

# 2015 Healthy LGBT Aging Photo Contest Winners

SAGE's National Resource Center on LGBT Aging and the National Council on Aging's National Institute of Senior Centers are proud to announce the winners of our 2015 Healthy LGBT Aging Photo Contest! It was a tough job choosing the winners from the 60-plus wonderful and dynamic photographs entered from all over the world, but our Grand Prize winner is Deborah Craig with her portrayal of "Two Women in a Forest."

View all of our winners and read their comments on these beautiful portrayals of healthy LGBT aging.



*Nancy Stoller & Joan MacQuarrie clearing brush at a women's land conservatory that was created in Northern California in the 1970's.*

## GRAND PRIZE: Deborah Craig

I've been very interested in lesbians and aging for quite a while. First of all, I'm a lesbian and aging myself! I've also been working on a project about health among 40+ lesbians with a colleague of mine at San Francisco State University. And, I'm directing a film about lesbians aging in communities (retirement communities, back to the land communities, etc.). I actually think we're experiencing a first: lesbians (and gay men of course) aging while out of the closet. In some ways, I see many of these dynamic, political, engaged, and energetic women as role models for aging, not just for LGBT people but for everyone.

Although this was not a deeply premeditated photo, I did have my good camera out, noticed the beautiful light, and thought the redwoods in the background and the tools and work clothes and women together perfectly expressed the spirit of this women's land community: Making something by working together, taking pleasure in the outdoors and beauty of nature, and, also feeling a sense of obligation as conservators of the land. I hope it shows the strength, spirit of community, and just plain happiness of women working together in the outdoors. And, of course, the real beauty of aging.

There's not enough representation of old people, of queers, or of women. So when you add that together, there's especially not enough representation of older lesbians. We need to have more images (pictures, films, etc.) showing older LGBT folks aging in a positive way.



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## FIRST PRIZE (TIE): Gillian Edwards



*Betsy McConnell (73) at the Denver Tennis Club*

This is my partner, Betsy, and she is the perfect example of healthy aging. At nearly 80, she still plays tennis, skis aggressively, and rides her bike. A part of me was thinking how amazing she is when I took this shot, but I was probably concentrating on getting the ball in the photo! and getting a good action shot!

I love this photo because it says so much about Betsy: beautiful, strong, athletic, determined, and ever competitive. I hope and believe that others will see those qualities in a seventy-something woman and be inspired. There is very little representation of older LGBT people in the media. So many older LGBT people have been unseen and unheard for most of our lives, and this should be our time. We need to be heard and seen right *now*.

## FIRST PRIZE (TIE): Reece Pickering



The subject photographed in my image is a man named David Thompson (48), who is the resident librarian for the University of Gloucestershire, U.K. I was shooting a personal project at the time that was focused on showcasing David's impressive body canvas of tattoos. I had no idea David was gay until he began to unfold his past experiences through explaining the history of his tattoos.

I felt a sense of accomplishment in portraying an interesting man in such a way: David exemplifies who we should strive to be, as diversified people within society, who aren't ashamed to showcase who they truly are. I hope that people will see David as an example, to those who may struggle, to tell the small societies around them who they truly are.

Personally, I rarely see any images of elder LGBT people except for in an artistic sense. And this was only recently when seeing a photography campaign documenting the elderly with tattoos.

You can follow me on Twitter at @reeceisinpieces and @edandadphoto and David is on Twitter at @MAT\_Librarian.

*David Thompson (48), Resident librarian for the University of Gloucestershire, U.K.*

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## RUNNER UP: Marsha Bancroft



*Marsha Bancroft (77), Vermont Senior Games State Triathlon Championship, Shelburne, Vermont*

A close friend saw an announcement of this photo contest and encouraged me to enter. This picture is a celebration for me, not only for winning but for being healthy and fit enough to compete at the age of 77.

When this picture was taken, I was very excited to win my age group and be eligible for the National Senior Games! There is not enough representation of LGBT older people in the media and you can follow me on Twitter at @MJBancroft.

## RUNNER UP: Rachelle Lee Schneider



*Kay Lahusen (75) and Barbara Gittings (73) Philadelphia, PA*

I have a deep respect for those who came before me and helped pave the way to where we are now. I don't ever want to take my rights, privilege and life for granted. This photograph honors two incredible women.

Barbara Gittings was one of the original pioneers of gay rights and organized the New York chapter of the Daughters of Bilitis and edited their national magazine, *The Ladder*. She worked closely with Frank Kameny in the 1960s on the first picket lines that brought attention to the ban on employment of gay people by the U.S. Government. Kay Lahusen was the first openly gay American woman photojournalist and contributed to *The Ladder* and helped with founding the original Gay Activists Alliance in 1970.

This photo was shot in front of Philadelphia's Independence Hall in 2005, where they participated in one of the first gay protests ever on July 4th, 1965. It shows how, despite and in spite of the struggles they endured, these two never backed down, grew old gracefully, together, and proud of who they were! It illustrates the success story of a love against all odds overcoming all hardships and prevailing.

You can follow me on Twitter at @SpeakingOUT\_rls or on Facebook at facebook.com/SpeakingOUT.rls.

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## HONORABLE MENTIONS

### Fanda Bender



*This photograph was taken by my life partner Lucy Jackson on September 2014, 10 months after my second total knee replacement surgery. Lucy coached me after my surgery so that I could hike to the top of Grizzly Peak Mountain in Ashland, Oregon. This was one of the happiest and proudest moments in my life.*

### Kaye Crawford



*This picture is of me taken in a vendor booth promoted by Reno Rainbow Fest (I was co-founder) and sponsored by CAPI at San Francisco Gay Pride in June 2012. I want others to see there is life after 50 that is just as fulfilling, and perhaps even more satisfying, than our younger years. I want to be a positive influence on the younger generation to take their fear of growing old away.*

### Gillian Edwards



*This photo of Betsy McConnell (77) and her daughter, Lynne Huffer (52) portrays an amazing relationship of two lesbians who are also mother and daughter, a relationship which seems to get stronger every day.*

### Dottie Neufeld



*The subject of the photograph Dottie Neufeld (75) was hamming it up for a video on the Bayview Retirement Community in Seattle, WA. Dottie says "I'm having a great time. I hope others will see that and want to join the party." Learn more about Bayview on Twitter @retireatbayview.*