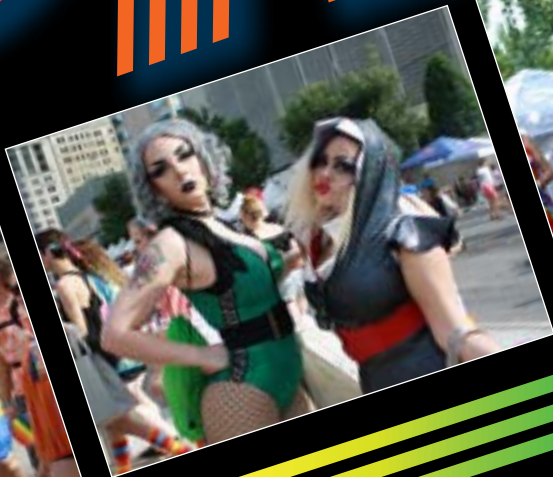


# connect

summer 2021 • [weconnect.lgbt](http://weconnect.lgbt)



# SUMMER OF PRIDE



YOUR GUIDE TO  
TENNESSEE'S  
CELEBRATIONS



# ADVERTISE WITH



**We offer opportunities to connect you to audiences through print, online, social media and events! Call Selena Haynes today to find out more!**

**615.603.6169**



# Connect

**SELENA HAYNES | LAUREN MEANS**  
PUBLISHERS/FOUNDERS

Connect Magazine is a product of  
weconnect.lgbt, an S&L Companies venture.

**Lauren Means**  
CONTENT EDITOR, WRITER

**Joey Amato, Matthew Stafford**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

**Brian Goins**  
GRAPHIC DESIGNER

**David Duplessis**  
PHOTOGRAPHER

**Selena Haynes**  
ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

## SUBSCRIPTIONS | LOCATIONS

To subscribe, visit [weconnect.lgbt](http://weconnect.lgbt)  
or call 615.603.6169 or email us at  
[info@weconnect.lgbt](mailto:info@weconnect.lgbt).

## WRITING OPPORTUNITIES

We are always willing to consider freelance  
or story ideas. Send queries or story  
suggestions to [editor@weconnect.lgbt](mailto:editor@weconnect.lgbt).

## WECONNECT.LGBT

Visit us online for information about our  
latest events, or to read all of our latest  
content and see our latest photo galleries.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

[f /weconnect.lgbt](https://www.facebook.com/weconnect.lgbt) [@weconnect\\_lgbt](https://www.instagram.com/weconnect_lgbt)

[@weconnect.lgbt](https://www.instagram.com/weconnect.lgbt)

Volume 1 | Issue 1  
Connect Magazine  
144 Player Drive  
Murfreesboro, TN 37128  
[weconnect.lgbt](http://weconnect.lgbt)

A part of

**S&L**  
COMPANIES

A member of







# FRANKLIN'S FIRST PRIDE

JULY 31, 2021 ★ HARLINSDALE FARM ★ 12:30 - 6:00PM

MUSIC ★ DRAG ★ FOOD ★ DRINKS ★ VENDORS ★ AND MORE!

THANK YOU TO OUR AMAZING SPONSORS



HomePage

Ron Sanford



REDDY FISHER & ASSOCIATES

Connect



TENNESSEE  
EQUALITY  
PROJECT

TRACTOR  
SUPPLY CO.



Vanderbilt  
Vaccine  
Program

Mac  
Productions  
and More!

# in this issue



## CONTENTS

**5** Letter from the publisher

**5** Contributor spotlight

### **6 MUSIC**

Dianne Davidson has forged her own trail

### **26 BUSINESS**

Nashville native Elliott Noble-Holt finds success as an author and podcaster

### **14 COVER STORY**

Your 2021 guide to Pride



## FEATURES

### **32 CULTURE**

Nigel Ashford made his dream come true as talk show host of OUTSpoken

### **28 TRAVEL**

Travel journalist Joey Amato (re)visits Atlanta

## NEWS

### **36 SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Fighting the Gender Marker ban

### **38 LGBT HISTORY**

Archivist compiles LGBT+ history at MTSU's Albert Gore Research Center

## FROM THE PUBLISHER

**WELCOME TO CONNECT!**

Welcome to a world full of possibilities — a world full of inspiration and empowerment — a world full of change.

Connect inspires you with stories of people breaking glass ceilings. There's nothing you can't accomplish. BE YOU! BE INSPIRED!



Connect empowers you with knowledge through our media and events — events that YOU want — events that will have a meaningful impact. BE YOU! BE EMPOWERED!

Connect changes outcomes by inspiring and empowering our community. Take the journey with us. BE YOU! BE CHANGED!

In this issue, we have the inspirational story of Elliott Noble-Holt and how he built a multi-million

dollar company starting with just \$50 and an AOL gift card in hand while raising his adopted daughter — beginning at the age of 21.

We also spoke with Nigel Ashford of Outspoken, an LGBTQ+ Facebook live show. Nigel takes on topics that some steer away from, but they are conversations that need to be had. He's proving all the naysayers wrong and

doing EXACTLY what they said he couldn't.

With Pride celebrations all over the calendar this summer and into the fall, you don't want to miss Dianne Davidson when she performs at Franklin Pride on July 31st.

Dianne's story is one that we hear all too often in the world of country music, but she chose to be who she was and wouldn't change anything.

Even though there is still work to be done, Dianne paved the way for younger generations to be themselves.

We hope you enjoy our first issue. We will be on a regularly bi-monthly publication schedule going forward with our October/November 'Hustle & Bustle' holiday issue.

*Let's Connect!*

*Co-founder and Publisher*

**CONTRIBUTOR SPOTLIGHT****Connect with this month's contributing writers, artists****Joey Amato**

Joey Amato is founder, publisher of Pride Journeys, an LGBTQ travel website and syndicated column. Visit [pridejourneys.com](http://pridejourneys.com).

**Lauren Means**

Lauren is co-founder and editor of Connect. She is also wife to Selena and dog-mom to Franklin and Daisy. Tweet her at @LaureninMidTN

**Matthew Stafford**

Matthew currently lives in Nashville and works in Cool Springs. He has a furry canine sidekick, Penelope Jeannette.

■ Read our virtual issue online at [weconnect.lgbt/issues](http://weconnect.lgbt/issues).

**LGBT ENTREPRENEURS**

Helping LGBT/ALLY small business owners THRIVE through referrals, support and networking

[Facebook.com/groups/NashvilleLGBTEntrepreneurs](https://Facebook.com/groups/NashvilleLGBTEntrepreneurs)  
[Facebook.com/groups/KnoxvilleLGBTEntrepreneurs](https://Facebook.com/groups/KnoxvilleLGBTEntrepreneurs)  
[Facebook.com/groups/MemphisLGBTEntrepreneurs](https://Facebook.com/groups/MemphisLGBTEntrepreneurs)  
[Facebook.com/groups/ChattanoogaLGBTEntrepreneurs](https://Facebook.com/groups/ChattanoogaLGBTEntrepreneurs)

[Facebook.com/groups/TennesseeLGBTEntrepreneurs](https://Facebook.com/groups/TennesseeLGBTEntrepreneurs)  
[Facebook.com/groups/LouisvilleLGBTEntrepreneurs](https://Facebook.com/groups/LouisvilleLGBTEntrepreneurs)  
[Facebook.com/groups/KentuckyLGBTEntrepreneurs](https://Facebook.com/groups/KentuckyLGBTEntrepreneurs)  
[Facebook.com/groups/AtlantaLGBTEntrepreneurs](https://Facebook.com/groups/AtlantaLGBTEntrepreneurs)





PHOTO COURTESY OF DIANNE DAVIDSON

# Breaking All The Rules

*Dianne Davidson  
has forged her  
own trail in music*

By Lauren Means

[@LaurenInMidTenn](#)

**H**ere in Music City, you'll find musicians in the bars, singers in the honky tonks, and performers in the concert venues. But to find the real artists, you have to look really deep. Sometimes they're even hidden in plain sight. Dianne Davidson is one such artist. Singer, songwriter, guitarist, performer, and producer, she does it all — and does it without the backing of a major industry label.

