

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Albert Tauriac

COLLECTION: 4700.2558

IDENTIFICATION: Civil Rights demonstrator

INTERVIEWER: Daniel Manuel

SERIES: LGBTQ Lafayette 1950s to 1990s

INTERVIEW DATE: February 15, 2013

FOCUS DATES: 1960s to 1990s

ABSTRACT:

Session I
Tape 4497

Introduction; early childhood, always felt different, felt he had a positive childhood; played with toys meant for boys and girls; attended Southern University, had first relationship with a man, was confused; lived in Boston, MA when his university closed for Civil Rights demonstrations in 1962; invited to a gay bar by a friend and felt comfortable, still confused; kept going to gay bars, realized he was gay by speaking with other gay people at bars; felt afraid to tell his family or friends, confided in drunk homeless people in the Boston Common for years; fell in love with a woman and became confused; tried not being gay, but found it difficult; married his wife and had two children; after seven years he told his wife he was gay, ended the marriage; his wife told his sister, he asked his sister to keep it a secret; told his sister soon after, asked her to tell their parents; felt afraid of their reaction and being abandoned; parents told him they loved him no matter what, felt relieved; began a long-term relationship with a man; became infected with HIV in the early 80s; was unaware of his status until he donated blood and it came back positive, felt guilty; kept illness a secret from parents, told family after his parents died; family was accepting and supportive; feels proud that family was open and supportive; diagnosed with HIV in 1984; retired from his position at Gillette in 1995 after 30 years; originally given two years to live, but survived for more than 20 years; attended Southern University in the early 1960s; participated in Civil Rights demonstrations; boycotted the bus system, restaurants, and stores; made progress, businesses began offering better jobs to black people, buses integrated; did not finish school at Southern University, attended IBM School in Boston; began working at Gillette Company in 1964, treated gay population well; remembers extended family members who were gay and outcast; did not make fun of them; went to his first gay bar in Boston with a gay classmate, kept returning; still loves his ex-wife, his children know and accept that he is gay; met his first boyfriend his freshman year in the dormitory; was raised by a very religious family, catholic;

fought being gay; left the church once he came out, but returned after his diagnosis; goes to church every weekend; remembers the church condemning homosexuality; believed the same until he read the bible, determined it was not true; does not think God would make him gay only to condemn him; did not choose to be gay; decided to get involved with the Civil Rights movement when he realized discrimination against blacks; if he attended University of Lafayette he would not be able to join any extra-curricular activities because he was black, he could only attend class and the library; all demonstrations were nonviolent, but they were abused anyway; people threw rotten eggs at them, police used fire hoses and tear gas; being creole caused issues for him, was not accepted as fully black or white; discusses Louisiana laws on who counted as black; treated differently in Boston, still prejudiced but treated blacks better; discusses racism he experienced at his job; Tauriac's promotion was given to a white man with less experience until Tauriac threatened to sue; Irish coworkers often called him, "nigger," and would not let him use locker room; lived in Boston from the 1960s to the 1990s, had no problems with homophobia; gay bars were racially integrated; remembers attending first gay pride parade and going to AIDS marches; remembers gay pride week and fundraising for HIV/AIDS; discusses medical care with AIDS; health insurance from his position at Gillette was very good; remembers medications being rough on his body and, "very toxic," and expensive; knew about AIDS before he was infected, discusses when he was infected; he and his long-term partner got into an argument, Tauriac met a man while out and had sex with him, was diagnosed soon after; partner never became infected; believes the AIDS epidemic brought the Boston gay community closer; there were still people in denial who were promiscuous; feels it is easier to live with it now because there is more medication; quit drinking when he became infected; is not as involved in gay life in Lafayette, still has gay friends; discusses parents and family life; was the first in his family to go to college; his parents supported him going to college and demonstrating in the Civil Rights movement; does not think being gay is a choice, "we're born that way,"; went to his first gay bar in Boston in 1965.

TAPE: 1 (T4497)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 55 minutes

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 19

RESTRICTIONS: None