

Preservation  
Report

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**BLAQ**LGBT  
HISTORY

BlaqLGBT History is a storytelling platform honoring the lives, legacies, and love of Black queer people in Washington, DC. We exist to preserve the past, celebrate the present, and protect our future.





## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	6
Executive Summary.....	7
Building This Legacy for Blaq Futures.....	10
Background.....	11
Community Engagement.....	14
Organizing.....	20
AIDS Crisis.....	28
Black Spaces, Places & Scenes.....	33
Black Pride.....	38
Black Trans Leadership.....	44
Black Military & Veterans Experience.....	50
Appendix I: Education Curriculum.....	54
Grades 8-12 Common Core Social Studies Standards Alignment.....	54
Grade 8: Action Civics.....	55
District of Columbia History and Government.....	57
Grade 8: Action Civics.....	59
World History II.....	61
US History II.....	63
District of Columbia History and Government.....	65



## Acknowledgements

### **Message from Mayor Muriel Bowser**

Washington, D.C. is proud to lead as one of the most culturally diverse and inclusive cities in the world. Our strength lies in our people, the neighbors who have fought for justice, equality, and dignity, and who have shaped the story of our city. This Black LGBTQIA+ History Report is a testament to the resilience, brilliance, and leadership that define our community. As we celebrate and reflect, let us continue building a city where every resident—regardless of race, gender identity, or sexual orientation—can thrive.

### **Message from Councilmember Zachary Parker, Ward 5**

The District's Black LGBTQIA+ communities have contributed to the cultural, political, and social fabric of our city for generations. This report legislated by the Black LGBTQ History Preservation Establishment Amendment Act of 2024 ensures these stories are documented, honored, and shared, not just as history but as living contributions that continue to inform our city's future. This Black LGBTQIA+ History Report is about visibility, dignity, and ensuring that Black LGBTQIA+ voices remain central to D.C.'s narrative.

### **Message from Deputy Chief of Staff Steven Walker**

It is an honor to contribute to this important work. The Black LGBTQIA+ community has been at the forefront of so many struggles and triumphs that define our nation's progress. This report not only preserves that history but also uplifts the voices and legacies of those who have too often been overlooked. I am proud to be alongside our community in celebrating this milestone, and grateful to everyone who worked on this project forward.

### **Message from Japer Bowles, Director of the Mayor's Office of LGBTQ Affairs**

Bringing this project to life has been one of the greatest honors of my time in the District. The Black LGBTQIA+ History Report reflects the power of storytelling, resilience, and community leadership. Thank you to my dedicated team, our grantees, and our community partners who worked tirelessly to ensure this history is recorded and celebrated for generations to come. Together, we are not only preserving history — we are building a legacy of pride, justice, and belonging.

### **Message from Rayceen Pendarvis, Black LGBTQIA History Committee Member**

As someone who has lived, loved, organized, and created in D.C.'s Black LGBTQIA+ communities for decades, I know how powerful it is to see our stories honored. This report is about joy, survival, creativity, and truth. It makes sure our elders are remembered, our youth are affirmed, and our full humanity is never erased. Preserving Black LGBTQIA+ history is an act of love and a gift to generations of children who are and will continue making history.

## Executive Summary



Washington, D.C. has long been a center of Black LGBTQIA+ history, culture, and advocacy. This report documents this history and its enduring legacy, highlighting the resilience, creativity, and leadership of Black LGBTQIA+ communities that have shaped local life and national movements. From the roots of the Black Pride movement to trans leadership and the community response to the AIDS crisis, this history demonstrates how Black LGBTQIA+ Washingtonians transformed struggle into movement and laid the foundation for today's ongoing fight for equity and visibility.

### **Organizing**

Black LGBTQIA+ organizing in D.C. emerged from the overlap of the Civil Rights Movement and early queer activism, as Black residents built social, spiritual, and political spaces where they could exist safely and with dignity. Community networks, nightlife, and mutual aid efforts became essential supports, later expanding into major organizing moments such as the Third World Lesbian and Gay Conference and pioneering LGBTQIA+ student and political groups. During the HIV/AIDS crisis, activists mobilized for care and visibility, helping shape the foundations of D.C. Black Pride and long-term archival and advocacy work.

### **The AIDS Crisis and Resilience**

The AIDS epidemic disproportionately devastated Black LGBTQIA+ Washingtonians, highlighting structural inequities in healthcare, housing, and other social services. Yet it also inspired a wave of community-led care and advocacy. Leaders such as Dr. Melvin Boozer, A. Cornelius Baker, and Essex Hemphill elevated Black queer voices nationally, while local organizations like the Inner-City AIDS Network, Us Helping Us, Whitman-

Walker, and The Brotherhood provided testing, education, and critical support. Cultural memory was preserved in funeral programs, underground publications like *Malebox!*, and the AIDS Memorial Quilt. Out of this crisis, resilience emerged and an enduring legacy: community-led responses that shaped today's public health infrastructure and affirmed D.C. as a center of Black LGBTQIA+ activism.

### **The Black Pride Movement**

The District of Columbia is the birthplace of Black Pride, grounded in a long history of intersectional advocacy and cultural organizing. Beginning with figures like William Dorsey Swann—the first self-identified drag queen—Black LGBTQIA+ Washingtonians turned homes, churches, and clubs into political and cultural hubs of pride. Organizations such as the D.C. Coalition of Black Gays and Sapphire Sapphos demanded racial and gender justice, while the 1979 Third World Lesbian and Gay Conference at Howard University amplified Black queer voices nationally. These cultural and political traditions culminated in the founding of D.C. Black Pride in 1991, the first of its kind in the nation and a model for Black Pride celebrations worldwide. Today, oral histories and archival work ensure this legacy remains accessible for future generations.

### **Black Trans Leadership**

Black trans and gender-nonconforming Washingtonians have shaped D.C.'s culture, arts, and advocacy for decades. Community leaders like Rayceen Pendarvis, Maxine Blue, Donnell Robinson, and Charles Comedy built chosen families through drag, ballroom, and nightlife, while advocates such as Earline Budd and SaVanna Wanzer fought systemic discrimination and created platforms for trans pride, education, and visibility. The 1995 death of Tyra Hunter exposed healthcare inequities, spurring reforms and new resources like the Tyra Hunter Drop-In Center. Despite violence, housing insecurity, and gaps in healthcare access, Black trans Washingtonians continue to build resilience through cultural production, community services, and grassroots advocacy.

### **Black Military & Veterans Experience**

Washington, D.C. has long been shaped by its deep connections to the military, federal agencies, and the many veterans who live and work in the region. Within this landscape, Black queer service members and veterans have navigated the intersecting burdens of racism, homophobia, and transphobia while serving in institutions that often demanded silence about their identities. Their experiences reflect both profound hardship and extraordinary resilience. For many, D.C.'s military and federal sectors offered economic opportunity even as these same systems closely monitored and marginalized them. These stories reveal an essential but often overlooked part of the District's military and cultural history.



## Building This Legacy for Blaq Futures

### Recommendations for Expanding While Engaging Communities

This report calls for preserving and expanding the Black LGBTQIA+ historical record, while also continuing broad community engagement and ensuring institutional support.

Recommendations include:

- Collections & Archiving: Expand the Black LGBTQIA+ collection through the BlaqLGBTQHistory website, in partnership with the Center for Black Equity, Rainbow History Project, D.C. Public Library, and other archival institutions.
- Community Engagement: Develop innovative tools like augmented reality, podcasts, walking tours, playlists, and exhibits to bring history to the public.
- Cultural Preservation & Events: Support annual gatherings, such as the Clubhouse reunion, women’s parties, and history panels, while creating more intersectional spaces.
- Capacity & Infrastructure: Train oral historians and archivists, support volunteers, and establish a dedicated fund (with government backing) to sustain this work.
- National & International Expansion: Continue to position D.C.’s Black LGBTQIA+ history as a foundation for wider storytelling, connecting to military, civil rights, and national and global Black Pride narratives.

### Recommendations for Education Curriculum

As set forth by the guiding legislation of this project, this report includes curriculum recommendations (Appendices I) for teaching Black LGBTQIA+ history in public schools, aligned with the Social Studies Standards for District of Columbia students in Grades 8–12.

In collaboration with the Rainbow History Project, this report provides teacher curriculum modules to support students in 8th Grade Action Civics, World History, U.S. History, and D.C. History and Government. Rooted in archival research and oral histories, the modules highlight key themes such as Black Pride, the Black trans community, and the Black community’s response to AIDS. The modules create opportunities for students to engage with primary sources, analyze grassroots activism, and design creative projects that connect past struggles to present-day movements.

Each unit is fully aligned with the 2023 D.C. Social Studies Standards, which for the first time explicitly include LGBTQIA+ history. This ensures teachers can meet required benchmarks while centering underrepresented voices.

## Background

### **The Black LGBTQ History Preservation Establishment Amendment Act (B25-0298)**

The Black LGBTQ History Preservation Establishment Amendment Act (B25-0298) was introduced in 2024 by Councilmember Zachary Parker (Ward 5), the only out Black LGBTQIA+ Councilmember, who garnered unanimous support across the D.C. Council. Council members noted that Black LGBTQIA+ history is both vital and vulnerable. Testimony underscored the urgency of recording the Black Pride Movement, the disproportionate impact of the AIDS crisis, and the pioneering leadership of Black trans people. Equally important was a preservation project celebrating resilience, creativity, and joy.

### **Deliverables**

The law gives the Mayor's Office of LGBTQ Affairs (MOLGBTQA) responsibility to research, develop, and publish a comprehensive report on Black LGBTQIA+ history.

To guide this process, a six-member Advisory Committee was formed, bringing together community voices and subject matter experts. Black LGBTQIA+ History Advisory Committee Members included: Ernest Hopkins, Valerie Papaya, Aaron Myers, Rayceen Pendarvis, Rev. Brenton Brock, and AJ King. Members helped shape the report through feedback and guidance.

The legislation set clear deliverables: The final report must cover the history of the Black Pride Movement, the contributions of Black trans people, the impact of the AIDS crisis, and strategies to share this history with the public. Importantly, it must also provide recommendations for incorporating this history into D.C. school curricula, ensuring long-term visibility for future generations.

The Council, MOLGBTQA, and the Mayor's leadership believe that this is not just an archival project but an ongoing community commitment to education, preservation, and cultural pride.

### **Grant Partners**

In accordance with the Grant Making Authority Act, the MOLGBTQA initiated the Black LGBTQIA+ History Preservation Grant. The grant's purpose was to fund D.C.-based organizations to research and produce a comprehensive report on Black LGBTQIA+ history within the District. MOLGBTQA's grant cycle was from January 3, 2025, to January 17, 2025. MOLGBTQA received 15 applications and selected four organizations to collaborate on the project:

- Center for Black Equity: Dedicated to improving health and wellness opportunities, economic empowerment, and equal rights.
  - Worked to guide overall project structure, conduct and transcribe oral history interviews with community members, develop online exhibit and education materials and promotion, and host public engagement events.
- Rainbow History Project: Mission to collect, preserve, and promote the history and culture of the diverse LGBTQ communities in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.
  - Worked to conduct research on Black LGBTQIA+ history, identify and license photos from Black LGBTQIA+ photographers, develop and distribute curriculum materials and host workshops, recruit teachers as tour guides, and conduct program impact evaluation.
- Modern Military Association of America: Focuses on advocacy for LGBTQ+ military and veteran communities.
  - Worked to connect with Black LGBTQIA+ service members and veterans, conduct outreach to destigmatize conversations around mental health, and support Black LGBTQIA+ service member and veteran leadership.
- Octane: Dedicated to storytelling and connection through public relations.
  - Worked to market social media, develop a website, create branding and assets for digital communications, and conduct media outreach.

### **Grant Workstreams**

The grant's work was divided into two primary workstreams: "Policy and Report" and "Community Engagement."

The Policy and Report priority required comprehensive research on several key topics and guidance on moving forward with findings, including:

- Research and documentation
- Education and Curriculum Development
- Policy Recommendations
- Legacy of Equity Initiative

The Community Engagement priority is centered on public-facing efforts to raise awareness and foster dialogue, including:

- Public Engagement and Awareness
- Legacy of Equity Initiative

## Community Engagement

*Community engagement efforts included listening sessions, meetings, interviews, and partnerships with local organizations to ensure Black LGBTQIA+ voices were central to the development of this report.*



### **Public Meeting #1**

The first public meeting for the Black LGBTQIA+ History Preservation project was held on July 16, 2025, at 6:00 pm and brought together community members, partners, and city leadership to celebrate the launch of this initiative. The program opened with remarks from the Mayor's Deputy Chief of Staff Steve Walker, who underscored the Mayor's commitment to honoring and preserving the stories of Black LGBTQIA+ residents in Washington, D.C. Following this, Director of the Mayor's Office of LGBTQ Affairs Japer Bowles presented an overview of the program, outlining the goals of collecting oral histories, preserving artifacts, and building a lasting foundation for cultural remembrance.

