

LAFAYETTE COLLEGE
LGBTQ ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview of
George Mundorf '70
Conducted by
Mary Armstrong
June 11, 2019

Special Collections & College Archives

David Bishop Skillman Library

Lafayette College

2019

Mundorf

MARY ARMSTRONG: This is Mary Armstrong, and I'm in New York City on June 11, 2019, and I'm here with George Mundorf, class of 1970. Thank you very much, George, for being here and for agreeing to do an interview for the Queer Archives Project. The first way we start every interview is to ask the participant to state their name, and to confirm that their participation is voluntary, and they've given their informed consent.

GEORGE MUNDORF: My name is George Mundorf. I am doing this voluntarily, and I give my consent.

MA: Great, wonderful, thank you. You passed the first test. The other question we have is, would it be okay to take a picture of you to use with the interview online and in the archives?

GM: Sure.

MA: Wonderful, thank you, and you're looking quite dapper may I say.

GM: Well I should have brought my picture from 1970.

MA: You know it is funny we have those yearbooks in the archives and when we put your transcript up, we'll add your picture from 1970 to see [00:01:00] how great you turned out with your handsome --

GM: "Oh, my God, what happened?"

MA: Not at all. So, the preamble is that the questions that I ask are only prompts. So the way the interview is structured is really for you to tell the story about your time at Lafayette as a Lafayette student and anything else you want to add in a way that's important to you and reflects the story you want to tell. So, what we did is we came up with a series of prompts to remind people of different parts of what college typically includes; the classroom, and athletics, and things like that. And some people have nothing to say about some of those areas and that's perfectly fine because that's just, you know, life takes different shapes but it's not like we're after the answers to a particular set of questions for every people. We're just offering, sort of, open doors that might help jog memories. The personal pronouns that you use, for me to use during the interview? He, his?

GM: He, yeah.

MA: Okay, and you're an alum, and your class year [00:02:00] is 1970, and how do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ community?

GM: I am out. I have a partner. But this is relatively late in coming to be, my coming out especially.

MA: Okay, okay, so you didn't come out as a gay man until later in life.

GM: Yeah, not until graduate school did I do anything about my being gay, and not until after graduate school I was out to my friends, some of them, but just the group in New York, you know. Not to my parents, not at my workplace. That didn't happen until much later, until like I was 45 or something. [00:03:00]

MA: Okay, so the sort of progressing out, the slowly coming out that many of us have, over groups of friends, and work, and family. How do professionally describe yourself? Work life, or vocation, or however you want to define that.

GM: I am retired. I was in retail. My whole -- I was so naïve and unfocused when I was growing up that I didn't know what I wanted to be. Yes, I liked art but there's no careers that I could see myself doing. So, I sort of drifted into economics, which was, in my case, a mistake. I wanted to be creative but didn't do anything about it. Got my master's degree which taught me nothing, but you do to me, I'm sure, in business [00:04:00] because I had no interest in it. But on the other hand, it was great experience. Forget the academics, the actual being in graduate school was what I needed.

MA: Where was that?

GM: Cornell University. And then I went into retail and worked for Saks Fifth Avenue for 25 years. And I didn't particularly like it. The store was not -- you know, but, again, drifting along. What I really -- in retrospect -- okay, "What should you have done?", that type of thing. I should have gone into something to do with collecting or art or something like that. The perfect job for me would have been to be the manager of the archives of say, Coca Cola, [00:05:00] which is a very desirable job. To be head of the archives of any company that's been around a long time, Post Cereals, you know, that type of thing, because I love to collect, and that's what I do. So, define yourself, I would say I'm a collector. People come into my apartment here in the city and say "this isn't an apartment, it's an antique store," or "it's a junk shop," or "it's decorated in early clut." So, you know, I have for example, my apartment isn't huge. It's big in New York standards, I guess, but when somebody from out of town sees it, you know, yeah, it's a nice apartment, but I have 90 dollhouses. So, you can imagine how you -- to fit all this, and I collect hubcaps, and I collect Edsel automobile memorabilia and parts and stuff like that. So, it's [00:06:00] a big mess, my apartment. But I love being surrounded by all of this stuff.

MA: It sounds magnificent, I have to say. It makes me want to see it. Ninety dollhouses, nine zero. Wow.

GM: Yeah, and art deco stuff. That's how I would define myself. Unfortunately, it's too bad that I wasted all of this time, you know, years, doing something I didn't particularly like, and I also -- the second I left Cornell I should have moved to Hawaii. If life is not the greatest, go someplace where the climate is nice. That's my advice. My advice for today.

MA: Yeah, yeah, it's good advice. Were you collecting -- so, your vocation, what were you doing at Saks, I'll start there. What was your role there?

GM: I was put on the fast track very rapidly, like immediately. I was one [00:07:00] of the two people who were destined for success. I slipped off of it real quick. You know, you can't put your heart into something that you don't like.

MA: That's right, yeah.

GM: And I didn't like it. I was a buyer. I was in charge of merchandizing. I was in charge of getting information and putting it all together. I was in charge of different stores, opening stores, that type of thing.

MA: And were you collecting the whole time? When did your avocation kick in?

GM: Well, I think when the World's Fair, when was it, '64 I think.

MA: I believe so.

GM: I went to the Coca Cola exhibit and it was filled with Coca Cola old stuff. This is great, you know. I started then and thank God I did because I had a very good collection. There's so much [00:08:00] stuff out there, but I had really good stuff. And then I was laid off at Saks after 25 years. As a side note, you know, people say you're going to have to work until you're 80. Nobody wants you when you're 80, don't kid yourself, and it was very difficult to get a job at 50.

MA: It makes a big difference, right?

GM: Yeah, they don't want to see you. I went to one place and they -- the guy came out of the elevator who I was supposed to interview with, and he looked at me and said, "you're not old." Well, excuse me?

MA: Right, right, right, that sort of classic mid-career change problem.

GM: Yeah, he thought I was -- because of the 25 years and because I was in the Army, I was in graduate school, all these are adding years. So even though I'm sure my [00:09:00] resume didn't say my birthdate on it, by adding up the years you can get an idea, and I didn't look

whatever age he thought that I was going to be. I hit that right away. It was extremely difficult. So, I ran out of money and this was also during the recession, so I was on welfare -- not welfare, what's the -- this is where my mind goes blank. When they start paying you --

MA: Unemployment?

GM: Unemployment, yeah, but that ran out.

MA: Yeah, that does.

GM: So, then I'm a year without any income whatsoever so I had to sell my Coca Cola collection. Well, it killed me to do it, but I had to do it and the money rolled in. I mean it was the best investment. I invested in the [00:10:00] stock market and during that recession the money just went out the window, so I lost thousands of dollars. But the Coca Cola which is what I should have put all my money into in retrospect.

