

*Closeted/Out in the Quadrangles:
A History of LGBTQ Life at the University of Chicago*

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

**INTERVIEW #1
GOLDMAN, DAVID C. (1951-) AB 1972**

At U of C: September 1968 – June 1972

Interviewed: 2012 (1 session)

Interviewer: Monica Mercado

Transcript by: Monica Mercado

Length: 58 minutes 41 seconds

Interview (September 17, 2012) at home with David Goldman in San Francisco, CA

[00:00:00]

MM: David, we start with kind of a simple question, which is how did you end up at the U of C?

DG: I applied to three colleges in my senior year of high school, I went to Stuyvesant High School in New York, and I applied to Columbia University, because my sister was at Barnard, I applied to the University of Rochester...and the University of Chicago. And when Chicago accepted me I accepted them. I also was impressed with Sidney Huttner, who became my resident head in Henderson House, he actually interviewed me... I remember going to the interview there and being very impressed by the school.

MM: So did you have certain expectations?

DG: Also I do want to admit that at the time I was alert to the fact that Illinois was the only state that had repealed its sodomy laws, so being legally able to engage in sex between consenting male adults was legal in Illinois and nowhere else in the United States. Little did I know that the harassment gay men were experiencing at the time in Chicago was far worse than New York. But that did weigh in to my decision.

MM: So you arrive, you said that you were interviewed by the Henderson House [resident] head; did you end up in Henderson House? Where did you live?

DG: I did. I think he picked me! Based on the fact that he interviewed me and liked me enough and thought I'd make a contribution to his house. Henderson House. Sidney Huttner ...

[00:02:18]

MM: Were you social in your house? Did you stay in the house?

- DG: I stayed in the house all four years. I lived there for four years, I never left. I had a single room for three years and I had a roommate my first year.
- MM: And what do you remember about having the roommate the first year versus...
- DG: I remember that he didn't really care for me, so he was glad when he moved out and I was glad when he moved out. It wasn't acrimonious; he just didn't care for me.
- MM: It happens! So you arrive in Henderson House, you're at the U of C; I guess we should talk a little bit about academics, or what you were there to study, or what...
- DG: I was there to study mathematics, I was pretty good at math in high school, I had taken AP Calculus as a junior in high school, I had taken multi-variable calculus as a senior, so I walked in and was able to accelerate my math background, I was able to place into honors second year calculus...and that was a challenge but I squeaked by, got my degree after four years. I thought the courses there were quite challenging.
- MM: I was going to say, sometimes people remember either the core, or, in some ways, the heavy science and math is not the experience of everyone...
- DG: I enjoyed most of the courses I took there. My freshman poetry course with Michael Murran was really fun. And I enjoyed the biology course I took my senior year where I had a professor from the Medical School teach the course Man, Environment, and Disease. I think it was in the third quarter of my junior year...It turned out he was McGovern's top medical advisor when McGovern ran for President in '72...
- MM: So of course, in some ways, we see these interviews as life histories, and so I'm interested that you said you were already aware of the sodomy laws, so were you "out" before you came to Chicago? Were you aware?
- DG: I was aware. I was aware I was gay. I didn't really come out...until I think it was the summer between my freshman and sophomore year. I came out and my mother at first was very upset and wanted me to see a psychiatrist, and I said I didn't need to see one. She said "if you don't go then you're afraid to go," so I felt trapped. So I went and he said "you're fine, you don't need any help, being gay is ok," which was quite remarkable for that period.
- MM: Yeah, I'm surprised to hear that...
- DG: She [my mother] also like that I was getting involved in gay political activism. I joined the Gay Activists Alliance [GAA] in New York in 1970 and during my summers home from school, '70 and '71 I worked with GAA, Gay Activists Alliance, went on their marches, took part in some of their zaps. We took over *Harper's Magazine* and I got to hear William Blair [Ed.: the publisher of Harpers Magazine at the time] admit he was an anti-Semite as well as a homophobe.

MM: Well it's interesting, right? In some ways... New York is written about as the epicenter of a lot of things, and then they spread out, make their way to Chicago. We can talk a little bit about your summers – did you have a sense of what was going on in New York while you were in Chicago? Did Stonewall appear as something you were...

DG: I was away at music camp when Stonewall occurred, I was at the National Music Camp at Interlochen when Stonewall... Summer of '69, and '68, so I missed it but when I got home I immediately went down to the Village and found out what was going on. And that got me to want to get involved in starting a gay group at the University of Chicago in the Fall of '69. Murray Edelman [Interview #83] placed an ad in the *Maroon* asking people to meet at Cobb Hall Lounge.