The evening also highlighted voices of community leadership and partnership. Advisory Committee members Rayceen Pendarvis, Ernest Hopkins, and AJ King shared powerful reflections on the importance of centering Black LGBTQIA+ experiences in the city's historical narrative. Community partners also spoke of their ongoing work and collaborations: Kenya Hutton from the Center for Black Equity, Sloane Betz from Octane, Cathy Marcello from the Modern Military Association of America, and Vincent Slatt and Ra Amin from the Rainbow History Project. Together, they emphasized the need for collective

action to ensure these histories are preserved and amplified. The residents of D.C. provided public comments and questions on how they can best collaborate with the project.

## **Public Meeting #2**

The second public meeting was held on August 19, 2025, at 6:00 pm, continuing efforts to engage residents in shaping this historic initiative. The program opened with welcoming remarks from Deputy Chief of Staff Steve Walker, followed by an update from Director of the Mayor’s Office of LGBTQ Affairs Japer Bowles. Bowles shared progress since the initial launch, including community feedback and early steps toward collecting stories and materials that reflect the lived experiences of Black LGBTQIA+ residents.

The meeting also featured key insights from community partners. Kenya Hutton of the Center for Black Equity spoke on the importance of documenting Black LGBTQIA+ contributions to local and national Pride movements. Vincent Slatt and Ra Amin from the Rainbow History Project highlighted the archival and research work already underway, sharing how the project is preserving materials that would otherwise be lost. The conversation emphasized collaboration, transparency, and accessibility, ensuring that the community is centered in all phases of the project. By fostering open dialogue, this second meeting further solidified the collective vision of preserving Black LGBTQIA+ history as an essential part of Washington, D.C.’s cultural legacy.

## **World Pride Rainbow History Exhibit**



In celebration of World Pride hosted by D.C. in 2025, Freedom Plaza became the site of a powerful and historic installation: the Rainbow History Exhibit. Erected in June 2025, the exhibit transformed the heart of the city into a living archive, dedicated not only to LGBTQIA+ communities broadly but with a distinct focus on highlighting the essential role of Black culture in shaping Pride, Black trans contributions to culture and activism, and

care and advocacy from Black communities during the AIDS crisis in the District and beyond.

Freedom Plaza, long recognized as a stage for protest, pride, and civic expression, served as the backdrop for this exhibition. The installation included vivid panels, portraits, and interactive displays chronicling the resilience of Black LGBTQIA+ activists, artists, and community leaders who carved out space for themselves in times of both celebration and struggle. Brought to the forefront were stories of pioneers in the Black Pride movement, leaders in HIV/AIDS advocacy, and cultural icons from D.C.'s vibrant nightlife and ballroom scenes. The exhibit underscored that Pride is not only a global celebration but also a deeply local one, rooted in the struggles and triumphs of Black Washingtonians who demanded visibility and justice.

For many visitors, the exhibit served as both education and affirmation. Others were introduced to oral histories and archival photographs preserved by organizations such as the Rainbow History Project. The exhibit emphasized that Black culture has always been central to the Pride movement, shaping its art, music, political strategy, and spiritual resilience.

Yet only days after its unveiling, the installation was vandalized. Panels were defaced, and several displays were damaged in what many recognized as an attempt to silence or diminish the visibility of LGBTQIA+ history. The act was both painful and symbolic: a reminder that while progress has been made, racism and homophobia remain persistent forces.

The exhibit reopened, standing stronger than before. The repaired panels embodied LGBTQIA+ culture. By honoring history, enduring vandalism, and rising again through the dedication of volunteers, the installation offered a powerful message: that Black queer history is not only worth telling but impossible to erase.

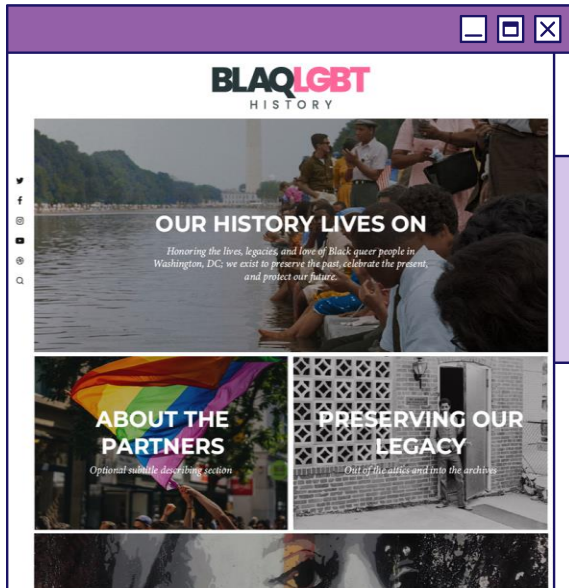
### **Community Engagement Events**

The project participated in numerous community events to share more about the work, including a workshop at the Creating Change Conference by the National LGBTQ+ Task Force in January 2026, a talkback panel discussion following a theatrical production of the life of James Baldwin in February 2026, and a Black History social media campaign in February 2026.



*Creating Change workshop, January 2026*

## BlaqLGBTHistory Website



The project developed a website for the public to access the collected archives easily. The site is designed to educate and guide visitors through Washington, D.C.'s local archives, providing a central hub for learning about the city's Black LGBTQIA+ history. The website also features a *Get Involved* page that invites community members to contribute directly by submitting artifacts, sharing their stories, or partnering with the coalition to ensure the preservation effort continues to grow. Finally, the website provides information on the Black LGBTQ+ Preservation Act, which served as the

catalyst for this project.

The website can be accessed at [blaqgbthistory.com](http://blaqgbthistory.com).

### Social Media

To expand the reach of the Black LGBTQIA+ History Project and ensure broad community engagement, the project actively maintains a presence on X, Facebook, and Instagram. These platforms extend the project beyond traditional archives, making history more visible, accessible, and relevant in today's digital landscape.

Content shared across platforms have included photographs from community events, images of historic magazines and publications uncovered during archival research, highlights from public meetings, and behind-scenes reels documenting the process of searching and preserving archives.

Social media also serves as a powerful tool for education and intergenerational connection. By presenting archival materials in engaging, visual formats, the coalition helps younger audiences access stories and histories that might otherwise remain hidden. Additionally, social media is used to promote upcoming events, invite community participation, and amplify calls for contributions to the archives.



## D.C. Coalition of Black Gays



*D.C. Coalition of Black Gays at the Pride Parade 1983. Photo by Leigh Mosley. Rainbow History Digital Archives.*

*In April 1978, frustrated by the lack of representation and the narrow focus on homophobia by mainstream, primarily white, gay activists, Black gay activists held the first meeting of the D.C. Coalition of Black Gays. Recognizing the need to address issues beyond homophobia, the Coalition focused on community empowerment and integrating discussions of race into the gay rights movement.*

## Organizing

*Grassroots organizing has been essential to advancing the rights and visibility of Black LGBTQIA+ communities in the District. This section documents major campaigns and coalitions.*

### **Movements, Identities, and Activists' Spaces Intersect**

In Washington D.C., Black LGBTQIA+ organizing grew out of two converging struggles: the fight for Black civil rights and the early movement for queer recognition. By the mid-20th century, Black Washingtonians who were already mobilizing against segregation, employment discrimination, and police abuse also began to carve out social, spiritual, and political spaces where same-sex desire and LGBTQIA+ identities could exist with dignity. House parties, neighborhood YMCAs, Black churches that sheltered queer life in private, and an underground nightlife of clubs and salons galvanized where and how community, pleasure, and politics met.

As the 1960s and 1970s came around, activists in D.C. adopted tactics from various movements, such as direct action, mutual aid, and institution building to answer needs that mainstream organizations often ignored. Tactics such as early sit-ins, picketing, and community gatherings foregrounded the unique needs of Black LGBTQIA+ people: combating racialized policing in LGBTQIA+ spaces, ensuring access to culturally competent health services, and creating leadership pathways for those marginalized within both Black and LGBTQIA+ communities. Burgeoning mutual aid groups, counseling collectives, and social clubs, often informal, became essential lifelines for the community.

Additionally, nightlife and cultural venues played a large role. Clubs, drag revues, and performance circuits were more than entertainment. These spaces were fashioned as safe havens, organizing hubs, and training grounds for leadership. From neighborhood ballrooms to bars, these venues fostered networks that supported civic action, community fundraisers, health outreach during the AIDS crisis, voter engagement, and the founding of political clubs and coalitions rooted in Black LGBTQIA+ life.

In the 1980s, the HIV/AIDS epidemic forced a further transformation. Community leaders mobilized urgently around care, prevention, and advocacy, creating service networks, demanding public resources, and insisting that Black queer lives be visible in public health responses. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, these efforts and the desire for autonomous cultural spaces helped catalyze organized events like D.C. Black Pride, powerful coalitions, and sustained archival work to preserve stories that had too often been erased.

Today, the origins of Black LGBTQIA+ organizing in D.C. are visible in a layered legacy of grassroots mutual aid and political organizing, vibrant cultural institutions and nightlife, and an enduring commitment to document, honor, and make accessible the histories of those who built these movements.

### **Civil Rights and Home Rule**

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950–60s mobilized Black Americans to challenge racial segregation, economic injustice, and political exclusion. It emphasized collective organizing, intersectional oppression, and mass protest, tactics that would become crucial in later LGBTQIA+ and Third World movements. At the time, people of color called themselves “Third World People,” identifying their oppression within what is now considered the Global South.

The Civil Rights Movement inspired a broader push for human rights and identity-based liberation, especially among people of color, women, and LGBTQIA+ communities in the 1970s. D.C.’s struggle for Home Rule was led largely by Black residents and leaders during the 1960–70s. The passage of the Home Rule Act in 1973 marked the culmination of that work: Black communities now had official political control in the nation’s capital.

D.C. increasingly became a hub for radical organizing. The Civil Rights Movement gave activists the tools, language, and courage to demand justice; Home Rule gave D.C. residents the political space and control to organize; and these conditions empowered Black and Third World LGBTQIA+ people to host the **Third World Lesbian and Gay Conference**, which centered intersectional liberation in the heart of the nation’s capital.

### **Howard University**

Howard University holds a singular place in the history of Black LGBTQIA+ organizing. In 1979, students at Howard University created the Lambda Student Alliance, the first organization for LGBTQIA+ students created at a Historically Black College or University. Annette “Chi” Hughes and Warrior Richardson founded the alliance, fighting the university administration that tried to prevent Hughes, Richardson, and other students from chartering the organization. They filed a lawsuit, forcing the administration to acquiesce, and Lambda was officially recognized.

Howard also served as an organizing hub beyond its campus. In October 1979, the National Third World Lesbian and Gay Conference took place near the university, coinciding with the first National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. After the conference, participants marched down Georgia Avenue to join activists assembled on the National Mall, recognized as Washington’s first gay pride parade by people of color. The Lambda Student Alliance eventually evolved into BLAGOSAH and today’s CASCADE

(Coalition of Activist Students Celebrating the Acceptance of Diversity and Equality), sustaining a continuous thread of queer activism at Howard for over four decades.

### **Third World Conference**

The 1979 3rd World Conference, held at Howard University during the first National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, provided a platform for Black, Indigenous, and LGBTQIA+ people of color BIPOC LGBTQIA+ activists to address racism, sexism, and homophobia. Organized by the **National Coalition of Black Gays**, it amplified voices often excluded from the broader movement and strengthened solidarity among marginalized communities.



*Protesters with 3rd World Conference Banner - "When will the ignorance end?" Photo by Leigh Mosley, Rainbow History Project Collection.*

The conference featured workshops on topics such as coming out, parenting, and homophobia in Black communities. These sessions created space for dialogue among attendees from diverse racial backgrounds, fostering coalition-building while tackling unique challenges faced by gay people of color.

### **Annette “Chi” Hughes and Sapphire Sapphos**

Annette “Chi” Hughes came to D.C. to attend Howard University, after being born in Alabama and growing up in Queens, N.Y. During her time at Howard, she connected with other gay students and helped found the Lambda Student Alliance, the first club for gay students at a Black university in the country. For Annette “Chi” Hughes, “being a visible gay woman of color at that point in time, in the early ‘80s, was a political statement.”<sup>1</sup>

*“So we really wanted people to know, in a city that was predominantly African American, that we were there. And that we were trying to do things for each other and that we were proud of who we are.”<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Rainbow History Project, “Annette ‘Chi’ Hughes,” *Rainbow History Project Digital Archives*, 2012, <https://archives.rainbowhistory.org/exhibits/show/pioneers/annette---chi---hughes>.

