

9th JD PRIDE MONTH

Celebrating

The 10th Anniversary of Marriage Equality



Tuesday, June 15, 2021

12:30 pm – 2:00 pm

Presented by

The Hon. Kathie E. Davidson, Ninth Judicial District Administrative Judge

Together with

The Richard C. Failla LGBTQ Commission of the New York Courts,
The Westchester County Bar Association, The National Trans Bar Association &
The LGBT Bar Association of Greater New York



INCLUSION

Welcome

Honorable Kathie E. Davidson,
Ninth Judicial District Administrative Judge

Pledge of Allegiance

Sergeant MaryAnn Koopman

Special Remarks

Matthew Skinner

Executive Director, The Richard C. Failla LGBTQ Commission



Kristen Browde, Esq.

President, The National Trans Bar Association



Sarah Filcher, Esq.

President, The LGBT Bar Association of Greater New York



James L. Hyer, Esq.

President, Westchester County Bar Association

Musical Presentation ~ “Me and Bobby McGee”

Alice Marie, Vibrant Violinist & Vocalist

“Celebrating 10 Years of Marriage Equality”

John Skwiersky, Esq.



Michael Sabatino & Robert Voorheis

Poem ~ “no Name”

Emmett Thompson, WriteGirl alum

Closing

JOHN SKWIERSKY, ESQ.



John Skwiersky is a consulting attorney with the Sylvia Rivera Law Project ("SRLP"), a non-profit organization that provides legal services to Transgender, Intersex, and Gender Non-Conforming ("TIGNC") low-income people and People of Color, located in New York City. He has been affiliated with the organization over the past eleven years in assorted capacities, having first interned with them during the summer of 2010 as a rising 3L. John is also a member of the Westchester County 18-B Panel, representing indigent clients in criminal cases since 2013. He had the privilege of being mentored by his father, Barry Skwiersky, and worked with him for three years before Barry passed away in 2015. John offers pro bono assistance with name changes to transgender individuals in the Hudson Valley.

John is a Westchester native. He attended undergraduate at the University of Rochester, where he double-majored in American History and Philosophy (Ethics), graduating Class of 2008. He then attended Syracuse University College of Law, graduating Class of 2011. John is a member of the Mount Vernon Bar Association, the White Plains Bar Association, LeGal, and the Loft. In 2014, he was awarded the first ever Matthew Carmody Fellowship in recognition of his dedication and service to the TIGNC community. He recently spoke before the Women of Color Subcommittee of the New York State Assembly about the Gender Recognition Act and is thrilled about its passage.

MICHAEL SABATINO & ROBERT VORHEIS



Michael Sabatino, Jr. & Robert Voorheis met in New York City's Greenwich Village. In 1979 they had what is now referred to as a Commitment Ceremony in the Washington Square United Methodist Church. In October of 2003 they traveled to Niagara Falls, Canada where, surrounded by friends and family members they were married in a civil ceremony.

The local paper, *The Journal News*, in Westchester County featured them in a front-page article entitled "The New Faces of Marriage". They were also selected to have their announcement printed in the New York Times. One week later Michael & Robert were

informed by the monsignor of their church that in light of the recent public announcement of their marriage, they were no longer welcome to serve in a public ministry of the Roman Catholic Church Choir in which they had participated as a couple for 25 years.

It took both of them a year to overcome the distress they felt after the treatment they received. After a year of healing, they were once again singing in Zion Episcopal Church Choir in Dobbs Ferry, NY, where they were embraced as a couple by the entire congregation.

In 2006 Michael and Robert became plaintiffs in one of the marriage recognition cases (*Godfrey v Spano*) that worked its way through the New York Court system to the NY Court of Appeals (New York's highest court) and in Nov of 2009, with the aid of Lambda Legal, were victorious in getting a ruling that marriages performed outside NY were to be recognized as legal marriages.

Michael & Robert now speak on the history of the Marriage Equality Movement. They are Co-Authors on a book "The People's Victory- Stories from the front lines in the fight for marriage equality." They are currently featured in an exhibit at the Smithsonian American History Museum on LGBTQ history. They are currently board members of Hudson Valley Stonewall Democrats.

Robert is a former Co-Executive Director of Marriage Equality NY (MENY). He is also Yonkers Mayor Spano's liaison to his LGBTQ Advisory Board. He is a founding member of Yonkers Pride. Currently Robert is the Equal Employment Opportunity and Training Administrator for the City of Yonkers.

Michael serves on the Westchester County New York LGBTQ Advisory Board and is the former Yonkers City Council Majority Leader, a former Human Rights Commissioner for the City of Yonkers and former Communications Director for Marriage Equality NY Michael serves as the Director of Community and Government Affairs for Yonkers.



ALICE MARIE



Alice Marie has performed extensively as a solo artist and with various ensembles for weddings, cocktail hours and receptions since 2008. Further, she has regularly performed at corporate events, holiday parties, community centers and senior homes. She's performed

several times as a strolling violinist on *Good Day, Philadelphia*, serenaded with the Grammy-nominated Temple University Symphony Orchestra and soloed with the Chester County Pops and Immaculata Symphony.

