

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

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

**INTERVIEW #52
HORMEL, JAMES (1933-) JD 1958**

At U of C: 1955-1958, 1961-1967

Interviewed: July 25th, 2013

Interviewer: Lauren Stokes

Transcript by: Molly Liu

Length: Clip 1: 0:06:12; Clip 2: 1:07:23

Interview (July 25th, 2013) in Jim Hormel's office, San Francisco, CA:

[0:00:10]

LS: All right! So we like to start with the question, how you ended up at the University of Chicago.

JH: Well, I'll give you an overview. As a senior in Swarthmore, I was kind of considering law school, and the person who was then in charge of the law school consultant on the faculty, Roland Pennock, who was head of the political science department, asked to see me and when I went in, he said that the law school at Chicago had what they called the National Honor Scholarship program. Which provided tuition scholarships to students coming from, I think, 40 different institutions, one of which was Swarthmore. He asked if I would like to be considered for that scholarship. And I thought about it briefly. I knew someone else at Swarthmore who was planning to go to Chicago, who was in much more serious financial circumstances than I was, so I told Roland that. I said, "I would rather have this person get the scholarship." But it brought me into focus with the law school. This was in the mid-'50s. It was a much different situation for law schools in those days. There were very few lawyers in the country, actually. If you would believe it. [LS: I can't!] When I graduated, 65,000 lawyers in the whole country, and now there are probably more than that in Washington, DC.

LS: Probably! Yeah. So they needed lawyers.

JH: So law schools were, you know, were seeking to increase their classes. So I went to Chicago. There were still a few people who were on the GI Bill.

LS: So did it—what was your experience at the law school like? What did you expect when you were going to law school at Chicago.

JH: I really didn't have much expectation. I was curious. I got married right before—right

after I graduated from Swarthmore. And we moved to Chicago, never having lived there before. She was from Virginia. My family was living in California at that time, so Chicago was a nice place to be away from both families! And we knew practically nobody there. Which was okay, too. What I did not know was the challenge that it would be, to go to law school. It was intellectually very challenging. Especially at Chicago. And I found myself spending, you know, two hours to read ten or twelve pages.

LS: Yeah. Did you have any kind of classes that you particularly liked, that were particularly inspirational or memorable in the law school?

JH: Well, there was a, there was a course in the very beginning of first year called Elements of the Law, which was designed specifically by faculty members at the University of Chicago, including Dean Levi, which wrote the book that we used primarily. And it gave an overview of how the common law system in the United States developed, and what it stood for, and how it tried to be fair and just. So it was, it was not strictly a legal course. Although it involved a lot of reference to legal thinking, we didn't study cases, which was the custom in law schools at that time, to use cases in a Socratic give-and-take with the professor. This was more of a course that referred to other kinds of reading that involved the law.

LS: And then you had mentioned that you had gotten married. Did you go directly from Swarthmore into law school?

JH: Yes, I did. And it was customary back then. It's not at all now. But it was quite usual for somebody to go directly onto graduate studies from undergraduate.

LS: And where did you live while you were here?

JH: First we lived in Hyde Park. Then we moved up to Irving Park.

LS: Okay. Let's see. And then were you involved in activism at all when you were there from the '55 to '58 period?

JH: No, I don't think I had any involvement in that regard.

[0:06:12]

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JH: I was interested in politics. I was on the periphery of what was going on politically. I was a registered Republican. And my wife was a Democrat, so we had nice interesting conversations about that. But I was a pretty liberal Republican and she was a pretty moderate Democrat.

LS: So you got along.

JH: And bear in mind, this was in the mid-'50s. So *Brown v. Board of Education* had just come down. It was fresh when I went to law school. There were riots in 1958 in Arkansas. Things were beginning to foment in terms of civil rights. That was novel for me. I'm sure there were similar episodes following World War I, for example, and especially in the labor movement. But the civil rights movement really became vital in the 1950s. And then the rise of Martin Luther King. You know, Martin Luther King was a kid! When he died he was still in his 30s.

