

outstanding Chicora Martin Has Your Back

University of Oregon is one of *The Advocate's* Top 20 universities in the country for queer students. Chicora Martin is director of the LGBT Educational and Support Services department and one of the people who instituted the Bias Response Team, which deals with everything from documenting instances of discrimination to raising awareness about hate graffiti.

My name is Chicora Martin.

I am known as a resource. A kind of go-to person, not just with LGBT issues, but people come to me for information about everything.

My cause is helping to make change. I really like football, and growing up I always cheered for the underdog. Not because they were the underdog but because they had the motivation. I believe that LGBT people have the drive to change. Being LGBT is not just an identity but it's [an issue] of access and equal rights. Some people think I am a crazy optimist, but I believe the LGBT community has the drive to fight and is something worth fighting for.

I am 33 years old. I feel anywhere from 13 to 133 depending on the day. When I'm out playing paint ball, I feel like I'm 13. When I've been playing football all weekend, like I just did, I feel 133.

My childhood ambition was to be an EMT, to ride in ambulances. I did that right after high school. I believe you should get ambition, achieve it and then get another.

My first same-sex crush was in first grade. She was a friend of mine and, as my mother asked, was she a friend or was she a friend friend? So I guess it was a crush.

I like to spend my down time reading and scuba diving. Sometimes reading books about scuba diving. I love learning, and I'm a Sagittarius, so I am all about knowledge.

My proudest moment was recently I got a letter from a student thanking me for my help during a difficult time. Those are the proudest moments—not the thanks but the acknowledgment that I helped someone. I have proud moments all the time.

A perfect day in Eugene would be spent getting outside, going to the Saturday Market or playing on the rock slide at Triangle Lake. I can't wait until summer, when you can go outside and get back to being a kid, get back to what you enjoy. I also really love getting to wind down at a show or restaurant. I love Portland, but I hate the traffic. That's why I live in Eugene.

My first job was shucking oysters. I grew up in Virginia Beach, and when I was 16, I was shucking oysters at a restaurant.




Chicora Martin has a weakness for Web searching and full-contact sports.

My vice is the Internet. I love information, anything from YouTube to CNN. I love the Internet for research and laughing. There's some really funny stuff out there. And espresso—but everyone in the Northwest has that vice.

My inspiration is my parents. They raised me and made me accountable. They used to tell me, "We can't punish you forever," so they really instilled in me responsibility and accountability for my actions. I really believe in karma: If you put yourself out there and put good out in the world, it will come back to you.

My most recent queer event was one with a group of PFLAG moms from Springfield. It's really great to get out there and do something to raise awareness to help young people. I am also always involved in events here on campus.

My highest hope for the cause is I want people to wake up in a space where everyone can be who they are. There will always be a need for advocates. There will always be issues—race, gender, class—but my highest hope is there'll be a space where everyone is accepted and welcomed. 

—Alex Baldino

just asking

Just in time for Earth Day, *Just Out* asked readers, "How do you do your part for the environment?"



KELSEY TYLER
Groom-to-Be

"It's easy to be green in Portland. The knowledge is there, the hype is there. It's easy to be educated about it."



ERICA PARON
Rocket Magician

"Oh my God, all I do is recycle, that's it!"



EILEEN FOSTER
Magician's Assistant

"I work at a preschool, so we reuse everything—metal, yarn, paper, cups—for art projects."



ELSHAD HAJIYEV
Financial Analyst

"I try to do it in my everyday life. I recycle everything I can. I drive as little as possible, maybe once a week. I buy products made by companies that are green and that are easily reusable."

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