

ACTIVIST

Marsha P. Johnson

A prominent figure of the gay rights movement of the 1960s-70s in New York City, Marsha P. Johnson was an important advocate for homeless LGBTQ+ youth, those affected by H.I.V. and AIDS, and gay and transgender rights.

Johnson was on the front lines of resistance along with fellow activist Sylvia Rivera, at The Stonewall Riots in 1969 when police raided a gay bar and began arresting patrons. In the wake of the raid, Johnson and Rivera led a series of protests and co-founded STAR, which provided food and shelter for transgender youth.



Johnson described herself as a gay person, a transvestite, and a drag queen and used she/her pronouns (the term “transgender” only became commonly used after her death) and actively spoke out about the transphobia in the early gay rights movement. The “P” in her name stood for “Pay It No Mind,” a phrase that became her motto.

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