

## Excerpts from *Queer Quotes* edited by Teresa Theophano (2004)

*Quotes from famous gay, lesbian and bisexual personalities.*

***“One word frees us of all the weight and pain of life: that word is love.”***

--**Sophocles** (495-405 B.C.) Ancient Greek playwright who wrote more than 120 plays, although only seven have survived. *Oedipus the King* is considered his best work. Also an accomplished actor and an ordained priest, Sophocles was reported to be a lifelong lover of young men.

***“The ‘love that dare not speak its name’ in this century is . . . that deep, spiritual affection that is as pure as it is perfect. It is beautiful, it is fine, it is the noblest form of affection. There is nothing unnatural about it.”***

-- **Oscar Wilde** (1854-1900) Writer and critic who was as famous for his wit and flamboyance during his early years in Britain. He published one novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and wrote several plays including *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Later he was prosecuted for his “gross indecency” with other men.

***“I couldn’t say ‘je t’aime’ et je t’adore’ as I longed to do, but always remember I am saying it, that I go to sleep thinking of you.”***

--**Eleanor Roosevelt**, in a letter to Lorena Hickok. (1884-1962) Humanitarian legend and beloved former First Lady. Though married to FDR, Roosevelt maintained an intimate relationship with journalist Lorena Hickok. Her work included helping to found UNICEF and establish the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Her efforts on behalf of poor and oppressed adults and children earned her lasting and widespread admiration.

***“In itself, homosexuality is as limiting as heterosexuality: the idea should be to be capable of loving a woman or a man; either, a human being, without feeling fear, restraint or obligation.”*** --**Simone de Beauvoir** (1908-1986) French writer and philosopher and writer of the classic feminist work *The Second Sex* (1949). Though her relationship with Jean-Paul Sartre was well known, Beauvoir documented several same-sex relationships in her journals.

***“If I do not fight bigotry wherever it is, bigotry is thereby strengthened. And to the degree that it is strengthened, it will, thereby, have the power to turn on me.”***

***“To be afraid is to behave as if the truth were not true.”***

--**Bayard Rustin** (1910-1987) Openly gay writer and civil rights activist. Rustin was a dedicated nonviolent strategist who was chief political advisor, strategist and speechwriter for Martin Luther King Jr. and helped organize the 1963 March on Washington. He also helped form the Congress of Racial Equality in 1942, directed the Committee Against Discrimination in the Armed Forces, and later worked to link the racial and economic justice movement with the gay and lesbian movement.

***“As everyone knows, a fag is a homosexual gentleman who has just left the room.”***

-- **Truman Capote** (1924-84) Acclaimed writer whose first novel, *Other Voices, Other Rooms*, was a critical smash and whose other books: *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* and *In Cold Blood* were hugely successful.

***“One writes out of one thing only – one’s own experience. Everything depends on how relentlessly one forces from this experience the last drop, sweet or bitter, it can possibly give.”***

--**James Baldwin** (1924-87) Hugely influential African-American gay writer and intellectual. Author of the 1956 gay classic *Giovanni's Room*, one of the first novels to openly address homosexuality. He wrote 21 other published books and was a popular public speaker on civil rights.

***“If God dislikes gays so much, how come he picked Michelangelo, a known homosexual, to paint the Sistine Chapel while assigning Anita Bryant to go on television and push orange juice?”*** --**Mike Royko** (straight ally) (1932-97) A syndicated newspaper columnist for 600 newspapers who won a Pulitzer Prize in 1972.

***“To be a black woman poet in the ‘60s was to be invisible . . .triple invisible as black, lesbian and feminist.”***

--**Audre Lorde** (1934-1992) Writer and activist who wrote extensively about her experiences as a black lesbian feminist. Lorde published 17 books including the 1984 essay collection *Sister Outsider*. She was New York’s poet laureate in 1991, and received an American Book Award for *A Burst of Light* (1989).