Davidson was born in Memphis in 1953. She grew up in a small Tennessee town named Camden where she developed her musical styling. From singing and writing songs at an early age to forming her first band, The Mad Martians, at age 11, it was clear that Davidson had music flowing through her veins.

She lived in a household

that was medical and musical. She knew she would either become a musician or a physician. Davidson's mother was her strongest advocate when she was getting started. She carted everyone to practice when she started her band and carried all the equipment.

At a young age, she sat down with her father and had a conversation about her future. He asked her "Are you any good at this?" and she said, "Daddy, you know, I think I am." He said ok and that was the affirmation she needed from her dad to pursue her dreams full steam ahead.

When she was 17 years old, Davidson decided to chart her course in the music industry. She played in West Tennessee bars, California nightclubs, Greenwich Village listening rooms, festivals, and even Carnegie Hall.

During her early years, Davidson recorded five albums (although one was just released in 2020), toured with Linda Ronstadt and The Moody Blues, and sang backing vocals for big-name performers such as B.B. King, Jimmy Buffet, Tammy Wynette, Barry Manilow, and Leon Russell.

She was on her way to becoming a household name

but her album "Breaking All The Rules" didn't get the pickup she needed and in the mid-nineties, she called it quits. She moved to New York, took a nine-to-five job, got married and adopted a son.

What could make someone who was living out their true passion in life just give it all up? Maybe it was because in the 70s and 80s if you were gay, you kept it under wraps. If you didn't keep it quiet, you likely didn't have a career.

This is exactly why Davidson's fourth recorded album, "1974," wasn't released until 2020. She knew who she was and she was ok with who she was — including being gay. She



## Listen to it

Dianne Davidson has released numerous albums throughout the years, including "Backwoods Woman" in 1972.



said she doesn't remember thinking too much about putting the album out and how it might be received because she was just a 21-year-old who was writing about her life experiences.

In 1974, though, the industry wasn't ok with who she was. They wanted someone marketable, meaning straight. So that album, which included a song Davidson calls a lesbian love song, was shelved. She said it burnt her heart and almost completely burnt her spirit.

Davidson had people around her tell her she had to

be cautious with her personal life. Davidson acknowledged that when she came out, it was a time where it was extremely dangerous to do so. This was back in the 60s and 70s when there were raids on bars and shakedowns. She said she thought better of people and that she wasn't expecting the kind of response she received. "I thought people would be happy for me," she said. She found someone who made her happy and in her youthful naivety, she didn't expect doors to be closed on her.

But closed they were.

### **Invisible**

Davidson wasn't the only artist to which this happened. There are many LGBTQ+ musicians who've done extraordinary work in the music industry that had to take a back seat due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

It's happened so often with the women in the industry, especially the country music sector, there is now a documentary highlighting their struggles and stories. Producer Bill Brimm and director T.J. Parsell developed *Outhaus*



Films specifically to produce the documentary “Invisible.” This film explores the lives of a group of LGBTQ+ singer-songwriters who’ve navigated southern music. “Invisible” examines their journeys and how they persevered in both private and professional lives.

Davidson was one of the artists highlighted in the documentary that started filming in March 2017. It was set to premiere in 2020 but like everything else, that was postponed.

The film finally made its debut in June 2021 at the Frameline San Francisco International LGBTQ Film Festival to rave reviews. It was even awarded the Audience Award for Best Documentary for T.J. Parsell.

Alongside Davidson, you hear stories from artists such as Cidny Bullens — a two-time Grammy nominee who

was a member of Elton John’s band in the 70s and sang three lead vocals for the soundtrack to the film “Grease” who transitioned in 2011.

Then there is Chely Wright. She was the first out country music artist. Wright tells the story of when she had hit the end of her rope and contemplated ending her life. “I wasn’t ashamed of being gay. I was just so damn tired,” she explains in the film.

These stories, along with Davidson’s, are just a small sampling of people who had their careers ended just because of who they love.

Invisibility was the choice they made along the way. As Davidson explained, your sexuality is a pretty important thing to constantly lie about. You can’t slip up on pronouns or talk about anything personal when you are working with people

intimately as a singer-songwriter.

Some people chose to live their truth and not hit it big. Others chose to suppress that part of them in exchange for a career. For people who made the choice to hide that part of themselves, it was a true feeling of being invisible.

### Forging the Road

When asked how it felt to share her story, Davidson said it was a story she had not really told before and it was a viewpoint that she never explored with anyone. She kept it inside. To be able to talk about it and explore what it meant for her career and to see other people’s reactions to her story was powerful. “It was something I really needed to experience to move past,” Davidson explained. She said it brought about epiphanies that she

### MORE INFORMATION

For more information about Dianne Davidson, visit [diannedavidson.com](http://diannedavidson.com).

For more information on Franklin Pride, visit [franklinpridetn.com](http://franklinpridetn.com).





“

“We’ve been forging this road for a long time and I am proud to be a part of it.”

didn’t expect to have at her age.

Davidson said she wouldn’t change coming out because it took people like her coming out when they did to pave the way for people to come out the way they can now. “We have been forging this road for a long time in a lot of different ways and I am proud to be a part of it,” said Davidson.

She said she’s exposed to a lot of different people because of her son who is now 16. She knows sometimes it’s just that someone has never been around a lesbian family before or if they had, they didn’t know it. She is very open and willing to be the one to help people rethink how they treat people.

Davidson told a story of a time, years ago, where she was having a conversation in a room full of people about marriage equality. According to Davidson, there was a woman in the room who actually didn’t realize that marriage was not allowed for all people. Davidson hopes this movie helps educate people about things they don’t know or things they thought they knew but were actually incorrect.

### Three Hundred and Sixty Degrees

Her sixth studio album was “Perigon: Full Circle.” Released August 2020, it was her first new recording in over three decades. It came off the

heels of her “1974” album that she finally released after filming “Invisible.”

When comparing the process of writing and recording “1974” and “Perigon,” she said the process was the same but the technicalities made it very different. “Doing this record I was able to get people to work on it and play on it without being in the same place. But making it was the same as they were both a labor of love,” said Davidson.

Davidson said she couldn’t be where she was without her listeners and supporters. She doesn’t like to use the term fans because they are more than that. She says her benefactors have kept her and

her family afloat so she can pursue her passion and she will be eternally grateful for them.

She credits other musicians and her peers for helping her along. Davidson explained how they helped her cut her teeth and navigate the scene when she was first coming out and they helped her in the present day to make these new releases possible.

She now tries to repay that help by providing advice to and even co-writing with younger, out musicians. "They feel a lot freer to explore life with openness and I love that. They need to be thinking about creating their art and not about someone closing doors on them," said Davidson.

"In the music industry,



among artists, nothing matters except if you are a good player," Davidson explained. Her hope is we can eventually get to the point where our differences don't matter.

Davidson's next stop is here in Tennessee at Franklin's Inaugural Pride Festival. She said her set will be a mix of old and new music. "It's going to be fun and I'm playing with a great band. The people involved have been incredible." ■

**"(Young people today) feel a lot freer to explore life with openness and I love that. They need to be thinking about creating their art and not about someone closing doors on them."**



**new leash on life**  
newleashonline.org



**NASHVILLE**  
**SHORES**  
WATERPARK

# POOCH POOL PARTY 2021

**CALLING ALL POOCHES, PUPS,  
DOGS, & MUTTS!**

**SATURDAY** 11AM TO 4PM  
**SEPT 25<sup>TH</sup>** 2021

Don't miss the chance to bring your dog to Nashville Shores for a Dog Only Swim Day! The event will also include vendor & exhibitor booths, a K9 cooling station, Kowabunga Splash Pad, Lazy River doggy fetch area, and more! Each ticket lets you bring one dog, and a portion of all ticket sales will be donated to New Leash on Life.

