

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

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

**INTERVIEW #81
KNOWLES, JACQUI (1972-) AB 1994**

At U of C: 1989-1994

Interviewed: April 24, 2014 (1 session)

Interviewer: Kris Rosentel

Transcript by: Skylar Liam

Length: 57:12

Interview (April 24, 2014) over Skype,

[00:00 to 04:20 –KR and JK review consent form and demographic questions]

KR: Okay, so that's it for those questions. So to start of the interview, basically we just like to ask how did you come to be at the University of Chicago? Like, what led up to you being there?

JK: I remember getting a lot of brochures in the mail and that sort of thing and I knew Chicago because I had an aunt who went there, so I liked the idea of going to a big city, so that was probably the initial attraction, and then I got in and got enough financial aid so I went there.

KR: So where were you living before that? Were you in Toronto?

JK: No, I lived in -- I'm from Tennessee.

KR: Oh Tennessee.

JK: The only places I'd lived to that time was East Tennessee, so yeah, I wanted the contrast.

KR: And do you remember how you first heard about it, or...?

- JK: The UofC? I'm pretty sure it was one of these college mailings and I remember my aunt telling me "Oh, yeah, it's a very theoretical school" and I wasn't sure whether it was a positive or negative for her but it sounded good, so...
- KR: When you got to the school what did you first get involved with, what did you start studying, or thought you were going to study?
- JK: Oh, yeah, I had no idea what I wanted to study as far as concentration or anything, so I ended up just registering for the last -- I was registering the last day so I kind of ended up with the classes that were left, actually, as far as stuff I signed up for studying. You mean like extracurricular things, or...?
- KR: Yeah, sure.
- JK: I'm trying to remember now. I mean I remember spending a lot of time in the library and that kind of thing. Very UChicago things to do.
- KR: So what did you end up studying and why did you decide on that?
- JK: Well my degree is in general studies in the Humanities, so I think I picked that because I wanted to study a bunch of different things and kind of put them together and that was a way of doing that, so it was a little bit religion, a little bit of politics, pretty much.
- KR: And did you have any classes that influenced what you wanted to focus on a lot, or experiences?
- JK: Yeah, I had a really, well, several good classes, but one with, I think it was called Politics and Religion with somebody at the Divinity School, and I just, I liked it because it wasn't all one thing, it was like it was about religion but it was about its social context, and I hadn't really been exposed to that kind of subject matter before.
- KR: Any other classes?
- JK: Oh yeah, there was a class in Elementary Logic that I thought was -- I thought all Philosophy classes were like that, turned out they weren't, but I liked that one, yeah I mean there were a lot of fun classes, but as far as influencing my choice of major, those were the two that came to mind.
- KR: And did you have -- what did you do outside of classes in your time here?

JK: Well I wrote for one of the student papers, quite a bit, and I was a big fan of the film festival, I think that those are the two main things that I remember.

KR: And did your social friend groups come out of those, or who you were living with?

JK: Yes, first it was people who lived in the same dorm that I met up with, and then just meeting people through them -- I mean I don't... I liked the people I worked with on the paper but I don't -- like my really good friends didn't really seem to come out of that or were just friends of friends...

KR: So were you out when you came to the university, or -- when you first got there, or when did you first come out?

JK: When I first got there no. That was something that kind of took place over the first year, 'cause where I came from that wasn't a thing that I was aware of happening at that time.

KR: So can you tell me a little bit about your coming out experience in that first year?

JK: Yeah well, that year was -- there was some stuff on campus of hate mails and things that were being directed at some of the leaders of GALA, what was then the Gay and Lesbian Alliance, and so there was sort of the protests around the flag pole thing going on at that time, people seemed to think the University wasn't doing a very good job and so I kind of came out in that context, actually, when a lot of people were starting to get together and it was totally okay to come out 'cause we clearly weren't the only people, and so it really happened that spring.

KR: And were there any other LGBT people in your dorm or that you met early on?

JK: There were but I kind of didn't find that out until later -- it was sort of... it started and then, oh it turns out so-and-so down the hall is gay too, or "Oh you're -- oh okay" and then someone else comes out to you the following year and which seemed to be slow in happening at least with all the people that I knew, 'cause I wasn't involved in organizing groups at that time.