MM: But on campus?

DG: Cobb Hall lounge, and I got there late 'cause I learned about it too late, but eventually there were more ads placed in the *Maroon*, we started meeting, and we formed the University of Chicago Gay Liberation. People like Henry Wiemoff, Carl Sharp, Hannah Frisch [Interview #24], Murray Edelman, Kevin Burke [Interview #20], myself, Step May, Ferd Eggan – that was from Fred Eggan, but Ferd Eggan. These were some of the people who got involved with our group, I'm not certain which years... it was over the three-year period that I was there. In other words, the work really began over my second year and ended for me when I left the University in June of '72 to go to grad school at Stanford and we accomplished a lot.

[00:08:00]

We forced the city to acknowledge that gay people had the right to have dances publicly in the city and that took very intense negotiations with the police; we also outed an undercover policemen named Officer Manly – I love the name – who was pretending to be gay and would try to solicit people for sex in the park, and busted them for solicitation of prostitution, and a lot of them were closeted, were afraid of losing jobs and livelihoods, places where they lived, being shunned by their friends and such. They would generally cop a plea and there were plenty of high-priced crooked attorneys... to help make the matter go away for them. So we were actually able to out him because he came to some of our meetings pretending to be someone else, because he heard that we were on his tail.

Over the years then, we were able to get a drop-in center in Ida Noyes Hall, and that was one of the first things we did. We had gay dances on campus, and we had support from the Students for Violent Non-Action when they had their Lascivious Costume Ball, they were very much in support.

[00:09:15]

MM: Yeah, I wonder about -- do you remember anything about those dances? They were not the same thing as the Lascivious Costume Ball, right?

DG: No, no no – they were completely different, but we got support from them. The University was a little nervous about us but basically pretty much acceded to our requests, because we were clear we were militant, and we were reasonable, and I believe our demands were not off the wall, just the right to dance in public and be ourselves and that was a big step forward, because there were just so many people in the closet at that time. There was a dean named James Vice, love the name, and he was notorious for cruising the Wieboldt basement john, which was a gay sex tryst place and I think behind the scenes he was supportive. In my last year there I did a radio show there on WHPK, called “Out of the Closet.”

MM: It’s funny, we have a little bit of information about this period...some of those ads and things...

DG: So I did a radio program where I live interviewed people, we did a call-in show. I replicated that at Stanford...one of the first things I did was I marched down to the radio station there and said “I’ve done this in Chicago, I want to do this here.”

MM: “It’s successful! People like me!”

DG: And then first thing I did when I went to Stanford was to say “we need a drop-in center,” and we got one...and I had a guardian angel there. There was a Dean of Students there named Tom Rhue, I think his name was, and he was gay, and he didn’t know me, but he stood up for me when the administration came to him and said “who is this guy who wants all this stuff, is he on the level?” And Tom Rhue, without even knowing me, stood up for me, and so when they first said to us “oh no no no no, you can’t have this, you can’t have this,” at the end of the day, Beth Collison, my contact person at the administration, said “oh, everything’s fine, you’re gonna get an office, and we have an answering machine for you, and everything.” And we started meeting in the old student union. So from the year I was there, ’72 to ’73, I left in ’73, we’d set up a gay student union there, we called it Gay People’s Union at Stanford. And we had a drop in center, we had meetings, we even had a dance on campus, so I tried to spread what I had done at the University of Chicago.

MM: So you guys were doing sort of a couple things, it sounds like there was sort of like a counseling sort of...

DG: We had a drop-in center at Ida Noyes Hall. We had dances regularly...I think we sometimes danced at the Blue Gargoyle, remember the Blue Gargoyle, is it still around?

MM: It still exists as a building, but in the last few years it hasn’t been known...

DG: It’s amazing I can remember all of these names! They’re all coming back to me! See, that’s what cannabis does, it helps you remember, truly, I’m not kidding!

MM: So you also considered yourself kind of political, right, so you’re doing this organizing

on campus, and the social, and counseling...

DG: Right, right.

MM: I'm curious about the radio show, what kind of calls you got? Do you remember?

DG: Oh, people asked questions of my guests, I brought people to speak on issues of concern. I had a lesbian come on and talk about lesbian women's issues; we took calls from women about that. I had on Murray Edelman... talking about what we were doing. Current events of the day in the gay community. By the time we left we had really established a strong presence, a real clear part of the mosaic, not sticking out, but the part that you would see. So it felt like we were there with the Black student movement, Latino student movement, that kind of thing, and it was very gratifying to know that people would be more willing to be out.

