, sexuality and class structures.
- In 1949 Baldwin met and fell in love with Lucien Happersberger, a boy aged 17, though Happersberger's marriage three years later left Baldwin distraught. When the marriage ended they later reconciled, with Happersberger staying by Baldwin's deathbed at their house in Saint-Paul-de-Vence.
- In June 2019, Baldwin was one of the inaugural fifty American "pioneers, trailblazers, and heroes" inducted on the National LGBTQ Wall of Honor within the Stonewall National Monument.
Gilbert Baker (1951-2017)

- Gilbert Baker served in the United States Army from 1970 to 1972. He was stationed as a medic in San Francisco at the beginning of the gay rights movement, and lived there as an openly gay man.

- He used his sewing skill to create banners for gay-rights and anti-war protest marches. It was during this time that he met and became friends with Harvey Milk. He also joined the gay drag activist group Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence.

- Gilbert Baker designed and debuted the rainbow flag in 1978.

- The flag had become widely associated with LGBTQ+ rights, and he refused to trademark it saying it was a symbol for everyone.

- To celebrate its 25th anniversary, Baker created the world’s largest rainbow flag, spanning over Key West from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean.
Marsha P Johnson (1945-1992)

- Marsha P Johnson was known as an outspoken advocate for LGBTQ+ rights. Marsha was one of the prominent figures in the Stonewall uprising in 1969.
- She co-founded the gay and transvestite advocacy organization, S.T.A.R. (Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries), alongside close friend Sylvia Rivera.
- She & Rivera also started the STAR House, which was a shelter for homeless transgender youth in New York City. They paid the rent using money they made themselves as sex workers and acted as "mothers" to these youth.
- In 1973, Johnson and Rivera were banned from participating in the gay pride parade by the gay and lesbian committee who were administering the event stating they "weren't gonna allow drag queens" at their marches claiming they were "giving them a bad name". Their response was to march defiantly ahead of the parade.
- Shortly after the 1992 pride parade, Johnson's body was discovered floating in the Hudson River. Police initially ruled the death a suicide, but friends were adamant that she was the victim of a transphobic attack.
- In 2012, New York police reopened the investigation into her death as a possible homicide, before eventually reclassifying her cause of death from 'suicide' to 'undetermined'.

Johnson initially used the moniker "Black Marsha" but later decided on the drag queen name "Marsha P. Johnson", stating that the P stood for "pay it no mind" when questioned about gender. Johnson variably self-identified as gay, as a transvestite, and as a queen (referring to drag queen). Johnson never self-identified with the term transgender, but the term was also not in broad use while Johnson was alive.
Jeanne Manford (1920-2013)

- Every movement needs ally support and Manford made sure the LGBTQ+ community got that support as co-founder of PFLAG, the nation’s first and largest organization for parents, families, friends, and allies to LGBTQ+ people.

- In April 1972, Manford learned from a hospital's telephone call that her son Morty, a gay activist, had been beaten while distributing flyers. Reports stated that Morty was "kicked and stomped" while being led away by police. In response, she wrote a letter of protest to the *New York Post* that identified herself as the mother of a gay protester and complained of police inaction. She gave interviews to radio and television shows in several cities in the weeks that followed, always accompanied by her husband or son.

- She was grand marshal of the New York City's Pride March in 1991 as well as the first Queens pride celebration in 1993.

- Manford was posthumously awarded the Presidential Citizens Medal by President Obama in 2012.
Harvey Milk (1930-1978)

- Harvey Milk was an American politician and the first openly gay elected official in the history of California, where he was elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1977.
- Although he was the most pro-LGBTQ+ politician in the United States at the time, politics and activism were not his early interests; he was neither open about his sexuality nor civically active until he was 40, after his experiences in the counterculture movement of the 1960s.
- Milk's political career centered on making government responsive to individuals, gay liberation, and the importance of neighborhoods to the city.
- His camera store and campaign headquarters at 575 Castro Street (and his apartment above it) were centers of community activism for a wide range of human rights, environmental, labor, and neighborhood issues. During his tenure as supervisor, he helped pass a gay rights ordinance for the city of San Francisco that prohibited anti-gay discrimination in housing and employment.
- On November 27, 1978, Milk and Mayor George Moscone were assassinated by Dan White, who was another city supervisor. Milk was 48 at the time of his death.
- Despite his short career in politics, Milk became an icon in San Francisco and a martyr in the gay community.