[www.NashvilleShores.com/Pooch-Pool-Party](http://www.NashvilleShores.com/Pooch-Pool-Party)

**IN-ADVANCE TICKET PRICING**  
**\$15.00** \*TAX PER PERSON BEFORE AUG. 31<sup>ST</sup> OR **\$20.00** \*TAX PER PERSON BEFORE SEP. 25<sup>TH</sup>

**DAY-OF EVENT TICKET PRICING**  
**\$25.00** \*TAX PER PERSON OR **\$10.00** \*TAX PER PERSON SEASON PASS HOLDERS

PROOF OF RABIES VACCINATIONS REQUIRED - NO HUMAN SWIMMING PERMITTED  
ALL GUESTS REQUIRED TO COMPLETE WAIVER BEFORE ENTERING THE PARK

4001 BELL ROAD  
HERMITAGE, TN 37076



FRANKLIN PRIDE • BORO PRIDE  
UPPER CUMBERLAND PRIDE  
NASHVILLE PRIDE PARADE & FESTIVAL  
TENNESSEE VALLEY PRIDE • JACKSON PRIDE  
NASHVILLE BLACK PRIDE • TRIPRIDE PARADE & FESTIVAL



# SUMMER PRIDE

# OF Pride 2021

Ahhh... Pride season is in the air. After the heartbreak, loss, and disappointments 2020 brought us, 2021 is promising to lift spirits. Here is a listing of what to expect for Pride events across Tennessee as we celebrate **Pride All Summer Long!**



PHOTOS COURTESY FRANKLIN PRIDE/FRANKLIN PFLAG



# Franklin Pride

*After a year on hold,  
Williamson County's  
celebration goes on*

**By Connect Staff**

 @WeConnect\_LGBT

**T**he long-awaited inaugural Franklin Pride is taking place July 31 at Harlinsdale Farm from 12:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. First announced in January 2020 and then postponed to 2021, there's been a lot of buzz and excitement around the event. In that year's time, enough interest formed that the original location, Franklin Theatre, wasn't going to be large enough.

There will be a craft fair, youth activity tent, food trucks, nonprofit organizations, vendors and activity on the stage all afternoon.

The entertainment line up includes Dianne Davidson, Sisters Mann, Vidalia Anne Gentry, The Miss Fits, Mr. & Mrs. Nashville Pride, and Major Minors. Food vendors consist of 2 Girls & a Hot Dog, Bradley's Creamery — Homemade Ice Cream, Buffalo's Texas Sausage on a Stick, Mafiozias Beer Tent, Ace's Kettle Corn, Franklin's Fruit Tea, Cousins Maine Lobster, and Steaming Goat.

Kicking off the event is the emcee, Vidalia Anne Gentry, with a welcome message. From there you can show off your best moves at the family-friendly dance party or take in a drag show. Then enjoy an awards ceremony honoring Sharon Collins and Charlie Grimes, who established PFLAG Franklin in 2001, for their support of LGBTQ+ people and their families.

The second half of the event will have the stage filled with singer-songwriters including the Sisters Mann, Dianne Davidson, and a performance by Nashville in Harmony's Major Minors — the first youth LGBTQ+ chorus in Nashville.

When it was originally announced, PFLAG-Franklin, in partnership with the Tennessee Equality Project (TEP), explained they were putting on the event because they believe that when everyone is accepted the entire community benefits, whether or not one identifies as LGBTQ+. PFLAG-Franklin is putting in the work needed to provide a safe place for people who want to learn more, for people who are seeking acceptance, and to hold what can be an uncomfortable dialogue. The organization states, "We are confident that this event will give people who want to know more about the LGBTQ+ community a place to start."

## FRANKLIN PRIDE

Saturday, July 31, 2021

Harlinsdale Park

Franklin, Tennessee

**FREE. Donations accepted.**

[franklinpridetn.com](http://franklinpridetn.com)



# Boro Pride

*Murfreesboro's  
celebration moves  
to Cannonsburgh Village*

**By Connect Staff**

 @WeConnect\_LGBT

**F**ive Years! Boro Pride has grown so much in the last five years that they're moving from the downtown square to Cannonsburgh Village. The event will be held on Saturday, August 21 from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. Admission is free.

First held in 2016, Boro Pride was conceptualized and organized by the Rutherford County committee for the Tennessee Equality Project as a way to bring the LGBTQ+ community together. It was also a way to promote inclusion and acceptance in Murfreesboro and throughout Rutherford County.

In the years past, there's been a music stage, drag shows, drag queen story hour, a pride walk around the square, vendors,

food trucks, non-profits, and community organizations that participated. There has never been a shortage of free hugs and rainbows either.

The move to Cannonsburgh Village will allow two stages with live entertainment, a kids zone, community information tables, food trucks, vendors, and more. Iona, queen of many stages in Rutherford County, will continue to emcee the event.

There is also the introduction of a new Boro Pride Pageant. This inaugural event is an exciting addition to the pride line up and will be held on July 11 at 7 p.m. at National Dance Clubs in Murfreesboro.

Competing for the title of Mr. Boro Pride 2021 are Sam Cross, Justin Alexander Robinson, Diesel Khaos, Vicktor, and Graysin Hale. Veronika Electronika, Veronica Paige, Jessica Monroe, She Devil, Deezastris, Miss Misha, and Cassie are competing for Miss Boro Pride 2021.

## BORO PRIDE

Saturday, Aug. 21, 2021

Cannonsburgh Village  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee

For more information on volunteering or how to donate, visit

[tnep.org/boropride2021](http://tnep.org/boropride2021)

[facebook.com/boropridetn](https://facebook.com/boropridetn)







# Upper Cumberland Pride

*The celebrations return  
with pageant, design  
contest and festival*

**By Connect Staff**

 @WeConnect\_LGBT

**J**ust can't hide that PRIDE! Upper Cumberland Pride (UCP) Festival is back and will be held on Aug. 21 from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. at Dogwood Park in Cookeville. Although it's being held a little later than normal on Aug. 21, the festivities are already underway.

In May, the Tennessee Tech Players from Tennessee Tech University put on Drag at the Backdoor as a fundraiser for UCP.

On July 10, the Upper Cumberland Pride Pageant 2021 will be held at the Cookeville Performing Arts Center at 6 p.m. This will be a night of competition and entertainment while searching for the next Miss and Mr. Upper Cumberland Pride.

"All of us at UCP are so excited for this year's festival and have been working diligently to prepare for all the fun!" said Miles, the UCP President.

"This year's event is extra special after all the endurance and perseverance our

community members have shown throughout the COVID-19 pandemic! As such, we have some special events and performances planned at this year's event as well as several booths set up in attendance too! We want you to know that all of us at UCP are proud to represent all of our LGBTQ+ Brothers, Sisters, non-binary, and especially our community members living in the Upper Cumberland!" Miles exclaimed.

UCP is also hosting a pride t-shirt design competition this year. They are requesting line drawings around the theme JUST CAN'T HIDE THAT PRIDE! There's a cash prize of \$100 for the image selected. For more information, email [ucpridetn@gmail.com](mailto:ucpridetn@gmail.com).

UCP was founded in August 2011 with the first pride festival held in Dogwood Park on May 5, 2012. The festival has since been held at other locations like the West Side Events Center and most recently at the Hyder-Burks Pavilion. UCP represents all 16 counties of the Upper Cumberland and they strive to make the community a better place.

As Miles said, "Come join in on the fun! We love you, and we can't wait to see you at the park!"

## UPPER CUMBERLAND PRIDE

Saturday, Aug. 21, 2021  
Dogwood Park  
Cookeville, Tennessee  
[ucpride.org](http://ucpride.org)









*The festival is back,  
bigger and better*

**By Connect Staff**

 @WeConnect\_LGBT

**N**ashville Pride is back! After many postponements and eventual cancellation in 2020, the festival returns this year on September 18-19 and the location has moved to Bicentennial Capitol Mall State Park.

The last pride festival in Nashville before COVID hit was in June 2019 and it was a record breaking year. It's estimated over 75,000 people attended the two-day event which included the festival and parade.

There were over 200 vendors, multiple stages filled with live music and performances, a kids area and much more. Festival attendance alone exceeded 50,000 people.

This was also the year organizers brought back the pride parade. The first in over a decade, it drew a crowd of over 25,000 people

to watch the 100+ groups, floats, bands, vehicles and more parade through Nashville down Broadway.