LS: Was the civil rights movement already on campus? I guess you were in the law school, but in Hyde Park, in the '50s, what do you remember about it?

JH: As a student I don't remember very much. I don't remember much activism. Later when I was an administrator at the law school, there was a concerted movement.

LS: Yeah, because you were—I read *Fit to Serve* a couple of weeks ago. As I remember, you were the first dean of students at the law school?

JH: I was the first full-time dean of students, as far as I know. My predecessor was a faculty member. And he acted as dean of students as well as carrying a course load. Which wasn't working for him or for the institution, so they decided that it was time. Also there was a very clear need for focus, especially on admissions. The law school, and this is not unlike other law schools, had very few women. And part of the problem was, of course, is that when women graduated from law school they couldn't find jobs. There were very few women, the ethnic diversity was very limited. And I saw that as an opportunity to make some changes.

LS: How did you end up getting into that job?

JH: I haven't the slightest idea.

LS: You haven't the slightest idea!

JH: After I graduated, I had a brief clerkship with Judge Bryant at the appellate court, and then I was working downtown, and I got a call from Edward Levi. He said that he'd like to have lunch with me. We had lunch and he asked if I wanted to be a dean of students.

LS: And you said yes!

JH: I didn't say yes. I said, well, I'll think about it. It was a—it was a double-headed job, to be dean of students and director of admissions. And of course director of admissions explains itself. But really dean of students was a multi-tasking situation, which involved all of the scholastic records. It involved managing the scholarship and loan programs. It involved any sort of disciplinary issues that might come up. Everything up to placement, we had a separate placement office. And this was, you know, all new to me. I wasn't—I

wasn't trained in that kind of work, and it was very interesting.

LS: Had Edward Levi remembered you from class, classes you had taken with him?

JH: Edward Levi grew up with the University of Chicago. He went to everything from the Lab School to his doctoral thesis. He was...He ran the law school. Literally. He was the person who was very clearly in charge of the law school. So when I took a course—you know, he taught pieces of a course or two that I took. There was one on antitrust law I believe I took during my third year. And he was very witty. And he brought people's focus to the material through his, through his wit. And sometimes it was not—it was not generous to the person on the receiving end! [LS: Yeah.] There was one person, this was in the very end of third year, so everyone knew how the class ranked. And the number one student was in that course, and was called on to respond to a particular question, and gave a rather nondescript and uninspiring response. At least it didn't satisfy Edward. So Edward looked at him and he called him by name. He said, "What's the matter, Mr. Beaver, afraid to cast your pearls before these swine?"

LS: That's a Chicago tradition. Yeah. A little bit of sharp wit in the classroom. So then, I'd be curious to hear more about how you went about reaching out to more women and people of color in the admissions process, because that sounds like something that you were very focused on and invited to do.

JH: It was very difficult, actually. To expect women—women had to be encouraged to apply. I visited women's colleges. I would make a tour of colleges during the course of a year and usually go to 45 or 50 different campuses in a year. And I'd do what I could to speak to women when I was there. We had—we had an outstanding woman on the faculty. But interestingly, she was not a full professor. And the reason she was not a full professor was that she was married to a full professor. And there were regulations about that. It's really—it's bizarre to think where we were 50 or 60 years ago, but that's where we were.

LS: Who was that?

JH: That was Soia Mentschikoff.

LS: Oh, okay.

JH: And Soia left, finally, became dean of the law school at the University of Miami.

LS: So it was hard to get women to apply. And then what about African-Americans and reaching out to that population?

JH: They are too, it was difficult to get people to apply. There is a general intimidation that exists today when people look at test scores and say, "I'll never get in," and they don't apply. And this surprised me. Somebody told me, I was the first—I was the first recruiting visitor from a major law school to go to Howard University. [LS: Oh wow.] Isn't that hard to believe?

[0:10:14]

LS: That is hard to believe. And that would have been in the mid-'60s, right?

