Oral History Interview with Joanne Fletcher

Interview conducted on September 6, 2018

By Professor Judith Raiskin, UO Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Linda J. Long, Curator of Manuscripts, UO Special Collections and University Archives, UO Libraries

For

The Eugene Lesbian Oral History Project

Joanne Fletcher and Ellie Fletcher, 1995

Joanne Fletcher, September 6, 2018

Recorded in the University of Oregon Libraries

Preface

This is an ongoing community-engaged oral history project. Linda J. Long, Curator of Manuscripts in the University of Oregon Libraries, and Professor Judith Raiskin of the Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies Department at the University of Oregon, conducted video interviews with eighty-three narrators in the summers of 2018 and 2019. The interviews were held in the UO Libraries' recording studio. This collection includes the video interviews and the bound and on-line transcripts. Associated with the interviews are materials collected from the narrators, including photographs, diaries, flyers, business records, letters, posters, buttons, and T-shirts that document the businesses, organizations, and cultural and political activities discussed in the interviews. These collections will be made available separately as individual archival collections and can be searched and retrieved using the Library's Online Catalog.

In the 1960s-1990s hundreds of lesbian-identified women came to Eugene, Oregon from across the United States. These women founded cornerstone organizations central to Eugene's history and influenced Oregon's political landscape. They created and worked in collective businesses, ran printing presses, and founded cultural organizations (theater companies and dance troupes, music bands and choirs) and gathered in lesbian cultural spaces (book stores, martial arts studios, restaurants, bars, and softball teams). They became leaders of Eugene community service agencies and worked in City and State government positions. A number were instrumental in leading important legal challenges of discriminatory policies at the county and state levels regarding employment and housing protections, benefits, lesbian and gay adoption, and marriage equality. Those who came to study or teach at the University of Oregon were influential in making institutional change protecting the rights of lesbians and gay men.

The artist Tee Corinne, whose papers and photographs also reside in the University of Oregon Special Collections, asserted, "The lack of a publicly accessible history is a devastating form of oppression; lesbians face it constantly." The Eugene Lesbian Oral History Project seeks to preserve a specific and vibrant history that otherwise is lost. This collection of interviews captures a range of engaging and important stories that reveal new angles on lesbian history, women's history, the counterculture movement in the 1960s-1980s, Oregon history, feminism, sexuality, intentional communities, and women working in jobs reserved for men. Looking back over twenty-five - fifty years, the narrators reflect on the complex relationship of individual aspirations and larger social

movements in times of dramatic historical change. Many of the narrators have retired and continue to be involved in vibrant artistic, scientific and political work.

Abstract

Interview conducted on September 6, 2018. Joanne was born in 1960 in Fullerton, California. She grew up in Anaheim, California and went to Hebrew school. She was attracted to girls in the fourth grade. She discusses feminist and lesbian culture, especially lesbian music and bookstores. She moved to Eugene in 1983. She also talks about her various jobs, including with the Housing Authority in Eugene, Lane County Government and at Linfield College. She talks about being out, and trying to normalize her life. She describes Mother Kali's Bookstore and Izzie Harbaugh, the manager. The lesbian Jewish community was welcoming. Joanne mentions Governor Neil Goldschmidt's Executive Order 8720 banning discrimination of gays and lesbians in state employment. Joanne worked behind the scenes against the anti-gay ballot measures. Joanne discusses her promise to herself to always be out. She talks about an anti-gay measure in Springfield, Measure 20-08, that passed. She discusses the various marriages she and her partner had. Joanne finishes her interview by talking about the importance and value of marriage.

Additional subjects: Ballot Measure 8; Ballot Measure 9; Bryant, Anita; Coming out (sexual orientation); Eugene (Or.); Homophobia; Judaism; Lesbian community – Oregon; Mother Kali's Bookstore; Same-sex marriage; Springfield (Or.).

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Interviewers: Linda Long and Judith Raiskin

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Long: This interview is part of the Eugene lesbian oral history project. The recordings will be made available through the University of Oregon Libraries' Special Collections and University Archives. This is an oral history interview with Joanne Fletcher on September 6, 2018 taking place in the University of Oregon Libraries' recording studio in the Center for Media and Educational Technologies. The interviewers are Linda Long, Curator of Manuscripts in the UO Libraries' Special Collections and University Archives and Professor Judith Raiskin of the UO Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies. Joanne, please let us know if you agree to be recorded for this project and that you give your permission for the university to preserve and make available your recorded and transcribed interview.

Fletcher: Absolutely.

Long: Okay. Thank you very much. Let's just start with a basic question. Can you please tell us when and where you were born and something about your early years?

Fletcher: Yeah, so my name is Joanne Fletcher. Aileen is my middle name, although I never used it, so I wasn't sure how to spell it for the longest time. I was actually born Joanne Aileen Berkowitz, but when I was in my twenties, I changed my name to kind of change the legacy. So I changed it to Joanne Aileen Fletcher.

I was born on August 2, 1960. I would say I had a pretty basic normal-ish childhood where, you know, I went to school, we did things I. I was raised Jewish, went to Hebrew school— things. It was a pretty all-American kind of childhood.

Raiskin: Where were you born?

Fletcher: I was born in Fullerton, California and I grew up mostly in Anaheim, California. I went to school at the Loara High School and I would say that, looking back when I was in fourth grade, I didn't recognize it at the time, but I could see that I was attracted to girls, but I had no clue what that meant. There was no like gay-straight alliance on campus.

I remember being attracted to this girl in fourth grade. Her name was Karen. And I just felt oddly protective of her. And I remember a teacher, a substitute teacher, making fun of her last name. And I wanted to stand up and defend her, but didn't really understand much of that. Also, one of my other early memories was I had a

massive crush on my teacher, Ms. Vivrette. She was tall, she was blonde, she was articulate, she was kind, she was smart. And I had a crush on her all through the entire year. And the next year she came back and she was Mrs. somebody or other, and I was mortified, but I didn't know why. Looking back there were clues, but I didn't really get it. I knew that I felt different in high school because I was not attracted to boys.

I didn't want to be any part of that social scene. But that was part of what we were supposed to do. But I didn't go to like school dances. I was involved in the Girl Scouts and I went to Girl Scout camp outs and that delighted me. It was wonderful to be in this empowered group of women and girls who could claim who we were, not about lesbianism, but just claim our personhood outside of that mix of boys and girls, men and women.

