

**LGBT Center of Central PA History Project
Dickinson College Archives & Special Collections**

<http://archives.dickinson.edu/>

Documents Online

Title: LGBT Oral History: Jeanine Ruhsam

Date: August 23, 2017

Location: LGBT Oral History – Ruhsam, Jeanine - 099

Contact:

Archives & Special Collections
Waidner-Spahr Library
Dickinson College
P.O. Box 1773
Carlisle, PA 17013

717-245-1399

archives@dickinson.edu

Interviewee: Jeanine Ruhsam

Interviewer: Liam Fuller

Date: August 23, 2017

Place: Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Alette Kligman

Proofreader: Lillian Sweeney

Abstract:

For more than a decade, Jeanine Ruhsam was an advocate in Central Pennsylvania's transgender community. With the primary goal of providing support and resources for transgender people and their loved ones, she spearheaded the Trans Central Pennsylvania organization and the Keystone Conferences. Her projects have also included organizing initiatives like the Transgender Day of Remembrance, as well as political lobbying and legislation. Today she continues her career as a Women and Gender Studies Professor in New Hampshire. This interview discusses her personal experience as a trans women, her thoughts on the Central Pennsylvania LGBT community, and her insight into the future of trans people in the United States.

JR: Hello.

LF: Hi.

JR: Hello.

LF: Sorry about all that configuration and everything.

JR: Yeah no, I've been through this. When I was writing my dissertation, I had to do several long interviews that I needed to record so that they could be transcribed to, you know, a Word Doc, and it was a real pain in the neck because it was sort of... We're in rural New Hampshire, and, you know, there's a lot of nice towns around here, but it's so mountainous it's just-- the signals are terrible. And there's no kind of—we have no cable, sort of, broad band. So it's all satellite dish.

LF: Oh, okay.

JR: Okay, so let's get rolling, Liam.

LF: Yeah, yeah. I don't even like doing transcriptions when the recording is good, so... [Laughs]. Totally understand. Yeah, so, I just have to say some basic info before we start. So, I'm here with Jeanine Ruhsam today. Today is the 23rd of August, 2017. I am recording this interview at Dickinson, in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, but Jeanine is in New London, New Hampshire. And my name is Liam Fuller, and I'm here with the Central Pennsylvania LGBT Oral History Project. So I think that's all the stuff we have to say at the beginning, so we have all

that background info for the transcriber. So my first question for you, Jeanine, is when and where were you born?

JR: When and where was I born, oh my goodness. Monterey, California in July of 1954.

LF: Okay. And can you walk me through your sort of early childhood development, your sort of experience growing up in your family, things like that?

JR: Yeah, I suppose so, as it relates to me being trans, I suppose. So, yeah, my parents were both college-educated, and I have an older brother and an older sister. And my dad was career army and State Department. And so basically I was an army brat as they call them, so probably most every couple of years... across the country. I was sort of first aware of identifying as a girl when I was probably about four years old. And my parents were quite aware of that and very gentle with me, and I remember one of the early conflicts was the first day I had to go to kindergarten, and I had to wear boy clothes. And I really was not happy about that, but back then, of course, in the late '50s, early '60s, it just- there was no question about the fact that conforming was something I had to do to survive. And they were very good about that. Fast forward to my high school years, I was in a county in Virginia, Fauquier County, which was mostly rural. Only 20% of the college- I mean high school- was college bound: the other 80% were, like, the boys all were supposed to be like car mechanics or farmers, and the girls were all supposed to be, you know, wives and home ec [Home Economics], and that kind of thing. Anyway, so I experienced a lot of bullying, and abuse, mostly from that 80%... that I decided to stop riding the school bus because I was getting beaten up. And mostly because I didn't think that typical gender stereotypes.

LF: Hmm.

JR: Yeah, I think they called me... the word 'dyke' wasn't in existence then, and 'homo' was just kind of being used, but basically, I was accused of being, you know, queer. And suspected of being what we would call a 'gay boy' now. You know, the funny thing was, I didn't have those sort of feelings. I was very attracted to girls, but in a very funny way, because it was like I wanted to be a girl as much as I wanted to be with girls.

LF: [Laughs]

JR: And so that was sort of my high school years. I never went to any of the high school dances or proms or football games or anything, because I just- you know, it was a question of survival. And discomfort. Gym was something I avoided like the plague and got special permission to, like, run laps in the middle of the winter and around the football field, so I wouldn't have to do wrestling or basketball with the other guys. So I managed to get through high school without any of the social stuff. And then went to George Mason University, and yeah. And sort of during all that time, what probably saved me from any sort of real mental damage or substance abuse was my parents had al- and my sister had always- been involved with horses. And so was I. And it

was sort of a family thing we did together. And I became a steeple chase jockey, first as an amateur and then as a professional. And that sort of gave me an outlet, and something I could do and be successful at where my sort of gender non-conformity didn't matter. It was a very, very risk and dangerous sport, kind of glamorous too. So I was quite successful, I was like the leading amateur jockey in the Virginia-Maryland area for several years, and then I turned professional. And I was the- first a college student, and you know, won a lot of races at major race tracks like Saratoga and Belmont and Delaware Park, as well as all the country race meetings around the area. As a matter of a fact, when I was in high school, sort of what ended my abuse was as a senior, I rode a horse that was second in the Virginia Gold Cup, which was like an institution in Virginia. It's like a really big deal. It was on a race course that was right next to the high school where I attended, so that kind of changed my image in the eyes of people, and so I was tolerated because obviously I was incredibly brave because I was willing to dash my brains out on a race course.

LF: Hmm

JR: So yeah, there we are. So that takes me through college. And yeah... so where do we go from there, Liam?

LF: So where exactly in Virginia were you?

JR: That was Fauquier High School, which is Fauquier County, which is about 40 miles west of Washington, D.C.

LF: Okay, so would that be sort of Northern Virginia?

JR: That was Northern Virginia, yup.

LF: Yeah, okay.

JR: Middleburg, Leesburg area.

LF: Mmhmm, and then what was that like... What sort of feelings did you have in high school about the fact that you did not have access to, sort of, being able to socialize with your peers and stuff like that?

JR: You know, it was kind of tough.

LF: Yeah.

JR: The good side of it was that I had friends in class. I struggled. I mean I was a good student, but got poor grades for the first few years of high school because just struggling with all the social issues.

LF: Yeah.

JR: And then like the last year, sort of bloomed and got straight As, and you know, that helped.

LF: Okay.

JR: And of course, this is the same time the Vietnam War was going on. My dad and my brother were both over there, and yeah, those were kind of tough years. You know, I struggled with you know drinking in high school, but again, it's like I didn't have anybody to drink with because I didn't do much, you know? There really was no social outlet for me. I- as I said earlier, I didn't go to any dances or anything like that because it just didn't work for me.

LF: Yeah. So then what kind of... In school, sort of besides the fact you were confronted with all these sort of negative personalities and projections, how did you... Did you enjoy school in general? Or what was- what were- your feelings about school?

JR: You know, I love reading, and I love education. Which is kind of obvious because I have, you know, a lot of degrees at this point. But, you know, I kind of found solace in reading and in nature. I grew up on a pretty large farm. So, you know, I just skipped school all the time and just take a novel and read in the woods, or up in a high meadow, and just read, and read, and read. So, you know... A lot of why I skipped school was to avoid the abuse.

LF: Yeah.

JR: You know I started hitch hiking, because even though I sat behind the bus driver, I'd still get attacked from behind.

LF: Hmm.

JR: One of the comical things was this... One of the characters that used to try to pick me up all the time was this big, hairy fat guy named Dick Arbaghast (ph), and he used to... He used to hit me with the only book he carried, which was a great, big, thick United States government book. And it was like the only time that 80% that were not college bound came over to the wing that the rest of us in the 20% of us were in, where the regular classrooms were. One of the mandatory courses was U.S. Government.

LF: Mmhmm.

JR: And it was just so ironic that I used to get hit over the back of the head with the binding of this book. [Laughs]

LF: Yeah.

JR: But anyway, when the bus driver- and you know, I was sitting right behind him- couldn't protect me, I was like, 'Well okay, I'll hitchhike to school.' And so I started hitch-hiking to high school in the mornings. Yeah, so, they weren't very pleasant years, but I got through them.

LF: Yeah. And then going—can you talk more about your college experience at George Mason?

JR: Not a whole lot, you know? It was... I was just... you know... I videotaped my way through college. I galloped horses at the race tracks every morning, early in the morning before school.

LF: Mmhmm.

JR: And then was just... so I was not in residence at the university. I was a day student, and so I had this sort of dual life that I had this career going on, as a jockey, and galloping horses every single morning of the week, and then going to class, and you know, the rest of the day. So yeah, I did that for four and a half years. You know, got excellent grades, and enjoyed the academic experience. But then once again, I didn't do any of the social part.

LF: Yeah. So then did you sort of follow a traditional track in school when it came to academics?

JR: No, I actually didn't. Kind of funny, try to shorten this part of the whole thing up so we can get to other things. So I basically had an accidental pregnancy. This is kind of a funny story. But yeah, in the process of being a jockey and all that, a girl from New England came down to Virginia with her horses. Oh, I rode one of her horses in a race, and it won, and there was a big party afterwards at this lovely stone house out in the country. And next thing you knew, I ended up in her sleeping bag, and next thing you knew, it was like 'I'm pregnant; you're going to marry me. Aren't you?' And so that all the sudden... It was kind of like 'Mom, Dad, and apple pie. Oh my goodness, the girl is pregnant. You have to get married.' It didn't occur to me, of course, back then that horses were \$300, and I was... At that point as a senior in college, debating- really struggling- with whether to go on with a PhD in English or go to law school. And I kind of decided Law School was what I was going to do. Well, this whole thing got derailed. And as a young parent, was like 'I got to make a living and support this child.' So the race track became not just an application for me, it became, you know, a living, a livelihood.

