



THE ATLANTA PRIDE COMMITTEE, INC.
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THE ATLANTA PRIDE COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES 2021 GRAND MARSHALS

Despite Festival & Parade Cancellation- ATL Pride Honors Grand Marshals

ATLANTA (November 8, 2021) —Today, The Atlanta Pride Committee announced they will honor their slate of 2021 Grand Marshals.

APC Executive Director, Jamie Ferguson said, “These individuals and organizations were nominated by Atlanta’s LGBTQ community and chosen by our members. The work they do is vital to our community, and they deserve to be recognized.”

These Grand Marshals will be given the opportunity to ride in the 2022 Atlanta Pride Parade. Additionally, they will be honored in a celebratory reception that will be hosted by Atlanta Pride this winter.

The 2021 Atlanta Pride Parade Grand Marshals are:

Gerald Bostock
Dr. Valeria Cantos
Gabrielle Claiborne
Out Front Theatre Company
Policing Alternatives & Diversion (PAD) Initiative
Renee Montgomery
Rhea Wunsch

For more information about our 2021 Grand Marshals and the critical role they play in serving Atlanta’s LGBTQ+ community, please visit: www.altantapride.org

Attached: Grand Marshal Bios

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2021 APC GRAND MARSHAL BIOS

Gerald Bostock:

I was an advocate for child victims for more than 10 years in Clayton County, a job I loved. I always received favorable reviews, and our program won state and national recognition. But then, on my personal time, I joined a gay recreational softball team in the Hotlanta Softball League. I joined the league to prove to myself I could do it, both physically and mentally after being diagnosed with prostate cancer. Within 6 months, I was fired. Stated reason for termination: conduct unbecoming a Clayton County Employee. As I have stated from the beginning, no one should go to work fearful of losing their job because of who they are, who they love, or how they identify. So we took our case to the United States Supreme Court. I proudly stood by Aimee Stephens and the Zarda family, and we won! In a 6-3 ruling, we now have Title VII protections. I thank my partner, my loving family and friends, and my amazing legal team at Buckley Beal of Atlanta. There have been so many great organizations that have also supported me during this journey, including Georgia Equality, HRC, and the ACLU. And then there is the softball league-leagues, teams, and individual players from all over the country that have stood up and reached out in a show of support. No regrets!

Dr. Valeria Cantos:

Dr. Valeria Cantos is from Quito, Ecuador. She completed her medical school in Ecuador, then she moved to Atlanta for her Internal Medicine residency and Infectious Diseases Fellowship at Emory University. She is an Assistant Professor at the Division of Infectious Diseases at Emory University, and an attending physician at Grady Memorial Hospital, Emory University Hospital, and the Grady Infectious Disease Clinic (IDP).

Dr. Cantos' research focuses on HIV prevention in ethnic minorities, with a special focus on the Latinx community. She is interested in developing and implementing innovative and culturally responsive strategies to deliver HIV prevention services.

Dr. Cantos is a co-investigator at the Emory Ponce de Leon Clinical Research site, where she works in therapeutic and vaccine clinical trials for COVID-19. She is invested in optimizing representation of Latinx populations in research, as well as overcoming the systemic barriers to healthcare access for these communities.

Gabrielle Claiborne:

Gabrielle Claiborne is Co-founder of Transformation Journeys Worldwide, an inclusion training and consulting firm with a transgender focus. She helps cutting-edge organizations transform their environments into fully trans, gender nonconforming and non-binary inclusive cultures. Her firm was recognized as the Out Georgia Business Alliance's (OGBA) 2018 Small Business of the Year and received the Atlanta Hawk's prestigious 2019 True Comes in All Colors award.

As a former Executive Board member of Atlanta Pride, she currently serves as Co-Chair of the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce's Transgender and Gender Expansive (TGX) Initiative, as Co-Chair of the Trans Affairs Committee on the City of Atlanta's LGBTQ Mayoral Advisory Council, as Inclusion Chair and Board Secretary of the OGBA, as Chair of the OGBA's TGNC360 Workplace Initiative and as Advisory Board Member of Out Front Theater Group.

