Oral History Interview with Maureen McCauley and Pat Shirley

Interview conducted on September 7, 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

Maureen McCauley and Pat Shirley in Eugene, early 1980s

Pat Shirley and Maureen McCauley, September 7, 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 September 7, 2018

Maureen McCauley was born in 1956 in Alexandria, Virginia. Her father was in the army. They moved to South Carolina. She and her two brothers attended Catholic schools. Growing up, Maureen was happy, active, and did sports. While in high school, she had a sense of having crushes on girls, not boys, though she was not aware of lesbianism. She went to college in 1974, and met Pat Shirley, who also attended the University of South Carolina. They became partners, and remained partners for two years after they both moved to Eugene. Maureen discusses bar culture and butch/femme culture. Maureen relates a story about she and Pat being stalked. Maureen came to Eugene and went to the University of Oregon where she studied exercise physiology. Maureen worked at Starflower Natural Foods & Botanicals. She also worked at Laurel Hill Rehabilitation Center. Maureen relates an incident of rape in Eugene, which was inadequately dealt with by the police. Safe Run, a feminist service that rented Doberman Pinschers, was created to help protect women. She discusses Oregon Measure 9. Once she became an occupational therapist, she was always out. Maureen got married to her partner. She concludes the interview by discussing aging and cohousing options for lesbians.

Additional subjects: Bars (Drinking establishments) -- Oregon – Eugene; Butch and femme (Lesbian culture); Cohousing; Collectives; Cooperatives; Disowned by family; Exercise -- Physiological aspects; Laurel Hill Rehabilitation Center; Occupational therapy; Rape; Rape – prevention; South Carolina; Shirley, Pat; Southern culture; Stalking victims.

Pat Shirley was born in 1954 in Glendale, California. She discusses family chaos when she was growing up. At home, she was rebellious and angry, but with friends she was happy. She had crushes on her female friends but had no words to describe her feelings. Pat went to a small college for a year. She then met Maureen McCauley at the University of South Carolina, where they became lovers. Pat talks about the restrictive nature of southern culture and knowing she had to move away from South Carolina. She and Maureen knew they had to stay under the radar with their relationship, but the women's movement also emboldened them. Pat discusses women's music and living in Eugene. She

discusses the "Amazon" label in Eugene. After graduating from UO, Pat worked as a VISTA volunteer. She also worked at Wild Iris restaurant. Pat had a career in the mental health field and had an internship at Womenspace. She discusses sex, politics and living in Eugene. She and Maureen remained friends after they broke up. Pat discusses the nature of lesbian friendships and the value of relationships. Pat discusses the Oregon Citizens Alliance and Measure 9. She also talks about assimilation over the years.

Additional subjects: Lesbian identity; Lesbian community – Oregon; Southern culture; Southern States – Civilization; Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA); Wild Iris (restaurant); Women – abuse of; Womenspace (Eugene, Or.); Women's movement.

Transcriptionist: Rev.com and University of Oregon Libraries

Session Number: 048

Narrator: Maureen McCauley and Pat Shirley

Location: University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, Oregon

Interviewers: Linda Long and Judith Raiskin

Date: September 7, 2018

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 Pat Shirley and Maureen McCauley on September 7, 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. Pat and Maureen, 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.

Shirley: Yes.

McCauley: Yes.

Long: Thank you. So let's start with a basic question. I'll start with Pat first. Please tell us where you were born, when and where you were born, where you grew up, and something about your early background.

Shirley: I was born in Glendale, California, but only lived there for about a year. We moved around a lot and eventually ended up— so early childhood was in Connecticut and then later childhood and high school was outside of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Something about my early childhood. Well, my family had a bit of chaos going on, so I relied on friends a lot as my base, and I remember my mother used to worry because I played with the boys too much, and as I got older she worried because I played with the girl too much. Like, "Don't you have any male friends, Pat?" So, it would just kind of— turned around like that.

Long: What year were you born?

Shirley: Fifty-four.

Long: And Maureen, how about you?

McCauley: I was born in 1956, in Alexandria, Virginia, and my dad was in the army, and so we moved like every three years. I lived in Virginia, Germany, South Carolina, Texas, and then when I started high school my dad retired to South Carolina, so I ended up spending all

of my high school and college in South Carolina. And I have two brothers, and I had a great childhood. We lived on army bases most of the time, and so there was access to a lot of activities and a lot of kids, and I went to Catholic school almost my entire childhood. I think kindergarten and first grade in Germany I didn't because there was not one available, but other than that, all the way through high school, I went to Catholic school, so—

Raiskin: Are both your parents Catholic?

McCauley: Both my parents were Catholic, and I come from a very Irish Catholic family.

Raiskin: So what was your temperament like as a kid?

McCauley: I was pretty active, just— living on army bases, I had access to all kinds of sports activities, and I would take full advantage of that, and I had two brothers and so— They were older, they weren't going to play any games that I wanted to play, so I had to play every game they wanted to play, so I just pretty much threw myself into any sports that was available. I remember growing up we had a good time all the time, pretty much. The only chaos was the moving part, but that was— it was normal for me, so it was kind of exciting.

Raiskin: Was it hard to leave friends when you'd go from place to place?

McCauley: When I was— I think the hardest was like after second, third, and fourth grade, it was— I was in South Carolina, and we lived off—

base there. That was the only place we lived off-base, and so that was the hardest, but then it ended up that we went back to South Carolina after Texas. And I think we went back there because my parents also had friends that were off-base.

When we lived on base, it wasn't that hard to leave friends because friends were leaving all the time, so there wasn't any continuity of people but there was always lots and lots of kids, so one family would move and another family would move in, so it was— That was just common.

Raiskin: Pat, what kind of kid were you? Thinking about middle school, high school.

Shirley: I was pretty rebellious. I was kind of angry at home, and happy around— happy-acting around my friends, and— A little bit on the wild side. When you said you went to Catholic school, my parents used to threaten me with Catholic school if I didn't shape up. "We're going to have to send you to Catholic school if you don't get this together." I was very gregarious and relied on humor a lot. It was a bit of a double life, because things were hard at home, but I had— my friends were such a safety net, and that's kind of— that's where my life was. That, and we had a family dog and everyone— the dog was a cohesive factor of our family. No matter what was going on, oh my gosh, we loved that dog and could always group around the dog.

Long: What was the dog's name?

