

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

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW #45

HARRILL, BERT (1963 -) MA '89, PhD '93

At U of C: 1987 - 1994

Interviewed: July 9th, 2013

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Interview (July 9th, 2013) by phone:

[00:00:00]

ML: So, first question: How did you come to the University of Chicago?

BH: Well, I was a Religious Studies major at the University of Chapel Hill, North Carolina. I'm from North Carolina. Desperately trying to escape North Carolina. At the time it was the land of Jesse Helms. I knew as a freshman that I wanted to be a professor. I thought I was going to be maybe an English professor or a history professor, but I got really excited by religious studies and the study of the New Testament, because it turns out Chapel Hill had a very good program there. I did not want to go to seminary. The old model of Biblical Studies was that you first had to go to seminary and get a masters in divinity. This was because there was never a religious studies major, you know, back in the old days, there was never a BA in religious studies. That's kind of a new phenomenon.

I had three years of Greek and two years of Hebrew, I had Roman history, I had done everything, so I wanted to apply directly to PhD programs. So I applied to schools like Yale, Princeton. I think I applied to five schools. I got into not all of them, but some of them. But Chicago not only accepted me but gave me a fellowship. And so I was—and I learned later when I got to campus that Chicago is known for taking risks on students. When I arrived on campus, they said, “Just because we admitted you doesn't mean that we have to give you a degree. You have to prove yourself.” It's got that kind of reputation. I was very interested in the interdisciplinary approach. Chicago, they had this department of New Testament and early Christian literature, which doesn't exist anymore. They folded it into the divinity school I think about five years ago. But the faculty came from philosophy, came from classical studies, came from the divinity school, and I wanted a program that did classics and New Testament studies together. The other programs were kind of more theology, kind of old-fashioned, assumed that you were coming in with an ordained background. And Chicago had a history—the divinity school itself, I don't know if you know the history, it's Northern Baptist, and William Rainey

Harper wanted to make sure that Swift Hall was right in the middle of campus, he didn't want it to be separated. The social history of early Christianity was actually done at Chicago in the 1920s. They actually first started looking at the early Christian, looking at the New Testament for the social history of the community, as opposed to systematizing theology from it, like the doctrine of sin or something. And so the faculty was also very famous.

But it was mainly the interdisciplinary classics, New Testament combination, the unusual nature of an entire department in New Testament, and the fact that they gave me a fellowship that put it all in. So I could go straight into a PhD program, the masters I did en route, and I didn't have to do another masters. And I got out in six years, which was, you know, that's—I knew people who had been there twenty years, and ten years, and of course they arrived with a masters from another school, so I was determined to get the PhD and get going. I was very happy at the University of Chicago. A lot of people don't like it, but I actually liked my time there.

ML: Why do you think you liked it, whereas other people didn't?

BH: Well, I knew what I wanted to do. As I said, I remember—I knew that—I didn't know exactly what I wanted to work on in my dissertation, but I knew that—I wasn't there to find myself, I wasn't there to explore courses, I kind of had the attitude that you would find in a medical student or a law student. I was very—I was basically goal-oriented. I also got to know the advanced grad students. There are some grad students you don't really want to spend more time with, because they're just complainers and they have a lot invested in making you agree with them being miserable. But then there are others—I could see other grad students who were advanced, and they gave papers at conferences, you could tell that they spoke in seminars, you could tell—I got to know them.

One of them, actually, he was gay, and he was four years ahead of me. He's the one who told me about the coming-out group, and he's the one who told me about GALA. He's now, he's in New Testament, he's now dean of St. Michael's College in Vermont. I'm pretty sure he's the only openly gay dean at a Catholic university. And so when he got the job, when he became dean, he's been at St. Michael's since '89, but when he got the job as dean, there were all these things in the news about “oh St. Michael's is not Catholic,” but I think it's died down now. Yeah, that's what I told grad students when I'd been there about four years. Get to know the grad students who are successful.

I remember one of the GALA meetings—back then the undergraduate population wasn't very large and there wasn't much focus on the undergraduates, it was mostly a graduate school emphasis, and I just remember one student was saying, “There's a thing that the undergraduates call the U of C greeting, which is basically, everyone staring at the ground, and you just shrug, that's it.” They talk about, if you want to do any kind of advertising, you have to write it on the sidewalk, because everyone's looking down. They didn't have—I remember, around '94, I first started to see letter jackets from the sports, I was like, “what is that?” And the fraternities started to be more prominent. So—and also being involved in GALA. I had a social outlet on campus, and that was really important

to me.

The other thing that I think made it great for me is that I got to go away for a semester. I went to—I learned that a graduate student can do an exchange, it's called an exchange scholar program, they also have another program with the Big Ten school. But the exchange scholar program let you go to Yale or Pennsylvania. So I went in the fall of 1990, I went to Yale. Because there were professors there I wanted to study with. I just finished the MA and it was good to get away. That's where I met David, my partner. But it was very interesting. I went to the orientation for new students there, just to see what it was like, and it was very different. Chicago said, “Just because we admit you doesn't mean that we have to give you a degree,” whereas at Yale, they were like, “We admitted you, we have every confidence that you will become not only a successful grad student and graduate, but you will be a great scholar and we have invested in you.” So it was just—it meant a different kind of culture, because at Chicago it was very competitive. I think students, one of the reasons why they were sometimes mean to each other, is because they were trying to show off to each other and there was always competition because you had to impress the professor. Whereas at Yale, they already knew—the professors already accepted them. So more cooperative at Yale. I made a lot of friends there, and I came back. It was nice to go away for a semester. It was like being on vacation, you go away and then you come back. And then I finished up the program after that.

ML: It's great to hear that you had such a good time. And you were president of GALA, which is really impressive. Could you talk about how you got involved in that organization?

BH: Well, I'm from North Carolina. I was not out in college. Even though University of North Carolina is liberal. Jesse Helms famously said that he was going to not fund the new North Carolina zoo, because all you need to do is put a fence around the university and that will do for the zoo, with all the communists they have there, and all the animals. But I was very frightened about coming out. I lived my freshman year in a dorm that had 90 people in it, it was all male. It was a three-floor building, and they only had RAs on the third floor and the first floor. I was on the third floor. So the second floor was kind of wild because they didn't have an RA. I remember there was an African-American freshman, and there was another freshman who clearly was gay, and they both turned out to be gay. They found out that they were gay that year. And basically, the students on that hall made it so unpleasant for them—they wrote “faggot” on the door and everything—and there was no, there was no RA policing or anything, that they had to special permission from the housing department to get off-campus housing and live in an apartment. I certainly was not going to come out after that experience. I remember thinking, “Why weren't the RAs doing anything about this?” And then I became an RA my senior year, and it was very different by then, we had all this—but I still wasn't out to anybody.