I would say my actual coming out started, not by myself but by my brother. My brother's three years older than I am. His name is Paul. And he was out in high school and, he was very in-your-face-out. And he decided that what was important was that he came out for me. When I was around seventeen, he told a few of our relatives. I was not pleased because I saw he was really in your face about his coming out. And for me that wasn't how I wanted to do it. And I saw the backlash that he suffered and I didn't want any part of that and that's not my personality and I didn't want to be that. And if I didn't come out that way, I didn't know how to come out.

Raiskin: How did your parents respond to his coming out?

Fletcher: Well, my dad had died when we were really young. I was four. So, it was my mom and her third husband, I think. My mom was appalled, couldn't talk about it, you know, let's never talk about this, let's never be real about it. That was also a cue to me that I can't come out.

But my first event really was— I thought I was being all liberal because my brother invited me to this concert for I think it was 6, No on 6, the Briggs Initiative that—yeah—down in California, which said, among other things, I think, that no school teachers can be gay. And I'm sure they said "homosexual" and that, anybody who supports that should also be fired. And I went to this concert and there was this women's music and I didn't know what to make of that because I thought for sure— and they were talking about actually buying albums at the record stores— And I thought, that can't be possible. It can't be legal. This can't— what is women's music? And they can't be selling this stuff. And I remember Sue Fink's song "Leaping Lesbians", and that was kind of my introduction to women's music, which was an odd introduction.

I thought, "Oh, how liberal I am that I went to this concert to support my brother." But I kind of knew at the time, still, that it was really somewhat about me.

Raiskin: Who did you go with?

Fletcher: I went with my brother. That was really the early part of all of that. And I really didn't come out to myself until probably my second

relationship. My first relationship was at about sixteen or seventeen, and it was hard to make sense of it. But by the second relationship I knew what was going on. But, before that, one of the early coming out memories of realizing that all of my friends pretty much were lesbians, but we didn't talk about it even though some of my friends were in relationships with each other in this group that we had. We were all gathered around my friend's house. Her name was Maggie. She lived in Costa Mesa. We are all in the living room in this circle, just hanging out, talking. And our friends, Nikki and Betsy were kind of late coming, and they came to the door. Now this was a group of very closeted lesbians, very Orange County, very closeted.

Raiskin: High school?

Fletcher: Maybe the end of high school. Most of my friends were in college. Betsy comes to the door, she gets introduced by my friend Nikki and Betsy looks around and says, "Oh, just so I know who's in couples?" Oh, we had no idea what to say because we didn't admit it to ourselves. Much less each other, much less— and these were my closest friends. So, it started this thought process. And then I started looking for books on lesbianism, trying to understand what it was trying to, to grasp what I was going through. But at that time, you know, it was the late ‘70s. The only books that I saw were in the abnormal psych section in between like mental illness and sexual deviancy. And I thought, Oh my gosh, that can't be who I am. But that's who it says I am. That was a very confusing time.

And then right before I came up to Oregon, I came out to my mom and it was a very— I was living in Long Beach, California, in this duplex, and I'd asked all my housemates to leave and I actually cooked, which I don't do, but I cooked something that I thought was intricate, which was soup, because that was big for me. So I invited her over. I had this soup cooking and she sat down and I was about to get brave and tell her, and she looked at me and she said, "Are you gay?"

I thought, Wait a minute. That was, that was my thing. I was supposed to be able to do this. And I said, "Yes." And I am sure that I was like dizzy, you know, I was coming out to my mom and for the first time ever in my life, I heard her cuss and she said, "Shit!" And that was her response to me coming out. And I would say that that was her response forever. And that was pretty painful, but I did it. And that was at time that felt like the lesbian culture, the lesbian community was developing in the late seventies, early eighties, down in Long Beach. And it was evolving. And what I knew was it was important to be visible and it was important to state my truth. Partly because I believed it and partly because that's what all the rhetoric said and that's what all the songs said. That's what all the books said. I thought, okay, this is important. And it was, and it was a horrible, horrible, and I do remember it obviously because I still feel emotional about it. But—

Raiskin: Do you remember anything you were reading at that time?

Fletcher: Oh, I read, *The Coming Out Stories*, *Common Lives/Lesbian Lives*, Rita Mae Brown, books that— and then I read some of those books that, yeah, they were important, but they were horrible, *Well of Loneliness*, things that spoke some truth, but they were crushing and it always ended up that the lesbian went off and was sad and her girlfriend went off and married her boyfriend. And the other early books I read where— *Lesbian Woman*, Del Martin, Phyllis Lyon. Some of these things were just revolutionary and they just— they were so affirming that somebody was talking about my life in a positive way. It wasn't just my secret that I had to hold on to. And the women's music that was around at the time. I mean, that to me, it in some ways it felt like it saved my sanity and it gave me the courage to keep going.

Raiskin: Do you remember who you were listening to?

Fletcher: I could, I don't remember everything now, but at the time I could tell you every album, every song, every background singer, every musician. But I was listening to Meg and Chris and Holly and Margie and listening to like, "I Know You Know" and "You Can Know How I Am" and "We Shall Go Forth" and "Changer and the Changed" All of those, all of "Fire in the Rain", all that music that really spoke about my life and my experience and the good parts of it, my loves and, and community and the brightness. And just that spirit, but also had got to acknowledge the fears and, and some of the horrible side of it all. "Lesbian Concentrate," the album in reaction to the Florida—

Raiskin: Anita Bryant.

Fletcher: Thank you. Anita Bryant. Yeah, I mean that was phenomenal. In some ways I thank Anita Bryant because she really coalesced gays and lesbians across the nation and she helped to form what we became, in part. And oddly, ironically I appreciate her for that. It worked.

But some of that music, it just spoke about who I was and the face of, of having to hide in the face of all of the discrimination. It was not just to be able to hear that music and to go to places like McCabe's and where I was— McCabe's— To Cal State Long Beach which is where I was going to school at the time and to go to women's music concerts with, you know, sometimes it was fifty, sometimes it was hundreds of lesbians and be able to have that common experience. And, and I remember the first concert I went to and Holly Near was up on stage and she's so expressive and to, to watch how she used her hands to express her life and to use her words to reflect my life. It was— it helped my sanity for sure.

And I remember, you know, being in college and thinking at the time, how sad it is to me that I'm never going to be able to get married, that was around seventeen or eighteen, and thinking that how unfair that was, but somehow knowing that that was the life I was choosing because I couldn't not be me, I couldn't not be authentic.

