


# QTIPOC in History

(Queer Trans  
Intersex People  
of Colour)



 *No pride for  
some of us  
without liberation  
for all of us."*

Marsha P. Johnson

## Introduction

LGBT+ History Month has been celebrated across the UK since February 2005.

Each year the event has become bigger and better, and we've no doubt that this year's will be the best yet with LGBT+ groups and communities running events, campaigns and highlighting the trailblazing QTIPOC (Queer Trans Intersex People of Colour) whose footsteps we follow.

Unfortunately, LGBT+ people are all too often erased from the history books. This couldn't be truer of QTIPOC throughout history. QTIPOC people have a long and vibrant history in the LGBT+ community, often having been at the forefront of the ongoing struggle for equal rights and dignity.

Racism and LGBT+phobia combined mean that QTIPOC achievements are regularly overlooked not recorded, honoured or recognised. It is vital that we celebrate the role these people played in history and making sure their stories aren't left out of the history books.

The NUS LGBT+ campaign believes that these exceptional people should be celebrated as part of history month, and that's why we've produced this briefing.

It contains a useful guide to being more inclusive of QTIPOC in your LGBT+ history month activities, a list of ten QTIPOC of history - ranging from activists and advocates to artists and actresses. We've also included some top tips on how to use this information, as well as links to other organisations that can offer support.

LGBT+ History Month is our opportunity to celebrate our past, contemplate our present and to look towards a more diverse and inclusive future. We hope you will join us in celebrating the amazing achievements of QTIPOC of history.

Wishing you a great LGBT+ History Month!

Melantha Chittenden  
LGBT+ Officer (Womens Place)



## Audre Lorde



***"There is no such thing as a single issue struggle because we do not live single issue lives"***

Born in New York in 1934, Lorde was a Caribbean American writer and activist for civil rights and feminist movements. The youngest of three daughters, Lorde grew up in Harlem during the Great Depression. She graduated from Hunter College in 1959, with a Bachelors degree, later earning a Masters degree from Columbia University in Library Science in 1961.

Her work focuses on the female experience, race and sexuality. Whilst her advocacy work centered on advocating for the rights of women of colour, who's experiences were being neglected by the mainstream women's movement. In

the last year of her life, Lorde was awarded the poet laureate of New York before she died of breast cancer. However, her legacy lies on in the Audre Lorde Project, an LGBT+ organization in New York that focusses on social and economic justice.

## Laverne Cox

***"It is revolutionary for any trans person to choose to be seen and visible in a world that tells us we should not exist."***

Cox remains to this day one of the most prominent transgender rights activists globally. At only 32 Cox has already become a trailblazer for the trans community. From being the first trans person nominated for an Emmy to being the first out trans person to be on the cover on Time magazine. Cox also appeared in a documentary style series named "Laverne Cox: The T Word" in which she interviewed young trans people about their journeys. Her impact and prominence in the media has led to a growing conversation around trans people, particularly trans people of colour and she remains an activist for the community, challenging ignorance and bigotry in everything she does.



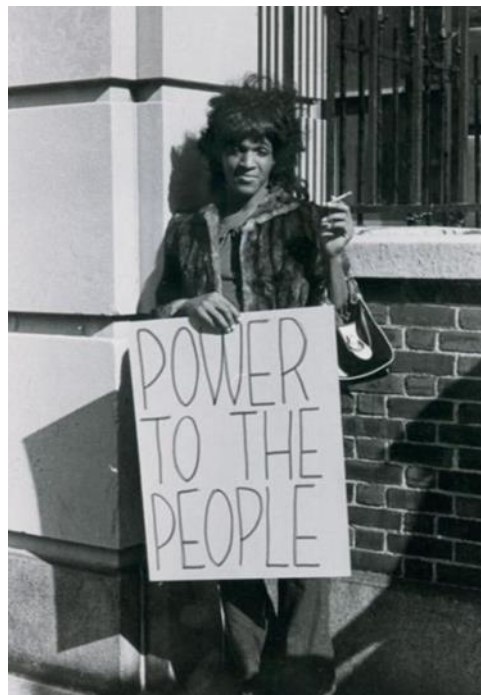


## **Marsha P. Johnson**

***"No pride for some of us without liberation for all of us"***

Born and raised in New Jersey, Johnson relocated to Manhattan in 1966 where she would begin mentoring Sylvia Rivera who would go on to also become an activist for the trans community.

