



**Pride Month  
Resource Base**

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## **Instructions**

Choose the items you'd like to include on your document from the Resource Base. You may use all or part of the content for each topic or sub-topic. Copy and paste desired items into the blank templates located on DEOMI's Special Observances tab, under Observance Products. You can also paste facts and images into emails and other social media. Be creative and share your ideas!

## Pride Month

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### Milestones

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#### Milestones in Pride History

Around the world, Pride celebrations take a variety of forms, from parades to parties to protests and proms. Since the start of the modern LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning) liberation movement in the 1970s, hundreds of independent Pride events have sprung up in cities around the world, each distinctly local and tied to the foundational Stonewall Riots that occurred in June of 1969 (discussed below and on the next three pages).

After 50 years of Pride celebrations, these events have become so varied that people can usually find a way to celebrate that feels best to them, whether it's the raucous jubilation of the New York City Pride parade, community forums at the LGBT Center in San Francisco, or the massive crowds that attend World Pride in a different city every two years.

But how did the last half-century of Pride become what it is today? This first section recognizes significant events in Pride history.

The **Stonewall Riots** weren't the first time that LGBTQ+ people stood up against police harassment — before Stonewall, there was a riot in Los Angeles at Cooper Do-Nuts, and in San Francisco at Compton's Cafeteria. But the Stonewall Riots are the best-known, and they led to the creation of what is known as Pride today.

The Stonewall Riots started with a police raid on a hot summer night in Greenwich Village. Police stormed the Stonewall Inn, arresting patrons and forcing them into waiting police vehicles. But a nearby crowd grew restless and angry, and eventually someone — there's debate over who — started encouraging onlookers to fight back. They pelted the police, forcing them to retreat. Aggressive street confrontations would continue over the next few nights. (See next three pages for more on the Stonewall Riots.)

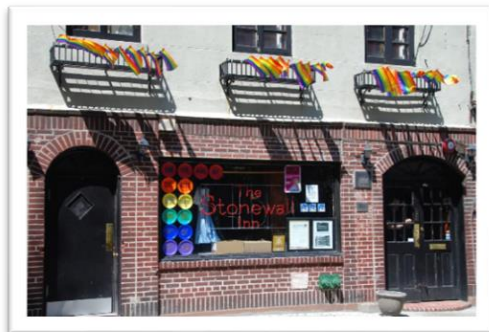
In the aftermath of the Stonewall Riots, organizers wanted to build on that spirit of resistance. The following year, they organized a march to Central Park, and adopted the theme of "**Gay Pride**" as a counterpoint to the prevailing attitude of shame. That march down Christopher Street soon expanded to other cities, with many more joining in year after year through the 1970s until Pride evolved into the massive celebrations held today.

**Each city's Pride schedule is different, but most Pride celebrations, parades, and marches take place in June to mark the anniversary of the Stonewall Riots.** A handful of cities opt for other months, usually due to inhospitable June weather, such as Palm Springs Pride (November), Auckland Pride (February), and Vancouver Pride (August).

Many larger cities coordinate their pride months through the international organization InterPride, which helps manage Pride celebrations around the world.

[What is Pride Month? A Short History of Pride | Them](#)

## Milestones in Pride History Stonewall Riots



*Figure 1 The Stonewall Inn, Greenwich Village, New York City. Photo credit Lee Snyder  
<https://www.britannica.com/event/Stonewall-riots/images-videos#/media/1/1386501/240494>*

**June 28, 1969:** In the early hours after a hot summer night, police raided the **Stonewall Inn**, a bar located in New York City’s Greenwich Village that served as a haven for the city’s gay, lesbian, and transgender community. At the time, homosexual acts remained illegal in every state except Illinois, and bars and restaurants could get shut down for having gay employees or serving gay patrons. Most gay bars and clubs in New York at the time (including the Stonewall) were operated by the Mafia, who paid corrupt police officers to look the other way and blackmailed wealthy gay patrons by threatening to “out” them.

Police raids on gay bars were common, but on that particular morning, members of the city’s LGBTQ community decided to fight back—sparking an uprising that would launch a new era of resistance and revolution.

On the Tuesday before the riots began, police had conducted an evening raid on the Stonewall, arresting some of its employees and confiscating its stash of illegal liquor. As was often the case, police targeted the bar for operating without a proper liquor license; at the time, bars serving or employing gays were denied a liquor license. After the raid, the New York Police Department (NYPD) planned a second raid for the following Friday, which they hoped would shut down the bar for good.

After midnight on a hot Friday night, the Stonewall was packed when eight plainclothes or undercover police officers (six men and two women) entered the bar. In addition to the bar’s employees, they also singled out drag queens and other cross-dressing patrons for arrest. In New York City, “masquerading” as a member of the opposite sex was a crime at the time.

More NYPD officers arrived on foot and in three patrol cars. Meanwhile, bar patrons who had been released joined the crowds of onlookers that were forming outside the Stonewall. A police van arrived, and police began loading Stonewall employees and cross-dressers inside. Accounts vary over exactly what kicked off the riots, but according to witness reports, the crowd erupted after police roughed up a woman dressed in masculine attire (some believe the woman was lesbian activist Stormé DeLarverie) who cried out that her handcuffs were too tight. People started taunting the officers, yelling “Pigs!” and “Copper!” and throwing pennies at them, followed by bottles; someone slashed the tires of the police vehicles.

(Continues on next page.)

[What Happened at the Stonewall Riots? A Timeline of the 1969 Uprising - HISTORY](#)

## Milestones in Pride History Stonewall Riots (cont.)



Figure 2 Police confront a patron in the street outside the Stonewall Inn, June 1969. Photo credit: Everett/Rex Shutterstock.

**Close to 4 a.m. June 28, 1969:** As the police van and squad cars left to drop the prisoners off at the nearby Sixth Precinct, the growing mob forced the original NYPD raiding party to **retreat into the Stonewall itself and barricade themselves inside.**

Some rioters used a parking meter as a battering ram to break through the door; others threw beer bottles, trash, and other objects, or made impromptu firebombs with bottles, matches and lighter fluid.

Sirens announced the arrival of more police officers, as well as squadrons of the Tactical Patrol Force (TPF), the city's riot police. As the helmeted officers marched in formation down Christopher Street, protesters outsmarted them by running away, then circling the short blocks of the Village and coming back up behind the officers. Finally, sometime after 4 a.m., things settled down. Amazingly, no one died or was critically injured on the first night of rioting, though a few police officers reported injuries.

**June 28-29, 1969:** Despite having been torn apart by the police, the Stonewall Inn opened before dark the next night (though it wasn't serving alcohol). More and more supporters showed up, chanting slogans like "Gay power" and "We shall overcome." Police arrived to restore order, including a larger group of TPF officers who beat and tear-gassed members of the crowd. The violence continued until early morning, when the crowd dispersed.