And there were a few other coming out pieces that were really important to me. I was at— when I actually was up in Eugene, it was in the— I'm going to skip around a little bit, but, in the '90s and the City of Eugene had a new city ordinance that said you could not discriminate among other things relative to sexual orientation for housing. And I worked at the Housing Authority at the time, and I went to this meeting that was a bunch of rental owners in the area and they were discussing it and I was sitting right there at the table, there was probably a hundred of these people, the rental owners, and there were people up front talking about this new city ordinance and saying there's ways around it. And they were talking about how to strategize to not have to rent to gays and lesbians. And I'm sitting right there and one of the things that they said was somebody said, "Well, how can you do this?" And they said, "Well, you know, when somebody turns in an application, you can just tell." And I thought, "But I'm sitting right here. How can you? How?"

That was life changing for me in that it was devastating. And I remember leaving the room and going off to the bathroom and just sobbing because they're talking about me, they're talking about my friends, they're talking about members of the community who are here contributing. And I remember right then thinking— and I said nothing. Which, that was so hard, and I kind of blamed myself, but I didn't know what I was supposed to do. There weren't any rules at the time working for an organization that said, you can defend yourself, you can talk about being gay.

I remember sobbing in the bathroom and thinking, "I can't ever lie again. I can't ever hold back my truth, and I can't ever lie again." And that has been really hard sometimes. It was initially.

I worked at Linfield University in 2000. Very conservative college. Really wonderful place, great education, but very, very conservative. And they had this thing. Initially when there was a new person who came onto the team, a new employee, in the admission's department, and I was the assistant director of admissions, that they would have like a little welcome.

We were in this beautiful old house on campus, and it was well decorated, and it had all of that charm of that old architecture. And we were sitting in this grand living room and everybody was sitting around, and they said, "So, we've interviewed you. You already have the job. We know all about your professional life. Tell us about your personal life. We want to know all about your personal life. Are you married? Do you have kids? You know what, what do you do?" And so I thought, Oh my gosh, I promised myself I would never lie. Here's this group of conservative brand-new coworkers that I've known for about an hour. And I took a deep breath, and I said, "Well, I currently live in Eugene with my partner Linn of eleven years, and we have a dog named Calli. And we like to do things like go to the beach and go on adventures and have friends over and play music." And it was just silent in the room, and it felt like hours had gone by, but really it was probably like five seconds, but nobody said a word. And finally somebody

broke the ice and said, "So, what kind of dog do you have?" I thought, I just told you that I have a partner of eleven years, and you want to know about my dog. And I thought, Okay, but at least I kept my promise to myself.

It was a hard moment, but it was life changing for me. And I have kept that promise, you know, really ever since. And I think that around coming out and being a lesbian, that mostly what I try to do is just normalize it. Just talk about it as an every day, "Oh yeah my wi—." Well, using the word "wife," that's new, and I'm still looking for like the lightning bolts or the people with guns or something. But, I try to use the word wife, to normalize it, but I talked about, "Oh, Linn and I—." My wife's name is Ellie Linn Fletcher, but I call her "Linn." And you know, I talk about just what Linn and I have done and just try to normalize it because it is. I mean, I look forward to the day when, I don't want this to sound wrong, but being gay, being a lesbian is just kind of just boring. It's just another thing. It's just normal. It's just what is, let's talk about things that, Oh my gosh, are revolutionary.

And so that's kind of how I feel like coming out is that lifelong process. Even today, it feels like every single day I'm still choosing and, and it's how and where and when. And is this safe? Does it matter if it's safe? And, talking to neighbors and coworkers and colleagues and friends and just being able to be there and be authentic.

Raiskin: When did you come to Eugene?

Fletcher: I moved to Eugene in '83. I moved up with— my brother was living in Eugene. He had been here for— my oldest brother, Dan. He and his girlfriend at the time, Holly, no— I think they got married— his wife Holly, were living in Eugene and it was at an economic downturn and in the ‘80s, and they couldn't sell their house. And I thought, Oregon, that sounds beautiful. I've always wanted to get out of southern California. My partner at the time, Lori, and I said, "Let's go up there and buy the house." I had been to Oregon once for twenty-four hours when my brother had gotten married. And I thought, "Okay, let's just do this."

We moved up together and, Lori and I were together for, I don’t know, maybe another six months, maybe a year and then parted ways. But it was so— it was odd because I was living in Springfield, which at the time was even more conservative than it is now. And I had no idea that Eugene was next door. In fact, at the same time that I was moving up, one of my best friends, Stephanie, was moving up to work for the Girl Scouts and that was in Eugene and I was moving to Springfield and she said, "Well, if Eugene is near Springfield at all, how about if I live with you till I find a place?"

So she moved in and the community was amazing. I mean, there were— it was kind of underground. It's an odd community in that lesbians are everywhere, which warmed my heart. And I immediately found support groups and Mother Kali's and concerts and all sorts of events and potlucks. And just a lot of gatherings

and it felt really good to be able to be that connected. I got involved immediately in the community. I was still closeted in some ways. I lived in a nice but kind of conservative street in Springfield. And I got involved in Mother Kali's and helping with the lending library. And that was interesting because everything, personal is political, everything was— we had to look at each book in the lending library cause we were trying to make some sense of it and try to decide if that book should stay in the library or not. But everything was consensus and political and really we tried to be very thoughtful about it. It was an interesting challenge.

Raiskin: What kind things would not stay in the lending library?

Fletcher: I do not remember specifically, but they were books that had nothing to do at all with gay or lesbian. Had nothing to do with social proactive, positive community. It would be things that maybe were historical but from a perspective that wasn't inclusive. But those were really hard choices. So, not many things actually left the lending library at that time. But we did take a good look at it.

Long: What was Izzie Harbaugh like?

Fletcher: Izzie was amazing. You know, she— she kind of had this edge to her that I remember, but she was also so welcoming and, and she— she would always want to recommend books. I would tell her what I liked and she would recommend some of those and then tell me what also I should want to read, which was very cool. But she also, I mean she knew so much about everything in that store and she

seemed so proud of that store. And, Mother Kali's was a haven. I remember one time, this was my fondest story of Izzy that I had had a really hard day, a really hard day. And there was some homophobia that had gone on and it was so challenging. And I went in and she said, "How you doing?" And I said, "I had a really hard day." And she said, "Well, how about if you'd come and sit down and I'll make you a cup of tea." I thought this is the thing I need. And the tea was really bad, but it didn't matter because it was this offering of home and hospitality and nurture that it was one of the few places I knew that I could go into Mother Kali's and just be surrounded by women-identified materials and music and books and posters and that it could just feel like home.

