

Famous Unmarried People, Past and Present

This list is divided into

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If you have an addition or correction to the list, please contact us.

Contemporary Solo Singles

Octavia Butler (1947-2006) was an African-American writer and the only science fiction writer to date to receive a "genius grant" from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Butler overcame shyness, self-doubt and an impoverished childhood to become recipient of Hugo awards, Nebula awards and an award for lifetime achievement in writing.

Maureen Dowd (1952-) is an author and columnist for the New York Times who received a Pulitzer Prize in 1999 for distinguished commentary. She received the Damon Runyon award in 2000 for outstanding contributions to journalism and the Mary Alice Davis Lectureship award from the College of Communication at The University of Texas at Austin in 2005.

Marie Barbare Edwards (1920-2009) was a psychologist who helped spark the 'Single Pride' movement. In 1974, she published a book, *The Challenge of Being Single* and was written about in an LA Times article printed that same year, "A Singles' Lib Manifesto."

Edward I. Koch (1924 -) New York's 105th mayor, is a lifelong bachelor. According to the New York Times, He is often asked but declines to say whether he is gay. "I do not want to add to the acceptability of asking every candidate, 'Are you straight or gay or lesbian?' and make it a legitimate question, so I don't submit to that question. I don't care if people think I'm gay because I don't answer it. I'm flattered that at 84 people are interested in my sex life — and, it's quite limited."

Maggie Kuhn (1905 - 1995) was the founder of the Grey Panthers. She once quipped: "Many people asked me, "You're not married -- how does it happen that a woman like you never married?" And my standard response is, "Sheer luck."

Agnes Martin (1912-2004) was a Canadian-American painter who lived and worked in both New York City and Taos, New Mexico. Her style was minimalist and many of her paintings reflect her Taoist leanings.

Harriet Meiers (1945-) is a lawyer who served as White House Counsel for President George W. Bush. Prior to her government service, she represented clients which included the Walt Disney Company and Microsoft. She served as president of the Dallas Bar Association (the first female to hold that post) and chaired the Board of Editors for the Journal of the American Bar Association.

Sally J. Priesand (June 27, 1946 -): America's first ordained female rabbi. Rabbi Priesand has leadership roles in the Jewish Federation of Greater Monmouth County, Planned Parenthood of Central New Jersey, the Center for Holocaust Studies at Brookdale Community College and she is president of the board of directors for Interfaith Neighbors Inc. After battling breast and thyroid cancer, Priesand retired in 2006.

Janet Napolitano, governor of Arizona, was nominated by President-elect Obama to become Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

Helen Reddy (October 25, 1941 -): Australian pop singer and actress. She scored an international hit in 1972 with "I am Woman", a song that quickly became a feminist anthem and hit #1 on the U.S. charts. Reddy has also appeared in many movies and television series, including two that she hosted.

Janet Reno (1938-) was appointed by President Bill Clinton as Attorney General, the first woman to hold that post. Reno served the longest term as Attorney General since William Wirt in 1829. Prominent cases prosecuted during her term include the Unabomber, the Oklahoma City Bomber and the Microsoft Antitrust case.

Dr. Condoleezza Rice (1954-) currently serves as U.S. Secretary of State and is the first African-American woman to hold that Cabinet post. She previously served as National Security Advisor (2001-2005), was Provost at Stanford University (1993-1999) and was a top advisor on Soviet and East European affairs during the breakup of the Soviet Union. In 2004 and 2005 Forbes Magazine ranked her as the most powerful woman in the world.

David Souter (1939-) was Attorney General of New Hampshire, and currently serves as an associate justice for the United States Supreme Court. He was a Rhodes Scholar and attended Harvard College, Oxford University in England and Harvard Law School.

John Waters (1946-) is a filmmaker known for his funky, transgressive movies that reflect his passions; blood and violence. Waters also identifies with the LGBT community and is a wonderfully unique individual with a "laugh-out-loud" sense of humor.

