



# The Billionaires Behind the LGBT Movement

by

**Jennifer Bilek**

on

[First Things](#)



## **Jon Stryker: The Gay Jewish Billionaire Funding the LGBT Movement**

Not long ago, the gay rights movement was a small group of people struggling to follow their dispositions within a larger heterosexual culture. Gays and lesbians were underdogs, vastly outnumbered and loosely organized, sometimes subject to discrimination and abuse. Their story was tragic, their suffering dramatized by AIDS and Rock Hudson, *Brokeback Mountain* and Matthew Shepard.

Today's movement, however, looks nothing like that band of persecuted outcasts. The LGBT rights agenda-note the addition of "T"-has become a powerful, aggressive force in American society. Its



advocates stand at the top of media, academia, the professions, and, most important, Big Business and Big Philanthropy. Consider the following case.

Jon Stryker is the grandson of Homer Stryker, an orthopedic surgeon who founded the Stryker Corporation. Based in Kalamazoo, Michigan, the Stryker Corporation [sold \\$13.6 billion](#) in surgical supplies and software in 2018. Jon, heir to the fortune, is gay. In 2000 he created the Arcus Foundation, a nonprofit serving the LGBT community, because of his own experience coming out as homosexual. Arcus has [given more than \\$58.4 million](#) to programs and organizations doing LGBT-related work between 2007 and 2010 alone, making it one of the largest LGBT funders in the world. Stryker [gave more than \\$30 million to Arcus himself](#) in that three-year period, through his stock in Stryker Medical Corporation.

Stryker founded Arcus right when the AIDS epidemic was being brought under control in the U.S. Before he started Arcus, he was president of Depot Landmark LLC, a development company specializing in rehabilitating historical buildings. This would serve him well when he later renovated space for Arcus in Kalamazoo. He was also a founding [board member](#) of Greenleaf Trust, a privately held [wealth management firm](#) also in Kalamazoo.

Jon's sister Ronda Stryker is married to William Johnston, chairman of [Greenleaf Trust](#). She is also [vice chair](#) of Spelman College, where Arcus recently bestowed a \$2 million [grant](#) in the name of lesbian feminist Audre Lorde. The money is earmarked for a queer studies program. Ronda and Johnston have gifted Spelman [\\$30 million dollars](#) overall, the largest gift from living donors in its 137-year history. She is also a trustee of Kalamazoo College (where Arcus bestowed a social justice leadership [grant for \\$23 million](#) in 2012), as well as a member of the Harvard Medical School Board of Fellows.

Pat Stryker, another sister to Jon, has worked closely with gay male [Tim Gill](#). Gill operates one of the largest LGBT nonprofits in America and has been close to the Stryker family since Jon created Arcus. In 1999, Tim Gill sold his stakes to Quark, his computer software company, and went to work running the Gill Foundation in Colorado. Working closely with [Pat Stryker](#) and two other wealthy philanthropists, who together became known as the [four horsemen](#) due to their ruthless political strategies, they set out to change Colorado, a red state, to blue. They proceeded to pour [half a billion dollars](#) into small groups advocating LGBT agendas. Gill noted in his opening introduction for Jon Stryker at the [2015 GLSEN Respect Awards](#) that, since knowing each other, he and Jon have "plotted, schemed, hiked and skied together", while also "punishing the wicked and rewarding the good".

Prior to 2015, Stryker had already built the political infrastructure to drive gender identity ideology and transgenderism across the globe, donating millions to small and large entities. These included hundreds of thousands of dollars to [ILGA](#), an LGBT organization for equality in Europe and Central Asia with 54 countries participating, and [Transgender Europe](#), a voice for the trans community in Europe and Asia with 43 countries participating (Transgender Europe has also funded smaller organizations like [TENI](#), Transgender Equality Network Ireland).

In 2008 Arcus founded [Arcus Operating Foundation](#), an arm of the foundation that organizes conferences, leadership programs, and research publications. At one 2008 meeting in Bellagio, Italy, 29 international leaders committed to expanding global philanthropy to support LGBT rights. At the meeting, along with Stryker and Ise Bosch, founder of Dreilinden Fund in Germany, was Michael O'Flaherty—one of the rapporteurs for the Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of International Human Rights Law in Relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (principles outlined in Indonesia in 2006). With the [Yogyakarta Principles](#), the seeds were planted to bring in and attach [gender-identity ideology to our legal structures](#). O'Flaherty has been an elected member of the United Nations Human Rights Committee since 2004.

Out of the Bellagio meeting, Arcus created [MAP](#), the LGBT Movement Advancement Project, to track the complex system of advocacy and funding that would promote gender identity/transgenderism in the culture. Simultaneously, the [LGBTI Core Group](#) was formed as an informal cross-regional group of United Nations member countries to represent LGBTI human rights issues to the U.N. Core Group



members funded by Arcus include [Outright Action International](#) and Human Rights Commission. Core Group member countries include Albania, Australia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, El Salvador, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Japan, Montenegro, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, the United Kingdom, the United States, Uruguay, and the European Union, as well as the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights.

These initiatives promote gender identity and transgenderism by training leaders in political activism, leadership, transgender law, religious liberty, education, and civil rights. The lineup of Arcus-supported organizations advancing the cause is daunting: [Victory Institute](#), the [Center for American Progress](#), the [ACLU](#), the [Transgender Law Center](#), [Trans Justice Funding Project](#), [OutRight Action International](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), [GATE](#), [Parliamentarians for Global Action \(PGA\)](#), [The Council for Global Equality](#), the U.N., Amnesty International, and [GLSEN](#). The Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. ([SIECUS](#)), in partnership with Advocates for Youth, Answer, GLSEN, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation, and Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA), has initiated a campaign using a rights-based framework to inform approaches in reshaping cultural narratives of sexuality and reproductive health. Sixty-one additional [organizations](#) have signed a letter supporting an overhaul of current curriculums.

In 2013 [Adrian Coman](#), a veteran of George Soros's [Open Society Foundations](#) (a [driver of transgender ideology](#) that has begun initiatives to [normalize transgender children](#)), was named director of the international human rights program at the Arcus Foundation, to drive gender identity ideology globally. Previously, Coman served as program director of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission. And in 2015, Arcus worked closely with and funded NoVo Foundation programs [for transgenderism](#). NoVo was founded by Peter Buffett, son of billionaire Warren Buffett.

These programs and initiatives advance gender identity ideology by supporting various [faith organizations](#), sports and cultural associations, police department training and educational programs in grade schools, high schools ([GLSEN](#), whose founder was brought to Arcus in 2012 as board of directors, has influenced many K-12 school curricula), and universities and medical institutions- including the [American Psychological Foundation](#) (APF). Arcus funds help APF (the leading psychology organization in the United States) develop guidelines for establishing trans-affirmative psychological practices. Psychologists are "encouraged" by those monies to modify their understanding of gender, broadening the range of biological reality to include abstract, medical identities.

Concurrently, Arcus drives gender identity ideology and transgenderism in the marketplace by encouraging businesses to invest in LGBT causes. Lest we forget, Stryker is heir to a \$13.6 billion medical corporation. One only has to look at the corporations supporting LGBT during pride month this year to ascertain the success Arcus has had in this arena.

As the example of the Arcus Foundation shows, the LGB civil rights movement of yore has morphed into a relentless behemoth, one that has strong ties to the medical industrial complex and global corporatists. The pharmaceutical lobby is the largest lobbying entity in Congress. Although activists present the LGBT movement as a weak, powerless group suffering oppression and discrimination, in truth it wields enormous power and influence- power it increasingly uses to remake our laws, schools, and society.