



Amy Schneider (She/Her) Amy Schneider, LLC
– Honoree of LGBTQ Caucus

Jeopardy champion Amy Schneider enjoyed a 40-game winning streak during her time on the popular game show, making her the second-winningest contestant ever! Since then, Amy has gone on to become a prominent spokesperson for the trans community, which has included numerous speaking engagements around the country and a visit to the White House in support of Trans Visibility Day. Amy is working on a book about her life and eagerly anticipates Jeopardy's upcoming Tournament of Champions in November.



Anjali Rimi Koka (She/They) Parivar Bay Area –
Honoree of Assemblymember Alex Lee

Anjali Rimi is a woman of Transgender, Southasian, Immigrant, and Hinduism experiences. With roots in India, she blossomed in Canada and belonging in the United States. She is based in San Francisco Bay Area in California.

Anjali is the president of America's only Trans-led, Trans-centering South Asian Queer organization of Parivar Bay Area. Parivar Bay Area focuses on transgender Kinnar Hijrah equity through health care access, economic justice, and social inclusion within communities of color while centering TGNCI+ folk of Southasian diaspora. Parivar Bay Area leads SF Bay Area COVID relief coalition while leading the largest grassroots effort to recover and rebuild Trans Hijrah lives in India. Additionally, Anjali Rimi oversees the

economic justice program at Parivar Bay Area that provides microgrants to Trans entrepreneurs to set up small business livelihood projects in India and beyond. Anjali currently serves on the boards of Lyon

Martin Health Services, LGBT Asylum Project, and San Francisco Pride & on the Transgender Advisory Committee with the Office of Transgender Initiatives, San Francisco Mayor's office. They serve as an advisor to GLBTQ+ Asian Pacific Alliance (GAPA) & San Francisco Queer Film Festival & Sewa International for Transgender visibility, and co-chair of the QTAPI Coalition of America. They have previously served on the boards for East Bay Stonewall Democrats, Oakland LGBTQ Center, Harvard Medical School & TGI Justice Project.

Anjali has held over 100 DEI workshops and seminars to educate and build awareness for Trans LGB affirming workplaces and faculties across Fortune 500 companies, nonprofits, and community organizations as a DEI coach, along with helping spaces build racial equity and gender justice.

She holds an MBA and works as a business development executive in the wine industry with Constellation Brands. A polyglot, Anjali Rimi is an excellent speaker, performer, and community organizer.



**Arlene Rusche & Clara Brock (She/Her/Theirs)
City of Santa Clara Activists – Honorees of
Assemblymember Evan Low**

Arlene Rusche and Clara Brock are true pioneers for the LGBTQ+ community. After graduating from San Jose State University, Arlene pursued her passion for becoming a schoolteacher. She taught at Santa Clara Unified School District for 16 years. Clara served in the US Navy for five years as an aviation electronics technician. After 20 years, she served 15 years in the Naval Reserve, retiring as a lieutenant.

Arlene and Clara, who have been in a committed relationship since early 1992, took the next step by legally marrying in 2013. Arlene, who was 73 at the time, and Clara, who was 86, are trailblazers for our younger LGBTQ+ generation and remind us that love can be found at any age. While their marriage to one another does not change their feelings for each other, it does represent a life-changing civil rights moment, where their marriage and love are legally recognized.



Arturo Vargas (He/Him/His) National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund – Honoree of Commissioner Ricardo Lara

Arturo Vargas is the Chief Executive Officer of the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, a national membership organization of Latino policymakers and their supporters governed by a 36-member Board of Directors. Arturo also serves as CEO of the NALEO Educational Fund. This affiliated national nonprofit organization strengthens American democracy by promoting the full participation of Latinos in civic life. Arturo has held these leadership positions since December 1994.

The NALEO Educational Fund’s programmatic activities include US citizenship outreach and assistance, civic participation and integration, voter engagement, technical assistance to elected and appointed Latino officials, research on Latino demographic and electoral trends, and policy analysis and advocacy on access to the democratic process. Headquartered in Los Angeles, the NALEO Educational Fund is governed by a 15-member Board of Directors and maintains offices in Houston, New York, and Washington, DC. Prior to joining NALEO, Arturo was Vice President for Community Education and Public Policy of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund. His prior positions at MALDEF included Director of Outreach and Policy. He coordinated the organization’s 1991 redistricting efforts, which led to a historic increase in the number of Latinos serving in the California legislature. Arturo also directed MALDEF’s National 1990 Census Program, an award-winning national outreach and public policy effort to promote a full count of the Latino population. Before joining MALDEF, Arturo was the senior education policy analyst at the National Council of La Raza, now known as UnidosUS.

