



June is LGBTQ Pride Month

1. When We Better Serve
2. Disclose or Not Disclose
3. The Shoulders We Stand On
4. LGBTQ Milestones

June 2019 Edition | Volume 14 Issue 3

Read, Pass on to Friends,
Family Members, Colleagues
& Constituents



Don't
Miss an
Issue!

It is the policy of the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council to use person-first language in items written by staff. Items reprinted or quoted exactly as they originally appear may not reflect this policy.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) Pride Month is currently celebrated each year in the month of June to honor the 1969 Stonewall riots in Manhattan. The Stonewall riots were a tipping point for the Gay Liberation Movement in the United States. In the United States the last Sunday in June was initially celebrated as "Gay Pride Day," but the actual day was flexible. In major cities across the nation the "day" soon grew to encompass a month-long series of events. Today, celebrations include pride parades, picnics, parties, workshops, symposia and concerts, and LGBTQ Pride Month events attract millions of participants around the world. Memorials are held during this month for those members of the community who have been lost to hate crimes or HIV/AIDS. The purpose of the commemorative month is to recognize the impact that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals have had on history locally, nationally, and internationally.



Through the voices of individuals from within the LGBTQ community, we clarify terms, identify issues, and provide historical perspective. Additionally, we included milestones and facts.

When We Better Serve the Most Marginalized Around Us, We Better Serve Everyone

I was born a lesbian. Did I know I was a lesbian then? Of course not. Like everyone else, I grew into puberty and came to understand my physical and emotional attractions in the same way everyone else does. In my case, however, I realized I was attracted to women, not men.

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Kim Welter,
Director of
Finance and
Policy,
Equality Ohio.
Gender
pronouns: she,
her, hers



Disclose or Not Disclose



**Michael Denlinger,
ODDC Council Member**

Courage replaces fear when you are passionate about your Mission.

The following is a summary of Dr. Patricia Hicks, ReachOut e-Diversity Newsletter Grantee, interview with Michael Denlinger, ODDC Council Member [-READ MORE-](#)

The Shoulders We Stand On

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As I acquired a bit of history myself, though, I'm realizing that my need for thoughtful historical study is driven by the portion of the word that's most important. The story. It's vital we understand the whys more than the whens or the wheres; thus we begin to weave a tapestry so complex, it shows us how we as individuals fit into its global cloth. [-READ MORE-](#)



Troy Anthony Harris

LGBTQ Milestones

Here is some background information about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender milestones in the United States. [-READ MORE-](#)



Using the ODDC platforms, we invite you to learn, clarify, and share.



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Reach Out e-Diversity News is produced by The Outcomes Management Group, Ltd.

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When We Better Serve The Most Marginalized Around Us, We Better Serve Everyone

Kim Welter, Director of Finance and Policy
Equality Ohio

Gender pronouns: she, her, hers

I was born a lesbian. Did I know I was a lesbian then? Of course not. Like everyone else, I grew into puberty and came to understand my physical and emotional attractions in the same way everyone else does. In my case, however, I realized I was attracted to women, not men. Growing up in the 1970s, I didn't know there was such a thing as, let alone a word for, lesbian. When I asked my pastor about it, he told me not to worry and that I "would grow out of it." Eighteen years later and a very unsuccessful marriage to the first man that wanted to marry me, I finally came to understand that I was a lesbian. The realization was instantaneous and made so much sense out of my life.



I am part of the LGBTQ community. LGBTQ is an acronym that attempts to be fully inclusive of people who are sexual orientation and/or gender identity diverse. Most people in the world are born with a sexual orientation of heterosexual (straight) and their understanding of themselves as a gendered person matches what was assigned to them on their birth certificate at birth – that M or F in the sex box (cisgender). According to the Williams Institute, about 4.3% of Ohio's population has a different experience growing up with regards to sexual orientation and/or gender identity.¹ We call them LGBTQ people, which stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer. I could use more letters with more labels—and would be happy to at an in-person training.

¹ <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/visualization/lgbt-stats/?topic=LGBT&area=39#density>

KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

The following definitions are from the website www.welcomingschools.org

Lesbian: A term describing a woman who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to some other women.