JH: That would have been in the mid-'60s. [LS: Yeah. Huh.] So we weren't doing what we could to find African-American students. And when we did, we had to look at the test scores along with everything else, and they generally tended to run very low. So we had to look carefully at all of the factors involved to see if that test score really was a predictor or not. I don't have a great deal of faith in test scores, although while I was at the law school I was on the LSAT council. So I was exposed to all the thinking behind them.

LS: Is the LSAT council like the governing body that administers the exam?

JH: Yes. Right.

LS: How long were you dean of students and director of admissions at the law school for?

JH: I arrived in the fall of '61 and left in June of '67.

LS: So were you there for the disturbances—the sit-in at the administration building?

JH: Yeah, some of that was going on over there.

LS: Do you have any recollections on what that was like?

JH: My recollection is that the law school was not very much affected by that. And from my point of view—and my point of view had evolved considerably from '61 to the mid-'60s. From my point of view, the sit-ins were useful in drawing attention to issues and problems that the university wasn't considering thoroughly. And I say that without any sense of fault or blame regarding the university. That was typical. They were coming through an era that was ending, which I guess was referred to as “in loco parentis.” The institution was the substitute parent to its students. And so that was how—that was how educational institutions regarded their responsibilities.

LS: Right. That's what they were expected to do. So did you see the main issues at Chicago as this “in loco parentis” stuff, women shouldn't be signing in at 9pm, and so on? What were the main issues in your perception as you were watching?

JH: Well, it was shifting dramatically. Still there were issues about women not being treated equally. They're not treated equally today. I mean, I love to point out that Alice Paul wrote the equal rights amendment and she wrote that in 1920, and it still hasn't been ratified. [LS: Still hasn't been passed, yeah. Yeah.] So there were real issues. And I'm very pleased that I was able to get a spectrum of students into the law school, because in the class that graduated in the—I think it was the year that I left—there was John Ashcroft

who became, you know, ultra-right-wing Missouri governor, senator, and then—

LS: You're going to tussle with him. You're going to tussle with him a little later, right?

JH: And then on the other end was Bernadine Dohrn, who was later on the FBI's Ten Most Wanted list. I loved it! I loved that.

LS: You had them all! What percentage of women would have been in that graduating class?

JH: I don't know if I have these figures in my head, but it seemed to me that when I—when I went to the law school as an administrator in 1961, there were 7 or 8 women in the entire law school, in all three years. When I left, I believe there were 20 in the entering class. I could be wrong. [LS: That sounds...] And that was the beginning of a very steep rise in the number of women.

LS: Right. Was there a similar increase in the number of African-American students at the time?

JH: No. That number crept up.

LS: It took longer to kind of get up to a reasonable number. I mean, it's still not really there. But so there's the dean of the law school. I guess we haven't touched on at all issues of sexuality.

JH: Right. I wanted to say another word about race because there came a time when African-American students were sought after. Those who had obvious qualifications who were smart to apply to the obvious schools, and everybody would come to us, so it was challenging.

LS: When was that in your perception?

JH: I think that trend started developing in the time that I was an administrator. It was probably not before then. In the '60s.

LS: In the '60s, yeah. Okay, great. So like I said, we haven't touched on issues of sexuality at all yet, right? And I know that this is—I guess a pivotal decade for you, because in 1955 you're married, and in '68 you're moving to New York with your boyfriend at the time. How do you want to tell that story?

JH: Well, I pondered whether I wanted to tell it or not. Because it's a very difficult story. It has to do with my own integrity, which I don't think was fully there in that time. In 1955 when I got married, I had already had sexual experience with men. In my mind at the time, that was something that was passing, or past. That was, I think, most people liked to think of those interludes, and in many cases it was. But for me, it clearly was not. I was—I was very attracted to other men, and it was a great challenge for me to not act on that attraction. And then, being—excuse me—being married... My...my sense of integrity was

challenged every time I considered the possibility of having some kind of relationship outside the marriage. I took a vow. It was a very serious vow. And at the time I took it I was very serious about keeping it. And I loved my wife. I should say “love” because she’s still around and we have a very good relationship. And we had children, five of them, five lovely kids. And during the course of that marriage which lasted 10 years, I would have—transgressions, I guess is the best way to call them. I don’t know, maybe it’s the most evasive way of calling them. I had—I had sexual encounters, practically all of them anonymous, with a couple of exceptions. One of whom was a student in the law school. I mean, a student while I was a student. Also, he was married.