Shirley: Butch. How about that? Now that I think about it.

Raiskin: Did you have a sense of yourself as a lesbian in high school?

Shirley: No. I didn't, but looking back, it all makes sense. And I didn't because it was never— I had no context for it. No one talked about it, it wasn't— I had no exposure to it, so it just wasn't an idea. I had no idea you could do that, and I remember when— my first kiss with a woman, which wasn't too long after high school, I just looked at her and said, "We can do this?" And she said, "Yeah." I said, "Ahhh." And it was— that's it, "Oh, this is me." And she went on to struggle with her sexuality, but I was like, "This is it. This is what was— this makes everything make sense."

Raiskin: Did you date boys in high school?

Shirley: Not too much. I had very— a lot of camaraderie, kind of like this kind of friends [pats Maureen on the back]. Dating, no, it was more like buddies. Any dating was really awkward, and it was like, "This is ridiculous." Yeah.

Raiskin: What about you, Maureen?

McCauley: Yeah, I— in high school I had a sense that I had crushes on girls, and not on boys, but again, like Pat said, I had no context for that at all. There was no discussion about gay and lesbians, except for the was one boy at our high school, who, people say, "Well, he's gay." And that was sort of the end of the conversation, really.

And I didn't date in high school, but I had like a best friend that was a boy, and so that was like always a great sort of, I would say cover in a way, because I kind of knew I had crushes on girls, but he was like my best friend and we did everything together, so it was very comfortable in high school in that way, because I had Steve all the time. But we were just buddies. And then, it was really in college, my freshman year at college, that I kind of figured out, "Oh," that there were women who just like woman, and that there was quite a few of them at college.

Raiskin: And what year was that, that you went to college?

McCauley: 1974.

Raiskin: Do you remember reading anything or seeing anything about lesbians in that time?

McCauley: Never. Yeah, I would say not at all.

Raiskin: And what did you do after high school?

Shirley: I went to college, but I was thinking language is so powerful. I can look back and see all the crushes I had in high school, and I remember like sitting in the backseat of the car as we're riding somewhere and there's Carol sitting next to Billy and boy, I really adored Carol and I wish I was sitting next to her, but I had no way to think about it, and so I didn't consider it a crush at the time.

It was just feelings that were there, but without any definition, I guess, and it's— if you don't have the words for it, it's just amazing.

I went to a small college for a year and got very close to my roommate, and we were unusually affectionate, but again, I didn't really have words for that.

And the summer after my first year, I was quite an immature nineteen-year-old, took me quite a while to grow up, and I went to— My mother said, "Why don't you stay with your sister," who was very responsible, "for the summer?" And I said, "Okay." And as soon as I— the first night there is when this woman kissed me, and I went, "Woo!" And it was a great summer.

I couldn't wait to get back to my second year of college, where we transferred to South Carolina, and tell my roommate, "Hey, this is what's going on. We can do this." And that was my first significant relationship.

Raiskin: And when did you meet then?

Shirley: Seventy-seven?

Raiskin: End of college?

Shirley: I was— did I have a year left?

McCauley: I think you had a year left.

Shirley: And you had two years left, I think.

McCauley: Yeah.

Long: So let's clarify, you went to the same college.

Shirley: Yes.

Long: Okay.

Shirley: That's where we met.

Long: And what college was it?

Shirley: University of South Carolina.

Long: Okay.

Raiskin: And how did you meet?

Shirley: It was either on the track or in a bar.

McCauley: Yeah.

Shirley: I think it was at the track, I would run around that track.

McCauley: Yeah, I don't really remember how we met.

Shirley: She was really involved in sports, and I really wasn't but I liked being physical, and I'd go to this track, and I remember just like running for a mile around it, and Maureen said, "Well, you're pretty good at running. You could run farther." I said, "I can?" So then I started running farther. I think that's—

McCauley: Yeah.

Shirley: Around there.

McCauley: Yeah, I didn't start really going to bars in South Carolina till I met Pat, and the bar in South Carolina that we went to, well, first of all, it was a military base. Columbia has a big military base, and I don't— and also, there's a lot of blue laws and all that stuff, so all the clubs were considered private.

And so, it was a little bit scary to go to the clubs, because they would open this little door, and then you would have to show your ID to get in, so there was like this whole— you know, you're crossing some barrier, it wasn't just like anybody could walk in.

And we went to this one bar that was a lesbian bar, and one time we drove by it during the day, and I said to Pat, "I think the bar burned down." And she said, "No, that's what it always looks like." I'm like, "Seriously? That's where we're going at night?" It was frightening-looking, it was—

Shirley: I was just having that same thought—

Raiskin: What was it called?

Shirley: It was called The Fortress.

McCauley: The Fortress.

Shirley: And you walked in, you had the little screen and you walk in and— there was a lot more role definition with many of the people that went to that bar. And I'm not just talking about the era, because the rest of my friends, you know, kind of like we are now,

but that bar, there were some people really— and I was like, "Whoa!"

Raiskin: Can you describe that?

Shirley: I can't—

Raiskin: Butch/femme was the role—

Shirley: Yes.

Raiskin: Okay.

Shirley: It was kind of a different world because it was The Fortress, and it was dark and you'd go in and there were a lot of women there just really, really tough-looking.

McCauley: Yeah.

Shirley: Not tough-acting, but just looking, but you don't know that at first because it's such a new world, and there were so many military.

McCauley: A lot of military women and I would say the— there was a lot of a level of anxiety there, because if someone saw them leaving the bar, that would be their career. Was it going to be over if they were discovered. So, there was a lot of secrecy, and if you saw someone somewhere else, you could never act like you knew them because it might come up like, "Where do you know them from?" And it's like— yeah, so you wouldn't have that recognition of somebody outside of The Fortress.

Shirley: That's it, there was that tension, because another bar opened later downtown that was more what we'd be used to today. It was open and airy, and couches, and they'd bring musicians in, and it was very different, but that first one was walking into a different world.

Raiskin: Were those women older than you or it's just that they were in the military that they were so—

Shirley: They seemed older, I don't know that they were. They acted— it was kind of restricted, constricted maybe. I just felt like, "Party!" And they had a more serious feel to it.

Long: Was there a class issue too?

Shirley: It makes sense that there would be, but I don't think so. Living in South Carolina and being a lesbian was kind of very much an equalizer among everything.

Long: In the sense of what?

