

# June 2021

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EDUCATION PROFILE

### LGBTQIA+ Allies: Standing and Acting in Solidarity

BY DR. CLAUDIA V. SCHRADER

What's not to love about the month of June? Derived from Juno, the Roman goddess of marriage, it is the month of weddings. It is the season of graduations and all the celebrations that come with graduates marking the completion of their studies and the commencement of the next leg of their academic or professional journeys. This is the month that summer solstice arrives and brings with it the most sunlight and the longest day of the year. In June, we celebrate fathers and, since 1969, Pride Month and the rich legacy of our LGBTQIA+ community.

It wasn't always that way. For decades, the LGBTQIA+ community was plagued by widespread discrimination, injustices, and harassment. As such was the case in June 1969 when police raided the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village. The rebellion that ensued marked

the beginning of political activism and a movement to ban discriminatory laws and practices against the LGBTQIA+ community. Also, while members of the LGBTQIA+ community generally did not publicly embrace their sexual orientation or identity, the Stonewall riots kindled both strong personal and public expressions of pride throughout the LGBTQIA+ community.

There have been tremendous strides in ensuring the civil rights of LGBTQIA+ from anti-discrimination laws to federal workplace protections to marriage equality. But there is more work to be done. And while expressions of pride are more visible than ever, unfortunately for many, it is matched by continued discrimination, harassment, and a rise in violence against members of the LGBTQIA+ community. The antidote to hate must be education and inclusion.

At Kingsborough, we



Kingsborough Community College hosts events throughout June to commemorate the voices of the LGBTQIA+ community as we continue to ensure an inclusive and supportive environment for our LGBTQIA+ students, faculty, and staff.

celebrate Pride Month, but we work to ensure an inclusive campus, one where we understand that our differences should not set us apart but bring us together. We have resources in place all year round to support members of our LGBTQIA+ community, the most important of which are our allies. Our Safe Zone Allies, (a campus-wide network of

committed individuals who serve as the first points of contact for those who need to speak to a caring person about LGBTQIA+ issues) are critical to helping both LGBTQIA+ students and other members of the KCC community feel welcomed, supported, included and valued so they can thrive at the College.

Allies have always been

part of the movement. They are loved ones, friends, and strangers who all understand, as Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. understood that injustice anywhere (for anyone) is a threat to justice everywhere (and for everyone).

Let us embrace June as a time of celebration, a celebration of the new solstice; a celebration of fathers; a celebration of graduates and newlyweds; and a celebration of the LGBTQIA+ community and the allies who stand and act in solidarity with them.

*Dr. Claudia V. Schrader is president of Kingsborough Community College (KCC), a 72-acre academic oasis located in beautiful Manhattan Beach, Brooklyn. Kingsborough honors the histories, identities, and voices of our LGBTQIA+ community. Join us as we remember and celebrate the lives of leaders and loved ones in our LGBTQIA+ community who have passed on.*

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