Interview – Edward Strickler

Interviewee: Edward Strickler

Interviewer: Cecelia Parks

Interview date: December 5, 2022

Location: Central Virginia Regional Library, Dillwyn, VA

Length: 1:21:01

START OF RECORDING

Cecelia Parks (CP): So, this is Cecelia Parks. I am here with Edward Strickler. It is...Monday, December...I always forget to do this and check.

Edward Strickler (ES): I think it's the twelfth.

CP: The twelfth. Yeah. Yeah. Monday, December twelfth [laughs], 2022. We are here at the Buckingham Library in Dillwyn, Virginia, and we're going to get started. So, Edward, what words do you use to refer to yourself? Do you say "gay"? Do you say "LGBTQ"? Do you say "queer"?

ES: So... because I've--I have a long enough life that a lot of those words have changed over time, it's not that they're confusing to me; it's just that maybe they all mean the same thing, or I don't even know what they mean anymore! So on official forms where they want to know that, I usually put "human terrestrial." [Laughs] As a--as a--because it's true. But also as a bit of a pun on the--how these words keep changing and I'm not sure even exactly what they all mean.

So to be kind to people, I just say, "You can use any pronouns you want. Or any identifiers you want." But it wouldn't be fair to say I'm lesbian because I'm not. It's more

fair to say I'm gay. “Queer” is okay. “Nonbinary” is okay. But I'm not transgender, because I've not done any of the therapies or surgeries that would connote that status. So--does that answer a little bit?

CP: It does. It does. So do you--so then when you're thinking about sort of the--sort of the larger community, or communities, would you say like “the gay community,” “the queer community,” or is that--or do you sort of think about it a little bit differently?

ES: So in public health literature, they often use a term “sexual and gender minorities.” And so I--sometimes I will use that because it's definitionally true and it's valid in a literature that is meaningful to me, the public health literature. Does that make sense?

CP: It--yes, that absolutely does make sense. So tell me about where you grew up.

ES: So, the family was a working-class farming family in the Shenandoah Valley.

CP: Okay. So what was the--what was that like? Are there any stories from your childhood that you want to share? Anything that you really remember?

ES: Oh, well [laughs] we won't have enough time! [CP laughs] Sometimes, I say I don't really have strong memories of childhood. I know that things happened that people told me but I don't remember that.

CP: Yeah.

ES: And that is even true today, where my husband will say, “Remember when we did this?” And I'll say, “I think I remember,” but not the level of detail he remembers. So, I think I may--we're all cognitively different, correct? And we have the same general anatomy but our perceptions are all very different, so that's a given. So I think my perceptions tend to flow in a kind of eternal now stream, if I can adopt that from Paul

Tillich. So there's kind of an eternal present where the history is part of that but I don't necessarily remember all those details.

CP: Got it.

ES: So I know some things from childhood that others have told me that suggest that maybe I was a little different in my expression. So I do know--or have a memory--kind of a memory but it's more in other--what people have said, where my second grade elementary school teacher wrote in a note--because back then, that's your permanent record, your report card on paper. [ES edit: So, the teacher would write] comments and your parents or guardians had to write that they received it. And it said something about me preferring to play with the girls on the playground and I knew when I heard that or heard that was reported, I think I remember a conversation about that note. I know that that was something that was not supposed to be endorsed or validated. Although apparently the note didn't say anything bad; it just made that as an observation. So I think probably that was true. [Laughs] Maybe I did play with--like playing with the girls on the playground more; I don't know. But I don't remember. So that's a childhood thing, if you--that might be of interest to this.

CP: Yeah. So were your--so you said your family was a farming family.

ES: Mm-hmm.

CP: So you all--did you grow up on a farm? Like were you working on the farm when you were a child?

ES: Well, sure. So I always tell people--because younger people [laughs] wouldn't even have a concept of this, I don't think--it's like show them a rotary phone; they may actually not know how to use it. Not--not know how to use it [laughs]--well, they saw it

in a movie. But when we grew up, when we were young children, the--Mother prepared food with a cookstove, a wood cookstove, so that required wood. So I do definitely remember enjoying chopping wood after school. I thought that was just exciting and productive. So there was a cooking woodstove and it heated up the house really well, right? And my job was milking the family milk cow after school, so there were all those young people chores that a child could do. And then more things as we grew up.

Another thing that--that might--a lot of people think like, "What?" Thanksgiving Day was really important to the family because that's when we slaughtered hogs. Because it was a day when Father and other neighbors, because it usually was a neighbor--neighbor activity; a group activity because it was such a big enterprise and took so much labor--that was the day the--the men who were working had off work. It was a holiday, so it was never a holiday for us. It was always really difficult workday from very early hours, because you had to get the fires going early, and it was until--until dark before you even could say, "Okay, we got enough done." And but then later there were all the other activities, like salting the hams and things like that. So it was--that--that sounds like a working farm, doesn't it?

CP: Yes.

ES: Yes.

CP: Yes. That sounds--yeah. Like a lot of work. So you grew up in McGaheysville. How did you end up in Charlottesville?

ES: So, I guess this is another aspect of childhood. I do know that in high school, the teachers thought I was bright, because that's what was written on the report cards the--the actual paper cards that they wrote in in longhand. And one teacher in particular--can

I say people's names? I don't think it matters, or do you prefer not to use names?

CP: It's totally up to you. Really, the only guidance I have is, you know, I'm not trying to out people who might not be out, but other than that then--

ES: Right, so this teacher's name--this is all of very not--it's all praiseworthy.

CP: Yeah. Right, yeah.

ES: So this particular teacher, name was Jean Cash, who went on to finish a PhD and write a book[s] and teach.[1] And I think is probably now retired. Hopefully still living. But her work was on Southern literature and Flannery O'Connor was one of her specialties. So I definitely remember in her class, or classes, reading at a more adventuresome or adult level than other students and she was a good coach about the papers I would write. So--and I think I remember some of those encounters as not only encouraging learning but encouraging adventuresome learning. So that was good.

I--I did a first year at--then it was--I think it was already James Madison University, but earlier it was Madison College--and transferred to Swarthmore. [ES comment: I was wrong. The official name change was in 1977. [2]] Which was a very different place than--or a place where nobody knew anything about slaughtering hogs on Thanksgiving Day [laughs], so--and things like that. So that was a real culture shock in a--in a way. And issues of sexuality and gender were certainly current... I started at Swarthmore not long after a period of when the--the school--that school community, along with many others, was known as being rather radical culturally. If you--have you

---

[1] ES note and references: Jean Cash is a professor emeritus at James Madison University as of March 2023. Some of her work can be found here: "Jean W. Cash," University Press of Mississippi, accessed March 27, 2023. https://www.upress.state.ms.us/Contributors/C/Cash-Jean-W ; see also Jean W. Cash, *Flannery O'Connor: A Life* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2002).

[2] "JMU Centennial Celebration - JMU Historical Timeline," JMU Centennial Celebration, James Madison University, accessed February 4, 2023. https://www.jmu.edu/centennialcelebration/timeline.shtml [ES reference]

heard of the Weather Underground?

CP: Mm-hmm.

ES: So there were Swarthmore people that were part of the Weather Underground, and their famous raid on the FBI office was near Swarthmore. The town close to Swarthmore, that's where they raided the FBI office to find the secret documents about COINTELPRO, the government's infiltration of leftist or radical organizations. To spy on them or use them; manipulate them.[3] So the Weather Underground was some--was a kind of a thing that people would refer to and of course, other kind of revolutionary ideas were there. So it was a very different kind of place, so. I finished there. That's a whole different--that's too much information; I'm sorry. But then, finishing there in honors humanities including religious philosophy. I thought, "Well, I want to go back to Virginia, closer to home, but I want to study some more." So I entered in graduate school

[3] ES comment: about the "raid" – or rather a break in/theft/disclosure of classified info: Kenny Cooper, "How to Break Into The FBI: 50 Years Later, Media Burglars Get Local Honors," WHYY, Philadelphia, August 23, 2021. https://whyy.org/articles/how-to-break-into-the-fbi-50-years-later-media-burglars-get-local-honors/ I was not intending to say that those breaking in were members of the Weather Underground. Rather that the event of the break in nearby Swarthmore (the next stop on the suburban rail line) and local 'lore' of Swarthmore students involved with the Weather Underground were part of the college culture. In fact Jane Alpert – one of the Swarthmoreans in the WU was sentenced 1977 while I was in college: Arnold H. Lubasch, "Jane Alpert Given Four-Month Term," *New York Times* (New York City, NY), October 7, 1977. https://www.nytimes.com/1977/10/07/archives/jane-alpert-given-fourmonth-term-sentenced-for-contempt-she-had.html. Weather Underground actions were violent; the Society of Friends (Quaker) traditions of Swarthmore are non-violent. The tone of discourse was not "all in" for undermining authority and certainly not condoning violence; rather we believed that learning was significant inquiry, personal and social, that could impel beneficial personal and social change. A significant story in the college "lore" was also that during a student sit-in at the College, the Swarthmore President, a notable defender of intellectual freedom, who had also built significant assets for students, died of a heart attack: "Courtney C. Smith," Swarthmore College Presidents, Swarthmore College, accessed March 27, 2023. https://www.swarthmore.edu/swarthmore-college-presidents/courtney-c-smith. The "lore" incorporated this story in this way: activism/actions have consequences, some you want, and some you don't expect, and some you may regret These years when I was a student at Swarthmore were also the years of early LGBTQ policy activism in the City of Philadelphia; there was many different factions, and actions, as described by Philadelphia Gay News at that time: Jason Villemez, "Philly's First Attempt at Nondiscrimination," *Philadelphia Gay News* (Philadelphia, PA), November 7, 2019. https://epgn.com/2019/11/07/philly-s-first-attempt-at-nondiscrimination/ Although I was not immediately aware, and not involved, while a student, I became involved a few years later, that is discussed later in this transcript.

in UVA. In religious studies. So that's how I got back to Charlottesville.