It was such an incredible set of social rules we followed in those days, and one of them was that homosexuality was not acceptable. Period. And it didn’t even have to be stated. The message came from society. [LS: From everywhere.] Yes. But in fact it was stated, in the ‘50s. Beginning around 1950 when the State Department started firing people for being gay, and making it public. And the police took it upon themselves to raid bars and bathhouses. In Chicago, the *Tribune* and other papers would published the names of the people who were stopped in those raids. It was really terrible. And that went on until the mid-‘60s in Chicago, probably later elsewhere. Illinois, incidentally, was the first state to eliminate sodomy from the criminal statutes.

LS: When was that?

[0:21:45]

JH: I believe that was 1961. [LS: Okay.] And the primary author of that act was Frank Allen, who was on the faculty of Chicago at that time. [LS: Oh really?] Frank Allen I believe left to become the dean of the Michigan law school.

LS: I didn’t know that the primary author was a Chicago person. It’s funny because I’ve talked to a lot of men who came in the late ‘60s to Chicago because they knew that law was off the books. Which isn’t—which makes a lot of sense.

JH: Illinois was the only state for years. In 1968 or 9 was when Connecticut changed its laws, and Connecticut was number 2.

LS: That was ‘61. Can I ask where, given that preserving anonymity was so important, where did you meet other men for encounters?

JH: In various places. I was terrified about going to bars. Terrified. And then I thought about it, then I thought, “Why should I be terrified? If I run into someone I know, then what’s that person doing there?”

LS: Right! You both have that...

JH: But I had such an overwhelming feeling of, I needed to keep it secret. Which made it difficult. On the other hand, I ran into people on campus. And I was thinking about this

last night. What is it—people talk about gaydar, and I'm not so sure there is such a thing. But I do think that people communicate a lot by their body language, by their looks, the way they look at people, the signals that are given that are so subtle, that you—it takes a nanosecond to recognize it. [LS: Interest, yeah.] So—that happened. And then, at the end of the marriage, I had met a very limited number of people in the gay male circle of Chicago. When I traveled, which I did a lot as an administrator, I would meet people. And occasionally it would be someone from another law school. Administrator or faculty member. So, you know—I learned where to find people and how to find them.

LS: It's kind of a learning process.

JH: It took me a very long time to tell anyone my real name. One time I—this was fairly late in the '60s. I think it was about the time that I was divorced. I saw the name of someone I knew in a report of a raid. And I saw the guy, he was a dentist, I saw him a couple of months later at a party or something, and I said that I was really sorry to see you in that report. And he said, “Oh, don't think anything about it.” He said, “My practice has doubled since then!”

LS: Dentists. Yeah.

JH: I didn't know anyone on the faculty at the University of Chicago. It just happened, I hadn't met anyone. There were a couple of people on the law school faculty who I thought might be. But they were as covered as I was with marriage and children or whatever. I heard a story, and this is so vague in my mind that I don't even really remember, but it involved some faculty member, and I think it may have been in the music department, I'm not sure, who lost a position because of stories that that person was gay.

LS: While you were there? Or was it something that had supposedly happened earlier?

JH: I don't know the answer to that. I think it was while I was there, because I think—I heard it, I heard it talked about as something recent.

LS: That's interesting, because we have a documented case of someone who was asked to leave in, I want to say, '53, '54, from the music department, for having been caught in one of those raids.

JH: That's probably recent enough.

LS: So that might be it. Cecil Smith, that was his name. So yeah, I'll look at those documents.

JH: And my neighbor across the street was the head of the music department. I never discussed that with him. I knew his daughters, and his eldest daughter in particular was a great friend. Still is. She lives in New York, she's a filmmaker. And she's so open about sexuality. She's married and straight, but she's just a very open and wonderful person.