My being openly gay in the dorms was, I was one of the few, and it helped other kids come out. Like when I was a senior there was a bunch of these freshmen, who were either gay or very gay friendly, and we all hung out, and they thought it was really great that I was openly gay and I was standing up for my civil rights, it felt like quite a change from my freshman year when I was still a bit in the closet.

MM: Right, I was going to ask, were there places you felt free to be open about your sexuality on campus, more than somewhere else, but I guess?

DG: I was pretty open from the beginning of my second year on. There was a little bit of hostility—one day I came back and there was a gay liberation poster on my door that had a little cigarette burn on it, but for the most part I got along with the people in my dorm, so, you know, they were joking. Once they told me that if I had scabies I would have to burn all the clothes I had owned, including the clothes I was thinking of buying, to keep it from coming back. You know, they were in their own you know, straight macho way, trying to show a little bit of empathy.

MM: So, I was going to ask, too, if most of your gay friends came out of this GLF – that's what I've seen...

DG: University of Chicago Gay Lib, U of C Gay Lib. We just called it Gay Liberation.

MM: Okay. Would you say that was your friend group?

DG: It became my social network, yeah. That's where I met other gay men and women and we hanged together. I was good friends with a woman, Nancy Garwood, she was a classmate of mine, and she was part of that. It was nice I could go to classes and there was Nancy, we'd sit together... it felt good.

MM: So, at least nowadays, U of C students don't spend all their time on campus, so I'm curious, you're like a city guy, you're from New York, did you spend time out in

Chicago? Did you meet a larger gay network in Chicago, or a friend network even?

DG: I did, I started going to the gay groups on the north side. They formed a group called Chicago Gay Alliance, which was on the north side of Chicago; primarily focused where the gay neighborhoods were, primarily Clark and Diversey, and Belmont area. And I would go to meetings up there. I wasn't old enough to go to the bars. And I looked young. So when I got to turn 21, I felt like I had come a long way, I could probably go to a bar and not get carded, and if I got carded I could prove who I was, that I was legit. But it hurt my social activities because I couldn't get into bars until I was 21 and aside from Gay Lib that's all there was. I did go to a thing called the Daisy Patch, an underage place, 6200 N, way way up on the north side, about a five-minute walk from the El, and they had like a dance...I think it was on Saturday night and I'd go up for that.

MM: That's a long ride!

DG: A long ride just to go to meet a bunch of gay men! Most of them were young, kind of queenie hairdressers; I didn't feel a lot in common with them. They were a bit older than me, too, they were in their early twenties, I was like, barely twenty.

MM: And so in the summers...you were in New York, right?

DG: I was in New York ...in '70, '71 I was working in New York, to make money, you know, to pay for things. In the summer of '72 I was at Stanford, in the graduate program.

MM: And the group you mentioned, you were involved with in New York?

DG: I was in the Gay Activists Alliance. GAA.

MM: And were other students who were in Gay Lib at UChicago, were they New Yorkers? Did you have a sense?

DG: If they were visiting New York, or staying in New York, they would come to either GAA or GLF. GLF was the more radical group, GAA was the more moderate group. I was in the more moderate group. I wasn't ready to become a Marxist-Leninist at the time...I was pro-Left, but I was not a Marxist-Leninist...I wanted to work on gay civil rights. I wanted to end discrimination. I didn't want to have a political qualification test for membership. I didn't want to have to swear allegiance. And I didn't want people who wanted civil rights for gay people to feel like...to adhere to that.

MM: I'm interested in hearing that, I mean, I wonder, it seems like you were already pretty aware of a lot of this, or interested in this political stuff before you arrived at U of C?

DG: I was a Leftie from way back. I was one of the students who was "Clean for Gene," in '68, Gene McCarthy; I was big for McGovern in '72; I met him when he came out to California. My first votes, as a 21-year old who could legally vote was...for Prop 19, for legalized adult personal use, not medical use of marijuana. In 1972, I also voted for

McGovern. Not that it mattered!

MM: But we remember those first votes!

DG: Well McGovern said that he would decriminalize marijuana if he was elected...

MM: And was that something that you did any sort of organizing about?

DG: No, I was a user of cannabis, but I was not an activist for cannabis as I am today. We [David and his husband, Michael] both are active in the core leadership group of the San Francisco chapter of Americans for Safe Access. We're having a meeting tomorrow night...

MM: Do you keep in touch with any of these folks? What happened to them?

