

**Media Contacts:**

Julie Richter | [julier@charleszukow.com](mailto:julier@charleszukow.com)

Peter Lawrence Kane | [peter.kane@sfpride.org](mailto:peter.kane@sfpride.org)

# **SAN FRANCISCO PRIDE ANNOUNCES THELMA HOUSTON AS THE SUNDAY HEADLINER FOR OFFICIAL PRIDE 50 ONLINE CELEBRATION**

Black Lives Matter co-founder Alicia Garza, contestants from HBO's *Legendary*, and Celebrity Grand Marshal W. Kamau Bell join online programming for the nation's largest gathering of the LGBTQ+ community and allies

Concurrent stream on SFPride.org will feature special community programming from the Don Julio Latin Stage, the Soul of Pride, and the Women's Stage

**JUNE 27–28, 2020**

SAN FRANCISCO (June 23, 2020) — Today, the Board of Directors of **San Francisco Pride** announced Grammy award-winning singer and Motown legend **Thelma Houston** as the Sunday headliner for the official **Pride 50** online celebration. The weekend-long tribute to LGBTQ+ luminaries and queer solidarity continues to amplify Black voices through a spotlight on **Black Lives Matter** cofounder **Alicia Garza**; a celebration of the underground ballroom community with contestants from **HBO's *Legendary***; and a special appearance by Celebrity Grand Marshal **W. Kamau Bell**. More than 13 hours of programming will stream through [SFPride.org](https://sfpride.org) as the nation's largest gathering of the LGBTQ+ community and allies goes online for the first time in its history.

"Thelma Houston and Big Freedia are iconic performers whose lives and work are representative of the joy and hope found in performing arts, alongside their role in empowering others as we navigate the struggles of equality and justice. We couldn't be more thrilled that they will headline Pride 50," said San Francisco Pride Executive Director **Fred Lopez**. "In a year

when we are more aware than ever that our culture owes a huge debt to Black voices, these and other artists are elevating the Pride experience. We are thankful to them as we continue the fight for change and remain resilient. This weekend's lineup will inspire hope as we reflect on the last 50 years, and look ahead."

(Please refer to the first two #SF Pride 50 lineup announcements from [May 20](#) and [June 18](#) for a comprehensive list of acts.)

San Francisco Pride will host a concurrent stream at [sfpride.org](http://sfpride.org), featuring some of the Community-programmed stages that celebrate the diversity of LGBTQ+ culture in San Francisco and beyond. The **Soul of Pride** stage will feature, among other stellar acts, **D'Wayne Patrice Wiggins**, founding member of 1990s soul/R&B group Tony! Toni! Toné!, and **Yo-Yo**, the outspoken hip-hop artist, actress, and entrepreneur. The **Women's Stage** is showcasing a selection of the Bay Area's best, such as dance-club DJ, radio mixtress, and club promoter **Page Hodel**, as well as **Christie James**, **Olga T**, **Alex D**, and **Rockaway**. Rounding out the Community Stages is the **Don Julio Latin Stage**, presented by Club Papi, Gay Club TV, and Media Concepts PR — with featured performances by the legendary **Ana Barbara**, **Amara La Negra**, **Los Horoscopos De Durango**, and more.

**Bios (previously announced entertainer and speaker bios can be found [HERE](#))**

#### **Thelma Houston (Sunday headliner)**

A Mississippi native, Thelma started out in the '60's performing gospel music with the Art Reynolds Singers. After she released her first solo album *Sunshower*, she joined Motown Records, where she claimed the top of the Pop, R&B and Dance charts with her high-powered rendition of "Don't Leave Me This Way." That Gold Record classic gave Thelma the distinction of being the first solo female artist at Motown to win the Grammy Award for "Best R&B Female Vocal Performance."

Known as a humanitarian for her charitable causes and her tireless efforts in the battle against AIDS, the City of West Hollywood proclaimed January 29 as "Thelma Houston Day" in 2003. She has donated her talents to numerous charities including Devine Design for Project Angel Food, AIDS Project Los Angeles, and the Minority AIDS Project. She is also active in the Beverly Hills/Hollywood branch of the NAACP.

Thelma has rocked Rockefeller Center on NBC's The Today Show and the summer music special "Hit Me Baby, One More Time." She dazzled in ABC's Motown 45 and glittered on ABC's The Disco Ball. Along with Aretha Franklin and Mary Wilson, she raised the roof on Love, Rhythm and Blues for PBS. Thelma appeared with Phoebe Snow, Chaka Khan, Mavis Staples and CeCe Peniston as the "Sisters of Glory" in New York City in a rousing performance that received a special request to perform at The Vatican for The Pope. She's performed on Fox's *American Idol*, NBC's *America's Got Talent*, and she headlined the official inauguration dinner for President Barack Obama.