LS: So then, once you were—after your divorce, when you were, it sounds like, learning about the gay male circles a little bit more, was there ever a circle that was related to the university, affiliated with it? I ask because we know by the early '70s, there were these parties at Howard's and Roger's house, but I don't know if that had already started when you were there.

JH: Not that I was aware of, no. We were so, so closeted. When Alice and I moved up to Irving Park, there was another law student from my class, he and his wife lived in an apartment building across the street. We'd take turns driving down to the law school together. And it took me about—about 40 years, literally, to find out that he was gay.

LS: 40 years! So this must have been pretty recent! How did you find out? Did you run into him again?

[0:30:14]

JH: Yes, I ran into him again, down in San Diego.

LS: And he said, “Hey, I remember you...”

JH: Well, he knew me because I was very public by then.

LS: Right. Huh. That's—kind of amazing. What would you say finally gave you the courage, I guess, to come out? I don't know if you consider yourself to have been out by the time you left Chicago for New York.

JH: Yeah, I came out tentatively and slowly. And frankly I don't know that I would call it courage. There were—I suppose there were things that I've done in my life that were courageous, but I don't think the initial stage of coming out was courageous. In the first place, my—I was having a terrible time with Alice. The two of us were not communicating. And the fact that I was gay was the barrier. That was really the barrier between us. And she didn't know. She was, you know, agitated and frustrated, and had no idea why. Probably was thinking, “What's wrong with me?” And finally, I went to see—she went, she had started seeing a psychiatrist. I went to see him. It was a terrible experience for me. He was almost a prototypical cartoon psychiatrist, with the tweed jacket and the pipe and the—and I swear to god, his desk chair was a couple of inches higher than the chair across from him. We had talked for about two or three minutes, and he asked if I was gay. And I said, “Yes, I think I am.” Then it took him about a minute to dismiss me.

LS: Was that—?

JH: That was that. “I don't think I can do anything for you,” blah blah blah. “Nice meeting you.” Well, that certainly didn't make it easier for me. And I don't think that he shared it with Alice right away. After all he had some responsibility with confidentiality, but we were on the verge of separation. And once that happened, I started living more openly. I

had—I had a sort of a boyfriend from Chicago. He was in the history department. A doctoral candidate. And we spent a lot of time together. We didn't live together, but we spent most of our social time. So then I'm—then I met someone who was very social. And a party boy, and he knew everybody and he was, he was fun and funny and he was a total mess. Enough to drive me to a psychiatrist! That was my first experience, in 1967, I think it was. I started seeing this guy, seeing a psychiatrist, and we would talk about my relationship, and at one point she said to me, “Well, remember that you're spending this time with him, but he has to live with himself 24 hours a day.” That didn't really help me but it was an interesting thought.

He started coming with me on weekends. He got to know my children, and they started seeing him as some sort of, something other than a friend. Because one time one of my daughters asked me. She was about ten years old at the time. And we were down at the beach, at Lake Michigan, and nothing in particular, and all of a sudden she says to me, “Daddy, do you love Bob?” And I said, “Well, yes, I do.” And she said, “Well, why don't you marry him?” This was—this would have been 1968 or thereabouts. And I think that kind of gave me a push. My brother Thomas and his wife were visiting that summer, and one evening I just sat down with them and told them. That was the first time I had really told anybody, who wasn't gay. So I realized that they were still there the next day. Nothing had changed. And that was the beginning. I could dash off and say, “Hey! Here I am, world.”

LS: Did you tell Alice eventually? Yes, but—

JH: I talked with Alice. She and I had a—barely civil relationship for a few years, mainly because of the children. We were determined to not cause any sort of feelings among the children towards one or the other of us. And so, you know, we were civil, but between the two of us we barely communicated for a couple of years. During which time she figured it out, of course. So when I finally talked with her directly about being gay, it was no surprise to her. Then several years later, when she went back to get a doctorate in psychology at the University of Virginia, she wrote her thesis on homosexuality in the Episcopal Church. And you know, so—Alice moved, Alice moved far and fast, and it was really nice.