CP: Okay. So I want to go back to something. You--you sort of mentioned it; it seems like growing up there maybe you--you sort of felt like you were a little bit different from your peers, whether that was feedback you were getting from teachers or whatever. So I'm curious how that sort of--how do I want to put this? I don't know; if they--if you have any memories of any like, your first experiences like really feeling like--I don't know, that you were gay or when you sort of realized that.

ES: So that--those concepts or ideas were not available to me. As a child, that discourse--the current phrase, “the discourse” --that discourse did not exist. Swarthmore did. So that's where I could have a discourse where--to name--to name experiences. And jeepers, I had a--just a very long, unrequited love there. So--if you understand what I mean. So, there--there was one person in particular that was of very intense fascination to me. In all for--ways. Physically, emotionally, and spiritually. And our relationship tended to be more spiritual because we were sharing a lot of religious and philosophical ideas. And--and that occurred with a couple other people too, but this one person in particular. So it was--I had to learn not only a--well, more than a community discourse, I had to have an internal dialogue. I had to have my own self-learning about that.

Another thing that opened up that discourse, that actually continued through to Swarthmore I think in some ways, now that I think about it, was I spent more time talking about those relationships with lesbians. So, there were--there were two women in particular I met at Swarthmore who they were intellectual friends but I--I knew that they had a relationship and it was deeply meaningful to them. One of the women I think probably had...a diagnosable level of depression... And we talked a lot about her

struggles. So I think that was a point of reference for gay relations for me as meeting and talking at a rather deep level with lesbians.

CP: Yeah. That makes sense. So, then when you moved to Charlottesville to go to grad school at UVA, did you sort of seek out other sexual and gender minority folks? Yeah--

ES: Well, as you know, the--the now called Queer Student Union is one of the oldest in the country. At UVA. And I think they--they now acknowledge that as historically important. I think the university does now. Once upon a time I think they didn't really care [laughs] but I think now they claim that as like, "We're historically rich and important." So--but it wasn't called Queer Student Union then. So I went to those meetings and those were interesting. I met people. And that's where I met my husband.

CP: And what year did you start at UVA?

ES: I guess I would have--have matriculated there to graduate school in the fall of '78.

CP: Okay. Okay, so--it would have been Gay Student Union probably then?

ES: It was probably called Gay Student Union.

CP: Yeah. So that was pretty--it was pretty new then, because I think it started in '72.

ES: It was relatively new.

CP: Yeah. Yeah.

ES: Oh, it was a very--I remember it being very busy. It was in the Wesley--Wesleyan Center, the Wesley Student Center, whatever they call it now.

CP: Okay.

ES: Across from Mem[orial] Gym.

CP: Yes. Right. Okay.

ES: That's where the meetings were. So I certainly remember meeting my now-husband there. He had moved to Charlottesville from New York City. Not following his brother, but his brother was in school--graduate school at the university. And he and his parents would frequently visit the area and when he finished his college in New York state, it was a time to make a change and he moved there [ES comment: to Charlottesville].

CP: So he was attending the Gay Student Union meetings but he wasn't a student? Or was he a student then?

ES: Not a--not a student at UVA. He just had moved to the area.

CP: Got it.

ES: So he had somehow found out about it. It wasn't that hard to find about it, if you asked enough people. And that's where we met. And I remember our first date. It was a bike ride. We rode bikes on a long ride when the roads were safer. I think they're not so safe now. To take that long route out to Earlysville and beyond. I'm sure still people do that bike trip, but it's a lot of traffic now.

CP: Yeah. So were there other people in--coming to the GSU meetings who weren't students? Like was that a pretty common thing?

ES: Yeah, yeah. I think so.

CP: Okay. Yeah.

ES: It was the--the border was very fluid because it wasn't on Grounds. Now as you know--or you should know, the mysterious border of Grounds and the community is

a source of--of--of great historical tension and richness. Problems--it's very problematic for a lot of reasons. So the meeting was not on Grounds. And because it was in a faith-based center, which was welcoming--that's what it was. Welcoming. So the--the--these--those problematic boundaries weren't there. Now, perhaps it was very problematic for people that didn't want to go to a religious space. But it wasn't in a sanctuary. It was basically like a big living room.

CP: Yeah. That makes--that makes a lot of sense. And you know, it sounds like--well, I don't know. Were there other sorts of--like was--did it seem like the GSU was like the main sort of organized group for queer people at the time in Charlottesville?

ES: Sure. Sure. I went back and did a little--Googled around. You've--you've done it already, I'm sure. You have access to this, but there was maybe ten years or a little bit more than ten years ago, one of the street papers--I'm not sure--it was probably the *Cville Review* or one of the ones that still exists. I don't know which ones still exist. There used to be three, actually. Had a nice little piece where they did a little historical piece.[4] I'm sure you've seen it. So you would know there was Muldowney's.

CP: Mm-hmm.

ES: A little pub. Joani Schatzman. Yeah.

CP: I'm interviewing her on Thursday.

ES: Yeah. Are you? Okay, well that's so--you're going to hear that history from her, that's great [both laugh]. So she--she's very interesting, so she's going to tell you a lot about that history and why should you hear it from me? So there was a pub. And then the

[4] ES comment: the historical review in the local media: Tobias Beard, "Across 30 Years and an Epidemic, Charlottesville's Gay and Lesbian Communities Came Out Together," *C-Ville* (Charlottesville, VA), November 13, 2012. https://www.c-ville.com/gay-history-of-charlottesville

student union. I'm sure there were other small informal groups that people knew as friends or you could get invited to special parties, but I really wasn't aware of those.

CP: Right. That makes sense. So that--so you moved you know to UVA in--towards the end of the '70s and then I think this is something that maybe you mentioned in something in one of your emails, or I saw somewhere, but what was your experience working with people with AIDS in the Charlottesville area?

ES: Oh, so--yeah, I do want to highlight that a little bit and that's why I have brought this banner, which you've seen... There's some pretty good writing of some history that I think some publications in Charlottesville wrote with some pretty good background history. Better than I could tell you. My experience with that...comes from reading about meetings where they wanted people to come and talk about what was going on. So the language of AIDS didn't exist. At that time.

CP: And that was...early '80s?

ES: Somewhere in the mid-'80s.

CP: Okay.

ES: Yeah. So for--there was just beginning to be a discourse or public information. I don't--I think AIDS existed but HIV didn't exist yet. [ES comment: disease nomenclature changed over time, and could be variable depending on research field, or information. I recall – as this paper shows – saying and writing "HTLVIII."[5] It was, of course, very confusing to everyone and we spend lots of time with basic terms, clarifying biological mechanisms of transmission, etc., to ensure foundations of knowledge. As I

[5] Jan Balzarini et al, "The Anti-HTLV-III (Anti-HIV) and Cytotoxic Activity Of 2',3'-Didehydro-2',3' Dideoxyribonucleosides: A Comparison with Their Parental 2',3'-Dideoxyribonucleosides," *Molecular Pharmacology* 32 (1987): 162-167. [ES reference]

said, I considered directly addressing stigma(s) to be part of the essential foundations.] Those terms were--were fluid and changing, right? There was a need for people--it wasn't so much alarm, it was a need to help people that needed help. That didn't have family to help them. Or both partners were sick. So that began the first awareness of that really. And started community ties and once again, it goes back to something I said earlier: the lesbian community was really interested and engaged and supportive.

So this once--and this is a very long story so I'll try to be brief. One of the things I decided to go is use some power that I had because I was appointed to comm--a city commission. That was some little bit of power I had. We had done a lot of what would now be called "social justice policymaking." That word didn't exist then either; social justice discourse language didn't exist quite in that same way. But that's what we were doing. So I said, "Okay, let's take on this." So I...I was either chair or vice chair or at least a member of the Social Development Commission with the City of Charlottesville at that time. [ES comment: I see that UVA Library's "Nancy K. O'Brien Papers" have some documents from work of the 'Social Development Commission.[6] I served on the Commission with David Toscano, who later become City Mayor, Delegate, and a House of Delegates leader. My recollection is that I succeeded Davis as chair of the Social Development Commission. I introduced the first "official" discussion of AIDS with city agencies. We also, at that time, handled issues of City's divestment from South Africa Apartheid related businesses; and other issues of social justice – BEFORE the term "social justice" was widely used.] I wanted to make the--that might have been one of the--the first times that the city officially talked about AIDS. As a matter of policy and

[6] Nancy K. O'Brien Papers, 1976-2004, Accession #14815, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, VA. [ES reference]

funding.

So... we made it a part of our discussion with agencies, social service agencies or social safety net agencies that came to the city for money, which was part of the work of the commission, to review those applications. And then recommend to the [City] Council. So we made that a part of the discussion. A lot of agencies were--not scratching their heads but they didn't quite know how to respond to questions, but they did, so they made them [the Commission] respond publicly to a matter that they hadn't responded publicly to before. And there was some--we got around to get some city funding. Then from there, when the first agency formed--AIDS Support Group would have been the first name. It would have had various other names in its history. Then I was hired as an educator and at one time, I think we used to say there were three phones, three tables, and three chairs in the Prism Coffeehouse and that was the AIDS Support Group. And--and the volunteers. So you can't do anything without--without loads of volunteers who cannot be praised highly enough.

CP: So what at that time--the work was mostly caring for people with AIDS or HIV?

ES: Yes, and so my hire was to--because there was now money coming from state government through federal grants--was to open out into more explicitly public health awareness, public health education programs. So that was my task.