KR: And so can you talk a little bit about what the climate was like during that hate mail thing -- 'cause I've heard about it before but I've never really heard...

JK: Well it was -- on the one hand people were upset about it because I guess they saw that there were some threatening individuals and that was a bad thing, but on another level it was also kind of empowering because all of a sudden all these people came out -- and not

just people coming out but there were a lot of straight people on campus who were rallying and things, you know, this doesn't really work and so, in a way it was kind of -- not that the hate mail was positive, but it ended up spawning a kind of positive counter-reaction, 'cause I mean I had never been to a pride event or gay organization or anything like that and all of a sudden people from The Windy City Times and so forth were just wandering around talking, and it seemed like there was -- you know just everyone was talking about it and it sort of made it seem as though we must out-number those people who were sending that hate mail and that was a positive energy.

[00:12:24]

KR: Yeah. So did you go to any of the rally things or?

JK: Yeah, I remember going to that -- I went to two or three of them, not really knowing what to do, you know I didn't have a sign or anything, it just seemed like I should show up, and then I remember my roommate showing up, which was really nice at that time, because I didn't know she would be there, well she wasn't gay or anything, and she didn't know that I was, either, but that was really nice because, as I found later, there was another person in the dorm and her roommate had reacted really badly and, you know, beat her up, and all this stuff had happened, so I felt really lucky because even all of my straight friends were comfortable, and talking about it, and "Oh this -- we can't put up with this" and that wasn't everyone's experience, by any means.

KR: So with coming out did you -- who did you come out to first, was it more of a slow process of certain people over time, or...?

JK: Yeah, well, at the time I had -- one of my friends during the winter had had a round of problems, she'd been hospitalized, for various reasons I was talking a lot to the counselors at the University, I'm pretty sure it might have come up first in that context, although that wasn't actually why I was talking to her, but I remember telling one of my friends back home, and my brother and sister, and then all of a sudden it was like... the rallies were happening and I was in the paper and it became like a public thing, so there were sort of a few people then it sort of... dropped, and I thought "Well let's get this over with," well not really all at once but it seemed like it.

KR: Mm-hmm. So you were in some of the papers and stuff with...?

JK: Yeah I think I wrote a letter to the editor or something and all of a sudden everyone was like "Oh Jacqui came out to everyone on campus!" [laughter] I suppose I hadn't really

thought -- it didn't scare me at the time because, I don't know I guess you don't think about those things, I was quite young. [laughter]

KR: Yeah. So did you come out to your family at a similar time or was that later, or...?

JK: Yeah, I came out to my brother and sister but I didn't come out to my parents because they were -- well it just wouldn't have been a good idea, I didn't think; they were conservative and religious and things... so I think I imagined I would somehow never have to come out to them, but what actually happened was they figured out by the end of the summer and actually asked me, so -- or didn't even ask me, they just kind of told me that they knew, so I kind of didn't have to come out to them, but it was still kind of awkward, but... they didn't react as badly as I thought they would, so...

KR: So there was a hate mail thing your first year, were there any other big moments like that that you can think of, like events that happened?

JK: Well, I mean I think it became -- sort of after that, after the incident they started doing things like "Well let's have a gay pride issue of the paper," you know "let's have some positive things because we're kind of counter-acting that," but I mean I wasn't like... seeing anyone at the University, so it was kind of... in a way it was almost like this political context, instead of sort of, "Oh, I know that I'm coming out because, you know, you're in love" which seems to be a common experience but it was actually different.

KR: So did there feel like maybe a divide between the political aspect and the social aspect of gay life on campus, or... were they kind of together?

JK: They kind of seemed to flow together for me, because, I mean I started meeting other people who were out, and seemed very comfortable with it, and so that was nice, obviously, to get to know other people and kind of figuring out, "oh this is what it means to be gay," so I didn't really have any other way of knowing, I didn't have other models or anything like that, so yeah at that time it seemed like that was the context, so you know... if you were going to meet other gay people then, that was how, because otherwise, how could you know they were gay? They were probably -- you might not necessarily know, 'cause they weren't out carrying a sign.