MA: It paid off.

GM: It paid off. It was great. I just -- but then, of course, you run out of stuff to sell. I also might say that Saks Fifth Avenue got the positively best placement agency that you could ever imagine. You had your own secretary who did all of the typing and sending out letters and resumes. I sent out hundreds of letters and it's not like, well, you really screwed up those interviews. I didn't get

interviews. And this happened later but it's still something that sticks in my mind. I worked at Gracious Home, finally, in retail, which was a very high-end sort of Bed, Bath and Beyond, and [00:11:00] I look okay, right, you can clean me up.

MA: Absolutely.

GM: So, there was a job in the newspaper, they wanted somebody at -- now I can't remember the name, of course. But it was a place on Madison Avenue, famous, it's been there a long time. It's now gone out of business I'm happy to say. And I would have been perfect for this job. It's what I had been doing. I looked like the customer that they had there. Everything sort of clicked. They wouldn't even give me an interview.

MA: Yeah, just ageism because of your --

GM: So, you know, that's what you're up against.

MA: Yeah, absolutely, yeah, absolutely. That's a complicated arc there; it's hard to get back in the workforce at that age. I think that's a persistent problem for many people. So, if I take you back in time a little bit and we think about Lafayette, generally, sort of looking over the arc of your career, it's important [00:12:00] to get a sense of who you are and what you've done. My mind is still back

with the Coca Cola and I'm just amazed at -- trying not to ask you what cool vintage pieces you had --

GM: I had them too.

MA: I bet you did, I bet you did, and we'll have to talk about that sort of off record at some point because I'd be interested. But thinking about Lafayette now, I'm wondering, the late '60s and thinking, you said you came out later. Was there -- I'm trying to ask this question correctly. Was there a climate for LGBTQ people?

GM: Not at all. So I would like -- I do -- I have something to say first. When you asked me -- there was a meeting of gay alumni and I got the invitation, and I looked at it and said, you know, there's going to be three people there, me and two women and that's it, but there was a very nice turnout. I was very much surprised.

MA: It was thrilling, and it was the first one [00:13:00] that we had done for the alums in New York. It was brand new and we didn't know if anybody would be there either, so thank you for coming.

GM: And you asked me, would I like to do one of these interviews and I sort of jumped at the chance, and there were two reasons. The second reason was that I was on campus for the four years when it changed from A to Z, like, overnight -- it didn't obviously, but the whole

feeling on campus, the whole mindset changed totally. But the first reason was, and I realize this is a cliché, but it's very important, I think. If I can help one person, one gay person who went through what I did, then I'm being successful. Remember, when I was in school [00:14:00] even in Lafayette, there were no personal computers, so there was no one to talk to. There was no suicide hotline that you knew about. There was nothing. You were alone. I don't think for a minute that any young kid is going to be hearing this or reading this but maybe if an alumni read this and passed on what I went through, and what I have to say is -- and it's not new, and it's old news at this point, and Dan Savage is the one who promoted it, although to tell you the truth before him for other reasons, Rosemary Clooney in her book says this, "Things will get better, things will change." And it's very important that somebody know this, that somebody [00:15:00] tells some kid who's having, obviously, a hard time with this.

I have to tell what happened in high school in order to continue what happened in Lafayette. From, let's say -- beyond high school. From fourth grade until -- well, all through college I was picked on, I was bullied. I was spit on one time in the cafeteria in high school at the table, the place was filled, a guy takes an apple and starts

pounding it on my head screaming out, "Fag, fag, fag." And this happened on a daily basis. I used to pray on Fridays that it wouldn't happen because it would ruin my whole weekend. [00:16:00] The topper was the whole class met for prom committees and organization, so we had the whole class in one room, and somebody nominates me for prom decorating committee which, let's face it, I would have been good at. So, the place goes silent, and then somebody yells, "He's a fag. He's queer," and that continued in that vein. Now you say, okay, you got over that so let's move on.

MA: How horrible though.

GM: The teacher didn't hear the name that was called so now we have to go through it again. "What name was that?" So, my name was called again but this time we have laughter, "Ha! Ha! That faggot!" [00:17:00] you know. And so here you are at age 17, 18 -- oh, nobody seconded my nomination. So here I am, 17, 18 realizing you don't have a friend in this world. And I want to get this across because in my mind from -- through college, I never did anything homosexual. I must have carried a sign around with me that said, "I am a homo" because I didn't dress flamboyantly. I had a crewcut. I tried to -- you know, after a while you learn, don't make waves, blend in with the woodwork. Some people took this -- like some of the people that I read that you

interviewed, took it and ran with it. [00:18:00] I didn't. I was a wreck. To add to the fun, my mother was a librarian of the high school. So, I was a nervous wreck that she was going to hear this -- that she would hear it. So, half my life was trying to keep things -- you know, not only me but I don't want her to hear about it.

MA: So, your mom was right there.

GM: She was right there, you know. And so come graduation I won several awards, and I was a nervous wreck if I go up there and get them. Well, the teachers were invited to come, and my mother would have been there. Are they going to say "faggot?" As it turns out, they didn't, thank God.

MA: Took the joy out of it.

GM: Yeah, I was a nervous wreck. So, and I realize that saying all this [00:19:00] a person might think, "okay, get out the violins, we get it." You should have stood up for yourself. You should have been a man. Move on. And, you know, I get that too. But really, from let's say fourth grade to senior year, constantly being picked on a daily basis and bullied, you're a shell. You're not there anymore.

MA: It's just traumatic, George. I can't image anyone saying you should have -- from being a child to a young teenager, stood up for yourself. That's just -- it sounds --

GM: Well, my father would have. (laughs)

MA: -- like nonstop abuse, though.

GM: But rationally, I didn't know how to fight. I mean getting beat up, is that wise? I don't know. And I know people had it worse, trust me. I'm aware of what goes on. Kids do get beaten up. They get killed. They get shoved in the locker and kept -- [00:20:00] that didn't happen to me to that extent but still I was a mess.

MA: Absolutely.

GM: So, now it's time to choose a college. I overheard my parents saying -- listen I want to get this right because it's easy to mess up. My father thought that if I wanted to go to an all men's school it's because I wanted to have fun with the boys. You understand what I'm saying. My mother thought that if I wanted to go to a co-ed school, it was because I wanted to be one of the girls. So, I couldn't win.

MA: Wow.