**June 29-July 1, 1969:** Over the next several nights, gay activists continued to gather near the Stonewall, to spread information and build the community that would fuel the growth of the gay rights movement. Though police officers also returned, the mood was less confrontational, with isolated skirmishes replacing the large-scale riots of the weekend.

**July 2, 1969:** In response to the *Village Voice's* coverage of the riots, which referred to "the forces of faggotry," protesters swarmed outside the paper's offices. Some called for burning the building down. When the police pushed back, rioting started again, but lasted only a short time, concluding by midnight. Meanwhile, the *New York Times* wrote only sparingly of the event, printing a short article on June 30 entitled "Police Again Rout 'Village' Youths."

(Continues on next page.)

[What Happened at the Stonewall Riots? A Timeline of the 1969 Uprising - HISTORY](#)

## Milestones in Pride History

### Stonewall Riots (cont.)

**The lasting impact of the Stonewall Riots.** With Stonewall, the spirit of 1960s rebellion spread to LGBTQ people in New York and beyond, who for the first time found themselves part of a community. Though the gay rights movement didn't begin at Stonewall, the uprising did mark a turning point, as earlier "homophile" organizations like the Mattachine Society gave way to more radical groups like the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) and the Gay Activists Alliance (GAA). (See People section of this document for more on these activists.)

**June 28, 1970:** On the first anniversary of the police raid on the Stonewall Inn, gay activists in New York organized the Christopher Street Liberation March to cap off the city's **first Gay Pride Week**. As several hundred people began marching up 6th Avenue toward Central Park, supporters from the crowd joined them. The procession eventually stretched some 15 city blocks, encompassing thousands of people.

Inspired by New York's example, activists in other cities, including Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, and Chicago, organized Gay Pride celebrations that same year. The frenzy of activism born on that first night at Stonewall would eventually fuel gay rights movements in Canada, Britain, France, Germany, Australia, and New Zealand, among other countries, becoming a lasting force that would carry on for the next half-century—and beyond.



*Figure 3 The Gay Liberation Front was formed after the riots. They are pictured here marching in Times Square in 1969. Photo credit; Diana Davies, New York Public Library.*

According to David Carter, historian and author of *Stonewall: The Riots That Sparked the Gay Revolution*, the "hierarchy of resistance" in the riots began with the homeless or "street" kids, the young gay men who viewed the Stonewall as the only safe place in their lives.

Two transgender women of color, **Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera**, were said to have resisted arrest and thrown the first bottle (or brick or stone) at the police, but Johnson later said in a 1987 podcast interview with historian Eric Marcus that she had not arrived until the uprising was well underway. The exact breakdown of who did what first remains unclear—in part because this was long before the smartphone era and there was minimal documentation of the night's events. The violent attack on this sacred bar that many called home was the breaking point for those looking to advance LGBT political activism.

[What Happened at the Stonewall Riots? A Timeline of the 1969 Uprising - HISTORY](#)

## Milestones in Pride History

### Stonewall and the New York City Pride Parade

The Stonewall Riots, as they became known, made one thing clear—the LGBT movement needed to be louder and more visible. They realized that nothing was going to change if they continued their passive, non-threatening tactics. They needed to get organized.

Just a few weeks after the Stonewall Riots, a group of LGBTQ+ persons gathered for a “**Gay Power**” rally in Washington Square Park. It was clear that people were interested in holding more events like it, and over the following year local activists proposed a larger annual march, modeled on quieter protests that had been happening for years in Philadelphia.

Five months after the riots, activists **Craig Rodwell, his partner Fred Sargeant, Ellen Brody, and Linda Rhodes** proposed a resolution at the Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations (ERCHO) in Philadelphia that a march be held in New York City to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the raid. Their proposal was for an annual march on the last Saturday in June with “no dress or age regulations.” This was a drastic change from the current methods being used by LGBT activists who would host walks and vigils in silence with a required dress code: men in jackets and ties and women in dresses. The new annual protest was to be called “Christopher Street Liberation Day,” and was organized by representatives from groups like the Mattachine Society, Gay Activists Alliance, and the Gay Liberation Front. (See People section of this document for more on these activists.)

**June 28, 1970:** The **first Pride parade was held in New York City** and attracted thousands of marchers carrying banners and signs. Since its beginning, Pride has been a political event. Although it may feel like a party today, protests are embedded in its very reason for existing. Pride has always been a protest against unjust systems, even when it’s lighthearted and fun.



*Figure 4 Two transgender women of color, Marsh P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera (far left) are pictured at a 1973 Gay rights rally in New York. Photo credit: Diana Davies, New York Public Library.*

Community organizers in New York included Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera, and Miss Major Griffin-Gracy, who protested against unjust treatment and advocated for legal reform even before Stonewall.

Once Pride events were established in major cities, they became opportunities to register queer people to vote, for groups like ACT UP to demand action on HIV, and for activists to pressure politicians to express their support for the community by marching.

[What is Pride Month? A Short History of Pride | Them](#)

[How Activists Plotted the First Gay Pride Parades - HISTORY](#)



## Milestones in Pride History

### Obergefell v. Hodges: Marriage Equality

**June 26, 2015:** In a major milestone for civil rights in the United States, the Supreme Court announced its decision in **Obergefell v. Hodges**. By one vote, the court ruled that same-sex marriage could not be banned in the United States, and that all same-sex marriages must be recognized nationwide, finally granting same-sex couples equal rights as heterosexual couples under the law.

In 1971, just two years after the Stonewall Riots that unofficially marked the beginning of the struggle for gay rights and marriage equality, the Minnesota Supreme Court had found same-sex marriage bans constitutional, a precedent that the Supreme Court had never challenged.

As homosexuality became more accepted in American culture, the conservative backlash was strong enough to force President Bill Clinton to sign the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), prohibiting the recognition of same-sex marriages at the federal level, into law in 1996.

Over the next decade, many states banned same-sex marriage, while Vermont instituted same-sex civil unions in 2000, and Massachusetts became the first state to legalize same-sex marriage in 2003. Gay marriage was the predominant "culture war" issue of George W. Bush's presidency, and even his successor Barack Obama, elected on a platform of liberal change in 2008, did not fully endorse same-sex marriage at the time of his election. Obama stated his opposition to DOMA and instructed his Justice Department to stop defending it in 2011. In 2013, the Supreme Court ruled DOMA unconstitutional and declined to rule on a case regarding a California ban, effectively legalizing same-sex marriage there.

Obergefell originated with a gay couple, **Jim Obergefell and John Arthur**, who were married in Maryland, where same-sex marriage was legal, but whose marriage was not recognized by Ohio authorities. As often happens with Supreme Court cases, a number of similar cases in Ohio and elsewhere were consolidated into what became Obergefell v. Hodges. The Supreme Court heard arguments on April 28, 2015. On June 26, the court ruled 5-4 in favor of the plaintiffs, stating that both bans on same-sex marriages and bans on recognizing same-sex marriages were unconstitutional under the due process and equal protection clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Writing for the majority, Justice Anthony Kennedy said, "The right to marry is a fundamental right inherent in the liberty of the person, and under the Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment couples of the same sex may not be deprived of that right and that liberty." His opinion was joined by Justices Stephen Breyer, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Elena Kagan, and Sonia Sotomayor.