KR: And so what did the social aspect of queer life look like at that time, were there parties, or like... were they with GALA, or was it kind of a separate thing, or the same people...?

JK: Yeah, I mean there probably were... I mean I don't really remember parties very much, because it seemed like it was more of a lot of meetings, which doesn't sound very

exciting now, but at the time it was like, “Oh we want to work on AIDS vaccines, we want to protest this, and we want to see this film” and those kinds of things so, I mean I know there were bars and stuff in Chicago but for the most part, we were just as likely to get carded and not let into bars, as to get in, so didn’t see as much of that as far as the larger Chicago scene.

KR: So how did -- what was the dating scene like? Were people dating within these -- the political groups or was it kind of separate from that, or...?

[00:18:31]

JK: It seemed like it -- I mean it seemed like a couple that I knew were all sort of involved in those things together, but of course, I don’t know that there weren’t individuals who were dating someone else that I didn’t know anything about just because they didn’t come to be at the rallies, so it’s a bit hard to tell, but it seemed like there were sort of, two or three power-house couples that were always advocating and arguing about things and so I had that impression “oh you all met in this group” but that probably wasn’t true for just as many other people.

KR: And so did you date anyone during school?

JK: Yeah, um, I mean a little bit later, and as far as at the University, yeah I mean I went out with a couple of students, but interestingly they weren’t people I met in that context, they were sort of, trying out films, or they were people who were my friends anyway, so I remember sort of expecting the social situation to go one way but actually it felt a different way, which was just -- it was actually more about people being people and “oh yeah, maybe I’m gay, too” instead of just meeting at... “here we are, we’re gay,” so...

KR: So when was that -- it was later in your time here?

JK: Yeah, I mean they weren’t the first people I ever went out with but -- well only like my second year, and all this happened the first year, and so I guess by the time I came back in the fall I was more... you know, going out to other parts of Chicago and just meeting more people and more confident... plus I didn’t live in Tennessee anymore, which helped.

KR: Did you ever encounter, in other settings, intolerant people that are memorable moments to you at all?

JK: Yeah... there were definitely students that weren't comfortable with the whole thing, and for the most part I don't remember them, like one on one attacking me, or verbal assault on me personally, but it was more of an atmosphere of people writing things that I think were pretty ignorant. Strangely, one of the weirdest things that happened was there was a couple who, I don't think they were actually connected to the university, but they came to some GALA meetings, and they were really angry, like lesbian separatists or something, and they liked to scream "Dyke!" at people if they saw them on campus, and I remember walking past them once with my two friends and they were screaming "You closeted dyke!" and I'm thinking like, "What the hell, I thought you were on our side," so that was sort of weird, but, I think now, well, they probably had some issue about how political other people should be, I'm not sure, so that was weird, but...

KR: Were there any other times that people were outed more than they wanted to be, or something? Because sometimes the rumor mill --

JK: Yeah, it definitely, it definitely didn't always happen the way that people wanted it to, just like the girl who got attacked by her roommate, but then there was another guy, and I didn't really know him until later, but he was in my dorm and I guess his experience was really traumatic, I think his -- I'm not sure if it was roommate or someone else, but was telling everyone about him, and he ended up, I think, attempting suicide, but fortunately he ended up being okay, but you know obviously that wasn't the way that he had envisioned doing it, either...

KR: I just lost my train of thought. So with -- right, with GALA and some of these groups, were there any tensions between subgroups of that, like lesbians and gay men, or was it more cohesive, or were there just people who weren't there at all or not really part of the picture?

JK: I don't remember it being that way, it seemed like that particular time that the men and women were cooperating pretty well, because there was still a lot of -- like ACT UP and that kind of AIDS advocacy going on and there were women who had really good gay guy friends, seemed kind of balanced. I mean I knew a few people who -- well several people, actually, who identified as bi and saw that as, I think sort of felt like they weren't represented, so they had... the Bisexual Union, I think, I don't remember what it was called, but they kind of had their group, but I didn't -- I remember knowing that and being friends with them but I don't recall that I ever went to any of those meetings, I mean I suppose there were some tensions like that...

