

**Southwest Virginia LGBTQ+ History Project
Oral History Initiative**

**Interview with Barbara Maberry
October 5, 2016**

Interviewer: Zacchariah Wooten (ZW)

Interviewee: Barbara Maberry (BM)

Date: October 5, 2016

Location: Roanoke College Library, Salem, Virginia

Transcript prepared by: Amelia Woodworth and Joshua Bailey

0:00: checking sound levels

0:15: Introductions

0:55: Barbara's parents and siblings

1:50: Barbara's childhood in Roanoke (c. 1961 – 1970s); exploring femininity and gender

3:04: going off to college (early 1980s?); first lesbian relationship and sexual experiences

5:22: Family and friends react to Barbara's coming out (early 1980s)

10:38: more on Barbara's college days (early 1980s); visiting The Park in the late 1970s / early 1980s; drug use within the gay community

14:15: Homophobia and violence against gays, sometimes outside The Park (1980s)

17:18: Opening up a new gay nightclub, The Alternative (1990-1991); drug use at the club; straight folks at gay bars

21:16: the PRISM Foundation (2015 – present)

24:46: how Barbara's parents came around to support her business venture and how they came to love drag shows (early 1990s?)

26:57: building up support for PRISM; relationship with politicians (2015 – present)

33:20: work with the Western Virginia AIDS Council (1990s); founding Sisters in the Name of Love (late 1980s); involvement in Metropolitan Community Church

36:25: getting married (2012); childbirth through artificial insemination(?) (2014); raising her son

47:11: Same-sex marriage, divorce, relationships, and parenting within the LGBTQ community

57:53: Final Remarks

0:00

[Checking sound levels – 11 seconds]

0:15

ZW: My name is Zacch Wooten and I am sitting here with Barbara Maberry at Roanoke College library on October 5, 2016 as part of the Southwest Virginia LGBTQ History Project, Oral History Initiative. Could you just start off by telling us your name and a little bit about yourself like where you grew up and such?

0:29

BM: My name is Barbara Maberry. I am 55 years old and proud of it. I was born and raised in Roanoke, lived outside of the area, lived in Arlington, Virginia; Orlando, Florida; and Charlotte, North Carolina. other than here in Roanoke, so...

0:55

ZW: What about your parents, what were they like?

0:58

BM: Oh, Mom and Dad, that's Helen and Duke Maberry because his name was Clarence. But, he was raised in Salem, Virginia—Salem-born, Salem-bred kind of thing. Loved Roanoke College by the way. I grew up here a lot going to ball games and things and so... My mom was a singer. She sang in different local area groups. My dad was a fisherman and a football official and all those kind of things. I have one sister. She is 10 years older than I am so she is 65 and she's married, has one child... or one son and two grandchildren. So...

1:50

ZW: Can you tell us a little about your childhood, what it was like growing up?

1:54

BM: Childhood, I was the ultimate diva. I grew up in dance lessons for twenty years. I've always been prissy and make-up and hair and usually nails and did beauty pageants and grew up on stage. Was also Daddy's tomboy, went with him when he would go, the beginning of every fall, to look for deer tracks and bear tracks in the woods. I was a girl scout, you know all those kinds of things, so I enjoyed that part of it and fishing. We used to go fishing a whole lot, too. With Mom I was the one who came in. I was a latch-key child so I came in about 12 years old and started learning to cook dinner and washing clothes and taking care of the house because both parents worked. And very middle class. I guess that's pretty much good for them.

3:04

ZW: When did you figure out for yourself about your sexuality?

3:08

BM: I went away to college at age 19 went to Shenandoah Conservatory of Music, now it's Shenandoah University, and you know that was four hours away from home, thank you Jesus. You know every teenager's dream is to be away from home and I got to go and I met these two women... two girls that were a couple of years older than me in school, and there was kind of a rumor going around that they were girlfriends, well that intrigued the heck out of me because I'd always lived the straight life until then, but always knew I didn't want to really be around boys and really didn't... was not a sexual thing. They were really good friends but that was about it. And [I] kept seeing one of the girls and she ended up being my girlfriend for seven years. It was my first relationship, yeah, and her name was Michelle and... That was my very first relationship. She happened to kiss me one night and the thoughts that went through my mind were "oh my god, what do you do? what do you do? what do you do? what do you do? Do you

kiss her back? Do you not? Do you kiss her back?” and finally I kissed her and there began the journey of my life.

4:44

ZW: So, that’s obviously your first homosexual sexual experience. Did you have any sexual experiences before that, you know, heterosexual?

4:53

BM: Um, Yes I dated boys. Like I said they were, you know, better friends, and I thought I was in love a couple of times and realized that’s not really what it was. I just wanted to hang around with my girlfriends and go dancing. If we met somebody at the bars, danced and stuff, that was fine. It was not a big thing for me to date. I really never had long term male-female relationships.

