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50 States, 50 Heroes

the Editors of The Advocate

25–32 minutes



Alabama

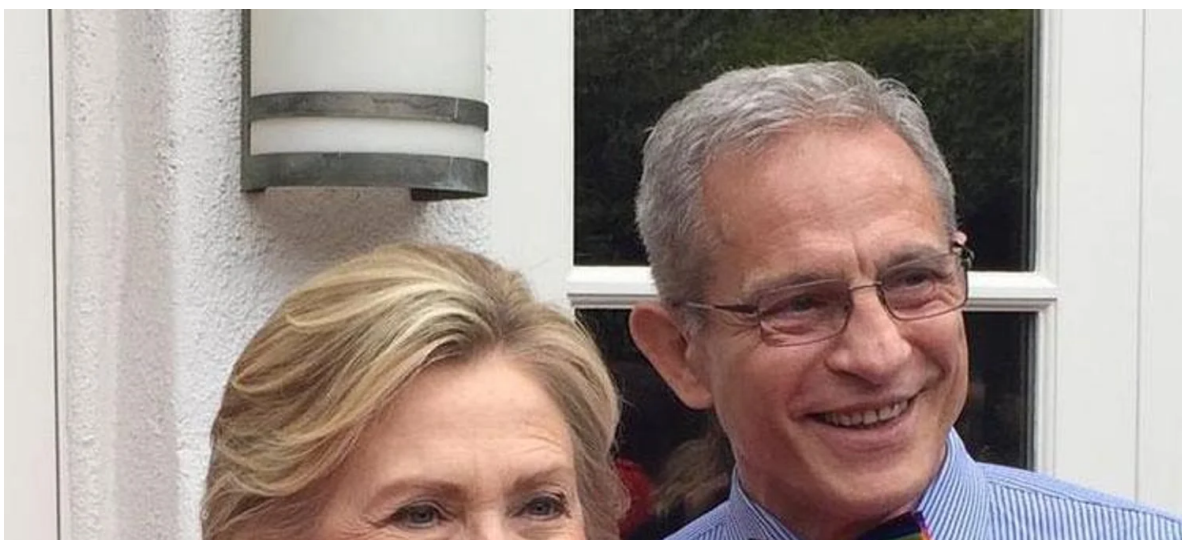
Patricia Todd

"Patricia was an out lesbian advocate before being LGBTQ was cool. She is the first openly gay elected Alabama legislator (Jefferson County, Montgomery), where she still serves. When an anonymous smear campaign called her a 'bull digger,' she wore a hat to her first session that proclaimed, 'Bull digger in the House.' She has also served as the executive director of both AIDS Alabama and Birmingham AIDS Outreach and as president of Equality Alabama. She has given the gay community a face. Her friends joke that her tombstone will read: 'Patricia Todd, Lesbian.'" -- *Kathie M. Hiers, CEO, AIDS Alabama (AIDSAabama.org)*

Alaska

Darrel W. Hess

"Since 2012, Darrel holds the highest publicly appointed position in [Alaska]. He serves as the ombudsman of the Municipality of Anchorage. Darrel is cochair of the board of directors of Identity Alaska [which serves] the state's gay, lesbian, bisexual, and [transgender](#) population. Darrel is out and active in every Anchorage organization that has to do with equality and goodwill. The first lady of Alaska has honored him for his volunteer work."-- *Elias Rojas, board president, Alaskans Together for Equality (AlaskansTogether.org)*





Arizona

Ed Buck

In 1987, Ed Buck formed Mecham Recall Committee, to force Arizona Governor Evan Mecham from office. A year later, the homophobic governor became the first in Arizona to be impeached. Buck also organized the first HIV education program in Arizona. Since retiring to West Hollywood in 1991, Buck has become a volunteer with animal rescue. "Year after year, Ed has shown us how his commitment to compassion makes the difference. Best of all? Ed's smart and sassy and gets the job done." -- *John D'Amico, West Hollywood Councilmember (WeHo.org)*