LS: Yeah. So...so nobody in the university must have known then, except people who were—who were also gay. That was apparent—

JH: Yeah, I left at the end of the academic year, in June of '67. And moved almost immediately to New York. I don't think anyone at the time at the law school had any indication that I was gay.

[0:39:27]

LS: What did you do in New York when you lived out there?

JH: I didn't really have any particular plan. Suddenly I was footloose. And what a time to feel

that. It was great. I started taking courses at the—what's it called? There's an art academy on 89th and 5th Avenue, right across from the Guggenheim. I started taking painting classes there. And I went to all of the cultural stuff that—I went to the cultural things that were happening in New York that bordered on revolutionary. It was the '60s [LS: 1968!], it was really exciting. [LS: Yeah.] And then I moved to a little house down on Spring Street, which was, which happened to be a block from this firehouse that became gay central in 1969 and '70. So I was suddenly kind of in the middle of things happening.

LS: That must have been really exciting.

JH: I was in Washington in 1968, '69. And I was there because of an enormous disappointment I had in the political system. '68 was a horrible year, politically. The Democratic Convention in Chicago was an embarrassment for everybody. And my sympathies were very much toward those people who were demonstrating. They were demonstrating mainly out of frustration. All those people because they see an opportunity [LS: Some people like demonstrating.], but basically, those demonstrations were meaningful. They were coming out of frustration, and there was no indication that anybody in Washington gave a damn. And Vietnam—we were lied to about Vietnam the same way that we were lied to about Iraq. A story was created in order to enable our involvement, and why, I don't know. Why Johnson wanted to do what he did, I don't know. I don't know what it was. I'm sure there was international political issues that were never made public. But there was something that had impelled us into full-scale involvement there.

LS: Mentioning Vietnam actually reminds me. Was the draft and selective service registration an issue when you were at the law school?

JH: Well, it was an issue because it existed. [LS: Right.] And people were doing whatever they could to get out of it. [LS: Right.] And that went on, I think, until the early '70s.

LS: Yeah, I know that there were some students who were very active in the college, but I don't know if that was the case for the law school students.

JH: Well, I think everyone had their concerns, and if we had the draft today, I daresay it would change our politics today too.

LS: Yeah, so Vietnam, politics in the '60s.

JH: It's interesting—my observation, and this is not from direct experience, more indirect, is that those major wars that we were involved in in 1941 until the early '70s, enabled a lot of men to see that their sexual feelings were shared with other men, that they may not have realized had they not had that kind of exposure. And people started coming out. People started saying, “Why should I live this way? There's no justification for these impositions on people, simply because of their sexual attraction.” And once that started and people started coming out, attitudes started to change. I have no doubt, absolutely no doubt, that the greatest single factor in the increasing acceptance of gay people in our

society has to do with coming out. Back in the '70s somebody did a survey and found that, I don't know, 20-30% of the population said that they knew someone who was gay, and today it's, I don't know, like 90%. And you wonder who the others are!

LS: Living below ground or something.

JH: But it certainly has changed attitudes. Looking at Congress, for example, a very conservative guy from Ohio whose son tells him, "I'm gay," and the next day he's supporting marriage equality.

LS: An about-face, yeah. You talk about coming out as sort of a political process that has changed people's political attitudes towards gays and lesbians enormously. Did you understand it as a political process when you were coming out yourself? Or has that been a retrospective?

JH: In a way, I saw it as such. I started to tell you a little bit about '68, '69, when I went to Washington to work with a group called the New Party. The New Party was on the fringe of the radicals. We had a board with people like Gore Vidal on it, and Benjamin Spock, the baby doctor, who was this very interesting guy. Such a patrician, you know. He evolved. In the decade of the '60s, he went from being...I don't know. He had all the double standards that people applied in the day. He just changed completely. I worked with someone who was the president of a college in Ohio. I don't know, it was a broad variety of people. But we had a candidate for president, and our candidate was Dick Gregory. And Dick Gregory was somebody who had all kinds of conspiracy theories. But he was very articulate. Very smart, very smart. I haven't seen him in many years, but he's still alive and doing well, I guess. So I lived through the '68 election as an outsider. But as a participant. And what I saw was—was disappointing and disillusioning, because I saw that the movement was also full of people who had these standards. Stokely Carmichael. Someone asked him about the position of women in the movement, and he said, "The position of women is prone." That was a disappointment. One would have hoped for something more from him.