<sup>2</sup> Rainbow History Project, “Oral History with Annette ‘Chi’ Hughes (Queer Capital—Genny Beemyn),” *Rainbow History Project Digital Collections*, accessed January 29, 2026, <https://archives.rainbowhistory.org/items/show/2014>.

To foster support among lesbian women of color, in 1979 she co-founded the **Sapphire Sapphos**, a social and political organization. Sapphire Sapphos wanted a safe space both socially and politically where women could talk about political issues, socialize, support each other, and be visible as lesbians of color. Their activities included dances, picnics, support-group meetings, family-friendly gatherings, and participation in **Take Back the Night** marches and the annual Pride parade. The organization encouraged women’s voices to be heard at a time when the principal LGBTQIA+ organizations were dominated by men.

*Learn more about Annette “Chi” Hughes from the [Rainbow History Project Digital Collections](#).*



*Portrait of Annette “Chi” Hughes, founding member of Sapphire Sapphos and AIDS educator, recipient of a 2015 Community Pioneers Award. Photo by Tracey Jones. Rainbow History Project Collection.*

### **Langston Hughes-Eleanor Roosevelt Democratic Club**

In 1982, frustration with the lack of racial and gender diversity in Washington, D.C.’s gay political establishment led to the creation of the Langston Hughes–Eleanor Roosevelt Democratic Club. The existing Gertrude Stein Democratic Club, which had risen to prominence after supporting Marion Barry in the 1978 mayoral election, was dominated by white gay men in Dupont Circle and had struggled to attract Black members and women. Although Stein leaders acknowledged these shortcomings, many in the broader community no longer saw the club as representative.

In this climate, activists including **Colevia Carter, Melvin Boozer, Clint Hockenberry, ABilly S. Jones, Alexa Freeman, Frank Zampatori, Tony Johnson**, and others established the Langston Hughes–Eleanor Roosevelt Democratic Club as a rival organization. The group, which Carter co-chaired, intentionally centered Black gays and lesbians while also including white allies. Its founders argued that the issues facing the community extended far beyond sexuality, encompassing schools, housing, employment, and other challenges tied to race and gender.

The club also grew out of earlier efforts to demand inclusion of people of color in national gay politics, such as the 1970s delegation of Black activists—including ABilly Jones—who met with the Carter administration under the banner of the **National Coalition of Black Gays**. By the early 1980s, the Langston Hughes–Eleanor Roosevelt Democratic Club stood

as a significant alternative to Stein, with leaders openly rejecting the idea that gay politics in the District should be defined solely by white men. Named after Harlem Renaissance writer **Langston Hughes** and former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt—figures the founders claimed had same-sex relationships—the club embodied a broader vision of queer political life, one rooted in intersectionality and representation.

### **Chuck Hicks**

Charles “Chuck” Hicks is the founder and director of the D.C. Black History Celebration Committee, which recognizes and celebrates the contributions of the African American community in art, literature, politics, and education throughout the year. Born in Bogalusa, Louisiana and the son of civil rights icon Robert Hicks (founder of the Deacons for Defense and Justice), Chuck carried a heritage of resistance into his D.C. life. He had a 35-year career with the D.C. Public Library, primarily in the Black History Section of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, and served as president of AFSCME District Council 20, the largest public sector union in the District.



*Hicks as a student at Syracuse University and recently at the DC MLK Library.*

Hicks is the founder and chair of Bread for the Soul, a nonprofit organization providing emergency assistance and support for children and families living with HIV/AIDS and has been an HIV/AIDS prevention advocate throughout his community organizing career. He previously collaborated with the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities on historical multimedia productions and has been a consistent connector between the Black community’s civil rights legacy and LGBTQIA+ struggles for equity and dignity. In 2019, he was elected to the Washington D.C. Hall of Fame. The GLAA (Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance) honored him with a Distinguished Service Award in 2015.

## **Wanda Alston**

Wanda Alston was an American feminist, LGBT activist, and government official born in Newport News, Virginia. In the 1990s, she served in the National Organization for Women and was a co-leader at the 1995 UN World Conference on Women in Beijing. She was a founding member of the National Stonewall Democrats and active in the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club, D.C.'s flagship LGBTQIA+ political organization. Alston served as the acting director of the Washington, D.C., Office of LGBTQ+ Affairs from 2004 until her death in 2005, the first person to hold that cabinet-level position. She was stabbed to death inside her D.C. house on March 16, 2005. Her legacy endures through the Wanda Alston Foundation, which provides transitional housing and supportive services to LGBTQIA+ youth experiencing homelessness. In April 2026, Mayor Muriel Bowser issued a proclamation declaring April 7 “A Day of Remembrance for Wanda Alston,” honoring what would have been her 67th birthday.



*Photo from The Wanda Alston Foundation*

### Today's Leaders and Organizations

The legacy of past organizing continues with new Black LGBTQIA+ leaders responding to new and persistent challenges to visibility, recognition, and rights.



*Zachary Parker is the first openly Black and gay D.C. Councilmember.*

**Zachary Parker** made history as the first openly Black and gay member of the D.C. Council, marking a significant milestone in Black LGBTQIA+ political representation in the District. His leadership focuses on advancing equity across education, public safety, and youth services, with a clear emphasis on inclusive policymaking. Parker's role reflects both the progress of Black LGBTQIA+ political power and the ongoing responsibility to translate representation into tangible outcomes for marginalized communities.

**Heidi Ellis** is a key leader within the **D.C. LGBTQ+ Budget Coalition**, a membership group of representatives of LGBTQIA+ and ally organizations committed to advocating for dedicated funding that supports LGBTQIA+ residents.

### Today's Leaders and Organizations (continued)

Ellis's work focuses on ensuring that funding decisions address disparities in housing, health, and economic opportunities, while holding local government accountable to inclusive outcomes. Ellis represents a new generation of policy-driven leadership grounded in coalition-building and systems change.

Groups like **Impulse DC** create culturally competent health programming and social engagement opportunities, particularly for Black queer men, blending wellness with community connection. Similarly, **Gay Professional Men of Color** fosters economic empowerment and mentorship, providing Black LGBTQIA+ professionals with pathways to leadership, career advancement, and collective support. These organizations demonstrate that community-building extends into every dimension of life—from health to wealth to social capital.

Over the last decade, Black LGBTQIA+ leaders have been taking up space as the heads of national LGBTQIA+ organizations based in Washington, D.C. These groundbreaking leaders include **Kelley Robinson** as president of the Human Rights Campaign, **David Johns** as head of the National Black Justice Coalition, **Kierra Johnson** as president of the National LGBTQ Task Force, and **Imani Rupert-Gordon** as president of the National Center for LGBTQ Rights. Collectively, they are elevating the visibility of Black, queer communities in national discourse by centering their lived, intersectional experiences. Their unique perspectives continue to drive national conversations of racial, social, and LGBTQIA+ equality as being intricately connected in the face of increasing legislative and cultural attacks on the rights of many marginalized communities.

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*Learn more about organizing in Washington, D.C., including the pivotal people, places, organizations, and events at [BlaqLGBT History/Organizing](#).*


# Essex Hemphill

**V**ITAL SIGNS

A  
Celebration  
of  
**ESSEX HEMPHILL**

Tuesday, April 16, 1996  
7:00 to 9:30 pm  
Hine Junior High School  
8th and Pennsylvania Ave., SE  
Washington, D.C.  
(at Eastern Market Subway)

For additional information call  
202-397-2412



This event is produced in collaboration  
with the J.P. Getty Center for the History of the Arts and Humanities

This Memorial Event is free and  
open to the public

Sign Language  
Interpreted

Wheelchair  
Accessible

**“being accountable to ourselves and to one another,  
truthful and honest, and of course open to change”**

*Essex was at the heart of Washington, D.C.’s African American gay and lesbian literary and performance renaissance of the 1980s and 1990s, much of it centered at the **ENIKAlley Coffeehouse**. His poetry and performances proved memorable evocations of the challenges of being black and gay and young in the midst of the AIDS epidemic. For filmmaker **Marlon Riggs**, he brought voice and energy to *Tongues Untied* and *Black is .. Black Ain’t*, as well as to *Isacc Julien’s Looking for Langston*.*

*Essex’s poetry and prose is inextricably linked to African American gay life in D.C. and across the country. Evocative of the despair and joys of African-American gay life and seminal in its influence on the community about him, Hemphill’s confidence and joy in himself and others, his anger at discrimination and violence, and his strong belief in “being accountable to ourselves and to one another, truthful and honest, and of course open to change” ran like an anthem through his community. His writings on AIDS articulated the anger, despair, and commitment of his generation.<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>3</sup> Rainbow History Project, “Essex Hemphill,” *Rainbow History Project Digital Archives*, 2009, <https://archives.rainbowhistory.org/exhibits/show/pioneers/hemphill>.

## AIDS Crisis

*The AIDS crisis deeply impacted Black LGBTQIA+ communities in D.C., exposing racial and social inequities. Leaders like **Dr. Melvin Boozer** and **A. Cornelius Baker** organized for care and justice, while groups such as the **Inner City AIDS Network (ICAN)** provided life-saving support. Community spaces and the emergence of **D.C. Black Pride** became powerful sites of resilience and activism.*

In Washington, D.C., grassroots organizations became lifelines during the AIDS epidemic. When stigma and neglect left many without resources, institutions like the **Whitman-Walker Clinic**, **Us Helping Us**, and **The Brotherhood** delivered testing, peer support, and education at the community level. Among these, ICAN stands out as a pioneering advocacy group that emerged in the early 1980s. It predated Us Helping Us and is often described within **Rainbow History Project**'s archives as the “mother” organization to later Black-led AIDS service groups.



*Figure 1 Inner City AIDS Network contingent in Gay Pride Day parade. June 23, 1991. Rainbow History Digital Archives.*

In the **Clubhouse** oral history collections, volunteers recount how community leaders mobilized to fill the gaps of institutional inaction. Us Helping Us formally incorporated in 1988 in response to rising HIV/AIDS cases in Black communities. Its roots trace back even further: managers and members of the Clubhouse observed a troubling pattern in the mid-1980s—friends, peers, and community bonds fading as illness took hold. To counter this, they developed a community-based response. The building at 819 L Street SE served as a hub for early outreach, health education, and holistic care delivery in neighborhoods deeply affected by HIV. Together, these organizations represent critical chapters in D.C.'s

queer public health legacy. Their work laid foundational infrastructure for Black LGBTQIA+ communities during one of the most challenging moments in U.S. history.

### **Valeria “Papaya” Mann**

In Washington, D.C., Valerie “Papaya” Mann served as an out lesbian activist, poet, actor, AIDS educator, AIDS care organizer, and schoolteacher. Just a few years after coming out in the 1970s, she plunged headfirst into the African American gay and lesbian community, involving herself in theatre, performance art, and politics. In 1978, she was one of the early members of the National Coalition of Black Gays and of the local D.C. Coalition.

Papaya was at the heart of Sapphire Sapphos, the city’s first organization for African American lesbians, and her early work with Renaissance Productions pioneered the non-bar social gathering model for D.C.’s Black lesbian community. With the start of the AIDS epidemic, she turned her skills to supporting AIDS education and awareness. She worked with the Whitman-Walker Clinic to produce the first AIDS outreach publicity campaign and iconic poster for the 1983 Black



*Marion Barry with Sapphire Sapphos Carlene Cheatham and Papaya Mann in 1982. Photo by Leigh Mosley. Rainbow History Digital Archives.*

AIDS Forum at the Clubhouse. She later served as Executive Director of the AIDS Project of the East Bay, California before returning to D.C., where she continued activism through Africa AIDS Watch. The Rainbow History Project recognized her as a Community Pioneer in 2009. Her archival collection is held by the African American AIDS History Project.

### **A. Cornelius Baker**



A. Cornelius Baker, center, is sworn as an elected Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner alongside Phil Pannell by D.C. Council member Carol Schwartz on Jan. 3, 1987. Washington Blade archive photo by Doug Hinckle

A. Cornelius Baker was a fierce activist who had a 40-yearlong decorated career in public health and HIV advocacy, as he served as Executive Director to **Whitman-Walker** in 1999, led the formation of what is now known as the Office of Infectious Disease and HIV/AIDS Policy, and bolstered the global response to the HIV pandemic through PEPFAR, which has saved more than 25 million lives worldwide. In his early days, he began working with **Brother, Help Thyself** (BHT) and

even worked on Jesse Jackson’s presidential campaign, centering LGBTQIA+ issues and HIV advocacy the whole time. His passing in November 2024 saddened both the LGBTQIA+ and public health community.

