



# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

## BEVERLEY PALESA DITSIE

Dr Beverley Ditsie is a South African LGBTIQ+ activist, actress, film-maker and musician. Ditsie is one of the founders of the first Pride March in Africa in 1990.

She is a member of the first multi-racial LGBTQ+ organisation on the African continent called the Gay and Lesbian Organisation of Witwatersrand.

Ditsie is also the first lesbian to ever address the United Nations at the fourth and final UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

Ditsie's appearance at the conference was the first time that the United Nations was addressed about considering LGBT+ people in the protection of human rights. In her address, Ditsie argued **“If the world conference on women is to address the concerns of all women, it must similarly recognise that discrimination based on sexual orientation is a violation of basic human rights”**.

Ditsie has gone on to write, direct and consult in over 20 documentaries, screened nationally and internationally, including award winning documentary 'Simon and I' about the lives of Ditsie and LGBT+ activist, friend and mentor Simon Nkoli.

**“  
We were visible, we  
were loud, we were  
fearless at a time  
when we should  
have been most  
afraid.  
”**



Want to find out more? Read an article by Beverley Ditsie about her activism through this QR Code



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## LANI KA'AHUMANU

Lani Ka'ahumanu, is a leader of the bisexual rights movement in the U.S. and has worked for greater visibility for bisexual people. She is also an author, community organizer, and health advocate.

Ka'ahumanu has been doing advocacy work for the bisexual community since the 1980's however had been involved in activist movement's since the 1960's: she joined Another Mother for Peace, an anti-war advocacy group and collected food for the Black Panther free breakfast program.

Ka'ahumanu first came out as a lesbian and then as bisexual in 1980. Ka'ahumanu has spoken openly about her internalised biphobia and being shunned by some in the LGBT+ community at the time. As a result, she wanted more bi visibility within the LGBT+ community.

In the 1980's she began organising a bisexual community within San Francisco. In 1983, she co-founded BiPOL, the first feminist bisexual political action group in the country.

Ka'ahumanu was instrumental in coordinating the first National Bisexual Conference in 1990, where BiNET USA, the first national bisexual rights group, was founded.

In 1991, Lani Ka'ahumanu and Loraine Hutchins co-edited an influential book called "Bi Any Other Name" which contains essays, poetry, and art from dozens of bisexual people sharing their experiences. Ka'ahumanu also coordinated an American Foundation for AIDS Research grant for Lyon-Martin Health Services' outreach program, which targeted young lesbian and bisexual women at high-risk for HIV/AIDS. Ka'ahumanu has continued to write about bisexual issues and continues to publish books and articles today.

“

There is strength in our numbers and diversity. We are every race, class, culture, age, ability, religion, gender identity and sexual orientation.

”



Want to find out more? Read this biography from the National Women's History Museum on Lani Ka'ahumanu using the QR code.



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## SARAH MCBRIDE

Sarah McBride is a State Senator for Delaware and LGBTI+ rights activist. When McBride was elected in November 2020, she became the first openly transgender state senator in American history.

She was also the first openly transgender person to address a major party convention when she spoke at the 2016 Democratic National Convention. McBride also played a prominent role in lobbying the Delaware state legislature in 2013 to pass a law that prohibited discrimination based on gender identity.

McBride had a passion for politics from a young age and first volunteered in a campaign when she was 14 years old.

McBride led the Delaware chapter of Young Democrats by the age of 17.

In addition to her successful political career, McBride has been involved in LGBTI+ advocacy work. McBride worked as national press secretary for Human Rights Campaign, the USA's largest LGBTQ civil rights organization.

In 2018, she published the book 'Tomorrow Will Be Different: Love, Loss, and the Fight for Trans Equality'. It describes her experiences advocating for LGBTQ equality as well as the story of her relationship with her late husband.

“

Hope can be limitless.  
Inspiration can always be found. Ideas are endless.  
But time, that is the one resource that none of us can afford to waste.

”



Want to find out more? Read this biography from the National Women's History Museum on Sarah McBride using the QR code.



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**MENAKA GURUSWAMY AND**

**ARUNDHATI KATJU**

Menaka Guruswamy and Arundhati Katju are LGBTQIA+ rights lawyers in India. Guruswamy and Katju played essential roles in the New Delhi Supreme Court ruling to outlaw Section 377 which criminalised homosexuality. In part to their efforts, since 2018 homosexuality is no longer criminalised in India.

The pair, who came out as a couple in the international media afterward, have noted that this ruling represented a personal triumph as well as a landmark victory for Indian LGBTQ+ people.

Prior to the Supreme Court ruling, Guruswamy and Katju both were, and continue to be, very successful lawyers. Guruswamy studied law as a Rhodes Scholar at the University of Oxford, earning a doctorate degree in 2015. She has worked as a human rights activist consultant to the United Nations. Katju practiced law for 11 years before receiving an LLM in 2017 from Columbia University, where she was a Human Rights Fellow.

Both women have fought to protect the rights of LGBT+ people throughout their professional careers; they fought to get rid of Section 377 in 2013, and have promoted the voices of LGBT+ Indians in court rooms. In 2019 Time magazine named Guruswamy and Katju to its list of the 100 most influential people.

**In their committed fight for justice, they have shown us that we as a society must continue to make progress...**

Quote by Priyanka Chopra in Time 100 article about Arundhati Katju and Menaka Guruswamy



Want to find out more? Use the QR code to watch a video of Menaka Guruswamy & Arundhati Katju talking about their experiences in getting Section 377 overturned.





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## MATCHA PHORN-IN

Matcha Phorn-in is a lesbian feminist human-rights defender in Thailand. She is the founder of Sangsan Anakot Yawachon Development Project, which supports ethnic minority children through educational programs, identity exploration, and scholarships.

Her organisation supports women to become leaders and raise their communities' awareness regarding human rights, gender equality, sexual orientation and gender identity.

Matcha Phorn-in is also the Regional Council Members of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), the Board Member of International Family Equality Day (a network that advocates for LGBTIQ+ family equality), and the former Board Member of ILGA Asia (an LGBTIQ+ rights network for Asia region).

Phorn-in supported the organisation of the first Pride in the Humanitarian System consultation in June 2018 which brought together organisations working for LGBTQIA+ rights along with humanitarian actors to discuss awareness of LGBTQIA+ perspectives in humanitarian crisis prevention and response. This supported humanitarian organisations in understanding the unique barriers LGBTQIA+ people may face during natural disasters/humanitarian crisis.

“

**My desired change is acceptance, acceptance from families and communities. In order to get there, our needs must be addressed, our voices must be heard, and dialogue is the key.**

”



**Want to find out more? Read this interview with Matcha Phorn-in from UN Women using the QR code.**