McCauley: Everybody was discriminated against equally.

Shirley: And these are your peers and you need them—

McCauley: You need them, yeah.

Shirley: In the group of friends I had there, they probably weren't friends that I would have here. We were together because we were kind of on this lifeboat together.

Long: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Raiskin: Can you remember any people in particular? What they were like, and description of them?

Shirley: Well, they were— it was quite a variety, really. From more— it was nowhere near as political as when we moved out here, and so people were just living their lives. Right, in separate—

McCauley: Two lives.

Shirley: Two lives, they were living their two lives. I don't know how to explain it really. It was kind of a diverse group. From someone who might be working at the gas station, to someone who's teaching college, maybe, and everything in between. But you were just together because you were lesbians.

Raiskin: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Long: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Do you remember any stories of some women being outed and bad things happening to them?

McCauley: Well, right after we left South Carolina— well, it was interesting because I played sports at South Carolina, and so most of my friends were other people on the sports teams, and there was quite a few lesbians in softball and basketball, but they were never— we would never be allowed to outwardly identify as that.

And in fact, it was a big push to kind of not let anybody know that there was any lesbians on any team. After we left South Carolina, there was a basketball coach who actually was arrested and put in

jail for having an affair with a basketball player that she had recruited, after the player had left.

Shirley: Yeah. After the player had left, so it wasn't while she was coaching.

McCauley: Yeah. But they were jailed, and they said they were jailed for perjury, was the reason. But it was an interesting time. But we had a situation that was frightening. We lived together, and we were stalked at some point, where it— it was kind of right before we moved out here. Do you remember that? When we lived, and we would get phone calls?

Shirley: I'm wishing I remembered.

McCauley: And a guy would say that, "I'd been in your house." You know, "I know you have golf clubs in the closet, in the back room," and "Meet me out at this Lake Murray Island," and—

Shirley: That's right.

McCauley: I mean, it was frightening, and, "I know about you two," so it was definitely like he was stalking and threatening us.

Raiskin: Did he want to blackmail you?

McCauley: Yeah, I don't know what exactly he wanted, but it would be frequent calls.

Raiskin: Did you feel you could contact the police?

McCauley: I can't remember, I think we did—

Shirley: I think we did.

McCauley: —contact— we did contact the police.

Long: Was that in Eugene?

Shirley: No.

McCauley: No, it was in South Carolina.

Shirley: That was in South Carolina.

McCauley: And he actually even— my parents had both passed away, but I had a stepmother and some step-siblings and they were very young, and he actually called the house where they lived and got my youngest stepbrother to kind of give him some information about me. It was sort of this ongoing kind of frightening situation that happened there.

And shortly after, we decided to leave South Carolina. We may have already been in kind of— getting ready to go, but we were happy to be leaving.

Raiskin: Was your idea to leave South Carolina influenced by the atmosphere and discrimination, or some other reason?

Shirley: Where we left to, I think, because she was applying to grad school, so we were going to leave, but we got far away from South Carolina as we could, so South Carolina, Oregon, what's farthest over there? That strongly influenced where we moved to, I believe. But I think—

Raiskin: Were you partners at the time?

Shirley: Yeah.

McCauley: Yes.

Raiskin: Okay.

Shirley: So, I think you asked if there were many incidents of harassment that we'd heard about. I probably don't want this recorded historically, but the South— not being from the South felt different culturally, and it felt to me— it wasn't my culture and I felt very stifled in it. Everything just felt so restricted. And so, people really weren't out enough in some ways. I mean, you didn't really hear about stuff in the news or anything, you just knew you had to stay under the radar. But at the same time, it was— the women's movement was becoming very active, and there was a lot of— started to have a lot of stuff going on around that, and that emboldened us, and it was quite fun, really. They had all the early musicians come down there, and it was—

Raiskin: Who do you remember coming down there?

Shirley: Oh, gosh. Cris Williamson and Teresa Trull, and— Woody Simmons came down there. Did Meg Christian? All the early Olivia ones, before they were— at the beginning, and so they'd play in the church basement, or— By the time we had that nicer bar, they'd play in there, but it was—

South Carolina, I'll say I had a lot of fun, it was just not something I'd want to— I couldn't thrive under it, but it was an exciting time because of the women's movement, and being a lesbian subset of the women's movement. It was very exciting.

Raiskin: How did you choose Eugene and University of Oregon?

McCauley: Well, I had a teammate of mine from the University of South Carolina that moved out here, and so she would write letters to us about Eugene, and she lived in Eugene for a while and how great it was, and we should really come out here. And so, I was looking at grad schools and I applied to three different schools and when I got accepted to the University of Oregon in Eugene, it was like, "Okay, let's go to Eugene." And also, there was this song that we would listen to that Pat liked a lot that was called Oregon Mountains, and I can't remember who—

Shirley: Woody Simmons.

McCauley: Woody Simmons sings it, and so that also was like, "Oh, that sounds great."

Shirley: Well, and she'd send us little maps of the town, and I'd say, "Look, Amazon Park. Amazon Parkway. This— we have got to go." And now I say, "Oh, my vet's Amazon Clinic," I don't think twice about it, but at the time that had to be utopia.

Raiskin: What did she tell you in the letters specifically about?

McCauley: Well, just that there was a lot of women out here, there was a lot of lesbians, it was okay to be a lesbian, basically just— it was utopia out here, and that we had to come out, and she was actually the person that when I was in college, when I— she sort of identified me as lesbian before I self-identified as a lesbian and she had a partner. I knew she was a lesbian, she had a woman partner, and they said, "Come on over to our house tonight," and so I went over there, and then they said, "We're going to a party," and so we went into her van and we started driving, and then she turned around and said, "This party is women-only." And I was just like, "What?" And she's like, "It's women-only. Like, these are women who like women." She kind of sort of like kidnapped me to this party, and then after that it was, "Okay, I need to identify myself also as a lesbian." So—

Shirley: Bless her heart.

Raiskin: So what year was it you came to Eugene?

Shirley: Seventy-eight.

Raiskin: And what did Eugene look like to you, what was your first impressions of it?

McCauley: Well, Eastern Oregon, we drove across and I think I cried all the way to Sahalie Falls. I was like, "What are we— where are we going?"

Shirley: Because Mott talked about rivers and bike paths and so, "Welcome to Oregon," and it's like— "Whoa, this is different than she portrayed." But then we got to the Willamette Valley and—

McCauley: Yeah.