[0:49:40]

LS: Yeah. Was sexuality at all discussed—?

JH: That was not the focus. That was simply not a focus. There was Bayard Rustin, who created the entire March on Washington in 1963, who was shunted aside, you know. He was open. Nobody else was open about him. So... The movement—my experience of the movement said to me, the problems we're dealing with are endemic.

LS: Yeah. They're not going to go away...that easily.

JH: And Chicago... I think that the atmosphere around Chicago was always been, you know, kind of lofty, intellectually-speaking. And people are curious, there's a lot of interdisciplinary stuff going on on campus, which I think is wonderful. You don't find that

at other schools, and very few people realize. You know, you go to Chicago and you think it's that way at other colleges, but at other universities, it's absolutely not. Chicago is almost unique in that regard.

LS: Have you been back often since you left?

JH: I go back. I'm on the visiting committee for the law school.

LS: So of course you would go back! Yeah. I think I knew that you were going [serve on the board?] at some point, but I guess...

JH: Well, Swarthmore was the—it's so easy for someone graduating from Swarthmore to go to the University of Chicago. It's the same kind of atmosphere. But with respect to being gay, I think it was regarded that way. "That's very interesting, let's explore that." As opposed to, "how do you feel about it?" Well, what do you think?

LS: Yeah. Yes. How can we theorize this a little bit?

JH: I had, in my experience as the dean of students, I had someone come to me. A student. Who—he had made an appointment to talk with me, and he was very nervous and very reluctant, but he said that he needed to talk to me. When we got together, he was on the verge of sobbing, and said that he had come to recognize feelings that he had that made him think that maybe he was gay, and he didn't know what to do. And I thought to myself, my god, what am I going to do? What do I say? Well, it's—first of all, I thought... I don't know, maybe he isn't, maybe he's dealing with some issues of self-worth that are causing him to think this, but that's not really what's going on for him. I wanted to be sympathetic. I didn't want to say, "oh, don't worry about it," I didn't want to say, "well, worry about it!" I let him talk, we discussed the possibilities of it, like what do you want to do. Finally I think he went to counseling and he never came back to me about it.

LS: Was he worried about being gay and its effects on law? On whether he could go to law school, be a lawyer? [JH: Maybe.] It was very much, I might be gay, and this throws everything—everything into question.

JH: Well, this was a time when being gay was illegal in 49 states. [LS: He just happened to be in the one where it wasn't.] That was a terrible thing to have hanging over your head. Just terrible. I mean, I could go to prison. Think of the shame that I could bring to my family. Those are the kinds of thoughts that held people back in the '50s.

LS: So he just came to you with "This throws everything into question, I don't know what to do"?

JH: Yes. I don't know what exactly came up for him or what his fears were. I didn't feel like I was the person he should be talking to about it. I tried to guide him to some professional assistance.