Raiskin: Did you find that community in general, wherever you found a welcoming to you at when you moved in?

Fletcher: It was interesting because, it didn't feel proactively welcoming. It felt not like it was hiding, but it felt underground. It felt like there were lesbians everywhere, but how to connect, you really had to take the initiative. But once I did it was very welcoming. And one of the things I like being raised Jewish is there's a very big Jewish lesbian community here and a lot of really amazing women leaders, especially back then. So to feel like, to feel like I could be proud of being Jewish because growing up Jewish, there was a lot I didn't agree with in, in the religion. I loved the tradition and the connection in the family, but the religion itself I couldn't connect with. So once I got to the place where I could translate from

Hebrew into English, I knew that I— it wasn't for me. So to come in here, to come up to Eugene and see all these strong lesbian women who were Jewish— it helped heal some of that. That was really a wonderful thing as well.

Raiskin: Did you know about Baleboostehs, the Jewish lesbian group?

Fletcher: I heard about it. Almost went once, but did not because I was pretty shy in a lot of ways. I mean, once I was connected I was good, but I was very shy around new groups and new people. But there were a lot of concerts. I went to concerts and, there were book groups and work groups, and just, I think that the magic— one of the magical things about being in Eugene and being a lesbian was that we could go anywhere. My wife now, my partner at the time— we could go to the Eugene Celebration and go to the dances. And just go dancing at any of the venues and we were welcomed. Nobody, nobody harassed us. It was almost like a part of Eugene was lesbian. So in that way, we didn't have to be connected to a specific group of lesbians that it just was lesbiana everywhere. And it was beautiful. And there were lots of places to make friends and make connections in Eugene.

Raiskin: So you were here for Measure 9 I'm wondering how that felt?

Long: You were here for Measure 8? Measure 8 came first. That was '87/ '88.

Fletcher: Yes. I remember, I thought it was revolutionary that Neil Goldschmidt, I think it was, had that executive order saying you couldn't discriminate against gays and lesbians in the workplace.

Raiskin: —the governor of Oregon.

Fletcher: Yes. And I thought that was revolutionary. And I was a little scared because I thought there could be backlash. And I think that's when 8— was that when 8 came on?

Long: Yeah.

Fletcher: I was here for 8. I was here for 9, I was here for Son of 9. I was here for Springfield 20-08, which was one of the hardest. I was here for 13 and 36 and all of these— so, I worked in two ways on all of those initiatives, all of those ballot measures. One was doing behind the scenes stuff because I want to knock on doors and make phone calls that's too hard. And I've always been in human services so I was always doing that out-focus stuff and I didn't want to do more of it. I would do like databases and mailings and things. One year we had Halloween costumes that were No on 9 Halloween costumes and we'd march in the Eugene Celebration parade, with the lesbian, gay contingency, whatever, in that moment we were trying to stop.

But it seemed like for a long time it came along every two years. And every time it broke my heart because I would think— oof, still get pretty emotional— because it's so personal. And here are these people trying to tell me that I am not a positive influence in my community. That I don't count, that I don't matter. Even though I'm

out there doing all of this positive work in human services for nonprofits and for the County, I still had— there were still these ballot measures. The marriage equals one man and one woman. And it's just all this hate propaganda. And there were these horrible, I don't know, I want to say advertisements, campaign ads on TV and it broke my heart every time. And every time I'd have to gear up again. And, I figured that my job, if I couldn't be out there in the front lines, that my job was to talk to my colleagues, to talk to people who knew me, to talk to my neighbors, that that's where I did my political activism, to help them to understand how standing across from me as a coworker, as a friend, this is how it affects me. This is my life that people are voting about. And it was painful and it wasn't always accepted.

And to see— I forget, which of them passed and which didn't. I try to make it a blur because it was so painful. And I think one of the hardest things for me was that being in human services, I would be in service and support lots of different clients, lots of families who I knew could be sitting across from me getting ready to vote against me. And yet my job was to support them and be in service to them. And there was some really blatant homophobia that I had to deal with and some just that was more subtle, but it was palpable, it was obviously there. But we lived through each of those measures in incredibly painful ways.

But we lived through each of them and the OCA, the Oregon Citizens Alliance and oh, how horrible that was. And still getting

up and going to work every day, still getting up and trying to be who I am and be authentic and not let it, not let it take over my life even though it was our time and it was our money. And it was our soul that we had to give out every single time. It was crazy challenging.

Raiskin: What was the work that you were doing when you came up and then what kind of jobs did you do?

Fletcher: When I came up to Oregon?

Raiskin: Yeah.

Fletcher: I first came to Oregon and I worked for Alvord Taylor, supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in their home life. And then I moved from that. I also worked in this school district for Lane ESD, I worked in a classroom with middle schoolers. Yeah, who had intellectual developmental disabilities. And then I did employment and training, so helped people. It was cutting edge at the time, which sounds silly now, but working with the local business owners to get jobs for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. And then I went on from there. I left the DD world for a little while and went on to work at the Housing Authority for about eight or nine years. I was what was called a housing coordinator at the time. Went out and helped landlords and people who were on section eight keep their housing and check the housing to make sure it was decent, safe and

sanitary and that kind of thing. And then I did some family self-sufficiency work there, too.

Raiskin: And how did you end up at Linfield College?

Fletcher: I took— I saved up a bunch of money and I took a year off of work and I wanted to go into something completely different than I had done. And I looked in the paper and there was a job as an admission counselor at Linfield College and it said zero to three years experience. And I thought, I'm there. I have zero experience. This is perfect. And so I interviewed and I got the job. And before I signed the paper, they offered me the assistant director job, which I thought was great. And I got— for the first time ever, I got to work with people who were not at risk people who were just looking for their best option. And it was revolutionary to me. Families who were together. People who were just being families coming up and checking out the campus and trying to decide what their best option is, you know, Linfield or George Fox or Willamette, and it was refreshing. But I found that my values of how they treated us as employees, didn't match my expectations, and I chose to leave there and that's when I went to work for the County and I—

Raiskin: Did Linfield College have any domestic partnership or anything like that in place?

