



LGBTQ+ Activists

Sonia | LGBT+ Month | 10/02/21

Storme DeLarverie (1920-2014)



Storme DeLarverie was a lesbian, drag performer and a lifelong activist from the United States. It's widely believed that she started the scuffle with the police resulting in the Stonewall Uprising in New York City, which ignited an international gay rights movement.

"it was a rebellion, it was an uprising, it was a civil rights disobedience – it wasn't no damn riot."

The uprising transformed her, making her become a fierce activist and protector of the LGBT+ community. DeLarverie had a state gun permit, and was known to patrol the neighbourhoods around lesbian bars looking for intolerance or, as she described it, "ugliness" against her community.



1 - Storme's gender fluid dress inspired a lot of other lesbians of the time to begin wearing traditionally masculine clothing as well

Beyond her LGBTQ activism, DeLarverie also organized and performed at fundraisers for women who suffered from domestic violence and their children.

A remarkable woman with a remarkable story

Martha P. Johnson (1945-1992)



Martha P. Johnson was an outspoken transgender rights activist and is reported to be one of the central figures of the historic Stonewall uprising of 1969.

"As long as my people don't have their rights across America, there's no reason for celebration."

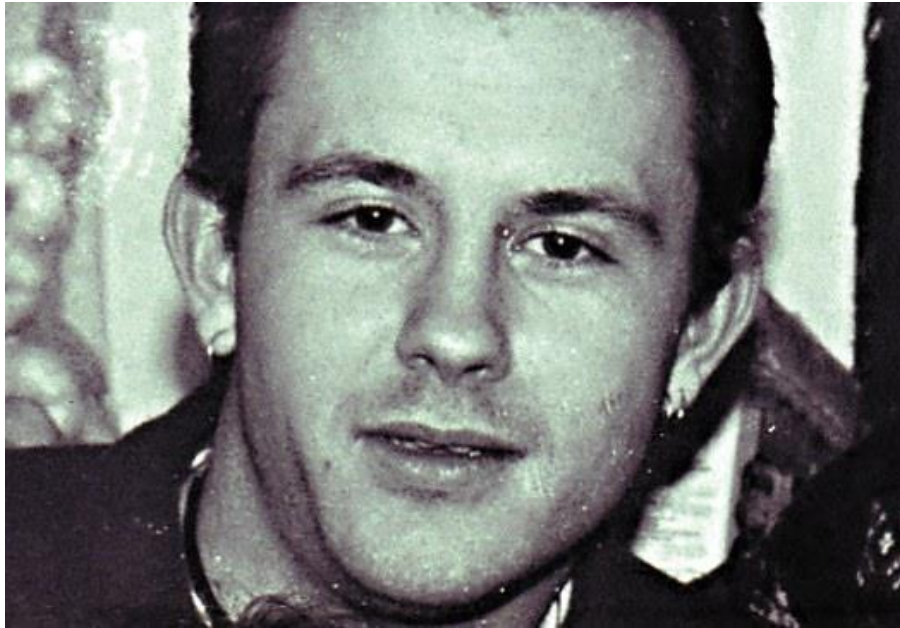
Along with fellow trans activist Sylvia Rivera, Johnson helped form Street Transgender Action Revolutionaries (STAR), a radical political organization that provided housing and other forms of support to homeless queer youth and sex workers in Manhattan.



2 - An eccentric woman known for her outlandish hats and glamorous jewelery, she was fearless and bold.

Her forthright nature and enduring strength led her to speak out against injustices. She is a prevalent part of history and an inspiration for generations to come.

Mark Ashton (1960-1987)



Mark Ashton was British gay rights activist and the co found of LGSM (the Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners support group). He was also a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain.

"He was an Irishman, a communist, an agitator, a lapsed Catholic who still went to mass very occasionally. He was very charismatic. His communism governed everything he did. He spent a couple of months in Bangladesh in '82 and the poverty really politicised him. I miss him terribly. People tell me I didn't smile for three months after he died." - Chris Birch, his friend

Unfortunately, Ashton died from HIV related illnesses at the age of 26, but he is remembered well and many funds, trusts and memorials have been opened in his name.



In 2017, on what would have been Ashton's 57th birthday, a blue plaque was unveiled in his honour above the Gay's The Word bookshop in Marchmont Street, London, the site where LGSM met and held meetings during the miners' strike.

Sonal Giani



Sonal Giani is an Indian LGBT activist and filmmaker. She is known for her pioneering work in lesbian and bisexual women's issues as well as LGBTQ youth work.

'When you are no longer ashamed, the only thing left is to be proud.'

Giani cofounded one of India's largest LGBT youth initiatives called 'Yaariyan' (translates to Friendship) as well as 'Umang' a Mumbai based youth initiative.



Sonal focuses on trying to break the culture of outcasting or discriminating against anyone different, which is widespread within India. She has also worked on human rights issues and crisis handling of the queer community for about 8 years previously when she was an Advocacy Manager at The Humsafar Trust, including Section 377 related violations (which resulted in the legalisation of being LGBT+)

Amazin Le Thi



Amazin Le Thi is an HIV advocate, producer, director and a Global Ambassador. As well as this, she is a competitive bodybuilder and the founder of the Amazin Le Thi Foundation which serves homeless LGBT youth and children living with HIV.

'It is a revolutionary act when you see a reflection of yourself in someone else's story; its impact allows us to realise we are not alone and encourages us to celebrate all forms of diversity and inclusion.'

As a young adult, Le Thi was homeless and found her mental and physical health was deteriorating and her passion for sports kept her going.



In 2016, GLAAD named Amazin one of only seven Asian LGBTQ activists accelerating equality globally along with becoming the first openly out Asian athlete to appear in the Stonewall UK 'Rainbow Laces Campaign' in 2018.

Endnotes

There are a vast amount of amazing, inspiring activists out there and I only briefly touch on a few so I have some sources that you can look into if you wish to learn more about this incredible movement

[The real-life triumphs of the gay communist behind hit movie Pride | UK news | The Guardian](#)

[A QUEER HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES](#) by Michael Bronski

[Equal Ever After: The fight for same-sex marriage – and how I made it happen](#) by Lynne Featherstone

[The Stonewall uprising: 50 years of LGBT history](#)

[Pride 2019: Seven people who changed LGBT+ history - BBC Three](#)

[15 LGBTQ Activists of the Past and Present You Should Know \(globalcitizen.org\)](#)