[0:10:56]

I took a year off before I went to graduate school. I had to learn German, so I went to

Germany for 6 months, at a language institute. I had a roommate who was Japanese my sophomore year, and he invited me to Japan for a week. You know, if I could get over there, it was free, so. I did a lot of things. I went to, before—I'm still talking about Carolina, here—before I, in the summer, before I left for good, I remember going to the campus equivalent of the gay and lesbian group at Carolina, they just had a voicemail answering machine, and I made an appointment to meet, I guess he was the president. He basically, I just said, “I want to come out to my parents.” He said, “Don't come out to your parents when you have a boyfriend. Come out now, because it's less threatening.” So I did that before I went away to Germany.

When I went to Chicago, I was determined to be out. I remember looking up in the student handbook—there was a list of student groups, and I remember looking up the Gay and Lesbian Alliance, and I was going to go to their first meeting. Oh, the other thing that I wanted to say about why I wanted to go to Chicago was that it was the only school at the time that had non-discrimination of sex orientation in its non-discrimination clause [Ed.: “Sexual orientation” had appeared in nondiscrimination statements in University publications, but would not be part of the official bylaws of the University until 1998]. I don't remember seeing that at Yale, at the other schools. So I was quite impressed with that. The very first week that GALA had met, it was a Tuesday night, I didn't know a soul. There were only, there may have only been, I don't know, fifteen to twenty people there. And I just happened to talk to somebody. He asked me what I was doing, and I said, “I'm in this department you've probably never heard of.” He said, “What is it?” I said, “New Testament and early Christianity,” and he said, “Oh, I'm in New Testament too!” That was the senior graduate student I talked about. That was really helpful. He's the one who told me about the coming-out group, so I started doing that. That met an hour before at Brent House. I think it was—no, it wasn't at Brent House then, it was in the person's apartment, the coordinator's apartment. So I just started coming. It was an important group for me. This was '87. And then in 19... so the elections for the president, that was in December, I think, it would be calendar year. It would be the fall of 1989—it was always co-presidents, it was always a man and a woman, and they basically needed someone to do it. Everyone clapped and then I suddenly found myself to be co-president. And that's how that happened. I had—the year before, I had been the coordinator for the coming out group. I did the coming out group as a participant, and then the next year I became the coordinator. And then, I had that experience, then I became president the next year.

ML: What was the coming out group like?

BH: It was run by a person in the divinity school, which was nice, because I got to know him in class. When I was a participant in it, it was very small. There were only four or three people who would come. Some people would not come regularly—they just came when they wanted to. And it was—I was a little uncomfortable with it being in this person's apartment. It was down the street from the Medici on 57th St, and you had to ring the doorbell and it was his place, and I was kind of—because I knew him from school, from the divinity school, it was okay.

So when I became coordinator, I wanted to change the venue of the place to a more neutral location. I knew Sam Portaro [Interview #65], who was the Episcopal chaplain, who was—who is himself gay. He's retired now. I asked him if he would be happy to host the coming out group, and he was very happy about that. So moved it when I was president—sorry, when I was the coordinator—to Brent House. We did better advertising of the group, we put an ad in the Maroon and things like that. The coming out group, I made sure that we sat in a circle, I had no counseling training at all. But I let people talk about what they wanted to talk about. I don't think I had any set agenda except to let people talk.

And I think at one time there may have been ten people who showed up. I think it was mostly graduate students. Undergraduates, they were just—we did have some of those, but I think for them it was just too soon, you know. And of course there was no internet at that time, so you couldn't do anything. I made sure there was information about PFLAG, the resources on campus, so I would talk about that when there was not anything else to talk about.

ML: You mention there being not many undergraduates in the coming out group. In GALA itself, was there a large undergraduate contingent, or was it mostly graduate students?

BH: Well, the co-president, her name was Melissa Stein, she was a senior. The secretary was Daniel von Brighoff [Interview #22], he's the one who told me about your, about your history project. He was, I think he was a sophomore. Yeah, there were—well, the problem was that we didn't really identify each other by what school we were in. There were both undergraduates and graduates there. I remember the president before me, he was Mormon. Actually I forgot his name. He was a senior but he had been out of school for about three years before he came to Chicago, so he was a little older. The president before that was a grad student. And the president before that, I don't remember, that was before I came here. But the coming out group, I just remember, we had some freshmen show up. When they came with a friend, there were two people who would come together, they would say, but if they just came by themselves, they were just kind of scared, they didn't know anyone. I—I think it's just—I remember, I didn't come out at all in college, so I could understand.

ML: During GALA, what sort of events did GALA organize? Did you have goals for the organization as president?

BH: Well, let's see here. What I'm going to send you—I gave you our mission statement and what we're trying to do. Basically, there were two main events that we did every quarter. One was a dance in Ida Noyes hall, and the other was a wine and cheese party at Brent House. Brent House, before we did the coming out group there, Brent House had already partnered with GALA as a safe space for the Brent House social, as it was called. That, because there was wine there, was pretty much grad students, although we would try to get more undergraduates to come. The dance was the other event that we did.

What I tried to do as president was to have some kind of speaker or some kind of

program every Tuesday. I tried to make sure we did that. You're going to get the schedule. When I was there, that was when ACT UP was just starting. So we had ACT UP come, we had some movie nights, we had a rabbi from Congregation Or Hadash, which is a gay and lesbian Jewish congregation. We had someone from the college student resource center to talk about counseling for gay and lesbian students. We had someone from Chicago House, which serves people with AIDS. We had a program about being an openly gay or lesbian professor. I got to know—I tried to learn who in the university was gay and willing to talk. And the university health service, Dr. Tom Jones, gave a presentation on safe sex. And that's back when there were bookstores open, so the gay and lesbian bookstores, like the People Like Us Books, the owner came down to do a presentation. We had a presentation by a woman who had just adopted, so it was about how you could adopt as a gay or lesbian. At the end of April, there was always the gay and lesbian awareness week on campus. People wore pink armbands. Those kinds of things we did.

In June, I actually partnered with the alumni association, and we had the first ever gay alumni event. You'll get that from the scrapbook. Of course that was at Brent House again. The alumni association had never been contacted by the gay and lesbian association, and said, "This is actually an interesting fundraising idea!" We put on the program, the homecoming weekend, that there would be an event for gay and lesbian alumni. It was actually very successful. I'm looking at my copies from the scrapbook. Apparently June 20th was actually the 20th anniversary celebration of GALA. So GALA must have been founded in June of 1970. I don't know if that coordinates with what you have, but that's what we have.

[22:10]

ML: Yeah! Chicago Gay Liberation was founded in June of 1970, I think. [BH: Yeah, that's it!] But yeah, that's really neat, that's an incredible array of programming that you had.

