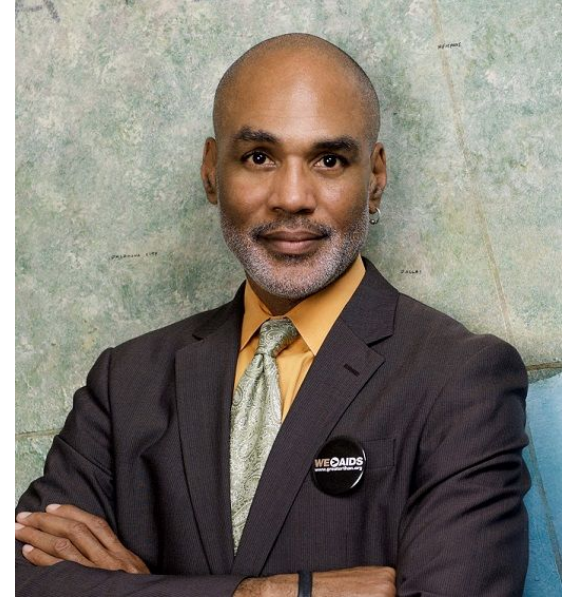


Phill Wilson

Phill Wilson was born on April 22, 1956 in Chicago, Illinois. Now age 65, he is the openly gay Director of Policy and Planning for the AIDS project in Los Angeles. Wilson became a civil and sexual rights activist after he and his partner, Chris Brownlie, were diagnosed with HIV in the early 1980s. This was a point in American history when AIDS, a newly discovered diagnosis, was believed to only affect the gay populous. Wilson was determined to rally support for all Black men affected by this disease. He moved to LA in 1982, joining the National Association of Black and White Men Together. Later that decade, in '89, tragedy struck when his partner died of HIV. Determined to ensure his death was not in vain, Wilson then joined the AIDS project. Later, in 1999, after a long hiatus from work, he founded the Black AIDS Institute, a think tank of which he became CEO. After several years of hard work, he stepped down in 2018, and was replaced by Raniyah Copeland.

Painting by Lina Abid & Max Bulera

Research by Charles Ernst



Evan Adams

Evan Adams (full name Evan Tesla Adams) was born November 15, 1966 in the Sliammon First Nation, British Columbia. Adams now enjoys a very successful acting career. He has starred in several prominent Canadian television shows, including *The Beachcombers*, *Da Vinci's City Hall*, and *The L Word*. He also appeared in several plays (*Dreams of Ship*, *Janice's Christmas*, etc.) and films (*Indian Horse*, *Kayak to Klemtu*, among others). Within America, Adams won an Independent Spirit Award for Best Debut Performance for his role in the film *Smoke Signals*, as well as a Los Angeles Outfest award for his role in *Fancydancing*. Adams has also worked extensively with health programs for Indigenous people in Canada, including alcohol and drug abuse treatment and HIV/AIDS education. In 2007, Adams became the first ever Indigenous Health Physician Advisor for British Columbia, in addition to the first gay one.

Painting by Evelyn Slaman-Wiles

Research by Charles Ernst



Marsha P. Johnson

Marsha P. Johnson was born August 24, 1945, under the name of their father, Malcolm Michaels. As early as the age of five, they began wearing dresses and quickly separated from the gender "norms" their parents enforced. However, Johnson had to stop this after a group of boys who lived nearby began to harass them. Their parents also reportedly disliked the idea of their child being a member of the LGBTQ population. After graduating from high school, Johnson changed their name, sarcastically telling people the P. stood for "Pay it no mind".. They became an activist and drag queen, highlighting aspects of the masculine and feminine when they performed. They were also an active participant in the Stonewall riots. Sadly, Johnson died under mysterious circumstances at the age of 46.

Painting by Elliot Zolli

Research by Charles Ernst



Jewelle Gomez

Jewelle Gomez was born in Boston, Massachusetts, and raised by her great-grandmother, Grace. Grace was born to an African-American mother and loway Indigenous father. As an adult, Gomez became involved in activist writing. She became a member of *Conditions*, a lesbian activist magazine, and proceeded to author *The Gilda Stories*, a vampire novel with a lesbian vampiress as the heroine. *The Gilda Stories* was Gomez's most acclaimed work, becoming a play and winning a double Lambda Literary Award. Later, Gomez's writing began to show her Indigenous roots. Her writing appears in *Dark Matter* (the first anthology of Black speculative fiction) and *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*. Gomez's activism combined gender and sexual rights with civil rights, and she became a prominent member of the Astraea Lesbian Foundation and the Open Meadows Foundation, both of which are committed to women's rights. Gomez and her partner, Dr. Diane Sabin, were two of those who sued for the right to legal marriage in California. Gomez now works at the Horizons Foundation, the oldest LGBTQ owned and operated business in America.

