

# BIO

## *Gaylon B. Alcaraz*

Gaylon B. Alcaraz has a long history in Chicago as an activist, organizer, and champion of human rights. As the past Executive Director of the Chicago Abortion Fund, she worked within the reproductive justice/rights/health movement to advocate for low-income women seeking to control their reproductive rights. Among Gaylon's many social justice accomplishments is her service as a founding board member of Affinity Community Services, a social justice organization that advocates for the rights of black lesbian and bisexual women in the Chicagoland area. During her tenure at Affinity, she assumed increased leadership roles across all areas of the organization's functions, including the role of Vice-President of the board. She is also a past board member of the Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health and the Midwest Access Project.



For more than 25 years, she has worked on issues related to sexual minority women, violence prevention, gender equity, health care, reproductive rights, race, and culture. Gaylon has consistently applied her knowledge in practice toward quality improvement and increased access, and challenged frameworks that do not allow for the exploration of diversity across multiple dimensions when working with, and on behalf of, diverse constituencies. These passionate beliefs have led her to advocate on behalf of all women and children.

Born and raised in Chicago, she was awarded her BA and MA from DePaul University. Gaylon is currently a PhD candidate in Community Psychology at National Louis University. She has received awards from SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective, Northwest Suburban NOW, Choice USA, Chicago Foundation for Women, and Chicago NOW for her work in the reproductive rights/health and justice field. Gaylon was featured in the July/August 2017 issue of *Chicago Woman* magazine as one of "The Fierce 50." She was profiled as "The Activist" in *The Chicago Reader's* 2014 "People" edition. In 2013, Gaylon was inducted into Chicago's Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame—the only LGBT Hall of Fame in the country.

Also a published writer and poet, Gaylon published her first book, "tales of a woojiehead," in 2002. She previously wrote an ongoing column, "Reproductive Justice at the Intersections," in the *Windy City Times* and has been published in the *Chicago Sun Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Chicago Defender*, *Streetwise*, and *Venus Magazine*. Recently she has been featured on WNBC, WCIU, WBBM, WCPT, and WBEZ.