BH: Well, this is the social life that I had. Another undergraduate joke I learned was that Hyde Park, it wasn't as fun—well, Hyde Park is Hyde Park, but back then, I remember they said, "Be careful where you walk" and all this stuff. But the undergraduates said that the only way to escape Hyde Park is to take LSD. What they meant was Lakeshore Drive. You can't take the L, it was very hard to go downtown. So for me, it was—I was very engaged with this. I was really happy to do it. But you'll get the full schedule of what we did.

ML: Yeah, I'm looking forward to it. So, you mentioned ACT UP in your list of things you did. There was that, and what other political issues were—?

BH: I remember, we were not political. In the sense that—we were political, I learned a little about the history of GALA, and I learned this from friends who were four years ahead of me. Some time, it must have been '86 or '85, people from a conservative newspaper or somewhere on campus put a fake personal ad in, like, the Windy City Times or something. Whoever answered it from the University of Chicago, they wrote a letter to

their parents or anyone they knew, the place they worked, to say “do you know this person is gay?” I don't know all the details of it—I think I talk about it in one of the newspaper articles. That was quite a disturbing event on campus. And I remember, the files in the GALA office, I remember looking at those, and there was a letter there from Hanna Gray, the president of UChicago. It may have been the only letter she ever wrote to GALA. But she wrote, “We're going to get to the bottom of this,” because apparently students were behind this. It was apparently the impetus to get sexual orientation in the non-discrimination clause for the university—we need to have this because this is a clear case of discrimination.

I remember that happening, and—so that was a political event. But we decided, or it was decided for me—I remember people saying, it's meant to be a social event where people can feel safe. Because we didn't have safe space back then, we didn't have signs—one of the things I have on my door that I had at Indiana and also DePaul, when I was there, is that this is a safe space, a safe zone, for gay and lesbian students. But there was nothing like that. Students were wanting us to be more and more politically active with ACT UP. This happened after I became president, but there was a schism, that happened. Because we, we didn't feel like we wanted to make people do things that they didn't want to do. Like march—if they didn't want to march, then that's fine. The organization—we always marched in the gay pride parade, I always reserved a space for that, but we decided that we would not be an organization that—I think it's because we wanted to be as inclusive as possible. But ACT UP, there were several students who were really angry, really upset, really wanted to fight this. And so they started their own group. I don't remember what it was called on campus. But so there was another group that was openly political or openly activist.

ML: Do you remember which year that schism happened?

BH: Well, so I went to Yale in 1990. When I came back—it must have been around '91, when they had this other group. I don't remember what it was called, this group. I remember that when I put the program together, I had speakers from ACT UP!, I had speakers who wanted—PFLAG, they were very supportive, PFLAG Chicago, they had been coming to Chicago for many years. They were a husband and wife and they were great. They talked about their son and they talked with a Chicago accent. So I'm looking at my—I'm looking at our mission statement, and it says, “The Gay and Lesbian Alliance is a student alliance which provides educational and advocacy service for the university's sex-associated minorities. We attempt to provide a supportive and social environment for people attempting to live as openly as they desire as gay men, lesbians, and so forth. We act as advocates for sex-associated minorities to the administration, housing, health services, and related areas.” That's it—I remember that we decided that our main goal was that if we were going to be political—our main political function is to work with the university, and to make sure that we have an open environment for the university. Outside the university, I remember people saying that that probably isn't GALA's function. If you want that you can join ACT UP. And I think that's where some people felt that we should be more politically active beyond the university, and we should get involved with bigger issues outside the university. But I was kind of the school of thought that organization

shouldn't be dedicated—because things like getting the sexual orientation notice into the non-discrimination clause, and there were a couple of instances of harassment on campus. I went to the administration and met with them, and I was the official spokesman for the gay and lesbian students. And so at least there was a voice for those students.

ML: Could you talk a little bit more about those incidents of harassment?

[0:29:07]

BH: Yeah. I've got clippings about it. I'm trying to remember—was it 30 years ago? I don't want to remember. But there was a—there were some students in chemistry, some undergraduate students in chemistry who were gay, who were attacked somewhere on the quads. Someone said, "I'm going to inject air bubbles into you." And I thought that this was a strange thing. It sounds like—who would say that? It must be someone they know in the chemistry department, I always thought. There was a big outrage about this incident on campus. So that was one incident.

The other political incident was that we wanted to make sure that an ROTC would never recruit on campus, because gays were not allowed in the military. ROTC had already been kicked off the campus, they had been kicked off campus in the Vietnam era, so we didn't have the ROTC. But we were also wanting to have recruiters who used the student placement service, to make sure that they abide by the non-discrimination policy of the university. Yes. So it was the Career and Placement Services, CAPS office. I don't know if it still exists. We wanted to make sure that any firm would abide by the university. The law school had its own gay and lesbian group, but they actually got the firm of Baker and McKenzie barred from recruiting in 1990. I'm just reading from the clipping here. Because one of the firm's partners used insensitive and racist language while interviewing a student. And so, yeah, we called on the university to only allow companies which either have non-discrimination policies that are consistent with the university's own policy, or who certify that they do not discriminate.

So I remember, actually, I remember meeting with, this was like the highest—I never met the president, but I met someone from, I don't remember which office this was from, but these were administrators who thought, "We should not do this policy. We should let recruiters come in, and we should have anyone they want. That's part of being a university, we have tolerance, we have tolerance for people who have different views from us." I remember arguing right back at the administrator. "But this is important, because they're discriminating against students." She said, "But don't you want to be tolerant?" I said, "I don't have to be tolerant about people who are discriminating against us! Why should they—they should have a right to discriminate against me? No!" I remember that was an issue.

So those were the things that I was passionate about and felt that GALA should do. The advocacy that ACT UP wanted to do, I felt like it was going in too many different directions. I wasn't opposed to doing that, but I personally was more committed to dealing with issues on campus.

I think those were the main—I remember also, I spoke at some kind of forum at—it was something, I can't remember now what it was. It was something about...yeah, George Chauncey had just arrived. You know who he is? Professor of—[ML: Yeah, famous gay historian.] Yes! He had just arrived, and they were starting a gay studies workshop. There were some students opposed to this, and they had some kind of open forum, should we have this? And I remember fighting for that. But I remember Chauncey—one of my advisors of the Roman historian Richard Saller, and he went on to become provost, he's now dean over at Stanford. I remember coming out to Richard in my second year, and he was a little uncomfortable, but the first thing he told me was that they had a candidate in gay history, and he wanted me to know that he voted for him, but there were people who voted against him because they felt like this was trendy and not really something that would be a real field of history twenty years from now. And so I told this to George Chauncey later when I met him, and he kind of laughed. He said that he knew that him coming to campus was controversial in the history department. But those were the kinds of things that I dealt with.