Hopes were high going into the 2020 festival season for another record-breaking year before the world shut down during the pandemic. Events were held virtually but with everything opening back up, everyone is ready to celebrate again in person and this is one not to miss.

Sam Parker with Good Neighbor Festivals who organizes the event each year states, "This year's lineup is the biggest we have had yet!"

There's also pre-pride events scheduled including the Nashville Pride Turnabout on Friday, August 27 at 7 p.m. and the Nashville Pride Pageant on Sunday, August 29 at 7 p.m. Both events will be held at Play Dance Bar.

Early bird VIP tickets are now available for purchase along with Friends of Pride tickets. General Admission weekend tickets will be available for pre-purchase starting July 16.

## **NASHVILLE PRIDE PARADE & FESTIVAL**

Sept. 18-19, 2021

Bicentennial Capitol Mall State Park  
Nashville, TN

### **Entertainment Lineup, Saturday**

Kim Petras, Orville Peck, The Aces

### **Entertainment Lineup, Sunday**

Salt N Pepa, Tommy Genesis, Brooke Eden


For a complete lineup, visit [nashvillepride.org](https://nashvillepride.org)



# Nashville Black Pride

*The annual event is created for and by local members of the African-American Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community*

**By Connect Staff**

 @WeConnect\_LGBT

**I**f you have ever attended a Nashville Black Pride event, you know it's a celebration full of education and community activities. All the fun returns for the 19th year this October 8-10.

Nashville Black Pride came to be in the early 2000s after Dwayne Jenkins, a founding member, hosted an event for people of color during a Nashville Pride festival. It was after this event that he realized the community needed a stand-alone event.

After attending Black Pride celebrations in other cities like New York, Chicago, and Washington DC, Jenkins made the move to establish a board of directors and start the planning process.

The annual event is created for and by local members of the African-American Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community. It's open to all people regardless of race, sexual orientation, or gender identity but it's specific purpose is an outreach effort for the underserved LGBT communities of color in the Middle Tennessee area.

The pandemic didn't stop the festivities last year. They converted to online virtual sessions and a socially distanced outdoor walk to commemorate National Coming Out Day.

Past pride weekend events have included receptions, couples recognition, spoken word & poetry showcase, educational workshops, community forums, book signings, benefit parties, free and confidential HIV testing, live entertainment, and a Black LGBT Film Fest.

While the details are still being finalized, go ahead and mark your calendar for this year's celebration. Visit Nashville Black Pride's website or Facebook page for full details.



## NASHVILLE BLACK PRIDE

Oct. 8-10, 2021

Locations TBD

Nashville, Tennessee

[nashvilleblackpride.org](http://nashvilleblackpride.org)

[facebook.com/nashvilleblackpride/](https://facebook.com/nashvilleblackpride/)



# MORE PRIDE

Mark your calendar: Pride events throughout Tennessee



## FRANKLIN PRIDE

Saturday, July 31, 2021  
Harlinsdale Park  
Franklin, Tennessee  
[franklinpride.tn.com](http://franklinpride.tn.com)

## BORO PRIDE

Saturday, Aug. 21, 2021  
Cannonsburgh Village  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee  
[facebook.com/boropride.tn](https://facebook.com/boropride.tn)

## UPPER CUMBERLAND PRIDE

Saturday, Aug. 21, 2021  
Dogwood Park  
Cookeville, Tennessee  
[ucpride.org](http://ucpride.org)

## NASHVILLE PRIDE PARADE & FESTIVAL

Sept. 18-19, 2021  
Bicentennial Capitol Mall State Park  
Nashville, TN  
[nashvillepride.org](http://nashvillepride.org)

## TENNESSEE VALLEY PRIDE

Sept. 26 - Oct. 3  
Pride Parade and Festival will be on Sunday, Oct. 3  
Chattanooga, Tennessee  
[chattanoogapride.com](http://chattanoogapride.com)

## JACKSON PRIDE

Saturday, Oct. 2, 2021  
Conger Park: Highland Park  
Jackson, Tennessee  
[equalityjackson.tn.org](http://equalityjackson.tn.org)

## NASHVILLE BLACK PRIDE

Oct. 8-10, 2021  
Locations TBD  
Nashville, Tennessee  
[nashvilleblackpride.org](http://nashvilleblackpride.org)

## TRIPRIDE PARADE & FESTIVAL

Saturday, Oct. 16, 2021  
Cumberland Square Park,  
Downtown Bristol  
Bristol, Tennessee/Bristol, Virginia  
[tripride.tn.org](http://tripride.tn.org)

# BORO PRIDE

MURFREESBORO, TN

SATURDAY  
AUGUST 21, 2021

3:00PM – 10:00PM

CANNONSBURGH VILLAGE

312 SOUTH FRONT STREET  
MURFREESBORO, TN 37129

WE'VE OUTGROWN  
THE SQUARE!

NOW AT CANNONSBURGH VILLAGE

FOOD TRUCKS • LOCAL VENDORS • LIVE MUSIC • DRAG!  
FREE ADMISSION & PARKING

*BoroPride is an open (and free) celebration of community, music, celebration  
and speakers focused on promoting equality and inclusion of ALL people.*

[FACEBOOK.COM/BOROPRIDETN](https://facebook.com/BOROPRIDETN)



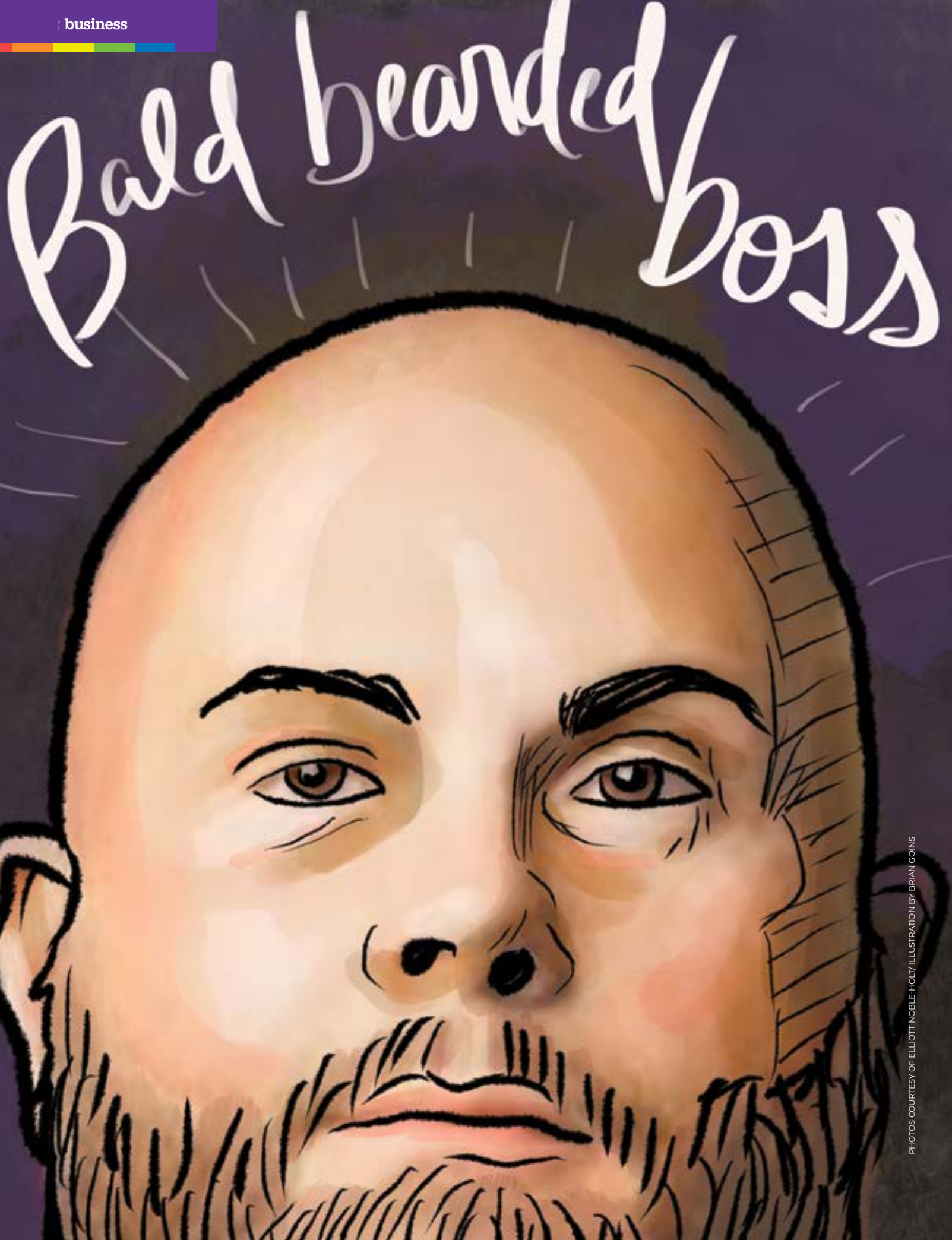
SHERRY GALLOWAY, MD



TEAM WARNER










*Take a peek inside the head of Elliott Noble-Holt — a Nashville native — is finding success as an author and podcaster*