Fletcher: Nah, not that I remember. I don't think so. It was pretty conservative and now I don't even remember people really talking about gay-lesbian alliances. It was a very conservative campus.

They were just trying to get some diversity committees going and I was like a head of one of the diversity committees through the admissions' office. But—

Raiksin: There was no out faculty?

Fletcher: There was— I don't remember her being out that I remember going "Okay." But I don't remember people being out at all. But, I was there less than a year and we were in the admissions' department, which was in a very different circle than the instructors, than the professors. I don't, yeah. And then at the Housing Authority, that was the first time that I could actually be out mostly and feel kind of comfortable about it. And there was this unwritten rule when I was working around that time, and it happened to me a few times that the elder lesbian that worked at an organization would see that a new lesbian had come onto the employment team and would take that person out for coffee and say, "Here's who's safe. Here's who's homophobic. Don't say this around this person." You know, just trying to say, "Here's the lay of the land. If you want to take care of yourself and you want to be safe, here's how it goes."

Raiskin: Did somebody take you out and do it?

Fletcher: Oh yeah, yeah.

Raiskin: Do you remember who that was?

Fletcher: Nancy Linchild. Yeah. She took me out to 5th Street before they had redone it and made it all fancy. And we were having coffee and she

was telling me, you know, here's— "Here's what you can say," "Here's who you can say it to." "Here's not to say it to." Before that I worked at Community Services Consortium and then— I worked at Community Services Consortium and it was— I worked in Albany and it was incredibly homophobic and I had no idea. And I had this little picture of Linn, of my partner and it was probably about this big and it was in a frame and I had it up, I had a computer monitor stand at my desk and I had this picture up under the computer monitor. And so you would really have to go out of your way to see it because I was in Albany and I was a little scared and I was told— and other people, you know, I shared the office with three people and they talked about their husbands or their wives and they had pictures, of their family everywhere. And I was told that I had that picture and I was flaunting my sexuality. And it was just this little picture of Linn just standing in the living room smiling.

Raiskin: And who told you that?

Fletcher: You know, I do not remember, but I remember hearing it.

Raiskin: Was it a superior or?

Fletcher: It wasn't I think it was my one of my coworkers that shared that space who always talked about her family and her kids and that was the center of conversations. But I was flaunting my sexuality. It was also the same place for one of my coworkers at a retreat said,

"You should take all the homosexuals and throw them in a pit." And nobody disagreed.

And here was the thing that shocked me the most that you couldn't get away with now. My supervisor's name was Caprice and she pulled me aside after I'd been there like six months or so. And she said— in this office up in Albany, you walk into this big open lobby and then there were these offices off the lobby and there were classrooms. And she pulled me into really the lobby and she was standing there and she looked at me and she said, "You lied to us in the interview. You didn't tell us you were gay." I know. "And we're going to transfer you to Corvallis." And I thought, I didn't know what to say. Who, who comes out in a job interview? And what is even relevant about that? But the good news is that I went over to Corvallis. It was much more open. My new supervisor, Sarah, took me out to coffee and she said, "Here's what you can say, here's what you can't say, here's who's open, here's who is not." And she was very supportive.

Raiskin: Were you ever in a position to take a newer colleague out to tell them the lay of the land?

Fletcher: Not really. No. Because there were actually, and this surprised me, in all the jobs, even though it was human services, very few lesbians and I never understood that, and the lesbians that were there didn't last very long. But these were people who were already way out, and I wasn't going to tell them anything, which was yay

for them. But then I worked for the county and I'm still there, human services.

Raiskin: How did you meet your wife?

Fletcher: Oh, I'm looking over there because she sitting right there. I met Linn through a friend of ours named RJ Bell. RJ was actually Linn's ex and RJ and I went out to dinner and she was telling me, she was describing Linn to me and I fell in love with her before I met her. Just how she was describing her nurturing and her intelligence and her sense of adventure and her kindness and, and how expert she was at certain things. And I just thought, "Oh my gosh, I have to be with that woman. I am in love already." And then I met her and I was totally enamored.

But it was hard because she wasn't really a part of the lesbian community. She wasn't really associating with lesbians and I was shy about it because I had never had to take the initiative with anybody. It was my previous girlfriends and partners were, were women who we already kind of knew each other. We were working at camp together, we were doing something together and we knew each other and it just kind of evolved. But this was having to go and ask her to do something. We decided that we'd go to the coast and I was nervous and I didn't know what it meant. And I didn't know if it was about being friends or about— I knew for me I was totally in love.

And it took a while. It took a few getting together and parting of the ways. And finally we got to a point— she had— I hope she doesn't kill me for saying this, but she had broken up with me a few times and the third time she broke up with me, I talked to somebody and I said, "What's going on? Because I am so in love with her." And she said, "Just tell her you don't agree." I think I wrote her a note and I said, "I know you want to break up with me, but I don't agree." And that was the last time she ever broke up with me. And we are getting ready to celebrate our twenty-nine year anniversary this September.

Raiskin: Were you able to stay connected with your lesbian community contacts? Living in Springfield and—

Fletcher: Oh, so we left Springfield when Measure 20-08 came around. That was heartbreaking.

Long: Which one was it?

Fletcher: Measure 20-08 was a Springfield ordinance. I forget all the details. Something about you can't have books in the library. You can't acknowledge or use any government funding for anything gay or lesbian. I'm sure they said homosexual, but I try not to use the H word because it's so offensive. And we were living in Springfield.

Linn never wanted to live in Springfield because she's a Eugenian through and through. But she was living with me in my house in Springfield and she had her business there. And I remember that we went down to San Francisco. Linn is a Reiki master and we

were doing a Reiki class down there, and we were listening to the news, and it had passed. Twenty-oh-eight had passed and I didn't know how that was possible. And it was like one of the first in the nation, if I remember correctly, at the city level that passed.

And shortly after that we moved partly because then, everybody was boycotting Springfield, which I could understand, but we were in Springfield. You can't boycott lesbians just because they're in Springfield and she had her business there. And so we had a friend who was selling her house over on University Street and we bought her house and moved to Eugene and it was fine because my house was in Springfield, but my life wasn't in Springfield because there was nothing social for me really. It wasn't progressive. There was not a big gay-lesbian community in Springfield. Everything, my work and my life and my friends and my culture and I felt like my home was in Eugene anyways. We moved to Eugene and been there ever since.