LF: Yeah.

JR: And so I became... Well, I was still a jockey at the time, but I also became a trainer of race horses. So for the next, you know- gosh- probably fifteen/twenty years, I trained race horses up and down the east coast at various race tracks.

LF: Okay. And then what—did you study English at George Mason then?

JR: I'm sorry?

LF: Did you study English at George Mason then?

JR: Yeah, yeah, I was an English major.

LF: Okay. And then, going from being a jockey, can you kind of walk me through your occupational history?

JR: Yeah, that's fine. So late '80s, well actually during the '80s, I went from the racetrack to I actually... I had built a small farm in North West Connecticut, and was training the horses off the farm. And towards the end of the '80s, just had a real falling out with—I guess you could say—the ethics, if you will, of the race track. And part of that was because of some clients I had that, you know... It dawned on me—it took years for this to happen—but that this beautiful sport that I was involved in, with these lovely, lovely animals that I was just, you know—felt like I was part horse—they were commodities that wealthy people used for their pleasure. And I had a few clients that were really pretty awful, and cared not at all about the horses' welfare, their pain, their struggles, even their lives. It kind of got to the point it's like 'I can't do this anymore, you know?' And it was kind of too bad because I kind of created a pretty good life at that point—you know?—and was making ends meet pretty well. But... so I went back to school and did a lot of studying. And part of the process of building that farm—I had designed and built the houses and barns and everything—I said 'Well, you know what'... Actually, this kind of happened, as I was offering a race horse, I had a few people that came to the place, and saw the buildings, and said 'Wow, would you design and build a house or a barn for me?' So that became my next career. So yeah. For the next couples of decades, at least-- I mean, I'm still doing it now-- I worked as an architect and home builder. Mostly high end, very interesting homes that tended toward the traditional and vernacular architecture, and also, you know, more recently towards very, very green construction. So, sold the farm and moved to the Caribbean. I built a wooden sail boat, sailed the wooden sail boat down to the **Virgin Islands**, and shipped my tools down, and started from the bottom up. Within a few years—so now we're in the '90s—down to the Caribbean, down to the **Virgin Islands**, in about 1992—I guess, maybe '93. And stayed there for about 13 years, and in that course became the premier home builder on the island. And of course, all these years I was sort of living a dual life, you know? There was Jeanine, and then there was the boy part, the boy counterpart. Because again, for obvious reasons knowing the history you do of gender non-conformity in this country... and especially moving in these circles, of training race horses for wealthy people and building houses for wealthy people, you had to look like you conformed.

LF: Yeah.

JR: So I was always, you know, a little bit—not a little bit, probably very—kind of girly looking, and, you know, that kind of thing. I passed by under the radar, but I always, you know, had this dual life, where there was the side of me that lived as a woman, as a girl, but that was very separate from the side of me that presented to the public and did all those interactions.

LF: Mmhmm.

JR: And that was the case in the Virgin Islands. Although down there, I had kind of come out and had quite a clientele of mostly gay men that sought me out. And I designed and built some pretty snazzy houses for them. Yeah, so then, oh my goodness... So we're up to like '90... No, we're up to 2000... Yeah, so about 2004, I moved back to the United States Mainland and had a

home in Georgetown, in Washington, D.C. and then about that time—within a year of that, I think about yeah, like 2004 or so... Actually, I guess I had the house in D.C. before that, probably around 2002 or 3 and moved back up here pretty much full time in 2004. Sailed the boat back up by myself and was starting out a business in Washington remodeling historic period homes and selling them. And then this is sort of where we fit into the Central Pennsylvania LGBT history... Let me look at my notes here... In April of 2003, I made my first ever visit to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania to attend a meeting of the Renaissance Lower Susquehanna Valley Chapter.

LF: Mmhmm.

JR: And had knew a couple people that belonged to that group, and came up to attend a meeting. And I had been, for the last couple years, attending regular meetings of the TGEA, which is the Transgender Education Association in Washington, D.C., which was largely—well—it was absolutely a white collar group. You know, mostly government employees and military people. So I was very comfortable with that group, and then a few people I had met said ‘Come on up to Harrisburg’ so I came up there, and I— I think the second meeting-- met a woman, a ‘GG’ as we used to say back then, for ‘Genetic Girl’... Now we call them... Come on Liam, what do we call them now? Assigned female at birth, right?

LF: Yeah, yeah, there it is.

JR: Okay, back then we called them GGs. But she happened to be at the meeting, and yeah, so that was the beginning of what is now, I guess an eleven—I can’t even count anymore... 2003—so we’ve been married now about 14 years. So I met her at that meeting. And she’s why I eventually, in the next year or so, moved to Central Pennsylvania.

LF: Mmhmm.

JR: And it’s kind of a funny story. I think for the safety of people involved, she is an attorney and worked for the state government, and you know, her job, as an at-will employee as an attorney... You know, I won’t go into detail about who she worked for exactly in the state government, but her job would have been in peril if it were obvious that she were married to a trans person.

LF: Okay.

JR: So we had to work really hard to separate our lives that way. Because at the time, I was becoming more and more full-time as Jeanine. And so anyway, that was 2003 that I attended my first meeting, and in 2006, I became—I was elected the—president. It wasn’t called president back then... Oh, I forget what the title was. It was not ‘Executive Director’ because there was no pay, but it was the equivalency of a president. But Renaissance, back then, it certainly was not any kind of a nonprofit organization. It was a very loose organization.

LF: Mmhmm.

JR: And the group at the time... Mara Kiesling (ph) had just left like when I got there. She had just moved to Washington, D.C. just as I was... She had come to Washington as I was leaving Washington.

LF: Mmhmm.

JR: And so I became the president or whatever it was called back then, and we entered the first Pride parade that was ever had in Harrisburg. Marched in that, back in 2006. And then in winter of 2007, as the leader of that group, we basically... I was... I took a... We had a hands up count, basically a vote, of membership at one of our monthly meetings, and decided unanimously—well maybe not, there might have been two people that dissented—to leave the Renaissance Organization and rebrand ourselves and become our own organization. And that was largely because the group at the time... Renaissance Lower Susquehanna Valley was the-- had the-- greatest number of members of all the Renaissance groups, and were paying dues regularly to Renaissance in Philly for the privilege of running our group down in Harrisburg. And we had no support from them. They just wanted our money. And then they decided we couldn't do any sort of outreach unless they trained us. And you know, at the time, we were doing good stuff. So the group decided, 'You know what? Let's go out and go out on our own.' So yeah, we did. And I coined the name 'Trans Central Pennsylvania'. And everyone agreed that was fine. We didn't do a vote on that. And then shortly thereafter, we decided that it would be a really good thing to become a non-profit organization. So with the help of Phoebe Malay (ph), who, needs no introduction to you, I don't think. Phoebe did the legal work for us pro bono, which was wonderful. And so we went through the whole process and became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, which really helped an awful lot. So that was about 2007. And I was elected to president of the group from 2007 through the end of 2014. I'm going to jump around a little bit here, Liam, just because... Just you'll get the dates down, but rather than going strictly chronologically, I have to jump around a little bit.

So what happened in 2014, is, I was very, very much full-time in Grad School, and getting... I think then, yeah, I got my Masters in 2014 and went right into the doctoral program... So I just couldn't do everything, and also realized I wasn't going to probably stay in Central Pennsylvania forever, and thought it was probably time, after having been the president of the group for that number of years-- 2007 all the way through the end of 2014... So midway through 2014, with the approval of the other officers, asked Joanne Carroll to step in and start running the monthly support group meetings, because, since Trans Central became, you know, the entity it is now back in 2007, kind of had a three pronged approach of advocacy, education, and support. Prior to that, it had basically been just a support group. And when I first came up from D.C. you know, it was a largely a blue collar group. I mean, the president worked as a sausage stuffer at one of the Pennsylvania Dutch companies, and, you know, almost everyone there was a blue collar person. Only a couple people had college educations. And of course, you know, that's changed radically

over the years. But, so anyways, I brought Joanne in to run the monthly support group meetings because, you know, those meetings are kind of interesting. I don't know if you've been to any... They kind of run the gamut from, you know, largely from people telling their stories, you know, in the early days, of Trans Central and Renaissance. These are always stories of tragedy and loss, and abuse and suffering. And of course, that's gotten better. And as the years went on, it was more about 'Okay, I'm new here. How do you help me, you know, be the person, the gender, I want to present in?' So anyway, Joanne ran those meetings through the end of 2014, and I was focusing on the advocacy and education aspect.

And we got into 2015, and it was like, with the approval of the other officers, I was elected the president in 2015 and then stepped aside and said 'Hey folks, I'm going to hand over running the group to Joanne for the rest of the year. I'm too busy and just enable her to be in the position of responsibility, so everyone can get used to her. So when the elections next came up, because it takes all the members vote, and they weren't too sure about her. They didn't know her that well. She hadn't been a really active member over the years of Trans Central, largely because of conflicts with her religion. She couldn't be out as a trans person. And so she sort of became available at that time because she changed religious affiliations and was able to be fully out, and said 'Hey, Jeanine, I want to help. These are my people. I want to help.' So that kind of explains how Joanne came in. I handed the reigns over to her, and then, you know, the next set of elections going into 20, yeah I guess, 2015 in the fall, she was elected, and that pretty much ended my affiliation with Trans Central, except they made me President Emerita. But, I still am the... I'm still the co-chair of the Keystone Conference.