Chief Justice John Roberts and three Associate Justices—Antonin Scalia, Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito—each wrote dissenting opinions.

The ruling overturned the 13 statewide bans still in effect and effectively settled the issue at the federal level, although a few rogue counties ignored the ruling.

[Same-sex marriage is made legal nationwide with Obergefell v. Hodges decision - HISTORY](#)

[Obergefell v. Hodges | Summary, History, Ruling, & Facts | Britannica](#)

## Milestones in Pride History AIDS Activism and ACT UP

By the year **1987**, the **AIDS epidemic** had reached grim proportions. The disease had killed almost 60,000 people worldwide, and more than 40,000 were HIV-positive in the United States alone. The majority of those ravaged by the disease were gay men. Despite mounting cases and deaths, President Ronald Reagan had not said the word AIDS in public until September 1985. To many, it seemed like the U.S. government had been willfully ignoring what had grown into a global health emergency.

"In the history of the AIDS epidemic, President Reagan's legacy is one of silence," AIDS activist Michael Cover said in a June 8, 2004 SFGATE editorial. "It is the silence of tens of thousands who died alone and unacknowledged, stigmatized by our government under his administration." AIDS was viewed as a gay disease, and it seemed the community was on its own to fight it. Fight is what they did—and the work of ACT UP and many activists paved the way for breakthroughs in patients' rights.

**March 1987:** AIDS activist Larry Kramer and others formed the **AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP)**. The group was made up of people with no rights, facing a disease with no cure, who had been abandoned by their families, their government, and their society, notes author and activist Sarah Schulman in *Let the Record Show: A Political History of ACT UP New York, 1987-1993*. It was loosely organized as a confederacy of affinity groups—each with their own special set of talents—and that expertise contributed to its tremendous impact.

ACT UP is often remembered for its most dramatic moments, from wrapping North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms' home in a giant yellow condom, to disrupting mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral, to dumping the ashes of AIDS victims on the White House lawn. While these were powerful visuals, the organization's core focus was on improving patient-centered care.

ACT UP was one of the first groups to propose designing healthcare solutions based specifically on the population being treated. They brought high-quality care to the streets, treating underserved people with AIDS, finding shelter for the unhoused, and protecting IV drug users through needle exchanges.

The group also challenged the healthcare industry. Decades ahead of the Affordable Care Act, they fought for changes in state insurance laws and called out exclusionary policies against gay men. ACT UP played a lead role in pushing government agencies and drug companies to accelerate testing, lower costs of drugs, and bring people with HIV/AIDS into the care design process.

The notion of patient-centered care was not new to U.S. healthcare, but the AIDS crisis injected an urgency behind the principle. "Before AIDS and before ACT UP, all experimental medical decisions were made by physicians," Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, longtime director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, told the *New Yorker* magazine in 2002. "Larry Kramer, by assuring consumer input to the FDA, put us on the defensive over our appropriations. ACT UP put medical treatment in the hands of patients. And that is the way it ought to be."

[How AIDS Activists Fought for Patients' Rights - HISTORY](#)

## Milestones in Pride History The Pride Symbol and Pride Resources

The rainbow flag is universally recognized as the symbol for LGBTQ pride. Created by **Gilbert Baker**, a renowned San Francisco activist, the flag was flown for the first time at the **1978 San Francisco Gay Freedom Day** celebration.

According to Baker, he was inspired by the rainbow because it represented all the genders and races and stands for “the rainbow of humanity.” Each of the six colors of the rainbow flag represent a different aspect of the LGBTQ movement: life, healing, sunlight, nature, serenity, and spirit. To some, the rainbow flag also signifies power, rebellion, and hope.

In 2017, Philadelphia added a black and brown stripe to their flag to symbolically represent LGBTQ people of color who have often felt marginalized from their own community. Today, many organizations have adopted that flag, also adding the colors of the transgender pride flag — baby blue and light pink — to represent that community as well.



*Figure 5 Hands making heart sign in front of a rainbow flag. Photo credit: Public Domain.*

### Pride Month Resources

The following resources can provide more information about Pride Month:

**GLAAD**, a non-government agency founded to promote LGBTQ acceptance along with identifying and preventing discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer individuals.

**GLSEN**, a network of students, families, and education advocates working to facilitate LGBTQ safety and support in schools.

**The Equality Federation**, a LGBTQ advocacy group working to help advance the rights of LGBTQ people.

**The National LGBTQ Task Force**, an advocacy group dedicated to advancing freedom, justice, and equality for LGBTQ people.

**The Library of Congress**, for history on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer Pride Month.

**The Anti-Defamation League**, an anti-hate organization dedicated to fighting bias, extremism, discrimination, or hate.

**The American Civil Liberties Union** works to preserve and defend the rights and liberties of U.S. citizens.

[What is Pride Month? Facts, Meaning and Why We Celebrate \(today.com\)](https://www.today.com/health/what-is-pride-month-facts-meaning-and-why-we-celebrate-todays-1.11000000)

# Pride Month

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## People

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### **Early Pride Activists Mattachine Society and Daughters of Bilitis**

The dramatic political awakening by the gay community in New York City in 1969 was preceded by more than a decade of intensive political work by a small cadre of devoted activists in the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis.

**Mattachine, begun by Harry Hay in Los Angeles in 1951**, slowly opened chapters across the country, focusing on providing public forums for medical views sympathetic to homosexual civil rights; creating protective, supportive social networks for homosexuals; and providing a clearinghouse for legal, medical, and personal advice for homosexuals in jeopardy.

During the same period, **the Daughters of Bilitis, founded by Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon in San Francisco in 1955**, provided similar support, community, and political conversation for lesbians. The New York chapter was started in 1958 by Barbara Gittings, who went on to edit and radicalize the organization's national journal, *The Ladder*, with her partner, the photographer Kay Tobin Lahusen.

By the early 1960s, a new generation of East Coast activists had become dissatisfied with these strategies, which they saw as politically ineffective and overly respectful of medical and legal authorities. In **1965 the Mattachine Society of Washington, D.C., under the leadership of Frank Kameny**, boldly inaugurated a series of pickets of the White House, the Pentagon, and the State Department to protest the exclusion of homosexuals from military service and federal employment. These pickets led to annual Fourth of July pickets of Independence Hall in Philadelphia each year until 1970, when they were superseded by the annual Gay Pride marches.

The New York chapters of the Daughters of Bilitis and the Mattachine Society were radicalized by close contact with Washington's Mattachine through collaboration at such conferences as the annual East Coast Homophile Organization (ECHO) meeting, which in 1965 was held in New York City. Under the innovative leadership of **Dick Leitsch**, the Mattachine Society of New York challenged the State Liquor Authority's ban on serving homosexual patrons, and worked to stop police entrapment of homosexuals.