**By Selena Haynes**

 @sjhaynes321

**I** first met Elliott in 2019 at an awards ceremony. Sure he's bald and bearded, but the first thing I noticed was his kindness. He intrigued me and sometimes you just get a gut feeling about people. His answers in this Q&A speak to who he truly is and that's important. Genuineness is hard to come by. One of the reasons for this magazine is to show the LGBTQ+ community what YOU're capable of and Elliott is a great role model to have.

**Selena Haynes: When did you first realize who you were/how you identify?**

At the very young age of 6, I knew I liked boys. I would act on these impulses with a neighbor, another gay kid, who was around the same age. It wasn't easy as it wasn't the "norm". I felt lonely, singled out and different. I did my best to act "straight" and not be

noticed. For me, it didn't get easy until I turned 18 and started hanging out with other people who were LGBTQ. I finally felt normal. I finally felt like I could take the restraints that I placed on myself off and be who I was meant to be.

**How did you and your husband, Donte, meet?**

Donte and I met on Facebook in 2015 through a mutual friend that neither one of us knew, lol. It all began via Facebook messenger. He lived in New York and I lived here in Nashville. It didn't take long for us to begin to travel back and forth to see each other and eventually him moving from the "Big City" to the "It City" and marrying in December of 2016. He's my backbone and keeps me grounded.

**How was it raising a daughter? Did you encounter any negative situations? If so, how did you handle them?**

I adopted my daughter when I was 23. She came home with me from the hospital when she was four days old. Raising her has been

a highlight of my life. I'm attracted to growth both personally and professionally, so to see my child grow from an infant to a young woman is quite spectacular. Being a gay, white man, with a biracial daughter and raising her in the South, you most definitely experience negative situations. I've always been more of a "show you, better than I can tell you" type of person. My daughter was raised in a household where values, ethics, diversity and inclusivity, community and giving back were topics of discussion throughout her childhood and teenage years.

With my father passing away when I was only 17, I wanted to provide my daughter with all the necessary tools to be independent, confident, and strong but most importantly a good human. When Isa speaks, people listen. Over the years, when we've experienced racist comments or homophobia, we spoke from a place of reason, commanding respect with our actions while reminding others that we are all human before we're anything else.

**What's a couple of your most favorite memories of your family life?**

Wow! So the first thing that popped into my head was »

meeting Reba McEntire when I was 13. I slipped through the bathroom window to get to her trailer at Opryland. When she came out of her dressing room, I asked her for a picture, which she obliged. Still to this day, she's one of my favorite artists, with her songs helping me grieve the loss of my father, the loss of my mother, breakups and heartache to empower me to be "me" with other songs.

My second favorite memory would have to be the first few years of getting my company MediCopy started and off the ground. I started with \$50 and, with the help of my impeccable team, have turned this business into a \$25m+ empire. I wouldn't trade those years for anything. It has made me who I am today.

**Your business is booming! I saw that you're looking to hire**

#### **40 new employees.**

We are! We hired 70 people during Covid in 2020 and grew the business by 39%. I was almost ashamed to say that out loud while so many other businesses and industries were failing but I'm proud that I've created a sustainable business, one that continues to thrive and shocks the hell out of me!

#### **What sets you apart from the competition?**

I believe what sets us apart is that MediCopy has a real personality. We aren't just selling a product or a service. We're real people trying to help other people. We have core values, which most businesses do but we live and breathe our core values and make every decision (both good and bad) based on them. If an employee, client or vendor are not aligned with our core values, we'll address it and adjust accordingly.

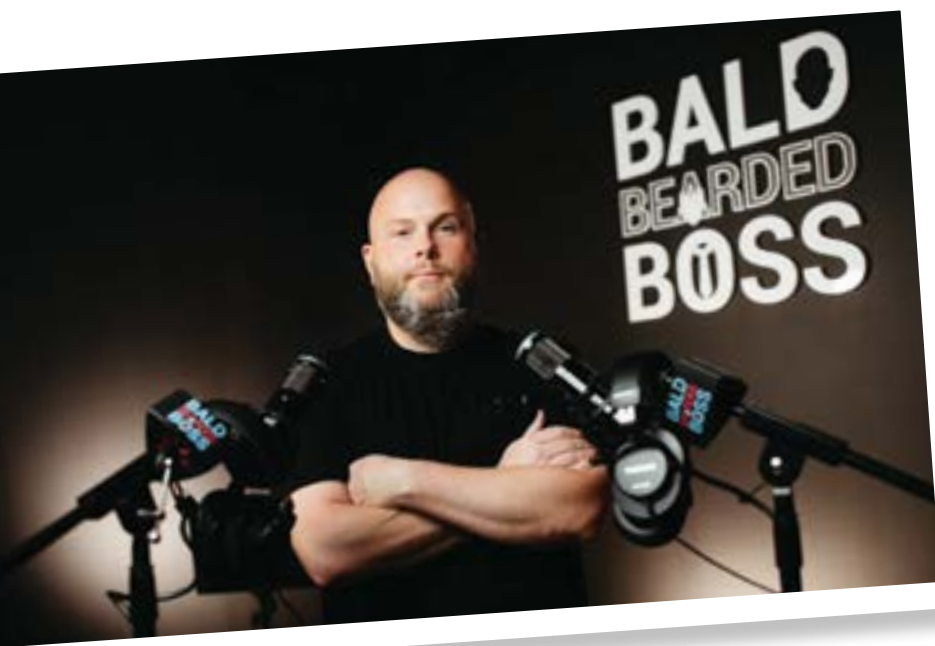
#### **What stokes that fire for you? What's your motivation?**

As I mentioned before, growth. I want to push myself to the limits and nothing will stop me. When my dad died in 1996, I barely made it out of high school but I did. I went to a local community college for 10 days before dropping out. As important as a college education is, I have proven you don't need one to be a "success". I'd rather hire someone who has drive, dedication, and determination and works like me than someone who has a degree but half-ass works.

Luckily, I've surrounded myself with team members who are smarter than me! Their drive to grow inspires me to be better. When I started MediCopy, banks turned me down for business loans. This only made me work harder and smarter. My mother signed up for AOL at Best Buy back in 2000 so that I could receive a \$500 gift card to buy my first copy machine for MediCopy. That "free" gift card was an opportunity that I took advantage of in a positive way by investing in that Hewlett Packard copy machine. That little machine and small investment made me hundreds of thousands of dollars in the first few years of business. Writing this out makes me think that opposition stokes my fire. My plans are to always win and I will.

#### **What can we expect to see from Medi-copy in the future?**

MediCopy has already beat 2020's numbers in the first





“Listen, I still hustle like I did on day one of starting my business. It’s in my blood. My father, brother, uncles, and both grandfathers were entrepreneurs.”

six months of 2021. We’re on a roll! Technology and having a national presence is changing the landscape and the reach we have throughout the U.S. The sky is literally the limit. Our Q3 goal is to hire 40 new team members within 90 days!

