



MEDIA ALERT — FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: February 16, 2018

San Francisco Pride Announces Public Voting for 2018 Community Grand Marshals

San Francisco, CA – The San Francisco Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Pride Celebration Committee has announced the 2018 slate of nominees for public vote for Community Grand Marshal. Annually, the general public votes for both an individual and an organization to be honored at the parade and celebration, which are held the last weekend in June. Voting is live and will continue until 12:00 Noon on Wednesday, March 8th.

The 2018 nominees for Community Grand Marshal represent a diverse group of individuals and organizations that have, through their work, art, advocacy, and volunteerism, contributed to the strength and vitality of LGBTQ communities in the Bay Area. “We are lucky to live in a time and place where we are surrounded by so many impressive, inspirational individuals and organizations,” said SF Pride Executive Director, George F. Ridgely, Jr. “Every year it is challenging to narrow the ballot to 15 candidates.”

The 2018 San Francisco Pride Celebration & Parade is scheduled for the weekend of June 23rd and 24th. The theme for this year’s Pride event is *Generations of Strength*. “Our theme for 2018 exemplifies the core mission of our event,” according to Ridgely. “Our founders established the Parade and Celebration to commemorate the Stonewall Riots. Since then we have created the space in San Francisco for multiple generations to lift their collective voices in celebration and in resistance, highlighting a rich history of activism in the LGBTQI movement. As we approach our Fiftieth Anniversary in 2020 we have the opportunity to assist in preserving and celebrating the stories of our elders. We also strive to inspire today’s young leaders through meaningful connections to those who organized before them.”

The San Francisco Pride Parade/March will take place in downtown San Francisco along Market Street on Sunday, June 24th. The Celebration, a rally and festival at Civic Center Plaza, will take place on Saturday and Sunday, June 23rd and 24th. The Celebration features multiple stages of local and international talent that include speakers, performances, live entertainment, DJs, and more than twenty community-produced stages and venues. There is no mandatory admission fee for the Celebration; however, organizers are requesting a \$1 donation from everyone who attends.

Organizers encourage groups and organizations to register early. Registration is available at register.sfpride.org. Updates and complete event information can be found at sfpride.org.

HOW TO CAST YOUR BALLOT FOR COMMUNITY GRAND MARSHAL

DEADLINE: Public voting will conclude on Wednesday, March 7 at 12:00 Noon.

There are several ways to cast your ballot for Community Grand Marshal.

- Online: sfpride.org/grand-marshals.
- In person at the SF Pride office, 30 Pearl Street, 4th Floor, San Francisco. Please note that access to the Pride offices is by appointment only. Contact info@sfpride.org to schedule an appointment.



NOMINEES - Individuals:

Billy Curtis is Director of UC Berkeley's Gender Equity Resource Center, a committed community activist for over 30 years, a proud black queer immigrant from the Bahamas, past board member of Vitality and the SF LGBT Center, a volunteer for Project Open Hand, and an AIDS/LifeCycle rider. He loves his LGBTQ+ siblings, especially those working toward creating inclusive community spaces.

Kin Folkz is an award-winning educator, human rights activist, author, community catalyst, founder of the Oakland Pride Creative Arts & Film Fest, the founder of the Oakland Queer +Trans Open Mic, co-director of the Bay Area Bisexual Network, a member of Black Lives Matter Bay Area, and Queer Black Lives Matter. With a MA in Ethnic Studies (San Francisco State University), and both a MA and PhD in Education (Stanford University), Kin's work has been lauded by the Huffington Post and presented within and outside of the U.S. including Japan, South Africa, and Jamaica. Kin is the CEO and cofounder of SpectrumQueerMedia.com.

Steven Gaynes is a longtime community volunteer. Steven moved to San Francisco in 1985. His passion for volunteering led him to delivering meals to people with AIDS with Open Hand, joining the AIDS Emergency Fund and the Folsom Street Fair boards. He served on the Castro Street Fair Board for over twenty years, transforming it into a community board. Steven joined the 15 Association and served as Chairman of the Fraternal Committee. In serving the Leather Community, he transformed the Inter Club Fund and the Leather Forum into the Leather Alliance. He served as San Francisco Leather Daddy XII and is now working on creating the South of Market Leather Cultural District.

Ali Marrero-Calderon began working for gay rights in the 1970s, fighting against the Briggs Initiative. She was involved with the Pride Parade as a safety supervisor and the celebration main stage until 1990. Ali belonged to Gay Latino Alliance (GALA) and Mujerio (a Latina lesbian organization). She worked with Shanti Project in the early days of the AIDS epidemic, providing services for men living and dying with the virus. With Dykes on Bikes since 1976, she became its first emeritus member. Ali received recognition by Astrea for her work with Old Lesbians Organizing for Change (OLOC) in 2017.

Pamela Peniston is a founding member and Artistic Director of the Queer Cultural Center (QCC). Since 1998, Pam has provided visionary leadership for twenty National Queer Arts Festivals, commissioned generations of LGBTQI artists and artists of color, and provided opportunities for them to discover their voices and connect with their communities. Pamela and Queer Cultural Center have mentored and inspired queer artists who have become leaders and changed the cultural landscape of queer arts across the nation.

Gabriel Quinto is the first LGBT Filipino-American Mayor of El Cerrito. He is an experienced organizer and activist, DPCC-elected delegate, environmentalist and Sierra Club Executive Committee member, and longtime HIV survivor. Gabriel promotes involvement and inclusion, working with women, seniors, people with disabilities, and minority communities. He's a former board member of the API Wellness Center and East Bay Stonewall Democrats. He is also a Vice President of the League of Women Voters and a volunteer with Shanti SF.