KR: So did the Bisexual Union and GALA ever do things together, sort of as... political things, or were they kind of separate?

- JK: I think that... I'm not actually sure, it seemed like they got together... it wasn't actually Pride month at Chicago but there was a week in the spring where there were a lot of things going on on campus, and I think they co-sponsored that, I mean I remember a couple of attempts to get together a broader group and call it something else, like UofC queers or Queer Allies, or different things like that, you know "It should be broader," "It shouldn't just be spelling out gay or lesbian or bi" but I don't know how successful that was, at least not while I was there...
- KR: And how did GALA work as an organization, were there certain people in charge of it, or was it just like... people went to the meetings and there was no person in charge, or?
- JK: At that time it seemed like there was -- I don't know if they were called chairs, or what, but there was a male and a female co-leader, and they didn't really -- I wouldn't necessarily say they were in charge, they would just get discussion going, or something... the people I remember being those people were really laid back, they didn't seem to be -- have an agenda or -- because sometimes people would come in very angry about various things and express their strong views and they always seemed to be mostly listening and kind of enabling the state more than, you know, "this is what we're going to do." I don't know how those people were chosen, or in retrospect I don't know how long they were the leaders, but that seemed to be the way it worked.
- KR: And how did some of these demonstration things come to be organized? Would people just propose it at the meetings, or... how did people organize around that?
- JK: I think it must have been beyond GALA, because I don't remember knowing about GALA really or going to the meetings at first when these protests were happening, I think it was just some signs getting stuck up on sites because some people probably were emailing, but we weren't really using that as much then, it was just any, you know, "Flag pole at noon" and then all of a sudden word spread because so many people would be there from outside of the university, like the Socialist Union, and all these people would show up, and I'm not sure how they all knew we would be there but I suspect maybe some of these organizers made some phone calls.
- KR: And did outside media or anything ever pick it up as a story or --
- JK: Well I remember being told that it was in the New York Times, I don't remember actually seeing it in the New York Times. There were certainly media there, Chicago media, there was a journalist from the Windy City Times there, the first time, I remember going and then it seemed to escalate and continue beyond that, because there were...

there were episodes where someone was attacked on the steps of the administration building and they said the university police weren't responding, which they weren't, and the next thing was people were filing into the administration building to go and occupy the office and stuff, and I don't remember knowing how that happened, it was just "Hey, let's go in here because we all just watched this happen," whose idea it was I'm not sure.

KR: And so where did some of the meetings and stuff take place? Was it on on-campus places or did anyone have an apartment that people went to, or...?

JK: The ones I recall generally did take place on campus, I mean different parts of Ida Noyes Hall, and you know, people would go out afterwards for coffee and things like that. Some of the other organizations that weren't gay specific did meet in people's apartments but when I think about that I think, people knew where we were so I guess everyone there must have been really comfortable... because there was also a coming out group that used to be in the Episcopal student union and I think part of the reason for that was it was sort of out of the way, you weren't just going to stumble across it so people who were having -- you know, who were hesitant or weren't sure or they didn't really want someone walking by and going "Oh, you're in the gay meeting!" they were at a different, well, it's a more safe place.

[00:29:33]

KR: And do you know how they advertised that support group? Because we have a similar group now and it can be tough to like... want a lot of people to know about it but not know that that is the coming out support group, you know?

JK: Yeah, you know, I seem to remember that there were sort of fliers about different things and one of them was the coming out group, that if you wanted to do that, you met at Brent House, so I guess it wasn't really a secret, because as I recall one of the guys who was going to that was given a hard time, I don't think he was attacked, I don't think he was beaten to a pulp, but I mean some people were following him on the way home, and gave him a hard time, they found out about this, so yeah, I mean it's -- you want it to be private, but not so private that people can't actually find you, because they might not be looking for flyers that say a lot of gay stuff.

KR: Yeah.

JK: They might not even be sure about what—about themselves.

KR: And were there any faculty or staff that were out on campus that people knew about and maybe did things?