CP: So who--so what did those programs look like? Those public health education programs?

ES: Well, I early on figured that as we all know now and was apparent to anyone then, but with hindsight you can see okay, that made sense--or not made sense; maybe it

didn't, I don't know. But I thought that approaching a stigma around the disease and the people who were most commonly acquiring the illness or publicly known to be affected, the sexual and gender minority communities, and the crossover with people of color. And the crossover with poorer people but working-class people. And the crossover with substance-abusing people. All those stigmas together seemed to be the place where we really had to work a lot. So, I think I spent much of the time doing public awareness that we would now call "destigmatizing illness," making it a public health concern that all the public should be concerned about. So, when I was in the midst of it, I don't think I had theorized all of that. But I think that's what I was doing, most of the time.

[ES comment: I forget to mention the time I received hate mail from a local KKK/white supremacist group after a piece was published in Charlottesville *Daily Progress* newspaper, an editorial, regarding lack of prevention and law enforcement protections from hate crimes, for LGBTQ families and communities, and for other targeted families and communities. Improving Virginia legislative treatment of hate violence – for any group threatened and harmed by hate violence - was one of the early statewide campaigns for LGBTQ families and communities that I was involved with through Virginians for Justice (VJ), an organization that preceded Equality Virginia.

Some VJ meetings, usually in Richmond, would be a handful of people. I recall that I was typically the only person from the Charlottesville. The regulars at meetings were from Richmond and from Tidewater communities. One of my commitments was sending "Letters to Editor" and proposing editorials to various Virginia newspapers, especially in more rural areas where the issues were less frequently heard.[7] A KKK/white

[7] Edward L. Strickler, Jr, "Gays Unprotected," *Roanoke Times* (Roanoke, VA), March 9, 1994. https://scholar.lib.vt.edu/va-news/roa-times/issues/1994/rt0394/940309/03100025.htm [ES reference]

supremacist leader with a base in Greene County read my editorial in the *Daily Progress*. They were able to find out how to find me (remember this was before the Internet) leaving literature for me where I lived highlighting the anti-gay sections, within the racist, anti-Semitic, and other sections. A leader of the Greene County group was eventually arrested on charges of illicit pornography.[8]

This historical note – about myself, our local community, and the Commonwealth – should help others understand the historical context from which later events, including the Unite the Right rallies, occurred. White supremacist ideas and activities were not distant, or remote; my experience – being directly threatened by a local KKK/White Supremacist organization – decades before "Unite the Right" – shows that. I worked with Virginians for Justice from their early days in the late 1980s. In those early days of LGBTQ public policy work in Virginia raising awareness about hate violence was a cornerstone of our advocacy with the General Assembly because it was both a critical issue and one we thought would be better or more easily understood, and supported, by legislators, and their constituent communities.

Issues of preventing and protecting from hate violence was – and is – a prime example of intersectional public policy advocacy because sexual and gender minorities who were minoritized also in other ways (race, culture, national origin, dis/ability and health - including HIV, of course – etc.) were disproportionately victims of hate violence, and other violence. LGBTQ historical accounts of the UVA and local community has to consider violence. I hope other people discuss violence they experienced or are aware of.

And I hope others mention the Evan Kittredge case and how it impacted them; the

[8] "Kevin Alfred Strom," Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, last modified December 8, 2022. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kevin_Alfred_Strom [ES reference]

local LGBTQ community understood that the violence perpetrated on Mr. Kittredge included anti-LGBTQ hatred; the assault and abduction began at a well-known "cruising" area in downtown Charlottesville.[9] Mr. Kittredge is now deceased. The terror he endured occupied my mind and focused my attention, bolstering decades-long commitment to "anti-violence": joining efforts to include LGBTQ in other Virginia anti-violence advocacy, joining as a founding board member with Virginia Anti Violence Project (VAVP), serving on the Virginia Human Rights Council – appointed by then Governor Kaine, supporting many community forums and dialogues on issues involving violence – including ensuring responsive and responsible law enforcement by enrolling with the Albemarle County Citizens Police Academy, and later the Farmville Citizens Police Academy, etc.[10]]

And then there was direct community education. What do we do here in our church? If we have somebody coming with AIDS? What do we do in the school? When a student presents? What do we do in this nursing home when somebody gets transferred here for rehab? So there was the destigmatizing community awareness part, then there was direct "What do we do in this case?" But I'm not a clinician so I wasn't doing clinical education. Just referring to the clinical materials. But all the while through the sort of direct education with different agencies or services, there was always the destigmatizing component. Some people--I think once upon a time they would call that like "humanizing," "putting a human face on AIDS," and I never thought of it quite like that.

CP: How did you think of it?

---

[9] "3 Charged with Beating, Torturing Man," *Roanoke Times* (Roanoke, VA), November 6, 1996. https://scholar.lib.vt.edu/VA-news/ROA-Times/issues/1996/rt9611/961106/11060074.htm [ES reference]
[10] "Edward Strickler," Cvillepedia, Albemarle Charlottesville Historical Society, last modified March 2, 2019. https://www.cvillepedia.org/edward_strickler [ES reference]

ES: But that--that's a way to think about it as a theoretical framework. I really think I was always destigmatizing.

CP: Okay. And then so do you remember how--about how long you--like what's sort of the timeframe for that kind of work that you're doing with ASG was?

ES: I don't remember--I don't actually remember the [laughs]--right. So I'm sure I can go back and look on a CV or something, but that was enough years to know that this is really exhausting and there was a lot of struggles in the organization and it was a good time to go. Now, one thing that was important to note coming out of that--out of that work with a local organization, I got appointed--back then, we were appointed by the...Commonwealth of Virginia Commissioner of Health. We were members of an advisory panel to the Department of Health, and back--originally, we were appointed by the Commissioner. So when was that? Was that the governorship of--probably George Allen.

[ES comment: Yes, that would be in 1994, the beginning of the Governor Allen Administration, and I was appointed to the inaugural advisory panel to the Virginia Department of Health in that year.[11] I recall that it was quite a controversial time. The Commissioner of Health made the appointments directly and included - it seemed to me – appointees to be a sort of watchdog for how far our discussions would go, and what sort of recommendations we would make. Our meetings in those first years were very much groundbreaking – breaking into new topics that appointees of the Commonwealth hadn't discussed so openly or specifically before.

And the members with HIV/AIDS were truly heroic in their commitment. One, I

[11] "Get Involved," Disease Prevention, Virginia Department of Health, accessed March 27, 2023. https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/disease-prevention/get-involved/ [ES reference]

recall, an often-ill young lady, was from a far-away county in Southwest Virginia, so, to attend meetings in Richmond (again, remember, no Internet, then and still many rural areas don't have Internet today) she had a long drive through those mountains and valleys, to get to an airport –not in Virginia – to eventually get to Richmond. That was heroic determination to be able to represent the needs of rural southwest Virginians living with HIV/AIDS. There were so many so dedicated in those early struggles with HIV policy and care planning. That is a different oral history that I hope UVA and others will collect.]

So that was a conservative Republican administration that probably didn't really have--want to say much about queer stuff or AIDS--or even AIDS stuff. But they had--public health had to talk about AIDS stuff. Eventually, that was just applying to be appointed--members would apply to be appointed and the Department of Health would do it. It wasn't directly the Commissioner, which was kind of like a political appointment. So I was--I served on that advisory panel for nearly twenty years. So long after I was no longer working directly with HIV or AIDS at all.

CP: Got it. Okay.

ES: Which--which was--spanned the time between [laughs] "We really don't know what we're doing and we don't really know what's going on"; the epidemiology was not very good. Community programs were just starting. All the way up through "We have really good treatments now." There was a period of bad treatments. Boy, I certainly remember working with people in Charlottesville who were the first ones on AZT. That was just painful to see. And--hopeful and painful [laughs] at the same time. All the way up to "We have really good treatments" and then up to "we have PrEP now" so you can

be quote-unquote "normal."

CP: Yeah. So when--in doing that work, were you mostly seeing people from sort of the Charlottesville-Albemarle sort of Central Virginia area, or were you seeing people coming from pretty far removed from Charlottesville?

ES: Oh. So I won't necessarily--I won't talk about the clinical care because I was doing education.

CP: Right.

ES: So, but yes. People would come from many miles because there was nothing in their area. I know there were patients--I'll say "patients," but we would say "consumers" or "clients" --from down this way, where we're currently sitting [in southern/Southside Virginia]; from the Shenandoah Valley; but eventually the AIDS Support Group--I certainly remember doing workshops or trainings in the Valley, down in this Southside, other parts of Virginia. But eventually there were people hired to do case management in the Valley or case management in other adjacent areas. So the--the patient or client or consumer load was from a large region. And over time, eventually the Virginia Department of Health started making awards to different--these different communities on their own because they had many--enough cases that they should have their own agency. And of course, eventually they got their own boards to write their own grants.

[ES comment: Some citations from our VDH HIV Community Planning Committee-supported work.[12] Most early research was with gay and bisexual men to

[12] J. David Kennamer et al., "Differences in Disclosure of Sexuality Among African American and White Gay/Bisexual Men: Implications for HIV/AIDS Prevention," *Aids Education and Prevention* 12, No. 6 (2000): 519-531; Jessica Xavier et al., "Transgender Health Care Access in Virginia: A Qualitative Study*," International Journal of Transgenderism* 14, No. 1 (January 2013): 3–17.

gauge levels of awareness. I did on the street interviews in Washington, DC, at clubs in Virginia, and collected other data other ways. We used telephone surveys (before there were Internet surveys). We did early research comparing Black, Hispanic, and White gay and bisexual men's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors (KAB studies). We did early research with faith communities, etc. VDH would have a catalog, or copies of the complete studies. We also produced brief "Fact Sheets" for easier use in the community, at local health departments, etc.]