Marsha is known for having thrown the first brick at the Stonewall riots in 1969. However, her activism stretched much further than this, in the early 1970s, she co-founded the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) with Rivera in order to help young homeless trans women. Even before this, Johnson was known to be the surrogate mother to the drag queens, trans women and homeless kids living on Christopher Street Johnson was also heavily involved in AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP), a direct action advocacy group working to bring about legislation, medical research and treatment in order to bring an end to the AIDS crisis.



## **Dr. Frank Mugisha**

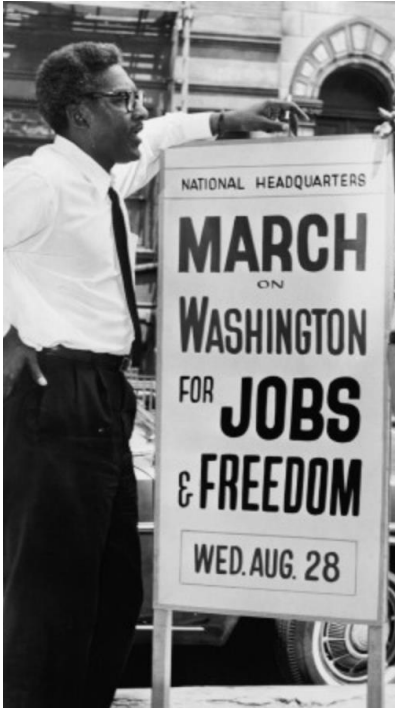
***"We are driven by the conviction that we are part of a larger story of global human rights, and we will not give up until we have built the future we all deserve"***



Born in Kampala, Uganda, to a strict Catholic family, Mugisha has become a prominent activist for LGBT+ Ugandans. In 2004, whilst still studying at University, Mugisha founded Icebreakers Uganda, a support network for LGBT+ Ugandans. This later joined with seventeen other LGBT+ rights organisations based in Uganda, to create an umbrella organization called Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG), of which Mugisha is now Executive Director. As part of this role he successfully sued *Rolling Stone* a tabloid which published the names of 100 LGBT+ Ugandans and encouraged that they be killed. He also attempted to sue Scott Lively, well known American evangelist, for his input into Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Bill.

For his contributions to LGBT+ activism Mugisha was named by #POWER10: among the most influential black LGBTQ people in 2014 and was honoured by the UN Secretary General. He also won the Thorolf Rafto Memorial Prize 2011 and the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award.

## **Bayard Rustin**



***"Let us be enraged about injustice, but let us not be destroyed by it"***

Rustin began his activism shortly after he graduated from College and moved to Harlem, in 1937. His early activism was centred around black liberation during the years of the Civil Rights Movement. Despite being openly gay at a time when homosexuality was criminalized Rustin became Martin Luther King's Chief strategist after educating him in the nonviolent protest principles established by Gandhi in South Africa. During his time as a key player in the Civil Rights Movement Rustin rallied activists, lobbied politicians and organized demonstrations, the most famous of which was the 1963 March on Washington.

Although Rustin achieved many great things and was a key player during the Civil Rights Movement his sexuality did pose some problems as many of the black leaders of the time feared that his sexuality may compromise the movement. For this reason it would take many years before Rustin was recognized for his important role in the Civil Rights Movement.

## **Frida Kahlo**

***"At the end of the day, we can endure much more than we think we can"***

Kahlo's life began and ended in Mexico city, in her home, famously known as "*La Casa Azul*". She led a solitary life due to lifelong health problems from an accident. This isolation inspired many of her paintings, a number of which were self-portraits as she said "I paint myself because I am so often alone". Mexican culture and tradition are important in her work, which is sometimes characterized as folk art. Her work has been celebrated internationally for its uncompromising depiction of the female experience and form.