**You mentioned signing up for AOL to get that \$500 gift card. How does it feel knowing that you no longer have to take that route for your business or even your personal life?**

Listen, I still hustle like I did on day one of starting my business. It’s in my blood. My father, brother, uncles, and both grandfathers were entrepreneurs. Is it easier as our brand gets bigger and our reputation is shared with potential clients? Absolutely. I run this business lean, debt-free, with no investors or a

**CONNECT**

You can find and subscribe to Bald Bearded Boss on all streaming platforms — Apple, Spotify, Audible, etc. Elliott’s new book, “Bald Bearded Boss: Manifesting Who You Are Meant to Be,” will hit shelves Winter 2021.

Learn more about Elliott Noble-Holt and “Bald Bearded Boss” at [baldbeardedboss.com](http://baldbeardedboss.com).

board that I have to answer to, so that I can adjust and customize my leadership style when needed or workflows for clients when requested. Hard work, humility and gratitude have gotten me to where I am today. I’m thankful for my success but I’m just as thankful for the journey getting here. I never dreamed I’d be this successful! By the way, I’m not done yet!

**Life isn’t always perfect though. How do you**

**handle the downs?**

I just talked about this today with one of my friends. I don’t operate in a negative space long. What I mean is, if something happens to me in a negative sense, I ask God and the Universe to show me how I contributed to this negative action. I want to immediately learn what I did wrong and grow from it.

There are times that as a human, something negative happens and we didn’t contribute or “ask for it”. During those times, I surrender »







**“There are times that as a human,  
something negative happens and  
we didn’t contribute or ‘ask for it.’  
During those times, I surrender to  
God and the Universe.”**

to God and the Universe. I can’t preach to friends, family and co-workers about how blessed and successful I am when I surrender my day/thoughts/life to God and the Universe and then not recognize that I’m not too old to learn a lesson and have a “down” when there’ve been so many “ups”. I’m not too special to be taught a lesson.

**What advice do you give for people trying to establish themselves in a career or a business of their own?**

Establish your own core values. Never waiver from them when accepting a job offer or bringing on a new client. Limit taking on debt. Exhaust your resources before using someone else’s. This will prove to you how much you believe in your product or service!

**Tell us about “Bald Bearded Boss.”**

“Bald Bearded Boss” is a podcast dedicated

to entrepreneurs and leaders who are wanting to grow personally and professionally while keeping their team open, honest, and accountable. As a father, husband, serial entrepreneur, author, 7x Inc. 5000 Honoree, I share my experiences growing a company and its culture. From straight talk on workplace culture, relationships, working with family and beyond. My goal is to help others manifest who they are meant to be!!

**How did this podcast come about?**

I was approached about writing a book and began that process once we started working remotely during quarantine. Preparing for the book brought up lots of memories and experiences that have helped mold me into the person I am personally and professionally but had “stored them in my head”. I wanted to share as many of these experiences with others who are trying

to establish themselves or grow into a better leader, entrepreneur or C-suite.

Naturally, I wanted to use all platforms to get this message across. I turned to podcasts (since they took off during the pandemic) to see if it was something I’d be interested in doing. So, I started listening to a podcast called “Your Gay Cousins with Michael and Estevan” on my morning walks. I couldn’t get enough of it. It was real and casual. They both inspired me to give it a try. I created a studio, reached out to producers here in Nashville and the rest is history. I’ll begin recording season two in August with content from business leaders and entrepreneurs across the U.S.

**What topics are you going to cover?**

We’re covering topics such as workplace culture, accountability, working with family and friends, diversity and inclusion in the workplace, to name a few! This is real talk, no bullshit. ■







# Unapologetically OUTspoken

*Nigel Ashford: Taking his dream and making it happen*

By Matthew Stafford

🐦 @WeConnect\_LGBT

**N**igel Ashford is the creator and host of the show, OUTspoken. Ashford, 28, is a native of Birmingham, Alabama, and has been working in Nashville for the past two years. Previously having worked as a television reporter in Mobile, Alabama, and in Amarillo, Texas, Nigel always wanted to be a talk show host but was told by a station manager that he didn't have what it takes to be one. Undeterred and with some nudging by a good therapist, Nigel decided to give it a try, and his show debuted on Facebook in May of 2020. Show topics have been

diverse and have included LGBTQ+ history, HIV/AIDS, raising children, polyamory, and cooking. We discussed what readers should know about the show and what makes it different from the LGBTQ+ content we mostly see on television.

## **Tell us about your show. What would you want readers to know?**

It is a Facebook Live show, and one thing I would want readers to know is that it opens a conversation that is rarely had with LGBTQ+ culture. We always talk about entertainment. We always talk about celebrities. We always talk about reality tv. We always talk about Ru Paul's Drag Race. We always talk about things that have to do with sexual intercourse. But we're more than that, and we're very deep-rooted, and there's so much good, and positivity, and strength, and trauma, and loss, and understanding that has to go with LGBTQ+.

When people think of the

LGBTQ+ community, we are seen as white men with blue eyes, blonde hair, a six-pack, and muscles. But there are African Americans. There are Asians. There are Latinx. There are transgender, and there are lesbians. There are so many people that make up the LGBTQ+ community and their stories need to be told. I wanted to create a platform for people to be comfortable enough to tell their stories and also for people to be seen. It's for us to really dive into the mindset and the cultures of everybody in the LGBTQ+ community. That's the concept for my show.

## **What brought you to Nashville?**

I accepted a position as a marketing director for a nonprofit. I've been here for two years now. I'm starting a new job with Gays with Kids. It is a national organization that really showcases LGBTQ+ parents raising children and finding them through adoption or surrogacy.

## **What motivates you to do that kind of work?**

I was ashamed of being gay at first, and I was very closeted. That was even after coming out at the age of 20. When I thought of "gay," I thought of flamboyant men who were "girlie." Being African American, that's even harder »



because on top of being black, now our own community is going to hate us for being gay. It's like a triple-negative. I'm a black, gay male in America. On top of family and religion, it placed such a hardship on me. I'm a Christian, and I'm very close to my faith. I honestly thought, "Am I going to Hell?" "Am I disobeying God?" "Is this the right path for me?" Then, all of a sudden, when I started accepting all of me and loving all of who I am, doors started to open, purpose started to show. My passion for things started to change, but it was in a good way.

**What do you feel like you've learned in putting your show together?**  
I've learned so much!  
Each show brings us

### CONNECT

OUTSpoken can be found on Facebook at <https://m.facebook.com/OUTSpokenLGBTQ/>.

understanding. With the LGBTQ+ community, I feel like we always just stay in our lane. The gays stay with the gays, the lesbians with the lesbians, the transgender with the transgender, the bi's with the bi's. For us to be a whole community, we don't understand each other.

**How do we expect people who are straight or religious to understand us if we don't understand each**

**other?**

**It sounds to me from listening to you that there's wisdom to be found not only in hearing other people but also in sharing.**

Yes, and it's all in just talking. That's the thing. If you provide a platform for people who are different from you, and you just take the time to listen, you will find out so much more about life and about others, and it will change your concept. ■

NASHVILLE



BLACK PRIDE

19TH ANNUAL NASHVILLE BLACK PRIDE CELEBRATION

OCTOBER  
8-10 2021

**SUPPORT BLACK PRIDE!**

Visit our online store to shop for merchandise or make a tax deductible donation

For more details, visit [nashvilleblackpride.org](https://nashvilleblackpride.org)



Social distance will be practiced. Wear a mask. The health and wellness of our supporters is very important to us!



# Fighting the Gender Marker Ban

By Lauren Means

🐦 @LaurenInMidTenn

Our transgender community has been pummeled this year with legislation geared specifically at limiting their rights. Additionally, Tennessee now stands as the sole state to prevent people from correcting the gender marker on their birth certificate. Not only can this be devastating for someone's mental and emotional well-being but can cause legal and safety issues when presenting a birth certificate that doesn't match your ID.

The U.S. Department of State permits corrections to the gender marker on a person's passport. Federal agencies — like the Social Security Administration — allow for changes in agency records. Even the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security authorizes transgender people to correct the sex designation on their driver's licenses. Many of these changes require proof of identity or citizenship — like a birth certificate. This can lead to individuals being forced to disclose private and sensitive information about themselves in situations where it would normally remain undisclosed.