Mattachine also worked closely behind the scenes with sympathetic political officials, such as Mayor John V. Lindsay, to reduce the oppression of homosexuals. Although they were only a handful of people, these activists made a real impact on the lives of gays and lesbians and laid the ground for future political work.

[NYPL, 1969](#)

## Early Pride Activists Gay Liberation Front (GLF)

Mattachine worked hard to capitalize on the energy released by the Stonewall Riots, holding public forums and demonstrations to bring gays and lesbians into organized activism. These efforts caught the attention of the generation that had come of age in the civil rights and antiwar movements. However, this younger generation had little patience for the tactics and politics of their elders.

**Michael Brown**, a young veteran of the New Left, contacted Mattachine president **Dick Leitsch** after reading his position paper on Stonewall, "The Hairpin Drop Heard Around the World," and with Leitsch's support he created the Mattachine Action Committee. But on **July 24, 1969** the new committee soon seceded from Mattachine, holding their first meeting and rechristening themselves the **Gay Liberation Front (GLF)**. GLF members openly claimed the word "Gay," which had been avoided by the previous generation of gay and lesbian activists in favor of cryptic, inoffensive names: Mattachine, Bilitis, Janus. They demanded liberation in the spirit of the national-liberation and anti-capitalist struggles around the world.

GLF meetings were run by consensus. While this was not the most efficient method of decision-making, it created an opportunity for dialogue that transformed its members. The core activists of GLF — who included **Michael Brown, Martha Shelley, Lois Hart, Bob Martin, Marty Robinson, Karla Jay, and Bob Kohler** among many others — organized marches on *Time* magazine and *The Village Voice*, fund-raising dances, consciousness-raising groups, and radical study groups, and published their own newspaper, *Come Out!*

GLF quickly became the incubator of the new gay and lesbian mass political movement. Although many activists moved on to create more focused gay and lesbian organizations, GLF transformed the consciousness of everyone it touched.



Figure 6 July 24th 1969: The Gay Liberation Front Holds Its First Meeting. Photo credit: Public Domain.

[NYPL, 1969](#)

## Early Pride Activists Gay Activists Alliance (GAA)

Although the Gay Liberation Front's (GLF's) broad radical political agenda and anarchist methods appealed to many, some activists wanted a more streamlined approach, concerned only with gay and lesbian issues.

Core GLF members considered their solidarity with other liberation movements to be of prime importance, extending their support even to the Black Panthers, which many activists considered a homophobic organization.

Partly in response to the support of the Panthers, in **December 1969** a small group of GLF activists, including **Jim Owles, Marty Robinson, Arthur Evans, and Arthur Bell** — as well as veteran activists like **Kay Tobin Lahusen** — split off to form the **Gay Activists Alliance (GAA)** to focus only on explicitly gay and lesbian issues.

GAA quickly perfected the art of the "zap," a new guerilla style of press-savvy demonstrations planned to maximize the media attention that started in GLF. The zaps were often humorous — members brought donuts and coffee to *Harper's* when they crashed the magazine's offices to protest a homophobic article, and zapped Fidelifax, a corporate background-check company, with an activist dressed as a duck.

GAA quickly adopted the Greek letter lambda as its logo, to symbolize the exchange of energy (lambda represents wavelength in physics), and it became the main symbol for gay and lesbian activism until it was supplanted in the late 1970s by the pink triangle. True to this sign, GAA members quickly showed their energy with a series of zaps on city and state officials to demand gay civil rights legislation. Initial targets included Mayor John V. Lindsay and Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller.

They also mobilized thousands to protest the death of **Diego Vinales**, who jumped from a second-story window to escape police in the raid of the bar the Snake Pit in March 1970. GAA quickly became the major force in gay and lesbian activism in New York City, and across the country as GAA chapters spread. GAA also created a framework for a new generation of activist organizations, including ACT UP, which used the same arsenal of attention-grabbing zaps and Robert's Rules of Order to combat the AIDS crisis.



Figure 7 GAA and Vito Russo (see next page) marching in 1st Christopher St Liberation Day Parade 1970. Photo credit: The New York Public Library Digital Collections.

[NYPL, 1969](#)

## Early Pride Activists Vito Russo

**Vito Russo (July 11, 1946 – November 7, 1990)** was a gay rights activist, a film historian and an author best known for his 1981 landmark book, *The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies*, a groundbreaking chronicle of gays and lesbians in film, and for co-founding both **GLAAD (originally known as the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation)**, and ACT UP (the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power).

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 (GAA). 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 Sevick, 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.



*Figure 8 In 1988, Vito Russo – writer, cultural critic, and AIDS justice activist – delivered a speech at an ACT UP demonstration in Albany, NY, and then again at a bigger protest in front of the Department of Health and Human Services in DC later that year. The speech, “Why We Fight,” though written during the first wave of the AIDS crisis, speaks to generations of the future about the prejudice and homophobia that contributed to the lack of information and care. Photo credit: [Vito Russo – Why We Fight | Genius](#)*

Russo appeared in the 1989 Academy Award-winning documentary, *Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt*, about the life and death of Sevick 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.

[The National AIDS Memorial](#)

[Vito Russo – Why We Fight | Genius](#)

## 118th Congress Breaks Record for LGB Representation Thirteen Voting Members Identify as Lesbian, Gay, or Bisexual

Thirteen voting members of the 118th Congress identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual – the highest number of openly LGB members in history. While small, the number of LGB lawmakers in Congress has steadily increased over the last decade.

Two senators and 11 members of the House of Representatives identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of lawmakers’ official biographies, campaign websites, and news reports. Eight of the 11 House members who identify as gay or lesbian are gay men and three are lesbians. There have not been any openly transgender members of Congress to date.

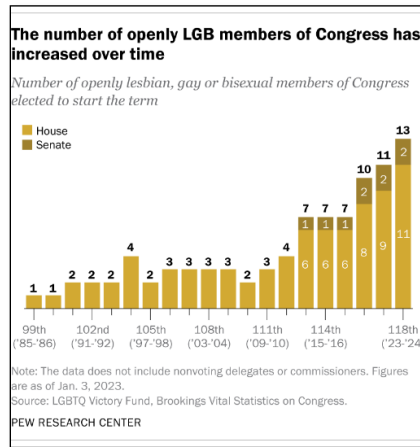


Figure 9 Table showing number of LGB members of Congress over time. Photo credit: Pew Research Center.

The number of LGB members of Congress has more than tripled in recent years. In the 112th Congress of 2011-13, just four members – all representatives – identified as gay or lesbian (and none as bisexual), according to data from the Victory Fund, a political action committee that works to elect LGBTQ politicians.