GM: And the honest truth is, I didn't know what I was, who I liked -- you know, yes, over here someplace one tiny bit was I was attracted to men, [00:21:00] but I never got anywhere, and I never took -- you know, I said I'm not one of those. We'll hide that over there. I could honestly say -- if you asked me are you gay, I would have said, "No, I'm

not gay," you know. No, and as I said, I never did anything in my mind that spelled "you're gay." And, you know the sign I told you that I carried that said "You are a homo," or "I am a homo?" There was another sign below it that said rather, "But don't approach me." If I was so obviously gay no one said, "Can we get together and at least talk about the experiences we're going through or" -- nothing. So talk about being alone.

MA: The worst of both worlds.

GM: Yeah. All right, so --

MA: Tremendous isolation though on so many levels.

GM: It was. [00:22:00] It was awful, but I dated a lot. So, this kept and continued to keep things a little at bay.

MA: In college?

GM: In college and in high school. You know, I always dated - And [section redacted by a QAP reviewer] in college freshman year sort of said to me, "you know, we don't understand you." Because I guess I'm so obviously gay and yet "you have these dates. You have more dates than we do." They couldn't quite plunk me into the "you're a big old homo" file. All right, so, now I'm on campus.

Lafayette was the most right wing, straight as an arrow mindset place that you can imagine [00:23:00], in my mind. Now you may have heard differently, but if in -- when was

it, 1992 the Princeton Review said that we were the most homophobic. You can imagine how it was in 1966.

MA: It's hard to comprehend, really.

GM: And I don't think that the whole mindset of Lafayette changed from 1955 to 1966, and probably not from '45, you know. It was - "We don't want diversity. You walk down this line and that's how it is." Now, on the surface I should have fit right in because I was white, Anglo Saxon, Protestant, I came from four generations of Republicans. I looked the part so I should have fit right in, but I didn't. I want to give you an example of how [00:24:00] straight laced the campus was. Now, remember this was before women were on campus. That happened the year after I graduated. Somebody would have to do research to find out who this guy was but somebody from Vietnam came to talk at the college, and I'm guessing, about eight to 10 people which includes some faculty members because I recognized a teacher that I had then, lined up in front of Marquis in silent protest. So, these 10 people were the liberals in school. So, they're lining up. Whether there were any signs or something, I assume that there would be, but I don't remember that.

MA: When you say some guy from Vietnam, was that a person from Vietnam?

GM: Yeah.

MA: Okay, okay, so it was people from --

GM: I want to say the president of South Vietnam was there, but I doubt that --

MA: Okay, so a representative of those nations, okay, okay.

GM: Yeah. It couldn't have been I suppose, [00:25:00] but there was somebody and they were protesting it. Now, this was in 1966 or '67, when I was a freshman. So, my room in Marquis was the room that had the two little balconies, there were three balconies, my room had two of them. More people than were protesting came into my room -- they just opened the door and came in -- filled up wastepaper baskets of water and threw it out the window on these people who were standing in front of Marquis. And apparently this was fine with whoever is in charge of the campus because I was never questioned. No one ever said, you know, what was that about, what were you doing, nothing. And another fun example, my [00:26:00] [section redacted by a QAP reviewer] in Marquis was a James Dean wannabe. So, he had the white T-shirt, he had the cigarettes rolled up in his sleeve, cigarette always dangling from the mouth, the zippity doo da hair. Now, we got along, strangely enough. We weren't friends or anything, but we got along. But he had to show his friends that we didn't get along, so he put a tape down

the middle of the room; you stay on your side, and I stay on my side. Of course, I didn't. I wasn't going to be playing these -- this game, especially when we're alone and we got along. But, anyway, his brother gave him two flower power shirts. You know, the long collars -- this was the fashion coming along. It was coming up. It [00:27:00] wasn't there yet, with little purple flowers all over it. Whether it had puffy sleeves, I don't know. But he and his buddy wore them. They parted their hair down the middle and they came -- they went to dinner in Marquis where the freshmen ate at the time. I don't know whether it's still... I don't know what he expected. That people would come up and say, "Oh, this is so funny," slap him on the back and say, you know, "this is such a takeoff on the crazy liberal hippy types," you know. But that's not what he got. I'm not saying the place went silent, like it did with my thing in high school, but the place quieted down because everyone was staring at them.

At least eight people walked by and said, "faggots," "queers," as they passed the table. Well, these guys [00:28:00] who weren't, let me tell you, were astounded that -- they're expecting "smokes and jokes," you know, and this is what they're getting. One of the points I want to make is Lafayette had this fear of homosexuality when, for

all intents and purposes, it wasn't there. I'm not saying that something wasn't going on behind closed doors. I never saw any of it. No one ever approached me. I don't know -- you know, if you'd ask, "Is there any homosexuality on campus?", I would say, "No, none at all." I never saw any of it, but we also know how naïve I am, so all right. But it was always in the air. This hate. When they said most homophobic, that was quite correct. [00:29:00] A couple of years after that I was looking up Lafayette and homosexuality and there's a site that's called College Confidential and one guy asked, "I'm gay, should I go to Lafayette?" and somebody answered, "Definitely not."

MA: When was that?

GM: A couple years after 1992.

MA: Okay, yeah, yeah.

GM: So, you know, it was out there. Now, it's time for me to join a fraternity. I knew that I had to join a fraternity in order to have any kind of life. But as I said, I'm -- I was such an introvert at that point. I was so -- I was afraid of groups of men so you'd say not the wisest choice, choosing to go to an all men's school, right? [00:30:00]

MA: Given the bullying that you put up with, I could understand that though.

GM: You don't want to give them the opportunity to say anything. So, I said, all right, my problem was not at this point coming out, being a homosexual, let's get moving, let's deal with this. The first priority was getting myself into society. Into being a human being that people liked and, well, whatever. Again, Mr. Naïve, I went to the fraternities and I thought okay, you go there, if you like it, if it seems nice, if the guys seem nice, you just say yeah, I want to join, and you join. (laughs) No one told me, well, you have to make [00:31:00] -- what's the word. You have to get to know people ahead of time, contacts. You have to have contacts. You have to know about them. You have to do something. I didn't know this. As I said.

So, in one fraternity, for example, I went and like immediately I was taken to a back room where there was a line of chairs and there was a black guy, and there's a guy who dressed weird and I was put there. Now, I had read about this somewhere in my reading that this is one of the fraternity fun things is that you get all the loser people, you put them there, and have them wait hours. They're thinking oh, well, I'm going to get into this fraternity, you know, and really hours later you're going to be told okay, take a hike.

MA: It's just cruelty.

GM: Yeah. So, luckily, I read that, and I said to the guys who were there this isn't -- we're going to be kicked [00:32:00] out. Just leave so you don't waste your time, which we did. Now, my - oh and I didn't tell you this. The first week that I was in college I don't think anyone knew my name, I stepped out of the front door of Marquis and at the time, I don't know, I haven't been back on campus, so I don't know. There were two dorms here; a newer one and an older one here, and a fraternity house over there. I walked out and from somewhere, "Hey, Mundorf, you're a fag."

