



# **Maryland trans activist, businesswoman Sharon Brackett dies at 59**

## **Co-founded Gender Rights Maryland**

by  
**Lou Chibbaro Jr.**  
*From the Washington Blade*

Sharon Brackett, a Maryland businesswoman and transgender rights advocate who played a lead role in the successful effort to persuade the Maryland Legislature to pass transgender rights legislation in 2014, died on May 24 at her Baltimore home. She was 59.

Her son, Steven Brackett, told the Baltimore Sun she had “chronic illnesses that manifested themselves in cardiac arrest.”

Brackett’s LinkedIn page says she helped to start five companies over the past 20 years and was named by the Maryland Department of Commerce in 2016 as one of Maryland’s Top Women in Tech. With a degree in computer engineering from Syracuse University in New York, Brackett served as president and CEO for the Laurel, Md., based tech company Tiresias Technologies, Inc. from 2011 to 2019. She served from 2019 to 2021 as founder of Baltimore Design Works, Inc., an engineering and design company, according to her LinkedIn page.

In a YouTube interview in March of this year conducted by a student intern, Brackett said that after encountering what she considered discrimination in the business world as a transgender woman she joined other trans activists in 2011 as co-founder of Gender Rights Maryland, a statewide group that advocates for transgender rights. Brackett served as chair of the group’s board from 2011 to the time of her passing this week.

LGBTQ activists in Maryland have said Brackett also became involved in the broader LGBTQ rights movement. She served as co-chair for the National LGBTQ Task Force's Creating Change conference in Baltimore in 2012. She also served on the boards of the Point Foundation, a national LGBTQ scholarship organization; and OutServe-SLDN, an advocacy group for LGBTQ people in the military.

As if that were not enough, Brackett co-founded Trans Parent Day and served as a volunteer co-moderator for a gender identity support group of the Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Baltimore. In prior years, she served as a mentor for high school students interested in tech-related projects and was a scout master in the Boy Scouts of America.

In 2018, Brackett won election to the Baltimore City Democratic State Central Committee, becoming the first transgender person to be elected to any political office in Maryland. She was later named as chair of the LGBTQ+ Diversity Leadership Council of the Maryland Democratic Party.

Brackett appeared to sum up her career as a businesswoman and her role as an activist in a campaign website post when she ran as a candidate for the Democratic committee position.

"Yes, I am an Engineer, Entrepreneur, Corporate Executive, Roboticist, Rocketeer, Maker, and sometimes Activist," her campaign write-up says. "I also just happen to be trans. If that's a showstopper for you then I'm probably not your candidate," she stated.

"But if you consider my challenges and experience. My support of diversity and inclusion. My on the ground experience in Annapolis. I think you will find I've honed all the tools for this job and then some," she stated.

"Sharon was a dedicated champion of equality for all and gave much of her time, heart and soul to the fight for equality for all Marylanders," said College Park Mayor Patrick Wojahn, who's gay. "Her passing is a true loss for the whole LGBTQ+ community," Wojahn said.

Sara Law, Brackett's partner for the past seven years, was the first to announce Brackett had passed away in a Facebook posting.

"She left this world so much better than she found it," Law wrote. "That was one of her goals, and she met it many times over – be it Boy Scouts, or gender rights, or robotics, or local politics."

The Baltimore Sun reported Brackett was born in Batavia, N.Y., and lived in Laurel, Md., before settling in Baltimore.

Survivors include her partner, Sara Law; her son, Steven Brackett; and daughter, Jess Brackett. No immediate plans were announced for funeral or memorial services.