

INTERVIEW WITH LORRAINE FONTANA: LONG TIME SUPPORTER OF THE RUSTIN/LORDE BREAKFAST

By Stefanie Steele



SS Lorraine, thank you so much for taking the time for this interview, and congratulations on being the recipient of the 2026 Rustin/Lorde Legacy Award! You are so deserving. You've been at practically every Breakfast, and were the first person to take photographs to document the event.

LF I enjoy helping to share the event and ongoing history with my photos and posts.

SS Anything else motivates you to attend?

LF The importance of this happening on MLK Day since 2005 for the Black queer community to say (in part), "We were there during the Civil Rights Movement, and we need to be recog-

nized as part of our community too...all parts of us!" Also, seeing so many friends I don't get to see too often and hearing from, and giving thanks, to old and new activists in our POC communities.

SS Have there been any particular speakers/experiences at the Breakfast that stand out for you?

LF Way too many great speakers to pick one, or even a few. I DO love seeing the children come up and show us their work and speak! Hearing music and songs always lifts me.

SS You've had a long history of activism going back to the 60s. What were your motivations for getting involved back then?

LF Mostly the Civil Rights Movement on the evening news as I grew up. Also, the reading I started doing because of it, and the Black Empowerment movement, and anti-colonial/anti-imperialist info from people and books. A lot was because of the Vietnam war, but also anti-colonial struggles in Africa.

SS And you're not slowing down. Are there any particular organizations you are a part of today?

LF Yes, I am a member of First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta's Social Justice Guild (SJG) and Atlanta Grandmother's for Peace. I had also, until recently, been active with Southerners on New Ground (SONG) and Democratic Socialists of America here in Atlanta, and am currently helping to form a new CodePink chapter here in ATL."



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SS As we know, activism can be exhausting, and many activists burn out. Do you have a space of comfort for when events seem overwhelming? This could be a person, place or activity.

LF The Activities that I enjoy include shooting pool (am in a couple of leagues), water volleyball, working 1000-piece jigsaw puzzles, taking photos and sharing them, drawing and poster making. The Persons include, being with chosen-family members, and joining comrades in an action that is hopeful (and hopefully fun), like the Rustin/Lorde Breakfast!

My Place of comfort and rest is my apt where I can relax and stay in pjs all day if I want to...place to watch tv both for fun and learning something new...spending time on Facebook and responding to emails.

SS Wow, that sounds like a great balance and fun. Finally, do you have any suggestions or words of encouragement for young queer activists today?

LF Keep remembering that it's ALL related...it's not just being queer...or just being a woman...or just being poor or working class...or just being Black...or just being disabled. All the isms come from the same place and mindset—"we are better than them." Focus on community and cooperation, rather than competition and one-upsmanship. And have fun together as well as do serious/difficult actions!