Gay: A term that describes a person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to some members of the same gender.

Bisexual: A term that describes a person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to people of more than one sex, gender or gender identity, though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree.

Transgender or Trans: An umbrella term that describes people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth: A term used to describe people who identify as a different gender from the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation; transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.

Queer: A term some people use to identify themselves with a flexible and inclusive view of gender and/or sexuality. Also used interchangeably with LGBTQ to describe a group of people such as “queer youth.” It is also seen in academic fields, such as queer studies or queer theory. Historically it has been used as a negative term for LGBTQ people. Some people still find the term offensive while some embrace the term as an identity.

LGBTQ people are not a homogenous population. We are generally born to straight parents of all races, national origins, ethnicities, socio-economic status, religion, ancestry and so forth. We come in all colors, shapes, abilities and sizes. As such, we are not, generally, raised in an LGBTQ culture—this is the reason why community celebrations such as Pride and community institutions such as LGBTQ centers are important. They serve as gathering points for community. Because our community is so diverse (and in some ways, still emerging), many of our words and meanings are in flux. Ask us the definition of Queer for example and you’re likely to get different answers from each of us. In my trainings, I recommend that if someone uses a term around their LGBTQ identity, ask them to tell you more about what it means to them so that you are both on the same page with what is being discussed.



In Ohio, it is still legal to fire an LGBTQ person, refuse them housing or service in a place of business. This is discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity. While there have been efforts, most of them successful, to pass local ordinances in various cities around Ohio, the state legislature has yet to pass a law that covers the entire state. I live near Grandview Heights, Ohio. The boundary lines between Grandview Heights and Columbus are not clear to the average person, including me. Columbus has a local ordinance protecting my rights but Grandview Heights does not. I am quite literally protected on one side of the street but not on the other when near my home. That means I probably lose my civil rights on my daily commute.

Because of the work I do, I often hear stories of discrimination. These stories often include being treated in a hostile manner in a work environment, being refused an apartment based solely on a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity, being refused health care, being fired when outed by someone, being denied a promotion, not being provided correct clothing and medication when incarcerated, being refused service in a homeless shelter, or having to resort to survival crimes after being thrown out of your home by hostile parents. The list goes on. Even more prevalent is the effect that fear of this kind of treatment has on LGBTQ people. I’ve known people who avoid getting necessary health care, contacting law enforcement when a crime occurs or seeking in-home elder care services for fear of being mistreated.

I presented recently to the Developmental Disabilities Council Outreach Committee around basic LGBTQ issues. The Outreach Committee taught me modern language around the population they serve and I taught them modern language around LGBTQ people. Invariably, one of us would use an outdated term or use a phrase incorrectly. I really enjoyed the way we allowed each other to grow, learn, and make mistakes – as long as we were trying to be as respectful as possible.

Yes, those living with a disability may also be LGBTQ. I would love to be able to tell you how many LGBTQ people living with a disability live in Ohio but I can't. Demographic information just isn't being collected in a way that would provide us this data. When we do collect sexual orientation and gender identity/expression data it is called SOGIE data (first letters of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression). We have several hurdles to overcome in this effort. 1) Data systems need to be changed to include fields to store the data 2) Straight, cisgender folks need to be comfortable asking the questions and answering them – since you can't pick out an LGBTQ person by how they look, you have to ask everyone 3) Confidentiality is an issue since discrimination is still legal in most of Ohio, and 4) LGBTQ people need to feel safe answering the questions.

We have a way to go to better serve LGBTQ Ohioans, including those living with a disability. When we better serve the most marginalized around us, we better serve everyone.

VISIT www.equalityohio.org



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Disclose or Not Disclose?

Courage replaces fear when you are passionate about your Mission.

The following is a summary of Dr. Patricia Hicks, ReachOut e-Diversity Newsletter Grantee, interview with Michael Denlinger, ODDC Council Member



Q How long have you been a member of the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council?

A I joined the Council in February, 2018. When I joined, I was excited about having the opportunity to advocate for people with disabilities.

