

# CRAIN'S 2020 NOTABLE LGBTQ EXECUTIVES

## + BUSINESSES CHAMPIONING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

This Notables section features 56 LGBTQ executives and 10 companies that champion diversity. A number of the honorees work for or support leading advocacy organizations, including AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Center on Halsted, Chicago House & Social Service Agency, Equality Illinois and Howard Brown Health.

Some of the attorneys on the list represent gay clients in employment or family law matters. Others have handled asylum cases for clients who were persecuted in their home countries. They help advance colleagues through the LGBT Bar Association and other legal forums.

These Notables are working at small

businesses and large corporations, arts organizations and nonprofits. Typically, they started or sponsor employee resource groups and serve on diversity and inclusion councils with an eye to breaking down the barriers that keep LGBTQ people from advancing to leadership positions. And they mentor colleagues informally or in structured settings to help them get ahead.

The Supreme Court's landmark ruling in June that civil rights law protects gay and transgender employees from discrimination pleases this cohort of Notables and the broader community that advocates equality.

*By Judith Crown*

**METHODOLOGY:** The individuals and companies featured did not pay to be included. Their profiles were drawn from the nomination materials submitted. This list is not comprehensive. It includes only individuals and companies for whom nominations were submitted and accepted after a review by editors. To qualify for the list, individuals must have made significant contributions to advancing equality within the workplace or in the Chicago area. Companies must have demonstrated that they have promoted diversity and inclusion, including the hiring and advancement of LGBTQ managers and executives as well as women and minorities.



### MICHAEL ABRAMS

Founder and CEO  
Michael Abrams Interiors

Michael Abrams heads his own 20-year-old design firm that focuses on high-end residential interiors. His team designs luxe



spaces in the city as well as affluent suburbs such as Hinsdale and Highland Park. Assignments take the team out of town, including work

on vacation homes in Florida and Utah. Abrams serves as president of Designs for Dignity, an organization that transforms nonprofit environments through pro bono design services and in-kind donations. Abrams aims to have all members of the Chicago-area design and construction community support the organization through pro bono design or construction services, donation of furnishings and construction materials or financial support. Prior to his involvement with Designs for Dignity, Abrams was a board member of the Human Rights Campaign.

### TONY ABRUSCATO

Founder and president  
Get Growing Foundation

As founder of nonprofit Get Growing Foundation, Tony Abruscato works to inspire, educate and motivate the next



generation of gardeners through community outreach and educational programs. The foundation is the educational partner of

the Chicago Flower & Garden Show, which Abruscato directed. Known as "Mr. Green Chicago," Abruscato works with special needs programs to grow plant material that is distributed to underserved communities. His latest initiative, Plant Truck Chicago, is a mobile greenhouse that brings plants to communities that don't have garden centers. Abruscato has three decades of involvement with the local and statewide LGBTQ community. He has worked with Equality Illinois, Chicago House & Social Service Agency and Chicago AIDS Run & Walk. And he was emcee for a Wintrust Pride celebration in 2018.

### DUKE ALDEN

Vice president  
Alight Solutions

At the provider of benefits, payroll and HR cloud services, Duke Alden leads the global security assurance function.



Alden's team of cybersecurity experts supports 3,250 clients worldwide. Alden has been a part of Alight's COVID-19 efforts, helping

clients respond to the pandemic. Alden served on the Illinois Human Rights Commission between 2015 and 2019. During his term, he advanced equality in a number of rulings related to equal treatment in the workplace, including issuing workplace protections for members of the transgender community. Alden served as co-chair of the governor's LGBTQ Advisory Committee for four years. He currently is on the board of Howard Brown Health and was previously board chair. Before joining Alight Solutions in 2017, Alden was chief information security officer at Aon.

