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Atlanta Pride Announces 2025 Grand Marshals

ATLANTA (JUNE 25, 2025) — [Atlanta Pride](#), the largest free Pride festival in the United States, is proud to announce the 2025 slate of Grand Marshals, an inclusive group of individuals and organizations whose work exemplifies this year's theme, "Rooted in Resistance." These honorees represent bold activism, cultural preservation, and unwavering commitment to the LGBTQ+ community in Atlanta and beyond.

"Our Grand Marshals showcase the incredible range of work being done across our community, from preserving our past to shaping a more just and inclusive future," said Chris McCain, Executive Director of Atlanta Pride. "Each of them is a reminder that Pride is not only a celebration, but a call to action. They embody the strength, brilliance, and resistance that have always defined our movement, and we are proud to honor their contributions on one of the biggest stages in the Southeast."

The 2025 Grand Marshals are:

[Dr. Christy Perez \(She/Her/Ella\)](#)

Dr. Christy Perez is an Afro-Latina trans theologian, historian, and abolitionist whose advocacy and writing are grounded in healing and transformative justice. She serves as Chief Administrative Officer at Poder Unides and supports trans and justice-impacted communities across Atlanta.

[Georgia LGBTQ History Project](#)

A collective of archivists, librarians, and volunteers dedicated to preserving Georgia's LGBTQ+ past. Through advocacy, education, and personal archiving, the project ensures that the stories and materials of queer Georgians are saved for future generations.

[Jere Chang \(She/Her\)](#)

A beloved Atlanta-based educator and content creator with nearly 4 million followers, Jere uses humor and honesty to inspire inclusive teaching practices. She is a vocal advocate for LGBTQ+ equity in education and is reshaping classrooms to center

belonging and compassion.

Lena Lust (She/Her/Hers) aka Lester West (He/Him/His)

The drag persona of Lester West, Lena is a legendary performer whose career has spanned nearly five decades. A fixture of Atlanta's queer nightlife since 1977, Lena continues to perform today and is celebrated as a community elder, HIV-positive activist, and drag mother.

The LGBTQ+ Institute at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights

This vital program connects LGBTQ+ history to present-day advocacy through educational initiatives, civic engagement, and social programming with a particular focus on the U.S. South. In 2025, the Institute celebrates its tenth anniversary.

PALS Atlanta – Pets Are Loving Support

Founded in 1990 during the height of the AIDS crisis, PALS has provided pet food and veterinary care for individuals living with HIV/AIDS, cancer, and other challenges. The organization has hosted the country's longest-running drag bingo event for 28 years. This year, the organization celebrates thirty-five years of service.

Raquel Willis (She/Her/Hers)

An award-winning author and activist, Raquel is a national leader in the movement for Black trans liberation. She is the author of *The Risk It Takes to Bloom* and serves as executive producer for iHeartMedia's Outspoken podcast network. Raquel was named to the 2025 TIME100 and previously served as a Grand Marshal for NYC Pride.

Richard Ramey (He/Him/His)

Owner of the Atlanta Eagle and The Flower Cottage, Richard has spent decades building community and safe spaces for Atlanta's LGBTQIA+ population. He is also the founder of Drag Down South and a tireless advocate for queer visibility and empowerment.

Shannon Bradley-May (He/Him/His)

Known to many as Sha Sha Sugarbaker, Shannon has been a passionate HIV/AIDS advocate for nearly 30 years through his work with AID Atlanta and the Starlings fundraising collective. His grassroots efforts and drag performances bring joy, awareness, and action to the fight against HIV.

Russ Youngblood (He/Him/His)

A longtime community photographer and journalist, Russ has documented Atlanta's LGBTQ+ life since the 1990s. His upcoming book, *What I Saw*, is a visual love letter to queer resilience and joy in the South.

Since 1992, Atlanta Pride Grand Marshals have been individuals and organizations nominated by the community and selected by Atlanta Pride for their significant contributions to LGBTQ+ visibility, advocacy, and community impact. They are honored guests of the Atlanta Pride Parade, leading the march through Midtown Atlanta and representing the spirit and values of the LGBTQ+ community. Their selection highlights the many ways people can create lasting change through activism, art, service, education, and celebration.

"Rooted in Resistance" honors the rich history of the LGBTQ+ movement, acknowledging the foundational acts of defiance and courage that have paved the way for current advancements. It serves as a reminder that the very existence and celebration of LGBTQ+ lives are acts of resistance against oppression, discrimination, and injustice. The theme also looks forward, inspiring continued advocacy and collective action in the ongoing fight for full equality and acceptance for all.

To learn more about Atlanta Pride, visit <https://atlantapride.org/>

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About Atlanta Pride

Atlanta Pride is Georgia's oldest nonprofit organization serving the LGBTQ+ community in metro Atlanta and across the South. Its operations include the annual Atlanta Pride Festival and Parade in October, as well as educational programs, and philanthropic initiatives. For more information about Atlanta Pride, visit atlantapride.org. Stay connected with Atlanta Pride on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).