

Throughout PRIDE Month, CTI will be featuring profiles of local LGBTQ+ leaders to celebrate #LowellLGBTQExcellence by learning about their experiences, perspectives, and the wisdom they share in our local communities.

CTI Celebrates Local LGBTQ+ Leader of Excellence ~ Anne Mulvey

Nominated by Barbara Warren, Division Director of Housing and Homeless Services, CTI

Definite Questions

- **What is your title/role/organization and/or involvement in the community?**
I am a Professor Emerita of Psychology (i.e., retired) at UMass Lowell where I taught community psychology and women's studies for many years. I'm a member of the Lowell Women's Week (LWW) Planning Committee. Now in its 28th year, I co-founded LWW with women from other organizations doing special programming for women during March, Women's History Month.
- **What does Pride Month Mean to you?**
Pride Month (PM) represents a celebration and positive visibility by and for those of us who identify as LGBTQI+. PM demonstrates and affirms diversity as a strength, not liability, and encourages members of the larger community to do so. As hate and violence toward LGBTQI+ people and other demonized groups have escalated, it's more important than ever to celebrate our lives and share our stories, challenging misinformation and false narratives in the process. PM offers allies and community groups opportunities to collaborate with LGBTQI+ communities publicly affirming their support and challenging homophobia in all its forms.
- **What can the community do more of to recognize Pride during the year?**
Recognize and celebrate the histories, contributions, and lives of LGBTQI+ individuals and groups in homes, schools, churches, news outlets, stores. Organize and attend educational, athletic, social events and other programs designed to encourage diverse groups to come together and learn from each other. Have signs, flags, stories, books and other symbols associated with Pride Month visible all year everywhere.
- **What advice would you give to future generations of leaders in the community, especially those who identify as LGBTQ+?**
Start where you are. Do something small. If you hear a homophobic or xenophobic joke, speak up. Write a letter to the editor of a local or school newspaper expressing your opinion. Seek out friends, a group, a community leader or a mentor— ask them how they got involved. Or encourage them to get involved. Organize a panel or do a fundraiser or concert related to something you care about. Use your interests and talents to educate, entertain or motivate yourself and others!

It's not just what you do—it's how you do it. Find your passion. There are so many small and large, individual and collective possibilities. Be yourself. Tell your own story, encourage others to do the same, and listen respectfully when they do. Take good care of yourself, too—even though it may be hard to do!

Additional Optional Questions:

- **What has been the most rewarding part of your commitment to the community?**
Collaborating on community-based projects designed to improve Lowell quality of life with members of diverse groups and UML students in my courses: Lowell

Women's Week public art projects, V-Day performances of *The Vagina Monologues*, The Lowell Growing Safer Project, creative writing workshops, Re-Pairing the Social Fabric, Take All Our Daughters to College Day.

- **How have you seen your efforts make a positive difference in people's lives?**

I believe my efforts as a teacher have encouraged critical thinking and community-based research and action by students I've taught and supervised. Over the years, I know that many students I've had in my classes have made wonderful contributions to the Greater Lowell community – and many other cities and countries. Since 1996, Lowell Women's Week, a city-wide program I co-founded, has engaged members of diverse groups in intergenerational, educational, informational, creative and networking programs that have nurtured and sustained formal and informal projects, networks and friendships.

- **How has your experience as an LGBTQ+ person influenced your work?**

I think it's helped me to understand commonalities and differences within LGBTQI+ communities—and to appreciate the challenges, bravery, and diversity of members of other marginalized groups.

From the early 1970's when I participated in a "consciousness-raising group," I've believed that: "Sisterhood Is Powerful" and "No woman is safe until we all are" (popular slogans at the time). I found it easier to speak out against before I was in the process of "coming out." This helped me to be more patient and understanding (at least sometimes) of others and more appreciative of the powerful role others play as allies. It's important for the LGBTQI+ community to be allies of other groups with different challenges!

- **What was the most difficult obstacle you had to overcome to become a leader in your community?**

Being encouraged to be "nice" and a "good girl" coupled with a desire to fit in and belong. I've found it hard to question authority and easy to feel fearful or intimidated. Although these have been obstacles, they've also been assets in the sense that I realize most or all of us need encouragement and support to see and value our own strengths.

A Common Woman is a poem by lesbian poet Judy Grahn.

I have loved it since I heard it 50+ years ago. It ends this way:

For all the world we didn't know we held in common all along
the common woman is as common as the best of bread
and will rise
and will become strong—I swear it to you
I swear it to you on my own head
I swear it so you on my common
woman's
head.

Thank you for asking—and for celebrating 2023 PRIDE!

#LowellLGBTQplusExcellence #PRIDE #CommunityLeader #Leadership #DEIatCTI
#PRIDEMonth2023 #Appreciation #Grateful #CTIPride #PrideMonth