Trending stories

Arkansas

John Schenck

(d. 12/29/2016)

John Schenck worked the bar at the Stonewall Inn, including on

the night of the 1969 riots. He and his partner, Bobby Loyd, were legally married in Canada in 2004 and later joined plaintiffs in *Wright v. Arkansas*, the lawsuit that challenged the state's same-sex marriage ban. Schenck founded the state's longest-running Pride parade. The couple provided shelter and support for local LGBT kids tossed out by their parents. Schneck and his husband died 12 months apart. "John and Bobby worked tirelessly to advocate for LGBT civil rights and founded Conway Pride. Their home, known as the Pink House, stands as a symbol of pride and resistance to oppression in Conway." --*Jordan Van Ness, on a GoFundMe page to raise funds for Schenck's funeral expenses*



California

Ivy Bottini

This 91-year-old served on West Hollywood's Lesbian and Gay Advisory Board until 2016. "From helping to found the New York chapter of the National Organization for Women in 1966, all the way down to her cofounding AIDS Project Los Angeles [now APLA Health] in 1983, Ivy has lent her considerable talents to raising LGBTQ folks up where we belong. She cofounded the nonprofit Gay & Lesbian Elder Housing [which later merged with the L.A. LGBT Center]." -- *Michael Frances Smith, founder of Compass Ventura, an LGBTQ counseling center*

Colorado

Gerald Gerash

"On an ordinary day in the fall of 1972, five people met in a Denver apartment to discuss one common interest: how to become more involved in the gay liberation movement. Gerald Gerash and five colleagues formed the Gay Coalition of Denver. A civil lawsuit, *Gay Coalition of Denver v. the City and County of Denver*, provided historic wins for gay liberation and is documented in Gerash's [film] *Gay Revolt at Denver City Council*." -- *Karen McCleery (GLBTCOLORADO.org)*

Connecticut

Robin McHaelen

"Robin is the founder of the Hartford-based organization Our True Colors, which organizes the largest LGBT youth conference in the country. She's an amazing resource for LGBTQ issues, and speaks around the state and the country on the joys and challenges of LGBTQ youth." -- *John D. Allen, New Haven Pride Center (NewHavenPrideCenter.org)*



KAY TOBIN LAHUSEN

Delaware

Barbara Gittings

(d. 2/18/2007)

On July 4, 1965, with Frank Kameny and others, Barbara Gittings organized one of the first LGBT protests in U.S. history, a march that would become an annual event in Philadelphia through 1969. "Gittings played a prominent part in the movement to have the American Psychiatric Association drop homosexuality as a mental illness. One of the most famous photographs of the early LGBT movement shows Gittings marching in front of the White House with a sign that said, 'Homosexuals should be judged as

individuals." -- *Steve Elkins, executive director of Camp Rehoboth, a Delaware LGBT community center (CampRehoboth.com)*

Florida

Nadine Smith

"Under Nadine's leadership, Equality Florida has been at the forefront of the civil rights movement throughout the state since 1997. Nadine has fought tirelessly to secure equality and justice for Florida's LGBTQ+ community. Her work includes fighting for marriage equality, [non]discrimination, adoption rights for LGBTQ parents, LGBTQ+ family recognition, gun violence prevention, trans inclusion, and safe and healthy schools for LGBTQ+ youth."