Q When did your advocacy focus expand?

A As a new member of Council, I was provided the opportunity to observe and engage with all committees. While attending the Council's Grantee Gathering, Kenneth Latham, the Staff Liaison, Outreach Committee, mentioned that he was in the process of gathering information about the LGBTQ+ community to determine if there were unmet needs of individuals with disabilities that the Council should be made aware. I never thought that such an opportunity would present itself. I found myself feeling compelled to share with him that I was gay. It felt scary. I wondered what others would think. But I knew I didn't want others with disabilities to feel alone. I made my way to connect with Ken and let him know that I was available to assist in anyway that he needed. Ken was accepting of me and welcomed me to be engaged in the advocacy work ahead. The LGBTQ+ advocacy is one of many that Council is working on that is important to me.

Q When you shared your identity with others, how did they react?

A After my friend helped me realize my truth, when I was 29, the only other people that I told at that time were my sister and my roommate. Some family members and friends have been supportive and encouraging. One family member told me she didn't have to call and tell me she was straight so didn't feel I needed to call and say I was gay. Some

family members have stopped talking and spending time with me. The “not talking” makes things worse because there is no opportunity to find a way to move forward. So the day that I told Ken was the first time that I had openly shared my identity with someone whom I did not have a relationship.



What has been the response of other Council members and staff?



Everyone has been supportive. One staff member reached out and squeezed my hand as I choked up sharing my identity at the Outreach Committee meeting. Carolyn Knight, Executive Director, acknowledged, “You don’t know how many lives you are going to change by what you did.” Other members of Council applauded when I shared my identity, and still others let me know that I was not alone.



As a man who is gay and has a physical disability, what are some issues that are unique to you, that others need to know?



Because I have a physical disability, I am dependent upon someone else to assist me with my personal care. I am unable to get out of bed without assistance. I need help to go to the bathroom, shower, and dress. It is important to me that individuals who assist me with my personal care accept me for who I am. I need to be able to count on them to provide the same level of care for me as they would for anyone else. Personal Care advocacy is one area to examine.



What have you discovered since sharing your identity?



The more I have been open and shared my identity with others, the more empowered I have felt and the easier it has become. When I find myself feeling afraid, I remember that there are others who are like me who need to know they are not alone. That drives me to speak up.

While I knew that I had a lot to offer Council in the area of advocacy for people with disabilities, I did not know how much Council would help me to have a greater appreciation for who I am. It has been amazing. I feel liberated. Since sharing with Council, I have shared more with family members and friends. I have found more support than rejection.

I feel honored to serve with this Council and Staff. They have given me more than they could ever know.

Get to know someone!





The Shoulders We Stand On By Troy Anthony Harris

This article is reprinted from PRIZM Magazine, Columbus, OH (February, 2019)

I've been many things in my lifetime, but a good history student was never one of them. Anyone who raised or educated me- teachers, parents, counselors- knew that my left-brained strengths were far more acclimated to subjects like drama, music, and photography than any of the rote subjects in which I had to memorize names, dates, and places.

As I acquired a bit of history myself, though, I'm realizing that my need for thoughtful historical study is driven by the portion of the word that's most important. The story. It's vital we understand the whys more than the whens or the wheres; thus we begin to weave a tapestry so complex, it shows us how we as individuals fit into its global cloth.

That was my introspective for this Black History Month piece on historic LGBT black figures. I wanted to take it a step further and go beyond the traditional names we hear-James Baldwin, Langston Hughes, Alice Walker, Marsha P. Johnson find some of the stories that might not be as well-known or, at least, are the stories of which we need to be reminded.

I knew the focus would be the intersectionality of their lives, the term coined by feminist writer Kimberliè Crenshaw that describes the crossing Venn diagrams of being part of two or more marginalized communities. For each of these historic figures, their minority sides represented a demographic that could marginalize them or even kill them, which made their courage even greater.

Even in writing this article, the concept of being a "minority with a minority" is prevalent. It's rare for an LGBT publication to focus on LGBT black history in the context of Black History Month. It's also rare for the larger, mainstream black community to devote much, if any attention to those historic figures who are defined as black and L, G, B or T.