LF: Mmhmm.

JR: So now let's shift to the Keystone Conference. That started in—the first was in 2009. And in collaboration with the vice president, Kristy Snow, you know, I came up with this idea of... We'd been doing sort of these various weekend kind of heavy, sort of like mini-conferences. We'd bring a speaker in, and we'd bring Mara Kiesling up from D.C. or we'd bring somebody in, and we'd do like lectures and seminars and stuff like that. And came up with the idea of like 'Why not do a real dinner conference?' So the first one was in 2009, and Kristy Snow and I signed personal guarantees and wrote checks out of our own personal accounts to make the whole thing happen at the Sheraton Harrisburg Hershey, and I think we had 150 attendees. And of course, it worked. So the 10th one will be this coming March. They've grown and grown and grown, and yeah. Okay, so where do we go next, Liam?

LF: Yeah. Oh, that's so interesting... Well, I mean of course you're going to bring up the Keystone Conference, but I interviewed Katie Ward earlier this summer.

JR: Yes.

LF: Yeah, that was a really cool interview too. So at the time when you were getting heavily involved in Trans Central back when it was still affiliated with Renaissance, were you commuting up from DC?

JR: No, I was—no I moved to Central Pennsylvania in 2005.

LF: Mmhmm.

JR: So that explains why I was elected president of Lower Sus Renaissance in 2006, and then sort of led to revolution that turned that group into Trans Central Pennsylvania in the late winter of 2007.

LF: Okay. And the Trans Central, did you specify what year you started the organization?

JR: Yeah, it was late winter of 2007.

LF: Okay. And then were there any sort of barriers or obstacles you faced in the creating of the organization or the schism from Renaissance?

JR: Yeah, there were. I still have a couple emails saved on my computer.

LF: [Laughs]

JR: Of course this was in the fairly early—not the early early days—of the internet, but when it was more than AOL and stuff. But there are a couple nasty levels that were published. I remember when I first googled my name way back then, there was like a nasty letter that the leader of the Renaissance group in Philadelphia had published about how awful I was for leading this revolution and taking—dissolving—Renaissance Lower Susquehanna Valley Chapter and starting this renegade organization that, you know... So there was a little bit of that flack from them, but, you know, the group in Pennsylvania just, it grew by leaps and bounds, and you know, it's just kind of funny.

Here's an example that was illustrative of how things were back in 2005—yeah, 2000, yeah I guess my first meeting I said, that I went to in 2003. I walked in, and they said 'Oh, well, you're a guest,' and before you can get into the meeting room, there was this table laid out. And there were two lines of people. And they said even though you're a guest, you have to sign in at one or the other line. And I said 'Well, please explain the difference between the two lines before I sign in.' And 'the one on the right is for transsexuals, and the one on the left is for crossdressers.' And I remember just bursting out laughing and saying 'Well, that's a real problem, because I refuse to sign either one of them.' And well, what... It was kind of like met with this stare of disbelief like 'What are you talking about? You know, you're either one or the other.' And I said 'No, I'm not.' And I said 'You've heard this term transgender, right? It's a fairly new term, but still. You know, I'm like... I'm trans. I'm not one, I'm not a cross dresser. I don't consider myself a cross dresser. I don't just put on clothes and do the weekend warrior thing. And on the other hand, I'm

not I'm not a so-called 'transsexual'. It's not about the disappointment, it's all about me just changing my body to meet, you know, standards. Anyway, that's kind of how it was back then. They didn't know what to do with me, and they said 'Well, you have to sign one or the other, or you can't come to the meeting.' And I said 'Well, okay, I'll sign them both. How's that?'

LF: [Laughs]

JR: But that's what it was like back then.

LF: Yeah.

JR: And of course, this is part of... Maybe that was driven by Renaissance, and you know what, groups just kind of went like 'No, we're not doing that.' There's too much else that's important, and we can't be dividing our own group of people up like that. So, yeah. But any other real problems? Yeah, pretty much after our schism there were a couple of people that wanted to remain with Renaissance. And they caused problems for about a year, and then they got permission to form, or reform, or take the name 'Renaissance Lower Susquehanna Valley' or something like that. And they reformed down in the York area. And, you know, I don't know if they're still going or not, but they certainly, you know, were not the, you know, the same kind of group that Trans Central became.

LF: Okay, and then you said in the formation of Trans Central PA, your goals were education, advocacy, and what else? Sorry.

JR: And support.

LF: And support. Okay. And so, how did you sort of rebrand the organization? How did you sort of initiate objectives to gain more members and things of that nature?

JR: You know, a lot, a tremendous amount of the credit for this goes to Kristy Snow. Kristy Snow, you know, she's a good personal friend of mine, but is not a public figure. Still leads a dual life, again for family and employment reasons. You know, those close to her know she's trans, but most of the world knows her either as a man or as a woman. But Kristy's not the public face of Trans Central, but she's a brilliant person. Well educated, and a real public relations type. And you know, basically, for the whole life of Trans Central, really, from 2007 that was like one of her first meetings. When we started this whole schism. She came in 2007 right through now. I mean, she and I together have pretty much, until of course, I pulled out and handed the reigns to Joanne—and things have been restructured there—but certainly in terms of the Keystone Conference, you know, Kristy and I have kind of put together, worked to make all the policy changes and steer this group. So yeah, we recognized early on the real foundation of the monthly meeting was all about support for trans and gender non-conforming people in Central Pennsylvania. And of course our meetings—from the earliest times—you know, we had people from Scranton, and from north of State College, and all over the state, would drive down once a

month to come to our meetings, because, you know, rural Pennsylvania's just not a place you get that kind of support.

LF: Yeah.

JR: So we would have fulltime, fully transitioned people coming down just to be with their own kind, and, you know, we'd have people that would identify as cross dressers but come down just to be able to have a chance to express the gender that they... that gave them comfort.

LF: Mmhmm.

JR: So that was always a part of it, in sort of a, if you will, one of the steady, sort of permeant things- I guess is the easiest term to use. The support portion is what Renaissance was, and it's certainly a key, key part of what Trans Central still is. Kristy and I came up with this idea of doing dinners before the monthly meetings, and my idea on that, and Kristy's idea was, wouldn't it be nice for people to socialize other than just in, you know, in the closeted church meeting room? Wouldn't it be nice if, like, we could socialize? Because Kristy and I had started out- Kristy and I would go to dinner before the meetings because we both were kind of foodies. We liked good food, so we'd go out and have dinner somewhere before we'd go to the meeting. And then a couple people would join us. And we said, you know-- Kristy said-- wouldn't this be nice if we could do this, gives a chance to sort be out in the public. And I went 'Yeah, but the bigger part of this is the public gets to see us.' And they get to see trans people that aren't, like, closeted people that feel guilty about doing what they're doing, and, you know, realizing that most of the public at the time figured cross dressers were just some, you know... trans people were all cross dressers, and some of them or maybe all of them were some kind of drag queens, and you know, we just had this really sort of poor public brand. And so I said 'Why not?' You know, in Harrisburg, the seat of the state government, and certainly we'd have our meetings. We would be seen by a lot of people. So we started this custom of going out to the fine dining restaurants of Harrisburg every month before the meeting.

LF: Mmhmm.

JR: And that just grew and grew. And, you know, we had standards. You had to dress nicely and be polite, and all that kind of stuff. And at the time, largely were trans women. We probably had a trans man about... Every other dinner, one of them would join us. But typically, we'd have anywhere from 10 to 15 or more people at, you name it, any one of the restaurants in Harrisburg. I remember one of the fun meetings we had—one of the fun dinners—probably around 2009 or 10-- but Governor Ed Rendell was at the same restaurant, stopped by the table and chatted with all of us. And we had a bunch of pictures with him, and, you know, that was kind of fun. But, so yeah. So that was sort of part of the outreach stuff. And of course, at the same time, you know, in terms of advocacy, is-- you're probably aware, Liam—things were starting to happen. You know, politically. And we realized there were things we could do, and we needed to make trans people more visible. Hence, part of the going out to dinner thing, which of course grew. When

we started Keystone, one of the first things we did was to bus attendees downtown till we've gotten to the point that it's not unusual on a Friday evening in March to see, you know, 200-some trans people in downtown Harrisburg. So, yeah. To increase the visibility of trans people, so, you know, obviously the more the public sees them, the more used they get to trans people, and the more they go 'So what?' And then we got involved in legislative arena too. I worked with Ted Martin... Oh gosh, when was that? 2010. Early in 2010, Ted asked me to help him, and we worked together on it, and had a couple meetings with the Department of Transportation, and got the gender marker law changed for drivers' licenses.

LF: Yeah, okay.

JR: In Pennsylvania, which was a huge, huge win for trans people, because prior to then, the only way you could get your state issued photo I.D. was to provide proof that you had, you know, gender confirmation surgery or SRS, 'sex reassignment surgery' as it was called in earlier times. But that was really huge because, you know, a lot of people couldn't afford to have surgery, or didn't want to for health reasons, or didn't want to because they didn't want to. And so, of course, what that meant was if you're a fulltime, fully transitioned trans person, man or woman, that you'd have an I.D. stating the opposite, and this is something that came up over all the years, every single one of our support group meetings. Invariably, somebody would be telling a story of how they got outed at work and lost their job or at a minimum, suffered abuse from their fellow employees for being outed as being out as, you know, not what they appeared to be.

LF: Yeah.

JR: So yeah, that was some of the political stuff that was going on then, and of course later, as we got closer to now, there were various bills that have come up in the House and the Senate to—for—non-discrimination, and we worked on those too.

LF: Yeah, yeah. Is there anything else regarding legislation that y'all worked on?

