

Each June, many cities, states and our Nation recognize and honor the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and/or Allied (“LGBTQ”) community during Pride Month. Although the worst appears to be behind us with the pandemic, the normal annual celebration marked by vibrant, loving and affirming parades and celebrations in this community will be muted.

At CPCS, we celebrate and are proud of our many LGBTQ colleagues who make the daily commitment we all share to represent our clients. There is a bond in knowing suffering, created through inequities built into the law. We welcome our colleagues’ voices in sharing reflections on what Pride means to them this year, and I want to thank them for taking the time to share their stories with us.

Melanie Roberts (she/her), Youth Advocacy Division Training Director, Boston

This Pride I am spending some time thinking about Marsha P. Johnson. For those of you who are not familiar with Marsha, she was an activist, who was also black, queer, and transgender. Marsha was found dead in 1992, and was likely murdered. So far this year, Jaida Peterson, Serenity Hollis, Keri Washington, Tiffany Thomas, Danika Henson, Remy Fennell and Tiara Banks were murdered – all members of the transgender or gender non-conforming community.

I hope to spend some time this month celebrating, but I will also be looking to Marsha and others for inspiration on how to continue to dismantle a system that so frequently and consistently dehumanizes black transgender lives. (Please learn more about Marsha here: <https://marshap.org>; <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/obituaries/overlooked-marsha-p-johnson.html>)

Kellie Tiller (She/Her/They), Trial Attorney, Mental Health Litigation Division, Worcester

For me, Pride is the best time of the year. It is the one month where all my intersectionality is Seen. My pronouns are She/Her. I remember when I did not understand how to celebrate Pride because I was so unsure about who I was. It was not until I surrounded myself with Community that I was able to get my Grounding and understand that each intersection is made of greatness and that alone is something to celebrate. Happy Pride Month!

Barra Cohen (she/her), Trial Attorney, PDD, Springfield

June 28, 1969: Stonewall was a RIOT.

Over the years as Pride has taken on new meaning and shapes and forms I try to call in the origins of Pride. Banana Republic made a sweater with the word “Femme” emblazoned on it. This past month, the Gap stole and coopted the Lesbian Avengers symbol and put it

on a t-shirt to celebrate Pride this month – or more accurately slapped it on a shirt to profit off of the work of radical queers. You can check out the Lesbian Avengers here: <http://www.lesbianavengers.com/about/history.shtml>. In other words, our queerness and our culture has been taken and assimilated by the masses.

Pride marches have local banks and elementary schools marching in them these days. I honor that the first Pride was born of resistance. It was trans women, queer people of color, diesel dykes, sissy fags, femmes in heels who took to the streets in the face of the police raiding the queer bar.

My Pride is not a sanitized Pride. It is a hot, sweaty and messy, queer Pride. It is a celebration of resistance. It is also a party because we had to start throwing one for ourselves in the face of rejection, violence, and others trying to shame us.

- Being “queer is not about who you’re having sex with, that can be a dimension of it, but queer is being about the self that is at odds with everything around it and has to invent and create and find a place to speak and to thrive and to live.” bell hooks <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rJk0hNROvzs>

Pride is a celebration of queer kinship and the family formations we created when our culture and government told us that we could not be family. It is a reverence for the ancestors such as Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson. I say bring on the Dykes on Bikes and the gays in chaps. And have the elementary schools march next to that.

Shayla Mombeleur (She/They), Trial Attorney, Public Defender Division, Boston

As a Black person who is also a member of the LGBTQ+ community, this significant month naturally leads me to reflect on the intersectionality of PRIDE and Black Lives Matter.

While both communities have historically faced their own incredible, yet similar instances of brutality and oppression, Black LGBTQ + members are twice as likely to experience police violence and are subjected to higher rates of assault, harassment, trauma and mistreatment.

The LGBTQ+ and Civil Rights movements have equally shown us the impact of organizing and working together to achieve common goals. We have to continue to stand together in the fight for liberation and remember that “Black lives transcend into Pride”. Black LGBTQ+ members like Marsha P. Johnson, who was a trans activist, was on the front lines of the LGBTQ+ liberation movement and the Stonewall uprising and is an example of the nexus between Black Lives Matter and LGBTQ+ PRIDE.

LGBTQ+ Pride month gives us an annual moment to reflect on, honor and embrace members of the LGBTQ community, their families and allies, in celebration of equality. Pride presents us all with a great opportunity to think of small ways that we can uplift, support and ally for the visibility, acceptance and respect for those who are often mistreated and victimized simply because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. One modest measure would be to consider using pronouns that we attach to our names, out of respect for transgender and non-binary colleagues, whose lives and identities suffer significant slights and outrages through misidentification, bias and ill will. Here is a short article that helps to explain the use of pronouns, including what to do if we make a mistake:

<https://www.diversitycenterneo.org/about-us/pronouns/>

Happy Pride to all!

2021 Pride Events

Trustees of Reservation Conservation shared events

https://thetrustees.org/program/lgbtq-events/?gclid=CjwKCAjwn6GGBhADEiwAruUckjGXzoW-Orz9tx1ufDevTXrE_oHHos744jV9-fACZNpPZIBPl5akpRoC-jwQAvD_BwE

Google listing of Pride Month Events

<https://www.google.com/search?q=pride+month+massachusetts+events&oq=pride+month+massachusetts+events&aqs=chrome..69i57.5967j0j15&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8&ibp=html;events&rciv=evn&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj2xcKR7JnxAhVIhOAKHcpBBa4Q5bwDMAB6BAGcEAE#fpstate=tldetail&htidocid=L2F1dGhvcml0eS9ob3Jpem9uL2NsdXN0ZXJlZmVudC8yMDIxLTA2LTAxZDM1NDE2NTcwMTAwOTc4NDA2MzY%3D&htivrt=events&mid=/g/11ppsmhs8r&sxsrf=ALeKk02oYvZvkfhc9n2LRFUwLaqrr5CtZA:1623767183834>

Worcester Area (and beyond) Pride Events

<https://allevents.in/worcester-ma/lgbt-pride>

North Shore Pride

<https://www.northshorepride.org/>

Boston Area Pride Events – Eventbrite

<https://www.eventbrite.com/d/ma--boston/lgbt-events/>