JK: It's funny because there must have been, but... I mean the closest thing I remember was, there was a philosophy class about feminism, and I don't know to this day if the person teaching it was gay or out or anything, but it seemed like all the women who went there met lesbians, so that class -- of course everyone in the class wasn't a lesbian, either, 'cause it was a class about feminism, but at some point, probably in my third or fourth year, there was sort of an ad hoc -- no, it must have been my third year, because the domestic partnerships were being brought in at that time, there was a sort of an ad hoc about moving forward with gay rights on campus, at that time there were faculty like George Chauncey, was in the history department at that time, they were out -- you know they were probably out before that, but that was the first time I ever was in a room with them and doing gay stuff.

KR: And so did you take any classes with George Chauncey or?

JK: No I didn't, my student job was in the social sciences department so I kind of met all the social science faculty so I knew him that way, but I didn't actually take any of his history classes.

KR: Did you take any classes that talked at all about queer things, or did it come up with discussion about feminism at all, or...?

JK: I really don't remember that it did... I knew there were people doing classes and doing queer theory at the graduate level -- because I knew, part of the thing with GALA is we met a lot of grad students, because it's a primarily a graduate university, who just don't want to hang out with 18 year olds all the time, so that was interesting. In the classes that I took I don't really -- probably the closest was some Greek Philosophers, and oh yes of course, Socrates and these guys in that classical context, but not like modern history or... I mean we knew these faculty were there but we never really talked about them in class

[00:33:03]

KR: Yeah. So were there any academic events or anything that were dealing with queer theory that you knew about with some of these faculty members, or was there any sort of connection with GALA or were those worlds kind of separate?

JK: I don't remember any of that that I was involved in, when this ad hoc group came together in about 1993, I guess there was more -- I mean I guess I can remember, like,

Adrienne Rich came to read poetry, and that was not advertised on campus, I think that was through the Seminary Co-op Bookstore, and there probably were members of the faculty there, it wasn't just GALA, but yeah it did seem like there was a disconnect, it seemed like students were doing everything themselves, and then later probably that wasn't entirely accurate, but I never seemed to see any faculty around.

KR: And you mentioned the domestic partnership thing, was there a campaign around that while you were there or was it ---

JK: Yeah I think it was somewhat low-key, I don't think it was like, marching on campus, kind of thing, anymore, but there was definitely pushing work, because it was still kind of new, I mean I don't think there were very many universities doing that at all yet and so I think it was advocated for by faculty and staff and then they did bring it in before I left, so that seemed like a big change because in the beginning there was the sense that the university wasn't interested in protecting students and then a couple years later they seemed to be kind of... well they were making domestic partnership policies, so clearly there was some advocacy work done there... more than I was probably aware of.

KR: And were certain administrators kind of in those conversations, or was it generally the administration?

JK: As far as the domestic partnership policy?

KR: I think generally with some of the advocating with the administration, like the letters, too, were there certain people they were talking to or was it kind of, like, in general the administration?

JK: There probably were but I don't really know who. The only sort of grownups that I can remember being really forthright, coming to rallies, actually talking to people, were actually some of the chaplains who seemed to be quite good about that and I think they were more worried that people were maybe coming out and it would be sort of lonely for them or they needed... not counseling, but a people who were there for you kind of thing. But yeah, as far as working with the administration, I remember being at meetings and some faculty being there, you know, like Chauncey, so I feel like that task force was at all the discussions...

KR: And were there counseling services at the time at the university at all, like therapy or anything? 'Cause I know we have that now but I'm not sure when that started...