Shirley: Got hopeful. It was everything she said it was. Soon, it seems to me like very early— well.

McCauley: Well, we first say that the house where she stayed, there was— a lesbian in town owned the house and she had a partner, and then Mott rented a room, and then we rented a room for a little while. There wasn't really enough room, but they let us stay there.

Shirley: Mott moved, she went back to South Carolina.

McCauley: And then Mott went back to South Carolina, where she lives today, but— so then we stayed there for a while and then we rented another room until we finally got our own place.

Long: Where was that house?

McCauley: In Springfield.

Long: Oh.

McCauley: Yeah, it was like in the historic area in Springfield.

Long: When you came to Eugene, did anybody talk about Referendum 51? Because that was going down just about that time.

Shirley: It was right after that.

Long: It was right after that, okay.

Shirley: Yeah.

Long: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Shirley: That was the city one, right?

Long: Yes.

Shirley: Yeah.

Long: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Shirley: It was after that.

Raiskin: Do you mean you came after the referendum or the referendum came after you came?

Shirley: We came after the referendum.

Raiskin: Okay.

Shirley: But soon after we got here, I don't know how we got into the community but I just remember being at a party really soon after we got here and just feeling like we just got off the prairie or something. Do you remember who was in that big green— the avocado house? Anyway, but there were so many women there, and it was so lively, and it was such a positive environment.

Things were so much more positive here, and creative here. I felt pretty at home. I had lived several places before, but I came to Eugene and felt at home really quickly.

McCauley: Yeah, I had the same experience, too. After we had lived here for a short period of time, it was like, "Oh yeah, this is way more comfortable for me."

Shirley: Yeah, "I found home," that's what it felt like.

Raiskin: What kind of things did you get involved with when you came?

Shirley: Well, I got involved with— we partied a lot. That was a big time-consuming activity, then went to U of O, and it was mainly centered around friends, and then other measures came, and— which really galvanized us politically, and it's been kind of political ever since. But in— that was quite a bit later, '89, I started with Soromundi.

Long: Pat, were you a graduate student at UO as well?

Shirley: Yeah.

Long: What were you—

Shirley: I didn't come out here for that, but I ended up there.

Long: Okay. What were you each studying?

Shirley: I was studying this kind of unique program, it was called Applied Human Development, it was in the Psychology Department. And I

got into that because it offered a year of practical experience, and I did an internship at Womenspace, and I just wanted that human service experience.

Long: Okay. And how about you, Maureen?

McCauley: I was in a program, which was exercise physiology, with— then you could pick some specialties, and I picked gerontology and adaptive physical education. I was a P.E. major in South Carolina, and then after I graduated I worked with VISTA Volunteers for senior and disabled services, and it was like the 1980s, so it was pretty depressed economy, and so I would have jobs every couple years that were grant-funded. I was the community organizer for Whiteaker neighborhood, for NEDCO, and I worked for Willamalane. I coached wheelchair basketball and I drove trips for seniors, and then eventually I started working at Starflower, just the last few years that Starflower was in business, I worked there.

Raiskin: And what was that experience like?

McCauley: Well, it was great. I mean, I started in the herb room and then I did warehouse, and then I became the main receiver in the warehouse, and it was an amazing place to work, very close comradery with the whole warehouse team, it was— unfortunately kind of when the— Starflower started, a bit of the decline was starting to happen, and I actually ended up on the board of directors that made the decision for Starflower to have to close the doors, which was very painful.

When I think back on it, I think it was like way ahead of its time. Distributing natural foods, and we would distribute to like little tiny stores all over Oregon and Northern California, and now, natural food distribution is so huge, so it's just kind of a— it was a fantastic opportunity.

Raiskin: Why do you think Starflower had to close?

McCauley: There were two main things that happened. I think there was one thing that people were very interested in taking care of each other. And so, they didn't quite, I think, realize the business part of that in terms of workers compensation and how that worked, because what happened was if people got injured, they pulled a muscle in their back or something, they would just say, "Oh, take a couple weeks off."

Well, as the result to that, we ended up in a Class A risk and had to pay our premiums upfront, in cash, and so we didn't realize the whole thing, like you have to get back to work in three days, or it starts affecting your insurance.

And then, the other bigger thing was that there was a big distributor that went out of business, and basically didn't pay their bills to the food providers. When that happened, then everybody who provided any food wanted cash upfront for their food, and that was never how we operated in the past, so—

It's very difficult, when you're a big— it was a big business, to make that shift, so coming up with cash to actually buy the

merchandise became not possible, so we couldn't fill the orders, so then people started going elsewhere, so it was just kind of a combination of things that happened.

I was coaching wheelchair basketball, and one of my players said that I should become an occupational therapist, and I didn't know what that was, but I just kind of saw the writing on the wall with Starflower, and I needed something that actually— I could make a living, and so I ended up going back to school at that point, after working with Pat for a year at—

Shirley: Yes, I was on the interview committee. That was so awkward. I said, "I don't think I should be here." "Oh, no, you should be here."

Raiskin: What's the story?

McCauley: Okay, after Starflower, I started to apply for schools and I realized I needed to get back to some experience that had something to do with occupational therapy, so Pat worked at a mental health clinic, and they needed somebody that had warehouse experience to run the store that they ran to train people with mental health disorders to work in a kind of public environment, like semi-public environment. And so, Pat says, "I know somebody with warehouse experience," and so I applied at Laurel Hill Rehab Center, and yeah, Pat was on my interview committee.

Shirley: I was. She got the job.

McCauley: I got the job.

Shirley: You would have anyway. And then I left there a year later or something.

Raiskin: And what kind of work were you doing?

Shirley: Well, I— after U of O I also was a VISTA volunteer, and we set up safe houses, we organized safe houses throughout the community—

Raiskin: For whom?

Shirley: For rape prevention, so if you were out and about and you needed a safe spot.

Raiskin: How did that work? Did people volunteer their homes?

Shirley: Yeah, they have signs in the windows. A sign was— it was a sign with a candle, I think. We'd interview them, and do trainings and they could have their sign, and it wasn't really used much, but it did add a sense of safety when you were out to know where you could zip to, if you needed. It was wasn't that long-lasting though.

Long: Were the safe houses, that program, under the auspices of a particular larger program or agency?