-- *Victor Diaz-Herman, executive director of Pridelines Youth Services (Pridelines.org)*

Georgia

Cathy Woolard

Currently running for mayor of Atlanta, "Cathy Woolard has been a stalwart activist within local LGBT circles since the late 1980s when she helped to mobilize local advocates for the 1987 March on Washington. Over the past 30 years, there are few victories within Georgia's LGBTQ community that Cathy didn't have a hand in. She was the first [out] LGBT elected official in Georgia when she became an Atlanta City Council member in 1997. She has helped elect dozens of other openly LGBT people to office ... and has raised millions of dollars in support of LGBT and HIV organizations and causes. As a lobbyist for Georgia Equality, [she] has led successful efforts to prevent anti-LGBT legislation from passing in Georgia." -- *Jeff Graham, executive director of Georgia Equality (GeorgiaEquality.org)*





Hawaii

Janet Mock

Honolulu native Janet Mock is a transgender rights activist, founder of #GirlsLikeUs, journalist and TV host, and author of the *New York Times* best seller *Redefining Realness* and 2017's *Surpassing Certainty*, a memoir about her 20s. "Growing up and visiting Hawaii regularly, there were no out people I knew of. It was a different time. But now Janet Mock is my guiding light as a writer and activist. Brave and sexy, Ms. Mock rocks my world." -- *Lisa Freeman, author of Honey Girl and Riptide Summer*





Idaho

Nicole LeFavour

Idaho's Nicole LeFavour served in the state House of Representatives from 2004 to 2008 and in the Idaho Senate from 2008 to 2012. "Nicole LeFavour, the state's first out elected official. A woman who was not afraid to stand toe-to-toe with any male or female to fight for equality for one and all." -- *Tom Nester, founder and executive director of All Under One Roof (AllUnderOneRoof.org)*

Illinois

Art Johnston

"Art has been at the forefront of advancing LGBTQ equality in

Illinois for over three decades. As one of the famous 'Gang of Four,' he led the fight for the passage of Chicago's first gay rights ordinance [Ordinance on Human Rights], which passed in 1988. On the heels of that win, he helped found the Illinois Federation for Human Rights (which later became Equality Illinois) in 1991. His leadership helped shepherd the passage of statewide nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ people in 2005, civil unions in 2011, and eventually marriage equality in 2014 (when Illinois was the last state to adopt marriage equality through the legislature)." -- *Brian C. Johnson, CEO, Equality Illinois (EqualityIllinois.us)*

Indiana

Coby Palmer

Coby Palmer, a 72-year-old florist in Indianapolis, helped bring the city's Pride celebration to downtown and in 1981 cofounded the Indy Pride Bag Ladies, a group of gay men raising funds for HIV causes while in drag. "Coby has been a staple in this community and continues to be dedicated to supporting all of our community organizations. His leadership with the Indy Bag Ladies and Indy Pride Inc. have helped to create a community that continues to thrive." -- *Jason H. Nolen-Doerr, president of Indy Pride Inc. (IndyPride.org)*

Iowa

Sharon Malheiro

"Sharon is a Des Moines lawyer and longtime LGBTQ activist. She founded One Iowa in 2005 to fight for marriage equality in the state and prompted national LGBTQ organizations to devote resources to the cause. Her hard work helped make Iowa the third state in the nation to secure marriage equality in 2009, and One Iowa

continues to advocate for Iowa's LGBTQ community today." --
Daniel Hoffman-Zinnel, executive director of One Iowa
(Onelowa.org)



Kansas

Gilbert Baker

(d. 3/31/2017)

An artist and civil rights activist, Baker designed the rainbow flag in 1978, now a symbol of equality for LGBTQ people around the world. Baker set several world records for longest flag (including his mile-long rainbow flag carried by 5,000 people to celebrate the

25th anniversary of the Stonewall riots). "LGBT Kansans are proud that a native son of our great state is the creator of the rainbow flag that now flies around the world. We are confident that his contribution to our history will be as consequential as other famous Kansans, such as Amelia Earhart and Dwight Eisenhower." --
Thomas Witt, executive director, Equality Kansas (EqKs.org)