MA: Oh my God, you must have felt desperate.

GM: I haven't done a thing. No one knows me.

MA: One week.

GM: One week.

MA: Oh, brutal.

GM: As I said, I don't think I come across as gay. I don't know, so. [00:33:00] All right, the one thing that I did do that I know was gay now because, again, no one taught me otherwise in high school. I carried -- I clutched my books to my chest. That's what girls do. Instead of carrying them down here.

MA: Wow, yeah.

GM: That was the beginning.

MA: That's a pretty high level of policing around peoples' behaviors. I mean the homophobia being so intense that if you carried your books wrong everybody's...

GM: I know. I spoke to my brother-in-law, who I like, who went to Lehigh. He took me to my first fraternity party. I told him that story with the books. He said, "Oh yeah, if I saw you in high school, I would have gone over to you and knocked the books right out of your hands." That's nice. All right, a friend of mine wanted to go to Kirby [00:34:00] House and got in right away. I think, I'll go over to that one -- not having a clue. He got me into Kirby which, thank God for Kirby House. I was still neither here nor there. I wasn't part of anything. If I was invited into a group or something like that, it was out of pity but basically, I was invisible. Like [section redacted by a QAP reviewer] again, I got along fine with him. He said to me so and so down the hall thinks you're a homosexual. How do you answer that? Well, I'm not -- now I would have just gone and sat down and told him, "you think I'm a homosexual," and at the time, yeah, I wasn't. "But let me tell you [00:35:00] the reasons why I'm not, but I'm not closing the door to anything and in any event

it's none of your business whether I am or not and you needn't worry."

MA: Don't lie awake at night.

GM: Yeah, and that was the truth. There was another guy who was part of what came to be like a little group who was so homophobic. He saw me and was in a rage because he could perceive that I was gay when I hadn't done anything. By the mailboxes, one time, someone wrote, "Mundorf, you fag, go home."

MA: Somebody wrote on the --

GM: Somebody wrote on the wall.

MA: Oh, my God.

GM: And as I said, again, I saw no homosexuality at all. Now, a bright spot finally happens.

MA: You're in Kirby House? [00:36:00]

GM: I'm in Kirby House. I'm basically okay. I mean now and then somebody will say something snide but physically nothing happened, and it was all right. And I stayed to myself but -- and you can decide whether you want to put this next part into it. There were two guys in Kirby House who weren't together, who didn't -- they knew each other because they were in the same house, but they had nothing to do with each other. To this day, so 50 years after that I have never met two -- and there's no word that I can

think of that fits -- two of the "good-est," you know, not best, but "most good" people that I have ever met. They were honest. They were ethical. They were religious. They were humble. They didn't [00:37:00] -- they weren't goody two shoes thrown into your face how fabulous they were. This one particular guy was just righteous. The other guys in the house and, mind you, this house had more than its share of people who took beer cans and threw them against the wall, and slopped all over the place and, took an STP sticker -- you might not know this -- and put it on a Gilbert Stuart painting that was hanging. It's not there anymore, the painting.

MA: Oh, my.

GM: The party came to an end. How do we take this off? Okay, swish and half the paint comes off with it.

MA: That's the atmosphere.

GM: That was a lot of the atmosphere. It wasn't totally ,but [00:38:00] it was a lot. What I'm saying is you had this type of person but even they could see the goodness in this guy, and he became president of the house. Extremely popular but not popular because he's, you know, all right, "let's go for a drink" and, you know, none of that stuff.

MA: Goodness has a way of rising.

MG: And it did. Luckily for me, his girlfriend liked something about me. I guess, that I was quiet, and I was not unattractive, and lined me up with her girlfriend down in - - well, we went on a double date in Atlantic City. It was a great time. We had such a nice time. Well, this guy realized that I'm not this, you know, invisible person and we became best friends. [00:39:00] So now I'm best friends with the president of the house, which puts everyone - "like what's going on?", the universe is shifting here. It wasn't clear sailing because everyone moved down a notch while I was brought up.

MA: Right, right, right.

MG: So, there was resentment also. But anyway, now I'm with somebody who -- as he said it, "I took you under my wing," which he did. Because of that things started to change for me. I became -- into the world type of thing.

MA: He was very important.

MG: He was extremely important, and I'll finish the story later after the thing. So, I guess that puts me where I was in school and, again, nothing gay. I didn't see anything gay [00:40:00] but the atmosphere was homophobic. Now, what I saw on campus was exciting to be there. First of all, let me say that I painted Lafayette as this right-wing mess, which it was, but there were good things about it too.

Women were treated like queens when they were on campus. They were so rare that doors got opened for them. We opened the car door, and Kirby was a very good place. First of all, I had my own maid. Did you know that?

MA: No, I didn't.

MG: We had maids then. She made the beds; she washed the barware and stuff. Life was so much better in so many ways back then. It was -- when they wanted to, it was very [00:41:00] elegant. A party weekend, football weekend, you got dressed up to go the football game. I don't know whether they do it now or not. Ties, and sweaters, and the plaid jackets, and the corduroy pants, and the girls dress to the nines. Then you'd come back to the house and you'd have a cocktail party. You know that big room in Kirby House with the paneling, and there would be cocktails. It was not only just the guys, it was faculty, and I remember Mrs. Tibbets, I don't know whether you knew her or not. Girls weren't allowed on campus -- not on campus, they weren't allowed to sleep over on campus. We'd rent rooms in these big houses that were nearby. Mrs. Tibbets was one [00:42:00] of the owners of the houses and she was like Auntie Mame. She said -- this huge house that she had, it was amazing, was the cheapest that she could get.

They were cheap because it was so hard to heat and cool and do all that stuff. Girls would stay there. Campus, if a girl was in the place where you were, you had to have the door open if she was in the room, and no staying overnight, of course. Now, I'm sure people will see this and say, oh, come on, of course they stayed over, and of course there was all sorts of things going on. Again, I never saw it, it's so sad. But as I said it was very special. Then you changed for dinner, which was formal. I don't mean tuxedos, but it was very right, china, and the silver. And then you'd change again [00:43:00] for the party at night. You'd have a band and stuff. There were aspects of this thing, again, straight from 1956, let's say, that were nice parts about it. So, 1967 was the summer of love, I think, and Woodstock was in there somewhere, '69, I'm not sure, and Stonewall was in '69. Things are happening outside of this campus all over the place, and Vietnam was going full force.

MA: It was a time of tremendous social change.