In 2008, Gus Van Sant directed a biopic called *Milk* written by Dustin Lance Black which went on to win Best Original Screenplay at the 2009 Academy Awards.
The Daughters of Bilitis (DOB), was the first organization that focused on lesbian civil and political rights. As they gained members, the focus shifted to providing support to women who were afraid to come out.

Early meetings and writings in the Daughters of Bilitis urged their members “not to upset mainstream heterosexual society; that integration and acceptance would be won if heterosexuals could see that gays and lesbians were not dramatically different from themselves”.

Del Martin are Phyllis Lyon co-founded Daughters of Bilitis in San Francisco as a couple in the 1950s initially to form a lesbian social outlet, then moved towards civil causes.

Before the Stonewall riots, Barbara Gittings started its New York chapter. Gittings also began editing *The Ladder*, the national magazine by and for lesbian women.

Martin & Lyon were the first same-sex couple married in 2004 after the city clerk was ordered to provide marriage licenses to gay couples. Their marriage was voided later that year by the California Supreme Court. They married again in 2008 when the court legalized same sex marriage in the state.
Lili Elbe / Einar Wegener (1882-1931)

- Lili Elbe was a Danish transgender woman and among the early recipients of gender reassignment surgery.
- She was born Einar Magnus Andreas Wegener, and was a successful painter under that name. During this time, she also presented as Lili and was introduced publicly as Einar's sister.
- In 1930, Elbe went to Germany for gender reassignment surgery, which was highly experimental at the time. A series of four operations were carried out over a period of two years.
- After successfully transitioning, she changed her legal name to Lili Ilse Elvenes and stopped painting altogether. The name Lili Elbe was given to her by Copenhagen journalist Louise Lassen.
- Eventually, her immune system rejected the transplanted uterus, and she developed an infection. She died in 1931, three months after the uterine transplant surgery at the age of 48.

Lili’s life was brought to the big screen in the 2015 movie *The Danish Girl* with Eddie Redmayne starring as her.
Keith Haring (1958-1990)

Keith Haring was an American artist whose pop art and graffiti-like work grew out of the New York City street culture of the 1980s.

- After public recognition he created larger scale works such as colorful murals.
- His later work often addressed political and societal themes – especially homosexuality and AIDS – through his own iconography.
- Haring was openly gay and was a strong advocate of safe sex, however, in 1988, he was diagnosed with AIDS.
- From 1982 to 1989, he was featured in more than 100 solo and group exhibitions as well as produced more than 50 public artworks in dozens of charities, hospitals, day care centers, and orphanages.
- In 1989, he established the Keith Haring Foundation to provide funding and imagery to AIDS organizations and children's programs.
- He is commemorated in the AIDS Memorial Quilt.

Madonna declared that the first New York date of her 1990 Blond Ambition World Tour would be a benefit concert for Haring's memory and donated all proceeds from her ticket sales to AIDS charities.
Sylvia Rivera (1951-2002)

- Sylvia Rivera was a Latina American gay liberation and transgender rights activist significant in the LGBTQ+ history of New York City and of the US as a whole.
- She was raised by her Venezuelan grandmother, who disapproved of her effeminate behavior, particularly after Rivera began to wear makeup in fourth grade.
- As a result, Rivera began living on the streets at the age of 11 and worked as a child prostitute. She was taken in by the local community of drag queens, who gave her the name Sylvia.
- Rivera, who identified as a drag queen, was a founding member of both the Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Activists Alliance.
- At different times in her life, Rivera battled substance abuse and lived on the streets, largely in the gay homeless community in NYC. Her experiences made her more focused on advocacy for those who, in her view, were left behind by the mainstream society sectors of the gay community. Rivera fought partly for herself for those reasons but most importantly for the rights of people of color and low-income LGBTQ+ people.

Rivera amplified the voices of the most vulnerable members of the gay community: drag queens, homeless youth, incarcerated gay inmates, and transgender people.