Kentucky

Carla Wallace

Carla Wallace cofounded the Fairness Campaign and Showing Up for Rural Justice. In 2005 she donated \$1 million to the University

of Louisville to establish the Audre Lorde Chair in Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality. "Carla's leadership was instrumental in the 1999 passage of Louisville's antidiscrimination [Human Rights] ordinance and in building an intersectional framework for queer rights in Kentucky that also focuses on racial justice and immigrant rights. Thanks to Carla's leadership and her years of close work with prominent Southern white antiracists like Anne Braden, Kentucky's queer rights movement was imbued with an intersectional racial justice approach from its inception." --*Chris Hartman, director of Fairness Campaign (Fairness.org)*

Louisiana

Stewart Butler

"Stewart Butler is a pioneer in local LGBT activism. He advocated for transgender rights long before it was fashionable and is in no small part responsible for PFLAG including transgender students in its mission statement. His political activism in the 1980s helped pass a nondiscrimination ordinance in New Orleans and he is a founding member of the LGBT+ Archives Project of Louisiana. At 86, he is our 'Lion in Winter.'" -- *Frank Perez, president, LGBT+ Archives Project of Louisiana (LGBTArchivesla.org)*





Maine

Mary L. Bonauto

"Mary Bonauto, who resides in Portland, Maine, is the GLAD lawyer who won marriage equality in front of [the Supreme Court]. We honor Mary for her leadership in demanding full equality for all people, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Her tireless efforts are heroic and her successes change our nation for the better ... for everyone." -- *Jeanne Dooley, executive director, Out Maine (OutMaine.org)*

Maryland

Paulette Young

"Paulette Young was the first president of what was then called the Gay Community Center of Baltimore, serving from 1977 to 1978. So often, women, especially women of color, are left off of the list of contributors to gay history and queer culture as we know it when in actuality, black women are more often than not the ones at the forefront of organizing and executing positive change in the communities to which they belong. Paulette Young took on a task that the majority white and largely male group of the center's cofounders did not." -- *Jennifer Eden, peer navigator and*

communications specialist, GLBT Community Center of Baltimore
(GLCCB.org)



Massachusetts

Robyn Ochs

Robyn Ochs is an award-winning activist, and editor of the *Bi Women Quarterly* and the new anthology *Recognize: The Voices of [Bisexual Men](#)*. "For the past two decades Robyn Ochs has worked tirelessly with youth and college students to illuminate what it means to be bisexual+ in this very binary world. Her work has helped bring to light the unique disparities our community

faces. And she has shown us we can be proud of who we are. Her definition of bisexuality+ has been adopted as our official community definition." -- *Lynnette McFadzen, president, BiNet USA (BiNetUSA.org)*

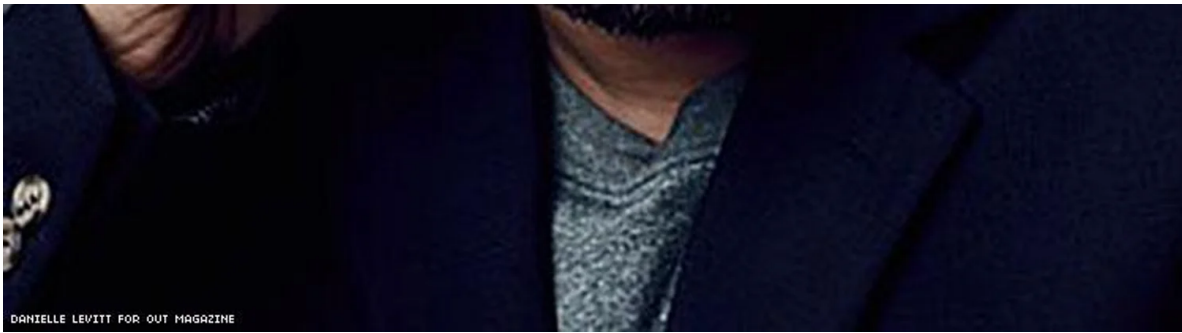
Michigan

Ruth Ellis

(d. 10/5/2000)