CP: Got it.

ES: So that's a long, complicated history. It would take a long time, and I won't remember the details, so I should--I would not be the most accurate reporter.

CP: Fair enough. I mean--I'm more interested in the--I don't know, what your experiences were, what you remember, so I'm not worried about it.

ES: Well, I--there are little things I wouldn't--I almost brought this one photograph with me. There was--I won't say the names of patients, but--

CP: Yeah.

ES: They're long dead [laughs] but this one patient in particular was one of the first people on AZT and it was just very devastating to him. But he was able to do a

---

doi:10.1080/15532739.2013.689513; Ryan J. Testa et al, "Effects of Violence on Transgender People," *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice* 43, no. 5 (2012): 452-459, https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/a0029604; Judith Bradford et al, "Experiences of Transgender-Related Discrimination and Implications for Health: Results From the Virginia Transgender Health Initiative Study," *American Journal of Public Health* 103, no. 10 (October 2013): 1820-1829, https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2012.300796; Jessica Xavier et al, "Transgender Health Care Access in Virginia: A Qualitative Study," *International Journal of Transgenderism* 14, no. 1 (2013): 3-17, https://doi.org/10.1080/15532739.2013.689513. Our Virginia qualitative and quantitative work with transgender health was cited and discussed throughout an early publication by the National Academies Institute of Medicine about LGBT health: Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Health Issues and Research Gaps and Opportunities, *The Health of Transgender People: Building a Foundation for Better Understanding* (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2011. [ES references]

number of things that were--showed a lot of resilience and strength. One of them was he was able to--he had a good job, but he could no longer work. But he was able to cash in or whatever the phrase is his life insurance from his retirement. And buy a condo. That was his--his big dream. He wanted to have his own home. So he could do it the way he wanted to do it. And eventually, of course, you know die where he--in the place that was his place. But he also liked taking photographs. So my husband I--we weren't husbands at that time, of course. That was not permitted. But we would just take little friendly drives with him. And once we took a friendly drive to Yogaville, and he took a really beautiful picture of the lotus shrine there that I still have on the wall. And on the back of the photograph, I have his...funeral program and a note from his mother. So that--that's where I can see it every day.

CP: Yeah. Yeah. That's really beautiful. Thank you for sharing that.

ES: Oh, you're welcome.

CP: So when I first asked the question, you mentioned this Dignity/Integrity banner--

ES: Oh, yes. Uh-huh.

CP: That you brought. So were--were those sort of groups related? Were they doing AIDS work as well, or was it just other things you were involved in?

ES: It's clearly related. So I'll tell you that story because I brought that. Early on, before AZT, there was not much anyone can do. I re--definitely remember sitting in the office where people would--clients, patients, consumers--would come and they were going to talk about sort of self-help books. Because there was a flurry of different--I won't say authors or names but you can find them--before there were any treatments,

there were a variety of self-help books, self-care books. And so there was a good read and discussion for support groups. And among those issues were the early faith-based approaches to HIV and AIDS.

[ES comment: Louise Hay was a prominent writer with books, lectures, retreats, etc. on self-care early in AIDS her books were abundant in the ASG lending library. Interesting story that I didn't tell: At one early Virginia Film Festival they screened *Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt* – about the AIDS Quilt. It happened that the Festival had a community 'launch' event on the Downtown Mall, and our ASG office had moved to a second floor above the Mall. I made a big banner and unfurled it from the second-floor window during the Festival launch. The film-makers – who received the Academy Award for the film in 1990 – saw the banner and found their way up to our offices to greet staff and clients in the office at that time!

I can tell you many more stories about our early awareness and outreach in those very early years if interested. Including hosting screenings and brief outreach at dance parties using some of the early explicitly erotic media about safe/r sex before grants and awards prohibited them. Those were Beta cassettes – if anyone still remembers those – and I may still have some of them; as well as flyers announcing, and materials from our early outreach. I think we were able to do a number of 'firsts' with our outreach, including, I recall getting funding, planning, and putting on a first conference on LGBT youth, at UVA's Wilson Hall auditorium. I recall that several local teachers/educators were able to attend that event as a way to "come out."]

And the Roman Catholic community, I think, in my recollection were...early in that. Which is a contradiction to a--a stigmatizing of Roman Catholics as--as wicked,

gay-hating people [laughs]. So, that was not my experience at that time. Or currently. But the Roman Catholics were earlier on, writing and acting--acting out of compassion. And I'm not sure exactly when but the Roman Catholic Diocese of Richmond began offering retreats for people with HIV and AIDS. So I was aware of that. And...I was Episcopalian--in Episcopalian community.

So conversations I had with...two other people in particular. One is deceased, James Castillo. The other is living, [name removed], and so I actually emailed him this morning because I think I--if I am still in touch with him, he might be interested in doing part of an oral history too. James and/or [name removed] made this [banner]. I probably helped but I don't remember. As I said earlier, I kind of like I'm in this eternal now and I don't remember. But if--if [name removed] remembers the making of it, I asked him to cons--if he could do an interview, maybe, or if he could write it out so I could have a little history about it.

So this big banner, “Dignity Integrity Charlottesville,” the three of us--maybe there were others, but I think it was just the three of us said, “Let's try this.” So these--Dignity was the name of the Roman Catholic-affiliated group of LGBTQ folks to meet in fellowship and worship as Roman Catholics. And Integrity was the one for Episcopal LGBTQ folks. And I was aware that some places they joined together, so our conversation--one or both of Jim and [name removed] were Roman Catholic.

So we said, “Oh, let's try it.” So, we have--we have a banner! And we were able for--maybe two or three years, I can't remember exactly how long we were able to do this, just the three of us putting it together. We found us a place. It was Trinity Episcopal Church that would welcome us. I think I did ask one or two of the other Episcopal

churches but the--the priests in charge at that time weren't sure that they could do it. But Trinity Episcopal Church was--which, in Charlottesville, was historically a Black-identified Episcopal church...welcomed us. So we had liturgy there. And we would alternate between an Episcopal priest and a Catholic priest. And I do know that that was a--considered rather adventuresome for a Catholic priest to do that in the--in the--in that diocese. And the--we would alternate different months. And I think the Catholic priest--one of the Catholic priests who regularly came actually had a--a country house. I won't say any names but I don't remember the names [laughs]. And there was another priest who would come.

The Episcopal priest was usually a lovely woman who was also at one time a sociology professor at UVA, Jeanne Biggar--B-I-G-G-A-R.[13] [ES comment: Jeanne and often another priest, Marian Windel, would celebrate the Eucharist together]. And they were delightful, especially, to work with because there were two women. And one or both of them would always incorporate an anointing for healing in the service. So we always thought about the Dignity/Integrity liturgies as something we could do for people that medical science couldn't do. Does that answer that question a little bit?

CP: It did. Yeah. How many--do you have a sense of like how many people would usually come to these services?

ES: Oh, it would almost always be under ten.

CP: Okay. Yeah. Makes sense. And how--and you said that--

ES: And we would have a little supper afterward.

---

[13] "Virginia Obituary and Death Notice Archive - Page 267 – Jeanne C. Biggar," Virginia Obituary and Death Notice Archive, genlookups.com, https://www.genlookups.com/va/webbbs_config.pl/noframes/read/267 [ES reference]

CP: Okay. Yeah. And you said they lasted for two or three years?

ES: I'm pretty sure that's the case. If I did enough research I could find out, because--because of the way I sort of perceive how to break through to different power structures, I was always doing this. I always do that. Because we had a--a--chapter, and we actually applied to be recognized by national Integrity. I don't know if we did that for national Dignity. I would, on my own, and because I would often always do these things, breaking through these little power structures on my own, I went to the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia annual meetings representing the Dignity/Integrity chapter with my--with this banner. So there was opening up a conversation.

That led eventually to the diocesan bishop of the Diocese of Virginia inviting me to be the chair of a commission, a diocesan commission on AIDS. And through that commission coming together with many lovely volunteers from around basically northern Virginia--Virginia north of the James River but including the northern Shenandoah Valley. That was the--is the Diocese of Virginia. We decided to complement the Roman Catholic diocese's retreat for people with AIDS to hold a retreat for caregivers.

[ES comment: I didn't mention that following this service with the Diocese, Bishop Lee invited me to join others – bishops, priests, lay persons – to be a 'Dialogue on Sexuality' that lasted for years in the Diocese, helping to lead theological and pastoral formation about the roles of gay and lesbian, and eventual transgender, persons in the Diocese. Here is a record of one of our early, founding activities: 'Burning Issues' conference, 1998.[14] When Diocesan Bishop Peter James Lee voted to confirm the

[14] Sarah Bartenstein, "Burning Issues Conference Brings Diverse Voices to Sexuality Debate," *Episcopal News Service,* January 15, 1998. Https://Episcopalarchives.Org/Cgi-Bin/Ens/Enspress_Release.Pl?Pr_Number=98-2069 [ES reference]

consecration of 'the first' openly gay bishop in The Episcopal Church - Gene Robinson - the Diocesan Dialogue on Sexuality took a new turn as several prominent, and smaller, congregations discussed that they might - and then would - withdraw from the Diocese and The Episcopal Church. The New York Times did a long piece, in 2004, about the playing out of these issues in the Diocese.[15] Many of the persons quoted in the piece were fellow members in our Sexuality Dialogue. The resulting lawsuits, and other events, took many years to work through and that is a big story all its own. But our Dialogue continued until it was clear that actions in court would be the venue for resolution.]

So maybe it was five years? Maybe it was six years? I forgot. We were able to sustain that. Because we're doing it with volunteers and volunteers come and go. But we were able to for some years have a retreat for caregivers, which I thought was really valuable and that was a big attendance, you know, forty or fifty maybe sometimes.