Solo Singles from History

Alvin Ailey (January 5, 1931 - December 1, 1989): African - American modern dancer and choreographer, founder of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. His company popularized modern dance throughout the world with its international tours. West 61st Street between Amsterdam and Columbus in New York City was renamed as "Alvin Ailey Way".

Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) was a schoolteacher involved in the temperance and abolitionist movements before joining with other suffragists such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton to champion women's rights. She was arrested for voting in the 1872 presidential election, 48 years before U.S. women gained the right to vote in 1920.

Joan of Arc (1412-1431) is a national heroine in France. At age 17 she led the victorious French troops in the Battle of Orleans (1429). Two years later she was convicted of heresy and burned at the stake; in 1920 Joan was canonized by the Roman Catholic church as a saint.

Emily Carr (December 13, 1871 - March 2, 1945): was a Canadian writer and artist influenced by the cultures of Alaska and British Columbia. She was named "The Mother of Modern Arts" by the Group of Seven, her work was exhibited at the National Gallery of Canada, and her book "Klee Wyck" won the Governor General's Award. Multiple Canadian public schools, as well as an institute of art and design, are named after her.

Coco (Gabrielle) Chanel (1883-1971) was a famous French fashion designer who introduced the world to her signature cardigan sweater, "little black dress" and Chanel No. 5. She briefly served as a nurse in World War II. Coco even had a Broadway musical, Coco written about her life!

Elizabeth I of England (1533-1603) was the last and longest-reigning monarch in the English Tudor dynasty, ruling for 45 years. During her reign England became a substantial power in Europe, defeating Spain's Armada and spreading English influence around the world through exploration.

E. Cora Hind (1861-1942): Western Canada's first female journalist. Agricultural editor for the "Winnipeg Free Press", world authority on crop predictions, president of the Canadian Women's Press Club, and active supporter of women's suffrage and the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

William Lyon Mackenzie King (1874-1950) served three terms as Canadian Prime Minister and has been ranked by historians as Canada's greatest PM. During 21 years in office he established Canada's independence in international affairs, instituted social security programs and gave responsibility for the economy to the federal government.

Moms Mabley (March 19, 1894 - May 23, 1975): African - American comedian and one of the most successful black vaudeville entertainers. Though she had four children and five grandchildren, Mabley never married and she lived most of her life as a lesbian. Moms Mabley broke taboos and challenged assumptions throughout her career with her character of an old woman, who was sexual, savvy, and irrepressible.

Agnes Campbell Macphail (1890-1954) was the first female elected to the Canadian House of Commons. She active in progressive politics; committed to rural issues, penal reform, senior pensions and workers' rights; and promoted these issues through writing, activism and legislation.

Harriet Martineau (1802-1876) was a British writer, political scientist, abolitionist and feminist who was acquainted with Thomas Malthus, John Stuart Mill, George Eliot, Florence Nightingale, Charlotte Bronte and Charles Darwin. She wrote an unflattering portrait of America in *Theory and Practice of Society in America* (1837), and through subsequent writings introduced Britain to the abolitionist cause.

Pauli Murray (1910-1985) was an activist for civil rights and women's rights, a lawyer, teacher, poet and minister. Murray served as professor of American Studies at Brandies University, was a co-founder of the National Organization for Women, and was the first African-American woman ordained as an Episcopal priest.

Christabel Pankhurst (1880-1958) was an English suffragist and co-founder of the Women's Social and Political Union (WPSU) in 1903. Her vocal demands for women's voting rights caused her imprisonment in 1905. After earning a law degree she continued her activism for voting rights and sexual equality and was appointed a Dame Commander of the British Empire in 1936.

Dame Freya Stark (1893-1993) was a fearless British travel writer who traveled solo in regions, such as the Arabian deserts, where women seldom traveled. During World War II, she helped create a network to persuade Arabs to support the Allies. She is known for her linguistic abilities, cartography and her travel writing.