***“All power is the willingness to accept responsibility.”***

--**Larry Kramer** (1935-) America’s best-known AIDS activist, Kramer was cofounder of ACT UP and Gay Men’s Health Crisis (GMHC). He is the author of 1978’s *Faggots* and the 1989 memoir *Reports from the Holocaust: The Making of an AIDS Activist*.

***“I never officially came out in any kind of really public way. I just always lived very simply and openly, but the press never made a big fuss about me or said anything to me.”***

--**Lily Tomlin** (1939-) Celebrated comedian and actor famous for her characterizations, she has received countless awards including six Emmys and two Tonys for her Broadway, film and television performances. She narrated and produced a 1996 documentary *The Celluloid Closet* and has long supported gay rights.

***“The average American is less homophobic than he thinks he’s supposed to be and more racist than he’s willing to admit.”***

--**Barney Frank** (1940-) Democratic Congressman from Massachusetts who has long been an outspoken supporter of progressive causes. In 1987, Frank became the first out member of U.S. Congress.

***“I write about things that are going on in the lives of my friends: child abuse, AIDS, contaminated water that got into their system and gave them cancer . . . . The trick for the songwriter – for me – is to take these issues that are too painful to hear about and put them in a context so that you can listen.”***

-- **Holly Near** (1949-) Activist and singer/songwriter who was a major influence in the development of the women’s music movement. Her music has long addressed issues of gay rights and feminism as well as pacifism and racism.

***“Just by being out, you’re doing your part. It’s like recycling. You’re doing your part for the environment if you recycle; you’re doing your part for the gay movement if you’re out.”***

--**Martina Navratilova** (1956-) Tennis star, activist, and writer. In 1991, Navratilova was the first major athlete to come out publicly during her sports career. Born in Czechoslovakia, defecting to the U.S. in 1975, she has established herself as the greatest women’s tennis player, with 167 single and 164 double titles.

***“I remain faithful to the church, but in its prohibition of homosexual clergy, I believe the church is not faithful to the work of God’s spirit.”***

--**Karen Dammann** (1957-) Methodist minister who after coming out as a lesbian, had charges brought against her – and later dropped – by the church.

***“What happened to me is exactly the opposite of what closeted people fear: They think they’ll lose everything if they come out. This did not happen to me at all. In fact, everything came back tenfold.”***

--**Melissa Etheridge** (1961-) Rock musician. She is recipient of two Grammy Awards, and her 1993 platinum album *Yes I Am* was released the year she came out as a lesbian.

***“There’s one part of me that really dreads assimilation . . . I’m all for equality, but the idea of being assimilated to the point of losing my identity is just plain revolting to me.”***

-- **Boy George** (George O’Dowd) (1961-) British singer and former vocalist for ‘80s pop band, Culture Club, more recently a DJ and performer in the musical *Taboo*.

***“One thing that really pisses me off is that the church—that is supposed to represent the teachings of Jesus Christ, who never said a word about homosexuals and whose teachings are about equality and loving each other, and doing unto others – and you have the institution of the church preventing homosexuals from becoming ministers to help and love people. It’s just a perversion of the teachings to me.”***

--**Emily Saliers** (1963-) Lesbian singer/songwriter who has been half of Grammy-winning folk-pop duo the Indigo Girls since the mid-80’s. They have produced eight studio albums and have a large following, both mainstream and lesbian.

***“I didn’t want to hide this illness. I didn’t want to live a lie. I’ve always wanted to be truthful.”*** --**Rudy Galindo**, on coming out as HIV-positive (1969-) Award-winning figure skater who went professional in 1996. He co-wrote *Icebreaker: the Autobiography of Rudy Galindo* with Eric Marcus in 1997 and has recently served as a spokesperson for American Foundation for AIDS research (amFAR).

***“I’m the person most likely to sleep with my female fans. I genuinely love other women, and I think they know that.”***

--**Angelina Jolie** (1975-) Openly bisexual film actor who has portrayed queer characters in some of her movies, including *Foxfire* (1996) and *Gia* (1998). She won an Oscar for her performance in *Girl, Interrupted* (1999). She is also known for her role as a goodwill ambassador with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).