Baker’s relentless advocacy helped create the resources we have to combat HIV in our communities and beyond. His work serves as a constant reminder of the need to stand up for change and advocate for our communities.

### Artifacts and Memory with Rainbow History Project

Preservation efforts in Rainbow History Project’s archives emphasize materials such as funeral programs, memorial brochures, and community photographs. These artifacts are central to memory work under the Preservation Act, making visible those lost to AIDS and ensuring their stories are not forgotten. The **Names Project: AIDS Memorial Quilt** collection in Rainbow History Project’s archives include paper records related to the Quilt’s creation and its display on the National Mall. Items in this collection include photographs, newsletters, ephemera, and flyers from



Names Project: AIDS Memorial Quilt (Series XIII). 1994. Rainbow History Digital Archives.

the 1980s and 1990s, all contributing to public remembrance and community acknowledgment.

The AIDS Memorial Quilt was first displayed on the National Mall in D.C. in October 1987 during the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. The initial installation covered more than two football fields in size. Rainbow History Project's archives house multiple panels, quilt-related banners, and associated materials documenting the Quilt's public presence and its growth over time. These materials preserve both public and private grief and symbolize a larger movement of activism and visibility rooted in community care.

### Ron Simmons and Us Helping Us



Ron Simmons. *Washington Blade* photo by Michael Key

Ron Simmons arrived in Washington, D.C. in 1980 to pursue a doctorate in mass communications at Howard University, immersing himself in the vibrant Black gay and lesbian scene in the District. He became a close collaborator of poets Essex Hemphill and Joseph Beam and was a field producer and cast member of Marlon Riggs' landmark documentary *Tongues Untied*.

Diagnosed with HIV in 1990, Simmons became involved with Us Helping Us (UHU), a holistic health organization for Black gay men with HIV. In 1992, he was recruited as

executive director of the fiscally challenged organization. Within two years, Simmons transformed Us Helping Us into the first and only African American-founded, community-based AIDS service organization for Black gay and bi+ men in Washington, D.C. Under his leadership, Us Helping Us grew into one of the largest Black AIDS organizations in the country, serving men, women, transgender persons, and youth, raising \$30 million since 1992.

The Obama White House honored him as a Champion of Change in 2011. Dr. Simmons passed away on March 29, 2020, from complications related to prostate cancer. The Rainbow History Project recognized him as a Community Pioneer.

### **Colevia Carter**

Colevia Carter has contributed to just about every aspect of the LGBTQIA+ community in Washington, D.C. — as an educator, organizer, service provider, poet, and musician, political activist — since arriving in 1975. She was actively involved with the LGBT Third World Conference held at Howard University in 1979 and with the D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays. She was also an executive board member of the National Association of Black Lesbians and Gays.



*Colevia Carter c. 1980s. Photo by Leigh H. Mosley, Copyright Leigh H. Mosley, Courtesy Rainbow History Project Archives*

In 1982, Marion Barry appointed Carter to the D.C. Human Rights Commission, on which she served for five years and was the first open lesbian commissioner. In 1982–83, when she became aware of a new disease killing gay men, Carter began educational programs for inmates in Lorton and other D.C. correctional facilities, where she worked. In 1984, she organized the first D.C. conference on Women and HIV/AIDS, a landmark act of foresight when women were largely invisible in the national AIDS response. In 1992, Carter moved to the D.C. Department of Health, where she was appointed D.C. State Adolescent Health Coordinator and directed the Synergy Adolescent Health Project, focusing on HIV/AIDS programs for children, adolescents, and women. The Rainbow History Project named her a Community Pioneer in 2012.

### **Malebox!**

Between 1993 and 1999, **Ric Irick** produced Malebox! as a monthly newsletter and magazine subtitled “the intimate opinions, experiences & emotions of Black Gay Men.” At

its height, the publication reached over 2,000 subscribers locally and nationwide. Its pages highlighted cultural happenings, news, political organizing, HIV/AIDS advocacy, and personal ads, making it both a source of information and community connection.

### HIV Advocacy Today

Since the 2010s, Washington, D.C.'s LGBTQIA+ HIV advocacy movement has increasingly focused on ending disparities affecting Black gay men, transgender people, LGBTQIA+ youth, and longtime residents facing housing instability and healthcare inequities. Organizations expanded work around PrEP access, transgender healthcare, harm reduction, mental health services, and culturally competent outreach.

### Impulse DC

Today, Impulse Group D.C. has become a vital force for LGBTQIA+ wellness and empowerment across the District, guided by a mission “to engage, support, and connect gay men globally.” Founded in 2015 as part of the AIDS Healthcare Foundation’s affinity network, Impulse Group D.C. has reach of 10,000+ residents and hosted more than 150 activities across all eight wards, including health education campaigns, nightlife-based outreach, on-site navigation for PrEP, PEP, and DoxyPEP, HIV testing sign-ups, Narcan trainings, wellness workshops, and more.

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*Learn more about the AIDS Crisis in Washington, D.C., including the pivotal people, places, organizations, and events at [BlaqLGBT History/AIDS](#).*

## Black Spaces, Places & Scenes

*Black queer gatherings remain one of the most vital entry points for community formation, and the District has incubated a thriving ecosystem of spaces, places, and scenes for people to come together in affirming environments*

### **Nightlife & Entertainment**

#### **Nob Hill, 1953-2004**

Upon closing, Nob Hill at 1101 Kenyon NW was the oldest continuously operating gay bar in the city. Nob Hill began as a private social club for the city's black gay men. It was known for having an older crowd and Sunday Gospel Nights. It hosted the first Black Gay AIDS Forum in the 1980s and participated in many black gay pride celebrations.



*Photograph of Nob Hill's front entrance. Source Unknown.*

#### **The Cairo Hotel, ~1951-1962 (as a hotel)**

An after-hours nightspot for both white and black gays and lesbians, the Cairo at 1615 Q St NW was known for late night parties and dances organized by female impersonator Black Pearl (Ken White). It was a popular drag venue, and it later became an apartment building and was jokingly referred to as a 'gay frat house'.

#### **The Brass Rail, 1968-1996**

The Brass Rail's first address was 809 13th St., a basement entrance, but it moved upstairs to 811 13th St NW in 1973. It was one of the main African American drag bars. The Railettes were a popular in-house drag entertainment group at the club. Local female impersonator Barbra MacNair performed her popular Moms Mabley routines here. In the mid-1980s the club moved to 476 K St NW.

#### **La Zambra Club), ~1970-late 1990s**

From the early 1970s until the mid-1980s, LaZambra at 1406 14th St NW but now demolished, was known as one of the great weekend dance spots. The club was known informally as "Lucy's", after the manager, who reputedly would walk the bar to the delight of her customers. La Zambra provided meeting space to the Sapphire Sapphos in their early years.

### **Bachelor's Mill, 1979--2018**



*Photo of the exterior of Bachelor's Mill. Source and Date Unknown.*

In December 1978, BB Gatch's women's club, Club Madame, became a male-oriented club called The Bachelor's Mill at 500 & 1104 8th St SE. For more than 25 years, the club had been one of the most popular African American dance clubs and drag venues. In 1984, the club moved to its final address at 1104 8th St SE. Local drag promoter Marc King managed The Mill in the early 1980s.

### **The Fireplace, 1989-Present**

The Fireplace at 2161 P St NW has been a longtime neighborhood gay bar in Dupont Circle known for its loyal local clientele and unpretentious charm. Open for decades, The Fireplace serves as a gathering place for generations of Washington's Black LGBTQIA+ community, particularly older gay men and longtime residents of the city.

### **Brown Sugar Bash**

The Brown Sugar Bash was a recurring party that became a beloved social institution for Black lesbians and queer women of color in Washington, D.C. Emerging in the tradition of community party-making that characterized the D.C. Black Pride weekend and year-round gathering culture, the Brown Sugar Bash offered an explicitly Black women-centered space at a time when mainstream lesbian nightlife in the District remained predominantly white. The event became known as a site of cultural affirmation, music, and community connection across generations of D.C.'s Black queer women's community.

### **A 2 Zee Events, 2009-Present**

Founded in 2009 by Zekeera "Zee" Belton, [A 2 Zee Events](#) became one of Washington, D.C.'s premier event collectives dedicated to creating affirming, elevated spaces for Black queer women and sapphic communities. Beyond nightlife, A 2 Zee Events fostered community through sports leagues, panel discussions, domestic and international travel experiences, and philanthropic initiatives supporting HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. Belton later became a co-founder of Unleashed D.C. and currently serves as co-founder of BLISS Pride, continuing her legacy of shaping Black queer women's nightlife and cultural experiences during D.C. Black Pride Weekend.

### **Thurst Lounge, 2023-Present**

Today, Thurst Lounge at 2204 14th St NW has become one of the few Black-owned LGBTQIA+ lounges in Washington, D.C. dedicated to centering Black queer community, culture, and nightlife. Opened in the U Street corridor by Brandon Burke and Shaun Mykals, Thurst quickly became known for centering Black LGBTQIA+ professionals, creatives, performers, and patrons in an environment designed explicitly for belonging, celebration, and expression celebrating. The lounge regularly hosts open-mic nights, Black Pride events, community gatherings, and fundraisers supporting local LGBTQIA+ causes, helping continue D.C.'s long tradition of Black queer social spaces.

### **Arts, Culture, and Creative Expression**

Black LGBTQIA+ arts and culture in Washington, D.C. have thrived at the intersections of creativity, resistance, and community care. From the city's legacy of Black LGBTQIA+ ballroom culture to today's festivals, galleries, and music scenes, Black LGBTQIA+ artists have carved out spaces that center their voices, celebrate joy, and confront systems of erasure.

### **Charles Comedy: Fierce Drag and Ballroom Performances**

*"I came to D.C. in 1963... I met a person by the name of Andre Lindsay, AKA Barbara MacNair... [who] asked me, 'Have you ever been to a drag show?' At the time I didn't know what a drag show was. [When I went,] I was flabbergasted. Like I said, I had never seen a man dressed as a woman."*<sup>4</sup>

This oral history with Charles Comedy, also known as Kip Turner Brice, captures a vivid portrait of Washington, D.C.'s drag and ballroom world across several decades. Arriving in the city in 1963 after serving in the Air Force, Kip entered a thriving, but often hidden queer community shaped by drag shows, house networks, and the **Academy Awards of Washington**. His memories move from first encounters with performers like Barbara MacNair and Liz Taylor at the **Cairo Hotel**, to the formation of chosen families under leaders such as Lala Maharris and Fanny Brice, to legendary events like the **Black Pearl Balls**.

### **Reggie Van Lee**

Reggie Van Lee has been an influential supporter of the Washington, D.C. LGBTQIA+ arts scene through his philanthropy, arts leadership, and advocacy for equity in cultural institutions. He has championed greater investment in LGBTQIA+ artists and artists of

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<sup>4</sup> Rainbow History Project, "Oral History Interview with Charles Comedy ('Kip Turner Brice')," *Rainbow History Project Digital Archives*, June 27, 2004, <https://archives.rainbowhistory.org/items/show/1174>.

color, supporting efforts to expand access, mentorship, and institutional inclusion within theater, visual arts, and community-based cultural organizations. Van Lee’s leadership roles with D.C. Commission on Arts Humanities, nonprofit boards, and initiatives focused on diversity and representation have helped strengthen the visibility and sustainability of Black LGBTQIA+ artistic communities.

### **ENIK Coffeehouse**

ENIK Alley Coffeehouse or just “Coffeehouse” was an arts & literature center in a two-story carriage house building behind a house at 816 I St NE. D.C. **CBG & Ray Melrose** founded the Coffeehouse. The name ENIKAlley refers to its location in the alley between Eighth and Ninth and I and K streets. With an open loft overlooking the main floor, a fireplace and a warm atmosphere, the place was unique among gay and lesbian spaces in D.C.



*Inside The Coffeehouse: Darrin Frisbee & Ray Melrose (Coffeehouse founder) | Photo Credit: Fierceness Served! Archive*

The coffeehouse was a crucible for artists, writers, musicians, and performance artists. When Melrose moved to the D.C. space, many of the performers at the Coffeehouse joined him there. Coffeehouse was the central place for meetings of the **Sapphire Sapphos**, which took over in November 1984 and briefly operated a coffeehouse called Essie’s.