MG: Right, it was social change, but it skipped over Lafayette for a while, but it can just skip over for so long before you realize that you're so out of style you're not with it. So now, [00:43:00] sideburns, and beards, and mustaches, and hair was growing. I remember buying my first pair of

bell bottoms. Now, you got to remember, for me to buy them, because I'm trying to stay hidden over here in the woodwork, that they have to be now accepted because before that the only people who wore bell bottoms were girls and sailors, right? I thought that I was the coolest thing in the world, and big watch bands, and the big belts, and headbands. The whole thing. I think the fashion change came first. Then you had the lottery for the draft. Now, Mr. Temple was a year younger than I am. He mentions this in his interview. [00:45:00] Well, before the campus was "love it or leave it," "my country right or wrong," you know, "rah, rah America." Well, now it's coming close to home because of Vietnam, "where's Vietnam? what's that about?" Yeah, it's been taking place. It has nothing to do with me so I can put blinders up and not worry about it. I can just wave the pom-poms. The lottery -- I don't know whether you know how it went. As far as I remember, it started with January 1st, we'll dip into the barrel and that's number 43, okay, and so on. April 7th, which is my birthday, they dipped in and it was 40-something, I can't remember, 46 or something. My friend, dip in, which was August 19th or something like that, 15th, [00:46:00] it was 300 and something. You knew you were going to be drafted

if you were up into the first half at least. He was golden, my friend.

MA: The higher the number, the less likely.

GM: The higher, the less likely because they went -- we're going to draft people now, we'll take all the number ones. While this was taking place, you could imagine everybody is around television sets. Your life is on the line here. It happened. Well, now Vietnam is at my backdoor.

Discussions started. What's this Vietnam, what is that about? Why are we fighting there? [00:47:00] Does it have anything to do with the United States? The thing that I always heard, well, it was the domino effect. If, whatever, North Vietnam conquered South Vietnam or whatever it was, then the next island over they would get it and then France would -- and just down the line would all become communistic. That's the reason we had to stop them. There were still some people, obviously, on campus who lived for ROTC and stuff. My roommate sophomore year made his career in the Army so I'm sure that he was fine with it.

But the campus was not on the whole. All of a sudden protests started, and I can remember one day. It was like a country fair, let's say, in the quad but more pushed toward one of the [00:48:00] fraternity bunches back then.

Not by Kirby but over more -- and tables were set up, and banners were flying, and there was one guy who was painting T-shirts because we went on strike. I got a T-shirt and I had it, and I wanted to bring it to you, I couldn't find it. I was positive I knew where it was. But it said strike in red and there was a fist.

MA: If you ever find it.

GM: I know, and I was ready to bring it. Good intentions mean nothing, I understand that.

MA: No, no.

GM: But if I do, I intend to.

MA: We'd love to have it. It would be wonderful to have a very important piece of Lafayette history, but, yes, so...

GM: So, there's this whole thing going on, right, and we're on strike. So, for a semester, I think, we weren't in school. We didn't go to class, and they based your grades [00:49:00] on the first test that you took. So, like, first test and then we went on strike. I always did great on the first test, so I did great. One of the things I didn't like is that it became a stew pot of what anybody was ever against ever. First of all, it was no, "let's give gays their rights." That was not part of the deal, but like one banner, "Boycott Coca Cola" because they were exploiting undeveloped nations or something. And since I

personally am responsible for the profits of Coca Cola, I was against that. I think that is a problem that we tend to dump everything into it. Like the gay parade, gay march. It used to annoy me to no end in New York City [00:50:00] because there would be a float, legalize marijuana, or legalize... You know, we have enough troubles, and "Men and Boys" was another float. People look at us, "Oh, they do nothing but take drugs and dance all night," you know, and become pedophiles. Let's stick to the subject. That's how I felt about it. Getting back to a little -- to toss out here. My parents wouldn't sell me their house when I was through with my formal education and had money and I could afford it "because I would turn it into a den of inequity." I wish, you know? People -- that's a problem with straight people, I think, that they see us in a certain light [00:51:00] and not think, oh, well, he has to pay his grocery bill just like anybody else.

MA: Yeah, it's dehumanizing.

GM: Yeah, we have this crazy, wild, perverse group over here. And I'm not -- I know things got better. I did my bit. I marched across the Brooklyn Bridge for gay rights. Not as much as your accomplished people who -- I read the other interviews and everyone was so positive, and energetic, and

accomplished. I seriously thought about canceling this because I couldn't compare with these other guys and what they did, and what they did for the gays.

MA: I assure you, first of all, it's not a competition. We don't compare across --

GM: -- well, I did.

MA: -- I cannot tell you how important your stories are, really. I'm just sitting here utterly riveted, and I'm so happy you didn't cancel. I could just [00:52:00] -- honestly just jump across the table and hug you I'm so happy you didn't cancel, so thank you.

GM: No, I felt like you were saying, "Okay, Amy Schumer is finished, go on now, up on stage and tell your three jokes." Oh my God. I accomplished two things, well, three things at Lafayette. I passed history which I had -- the guy took immediate dislike to me -- not because I was gay, he was just like that. But, two, I got the highest reading, the fastest reading and comprehension for what I read in the speed-reading course, and the third thing I accomplished was that the president of the college said I was the most illogical person he ever met.

MA: (laughter) Who was the president?

GM: I have no idea.

MA: We can look it up, we can look it up. I'm sure it was a he because we just got our first female president, so whatever he said to you, we'll look him up [00:53:00] for saying you're the most illogical. You are not. You are amazing, and these stories are -- I'm just sort of speechless. We were on the quad and there was a strike T-shirt, was there more to that? Did I interrupt you when we were talking about your --

GM: No, it was just very exciting because --

MA: -- yeah, the exciting times.

GM: -- a lot of things were going on, all that protesting and stuff. When I got into Cornell, the business school there, first of all you'll be interested to know I asked a girl to marry me. (laughter) Still my mind in the clouds. She said no, luckily. But I got tear gassed in Ithaca, and marched on Washington, so, you know, I was part of that whole thing. I guess to finish my life, so to speak, so at [00:54:00] this point, this is where I would tell a guy, okay, it's going to be a long tough road to hoe but make it through, and things will get better, and you'll be good. Which is not to say life is perfect, because I got out and there were a couple of years there of fun and discos and stuff like that, but then AIDS showed up. I was on the bottom rung of this AIDS thing, because my partner at the

time was the head of emergency medicine at Cabrini. He would come home and say, "We saw the oddest things. An old woman has this cat disease that you -- yes, it's in the medical books, but it's so rare it doesn't happen.

Basically, it doesn't happen." Things like -- because people were coming in with these [00:55:00] strange growths and all this kind of stuff, and he would get stuck with needles. So, yes, he died of AIDS.

MA: I'm sorry.