- Leslie Cheung was a bisexual Hong Kong singer and actor. He is considered "one of the founding fathers of Cantopop" for achieving huge success both in film and music.
- Cheung debuted in 1977 and rose to prominence as a teen heartthrob and pop icon of Hong Kong in the 1980s, receiving numerous music awards.
- He announced his same-sex relationship with Daffy Tong during a concert in 1997, earning him prestige in LGBTQ+ communities in China, Japan, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.
- Cheung was diagnosed with depression and committed suicide.
- Before his death, Cheung mentioned in interviews that he had become depressed because of negative comments about gender-crossing in his Passion Tour concert.
- He had planned to retire from stage performance because of the strain of being a gay artist in Hong Kong.

Cheung is the first foreign artist to hold 16 concerts in Japan, a record that has yet to be broken and also a record holder as the best-selling C-pop artist in Korea.
RuPaul Andre Charles (1960-Present)

- RuPaul is an American drag queen, model, singer, & television personality who has brought the niche art of drag into the mainstream.
- He got his start in the '90s in the music industry, releasing his hit single, “Supermodel”. At the same time, he appeared in a number of films as his drag persona, including "Crooklyn," "The Brady Bunch Movie," and "Blue in the Face."
- In 1999 he was awarded the Vito Russo Award at the GLAAD Media Awards for work in promoting equality in the LGBTQ+ community.
- While he isn’t the conventional heroic character, RuPaul has done an amazing job of showing the world that sexuality is a spectrum and gender is a performance. In his own words, “We’re all born naked and the rest is drag.”
- Starting in 2009, he produced an Emmy award winning drag queen competition show titled "RuPaul's Drag Race," which has become a mainstream success, normalizing an array of sexual orientations and genders.
- In 2017, he was included in the annual Time 100 list of the most influential people in the world.

RuPaul is indifferent to which gender-specific pronouns are used to refer to him and once quipped, "You can call me he. You can call me she. You can call me Regis & Kathie Lee; I don't care! Just as long as you call me." He has also played male roles and makes public appearances in both male and female drag.
Society for Human Rights 1924

- Society for Human Rights was established by Henry Gerber in Chicago. The group is recognized as the first gay rights group in America.
- Its newsletter, “Friendship and Freedom,” was the United States’ first recorded gay rights publication.
- Gerber based the organization on Magnus Hirschfeld’s work in Germany, which was reforming anti-homosexual German laws and organizing the gay community in Berlin.
- The group had difficulty securing members and financial support. Eventually the society was disbanded when the group was raided by the police and Gerber and other leaders were arrested.
Human Rights Campaign Fund (1980-Present)

- Founded by Steve Endean, the Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRC) in 1980, was one of the first LGBTQ+ political action committees.
- In 1989 the HRC reorganized to broaden its function to encompass lobbying, research, education, and media outreach.
- Its mission became "For the promotion of the social welfare of the gay and lesbian community by drafting, supporting and influencing legislation and policy at the federal, state and local levels."
- In 1992 the HRC endorsed a presidential candidate for the first time, Bill Clinton.
- In 1993 it founded National Coming Out Day.
- With over three million members, the HRC has become the largest organization advocating for LGBTQ civil rights.
ONE: The Homosexual Magazine / One, Inc v. Olesen 1958

- **ONE: The Homosexual Magazine** was the first pro-gay publication in the US. It began selling openly in the streets of Los Angeles, then being distributed via mail.

- Los Angeles Postmaster Otto Olesen declared the October 1954 issue of **ONE: The Homosexual Magazine** “obscene, lewd, lascivious and filthy” and therefore unmailable under the Comstock Laws. He refused to deliver the magazine.

- In January, 1958 the case One, Inc. v. Olesen was heard in the local courts. The first 2 victories went to the post office. When it was brought to the Supreme Court, the decision was reversed.

- It was the first time the Supreme Court ruled for in favor of LGBTQ+ rights. It was the first ruling to address free speech rights with respect to homosexuality.