CP: Yeah. And that was for care--so caregivers from across the state could come to that?

ES: Anybody. Yep. Yep.

CP: Yeah. So were there other Dignity and/or Integrity chapters in Virginia that you all would link up with?

ES: There--well, I do remember my first experience of an Integrity--well, early experience of an Integrity chapter in Virginia was just going down to Richmond when they would have meetings.

[ES note: this would have been in years after John Shelby Spong was priest at St

[15] Michael Massing, "Bishop Lee's Choice," *New York Times* (New York City, NY), January 4, 2004, https://www.nytimes.com/2004/01/04/magazine/bishop-lee-s-choice.html. [ES reference]

Paul's, Richmond, on Capitol Square.[16] Spong was one of the 'lightening rods' of theological and pastoral discussions about welcoming gay and lesbian persons into the Episcopal Church: "Spong was one of the first American bishops to ordain a woman into the clergy, in 1977, and he was the first to ordain an openly gay man, Robert Williams, in 1989. Later the church followed his lead. An Episcopal court ruled that homosexuality was not counter to its principles in 1996, and the church recognized same-sex marriages in 2015."[17]]

So I went a couple of times and met some people. So this is--there's a connection to Swarthmore time too. I'm sorry--tell me if I'm talking too long.

CP: No, this is great. We have--

ES: Old people have a lot of stories. And southerners in particular have lots of long-winded stories but we usually have a point.

CP: No, that's why we're doing this so--

ES: Yeah, that's right, right.

CP: Yeah.

ES: So... I think it was two years--it might have been--it was '82, which was a couple years after graduating from Swarthmore, I had a--I got a fellowship. I applied for a fellowship--once again, it would be--call it a "social justice fellowship," the current language. It was the Lisle--L-I-S-L-E--Fellowship, I think it was started by--within a kind of Methodist church experience. But in any case, they do a lot of international--not explicitly interfaith, but intercultural work over the many, many years--they still exist. So

[16] "More History," St. Paul's Episcopal Church, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, accessed February 6, 2023. https://www.stpaulsrva.org/alittlemorehistory [ES reference]
[17] "John Shelby Spong," Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, last modified January 19, 2023. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/john_shelby_spong [ES reference]

I got a fellowship--I was awarded a fellowship and it was in West Philadelphia. And I had a couple assignments.

One of them was monitoring eviction courts to produce some data to help them understand some social justice issues around evictions. And another project that I took on--that was the year when the Philadelphia City Council was debating a non-discrimination ordinance, or including gay, lesbian, or whatever terms at that time, in their non-discrimination ordinance. It had been tried before and it failed. But that year, it passed [laughs]. [ES Comment: the 1982 City ordinance was among the earliest of its kind in the United States.[18] So, without setting out to do so, I returned to my alma mater at just the right time to participate in that small way in Philadelphia's long and illustrious queer history. It is a very meaningful place to visit to learn queer history as part of American history.] So I remember not pretending I was a resident of Philadelphia, because I was there for--as a fellow--in a Fellowship, so I would go to the meetings, the City Council meetings, and go to my City Councilor and so I felt, "Okay, I'm contributing to this."

But the back--a lot of the backbone of that was there was a regular Integrity chapter in Philadelphia, of course, big city. So I regularly went to those meetings and met a lot of interesting people. Got invited to a lesbian wedding officiated by an Episcopal priest. So, Philadelphia was a place where there were a lot of what they call "irregular rites." So I think in other words, they weren't officially approved by the Church, but priests were still doing--doing things, so. That was lovely and very meaningful to me. I

[18] Mary Anna Rodabaugh, "The History of Philadelphia's Gay Rights Movement," Philadelphia Corporation for Aging, June 16, 2021, accessed March 28, 2023. https://www.pcacares.org/news/the-history-of-philadelphias-gay-rights-movement/ [ES reference]

remember that.

But also to get back to the AIDS issue, the first time I remember knowing anything about a strange illness would have been that year, so that would have been 1982. I'm pretty sure that was the year. And it was in the gay village in Philadelphia, which they had a gay village then; they still have a gay--they call it the Gayborhood, I think. A guy on a street corner with a flyer--I'm sure he was a--somebody who knew or worked with Larry Kramer, because there would have been very few of them, even in New York City, but he was there with a flyer and the word "AIDS" didn't exist, but he was just getting--trying to get people interested in this strange disease that's killing gay people. I specifically remember that, and I wish I had that flyer. [ES comment: Larry Kramer was among the founders of the NYC-based Gay Men's Health Crisis, in 1982, just a year after the first official US government alerts about a "rare pneumonia" seen in some gay men; long before the AIDS or HIV nomenclature, GMHC used "gay cancer," so something similar would have been what the flyer talked about.[19]]

CP: Yeah.

ES: I didn't save that. But that was early--that was--I think '82, something like that.

CP: Yeah. That sounds--that sounds about right. It would have made sense; New York to--or coming from New York to Philadelphia; that kind of information would have spread. Yeah, so I mean I think sort of going on from talking about Dignity and Integrity. You were involved with the Contemplative Science Center at UVA? Or what--yeah.

ES: Oh, so--right. So some of my work at Swarthmore in Thailand with Buddhist

[19] "History," Gay Men's Health Crisis, accessed March 28, 2023. https://www.gmhc.org/history/ [ES reference]

monks and theravada traditions, including samadhi mindfulness. [ES comment: Buddhadasa was an important reforming/modernizing Buddhist monk in Thailand, whose work my Swarthmore faculty, Donald Swearer, was studying. It was an honor to be able to meet him.[20]] And then at--at UVA, as you know, has a strong--had, and still has a strong religious studies department, and Buddhism's an important part of that. So...yoga practice, contemplative practice is always very meaningful to me. The--a way to bring in a lot of intellectual material and spiritual material and practical experience. So when the Contemplative Studies Center started up, I said, "Oh, okay! Put me on the profile if--if--if you want to." But so I don't know if it's still there; it's probably not. But--but I had no academic appointment.

But it--once again, I always try to find a place where I can enter a structure and bring some new information or ideas or opportunities, so that was...an unofficial, unappointed--no appointments to the science center, but because UVA, coming out of... there were two killings. I don't want to mis-name the victims or survivors, so. There were two close--to close--near historic terms killings and a suicide. [ES comment: Kevin Morrisey was the suicide, so noted in a journalistic history of the downtown Charlottesville Coal Tower and discussed widely in academic circles including the Chronicle of Higher Education and in investigative journalism, including Slate.[21]] There were dialogues that were opened up to have the community process a lot of the grief and

---

[20] "Buddhadasa," Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, last modified March 25, 2023. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhadasa [ES reference]

[21] Tobias Beard, "A Biography of Charlottesville's Coal Tower," *C-Ville* (Charlottesville, VA), August 2, 2012, https://www.c-ville.com/the-charlottesville-coal-tower; Robin Wilson, "What Killed Kevin Morrissey?" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, August 12, 2010, https://www.chronicle.com/article/what-killed-kevin-morrissey/; Emily Bazelon, "Tragedy at the Virginia Review," *Slate*, September 27, 2010, https://slate.com/human-interest/2010/09/tragedy-at-the-virginia-quarterly-review.html. [ES references]

trauma and issues. This would have been early in the term of--of President Sullivan.

[ES comment: "Sullivan arrived at UVA three months after 22-year-old student athlete Yeardley Love was killed by George Huguely, her ex-boyfriend and a star on the UVA lacrosse team. So from day one, Sullivan was forced to react to events. She staged a 'day of dialogue' that brought more than 1,500 students together to discuss how to prevent violence. She also implemented voluntary sessions on 'bystander intervention training.'"[22] The killing of a UVA student attracted very much attention and caused much trauma across the UVA and local and broader communities. There was also a suicide of a UVA employee that appeared to be, and some claimed, reflected a culture of disrespect or harassment in some UVA workplaces. The first UVA-community wide process led into a sustained program of "Dialogue Across Grounds" - "Dialogue Across Grounds" might sound familiar, and that's for good reason. The original version of "Dialogue Across Grounds" brought together students, faculty, and staff for facilitated conversation about timely topics. The earlier program ran from 2010 to 2017 – that I see President Ryan has revived.[23]]

CP: Mmmm.

ES: So there were enough interests in dialogue that some different groups said, "Okay, we're going to continue." I think the students have had a dialogue process for many years [ES comment: called Sustained Dialogue], and it may have been before that or after, I don't know. But there were enough of us UVA staff and faculty, mainly staff,

---

[22] Patricia Sellers, "The Unluckiest President in America," *Fortune*, March 25, 2015. https://fortune.com/2015/03/25/uva-president-teresa-sullivan/ [ES reference]

[23] McGregor McCance, "'Dialogue Across Grounds' Offers Students a Forum for Exploring Different Perspectives," UVA Today, University of Virginia, October 7, 2021. https://news.virginia.edu/content/dialogue-across-grounds-offers-students-forum-exploring-different-perspectives [ES reference]

as I recall, because faculty are busy and they weren't so much involved. Staff said, "Okay, we're going to keep doing dialogues." So that was sustained for quite a few years. You can talk to other people, or I can tell you--give you people that know the history of that. But these dialogues would sometimes have a theme, or not have a theme; a theme about power or privilege or gender. So that wasn't sponsored or a part of Contemplative Studies Center, but there was always that kind of informal interface, so there was kind of mutual sharing: "This is going to happen. You might have students or others who are interested." Did that answer your question a little bit?

CP: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

ES: So--right, you know in an academic environment it's important to have your designations and appointments.

CP: Yeah. Right.

ES: Know what all those lines of authority are. So I was never a faculty appointment.

CP: Got it.

ES: I was staff and didn't have funds or authority.