In the current Senate, Democrat **Tammy Baldwin** of Wisconsin became the first openly LGB person to serve in the chamber when she was elected in 2012, and **Kyrsten Sinema**, an independent from Arizona, is the first openly bisexual person to serve in either chamber.

Seven of the 11 openly gay or lesbian representatives in the House are returning members of Congress. The four newly elected members include **George Santos** of New York, who in the 2022 midterm cycle became the first openly gay, non-incumbent Republican to win a congressional election; (however, key aspects of Santos’ biography have been called into question); **Robert Garcia**, D-Calif., the first openly gay immigrant elected to Congress; Democrat **Eric Sorensen**, the first out gay congressperson to represent Illinois; and Democrat **Becca Balint**, the first woman and first openly LGB person to represent Vermont.

Despite the steady increase, this group remains underrepresented compared with the U.S. population as a whole. The 13 LGB members of Congress account for about 2% of the 534 voting lawmakers as of Jan. 3, 2023. LGB Americans make up 6.5% of the adult population overall, according to a 2021 Gallup survey.

[118th Congress has record number of lesbian, gay, bisexual members | Pew Research Center](https://www.pewresearch.org/2023/01/03/118th-congress-has-record-number-of-lesbian-gay-bisexual-members/)



## Serving with Pride: LGBTQ Soldiers Celebrate Diversity, Speak Their Truth Army Hosts Panel Discussion

For 2021 Pride Month, Soldiers representing the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community participated in a virtual panel discussion. The participants shared personal stories and experiences, as well as equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts made by the Army, along with how the policies have impacted their lives. The Soldiers also discussed the importance of LGBTQ representation within military ranks.

In 1993, the Department of Defense Directive 1304.26, commonly known as Don't Ask Don't Tell, or DADT, was written into law. The directive was a compromise measure that barred LGBTQ-identifying persons from military service, but also prohibited military personnel from discriminating against, or harassing, closeted gay and lesbian troops.

In 1984, when **Maj. Rebecca A. Ammons**, a transgender Army chaplain, first enlisted as a Marine, DADT did little to change her life. Even in 2011, after lawmakers repealed the directive, the repeal only ensured gay, lesbian, and bisexual troops could openly serve. It did not permit transgender service members from serving.

“[DADT] wasn't even an issue” in the 80s, she said during the panel discussion. “I was explicitly asked on my [enlistment] forms: Are you gay? Of course, there wasn't even a block to say: Are you trans?” Despite that, “I had this overwhelming compulsion; this need to serve,” Ammons said. Yet, with that need came “this overwhelming feeling of isolation.”

Ammons said the fear of coming out as transgender weighed heavily on her shoulders. She recalled the trepidation she felt when coming out to her peers, especially within the faith-based community she serves. Ammons publicly came out last July and with it came her name change and the medical procedures for her transition. She was surprised by how “heartwarming and honestly amazing” her fellow chaplains and other Soldiers have been.

Another panelist was **Col. Samuel P. Smith Jr.**, garrison commander of Fort Polk, Louisiana, who noted, “It took me a while [to be true to myself]. “I had a close circle of friends who helped me through it, which is important if you are isolated, so I was very fortunate to have a very close circle of friends who helped me along this journey.”

For years, Col. Smith struggled with his orientation. In 2004, amid DADT, he knew it was time to be honest with himself, the girl he was dating, and his family, he said. However, he did not want to risk his career. Outside of his small support group, he could not be open to the Army. He questioned whether or not he could endure 20-plus years in the Army while internally struggling with his orientation. “I didn't know whether the two could align: me being gay and serving in the Army,” he said.

Even when he came out to his friends and family, the colonel still felt closeted at work. He couldn't talk about his boyfriend. He couldn't have certain pictures on his desk. He couldn't talk about his weekend plans with coworkers. “I love the Army, and I was a good [Soldier],” he said. But “I could not be myself.” Instead, Smith “got used to it,” he said. “That's just the way things were. I accepted that.” Once DADT was overturned, “it was like a big weight lifted off your shoulders,” Col. Smith said.

[Serving with pride: LGBTQ Soldiers celebrate diversity, speak their truth | Article | The United States Army](#)

## OSI Special Agent Shares Trans Journey to Inspire Others The Air Force and Logan Ireland

Growing up, **Logan Ireland** always felt different. The Texas native had what some would describe as a standard childhood. He played sports, made friends, and spent his summers outside, but he knew something felt different. Ireland was born female. After coming out as a lesbian to his mother at the age of 12, he still felt conflicted. On his journey of self-realization, he faced societal rejection and was bullied long before deciding to enlist. Still, he forged ahead and joined the U.S. Air Force, not imagining his military career would begin on the cusp of policy changes for gay and transgender service members.

In 2010, Ireland traveled to Joint Base San Antonio for basic military training, planning to serve in silence. “I thought, what if I’m discovered?” Ireland said, thinking back to the early days of his military career, figuring he would just have to hide his identity. The year after, the repeal of “Don’t ask, don’t tell” (DADT) took place. This federal law banned lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals in the military from disclosing their sexual orientation.

Despite his military career taking off, the security forces Airman had a difficult time fitting into his lesbian identity. As he searched for answers, he discovered the term “transgender”; after learning more, he finally understood his true feelings. Yet, professional obstacles remained. Although DADT was repealed, the fight for trans rights continued. Ireland knew if he came out as transgender, he would likely face a discharge from military service.



*Figure 10 Tech Sgt Logan Ireland, Air Force Office of Special Investigations, pictured after receiving his Master of Arts in Military Studies from American Military University. Photo credit: Courtesy photo.*

“I wanted to make this work because I’m a good Airman,” he said. “My thoughts were to medically transition while also serving in uniform.” In February 2012, he began his medical transition at an off-base medical facility. In late 2014, had his first deployment to Kandahar, Afghanistan. Assigned to the Office of Special Investigations, he would later call the agency home. Being deployed helped Ireland live his truth in a new world. Even in the sweltering heat of Kandahar, life improved for the senior airman. “It was liberating to be treated like everyone else,” he said. Ireland’s professional and personal lives were finally in synch.

Following his deployment, he became one of the most recognizable trans individuals after coming out publicly in *The New York Times* before the policy changed. According to Ireland, he doesn’t see himself as a landmark figure, but simply as an Airman doing his job. As the first transgender male to deploy as his authentic self, he felt compelled to speak out for transgender rights.

[OSI special agent shares trans journey to inspire others > Air Force > Article Display \(af.mil\)](#)

## Rachel Levine: Transgender Official Sworn in As Four-Star Admiral U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps

**Dr. Rachel Levine**, 63, is now an admiral of the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. ADM Levine, appointed by President Joe Biden, is the highest-ranking openly transgender official in the U.S. She described the occasion as "momentous" and "historic" during a swearing-in speech in October of 2021. "May this appointment today be the first of many more to come, as we create a diverse and more inclusive future," she said in a speech that paid tribute to other LGBTQ individuals who came before her.