Ruth Ellis was an African-American lesbian and subject of the documentary *Living With Pride: Ruth C. Ellis @ 100*. "We celebrate Ruth Ellis for her extraordinary courage, openly identifying as a lesbian in 1915 and offering her home as a safe space to the Detroit LGBTQ community beginning in the 1930s. The work we continue to do at the Ruth Ellis Center is built upon her model of responsibility to oneself and one's community." -- *Mark McCormick, director of development and advancement, Ruth Ellis Center (RuthEllisCenter.org)*





Missouri

Kylar Broadus

"Kylar Broadus has spent over three decades devoting his life to advancing the policy, legal, and legislative concerns of LGBTQ Americans. Whether being the first openly transgender person to testify before the U.S. Senate, his tireless work with the [National] LGBTQ Task Force and Transgender Civil Rights Project, or founding the Trans People of Color Coalition, the Fayette, Mo., native's contributions to our community are legion." -- *Colin Murphy, COO and editor, #Boom Magazine. (Boom.lgbt)*





Minnesota

Karen Clark

Karen Clark followed another out gay Minnesotan, Allan Spear (d. 10/11/2008), into state politics. "Rep. Karen Clark is the longest serving out lesbian in a state legislature in the United States. She was integral to passing the first trans inclusive nondiscrimination laws in the country in 1993. Rep. Clark continues to work on issues of economic, racial, and LGBTQ equity in the Minnesota House of Representatives." -- *Monica Meyer, executive director, OutFront Minnesota (OutFront.org)*

Mississippi

Jack Myers

Through his gay clubs, "Jack Myers provided a safe place for LGBTQ Mississippians to gather for more than 50 years. Jack didn't set out to be an activist, but his mission -- since the 1960s -- was to provide a place where the community could come together in an accepting environment in a state where many were, and continue to be, hostile towards LGBTQ people. Even if LGBTQ people were ostracized by loved ones, many found a new, inclusive family at Jack's bars." -- *Rob Hill, state director, HRC Mississippi (HRC.org/Mississippi)*

Montana

Denise Juneau

The former head of Montana's public schools, Denise Juneau

became Montana's first out gay candidate to run for federal office in 2016 (although she didn't win). "Montanans know and trust Denise. Her run for Congress [was] historic in many ways. She's the first female American Indian to win statewide office -- twice. Denise is proof that anyone can go from Head Start to Harvard, from a small town to the U.S. Capitol." -- *Lauren Caldwell, Juneau's campaign manager, speaking to the Billings Gazette*



Nebraska

Ryan Sallans

"Ryan is a Nebraska native and an Omaha resident. He is a

published author [of *Second Son: Transitioning Toward My Destiny, Love, and Life*], national speaker/educator, and media spokesperson for trans issues. He serves as an excellent role model for young trans people. His work to educate college campuses and corporate leaders across the country makes an incredible difference in building a better, more inclusive country." -- *Abbi Swatsworth, board president, Outlinc, a Nebraska LGBTQ Community Center (Outlinc.org)*

Nevada

David Parks

"Sen. David Parks was the first openly gay member of the Nevada legislature and has been instrumental in sponsoring LGBTQ-friendly bills for Nevadans. Sen. Parks has been a mainstay of the LGBTQ civil rights movement in Nevada and has especially been a major supporter of the transgender community." -- *Andre C. Wade, executive director, the Center, Las Vegas. (TheCenterLV.org)*





New Hampshire

Raymond Buckley

Raymond Buckley was Democratic National Committee vice chair and a candidate to lead the DNC before dropping out to support Keith Ellison. "A native Granite Stater, whose family can claim roots back to the early 18th century, Raymond Buckley has dedicated his life to public service. He was one of the first out LGBTQ members of our state legislature, the first out chair of a major state party, and the first out vice chair of a major national party [the DNC]." -- *Ryan Richman, director of research and policy, GLSEN New Hampshire (GLSEN.org/chapters/NewHampshire)*