CP: So did you--

ES: But part of these collaborative groups.

CP: Right. Okay. So, you worked at UVA for a--a long time. You were--I think I have your title here. You worked at the Law School?

ES: Law, Psychiatry, and Public [Policy]...so once again I sort of lived through the different iterations of that, because I think once up on a time, ILPPP [Institute of Law, Psychiatry, & Public Policy] was primarily organizationally within the Law School.

CP: Got it.

ES: And then became primarily organizationally related to the Medical School. So there were a lot of different changes over the years. As always happens with academic departments, right?

CP: Yeah. Oof. So were you involved in any of the like staff or faculty groups like UVA Pride or the LGBT Committee or anything like that?

ES: Sure. So, and that sort of continues as I mentioned earlier, working pleasantly with and--and delightfully with a lot of lesbians. My experience was that often with UVA Pride, and I guess that was always the name. Lesbian community was more than equally in leadership. Equally or more than equally, whatever that means, in leadership. Prominently in leadership. I'm using praise--praising terms. So there were--hopefully, you've had a chance or will have a chance to talk with a couple people. I should name Ellen Bass and Claire Kaplan.

CP: So I talked to Claire. What was the other--Ellen?

ES: Ellen Bass. [ES comment: Ellen is a distinguished professor, researcher, and writer, in human factors engineering now at Drexel University. Ellen, and other UVA researchers published a piece presenting, through scientifically derived evidence, showing that nondiscrimination policies that include LGBT are associated with higher ranked universities.[24] This was a very innovative and analytical approach. Perfectly within the wheel house of human factors engineering; although, public policy, and

[24] Leigh A. Baumgart et al, "An Analysis of University Rank and the Inclusion of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Nondiscrimination Policy Statements," *2006 IEEE Systems and Information Engineering Design Symposium*, Charlottesville, VA (2006), p. 279-283, doi: 10.1109/SIEDS.2006.278690. [ES reference]

university policy, won't always follow the evidence of engineering. I see that Ellen has more recently published a book chapter about experiences at UVA.[25]]

CP: All right. That's a new name for me.

ES: Who--faculty in engineering.

CP: Okay.

ES: Which was an important thing for the School of Engineering to have a woman and a lesbian in engineering. I think she's now teaching in Philadelphia. Any case--and other people, and I shouldn't have named names because I'm going to forget people. I just--I should--names. I apologize to people; I just don't remember everyone's names! Those two in particular were often--I was in communication, "What do you think about this, Claire? What do you think about this, Ellen? Can you do this with--Ellen, you're faculty, can you push this or what do you think will work?"

So there was over a lot of years, working with a lot of different people and also with a lot of Serpentine Society people. Because we would often say, "What do you think will work?" I have kind of a staff perspective; Ellen, you have a faculty perspective; there are some other people that have a faculty perspective. We need the alumni to help too. So there was--there were often--by then, we weren't doing report cards with handwritten--writing on paper; we had email [laughs] so it was easier to do. So the--lots of collaboration about what's going to work; what should we try; who do we know. With--I remember so many conversations with Claire, Ellen, and alumni. And other people; wonderful, excellent people whose names I do not remember! I'm sorry.

---

[25] Ellen J. Bass, "A Human Factors Engineer's Journey into Enhancing LGBT Status in Academia," in *Advancing Diversity, Inclusion and Social Justice through Human Systems Engineering*, ed. Rod D. Roscoe, Erin K. Chiou, and Abigail R. Wooldridge (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2019). [ES reference]

CP: So what kinds of things were you all working on in those groups? You know, you're talking to them trying to figure out how to get things done. Like what kinds of issues were really important to you all?

ES: You're often presented with issues from the time. So it's im--this will be a long history, and I think somewhere in my boxes of papers I have a lot of this, so hopefully I can go through that and present it to the [UVA] Library.

CP: Yeah.

ES: Because I kept a lot of--I printed off a lot of emails.

CP: Great.

ES: And kept a lot of documents. So I have quite a few boxes of things. We were presented with issues by then-Attorney General Cuccinelli... Does that name ring a bell?

CP: Mm-hmm.

ES: Yes? Okay. So we were presented with issues that we had to respond to. So--you'll get more detail from other people about that. So that was a big part of the conversation. Another thing I remember was once there became to be something called the Diversity Council, I don't know if it still exists. I saw that, “Okay. Edward's taking this pattern of what kind of power can we get a little wedge in here and see what we can do.” So that was one of my projects. I always had two or three projects going on. Besides work and family and--and...I said, “Okay, how can--what the Diversity Council can do?”

So I know I spent a lot of time with all these wonderful people drafting a document to present to the Diversity Council. I think that was in 2011. Basically saying something, “The University needs to have some formal way for these issues to come--to come forward.” I remember meeting--meetings with Ellen and Claire and other people

and me with different people that were heads of diversity, equity, inclusiveness, whatever their title was at that particular time, and we finally got down to Dr. Marcus Martin, a most wonderful person, and physician and leader. And I was pretty sure that Dr. Martin and others with Diversity Council would respond well. So I spent a lot of time. I know--it felt like a lifetime--getting some documentation. Data points. To present. I think it was in 2011.

[ES comment: Yes, 2011. I did the research, presented data, discussed with the Diversity Council, and the LGBT Committee was almost immediately established: "The LGBT Committee, a subcommittee of the University of Virginia Diversity Council, was established in 2011 by Vice President and Chief Officer for Diversity & Equity Marcus Martin."[26] This was after, already, years of meeting with a succession of UVA VPs, and other Administration. The meetings often included some combination of Ellen Bass, Claire Kaplan, myself, and some others. The speed of action from presenting at Diversity Council to establishment of the Committee was excellent. But remember, that was after many years and many meetings and many efforts. Dr Marcus Martin was among the most encouraging VPs. He and I were 'awarded' by Serpentine Society in the same year, 2012.[27]]

And I was surprised and not surprised, but in that very meeting I think they had already decided what they were going to do, so I said, "Well, we need to have an advisory committee." So then the LGBT Advisory Committee, or whatever it calls itself

---

[26] "LGBT Committee," Division for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, University of Virginia, accessed February 7, 2023. https://dei.virginia.edu/lgbt-committee [ES reference]

[27] "Serpentine Society Outstanding Service Award," QVA, accessed February 7, 2023. https://aig.alumni.virginia.edu/qva/awards-2/serpentine-society-outstanding-service-award/; "V. Shamim Sisson Ally of the Year Award," QVA, accessed February 7, 2023. https://aig.alumni.virginia.edu/qva/awards-2/v-shamim-sisson-ally-of-the-year-award/ [ES references]

now, was announced. And you could talk to--there's a history--there's--will be a documentary history of that.

CP: Yeah.

ES: Or you can talk to Gary Nimax.

CP: I'm talking to him next week [laughs].

ES: Okay [laughs].

CP: Yeah.

ES: So he's going to [laughs] know about it. So that would be that history. Yes. Right.

CP: Yeah.

ES: So you don't need that from me [both laugh].

CP: Well, I am curious, actually, either in your work as a staff person, you know working with UVA Pride or in your work with ASG, how that overlapped with like--or if it overlapped with UVA faculty and staff, or even students, who might have HIV or AIDS. Was that an issue that ever came up? Did you do work with the university on that?

ES: So... hmm. Students at one time had focused attention on HIV. I know because that would be topics of conversations in--of course, once I was that old and on staff and living in the country, I didn't go to Queer Student Union. I was not a queer student. And it was Queer Student Union. That was the title.

CP: Yeah.

ES: They would--that would be a focused topic. I don't know if they still talk about that. Maybe it's not necessary or appropriate. But there would be focused topics about that. I do know that there were--there was a lot of attention to making sure there

was good condom availability and access among students. So once upon a time that was a much bigger issue than it likely is now. Because other issues take that place. World AIDS Day was a--an important event. So before and while--before I was working with AIDS Support Group and after, during and after, for some period of time that was an important event, community event, to collaboratively organize around with students--including students.

What else I was going to say there? Oh, one idea I had in doing that--when I was doing that job is--and my husband--now husband, not husband back then--he had one of the most popular radio shows on [W]TJU. It was called The Zebra Club. So if--if you ever want to--he might be willing to talk about The Zebra Club, but it's not directly on this topic. But he would introduce on that show a lot of...international musics, especially African musics and then it got to be Asian musics and Latin musics, so--but focused particularly on African music. We--so I'll say something later, but on your point right here, I said, "Oh! Let me use your show to talk about AIDS." [Laughs] So I would have a segment on his show to broadcast some questions about AIDS or to clarify some issues or announce events. So that was an interface; I thought that was actually--that was a lot of fun, actually. [ES comment: this piece has a long section about The Zebra Club from an interview with Jim Schneider, my partner/now husband, since 1980s.[28]]

At--at one time, I think his airplay got so noticed--got noticed that there was a--a line of African bands coming through Charlottesville because there was enough airplay that whoever takes account of college radio would say, "Oh. There's a lot of--a lot of

[28] Julie Innes, "WTJU Alternative Radio in Charlottesville," American Studies at the University of Virginia, University of Virginia, last modified May 1, 2001. http://www.xroads.virginia.edu/~ug01/douglas/wtju_website/innes_1990.html [ES reference]

airplay of African bands." So he would know all of the names, but I think Kanda Bongo Man came. Who else came? [ES comment: among African super-stars who came to Charlottesville, in part because or Jim's Zebra Club Show: Baaba Maal – Senegalese performer early in his distinguished career; Thomas Mapfumo – "The Lion of Zimbabwe" who used music also to critique the Mugabe dictatorship; Malathini and the Mahotella Queens – the "Lion of Soweto" and the fantastic singers/dancers whose music was incorporated in Paul Simon's "Graceland;" the Bhundu Boys – Harare (Zimbabwe) beat/"jit"; Kanda Bongo Man -Congolese soukous; Diblo Dibala and Loketo – Congolese soukous with what they call "machine gun" – or impossibly fast – guitar playing; and Youssou N'Dour – a super star of African music, touring with the Super Etoile de Dakar, and recording with a large number and variety of American and European artists. In the years of the Zebra Club, UVA and Charlottesville was gifted with this unbelievable array of world-class African musicians! Hard to believe. What great times those shows were!] These were really great events, because they were really exciting music. We would go up to Washington, DC, and go to different African community shops in DC to find LPs, because this was before CDs [laughs].

