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The logo consists of the word "RALLY" in a bold, black, sans-serif font, centered within a bright yellow rectangular background.

To National LGBTQ Task Force  
From RALLY  
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Re Stonewall Inn Wall of Honor Press Release

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**National LGBTQ Wall of Honor 2023  
at the Historic Stonewall Inn**

*Honorees include icons such as Leslie Jordan and Terrence McNally, as well as international drag superstar Heklina.*

**NEW YORK, NEW YORK**– The International Imperial Court System and the National LGBTQ Task Force are honoring seven legends of the LGBTQ movement as 2023 National LGBTQ Wall of Honor inductees at the historic Stonewall Inn. The ceremony will take place on June 22 at 6:30 PM ET at 53 Christopher Street, New York, NY.

The Wall of Honor posthumously celebrates and acknowledges LGBTQ activists, artists and other individuals who played crucial roles in the ongoing fight for LGBTQ liberation. These icons will join the likes of Harvey Milk, James Baldwin, Keith Haring, Jose Sarria, Audre Lorde, Marsha P. Johnson, Matthew Shepard and dozens of others as a living memorial in the bar that was the site of the historic uprising in 1969.

"I founded the National LGBTQ Wall Of Honor because I believe that a community, indeed a civil rights movement, that doesn't know where it came from and whose shoulders it stands on doesn't really know where it's going," said Nicole Murray Ramirez, San Diego City Commissioner and Queen Mother of the Americas of the International Imperial Court System. "I am especially proud that two iconic drag queens are being honored this year: Darcelle XV of Portland and Heklina of San Francisco. "

This event also coincides with the National LGBTQ Task Force's 50th year, a milestone anniversary to recognize the organization's history of advocacy, organizing, and celebration for half a century.

“As we reflect on 50 years of hard-won progress, we hold tight to the fact that we not only fight for rights, we fight for people. The honorees this year not only showcase the beautiful diversity of our movement, but also embody this commitment to community and to each other,” said Kierra Johnson, Executive Director of the Task Force. “We were devastated at the passing of Achebe, but with this induction, we honor her memory and legacy as the first Black lesbian to serve on the Board of our organization. This is a moment to celebrate these leaders who wore their queerness on their sleeves, inspiring millions and teaching us that a key aspect of liberation is striving to create a world where everyone feels empowered to live as their authentic selves.”

2023 Honorees include:

**Leslie Jordan** — The Emmy- winning actor and social media superstar with a wry Southern drawl was best known for his longtime role as Beverley Leslie on *Will & Grace*, and won an Emmy Award for his portrayal in 2006. He developed a long career in film and television appearances with projects like *Reba*, *American Horror Story*, *Ugly Betty*, and *Nash Bridges*. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Jordan became an Instagram legend, amassing 5.8 million followers in 2020 and bringing light and joy into the lives of millions during a dark time.

Jordan, who first came to Hollywood in 1982, is a rarity in that he never officially had a "coming out" moment, as he was out for the lion's share of his career. And audiences worldwide loved him. He was short and pudgy, with a stinging, syrupy, sissy Southern voice — all things he talked about as if they were attributes that instigated his happiness.

**Terrence McNally** — Terrence McNally was an American playwright, librettist, and screenwriter. Described as "the bard of American theater" and "one of the greatest contemporary playwrights the theater world has yet produced," McNally was the recipient of five Tony Awards.

McNally’s career spanned six decades, and his plays, musicals, and operas were routinely performed all over the world. Active in the regional and off-Broadway theater movements as well as on Broadway, he was one of the few playwrights of his generation to have successfully passed from the avant-garde to mainstream acclaim. His work centered on the difficulties of, and urgent need for, human connection.

**Achebe Betty Powell** — Achebe Betty Powell was an activist with the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice and the National LGBTQ Task Force. She was one of the first Black women to have a leadership role in what was then called the lesbian and gay liberation movement in the 1970s. She was a “founding mother,” of the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice and remained active in the organization for the last 45 years. She was among the small group of multiracial, multiclass, feminist activists who came together in 1977 to create a new way of bringing resources to movements led by lesbians and women of color, to, in her words, “generate the justice that our communities need, right here, right now.”

Powell was the first Black lesbian to serve on the board of directors of the National Gay Task Force and was co-chair of that board for several years. She attended the historic meeting of lesbian and gay leaders at the Carter White House in 1977, and served as the director of the Kitchen Table Press. In the last few decades, Achebe also participated in events organized around United Nations World Conferences on Women and did diversity and social justice trainings for several international feminist groups, such as the

Center for Women’s Global Leadership (at Rutgers University) and the International Solidarity Network of Women Living Under Muslim laws.