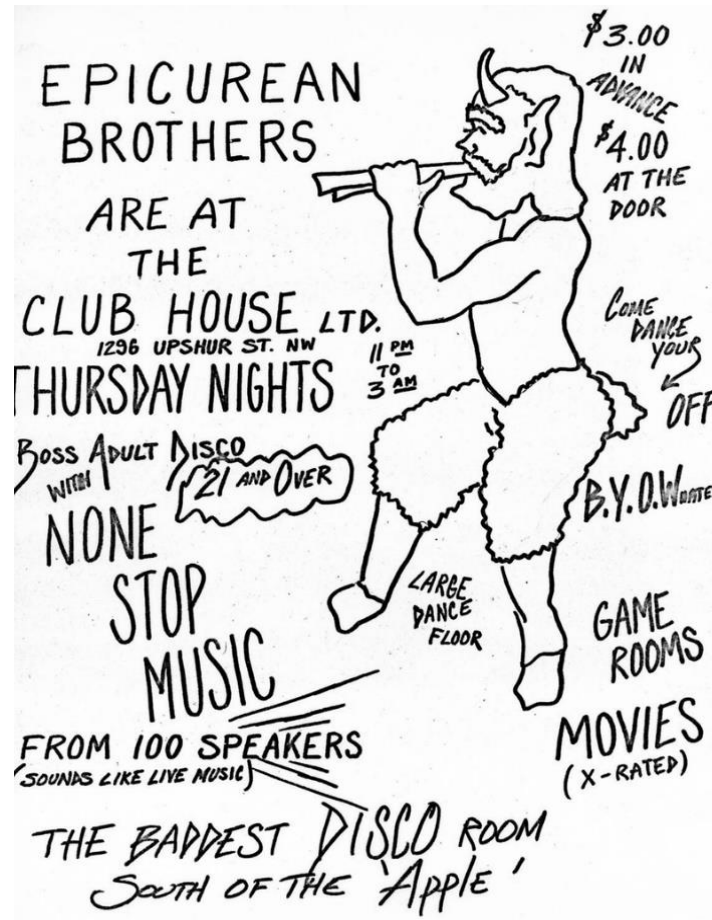
### **Tagg Magazine, 2012-Present**

*Tagg Magazine* is a digital news source for the LGBTQIA+ community—specifically by and for lesbians, LGBTQIA+ women, and nonbinary sapphics. Tagg was founded in 2012 as a bi-monthly print publication in Washington, D.C., eventually expanding nationwide in 2015. The aim is not only to uplift voices often silenced in mainstream queer media, but to create a place where journalism for and by queer women is celebrated. Tagg centers the voices of BIPOC queer folks while offering compelling and educational content, information on safe and inclusive events, and free and valuable resources for queer women across the country.

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Learn more about organizing in Washington, D.C., including the pivotal people, places, organizations, and events at [blaqgbthistory.com/people-places-archives](http://blaqgbthistory.com/people-places-archives).

### Children’s Hour at the Clubhouse: The Center of Black LGBTQIA+ Social Life



*Epicurean Brothers social club flyer, The ClubHouse*

The **ClubHouse** at 1296 Upshur St. NW opened in 1975 out of earlier venues like the **Zodiac** and the **Third World**. It quickly became a centerpiece of Washington, D.C.’s African American LGBTQIA+ social life. With 10,000 square feet, state-of-the-art sound and lighting, and a strict membership system, it offered separate party nights for straight and gay crowds, plus themed evenings, ladies’ nights, and Sunday special events. Extravagant holiday celebrations and annual traditions like the Mother’s Day dinner helped cement its reputation as more than a nightclub—it was a hub for community connection.

At its height, the ClubHouse hosted legendary entertainers including Sylvester, Jennifer Holiday, and Phyllis Hyman. The crown jewel of its calendar was Children’s Hour, an elaborate Memorial Day weekend party organized by staff and supporters. Beginning in

1976, each year’s themed celebration featured lavish décor, costumes, and DJs, transforming it into a national draw for Black gay men and lesbians. By the 1980s, Memorial Day weekend in D.C. had become a key event on the national LGBTQIA+ calendar.

## Black Pride

*The District. is recognized as the birthplace of Black Pride, a movement celebrating Black LGBTQIA+ identity and culture. This section explores its origins and enduring significance.*

### Memorial Day Weekend

For Black communities in D.C. during segregation, Memorial Day weekend signified traveling, family reunions, and vibrant house parties. For Black lesbians and gays, private parties provided networks for safe and discreet celebrations.

From 1975 until 1990, the Memorial Day weekend for D.C.’s Black LGBTQIA+ community was distinguished by the annual *Children’s Hour* party at the Clubhouse, an all-night celebratory bash for which the community dressed up, partied hard, and celebrated authenticity. The success of the annual *Children’s Hour* celebrations extended nationwide: African American lesbians and gay men made Memorial Day weekend in Washington D.C. a rite of passage into summer during the Eighties.

The AIDS epidemic devastated the ClubHouse’s membership, transforming it into a hub for activism during its final years. In September 1983, it hosted the first **AIDS Forum for Black and Third World Gays**, addressing systemic neglect of Black LGBTQIA+ communities.<sup>5</sup> The venue supported groups like **Us Helping Us**, fostering mutual aid and

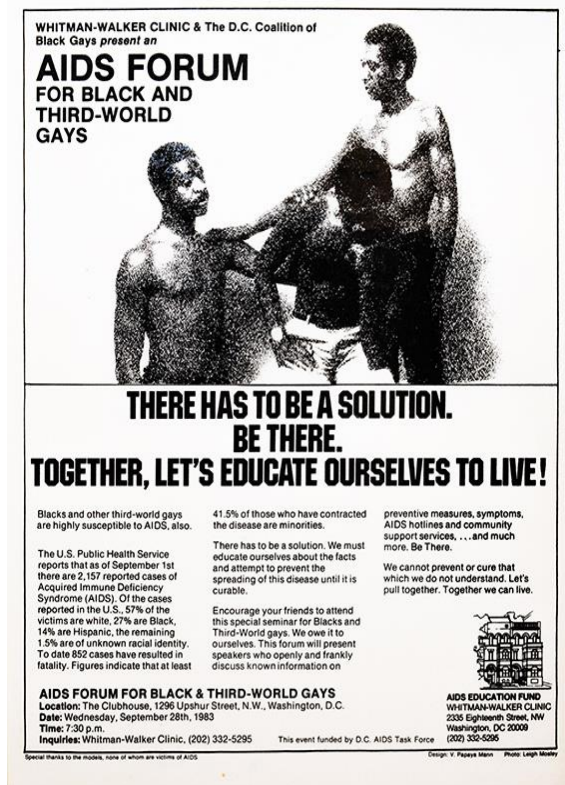


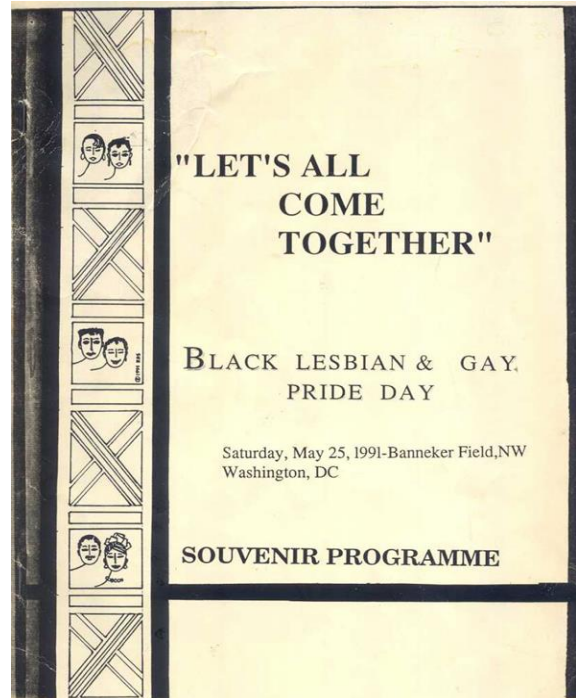
Figure 7 Flier for the 1983 AIDS Education Forum at the ClubHouse. Photo by Leigh Mosley. Rainbow History Digital Archives.

<sup>5</sup> Rainbow History Project, “The ClubHouse and AIDS,” *Rainbow History Project Digital Archives*, accessed January 29, 2026, <https://archives.rainbowhistory.org/exhibits/show/clubhouse/in-the-community/clubhouse-and-aids>.

advocacy that laid the foundation for **D.C. Black Pride**'s commitment to combating HIV/AIDS. When the Clubhouse closed in 1990, it seemed the Memorial Day weekend would be empty for the community.

### **The First Black Pride**

**Welmore Cook, Theodore Kirkland** and **Ernest Hopkins** were concerned with supporting the city's growing number of HIV positive African Americans and sought an opportunity to raise funds for HIV/AIDS organizations. They floated the idea of holding a Pride event for the city's African American gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered and using it to help raise funds for community organizations. Cook remarked in 1991, that "the planned celebration represents an attempt on the part of Black gays to help themselves and not ask anyone for a handout." Loss of the Memorial Day weekend *Children's Hour* was about to be succeeded by the nation's first black gay Pride celebration.



*"Let's All Come Together!" DC Black Lesbian and Gay Pride Day program. May 25, 1991. Rainbow History Project Digital Archives.*

Partnering with **Best Friends of D.C.** and other local organizations like the **Inner City AIDS Network**, they launched D.C.'s first Black Pride at Banneker Field on May 25, 1991. The event drew over 800 attendees under the theme "Let Us All Come Together," blending celebration with fundraising for AIDS services.<sup>6</sup>

### **Center for Black Equity**

The Center for Black Equity works to promote a multinational LGBTQIA+ network dedicated to improving health and wellness opportunities, economic empowerment, and equal rights while promoting individual and collective work, responsibility, and self-determination.

### **Carlene Cheatam**

In 1983, Carlene Cheatam became the first woman and first person of color to serve as chief coordinator of Gay Pride Day in Washington, D.C., bringing much-needed diversity to

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<sup>6</sup> Center for Black Equity, "The Black Pride Movement & the Center for Black Equity," *Center for Black Equity*, accessed January 29, 2026, <https://centerforblackequity.org/history>.

an organization that had been led primarily by white men. Among her explicit priorities was making sure Black Washingtonians had visible representation. She sought to “bring the Black kids out, make sure Black faces were on that stage, make sure that Black drag queens were on the stage.”

Cheatam was aware that most people in the Black gay and lesbian community were in the closet, and knowing that a Pride organized without her would be overwhelmingly white, she sought to create space for African Americans in the gay community. Those efforts culminated in her launching Black Pride alongside co-founders Welmore Cook, Theodore Kirkland, and Ernest Hopkins. Cheatam made space for African American gays and lesbians and raised money to support AIDS service organizations.



*Carlene Cheatam at 1983 Pride. Photo by Leigh Mosley. Rainbow History Digital Archives.*

Cheatam also served as co-chair of the Hughes-Roosevelt Democratic Club and was a longtime leader of the D.C. Coalition of Black LGBT Men and Women. She was recognized with the Welmore Cook Award by D.C. Black Pride in 2004. Her oral history is preserved in the collections of the Rainbow History Project.

### **Sheila Alexander Reid & Women in the Life**

Sheila Alexander-Reid is a trailblazer in social inclusion, advocacy, and community-centered brand building whose career has been defined by one powerful truth: when passion, advocacy, and skill align, you don’t just build a brand — you co-create a movement.

That movement began in Washington, D.C., where a young Sheila — having discovered the lesbian community in her late twenties — recognized that Black lesbians had almost nothing to call their own. She started with parties, co-founding her first event management organization, VTR, before launching Women in the Life (WITL) in 1993. A blockbuster event following the March on Washington put WITL on the map, and that same autumn, she launched a magazine addressing the issues, news, and stories of lesbians of color.

What followed was extraordinary. Women in the Life grew into a full ecosystem: an LLC, a softball team, a golf team, a non-profit social justice association, and 86 issues of a

nationally distributed magazine — all centered on Black lesbians at a time when representation wasn't a trend but a lifeline. WITL also launched a non-profit, the Women in the Life Association. "Wanda's Will," a project inspired by the 2005 murder of her friend Wanda Alston, was designed to help LGBTQIA+ individuals ensure their rights and wishes are fully honored in life and beyond.