Arturo is a nationally recognized expert in Latino demographic trends, electoral participation, voting rights, the Census, and redistricting. He has been included in Hispanic Business Magazine’s List of 100 Hispanic Influentials twice and named one of the 101 most influential Latinos eleven times by Latino Leaders Magazine.

He has served on numerous local and national nonprofit and foundation Boards. He recently completed service on the US Census Bureau National Advisory Committee on Racial, Ethnic, and Other Populations and previously served on the Census Bureau’s predecessor advisory committees, appointed by both Republican and Democrat US Secretaries of Commerce. He also served on the 2001-2002 and 2011-2012 Los Angeles City Council Redistricting Commissions.

Arturo holds a master’s degree in education and a bachelor’s degree in History and Spanish from Stanford University.



Robert Alan “Bob” Lehman (He/Him/His) LGBTQ+ Activist, Veterans Advocate & Arts Leader – Honoree of Assemblymember Chris Ward

“Long known in the San Diego community for his work championing veteran, LGBTQ, and artistic causes . . . Lehman has built a formidable reputation as a leader who brings communities together under the umbrella of diversity and inclusion.” The San Diego Union-Tribune (June 27, 2021)

For 25 years, Bob Lehman has been a nationally recognized leader in the fight for LGBTQ+ equality. A decorated U.S. Marine combat veteran, he helped end the discriminatory “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy as the first openly gay veteran on a US Congressional military advisory board and the San Diego County Military and Veterans Advisory Council. He founded San Diego’s American Veterans for Equal Rights chapter. He was a founding member of the national Military Education Initiative Board. In 2000, Lehman organized and led the first contingent of openly gay veterans in the San Diego Veterans Day Parade.

Lehman helped fund and establish the California Legislative LGBTQ Caucus in 2002, working with then Assemblymember Christine Kehoe. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed Lehman as the first openly gay Dream Team advisory board member in 2004. Lehman also co-founded the Stonewall Citizens’ Patrol following a series of brutal attacks against gay men in 2006.

Lehman and his husband Tom Felkner were prominent national leaders in the fight for marriage equality; providing major funding, staff, and campaign offices to fight California Prop 22 in 2000 and Prop 8 in 2008. The couple made history as the first two men to legally marry in California.

Three mayors have named a day in Lehman’s honor. In 2016, the City of San Diego Human Relations Commission named Lehman “Humanitarian of the Year,” and UPLIFT San Diego named him “Citizen of the Year.” He was inducted into San Diego’s LGBT Veterans Wall of Honor, received San Diego Pride’s “Champion of Pride” award, and was honored with the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force’s “Trailblazers Award.” PFLAG named him an “Honorary Lifetime Member.” The San Diego Lambda Archives honored him as one of its “Heroes.”

Lehman currently is the Executive Director of the San Diego Museum Council, advocating on behalf of nearly 60 museums and cultural institutions throughout San Diego County. Since assuming the leadership role, he has increased the diversity of the Council’s membership and improved accessibility for all San Diego families and neighborhoods.

Lehman serves on the San Diego Regional Arts and Culture Coalition Board and represents the LGBTQ+, arts, and veterans’ communities on the Balboa Park Cultural Advisory Board. He recently served on the board of directors of the Choral Consortium of San Diego, the Community Advisory Council for San Diego Pride, and the Community Advisory Council for the San Diego History Center/Lambda Archives 2019-2021 LGBTQ+ exhibition.

Lehman served as Executive Director of the San Diego Gay Men’s Chorus from 2013 to 2019 and helped create its Youth Pride Chorus and acclaimed Chamber Chorale. Under his leadership, the mission-based organization of 500 volunteers was selected “Nonprofit of the Year” in 2016 by the Greater San Diego Business Association.

Lehman was a member of San Diego’s official delegation to the San Francisco U.S. Naval Dedication (2016) and the San Diego Construction Launch (2019) of the USS Harvey Milk prior to the ship’s 2021 christening. He was a National Committee Member (Western States Director) of the Harvey Milk US Postage Stamp Campaign and is a National Committee Member of the Bayard Rustin U.S. Postage Stamp Campaign.

Lehman was a co-founder of the San Diego GLBTQ Hate Crime Fund of San Diego Crime Stoppers; he is on the Board of Directors of the San Diego GLBTQ Historic Task Force and serves on the Board of Governors of the Harvey Milk & Nicole Murray Ramirez Student Scholarship Fund.