Long: Can you give us a picture of what the lesbian community was like? You've talked a little bit about that, but if you could describe some of the, like the range of activities or the organizations.

Fletcher: Sure. For me, back then there were two, two main hubs. One was Mother Kali's, where there a lot of activities were generating, a lot of political work was generated out of. And then there was a lesbian support group that happened through the U of O, although I don't think there were any U of O students. But I remember meeting there and then we shifted over and met at the MCC.

Raiskin: The Metropolitan Community Church.

Fletcher: Yes, yes. But it started out at, at the university in the gay-lesbian union, I don't know what it was called. For me, a lot of the activities were— came out of that. And there were so many, like I said, there were so many lesbians around and also going to the arena, I think that what it's called the arena down the dance place down below Perry's. That might've been what it was called. And then there was the Riv Room, which I mean there was—there was this one place that seemed upbeat and newer and we could gather there and there was great music and we could just hang out and dance and drink and enjoy each other's company and just feel like we were just part— like we could relax. And then the Riv, we went there sometimes to play pool, the Riviera Room, I think it was called. It was a scary, dingy, really dark. It seemed like people there were very depressed and that's how it felt to me. People might've—

Long: What years was that?

Fletcher: What years, man. It was the mid '80's, I guess, somewhere around the mid '80's. And so we'd go to the Riv Room every once in a while to play pool. But it was so depressing. It reminded me of the Que Sera Sera in long beach where I came out and went to the bars. But that was kind of dark and depressing and kind of a hole in the wall, too. But we'd go out to the other place.

Raiskin: In Eugene, what was the other place? I don't think we've heard anybody talk about that other place.

Fletcher: Well there was this, there was the Riv Room and then there was this bar, I think there was a restaurant called Perry's. And below that I think that the— that the club was called Arena, Club Arena. And we used to go down there and go dancing and drinking and have fun and hang out. And just groups being able to just be ourselves so, that was another big gathering place. And then there were the concerts that happened. Laura Philips and I don't remember who used to produce some concerts. So there were times that, I don't even remember everybody who came out here to do those. And then *Dykes to Watch Out For*. She was here.

Raiskin: Alison Bechdel?

Fletcher: Yeah. And, God, I don't remember who all, but Kate Clinton came out here too, and it was interesting to watch how Kate Clinton was received here because it's very political and sometimes she would go off into places that people thought were politically incorrect, so she got a few boos. But mostly it was nice to be in a tiny group of lesbians.

Long: Do you remember where she performed?

Fletcher: I think it was at the U of O, but I'm not sure. I know it's not called the U of O anymore. The UO, is that what it's called? And I remember some things at the Hult. There were some concerts I think over at Condon School. And I don't remember where else. I think I went to something at the Unitarian Church once or twice. And then there was a cafe, I forget what the name of it was,

downtown in Eugene where sometimes acts would come to they had a small stage.

Long: Was that the Wild Iris?

Fletcher: No.

Long: Gertrude's ?

Fletcher: No, I don't remember, but it was a long time ago. Yeah. Eugene really, you know, it's, it's felt like home. It's felt more accepting. It's felt in some ways, kind of like this bubble of acceptance. And, and so when my wife and I are together and my friends and I are together, we feel like we can, you know, we can hold hands, we can be out, we can be gay. And it's safe. And even people who might say something or sneer or, or being homophobic, they don't really have any clout.

But then traveling outside of that, I remember after being in Eugene for a long time, going on a road trip by myself and going through Utah and, my wife and I, our first rings that we had put on the opposite hand that people typically do. And I went to Utah and I remember putting my ring on my, on my finger, on my left hand because that was more traditional. Maybe people would just think I was straight married.

Raiskin: You want to tell us about your different weddings? Marriages?

Fletcher: Yes. Okay. Linn and I had been together about six years and we really wanted to have some kind of a union. We wanted to bring

our communities together because we had very separate groups of friends and we wanted to celebrate our relationship. And we knew, we knew that we'd never be able to actually get married. We thought, let's have a wedding. We called it a "joining" and we had it at the Unitarian Church at Fortieth and Donald, beautiful place, beautiful place where you can have a wall of windows and you look out and there's all the trees. And we invited friends and lifelong friends and local friends from Eugene and, and my coworkers because I was working at the Housing Authority and they were very accepting and, and it was a beautiful ceremony. Joanna Mitchell officiated for us. And we had this big long, drawn out everything we'd ever want in a wedding. And we had it there and it was wonderful. And it was 1995.

Raiskin: What were you wearing?

Fletcher: I was wearing these white pants and a white shirt that was kind of laced with this very vibrant purple jacket. And this purple heart made out of stone. And the wedding earrings that I still have, they were little hearts that had this little diamond-looking thing on the end. And I decided that I was not going to wear any shoes cause I don't know, picking out shoes. I had these really fun socks. And Linn dressed in this white dress. She said that she wanted to wear white because she didn't wear white to her wedding when she first got married to her husband, John, former husband John. And so we kind of matched and yet we looked very different. It looked a little butch-femme. That was not the point. That's just who we were. But

it was a great event because it brought our communities together and it allowed us to celebrate and we could be out and make a statement about who we were as a couple. And it was lovely.

Raiskin: Did you order a cake?

Fletcher: We did from Costco because we could afford it. We had two sheet cakes and I don't remember what they said, but I think one of them had a heart on it. And we did all the traditional, you know, feed each other cakes and cake. And it was lovely.

Raiskin: And that was 1985 you said?

Fletcher: Nineteen-ninety-five.

Raiskin: Nineteen-ninety-five.

Fletcher: Yeah. And then the second time we got married, we were at home on our house in University Street in Eugene and we were watching the eleven o'clock news and Enid and Sally were talking about Multnomah County handing out or issuing wedding licenses to same sex couples. And we thought that, okay, that can't be possible. It's got to be some kind of a prank. It's not going to last but let's go. Because if we don't go tomorrow morning, then it's going to be over by the next day. I mean, I had no faith in that lasting any longer than a morning. And I didn't even think it was going to be real, but we were going to do it because if we could get legally married, if we could make that statement, if we could have the same right as everybody else to protect each other and to make that

statement that we're together, that that would be amazing. I called my supervisor at the time who I was out to fortunately and told her the truth, told her we were going up to Portland, we're going to get married and I'm not going to be at work tomorrow.