And the--the bands would probably record in Paris, probably, but--probably. Maybe also in Africa on CD--on LPs. So I remember once we were so surprised, because I don't know all these people's names but he would know them all, and know their cultural production. I think it was Docteur Nico [ES comment: "Dr. Nico," from the Congo, a founding member of one of the great groups performing African Jazz, and world famous guitarist with African superstar Tabu Ley Rochereau.] was sitting in some little shop that was about the size of this room [laughs] where there were--one of the

African LP shops in the District, and he was shocked to see Dr. Nico there, who was very important musician. Any case, there was--there was and probably still is, I'm sure still is a large African...immigrant community in the District. Any case, that was The Zebra Club.

CP: Yeah. That's--

ES: He donated all those LPs to the radio station.

CP: Okay.

ES: So somewhere [laughs] they've got some very important historic LPs. Not--and I think they probably still use them.

CP: Yeah. Yeah. Did you all--was that something that you all would do pretty regularly? Like go up to DC? To--I don't know, whether just to I don't know, go to gay bars, or obviously the sort of larger community there.

ES: Well, I mean, we're really not drinkers. So bars were kind of interesting.

CP: Yeah, fair enough.

ES: It would be more interested to go just to hear the music and dance.

CP: Mm-hmm.

ES: He would not be so much interested in that [laughs]. So--but the music was always of interest so we would go up to hear you know, to hear bands. I re--I definitely--here's a--here's a little gay connection. I definitely remember we purposefully--I think we purposefully went up to DC to the last showing at a--at an important little alternative movie theater, because they picked as their last show *Pink Flamingos*. So we--we have--we were always following John Waters' movies. And--so do you--have you seen *Pink Flamingos*?

CP: I haven't.

ES: Uh-huh.

CP: I've heard of it, but I've--yeah.

ES: Okay, so--well, you know who John Waters is.

CP: Yes. Yeah.

ES: Okay, but his early productions were the scandalous *Female Trouble*. *Pink Flamingoes*. These very scandalous, scandalizing film production. Cultural production is the word we're supposed to--cultural production. But we went to that show [laughs]. The end of the movie *Pink Flamingoes* has Divine--do you know--

CP: Mm-hmm.

ES: Okay. The--the--the performer Divine actually eats dog shit. In real--real life on the film [laughs] it's very disgusting. But part of the story in that movie is who--is a competition for being the filthiest people alive, so. I think I've got that right.

CP: Yeah.

ES: Any case, we went to see that.

CP: All right.

ES: By the way, I have a baby doll autographed by Edith Massey, who was a performer in the early John Waters movies, because after she stopped doing movies, she had a little rock and roll band, and they came to Charlottesville. And when John Waters came to Charlottesville, I had him sign it too.[29] So I have a doll baby autographed by Edith Massey and John Waters, and when he's dead maybe it'll be worth something. [CP laughs] It certainly is a conversation piece.

---

[29] Jane Ford, "Cult Celebrity and Celebrated Filmmaker John Waters to Headline U.Va. Arts Assembly and Screen Films in the Virginia Film Festival Nov. 6," UVA Today, University of Virginia, September 22, 2009. https://news.virginia.edu/content/cult-celebrity-and-celebrated-filmmaker-john-waters-headline-uva-arts-assembly-and-screen [ES reference]

CP: Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely. I don't know how many of those are out there.

ES: That's a long-winded story, and I apologize.

CP: No, that's--that's great. When did you and your husband get like officially married?

ES: That was in 2017.

CP: Okay.

ES: Because in May of 2017, shortly after my sister's daughter and only child died suddenly and shockingly...I started having chest pains and--not that those are related, but maybe they are. I don't know. And I had a stress test scheduled for months after my first primary care visit about the chest pain. And I remember hurrying because I would--you can't park at UVA Grounds, right? So I would park at Barracks Road Shopping Center or something and like run/walk to appointments. So I kind of was running and walking to the stress test, and I--I knew that was bad when I was nauseous and had right-side pain. But hey, I was going to a cardiac stress test! And what--how perfect was that?

So I got there and they ended the test pretty quickly. They said, “This is not normal.” Actually, they didn't tell me much though they had me waiting for a long time, and then the--the cardiologist came in and said, “I think we can get you in today.” And I had no idea what they were talking about. And they told me that the various tests were very abnormal. They wanted to do a catheterization because--to see what was going on. And I said, “Well, not now. Let's do it on Friday.” Two days later. To give me some time. And that Thursday, we got married. [Laughs] So that--I'm not trying to be melodramatic, I'm just saying like, “Okay.” We--we had all our documents done. We didn't feel like we needed to hurry to get married.

CP: Right. That was going to be my question: were you like concerned that they weren't going to let James in to like the--into the room with you?

ES: I--oh no, they--it was UVA; they weren't going to be--

CP: Yeah.

ES: They weren't going to obstruct that. It's just that the--we could have been married earlier, officially, but we had all our documents and it wasn't the most important thing to do. But it was very important to me that if something were to happen the next day on Friday, with the catheterization, that we will have been married.

CP: Yeah. That makes sense.

ES: Does that--does that make sense?

CP: Yeah.

ES: Some kind of sense.

CP: Yeah.

ES: A kind of spiritual sense.

CP: Yeah.

ES: It wasn't--it was no--there was no financial or legal calculation in my mind.

CP: Right.

ES: It was just that that was a moral duty--

CP: Right.

ES: That that--we hadn't done that--this was really important morally and spiritually to me. So we got married the day before the day I had my catheterization [laughs] and that all worked fine. I have a stent.

CP: Great.

ES: There you go!

CP: Yeah. Were you all married in the Episcopal church then?

ES: No. That was--that was--I only had a day [laughs].

CP: Well, yeah, fair enough.

ES: So we went--it was the Clerk of the Court for the city.

CP: Got it.

ES: But--but she was also a friend to Jim, so she was--she provided a really pleasant, celebratory space.

CP: Got it. Got it, got it, got it. Let's see. I'm mean, we're sort of getting towards the end of my questions.

ES: Getting to the end.

CP: I'm curious--you know, you've been in this area for a long time, you know when you think about Charlottesville, one thing that comes up a lot is--is race.

ES: Mm-hmm.

CP: So I'm--I'm curious, in your experience, how Black and white--especially queer people in Charlottesville relate to each other. Did you see mixing?

ES: In--and hopefully you'll talk to Ms. Schatzman about the club.

CP: Mm-hmm.

ES: Clubs. And I don't know who you could talk to about Silver Fox, so there was a succession of--and Eastern Standard, so you'd talk to a succession of people that have businesses that were explicitly welcoming and had dance parties.

CP: Right. Yeah.

ES: So my experience--not that I went to dance parties all that much--and we

didn't really drink, so sitting around bars was not anything we wanted to do. That is where there would be more cultural mixing. At a--in a dance. So people will often talk about missing those cultural institutions.

And I would say, “There's plenty of places to drink, but there're not that many places to dance.” So--and I think dancing has always been a cultural, emotional, spiritual power for oppressed people. And I'm not speaking for people of color, but it's a part of that history too, with dance and music and performance. Including drag performance as a space for people of color or other differences to present themselves in the way they want to present themselves. In a powerful way. So spaces that were about the performance of not just the differences we have, but our--our--our cultural power were more fluid and open, in my experience or in my observation, to more diverse people. So sitting around the bar drinking--maybe--not that I did it that much, but maybe that was not the way that different people would mix as much as dancing. Does that make a little sense?

CP: Yeah, it does make sense. I'm curious, actually, about the GSU meetings that you would go to. Was--were there sort of a diverse mix of people there?

ES: Well, there were always people of different gender appearances--

CP: Right.

ES: To me that I would recall. Were--was I looking to see if there were people of different physical color and hair? I don't recall.

CP: Fair enough. I--sort of actually building off that theme, do you feel like you're part of a queer or gay community in the area?

ES: Do I feel--

CP: Do you feel like you're part of a queer or gay community in Charlottesville or

sort of larger central Virginia area?

ES: Oh, I--well, don't live there now.

CP: Right.

ES: But I--I keep in touch because I'm delighted to see another person that I would think you would talk to: Jason Elliott.

CP: Mm. Mm-hmm.

ES: Mm-hmm. Who I think is still working with the local health department, but maybe now. It... keeps reminding people of community and getting together as community. And I forgot what the organization's called, but I still get those emails and I'm always saying, “Oh, that's a great event! Now, I might actually go to that if it wasn't an hour and a half drive.”

CP: Yeah.

ES: But sometimes I email him and say, “That's a great idea!” Or even suggest some ideas. So--so yes, I feel like that is still a part of...an experience of hope. Would be a word I would say. It's an experience of joy to see that, “Oh!” They had a really--I saw the pictures of their Thanksgiving meal. That was very joyful. And very hopeful.

CP: Yeah. Do you--are you sort of connected with any folks in--you live in Farmville now, right? Yeah. So are you sort of connected with any folks, any kind of community, any kind of queer community in--in that area?