New Jersey

Mickey Suiter

"Mickey Suiter and three friends held the first meeting of the Gay Activist Alliance in Morris County on September 11, 1972. Mickey remains a member of GAAMC's Board." -- *Sherri L. Rase, president of GAAMC (GAAMC.org)*





New Jersey

Reed Gusciora

Reed Gusciora became New Jersey's first out gay assemblyman when he came out publicly in 2006. He was followed by Tim Eustace, who was the first out gay assemblyman to win an election in the state. "[Gusciora] was involved in establishing domestic partnerships, civil unions, and marriage equality." -- *Christian Fuscarino, executive director, Garden State Equality (GardenStateEquality.org)*

New Mexico

Paula Gunn Allen

(d. 5/29/2008)

University of California, Los Angeles, professor Paula Gunn Allen was a leading Native American author and scholar. "This [lesbian] poet, philosopher, scholar, and teacher grew up in Cubero, N.M. She was also a prolific writer of poems, fiction, essays; her last

scholarly book, on Pocahontas, was a nominee for the National Book Award." -- *Patricia Clark Smith, University of New Mexico; excerpt from Allen's obituary (PaulaGunnAllen.net)*



New York

Carmen Vazquez

"Carmen Vazquez is an activist, writer, and community intellectual. Some of her work regarding liberation is published in *conmoción*, a Latina lesbian magazine. She is the coordinator of the LGBT Health and Human Services Unit for the New York State AIDS Institute. She was a founder of the Women's Building in San

Francisco and of Causes in Common, a national coalition of LGBT liberation and reproductive justice activists." -- *Gabby Santos, director LGBT health services, In Our Own Voices (InOurOwnVoices.org)*

New York

Barbara Smith

"Barbara Smith is an American lesbian feminist and socialist who has played a significant role in building and sustaining black feminism in the United States. Since the early 1970s she has been active as a critic, teacher, lecturer, author, scholar, and publisher of black feminist thought." -- *Gabby Santos, In Our Own Voices*



North Carolina

Mandy Carter

Nobel Peace Prize nominee Mandy Carter is a cofounder of the National Black Justice Coalition, focused on African-American LGBT civil rights, and Southerners on New Ground, an organization working "at the intersections of racial justice and LGBTQ rights. Mandy has blazed the trail for intersectional work not just in North Carolina but across the South. " -- *Christopher Sgro, executive director, Equality North Carolina (EqualityNC.org)*

North Dakota

Joshua Boschee

In November 2012, Joshua Boschee became the first out gay person to be elected to the North Dakota state legislature. He sits on numerous boards including the Fargo-Moorhead Coalition for Homeless Persons, Fargo Theater, and the Council of Abused Women's Services.

Ohio

Paul Lynde

(d. 1/11/1982)

"Paul Lynde was an iconic gay actor, born in Mount Vernon, Ohio, who paved the way for the mainstream GLBT-friendly programming we watch today. Lynde is a gay icon, and his comedic talent unlocked the gates for characters like Cameron and Mitchell on *Modern Family*, programs like *Will & Grace*, and networks like Logo [and Here]." -- *Erin McCalla, Outlook Ohio magazine (OutlookOhio.com)*





Oklahoma

Sharon & Mary Bishop-Baldwin

"Sharon and Mary Bishop-Baldwin secured marriage equality for Oklahoma, [through] a decades-long lawsuit challenging Oklahoma's gay marriage ban. [It was] the longest lawsuit in same-sex marriage history. They persisted and prevailed. In their recently released book titled *Becoming Brave*, they detail the dual battle they experienced with opponents of same- sex marriage and a national LGBTQ movement that refused to believe equality could be won in the heartland." -- *Toby Jenkins, executive director, Oklahomans for Equality (OKEq.org)*