Since her death in 1954, her fame has only grown, especially with the growth of the feminist movement of the 1970s which led to renewed interest in her. While the 1983 book "*a Biography of Frida Kahlo*" by Herrera also stirred up interest in her life and work. Her blue house or "*La Casa Azul*" was opened as a public museum in 1958 and remains open to this day.



## Alice Walker

***"The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any"***

Walker is a highly acclaimed author, most commonly known for *"The Colour Purple"*, for which she received a Pulitzer Prize and was the first African American to do so. She was also the recipient of the Rosenthal Foundation award and an American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters award for *"In Love and Trouble"*.



Alongside this work she was also involved in the Civil Rights Movement, having walked in the 1963 March on Washington and volunteered to register black voters in Georgia and Mississippi. At this time Walker was simultaneously involved in the emerging feminist movement, in which she battled to create a space for black women. Due to the whiteness of the mainstream feminist movement, Walker created a feminist theory that centered around black women called 'womanism', which identified and assessed oppression based on the racism and classism that African American women were experiencing and still do to this day.

## Barbara Jordan

***"Education remains the key to both economic and political empowerment."***



Born in Houston, Texas in 1936, Jordan became the third African American woman to be licensed to practice law in Texas. She began practicing in Houston upon graduating from Texas Southern University and getting her LL.B. from Boston University School of Law.

Barbara Jordan became the first African American woman elected to Congress after defeating Republican Congressman Paul Merritt. During her time in Congress she was a sponsor on several pieces of major legislation such as; the Voting Rights Act of 1975 and the Equal Rights Amendment in

1977. She also gave the keynote at the Democratic National Convention in 1976 and was invited to fellow Texan President Lyndon B Johnson to the White House to preview his 1967 Civil Rights Agenda. Towards the end of her life she was appointed to the Commission on Immigration Reform by President Bill Clinton and in 1994 she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

## Josephine Baker

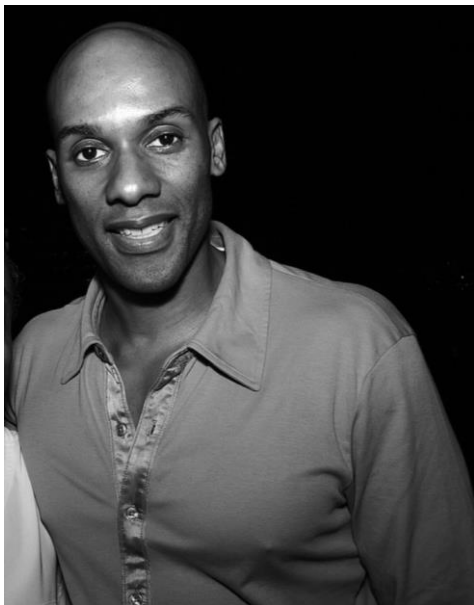
***"I'm not intimidated by anyone. Everyone is made with two arms, two legs, a stomach and a head. Just think about that."***

Born in St Louis, Missouri on 3 June 1906 Baker dropped out of school at 12 and began dancing on the street for handouts. Despite these humble beginnings Baker went on to be a world famous entertainer, and was the first African American woman to star in a major motion picture. Although the start of Baker's career was rocky due to the severe racism and discrimination she faced in the US when she moved to Paris in 1925 she became a star.

She used this fame to gather intelligence for the French Resistance during the Nazi Occupation by carrying sensitive documents to neutral countries and allied occupied areas. For her bravery Baker became the first American-born woman to receive the Croix de Guerre.



## Keith Boykin



***"At the end of the day it doesn't matter which group is most oppressed or whether they are identically oppressed, what matters is that no group be oppressed"***

Keith Boykin was born in St Louis, Missouri in 1965. He was accepted into Harvard Law School in 1989, from which he graduated in 1992. During his time at Harvard he was involved in numerous campus political causes including the Coalition for Civil Rights, a student group dedicated to increasing the diversity of faculty.

Boykin later went on to become director of specialty media for President Bill Clinton, making him the highest ranking openly gay person in the Clinton administration White House. Within this role Boykin organized the nation's first meeting between gay and lesbian leaders and a US President in 1993. He also founded the National Black Justice Coalition which is now the largest African American LGBT+ rights group in the US.