With appearances from Tokyo to Las Vegas to London and beyond, Thelma continues to bring audiences to their feet with her dynamic, energetic Motown show. This Diva logs over 200 performances annually and the singer/songwriter is enjoying every moment of her success.

### **Alicia Garza**

Alicia Garza is an Oakland-based organizer, writer, public speaker, and freedom dreamer who is currently the Special Projects Director for the National Domestic Workers Alliance, the nation's leading voice for dignity and fairness for the millions of domestic workers in the United States. Garza, along with Opal Tometi and Patrisse Khan-Cullors, also co-founded Black Lives Matter, a globally recognized organizing project that focuses on combating anti-Black state-sanctioned violence and the oppression of all Black people.

Since the rise of the BLM movement, Garza has become a powerful voice in the media. Her articles and interviews have been featured in *Time*, *Mic*, *The Guardian*, *Elle.com*, *Essence*, *Democracy Now!*, and *The New York Times*.

In addition, her work has received numerous recognitions, including being named on The Root's 2016 list of 100 African American achievers and influencers, the 2016 Glamour Women of the Year Award, the 2016 Marie Claire New Guard Award, and as a Community Change Agent at the 2016 BET's Black Girls Rock Awards.

Most important, as a queer Black woman, Garza's leadership and work challenge the misconception that only cisgender Black men encounter police and state violence. While the tragic deaths of Trayvon Martin and Mike Brown were catalysts for the emergence of the BLM movement, Garza is clear: In order to truly understand how devastating and widespread this type of violence is in Black America, we must view this epidemic through a lens of race, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

### **W. Kamau Bell**

W. Kamau Bell is a sociopolitical comedian who is the host and executive producer of the Emmy Award winning CNN docu-series *United Shades of America with W. Kamau Bell*. His most recent stand-up comedy special, *Private School Negro*, is on Netflix. Kamau has a book with the easy-to-remember title *The Awkward Thoughts of W. Kamau Bell: Tales of a 6' 4", African American, Heterosexual, Cisgender, Left-Leaning, Asthmatic, Black and Proud Blerd, Mama's Boy, Dad, and Stand-Up Comedian*. He is also the director of the critically-acclaimed documentary *Cultureshock: Chris Rock's Bring the Pain*. Kamau is on the advisory boards of Hollaback! and Donors Choose and is the ACLU Celebrity Ambassador for Racial Justice.

## **Calendar of Events**

### **San Francisco Pride's 2020 Online Celebration**

*Saturday, June 27, 1-9 p.m. and Sunday, June 28, 2-7 p.m.*

*Available online at [sfpride.org](http://sfpride.org)*

A full suite of live and pre-recorded musical performances, greetings from elected officials, and reflections on 50 years of Pride. These 13 hours of programming over two days represent the core of Pride Weekend.

### **Lavender Talks: A Celebration of SF Pride's 2020 Awardees, presented by The Commonwealth Club**

*Thursday, June 25, noon-1 p.m.*

The fourth in a series of moderated panel discussions produced by SF Pride in collaboration with the Commonwealth Club, this discussion is moderated by **Michelle Meow**, a radio host and former president of SF Pride's Board of Directors. Confirmed panelists for the June 25 Lavender Talk include **Mike Wong**, and **Cleve Jones**.

### **Frameline44 Pride Showcase**

*(\*A production of a partner organization of SF Pride, Frameline)*

*Thursday-Sunday, June 25-28*

Frameline, the world's longest-running and largest showcase of queer cinema, is pleased to present the **Frameline44 Pride Showcase** in celebration of the 50th anniversary of San Francisco Pride. Presented in partnership with the **Castro Theatre**, this four-day virtual event features 12 world premieres, one international premiere, three North American Premieres, and two U.S. premieres, including new narrative features, documentaries, and shorts programs, along with special live and pre-recorded intros, Q&A's, and other unique programming to evoke the live festival experience Frameline is known for. Tickets (\$8-\$10 per screening) and passes (starting at \$250, and valid all year) are available now online at [frameline.org](http://frameline.org). To ensure maximum flexibility for patrons, ticket holders will be able to tune in live to each screening or access any film at any time during the four-day event.