Painting by Sondra Carlson

Research by Charles Ernst

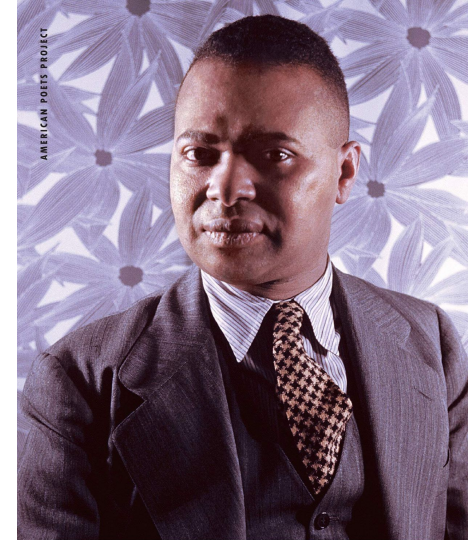


Countee Cullen

Countee Cullen was born Countee LeRoy Porter on May 30, 1903. At 15, he was adopted by the Reverend Frederick A. Cullen and his wife Carolyn, taking Cullen's last name. Cullen was quickly revealed to be very bright. Especially, Cullen showed a knack for poetry, and began writing after he enrolled in the DeWitt Clinton High School. Countee Cullen later won second place in the Witter Bynner undergraduate poetry contest with his college poem "The Ballad of the Brown Girl." He would enroll in this contest twice more, winning once. After a successful school career, he enrolled in Harvard to pursue a Master's in English. He continued to write poetry celebrating Black livelihood and resisting the effects of racism. His writings were also often spiritual, inspired in part by his childhood. Between 1928 and 1934, Cullen produced four entire volumes of poetry. Cullen is largely recognized as the epicenter of the Harlem Renaissance. From 1934 until his death in 1946, Cullen taught at the Frederick Douglass Junior High School, writing mainly for the theater.

Painting by Daguerre & Wynter Feiner

Research by Charles Ernst



Frenchie Davis

Frenchie Davis, a bisexual soul, electronica, and pop singer, was born in Los Angeles on May 7, 1949. Davis appeared on *American Idol* during its second season, but was disqualified after revealing pictures of her surfaced. Four years later, the same thing befell white contender Antonella Barba, but she was not disqualified. This raised many questions about race discrimination in the American contest. Post-*Idol*, Davis sang in the Broadway musical *Rent*, the staple of her career. She also appeared in other musicals, such as *Ain't Misbehavin'* and the fairy godmother in the musical adaptation of *Cinderella*. She later became part of "The Elite 8": the finalists in the TV show *The Voice*. After *The Voice*, Davis began to record albums of her own, such as "Love's Got a Hold on Me." She continues to speak out for the black and LGBTQ+ community.

Painting by Amelia Mani & Kaylee Perla

Research by Charles Ernst



James Baldwin

James Baldwin, born in New York City in 1924, was a well known writer and activist of the twentieth century. As the oldest child of eight, Baldwin worked part-time from a very early age. His childhood was shaped by the effects of racism in his neighborhood. Joining public school at the age of five under the city's first Black principal, Baldwin's aptitude for writing soon emerged. He wrote his first essay ("Harlem-Then and Now") for *The Douglass Pilot* newspaper when he joined high school. During this time, Baldwin began to realize his attraction toward other males beginning to emerge. After making some excellent connections in Greenwich Village and Paris, Baldwin began his writing career. While in Paris, he would publish several novels, essays, and critiques, such as *Go Tell it On the Mountain* and *Giovanni's Room*. He then returned to America, determined to write for the growing anti-racist movement. Baldwin, after a very successful life, died of natural causes at 63.

