

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEW WITH JESSICA DUVALL

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for the

LGBTQ ORAL HISTORY SERIES

MONDAY, AUGUST 11TH, 2014

Kennesaw State University Oral History Project
LGBTQ Oral History Series
Excerpts from interview with Jessica Duvall
Conducted by Anne Graham and Heather Oswald
Monday, August 11th, 2014
Location: Audio Video Technology Studio

JESSICA DUVALL: I see it and what I see is the responsibilities of it is really creating this network of visibility for the campus community. And that's -- I focus strongly on programming, is where I put a lot of it to create this cross-campus visibility because I feel it's like the first step is to really put the office out there and integrate the services that we have into existing areas. Similar with working with the Archives and try not to make it where it's just the GLBTIQ Center doing everything. It's really the campus responsibility in my office helps facilitate that.

It's hard to have a GLBTIQ Resource Center space in a changing environment. Acceptability of same-sex marriage or marriage equality, however you want to label it, is at an all-time high. People are coming out all the time. It's not always such a big deal. I mean, there's always going to be those sad stories and unfortunate circumstances. But overall -- I've got parents calling me to, you know, what do you have for my son? And interviewing me, so it's a very different dynamic, I think, than a lot of resource centers had to face when they first came about in the '90s and early 2000s. And so I really try to focus on this idea of understanding culture and awareness within the community. Students who are coming in and don't have a really strong foundation of knowing where we came from. They don't know what Stonewall is. Or ask them like, what is National Coming Out Day? Oh, it's a day and you come out and like do -- What is it about though? And students don't even know that there was a March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. I think that's an important step. And especially as people start talking about, as marriage equality becomes more prominent and we gain more rights, does the LGBT community disappear? Does it become no different than the, I guess, the straight community. And I think that's where the onus is to really educate young people and myself included, of, where do we come from? How did we get where we are? I think that's an important -- That's how I'm choosing to approach it.

If I had my druthers, I would see sexual orientation and gender identity added into non-discrimination policies nationally. I think that would help the ambiguity that I even touched about knowing that writes my wife and I could even get because it's state by state. I mean, if you look at Kennesaw, we added sexual orientation, I think in '95. But as soon as you step off KSU property, I don't have any rights anymore. I don't have any protections. I think that creates a lot of fear and uncertainty and keeps people from being out and asserting themselves because

you don't know what rights you have, where you have them. And so I would see that as being a number one priority.

I don't see much changing until something happens nationally. I think really that nondiscrimination policy and marriage equality being done national is really how change will happen.