It's why these figures that I've been studying are so important. Their fight for inclusion is what allows people like me to not fear who we are and to be proud of what we represent. In the black community, we use a common phrase, "standing on the shoulders of those that came before," and these people clearly reflect that concept.



These are the warriors who gave me the freedom to walk as proud as I do. And y'all know I do.



Stormé DeLarverie

We all know the origin of our LGBT civil rights movement during the 1969 Stonewall Uprising, but do you know who threw the first punch?

That claim belongs to butch lesbian activist Stormé DeLarverie (1920-2014) known affectionately as the Rosa Parks of the LGBT Community for her participation during the uprising. Her engagement in LGBT civil rights came from a fierce love and motherly protection of her community throughout her life.

DeLarverie was a bouncer for gay clubs, keeping an ever-watchful eye for troublemakers. She also worked as a male illusionist, emcee and stage manager with the Jewel Box Revue, a racially integrated drag revue that started in 1930s Miami and toured throughout the country to such places as New York's Apollo and Loew's State theaters. It was billed as a show with "25 men and one girl," and Stormé DeLarverie was that one girl who would define the term, drag king.

Glenn Burke

On or off the sports field, we've all given someone the high five in celebration or acknowledgement, but do you know where it originated?

It came from Glenn Burke (1952-1995), the first openly gay player in Major League Baseball, Burke played for the Los Angeles Dodgers and Oakland A's between 1976 and 1979.

The story behind the famous hand slap came from Burke rushing the field during the final game of the 1977 season to congratulate Dodgers teammate Dusty Baker after a home run. As Baker rounded third base, Burke threw a hand above his head and Baker instinctively slapped it. "It seemed like the thing to do," he would say later. The gesture caught on. Burke was out to his teammates in Los Angeles, Oakland, and he publicly acknowledged his sexuality and the struggles he faced because of it. One Dodgers official offered Burke a handsome sum if he would get married; he refused.



Burke died of AIDS in 1995 and was finally honored in 2014 for his place in baseball history.



H. Sharif 'Herukhuti' Williams

Defining bisexuality has been a universal challenge within our LGBT community, but there is a historical black figure who devotes his life to bringing illumination to the subject. Hameed Sharif Williams, also known as Dr. Herukhuti, is a founder of the Center for Culture, Sexuality and Spirituality. He's also a professor at Goddard College in Vermont. Dr. Herukhuti is a sociologist, a playwright, a sexual health researcher devoted to subjects related to AIDS/HIV, a film director and a

community essayist. He was a co-editor of "Recognize: The Voices of Bisexual Men" with "Sexuality, Religion and the Sacred: Bisexual, Pansexual, and Polysexual Perspectives."

His unequivocal blackness is the foundation for his commitment to the history of sexual fluidity within black culture, and his engagement led him to the national stage in September 2013 when he and other bisexual researchers and activists held a first-ever public policy roundtable at the White House. Dr. Herukhuti continues to study, illuminate and bring awareness to the subject of bisexual black men, which inherently is a reflection of all identified bisexual men.

Miss Major Griffin-Gracy

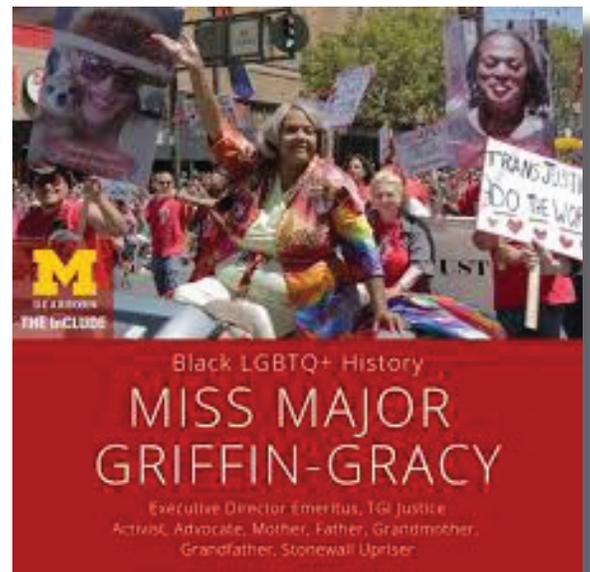
Before there was Janet Mock or Laverne Cox, there was a transgender activist who clearly defined her life and path devoted to women of color.