If every state except for Tennessee and all federal agencies allow for a transgender individual to update all of their personal documentation with correct gender markers, why is the state of Tennessee holding out on allowing a gender marker change on a birth certificate?

## Equal Protection and Due Process

It has been a long process for states to update laws that allow for gender changes. The first recognized case to consider legal gender change in the U.S. was “[Mtr. of Anonymous v. Weiner \(1966\)](#).” While the courts did not side with the plaintiff, this case did start the conversation.

The most recent state to authorize gender marker changes is Ohio. In December 2020, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio found the birth certificate rule imposed by the state Department of Health and the Office of Vital Statistics was unconstitutional.

This brings us to the present. With Tennessee being the last holdout, there's a case currently making its way through the courts. On April 23, 2019, lead plaintiff Kayla Gore spoke outside of the federal courthouse in Nashville where she announced a lawsuit being filed against the state of Tennessee naming Gov. Bill Lee and Tennessee Department of Health Commissioner, Lisa Piercey, as defendants. When asked about the case, Gore told



PHOTO COURTESY JAMIE COMBS

For more information on name and gender marker changes on legal documents, visit <https://transequality.org/documents> or <https://www.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights/article/trans-changing-birth-certificate-sex-designations>.

Connect, “The Lawsuit Gore v. Lee is the result of many Trans and GNC [Gender Non-Conforming] Tennesseans being able to safely navigate life with a birth certificate that reflects them. For many TGNC people, this makes them whole.”

The suit asserts Tennessee's ban on changing gender markers is not supported by any compelling, important, or even legitimate government interest while it subjects transgender people to discrimination, harassment and even violence. The suit seeks a determination that the statute is unconstitutional specifically citing the ban is in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the

Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution; the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution; and the Free Speech Clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Jaime Combs, a strong activist within the transgender community, recently joined the suit. When asked why she joined and why this is an important moment for Tennessee, she had the following to say:

*"It is imperative in the march for equality that we recognize individuals for who they are and that their documentation matches their identity. It is time for Tennessee to stop dragging its feet and join the other 49 states in recognizing this civil right of its (Tennessee's) citizens.*

*I was honored to be a part of this lawsuit and this is the third time that I have been part of this effort. Previously in the early 2000s and then later in the early 2010s, there were efforts made to organize litigation against this archaic and discriminatory law but it seemed as if the momentum dwindled when other matters were pushing against our community.*

*Without accurate documentation a marginalized community of transgender Tennesseans is left even more vulnerable, particularly in employment, since Tennessee is a right to work state, and also at this time, the Tennessee legislature has passed some of the most discriminatory and transphobic legislation (particularly targeting our younger transgender brothers and sisters).*

*Personally, this law is very frustrating for me as I have transgender friends who were born in Tennessee and who had the right to have affirming*

*documentation (until the law changed in the 70's due to this right becoming a case of fear-mongering politics)."*

The case is currently still open and pending with the

U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee.

For updates and more information on this case visit [lambdalegal.org/in-court/cases/tn\\_gore-v-lee](https://lambdalegal.org/in-court/cases/tn_gore-v-lee). ■



The poster for the 21st Annual Bark In The Park event features a bright orange and yellow background. At the top, the 'new leash on life' logo is displayed with the website 'newleashonline.org'. The main title 'Bark In The Park' is in large, bold, white letters with a blue outline. Below the title, it says '21st Annual'. To the right of the title is a cartoon dog holding a flag and a boy holding a balloon. The event date and time are 'SATURDAY 11am - 4pm OCT. 23RD 2021'. The location is 'WILSON COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS in LEBANON, TENNESSEE'. The text 'Join us at the' is written in a script font above the location. Below the date, it says 'FOOD, MUSIC & FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY FREE ADMISSION!'. At the bottom, it says 'Plus... GET YOUR PET'S FREE RABIES VACCINE' with a syringe icon. The bottom section of the poster has a white background with black text describing the event.

**new leash on life**  
newleashonline.org

**21st Annual**  
**Bark In The Park**

**SATURDAY 11am - 4pm**  
**OCT. 23RD 2021**

Join us at the  
**WILSON COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS**  
in LEBANON, TENNESSEE

**FOOD, MUSIC & FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY**  
**FREE ADMISSION!**

Plus... **GET YOUR PET'S FREE RABIES VACCINE**

Every year, dog lovers from our community and beyond attend this great event, bringing their dogs for the contest, games, vendors, and fellowship. This year, we are partnering with Empower Me Center for a Family Fun Day that benefits both animals and humans. This great event helps us to raise funds for the care of the animals under our protection, providing education, raising awareness, and continuing to help our community.

# Preserving our history

*Archivist compiles our LGBTQ+ history at MTSU's  
Albert Gore Research Center*

By Lauren Means

 @LaurenInMidTenn

**T**here's been a push to start recognizing and honoring our history in the LGBTQ+ community. There's also been legislation passed in many states, including Tennessee, to prohibit or limit the teaching of diverse history like that of LGBTQ+. Much like other parts of history, we'll be doomed to repeat it if we don't learn from it.

There's been a push to start recognizing and honoring our history in the LGBTQ+ community. There's also been legislation passed in many states, including Tennessee, to prohibit or limit the teaching of diverse history like that of LGBTQ+. Much like other parts of history, we'll be doomed to repeat it if we don't learn from it.

In Middle Tennessee, the Nashville Public Library houses [The Brooks Fund History Project](#) — an ongoing archival record of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) life in Middle Tennessee — and the [Larry Romans Papers](#). Vanderbilt University also has LGBTQ+ history collections.

Middle Tennessee State University's (MTSU) Albert Gore Research Center (AGRC) is adding to these archives with their acquisition of the OutCentral collection.

The AGRC is under the College of Liberal Arts at MTSU and focuses its archival collecting on the political, social, and cultural history of Middle Tennessee in the 20th and 21st centuries. The AGRC was named after Albert Gore Sr. because he donated his congressional papers to his alma mater MTSU in 1970. They also have several major collections from politicians like Bart Gordon, Richard Fulton, Jim Cummings, and John Bragg. Many collections focus on politics, World War II, MTSU history, and Rutherford County and its residents. As one might assume, this has led to a less-than-diverse collection of history.

Sarah Calise (they/them), is one of two full-time archivists on staff and they have taken the lead on diversifying those collections. We spoke with them about the AGRC, the Middle Tennessee LGBTQ+ History Project, what it takes to run the center, and their push to safeguard all histories.

## Preserving Inclusive Experiences

An archivist's job holds a lot of responsibility. Many people don't realize how an archivist can dictate what parts of history are preserved and what parts fall by the wayside. Sarah doesn't take that responsibility lightly. "Early in my career at the Gore Center, I started making plans to diversify our collections. The voices of white, straight men fill our archives, and that's a problem that needs »





**TOP LEFT:** Penny Campbell (right) at a Nashville Pride event circa 1990s.

**TOP RIGHT:** Fun carnival games, like a watermelon eating contest, held at the Gay & Lesbian Community Center (or The Center) at 703 Berry Road, circa 1990s. **ABOVE:** Drag queen Bianca Paige rides a big pink elephant in the 1998 Nashville Pride Parade.

**AT LEFT:** Members of the Lesbian & Gay Coalition for Justice marching in a Nashville Pride parade, circa 1990s.



reconciliation, so that's been my main job," Sarah explains.

It's also something that the AGRC acknowledges. On their website, they clearly state they recognize the current collection has documented and preserved mostly white, heterosexual male history of MTSU, Rutherford County, and the surrounding communities. They acknowledge this practice has created many "gaps and silences" in the collections and the updated collections policy demonstrates their goals to collect and preserve historical records and oral histories from people of color, women, disabled people, and people in the LGBTQ+ community.

"Archivists have a lot of power in determining our nation's collective memory and whose history gets validated and remembered. The archives field also has deep roots in white supremacy," says Sarah. The earliest government archives were built by white men for white men about white men's history.