Charlotte Whitton (March 8, 1896-January 25, 1975): Canadian social reformer, feminist, and first female mayor of a major Canadian city (Ottawa). Whitton served as mayor from '51 -'56, and again from '60 -'64, and was a staunch defender of Canada's traditions and legislation to aid children.

Single American Presidents

Can an unmarried person become President of the United States?

Thomas Jefferson (1743 - 1826) had been widowed for 19 years when he was elected as the third President.

Andrew Jackson (1767 - 1845) was single during his service as the seventh President because his wife died just before his inauguration.

Martin Van Buren (1782 - 1862), the eighth president, had been widowed for 14 years when elected.

James Buchanan, Jr. (1791-1868) was the 15th President and the only one never to marry.

Contemporary Different-Sex Couples

Michelle Triola Marvin & Dick Van Dyke: these Hollywood seniors were unmarried together for 30 years, until Michelle's death in October, 2009.

Angelina Jolie & Brad Pitt: together since 2005, have one child together and Pitt has adopted Jolie's other two children. In September 2006, Pitt said, "Angie and I will consider tying the knot when everyone else in the country who wants to be married is legally able."

Oprah Winfrey & Stedman Graham: engaged since 1992 but still not married. On Larry King Live in September 2001, Oprah said, "I think the relationship as it is works really, really solidly well." In TV Guide in October 2003, Oprah said, "People look at me [not marrying Stedman] and think, 'She must be unhappy, something must be missing.' But that's because they're looking at my life from their perspective. Stedman and I have a great relationship that allows me to be me in the fullest sense, with no expectations of wifedom and all that would mean."

Goldie Hawn & Kurt Russell, together since 1984 with no marriage plans

Tina Turner & Erwin Bach (record executive), living together since 1986

Susan Sarandon & Tim Robbins, together since 1988, have two kids and no marriage plans

LeBron James and Savannah Brinson: they are just in their early twenties, but Cleveland Cavaliers basketball 'King'

James is adorably outspoken not only about being a great father to their two babies but also about his great single mother, Gloria.

Bob Shacochis (American Book Award-winning author) & Barbara Petersen (executive director of the First Amendment Foundation), together since 1976.

Gail Godwin (bestselling author) & Robert Starer (composer), together since 1976.

Larry Mullen Jr. (of U2) & Ann Acheson: high school sweethearts. Together since about 1979 and have three children.

Donna Mills (actress) & Richard Holland (music executive), in a relationship since about 1981, although they live apart. Mills lives with her adopted daughter.

Julie Taymor (director) & Elliot Goldenthal (composer), together since about 1982. Goldenthal told *The New York Times*, "We've spent 20 years being happily unmarried."

Sam Shepard (actor) & Jessica Lange (actress), together since 1982.

Gene Simmons (rock star) & Shannon Tweed (former *Playboy* Playmate) have lived together since about 1984 and have two children. Says Simmons, "My daughter understands her mom and her dad never married but are happy together."

Carol Queen & Robert Morgan (authors and sex educators), together since 1989

Susie Bright (writer) & Jon Bailiff, in a relationship since around 1989. They live together with Susie's daughter, Aretha.

John Malkovich (actor/director) & Nicoletta Peyran (scholar), together since about 1991 with 2 children.

Quinn Cummings (actress, played Marsha Mason's daughter in *The*

Goodbye Girl and an orphan on Family) & Donald DiPietro (Internet software executive), together since 1996. Have a daughter together and no plans to marry.

Marty Liquori (track athlete) & Debra Main, together since 1992, "engaged" since 1996

Bertie Ahern (Prime Minister of Ireland) & Celia Larkin (Ireland's de facto first lady). Ahern is not officially divorced from his wife.

Alastair Campbell (Prime Minister Tony Blair's chief spokesman) & Fiona Millar (chief aide to Mr. Blair's wife, Cherie) have three children together.

