

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Atlanta Pride
Steven Igarashi
Director of Communications
& Community Engagement
(404) 382-7588, ext. 1003
media@atlantapride.org



Atlanta Pride Announces 2026 Grand Marshals

ATLANTA (JUNE 26, 2026) — [Atlanta Pride](#), the largest free Pride festival in the United States, is proud to announce the 2026 slate of Grand Marshals, an extraordinary group of individuals and organizations whose leadership, advocacy, creativity, and service embody this year's theme, "**Louder & Prouder.**" These honorees represent the many voices strengthening and advancing LGBTQ+ communities across Atlanta, Georgia, and beyond.

"Pride has always been powered by people who refuse to be silent in the face of injustice and who create spaces where our community can thrive," said Chris McCain, Executive Director of Atlanta Pride. "This year's Grand Marshals exemplify what it means to be Louder & Prouder. Through advocacy, education, healthcare, entertainment, cultural preservation, and community building, they have made a lasting impact on LGBTQ+ lives and continue to inspire others to show up boldly and authentically."

The 2026 Grand Marshals are:

[Carl Charles \(He/Him\)](#)

Carl Charles serves as the Elayne Cassidy Nicholas Memorial Counsel for Trans and Nonbinary Rights in Lambda Legal's Southern Regional Office. He has helped lead groundbreaking litigation expanding and protecting civil rights for transgender people nationwide, including challenges to discriminatory federal passport policies and anti-trans sports bans. Beyond the courtroom, Carl works extensively on federal and state legislative and policy initiatives affecting transgender youth and adults. His career has focused on advancing justice and equity for LGBTQ+ communities, particularly transgender people navigating systems of discrimination and exclusion.

[Jenny Arellano \(She/Her\)](#)

Jenny Arellano is a trailblazing media personality, beauty professional, activist, and influencer whose impact on Atlanta's LGBTQ+ community spans nearly two decades. Her advocacy and creative work have been featured by major media outlets including

Univisión Atlanta, Atlanta News First, Mundo Hispánico, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Project Q, and David Atlanta. Jenny made history as the first transgender woman in Atlanta to obtain an amended birth certificate reflecting her gender identity and continues to use her platform to elevate authentic stories and increase visibility for transgender and Latino communities through projects such as *Jenny Sin Censura*.

John M. Hauptert (He/Him)

John M. Hauptert is Chief Executive Officer of Grady Health System, one of the nation's leading public academic healthcare systems. A nationally recognized healthcare leader, he has served as Chair of the American Hospital Association Board of Trustees, Chair of America's Essential Hospitals, and Chair of the Georgia Hospital Association. Through his leadership, Grady has strengthened access to high-quality healthcare for diverse communities throughout metro Atlanta. Hauptert currently serves on numerous civic and nonprofit boards and was recently recognized with the American Jewish Committee's Human Relations Award and named Georgian of the Year for 2026.

Master J. Tebias Perry (He/Him)

Master J. Tebias Perry is an internationally respected educator, activist, mentor, journalist, and leader within the Leather community. An Atlanta native, he is the creator of the acclaimed "Bulge" event and the annual "Tacos and Tequila" fundraiser, which directs all proceeds to nonprofit organizations serving local communities. A former member of ONYX, he currently serves as Director of Engagement for International Mr. Leather, Inc., and contributes to the Leather Archives & Museum. He is also the author of *Leather Mentorship* and *The Principles of Leather Leadership*. Through education, mentorship, and advocacy, Master J. Tebias has elevated conversations around Leather culture, leadership, and community engagement across the globe.

Noël Heatherland (They/Them)

Noël Heatherland is an organizer, storyteller, and activist dedicated to collective liberation. As Statewide Organizing & Outreach Manager for Georgia Equality, they helped lead efforts that successfully defeated all fifteen anti-LGBTQ+ bills introduced during Georgia's 2026 legislative session. Noël serves on the boards of *This Doesn't Define Me* and *The Dreaming Justice Project*, and is a passionate advocate for survivors of domestic violence. Their work spans LGBTQ+ rights, immigrant justice, reproductive freedom, environmental protection, and community care, helping build coalitions that strengthen movements across Georgia.

Pressure K (Out of Drag: She/Her | In Drag: He/Him)

Pressure K is an Atlanta-based drag king, comedian, host, and entertainer known for combining Southern swagger, comedy, and high-energy performances. Raised in Stone

Mountain and Lithonia, Georgia, Pressure K proudly celebrates Atlanta culture while expanding visibility for drag kings and masculine-presenting performers. After gaining national recognition as a contestant on Season 1 of *King of Drag*, Pressure K has continued to build a platform centered on authenticity, representation, and community connection. Through performance and advocacy, Pressure K encourages audiences to embrace self-expression boldly and unapologetically.

Shawna Brooks (She/Her)

A legendary figure in Atlanta's drag community and Mother of the House of Brooks, Shawna Brooks has spent decades entertaining audiences and shaping the city's LGBTQ+ nightlife culture. Known for her charisma, humor, and enduring stage presence, Shawna remains a beloved performer and mentor whose career has inspired generations of drag artists. Throughout her storied career, Shawna has held numerous titles, including Miss Gay Georgia USofA, Miss Gay Atlanta, Miss National, and Miss Georgia Continental. Her commitment to creating joy, fostering community, and preserving Atlanta's rich drag legacy has made her one of the most recognizable and respected entertainers in the Southeast.

ZAMI NOBLA (National Organization of Black Lesbians on Aging)

Based in Atlanta, ZAMI NOBLA is dedicated to building power, visibility, and community for Black lesbians aged 40 and older. Grounded in a Black feminist social justice framework, the organization addresses issues including health and wellness, housing justice, food access, movement building, education, and community-engaged research. Through advocacy, storytelling, cultural programming, and intergenerational organizing, ZAMI NOBLA works to ensure that older Black lesbians can age with dignity, connection, visibility, and power while challenging systems of inequity that impact their lives.

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, healthcare, and cultural leadership.

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

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About Atlanta Pride

Founded in 1970, Atlanta Pride is Georgia's oldest nonprofit organization serving the

LGBTQ+ community in metro Atlanta and across the Southeast. The organization produces the annual Atlanta Pride Festival and Parade in October and leads year-round community programming and philanthropic initiatives. In recent years, Atlanta Pride has welcomed more than 350,000 attendees during festival weekend, generating an estimated annual economic impact of more than \$86 million for the region. For more information about Atlanta Pride, visit atlantapride.org. Stay connected with Atlanta Pride on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).