

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

**ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

**INTERVIEW #17**

**TAPON, PHILIPPE (1968-) MD 2006, STAFF**

*At U of C:* 2000 – present

*Interviewed:* March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013

*Interviewer:* Kelsey Ganser

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*Length:* 47:30

**Interview (March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013) at the University of Chicago.**

[00:00:16]

KG: We can start with maybe a little bit about your background and how you ended up at the University of Chicago?

PT: I was applying for medical schools, and I was looking for places in cities that I had visited and liked. So that left the West Coast cities, a couple of places in New York, and Chicago, which I had set foot in once but really, really liked. The University of Chicago had a famous name, lots of Nobel Prize winners and stuff like that. I looked at the website and really liked the feel of the school. Seemed like a collegial, fun place to be. And when I visited, I had mixed feelings about it. Obviously it was going to be a lot of hard work and kind of rough. But I decided upon it. As it turns out, they took me, so here I am.

KG: Great. Where did you go for undergrad?

PT: Berkeley, California.

KG: And what brought you to medical school?

PT: That's... The short answer: I toyed with the idea of becoming a doctor when I was in college and a little before that, but I was pretty sure I didn't want to work that hard then. I thought I had books to write, places to go, things to do, people to meet, and I didn't think that was compatible with getting a medical degree. So I did those things. But the thing that kind of sent me over back to medical school was the two novels I did finish writing. Both of them had medical themes. One of them was about a guy who had AIDS, and he was dying, and he wanted someone to narrate his life and tell his story as he was sort of circling the drain, and I actually spent a lot of time at the Institut Pasteur, where the disease was being treated. And then the second novel was about my grandfather—I say novel, although it was based on a real person. My second novel was about my

grandfather, who was a doctor in Paris, and there had been some family stories that had been handed down about him and how he survived during the occupation of Paris in 1943, 1944.

And my editor, Billy Abrahams, unfortunately had congestive heart failure while we were working on this manuscript. He actually died a week after I submitted the manuscript to New York and it was published. That left an ashy taste in my mouth. But I spent a lot of time with Billy, going to his cardiologist appointments, looking at the scans, hearing about his prognosis and medications and stuff like that. I found that I didn't have a third book inside of me. A friend of mine said, "What are you talking about? You need someone else to die so you can write a book." [laughs] There's some justification to that. It could be that somebody dying—that was enough to light the fire under my ass actually to write a book. I decided—I thought I wanted a more participatory role in these difficult moments. After toying with a couple of career choices, I decided to go with the MD. As a friend of mine put it, "You will have more choice over your contributions." That may have been true—I hope it was.

KG: So it sounds like you had some time in between Berkeley and UChicago while you were writing these books? [PT: Yes.] So did you have any sort of preconceived ideas about the University before you came here as a med student? Or is that not something that you think about as much with med school?

PT: I had heard a couple of my academic friends speaking about how... I remember one of them saying over dinner, "The University of Chicago. What an incredible institution." Making it sound like the place was really well-run, the values were exactly where they needed to be. These were two guys who worked at Stanford, and they often complained that Stanford was too much of a country club, and too coddling, and not academic enough. And they also had ties to Harvard, and Harvard being, Harvard was too social, too much of a—rather than here, a place where things actually happened. I don't know how much of that was true or not. But there was probably a grain of truth to it. So that was one preconception before I came here as well. I can't think of too many others, because it hadn't really figured strongly on my radar before I got here.

KG: Yeah. I think that's sort of more common with undergraduates. Did any of your expectations change when you got here? The idea that we're more academic and less social than other places?

PT: The medical school is, I think, a little bit apart from the undergraduate and the graduate work. Holly Humphrey is the overall director of the school, and under her tenureship, the medical school has become this very collegial place, where cooperation is the norm, it's expected. People from other departments, I remember some people from the economics department, telling me that fully half of the entering wannabe PhD class would be weeded out by the end. The undergraduates were always struggling with difficult classes and difficult curves, whereas our courses in the medical school were all pass/fail. It's true that we had to work our asses off to pass, but on the whole, I thought it was a rather benign place, on the whole. There are times that I was almost frustrated with the

expectations of me, but I always found that there was some kind of safety net to support me even as I stumbled and fell. People picked me up and urged me on even when I no longer believed in myself.