Miss Major Griffin-Gracy is now 78 years of age and continues her work as a transwoman activist and mentor. Having lived a life of struggle for acceptance, she was affectionately referred to by SF Weekly as "the Trans Formative Matriarch."

Miss Major grew up on Chicago's South Side and recognized early that her identity would become her marginalization. She determined that living as a trans woman would mean "living outside the law," and she became dependent on the black market for the hormones that were needed to live the life she saw for herself.

She saw and exposed the correlation between the prison industrial complex and trans identity with the inability of many to find a job or obtain appropriate healthcare. With her own stints of recidivism and incarcerations, she would go on to assist young trans women- her girls, as she called them- so they would not have to endure the struggles she had.

Her work and life are revered, both in a five-story New York building named for her that houses LGBTQ organizations, as well as the Griffin-Gracy Educational Retreat and Historic Center in Little Rock, the first of its kind solely dedicated to trans gender and gender-nonconforming people in the United States. Her story, as much as anyone's, is what standing on the shoulders is all about.



These are our heroes and heroines. These are the figures who made a path for our LGBT and black acceptance today. As we further study their stories during Black History Month 2019, we ordain and establish that their bravery and perseverance echoes the words of Albert Camus, who said: “The only way to deal with an unfree world is to become so absolutely free that your very existence is an act of rebellion.”

We recognize that black lives do indeed matter and that black history is American history. Especially through the prism of LGBT history.

Asè!

Troy Anthony Harris, a Columbus native, is a veteran theatrical stage performer and community advocate focused on issues of equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Check out PRIZM

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LGBT Rights Milestones Fast Facts

CNN Library

Updated 9:18 AM ET, Mon April 1, 2019

Here is some background information about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender milestones in the United States.

Timeline:

1924 - The Society for Human Rights is founded by Henry Gerber in Chicago. It is the first documented gay rights organization.

1950 - The Mattachine Society is formed by activist Harry Hay and is one of the first sustained gay rights groups in the United States. The Society focuses on social acceptance and other support for homosexuals.

April 1952 - The American Psychiatric Association's diagnostic manual lists homosexuality as a sociopathic personality disturbance.

April 27, 1953 - President Dwight D. Eisenhower signs an executive order that bans homosexuals from working for the federal government, saying they are a security risk.

September 1955 - The first known lesbian rights organization in the United States forms in San Francisco. Daughters of Bilitis (DOB). They host private social functions, fearing police raids, threats of violence and discrimination in bars and clubs.

July 1961 - Illinois becomes the first state to decriminalize homosexuality by repealing their sodomy laws.

September 11, 1961 - The first US-televised documentary about homosexuality airs on a local station in California.

June 28, 1969 - Police raid the Stonewall Inn in New York City. Protests and demonstrations begin, and it later becomes known as the impetus for the gay civil rights movement in the United States.

1969 - The "Los Angeles Advocate," founded in 1967, is renamed "The Advocate." It is considered the oldest continuing LGBT publication that began as a newsletter published by the activist group Personal Rights in Defense and Education (PRIDE).



June 28, 1970 - Community members in New York City march through the local streets to recognize the one-year anniversary of the Stonewall riots. This event is named Christopher Street Liberation Day, and is now considered the first gay pride parade.

1973 - Lambda Legal becomes the first legal organization established to fight for the equal rights of gays and lesbians. Lambda also becomes their own first client after being denied non-profit status; the New York Supreme Court eventually rules that Lambda Legal can exist as a non-profit.

January 1, 1973 - Maryland becomes the first state to statutorily ban same-sex marriage.

March 26, 1973 - First meeting of "Parents and Friends of Gays," which goes national as Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) in 1982.

December 15, 1973 - By a vote of 5,854 to 3,810, the American Psychiatric Association removes homosexuality from its list of mental disorders in the DSM-II Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.

