



# Pride Parades: How a Parade Changed the World

*Katherine McFarland Bruce*

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## **Pride Parades: How a Parade Changed the World** Katherine McFarland Bruce

On June 28, 1970, two thousand gay and lesbian activists in New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago paraded down the streets of their cities in a new kind of social protest, one marked by celebration, fun, and unashamed declaration of a stigmatized identity. Forty-five years later, over six million people annually participate in 115 Pride parades across the United States. They march with church congregations and college gay-straight alliance groups, perform dance routines and marching band numbers, and gather with friends to cheer from the sidelines.

With vivid imagery, and showcasing the voices of these participants, *Pride Parades* tells the story of Pride from its beginning in 1970 to 2010. Though often dismissed as frivolous spectacles, the author builds a convincing case for the importance of Pride parades as cultural protests at the heart of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community. Weaving together interviews, archival reports, quantitative data, and ethnographic observations at six diverse contemporary parades in New York City, Salt Lake City, San Diego, Burlington, Fargo, and Atlanta, Bruce describes how Pride parades are a venue for participants to challenge the everyday cultural stigma of being queer in America, all with a flair and sense of fun absent from typical protests. Unlike these political protests that aim to change government laws and policies, Pride parades are coordinated, concerted attempts to improve the standing of LGBT people in American culture.

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