

O'Melveny Pride: Celebrating Pride Month

Proud
TOGETHER



O'Melveny values and embraces diversity in all its forms. We join with LGBTQ+ communities and their supporters across the nation and around the globe in celebrating Pride Month this June. Our Southern California LGBT Employee Network, one of many diversity-oriented employee networks at O'Melveny, is pleased to share a series of spotlights that aim to raise awareness and encourage discussion.

Week Three Spotlight: LGBTQ-Related Efforts at the US/Mexico Border

The crisis at the US/Mexico border has affected thousands of migrants looking to seek asylum from the dangers they face in their countries of origin, including LGBTQ people who often face even greater threats because crimes against them are more likely to be treated as acceptable or have become normalized in certain communities. From a lesbian woman being brutally raped by family members and gang members who are still pursuing her, to transgender women losing their homes and businesses in El Salvador at the hands of local gangs who specifically targeted them for their gender identity, to the multiple transgender women who have been neglected, mistreated and, in some cases, died while in a US Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention center, the LGBTQ community is extremely vulnerable. [More than 80 countries around the world treat same-sex sexual activity as a crime, and LGBTQ people face violence and persecution in many more.](#)

In an effort to provide a safe space for the LGBTQ community at the border, Yolanda Rocha founded [Casa Jardin de las Mariposas](#), one of Tijuana's only shelters that specifically serves the LGBTQ population. In addition to providing safety, the shelter also offers access to meals, support groups, immigration services, health and wellness programs, and so much more. The shelter can house approximately 30 people and currently has 18 people living there.

If you would like to learn more about ways to help the shelter or make a donation, you can do so through [This is About Humanity](#), a non-profit that helps to provide humanitarian support to asylum seekers, migrants, and refugees on both sides of the border. Please note: If you are making a donation, please specify Casa Jardin de las Mariposas as the honoree so that your donation is directed to the right organization.

Week Two Spotlight: Inclusion in Media

An important part of Pride is continuing to advance the LGBTQ+ community's representation.

Our Firm

History

Diversity & Inclusion

Media Center

These days, popular media is one of the most powerful ways to accomplish this. Recent headlines have highlighted a growing inclusion of LGBTQ+ characters and stories in TV and movies.

Mr. Ratburn, a teacher on the long-running PBS children's series *Arthur*, had a same-sex wedding in a recent episode of the show. In May, The CW network picked up *Batwoman*, which will become the first live-action scripted drama with a lesbian superhero played by an out actress (Ruby Rose). FX's drama *Pose* notched another first by featuring the highest number of transgender series regulars in any US series. Finally, early in 2019, Marvel hinted that their upcoming film *The Eternals* will feature the first openly gay character in the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

Not too long ago, media was far less inclusive. Notably, in 1997, advertisers went so far as to boycott an episode of *Ellen*—the original sitcom of Ellen DeGeneres—in which her TV character came out to over 40 million viewers. At that time, companies feared being associated with “polarizing content.” Thankfully, the data shows we have come a long way since.

GLAAD (a non-governmental media monitoring organization) publishes an annual study on LGBTQ+ representation. Their most recent report on TV found that 8.8% of broadcast scripted series regulars are LGBTQ+, representing an all-time high. They note a significant increase in representation of LGBTQ+ people of color across all platforms (broadcast, cable, and streaming). They also found an increase in representation of bisexual+ characters for the first time in years.

When it comes to film, GLAAD's report found that 18.2% of major studio releases featured LGBTQ+ characters, nearly tying an all-time high. Gay and lesbian characters were represented equally, which was a first. They also found that comedy and drama releases were equally inclusive, indicating a diversifying range of roles for LGBTQ+ characters.

These recent advances in media representation continue to boost awareness of LGBTQ+ people and issues this Pride season. You can visit the GLAAD website for more information on these and other initiatives.

Week One Spotlight: The Stonewall Riots

This month marks the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots, which began on June 28, 1969 at the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar located in Greenwich Village in New York City. The Stonewall riots are considered a turning point in the modern fight for LGBTQ+ rights.

The Stonewall Inn was converted into a gay bar in 1966 and was one of the only gay bars in New York City that allowed dancing. At that time, solicitation of homosexual relations was illegal in New York City and police harassment of gay bars was frequent.

At 1:20 am on June 28, 1969, police officers entered Stonewall Inn during a planned raid. The patrons refused to cooperate when police attempted to have those who were dressed in drag accompany officers to the bathroom to verify their sex. Other patrons refused to produce identification. During the raid, a crowd gathered outside and began to throw objects at the patrol wagon that had arrived on the scene.

As one woman was beaten by a police officer while being forced in the van, she screamed for onlookers to act and a riot broke out. Ten police officers barricaded themselves, along with detainees and a few others, in the Stonewall Inn. Backup eventually arrived and dispersed the rioters. Thirteen people were arrested that night.

The Stonewall riots inspired LGBT political activism in New York City and across the country. The Gay Liberation Front was formed in New York City shortly after the riots. Three newspapers (*Gay, Come Out!*, and *Gay Power*) were started within months of the riots. The first gay pride marches in US history took place on June 28, 1970—the one year anniversary of the Stonewall riots—in New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago.

On June 24, 2016, the Stonewall National Monument was designated by President Obama and became the first US National Monument to LGBTQ+ rights.