DG: I see Murray Edelman, and Kevin now and then. That's about all of the people left that I keep in contact with...

MM: Because you went straight to grad school?

DG: I went directly from University of Chicago right to California; I even missed my own graduation. I had to start right away... [Ed.: for a Master's in Math Education].

MM: So you didn't keep up on what was happening at U of C, since you were so busy?

DG: No, I was pretty focused on getting my work done at school and organizing the gay student group there. I became a pivotal activist at Gay People's Union at Stanford.

MM: And were either at the U of C or Stanford groups were the undergrads and graduate students working together? Do you remember?

DG: We were very mixed. Lots of grads and undergrads in both organizations. There were definitely grad students involved with U of C Gay Lib...I was a grad student at Stanford, and there were undergrads there too...

MM: I guess it was pretty early in the organizing, but did you know if there were any big differences between what you sort of experience organizing in Chicago, and?

DG: It was a lot easier at Stanford.

MM: Really? Huh.

DG: Yeah, I pretty much asked for things, and after they got a little nervous and asked Thom Rhue, and he [said] I was on the level, we got the drop-in center...

MM: That's interesting. Do you think it was just personalities? Or California versus...

DG: I think Stanford was...more liberal administratively that the University of Chicago. And also I think they had gay exposure before I arrived, students asking for things.

MM: Right, because it's a little bit later.

DG: I don't think it seemed so different and new for them.

MM: It was not the first. Did you have a sense of people either at Chicago or Stanford, that this was their primary activism, or were they doing other kinds of organizing besides being involved in Gay Lib?

DG: You mean gay people there, or what?

MM: Yeah, or, the people you were sort of active with?

DG: Well the anti-war movement was big on both campuses. Stanford had had a big student strike I think in '70 and '71, where they blocked El Camino Real, the big highway along that runs north-south by there...

[00:22:31]

I found the atmosphere at Stanford much more pleasant. It just seemed sort of dreary in Chicago. Stanford just seemed, the weather seemed better, people smiled at me.

MM: I think people still say that today!

DG: ...I'd walk on the campus, I'd say, my god, these must be the best looking undergraduate and grad students I'd ever seen in my life they all look like models! All tan and buffed and healthy. Men and women alike. They all looked great! And I remember the people at Chicago all looked pale, and pasty, and grubby, and kind of walked with their head down, at least when I was there. Stanford seemed jovial. Stanford seemed light. Not lacking in academic prowess. Same academic capabilities. I found that my classes at Stanford were in the same level as at Chicago. But I found the work easier. I was able to get straight A's at Stanford no problem. Chicago I had to sweat to get A's and B's! Really! It was hard!

MM: And you were busy!

DG: I was working all the time. The academics at Chicago are unsurpassed...I heard people tell me that from Harvard! That when they transferred to Chicago for grad school that Chicago was much more challenging than Harvard.

MM: So you're busy with the Gay Lib, you're busy with your classes, did you have time or interest in relationships?

DG: Well I was dating, of course, and nothing that ever got serious.

MM: Both at Chicago and Stanford?

DG: Yeah. Yeah.

MM: I guess thinking just about Chicago for a sec, though, do you think that this was, your experience was typical of your cohort, or?

DG: I think it was typical for people who were involved in Gay Lib. We were activists, we were fighting social justice issues and civil rights issues, and at the same time we were trying to create a positive social environment that was an alternative to the bars, the baths, and cruising in parks, which up until gay liberation, there was not much else to do.

MM: And has your perspective on those years changed a little bit over time?

DG: In what way?

MM: I'm curious, in some ways, now, my students come often times – I have a select group, right – but I have students taking gay history, right, I have all these freshmen and they're out at 17...

DG: I was out. I was out at 18.

MM: I think they have different perspectives on what their sort of primary affiliation is and whether or not they should be political, so. I don't think that has changed?

DG: What I've noticed when I've talked to gay students who are, say, undergrads at Berkeley, is that they don't feel as much need to go to a gay group. They'll just go to parties, because everyone's completely integrated, and no one cares one way or another. If someone's attracted to someone else, you know, eye contact will take care of that. It will handle itself. There's no longer a fear to show interest in a guy if you're a guy, because the people there know how to handle it if they're not interested, right? And the gay people who are out, who make a pass at some guy, if they don't see a response, say "ok, I get it, time to move on!" It just feels like gay people are much more integrated into campus culture in general. Being gay is pretty much a non-issue let's say at Berkeley; I assume at Chicago it's pretty much a non-issue.

MM: Most of my students would probably say that.

