



Heritage of Pride, Inc.



Organizer & Producer of New York City's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Pride
March, Rally, Dances & PrideFest

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PRIDE WEEK: JUNE 19 – 27, 2010

LIEUTENANT DAN CHOI TO SERVE AS GRAND MARSHAL OF THE 41st ANNUAL LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER NYC PRIDE MARCH

(New York - Tuesday, February 09, 2010) NYC Pride is honored to announce Lt. Dan Choi as one of its Grand Marshals for the 41st Annual LGBT Pride March, which will occur on June 27th, 2010. When first approached about the request to be the NYC Grand Marshal, Lt. Choi responded with resounding excitement and a sense of honor for all who have struggled under this policy. Lt. Choi's selection and acceptance of the honor of NYC LGBT Pride Grand Marshal marks the first time in U.S. history that an openly gay male on active service with the U.S. Armed Forces will be an LGBT pride march Grand Marshal.

Lt. Dan Choi graduated from the US Military Academy at West Point in 2003 with a degree in Arabic and Environmental Engineering. He served as an infantry officer and served an extended combat tour in Iraq (2006-2007). His fluency in Arabic and West Point degree became very useful to the Army's mission in Iraq as he did not need to use an interpreter. He served as a combat leader, government liaison, and reconstruction officer, rehabilitating water infrastructure. When he returned home he began his first love relationship with his current boyfriend, despite the ban on gay military service. He decided he could not lie about love and so left active duty in 2008. He continued to serve in the Army National Guard.

As a founder of "Knights Out", the West Point LGBT Alumni, he has been at the forefront of the repeal of the discriminatory Don't Ask Don't Tell policy and reminds all soldiers that they are not alone, and they should never be ashamed of being honest with themselves and others. He declared his sexual orientation publicly on national television, which resulted in a notification of discharge despite his desire to continue serving. However, as of February 5th, it was announced that Lt. Choi was placed back on active service with Army National Guard.

Lt. Choi's selection as the NYC Pride Grand Marshal speaks volumes to struggle for equality among the LGBT community. His presence as Grand Marshal for 2010 NYC Pride March will serve as a reminder that the struggle for equality continues. Michael Owen, an NYC Pride member, stated that "Lt. Choi's presence as our Grand Marshal will send a strong message to Washington that the time has come to end the discrimination of "Don't Ask Don't Tell" and create an environment where our service men and women can serve their country in an honorable manner without having to hide who they are".

New York City's annual Pride March began in 1970 as a commemoration of the one-year anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. The March has since grown to become the oldest and one of the world's largest Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) events.

This year's Pride March will begin at 12:00 noon on Sunday June 27th. Step-off for more than 350 groups and 500,000 participants will take place on 52nd Street and Fifth Avenue. The March then follows the Lavender Line to its conclusion at the intersection of Christopher Street and Greenwich Street. Longer than St. Patrick's green line by many blocks, the Line is an identifying symbol of New York City's Pride March and will mark all four miles of the March's route. The route moves south on Fifth Avenue and turns right (west) on 8th Street and proceeds to the top of Christopher Street by the Jefferson Market Library. From here, the March will pass down Stonewall Place and the Stonewall Inn, site of the riots in June of 1969.

For further media inquiries please contact the March Director at march@nycpride.org or the Media Director at media@nycpride.org. For further information regarding NYC Pride and Pride Week 2010 events, please visit our website at www.nycpride.org.

For further analysis regarding Lt. Choi's acceptance of the Grand Marshal role, please see the published article titled "Lt. Dan Choi to Serve as 2010 NYC Pride Grand Marshal" at <http://queernewyorkblog.blogspot.com/>.

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