- In its next issue, **ONE** told its readers: "For the first time in American publishing history, a decision binding on every court now stands... affirming in effect that it is in no way proper to describe a love affair between two homosexuals as constitut(ing) obscenity."
The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) enacted in 1996, defined marriage for federal purposes as the union of one man and one woman and allowed states to refuse to recognize same-sex marriages granted under the laws of other states. While DOMA did not bar individual states from recognizing same-sex marriage, it imposed constraints on the benefits that all legally married same-sex couples could receive. These benefits included insurance benefits for government employees, social security survivors’ benefits, immigration assistance, ability to file for joint bankruptcy, and the filing of joint tax returns, financial aid eligibility otherwise available to heterosexual married couples, and other laws that applied to heterosexual married couples.

In the case *The United States vs Windsor* 2010-2013, Edith Windsor was the lead plaintiff. Her wife, Thea Spyer, died in 2009, but the federal government did not recognize Windsor and Spyer's marriage, and Windsor was left to pay $350,000 in estate taxes. She waged a war against the Defense of Marriage Act in court. The case went all the way to the Supreme Court, which ruled that Section 3 of DOMA (which prevented the federal government from recognizing any same-sex marriages for the purpose of federal laws) was unconstitutional, paving the way for the legalization of same-sex marriage.
Love Wins! Marriage Equality For All (2015)

- April, 2000: Vermont became the first state in the country to give same-sex couples the right to enter into civil unions — legal partnerships which would grant those couples the same rights and benefits as those in legal marriages.

- Proposition 8 was a California ballot proposition and a state constitutional amendment that passed in the 2008 California state election. The proposition was created by opponents of same-sex marriage.

- Once Prop 8 had been upheld by the state courts, two same-sex couples filed a lawsuit against Prop 8 in Hollingsworth v. Perry. In 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its decision, ruling that proponents of initiatives like Prop 8 did not possess legal standing to defend the resulting law in federal court. Thus, Prop 8 was held unconstitutional and Governor Brown was free to permit same-sex marriages to recommence.

- Obergefell v Hodges – In 2015 James Obergefell sought to put his name on his husband’s death certificate as the surviving spouse and won.

- This ruling allowed the Supreme Court to make same-sex marriages legal in all 50 states with all the accompanying rights and responsibilities.

“No union is more profound than marriage, for it embodies the highest ideals of love, fidelity, devotion, sacrifice, and family. In forming a marital union, two people become something greater than once they were. As some of the petitioners in these cases demonstrate, marriage embodies a love that may endure even past death. It would misunderstand these men and women to say they disrespect the idea of marriage. Their plea is that they do respect it, respect it so deeply that they seek to find its fulfillment for themselves. Their hope is not to be condemned to live in loneliness, excluded from one of civilization’s oldest institutions. They ask for equal dignity in the eyes of the law. The Constitution grants them that right.”
Matthew Shepard & James Byrd Jr Hate Crimes Prevention Act 2009

- October, 2009: President Obama signed the Matthew Shepard & James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act and it became a law.
- The act was named for two men who were murdered in hate crimes — Matthew Shepard, because he was gay, and James Byrd, Jr, because he was black. The new law expanded previous hate crime legislation to officially categorize crimes motivated by actual or perceived gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability as hate crimes.
- The bill also:
  - Removes the prerequisite that the victim be engaging in a federally protected activity, like voting or going to school
  - Gives federal authorities greater ability to engage in hate crimes investigations that local authorities choose not to pursue
  - Provides $5 million per year in funding for fiscal years 2010 through 2012 to help state and local agencies pay for investigating and prosecuting hate crimes
  - Requires the FBI to track statistics on hate crimes based on gender and gender identity

Matthew Shepard was a student who was tortured and murdered in 1998 near Laramie, Wyoming. The attack was in response to him being gay, and the trial employed a “gay panic defense”. Shepard's murderers were given life sentences—in large part because his parents sought mercy for his killers.
Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell (1993)

- In 1989, responding to a question during a routine security clearance interview, Margarethe Cammermeyer disclosed that she was a lesbian. In 1992, she was honorably discharged.

- In 1993, the “Don't Ask, Don't Tell” policy was instituted within the U.S. military, permitting gays to serve in the military but banning homosexual activity. President Clinton's original intention to revoke the prohibition against gays in the military was met with stiff opposition. This was a compromise, resulting in the discharge of thousands of men and women in the armed forces.

- Cammermeyer filed a lawsuit against the decision in civil court. In June 1994, the US District Court ruled that her discharge and the ban on gays and lesbians serving in the military were unconstitutional.