DG: Is there an active gay group on the campus?

MM: There is, it's actually called Queers & Associates. Currently. We're still trying to figure out when that name changed, it's been that since I've been around, the early 2000s, it was GALA before that...

DG: I know that Murray and Kevin moved out to California I think in '73 and I was at

Stanford in '72 and moved up to the city [San Francisco] in '73. So by the early '70s there were a few of us from Chicago who were living out here, because this seemed to be the promised land!

MM: Right! Well, I was going to ask, too, about your move to Stanford, I know you were only there briefly, but, the social scene? In some ways, Palo Alto is close to here [San Francisco], but...

DG: I would just go to the city, or go to the bars down there. 'Cause I was 21, I was totally legal, I could go to bars, I could meet people, and we had a nice gay group on campus. We had parties, we had dances, we did consciousness-raising groups.

MM: And then you said in '73 you moved to here, to San Francisco. You were done.

DG: Yes, and I've been pretty much here ever since. Michael [David's partner] moved here in 1970.

MM: So when you got here, you had your Master's at that point? And did you start working right away?

[00:28:15]

DG: I went right into teaching; I taught from, let's see, September '73 to June 2006, thirty-four years.

MM: You taught math?

DG: I taught math at the high school level. Secondary. Last twenty-four years I taught at Redwood High School in Larkspur, CA, across the bay in Marin County. Very upscale suburban, public high school.

MM: Some people when they start working full-time, they're sort of balancing their political and social commitments, those sort of change. Did you still find yourself involved?

DG: I was still working on gay activism. In the early '80s I sang with the Gay Men's Chorus, I was one of the co-founders of the Harvey Milk Gay Democratic Club, which is the preeminent left-wing, gay-bisexual-lesbian-transgender democratic club. It's the LGBT club. I'm glad they don't call it "Queer Democratic Club," I'd get mad, I'd pound on their door.

MM: I'm curious, so in the '70s?

DG: In the '70s we started a group called Bay Area Gay Liberation, BAGL. And then we formed the Harvey Milk Gay Democratic Club, which at the time was the San Francisco Gay Democratic Club, and after Harvey died we called it the Harvey Milk Gay Democratic Club. It's now the Harvey Milk LGBT Democratic Club. I'm still a member!

I was the founding Vice President, I can still be a member. I can't go to their meetings too much because they conflict with our ASA meetings [Americans for Safe Access].

MM: So did you feel that San Francisco, that was where you were always planning to head after Stanford?

DG: I was hoping to stay there, yeah...

[00:30:27]

MM: I guess I asked about San Francisco, 'cause we think of San Francisco in the '70s as maybe *the*...

DG: I loved being here in the '70s. I was like a pig in mud! [laughs] So to speak. It was great to be a young gay man, in San Francisco, in the early '70s...there had been gay liberation movements here, and it was a fairly well-developed gay subculture here. There were bars, there were baths, there were organizations. And I got involved in the Alice B. Toklas Democratic Club, became their issues chair, and when they refused to put the "Gay" in their name we formed with Harvey Milk, the San Francisco Gay Democratic Club. We mostly formed it because we wanted a club that would be openly identified as a Gay Democratic Club. And we also wanted it to be the nucleus around Harvey's campaign for Supervisor. He had run for office several times, first for the Assembly, and then for Supervisor, and we finally got him elected when he won in '77 in the district elections race. He lost city-wide in 1975, but he was the first runner-up in that city-wide race.

MM: So did you have any concerns about your teaching?

DG: I wasn't openly gay at work until the '90s. Even though everyone knew I was gay. Then I helped form a gay student group, what did we call it?

MM: This is where you were teaching?

DG: Yeah, at Redwood High School. We had a gay student group, and, what did we call it...It'll come back to me.

MM: And you said that's a development later in your career,

DG: Yes, in the 90s, I formed it with a straight teacher. Mostly kids who came to it were from my AP Calculus class, most of them weren't gay, they were just very supportive of me being openly gay, they thought that was very wonderful. These were the progressive kids. Redwood High School in Larkspur is a very progressive school, the parents are pretty liberal.

MM: So it wasn't completely out there when it was organized. I think a lot of those groups date from the mid- to late-90s. Gay-straight alliances, I think?