- LS: Do you have a sense of whether...other men of your generation, living through that time—is your story typical, do you think, how you came to coming out?
- JH: Everybody has [LS: Their own.] a story. You know? I know somebody here who's a judge. He and I and two other people were ushers in a friend's wedding, and it was funny because three of the four of us turned out to be gay, and so did the groom. So this one guy was married, and when he—he came to a realization about his sexuality after he was married, and he told his wife. They had, they made a decision to stay together. Which they did. But he was open about his sexuality. And that's one end of the spectrum. The other end is people who never deal with it, even within themselves. Either they don't have sex or they have furtive encounters or whatever. They don't deal with it. So everything in between is everything in between! [LS: Somewhere in the middle, yeah.] And that's been my experience.
- LS: Yeah. Something that just came to me: We haven't talked about lesbians at all, necessarily. Did you know any lesbians at the time? Were they involved in your first steps towards becoming an activist on gay issues? Or was it mostly the men...?
- JH: In the beginning no.
- LS: Yeah. In your recent experience?
- JH: I remember going to a gay bar in Chicago. And I don't know, I don't think it was a piano bar, I don't think it was. But there was singing. There was one person who was very vocal, and I didn't know if it was a man or a woman. And the person seemed to be enjoying the ambiguity. He or she was not revealing whether he or she was a man or a woman. That was probably in 1964, thereabouts. My other brother, not the one who I talked about earlier, my other brother who lived in Los Angeles had an association of people who were everything. When I told him I was gay, he said, “Well, I was wondering when you were going to tell me.” And so through him, I knew lesbians. I wasn't out looking for lesbians, you know! [LS: Obviously!] So I really knew very few. They were just, you know, people—[LS: They weren't out looking for you either!] So yeah, there were some people in New York with whom I socialized. When I moved to Hawaii, there was a lesbian couple there who were rather famous. I think one of them had written a book that was written into an Academy Award-winning movie, I can't remember the name of it. Then when I moved here, which was 1977, of course there were immediately many lesbians in my life. Many of them. And it was interesting because they were people who were in many instances quite active in the community at large. And known—when Dianne Feinstein was mayor she appointed someone who was lesbian as a police commissioner, which was a big deal at the time. That person happened to be a friend of mine.
- [1:01:10]
- LS: It's been interesting in doing this project, just at different times, people have social milieus that are either very single-sex, or that, kids we've talked to who have graduated

much more recently have said that their friend group have always been gay men and women, so to track how that's changed over time, which is pretty dramatically. Yeah.

JH: For me, it took a major turn when I moved here.

LS: Which was, right—after Milk it was gay-dominated, there were a lot of gay people around.

JH: And I lived through the AIDS crisis. In the beginning, when it was horrible, there were many lesbians who were so supportive of the community, here in San Francisco. So there was a level of participation that may have been different than before.

LS: So I don't know if I want to—I usually don't interview people who I know so much about what they did after the University of Chicago. So I don't know if we necessarily want to go through an oral history with all of that. If you do or if you don't, whether you'd just like to have any remarks, things I've forgotten to ask, things that you'd like to have on the record somehow. What would you like in terms of your story?

JH: Well, I guess I would like to say one other thing. That in my more modern history, the University of Chicago has been extraordinarily supportive. The law school in particular. It's also been amazing for me to see how the LGBT students have sort of emerged at the law school. They really are quite a fascinating group. When Jeff Stone was dean, I think he was very encouraging. There was—I don't remember if it was the year he became dean that the Federalists had a conference at the University of Chicago. It was like their first big thing. And they were all these ultraconservative young law students and lawyers who had a reception, I guess it was in the Green Lounge. And I knew these two guys who at that time were in their third year at the law school. Who went to the reception dressed as Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker.

LS: That's great! I appreciate that. When you say that the law school and the university in general has been supportive of you, what do you mean by that?

JH: I mean that they have given me the sense that my sexuality is something that is of passing interest but has had no bearing on my relationships, many of which are preexisting relationships. And that was with faculty members, some of which are no longer alive. Made me feel that they were very accepting, and that's a generational leap for them.

LS: Right. Is there anything else I should ask, or that you'd like to say?

JH: I don't know.

LS: I think I said, we're planning on having an exhibition in 2015 that will be “Closeted/Out on the Quads: LGBTQ History at the University of Chicago,” our tentative title. Do you have any thoughts on what you would like the exhibit to be like, or what you would like to see represented?

JH: I'd love to see whatever you dig up that has real historical value, to go back to the founding of the institution.

LS: We're working on it.

JH: I'm sure you'll find things. No, I can't think of anything other than that. I'm sure there's a lot of material to be unearthed that would make a difference to people.

LS: Well, if there's no last words, I'll turn this thing off.

[1:07:23]

End of Interview