



Celebrating the Appointment of Karine Jean-Pierre as White House Secretary

The trajectory of Karine Jean-Pierre began in Fort-de-France, Martinique, a Caribbean island just north of Barbados and St. Lucia, the daughter of Haitian parents. Her family immigrated to Queens, New York at age 5. She attended high school and college in NYC, graduating with an MPA from the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University in 2003.

By 2008 she was working on the Obama for America campaign, and then served as the regional political director for the White House Office of Political Affairs during the President's first term. She continued her involvement with the Obama 2012 re-election campaign in the role of National Deputy Battleground States Director.

In a June 9, 2011 interview with The Advocate, she reflected on being an out gay staffer on the Obama team. "What's been wonderful is that I was not the only; I was one of many. President Obama didn't hire LGBT staffers, he hired experienced individuals who happen to be LGBT. Serving and working for President Obama where you can be openly gay has been an amazing honor. It felt incredible to be a part of an administration that prioritizes LGBT issues."

Jean-Pierre was eventually tapped as the senior advisor and national spokesperson for the 2016 presidential election by MoveOn.org. While moderating a 2019 MoveOn forum for presidential candidates, including then-presidential candidate Kamala Harris, she physically intervened between Harris and an activist who jumped on stage.

That same year Jean-Pierre served as the senior advisor to the Biden 2020 presidential campaign, joining the team in May 2020. Seven months later, Jean-Pierre was named as the Principal Deputy Press Secretary for the Biden-Harris transition team.

In June 2021, Jean-Pierre shared her coming out story on Twitter. "I came out to my Mom when I was 16 years old. The revolted look on her face sent me running back into the proverbial closet and slamming the door shut. After that, my sexuality became a family secret and it would stay that way for years," she wrote.

"I dated, but I hid those relationships from my family. Just as American society has evolved over the course of the past couple of decades to embrace the LGBTQ community (never forgetting we still have work to do), my family has evolved to embrace my membership in it."

"I'm proud to be an out Black Queer woman and I have been for quite some time. I'm happy to say, my Mother is now proud of ALL of who I am; she loves my partner and she loves being a doting grandmother to the daughter we are raising."

Jean-Pierre's appointment as White House Press Secretary will begin when current press secretary, Jen Psaki, steps down on May 13. she becomes the first out LGBTQ African American woman to hold the position.

Jean-Pierre lives in metropolitan Washington, D.C. with her partner, Suzanne Malveaux, a CNN political correspondent, and their daughter. Malveaux will step down from covering politics in order to avoid a conflict of interest. Jean-Pierre's 2019 Hanover Square Press book, *Moving Forward: A Story of Hope, Hard Work, and the Promise of America*, shares how her personal and professional lives intertwined to encourage her to become involved in politics.

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