GM: Yeah. He was my best friend at that time. We had broken up after, I don't know, seven years or something. But we still were very fond of each other. Then, my second partner got AIDS and I was sure that I had it, I mean, you know, let's face it, but I didn't. At the time it was a death sentence. Now, he's still alive, knock on wood. That part worked out. My roommate, I had nothing to do sexually, but my roommate [00:56:00] in New York City on West End Avenue was supposedly the second person to die of AIDS. Take that for what's it worth but my point is that I was there when all of this was happening, and people were dying left and right.

MA: You were heavily, heavily, personally hit by the AIDS crisis.

GM: Yeah.

MA: Wow. George, I'm sorry.

GM: Yeah, well, it happened to all of us.

MA: Yeah, it was a terrible time.

GM: It was an awful time and I think -- as it goes by, you tend to sort of forget it, okay, well, things are getting better. We now have -- but it's a constant vigil.

Especially with this administration trying to take away the rights of women. If that happens, is gay marriage next?

Will they try to take that back? For all of the acceptance that is here, and there is a great [00:57:00] amount. As I

said, things have changed and I'm not denying that, but I

think that so much of it is like, the joke that is "when is a homosexual a fag? When he leaves the room." It's like

that. You can -- oh, my friends like me and, yes, they

accept me, go to the dinner and stuff. That's because I'm

here and I'm not part of that group over there because

those are the -- you know. And I'm exactly like those

people over there. I remember asking my mother, I said how

could you vote Republican when certainly some of the people

in Florida were saying we should round up all of the

homosexuals and shoot them, and they're responsible for

every disaster that ever happened in the natural world.

[00:58:00] I said how could you vote for him. She was a

librarian and I said, you know, if somebody said let's line

up all of the librarians and shoot them, I couldn't possibly vote for this person and yet you're voting for him. She said, in all innocence, "oh well I wrote him a letter and said you weren't a bad person and how nice you were." You wonder where the naivety comes from. I gave up on her.

You will remember, James Dean, [section redacted by a QAP reviewer] right?

MA: Right, with the tape down the middle of the room.

GM: Right. I'm told, I didn't see it myself, that when he graduated, he went barefoot wearing an Indian headband. So, things -- we changed quite a bit. [00:59:00] Now, 40 years later, I really had lost touch except for birthday cards and Christmas cards with my friend who I'm so thankful for. Because of the death of my first partner, the probable death of my second one, and some bad finances and things, I went through a crisis and I came out to my sister, thus to my parents, so everyone knew but --

MA: It's different.

GM: It wasn't discussed, and we just swept it under the rug.

MA: It's different if you come out.

GM: Yeah, I wrote a letter to everyone in my [01:00:00] high school because I was angry. I would get these emails saying let's get together next week and discuss the happy

times we had at Fort Lee High School. So and so is coming in from California, let's talk about such fun, you know, gala... So, I wrote to them telling them exactly what I told you and that for some of us life wasn't so happy at Fort Lee High School. That life sucked at Fort Lee High School, and really expected I was going to get a bunch of hate mail, and I didn't. I got 50, at least, responses saying that they went through their own problems at school. One girl, I remember her, she was afraid to get up in front of the class. [01:01:00] She would go to pieces, she would collapse. She said that when walking down the sidewalk people would just push her off. There are a lot of people going through different aspects, not the homosexual thing, but had problems too. It was all supportive, so that was good. Then I wrote my friend who had been so good to me, telling him that I was out and stuff. He dropped me like a hot potato. It was "that's the end of it." Now, his wife, I still write her at Christmas, but I think it's because in his mind, although I'm sure neither of us keeps up with anybody, that I'm gay, he was my best friend at school, he must have been gay too. Why else would you hang out [01:02:00] with somebody who was gay? So, it would have rubbed off on him.

MA: That's a shame.

GM: Yeah, and so that was it with him. Which is -- but, yes, we hadn't talked for -- in a while but there was still, in my mind, something there, a bond, you know, an unbreakable bond but he broke it. That was a sad --

MA: That is a sad end to that, when it made such a big difference in your life.

GM: He did, without him who knows what would have happened. But once I got into grad school, everything changed, and the names and the homo and all that stuff stopped. Ironically, it was when I started having relationships with people. So, as soon as I became the homosexual... All the badness went away, and I was in a [01:03:00] great fraternity, and it wasn't a gay fraternity or anything like that. But -- people were normal and sensible. I want to bring up one thing. I went -- I was drafted out of graduate school and had to fill out the form that Mr. Temple talks about where it asks, "Are you gay," and I wrote "no," and in retrospect, of course, I should have written "yes." If they don't want me, who wants to go into the Army? It was the worst time of my life despite all what I went through, the Army was worse. Not because of homosexuality, it's because it was -- and I don't even blame the Army, it's the people that you have to deal with. I mean, well, I won't go into it.

MA: How long -- what were the years you were in?

GM: Let's see, yeah, I was only in boot camp. Because they passed a law that said you have this window [01:04:00] that you can join the National Guard. I joined and then I had to take another one of those questionnaires, and that "Are you a homosexual" question wasn't on the form anymore. I've never read anything that this happened or whatever, but one time it's there, the next time it's not there. I thought that was very strange.

MA: Yeah.

GM: For the record, I didn't see any homosexual stuff going on, and I was looking for it to tell you the truth, at that point, and I didn't see it. I just remembered this now. The guy who nominated me for the prom committee thing, remember, I met with him much later. He had children, grown children, and we're talking [01:05:00] and it was very pleasant. They were talking about gays in the military. Well, he doesn't know that I'm gay. He was not part of the -- I think it was before the letter but even so he's not on this huge high school mailing list -- he's not on there, I checked. He's saying, oh, "those queers, you know? If I went into the Army or my son went into the Army, they'd be all over us." And I didn't say anything,

and the wife said, "oh, yeah, those queers. You wouldn't be safe. You drop the soap; you know what happens."

MA: Holy mackerel, wow.

GM: And I'm thinking to myself, like the other guy, "you'd be the safest person in the entire world," [01:06:00] [section redacted]

MA: Isn't it funny the arrogance of straight people. It's like, you've got to be kidding me, you think you're in danger.

GM: You're safe. You don't have to worry about me.

MA: Good news, bad news for you. You're really safe.

GM: So I wrote him 10 years later or whatever saying I'm the one who was in the Army, in boot camp but it was not just the length of regular boot camp, they threw on an extra month because I was a mortarman, and it was normal boot camp, which was awful for me because you had to do all of these things that I couldn't possibly do, like a horizontal ladder. You might say to yourself, and people don't know this or don't think about this, if you can't do these things that they want you to do physically, okay, maybe you will need it in the future in Vietnam or whatever, [01:07:00] they take you out of boot camp and they put you behind barbed wire in this other area. And I know, because I had a friend who couldn't do these things. Little chubby

guy, nice as could be, and he was unable, like myself, to do the physical things. We marched by one time this area with the barbed wire and he's there with, I don't know how many others, six other people, with a telephone pole on his shoulder, lift up, put on the other shoulder, and so on and it was the saddest thing because you have to start all over again. It's not, okay, whatever happens you only have to put in your four months or six months or however it is and then you got out. You went through three months, now we start again. You'll be there the rest of your life if you can't do that.