- She returned to the National Guard and served as one of the few openly gay or lesbian people in the U.S. military while “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” was in effect, until her retirement in 1997.

- Though “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” was repealed in 2011 by President Obama, sexual orientation was still not a protected class (unlike race, religion, sex, age, and national origin) under the Military Equal Opportunity Policy — until June of 2015, when the U.S. Defense Secretary, Ashton Carter, announced that it would officially be added to the anti-discrimination policy.

- President Trump rescinded this right, again banning transgender people from the military in 2019. In 2021 President Biden reversed the ruling once again.
In 2015, Senators Jeff Merkley, Tammy Baldwin, and Cory Booker, as well as Representative David Cicilline introduced The Equality Act which would make LGBTQ+ individuals a protected class and grant them basic legal protections in areas of life including education, housing, employment, credit, and more.

In 2019 the House passed the Equality Act but it was never acted upon in the Senate.

In 2020 the Supreme Court ruled that Title VII of Civil Rights Act of 1964, which barred employers from discriminating on the basis of sex, also barred employers from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

In February of 2021, the Equality Act was reintroduced in the Congress and was passed by the House and is awaiting Senate vote.
Mattachine Society Sip-In 1966

- Harry Hay attempted to unite closeted gay men in L.A. in the 1950s by organizing a secret society called Bachelors Anonymous under the idea that LGBTQ+ rights was something worth pursuing just like any other minority group. That group later became known as the Mattachine Society.

- During a time when most bars refused to serve gay people, the Mattachine Society, led by Hay & Frank Kameny, staged a “Sip-In” during which activists entered a New York City bar, announced they were gay, ordered drinks, and waited to be served.

- Frank Kameny fought tirelessly for equal rights throughout his life. He and the D.C. branch of the Mattachine Society drafted a bill to get the sodomy laws overturned in the city, which was passed in 1993 (30 years after it was written.) He was also a key player in getting the American Psychiatric Association to no longer list homosexuality as a mental disorder in the DSM.
Lawrence vs Texas (2003)

- *Lawrence v. Texas*, 539 U.S. 558 (2003), was a landmark decision of the U.S. Supreme Court, in which it ruled that sodomy laws are unconstitutional.

- In 1998, John Geddes Lawrence Jr., an older white man, was arrested along with Tyron Garner, a younger black man, at Lawrence’s apartment in Harris County, Texas. Garner’s former boyfriend had called the police, claiming that there was a man with a weapon in the apartment. Sheriff's deputies said they found the men engaging in sexual intercourse and were charged with a misdemeanor under Texas’ anti-sodomy law.

- The Court reaffirmed the concept of a "right to privacy" that earlier cases, such as *Roe v Wade*, had found the Constitution provides, even though it is not explicitly enumerated. The Court based its ruling on the notions of personal autonomy to define one's own relationships and of American traditions of non-interference with private sexual decisions between consenting adults.

- Assisted by the American civil rights organization Lambda Legal, Lawrence and Garner successfully appealed their sentences.
AIDS Crisis 1980s-1990s


- CDC initially refers to the disease as GRID: Gray Related Immune Deficiency Disorder. When symptoms are found outside the gay community, Bruce Voeller, founder of the National Gay Task Force, successfully lobbies to change the name to AIDS.

- Larry Kramer, playwright, author, turned activist, was on the front lines of the crisis, trying to bring attention to the disease gay men were facing around the country. In 1981, he created the Gay Men’s Health Crisis organization, which was the only group devoted to helping those affected by HIV/AIDS. He later created Act Up (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), which was an organization that held high-profile demonstrations.

- Initially it caused a stigma against homosexuals and a general fear and misunderstanding regarding how AIDS was spread. However, as celebrities like Rock Hudson and Freddie Mercury revealed that they had the disease, and Magic Johnson came forward with HIV, and dedicated his retirement to educating others about the virus, attitudes began to change.

- In 1987 Hundreds of thousands of activists take part in the National March on Washington to demand that President Reagan address the AIDS crisis. He doesn’t speak publically about the epidemic until the end of his presidency.

- In 1990 President Bush signs the Ryan White CARE Act, a federally funded program for people living with AIDS.
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