**J. Frederic “Fritz” Lohman** — Lohman was a pioneering gay art patron. Together with his partner Charles Leslie, Lohman launched the first gay art space in New York in the Soho loft in New York City in 1969, exhibiting homoerotic art that most art galleries deemed too controversial at that time. Lohman and Leslie were also major players in the establishment and development of the Soho district advocating for the preservation of the historic cast-iron buildings, as an arts community, and ultimately as a trendsetting commercial hub. Their efforts resulted in the designation of the Soho-Cast Iron Historic District by the NYC Landmark Preservations Commission in 1973.

Lohman and Leslie opened another gallery in a basement space on Broome St., and in 1987 co-founded the Leslie-Lohman Gay Art Foundation, a non-profit organization created to preserve the works of LGBTQ artists, which has grown exponentially, and opened the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art, the first gay art museum in the world. The museum collection includes work by Keith Haring, Marion Pinto, Delmas Howe, David Hockney, and Robert Mapplethorpe.

**Darcelle XV** — Darcelle / Walter Cole was a legendary Drag icon not only in her hometown in Portland OR, but in the drag universe. Walter served in the U.S. Armed forces, and was discharged after the Korean War. In 1967, he bought a tavern in Northwest Portland, which became Darcelle XV Showplace. The name Darcelle honors the French actress and singer Denise Darcel. Darcelle described her persona as “sequins on the eyelids, lots of feathers, big hair, big jewels, and lots of wisecracks.”

For over 50 years, Darcelle XV Showplace was home to the longest-running drag show in the West Coast and produced the La Femme Magnifique International Pageant. Darcelle provided a safe space to showcase the drag art form, and provided a home and career for countless drag performers. Darcelle also gave back generously to the community, and has been widely honored for her philanthropy; an AIDS Memorial Monument and a street named in her honor.

In 2016, Darcelle was recognized by the Guinness World Records as the world’s oldest drag queen at the age of 85, and in 2020 Darcelle’s XV Showplace was added to the Oregon National Register of Historic Places.

**Heklina** — Stefan Grygelko was a drag queen, actor and entrepreneur in San Francisco and founder of the drag club Trannyshack in 1996, the longest drag event series in San Francisco – later rebranded as “Mother” at The Oasis in 2015. Heklina was voted the Community Grand Marshall of the 2004 San Francisco Pride Parade, and won 2009 Pride Creativity Award for Outstanding Artistic Contribution to the LGBTQ Community.

She emceed a variety of community events including Folsom Street Fair and San Francisco Pride, and co-starred in a series of short films – “Tran-ilogy of Terror” – a drag queen horror spoof written and directed by long-time collaborator Peaches Christ. In 2022, Heklina appeared alongside Peaches in “Mommie Queerest”, and was slated to perform the show in London when she passed. Heklina was mother to many drag queens and is a true icon in San Francisco.

**Gloria Allen** — Gloria Allen, was an American transgender activist who ran a charm school for transgender youth in Chicago's Center on Halsted. Allen's school lasted only a few years — she was not paid, and she often used her own money to prepare students' meals — but inspired a hit play, Charm, by Philip Dawkins. Her experiences were chronicled in the documentary film, Mama Gloria.

In 2014, Allen received Living Legend Award at the Trans 100 awards from transgender activists Janet Mock and Precious Brady-Davis. In 2021, she received the Carmen Vázquez Award for Excellence in Leadership on Aging Issues from SAGE, an advocacy organization for LGBTQ elders, at the National LGBTQ Task Force's Creating Change conference.

Members of the media interested in attending the 2023 Wall of Honors induction at the Stonewall Inn should contact Brian Denney [bdenney@wearerally.com](mailto:bdenney@wearerally.com) for credentials.

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### **About the National LGBTQ Task Force:**

The National LGBTQ Task Force advances full freedom, justice and equality for LGBTQ people. We are building a future where everyone can be free to be their entire selves in every aspect of their lives. Today, despite all the progress we've made to end discrimination, millions of LGBTQ people face barriers in every aspect of their lives: in housing, employment, healthcare, retirement, and basic human rights. These barriers must go. That's why the Task Force is training and mobilizing millions of activists across our nation to deliver a world where you can be you. For more information, go to <https://www.thetaskforce.org>

### **About the International Imperial Court System:**

The International Imperial Court System is the oldest LGBTQ service organization in the world, established in 1965 by Latino World War II veteran Jose Julio Sarría who in 1961 became the first openly gay candidate for public office. There are now over 65 Imperial Court Chapters in the United States, Canada and Mexico. The Court led the successful national campaigns for the Harvey Milk U.S. postage stamp in 2014 and the U.S. Navy Ship Harvey Milk.