Jenna Rapues is a Filipina-American community leader and advocate on transgender health and HIV/AIDS. For nearly two decades, Jenna has been working tirelessly on the local and national levels to improve access to comprehensive, effective, and affirming health care services for transgender and gender non-binary people. Jenna's work in transgender HIV/AIDS research, education, policy, access to care and advocacy has made San Francisco a model city for trans communities. Jenna currently serves



as the Interim Director of UCSF's Center of Excellence for Transgender Health where she is able to advocate for and serve her community on a national level.

Mrs. Vera has spent over two decades in San Francisco helping to fundraise for a number of local agencies, while also encouraging others to discover and display their own unique visions by creating costumes from recycled materials in free workshops throughout the LGBTQ community. Mrs. Vera and the Verasphere group have marched in the San Francisco Pride Parade since 1995, entertaining the crowds in support of The SF LGBT Center, the SPCA, the Bookmobile, and Shanti.

Soni Wolf is a founding member of Dykes on Bikes® (DOB). She began riding with them in the late 1970s, shortly after the movement for women's empowerment and visibility brought the DOB to the front of the San Francisco Pride Parade. During the forty years that Soni has been a part of Dykes on Bikes, she helped the organization evolve into a 501(c)3 non-profit, spearheading the group's mission to create a national and international community of women motorcyclists supporting philanthropic endeavors in LGBTQ communities. She has been recognized by many, including the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence® who sainted Soni in 2016.

Carolyn Wysinger is an author, blogger, speaker, high school educator, and the host of "The C-Dubb Show" podcast. Her work has appeared in *Everyday Feminism*, *Elixher*, *Black Girl Dangerous*, *Autostraddle*, and *Sinister Wisdom*. Her first book, *Knockturnal Emissions: Thoughts on #race #sexuality #gender #community* was released in 2013. She is a former Human Rights Commissioner for the City of Richmond. She currently serves on the boards for BUTCHVoices and Lambda Democrats of Contra Costa County.

NOMINEES - Organizations:

Bay Area Bisexual Network (BABN) has been serving the bisexual community for thirty-one years. Founded in 1987, BABN was the successor to the San Francisco Bisexual Center (1976-1984). BABN continues fostering a vibrant multicultural Bi+ community in the San Francisco Bay Area through monthly get-togethers, discussion lists, groups for regional Bi+ issues and builds a connection to Bi+ community around the bay.

The FAIR Education Act Implementation Coalition, convened in 2014 by Our Family Coalition, is comprised of many organizations. The Coalition has worked over the years to see this historic education reform from legislation, through to curricular framework, to textbook adoption, and now school district-by-school district implementation.

Rafiki Coalition aims to improve people's lives by reversing the history of health inequalities that affect the Black community and other underserved groups in San Francisco. For more than twenty years, Rafiki has provided transitional living facilities and case management services for homeless people living with HIV/AIDS. Rafiki's weekly support group meetings help participants looking to identify viable solutions to life challenges—HIV/AIDS, substance use, sex, relationships, isolation, health, grief, loss and other concerns.

The San Francisco Lesbian/Gay Freedom Band is the first openly gay musical organization in the world, inspiring the formation of all other LGBT bands, choruses, and other groups around the globe. Locally, SFLGFB is the Official Band of San Francisco, having been given that honor by two different mayors. Founded in 1978 by Jon Sims, the Band first appeared when it marched up Market Street behind Harvey Milk's car in the 1978 San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Parade. For forty years, the Band has



been committed to community service. The Band's mission addresses the education and musical development of its members, promotes visibility of LGBT communities, and with its allies, fosters understanding among diverse communities through public performance.

Young Women's Freedom Center (YWFC) works to lift the voices and build the power of LGBTQ/GNCT young people of color who are system-involved or formerly incarcerated. Since being founded in 1993, YWFC has prioritized the leadership of LGBTQI people. When abuse was discovered against trans and gender non-conforming youth in SF's juvenile hall, YWFC organized and won changes in policy. YWFC operates *Queer on the Inside*: a leadership and technical assistance program led by formerly incarcerated LGBTQI youth to address homophobia and transphobia within the criminal justice system. YWFC was the first organization in the country to make the issues of LGBTQI youth in detention visible by keeping statistics on sexuality and gender identity.

Photos of the nominees are available upon request.

EVENT CALENDAR

San Francisco LGBT Pride Celebration and Parade
Generations of Strength | June 23-24, 2018

Celebration/Rally

Civic Center Plaza Park
Saturday, June 23, 12:00 N to 6:00 PM
Sunday, June 24, 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Parade/March

Along Market Street, from Beale to 8th Street
Sunday, June 25, beginning at 10:30 AM

About the San Francisco Pride Celebration Committee

The San Francisco Pride Celebration Committee is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded to produce the SF Pride Celebration and Parade. The mission of the organization is to educate the world on LGBTQ issues, as well as commemorate the heritage, celebrate the culture, and liberate the people of all LGBTQ communities. A world leader in the Pride movement, SF Pride is also a grant-giving organization through its Community Partners Program. Since 1997, SF Pride has granted over \$2.5 million dollars in proceeds to local nonprofit LGBTQIA organizations and organizations working on issues related to HIV/AIDS, cancer, homelessness, housing rights, and animal welfare.

For More Information or to Become a Member

Visit sfpride.org | Email media@sfpride.org | Telephone (415) 864-0831

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