JR: Gosh, you know, I think most of it other than the gender marker change, the other big legislation thing, of course, is the ongoing effort of what used to be Senate Bill, you know House and Senate Bill, 300, but, you know, really pushing for the fully inclusive non-discrimination bill.

LF: Yeah.

JR: Which is ongoing.

LF: Mmhmm.

JR: So for me personally too, sort of to interject in there, in 2009, Ted Martin was the president of the—

LF: Equality PA

JR: for the LGBT Center of Central Pennsylvania.

LF: Oh, okay.

JR: Okay. We didn't have an executive director at the time. Ted was the president, and asked me to be a member of the board. And that wasn't such a big deal, except it was because, at the time and prior to that, they hadn't had a trans person on the Board of Directors. And Ted in his, you know, great wisdom, and Ted has always been incredibly supportive of trans people. Ted just said 'This doesn't make sense. We call ourselves the LGBT Center, and we've got no trans people on the Board.' And I think he might have met with some friction on that because I... the fact is, I remember going to my first board meeting, and... I guess there were about 12 or 15 board members... and I remember everybody sort of shrinking back from me, and the conversation stopped when I walked in. And I sat down at the table, and you know, everybody was like pulling away from me and looking at me, you know. So here we are with, you know, gay men and gay women and a couple straight people that, you know, wanted to do their good work, and I just kind of smiled and said 'Hey everybody, let's just kind of break the ice here. You're a little uncomfortable about me, as you must be about most trans people because you just don't get it. I know. It's not about sexual orientation, and that's what you don't get. And, you know, we're kind of this 'T' little red caboose that gets tagged along on the end of the choo choo train that's the lesbian and gay people.

LF: [Laughs]

JR: and you don't know what to do with us. You kind of figure you're saddled with us, and you have to deal with us. So here I am sitting with you. But, you now, what do we have in common? Let me tell you something. Every one of our, almost every single one of our, support group meetings, all the trans people go 'Why the hell is it LGBT? We don't have anything to do with those lesbian and gay people. We're not about sexual orientation. We're about gender. Why the hell do we have to, why do we have like tag onto these people when all they think about is who they want to make love to?' So it's a lot bigger than that. And so I said 'So that's how they think about being the caboose. So here we are together. So what do we have in common?' I said, 'It's really pretty simple. You know, we all are gender non-conformists. It's that simple. This is all about gender. And, you know, who—the fact is those of you that are attracted to people of your same sex, of your same gender, you know, you're violating the gender rules.'

LF: Hmmm.

JR: And I said, 'Those of us that, you know, cross gender, we're doing the same thing, and that's what we have in common. That's how the public sees us. Although they probably couldn't articulate that.' So they all kind of laughed and shrugged their shoulders, and on we went. So that was 2009. And, yeah. So things went pretty well with the Center. I stayed on the Board there until—let me look at this here—I think to 2012 or 2013. And then designed and oversaw the construction and rebuild of the actual physical Center.

LF: Mmhmm.

JR: In 2010 and 2011. And was actually on the committee that looked to bring in our first executive director.

LF: Mmhmm.

JR: And that was sort of an interesting experience because, as you probably know, the first executive director of the Center was Donna Rose. And, you know—the trans woman. So, you know, in a few short years, they went from like being very uncomfortable with trans people to like, you know, and especially trans women, to, like, deciding that this was the best possible candidate they could get. And, of course, their fears and concerns about trans peoples' stability and trans women in particular's stability were confirmed when Donna Rose basically after having used the savings of the—the monetary savings—of the Center to pay her salary for one year, and then the money was gone, and Donna Rose was gone. And, you know, the Center was kind of like... you know, everybody—the Board of Directors—I mean, nobody could blame that on Donna Rose being trans, it was just kind of like 'Wow, that's too bad. What do we do now?'

LF: Yeah.

JR: So anyway. That was that.

LF: Yeah, so. Wait, what was I going to say? Moving back, sort of going back to Trans Central, did you specify, like the first meeting, where and when that was held?

JR: I'm sorry? Can you rephrase that?

LF: Yeah. The first meeting for Trans Central- could you clarify where and when that was held?

JR: Well, yeah. All the meetings had been held, for Renaissance, were held at the MCC, the Metropolitan Community Church.

LF: Yeah.

JR: And I don't remember exactly when historically they were. It was like the first Saturday or Friday of every month. So we kept that format for a while. You know, we had, we had been in conversation, we were invited by the LGBT Community Center to make our new home at the new physical center. It only made sense that we do that. You know, the thinking was, why shouldn't the big trans group in the area be part of the Center? And we did several functions. We had a couple of holiday dinners at the Center. So we did several functions. But when the group was asked to vote on it, they said 'No, we're very comfortable having our meetings at the MCC. So the group decided to stay at the MCC, from the earliest days of, you know, changing from Renaissance to Trans Central. And, of course, that was in conversation with and close to all the various pastors who were there, and they loved having us there. They made us feel very, very

welcome. They gave us space. They were just great. So, yeah. It was a very good physical home for us, and it stayed that way through my time there.

LF: Yeah, and then what sort of events and activities did you do as the mechanism of Trans Central?

JR: Well, for the years I was involved, so you know through 2015, you know, basically we had the monthly support group meetings. We'd do a holiday potluck dinner. Of course, we have the dinners before the meetings. We'd do Pride Parade. We always did the Parade when there was a parade, and we always had a booth at the Pride Festival. And there were the impromptu other gatherings—picnics, things like that—but our Keystone Conference, you know, became the big event we did each year.

LF: Yeah. And then can you go into the specifics of these events? Like, which ones were the most popular? What sort of locations you used, what venues were better to use over others?

JR: Well, that said, I think, you know, again, there wasn't that much going on in those years. We'd do the holiday dinners. You know, we did it at the MCC for a while until the Community Center actually had a physical center, and then we'd have them there. And so the last few years that I was involved, they would do an annual picnic at Pinsho (ph) Park. That was pretty much it, other than the dinners before the meetings. Because, as I said, you know, Keystone became so big and so consuming. And, you know, other than having volunteers help us the day of—the days of the actual conference—Kristy Snow and I pretty much did all the organizational work, I mean all the work on that ourselves. You know, until just the last couple of years.

LF: Hmm, yeah. And then, going into Keystone, so you said you're going on your 10 year anniversary? So does that mean it was started in 2007?

JR: No, the first actual conference was 2009. So 2018 will be the 10th.

LF: Okay. So then, and then you said it was held in the Sheraton, Harrisburg, Hershey?

JR: We've been there the entire time, yeah.

LF: And were there any sort of hiccups or barriers that you faced in organizing the conference?

JR: You know, of course. I mean, there always are. But none that were insurmountable. Yeah, gosh, I'm trying to think back to early on. But, you know, we really reached out and tried to get the support of the gay community.

LF: Yeah.

JR: Ted was always there for us. So when Ted became the executive director of Equality PA, he was wonderful. And I reached out. I became a member of the Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce.

LF: Mmhmm.

JR: Going really on my own. So I had my architectural design build business.

LF: Yeah.

JR: So I made that business part of it. And then I also, so I was a member myself, and then I had the Trans Central become a member. And encouraged our members, Trans Central people, to go to the meetings. Very few of them did. And trying to get the Chamber people to come to our Keystone meetings. And it just took years and years, and I think with sort of increased exposure of trans people and a lot of just what we were doing. As Keystone expanded, as our dinners on the town expanded, as people saw more trans people in and around Harrisburg, they became more comfortable with them. You know, to the point now that, you know, the Chamber shows up regularly at Keystone. You know, Deb McClain was the president of the Chamber for years. Yeah, she was a big supporter.

LF: Yeah.

JR: You know, so much of what I've seen happen over the years, that I really worked hard at because I felt it was important, is visibility.

LF: Mmhmm. Yeah. What was that, I was interviewing someone a week or so ago who is involved in Renaissance in like the Lehigh Valley, that organization. And she was talking about how there's like this gay leather group that's in the area up there. I'm not sure if they're the Pennsmen or not. And they used their fundraiser—their fundraiser was for Renaissance in that area throughout the year, through their organization. And they raised like \$3000 for that chapter, which is really some incredible solidarity work. And I was like 'That's so cool!' [Laughs]

JR: Mmhmm, yeah. A big part of Keystone as time went on was... It not only became a really positive, positive event in so many ways—in terms of support, yeah, phenomenal support for trans people, for trans kids, for families of trans kids—but it also became a heck of a fundraiser. Because of the work that we did to encourage sponsors to come along. So, so much of what Trans Central's been able to do has been, you know, the monetary gifts we've made to other organizations and things they've done that have been made possible because of Keystone as a, you know, a fundraiser as well as an event.

LF: Yeah. And then what... How did you sort of reach out to people about the Keystone Conference and sort of get it up and running?

JR: Gosh man, just, you know, personal contacts. You know, the internet. Lots of phone calls. Just, it was a really big effort the first couple years. You know, lots of people I've met over the years. I mean... So it's really critical for an event like that is, you know, the easy part is having an idea and, you know, putting together a few speakers and a few workshops, and that's not hard to do. Kristy and I did that pretty much just on our own. And then you have to find the location

for it. Then you have to, like, all the sudden I became a little bit of an expert on event planning and organizing, which I knew nothing about. But it's like you learn how to do this stuff. So, you know, so then there's that. But then the big one is like, you know, getting funding. Where are you gonna get money to run these things? And you need money. As I mentioned in the first year, you know Kristy and I had to sign personal guarantees and, you know, her credit card is on the line with the Sheraton. In case we couldn't raise enough money, we were still liable for renting this space and paying for meals. So, you know, you kind of have to get over that first hump. You know, we poured our hearts into it, and then we asked each of the members of Trans Central Pennsylvania to, you know, volunteer to help run it and to do so with enthusiasm and happiness. And they did. And, you know, that first year the people who came just went 'Wow, that was fantastic.' And word spread. And I hear all the time—not just from sponsors but from people I just run into at other conferences—you know, 'yours is the best conference in America, the best conference in America.'