DG: Gay-Straight Alliance! That's what we called it. Gay-Straight Alliance. GSA. Thank you! Anne Jaime, who was a straight Social Studies teacher, and I, David Goldman, Math teacher, formed a Gay-Straight Alliance at our school. And we'd meet at lunch in my classroom, and discuss things, and deal with issues that were coming up for students. And we did a lot of work around teachers handling homophobia. A lot of teachers at the school at the time did not know what to do when a kid would make an anti-gay slur. They would often just freeze and not say anything. And we thought that was unacceptable, it had to be challenged. Kids could not get away with saying that without there being a consequence. And so that was one of the big things I worked on with the administration, much to their nervousness. Was to get—desensitize—teachers to begin to handle it, and I finally got a staff development session, a half-hour of time to talk about it and how teachers could respond better. And it worked! Because teachers started standing up for it. And they understood that it was a problem.

MM: So did you notice, that's later in your teaching career, if you were sort of quietly out to some people...

DG: Oh, they all knew, they all knew. I had kids who would come to me and wanted to talk about stuff, they knew I was gay and I'd talk to them about it. I was accused during my first year at Redwood of kissing a girl. A student. And I said, "boy is this girl barking up the wrong tree."

[00:35:27]

MM: I'm exhausted talking to you because you seem so busy with all this stuff! And I wonder, you're active in these political movements, and working, and at this point were you forming relationships of a romantic nature, were you meeting people?

DG: Well, I met Michael in '88 and we've been partners ever since. I was dating all through the '80s, I had had two semi-serious relationships before Michael, the third time was the charm!

MM: Where did you meet?

DG: Michael and I met at The Eagle, a gay bar at 12th St. and Harrison St., which has just been named a gay landmark, there was an attempt to sell it to a non-gay interest group, and people went crazy over that, the Eagle meant so much to them, a lot of us, every Sunday, literally they had a fundraiser for AIDS work, so they literally raised tens of millions of dollars for AIDS over the years...they donated everything, all the proceeds to AIDS charities. It was great. That's how I met Michael, one Sunday afternoon I was there and I met Michael.

MM: And did you notice, were the groups you were working with...was there AIDS activism coming into the work you were doing with the political clubs?

DG: They were all integrated. I mean, AIDS became a major focus of the Harvey Milk Club in

the '80s and '90s. Along with more militant groups like ACT-UP. And ACT-Up split between the crazoids, ACT-UP San Francisco versus ACT-UP Golden Gate. And ACT-UP San Francisco was filled with people who had been known disrupters of gay groups in Florida, and the guys in it weren't even really gay, as it turned out... They were the ones who were telling people not to take their AIDS medications because AIDS was caused by drug overdosing. And they said, "just smoke cannabis." Well, cannabis is good for HIV but it's not the only thing you need to take for HIV.

MM: Right. So since you're from New York, did you keep an eye on, did you have a sense of a more national gay politics?

[00:37:48]

DG: All throughout my political work, even in Chicago, we had a big teach-in on gay issues at the University of Chicago, we brought Allen Ginsberg in.

MM: And that was during your time as a student?

DG: Yup. We did a lot of things. Murray [Ed.: Edelman] can fill you in on a lot of these specifics. I'm forgetting a lot of it.

MM: Doesn't sound like you've forgot a lot!

DG: It seems like a big blur to me now. But we did a lot. And we were always conscious of what other groups were doing and the national focus. We were thinking nationally but acting locally.

MM: Do you think that with the campus groups, even? Or was it so new?

DG: Oh yeah. We watched what was going on in New York, what they were doing, and I was able to report back from my summer trips, what was going on. Tell the University of Chicago, "Well we had this going on, we had a zap! We took over *Harper's Magazine*!" Because they published an article by Joseph Epstein called "Homo/Hetero: The Struggle for Sexual Identity" [Ed.: published September 1970] where he wrote that if he had his way he'd wish all gay people off the face of the earth. He was freaking out because one of his sons had come out gay. So he used the article as a diatribe against gay things.

MM: And do you know, thinking about that time again, do you have a sense of other campus groups in Chicago?

DG: There was one at the University of Illinois-Chicago Circle, Northern Illinois University at DeKalb; I believe there was one at Northwestern at one point. But the major activists came out of our group and non-students who formed the Chicago Gay Alliance on the north side. Adult residents of the city who were gay.

MM: We've sort of touched on this a little, but I wonder two things, one, we're just now

starting to trace this stuff, you taught over decades, do you think things are much different for either college students or the students you were teaching over time?

DG: Well, most high schools now in major areas have a gay-straight alliance, I know that. And there are gay educator's groups, like BANGLE Bay Area Network of Gay and Lesbian Educators, and GLSEN, I think GLSEN's a national group of gay educators. Mostly elementary, secondary...I think things have really changed. Just talking to students, like I said, at UC Berkeley, they feel much more comfortable in their own skin, they just integrate with everybody, everyone hangs out with everybody. Gay people hang out with non-gay people all the time, there's just more comfort being who you are with anybody. You know, in the Bay Area, being gay is just a big yawn. "Yes, and?" "What else is new?"