### DAVID ALFINI

Partner  
Hinshaw & Culbertson

A partner in Hinshaw & Culbertson's Chicago office, David Alfini focuses on product liability defense and the defense of



nursing homes, long-term care facilities and home care companies. He was instrumental in launching and developing the firm's long-term care and

aging-services practice, which he leads. Alfini serves as co-chair of the LGBTQ affinity group, which offers programs to raise LGBTQ awareness. One of his goals is to connect his aging-services practice and his work with the LGBTQ community. This year, he's helped clients respond to issues related to COVID-19 and recently participated on a panel discussion addressing issues faced by LGBTQ seniors during the pandemic. He is chair of the programming board for nonprofit StartOut Chicago, which supports LGBTQ entrepreneurs and business owners.

### JILL ALLREAD

CEO  
Public Communications Inc.

Jill Allread leads communications and marketing agency PCI, which serves clients in health care, nonprofits, travel and



tourism, animal care and conservation. Over the past 18 months, Allread has led initiatives to increase commitment to diversity

and inclusion among staff and clients. PCI is recognized by the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce as a certified LGBT Business Enterprise. Allread is a founding board member of Girls in the Game, a Chicago nonprofit that empowers girls through sports and leadership. The organization serves 3,000 girls in the region every year. She's led fundraising events for the AIDS Foundation of Chicago and Howard Brown Health. Allread and her partner of 26 years worked to help pass Illinois' first domestic partnership registry in their home village of Oak Park.

**CHASSE REHWINKEL**

Acting director of banking  
Illinois Department of Financial &  
Professional Regulation

During the pandemic, Chasse Rehwinkel has made certain that banks provide critical services



to Illinois residents. For example, he spearheaded efforts to ensure that COVID-19 stimulus checks could be cashed without additional fees.

Additionally, Rehwinkel helped secure relief options with private student loan servicers to expand on the protections the federal government granted to federal student loan borrowers, benefiting over 138,000 Illinoisans with privately held student loans. Rehwinkel promotes diversity and inclusion and has mentored and served as a role model for LGBT colleagues. In a previous role, Rehwinkel advocated for the Illinois marriage equality bill that was signed into law in 2013. Before becoming acting state banking director last year, Rehwinkel was chief economist and director of the bond division for the state comptroller.



Top row, from left: Deborah Bone, Ed Casmere, Sondra Hemeryck and Matt Crowl. Bottom row, from left: Ruth Krugly, Azar Alexander, Raymond Rushing and Jessie Mahr.

**RILEY SAFER HOLMES & CANCELILA**

Managing Partner Patricia Brown Holmes is the first African American woman to lead and be a name partner at a major law firm that is not women- or minority-owned. The firm's attorneys are 34 percent racially and ethnically diverse, 43 percent female and 5 percent LGBT, exceeding national averages. RSHC's Summer Institute creates a legal careers pipeline for disadvantaged students, exposing them to experiences such as court hearings and depositions. The firm's LGBTQ attorneys serve in leadership roles internally as well as in LGBTQ organizations, including the LGBTQ section of the Cook County Bar Association, the Lesbian & Gay Bar Association of Chicago and the National LGBT Bar Association. And the firm supports attorneys with disabilities through sponsorship of the ABA Committee on Lawyers Living With Disabilities.

**CYRUS RIVETNA**

Owner/principal  
Rivetna Architects

Cyrus Rivetna is founder, CEO and principal architect at Rivetna Architects, which specializes in single and multifamily



homes, historic restorations, and religious and community centers. The firm has rehabbed distressed properties in low-income

neighborhoods. Over the past 18 months, Cyrus Rivetna contributed to the project that updated the city of Chicago's building code. One project in Logan Square converted an abandoned firehouse into a design and sales office for acoustics firm Turf. Rivetna is an authority on Zoroastrian fire temples and was architect of a temple that opened in Houston last year, the first in North America. Rivetna is a founding member of the American Institute of Architects Chicago LGBTQ Alliance and a member of the LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce.



