

May 28, 2026

To the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court Board of Directors and College of Monarchs, and the International Court Council Nomination Committee:

It is my great honor to offer my strongest possible recommendation for Dr. Poison Waters, also known as Kevin Cook, for the distinguished title of Queen Mother of the Americas.

Over the course of nearly four decades, Poison Waters has become not only one of the most recognizable and beloved drag performers in Oregon history, but also one of the Pacific Northwest's most impactful LGBTQ+ civic leaders and philanthropists. In Portland, Oregon, Poison is woven into the very fabric of our community life — using visibility, humor, glamour, and compassion to uplift countless people and causes.

As a longtime activist myself, I have had the privilege of witnessing many generations of LGBTQ+ leadership. Few individuals embody the spirit of service and community stewardship as fully as Poison Waters. Through her lifelong work with the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court of Oregon, she has helped preserve and strengthen one of the oldest LGBTQ+ nonprofit traditions in the country while mentoring generations of queer leaders, entertainers, and activists.

Her record of service speaks for itself. Poison has raised awareness and critical funds for organizations including Cascade AIDS Project, The Trevor Project, Oregon Humane Society, Dress for Success Oregon, DoveLewis, and numerous HIV/AIDS initiatives that have supported vulnerable youth and families throughout Oregon. Her leadership as Camp Director for Camp KC, serving children whose lives have been impacted by HIV, demonstrates a depth of compassion and commitment that extends far beyond the stage.

What makes Poison especially remarkable is the way she bridges worlds. She is equally at home entertaining audiences at Darcelle XV Showplace, lecturing on Portland drag history at Portland Community College, speaking at City Hall or the Oregon Capitol, emceeing civic events, or representing LGBTQ+ people in mainstream public life with dignity and joy. Her influence reaches beyond the LGBTQ+ community into the broader civic and cultural identity of Portland itself.

Following the passing of the legendary Darcelle XV, Poison stepped into an even greater mantle of leadership with grace and humility. Her elevation to Queen Mother II of all Oregon was not merely ceremonial — it reflected the trust, admiration, and deep respect she has earned over decades of unwavering service.

Titles within the International Court System should represent more than pageantry; they should honor leadership, legacy, generosity, resilience, and devotion to community. Dr. Poison Waters exemplifies all of those qualities. She has spent her life creating space for others to feel seen, celebrated, protected, and loved.

I can think of no individual more deserving of recognition as Queen Mother of the Americas, and I offer this recommendation enthusiastically and without reservation.

With admiration and respect,

Terry Bean

LGBTQ+ Activist for 55+ years and Co-Founder of the Human Rights Campaign, Victory Fund, and Gay Games amongst others

terrybean1@gmail.com