Oregon

Bill Dickey

"When Oregon was ground zero for anti-LGBTQ ballot measures in 1991, Bill Dickey was going door to door in his parent's rural small town trying to defeat Measure 9. In the 25 years since, he's helped move a broad progressive agenda by supporting HIV/AIDS [causes], LGBTQ advocacy, reproductive justice, criminal justice reform, the arts, and more." -- *Amy Herzfeld-Copple, co-executive director, Basic Rights Oregon (BasicRights.org)*

Pennsylvania

Randy Forrester

(d. 4/23/2008)

"He created Persad Center as a safe place for LGBT people to

receive services without discrimination. As early as 1969, Randy founded western Pennsylvania's first gay and lesbian rights organization -- Mattachine. First to respond to the crisis of AIDS in the early 1980s, Randy [later] worked on the city's nondiscrimination act. Pittsburgh was one of the first municipalities to have protections because of Randy's work. He founded the Lambda Foundation which funded programs that serve the LGBT community, and served as chairman of Pittsburgh's [antidiscrimination] commission." -- *Betty J. Hill, executive director, Persad Center (PersadCenter.org)*

Rhode Island

Wendy Becker

"One of the founders of Youth Pride Inc., Rhode Island's only organization exclusively focusing on the needs of LGBTQ youth, Wendy ... recently organized and testified before the legislature advocating for a ban on conversion therapy for minors. As YPI celebrates its 25-year anniversary this year, Wendy continues to volunteer." -- *Christopher Laugh, executive director, Youth Pride. (YouthPrideRI.org)*

South Carolina

Jeff Ayers

"Jeff Ayers, the executive director of South Carolina Equality ... was a vital part behind the strategy of the now historic lawsuit filed in the federal courts which brought marriage equality to South Carolina. In 2015, he was a permanent fixture at the South Carolina State House, successfully fighting anti-LGBT legislation ([he]stopped 13 anti-LGBT bills in 2016 ...) and supporting pro-equality bills that would protect LGBT South Carolinians in the workplace, housing, and public accommodations." -- *Linda Ketner,*

founder of South Carolina Equality (SCEquality.org)

South Dakota

Angie Buhl O'Donnell

An out bisexual, Buhl O'Donnell was the first LGBT member of the South Dakota legislature. She has represented the 15th district in the South Dakota Senate since 2010, a seat she won when she was just 25 years old. That same year she was honored with the Young Democrats of America LGBT Caucus's Leadership Award.



Texas

Annise Parker

"Annise Parker's 40-plus years of LGBTQ activism and politics prepared her to make history as the country's first openly gay elected official of a major U.S. city. She became [Houston] mayor in 2010, leading the nation's fourth-largest metropolis ... for a total of three terms. Her successful effort to pass the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance in 2014 [was unfortunately] ... overturned by referendum in 2015." -- *Arnea Williams, the Montrose Center (MontroseCenter.org)*

Tennessee

Bill Kendall

(d. 4/19/2013)

"The Godfather of the Memphis art film industry," Bill Kendall "hosted the first Miss Gay Memphis pageant on Halloween night 1969. Inspired by Stonewall, it was the first openly LGBT event in Memphis. He fought to show art films, foreign films, and LGBT films in his commercial theater. [Charged with obscenity in 1964], he took his case all the way to the Tennessee Supreme Court," which overturned the law. -- *Will Batts, executive director, Out Memphis (OutMemphis.org)*





Utah

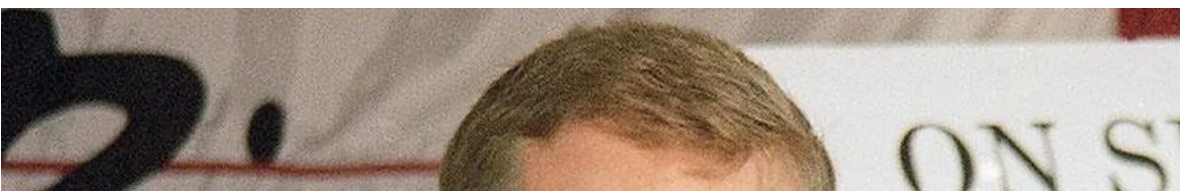
Bruce Bastian

"If Bruce Bastian (activist, [cofounder] of WordPerfect [Software Co.], and generous donor) had not been involved in all of our organizations, GLBTQ issues in Utah would still be as they were in the '50s. Our organizations exist on the foundation that is built by his gifts of energy, belief in our freedoms to be who we are, and his infinite generosity." -- *Carol Gnade, director, Utah Pride Center (UtahPrideCenter.org)*