1974 - Kathy Kozachenko becomes the first openly LGBT American elected to any public office when she wins a seat on the Ann Arbor, Michigan City Council.

1974 - Elaine Noble is the first openly gay candidate elected to a state office when she is elected to the Massachusetts State legislature.

January 14, 1975 - The first federal gay rights bill is introduced to address discrimination based on sexual orientation. The bill later goes to the Judiciary Committee but is never brought for consideration.

March 1975 - Technical Sergeant Leonard P. Matlovich reveals his sexual orientation to his commanding officer and is forcibly discharged from the Air Force six months later. Matlovich is a Vietnam War veteran and was awarded both the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star. In 1980, the Court of Appeals rules that the dismissal was improper. Matlovich is awarded his back pay and a retroactive promotion.

1976 - After undergoing gender reassignment surgery in 1975, ophthalmologist and professional tennis player Renee Richards is banned from competing in the women's US Open because of a "women-born-women" rule. Richards challenges the decision and in 1977, the New York Supreme Court rules in her favor. Richards competes in the 1977 US Open but is defeated in the first round by Virginia Wade.

1977-1981 - Billy Crystal plays one of the first openly gay characters in a recurring role on a prime time television show in "Soap."

January 9, 1978 - Harvey Milk is inaugurated as San Francisco city supervisor, and is the first openly gay man to be elected to a political office in California. In November, Milk and Mayor George Moscone are murdered by Dan White, who had recently resigned from his San Francisco board position and wanted Moscone to reappoint him. White later serves just over five years in prison for voluntary manslaughter.

1978 - Inspired by Milk to develop a symbol of pride and hope for the LGBT community, Gilbert Baker designs and stitches together the first rainbow flag.

October 14, 1979 - The first National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights takes place. It draws an estimated 75,000 to 125,000 individuals marching for LGBT rights.

March 2, 1982 - Wisconsin becomes the first state to outlaw discrimination based on sexual orientation.

November 30, 1993 - President Bill Clinton signs a military policy directive that prohibits openly gay and lesbian Americans from serving in the military, but also prohibits the harassment of "closeted" homosexuals. The policy is known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

November 1995 - The Hate Crimes Sentencing Enhancement Act goes into effect as part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. The law allows a judge to impose harsher sentences if there is evidence showing that a victim was selected because of the "actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation of any person."

September 21, 1996 - President Clinton signs the Defense of Marriage Act, banning federal recognition of same-sex marriage and defining marriage as "a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife."

December 3, 1996 - Hawaii's Judge Chang rules that the state does not have a legal right to deprive same-sex couples of the right to marry, making Hawaii the first state to recognize that gay and lesbian couples are entitled to the same privileges as heterosexual married couples.

April 30, 1997 - DeGeneres' character, Ellen Morgan, on her self-titled TV series "Ellen," becomes the first leading character to come out on a prime time network television show.

April 1, 1998 - Martin Luther King Jr.'s widow, Coretta Scott King, asks the civil rights community to help in the effort to extinguish homophobia.

October 6-7, 1998 - Matthew Shepard is tied to a fence and beaten near Laramie, Wyoming. He is eventually found by a cyclist, who initially mistakes him for a scarecrow. He later dies due to his injuries sustained in the beating.

October 9, 1998 - Russell Henderson and Aaron McKinney from Laramie, Wyoming, make their first court appearance after being arrested for the attempted murder of Shepard. Eventually, they each receive two life sentences for killing Shepard.

April 26, 2000 - Vermont becomes the first state to legalize civil-unions between same-sex couples.

June 2003 - The US Supreme Court strikes down the "homosexual conduct" law, which decriminalizes same-sex sexual conduct, with their opinion in Lawrence v. Texas. The decision also reverses Bowers v. Hardwick, a 1986 US Supreme Court ruling that upheld Georgia's sodomy law.

May 17, 2004 - The first legal same-sex marriage in the United States takes place in Massachusetts.

August 12, 2009 - Milk is posthumously awarded the Medal of Freedom by President Barack Obama.