Alice Marie has also performed with the internationally-acclaimed Celtic group, Barleyjuice, and played at the Great American Irish Festival, the Dublin Irish Festival, Celtic Classic in Bethlehem, Annapolis Irish Festival, MusikFest, and toured Ireland and the U.K. as a partnership with the Irish Radio Program, *Blarney on the Air*. While she performed with Barleyjuice, Alice recorded several albums with the most recent one entitled, *The Old Speakeasy*. Alice Marie has also opened for the Rebirth Brass Band at the Arden Theatre and the Mighty Mighty Bosstones as part of Shamrock Fest in Washington, DC.

Alice Marie recently recorded a solo album, entitled *Singles and Double Standards* under the name, Lady Torch. It is a mix of jazz and Celtic music, and features the Grammy-winning pianist, Joshua Yudkin. Alice currently plays with the Irish group, Jamison, and most recently performed virtually for the Romanza Festivale in 2020.

In addition to performing, Alice Marie is a Pennsylvania Certified Music Educator and held a tenured position for the School District of Philadelphia. While teaching, she received an Honorarium from the University of Pennsylvania to teach an after-school program that featured student performances at the Annenberg Center. Currently, Alice teaches private violin, viola and voice lessons virtually due to the COVID-19 crisis.



About WriteGirl

Founded in 2001, WriteGirl is a nationally recognized creative writing and mentoring organization serving more than 500 teens annually, mainly from LA's high-density neighborhoods. WriteGirl envisions a world where all teens live, write, and speak boldly as they become inspiring, transformative leaders, driven to effect positive change in communities. Now in its 20th season, WriteGirl has maintained a 100 percent success rate in helping its seniors not only graduate from high school, but also enroll in college. WriteGirl also works with boys and co-ed groups under the name "Bold Ink Writers." As a founding member of the Arts for Healing and Justice Network (AHJN), Bold Ink Writers brings creative writing workshops and mentors to youth who are incarcerated, and systems impacted. For more information, visit www.writegirl.org.



National Recognition for WriteGirl:

WriteGirl has won more than 90 awards for its 19 years of empowering teen girls. WriteGirl and Executive Director Keren Taylor were awarded the 2020 Los Angeles Times Innovator Award and in 2014 Keren Taylor was named a CNN Hero. In 2013, WriteGirl was honored by First Lady Michelle Obama with the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award – an initiative of the President's Committee on the Arts & the Humanities and the highest national honor awarded to exemplary out-of-school time programs. One of the breakout stars of 2021 so far has been WriteGirl Alum, Amanda Gorman, the national youth poet laureate whose performance at President Biden's Inauguration and the Super Bowl LV struck the hearts of America and the world. We are so proud of Amanda and all that she has achieved since her WriteGirl days, and that pride extends to our entire WriteGirl community. We continue to support and encourage the writing of hundreds of young women like Amanda each year and whether they recite a poem at the Presidential Inauguration or for their families at home, we are filled with pride and hope for the futures of these young writers.

EMMETT THOMPSON

WriteGirl Alum & Poet

Emmett Thompson is a non-binary poet currently attending Los Angeles Valley College, majoring in Political Science. Emmett is an alum of WriteGirl, where they participated for four years. They are currently based in Burbank, California.



“no Name” by Emmett Thompson

my Name is not fear
not depression
or self doubt

i think of reasons to keep existing
breathing in and out
remembering each stutter
i have to count my fingers and toes
to make sure they haven't left me while i slept

i'm not scared
but i like to hide in dark corners
i look out of eyes of someone that isn't me
creating universes in everyone
i'm not small
in size
or in mindset
i go stargazing in the specks in my eyes
i see planets in my pupils

my Name is not misplaced
not random
or a waste

my Name is what I'm trying to find in the universe

HISTORY OF PRIDE MONTH

Pride Month is an entire month dedicated to the uplifting of LGBTQ voices, celebration of LGBTQ culture and the support of LGBTQ rights. Throughout the month of June, nationwide, there have traditionally been parades, protests, drag performances, live theater and memorials and celebrations of life for members of the community who lost their lives to HIV/AIDS. It is part political activism, part celebration of all the LGBTQ community has achieved over the years.



You probably knew that the rainbow flag — created by artist Gilbert Baker in 1978 — is used as a symbol of LGBTQ pride, but did you know that each color on the flag has its own meaning? In the widely known six-color flag, red is symbolic of life, orange is symbolic of spirit, yellow is sunshine, green is nature, blue represents harmony and purple is spirit. In the original eight-color flag, hot pink was included to represent sex and turquoise to represent magic/art.

There have been many variations on the flag. In 2021, the flag has been altered in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter protests, including black to represent diversity, brown to represent inclusivity and light blue and pink, the colors of the trans pride flag.

Why Do We Celebrate in June?

We celebrate in June to coincide with the catalyst of the Gay Liberation Movement that was the Stonewall Uprising. In the early morning hours of June 28, 1969, police raided a popular gay bar in N.Y.C.'s West Village, The Stonewall Inn. This was commonplace for the time, but on this particular evening, the patrons of the bar fought back, starting the Stonewall Riots, which went on for days.

The Stonewall Inn was declared a historic landmark by the city of New York in 2015 and later named a national monument by President Barack Obama in 2016.

This June is the 51st anniversary of the first Pride parade, which happened in 1970, one year after the uprising.





Acknowledgements

NYS Unified Court System

9th JD Technology Department

The Richard C. Failla LGBTQ Commission

The LGBT Bar Association of Greater New York

The National Trans Bar Association

Westchester County Bar Association

Westchester Black Bar Association

Barbara Lerman, Esq.