LF: Yeah.

JR: Because, you know, it's just everybody's got such a great attitude. It's such a positive experience, you know. Everyone feels welcome, you know. It's an energizing experience. And that's kind of what we set out to do. You know, I'd been to most of the other conferences in the country at that point, you know, that we decided to do Keystone, and, you know, they all had... You look at them, and you say 'What do they do really well? What are they not doing well?' You know, 'What's missing here? What can we provide that they aren't providing? And how can we make people feel that this is a really great experience?' So, you know, as I said earlier, Kristy's just a wonderful public relations person and organizer, and even though she likens herself to the Wizard of Oz, the man behind the curtain, 'the girl behind the curtain' she calls herself. She's just really good at that stuff. So, yeah.

LF: Okay. And then you were mentioning workshops and speakers. What sort of activities, including that or beyond that, were involved in the conference?

JF: I'm sorry, could you rephrase that again?

LF: Yeah, sorry. Like, what sort of workshops and speakers did you have at the conference? Did you have any sort of activities beyond that as well?

JF: Well, you know, I would at this point just suggest you take a look at some of the programs from previous years, just because, you know, they've all been similar. What's been really interesting is looking at, we'll just say 10 years, of, because we're obviously involved in planning next year's already, you know, how it's shifted over the years. And you know, I would say the biggest change that we're seeing now is how many workshops we have and how much attendance we have. Not only, I'll just say families, okay... So not only the obvious ones you'll see if you went to the last couple—parents of trans kids and trans kids and people that deal with trans kids—but spouses of trans people. That just didn't use to happen. I mean, it didn't. Our

very first Keystone Conference back in 2009, one of the workshops we did was, to my knowledge, I mean I know this, no other trans conference in America at that point had had workshops that were for, you know, spouses and couples. Because historically, you know, if , let's just say a married couple, when, let's just say, the husband came out as trans, that resulted in divorce. That was just one of those axioms you knew happened. And you know, we knew this from all the various support group meetings. One of the big questions will be, 'Oh my God, I can't come out to my wife because it will be the end, we'll get divorced. And then what happens to the kids? So I have to stay closeted until the kids get out of high school.' We just knew. It was one of these things. You would lose your wife. You would lose your job. And you will probably... You might be rejected by your parents as well. And this was part of what we knew. These were the axioms of being trans and coming out. What do you do about it? These are the necessities of having a support group meetings, you know, to hold each other's heads above water and support those that needed support and try to keep people from literally jumping off the bridge because all their options had run out and their lives had been destroyed. So anyway, our first Keystone, one of the workshops was for couples. And so we'd seen a tremendous, I mean a complete tide change there, where there really used to be... Couples got split up. And we saw the same with trans men. They would come. We heard the same stories. They had typically been in a relationship with a woman, and they would both identify as lesbians. And then, let's just say trans men would identify as a trans man and start moving towards transition, and that would be the end of the relationship. So the same kind of stuff was going on. Every now and then, very infrequently there would be, you know, the trans man that was in a heterosexual relationship, and, you know, same issues. But the bottom line is we started getting couples together to talk through this. And, you know, would have counsellors-- I can think of two of them that were both, you know, respected psychologists—this was their field. They would come, and they would sit in and moderate these discussions. And then we started having these kind of retreats for spouses of trans people. So, you know, this started things moving in a direction that we had—that our community hadn't—dealt with before. Just like realizing, you know, what about kids? You know, for people of my generation, you know, we had to figure out on our own, you know, like 'you can't do this, or you're gonna suffer.' And it's kind of like well maybe that can change.

LF: Yeah.

JR: You know, my parents were really sweet and kind and didn't shame me and didn't abuse me when I wore my mother's or my sister's clothes around the house. But they also knew, you know, as good parents, to prepare me to survive in this world that they kind of had to have me conform.

LF: Mmhmm.

JR: And so we're going like 'Okay, let's start shifting this conversation too.' That's been... You know, the big changes in Keystone have been, you know, the fact that we're able to see so much

more of the workshop load be shifted over to not just supporting older trans people but, you know, looking at families—wives and husbands and children and parents.

LF: Yeah. And then are there any other marked shifts in the evolution of the conference that you've noticed?

JR: Probably not so much other than the very, very gradual acceptance of trans people by the public. You know, the first few years we were really, really worried we might have hate groups show up, so we kept the conference kind of under wraps. You know, we didn't want publicity. We were approached by TV stations and newspapers, and went sort of 'No, please don't' because we don't want... This could end up in violence. We don't want our people targeted. They're already targeted. And they've already suffered. And this is a place where they can be themselves for a week or a long weekend, and it's best to keep this under cover.

LF: Yeah.

JR: And of course, that's changed. Yeah, I don't know Liam. Other than that... You know, it's funny. I have often said to Kristy the mark of our success as a conference and Trans Central as a group will be, you know, when we really don't need to do this any longer.

LF: Hmm.

JR: And, you know, maybe if there's any reason to keep doing it, it's so like a reunion. But the real need to help the public understand us and for us to, you know, help us understand one another and ourselves, and try to explain to ourselves and everyone else, you know, being trans is not only perfectly okay, it's a wonderful thing. You know, maybe, it's all going to change over the next few years, and there'll be no need for it anymore.

LF: Yeah. And then... what was I going to say? So, one second. Oh! Are there any sort of like particular memories, either good or bad, that stick out to you through your work with Trans Central and the Keystone Conference?

JR: You know, I've probably already bumped into a couple of them with you so far, Liam. I would say that some of the people that I met early on, you know, during the evolution of Trans Central and Keystone and my experience as I got involved with the gay and lesbian community... Some of the real standouts I've mentioned. I mean, Ted Martin, certainly. If there's one person, I would say Ted Martin.

LF: Yeah.

JR: I mean right from the very beginning, Ted just said... He was just awesome.

JR: I mean, the very first thing he did. You know, I remember him coming up to me and saying 'You know what? I want to work on this gender marker thing with you.' And he said 'Wouldn't that be cool?' And he had just been installed as the executive director of Equality PA. He said 'I

would want this to be the first thing I accomplish in my position. And I hope to make that to be a great statement. That, you know, we're here for trans people. And, you know, gay people and lesbians- we're doing pretty well. We got pretty much we want. We're going to get this freedom to marry thing pretty soon. That's a given. But you trans people? No. You've got such a long way to go. You're the ones that need help. And let's make this first victory the one that really, really makes a difference.' You know, so Ted was there the whole time. And you know, Phoebe Malays, the attorney, the way she just jumped right on board and then insisted on doing the articles of incorporation and everything for Trans Central to be a 501(c)(3). I mean there's another one, just never, never a moment hesitation to like 'Are you kidding? Of course I'll do that.' You know. And there've been lots and lots of people that just, you know, that I've bumped into along the way working with the gay and lesbian community that have just opened their arms and their hearts to trans people, and you know, have said over the years 'I'm sure glad we did, because, you know, we love you guys. You're just exceptional people.' So, yes, it's been a great experience. It's kind of funny too because having been involved with the trans community in Washington, D.C., and getting to know the ropes down there pretty well, the biggest difference I noticed as soon as I got involved in the Harrisburg area was how much closer the LGBT community is in Harrisburg than it was back in D.C.. And you know, it's just like once people got over their initial issues, they just went 'Oh, okay. You know, we think we get you people, and that's okay. We like you. We're all together in this.' And, you know, you don't see that in other areas. I mean, I didn't even see lesbian and gay people in D.C. getting along the way they do in Central Pennsylvania. So it was great to see the Center grow the way it did and become what it has. And same with the Chamber of Commerce. I mean, just really good people, very few biases that last, and, yeah. Overall, a good community. And it's been great to see the trans community kind of flourish and become accepted.

LF: Yeah. And is there anything else during your tenure on the Board that you haven't talked about?

JR: On the Board of the Center?

LF: Yeah, on the Board of the Center. Should've been more specific, yeah.

JR: Not really, you know. It was good. Again, it just was a lot of work and took a long time, but things just got better, and better, and better. You know, good presidents and, you know, it's kind of funny how Louie became the default executive director when Donna Rose left after her short tenure, but you know, Louie was great to work with and had a great attitude and just did a fantastic job. I remember—I do remember—when I was actually nominated for a FAB award, and they just automatically said 'Well, you know Jeanine, you can't have it. You're on the Board. We can't give these to board members.' And I went, 'That's okay. I don't want it. I don't need it.' And then like at the same time that came in, a nomination for Trans Central came in as the group award. And all the members of the committee went back and forth, 'Well what can we

do about this? Because Jeanine, she's like, she's the president of the group. You know, can we do this? Or is this wrong?' And they all decided they can do that. And that was good.

LF: Yeah.

JR: Because it was the first time, you know, the group had gotten it. The first sort of trans person who got an award was Ashley, the year before, was one of the first FAB recipients for running the GSA at... Where was she? Was she at Millersville I think?

LF: And—

JR: And I wrote columns for the *Central Voice* from 2010 to 2014.

LF: Mmhmm.

JR: And I think those helped too, because those are back in the years when people still had a lot of questions about trans people.

LF: What sort of subjects did you write about?

JR: I'm sorry?

LF: What sort of subjects did you touch on in those columns?

