

June Diversity Tip Sheet:

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Pride Month

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Be a first-rate version of yourself, not a second-rate version of someone else." - Judy Garland

For many in the United States, and around the world for that matter, gay pride is something associated with parades, festivals, and at times people behaving outlandishly as a sign of being free. The truth is that lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans- gender individuals around the globe have been fighting for the right to be treated in a way that so many of us take for granted, Namely, to be treated with dignity and respect This struggle dates to Pre-modern times through the 19th Century movements in Germany and up to today. But for those of us in the United States, Gay Pride as we know and celebrate it has its birthplace at The Stonewall Inn on June 28, 1969.

On June 28, 1969, New York City police began a raid at The Stonewall Inn. It was a common occurrence for places where gay people congregated for police to conduct raids and to extort money from bar owners. These raids usually happened where the bar owners knew in advance and could prepare for it with the end result being a kickback to police as well as patrons often being harassed, beaten, and arrested. On June 28, 1969 something different occurred at The Stonewall Inn. When police began the raid, people did not do what was expected. They fought back against public humiliation and harassment and did so for several days. For many this event is considered to be the beginning of what united the gay community in the United States and in some part around the world.

The first Gay Pride parades simultaneously took place in New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles one year after The Stonewall Inn Riots. Today, there are hundreds of Gay Pride parades and festivals that take place throughout North, Central, and South America, Europe, Australia, and Asia.

Despite increasing acceptance and celebration of LGBT Americans, there are still many social and workplace situations that create uncomfortable or even hostile conditions for our clients and co-work- ers. They may not choose to fight back as Stonewall's patrons did, but their dignity, satisfaction and happiness are no less important. I want you to ask yourself this month, "What can I do or do better to lessen or eliminate conditions in my workplace that are unfriendly to LGBT individuals?" When you ask yourself that question, you are creating a better workplace for everyone that walks in your door.

On May 30, 2014, President Barack Obama proclaimed June 2014 as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month. In that Presidential Proclamation, he stated: "This month, as we mark 45 years since the patrons of the Stonewall Inn defied an unjust policy and awakened a nascent movement, let us honor every brave leader who stood up, sat in, and came out, as well as the allies who supported them along the way. Following their example, let each of us speak for tolerance, justice, and dignity – because if hearts and minds continue to change, laws will too."

When we allow people to be "first rate versions" of who they are, our firms and our lives prosper. That is the promise of diversity and inclusion. On behalf of the ALA Committee on Diversity and Inclusion, Happy Pride Month to you and your office!

Explore Additional Resources:

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLG) - www.community.pflg.org

Human Rights Campaign - www.hrc.org

Lambda Legal Defense - www.lambdalegal.org

The White House - <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/05/30/presidential-proclamation-lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-pride-mon>

It Gets Better Project - <http://www.itgetsbetter.org/>