### **Trans March 2020**

*(\*A production of a partner organization of SF Pride)*

Friday, June 26, time TBA

Online-only for 2020, full information TBA, at [transmarch.org](http://transmarch.org)

### **Gary Virginia and Donna Sachet's Pride Brunch 2020: Live at home!**

#### **Battle of the Queens Brunch Challenge**

*(\*A production of a partner organization of SF Pride, the Positive Resource Center)*

*Saturday, June 27, noon-1:30 p.m.*

*Ticket information will be available on Tuesday, May 26 at 10 a.m. PDT at [www.prc.org](http://www.prc.org)*

Hosts Gary Virginia and Donna Sachet bring their legendary Pride Brunch into homes across the world as they get saucy and battle it off in the kitchen, competing for the title of Pride Brunch Queen. Ticket holders will enjoy hosted cocktails and a delicious brunch delivered, just in time for the celebration, featuring the San Francisco 50th anniversary Pride Parade Grand Marshals, live entertainment, live auctions, and special surprises. All proceeds from the Pride Brunch support Positive Resource Center's (PRC) integrated legal, social, and health services for those affected by HIV/AIDS, mental health issues, and substance use.

## Global Pride

(\*A production of *Interpride*, a partner organization of SF Pride)

Saturday, June 27 - a 24-hour Livestream

[www.globalpride2020.org](http://www.globalpride2020.org)

## Illuminate the Pink Triangle

(\*A production of a partner organization of SF Pride)

Saturday, June 27, at 8 p.m.

Livestream: [illuminatethepinktriangle.org/join-us/](http://illuminatethepinktriangle.org/join-us/)

For its 25th year, **The Pink Triangle** will shine as a symbol of resilience, hope, and remembrance atop Twin Peaks to celebrate the 50th anniversary of San Francisco Pride, thanks to a special partnership with the nonprofit organization, **illuminate**, the masterminds behind the Bay Lights digital art installation that illuminates the western span of the Bay Bridge. Previously, hundreds of volunteers have gathered on Twin Peaks in San Francisco to assemble The Pink Triangle, a reminder of one of the darkest chapters of human history that is now embraced as a beloved symbol of hope and inclusion. In 2020, a community-driven effort will keep the Pink Triangle shining brighter than ever. Using more than 2,700 LED nodes, which will be installed safely by a small team of volunteers, an acre of glorious pink light will form a vibrant and mesmerizing triangle on Twin Peaks — making it more visible than ever before. The global grand lighting will be streamed live on Saturday, June 27 at nightfall. The illuminated Pink Triangle will light up Twin Peaks for the following three weeks, offering a reminder of resilience, in memory of the HIV/AIDS crisis and the current COVID-19 crisis.

## “Pride 50: Generations of Hope”

Sunday, June 28, 2020, 5-8 p.m. PDT

Broadcast on KBCW 44/Cable 12 in the Bay Area, livestreamed at [kpix.com](http://kpix.com)

This special will feature archival parade footage as well as reflections on the many voices of the annual Pride Parade and the diverse viewpoints of LGBTQ+ communities.

## PRIDE 50 HONOREES

### Community Grand Marshals (6)

- GLBT Historical Society Executive Director **Terry Beswick** (Members' Choice)
- Documentary filmmaker **StormMiguel Florez**
- Photographer; Founder and Project Director of the Bay Area Lesbian Archives, **Lenn Keller** (Lifetime Achievement Grand Marshal)
- **LGBT Asylum Project** (Public Choice, Organization)
- Spahr Center Founder **Rev. Dr. Jane Spahr** (Public Choice)
- CEO of San Francisco Community Health Center **Lance Toma**

### Awardees (3)

- San Francisco AIDS Foundation Founder **Cleve Jones** (Gilbert Baker Pride Founder's Award)
- Author **Gabby Rivera** (José Julio Sarria History Maker Award)

- San Francisco Lesbian/Gay Freedom Band Artistic Director of the Marching & Pep Bands  
**Mike Wong** (Audrey Joseph LGBTQ Entertainment Award)

### **SPONSORS OF SAN FRANCISCO PRIDE 2020**

Principal Sponsor: Kaiser Permanente

Premiere Sponsors: Bud Light Seltzer, Facebook, Genentech, Gilead, KPIX CBS Bay Area, and KBCW 44 Cable 12

Visionary Sponsors: Hilton San Francisco Union Square, Parc55 San Francisco

Supporting Sponsors: The Commonwealth Club, Frameline, the GLBT Historical Society

*For a complete list of San Francisco Pride sponsors, visit [sfpride.org/sponsor/](https://sfpride.org/sponsor/)*

### **ABOUT SAN FRANCISCO PRIDE**

The San Francisco Pride Celebration Committee is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded to produce the San Francisco 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, San Francisco Pride is also a grant-giving organization through its Community Partners Program. Since 1997, San Francisco Pride has granted over \$3 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.

###