- JK: Yeah, there was a student counseling center which you could go to for anything, pretty much, not necessarily connected to that, and then there was a student run phone line that was kind of a “here’s someone to talk to” service. I’m not sure how effective they were in terms of referring people if they needed more help or more counseling or if they were just kind of there to listen, but they were just student volunteers, so that’s probably as much as they can do. I don’t remember any sort of campaign about safe students or anti-bullying or any of that sort of thing... it was more... yeah I don’t remember anyone really talking about that.
- KR: Did people ever go to counseling to talk about being gay, and did they have good experiences with that or bad experiences, or do you know?
- JK: I don’t really know, I mean I didn’t have bad experiences, but I wasn’t actually there for that reason, but when it came up I didn’t have a bad experience. A couple people I knew were really troubled and needed psychiatric help, and I mean the experience was bad but I don’t know that they were badly treated... it was just, I don’t know that they were really just distressed, but there were probably others that I didn’t know about and they might have had much worse experiences, but not that I personally knew
- KR: And was that coming out support group a separate thing from counseling?
- JK: Yeah the coming out group was... I guess it was facilitated by the Episcopal chaplain, he didn’t really do it, but that was the same thing, and that was very much just peer support - I guess the idea, ‘cause I sort of helped with it for a while, my second or third year, and it was just... you were sort of there to be calm and talk about whatever -- like maybe they were just questioning their sexuality, or they weren’t ready to come out yet but they just wanted to know that it was okay, so yeah we couldn’t really -- if someone had come in in deep trouble I’m not sure how helpful we would’ve been other than to recommend that they get counseling, but it was okay if it was just people who were unsure, people who were a little private. It seemed like more guys, as I recall, than women... but it wasn’t a big group at any time.
- KR: Yeah ‘cause I was just thinking -- now the coming out support group is through the counseling services..
- JK: Oh yeah, it wasn’t organized like that, I didn’t get the impression that counseling thought there was a big need for someone to support gay students, it was just sort of like, if you were then they would say “well is that a problem for you?” and if it was a problem then they would just treat it like another problem, but now it’s probably a lot more organized, and outreach than... yeah I wonder if all that stuff hadn’t kicked off with... threatening

mail and all that stuff, or... how long it would have taken, because there wasn't really a clear context to come out, you were good to go if you were out, but if you weren't quite ready to organize and lead and stuff, yeah, not sure...

KR: So what did you do after you graduated, where did you live and work?

JK: Well, I worked at the university for a while, and then I did one year's graduate study in England, and then I moved back to Tennessee for a few years, and then I ended up in Canada for a long time, and now I'm in England. So what did I do? I mean I did a lot of different jobs, but I started out in the University administration.

KR: And did you -- what were your experiences like in those spaces being a queer person versus being at Chicago in school?

JK: Oddly enough by the time I graduated and I ended up working for the university, at that time they were listed as a great employer for gay and lesbian people, because they had policies and a lot of companies didn't yet, so... institutionally I think I must have been pretty happy, because I don't think I would have stayed there. But in terms of my immediate workplace I don't ever remember really being... I wasn't not out, but it wasn't something we really talked about ever, it seemed like it was a long time before I really wanted to be very vocally out at work, but I think, I think the work environment just tended to be more conservative than -- not homophobic, but I didn't really want to bring it up... I wouldn't think anything of it now, but it just seemed like I was more conservative at work -- and people in general were just more conservative, they just dressed more conservatively, and you had to -- I was younger than everybody I was working with and you had to present a very serious persona, I guess.

KR: And what about regionally between Chicago and Toronto and Tennessee and London?

JK: Tennessee was definitely less -- but I had gay friends there, so I didn't care, but I definitely didn't find it very easy to be, well I think, easy to be out, I mean it wasn't like I had bad experiences, you just sort of -- people were a lot more discreet. If you had -- there was pride, in Knoxville, but I mean, you just didn't seem to see people's pride unless they were students or if they were straight allies, sometimes they would show up, or if they kind of were self-employed people, but you just didn't tend to see -- I must have worked with half a dozen people at the library who were, who I knew were gay and everything but they just would never turn up at a gay thing, because there were bound to be members of the public who weren't happy with it and they just felt like they were high profile, so I didn't find that as much in the other places where I've lived...

KR: So what was dating and relationships like after school? How did you meet people, and...

JK: Well I met someone in graduate school -- well actually I was still an undergraduate, but anyway, so that's... I was in a long-term relationship for a number of years, so I don't really feel like I did a lot of dating after that... but you know I kind of had friends who were, so there was that, but yeah that was about 15 years, so, a lot of that was long distance because we were in different countries, and that was a much bigger problem than it would be today... anyway that's how I ended up in Canada because it wasn't really possible to live in the same country, legally.

KR: How did you meet your current partner?