Oh, there was one other thing. In the divinity school, very strange. We—there was a professor in the divinity school named Culianu. He was ethnically Romanian. And he was assassinated in Swift Hall. It was in the newspapers. And pretty much—so this was 1990. The Iron Curtain was falling, was coming down, and Romania's dictator was taken out. But he was very critical of some of the newly elected democratic leaders in Romania, because he said that they were actually part of the old Iron Guard, which was the fascist organization back then. So no one—they never solved this, they never solved this murder, and they think it was a hit done by the Romanian mafia or whatever. I remember in the newspaper reports, they said that maybe Culianu had a homosexual lover and that's what did it. I remember when I read that, I called the dean of the divinity school right away, and I said, “I'm the president of GALA and I'm also a student who takes courses in the divinity school, I need to talk to you about this. Because I can tell you that we know nothing about this.” So that's one thing that I did. There was no—we know about gay professors on campus, but no one has ever talked about him. It was just totally made up.

ML: To go back to the harassment stuff, we've been reading about anti-harassment rallies and the March Against Homophobia. Do you remember those? What were those like?

BH: Yes! I've got my—yes, we had a—I just told you the one incident. There were other incidents as well. I know the one about the chemistry undergraduates because they were very active in GALA. I'm trying to see if I can get to my photocopy for that to remind me of that... There were several—yeah, there were several articles by conservative students, saying that gay people should not be on campus. Oh, here it is. 20th of March, 1990, march for gay rights. Wearing pink armbands and assembled in solidarity, about 20 students demonstrated outside the administration building. March against homophobia. Yep, there I am. What—what exactly...just looking at the article here. Yeah. Oh, the other—well, this isn't directly related—one of the things we were doing at the time is that we wanted to get privileges for married student housing, for library and gym privileges for non-student spouses, that's one of the things we were trying to get. Yeah. The Career

and Placement Services I already talked about. I'm not sure I have the clippings about the actual violence done.

But I—there was a new newspaper that was started that year called The Fourth Estate. Started by conservative undergraduates because they thought The Maroon was too liberal. That newspaper had several anti-gay articles. The harassment—we thought that the university wasn't doing enough. Here you had this new newspaper that was sponsored by the student association that openly talks about how gays should not be in society, and then we had a couple instances of violence.

So—I personally was never harassed on campus. I remember—I always was, with the dance that we did every quarter, I was the one who came early and got everything set up, I would put posters all around Ida Noyes Hall. I remember one time I did this, the person I was with saying, “You know, the people around you are just whispering about you.” And I said, “Well, I don't care.” But I never was physically assaulted. Maybe it's because I was a grad student and I was a little older. I don't know. I'm guessing. But so, I guess I don't really have much else to say about the harassment. Because I didn't really experience it, and I knew students who experienced it, and I remember organizing rallies in front of the administration building to get the administration to do more about it.

[0:40:10]

ML: Did campus feel like a safe space, with all of the harassment that was going on?

BH: I think that if you talk to other people, they would say that they did not feel safe. I thought—well, the divinity school especially felt safe to me. As I say, the previous coming out director was actually a student of the divinity school, so I had very good feelings about that. The fact that Brent House, with the Episcopal chaplain—I mean, I'm not religious myself. I just went to these things because these people were a safe environment. Brent House has always been a safe space for gay and lesbian people. But I do—I think for undergrads, it was different, the experience for undergrads, and I think that's where most of the harassment happened. Now that I think about it, it may have been this chemistry student—there may have been one of them who was a grad student, who was assaulted. I think he was, yeah. So. But I remember distinctly talking to the administration and saying, “You need to do something about this.” Back then, I don't think the administration thought it was their job to deal with this.

ML: I mean, do you know why they thought that?

BH: They had just never had it put in front of their face before. This was something—when I met with the administrators—it must have been the administrators in charge of the placement service. I must have been the Dean of Students I was dealing with, that office. I remember them saying, “We've never had GALA come talk to us before. We don't really know what to say to you.” It's just—I think that University—I know the University dealt with this to get the non-discrimination inclusion for gay—for sex inclusion because of this harassment, the false ads in the newspaper. But I think that was done directly by the

president's office.

But I was very focused on my studies, and I was out totally. So I thought—it was certainly, compared to North Carolina, a paradise. And of course there were all these bars on the North Side, and I thought that I was in heaven. Absolute heaven. And I felt comfortable enough to come out to my professor. I didn't come out to all my professors. But I came out to several of them.

I do remember though, a grad student who was my roommate, he was in theology and he had just got—he was getting his PhD and he just got a job in a seminary in Virginia, called Union Seminary. He himself was also currently going through ordination procedures in the Presbyterian Church. He was very, very closeted. He was—we were roommates, but he did not want to come to GALA, he did not want anyone to know that he was gay. In the Presbyterian Church at the time, if you came out as gay, they would not ordain you. But when he got the job at the seminary, after he got the job offer, he got a strange phone call. And the phone call was, “We hear that you are gay from one of the professors in Chicago.” He was mortified. He went straight to the dean, and I remember—and the dean said, “This was anonymous. Someone in the university divinity school called the seminary and said, 'I'm surprised that you hired a gay person.' And this professor never gave his name.” In retrospect I think I know who the professor was, professor in ethics, of all things. They tend to be kind of moralistic. He's now retired. Don Browning was his name. Yeah, Paul Capetz, he's now the dean at the United Seminary at the Twin Cities, very liberal. He's happily ordained, and he's out, because you can be out as a Presbyterian minister. But I remember that was one instance where he did not feel safe with his professors.

But I felt—as I said, I came from a different reference point, North Carolina. I do think that being a grad student and being an undergrad in those days was very different. The College was very small in those days—I think it only had around 3000 students? Something. And the rest were grad students. They had a whole different—they had a common core, and the grad students were all focused in their fields. And so it was just very—those are two different kinds of experiences.

ML: Two different atmospheres.

BH: Yeah. The undergraduates all wore black, they were all—

ML: [laughing] They were always depressed, all the time!

BH: Yeah! And the University of Chicago greeting was a shrug—it was back before Zimmer. Zimmer, he's the one who—is he still president? I can't remember.

ML: Yes, yes.

BH: Yeah, he wanted to sort of bring it in like Princeton and make undergraduate life more prominent, and that's really been a change. But I wasn't an undergraduate, so I can't really

talk to that experience. To sum up, I never felt at all unsafe, and if anything I was very, I was very—I felt confident enough to go to the administration, confident enough to talk to my professors, confident enough to put up posters in Ida Noyes hall, and I don't care what people say about me. But I remember being told about the harassment incidences, and I remember people saying that they don't feel safe, and I remember—so people had different experiences.