JR: Oh my goodness. I think probably obvious ones. Yeah, well, here's a good example. I'd have to look at my notes. I don't have them in front of me now. Yeah, so, when I was president of Trans Central—I'm trying to think of what year it was—but I went to Ted Martin, and said 'Hey, Ted. I want a good Transgender Day of Remembrance. And I want to do it on the steps of the state capital. And, you know, you used to be in state government. Can you help me? And will you, like, will you make Equality PA be like, you know, a co-sponsor?' And that was fantastic. Because Ted, like within a day, said, 'Okay, we got permission. You know, you can assemble on the steps of the state capital.' So that was the first Transgender Day of Remembrance. And we've done one every single year since then.

LF: Yeah.

JR: But I reached out to all the other groups, and they were in attendance as well. You know, so that was good. So yeah, I wrote about stuff like that in the *Central Voice* column.

LF: And what year was that, that first Transgender Day of Remembrance?

JR: You know, I don't remember.

LF: Uh huh.

JR: I don't know if I can find that somewhere in my notes or not, Liam.

LF: Yeah. Okay. Yeah, that's fine. And then we're kind of going back a little bit in your life. Was there any sort of religious presence in your family growing up?

JR: Hang on a second.

LF: Yeah.

JR: Looks like it would have been 2010.

LF: 2010, okay.

JR: Yeah. And what I did was try to figure out how to run this. It wasn't a vigil. I would call it, and I think I sort of branded it back then, as sort of like a ceremony, and wanted it to be partially a sort of an 'in memoriam' ceremony for those trans people who have been murdered that year, and by extension for all trans people that have suffered. And at the same time, sort of a celebration of the existence of trans people. What I did is I did a bunch of research and got the names and the circumstances of death and newspaper articles and stuff on all the different trans people who have been murdered in the calendar year prior to up to the day of the ceremony. And wrote scripts. And had volunteers come up sort of to the top step, the capital steps, and they each had candles. And they would read the script out and when they finished their script, they would blow the candle out, suggesting that the person's life is being blown out. And, you know, that's pretty moving. Pretty shocking and pretty moving. And what's really shocking is as the years that I ran this went by, the murders went up. The numbers of people that got murdered went up each year, so the ceremony lasted longer. I'm just going like 'Wow.' So yeah, I pointed this out to people, too. Okay, what was your question? Something about religion?

LF: Yeah. Was there any sort of like religious presence in your childhood or in your family?

JR: No, so... For me, yeah, we were raised Episcopalians. I was an acolyte. So, and my parents view on that was 'this is, you know, the right way to raise your children: you should introduce them to some kind of a faith path. And, you know, my parents pretty much stopped going to church by the time we all went to college, because it was something you did for your kids. You know, you do it for social networking too, I suppose. But, yeah. So I had good exposure to all that... yeah.

LF: Yeah. And then can you walk me through your coming out process?

JR: Yeah, you know, in one word: I took a long, long time.

LF: Mmhmm.

JR: You know, a good... [Laughs] From like I was describing earlier, from like 2000—I'm sorry, from when I was four years old until—it was very gradual. You know, in other words, yeah. It was just really, really gradual.

LF: Mmhmm.

JR: So I opened up about being trans-- you know, having this other side to me--you know, decades ago to certain people.

LF: Yeah.

JR: And then I lived a dual life for decades. And, you know, had basically two names and two appearances, and then that became two lives, because I functioned socially as Jeanine and in business as, you know, my male side. And then that gradually became more and more Jeanine and less and less of the other. And sort of along the way, it was 'Jeez, it's time to get my identity documents changed. This is getting kind of complicated, you know, having two identities, and I'm not doing the other one that much. And, you know, it was kind of... you know, there was an element of risk that there always is.

LF: Mmhmm.

JR: So I own my own architectural design and construction business, but don't forget part of that is, you know, I'm sort of like the project manager. So I'm down there on the ground, dealing with the concrete crew and the guys that drive the bull dozers, and you get where I'm going with this.

LF: Yeah.

JR: Groups of people that historically that have been not only all male, but groups of men that pride themselves on being very, very rugged and very masculine. And, you know, they'd always kind of looked a little odd, you know, because I'm tall and thin and a little bit girly, as a man that was. And, you know, educated and all that. So I was always kind of over there to them, you know. Bosses are always a little bit over there. And, you know, people in leadership positions, you know. Anyway, but I went 'this might be kind of difficult.' But it's like well, it's going to happen. So that was kind of interesting. The bottom line is I was prepared to have some problems, and there weren't any. There might've been a snicker or two behind my back, but I basically, you know, just had to come out to everybody in that world. So if there was a coming out process that was a big deal that was it.

LF: Yeah.

JR: Because, as I said, the rest happened over the decades, you know. Family members, you know, you know, people I knew, places I showed up. There's sort of being out in the public and then there is sort of being 'Okay, you need to know that Jonathan is just now Jeanine.' You know. There's a difference between being out and being out, and then, finally, the full deal. So for me that was like, you know, in the construction business. And it's kind of funny how it happened. Because I had built a couple houses as Jeanine in Maryland and yet in Pennsylvania I was working as a guy. And, you know, for reasons you might be able to figure I'm going, 'Well

this group of people, you know...’ And the clients know me as Jeanine, and so this was kind of going on. It’s just a matter of simplification. But as I mentioned Liam, it was kind of like what I really feared, which was, you know, outright mockery and ridicule, and disrespect, didn’t happen.

LF: Okay.

JR: And I remember asking someone, or the conversation came up, and they just kind of shrugged and said, ‘You know, so what? We always kind of wondered about you anyway, and we just figured maybe you were a gay guy. But then we knew you were married to a woman, and we just wondered about you, and this explains a lot of things. And it’s like, so what? This is a side of you we didn’t know about. So what? Now about these plans, what do you want to do about this door in this corner here? It doesn’t quite fit.’ You know, that’s kind of how it went.

LF: Yeah. And then what was that like maintaining that dual sense of self?

JR: I’m sorry, I didn’t quite hear you.

LF: Yeah, sorry. What was that like, sort of maintaining those double lives?

JR: It was hard.

LF: Yeah.

JR: You know, I remember going to, you know, I don’t know... Well, certainly of my generation, I don’t know of any trans people that didn’t see therapists. And I had a really great therapist down in Washington, D.C. And I was seeing her in D.C. before I came up here to Pennsylvania. Anyway, I remember going to her like the first time, and saying, you know, ‘What’s wrong with me? The closest I can diagnose myself, you know, am I—‘You know, I was accused by my ex-wife of being a schizophrenic because, you know, I’ve got these two different identities, and I got back and forth between them. And she just kind of laughed and said, ‘No, you’re not a schizophrenic.’ And she said, ‘And there’s nothing wrong with you whatsoever,’ said ‘being transgender is, you know, you’re going to learn this, and I want to tell you this upfront: It’s not a curse. It’s a gift. And the hardest part you got is to how society views you. So my role here is helping you grapple with how society views you, so you continue to view yourself as a healthy, not just normal but better than normal person.’ You know. And I went, ‘Okay, great. That’s a tall order you just said. But thank you.’ And so then, yeah, the hard part was, you know, a few times it dawned on me just how ridiculous this was, that I had to play these two different roles. And this was going when I was down in the Virgin Islands, you know. It’s like, who am I? I get up on any given morning, I go ‘Holy shit. What am I supposed to be right now? Am I supposed to be a woman, or am I supposed to be a man? How does the public want to see me? What am I doing? Who am I?’ It really got quite difficult. Because, you know, I

had to, I had to convince whoever was interacting with me at any given time that I was really a man or really a woman.

LF: Yeah.

JR: And that's really hard to do. And especially when on any given day you have to do both. And sort of where it came to a head for me one day—this was in Central Pennsylvania—and I had meetings to go to as Jeanine, and I had meetings to go to in the business world as the guy. And I actually had to shift appearances, the way I moved, the way I spoke, four different times that day for four different meetings. And I couldn't set it up so that I could have two meetings as Jeanine and two meetings as the guy. That's not how it worked out.

LF: Yeah.

JR: So like early morning I'm a girl, midmorning I'm a guy, early afternoon I'm a girl, and then in the evening I'm a guy again. And it was like, this is bullshit. You know, this is just really hard to do. And, you know, how much longer do I have to do this? And of course, the answer was always, as long as you have to, because this is about survival. You know, it's about economic survival and it's about survival in society, and how people view you and how they accept you. But, so, you know... What was the greatest benefit of, you know... I hate to be—still there, Liam? Liam?

LF: Yeah.

JR: Okay, just wanted to make sure you were still there.

LF: Yeah, sorry, I thought you were still—

JR: I was.

LF: Continuing your train of thought.

JR: I was in the middle of something. But I didn't want to like have the phone die or something.

LF: No, no, we're good.

JR: But so, like as I said to you, transition was something that took decades. So if there was sort of a moment that was like, 'When did you become?' Well, I was always Jeanine. But, you know, it's when the legal documents changed over and I erased the boy appearance, you know, what was the greatest part of that was that like, 'Oh wow, now I'm my true self.' Uh-uh. You know, I've always been who I am. And you know, that's a person who is, you know, a little bit of a man and a little bit of a woman, but the world only wants to see one or the other, so which one do you give them?

LF: Yeah.

JR: So, you know, as I told a few close friends, it's like, 'Well, I had to spend the first more than half of my life showing the world a guy, and I'm going to spend the rest of it showing the world the other side of me.' And I've always been the same, so that you know, the world doesn't want to be confused. And again, certainly people of my age, my generation, my elders-- that were the ones that grant you admission to jobs or whatever you wanted-- they wanted predictability, they wanted conformity.

LF: Hmm.