Shirley: No, they weren't. We just set them up as VISTA volunteers.

Long: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Shirley: Yeah, it wasn't under another agency. And then, I worked at a lesbian-owned restaurant, lesbian employees. That was very fun, the Wild Iris, it was—

Raiskin: And what was that like?

Shirley: It was in this old house, it was pretty nice, cool little place.

McCauley: On Lincoln Street.

Shirley: Yeah. It was very busy, and there were a few of us that worked there, I worked in the kitchen.

Raiskin: What kind of food did you serve there?

Shirley: I worked in the daytime, I can't remember if they did dinners. They must have. I just remember they had a great— I don't eat meat now, but they had a great chicken salad sandwich that was to die for. I don't know, salads, sandwiches. I don't know what they did at night, I can't recall, but it was fun.

Raiskin: So it was a lesbian cooperative, or it was—

Shirley: No, it was owned by a lesbian, two. Two women.

Long: Who owned it?

Shirley: Mary Anne Gould and— her name's right there, Char something.

McCauley: Charlene? I can kind of picture her.

Shirley: I can picture her.

Raiskin: How long did you work there?

Shirley: I don't really know, maybe a year, and then I must have got the job at Laurel. No, I worked there and then became a VISTA volunteer, and then I went to Laurel Hill, which was a wonderful place to start a career in mental health because they were a training site for Boston University, and it was such a great start. And then I went from there to a community mental health clinic, and I've been there ever since.

Raiskin: Why would Boston University have a training site in Eugene?

Shirley: They had different programs around the country, not many of them, but they— and they taught their brand of psych rehab. It was really— it was just such great training and being up on all the current stuff, and current approaches, and it was effective.

Raiskin: And when did you work at Womenspace?

Shirley: That was an internship.

Raiskin: Okay.

Shirley: In '80, so it hadn't been operating all that long, I don't think. Seems like shelters were— certainly not as commonplace as they are now.

Raiskin: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

McCauley: Yeah, when Pat brought up the thing about the safe houses, I remember an incident in Eugene. It was just an interesting thing where a woman was raped on the bike path, and the Eugene Police

came out with a statement that all women should stay off the bike path, and we put together a group and went out. We were in a running group anyway—

Shirley: Oh, my god, yeah.

McCauley: —and we put out where we were running on the bike path all the time, and that men should stay off the bike path, because men, you know, it was just—

Shirley: They were offending.

McCauley: Yeah, they were offending.

Shirley: Why not keep the dangerous people off? But remember the program was the Doberman Pinscher—

McCauley: Yeah.

Shirley: Safe Run, I think it was— something like—

Raiskin: Can you describe that?

Shirley: This woman had— she must've been a dog trainer, and she had Doberman Pinschers, and she would let women borrow the dogs to go running as a protective thing, and I had one at my house for a while. Someone would come into my house and take the dog. And I'll tell you, no one bothered you, no one.

McCauley: No, they were—

Shirley: They gave you a wide berth.

Raiskin: What did those dogs look like?

Shirley: What did—

Raiskin: Those dogs look like?

McCauley: Doberman Pinschers.

Shirley: Doberman Pinschers.

Long: They're large?

McCauley: They're large.

Shirley: Very large, with pointy ears and—

McCauley: No, they're attack dogs.

Shirley: Yeah, you'll see them on signs when, "Beware of dog," and then they'll have a— [grimaces]. They were all very well-behaved and very sweet, but they were imposing-looking. Yeah, that was fun.

Long: How long did that last?

Shirley: I don't know how long she went, going for. A few years maybe?

Raiskin: I know women used to check them out to go camping alone.

Shirley: Oh, that's a great idea.

Raiskin: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Shirley: I had two big sheep dogs for a while, and I lived near the bike path, and I'd go out there whenever I wanted with my two big dogs. In

recent years, I have a little dog, and my first time walking out with him I went, "Oh man, this is not the same. You're not scared little fella, are you?"

Raiskin: How long were you in a relationship with each other?

Shirley: We've got to know the answer to this one.

McCauley: Yeah, because it was a long time ago. We moved here in '78, probably after we moved here, I mean we—

Shirley: A few years, I think.

McCauley: Yeah, probably two years in South Carolina, or a year and a half in South Carolina, and two years here, or—

Raiskin: And what split you up?

Shirley: Oh.

McCauley: There was a lot of opportunities in Eugene. I think that's what split us up.

Raiskin: Can you describe what the—

McCauley: I mean, we were very young.

Shirley: Yeah, young and immature, and there was a lot of— partner rearranging going on a lot.

Raiskin: What were the politics around sexuality then, in the lesbian community?

Shirley: Well, I remember myself being quite strident, but you are more strident when you first come out anyway, but— and really, working at Womenspace, I had— I would recognize sometimes, "Wow, why am I so angry?" And it really— I was angry, and—

Raiskin: About women being abused?

Shirley: Yeah, I think it would come out in lots of ways, but it would— I mean, I didn't walk around like an angry person, but I would— I remember when— If someone was disrespectful— like, people would come into the bar, and not for good reasons, you know? And they'd take over the dance floor, and throwing their weight around a little bit and I would just be— now, I'd probably handle it different, but I'd just be angry and I'd really—

Some of that was from seeing all I'd seen in Womenspace, but we were also really into, "We need to make room for ourselves in this society," and so— and I remember, when men would come into the bar and they'd get on the dance floor, we were all having a good time, and they'd whip their shirts off.

And we were like, "We should be able to do that," and so we'd "bshweee" [pretends pulling shirt off]— And the poor bouncer, she'd go, "Please, don't make me deal with this." It was a frequent occurrence because we were always just so— so we were just ready to challenge whatever we needed to challenge.

Raiskin: And what were the feelings about monogamy or polyamory or sexuality in general?

Shirley: It was a time of— it seemed like a time where people were really open to trying different configurations. We were also young, and so it may still be like that for the twenty-something generation, but then it was like that, and so in general, I'd say overall people were into serial monogamy, but there was a lot of cross-pollination, so to speak.

Raiskin: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And so after you separated your romantic relationship, did you stay friends at that time?

McCauley: I mean, it wasn't easy at first. I don't think it's ever easy at first, but Pat was the person that was my family, so—

Raiskin: Yeah.

Long: How were your families handling your sexuality?

McCauley: At this point?

Long: Well, let's just go back. When did you come out to your families?