In 2008, Sheila took her advocacy to the airwaves. She started, hosted, and produced the *Inside Out Radio Show* on WPFW 89.3 FM, a Pacifica station in Washington, D.C. — the first program to bring the voice of the LGBTQIA+ community to the station's wide and diverse audience. For over a decade, the weekly show was a groundbreaking platform for queer voices, issues, and stories. After Sheila's departure in 2020, the program evolved into *The Inside Out Collective*, continuing her legacy every Tuesday from 2–3pm EST with voices exploring LGBTQIA+ perspectives on social justice, representation, and community.



*Sheila Alexander-Reid. Washington Blade file photo by Michael Key*

Sheila's advocacy also extended into the highest levels of public service. As Executive Director of D.C.'s Office of LGBTQ Affairs, she advised Mayor Muriel Bowser on LGBTQIA+ policy, and as founder of Branding4Change, she has long championed social justice and inclusive workplaces. Today, she leads PHL Diversity at the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau, showcasing Philadelphia as a premier inclusive destination for Black, Brown, LGBTQIA+, and faith-based meetings and conferences.

A Spelman College graduate with certificates from Cornell and Stanford Universities, Sheila Alexander-Reid is a business development leader, a coalition builder, and a living example of what happens when you refuse to wait for someone else to build the table. She resides in Philadelphia with her wife, Aishah Shahidah Simmons.

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*Learn more about Black Pride in Washington, D.C., including the pivotal people, places, organizations, and events at [Blaqgbthistory.com/community-organizing](https://blaqgbthistory.com/community-organizing)*





## Ms. Earline Budd: A Voice for D.C. Transgender Rights



*Earline Budd has long been a stalwart voice for transgender rights in Washington, D.C., rooted in both lived experience and decades of community service. Born in 1958 and raised in a deeply religious household, Budd transitioned by the age of 13 and navigated early rejection, family violence, and the streets before formally finding her path in activism.*

*In 1987 she sued the Kalorama skating rink (and won), which had discriminated against her because of Budd's lack of 'gender appropriate' dress. Budd continued working tirelessly, challenging discriminatory policies, coordinating HIV outreach, and organizing funerals for community members. The brutal and tragic*

*death of **Tyra Hunter** in 1995 re-catalyzed Budd's advocacy efforts, a moment she reflected on in a 2025 WTOP News interview,<sup>7</sup> saying: "Tyra's death kind of set the stage for me today to be who I am."*

*In 1999 Budd sued the D.C. Department of Corrections for being refused access as a visitor (and won again). The formal complaint of discrimination based upon physical appearance led to a settlement which removed signs which read: "No One in Opposite Gender clothing will be admitted."*

*These efforts have earned Budd recognition and honors from local and national LGBTQIA+ institutions.*

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<sup>7</sup> Alan Etter, "Local Transgender Advocate Honored for Her Efforts to Support the LGBTQ+ Community," WTOP News, June 5, 2025, <https://wtop.com/dc/2025/06/local-trans-advocate-honored-for-her-efforts-to-support-the-lgtbqia-community/>.

## Black Trans Leadership

*The Black trans community has long stood at the center of D.C.'s queer culture, shaping the city's legacy of activism, art, and resilience. From the early days of organizing around visibility and safety to the creation of affirming cultural spaces like D.C. Black Trans Pride and Black Joy Disco, Black trans residents have led with courage and authenticity, often paving the way for broader LGBTQIA+ progress.*

*Today, Black trans leadership continues to influence how the District defines inclusion and justice today. Through advocacy in public health, housing, and employment equity, as well as cultural expression in ballroom, performance, and community organizing, the Black trans community remains a driving force in preserving D.C.'s identity as a national leader in LGBTQIA+ rights and representation. This section highlights their leadership and impact.*

### **Safety**

Transgender communities in Washington, D.C. have long faced systemic violence, neglect, and discrimination, sparking powerful advocacy movements for health, housing, and safety. The 1995 death of **Tyra Hunter**, a young Black trans woman denied emergency care after first responders discovered she was trans, became a landmark case that forced the city to award her family



*Tyra Hunter Vigil. (C) Washington Blade by Clint Steib.*

compensation due to breaking the District's Human Rights Act, negligence, and medical malpractice<sup>8</sup> as well as adopt government-wide sensitivity training and later inspired the opening of the **Tyra Hunter Drop-In Center**.

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<sup>8</sup> "Tyra Hunter," *Remembering Our Dead*, accessed January 29, 2026, [https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/1995/08/08/tyra-hunter\\_washington-dc-usa\\_04a01786](https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports/1995/08/08/tyra-hunter_washington-dc-usa_04a01786).

## Tyra Hunter



On August 7, 1995, Tyra Hunter, a 24-year-old transgender woman, was injured in a traffic accident at 50th and C Streets SE. When emergency responders discovered she was trans, they used slurs and delayed treatment. She later died of her injuries. The case was widely condemned, and her mother successfully sued the city, winning millions in damages. As a result of Tyra’s wrongful death, D.C. implemented government-wide sensitivity training, marking a critical step toward

accountability and justice for transgender residents. In 2006, the **Tyra Hunter Drop-In Center** at 1711 N. Capitol Street NE opened in her honor.

As part of the settlement, the D.C. Fire/EMS Department hired diversity trainer Kenda Kirby. Kirby was hired in 2003 but was harassed and blatantly discriminated against during her one-year tenure, prompting a five-year-long suit against the Department that was handled by Attorney and Rainbow History Project Community Mindy Daniels. The case was ultimately won.

Even after Tyra Hunter’s tragic death, violence persisted: between 2000 and 2011, at least thirteen transgender women were murdered, with only three cases brought to justice. In 2002 the killings of two teenagers highlighted both the risks trans youth face and the failures of the justice system.<sup>9</sup> In response, organizations such as the **D.C. Trans Coalition** emerged to demand structural change, advancing trans liberation through legal advocacy, resource sharing, and community organizing. Ongoing remembrance and resistance, like candlelight vigils for murdered Black trans women and landmark lawsuits against city agencies, demonstrate both the urgency and resilience of trans advocacy in D.C.

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<sup>9</sup> Peter Hermann and Samantha Schmidt, “Police Identify Suspect, Now Deceased, in Killings of Two Transgender Teens in 2002,” *The Washington Post*, July 30, 2020, <https://centerforblackequity.org/news-views/police-identify-suspect-now-deceased-in-killings-of-two-transgender-teens-in-2002>.

In October 2007, the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) in Washington, D.C. issued updated General Order GO-PCA-501.02 (“Handling Interactions with Transgender Individuals”). The purpose of the order was to require MPD officers to interact with transgender individuals in a professional, respectful, and courteous manner. Under the 2007 updates, officers must address individuals by their preferred name (if different from their legal name), use pronouns consistent with their gender identity or expression, and should not take their gender identity as evidence or suspicion of criminal behavior (for example, justifying assumptions about prostitution). If a person identifies as transgender, officers must accept that identification and should not question or challenge it.

The order also provided rules and guidelines for interactions involving transgender individuals in specific police contexts, such as calls for service and citizen complaints, stop-and-frisk situations, arrest, detention, and processing, and safe and respectful housing, medical treatment, and search procedures. The MPD policy aligns with the D.C. Human Rights Act, which prohibits discriminatory treatment based on gender identity or expression.

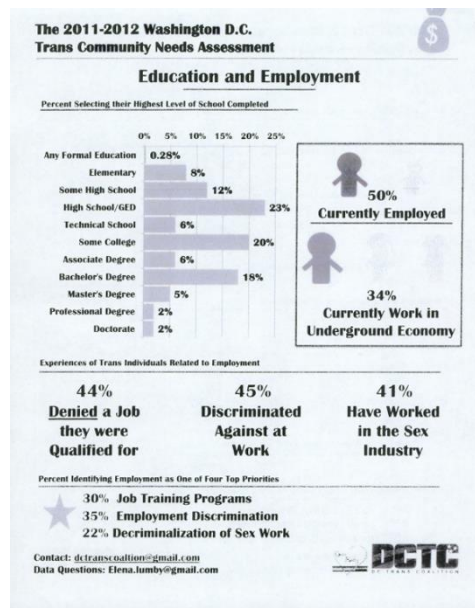
In later years, D.C.’s transgender-interaction policy was highlighted in reports evaluating police respect and nondiscrimination, noting that the policy prohibits using gender presentation as a basis for suspicion, requires respectful communication, and mandates certain protections during searches and detention.

### The D.C. Trans Coalition (DCTC)

The D.C. Trans Coalition (DCTC) was founded in 2005 as an all-volunteer-run, community-based organization to advocate for the human rights of trans and gender-diverse people in D.C. Still operating today, DCTC works to promote liberation and gender self-determination by raising awareness and building community support, facilitating resources and information, and changing laws that impact D.C.’s trans communities.

### Health

In 2000, the fight for transgender health equity in Washington, D.C. reached a milestone when **Earline Budd** founded **Transgender Health Empowerment (THE)** and **Us Helping Us** received its first grant specifically for transgender support services. That same year, trans advocates pushed the D.C.



*Selected Sections from The 2011-2012 Washington D.C. Trans Community Needs Assessment by the DC Transgender Coalition.*

Department of Health to release the final report of the Washington, D.C. Transgender Needs Assessment Survey (WTNAS), one of the first comprehensive efforts to document the lived experiences and urgent needs of the city's transgender residents. Together, these developments not only secured resources for direct services but also provided data to challenge the long-standing invisibility of the community in health planning and policy.

Transgender leaders like **SaVanna Wanzer** also helped establish in the early 2000s the **Transgender Health Clinic at Whitman-Walker Health**, a crucial step in expanding culturally competent care for the transgender community in D.C. For many residents, this was the first time a major health institution in the city offered dedicated services that recognized and affirmed transgender identities. The clinic not only provided medical care but also symbolized a shift toward visibility, inclusion, and the recognition that transgender people had unique health needs that mainstream systems had too often ignored.

Transgender Health Empowerment expanded its programming, supporting the annual Transgender Day of Remembrance and the opening of support houses for transgender adults (2004) and for youth (the **Wanda Alston House**, 2008). THE's focus has shifted as their services drew non-transgender people as well. They embraced all those in need.

THE faced a financial crisis that led to it filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy on July 7, 2013. A major factor in this collapse was the revocation or suspension of city grants that had been funding its transgender- and LGBTQIA+-related programs since 2004. The reason for the funding cut was tied to liabilities from unpaid taxes. Once the funding was cut, THE was no longer able to carry out its core mission of providing transgender health and advocacy services. Instead, it redirected its limited remaining resources toward operating a temporary housing facility for crime victims under a non-LGBTQIA+ related grant.

## **Work**

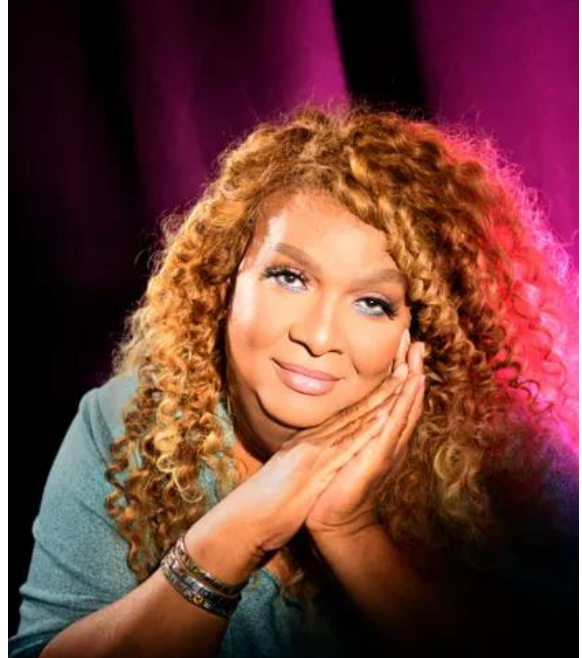
### **HIPS**

HIPS was formed to provide specialized services for youth sex workers. HIPS' mission is to assist female, male, and transgender individuals engaging in sex work in Washington, D.C. to lead healthy lives. Today, HIPS remains an active partner with the LGBTQIA+ community in advocating for trans rights.