We like raced in our closets. We figured out what to wear. I don't remember what we wore and we went up to Multnomah County building and we parked right across the street and when we got there, there were already lines of gay and lesbian couples. They were around the block and I mean all around that building and it was amazing and we thought, well, you know, we've been together for fourteen years, we're the old married couple and it was so humbling because there were women in front of us who were, who had been together for thirty years, who had lived that life that I had heard about a lot but hadn't met a lot of that, that they really had to hide or pass or I mean the depth of their secrecy was appalling and humbling. And I was thinking I fourteen years, I mean, we're going to be like the old married couple and we weren't, which was great and it was— the weather was kind of icky and it didn't matter.

Everybody was in really good spirits. People were coming along, handing out coffee and donuts and all that stuff. And we were waiting, I don't know how long we waited. It must've been a couple of hours. And we finally get in and we do the whole get-the-marriage-license, and then we come out. And fortunately there were people right outside that were officiants that were marrying people on the spot. And I thought, if we don't do this now, it might

not happen. We might not have a chance. So let's do it now. Hedge our bets. And there was somebody right behind us from the *Register-Guard* and he was looking for Sally and Enid. And I said, "I don't know, we haven't seen them here. But we're from Eugene." And he said, "Great, can we do an article on you?" And my first thought was, no, but Linn who— she was like, "yes, of course you can."

So, they took our picture and they had the article and we got to get married and as we were leaving—our car was right across the street—so all we had to do was just go across the street and get in the car and go back home. But I was thinking, we could have a reception line and there were still couples around the building and we thought, let's go around the building, have this reception line. We took our marriage license and we showed everybody and it was so beautiful because there was cheers and clapping and congratulations. And it was like the biggest reception line anybody could have, but it was like that icing on the cake for us that we got to not only have that moment but have our community, many of whom we didn't even know, celebrate us.

And then we went back home and I knew that we were going to be somewhere in the newspaper. And so I got up and I went over to the newsstand and I looked in the newsstand and we were on the front page above the fold and I freaked out because I thought people are going to kill us. People are going to I don't know, bomb

our house and burn crosses and egg our house and key our cars and really hate on us.

And so the next morning I went to work because I had to go to work. I couldn't not, and people were wonderful and I was so glad that I told my supervisor the truth because we were on the front page of the *Registered-Guard*. That was kind of my, like, here's like the last step in my coming out. Anybody who didn't know— it's 2004, now they're going to know because we're right there. And it was beautiful because I would go to the coffee place and the guy there said, "You know what, let me this is on the house. You can just have this." And people were so gracious. I remember going to a concert at the WOW Hall and these women, young women who we didn't even know, came up to us and said, "Oh, we don't know you but we have your picture on our refrigerator." And it was just lovely.

And the hard part of all of it outside of it eventually being annulled— but the hard part of it was that I got home and I called my mom. I should have known better, but I call my mom and you know, Linn and I had been together for fourteen years. And so I called her and made that small talk, you know, and she said, "Yeah, well, we've been in our house for fourteen years." I thought, "It's an interesting coincidence." They had moved to Nevada at the time. They were living in Las Vegas and she said, "We're doing some remodeling in the bathroom and we're replacing our floor covering." And I thought, "Oh, okay." And then I told her, I said,

"Well, I just wanted you to know that Linn and I were up in Portland and we got legally married." And the other end of the phone was just silent. And after what seemed again like hours, but it was probably like five seconds, this is what she said to me: she said, "You know, after fourteen years—" and I thought, she's going to say it, she's going to say this is great. She said "—after fourteen years, it's about time we replaced our bathroom flooring." I thought, Okay, that I gave it one last shot. I kind of expected it, but I was hoping for more, especially when she started with "After fourteen years." Because that's how long we've been together.

Raiskin: Did you send her the article?

Fletcher: No, I didn't. No, no. Why? No. Then those were annulled, and what we did, I mean it was—

Raiskin: How did it feel when it was annulled?

Fletcher: Well, here's the thing. I expected it. I never expected that those marriage certificates were legal. I never expected that it was going to last. When they were annulled, there was a part of me that was devastated, but there was a part of me that anticipated it. It's like, of course they're annulled. But Linn, my wife— does that make her my ex-wife? My non-wife? – was devastated because she hadn't lived that life of always being barraged by homophobia, by knowing that you can never do certain things by being— you know, we had just lived two different lives, so she was devastated.

We got the check, they sent us back— it felt really insulting. They sent us back that $60 check and we donated it to a high school LGBT group. But, I expected it to be annulled. I was braced for it, so it wasn't like it devastated me. Not like some of the other things that had happened that devastated me. And then in 2013 and then leading up to that, when all these states were saying, "Okay, gay marriage, that's cool, you can do it. It's going to be legal." And it started I think in Iowa, which is ironic to me because it seems like such a conservative place. But then, a little states here and there, what was it, Massachusetts and just little places here and there, started to legalize it and we were waiting, because we didn't want to have it like be legal a little bit, but not be totally legal.

We waited until the Supreme Court said, "Hey yeah, go ahead and do it." Well, it's not how they said it. They said, "Yeah, go ahead and do this." And we're like, "Look at the federal level. This is cool. Oregon's not 100% there, but they're going to be," and it was, it was early September 2013 I remember because our anniversary was coming up and we said, you know what? We don't want another anniversary. We want to keep September thirtieth. So, we had like three weeks I think to organize some wedding and we thought, well, let's just have a small group of people and we're going to go up to Vancouver, Washington because we know Vancouver, everything is all set there. We were looking at California, but they had some rules, I know this wasn't the right thing to talk about, but they had some rules about how you got divorced that we were like "If it ever comes to that, we don't want to have to go through that."

So we went up to Washington, we scouted it out, we came back, we organized a group of friends and then it was just so, so fun. We got on the train and we took the train from Eugene up to Vancouver and we rented this parlor at the hotel that's across from this really beautiful park. And we had our ceremony there and it was in a way, it's like, yeah, we've waited for this forever. And at the same time, it's like we've been married several times already because we had our very first marriage. We like kind of went away together up in Hendricks Park and we dressed up in our wedding outfits and we married each other before our big thing in '95. This was really our fourth wedding. And so by then it was kind of like— but I wore some of the things that I'd worn at the big wedding in '95 and almost everybody, I think everybody who was at this wedding had been to the other wedding. And we thought that we should maybe have one last wedding where we invite only people who have never been to any of our weddings, but we don't want to do that again.