McCauley: I was living here probably a year, and I had one brother that lives in South Carolina, and one that lived in Boston. The one that lives in South Carolina wasn't there when I left, but he had moved there in the meantime, and he called me and basically said that one of my best friends from high school was— told him that I was a lesbian, and I should call her and make sure she doesn't start talking like that to people.

And then, I had to say, “Well, actually that's the truth, and that's what I told her.” And it was not good for a long time with that particular brother. It wasn't clear— I mean, I think there was two things going on. First, just like sort of community embarrassment for him in a way, because it just wasn't spoken about in South Carolina.

And then, he also he said he was mad because why didn't I tell him myself? But at that point, he didn't talk to me for quite a few— maybe quite a few years, actually, like two years. I have another brother that lives in Boston, and he's a social worker. After I talked to my one brother, I called my other brother and he's like, “Oh, I'm so glad you told me.”

It was like completely opposite, like, “Now, you can share everything, you don't have to worry about,” he's older, he's like eight years older. And he was fine from the beginning with it. But both of my brothers have— as society has changed, and their lives have changed, he ended up marrying one of my friends from college, and as soon as they started dating, she called me and said, “Somebody wants to talk to you.” And put him on the phone.

And from that point on, it was— he wasn't going to— he was sorry as well, that we hadn't had contact, so that was a hard time, but now our relationship is great, with both my brothers, and they— when the Supreme Court passed the right to marry, both of my brothers called me that day and said, “When are you having your official wedding? We want to come.”

And so then, my partner and I were like, “Oh my gosh, we have to have a wedding because my brother,” and her brother also wanted to come. It was like, “We have to have a wedding. Our brothers want to come.”

Raiskin: That's sweet.

McCauley: It's been quite a turnaround.

Raiskin: What were your subsequent relationships after you separated?

Shirley: What were they?

Raiskin: Who were you with? What was your life like?

Shirley: Well, I've had a few relationships and I choose really well, and they've all been with really wonderful people and I remain close to them now, so— I mean, relationships can be difficult to sustain, but the people I've been with have just been wonderful, and really it's kind of our core family group. We all add on—

McCauley: Yeah.

Shirley: We bring someone else into the fold, but we've stayed together all the time.

McCauley: Yeah, after we ended our relationship, Pat got together with a woman who then we became really good friends, and then she was living in a house and I think working at the restaurant. Was that when you were working with Adelka? At the restaurant, that you were living in the house—

Anyway, I got together with somebody that—

Shirley: Oh.

McCauley: —she was living in the house with this person that I got together with, so there was no like not seeing each other.

Shirley: Yes, that's right. I was actually in the backyard.

McCauley: Yeah.

Raiskin: So do you think— I know it's not across the board, but do you think that there's a way that lesbians separate and get together and keep their friends in a way that's different than the heterosexual model?

Shirley: Oh, absolutely.

Raiskin: Can you describe it? Can you describe what that is like?

Shirley: Well, I think it's relative to our lesbian culture, I think it is a part of the lesbian culture, and I'm not sure why but it makes— it sure makes sense to me. I mean, I've heard different speculations, "Oh, well, maybe because we're— it's a prescribed community, and you're going to cross paths." But maybe it's just more sensibility and valuing relationships, but it's never made sense to me in the heterosexual world how you can love someone and commit to them, and then just end up, "I never want to see their damn face again."

It's very— it's just very common. I hope it stays that way, as we kind of integrate more into the mainstream, I hope we don't lose that. That's a good thing, I think.

McCauley: Yeah, for me it's been a total blessing because people I've been involved with, the people that Pat has been involved with have really just become like family to me, and even though things have changed amongst us, like the closeness and the history that we share, and just growing up together is a big part.

Now I have some friends that have kids, and they're sort of part of the whole mix too, and it just kind of grows— It's always like there's enough love to go around, so why eliminate someone that maybe you've had a changed relationship with but they're still a big part of your life and your history, and family.

Shirley: Family. Yeah. Maybe there's more of a family role—

McCauley: Well, the whole campaign, we did— Oregon did the whole campaigning, I mean, we took part in— we had pictures taken like "we are family" and having our whole group—

Raiskin: Which campaign is this?

McCauley: I can't remember if it was Measure 9 or one of the later measures—

Long: You were here for Measure 8 too, that came first.

McCauley: Yeah.

Shirley: I think it was the second one.

Long: So Measure 8 was 1987-88, and then Measure 9— that was the one that was lost, and then Measure 9 was 1992.

Shirley: I think it was Measure 9 because that one seemed— more people got involved, you know, people outside the gay and lesbian community, which was—

Long: Right.

Raiskin: What was this poster that you made?

McCauley: Well, just we took pictures— I remember we were at a picnic at Adelka and Alicia's and we all got together and took this big picture, and kept— we'd always put, "We are family," as the title at the bottom, and I just felt like that was the truth for us. And then, they kind of—

I don't know if it was before Basic Rights, you know, when Basic Rights came in also they kind of continued to just promote that, like that you have pictures with your siblings, you have pictures with your neighbors, you kind of put it out there all the time, that we're part of the community, we're your next-door neighbors, we're your coworkers, and when Measure 8 was happening I was in school in Tacoma.

And then there was Measure 9, that was right after that, but then when I returned to Eugene and started working just sort of standard jobs, not in more protected Starflower-type positions, I

mean, from the moment I started I just felt like— you know, people are going to know who I am. I'm not going to hide it or—

Long: So you were always out in your jobs.

McCauley: Once I became an occupational therapist and I was hired, I mean, I didn't necessarily talk about it but if somebody asked that was a coworker, I would just say, "Oh, yeah, well me and my partner Laura we're doing this," or—

Long: And what kind of reactions did you get?

McCauley: Luckily, I've been in a supportive work environment.

Raiskin: So you've nurtured this familial network for forty years almost. What's it like now? So you were in your twenties, and now you're however old you are. What's that network feel like to you now?

Shirley: Well, people have built their own lives, and some intersect. Maureen's very, very close with Adelka and Alicia, more part of their family, because we don't have like, every Saturday night, "Let's go to the park," kind of contact. "It's Wednesday. What do you want to do today?" Because people have gone on to build their own relationships and careers, and that kind of thing, but we still see— different people see ones of us more often than others, but when we get together, it feels just like you're picking up right where you left off. We just know each other so well, and we knew each other when we were twenty and doing all our stupid stuff. That's funny. It's really nice to know someone that long.