MA: Awful.

GM: I got through [01:08:00] it by hook or by crook. I realized what color pencil the guy was scoring with. I bought one of those pencils. I filled in my own score. You do what you have to do.

MA: Right, right, right, right. Get through it.

GM: So, that's it. There's my life.

MA: It's amazing.

GM: So, yeah, I went on to, as I said, Saks Fifth Avenue, and then Tiffany's for a while, and then Gracious Home, and then I was laid off there, and by that time I was -- I don't know what, 60. So finances were a problem but I have a partner for 21 years.

MA: Congratulations, that's wonderful.

GM: So, everything [01:09:00] is as good as it's going to get.

MA: That's really great.

GM: I have no complaints.

MA: That is really great. An amazing story, and you've given such thought to it. Thank you. And read the other transcripts and thought about the whole arc of history and come to this interview with so much to say. One thing I've made a note in my mind to say to you that you started saying how important it was to you to go on record that things do get better. There are a lot of gay and lesbians and LGBTQ, younger people right now, and I think we sometimes blithely say look how much better it is. They suffer greatly. Their parents reject them. They are homeless. The trans population is in tremendous crisis oftentimes. They need to hear that things get better. That's still really, really important. I just wanted to assure you that students will absolutely see your interview. It's actually something that we will assign in classes. [01:10:00] The student team who puts your interview together. You'll have a student assigned to your interview that helps put it up on the Web and people will really see this. Students -- people that need to see it, will see it. I promise.

GM: Good. Yeah, I think it would have made a big difference if there had been one person that I could have spoken to. And I'm not saying, and I don't mean somebody say, oh, well, maybe precisely when I'm saying, "things will get better and so don't even worry about it." No. Things will get better, but you still have a long time that you're not going to be happy. I think too often -- let's say in the case of a girl who doesn't think that she's as pretty as her contemporaries. Somebody coming up to her and saying, "Oh, you're just in an ugly duckling [01:11:00] stage." That's not the answer. She doesn't want to hear about "I'm in this stage and soon I'll be a movie star." No, that's not going to happen, but if there was somebody to say, "you are going through a rough time, and I recognize this. I understand. I don't have an answer," but just if there were somebody there. I'm hoping that there is an organization on campus, a gay organization. If there are other people, this will be a great help, I think.

MA: In many ways, and if you had a chance to read Catherine Hanlon's interview, she's the physician who graduated in 1979. She was one of our earliest interviewees, and she said something very, very similar which is one of the reasons she agreed to do the interview was because when I asked her, I said to her this is so that people know

[01:12:00] that other people have gone before you so that younger people can see -- not just that you survived but there's a whole community of us out there who know that it's as bad as you can possibly imagine some days. It's an absolute nightmare. And we've come out the other end, but the point is I hear you, I see what you're going through, it really hurts.

GM: Right.

MA: That inspired her to do an interview because I think for a similar reason, and I think a lot of us who are older, right, and gay identified would recognize that immediately that we think back and we think what it would have meant to have somebody who was older say, hey, I know exactly what you're going through. I've been there. I see how bad this is.

GM: Exactly, yeah.

MA: I see how bad this is, and it's real. It's nothing to laugh at. It's nothing to sort of poo-poo. It's really serious. It really is that awful to go through and you really do feel alone. You're not alone. It's just really something I think a lot of us would have given a lot to hear that.

GM: That's true. I thought that [01:13:00] -- for me, Lafayette was the wrong college. I should have gone to

someplace bigger where you could find groups of people who are like yourself. Cornell was like that maybe. But on the other hand, like that poor guy who his roommate televised his relationships in Rutgers. Now, Rutgers is huge and here this poor kid, and this is relatively --

MA: Tyler Clementi I think that was, right.

GM: And he committed suicide. There's no answer. "Go to a big school, you'll be fine," Maybe not.

MA: That's true.

GM: In my case I think go to a big city. That was a big help, but for some people it's not going to be the answer. If you're alone, maybe you'll be alone in the city too. You have to...

MA: Yeah, yeah.

GM: There's no easy answers but if you look and if people understand, try to understand [01:14:00] it.

MA: It makes a difference. It's the difference between being alone and being not alone, I think. I was thinking, you know, you said economics wasn't the right major for you. You just sort of slid along into it, which people do in college, slide into a major. How did you like your classes at Lafayette? I'm just curious. Your life as a student, did you particularly enjoy any classes?

GM: I enjoyed Professor Gaertner. There's like two names I remember, his class was art history. Have you heard of him or do you know him?

MA: What was the last name?

GM: Gaertner?

MA: No.

GM: German accent or Austrian accent. Very formal.

"Gentlemen, there will be no short pants in here." I enjoyed listening to his lectures. It was straight memorization. Here's the book, memorize it, which probably isn't the best teaching in the world, but it was enjoyable to listen [01:15:00] to him. Another teacher I remember is Professor Arboleda who was Spanish, and his whole attitude sort of sarcastic, witty. I really appreciate that. I enjoyed that. I had the nicest English teacher. I also had -- but it's not what they taught. I'm not complaining about what I was taught or whatever. As I said, it slid by. I learned how to play the game, and I'm good at taking tests. Once I got past the history guy freshman year, it was all downhill from there. No, I have no complaints about the teachers really. The classes were fine. But what I didn't do [01:16:00] was what apparently a lot of -- well, the five other interviews that I read. People got involved with their teachers. I mean visiting them. The

one guy said, "I used to hang out at the administration building, and I knew this one and the president" and blah, blah, blah. I guess I was -- I would say normal. I went to class, I passed the class, and I came home. There was no "let's go for dinner at so and so's house." One lady had Gaertner and she was -- and I read it in the Lafayette news magazine and how great he was, and how she loved to go to dinner at his house with the wife, and blah, blah. No, that didn't happen.

MA: That wasn't your thing.

GM: I wasn't invited. I would have gone. Just like when he called me the most illogical person in the world.

[01:17:00] That was at the President's Tea where everyone was invited so it wasn't like I was there as a special guest. So, no. I was a very, I would say, normal going the other way type of student.

MA: Yeah, right, right. Yeah, doing your thing.

