**LGBTQ+ American Achievements in Safety**

In June, we recognize and celebrate lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ+) Pride Month. Pride marks the anniversary of the 1969 Stonewall rebellion, which brought new visibility to the LGBTQ+ rights movement.

Throughout history, many who identify as LGBTQ+ have contributed to the improvement of safety and health through their leadership, innovation and research. Not all of them were empowered to publicly acknowledge their LGBTQ+ identities during their lifetimes. Here are 10 stories of safety, passion and perseverance.

**Pauline Newman**

Newman started working at a hairbrush factory at age nine and by 11 was working in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. This was in the late 19th century, prior to the fire in March 1911 that would claim the lives of 146 people. Her experiences in poor working conditions inspired her successful fight for better pay, hours and safety standards for women through unionization and education.

Photo credit: Creative Commons, Wikipedia, The Socialist Woman, February 1912

**Sara Josephine Baker**

One of few female doctors in the early 20th century, Baker was appointed the head of the Bureau of Child Hygiene where her hygiene protocols and education efforts helped reduce New York City’s infant mortality rate by half. She also famously apprehended cook Mary Mallon, the real “Typhoid Mary,” as the source of a small typhoid epidemic in 1907.

Photo credit: Creative Commons, Wikipedia, U.S. National Library of Medicine

**Gerald Bostock**

Bostock sued his employer, Clayton County, Georgia, for firing him shortly after joining a gay recreational softball league. The case, later combined with others, went to the Supreme Court and resulted in a 2020 decision that outlawed discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in most workplaces, creating safer work environments for LGBTQ+ employees.

Photo credit: Creative Commons, Wikipedia, Elvert Barnes

**Rachel Carson**

Carson was a marine biologist whose environmental activism led to national recognition of the effects of hazardous chemicals on our environment, spurring bans on pesticides and pollutants and launching environmental regulations that safety and health professionals follow today. She was a posthumous recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Photo credit: Creative Commons, Wikipedia, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services

**Phill Wilson**

As an activist, Wilson has spent more than four decades on HIV/AIDS policy, research, prevention and treatment issues, particularly in Black communities. Recently bringing his experience to the fight against COVID-19, he advocates for social approaches to infectious disease management that go beyond biomedical solutions.

Photo credit: Creative Commons, Wikipedia, HIV.gov

**Walter Westman**

As an ecologist and botanist, Westman had a significant influence on environmental policy. During a fellowship with Congress, he helped write portions of the Clean Water Act in 1972. Throughout his career, he fought against homophobia in the sciences and in 1980 founded the National Organization of Gay and Lesbian Scientists, now called Out to Innovate.

Photo credit: Provided by Robert Westman

**Joni Christian**

Following a gender-affirmation surgery while Christian was employed on a plant assembly line in the 1970s, her coworkers harassed her and attempted to block her use of the women’s restroom — an issue OSHA has since addressed as important to overall worker safety and health. She sued and won better working conditions for transgender people.

Photo credit: Provided by Joni Christian

**Urvashi Vaid**

An influential attorney, author and LGBTQ+ rights activist, Vaid fought for legislation and funding to improve safety and health for people diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, particularly those who were incarcerated. Vaid was one of the five incorporators of the American LGBTQ+ Museum, which will soon open at the New-York Historical Society.

Photo credit: Creative Commons, Wikipedia, The Laura Flanders Show

**Sally Ride**

Since becoming the first American woman in space in 1983 (and the youngest American in space at that time), astronaut Sally Ride has inspired many women and girls to pursue careers in STEM — science, technology, engineering and math. She also acted as an incident investigator on NASA boards looking into the 1986 Challenger and 2003 Columbia incidents.

Photo credit: Creative Commons, Wikipedia, NASA

**Tammy Baldwin**

As the first openly gay candidate elected to the U.S. Senate, Baldwin has fought for LGBTQ+ rights as well as improving safety standards in transportation and protecting worker health at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. She recently introduced The Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Worker Act.

Photo credit: Creative Commons, Wikipedia, United States Senate official portrait