Claiborne is a TEDx speaker whose work has been featured in Forbes and is the author of a memoir meets self-help book Embrace Your Truth: A Journey of Authenticity. She was the Atlanta Business Chronicle's 2019 Diversity & Inclusion "Outstanding Voice" Award recipient and received the 2018 Georgia Small Business Administration's LGBT Small Business Champion Award. In 2015, she was chosen as Atlanta's Best Trans Activist.

Out Front Theatre Company:

Out Front Theatre Company's mission is to tell LGBTQIA+ stories. Since our inception in 2016, Out Front Theatre Company has existed to serve artistic excellence to the LGBTQIA+ communities of Atlanta and the surrounding areas by producing outstanding theatrical experiences which focus on the voices of the LGBTQIA+ cannon. Though other companies in Atlanta have explored these themes in their respective programming, no theatre existed specifically to cater to the LGBTQIA+ audiences who regularly crave outstanding professional theatre that reflects their shared experiences. As Atlanta has the largest self-identified LGBTQIA+ population in the Southeast and with the prospective boom of the entertainment industry in our own backyard, it seemed disorienting that a theatre like ours wasn't already thriving as was the case in many other major regional cities like San Francisco and Chicago. Bearing this in mind, our leadership set out to create a company that would successfully fill the void. www.outfronttheatre.com

Policing Alternatives & Diversion (PAD) Initiative:

PAD was born out of the work and vision of Atlantans who were directly impacted by policing and incarceration and were committed to a new approach to community safety and wellness. Under the leadership of queer and trans people of color, Solutions Not Punishment Collaborative (SNaPCO) was formed in 2013 and rallied a broad coalition of Atlantans to champion criminal justice reform and propose more effective approaches to public safety.

In 2015, Atlanta City Council and the Fulton County Board of Commissioners unanimously agreed to authorize a Pre-Arrest Diversion Design Team. The team, which included representatives from local criminal justice agencies, local governments, neighborhood and faith leaders, directly impacted community members, and social services providers, worked over the next 18 months to design the local pilot of a diversion and care navigation strategy based on the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) model. PAD launched in 2017, offering diversion services to the Atlanta Police Department and providing harm reduction-based case management, housing, transportation, food assistance and linkage to care that supported improvements in participant and community quality of life.

Today, PAD employs a two-fold strategy to divert individuals away from the criminal justice system: diversion for individuals who have been detained by law enforcement and are otherwise subject to arrest; and ATL311 Community Referrals for individuals who have been referred by community members through the City of Atlanta 311 non-emergency services line. PAD's the partnership with City of Atlanta 311 line is emerging as a national model, as the first time any city in the country has used 311 to dispatch community responders for concerns related to behavioral health or poverty.

Renee Montgomery:

Renee Montgomery, a West Virginia native with 3 Girls State Basketball Championships, graduated from UConn as a two-time All-American in 2009 and played on the undefeated team that went on to win a national championship that year. She was drafted 4th in the WNBA and won 2 WNBA championships while also being named an All-Star and 6th Woman of the Year in her 11 year professional career. Renee retired in 2021 after sitting out the 2020 season to focus on social reform and justice. Renee serves as a Sports Analyst for NBA/ESPN, host to numerous media outlets and host of her own weekly podcast "Montgomery & Co.". She is currently part Owner and Vice President of the WNBA Atlanta Dream.

Rhea Wunsch:

Rhea Wunsch is a 19-year-old community organizer and activist. She is currently a sophomore at Georgia State University, where she studies Public Policy with minors in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Social Justice. She has been working in community organizing since high school when she started working on the Stacey Abrams for Governor campaign. Since then, she has worked on several other political campaigns, organized events for issues she's passionate about, and worked with organizations such as March For Our Lives and Not My Generation. Rhea hopes to continue her work in the community throughout college and beyond with the goal of amplifying the voices of youth activists and empowering the people around her.