Painting by Antonio Gavin

Research by Charles Ernst



Stormè DeLarverie

Stormè DeLarverie was born in 1920 to an African American mother and a white father. She grew up in a society of harassment, facing attacks against her race and sexuality. She married a dancer named Diana in her 30s, and lived with her for 25 years until Diana's death in the 1970s. Her deceased partner continued to be an inspiration for DeLarverie. DeLarverie is often labeled as the spark for the Stonewall riots. A woman (who was very likely DeLarverie) was escorted by police officers through the crowd at Stonewall, fighting back and nearly escaping repeatedly, all the while shouting at the audience to "do something." After she was finally captured, the crowd went berserk and the rioting began. Additionally, DeLarverie is known as the progenitor of gender-nonconforming fashion, and often encouraged non-male viewers to adopt traditionally male clothing as street wear. After Stonewall, DeLarverie continued activism for the LGBTQ+ community, often patrolling New York City streets on the lookout for harassment and performing at benefits for impoverished women and children. She died of natural causes at the age of 93.

Painting by Beena Reiter & Lola Ronning

Research by Charles Ernst



Bayard Rustin

Bayard Rustin, born 1912, was an extremely influential activist both for the black and the gay community. Rustin was raised by his grandmother (a Quaker) and grandfather. In college, Rustin became very involved with activism of the time; joining several African American fraternities and vouching for those who had been improperly prosecuted. Rustin had a very good singing voice, which earned him a place in a few musicals and nightclubs. Later in life, he joined the Socialist Party of Norman Thomas, which was actively working to schedule a march on Washington for civil rights, but this quickly dissipated. Over the next several years, he continued his work in activism, speaking out openly against bus segregation and helping found CORE (the Congress of Racial Equality) Rustin was later jailed for refusing military service, and served several more sentences for his sexuality and his activism. Later, Rustin became an active advisor for the then-minister Martin Luther King, Jr. Later, he would be influential in the organization of the March on Washington. Over his entire life, Rustin (a Quaker himself) was heavily involved in the civil rights movement, also speaking out in favor of gay rights. He died of natural causes in 1987.

Painting by Lili Sass-Zaragoza

Research by Charles Ernst



Audre Lorde

Audre Lorde was born in 1934 to two Caribbean immigrants. As her parents were struggling with reforming their business following the Great Depression, Lorde's relationship with them was minimal. She began to see poetry as a way to get her ideas out and to communicate from a very young age. At twelve, she began writing poetry as a way to connect with others who felt like outcasts. Lorde published her first poem in the magazine *Seventeen* after attending high school. After graduating, she attended university at Mexico, and established her identity as a poet and as a lesbian. She wrote her first book, *Cables to Rage*, following a time in Greenwich Village where she realized the need for LGBTQ and civil rights activism in the poetry she wrote. Lorde then proceeded to teach English at Lehman College and the John Jay College of Criminal Justice for two years. In 1980, Lorde co-founded *Kitchen Table*, the first publisher exclusively for Black women. In the years to come, Lorde continued to fund several other corporations dedicated to supporting women and the BIPoC community.

She would later spend time supporting the Black community. A self-described "lesbian, mother, warrior, poet," Lorde used poetry and prose to get these messages across, proving she fit in no self-defined box and suggesting that none of us really do.

Lorde would produce many volumes of poetry and prose in her life, such as *Black Unicorn* and *Sister Outsider*, and appeared in a film highlighting her time in Berlin.



Painting by Solveigh Bratulich & Olive Caritas

Research by Charles Ernst

Storme Webber

Storme Webber was born in 1959 to a Black Choctaw father and Alutiiq mother. Webber was largely raised by their Alaskan Alutiiq grandmother, who they credit for starting them on “the road of life.” It was their grandmother who first taught Webber how to appreciate music. Entering the foster care system at eleven years old, Webber’s natural aptitude for academic and creative arts earned them a full-time scholarship at Lakeside School. Webber came out as lesbian at the age of sixteen, following in their mother’s footsteps. After earning an MFA in Intermediate Arts at Goddard College in Vermont, they moved to NYC in the 1980s, joining the rising art, performance, and poetry scene. Webber proceeded to produce several multimedia anthologies and appear in many films, such as *Venus Boyz* and *Living Two-Spirit*. They established the company Voices Rising: Northwest LGBTQ Artists of Color as a safe space for LGBTQ artists in Seattle to present their works and brainstorm ways to combat systems of marginalisation in our country.

Painting by Sondra Carlson

Research by Charles Ernst