KG: Oh, that's great. Did you have professor mentors?

PT: I did. I think I would have to recognize Callum Ross, the anatomy professor, and his assistant, Jim O'Reilly, for providing me with particular assistance. Betty Katsaros provided enormous amounts of encouragement. Dan Brauner, a geriatrician, gave me a lot of encouragement as well. Lawrence Gottlieb, a plastic surgeon, encouraged me lots—so I found a lot of different people in different places to push me on...the list is very long.

KG: That's great. It sounds like you had a fair amount of social connections in medical school.

PT: Yeah. I was the gregarious type, so I was happy to socialize and get to know all my classmates, my professors, my professors. I would really enjoy talking with everybody, and I think that may have been one of my ways of getting through the roughness. If I had spent all my time by myself, I probably would have done better academically, but I would have gone crazier. [laughs]

KG: Did you have a separate social life aside from medical school?

PT: Yeah, there was this—at the time that I started medical school, I was 38 years old. I didn't enjoy drinking, and the gay bar club scene definitely started too late for me and involved too much drinking and was too far up north. And I just didn't care for it that much. I had an interest in video games and board games. Online, I found a nice little community of similarly-minded gay guys, and a few lesbians who were interested in board games and video games. That started up a monthly meetup which still goes on to this day. Five years or six years later, they're still meeting up to play their dorky little board games, which I enjoy doing. That for a while was probably my only outlet apart from the life in Hyde Park, because I lived in Hyde Park too.

KG: So this group wasn't based in Hyde Park?

PT: No, they initially—I think our first meeting was at the Uno's Pizzeria downtown, then it moved to the Pick Me Up Cafe, which was between Wrigleyville and Boystown, then it moved to Guthrie's Tavern, which is closer to Wrigleyville, then it moved to, now it's at a place called Chicagoland Games, which is up near Bryn Mawr. Keeps on moving north. I had originally hoped to include it more centrally, so that more South Siders could make it up, and in fact we did have more South Siders when it was at the Pick Me Up, but now it's mostly people from the North Side. That's Chicago for you, I suppose.

KG: Yeah. I do know some gay undergrad gamers here. That's a UChicago college-based group instead of a city group.

PT: Yeah. The thing about Hyde Park and college itself, having been an undergrad too, is that

it provides you a built-in social life, so it's the rare undergraduate who feels the need to socialize outside of his own—is it 4000 people in the college right now?

KG: Yeah, I think each year is around 1000 to 1500.

PT: Yeah, that sounds about right. So it's 4000 to 5000 people, and that provides you with a fair number of people.

KG: Yeah, definitely. Did you find any on-campus social participation groups for graduate students while you were here?

PT: I did. I was very assiduous to go to the LGBT office through some social events that I tried to make every appearance to. I met some good friends at them. Eric Rogers, I met him, and we're still in touch six years later I think. We nicknamed it Beers for Queers, and I was very happy that the university was actually paying money for gay people to get together and actually feeding us alcohol and chips and stuff like that. That might not have happened at another place. It might not have been necessary at another place though, to be fair. So I did that. I think the undergraduates, I think I stuck my nose into a Q&A group once, realizing that it was not for me. [laughs] Brad Nelson used to run the Lavender Maroons as well. He's since moved to Montana, and I've seen pictures on Facebook looking suspiciously like him getting married. That also was a source of friendship as well. Those are sort of the outside the school outlets. But really, I spent a great deal of time with my classmates, having dinner at their houses, or dinner on campus, or talking, or socializing. A lot of my social life really revolved around my class, and I'm really grateful that I was going to school with some people I really considered totally, totally wonderful.

KG: That's so nice. I want to come back to that, but just a quick side note: The Beers for Queers, was that in the Pub?

PT: Yes, it was.

[00:11:15]

KG: Yeah, somebody else had told me about that. I wanted to make sure that it was the same event.

PT: It's still going on, I'm pretty sure. [KG: You're probably right.] Or maybe not. This was before 5710 was built, so there really wasn't a place for LGBTQ to go, so they really had to create a space wherever you could, so one of those was the Pub.

KG: Yeah. Yeah. There's tons of stuff there now, but I don't really know a lot about grad students, obviously. We can try the... I'm picking up that you lived in Hyde Park, but I might have made that up.

