

Gay and Transgender Issues in the Workplace

Big Names in Big Business

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We didn't stay up until the end of this year's Academy Awards, and haven't since we lived in San Francisco (where we could do so and still be in bed by 9 p.m.,) but Ray and I were intent on seeing Neil Patrick Harris mesmerize the crowd in the award show's opening number. As must have been true for most women viewers when Kathryn Bigelow became the first woman in history to win the Oscar for Best Director, Ray and I take extra-special pleasure and pride in the accomplishments of other gay people.

That's not so hard to do today, especially in the arts. Think of Lily Tomlin, Ellen DeGeneres, Merv Griffin, Paul Lynd, Tennessee Williams, Cole Porter, Leonard Bernstein, Truman Capote, Rosie O'Donnell, and Stephen Sondheim, to name just a few. Fran Leibovitz once wrote that "...if you removed all of the homosexuals and homosexual influence from what is generally regarded as American culture, you would be pretty much left with Let's Make a Deal." (For those who might not remember, that's the television game show in which audience members dressed in outlandish costumes hoping to be picked to compete for cash and prizes.)

But what about industry? Who are the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people in the corporate world in whom other gay and transgender people can take special pleasure and pride? And, if you removed all of the homosexuals and homosexual influence, and all of the transgender people and their influence, from American industry, what would you be left with? Those are the questions being addressed in an upcoming DVD presentation created for corporate use by the Stonewall Museum (www.stonewall-library.org.)

Many straight and gay business people may be familiar with the names of David Geffen, Malcolm Forbes, Anderson Cooper, Suze Orman, Rachel Maddow, Jim Hormel, Tim Gill, and Allan Gilmour. These well-known and highly respected gay men and lesbian women have left indelible marks on their respective industries. But who else — who besides all of the incredible, inexhaustible worker bees who guide and assist corporations through the company's Employee Resource Group (ERG), who are the gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender people whose names we should know for making significant contributions to the vitality and success of their corporations, as well as to the wellbeing of most Americans?

Please consider the following, among others:

- Bruce Wayne Bastian, the American computer programmer, businessman, philanthropist and social activist who co-founded the WordPerfect Software Company in 1978
- David C. Bohnett, the American philanthropist and technology entrepreneur
- Andy Cohen, the television executive and host, who is currently senior vice president of Production and Programming at the Bravo cable television network

- Alphonse "Buddy" Fletcher, Jr., the African-American philanthropist who had previously been a successful money manager at Kidder, Peabody & Co. and at Bear Sterns, and who later founded his own firm, Fletcher Asset Management
- Brian Graden, the television executive at Fox who commissioned Parker and Stone to develop the series *South Park*
- Chris R. Hughes, who co-founded and served as spokesman for the online social directory Facebook
- Nina Jacobson, a film executive who was president of the Buena Vista Motion Pictures Group for Disney
- Cristina E. Martinez, the CEO of Mad Clik, Inc., a commercial printing company in Texas
- Martine Aliana Rothblatt, the founder and CEO of United Therapeutics
- Margaret Stumpp, the senior vice president at Prudential Financial, and the first openly transsexual person out of over 60,000 employees in the firm. In February 2002, Stumpp transitioned at age 49 from male to female while simultaneously maintaining her position at Prudential Financial, where she functioned as chief investment officer for Quantitative Management Associates, a wholly owned investment management subsidiary of Prudential.
- Kathleen Marie Sullivan, the revered professor at the Stanford Law School and potential U.S. Supreme Court nominee
- Megan Wallent (born Michael Wallent), the executive at Microsoft who worked on Internet Explorer versions 4 through 6, and served as general manager for versions 5.5 and 6
- Robin René Roberts, the co-anchor of ABC's morning show *Good Morning America*
- Richard Hampton Jenrette, one of the founders of the Wall Street firm, Donaldson, Lufkin & Jenrette (DLJ) in 1959
- Lori Fox, who served as a director of Human Resources and business partner for the McDonald's Corporation
- Stephanie Battaglino, the assistant vice president and communications director at New York Life Insurance Company, who successfully transitioned on the job in October of 2005, and is the first transgender person to do so in the 165 year history of the company
- James Scott P. Pignatella, the senior systems engineer at Raytheon. He started his engineering career with Hughes Aircraft Company in 1994 as a new college hire, and completed transition on the job shortly thereafter.
- Michelle Smith, in engineering in Boeing's Advanced Military Aircraft Division of Integrated Defense Systems. She was vice president and outreach director for the St. Louis Gender Foundation, a transgender support organization.
- Jon Stryker, one of the leading global funders of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights. In 2000, Stryker founded the Arcus Foundation whose mission is to achieve social justice that is inclusive of sexual orientation, gender identity, and race, and to ensure conservation and respect of the great apes.
- Judy Dlugacz, who co-founded Olivia.
- Tina Podlodowski, an executive with Microsoft until 1991. She was later executive director for Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Puget Sound, Washington.
- Robert Hanson, the president of Levi Strauss Americas, responsible for leading the company's businesses in the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Latin America

- Kenneth McNeely, the president of AT&T California, responsible for all legislative, regulatory, governmental, and external affairs activities in California
- George Kalogridis, the president of the Disneyland Resort in Anaheim, California who most recently served as chief operating officer for Disneyland Resort Paris
- Susan Arnold, a member of the Board of Directors of the Walt Disney Company who in 2004 became Vice Chairman of Procter & Gamble
- Laura Liswood, managing director, Global Leadership and Diversity for Goldman Sachs
- Virasb Vahidi, the senior vice president for Planning at American Airlines, Fort Worth, Texas
- Sally Susman, the senior vice president of External Affairs and Worldwide Communications for Pfizer Inc., and a member of the company's executive leadership team
- Kevin Brockman, the executive vice president, Global Communications, Disney/ABC Television Group
- Kyle Spainhour, the vice president of Corporate Finance at Motorola Inc.
- Tom Johnson, the vice president and Corporate Controller at the Clorox Company
- Tara Bunch, the vice president of Global Customer Support Operations of Hewlett-Packard
- Marcelo H. Roman, who leads IBM's global learning delivery outsourcing services
- Julie A. Hogan, the vice president for Xerox Sales, Technical Services Delivery, and Professional Services
- Rita Lane, the vice president of Mac Desktop Operations at Apple Inc. Prior to joining Apple, Rita was at Motorola where she served as senior vice president, Supply Chain and CPO.
- Keith Powell, the COO/CFO, of Kodak Gallery in the San Francisco Bay area
- Todd Sears, the director of Diversity and Inclusion at Credit Suisse
- Lynn Conway, the famed transsexual pioneer of microelectronics chip design whose innovations during the 1970s at the Xerox Palo Alto Research Center (PARC) have impacted chip design worldwide. Many high-tech companies and computing methods have foundations in her work.

If we personally question the contributions these openly gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender business people have made to their respective corporations, we can always ask WordPerfect, NBC Universal, Kidder Peabody, Bear Sterns, Quark, Fox, Facebook, Disney, United Therapeutics, Prudential, Stanford, Microsoft, ABC, CNBC, CNN, Hormel, Ford, Forbes, DLJ, McDonald's, New York Life, Raytheon, Boeing, Oracle, Olivia, BP, Levi Strauss, AT&T, Goldman Sachs, Credit Suisse, American Airlines, Pfizer, Motorola, IBM, Xerox, Clorox, Apple, and Kodak who they take special pleasure and pride in.