ML: Right. When you came out to your professors, how did you do it? Just like, oh—

BH: I did it with Richard Saller. I did it with talking about jobs. And I remember talking about the job market being very bad. And he was in Roman history, he wasn't in New Testament, and he said that he knew that fields were different. But when he came out—sorry, he didn't come out, when he went into the job market, he said that there were only two jobs in the United States in Roman history, and he got one of them. One at Swarthmore and one at Davidson, and he got one. That gave me an opening, and I said, “Well, I think I might have an even more of a disadvantage.” And he said, “Why?” I said, “Because I'm gay.” And he was really taken aback. He just wasn't used to people being that personal. But he had a quick rebound. He talked about voting for George Chauncey, and how he thought gay studies would not be just a trend but an actual field. He said, “I would give you advice similar to what I would give women.” I think what he meant was people are going to have extra prejudice against you because of this thing—I don't remember what he said. But I remember it was reassuring. The other person I came out to was a very young professor in the divinity school, he was very cool, he would always go out for beers with people, at Jimmy's, and he was totally fine with this. But I never came out to my main advisor, because he was German and he was old, and he was probably—I mean, now he knows. But those are the only people I really knew enough to come out to.

ML: Also, just another quick detour—you mentioned before the fight for domestic partnership rights at the University of Chicago.

BH: Yeah, for students, yeah.

ML: Were you involved in that?

BH: Well, yeah, I—they were just starting the conversation. GALA was mainly involved in getting student access. I don't think we were—there was probably some other group, employees were doing this for employees, but we thought GALA should be focused on the students. Yeah, I went to forums, I think, and I talked about this. But I don't remember—I just remember, the conversation had just gotten started. I think the argument was, they don't give any kind of benefits to students' boyfriends and girlfriends, so our counter though was “married.” Married student housing, because it was hard to get housing in Hyde Park, and there was married student housing, but they wouldn't allow gay couples in it. So it—it just started, and so when I stopped being president, it was still in the beginning phases. I don't know what became of it. I assume that they have the benefits now. I don't know. I don't know if students have benefits.

[0:49:59]

ML: Yeah, we do have domestic partnership rights! It's great.

BH: Well, there you go! We started the fight, and I don't know how long it took to get that. If you started around 1990, I don't know when they got that. I'm guessing they probably got them 5 to 10 years later. I don't know.

ML: Do you remember what started it up? We've been trying to find the name of the graduate student who started—who started the fight, but we can't seem to find it.

BH: Well, I think I might know who would know. The president after me was Hinde—oh gosh, what's his name? He's a professor of chemistry now at the University of Kentucky. RJ Hinde, that's his name, he went by RJ Hinde. I think that's H-i-n-d...is it 'y' or 'i' or 'e'? I forget. He went to some, you know, science high school. My—I remember, he was much more political than I was, in that he was more the other school of thought that one had to bring in, make the organization like ACT UP. I remember people telling me, “We don't like ACT UP. We don't agree with their policies—we don't like what they do.” They just—there were things like going into churches and upsetting the Eucharist, and they're just using profanity, they're giving us a bad name. I remember, I was trying to negotiate between two of these. But he was more of the political side, and I think he was actually one of the people who got harassed. And I remember he, he made a point of walking around campus with his boyfriend holding hands. They did kiss-ins. And my guess is that he probably continued the fight, and he would know. In fact, if he went online, I could tell you exactly. I kind of knew him—we kind of lost contact. But I remembered his name, and I remember—I was actually happy that he was following me, because you should have both kinds of people in GALA, you know. So. And I think it's just, for me, I felt like I was doing so much, just what I was doing on campus. Let's see, I think he may be a dean now...

[0:52:38 – 0:53:31: BH googles RJ Hinde and sends contact information]

BH: So he was the president of GALA after me. And he—I just sent it to you. And also, if you're interested in this, the dean I mentioned, Jeffrey Trumbower, the dean at St. Michael's who's gay, he can tell you about GALA before me. And RJ Hinde can tell you about GALA after me. [BH googles Trumbower and sends contact information. Trumbower is Interview #48] Yeah, he actually came back after his first year at St. Michael's, and he did a presentation on what it was like to be a dean—he wasn't dean yet, he was assistant professor, what it was like to be a gay or lesbian professor. Let me send you that—another contact. There. So Jeff Trumbower, that's his name. He was four years ahead of me. He talked about the coming-out group, they used to meet in Quaker house. They probably still exist in Hyde Park. But he said it was bad because it was a building that's got big windows. So you would sit in the front room with these big windows, and he said that some of his fellow students were walking by, and the next day they'd say, “Jeff! I didn't know you were a Quaker!” He had to sort of make up some story about this. Anyway, he can talk about what it was like in the early '80s. And he can tell you

especially about the harassment in the newspaper, the fake personal ad. And that sort of—that became—I think that was the first, that was probably the first prompting of activism that I remember, people talking about the old days. That really got GALA, focused our mission in talking to the university and getting rights for these students.

ML: Yeah, thank you so much for those contacts!

BH: Oh, you're very welcome. And, so—yeah, RJ Hinde probably remembers me, if you say Bert Harrill, president of GALA, he probably remembers me. I may be exaggerating the differences between the—I just remember, in those days, when ACT UP came in, we had students who just wanted, who came in and wanted it to all be, “We need to shout, we need to scream,” and there were other people who said, “No, we need to put on a face that's not scary. We've got to show that we're—” That was a debate back then. You've got to be better than anybody else—that's one school of thought. We're going to overachieve, and that's going to show 'em. But the other school was kind of—no, we just need to say fuck you, and we need to fight, and we don't need to follow their rules. And so—I remember, ACT UP was very angry. I remember in my last years at Chicago, they did not like GALA. They thought we weren't doing enough—and GALA is no longer. I don't know what happened to it.

ML: It just changed its name. It's called Queers and Associates now. [BH: Ah.] But the organization still exists.

BH: Oh, okay. Yeah, “alliance” was the old '70s. It was the old Marxist—I remember someone telling me the history of this. That it was, you know, when you call it the Gay and Lesbian Alliance, “alliance” has this old Marxist revolutionary bent to it, and that's why they picked it, I think. I remember someone telling me that.

ML: And now it's all queer instead.

BH: That makes sense. People were starting to—I remember that.

ML: Were people starting to use that term then?

BH: Yes, yes. That was a term, and people were starting to do that. I remember when I first heard it, I was kind of taken aback. It's kind of like using the n word. And I understood that you're reappropriating hate speech, and being proud of it. And so—but people were using it. I think it was—this was 30 years ago, but I think it was connected to ACT UP a little bit. But I just don't remember. I don't think—I think if we voted to put that in the name, I don't think it would have passed. But I think there would probably be people there very angry that it's not in the name.

ML: Right. Yeah. I know that you—you seemed incredibly busy with your studies and the organization and so on. But did you ever get a chance to go out into the city of Chicago?