Joanna Coles & Peter Godwin (award-winning journalists).

Alan Nairn & Amy Goodman (journalists and activists).

Wallace Shawn (actor/writer, known for The Princess Bride) & Deborah Eisenberg (writer, author of All Around Atlantis).

Pauley Perrette (actor, known for Almost Famous and NCIS) & Michael Bosman. The couple vowed not to marry until same-sex couples can.

Contemporary Same-Sex Couples

Gore Vidal (author) & Howard Austen, together since 1948

Barbara Gittings (activist, editor, bibliographer) & Kay Tobin Lahusen (activist, writer, photographer), together since 1961

Lily Tomlin (comedian) & Jane Wagner (writer) have been living

together since around 1971.

Steve Gunderson (U.S. House of Representatives) & Rob Morris (architect), together since 1983

Kate Clinton (comedian) & Urvashi Vaid (LGBT activist) have been together since about 1991. Clinton says, "I can't marry [her] and wouldn't if I could, even though we could use some new Corning Ware with matching tops."

Elton John (singer, songwriter, activist) & David Furnish (film producer), together since 1993. John told an Australian newspaper, "I see no point in marrying David. We are not going to adopt a child."

k.d. lang (singer) & Leisha Hailey (musician), together since 1996. lang said, "Marriage is a mainstream concept, and being gay is being alternative. ...We need to call it something else and create our own tradition that says 'Ours is different from yours, but it's just as valid.'"

Different-Sex Couples from History

Wally Nelson & Juanita Nelson (peace activists), together 54 years until Wally's death in 2002.

Simone de Beauvoir (author of *The Second Sex*) & Jean-Paul Sartre (existential philosopher), together about 50 years until Sartre's death.

Dashiell Hammett (writer, author of *The Maltese Falcon*) & Lillian Hellman (playwright, author of *The Children's Hour*), had a rocky 30 year relationship and friendship, until his death in 1961.

Katharine Hepburn & Spencer Tracy: He was unable to divorce his Catholic wife, so he and Katharine never married in their 27 year relationship that was ended by his death in 1967.

George Eliot (pen name for Mary Ann Evans, 19th century British author) & G.H. Lewes, together for 24 years until Lewes' death in 1878.

George Sand (pen name for Amandine Lucille Dupin, 19th century French author) & Frederick Chopin (Polish classical composer), together about 15 years until Chopin's death. Sand had previously been married and said she found marriage a "barbarous institution."

Aphra Behn (British author) & John Hoyle (lawyer), together more than 12 years.

Jack & Jill (hill climbers). The nursery rhyme duo are believed to be unmarried lovers in late 15th century England.

Peggy Seeger & Ewan MacColl (singing duo), may not be household names, but the song Ewan wrote about his falling in love with Peggy, "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face" is one of the most moving love songs of the 20th century. Peggy and Ewan were a committed, non-married couple for almost 30 years, and had three children. Ewan and Peggy finally married shortly before Ewan's death in 1989 only to allow Peggy to receive Ewan's pension.

Same-Sex Couples from History

J. Edgar Hoover (FBI chief) & Clyde Tolson (FBI special agent), together 44 years

Willa Cather (author) & Edith Lewis, together 40 years.

Harry Hay (author, activist) & John Burnside (activist), together 40 years, until Hay's death in 2003

Gertrude Stein (poet, author) & Alice B. Toklas, together 39 years

Raymond Burr (actor, philanthropist) & Robert Benevides (Burr's business partner, philanthropist), together 35 years until the death of Raymond Burr

Leonardo da Vinci & Giacomo Caprotti, together 30 years

Noel Coward (playwright, songwriter) & Graham Payn (actor), together 29 years

You can find many more living and deceased same-sex couples on the Partner's Task Force for Gay and Lesbian Couples' list of Famous Gay and Lesbian Couples.