They also note that archivists are human beings that come with their own biases and agendas. "Our work is far from politically neutral," Sarah expresses. "My work is inherently political and the personal is political. I'm an openly queer, non-binary, disabled white person, and therefore it was pertinent to me that the Gore Center turn its resources toward preserving more inclusive experiences, especially when local and state governments are passing laws to ban or whitewash Black and

queer history in particular."

### These Places Matter Too

Sarah says they are currently in the early stages of a documentation project where they are locating former and current Nashville sites connected to LGBTQ+ history. Back in June, a small group drove around the city taking photographs of 13 different places significant to the LGBTQ+ community. "Everything from the Berry Hill house where the Gay & Lesbian Community Center was to Nissan Stadium, which is the same site of Boots, a former men's only leather bar," says Sarah.

The AGRC will post these photographs along with their stories throughout the summer on their [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) pages leading up to Boro Pride. They'll have a booth there with a pop-up exhibit, photograph binders that attendees can look through and add their own captions, and LGBTQ+ history-inspired swag. ■



### CONNECT

To view the digital collections or find out how to view documents in person, visit <https://mtsu.edu/gorecenter/index.php>. If you have a story to share or items to add to the collection, you can call Sarah at 615-898-2869 or e-mail them at [Sarah.Calise@mtsu.edu](mailto:Sarah.Calise@mtsu.edu).



Upper  
Cumberland  
**PRIDE**



**Just Can't Hide That Pride!**

**Saturday August 21, 2021**

12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

**Dogwood Park - Cookeville, TN**

**ucpride.org**







# 5 places not to miss when (re)visiting Atlanta

*Travel blogger sees old favorite stomping ground in a whole new light*

**By Joey Amato**  
 @thatprideguy

**A**lmost everyone has been to Atlanta at some point or another. Whether for a conference or just passing through the Hartsfield-Jackson airport, the busiest airport in the world, Atlanta sees more than 100 million visitors per year. As the largest city in Georgia and one of the largest in the country by population, Atlanta has exploded to become an economic powerhouse.

Skyscrapers are popping up throughout the city and many Fortune 500 companies have a presence in the region. Of course, the city is known for its hometown favorites: Coca-Cola, Delta Airlines and Turner Broadcasting System, which was founded by none other than Ted Turner, whose name is everywhere in Atlanta. Turner has a downtown street named after him as well as his namesake restaurant – Ted’s Montana Grill – just in the Atlanta city limits.

Not too far from the downtown restaurant is Centennial Olympic Park, home of the 1996 summer Olympics. The park is adjacent to three other incredible attractions: the Georgia Aquarium, World of Coca-Cola and National Center for Civil & Human Rights.



On this visit, I decided to first swing by World of Coca-Cola, which gives visitors a wonderful overview of the history of the brand, talks about the secret formula and of course offers the opportunity to sample Coca-Cola products from around the world. If you time your visit right, you may even get a chance to take a picture with their mascot, the Polar Bear.

Next, I stopped by the National Center for Civil & Human Rights, a museum I had visited in the past. This time I was given a tour





by the Executive Director for the LGBTQ Institute at the museum. Although the Center doesn't have a specific LGBTQ exhibition, it does talk about the fight for LGBTQ rights throughout the years. The Center also houses the largest collection of papers and artifacts of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and has recently expanded its offerings to include a human rights training program for law enforcement officials as well as Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) experiences for workplaces.

One of my favorite things about Atlanta is MARTA, the public transportation system. It's one of the most efficient and inexpensive in the country, easily connecting travelers from the airport to

## READ THE TRAVEL BLOG

Joey Amato is the founder and publisher of Pride Journeys, an LGBTQ travel website and syndicated column.

For more LGBTQ travel ideas, please visit [pridejourneys.com](https://pridejourneys.com).

To learn more about Atlanta, visit [visitatlanta.com](https://visitatlanta.com)

all parts of the city including Buckhead, where I was staying for this visit.

While the Buckhead neighborhood isn't known for its LGBTQ nightlife, it is however known for its abundance of luxury shopping. Lenox Square is one of the most upscale malls in the country and boasts retail boutiques including Fendi, Louis Vuitton, and Prada. Don't forget to bring your credit card!

The reason I chose to stay

in Buckhead is because I wanted to check out the brand new Kimpton Sylvan Hotel. The mid-century modern property is a short ride, or a 20-minute walk to the MARTA station and features a rooftop bar, daily social hour with complimentary wine, as well as a 24-hour fitness center with Peloton bikes for those looking to work off some calories. Speaking of food, I would highly recommend the Charred Cauliflower +



Cucumber from Willow Bar located just outside the hotel lobby.

The Kimpton brand is known for being one of the most LGBTQ-inclusive hotel brands in the country so whenever I have the chance to stay at one of their properties, I usually do. They are also a global partner of IGLTA.

This September, Atlanta will host the IGLTA Global Convention. The International LGBTQ+ Travel Association will welcome guests from around the globe to midtown Atlanta for possibly the first in-person LGBTQ convention since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Registration is now open through the IGLTA website. I've been to this convention numerous times and can't wait to see all my friends and colleagues in the same room once again.

Midtown Atlanta is the epicenter of LGBTQ culture and nightlife in Atlanta. There is no lack of bars and restaurants here. Some standouts include Joe's on Juniper, Blake's on the Park, and My Sister's Room, a two-story lesbian-owned dance bar that has become a favorite among Atlanta's LGBTQ community.

The Midtown neighborhood is also known as the cultural hub of the city with over 25 different arts and cultural venues and more than 30 permanent performing arts groups residing in the area including the Grammy-winning Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, and the world-renowned High Museum of Art.

Not too far away is Zoo



Atlanta, an Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) accredited facility home to over 1,000 animals. Having a deep love for animals, I decided to take the elephant encounter, a one-hour experience that gives visitors a behind-the-scenes look at how zoo staff care for these majestic animals. During the program, we learned about the elephant's behaviors and even had the opportunity to feed them. In this case, Tara was especially fond of the lettuce that I was giving her.

After touring the zoo, head over to Guac y Margys, an LGBTQ-owned restaurant located along the Atlanta BeltLine's Eastside Trail. Everything I tried here was on point, from the house-made guacamole to the slow-roasted pork tacos. If you are in the mood to sample a variety of different

cuisines, check out Ponce City Market, located in the historic Sears, Roebuck & Co. building. The indoor/outdoor market offers dozens of dining and retail options including my favorite, Botiwalla Indian Street Food.

Atlanta is truly a multi-cultural destination that needs to be explored in its entirety. Venture away from the tourist-focused neighborhoods and meet the locals. You are sure to find surprises around every corner.

*Enjoy the Journey!*

*Joey*



*Inspire. Empower. Change.*

**presents**

# **The LGBTQ+ Marketplace**

## **Coming this Fall!**

Date, time and location TBD

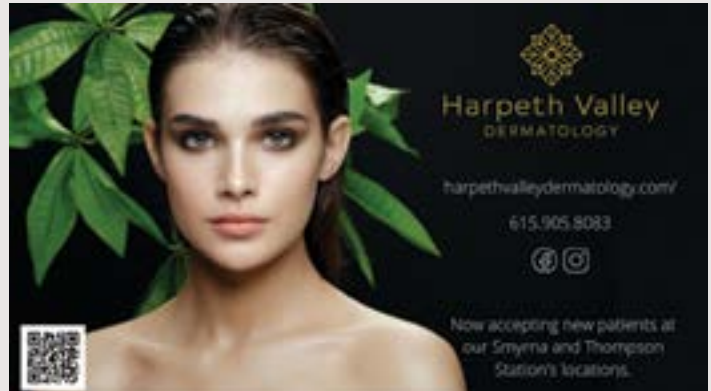
### **Reserve your spot today!**

Email your vendor space  
reservation request to  
[marketplace@weconnect.lgbt](mailto:marketplace@weconnect.lgbt)

**No deposits required until date, time and location are secured.**



# Shop. Play. Eat. LOCAL!





# NASHVILLE PRIDE

**SEPT 18 & 19**

Bicentennial Capitol Mall State Park



**PRESENTED BY**  
***BRIDGESTONE***



[nashvillepride.org](http://nashvillepride.org)