*Figure 11 Admiral Rachel Levine, Assistant Secretary for Health. Photo credit: <https://www.hhs.gov/about/leadership/rachel-levine.html>*

After graduating from Harvard College and Tulane University School of Medicine, ADM Levine completed her training in Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine at the Mt. Sinai Medical Center in New York City. As a physician, she focused on the intersection between mental and physical health, treating children, adolescents, and young adults. ADM Levine was a Professor of Pediatrics and Psychiatry at the Penn State College of Medicine. Her previous posts included Vice-Chair for Clinical Affairs for the Department of Pediatrics, and Chief of the Division of Adolescent Medicine and Eating Disorders at the Penn State Hershey Medical Center.

In 2015, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf nominated ADM Levine to be Pennsylvania's Physician General, and she was subsequently unanimously confirmed by Pennsylvania's state Senate. In March of 2018, ADM Levine was named Pennsylvania's Secretary of Health. During her time in state government, ADM Levine worked to address Pennsylvania's opioid crisis, focus attention on maternal health, and improve immunization rates among children. Her decision to issue a standing order for the anti-overdose drug, Naloxone, saved thousands of lives by allowing law enforcement to carry the drug and Pennsylvanians to purchase it without a prescription from their doctor.

ADM Levine is a member of the National Academy of Medicine and a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine, and the Academy for Eating Disorders. In addition to her recent posts in medicine and government, ADM Levine is an accomplished speaker and author of numerous publications on the opioid crisis, adolescent medicine, eating disorders, and LGBT medicine.

Secretary of Health Xavier Becerra described ADM Levine's appointment to the job as a "giant step forward toward equality as a nation."

[Admiral Rachel L. Levine, MD | HHS.gov](#)

[Rachel Levine: Transgender official sworn in as four-star admiral - BBC News](#)

## Pride Month

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### Events

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#### **The Life and Death of Harvey Milk Naval Officer, Elected Official, and Crusader for Gay Rights**

**Harvey Bernard Milk** was born on **May 22, 1930**, in Woodmere, New York. The second son of William and Minerva Milk, he came from a family with prominent ties to the community: his Lithuanian-born grandfather Morris owned Milk's Dry Goods, which became the largest department store on Long Island, and had helped organize the area's first synagogue.

Milk realized he was gay at an early age, and reportedly was indulging his desires with illicit trysts by his early teens. However, he also knew full well the need to conceal any signs that would raise suspicion, such as his love of opera. Milk was helped by his athleticism—he played football and basketball at Bayshore High School—and his popular, comic wit.

Milk enrolled at the New York State College for Teachers at Albany, where he joined the Jewish fraternity Kappa Beta and became sports editor of the paper. After graduating with a mathematics degree in 1951, he enlisted in the Navy. Milk attended Officer Candidate School in Newport, Rhode Island, and served as a diving instructor and chief petty officer aboard U.S.S. Kittiwake during the Korean War until his honorable discharge in 1955.

Politically conservative—he campaigned for Republican presidential hopeful Barry Goldwater in 1964—the strait-laced Milk was content to live a closeted life in those days. However, after he befriended experimental theater director Tom O'Horgan, Milk eventually became involved with a more progressive, avant-garde crowd. After his lover joined an O'Horgan-directed production of *Hair* in San Francisco, Milk moved to the Bay Area in 1969. A financial analyst by day, he marched in protests of the Vietnam War while enjoying the city's thriving gay social scene after hours. Fired for participating in an antiwar rally in the spring of 1970, Milk returned to New York, where he served as an assistant to O'Horgan for productions of *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Lenny*.

Milk moved back to San Francisco for good in late 1972, and within a few months he opened a camera shop on Castro Street, the heart of the gay community. Partly inspired by an unfair tax on small businesses, he ran for a seat on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1973.

Milk was spurned by much of the city's more influential gay electorate, who felt the outspoken New Yorker should tone down his act and wait his turn. Still, he garnered 17,000 votes to finish a respectable 10th out of 32 candidates, providing a reason to continue his political efforts. Milk co-founded the Castro Village Association to unite gay business owners, and launched the inaugural Castro Street Fair in 1974.

[Harvey Milk - HISTORY](#)

(Continues on next page)

## **The Life and Death of Harvey Milk Naval Officer, Elected Official, and Crusader for Gay Rights (cont.)**

Additionally, Milk forged an alliance with the Teamsters Union by supporting a boycott of Coors beer, and the union returned the favor by promising to hire more gay drivers. With his charisma, energy, and natural political skills, **Milk was soon known as the “Mayor of Castro Street.”** After coming up short in another bid for the Board of Supervisors in 1975, Milk landed a post in new Mayor George Moscone’s administration on the Board of Permit Appeals. However, he was forced out after announcing his candidacy for the California State Assembly, which led to another campaign defeat.

Undaunted by his election losses, Milk founded the San Francisco Gay Democratic Club to garner more political support, and successfully pushed for a reorganization of the Board of Supervisors election from a citywide, at-large format to a geographical district format. On the campaign trail in 1977, he sought to broaden his appeal beyond the gay community through promises to reform the tax code to boost industry, create low-income housing, and establish day care centers for working mothers.

That November, in an historic election that also saw the first Chinese American and the first African American woman elected to the city’s Board of Supervisors, Milk became one of the country’s first openly gay elected officials.



*Figure 12 Photo of Harvey Milk. Photo credit: <https://www.thefamouspeople.com/profiles/harvey-milk-3834.php>*

Demonstrating his penchant for courting publicity, Milk co-sponsored a “pooper-scooper” ordinance that required dog owners to clean up after their pets. As supervisor, he also dove into more personal matters by spearheading a bill to ban discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations based on sexual orientation, one of the nation’s strongest gay-rights measures to date. The ordinance passed with only one dissenting vote—that of Supervisor Dan White—and Mayor Moscone signed the measure into law on March 21, 1978.

Following California State Senator John Briggs’s introduction of the Proposition 6 ballot initiative, which sought to ban gay teachers and anyone supporting gay rights from working in California schools, Milk spent much of the summer and fall of 1978 campaigning against the initiative. He drew the support of several political luminaries, including President Jimmy Carter and former California Governor Ronald Reagan, and Prop 6 was soundly defeated by more than 1 million votes in November.

[Harvey Milk - HISTORY](#)

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## The Life and Death of Harvey Milk Naval Officer, Elected Official, and Crusader for Gay Rights (cont.)

On November 27, 1978, the former **Supervisor Dan White** crept into City Hall through a basement window, armed with a .38 revolver. White had resigned his post just months earlier, and had unsuccessfully asked that he be reinstated.

