# Transcript: Honoring Pride

**Rosemary Ferreira**

Hello and welcome to The Table podcast! We’re excited to release a special episode in honor of Pride month, so let’s get to it!

In the United States, June is recognized as Pride month, which celebrates the lives of LGBTQ+ folks, an umbrella term for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer identities as well as other sexual identities and gender diverse people. Pride is celebrated in June to honor the 1969 Stonewall uprising that occurred in Greenwich Village in lower Manhattan. The uprising served as a catalyst for the Gay Liberation Movement, which began to organize annual Pride marches in New York City in commemoration of the uprising. Pride marches have become widely popular events that are celebrated in cities across the U.S. and globally today.

There are many stories about what happened the night of the Stonewall uprising. While it’s not clear who threw the first brick or punch, what is known is that the uprising was in response to a police raid at the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in Greenwich Village. Police raids were a common tactic to enforce anti-LGBTQ+ laws and shut down queer spaces. Local patrons of the Stonewall Inn were fed up with the harassment of police and protested against the police for several days. These protests eventually led to the founding of multiple gay rights organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign and GLAAD.

However, it’s important to note that LGBTQ+ organizing did not begin nor end with Stonewall. Before the 1969 uprising, gay rights organizations, such as the Mattachine Society existed for more than a decade before the uprising. However, while the Society had more radical, communist roots, members began to focus on respectability and seeking acceptance from mainstream white, middle-class society. This push for assimilation excluded low-income queer and trans People of Color and marked deep cuts in LGBTQ+ communities. A year after the Stonewall uprising, Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson, who were leading activists for Trans and Gender Non-Conforming People of Color, founded STAR, a radical collective that provided housing and other resources to homeless Trans and Queer youth and sex workers.

Here is a clip of Sylvia Rivera speaking at a Gay Pride Rally in 1973 in New York City where was she was initially heavily booed on stage.

**Archived Footage: Sylvia Rivera**

I believe in the gay power. I believe in us getting our rights, or else I would not be out there fighting for our rights. That’s all I wanted to say to you people. If you all want to know about the people that are in jail and do not forget Bambi L’amour, Andorra Marks, Kenny Messner, and other gay people who’re in jail. Come and see the people at STAR House on 12th Street on 640 East 12th Street between B and C. Apartment 14. The people that are trying to do something for all of us! And not men and women that belong to a white, middle-class, white club. And that’s what you all belong to! Revolution now! Gay power [crying]. Louder! Gay power!

**Rosemary Ferreira**

Today, Trans Women of Color continue to experience what the American Medical Association has identified as an epidemic. Last year 44 Trans people were killed, most of whom were Black and Latinx Trans women. The violent and deadly attacks against Trans Women of Color exist within a backdrop of a rise in anti-Trans legislation in states across the country. LGBTQ+ folks also continue to experience discrimination in various sectors of our society, including employment, housing, and health care.

Pride is a time for celebration and a time for reflection, of examining how far or not far we’ve come as a society. In this episode, we asked staff members at the University of Maryland, Baltimore what Pride means to them. Here’s what they had to say...

**Gregory Brightbill**

Hello, my name is Gregory Brightbill. I use he, him pronouns and I work in Intercultural Leadership and Engagement as the associate director for student leadership and involvement at UMB. I'm proud to be married to my wonderful husband, Bud. And I'm proud to be a gay man. What does Pride mean to me? Pride means that I recognize that the fight is not over. From the Stonewall uprising on June 28th, 1969, to the affirmation of Title 7 protections for LGBT people, giving us safety in the workplace, and that happened on June 15th, 2020. Pride is recognizing that as queer people, we've come far, but we still have a lot to go. To me, Pride means realizing that our fight is not over. Pride is honoring the martyrs who came before us such as Marsha P Johnson and Harvey Milk and James Byrd Junior and Matthew Shepard. Pride is also celebrating the victories we've achieved. The victories giving us the ability to freely exist. For me, I celebrate Pride knowing full well that we are not done. That queer people across the country are still murdered, discriminated against, harassed... That even in the streets of Baltimore, trans women of color are murdered almost regularly.

To celebrate Pride should not mean turning our back on what currently exists in our country as it pertains to queer people. Queer people’s right to exist and as a queer person, I continually recognize that the pendulum of LGBTQ rights swings left to right, back to forward, and I know full well that all is not clear.

Now Pride to me means that I celebrate my husband and I celebrate the life I'm able to have. Pride to me means that I can be myself. Pride to me means that I can fall in love, but Pride also means to me a recognition that I am not done. That we are not done until every queer person of every color can be themselves and can be safe and can find joy. That's what Pride means to me.

**Zanne Gogan**

My name is Zanne, my pronouns are they, them, theirs, and I'm transmasculine. As a transgender person, I always feel proud of my identity, but this does not come without difficulty. With the multiple attacks on transgender people in the present, it's hard to not let society’s hatred of my identity get to me. However, Pride reminds me of the resilience it takes to be who I am and allows me to reflect on everything I've gone through to live as my authentic self. I'm also so proud of the other people in the transgender community for everything they've done to get us here and everything they continue doing to allow us to keep going. Being transgender brings me humility, empathy, and strength. I'm so proud of who I am and I'm happy to be part of a resilient community of unique and beautiful people.

**Mishawn Smith**

Hello everyone, my name is Mishawn Smith. My pronouns are she, her, hers. I work in the University of Maryland School of Nursing’s dean’s office within the diversity and inclusion department. I am also the chair of Stonewall Pride, UMB’s first LGBT staff and faculty affinity group. Pride to me means a state of being, a sense of worth, taking note of your accomplishments, respecting yourself and others as well as taking up for those who cannot take up for themselves, appreciating where you come from and where you are now, and just knowing that no matter what you will always love and support yourself because you have that affirmation, that value, that understanding, and positive impact due to all that you have accomplished and all that you have been through.

**Rosemary Ferreira**

Thank you, Greg, Zanne, and Mishawn for sharing such grounding and powerful words. For our listeners, we hope you take the time this month and every month to honor, uplift, and advocate for the lives of LGBTQ+ folks. Check out the transcript to this episode for a list of LGBTQ+ activists and organizations to learn from, engage with, and donate to. Happy Pride!

**List of LGBTQ+ Activists and Organizations**

[Ericka Hart](http://ihartericka.com/) – Sex Educator | IG: @ihartericka

[Raquel Willis](http://www.raquelwillis.com/bio) – Activist and Writer | IG: @raquel\_willis

[Alok Vaid-Menon](https://www.alokvmenon.com/) – Writer and Performance Artist| IG: @alokvmenon

[Baltimore Safe Haven](https://www.baltimoresafehaven.org/) – Provides opportunities and services to transgender people in Baltimore City | Twitter: @BaltimoreHaven

[No Justice No Pride](https://www.nojusticenopride.org/about) – D.C. based collective for Trans justice | IG: @nojusticenopride

[Free State Justice](https://freestate-justice.org/) - LGBTQ+ advocacy organization in Maryland | Twitter: @FreeStateLGBTQ

[TransLatinx DMV](https://www.translatinxdmv.org/) - TransLatinx organization in the DMV | IG: @translatinxdmv

[Marsha P. Johnson Institute](https://marshap.org/) – Black transgender advocacy organization | IG: mpjinstitute