JR: So, you know, it was a matter of simplification, really, is what it's all about. And I guess sort of these might good parting words, but for me, part of what I really appreciate seeing now as a professor in the classroom is seeing the up and coming generation, you know today's college students, are just completely over this whole thing. They have no issues with gender conformity. It's like, 'Whatever, it doesn't matter.' You know. And even my own children—I've had a couple of daughters that are in their 30s—but their first reaction was kind of like, 'Well, there's nothing wrong with that.' And the second reaction was, 'Except, except you're my father. And wow. You know, it's okay it's like everybody, but you're my father. You're supposed to be my father. Are you still gonna be my father?' And it's like, 'Of course, I'll always be your father. I might not look like a father, and some people in the world might be confused when they see us together and they'll call me your mother, but of course. I'm the same person. It's just how the world wants to see me. That's what they want. They want to have conformity and continuity, so that they aren't confused.'

LF: Yeah.

JR: But, you know, certainly back around you, this sense of really satisfaction and pleasure at today's college students. I mean like, you just graduated. Did you graduate just this last spring?

LF: Yeah, in May.

JR: Yeah, well I had bunches of students that graduated, both teaching at UMass full-time and at Colby-Sawyer part-time. But, you know, it was just great to go the graduations of these students and get hugs from them and see-- and I taught a lot mostly Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies courses-- to see a lot of these kids that were certainly at least gender non-conformists. You know, just full of love for themselves, full of self-confidence, you know, happy about the world they're walking out into, and knowing that they were going to be okay in it. You know, and that's really nice to see. You know, they're going to have a lot of struggles and some struggles I didn't have, and I don't envy those struggles, but they're not going to have the same ones. You know, they're not going to have this issue of every single day waking up and saying, 'Oh my God, you know, I gotta do gender, and I gotta do it so that, you know, I pass and I don't get abuse for it.'

LF: Hmm. And then, oh, can you talk about the reactions of your friends and family?

JR: The what of my friends and family?

LF: The reactions of your friends and family to coming out as trans.

JR: Yeah, I'll give you two, two little anecdotes. Anecdotes are always good. So I've only had like one assigned male at birth, male identifying friend in my life. I mean close friend. And he came to me—he was a very successful financial consultant in Northern Virginia—and he came to me—this is back when I was finishing up as a jockey but training race horses—but he came to me, and he said, 'I want you to teach me how to be a jockey. I want to be an amateur jockey, and you're really good. I want you to do this.' And so that started this long, long friendship. And really close friendship. And I remember I like had to tell Greg, you know, the only male friend. And Greg, Greg's a man's man looking kind of man. He's got the big handlebar mustache and deep voice, and you know, a real man's man. And so I called up Greg. Yeah, I was down in the Virgin Islands then, but I think Greg was in his very snazzy offices in Middleburg, Virginia where I grew up. And I called him up on one of my trips to the States, and was like, 'Greg, I need to meet with you.' And he goes, 'I got something I have to tell you.' And so he set up an appointment, and I showed up in his office. Greg's sitting there in his great, big desk. And he pulls down his glasses, and he looks at me, and he says, 'What do you want to tell me?' So I told him. And he just mocked his brow and looks at me, and said, 'Is that what you have to tell me?' And I went, 'Uh-huh.' And he goes, 'Thank goodness. I thought you had like cancer or, you know, you were dying of some horrible disease,' he said. 'You're telling me that, you know, you're a woman and I thought you were a man all your life? That's like telling me looking at you and your eyes look like they're blue to me, that's like telling me your eyes are really brown.' He said, 'I don't care. That's just fine. What's your name gonna be?' You know. 'Do you have any pictures?' So I said to him what my name was and had been and my other name and showed him some pictures. And he said, 'It'll take getting used to.' And he said, 'And if I call you buddy or say he by mistake, you'll forgive me because I've known you as a guy all these years, but that's just fine. So this isn't going to change anything. Except for what I just said. I might have trouble getting the pronouns right.' So yeah. That was one anecdote.

And the other was when I told my mother. And she just started violently laughing. And she had a way of giggling that her shoulders would go up and down, and she didn't make much noise. And I said, 'Mummy, what are laughing about?' She said, 'Oh, I'm not laughing at you as a girl, sweetie,' she said. 'I'm just thinking about a time when you were younger. Do you remember when—this just explains a lot of things. I never really did understand why you had all the girl clothes in your closet. There're a lot more than, you know, your girlfriends might've left with you or something.' She said, 'But do you remember when you and your sister were sharing a bathroom? And I used to scold you for having such poor aim because there puddles of urine on the floor in front of the toilet?' And I went, 'Yeah, but I got in trouble all the time for things. But, you know, okay. So?' And she said, 'Well, one day I came in to get the laundry out of the hamper under the sink, and I didn't knock on the door. It was closed. And I turned the door open, and there your sister was standing in front of the toilet.' [Laughs]

LF: [Laughs]

JR: And my mom, I'm going, 'Are you suggesting this runs in the family?' She said, 'Maybe so. Maybe so. But, you know, nothing surprises me. So whatever.' And so yeah. That's kind of, those are the reactions I got along the way. You know, those two anecdotes I gave you were many years apart, but nonetheless, kind of what I ran into among those people.

LF: And then can you talk about how your sort of involvement in different organizations, be it Trans Central and the Board for the Center or the Keystone Conference, can you talk about how those impacted your life as a trans person?

JR: Okay, what was the question? Can I explain how my involvement with them did what now?

LF: Impacted your life as a trans person.

JR: Yeah, I guess the first kind of question that maybe I think you're asking is 'Why did you do that?'

LF: Yeah, that's a valid question.

JR: That's sort of like the question that arises out of your question. The first. Like, why were you doing that? Because like weren't you like most trans people? Weren't you struggling? Weren't you involved in these issues?

LF: [Laughs]

JR: And, you know. The answer is yes. Probably because of struggling so hard and having all these problems, I realized other people... I saw lots of other people really struggling. And, you know, I... I've always, you know, I'll knock on wood and say 'Thank you Goddess' and all that stuff, but, you know, I've been a pretty resilient person all my life. I've taken on some pretty serious challenges. I mean, you know, as I mentioned to you earlier, kind of, you know, how I became a steeple chase jockey. It was kind of funny because, you know, it's an incredibly dangerous occupation. And the few short years I did it, in America, at the time, there were probably only about 40 or 50 regular, you know, really regular jockeys. But, you know, three of them were paralyzed, and two killed. You know, I've had more concussions than most football players. Because that's what happens when you're riding a horse 35 miles an hour, you know, bunched in with 12 to 15 other horses in a two mile race, jumping over—and some of the races are four miles—jumping over all these four foot high fences. These horses are falling down. And, you know, you're coming from, you know, 10 or 15 up in the air and slamming into the ground and getting run over by horses. And you know what? Horses weigh a lot more than other people.

LF: Mmm.

JR: And you get hurt. So, you know, was it suicidal that I chose that? Maybe a little bit. But it was also to prove to the world that I was tough and don't fuck with me. So, so here's the story of me suffering abuse and jumping in danger's way, so this whole trans thing, I realize, you know, this is a really hard path to be given in life. You don't choose this. You know, you don't choose to be trans any more than gay people choose their orientation. But, you know, you don't choose this. And most people all my life until that wonderful therapist I mentioned to you, you know, we looked at it as like a curse. It's like, 'Why is it I have to be trans? Because it really, really fucks my life up. You know, it fucks up my family, my job, everything.' For our people—you know, for trans people—up until very, very recently, Liam. It's so fascinating. Because you know, one of the subjects in one of my upper level trans courses at UMass last semester was talking about trans trenders. I mean the fact that it's kind of trendy to be trans now. Not so much, I mean, back when I was in college—this is back 10 years ago—it was a curse, I mean, to be trans. It was this extra burden to deal with.

So anyway, recognizing all of this and seeing so many trans people really, really suffering, and, you know, hurting themselves, trying to commit suicide, some of them succeeding at committing suicide, I'm feeling, 'Man, you know what? I've managed to get through this thing alive. And I've gotten strong because of it. You know, I can help these people. I can do something about this. And I'm going to.' And that's kind of how this whole thing started. That's why I got involved. You know, I showed up at these support group meetings and went, 'Oh my God, these poor people, they're suffering horribly. And, you know, we got to help them. You know, we have to stabilize them. It's going to take a long time to change the public because that's what really needs to happen, but in the meantime, what do we do about both of those things?' So you know, on the one hand you're doing all you can to counsel and help your fellow trans people get through the night, get through the next week, get through the next day at work, come to the next meeting alive and grateful to be there and grateful to be alive. And then saying, 'Okay, world out there you need to know about us. You need to know that we've been around forever, and we're good people.' And start shifting that conversation and making that become a conversation. So that was sort of why I got involved in all that stuff.

And how did I benefit from that? What did I seek out of it? You know, just that incredible sense of satisfaction that you are doing some good, even if it isn't that obvious. You know, some of the meetings it was obvious because people would come up to you and say, 'Boy, that last meeting really helped. I got through a whole month, and I'm here again. And I feel good about being here.' You know, stuff like that. It's like Kristy and I said after the first Keystone Conference concluded and each one, 'Well, that was a lot of work. We took a lot of risk on. But the big question is: Did we do good? If it does good, we'll do one next year.' And the answer is always, 'Oh my God, did it do good?' And then we started hearing from people like, 'It changed my life.' And then Kristy and I would look at each other and say, 'We gotta keep doing these Keystone Conferences.' You know? We got to keep doing this.

LF: Yeah. And you kind of like got into this, but can you describe how you felt sort of taking on all of this, sort of doing all of this, and how do you feel going forward with other people continuing your legacy in the area?