ES: Farmville has a Farmville Pride group. We've gone to--of course, now the time that we moved there was coincidental with the pandemic [laughs] when people weren't doing anything together. But I do remember just this past Sunday, that Farmville had its Christmas parade. And I volunteer with the Medical Reserve Corps... was among

their group of people that helped stand up the first vaccine clinics. And now we're moving--we still need to pay attention to that, but not so much clinics; that's moved into pharmacies. But do other kinds of awareness. Not just about COVID, but other--there are multiple respiratory illness season and other issues. So I was marching in the parade with the Medical Reserve Corps, but it was really great to see that the Farmville Pride had their contingent too with their banner, so.

CP: Yeah. That is really--that's really--that's great. Did you ever go to any of the like Cville Pride Festivals or anything in Charlottesville?

ES: Well, sure. Before there were festivals, there was--these are the wonderful people whose names I can't remember. I'm so sorry. I won't spend time trying to remember. Any case, before the festival there was something called the Q-munity Fair. Q-munity. So you--you see? Okay. And--oh, jeepers, I wish I could remember those people's names, I'm so sorry. Once again [laughs] mostly lesbians. Or people I think are lesbians, or have lesbian relationships, but maybe they identify in different ways. It was thought--conceived of more of a--a kind of resource fair.

CP: Mmm.

ES: And would often be in a little restaurant bar that was down off of Water Street that may or may not still be there.

CP: Was this by any chance organized by Julie Weed?

ES: Oh yes! Okay, good. Yes.

CP: Okay, yeah.

ES: Have you talked to her?

CP: Cville Pride did a bunch of interviews and they did some with--Julie was one

of the people they interviewed.

ES: Yes, of course, yes. Yes. Her father was once up on a time--he ran for Congress a time or two. I think he was a Virginia state senator. Al Weed. [ES comment: Al Weed ran for Congress out of the Virginia Fifth District twice; campaigned for nomination as candidate for Virginia Senate after sudden death from cancer of Senator Emily Couric, but I think lost that nomination to current Senator Creigh Deeds.] Very nice guy. They have a vineyard out in Nelson County. So we'd often have good wine at these--at these events [both laugh] from I think maybe was Julie Weed who helped get those together. But the Q-munity Fair was a--a kind of a resource-sharing. That preceded the festival.

CP: Got it. That makes sense.

ES: So I still have a Q-munity t-shirt. It's in my box--one of--in my boxes.

CP: Got it. Got it. That's--that's great. She did--yeah, she talked a little bit about that in her interview. Yeah. Yeah. But I haven't talked to anybody who attended one, so--

ES: I thought it was important, because it explicitly invited business community to be involved.

CP: Right. Right.

ES: There was another--there was a--I'm sure she's now long-retired--there was a professor at Piedmont Virginia Community College, because as I say, “Charlottesville's not a one-college town; it's a two-college town.” Maybe her issues were sociology or criminal justice; any case, when they were...interactions with law enforcement in Charlottesville that were adverse or unfortunate or wrong, there were some of those, including some shooting into the Silver Fox into the windows.

CP: Right.

ES: She led an effort that I and many others were a part of to do some education with local law enforcement agencies. So over time, there were a lot of different things and as I kind of said earlier, for me the HIV/AIDS was--and stigma, and lack of access to power--connected with a lot of different issues. So criminal justice interface--okay, we've got to educate police. And all those different community interventions around HIV explicitly. Substance abuse and community violence, domestic, sexual violence. One of the founding board members of a statewide 501c(3) interested in violence in LGBT communities. [ES comment: the Virginia Anti Violence Project/ VAVP: I was on the founding board of this 501c(3) agency.[30]] So these were all...I never saw all of these social problems as separate.

[ES comment: The public health literature came to call this way of thinking as the "syndemic" of HIV/AIDS and co-occurring social and health determinants.[31] The conceptualization of the syndemic - intersecting and layered issues that must be discussed together - was what I was describing early in the transcript as my early insights about how to address HIV/AIDS in rural Virginia: diseases, drugs, violence, sexuality, etc. all required de-stigmatizing in order for communities to talk helpfully, learn, and improve conditions for those with HIV/AIDS and their caregivers.]

CP: Yeah.

ES: Now, you--you would have experts in different fields, but I was always

---

[30] "The Virginia Anti-Violence Project – VAVP," The Virginia Anti-Violence Project – VAVP, accessed February 9, 2023. https://virginiaavp.org/ [ES references]

[31] Jaimie P. Meyer, Sandra A. Springer, and Frederick L. Altice, "Substance Abuse, Violence, and HIV in Women: A Literature Review of the Syndemic," *Journal of Women's Health* 20, no. 7 (2011): 991-1006; Merrill Singer, "A Dose of Drugs, a Touch of Violence, a Case of AIDS: Conceptualizing the Sava Syndemic," *Free Inquiry in Creative Sociology* 28, no. 1 (2000). [ES references]

somebody who would say, “Let's share the information and work together on these issues.”

CP: Right. Yeah. That makes sense.

ES: It's--it's why public health interests me.

CP: Yeah. Yeah. I--that totally makes sense.

ES: Okay.

CP: So like I said, we're wrapping up.

ES: Good.

CP: What do you think people don't know about queer life in this area that they should?

ES: That's a good question, isn't it? And that's why you asked that [both laugh]. Sometimes I think that LGBT communities need to know more of the history too, hence you're doing this project. I was often impressed living in rural areas that there were--in my youth and also older years when I observed more, with more perspective--there have always been and always are queer people in rural places. They may or may not and probably won't use the discourse of academic communities [laughs] it doesn't apply to them; it makes no sense. It's actually stigmatizing, sometimes. A lot of the...frameworks of academic research can be stigmatizing. So I'm sure, growing up, there were always lesbian couples in rural Virginia that I knew, but didn't know them to be lesbian couples. Maybe because I kind of got along with them and felt friendly with them or not threatened by them because gay men can be very threatening to one another. There's another issue to explore [laughs]. Gay men can be very welcoming to one another, but very threatening to one another in--in different emotional or other ways. Probably around

gender issues.

So one of the--another thing I would say is that it's been wonderful to see more res--good research and more good programs and services and more authentic community voices from gender different, gender expansive, transgender communities come forward. That was one of our important projects with the HIV Advisory Committee, with the Department of Health. A most wonderful woman who is--who is lesbian, Judy Bradford. Dr. Bradford. She's deceased. She led a lot of our research. She was then at VCU. She then became principal at the Fenway Clinic in Boston. In 2005 or even a little before, we first started thinking about transgender health in Virginia. And we were able, through her expertise and ability to get things done and connect, do a pretty significant panel of research, qualitative and quantitative research with transgender Virginians, including a rural sample of--with enough power to say they--to look at rural/urban differences.

So from that--or at least that early, I was thinking and working with and collaborating with in different gender experiences. So that's really important. And it's not that they just suddenly appeared in 2005 or 2015 [laughs] we just didn't know them. They didn't feel comfortable speaking. They didn't have a way to have a voice. They were stigmatized. There were no resources. And still are not, really, for transgender people or queer people in rural Virginia, really. So once again, this--this--HIV was a way and also a source of funds to--to do some things and open some doors and create some power for other people. So even that project, which was research-based, was opening doors and creating a voice for trans people to say, “This is--these are our health issues. This is what we need. This is what happened to us or happens to us.”

CP: Yeah.

ES: Did that answer a little bit?

CP: It did. Yeah. So I just want to make sure. So the--it--the who was the authority that published that study?

ES: That's the Virginia Department of Health.

CP: Okay. Because that should be available somewhere to look at, that I would like to do that [laughs].

ES: It's--right. And we--I think we kind of shorthanded them as the THIS Studies--T-H-I-S. Transgender Health something Studies. [ES comment: see the final report out of the Virginia Department of Health.[32] See some other publications of the research.[33]]

CP: Got it. Okay.

ES: Now, Ted Heck is at the--still probably at the Virginia Department of Health, who's a trans man who is, I think, still probably the--the lead--lead--the lead for transgender health resources down at the Department of Health in Richmond.

CP: Got it.

ES: So, Ted would have all--all of that history. That--literally, history in his head and documentary history.

CP: Yeah.

ES: But Judy Bradford is just a stellar person. You would love to meet her, should

---

[32] Jessica Xavier, Julie A. Honnold, and Judith Bradford, "The Health, Health-Related Needs, and Lifecourse Experiences of Transgender Virginians," (report, Virginia Department of Health, 2007). http://itgl.lu/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/THISFINALREPORTVol1.pdf [ES reference]

[33] Judith B. Bradford, "Virginia Transgender Health Initiative Study (THIS), 2005-2006," Virginia Commonwealth University. Community Health Research Initiative [distributor], Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2015-09-24. https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR31721.v1; Judith Bradford et al., "Experiences of Transgender-Related Discrimination and Implications for Health: Results from the Virginia Transgender Health Initiative Study," *American Journal of Public Health* 103, no. 10 (2013): 1820-1829. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2012.300796 [ES references]

she be living. But she's--she chose to be buried in very rural Franklin, Virginia, which is down here in the Southside. I--I did make a point to find her gravestone.[34]

CP: Yeah. Yeah.

ES: She was such an honorable person.

CP: Yeah. Yeah, she sounds like it.

ES: Oh, delightful.

CP: Yeah. Okay, last question: is there anything else you'd like to share for the historical record that you haven't yet?

ES: Well, no, thank you. [CP and ES discuss donating some material to the UVA Library.]

CP: Well, yeah, thank you so much for doing this. It was really wonderful to chat with you.

END OF RECORDING

[34] [ES comment: Judy's obituary] "Dr. Judith B. Bradford," The Virginian Pilot, Legacy.com, accessed February 9, 2023. https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/pilotonline/name/judith-bradford-obituary?id=16372087