

Phyllis Frye and the Fight for Transgender Rights

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Michael G. Long and Shea Tuttle's biography of Phyllis Frye captures her struggle to challenge entrenched beliefs on gender and identity.

Assigned male at birth, Frye seemed like a typical high achiever: she was an Eagle Scout, a graduate of Texas A&M's civil engineering program, an army officer, and even a spouse and parent. Yet, since childhood, Frye only felt like herself when wearing women's clothing—a fact that elicited derision from others. Unable to stay in the closet, Frye came out as a transgender woman. The move devastated her career, but it also laid the foundation for Frye to change the world.

This in-depth look at Frye's life is harrowing, but it is also a marvel. As a transgender woman, Frye faced heartbreaking episodes of discrimination, harassment, imprisonment, and violence. Yet her story is uplifting—a tale of the human spirit, and how it can change society for the better.

Clear and journalistic, the book covers Frye's struggle to be accepted as a transgender woman in authentic terms. Personal photographs and other artifacts from her life depict the struggles and the support that she had. The result is a complex profile of a woman who was driven to activism and advocacy. After years of repressing who she was, Frye became unabashed about being true to herself, even when the consequences drove her to near destitution. Yet, even when she was angry, frustrated, or scared, Frye found the inner strength to persist—not just for herself, but for the rights of others like her.

More than just a biography on the first openly transgender judge, *Phyllis Frye and the Fight for Transgender Rights* is a testament to the ability of a single persistent person to change an unrelenting world for the better.

KATERIE PRIOR (May / June 2022)

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