PT: No, it's true, I was living in Hyde Park. The apartment was actually at East 51<sup>st</sup> and South

Hyde Park. East 51<sup>st</sup> and South Hyde Park. So almost kitty-corner from Regent's Park, whatever it's called.

KG: As far as your classmate friends went, did you have to come out to those people when you came here?

PT: I didn't feel—I didn't make a big—I don't recall telling people that I was gay. But when a 38-year-old guy who's not married shows up for medical school with a bowtie... [laughs] I didn't feel like I had to—I feel like I didn't have to say it. I'm trying to think of moments when I had to clarify. I can't think of any moments when I had to clarify to anybody that I was gay. I'm trying to remember...did anyone ever assume that I was straight? I don't think anybody ever assumed that I was straight. Word got around. [laughs] I think early on, there was a medical school group called the, it had some alphabetical name, the Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, whatever, People in Medicine. LGBTPM. The administration had turned down one senior student who wanted to call us the Fagocytes. [laughs] Which I thought was a shame! That was a wonderful name. Understandably not correct. [KG: That's so great. Well, now it's on the record for history.] Early on, I had sent an email to the entire class, saying that I was organizing this group for LGBTPM. I think the majority of people who came were either gay or lesbian, but there were a couple of allies as well. So that was my way of saying, this is what I'm running. I remember writing an email that said, "Ladies, gentlemen, and those who are a little bit of both." [laughs]

KG: When you were writing those emails, was that the very beginning of the group?

PT: Close to the beginning. I think I must have sent this in my first year at the time.

KG: What were your goals as an organization?

PT: We wanted to give a place so that the LGBT students could come and recognize one another, and also LGBT faculty. So we were lucky in having people like Todd Zimmerman, who's an oncologist attending here. The wonderful Peggy Mason [Interview #40], who is a neurobiologist here, came here once. Sandeep Gurbuxani, who's a pathologist who showed up to these meetings. And I think they were just meant as mixers for LGBT medical students, residents, and faculty. The residents tended not to turn up—they were too busy. But we usually got a couple faculty members to turn up. I remember it was very encouraging for me to see that there were some faculty members who were out. And also to see their style of being out. There's, aside from a few people...it's a pretty buttoned-down style. Being a Midwestern physician, straight-shooting style comes first. And signifiers that you're LGBT come second. I could be wrong about that though.

KG: I forgot to ask where you were from.

PT: San Francisco, California.

KG: Right. Was that pretty different from what you saw in San Francisco?

PT: In San Francisco, well, California is a big place, and even San Francisco is a big city. The famous place in San Francisco, actually, these very reduced, small neighborhoods, the Castro, which is probably less than a quarter square mile perhaps. Somewhere around that. There's also the Polk, the Fillmore, SoMa, these are all sort of different gay neighborhoods, each one with its own style. Arguably some people can be criticized for just making LGBT the central part of their identity. Or making intergender a central part of their identity. Or making—some people who took really a lot pride in being cutting-edge and pushing you in terms of your expectations and taking offense if you weren't getting clued in. That has its charm, I suppose. But I also found it a little bit irritating and narcissistic. I was kind of glad to be out to Chicago, which seemed to hearken back to a less radical, but also simpler and more natural feeling to me, way of life.

KG: Yeah, it sounds like it was a good fit for you.

PT: It was a good fit.

KG: Did any of the professors who came to your LGBT...P...M [PT: That's right, alphabet soup!] [laughs] ... Were the professors who came to those group meetings, were any of them ones that you considered your mentors?

PT: Strangely not. The people I found most supportive did not identify as gay or lesbian themselves. With the possible exception of Peggy Mason, who encouraged me a lot, gave me a great deal of support. Sandeep Gurbuxani I would see in the hallways, say hello. Todd Zimmerman at these occasions as well, met his partner. Saw his children as well, which was all kind of exciting. But they were not people I was in daily touch with by any means.

KG: Is it still going on, this group?

PT: Yes, it was—it's handed down from one medical student class to the next. Last I heard, it was still going on. I don't think it stopped.

KG: But you don't participate in it anymore.

PT: No, I don't. This may be the reason that residents don't show up is that we didn't know how to get in touch with them, besides to send out an email to every single person in the hospital. Can't really do that.

KG: [laughs] Yeah, people would probably be unhappy if you did that. Let's see, I'm just going to look at this and make sure I'm not missing anything. Did you want to say anything else about your academic experience here?