BH: Well, oh yeah! I had a car, which helped me, because I could take LSD. Take Lakeshore

Drive. I would go out every Thursday night. There was Berlin, that was the big—well, it was Berlin, Sidetrack, Roscoe's, I used to go to all those places. I had the—my partner, we've been together now since 1990, and we married. We were always—he was able to come to Chicago the next year, since he was writing his dissertation, and in his final year he didn't have to be in residence, so we lived together. So we still went out dancing and we went out. That was an important part of my social life. I had friends, and—I had a four-wheel personality, I would take people out in the car. We would just go out and just have fun. I was never—I wasn't afraid to go to the bars. I remember, it was very liberating for me to just be a part of that culture. It was the first time I saw two men kissing my life. It was beautiful. It was amazing! I just thought, they'd shoot you in North Carolina for that.

[1:00:31]

ML: But it's happening all the time in these bars!

BH: Yeah. It's amazing how things have changed. The culture.

ML: Yeah, you said that you met your partner, David, at Yale, right? How did you two meet?

BH: Excuse me?

ML: How did you two meet?

BH: We met in a seminar on early Christian baptism. I think it was actually called rituals in early Christianity. Like I said, I signed up after my masters. I had just gotten the masters in December, and I was a little depressed because—grad students talk about this, once you finish the masters or finish coursework—I was still taking courses. But when you make the transition into the dissertation, it can be difficult. You're just used to going to class. But when you're not doing that, you get up and you don't know what you're going to do. You know? You have to do your own research, and go to the library, and what are you going to do? And it was winter, and I signed up for this exchange program, went to Yale, and basically, I audited classes there, and one was this doctoral seminar in New Testament on early Christian baptism by a very famous professor.

And so, I remember, I remember going there and I was quickly befriended by the students there. Chicago was always very, you know, “am I smarter than you? Or are you smarter than me?” All this sizing up of each other. But at Yale, they were always like, “Come on! Come to pizza night! We always go get pizza after seminar!” I remember, I remember telling people I was gay. I went to the gay equivalent at Yale. I remember at Yale, ACT UP people were doing sit-ins there, sort of the same debate we were having in Chicago they were having at Yale. They had the group there—we aren't going to be doing, because that's ACT UP and that's a different thing—anyway. So I met him—I told these students that I was gay, and in the seminar, there were three people who were gay. I was like, what! So I learned who David was, and we went on a date, and we basically started dating there that fall. It was very difficult at the end, because I knew I had to go back to

Chicago, but we agreed to buy plane tickets, and call each other, and write. This was before email. So we did that. And he got news that he—that he was able to get funding for his final sixth year at Yale, but he doesn't have to be there, so he can come live with me. And that's what he did. I came to pick him up there that summer. He was very sad, because he had been there for five years, and then he went to a place where he didn't know a soul, had no friends. He went with me, and we lived there. My roommate at the time was that theology student who went off to teach at Virginia, that seminary, so I had an apartment that was free. We lived there for a year. I was no longer president of GALA then, I attended things, but I was—I remember, actually this is relevant to benefits of students. I remember getting him a library card. We talked to one administrator who said, “Well, David can't get one because he's not a student at the University of Chicago.” But I said, “He's my partner!” And I think we went the next day, or we talked to someone else, and they said, “Oh, we'll give him a card.” And he got a card as a “visiting scholar,” I think is what they called it. And it was without a fee, and he had the same privileges of checking out books that a grad student had. I hadn't even thought of this ahead of them, like, how is he going to get a library card? But he had a Yale ID that was valid. Maybe there was an exchange, some kind of exchange with Yale, that Yale students could get into the UChicago library. But I remember getting that benefit, and I remember that being a very happy time.

ML: That's really great. Although that was an informal kind of thing, right?

BH: Totally informal. I'm pretty sure the librarian who did it was probably not following a procedure. There was another time that he got sick, there was a restaurant in Hyde Park called Mellow Yellow? Is that still there?

ML: Oh. Oh yeah. It's still around.

BH: Well, anyway, he had the chili. He got really bad food poisoning. And I called up Tom Jones, who I said was, he worked in student health, and he was known to be gay. I just called him up and said, “My partner is sick. And I just need to know—” And he said, “Put him on the phone.” And he, just over the phone, gave him a prescription. And so that was another moment where I got some benefits for my partner, informally.

ML: That's so great, that the university was so accepting of your relationship!

BH: Well, these were individuals in the university.

ML: That's true.

BH: It was also probably because I was president of GALA, and they kind of knew me. I don't know if the librarian knew me. I might have said something like, “I was president of GALA!” You know? Who knows.

But yeah, that's how we met. His first job was in Fargo, North Dakota, and we commuted. Then he got the job in Bloomington, which was great, because I could make

that drive in three and a half hours.

Then I had to go to Nebraska, which felt like going into the provinces. I was very lonely there. And it was very Catholic. Very—it was weird, because it was Jesuit, so they were all into social justice. They were all, they had these liberal nuns, and they were all into fighting poverty and making sure we're going to be opposing the death penalty, and stuff. But they were not too comfortable with gay rights. I was closeted there, I'm embarrassed to say. I was on a one-year contract, which became a two-year contract.

When I got the job at DePaul, I remember, one of my colleagues who was professor of moral theology, actually went to school with David at Yale. He came into my office, and he saw on my desk a letter addressed to David. He asked, "Why do you have David Brakke's mail?" I said, "Well, we actually are partners." He was taken aback, and then he said, "It's a good thing you're leaving, because otherwise we'll have to fire you for moral turpitude." [ML: Wow.] To this day, I don't know if he was kidding or not. Because he and I were friends, but he was very taken aback by this. His name is Rusty Reno, he's now the editor of First Things, this very conservative magazine, and I know he's written several articles against gay marriage. So I think he seriously would have said, you should be fired. That was my experience there.

ML: And then, where did you go after that?

BH: I went to DePaul in Chicago, and then I was closer to David. DePaul is Catholic, but they called it urban Catholicism. I know I was hired because I was gay. The interview, I of course, before I went into the interview I tried networking with the gay professors at DePaul, and I talked to them. They said, "Actually, in your department, there are three gay people. And one's a priest." When I came to my campus interview, I knew who was gay, and I talked to one of them privately, and I asked, "What's it like being gay here?" He was really taken aback, and he said, "Do you mind if I tell the faculty if you're gay?" I said, "Well, no." "Because I think it'll help you!" Because they were all into—the issue was, they were all so PC, the fact that I was gay, this gave me an edge. So it's kind of an interesting thing.

ML: Having gay faculty is hip.

BH: Yeah, it was—I think they were worried about hiring a man, white man, all this stuff. But this gave me some cred, you see, with this. And the school was totally into this urban Catholicism, which was all into pluralism and tolerance, I had a gay flag on my door, a sticker, and I was totally out while there. But the teaching load was very heavy—I was teaching seven courses a year, it wasn't a research university. And of course I wasn't near David. So anyway. But we finally, as an academic couple, got together. And we've been living together ever since 2002.