**Congratulations to Tyler Bauer, named to Crain's LGBTQ Executive List 2020.**

We're celebrating Tyler Bauer, Medical Group Vice President, NorthShore University HealthSystem. Tyler galvanized a COVID-19 response team that expanded capacity tenfold at four NorthShore Immediate Care sites, organizing health care providers and expanding patient access. The response team also developed telehealth protocols and drive-through COVID testing that provides care for thousands of patients. Thank you Tyler, for all you do on behalf of NorthShore.



[northshore.org/COVID19](http://northshore.org/COVID19)

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### BILL ROSSI

Chief operations officer  
Rossi Enterprises/Earles Architects & Associates

Bill Rossi is COO of Earles Architects & Associates and contributes expertise in financial operations, risk management, accounting, bookkeeping and human resources to nine other businesses. Over the past 18 months,



Rossi has contributed to growth at Dan Earles' architecture, furniture and popcorn enterprises. He serves as CFO for eight franchises of the It's Just Lunch matchmaking brand and works with companies in media relations and film production. Rossi spearheaded initiatives that led to the LGBTBE certification of the Earles businesses. He's an active member of the Illinois LGBT Chamber of Commerce, the state of Illinois LGBTQ Task Force and the Center on Halsted. Rossi mentors LGBTQ professionals and has advocated for inclusive practices at client companies, including benefits for same-sex couples.



### RUSH UNIVERSITY SYSTEM FOR HEALTH

Since Rush's participation in the Human Rights Campaign's Healthcare Equality Index in 2009, the system has committed to LGBTQ+ employment. Of Rush's workforce, 54.5 percent are underrepresented minorities and 75 percent are women. Of C-suite executives, 42.9 percent are women and 28.6 percent are minorities. Rush participates in the WERQ LGBTQ Job Fair, recently joined Hire Trans Now and has recruited through social services agencies such as Chicago House. The Rush system has HR roles dedicated to hiring from the communities served, with specific outreach to people with disabilities, veterans and LGBTQ+ individuals. It tracks its hiring and retention from diverse communities as well as the promotion of women and underrepresented minorities into positions at the director level and above. Rush supports LGBTQ+ organizations during and beyond Pride Month.

### WADE SCHAAF

Founder and artistic director  
Chicago Repertory Ballet

Founder and artistic director Wade Schaaf produces professional, contemporary ballet from a queer perspective and cham-



pions art that challenges the gender-binary and heteronormative culture. Schaaf has grown the company into a midsize arts organization that hires numerous artists each year, leads with equal-pay practices and prioritizes diversity, equity and inclusion in hiring. Last year, the company revived "Macbeth" at the Athenaeum Theatre, its first full-length ballet. Other landmark works include "The Four Seasons," "Le Sacre du Printemps" and "Bolero." Schaaf has danced for the Ohio Ballet, State Street Ballet Santa Barbara, the Omaha Theater Ballet, Thodos Dance Chicago and River North Chicago Dance. He also instructs and mentors student dancers at the Joffrey Academy in Chicago and other dance studios throughout the Chicago area.

### DARYL SNEED

CEO  
Soundoff

Daryl Sneed is CEO of the gender-neutral lifestyle clothing brand that he co-founded with partners Bret Grafton and Drew



Ferguson. Sneed handles business operations, including manufacturing, production, public relations and digital marketing teams. Soundoff aims to represent a diverse community and promote acceptance and tolerance. It features a line of T-shirts and hats that pay homage to the Black Lives Matter movement, printed with "I Can't Breathe" and "I Stand for Black Lives Matter." Sneed also is founder and designer for fashion brand Ricorso Design, which targets celebrities and influencers. He also designed the uniforms of the ZBar lounge staff at the Peninsula Chicago. Soundoff donates 10 percent of annual profits to causes it supports, such as voter education and reducing gun violence.



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Recognized Among Chicago's Notable Businesses Championing Diversity & Inclusion 2020