PT: It was tough. It was grueling. It was very grueling. I've been to some, I've attended many schools, but I don't think the standards were ever quite as high. Nor were people ever more focused on getting tools to succeed. In that sense it was, it lived up to its billing. It was a great institution. It wasn't a nerd factory, although it does feel like that to some

people. It wasn't a place where you could get ahead by schmoozing. You really had to do the work and know the stuff and know it well. At the same time it was a forgiving place. My particular memory with the University of Chicago is that I had a great deal of trouble with anatomy. I actually ended up failing the course and having to retake the course over the summer. I was the only student in the course who had to retake the course. Because of a scheduling snafu, there was a shortage of teaching assistants to teach anatomy next year. And although I wasn't good at anatomy, at least not naturally, I really had to work at it, I really did enjoy anatomy very much and thought that I would enjoy teaching it. So when they asked for teaching assistants, I shyly said, yes, I would. I was really thrilled to hear that Callum Ross and Jim O'Reilly and Betty Katsaros unanimously thought that I would be a good TA. Nothing to do with how much or how well I had done or not done in the course, it just had to do entirely with my attitude towards other students. In that respect, that was a rare—I really felt like I was in the Midwest. I was not in a place where stardom or schmoozing mattered the most. Nor was I in some terrible elitist place like you might find in France where they just take the top grade regardless of personality or something like that. They were really interested in the person doing the work. It was such a wonderful opportunity. And not to toot my own horn, although I feel like I'm tooting the horn of the University, I ended up winning an award for teaching anatomy. And I just thought it was all due to the generosity of the American belief that you could give people second chances. I'm all for it.

KG: Yeah, that's great. Do you have experience with French universities?

PT: I attended Sciences Po, a university in Paris. Institut d'études Politiques. One place, very interesting in many ways. Very high-level, very cerebral discourse. In retrospect, I think it was—it was an interesting place for me, it would have really been better if I had been intent on pursuing an academic career in the humanities, but as it turned out, that's not what I did. So it didn't quite feel right. It was interesting. They definitely relished sheer brainpower. Sheer, madman, brute brainpower. Your ability to know and read books, cite people, all that other stuff.

[22:24]

KG: It sounds like you had a little bit more room for humanity at Chicago.

PT: It may have been the person I was too. After all, there was an interval of almost a decade between the two schools. That might have contributed to it too.

KG: You'll forgive my ignorance about medical school—it's probably not a path I'll ever go down. [PT: It can't be as bad as mine when I started!] One of the questions I usually ask is if you took any classes here on gender and sexuality?

PT: I did not. In fact, gender and sexuality was an approach that... There was some exposure to it, there was nothing thorough-going, certainly nothing like a class on it. I do remember one of the student groups organized a lecture on intersex that was given by a urological surgeon. It was one of the most interesting lectures I've ever attended. She

threw up on the slides pictures of intersex genitalia and challenged us to name them male or female. I remember being really stunned and not able to state was that a penis or a clitoris? Because it really was somewhere in the middle. I remember writing that the lecture should be mandatory for medical school. We did do as part of our training program, we interviewed simulated patients. I remember one of my simulated patients was a gay man, and you were asked to get a good sexual history on him. There was an entire course—I remember before I went to medical school, I talked to a psychiatrist attending over at UCSF. He said, “When I went to medical school, we spent about three hours talking about gay men. And two hours and fifty-nine minutes of that were devoted to AIDS.” And that painted a rather bleak history of sexuality through the eyes of the medical doctor. Really only interested in it as a disease, and now that homosexuality is no longer a disease, what else goes on in the disease of gay men? Which is AIDS, by and large. There was a little bit of that, but on the whole, I definitely felt that it was a more accepting and humane place than when my attending went to school.

KG: That's a really good answer for someone who didn't take any classes on sexuality and gender. Was the intersex lecture that you went to part of a class or was it organized by some kind of group?

PT: It was organized by a student group, and I'm sorry to tell you, I don't remember who it was. I think it was a consortium of student groups, I think that Q&A might have been in there. It was a nice touch to get a urological surgeon up there and actually walk through the anatomy of intersex, because—the thing that I loved about it, once you see the slides, it's impossible to discriminate. You just can't say, just pick one. You just can't! You look at it and it's something else.