[1:10:30]

ML: How are things in Columbus, Ohio?

BH: It is, well, we helped elect Obama. We're happy to be the state to do it! Well, Ohio, it's a state, so it depends on where you live. But Columbus, you fly into Columbus, a big sign says, "Welcome to Columbus! GLBT Friendly" We live in Victorian Village, which is kind of like Halsted, a little bit, old houses restored, kind of like the North Side of Chicago. Very liberal. The city of Columbus has a registry for domestic partners. You have to pay \$50 for it, so we haven't done it yet. We're kind of hoping that the marriage decision from the Supreme Court will settle it. But the university's totally open. The fact that they were hoping to partner-hire with me—my department chair is gay here. So I'm totally happy here in that regard. I just kind of wish that the state were a little different. I wish that John Boehner weren't my representative—he's actually not my representative, he's actually from a suburb of Columbus. Columbus is actually too liberal to elect him.

ML: So you have no power to remove him from office.

BH: But the mayor is very liberal. It's kind of like Bloomington, Indiana. A little blue dot where the other people say that it's just full of liberal wackos. That's the problem with being an academic—you can't choose where you live. And we would have stayed in Indiana if the budget cuts hadn't been happening and the situation wasn't as bad as it was.

ML: Actually—I actually forgot to ask you this. When you were in Chicago, did you live in Hyde Park the entire time?

BH: The whole time, the whole time, yes, in Hyde Park. I lived first in International House. Then I lived on 53rd and Woodlawn. Right across from what used to be Mr. G's Grocery Store. Kimbark Plaza, they call it. Yeah, I lived in that apartment the whole time. It was a professor in Slavic Languages who didn't get tenure, so he taught at Purdue, but he kept his apartment. And I met—I met a fellow student when I worked in the library, she was in Slavic Languages, said that she had this apartment but it needed two people. And we had gotten to know each other, working in the library, but she was a little worried, living with a man. The first thing I said was, "I'm gay," and she's like, "Oh great! Oh great! That's wonderful!" We lived together until she got a boyfriend, and then she moved out, and then I got this theology student who wanted to live, then I got to live with David. I lived there the whole time.

ML: Did you enjoy living in Hyde Park?

BH: I did. I'm the kind of person, and I get up in the morning and I just want to go to the library. That's the greatest thing in the world, to go to the library. And I think that's why I liked Chicago so much. I genuinely—this was something I love doing, I love doing research. Whereas I think a lot of people were doing a PhD because they were good students, but it wasn't their passion. So if I lived on the North Side, I would have been very unhappy, because I would have hated the commute. I had a car, which made a big difference, so I could go to the North Side when I wanted to. I just had to avoid the Bears games, because we got stuck with traffic. But I went to Chicago recently, last year, and I drove. And I remember, I think the traffic in Chicago has gotten a lot worse than it was 30

years ago. Because I remember being able to drive up to the North Side at 4 o'clock, and you could do it. But now, it's all cars. So it may be a little different now. But I loved Hyde Park, I loved being there. There were times that I didn't like it. But it was—it worked for me.

ML: Do you think your perception of your time at the University of Chicago has changed over time?

BH: Probably—well, I remember at the time telling people that I liked being a student. So I don't think I hated it and then I'm changing it now. The fact that I am a tenured professor in the field—my dream job, I work in a research university, I got—I know people who didn't get jobs, I know people who didn't finish the PhD. I think I feel very positive about the University of Chicago because I was able to get a job and be successful, and pursue my passion. And Chicago helped me do that.

ML: Do you think that your experience was typical of the people you saw around you?

BH: I wouldn't say that. I remember—I knew some students in the Oriental Institute. I knew some students in Egyptology. They were miserable. And I think part of it may be that they knew that they weren't going to get a job in Egyptology. And there were so many PhDs working on the Hittite dictionary, they got their PhD 20 years ago, and they're still making this miserable salary as a technician, basically. And we would go to the student pub and these people would just be so upset. I wasn't one of them. I kind of gravitated towards the law students. Of course, they're only there for the three years. So there's a reason why they'd be happy. I couldn't stand the business students, I was never around them. And I knew one or two med students. Not many of them came to GALA because they were just so busy. But I remember that one did. He went to the coming out group, and he said, “Don't ever tell anyone in the med school that I'm here.” I said, “I don't know anyone in the med school!” But I remember he was very scared, he was very scared. So it must have been very conservative. I would say that I knew students, like Jeff Trumbower, who's the dean now, and RJ Hinde, he probably liked it as well. But I mean, we were students, all three of us got through pretty quickly, we were pretty much on track. But I knew a lot of students who didn't like Chicago. It had nothing to do with their sexual orientation, it was just Chicago. Kind of a gloomy place. This is the place where—I remember when I first arrived, they were selling t-shirts for freshmen that had the seal of Chicago, with the phoenix. Except without a flame, it has ice cubes. [ML: Oh no!] The motto was, “Hell does freeze over.” So you can tell, when they institutionalize it on a t-shirt, you know the culture's not very happy.

ML: Yeah, I think they still sell those t-shirts. At least, I see them around.

BH: It's quite funny! Quite funny.

ML: It's really interesting—those law school students and that med school student. We know very little about what was going on in the law school or the med school.

BH: Well, the law school at the time, quite a lot was going on. Because of this issue of gays in the military. Let's see, this student at the Naval Academy, Joseph Steffan, I have it in the scrapbook. He was about to graduate, and he came out as gay, because he was told to be honest, as one of his core values, and they kicked him out of school. And he was not able to go into the Navy. He sued. This was a major case. He wrote a book, and I remember he came to campus to speak. I remember reading his book. Trying to remember his name...So the law school had this issue, going on. Joseph Steffan was his name. Forced to leave the Naval Academy for being gay. Also James Holobaugh was discharged from the ROTC at Washington State for being gay, and they both spoke on May 3rd. Sponsored by the Gay and Lesbian Law School Association. I think I knew the president of that. I don't know if—yeah, the law student I knew, they tended to come to our dances. They didn't really come to our meetings much, but they would come to the dances. Because they had their own meetings.

ML: If you happen to still have the contact information for law school or the med school...

BH: I do have the law school. I actually kept up with him. He actually was in Boston, and I used him once, I had some legal issues, I had a condo and he was able to help me... Let's see.

[1:20:00 – 1:22:14: BH looks up WV on Facebook.]

BH: He can tell you what it was like in the law school. He wasn't really that political, he was more wanting to do the social. He was kind of on that end. But I know he was involved with the law school association, a little bit. [BH continues looking WV up] Yeah, he came from Maine. I remember he said that in high school, two people he knew threw a man off a bridge because he was known to be gay. So he was never gonna come out in Maine. There you go, I sent you that. In the scrapbook page, you'll see an article in the graduate school, business school newspaper about being gay in the GSB. But it's an anonymous article. I remember when I was president of GALA, I could never figure out who had written that article. Because the business school, we never had any of them join GALA. They were so terrified. I knew business students, but I think they were just terrified that they would never get a job.