## **SaVanna Wanzer and Trans Pride**

*SaVanna Wanzer was a longtime local transgender advocate and educator, whose work spanned over three decades. She founded TransPride in 2007 and later launched May Is.. All About Trans in 2018, an entire month of events centering trans visibility, education, and community-building.*

*Wanzer was the first transgender woman to serve on the boards of both Whitman-Walker Health, helping to establish its Transgender Clinic, and the Capital Pride Alliance, breaking new ground for trans representation in organizational leadership. She also helped pioneer peer mentoring programs, legal/name & gender clinics, volunteer efforts like distributing Thanksgiving dinners for people without families and served on the D.C. Mayor's LGBTQ Advisory Committee.*



*Throughout, her activism focused on intersectional issues, including HIV care, mental health, housing, and justice, always with a goal of ensuring that trans people in D.C. were visible, respected, and cared for. She passed away in April 2026.*

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*Learn more about Washington, D.C.'s Black Trans community, including the pivotal people, places, organizations, and events at [Blaqlgbthistory.com/black-trans-leadership](https://blaqlgbthistory.com/black-trans-leadership)*

**Marvin Bowser**



*Captain Marvin Bowser shaking hands with General Partlow after receiving his Joint Staff Badge.*

*Marvin Bowser is a proud D.C. native, a retired U.S. Air Force captain, and an active member of the LGBTQIA+ community who, after working as a defense contractor for 18 years, pursued his artistic talents as a photographer, filmmaker, and actor.*

*Bowser served in the Air Force for 10 years and subsequently worked six years for the Navy, a defense career conducted largely under policies that required gay servicemembers to conceal who they were. He purchased his first camera at the Air Force exchange on Ramstein Air Base in Germany in the mid-1980s, beginning a photographic practice that would eventually become his vehicle for community preservation. He was a closeted gay man for many years, and as he described it, while being closeted as a civilian wasn't as treacherous as in the military, there was still tension.*

*After retiring from the defense world, Bowser turned his lens toward Black queer history. While researching a Washington Blade article on D.C.'s first Black Pride event, he realized that the history of D.C. Black Pride was poorly documented and that he needed to do something about it while some of the leaders were still alive to tell their stories. The resulting documentary, "D.C. Black Pride: Answering the Call," traces the roots of D.C. Black Pride and includes interviews with co-founder Ernest Hopkins, Sheila Alexander-Reid, and other prominent figures. The film notably incorporates voices of queer women of color, D.C.'s elderly LGBTQIA+ community, and advocates for Black trans lives and LGBTQIA+ youth. His photography exhibitions, including BlackHair and COLORED, continue this work of documenting the African diaspora experience through art.*

## Black Military & Veterans Experience

*Washington, D.C. is not only the heart of our nation, but also home to a unique blend of communities shaped by the military experience. With its many military bases, federal agencies, and government institutions often staffed by veterans, D.C. holds an especially rich and layered history where the military and civic duty intersect. Among these intersecting stories is a community that has often gone unseen: Black, queer service members and veterans. These experiences embody both the challenges and the triumphs of living at the crossroads of multiple identities, navigating the realities of racism, homophobia, and transphobia, while also serving in institutions where authenticity and visibility have historically been constrained. These stories are essential, not only because they remind us of the resilience and brilliance of those who lived them, but also because they help us understand the full tapestry of our military history.*



## **Serving in Silence: The Double Weight of Washington’s Defense World**

For Black queer Washingtonians, the city’s military and federal infrastructure was simultaneously a source of economic opportunity and a machine of surveillance and suppression. D.C.’s outsized concentration of military installations, defense agencies, and federal contractors meant that a disproportionate number of Black queer residents built their livelihoods in institutions that, for most of the twentieth century, treated their identities as disqualifying. To serve meant choosing between survival and authenticity, and many chose to serve anyway.

### **Featured Veteran Interviews**

As part of the D.C. LGBTQIA+ Black History Grant, Modern Military published a both a print and digital version sharing the stories of many of D.C.’s Black LGBTQIA+ living service members and veterans. The full digital magazine featuring veteran interviews can be accessed [here](#).

- [Interview with Sharla Murrill](#)
- [Interview with Nina Ligon](#)
- [Article by MaCherie Dunbar](#)
- [Article by Richard Brookshire](#)
- [Interview with Fallon Williams](#)
- [Interview with Elias P. Fishburne](#)
- [Interview with Dr Lulu](#)
- [Interview with JT \(Anonymous\)](#)
- [Interview with Buddy Sutson](#)

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*Learn more about organizing in Washington, D.C., including the pivotal people, places, organizations, and events at [BlaqLGBT History/Veterans](#).*



## Appendix I: Education Curriculum

### Grades 8-12 Common Core Social Studies Standards Alignment

The chart below outlines the driving concepts that can be used to frame a unit of study based on the research collected in this report and other primary and secondary sources.

Grade	Related Driving Concepts
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Action Civics	<p><b>6: Protest and Resistance</b></p> <p><b>8.58</b> Analyze the significance of Washington, D.C. as a historic and current location for national protests, rallies or other demonstrations.</p> <p><b>8.59</b> Evaluate the effectiveness of non-governmental organizations in Washington, D.C. at participating in and creating change.</p> <p><b>8.60</b> Analyze an individual or a group involved in a historic or current protest movement to evaluate their efforts to achieve reform or improve society.</p> <p><b>8.61</b> Evaluate the role and efficacy of civil disobedience, mass protest and strikes in creating change.</p>
World History	<p><b>8: Shifting power</b></p> <p><b>WH2.96</b> Compare the reasons for the spread and/or emergence of at least two pathogens and diseases (e.g., HIV/AIDS, malaria, Ebola, SARS, COVID-19) across the world since the 1980s, including social and economic impacts at a local, national and global scale.</p>
US History	<p><b>8: Access to Democracy and Power from the 1980s-Present Day</b></p> <p><b>US2.77</b> Evaluate the federal response to the AIDS crisis in the 1980s and the strategies of activists and patient advocates to respond to the crisis.</p> <p><b>US2.82</b> Evaluate the tactics and efficacy of modern social, labor, political, and environmental activist movements in America</p>
D.C. History and Government	<p><b>3: Emergence of Modern Washington, D.C.</b></p> <p><b>DC.26</b> Analyze the impact of the Lavender Scare on LGBTQIA+ life in Washington D.C. and the actions taken by specific individuals and organizations (e.g., William Dorsey Swan and the Gay Liberation Front-D.C.), to increase visibility and equality for LGBTQIA+ individuals in Washington.</p> <p><b>4: Self-Determination in the District</b></p> <p><b>DC.38</b> Evaluate the roles different grassroots community organizations played in fighting for the expansion of political and economic power in the District and nation from the mid- to late 20th century, including local organizing for tenant protections, LGBTQIA+ rights and immigrant rights; national struggles for welfare rights and against poverty; and international fights against the Vietnam War, Apartheid and US imperialism in Latin America.</p>

## Grade 8: Action Civics

<b>Rainbow History Article</b>	<b>Program Guide</b>	<b>BLK Article</b>	<b>Rainbow History Exhibit</b>
D.C. Black Pride Timelines  1991-1993 1995-2003	First D.C. Black Pride Parade on May 25, 1991   <a href="#">Link</a>	“D.C. Holds First Ever Black Lesbian, Gay Pride Day”, July 1991   <a href="#">Link</a>	PRIDE: Party or Protest? Black Pride Panel <a href="#">Link</a>

**Objectives:**

- Students will be able to analyze multiple archival sources and gather evidence of key leaders, places, ideas, and themes related to the creation of D.C. Black Pride.
- Students will be able to create a 2025 D.C. Black Pride Program Guide that honors the style, culture, and vibe of the very first D.C. Black Pride.

**Hook (Think-Pair-Share):** What is pride? How do you make a space for yourself and others within your community?

**Archive Exploration and Research:**

- Use a note-catcher or graphic organizer to read and analyze the D.C. Black Pride article for key individuals and community organizing that were significant to the mission.
- Analyze the First D.C. Black Pride Parade program guide—what are 2-3 common themes that can be found that describe this event?
- Select 2 images from the D.C. Black Pride 1999 Photo Collection to analyze. Describe the characteristics of pride that you witness, which may include Style, Celebrity, Organizing, Dance, Music, Performance Arts, Joy, and Resistance.

**Visual Project:** Program Guide

In pairs or small groups, create a 2025 D.C. Black Pride Program Guide that honors the style, culture, and artistic expression of the very first D.C. Black Pride.

(Alternative: Slide Show or Poster)

- Use eye-catching art and designs for the front cover and back cover of the program guide.
- Honor the individuals or groups involved in the historic creation of D.C. Black Pride. Evaluate their efforts to achieve reform or improve society. 8.60

- Invite participants to D.C., using archival evidence to share the significance of Washington, D.C. as a historic place for Black LGBTQIA+ people. 8.58
- Introduce and describe the event in detail. Use the sources as examples of program guide components, including a theme, speaker topics, special guests, music, activities, images, slogans, or any additional details.
- Compile items from the archive to highlight that represent D.C. Pride and the fight for Black LGBTQIA+ Equality. Evaluate the effectiveness of non-governmental organizations in Washington, D.C. at participating in and creating change. 8.59

## District of Columbia History and Government

<p><b>Rainbow History Archive:</b></p> <p>The Lavender Scare   <a href="#">Link</a></p>	<p><b>Rainbow History Archive:</b></p> <p>Theodore Kirkland at Christopher Street Liberation Day   <a href="#">Link</a></p>	<p><b>Rainbow History Archive:</b></p> <p>The Washington Gay Liberation Front (GLF-DC)   <a href="#">Link</a></p>	<p><b>Rainbow History Archive:</b></p> <p>Gay Power to Gay People (GLF-DC)   <a href="#">Link</a></p>
<p><b>Rainbow History Archive:</b></p> <p>Members of Gay Liberation Front-DC)   <a href="#">Link</a></p>	<p><b>Rainbow History Archive:</b></p> <p>Collective Living Images   <a href="#">Link</a></p>	<p><b>Rainbow History Archive:</b></p> <p>A Letter from Huey Newton to the Revolutionary</p> <p>Brothers and Sisters about the Women’s Liberation and Gay</p> <p>Liberation Movements (p.28)   <a href="#">Link</a></p>	<p><b>Rainbow History Archive:</b></p> <p>Faces of the Front   <a href="#">Link</a></p>

**Objectives:**

- Students will be able to analyze multiple archival sources and gather evidence of key leaders, places, ideas, and themes related to the Lavender Scare and organizing for LGBTQIA+ rights in Washington, D.C.
- Students will be able to use a problem tree to analyze the impact of the Lavender Scare on LGBTQIA+ life in Washington D.C. and the actions taken by Gay Liberation Front-D.C. to increase visibility and equality for LGBTQIA+ individuals in Washington.

**Hook (Think-Pair-Share):** When it comes to creating change, why are individuals stronger together?

**Archive Exploration and Research:**

- Use a note-catcher or graphic organizer to read and analyze the Lavender Scare article and video for the key leaders of the Lavender Scare that considered LGBTQIA+ government workers as blackmailers to the US government.
- Analyze The Washington Gay Liberation Front (GLF-DC) sources, including the images, articles, and organizational timeline. Describe the purpose and mission of the GLF-DC. Consider the strategies this organization used to increase equality for LGBTQIA+ people in D.C. Use the letter from Huey Newton to compare the movement for LGBTQIA+ Equality and the movement for Black Liberation.

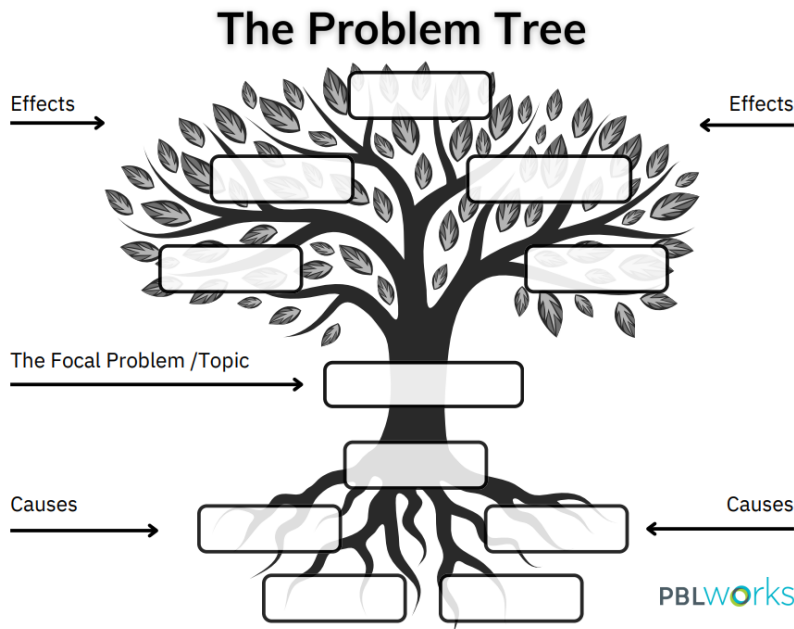
- Describe the impact of Theodore Kirkland, member of The Washington Gay Liberation Front and creator of D.C. Black Pride. Make connections between Theodore Kirkland’s life and the legacy of D.C. Black Pride.

