

Stonewall National Museum & Archives **LGBTQ Business Timeline**

Introduction

The United States has had a long-standing discomfort with the transgression of sexual and gender norms. Influenced by religious ideals, society viewed people who had same-sex desires and engaged in same-sex practices to be immoral and sinful. As such, the US has long enacted laws to control and condemn those who betray sexual and gender norms. Since the nation's earliest days, federal, state and local laws punished those who betrayed sexual and gender norms, often as a capital offense.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, commerce and industry flourished, causing people to move from rural communities to more developed urban areas. As a result of these social transformations, same-sex practices increased, as did organized efforts to suppress them. Accordingly, our examination of LGBTQ history in the United States begins after the Civil War and the growth of industrialization and urbanization. Despite insistent homophobia and transphobia in politics, culture, and society over the past 170 years, LGBTQ people have remained resilient, creative, and dedicated to the fight for rights and visibility. Rather than a comprehensive overview, this timeline is intended to provide a snapshot of significant moments in LGBTQ history so as to encourage further engagement and exploration.

Check out other LGBTQ history timeline selections that specifically explore visual art, theater and dance, literature, film and television, music, sports, memorials and historic monuments, AIDS, and more in this series.



1970 David Geffen co-founded Asylum Records, a major record label that championed artists such as Joni Mitchell, Jackson Browne, and Bob Dylan. [More](#)



1981 Tim Gill started Quark, a successful software company. Thirteen years later, he founded the Gill Foundation to support LGBT rights. [More](#)



1990 Martine Rothblatt co-founded Sirius Satellite Radio. She came out as a transgender woman four years later. [More](#)



1994 David Bohnett started GeoCities, a pioneering web hosting service where users could create their own websites. [More](#)



1996 Robyn Streisand founded the Mixx, a brand strategy company. [More](#)



1999 Peter Thiel co-founded PayPal, where he also worked as the CEO until its sale to eBay in 2002. [More](#)



2001 Anthony Romero became the first gay man and Latino to serve as Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union. [More](#)



2003 Chris Hughes was a co-founder of Facebook. [More](#)



2003 Nick Denton founded Gawker, an online media company. [More](#)



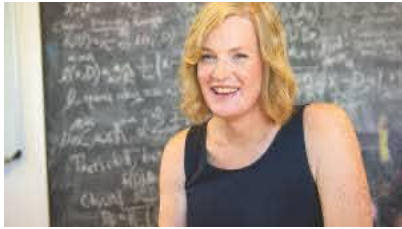
2005 Media mogul Harvey Levin launched TMZ, a news company focused on celebrity culture. [More](#)



2009 Peter Arvai co-founded Prezi, a presentation software company. [More](#)



2009 Grindr, the online dating application for gay men, was founded by Joel Simkhai. [More](#)



2011 Theoretical neuroscientist Vivienne Ming co-founded Socos Labs, a company that draws on machine learning and neuroscience to solve social problems. [More](#)



2011 Claudia Brind-Woody, the Vice President and Managing Director for Global Intellectual Property Licensing at IBM, was given the Out & Equal Trailblazer Award. [More](#)



2011 Todd Sears founded Out Leadership, an LGBTQ business advisory company. [More](#)



2011 Thomas Sanchez and his husband Anthony Shop founded Social Driver, a digital creative agency. [More](#)



2012 Jason Grenfell-Gardner became the CEO and President of Teligent, a pharmaceutical company. [More](#)



2013 Philanthropist and investor Jennifer Pritzker came out as a trans woman, making her the first trans billionaire. [More](#)



2014 Tim Burgess of C1 Financial became the first openly gay CEO of a bank on the New York Stock Exchange. [More](#)



2014 Tim Cook, the chief executive officer of Apple Inc., came out as gay, making him the first chief executive of a Fortune 500 company to do so. [More](#)



2014 President Barack Obama named Megan Smith the third Chief Technology Officer of the United States. [More](#)



2014 Businesswoman and star of *Pose* Angelica Ross founded TransTech Social Enterprise. [More](#)



2015 Cliff Hopkins was brought on as the chief marketing officer at Instagram. [More](#)



2015 Joey Gonzalez was named CEO of Barry's Boot Camp. [More](#)



2016 Hayley Sudbury founded WERKIN, an analytics company that promotes diversity in hiring practices. [More](#)



2016 Shamina Singh founded the Center for Inclusive Growth at Mastercard. [More](#)



2017 One of the most powerful publicly gay men and Latinos on Wall Street, R. Martin Chavez became the chief financial officer of Goldman Sachs. [More](#)



2018 Appointed as the CEO and President of the Land O'Lakes, Beth Ford became the first publicly gay woman to be the CEO of an American Fortune 500 company. [More](#)



2019 Stacey Friedman, general counsel at JP Morgan Chase, won the Jack Watters Corporate Leadership Award from SAGE. [More](#)



2019 Jim Fitterly became the first openly gay CEO of a large industrial company, Dow Inc. [More](#)



2019 Eric Dube became the President and CEO of Retrophin. [More](#)



2019 Louis Vega took on the role of President of Dow North America. [More](#)



2020 Lisa Davis became the Managing Director & D10X Co-Head at Citi's Institutional Client Group. [More](#)

(End November 2020)