October 28, 2009 - Obama signs the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act into law..

September 20, 2011 - "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is repealed, ending a ban on gay men and lesbians from serving openly in the military.

May 9, 2012 - In an ABC interview, Obama becomes the first sitting US president to publicly support the freedom for LGBT couples to marry.

September 4, 2012 - The Democratic Party becomes the first major US political party in history to publicly support same-sex marriage on a national platform at the Democratic National Convention.

November 6, 2012 - Tammy Baldwin becomes the first openly gay politician and the first Wisconsin woman to be elected to the US Senate.

June 26, 2013 - In United States v. Windsor, the US Supreme Court strikes down section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act, ruling that legally married same-sex couples are entitled to federal benefits. The high court also dismisses a case involving California's proposition 8.

October 6, 2014 - The United States Supreme Court denies review in five different marriage cases, allowing lower court rulings to stand, and therefore allowing same-sex couples to marry in Utah, Oklahoma, Virginia, Indiana and Wisconsin. The decision opens the door for the right to marry in Colorado, Kansas, North Carolina, South Carolina, West Virginia and Wyoming.

June 9, 2015 - Secretary of Defense Ash Carter announces that the Military Equal Opportunity policy has been adjusted to include gay and lesbian military members.

April 28, 2015 - The US Supreme Court hears oral arguments on the question of the freedom to marry in Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio and Michigan. On June 26 the Supreme Court rules that states cannot ban same-sex marriage. The 5-4 ruling had Justice Anthony Kennedy writing for the majority. Each of the four conservative justices writes their own dissent.

July 27, 2015 - Boy Scouts of America President Robert Gates announces, "the national executive board ratified a resolution removing the national restriction on openly gay leaders and employees."

May 17, 2016 - The Senate confirms Eric Fanning to be secretary of the Army, making him the first openly gay secretary of a US military branch. Fanning previously served as Defense Secretary Carter's chief of staff, and also served as undersecretary of the Air Force and deputy undersecretary of the Navy.

June 24, 2016 - Obama announces the designation of the first national monument to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights. The Stonewall National Monument will encompass Christopher Park, the Stonewall Inn and the surrounding streets and sidewalks that were the sites of the 1969 Stonewall uprising..

August 5-21, 2016 - A record number of "out" athletes compete in the summer Olympic

Games in Rio de Janeiro. The Human Rights Campaign estimates that there are at least 41 openly lesbian, gay and bisexual Olympians -- up from 23 that participated in London 2012.

November 9, 2016 - Kate Brown is sworn in as governor of Oregon, a day after she was officially elected to the office. Brown becomes the highest-ranking LGBT person elected to office in the United States. Brown took over the governorship in February 2016 (without an election), after Democrat John Kitzhaber resigned amidst a criminal investigation.

April 4, 2017 - The 7th Circuit Court of Appeals rules that the Civil Rights Act prohibits workplace discrimination against LGBT employees, after Kimberly Hively sues Ivy Tech Community College for violating Title VII of the act by denying her employment.

June 27, 2017 - District of Columbia residents can now choose a gender-neutral option of their driver's license. DC residents become the first people in the United States to be able to choose X as their gender marker instead of male or female on driver's licenses and identification cards. Similar policies exist in Canada, India, Bangladesh, Australia, New Zealand and Nepal.

November 7, 2017 - Virginia voters elect the state's first openly transgender candidate to the Virginia House of Delegates. Danica Roem unseats incumbent delegate Bob Marshall, who had been elected thirteen times over 26 years. Roem becomes the first openly transgender candidate elected to a state legislature in American history.

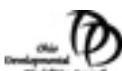
February 26, 2018 - The Pentagon confirms that the first transgender person has signed a contract to join the US military.

November 6, 2018 - Democratic US Representative Jared Polis wins the Colorado governor's race, becoming the nation's first openly gay man to be elected governor.

January 22, 2019 - The Supreme Court allows Trump's transgender military ban to go into effect. The policy blocks individuals who have been diagnosed with a condition known as gender dysphoria from serving with limited exceptions and specifies that they can serve only according to the sex they were assigned at birth.



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