Vermont

Beth Robinson

Beth Robinson is a judge on the Vermont Supreme Court. Previously, "Beth argued the historic civil unions and marriage equality court cases before the [state's] Supreme Court, each resulting in legislative required rulings. She was a key community organizer in all the marriage equality efforts in Vermont and worked with many other states to help them establish their efforts." -- *Llu Mulvaney-Stanak, Outright Vermont (OutrightVT.org)*





Virginia

Tracy Thorne-Begland

A General District Court Judge of Richmond, Va., since 2012, Thorne-Begland was the first out gay person elected by the state's legislature. In 1992, the then-Navy pilot went public with his sexuality to protest the ban on gays serving in the military, coming out to Ted Koppel on ABC's *Nightline*. He became the first test case of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

Washington

Seth Kirby

"Seth Kirby is a transgender man and leader of an enormous statewide coalition and campaign to stop far-right extremists from repealing our state's long-standing protections from discrimination

for transgender people. He led the fight to defeat them in the state legislature and keep them off the ballot last year, and now he's the general of a 'national battleground' fight over I-1552, an anti-trans statewide ballot initiative." -- *Heather Weiner, partner at Moxie Media (MoxieMedia.biz)*



Washington, D.C.

Ruby Corado

Founder of Casa Ruby and D.C. Trans Coalition, this trans Latina provides services to homeless LGBTQ youth and advocates for trans rights. "It is nearly impossible to be in a room with Corado

and not be inspired. Ruby saves lives." -- *Jody Michael Huckaby, former executive director of PFLAG National (PFLAG.org).*

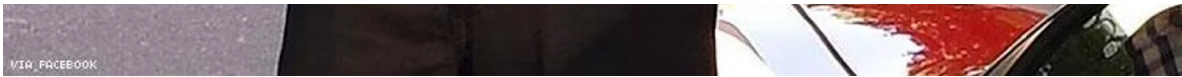
West Virginia

Helen Compton

"In 1963 in the small coal town of Bluefield, W.Va., Miss Helen Compton came across a group of young gay men ... [that] had been refused service [at a pub] and blocked at the door because they were 'queers.' Helen was 'a woman like that' ... and a 40-year resident of the Bluefield area. She opened the Shamrock bar ... [where] generations of men and women 'like that' came." --

Bradley Milam, former executive director, Fairness West Virginia (FairnessWV.org), writing in The Revivalist





Wisconsin

David Clarenbach

"David was the author of our statewide gay rights bill in 1982. It was the first gay rights law in the U.S., and maybe in the world. David was the speaker pro tem of the Wisconsin Assembly at the time. The law provided protection in housing, employment, and public accommodation. Later, David also got hate crime legislation and bills protecting people with HIV passed in Wisconsin. After leaving politics, he was the director of the Victory Fund [which supports LGBT politicians]." -- *Steve Starkey, OutReach LGBT Community Center (LGBTOutReach.org)*

Wyoming

Cathy Connolly

Rep. Cathy Connolly is Wyoming's first out lesbian legislator, who has been in office since 2008. "Rep. Connolly's unapologetic advocacy is one of the reasons the conservative state has defeated every anti-LGBT bill drafted in the last 10 years. She's truly tireless, and we're proud as hell that she's the minority whip in the Wyoming House." -- *Sara Burlingame, outreach coordinator, Wyoming Equality (WyomingEquality.org)*