GM: Just getting through it, let's get... And getting through it not badly. I wasn't -- I was on the dean's list or whatever. No, I had no complaints that way. But socially and stuff, a bigger college would have been better for me. I should have gone more into art. In graduate school, again, I did the business thing which as I said is a waste of time. But I did as much art as I could in business

school. I told them [01:18:00] -- you had to get permission to take art. Otherwise it was strictly business -- that I would be -- I wanted to work in a museum.

Business and art, where does it come together?

MA: That was very smart of you.

GM: Yeah, and maybe it would be a little closer to the truth of what I would have been good at, or would have enjoyed at least.

MA: Yeah, yeah, life unfolds as it unfolds, right.

GM: So, again, oh, I'm sure everyone says this but my advice to you students coming up who are going to read this, do what you like. My God, you know. Even if you're not good at it. I like to draw but I'm not the greatest. Do it. Somehow it will work out. You'll get to -- as long as you like what you're doing, it's the most important thing. Drifting through because the money is good, no. That's [01:19:00] a no.

MA: I'd like to take those words and paint them on my office wall. That can't be said too often, and I'm so glad you said that. It's so important to -- that students understand that life and work are very long and -- for most of us pretty long endeavors and you should be doing what you love.

GM: And I know the call of the money thing. Business, yes, there's money there versus over here, you know, life is tough enough without worrying about where your next meal is coming from, still. Choose that.

MA: Choose that. Yeah, absolutely. The only other thing I wanted to ask as you were describing -- well, a couple of things. The intense homophobia of the time you were there at Lafayette, it sounds like that was literally the culture. Like it was just sort of normative to use that language --

GM: Oh, yeah.

MA: -- and you said someone wrote something on the -- nobody, [01:20:00] no one in charge, no adult cared that that was happening? It was just normal culture, or no one was around or there's never repercussions --

GM: No one was aware of it, or no one took the time to be aware of it, or couldn't care less. Again, I was never - "you faggot," and push me down the stairs. That never happened. Maybe if we went the next step, thank God it didn't. If something would have been nominally done.

MA: Yeah, if you were physically hurt but day-to-day harassment just sort of happened.

GM: Yeah, and at Lafayette it wasn't day to day. In high school it was day to day. In Lafayette it was not. It was

there. I want to say now, dramatically I could sense it. I don't know whether you could sense it or not. But it certainly, in thinking back on it, this whole homophobia was ripe for the picking. [01:21:00]

MA: It was that present. It was sort of normal in behavior in an all-male school when everybody's trying to defend their masculinity and the easy mark is the easy mark.

GM: Yeah, and as I said. It would be different if two guys walked hand in hand on campus. There was a guy who didn't go to Lafayette. He lived in town, I guess. You would see him walking up the hill -- you say that, I saw him walking up the hill when I was in a car lots of times, and invariably somebody would have to scream out the window "hey faggot" because he wiggled when he walked. Whether he had a problem, I don't have the slightest idea. He probably wore a long scarf or something. But we can't just let that ride.

MA: Right, police everybody.

GM: Yeah, who cares what he did. We [01:21:00] have to make a comment about it.

MA: Yeah, wow. That is powerful indeed. It really, really is. I was thinking too about the speaker and the wastepaper baskets full of water. Were there other -- it was such a

tumultuous time of immense social change while you were at Lafayette.

GM: Right, but that social change didn't happen until -- well, you'd have to find out when we went on strike, I think. That was either my junior year or senior year. I'm pretty sure it was my senior year and which semester, although I'm pretty sure that was the second semester. There was at least two years, probably three years, of no change, and then (snapping fingers) because of the '69 summer of love and da, da, da.

MA: Yeah, at the end.

GM Yeah, and the lottery and the fashion.

MA: So, there was this really dynamic movement at the end.

GM Suddenly, you know. And if you wanted to be cool, [01:23:00] and I think most of the people on campus secretly -- maybe not saying it, wanted to be cool. Who doesn't at that age, right?

MA: Absolutely.

GM: Okay, well, let's start moving in that direction.

MA: Right, right, slowly but surely, yeah, yeah.

GM: Let me see if I have anything in my cheat sheet here.

MA: Yes, please.

GM: I think I said everything I wanted to say. Yeah, well, I just want to repeat that the other interviews, I'm sort of

proud of them. They did something about it. The one guy who started [01:24:00] the drag dances.

MA: Oh, oh, Dan Reynolds, yes.

GM: That's amazing.

MA: But that's decades after you graduated. It's a different world.

GM: It was a different world. But just to do it at all.

MA: Tremendous courage.

GM: Yeah.

MA: Insane amount of courage, yeah, absolutely. It's so impressive but still different times.

GM: And for so long I was one of those people. I'm ashamed to say it but I saw the light, all right, probably because I had to because I am gay. If I saw somebody with long flowing hair, and the bracelets, and the carrying on, this would disgust me. I'm not that -- why do you do this. You bring us all down. But it's quite the opposite. If it weren't for these people, they're the ones who have given us our rights, and I know it. [01:25:00] I'm not kidding myself anymore. Because while I'm standing back over here, he's bringing it to the attention of everybody. We deserve our rights. My hat's off to him too, all the people.

MA: Well, my hat's off to you because, in your story of survival and courage, and thank you for just -- when I

think about the Lafayette you went to, I'm just really moved and grateful that you would agree to talk to the college. In a sense, of course, you're talking to me but you're talking back to Lafayette, to this project. That you would agree to do this is really -- as I said, I went to Holy Cross in the '80s. It was an extraordinary homophobic place and it resonates deeply when you talk to me about a homophobic small -- but it wasn't the '60s. I certainly can relate to what you say personally, but I think doing this for Lafayette is -- and I know you're doing it for the students and the young folks who hear this, but I really just appreciate it so much [01:26:00] given what you went through, which was a lot, a lot.

GM: It's my pleasure.

MA: Very generous of you. I will -- I usually say this at the beginning, but I'll say it now while I think of it. If you think of anything else, you're welcome to share. The interview is not meant to be sort of like, this is your moment and then your moments over. If you find your T-shirt or you think of other things you wanted to say or any memorabilia. If there's a photo of yourself. If you had another story you wanted to share, all that stuff is totally possible. It's not like -- we're considering this project a living project that's going on. We're working on

our more complex digital humanity site, as well as the basic site with all the transcripts. There's a life to this because we're hoping we can make it a part of the educational experience of students that people will do research with these transcripts to keep Lafayette's history alive but also to make the history known, and to support students in learning about their own culture [01:27:00] and just about gay culture more generally, even if they're straight identified and cis-gender identified. To have this stuff available as part of the education at Lafayette. That's sort of our dream. If you do think of anything else, but for now I'll just thank you very much. It's been a wonderful interview and I really appreciate it.

GM: Thank you.

END OF AUDIO FILE