

Trans Day of Remembrance – November 20th

Mainstream identification and conceptions of “man” and “woman” are extremely rigid and often unquestioned. The appearance, behaviour, dress, roles and characteristics of gender are deeply rooted in a belief that these mainstream norms are constant.

"Trans" is an umbrella term for people who feel that their gender assigned at birth, does not correspond with their gender identity. The emphasis is on gender identity and expression, not on sexuality, as Trans individuals may identify as straight, gay, bisexual or asexual.

This group is extremely diverse and includes but is not limited to: *Transsexuals* (persons who change their gender role and typically also change their body through medical measures), *Crossdressers* (persons who wear the clothing of another sex on occasion, but who typically do not desire to change their bodies), and *Genderqueers* (people who feel they are both male and female, or neither male or female or who entirely reject binary, mainstream notions of gender).

Trans Day of Remembrance is held on November 20th in honor of Rita Hester, a trans-woman who was viciously murdered on November 28, 1998 and whose case remains unsolved.

Hester's murder spawned "Remembering Our Dead", a web-based project dedicated to remembering those who have been killed because of Transphobia. A candlelight vigil was held the following year in San Francisco, which gave birth to the first Trans Day of Remembrance. Since then, this commemorative day has grown worldwide, with events, demonstrations and vigils occurring in various countries.

These events help to raise public awareness about the negative treatment of Trans people in society; including in healthcare, education, employment, and social settings. Crimes against Trans individuals are rarely reported and receive even less attention from the mainstream media. Each day Trans people face the threat of violence, physical and sexual attacks, verbal assaults and murder.

As a Union we are committed to dignity and respect for all. Trans individuals are the most marginalized in our society and therefore the benchmarks of social justice. We must improve the conditions that members of this diverse community face each day, by advocating for those who might otherwise be forgotten.