JR: Yeah, so, you know, I moved out of Central Pennsylvania two years ago. And, you know, Joanne took over the reins of Trans Central completely, and, you know, has done a great job. And especially in her work as sort of the public face of Trans Central. You know, being... Did so well there in Central Pennsylvania because she's got the military background, and she's very religious, and Central Pennsylvania is certainly very religious. So that was good, and I felt great about, like okay, great. I don't have to worry about Trans Central. Everybody's doing well, you know. Got people like Kay that are stepping up and getting more involved. You know, it's good. I can go now. I'm done my work here. They don't need me anymore. And Kristy's asked me to stay on with Keystone just for all kinds of reasons, but, you know, because it's something we've created together and we run well together, and my relationship with lots of the people across the nation, both sponsors and speakers and that kind of thing. But, yeah. So what else do I tell you? What am I doing now? You know, I'm not that active up here in New England as I was down there. And I think mostly because there's not the need for it anymore.

LF: Mmm.

JR: I've given a couple of public talks up here in rural New Hampshire, which is still a little bit backwards about LGBT people. You know, so I'm helping a little bit with that. And I'm having a wonderful time teaching. I've got a book that I'm actively seeking a publisher for right now that I'm hoping is one of those crossover books that would be, you know, used in the classroom but also might be beneficial to people that are interested in sort of understanding the cultural history—well, cultural and largely feminist theory—behind trans people in this country.

LF: Yeah.

JR: So it really probes into the cultural and political ramifications of trans people kind of through a feminist lens. So anyway, I'm hoping to get that published. You know, tied up with a publisher in the next several months.

LF: Mmhmm.

JR: But you know, other than that, it's kind of like I look forward to coming down to Harrisburg in March to go to the next Keystone, and I'm just really grateful to see that the world's gotten to be—despite the number of murders of trans people on the rise—more people are accepting of trans people. And it's just great to see, you know, younger trans people like yourself feeling so much more secure about themselves. And there I was making an assumption. I'm not supposed to make an assumption, Liam. I apologize.

LF: Oh no, it's fine. I am trans. [Laughs]

JR: I don't know if you're non-binary or what you identify as, and I apologize.

LF: No.

JR: Just to see people that aren't so encumbered by the roles of gender conformity that it really troubles their lives, you know?

LF: Yeah, yeah. I never really gave other people's opinions much attention. [Laughs]

JR: Mmhmm.

LF: And let me see. Unfortunately we only have a few more minutes because I have to get off to lunch. But let me think of a closing question for you. Can you talk about what sort of changes you've seen within the community and then overall acceptance of the community, and what challenges you think still remain?

JR: Yeah, I think most of them are pretty obvious. You know, I think starting with the cover of Time Magazine, followed by Kristen Beck, and then Caitlin Jenner—just the thrusting of the trans people into the public view and consciousness, and embracing by the media of trans people. Certainly all because of sensationalism to start with, has all been good. You know, do I think—this isn't about whether I think that Caitlin Jenner is a good spokesperson for trans people or any of the stuff, you know. That's beside the point. The point is that people have been forced to realize trans people are in the world.

LF: Mmhmm.

JR: And, you know, while the arguments are made that Caitlin Jenner, you know, and even Laverne Cox aren't your typical trans women and shouldn't be held up as good examples, the fact is they're there.

LF: Yeah.

JR: And people see them. And people go, 'Wow, there's trans people out there. What is a trans person?' So all the sudden, the American public from, you know, prior to all this—let's just go back to 2000- you know, if you said, 'transgender' to people, they'd be like, 'What's that? What the hell is that? What's gender?'

LF: Mmhmm.

JR: You know, so, they're aware of that. And being aware of it is a good thing. And, you know, I think Trans Central PA and Keystone have certainly made trans people very, very visible in the Greater Harrisburg area. And visibility is all about acceptance and people getting used to them. So, you know, this is certainly been good. And I think it's saved a hell of a lot of lives and made an awful lot of lives much more bearable.

LF: Hmm.

JR: And that's the ultimate goal, isn't it, for trans people? As I said earlier, it's like nobody chooses this. And, you know, what we're forced to choose is like how we present ourselves to the world. What's the world going to see? What are they going to do about it? And, yeah. So, what was the rest of your question?

LF: What challenges you think remain?

JR: You know... I don't think that ever-- I mean of course, as someone with a doctorate in American History and Culture, I think I can speak with some experience—I don't think that... and it's a farm kid, you know, that was raised with cattle and horses and all kinds of critters. Looking at them out in the fields and, you know, how they behave. I don't think that, you know, we're ever going to erase gender.

LF: Mmhmm.

JR: I don't think nonbinary is gonna be accepted, certainly on college campuses, maybe in, you know, classrooms older than kindergarten. And I think that the emphasis on the gender binary as a means to privilege certain people and not others, I think that's going away, which is important and good because, you know, if anything, I'm a feminist. But I don't think that gender's going to go away.

LF: Yeah.

JR: I don't think that gender, the need for people to conform to gender norms, is going to go away completely. I don't think... you know, I think heterosexuality is going to remain the dominant form of, you know, how people choose partners. But that said, I think that the entire LGBT movement, if you will, has had wonderful, wonderful results, although it's been incredibly costly. And, you know, I think for trans people, it's never going to be completely easy. I don't know how long this period we're in now is going to last, where, you know, being trans is like, 'Oh, cool. You know, tell me about it.' There are still places in this country, and I live in one of them, you know, rural New Hampshire... And it all depends what town I go to. I can go up to Hanover, where Dartmouth College is, and, you know, to go out there and tell everybody you're trans, and, 'Oh, I'm not really a woman.' You might get away with it there just fine; that might be cool. People think that's cool. But the town I live in is, you know, it voted for Trump.

LF: Mmm.

JR: You know, my spouse and I made the decision a while back, you know, just to keep the fact that I'm a trans woman out of the conversation. I'm just—we're just—two women that live together. Because it's a lot safer.

LF: Yeah.

JR: So, you know, is there ever... you know, looking across this country, looking at a country that elected Donald Trump just a few months ago, do I think that, you know, we're going to have some period when gender doesn't matter at all and trans people are treated like, you know, royalty like they were in some Native American Indian tribes? Do I think that's going to happen any time soon? No, I don't. Not in my lifetime. Probably not yours.

LF: Yeah.

JR: So, yeah, there's still challenges. And I think, you know, I think we have to kind of keep working at it. And I think this whole thing, Liam, all these issues, all the public issues with gender and sexual orientation, is really rooted in misogyny. And I think until women are really, truly accepted as, you know, equal human beings, you know, across this nation, until that happens LGBT people are gonna continue to suffer.

LF: Yeah.

JR: It's, it's—that's how I feel. So, that's why it's like, where I put my efforts now, you know, in fighting misogyny.

LF: Mmhmm.

JR: You know, and trying to spread feminist theory everywhere I go.

LF: Yeah.

JR: Because, you know, I think that's, I think that's where it's all rooted. I think, you know... When we saw Trump get elected on a platform of misogyny, we got a long way to go. That's more, that's half the people in this country.

LF: Yeah. Yeah, totally. I majored in Gender Studies, so I'm totally feeling you on all of that. And yeah, there's just so much that is so... And it can be frustrating because I get so—with the way the news sort of will cover various gender pieces, sort of everything regarding feminism, queer people, trans people—I get so frustrated with how they cover it, because I feel like it's so lacking.

JR: Mmhmm.

LF: [Laughs] Yeah. Okay, so I think that about wraps it up for me and all my questions that I have for you. I want to thank you so much for agreeing to this interview and giving me your time. I'm going to send you via email a consent form for this interview, and then I'm going to ask that you mail it back to me. I'll include the address and everything in the email, and... I'm trying to think what else. Oh, if you have any sort of materials that are sort of historical artifacts of your time within the Central Pennsylvania area and your organizational sort of involvement,

we would appreciate that you could send that—those—to us as well. But again, it's at your own volition.

JR: Yeah, let me think about that, Liam. I could maybe send you a couple photographs.

LF: Mmhmm. That would be great.

JR: I think I might have a copy of the acceptance speech I gave for the FAB award. Maybe something about the gender identity, I mean the gender marker issues and stuff. There might be a couple things like that.

LF: Yeah, the entire collection of sort of Central PA LGBT history, in terms of archives, is held at Dickinson in the Dickinson Archives, and it's one of our fastest growing collections. So we really appreciate anything you can donate.

JR: Okay, great. Are you going to send me any sort of, when you finish your transcript and file it away, are you going to send me any kind of copy of all that when you're done?

LF: I can send you a copy of the recording and transcription if you'd like.

JR: Okay. And then what happens with it? You mentioned that it's going to go in the Archives, with all the other oral histories that were collected, right?

LF: Yeah, it'll be in the Archives.

JR: And you guys are also working on getting a book published?

LF: Yes, there is a book that is being published on the sort of LGBT history of the Central Pennsylvania area.

JR: Cool, alright. Excellent.

LF: Okay.

JR: And so what are you going to do now?

LF: I am spending the next year in France, where I'll be teaching English in a primary school for the year.

JR: Oh, cool.

LF: Yeah, and then I am looking at graduate school. I'm thinking about doing like general LGBT non-profit work. We'll see.

JR: Well, good for you.

LF: Thank you.

JR: Have fun, have fun. I think you'll do well at it. This has been nice meeting you.

LF: Thank you.

JR: I think you conducted the interview with good questions, and yeah. I hope—

LF: Okay.

JR: Yeah, well, good. And good luck in, yeah. Be safe and have fun.

LF: Thank you, likewise. Bye.

JR: Bye bye.