MM: Is the other, the campus visits you're doing now, is that related to your marijuana work? You said you'd been to Berkeley or other campuses, is that related?

DG: Mostly on medical marijuana issues, but over the time I've met gay and gay-friendly activists, the students at Berkeley told me it's just no big deal there.

[00:41:17]

[David discusses his medical marijuana activism after retiring from teaching in 2006]

[00:43:14]

MM: So would you say this work [with Americans for Safe Access] is sort of, in your retirement, your primary...

DG: It's my primary fun thing to do in retirement.

MM: Are you still active with any of the gay political groups around San Francisco?

DG: Just the Harvey Milk LGBT Democratic Club...but I see the cannabis movement needing much more work. We're about 40 years behind the gay movement. We're like where we were in the '70s with the gay movement...

[00:43:55]

MM: It seems like you've been, always been, an organizer. Is that true?

DG: That's right! I've always been an activist, and an organizer, and I feel I've been able to make a difference. That's why I do it. I don't care, I don't need to be a Gandhi...but on a local scale Michael and I are happy to make a difference...

[David and his partner, Michael, discuss Americans for Safe Access fundraising and other volunteer work organizing a local dispensary]

[00:46:02]

MM: Well, that makes me think, thinking of gay lib at Chicago, something that you join just a year after you started, were there even leaders in that group?

DG: Well there were activists in that group. I'd say – Murray [Edelman], and Kevin [Burke], and me were among the most active. Along with Henry Wiemoff, Hannah Frisch, Nancy Garwood, Step May, Ferd Eggan, Carl Sharp. It was a core of people who did most of the heavy lifting.

MM: I think there's some people that shy away from that kind of organizing, activism.

DG: Yeah, there was a guy in my dorm, John Iverson, who now lives in Berkeley, who never came to a meeting. And he's openly gay as anybody. He benefited from what we did but he didn't get involved...some people are just not that political. I think he wasn't that out at the time.

MM: Were those the kind of people that would show up at the dances? Or would they stay away?

DG: Some of them would. Some of them would come. And we'd always be watching to see who's coming and going. "Who's that?" "Do we know this guy?" "Is he a student?" Always wanted to know.

MM: Was there a cost for the dance, by the way? Were they free dances? Do you remember?

DG: I don't recall. Murray probably remembers.

MM: I should have brought, there's a poster in the archives – they say it's '72 or so – I'll have to email you the file if you're curious. It's one of the few things we [have], when we say, "we're trying to build our archive!"

DG: Consciousness-raising groups, teach-ins, all kinds of things.

MM: I bet those people overlapped a lot.

DG: Yeah.

MM: So, obviously, you heard about me because you were at the [U of C] alumni event [Ed.: in San Francisco at the end of August 2012], are you active much with the alumni, have you gone back for reunion?

[00:48:00]

DG: I've gone to events, I'm not active in the group but I'll go to events now and then. We

went to one at the bar around the corner, practically nobody showed up. But I think there's a bit more of a shot in the arm from Eric [Ed.: Rogers, who coordinates the LGBT Alumni Affinity group] and some of the others, to actually make the chapter in the Bay Area, gay and lesbian and bisexual and transgender alumni, more of an active group with regular meetings. And I'm willing to go any time they have a meeting.

MM: Have you ever been back to campus?

DG: Not since 1980. I went and visited in 1980. I went down to the Wieboldt john and there were still people cruising in there! I couldn't believe it! I had to see it for myself!

MM: This is great. We're finding out all kinds of things, places...

DG: Is that still a sexual trysting place?

MM: I don't know. I forget some of the other places my students found in their research, they were always surprised...

DG: I suspect that stuff is pretty gone now, the whole tea room scene, because people are feeling more comfortable being out, they don't have to meet in bathrooms to get a blow job, come on.

[David's partner, Michael, asks if there were lesbians active in the gay movement.]

[00:49:15]

DG: Hannah Frisch and Nancy Garwood, two very active women. They were really great, they were wonderful.

MM: So there wasn't really any...

DG: There was no hostility. At the time. I only discovered radical anti-man feelings among lesbians when I came out here, to California. At Chicago, and in New York, we had lesbians in GAA, we had lesbians in GLF, we had lesbians in UC Gay Lib, and for the most part we pretty well all got along. There wasn't much hostility.