JK: Oh, we actually met in an online writing group, or fiction discussion group, and then eventually ended up meeting in person -- which is how I guess a lot of people meet now, especially in different countries, but it was a fiction discussion but not a dating group or something. So I think, to the extent that I met people, it seems to usually be through common interests, not as much gay specific contexts, or gay access groups, but just more general... reading together, or hiking together, or stuff like that.

KR: And so have LGBT things come up in your work at all, or in the workplace, or...?

JK: Like race issues and stuff? I mean...

[call drops]

KR: So for the purposes of the recording we lost the call, so I'm trying to get it back...

[computer noises]

[00:49:11]

JK: Hi.

KR: Oh there we go, okay. Yeah sorry we lost the call, but what was I asking? I'm trying to remember... oh, about work in...

JK: Yeah, LGBT at work, well in Toronto and in London, I find it just being much more relaxed and open at work, and everybody always knew, and it wasn't really a very big deal, because the cultural context is quite different in Canada and England, so if it was Pride, or my partner this or that, that would be completely normal, in fact I can remember

in Toronto people saying “Oh, are you gonna have kids?” it was almost too normal, I’m thinking “What?” because obviously I had never experienced that degree of openness.

KR: So I guess... have you been back to the University at all since your time there?

JK: Yeah I went to one of the reunions, but mostly ended up hanging out with my friends who lived in Chicago anyway, so I probably didn’t need to go back to reunion for that, I’ve been back to campus a few times because it’s fun to walk around and see a few people that I knew there, but not too many times... I go to Chicago occasionally because I still have friends and family there.

KR: Do you think things... what do you think has changed or stayed the same since you were here in general with LGBT things and...

JK: I probably don’t really spend enough extended time to know... I mean I suppose that things must be more accessible now, partly because, obviously with technology and stuff students just have a lot more ways of connecting in general, even when they aren’t at University yet. 20 years ago I don’t remember anyone arriving out, I mean maybe people came out during, but even so some of my friends didn’t come out until we’d all been to University together for four years, and after that they finally felt able to come out so... I suppose it’s a lot more written down now, non discrimination, and they didn’t really seem to have those policies, you kind of had the sense that “Yeah, we’re open,” but it wasn’t a very formalized thing...

KR: What do you think maybe has changed generally with attitudes towards gay people...

JK: In general or at the university?

KR: Yeah, I mean like in general with the world.

JK: I think in the US especially, with all of the debate around same sex marriage and Defense of Marriage Act in different states, or... it’s become a lot more family oriented or involves more normal things people would talk about that wouldn’t be something you’d be afraid to bring up with your family where... even if you had a negative incident they would talk about it, whereas it just didn’t seem like it was talked about before... but I also think a lot of people, and not specifically in the States, but a lot of people seem to feel that it’s all over now, if someone comes out it’s like “well who cares? Fine if you come out!” and they aren’t really aware that there continue to be setbacks -- depending on where you live of course, but it still can be quite hard there’s still a lot of these laws on the books and so I think there’s a lot more openness but it’s also a little bit like... “Oh

there are celebrities who are out now so everything must be fine, gay people don't have anything to worry about," and I don't think that's true obviously.

KR: Well I think that's it for questions but if you have anything you'd like to add feel free...

[pause, call lost]

KR: So we lost the call again, unfortunately...

[computer noises]

[00:55:20]

JK: Oh, Skype!

KR: Oh yeah, sorry about this... I was actually just about to say that I don't have any more questions but if you have anything you'd like to add or share, feel free to...

JK: Yeah it seems like we mostly covered everything, yeah it seems like I've pretty much talked about everything. I think about just the concentrated four years as having a lot of change happening, at the same time, probably not enough has changed since then... I think it's interesting when you go into an environment like the university and it's a totally new place and you're not from there and you're with people from all over the place and you're in this sort of hotpot of ideas, and then you go into the world and it ends up sort of being about marriage and taxes and kids and, the sort of issues we're thinking about now, but of course it wasn't really like that in college.

KR: Well thanks so much for talking with me, I learned a lot it was great, sorry for the Skype issues...

JK: Oh, it happens, thank you, I'm looking forward to the final product being available.

KR: Yeah I'm pretty excited about it... well I think I'm gonna go but it was great talking to you.

JK: Take care!

[57:12]

End of Interview