Raiskin: Have either of you gotten married?

McCauley: Yeah, I got married.

Raiskin: And what was that like for you?

McCauley: It was great. I mean, I'd been with my partner or wife, now I can say, for twenty-four years, almost twenty-five years, and we did everything. When Multnomah had their one day where you could go up and get a license, we went up and got a license, and then had a wedding like the next day, you had to wait twenty-four hours or something, so we had a wedding the next day with two other couples, and when the City of Eugene said you could register, we registered.

And people at that point said we were crazy because that was right in the middle of the OCA being very active, and they said, "Well, that's just a list for them to target you," but we were like, "Well, we want to register." And then we got domesticated, when that was available.

Shirley: "Domesticated." [laughs]

McCauley: We wanted to have that commitment, and so when the Supreme Court came out with that ruling, I mean, it was pretty much instantaneous, with my brothers calling and everything, but we also were just like, "Okay, this is it. This is the real thing. We actually will get recognition and benefits."

And I mean, I can't even believe the change in my lifetime. I never, I never thought that we would ever have the rights to get married. I mean, I remember the OCA and the "special rights," and that whole campaign that was just— people believed that. And now—

Raiskin: They'd think that gay and lesbians were asking for special rights over heterosexuals.

McCauley: Yes. The people— that we were asking for special rights when we just wanted to be recognized with—

Long: Basic rights.

McCauley: Basic rights. Yeah. The change in society, in recognizing gay and lesbian relationships is incredible. I work with some younger people that they don't have any recollection of what it was like.

Shirley: I remember first hearing— The first time I heard "gay marriage" even mentioned on the national stage, was Bill Clinton, when we he was running for president, and someone asked him, "Are you in favor of gay marriage?" And it was like, "Why is someone even asking?" I mean, it just wasn't even a possibility, and he said he wasn't, which I was just so amazed the term was even said.

And I thought, "Wow, maybe this could be a possibility someday because it's actually— someone just put a name to it and we're talking about it." And I actually think the OCA, as hateful as they were, and there was so much— it was really tense, and there was increase in violence and intimidation, but I don't think we'd be

where we are today without them, because we organized, and we organized and we broadened.

Allies stood up, people who really probably hadn't even thought that much about it took a stand in our favor, and there was this one moment, and that sticks out for me, and I'm not sure why, but it was right during one of the campaigns, and it was like just turning evening, and it was rainy and cold, and there was one woman, and in my mind she was an ally, and she wasn't a lesbian.

I don't know why, I couldn't even see her up close, but that's in my head, that's who she was. And she was standing by herself in the rain, in the cold on Ferry Street Bridge holding this sign up—

Raiskin: That said?

Shirley: —against— well, it was in our favor, whether it was— I can't remember how the ballot measures were worded.

Long: No on 9. It would be "No on 9." Yeah.

Shirley: Yeah, so it would be No on 9, and just this lone figure, and it just was like— something really inspiring about that. But people came out of the woodwork, and I really don't think we'd have gay marriage if they hadn't expressed such fear of it all the time and kept it in the public eye. It was like, "Well, why don't we have gay marriage?" So, thank you, Mr. Mabon.

Raiskin: Do you have any concerns about the assimilation of gay people?

Shirley: You know, there's a loss to that, I think. I'm very— I think every generation likes living when they live. As you get older you hear our own self say, "Well, I'm glad I'm not a kid today." You know? Every generation says that, but I am glad that I was living when this movement really took off, the women's movement and the gay and lesbian movement, and we were more of a subculture and an identity, and you felt an affinity for people you didn't even know just by passing them on the street, and—

And you can move to a town, and you'd have some people to look up. I'd always say, "I don't know how straight people do it. You move to a city, how do you know where to start? How do they meet people?" I mean, you have to have something to organize around. I feel really fortunate for being alive during all these changes.

There's a loss, I think, of— when we were just subsumed into the main culture. It seems inevitable, but I'm glad I was here for the part I was in.

Raiskin: How do you imagine aging as lesbians?

Shirley: Hopefully with friends. A lot of work needs to be done on that. I work with older adults with mental health, and I work not in Eugene, but in a more conservative area, and I imagine myself in these assisted living or nursing facilities, and— sexuality itself tends to— except for a few lively ones where then it gets to be a

problem. I mean, it's not seen as a positive. It kind of— it's not a real—

You don't walk into these places and get a sense of people's vibrant sexuality, nor do you get too much of a sense until you're really there, knowing people, of individuality. And there's really only been a couple out people that I've been able to meet. And I imagine in Eugene it's not going to be—

It's going to be our generation, so we grew up with these issues, and as long as you're in Eugene or somewhere similar, it will probably be okay, but if you move— we're still on a bubble here, I think. It'd be stigmatizing today to be in the places I work in, and I think people would say, "Well, that's that lesbian, or that's that gay man," or— Attitudes have come far—

Long: Do you think lesbians will have to go back in the closet to be old people in a retirement center?

Shirley: I'm thinking we won't have to, because we're growing up that way, and these are our peers that we've been advocating and challenging all the way along, but the generation before us, I believe people have gone back in the closet, at least in all the towns in between Portland and Eugene, and you know, the centers.

Raiskin: Because even though we may identify as lesbians, the caretakers—

Shirley: That's right.

Raiskin: —the people who have power over us, won't be necessarily.

Shirley: That's right, but hopefully— yeah. I'll tell you though, I work in rural communities, social work, and I'm just myself and I've always been treated well. I've been treated well by my coworkers, and there's a range from people similar in politics to conservative, and I've always just been treated really respectfully.

But, what I see more of with the clients I work, and I go into their homes, is more and more people are saying, "Oh, well, my caregiver is my niece's wife." You know, you hear it and it rolls off the tongue a lot easier and more people will mention their family members or their connections.

They still have to say, "Oh, that's my— that's my cousin, he's gay." You know what I mean? It still comes with that, but they're saying it and they're not judging. And they'll say, "Well, I'm not judging." And now I'll hear that more with the trans-related. So I do really notice a difference.

And some of that I think are changes that first take place in the home, with the person thinking about themselves, and then loosening up and— I don't know what it would be like walking around the community necessarily, but it does feel more open.

Raiskin: What would you like for your retirement living situation?