KG: Yeah, that sounds like a really good experience. [PT: It was great. It was great.]

KG: I guess we can backtrack a bit and talk about the beginning of the awareness of your sexual identity, and if that had anything to do with your college experience and then into UChicago?

PT: I did college at the traditional age. I was between 18 and 22. I was dimly aware that I was gay when I matriculated into college, but I certainly wasn't even confident to call myself gay until I was long out of college. I think I was 25, the first time I really started calling myself gay. There may be different reasons for that. I had grown up in San Francisco, and was going to high school at the French-American school, which was less than I think half a mile away from the Castro. So lots of our teachers and even our principal were gay, flamingly so... There were rumors that Jacques our gym teacher was gay, Leslie was lesbian, they were everywhere. And yet, I—for some reason I never quite was able to make the leap for myself. And that may have been because of, I remember that we had gay couples as guests at our dinner table often in my family home. My cousin, it was kind of an open secret that he was gay, and he was a frequent visitor as well. There may have been—both my parents were, I think when I was growing up, more on the conservative side than on the liberal side, but never so conservative that they would regard Jack and John—that was a real couple, not a made-up name—Jack and John as not real, close



friends. So I'm not quite sure. I received some discouragement, I'm sure, which made it harder than I would have expected myself to take it.

[28:08]

KG: Yeah. Do you have any idea what switched in you when you were 25?

PT: Time had just passed. You're a quarter of a century old, you can't bullshit yourself any longer. [laughs]

KG: I suppose so! Let's see, we already talked about you being out at the University... I'm assuming that your identity didn't really influence you to come here for any reason.

PT: I was sensitive to whether a school was gay-friendly or not. I remember googling "LGBTQ," and it showed me to [lgbtq.uchicago.edu](mailto:lgbtq.uchicago.edu). There was a mailing list put together by, can't remember his name, a mailing list put together so that students who were visiting other medical students could be put up by an LGBTQ-friendly student. My host was Jennifer, now a freshly minted PhD, no, MD. Was very gracious. She gave me a promising view of the university, which influenced me in coming here. She gave me a positive recommendation to the university as well, which I'm sure was invaluable in securing my admission.

KG: That's a nice feature. I had never heard of them having that before. Did you ever feel like you had any problems with your identity in this school? Or the university, I suppose.

PT: No. My major complaint was that that damn university president wouldn't let the Green Line cut through the school. That was a horrifying, horrifying mistake. I really think that Hyde Park would feel so much connected to the rest of the city if the Green Line barreled through or near campus, instead of being separated by Washington Park. [KG: What a shame.] What a ghastly, ghastly...

KG: Wait until the Red Line shuts off. My girlfriend and I are going to move out the neighborhood just in time.

PT: That's right. That's exactly right.

KG: If you want to talk about this, would you describe how you found romantic relationships at the University?

PT: Some of it was through the student groups, where I would meet guys. Online, I think, like everybody else. And that's about it. Because I didn't really venture forth to the watering holes up north very often. My own gay gamer group, I actually didn't date anybody, somehow feeling that as the organizer, that it was incumbent on me that it not turn into a sleazefest. [laughs] Just trying to get people to keep going. Because it was meant as a social outing, not necessarily an effort to turn into another sexual outlet for guys, of which there are plenty.

KG: Yeah. I've heard several grad students say that online dating is one of their major ways to meet people.

PT: Yeah, one of the characteristics of the University of Chicago, at least in comparison to institutions on the West Coast, and perhaps it's because of Hyde Park, is that there are relatively few signifiers given out. Dan Rabe [Interview #39] was one of the young undergrads in charge of Q&A for a while. He would wear signifiers. Like, he would have a big rainbow umbrella that he would open up, poof, and it would be like a meter wide. Coming from across the quad. I think he dressed in drag for his birthday or graduation. There are a few people who would do the same. But they're few and far between. So that the actual signifiers are few. And if there are few signifiers, if you're not going to wear a shirt that says, yeah, I'm gay, then you've got to go online to find people! I think it's telling that in my own class, two of my fellow classmates were gay and I had no idea! [laughs]

KG: Are your classes pretty small?

PT: No—well, they're like 100 people.

KG: Yeah, my class is 1000 people, and if I didn't know two people who were gay I probably wouldn't care at all.