But it was just this wonderful— and the hotel was so welcoming to us and it was— it was just beautiful. And it was a parlor room that was a little bit fancy, a little bit not so fancy, but it had a balcony and looked over the park. And we had music there and we ordered in Thai food. And, it was great. I mean, we finally got to do it. We took bits and pieces of our other weddings and we included it in this one. And many of our friends who are also our age, many of them who were there are also lesbians. And one of them I remember very clearly, one of the most closeted of us said that she

never thought in her lifetime that she would ever see that we could actually get legally married. And it was so poignant to see somebody who was that closeted, know how much it all meant to her as well.

Long: And this was in 2013?

Fletcher: Two thousand thirteen, 2013, September.

Raiskin: And then all the federal rights in 2015.

Fletcher: Yeah, so to know that I could not only make the statement of this is the woman who I love, who I want to be with, but I also got to legally protect her. And that was— it felt like a relief but we still we had to go around to all of our banks and do a very special—. Before we got married, we had to do this very special— make sure that absolutely everything goes to her. You can't just like be co-owners of an account. There's like this certain document. So we had to go through and make double sure, triple sure that we were taking care of each other when one of us predeceased the other. But that was all legal like, but, but in 2013 then we knew that a lot of that extra stuff that we had to do, we didn't have to do anymore and to stop having to watch our backs in that way was so beautiful with such a relief.

Raiskin: Do you think that the fact that gay and lesbian people can get married will change the community at all? Communities?

Fletcher: The gay, lesbian community?

Raiskin: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Fletcher: No, I don't think so because I think that we built something from scratch. We already created a culture in a community. We already created values and rules and we created who we are. I don't think that that is what could change. You know, I think that the only thing that might happen is for the younger— for the teens and the twenty-somethings who are coming out, maybe things changed for them because they just see this as a normal part of life. Maybe for them they can be free to look at other things and to challenge other aspects of culture and community and, and be proactive in politics. But for those of us who've been around a while, I haven't noticed anything that's changed at all.

Raiskin: What are your future plans?

Fletcher: Wow. Retire from the County.

Long: When do you plan to do that?

Fletcher: Are they going to see this? I'm hoping in a couple of years to be gone from the County. And then to pursue my own training and consulting business. And I have some really good— my best friend from high school, Nicki we didn't actually go to high school together but, we have always talked about living in the same area and she and her wife Susie live down in Long Beach, California. And so they're going to move up here. And my brother and his husband are going to be moving up here at the end of this year.

And so I don't know, our plans haven't really developed that. All I know is that what we don't have to do anymore and that will just be more free to have adventures. Maybe travel a little bit more, really take the time instead of trying to fit stuff in, just take the time to enjoy each other and the things in our lives and the things that we want to do. And how to see ways that we could— I don't know how much, this might sound bad, but I feel like I've been contributing to my community and to the gay, lesbian community almost my whole life. And it would be nice to sit back and just take some of that in. I'm hoping that we can find some intentional community that's a lesbian community that we could retire into in our old age. So that we've got the supports and services that we need around us, but that it's a safe and engaging and inclusive and understanding community.

Raiskin: You're talking about those teens and twenty-somethings.

Fletcher: Yeah.

Raiskin: Is there some advice that you would give to a young person watching this video or some words of wisdom?

Fletcher: Oh, man. You know, I think that the Jewish part of me says, don't forget the history. Know where— this is emotional for me— to know what's happened and to know how to protect ourselves and prevent those things from happening again. I think politically it's a scary time again when the Supreme Court seems to be getting loaded with right wing conservative people, when the

administration just carelessly cuts off groups and discriminates. And that it seems like some of the Neo-Nazi homophobic hate has a place again.

Don't just stand by, don't be quiet. Don't assume that things are going to be okay. I don't live in fear of everything. We've worked hard. Our generation has worked hard. The generation before us—holy cow, what they did. There's no way to ever thank them enough for paving that path. But to not take it for granted, but just to enjoy the heck out of it too, to be fearless when you can and to celebrate yourself and be authentic and not have to wait. You know, if you're finding homophobia, there's plenty of places now that are inclusive and embracing and it doesn't just have to be the LGBT community, it's everywhere. And, and just to embrace that.

I think that combination, and to, I know a lot of people in their twenties and thirties are a little apathetic to voting. And even if it seems like your vote doesn't count, get out there and vote and, and get to know your representatives and make sure that they know who you are and what's important to you. And, to not let people go without being accountable for the decisions that they're making for other people's lives.

I think that the other thing is, I mean, one of the luxuries I think that I had in my generation was that we were—and maybe every culture feels like this—we were creating this culture. We were creating what was okay and how expansive things could be and what was acceptable and, and to continue to create that for

yourselves, but in community, not— I worry a little that with all of the screen time and apps and then all of the computer stuff that there's this disconnection. And to find a way to stay in community, however that is, even if it's electronically and, and to create and keep deciding what works and what's acceptable to you from your core and your life and your essence in your genuineness.

Raiskin: Is there anything we didn't touch on that you would like to?

Fletcher: Wow.

Raiskin: Make sure we do?

Fletcher: Let me look real quick. I don't think so, actually. I think that, you know, I was hesitant to come here initially because I didn't know how to capture forty years of being gay, of being a lesbian and being a dyke and put it into an hour and what is the most important thing. But I feel like I had the opportunity to say what was most important and hopefully to at least express through some of the stories that I got to tell and of the emotion that just happened what it's been like for me because it's been— my whole life as a lesbian, it's been— I mean, it is at the core of who I am. For some lesbians, I know it's not, but for me it just is. And I'm very happy about that.

And, and there's been so many horrible moments of homophobia and there has been so much light and love and grace and positivity and, and just this outpouring of, of goodness. And I'm so grateful

for that part of being a lesbian and the lesbian community and everything that we have worked for and created.

And I would just also like to say that I am quite a fortunate woman to be in a relationship with my wife. And when she does things for me or gives me cards, or brings me flowers to work, or I tell stories to my coworkers, my straight coworkers about her, they say, "Can she come and train my husband? Because, I really would like that from my relationship, and I don't get that." I've just been quite fortunate against the odds to have an amazing partner and to have wonderful friends and to have a great community. And for this to be able to happen, to preserve our lives and what's important to us as individuals and as a community, is phenomenal. I appreciate that being done.

Raiskin: Thank you so much.

Long: Thank you.

Fletcher: Yes, thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]