Angered that his hope of returning to the Board was denied, he confronted and killed Mayor Moscone, then strode across the building to Milk's office, where he murdered his former colleague with five shots. White was quickly apprehended, and that night, tens of thousands of Milk supporters marched to City Hall for a peaceful candlelight vigil. At the subsequent trial, the defense argued that White was operating under severe mental distress due to the loss of his job, citing his junk-food diet as evidence of diminished morale. The strategy was derided as the "Twinkie Defense," but his situation seemed to strike a chord with the jury. On May 21, 1979, White was sentenced to less than eight years in prison for voluntary manslaughter.

This time, the reaction was far less peaceful: outraged protesters stormed City Hall and set police cars on fire, and the San Francisco Police Department responded by smashing up gay bars and beating patrons. All told, at least 120 people, including some 60 policemen, were injured in what was dubbed the "**White Night Riots.**"



Figure 13 Rioters outside of San Francisco City Hall on the night of May 21, 1979, reacting to the voluntary manslaughter verdict for Dan White for the murders of Harvey Milk and George Moscone.

Photo credit: Daniel Nicoletta, Wikimedia Commons.

Although he spent less than a year in office, Milk's brief time in the public eye marked an important stepping stone in the battle for gay rights. His story became known to wider audiences through Randy Shilts's 1982 biography, *The Mayor of Castro Street*, and Rob Epstein's 1984 Oscar-winning documentary, *The Times of Harvey Milk*.

Additionally, more elected officials, including Massachusetts Congressman Gerry Studds and Barney Frank, came forth to acknowledge their homosexuality during this period. In subsequent years, Milk's name was attached to a series of schools, buildings, and public centers throughout California. He was the subject of another acclaimed film in 2008, with actor Sean Penn and screenwriter Dustin Lance Black earning Academy Awards for their contributions to director Gus Van Sant's biography, *Milk*.

In 2009, the activist's **May 22** birthday was formally recognized in California as **Harvey Milk Day**, and he was posthumously honored with the Presidential Medal of Freedom by Barack Obama. The United States Navy, in recognition of Milk's years with the Navy and his civil-rights activism, announced that a naval fleet oiler would be christened the **USNS Harvey Milk**. The ship was officially named at a ceremony in San Francisco on 16 August 2016. She is the first US Navy ship named for an openly gay person.

[Harvey Milk - HISTORY](#)

## Gunman Attacks Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida Targets Predominantly Gay Crowd

As Latin music blared inside **Pulse, one of Orlando’s biggest nightclubs, on June 12, 2016**, a gunman forced his way inside and opened fire on the predominantly gay crowd. In the end, 49 people were dead and dozens more injured, in what was, at the time, the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history.

When the gunman, 29-year-old Omar Mateen of Fort Pierce, Florida entered the club with an AR-15-type assault rifle and a handgun, the nearly 300 people inside were winding down their night of dancing. When the first shots rang out, many described not noticing, thinking the bangs were part of the songs, until people started to fall to the floor and others ran in terror.

“I heard 20, 40, 50 shots,” Jon Alamo told BBC. “The music stopped.” At 02:09 a.m., the nightclub posted on its Facebook page: “Everyone get out of Pulse and keep running.” As Mateen moved through the nightclub, he exchanged fire with the club’s security guard and, as officers arrived on the scene, shots continued to be exchanged. Mateen escaped to the bathroom, where he took hostages and told police he had explosives to detonate.

While the gunman was in the bathroom, police evacuated those still on the club’s dance floor. Many tweeted or texted for help from the inside, including people trapped in the bathroom who hid in the stalls trying not to be seen. Others played dead. During the attack, Mateen called 911 to pledge allegiance to ISIS.

Officers secured the building and prepared to enter the bathroom using explosives on the outside wall of the building. At about 5 a.m., the police stormed through their exploded hole, then shot and killed Mateen. At the time of the shooting, it was unclear if this was an act of terrorism or a hate crime. While Mateen’s family said that he had shown anger toward two gay men kissing the week before the attack, evidence discovered in the years after the attack shows that this may have been a planned act of terrorism.

Mateen had been interviewed by FBI officers twice in 2013, after making comments to coworkers about his connections to ISIS. He was questioned again in 2014 about a potential connection to an American suicide bomber in Syria. Seven months after the Pulse attack, Noor Salman, Omar Mateen’s wife, was charged with obstruction of justice for making contradictory statements to the FBI, and aiding and abetting for allegedly ignoring her husband’s connections to ISIS. In March of 2018, she was found not guilty.



*Figure 14 Mourners gather at the original memorial to Pulse victims in downtown Orlando in 2016. The One Pulse Foundation is working to build a permanent memorial.*

*Photo credit: [onePULSE Foundation Memorial & Museum](#) | [onePULSE Foundation](#)*

[Terrorist gunman attacks Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida - HISTORY](#)

## Gunman Attacks Colorado Springs Gay Club Q Five Killed Before Patrons Subdue the Shooter

On **November 20, 2022**, a 22-year-old gunman opened fire with a semiautomatic rifle inside a gay nightclub in Colorado Springs, killing five people and leaving 25 injured before he was subdued by “heroic” patrons and arrested by police who arrived within minutes.

The suspect in the Saturday night shooting at **Club Q** used an AR-15-style semiautomatic weapon, a law enforcement official said. A handgun and additional ammunition magazines also were recovered. The attack ended when a patron grabbed a handgun from the suspect and hit him with it, according to Colorado Springs Mayor John Suthers. The person who hit the gunman had him pinned down when police arrived, Suthers said. “Had that individual not intervened this could have been exponentially more tragic,” Suthers said.

On its Facebook page, the club called it a “hate attack.” Police identified the alleged gunman as Anderson Lee Aldrich, who was taken into custody. Aldrich was arrested in 2021 after his mother reported he threatened her with a homemade bomb and other weapons. No explosives were found at the time, and *The Gazette* in Colorado Springs reported that prosecutors did not pursue any charges and that records were sealed.

In February of 2023, a judge ruled that Aldrich should stand trial for the Club Q attack; Aldrich faces more than 300 charges, including murder and bias-motivated crimes. District Attorney Michael Allen told the judge that the evidence showed that Aldrich had an “aversion to the LGBTQ community.” The prosecutor in the case stated that Aldrich had shared an image of a rifle scope trained on a gay pride parade and often used an anti-gay slur.

Of the 25 injured in the shooting at Club Q, at least seven were in critical condition, authorities said. Some were hurt trying to flee, and it was unclear if all of the victims were shot, a police spokesperson said. Joshua Thurman said he was in the club with about two dozen other people and was dancing when the shots began. He initially thought it was part of the music, until he heard another shot and saw the flash of a gun muzzle.

Thurman, 34, said he ran with another person to a dressing room where someone already was hiding. They locked the door, turned off the lights, and got on the floor but could hear the violence unfolding, including the gunman getting beaten up. “I could have lost my life — over what? What was the purpose?” he said as tears ran down his cheeks. “We were just enjoying ourselves. We weren’t out harming anyone. We were in our space, our community, our home, enjoying ourselves like everybody else does.”