MM: So when it was a "gay dance," it was a...

DG: It was everybody! Yeah, yeah. Mostly men. And some of the women, they would complain that more women didn't come, and I would say, "Well, what can we do to help support you getting more women here?" Right? We would talk about it. It was harder. I guess women didn't come out as easily as the men did.

[Monica, David, and Michael discuss the current gay movement on campus]

[00:52:27]

MM: The students that are involved with this project, of course, are very – they knew nothing about gay history, I thought maybe they'd know something about, say, '69 forward, and even that...they're fascinated by the things that had to be done for U of C to look like the kind of place it is for them now.

DG: We helped build what it is today, in our own small little way. We desensitized the campus, staff, students, the whole feeling there, so that being gay wasn't a big issue. For that I'm grateful, we left a good legacy.

MM: I wonder why...you agreed to be interviewed?

DG: Well, I was very active in it then, I felt like it should be part of the history.

MM: Yeah – I'm very grateful for that. You've just built me a little database of things that happened between '69 and '72 that has just been hearsay, I think.

DG: You must talk to Murray Edelman, and Kevin Burke, I'll give you all their contact information...Murray will just fill you with stuff! Mounds of details! All sorts of articles and things.

[00:53:59]

MM: This is great, this is a lot of detail. I asked if your experience is typical; I don't know if as many students bounce back and forth...between two pretty active gay lib movements [Chicago and New York]. That's really really interesting. Is there anything else I might have missed?

DG: I can't think of anything else, I think that's pretty much it.

MM: ...I did bring, I don't know if you remember these ads. These are some of the things we found in the *Maroon*. [SEE APPENDIX 1]

DG: That was the one, that was my [radio] show, that was my show! This was the one Murray Edelman put in the paper...Yes, I went to this Pierce Tower dance...Oh, I can tell you one more story.

[00:55:21]

DG: The head of Shorey, the top two floors of Pierce Tower, was a guy named Northcott, Professor Northcott, I think he taught German. German scholar. And he wanted to do a reenactment of *The Boys in the Band*. And I auditioned for it but I told him that I wouldn't participate unless we had a roundtable discussion afterwards to put the play in context because of some of the self-hating comments that are made in the film, I mean the story. "You show me a happy homosexual and I'll show you a gay corpse." And that put the kibosh on that; he didn't want to do that.

MM: So there was no production?

DG: There was no production. Even though I was successfully accepted to play a part.

MM: Oh, so they cast it?

DG: I got to play Donald. I was going to be Donald.

MM: Oh wow! You were busy.

DG: Yeah. But I told them that it was important that we have a discussion about it afterwards, with the cast, to discuss the context in which that play was written, and how we're all not a bunch of miserable creatures who hate ourselves.

MM: That's interesting...you said this was cast by a professor – did you have any sense, academically, that stuff was going on in terms of gay topics, or even...

DG: Only incidentally, sporadically, nothing that I would necessarily know about.

MM: You were so busy with math!

DG: I did write a paper at Stanford on the "Effeminist" movement – these were ultra-radical gay men who said that drag was sexist, that men wearing drag were offending women. Mocking women's roles. And for my course taught by Daryl and Sandra Bem, two of the top psychologists at Stanford, on the psychology of sex roles, I wrote my paper on the Effeminist movement, and got an A on it! They thought it was great! Because it was something they didn't know much about.

MM: So it wasn't just all math courses...

DG: Oh no, I took other courses as a grad student there. I couldn't resist, and I had room in my schedule for it so I took it.

[Michael asks about the "Jail Fund" mentioned on one of the Maroon ads]

DG: We were raising money to make sure people who got busted at our demonstrations could be bailed out, because the cops were still engaging in open warfare on us, open season...This [ad] is the first thing I responded to, this one about the student homophile movement. I think Henry Wienhoff put that one in.

MM: That's what I've heard.

DG: He died of AIDS, unfortunately. It was very sad. He was an amazing guy. He was one of the most articulate, verbally adroit people I've ever met. He could express things so eloquently and succinctly my jaw would drop.

MM: And he was active the whole time you were there?

DG: Yes. Good guy. He was an ex-student, he had been there but he had not graduated.

MM: Like I said, thank you, this is has already helped put some of these pieces together for me.

DG: My pleasure.

[00:58:41]

End of Interview

APPENDIX 1: *Chicago Maroon* classified ads, ca. 1970s, discussed in Goldman interview [from 2011 exhibition at Special Collections Research Center]