## **Celebrating QTIPOC of history**

### **Information and tips on how to promote and celebrate QTIPOC of history.**

This section will give you tips as to how you can use this information and encourage your Students' Union and LGBT+ society to celebrate and promote QTIPOC voices.

#### Top tips on how to highlight QTIPOC of history:

- Put on an event and invite one or more QTIPOC who have achieved success and acclaim in their careers or activism. Ask them to come and speak about their achievements and what needs to be done to ensure all QTIPOC have equal opportunities to achieve success in their activism and careers.
- Encourage QTIPOC to participate in the activities that your union LGBT+ campaigns have to offer, such as your LGBT+ society.
- Talk to other societies in your union that may have QTIPOC members such as cultural societies and see if you could hold a joint event with them and the LGBT+ society
- Make sure QTIPOC have access to this briefing and other publications we have produced that encourage LGBT+ activism and offer support and guidance to LGBT+ Students
- Speak to QTIPOC in your institution about what would they like to see happen during LGBT+ History Month and what they would like to happen in your union over the course of the year.
- Plan events and forge relationships with other clubs and societies about what they are doing during LGBT+ History Month for QTIPOC and offer support to them to achieve their chosen activities during this time.
- Put on an event to celebrate QTIPOC achievements and successes, both from history and now. Highlight the importance of inclusivity and why QTIPOC are an integral part of your LGBT+ campaigns.
- Invite QTIPOC from your institution to put on an event where they can display some of their own achievements or share their talents with other people from your institution. This could be anything from displaying artwork, to reading poetry to singing, to giving a talk about their academic achievements.
- Contact Local and National LGBT Groups and find out what sort of activities and information they have available for QTIPOC and tap into their services. You can do this by encouraging QTIPOC to attend external events, making sure information from these organisations is available in your union and inviting these organisations to your union to deliver talks and workshops on what they do and how they support QTIPOC.
- Contact specific QTIPOC local or regional groups such as Rainbow Noir in Manchester to see if you can hold any joint events or invite them to speak at your union on QTIPOC issues.
- Showcase QTIPOC figures from your region. You could put together a presentation and/or a workshop to highlight these people and follow it up with a film or reading about or featuring one of the people. If they're available you could ask them to come and speak about their lived experiences as a QTIPOC.
- Encourage lecturers and tutors to include QTIPOC in the curriculum if possible.
- During LGBT+ History Month ask your students' union and/or your institution for some space so that you can make a display about QTIPOC, both from History and today. Here are some posters with QTIPOC people of history you could download and use:



In events you hold throughout the year you should be thinking about ways to encourage QTIPOC to attend. Representation really helps with this, how about introducing a QTIPOC representative onto your committee?

### **Useful organisations**

Here are the contact details of other organisations that create safe spaces for QTIPOC.

#### **Imaan**

This group, founded in 1999 in London is the UK's biggest LGBT+ Muslim group.

159 Mile End Road

London E1 4AQ

e: [imaanlgbtq@gmail.com](mailto:imaanlgbtq@gmail.com)

w: <https://imaanlondon.wordpress.com>

#### **KeshetUK**

This group works to promote equality and diversity, advance education and eliminate discrimination in relation to LGBT+ Jews within the Jewish and wider community.

e: [info@keshetuk.org](mailto:info@keshetuk.org)

w: <http://www.keshetuk.org>

#### **Sarbat**

This is a social and support group for LGBT+ defining Sikhs

w: <http://www.sarbat.net>

#### **Naz Project London**

Naz are a London based organisation who encourage QTIPOC people to get tested for HIV, provide the facilities where QTIPOC can be tested and the support afterwards.

e: [naz@naz.org.uk](mailto:naz@naz.org.uk)

w: <http://naz.org.uk>

#### **UK Black Pride**

UK Black Pride hold an annual event as a celebration of black pride. They also organise a variety of activities throughout the year in and around the UK.

e: [info@ukblackpride.org.uk](mailto:info@ukblackpride.org.uk)

w: <http://ukblackpride.org.uk>