He has received the General von Steuben Outstanding Service Medal and the International Jose Julio Sarria Civil Rights Award.



**Robert E. “Bob” Nelson (He/Him/His)
Posthumous Contributions to Public Service –
Honoree of President pro Tempore Toni Atkins**

Bob Nelson (October 25, 1991 – March 28, 2022) was a political strategist, business entrepreneur, and dedicated public servant. In 1977, Bob launched his first communications agency and gained notoriety as a ballot measure specialist. Over the years, his agency grew into different iterations, each gaining accolades and success. Bob directed national and regional projects supporting public schools, water systems, electrical utilities, hospitals, highways, gaming, horse breeders, oil companies, beer and wine producers, organized labor, and land developers.

Beyond his agency work, Bob was highly active in civic affairs, especially in San Diego. Bob served on the San Diego Unified Port District Board of Commissioners (2011-2017, chair in 2014), State of California Film

Commission (2016), City of San Diego Public Utilities Advisory Commission (2004-2006), San Diego Convention Center Corporation Board of Directors (2006-2010; chair, 2010), San Diego LGBT Center Board of Directors (chair, 2008), and the San Diego Human Dignity Foundation Advisory Board. Bob was also a member of San Diego Mayor Dick Murphy’s LGBT Advisory Committee, a presidential appointee to the bipartisan US Competitiveness Policy Council, and worked as transition chairperson and interim chief of staff for a US Senator. In 1992, he founded Republicans for Clinton and later served on the Clinton/Gore transition team. In recognition of Bob’s decades of community service, he was inducted into the Imperial Court de San Diego as their first and only Grand Sorcerer. He was also inducted into the Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels, a voluntary philanthropic organization, in 2016.

One could always rely on Bob's big-heartedness, from generously supporting local nonprofits to sponsoring children in school fun runs. Of all the charities Bob generously supported, the San Diego LGBT Center youth programs are where he served in multiple capacities as a volunteer, board member, and donor.



Carlos Marquez III (He/Him/His) ACLU California Action – Honoree of Assemblymember Sabrina Cervantes

Carlos Marquez III is the inaugural Executive Director of ACLU California Action, a statewide 501(c)4 organization established in 2021 to represent California's three ACLU affiliates with one voice in the State Capitol on civil rights and civil liberties. Prior to leading ACLU California Action, Carlos represented public education and healthcare stakeholders as the Founder and Principal of CM3 Advocacy LLC, a Sacramento-based government affairs consultancy. He served as Senior Vice President, Government Affairs, and Political Director for the California Charter Schools Association.

Carlos' career in advocacy has spanned leadership across the LGBTQ+ equality movement, education equity movement, and the labor movement while at Service Employees International Union Local 221. He is most proud of his contributions to the LGBTQ+ equality movement, including the successful launch of the Manchester Grand Hyatt Boycott for its role in the Prop 8 campaign, as Chair of Pride at Work, an affinity group of the AFL-CIO.

Most recently, Carlos led the Sacramento LGBT Community Center through a historic period of growth and service expansion as its Board President, including opening a shelter for LGBTQ homeless youth and purchasing a permanent home for the agency. Other roles in the movement include serving as Deputy Political Director for the LGBTQ Victory Fund & Institute and Executive Director of HONOR Fund, a sponsored LGBTQ initiative of the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund (MALDEF). Carlos holds a BA in Political Science & Journalism from San Diego State University. He was named "40 under 40" by the Sacramento Business Journal in 2019.



Cymone Alexia Reyes (She/Ella) San Joaquin Pride Center – Honoree of Senator Susan Eggman

Today, Cymone Reyes is one of the leaders and shining lights of San Joaquin County’s transgender community. A first-generation Mexican American, the proud child of a migrant worker father and mother that devoted her life to her children.

Cymone has been the San Joaquin Pride Centers Open Trans Latina Executive Director since 2019. She has been lending her voice and actions to bring attention and awareness to LGBTQ+ causes. Co-founding and Co-Chairing two successful fundraisers for the San Joaquin AIDS Foundation in the mid-90s and a founding board member of AIDS Walk San Joaquin.

Cymone has provided shelter to displaced LGBTQ+ youths and most of her life.

After a 3-year term in a male prison and paying her debt to society, she was discharged without incident. She resumed her work within the community when she most recently sat as Board President of the oldest LGBTQ+ nonprofit in San Joaquin County for two terms. Cymone marks 30 years of service this fall, making her one of the longest working LGBTQ+ activists in San Joaquin County. She is the first openly Trans woman of color to sit as an Executive Director of a community-based organization in the central valley.