**Graphic Organizer: Problem Tree**

In pairs or small groups, complete a problem tree that analyzes the root causes and effects around the focal topic of Black LGBTQIA+ Equality since the creation of D.C. Black Pride.

(Alternative: Slide Show or Poster)

- Analyze the impact of the Lavender Scare on LGBTQIA+ life in Washington, D.C. and the actions taken by specific individuals and organizations (e.g., William Dorsey Swan and the Gay Liberation Front-DC), to increase visibility and equality for LGBTQIA+ individuals in Washington. DC 26
- Evaluate the roles different grassroots community organizations played in fighting for the expansion of political and economic power in the District and nation from the mid- to late 20th century, including local organizing for tenant protections, LGBTQIA+ rights and immigrant rights; national struggles for welfare rights and against poverty; and international fights against the Vietnam War, Apartheid and US imperialism in Latin America. DC 38



**Extension Related to Driving Concept:**

8.61 Evaluate the role and efficacy of civil disobedience, mass protest and strikes in creating change.

## Grade 8: Action Civics

<p><b>Rainbow History Archive:</b></p> <p>Ms. Earline Budd Community Pioneer Profile   <a href="#">Link</a></p>	<p><b>Rainbow History Archive:</b></p> <p>Oral history interview with Earline Budd   <a href="#">Link</a></p>	<p><b>Rainbow History Archive:</b></p> <p>Toni Collins Community Pioneer Profile   <a href="#">Link</a></p>
<p><b>Rainbow History Archive:</b></p> <p>The 2011-2012 Washington D.C. Trans Community Needs Assessment   <a href="#">Link</a></p>	<p><b>Rainbow History Archive:</b></p> <p>Capital Trans Pride 2009   <a href="#">Link</a></p>	<p><b>Rainbow History Archive:</b></p> <p>Talking Trans History (recording)   <a href="#">Link</a></p>

**Objectives:**

- Students will be able to analyze multiple archival sources and gather evidence of key leaders, places, ideas, and themes related to Transgender rights, safety, and visibility within the LGBTQIA+ community of Washington, D.C. and the nation.
- Students will be able to design a map to equality that documents evidence-based steps to spread awareness for the rights and safety of transgender students within D.C. Public Schools.

**Hook (Think-Pair-Share):** What is freedom? Can you have freedom without safety?

**Archive Exploration and Research:**

- Use a note-catcher or graphic organizer to read and analyze key ideas and themes related to Transgender rights, safety, and visibility within the LGBTQIA+ community of Washington, D.C. and the nation.
- Describe the impact of Earline Budd and Transgender Health Empowerment. Analyze the sources on Toni Collins, Ruby Corado, Rayceen Pendarvis, and Gabrielle "Gibby" Thomas. Make connections between their lives and the legacy of transgender rights in Washington, D.C.
- Analyze the needs assessments for strategies that increase visibility and reduce harm against transgender individuals in Washington, D.C.

**Visual Project:** Map to Equality

In pairs or small groups, design a map that documents evidence-based steps to spread awareness for the rights and safety of transgender students within D.C. Public Schools.

(Alternative: 3-D Model or Speech)

- Use eye-catching art and descriptive words for the project.

- Summarize the types of violence and discrimination experienced by transgender citizens of Washington, D.C.
- Create evidence-based steps to equality that analyze and address the root causes of discrimination towards transgender people.
- Use archival evidence to share the significance of Washington, D.C. as a historic place for Black LGBTQIA+ people. Describe the impact and inspiration of a transgender activist from Washington, D.C. Highlight milestones from their life and legacy. Evaluate their efforts to achieve reform or improve society. 8.58 8.59 8.60

## World History II

<p><b>Rainbow History Oral History</b></p> <p>Oral history interview with Carlene Cheatam</p> <p><a href="#">Link</a></p>	<p><b>Rainbow History Article</b></p> <p>The ClubHouse and AIDS</p> <p><a href="#">Link</a></p>	<p><b>The Kojo Nnamdi Show</b></p> <p>Surviving A Plague: How Local Washington Fought The HIV/AIDS Epidemic   <a href="#">Link</a></p>	<p><b>Independent Article</b></p> <p>Why COVID Deaths Have Surpassed AIDS Deaths in the U.S.   <a href="#">Link</a></p>
<p><b>NIH Article</b></p> <p>Similarities and differences between HIV and SARS-CoV-2   <a href="#">Link</a></p>	<p><b>Government Article</b></p> <p>HIV Global Statistics   <a href="#">Link</a></p>	<p><b>Independent Article</b></p> <p>The Global HIV/AIDS Epidemic   <a href="#">Link</a></p>	<p><b>NIH Article</b></p> <p>The Pandemics of Mass Destruction: A Comparative Analysis of HIV/AIDS and Coronavirus (COVID-19)   <a href="#">Link</a></p>

**Objectives:**

- Students will be able to analyze multiple archival sources and gather evidence of Include social and economic impacts of HIV/AIDS and Covid-19 infections on a local, national and global scale
- Students will be able to describe pathology and prevalence, social attitudes and stigmas, government response, and organized movements to spread awareness in Washington, D.C.
- Students will be able to write an argument persuading the D.C. Council to support a community health project that spreads awareness about COVID-19 or HIV/AIDS.

**Hook (Think-Pair-Share):** How is the research of pathology of illnesses and infections helpful to a society that values health?

**Archive Exploration and Research:**

- Use a note-catcher or graphic organizer to read and analyze the sources on Covid-19 and HIV/AIDS. Include social and economic impacts of the infections on a local, national and global scale. Gather relevant details regarding pathology and prevalence, social attitudes and stigmas, government response, and organized movements to spread awareness.
- Analyze evidence within the sources to argue which groups were most impacted by the epidemics—what are 2-3 common themes that can be found within both?

**Oral Project:** Speech

In pairs or small groups, write an argument persuading the D.C. Council to support a community health project that spreads awareness about COVID-19 or HIV/AIDS.

(Alternative: Debate or Brochure)

- Describe the mission, purpose, and design of the community health project.
- Detail the reasons for the spread and/or emergence of at least two pathogens and diseases: HIV/AIDS and COVID-19, including social and economic impacts at a local, national and global scale. WH2.96

## US History II

<p><b>Rainbow History Oral History</b></p> <p>Oral history interview with Carlene Cheatam</p> <p>Link</p>	<p><b>Rainbow History Article</b></p> <p>The ClubHouse and AIDS   Link</p> <p>Aids Forum   Link</p> <p>AIDS Education Fund fundraisers   Link</p>	<p><b>Rainbow History Article</b></p> <p>Barbara Chinn</p> <p>Link</p>	<p><b>Rainbow History Article</b></p> <p>A. Cornelius Baker</p> <p>Link</p>
<p><b>Rainbow History Article</b></p> <p>Rev. Dr. Rainey Cheeks</p> <p>Link</p>	<p><b>Rainbow History Article</b></p> <p>James "Juicy" Coleman</p> <p>Link</p>	<p><b>Stanford Article</b></p> <p>At the Club: Locating Early Black Gay AIDS Activism in Washington, D.C.   Link</p>	<p><b>The Kojo Nnamdi Show</b></p> <p>Surviving A Plague: How Local Washington Fought The HIV/AIDS Epidemic   Link</p>

**Objectives:**

- Students will be able to analyze multiple archival sources and gather evidence of key leaders, places, ideas, and themes related to fighting HIV/AIDS in Washington, D.C.
- Students will be able to evaluate the local and federal response to the AIDS crisis in the 1980s and the strategies of activists and patient advocates to respond to the crisis.
- Students will be able to design a D.C. AIDS Fundraiser modeled after Whitman-Walker. Create an event that honors the legacy of individuals from D.C. who made lasting impressions on those impacted by HIV/AIDS.

**\_Hook (Think-Pair-Share):** What are examples of stigma around people with HIV or contracting HIV? How do we end those misconceptions?

**Archive Exploration and Research:**

- Use a note-catcher or graphic organizer to analyze the articles, audio, and images around HIV/AIDS activism in Washington, D.C. Gather evidence of key individuals and community organizing that were significant.
- Describe the impacts of major organizations and key leaders in HIV/AIDS activism in Washington, D.C. Consider the strategies this organization and key leaders used to increase equality and educate the community.

- Describe the impacts of Barbara Chinn, Rev. Dr. Rainey Cheeks, James "Juicy" Coleman, and A. Cornelius Baker among other activists. Make connections between these individuals and the legacy of HIV/AIDS activism and LGBTQ+ equality.

**Design Project:** DC AIDS Fundraiser

In pairs or small groups, design a DC AIDS Fundraiser modeled after Whitman-Walker. Create an event that honors the legacy of individuals from D.C. who made lasting impressions on those impacted by HIV/AIDS.

(Alternative: Diorama or 3-D Model)

- Use eye-catching art and designs for the flyer modeled after Whitman-Walker. Invent, design, or create a historical memento that can be sold at the fundraiser.
- Introduce and describe the fundraiser in detail. Add advertisements, activities, and special guests that honor the legacy of Whitman-Walker.
- Honor the individuals or groups involved in the community education around prevention of HIV/AIDS. Evaluate the federal response to the AIDS crisis in the 1980s and the strategies of activists and patient advocates to respond to the crisis. Evaluate their efforts to achieve reform or improve society. US2.77 US2.82

## District of Columbia History and Government

<p><b>Rainbow History Oral History</b></p> <p>Oral history interview with Carlene Cheatam</p> <p>Link</p>	<p><b>Rainbow History Article</b></p> <p>The ClubHouse and AIDS   Link</p> <p>Aids Forum   Link</p> <p>AIDS Education Fund fundraisers   Link</p>	<p><b>Rainbow History Article</b></p> <p>Barbara Chinn</p> <p>Link</p>	<p><b>Rainbow History Article</b></p> <p>A. Cornelius Baker</p> <p>Link</p>
<p><b>Rainbow History Article</b></p> <p>Rev. Dr. Rainey Cheeks</p> <p>Link</p>	<p><b>Rainbow History Article</b></p> <p>James "Juicy" Coleman</p> <p>Link</p>	<p><b>Stanford Article</b></p> <p>At the Club: Locating Early Black Gay AIDS Activism in Washington, D.C.   Link</p>	<p><b>The Kojo Nnamdi Show</b></p> <p>Surviving A Plague: How Local Washington Fought The HIV/AIDS Epidemic   Link</p>

- Students will be able to analyze multiple archival sources and gather evidence of key leaders, places, ideas, and themes related to fighting HIV/AIDS in Washington, D.C. (Whitman-Walker Clinic and The ClubHouse).
- Students will be able to evaluate the roles different grassroots community organizations played in fighting for the expansion of political and economic power in the District and nation from the mid- to late 20th century, including local organizing for LGBTQ+ rights.
- Students will be able to write a TV script with scenes from a political drama that reflect the history and triumphs within the Washington, D.C. HIV/AIDS activism of the early 1980's.

**Hook (Think-Pair-Share):** What is an example of local organizing that has impacted you? How do we help people know more about local activism?

**Archive Exploration and Research:**

- Use a note-catcher or graphic organizer to analyze the articles, audio, and images around HIV/AIDS activism in Washington, D.C. Gather evidence of key individuals and community organizing that were significant.
- Describe the impacts of major organizations and key leaders in HIV/AIDS activism in Washington, D.C. Consider the strategies this organization and key leaders used to increase visibility and equality for LGBTQ+ individuals in Washington.

- Describe the impacts of Barbara Chinn, Rev. Dr. Rainey Cheeks, James "Juicy" Coleman, and A. Cornelius Baker among other activists. Make connections between these individuals and the legacy of HIV/AIDS activism and LGBTQ+ equality.

**Visual Project:** TV Script

In pairs or small groups, write a TV script with scenes from a political drama that reflect the history and triumphs within the Washington, D.C. HIV/AIDS activism of the early 1980's.

(Alternative: Skit or Animation)

- Analyze the impact of the Lavender Scare on LGBTQ+ life in Washington D.C. and the actions taken by specific individuals and organizations (e.g., Whitman-Walker Clinic and The ClubHouse), to increase visibility and equality for LGBTQ+ individuals in Washington. DC.26
- Evaluate the roles different grassroots community organizations played in fighting for the expansion of political and economic power in the District and nation from the mid- to late 20th century, including local organizing for tenant protections, LGBTQ+ rights and immigrant rights; national struggles for welfare rights and against poverty; and international fights against the Vietnam War, Apartheid and US imperialism in Latin America. DC.38