ML: Same with the medical student?

BH: Yeah, the medical student, I didn't understand him. He was Asian, so maybe—he was a little—maybe he was from a conservative family or something, I don't know. He said, “Can you just promise me—” But I don't remember his name. But he was just terrified that coming to the coming out group would end his medical career.

ML: Yeah, medicine is known to be a pretty conservative profession too. Which is sad. One of the questions that we like to ask for these interviews is, why did you decide to be interviewed?

BH: Well, Daniel von Brighoff was my secretary-treasurer. He just friended me on Facebook

after thirty years, whatever. I hadn't really kept up with him because was an undergraduate. I went on and he was still, I think he was still at the U of C. I think he's a librarian at Northwestern now. He said, he said, "there's the project," and I said, "well, of course!" Part of it was that I documented all my time there, and I just thought, sure! It's part of why I wanted to become president of GALA. Sort of wanting to work with the university. I've always had positive experiences with the University. I was so happy that the project was there. And I thought, who would know more about this time with GALA than me, you know?

ML: You do know so much! Thank you! We really appreciate it. We're looking forward to getting the scrapbook you gave me.

BH: Yeah. It's not to the address you gave it, it's to the chief professor. So just get it out her box. Sorry about that.

ML: No, it should be fine. But yeah, that's pretty much all of the questions I can think of to ask. This has been great. Is there anything else that you want to tell the project?

BH: Well, you probably got this from other people. But when I started GALA, the only real social event—I mean, they had the dance. But the only other social event was called the Howard and Roger party. Have you heard of that? [ML: Oh, yes!] Howard and Roger were two openly gay professors, and as I understood it, the only two openly gay professors on campus. They lived together. One I think was in economics, the other maybe in music, I forgot. The story was that one was hired and then he was so famous, he said, "You have to hire my partner," and the university did it. One of the very first spousal hires. And they always opened up their Hyde Park house on, I believe it was Halloween. To students in GALA—well, anyone, but GALA was where they advertised it. I went to one, and it was just quite an event. It was the only gay event in Hyde Park. The Howard and Roger parties were very famous, because they went on. I just remember, it was a great welcome to Hyde Park. And they both died of AIDS. One died within six months of the other, something like that. Daniel von Brighoff might be embarrassed about this, but I remember, it was either Howard or Roger, asking me as president of GALA, if I could recommend a houseboy. I was like, what? And they said, "Well, we want someone to clean up." Apparently it was a very big honor to be their houseboy, because you got into their network. I remember asking Daniel, "You want a job for the summer and a place to live?" He's like, "Oh, yeah!" And so he was very happy to clean their house.

ML: He did mention that, actually!

BH: I figured that he might. "Do you want to be their houseboy?" The other thing to say is that our faculty advisor was Gilbert Herdt. Who was in the department of behavioral sciences. I don't believe he's at the university anymore. He was kind of an anthropologist who worked on male bonding rituals in the Aborigines or something like that. He never came to any of our events, I remember that. I went to him once in office hours, just to introduce myself and say hello to him. I got the impression that he, he said he signed up

on it because every student organization needs to have a faculty advisor. He did it, but you could tell that he was totally into research. But it was nice to meet him. That's two other faculty stories.

And I guess the other thing to say is that my biggest stress, biggest stressor, as GALA president, was going before the student activities board and asking for funding. Funding was done annually—or was it by quarter? I forget. It seemed like I went multiple times. You had to—every student organization had to apply to, I forget what it was called, it was in the Reynolds Club in the basement. Every student organization had to get funding, and you had to apply, and you had to present a budget. That was one of the incentives for us to get a full program, because we wanted to have something to show why we needed a budget. But I remember, I knew a student—one of the students at GALA was one of the student reps or senators or whatever they want to call it. He said that the president of the student organization said, “Did you hear how much the Fruit Loops wanted to get this year?” It was always—I remember coming before them, and the fact that I was, that I was a grad student and I was a serious, serious student—I think I even wore a tie to try to impress them. Yeah. And they were just—“why do you need a party?” Also, we had a small library in Ida Noyes of books that were kind of novels, and we subscribed to magazines like *The Advocate*. There was the library, also, they said, “You shouldn't be asking us for money for that, because you can ask the library to buy it.” I said, “Well, the library won't buy gay novels.” And *The Advocate*, it was very important. People would come to our meetings just to get copies of *The Advocate*, because they were too afraid to get subscriptions. It used to come in a plastic wrapper—or maybe it was paper. I forget. So that was quite a big thing. I always had to fight every—it could have been every quarter. It was very stressful. All of them were undergraduates, and you could tell that all of them thought GALA should be defunded. But I always fought that and I always got funding.

ML: Congratulations.

BH: Yeah. I think I was afraid that if ACT UP people came, it just would not work. It would just—I think I was afraid that that kind of approach would—at that time, people just wanted to be really in your face and I was trying to say, “Look, you kind of just show that we use the money responsibly, and we serve a need on campus, and we need this for the coming out group, we need this for this, so on. You don't have to be angry all the time. You can get what you want.” I tried to argue that. Anyway, that's what I did.

ML: Yeah, thank you so much for talking to us. You've already given us a ton of names, and it's been great. But are there any others, any other people you think it would be good for us to talk to?

BH: Actually this morning, I was googling some of these names. My co-president Melissa Stein, she was a senior. Just google her name and the University of Chicago, it seems she's a physician in New York. She got married, and her marriage announcement was in *The New York Times*. I don't know her at all, since then. Rachel Sturman was our librarian. [Interview #66] She's a professor at Rutgers now. Steven Homer was our

publicity coordinator. I googled him. He's now a law professor. I think he was an undergraduate who went to law school. So you can take the contact list that you get from me, and you could probably use that to find these other people. And to get their stories.

ML: Yeah, that would be really great.

BH: Yeah.

ML: Thanks again for talking to us!

BH: Sure. And as I said, Brent House, the chaplain, Sam Portaro, he probably has a lot of stories about life in Hyde Park as a gay man. He was one of the few. He was semi-open, he said that his bishop knew that he was gay. But he was very much a great resource for gay students. He could probably tell you a lot more. He's retired, he lives in Chicago still. He's still there. And you could probably get his contact number just by calling Brent House. It's one of the most gay-friendly places I've ever seen.

ML: Yeah, thanks again! And thanks for the scrapbook.

BH: Well, yeah, I enjoyed talking to you, and I'm glad I can help, and I'm glad this will all be in the history books now.

ML: Yeah! Come back to Chicago in 2015 to see the museum exhibit!

[1:34:56]

End of Interview