From breaking barriers to helping heal and change narratives. She leads with heart, compassion, and understanding but is known to bite the head off a lion if necessary. While she took a two-year break to care for her health and family, Cymone was called to break the silence by helping heal generational traumas and foster community acceptance and respect.



Paso Robles High School LGBTQ+ Changemakers – Accepting on their Behalf is Eve F Iacovelli Barajas (They/Them) – Honoree of Senator John Laird

Eve (they/them), resident of Atascadero, California, is a sophomore at Paso Robles High School and president of the PRHS Equity Club. They played a leading role in coordinating the historic October “Coming Out Against Hate” forum at PRHS, where students told their stories and spoke out against homophobic hate directed at the LGBTQ+ community. Barajas co-wrote an opinion piece, spoke with the media, and served as M for the event. The courage of Barajas and their fellow LGBTQ+ classmates, along with the formation of their LGBTQ+ Task Force, prompted the school district to commit to several changes, including staff and student training and safe access to lockers and bathrooms for nonbinary and trans students.

The students faced silence after a video surfaced on social media displaying a teacher’s Pride Flag being taken down and defecated on. The district’s response, a ban on pride flags, appeared to appease groups who are not in the classrooms and sent an unwelcoming message to some students. The lack of understanding by the administration regarding the struggles faced by LGBTQ+ youth was apparent. The Changemakers empowered each other and displayed courage as they bared their hearts with the district about how this incident affected them. The Changemakers’ direct action opened the eyes of the district members, thus influencing the creation of a more inclusive and welcoming environment for future generations.



Michael Trung Nguyen (He/Him) LGBTQI+ Advisory Committee of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission – Honoree of Senator Scott Wiener

Michael T. Nguyen is a San Francisco-based speaker, advocate, and community organizer. In 2021, mayor Breed appointed Mr. Nguyen to the newly reconstituted LGBTQI+ Advisory Committee of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission, the only queer legislative body in San Francisco. As Chair Emeritus of the GLBTQ+ Asian Pacific Alliance (GAPA), an advocacy organization that envisions a powerful Queer, Trans, Asian, and Pacific Islander (QTAPI) community that is seen and heard celebrated. Michael co-founded the Bay Area Queer, Trans, Asian, and Pacific Islander Coalition in 2018 and spearheaded the creation of the first QTAPI Week in the country, proclaimed by San Francisco in 2021 and

continuing this year throughout California.

Juicy Liu (Miss GAPA 2016), Michael’s alter-ego drag persona, performs regularly in San Francisco, is a Drag Ambassador for Drag Out the Vote, and has raised tens of thousands of dollars for community organizations in the Bay Area.

Earlier this year, Michael was a lead organizer, along with GAPA and Lavender Phoenix members, for a rally and vigil for Justice for Jaxon Sales. Michael led his first direct action in 2021, organizing over a thousand protestors in “Castro to Chinatown: an LGBTQ+ Solidarity March for Asian Lives,” days after the tragic murders of six Asian women in massage parlors in Atlanta. Michael believes safe spaces can be achieved through the power of the community to overcome marginalization and invisibility.



Steve Ichinaga (He/Him) Hyve Solutions – Honoree of LGBTQ Caucus

President & Founder, Hyve Solutions

Steve Ichinaga is a Silicon Valley executive with over 30 years of experience creating high-growth businesses with high-performing teams. As the Founder and President of Hyve Solutions, Steve continues to lead the charge to foster a culture of love, respect, and equity.

From spearheading the creation of a global, cross-departmental DEI committee to taking a knee with employees for 8 minutes and 46 seconds, Steve is an active and dedicated participant in Hyve’s journey to embrace a more diverse culture. A journey that extends to the company’s suppliers and customers.

Leading by example, Steve penned his Coming Out story to share with employees, providing encouragement on being your authentic self while vowing support in the workplace. He continues

championing marginalized communities throughout the company, providing space for cultural storytelling, education, and engagement.

Under Steve’s leadership, the company has committed to supporting the United Nations Global Standards for LGBTQ+ Equality. It has been awarded the Best Places to Work for LGBTQ+ Equality by the HRC. He also is an Executive Sponsor of the company’s Spectrum (LGBTQ+) ERG. He can often be found discussing how to increase the representation of women, black, and LGBTQ+ community members within the company.

Born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, Steve and his husband of 33 years, Robert, have successfully navigated the windy path of gay marriage and adoption in California. When not working, you can find him on the racetrack with his son, Ari.