PT: Peter and Alex both went on to become surgeons, and I remember being a bit flabbergasted that they were both, you know. That was kind of a shocker, I suppose.

KG: You mention that you didn't really like to hang out in Boystown much, but did you go to other parts of Chicago?

PT: I think out of curiosity I went to go visit a gay bar on Jeffrey St. It's called I think Jeffrey's Place? The guy that I was dating, we went together to this [other] place. So there are at least two gay bars on the South Side with a rather different feeling. One of them is definitely a kind of stand and model kind of bar, with a bunch of guys standing around looking tough and not talking to each other. The other is far more friendly, with a really friendly bartender, and people speaking to one another, which I thought was really nice. It was unusual. It wasn't like I made a habit of going to these places. I don't think I remember going to many other places. It was mostly Hyde Park, with occasional trips to Belmont, then right back to Hyde Park.

KG: But your gaming group was on the North Side.

PT: Right. It was on the North Side. That was once a month.

KG: So at least once a month. Let's see. So when did you finish medical school?

PT: 2006.

KG: Sorry, my understanding of how that works is really hazy.

PT: It was a four-year program and I took two extra years.

KG: So have you kept in touch with people you've met through the medical school and LGBTPM?

PT: I do. We keep in touch through Facebook, like lots of people. Some of them, I see them in corridors. I see Todd Zimmerman, I see Sandeep Gurbuxani, and I wave when I do. You hear stories, I hear, "oh, Mike Glista is doing great," or so forth and so on. Now I really feel that my core friendships are people I see independently of medical school, or saw independently of medical school. And my residents! I'm in a class with five other residents, and other people I keep tabs with.

KG: Aside from gay gaming and LGBTPM, did you participate in any other organizations or political activity while you were here?

PT: Being a graduate, we would sometimes throw different things together. Daniel Shannon, when he was here, threw a movie night at his house which was usually well-attended and a lot of fun. There was something else. Lectures that were given, where I met a good friend of mine...Now that I think about it, yeah, I did build a fairly substantial network, usually with someone that I would meet through one of the events thrown by the university, then there would be somebody I'd particularly click well with, then I'd meet his or sometimes her friends, and then we became good friends. A lot of it started through the little mixers that the university started. I'm glad I went to them. Tremendous source of support for me during some difficult years.

KG: Yeah, that sounds great. Those mixers that you're talking about, was that Beers for Queers?

PT: Beers for Queers. Also some of the undergraduate things. There were informal parties too, it wasn't necessarily thrown by the university, but if I had met somebody with whom I had clicked—Sravan Kannan was an undergraduate here studying literature, and we had actually met at a Muslim dinner being thrown by friends—both of us have friends who are Muslim and who would ask us to fast for a day during Ramadan. So we saw each other, and then we saw each other again at a party that was being thrown by Brad Nelson for the Lavender Maroons. If we had not seen each other both times, we probably would not have clicked, but now we're good friends and we're still in touch.

KG: What a funny way to meet someone. [PT: Yeah, a Muslim dinner.] Did you ever participate in any sort of community activities with Hyde Park or the city, the larger city?

PT: I do—I went to a lecture thrown by the Hyde Park Arts Center, I think. The school asked us to volunteer to give talks to the public schools about what it was like to be a minority medical student. And I went to Pride. Or tried to. Often I was busy then. But I don't

remember doing much more. Sadly it did not seem like a priority at the time.

KG: Well, it's hard to be a medical student. As sort of a, as you look back with your years of wisdom, having finished medical school, do you think your experience having a great social network and a fulfilling academic environment, do you think they were typical experiences for other medical students in your class?

PT: I think that most of the other medical students didn't quite have as huge of a network as I did. I was kind of famously gregarious in my class. To be fair though, most of the older students had friends of their own to attend to. Younger students had their families. They were still young enough that I remember one of them saying, "Oh yeah, I talk to my mom," I can't remember, it was every weekend or every night. I remember just being astonished. You talk to your mother? And you realize that it's someone who was 39 or 40 talking to someone that was 23 or 24. And it's a considerable gap. I was the same way when I was 23 or 24. I just wasn't 23 or 24 then. I think that different people handled the stress in different ways.

For me, I felt very lucky that it was a good fit between me and the university community. I felt particularly lucky that I got along well with the medical students, the graduate students, and the undergraduate students.