Shirley: Ideally, I would like— My pie in the sky dream would be to have a little community of my friends with little places, little cottages, and we could hire caregivers to come in and help us, and we'd all be— I

picture it as horseshoe for some reason, because I saw a place setup like that, just regular apartments, I thought, "That would work."

So that we're all— still have some spot of our own, but we're all together, that's what I would like. I don't think it will happen like that, but that's my dream.

Long: How would you make that happen?

Shirley: Well, you'd have to get people to sign in blood now that they're not going to move, they're going to stick with the plan. And that's hard, because people do decide to move, and people are deciding to snowbird, and I just want to, "Don't. Don't!"

Raiskin: Maureen, I know you've given this a lot of thought.

McCauley: Yeah.

Raiskin: Can you tell us about your decisions.

McCauley: Yeah, I mean that's the vision that I had from a long time ago, cluster housing has kind of been something that I read books about when I first started moving to Eugene, and we actually had some houses, properties that— with the adjoining lots, and we're trying to work with the city and see if we could get something like that going, but it just— It wasn't going to happen there.

And so, my partner and I, we're involved in a co-housing group in Eugene for about five and half, six years, trying to get that started, because we've always kind of felt like aging with people around

and kind of mixed ages and— would be a good thing. About two years ago, we actually—

Well, we left the co-housing group and bought into a townhouse intentional community development in Eugene, and so we're around, we have— There's ten other households and eventually there'll be thirteen households, and there's not any other gay or lesbian households in our particular development.

There's a similar development right close by that does have a gay couple that's in there, and when we were in the co-housing there was two or three gay families that were in that. We're kind of on— I mean, we feel like we've found the place that's going to work for us, hopefully, that has community around it.

And we would've loved our friends to buy into the same places, but we were ready to make the move, and so we just went ahead and kind of did that—

Raiskin: What happened with the co-housing situation?

McCauley: Well, some people stayed in, and what happened was that it was under appeal by the neighbors, and that appeal actually was just— There was just a victory for the co-housing group, and so it does look like it's going to be kind of a go-ahead at some point, it just might take another couple years, but the interest in that is phenomenal.

I mean, we're still friends with the people that we were in the group with, and the person that's taking calls and emails now, so there's like twenty inquiries a day about the units, now that it's out of the appeal process. And so I think it's going to happen in Eugene, it'll be the first co-housing community in Eugene, and I'd be very excited to see it happen, because I think— I think banding together is what people need to do really, to have some alternative types of housing, rather than just like single family, single family, single family.

Raiskin: Yeah, it's a desire for a lot of people. We just have to get it going faster.

Shirley: And everyone's just not in the same place at the same time, so they were ready to make the move, other friends have retired, and I'm still working. People, we just don't all meet those same milestones at the same time.

Raiskin: How do you keep the connectivity now that people are living separately?

Shirley: Events, a lot. Gatherings on holidays, women's basketball games.

McCauley: Yeah.

Shirley: We have a lot of contact during basketball season.

McCauley: Yeah, kind of traditions. Set up traditions with people, that's kind of what I like to do, just that, "It's this time of year, we always get

together, we do this," so I'm kind of a tradition person, so I like that.

Shirley: Maureen is really good at staying connected.

McCauley: I'm a project person, so I like to help people with projects, so I make sure that people know they can call me if they have a project or something they— And then that helps me stay connected to them.

Shirley: And if we're going through something difficult— we know to check in with each other.

Raiskin: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

McCauley: Yeah.

Raiskin: After having lived here for forty years, and been in the lesbian community for longer, is there some wisdom that you would pass down to a younger person who's maybe watching this video soon or in the future?

McCauley: I would say cherish your friendships. Don't get too complacent about what we have, you can see how tides shift in the political realm, and I don't think we can take things necessarily for granted. There's still people that probably are not happy with the way things are, and anytime you have a— you're different, that can be a target.

Shirley: I would say have patience with others who aren't on board yet, and that's really hard when you're young. So, people will come out and

then after struggling with it for a long time and then expect their family to be, "Well that's great news, Johnny." They need some time, too.

So, just have patience with— Let people get to know you, that's really— I think that's really what makes progress, is when people start coming out and let people just know them, and that's what I'd say.

McCauley: Yeah, I think that's where Basic Rights Oregon was brilliant, really, in their campaign. You know, knock on your neighbors' doors, or come out at work, or— sort of making every day national Coming Out Day, I think it was a great strategy. It helped me, because I was pretty closeted for many years, and I feel like that really helped me and when I started a new profession, just having that kind of basic, like, "Okay, this is who I am. Start from day one, and this is it." You know?

Shirley: If you're comfortable with yourself, other people, mostly, will share that comfort. The other thing I'd say is, "Don't assume it's easy for everybody." For some people who are more on the cutting edge and the leading edge of things and of the movement, I think they kind of assume that progress has been made across the board, and I don't think it necessarily has.

And some people, I think, sit more quietly with a lot of pain around things. So, not everyone's in the same place, and feeling okay about things, but you just need open arms.

Raiskin: Is there anything we haven't touched on that you want to make sure is recorded?

Shirley: Well, I think an important part of my experience here has been— I know if you've talked to other people about Soromundi. So that started in '89 and I was one of the— I was at the original six or eight people in the living room that started it, and I've been with it ever since.

Raiskin: Is this Soromundi, the lesbian chorus?

Shirley: Yeah, and it's been amazing to watch the community that's been built within that. I've never seen such instantaneous rising to the occasion for other people. I remember a couple of years ago we had a member who was dying, and she lived out in the country, and our director said, "I was thinking afterwards we should go to Joy's and sing for her."

I mean, we're talking like eighty people, and she lives in this small country home and she's really close to death, and we said, "Yes, we should do that." And so, after rehearsal, it was dark and— I don't know, after 9:00, and so we take off to go— we try and figure out where she lives and we take off and go there, and by the time we even get there, there's other Soromundi members out there, already directing traffic at the parking area field—

It was just really a can-do kind of group. It was so impressive, and we just filled her house and sang, and it was just— and she was just like beaming, it was so important to her. But just that someone will

put out a— post something, "I have to move next weekend," and people show up, and it's really turned into this alive community. That's been an important thing.

Raiskin: Thank you both so much.

Long: Yes, thank you.

Shirley: I hope I was in the right spot, I—

[END OF INTERVIEW]