Detectives also were examining whether anyone had helped Aldrich before the attack, Police Chief Adrian Vasquez said. He said patrons who intervened during were “heroic” and owed a debt of gratitude for preventing more deaths.

Club Q is a gay and lesbian nightclub that features a drag show on Saturdays, according to its website. Suthers noted that the club had operated for 21 years and had not reported any threats before the November 2022 attack.

[Gunman killed 5 at Colorado Springs gay club before being subdued by patrons, police say \(cnbc.com\)](#)

[Judge finds evidence to try suspect in attack on gay club \(wrwd.com\)](#)



## The Supreme Court Rulings That Have Shaped Gay Rights in America The Court Ruled in Favor of LGBTQ Rights as Early as 1958

The highest federal court in the country has weighed in on about a dozen LGBTQ rights-related cases, which have had powerful impacts on the gay rights movement and the lives of LGBTQ Americans. SCOTUS's first gay rights case focused on the First Amendment—specifically, how the rights of free speech and press apply to homosexual content. In 1954, Los Angeles' postmaster Otto Olesen ordered federal postal authorities to seize *ONE*, a homosexual magazine (the nation's first), arguing that the magazine's content was "obscene."

*One, Inc.*, the magazine's publisher, sued Olesen. A lower court ruled in favor of the government and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals agreed with this ruling. However, **SCOTUS took up *One, Inc. v. Olesen* in 1958 and ruled in favor of *One, Inc.*** with little comment, citing only its recent decision in *Roth v. United States* (1957). In this earlier case, the Justices found that obscene speech is not protected by the First Amendment. But they further noted that "sex and obscenity are not synonymous" and ideas with "even the slightest redeeming social importance," including controversial ideas, are protected.

In 1970, **Jack Baker and Michael McConnell** became the first gay couple to apply for a marriage license—they were denied. In the subsequent case *Baker v. Nelson* (1971), the Minnesota Supreme Court ruled that state laws limiting marriage to opposite-sex couples did not violate the U.S. Constitution. Then, in 1986, another SCOTUS ruling upheld a Georgia sodomy law (*Bowers v. Hardwick*) criminalizing oral and anal sex in private between consenting adults. (However, a Texas anti-sodomy law (*Lawrence v. Texas*) and *Bowers v. Hardwick* were overturned in 2003.)

In 1996's *Romer v. Evans*, SCOTUS found that a Colorado voter initiative violated the Constitution's equal-protection clause. The initiative sought to prohibit all levels of government from recognizing LGBTQ individuals as a protected class, arguing such protections would be "special rights." SCOTUS disagreed. "These protections," Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote, "constitute ordinary civil life in a free society." Two years later in *Oncale v. Sundowner Offshore Services, Inc.*, SCOTUS ruled that same-sex harassment is covered under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits workplace discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, and religion.

The 2010s saw SCOTUS rulings that made gay marriage legal in the country. *United States v. Windsor* (2013) deemed the Defense of Marriage Act unconstitutional; *Hollingsworth v. Perry* (2013) upheld a lower court's ruling to overturn California's Proposition 8 ballot initiative that banned same-sex marriage, and *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015) found that all bans on same-sex marriage were unconstitutional. *Obergefell v. Hodges* set up an inevitable clash between civil and religious liberties, with some businesses arguing they don't have to provide for gay marriages because doing so goes against their religious beliefs.

In 2019, SCOTUS heard three cases based on the rights of gay and transgender people in the workplace. In a 6-3 decision in June 2020, the court ruled that LGBTQ workers are protected under Title VII (which prevents discrimination on the basis of sex), and cannot be fired for their sexual orientation or gender identity. The ruling was seen as a major victory for LGBTQ rights.

[The Supreme Court Rulings That Have Shaped Gay Rights in America - HISTORY](#)

# Pride Month

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## Quotes

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### Quotes: Pride Activists and Other Famous Figures

“All young people, regardless of sexual orientation or identity, deserve a safe and supportive environment in which to achieve their full potential.”

#### Harvey Milk

“Every gay person must come out. As difficult as it is, you must tell your immediate family. You must tell your relatives. You must tell your friends if indeed they are your friends. You must tell the people you work with. You must tell the people in the stores you shop in. Once they realize that we are indeed their children, that we are indeed everywhere, every myth, every lie, every innuendo will be destroyed once and all. And once you do, you will feel so much better.”

#### Harvey Milk

“Let's make no mistake about this: The American Dream starts with the neighborhoods. If we wish to rebuild our cities, we must first rebuild our neighborhoods. And to do that, we must understand that the quality of life is more important than the standard of living. To sit on the front steps--whether it's a veranda in a small town or a concrete stoop in a big city--and to talk to our neighborhoods is infinitely more important than to huddle on the living-room lounge and watch a make-believe world in not-quite living color.”

#### Harvey Milk

“We will not win our rights by staying quietly in our closets”

#### Harvey Milk

“It's not my victory, it's yours and yours and yours. If a gay can win, it means there is hope that the system can work for all minorities if we fight. We've given them hope.”

#### Harvey Milk

"It takes no compromise to give people their rights. It takes no money to respect the individual. It takes no political deal to give people freedom. It takes no survey to remove repression."

#### Harvey Milk

"Rights are won only by those who make their voices heard."

#### Harvey Milk

[Harvey Milk Quotes \(Author of Letters to Change the World\) \(goodreads.com\)](#)

[55 LGBTQ Quotes to Share With Family and Friends During Pride \(today.com\)](#)

## Quotes: Pride Activists and Other Famous Figures

"It's just really important that we start celebrating our differences. Let's start tolerating first, but then we need to celebrate our differences."

### **Billie Jean King**

"The love expressed between women is particular and powerful because we have had to love in order to live; love has been our survival."

### **Audre Lorde**

"I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I am changing the things I cannot accept."

### **Angela Davis**

"We are all one — and if we don't know it, we will learn it the hard way."

### **Bayard Rustin**

"If I wait for someone else to validate my existence, it will mean that I'm shortchanging myself."

### **Zanele Muholi**

"Openness may not completely disarm prejudice, but it's a good place to start."

### **Jason Collins**

"Fears are not facts."

### **Chaz Bono**

"While as a society we are moving toward greater inclusion and equality for all people, the tide of history only advances when people make themselves fully visible."

### **Anderson Cooper**

"Nature made a mistake which I have corrected, and I am now your daughter."

### **Christine Jorgensen**

"Courage is one thing that no one can ever take away from you."

### **Chris Colfer**

"That nothing here is promised, not one day. And love is love is love is love is love is love is love is love cannot be killed or swept aside. Now fill the world with music, love, and pride."

### **Lin-Manuel Miranda**

"No pride for some of us without liberation for all of us."

### **Marsha P. Johnson**

[55 LGBTQ Quotes to Share With Family and Friends During Pride \(today.com\)](https://www.today.com/story/55-LGBTQ-Quotes-to-Share-With-Family-and-Friends-During-Pride-2020-06-29)