[40:23]

KG: Yeah, that sounds great, that you were able to have contacts in all of those social groups.

PT: Yeah, at the time, I really thought nothing of it. In retrospect, I was kind of—that was really some surprising friendships. I remember a guy who was an undergraduate here. He has since gone on to the Harvard JFK School of Government... We got along well, I remember having these long conversations with him. Completely my intellectual equal.

KG: Looking back, have any of your perceptions of your time at medical school changed from then to now?

PT: I think at the time, I really suffered through medical school. Academically it was very demanding. There were times I was flat on the floor, asking, "How much more do they want, how much harder can it get?" And perhaps it was very difficult. In retrospect now, being a resident and working, it's like, oh, those were golden years. A little bit of nostalgic revisionist rearranging is happening despite myself! Who was it who spoke about happiness? He did that wonderful experiment where he asked people to rate six pictures in the order that they liked them, and then he'd give people those pictures that they liked fourth most, and then they were asked to reorder those pictures. Invariably, invariably, the picture that they rated fourth most was promoted to third most after they had owned the picture for a couple of weeks. They revise it. I feel that same kind of revision is going on now. [laughs] But maybe that's just what's mine.

KG: Well, that's what's important. I guess we can shift gears a bit and talk about your work at

the hospital now, since you're still associated with the university. So you're a resident. I understand that this is better than attending as a medical student?

PT: Right. An attending is someone who's finished residency and is therefore at the highest job on the pyramid. Below him or her is the resident, who is past the first year. And below him or her is the intern, who is one year out of medical school and still learning his or her chops as a medical doctor. That's where I am.

KG: I have a roommate who's going to medical school, so I've heard all the terms, but I don't always know what they mean. How is it different being staff here than being a student?

PT: As staff, I don't see the quads. I rarely see the libraries. I show up for work, I do my work, I go to the cafeterias, I go back. And the psychiatry residency here, a lot of it is based off campus. Although I did my rotations in pediatrics and pediatric neurology, emergency medicine here, I did rotations in medicine in other hospitals. There were days when I wouldn't even set foot in Hyde Park. I would go to Mercy Hospital, do my work, then go back home. So you feel much further away from campus. I have no idea what movies are playing at Doc, is Scav going on, I have no idea.

KG: Not yet. [laughs] And this is sort of direct progression, going straight from medical school to intern to resident...

PT: Yeah, you go medical school, then intern, then resident, and if you're lucky attending.

[00:49:44]

KG: Do you miss the library?

PT: I do miss the library. I have good memories of studying at the Reg, or more rarely Crerar. I remember those were long blocks of uninterrupted time. Studying was tedious, but also interesting. I don't miss the tests! [laughs] But I do miss learning. I do some reading now, but nothing like that.

KG: So when you're done with your residency, will you then move on to someplace else?

PT: Yes. After residency I will have the option of taking a job right out of my residency, or pursuing more medical education as a fellow somewhere. I haven't decided whether I will or won't. But the idea is that after—sooner or later, maximum five years, you get a job. [laughs] You get a real job. I mean, I'm working right now, but the difference between resident and attending is the ultimate leap in that medical responsibility lies with the attending. I am still really a doctor in training.

KG: Do you think you'll look for another city, or preferably somewhere in the Midwest?

PT: I can't imagine living in the Midwest somewhere besides Chicago. This city for me is perfect-sized. It's not too big, it's not too small, it's lovely. I visited Madison, I visited

Milwaukee, I visited Iowa City. I visited Indianapolis. None of these places, charming as some of them are, have synced to me in the same way that this place does. I have considered living in New York, I have considering going back to the West Coast. Time will tell.

KG: Well, that's sort of the end of stuff that I have. Why did you decide to be interviewed for the project?

PT: Growing up I read interviews, little narratives of people who were LGBT. I spent many years living with a historian, who revered the power of a good historical record. I think Studs Terkel called us all to bear witness. If I don't tell my story, it will be forgotten and become unimportant. I don't think my story is important, but it forms part of a collection of stories that together are important.

KG: Yeah, for posterity in the Special Collections.

PT: That's right.

KG: Were you going to say something? Is there anything else you'd like to add before we wrap it up?

PT: No.

KG: Okay, well, great!

[47:30]

*End of Interview*