5:22

ZW: What were the reactions of your parents and your peers when you came out, were they encouraging?

5:27

BM: Well, once I came out after a year of college and had all my stuff brought back and it was downstairs in the basement my mother went through my trunk and found my love letters to Michelle and evidently she and my father had a little *tete-a-tete* and talked about this, and I can remember sitting on my—we had a Florida room, and we were sitting there and my dad called me out there and decided that he was going to throw these letters at me and ask me what they were about. And he did, and I remember him calling me a lezzy, a dyke, a fag, a queer, every negative connotation that went around homosexuality. I was raised a good southern Baptist girl so that was one of those things you just didn’t really do. You know, you didn’t have any homosexual thoughts. They’d always thought I was going to be fabulous and straight and my mother used to always tell me to find a man with good insurance and I didn’t do that, so, yeah, it was bad. They sent me to... well they called my doctor that I had gone to my whole life, which totally embarrassed me. I mean Dr. Berthoff knew that I was gay, for god sakes. And they asked him about counseling and he said, “Well I’ll pick out a couple and will she want a male or female?” They asked me, and they sat there, and I was just devastated. My mother hardly said a word and really wouldn’t look at me during this whole talk. My father enjoyed sitting—I don’t know that he enjoyed it—but to me it felt like he was, you know, badgering me about this. So, I went to the counselor and I remember we were in this really long room and she had hugely long legs that just to me... and she wore a dress, and that’s all I remember. I don’t even know that I looked at her face and I was just like “gosh, her legs are so long!” kind of deal, just trying to take my mind off what was going on. And so we talked, I went to like three sessions with her and then she wanted to have a session with my mom, my dad, and my sister. Well, I was not real happy about that because like no matter how you look at it, that’s three against one. She kept saying, “Well, Barbara, this isn’t your issue, this is their issue. You seem comfortable with who you are and you don’t have any questions.” It’s your parents who are not comfortable with the situation and who you are, and I was like “okay, alright, we’ll do it.” So, the day that we had the appointment scheduled for all of us to meet, I got up that morning and packed my car and went back to Winchester to be with my girlfriend. I said, “I ain’t going through this at all, I’m going, and this is not going to happen. I’m not going to be backed in a corner,” and you know, it just

wasn't going to be it. They went ahead and had the meeting because I talked to my sister about it. She said, "Yes, we had the meeting and she told us that you knew who you were, you know, and it seemed to be mom and daddy's problem." My father said, "Well, she's not welcome back in the house" and especially, typically in the early '80s, that's a lot of what we heard. Anybody that came out, I don't care whether you're male or female. That's what I went through with them, needless to say. Then, with my friends I didn't really tell very many people here because they all still were... everything was so closeted then and so taboo that if you mentioned it you were... I'm sure all my girlfriends would have been like, "well, she slept in the bed with me, did she ever think about me?" One of my very best friends who I finally ended up telling a few years later said, "Why did you not tell me?" I said "well..." and explained that whole scenario and "I just wondered how you were going to react to it," and she said, "Well did you ever have feelings for me?" I said "no, I really don't think I did." Then she said, "why not?" Then you know you're like, "oh no, not the typical straight lady questions!" "Why didn't you have feelings for me? What was wrong with me?" kind of deal. I finally did tell people and now, I think after I came out after Linda, [it] made it easier for me to come out to everybody else. By that point then I was proud and gay and lesbian and I wanted everybody to know at that point.

10:38

ZW: You talk about the '80s and I assume that you went to college during that time?

10:43

BM: Yes.

10:45

ZW: What was your college experience like besides from your girlfriends?

10:48

BM: Well, started at Western [Virginia Western Community College]. Did a year at Western, so 18 to 19 [years old] I was there, and 19 to 20 [years old] I went to Shenandoah. I loved college because I was a theatre major so I thought that was the grandest thing in the world. I was on stage yet again in my life and felt at home. There were more gay males up there that I was around. Then, when I would come home and even in high school... I neglected to mention this, my eighteenth year I used to go to First Baptist Church downtown and I would leave church on Sunday night and go down to The Park and dance and watch the drag show, because I thought the drag shows were the best thing ever, ever, ever, and I felt right at home there. I had a lot of lesbian girlfriends who were like "well, what kind of woman do you like?" And I'm like, "well, I don't like women." This was before Michelle, so that's not going to happen. I just like to come down here and dance. I know I was gay-curious, I know I was. I was already at home with homosexuals, but mostly males, so this female thing was almost like a challenge in order to get her to kiss me in the first place because if she didn't know I was pure puppy dog to her. I just looked to her like, "oh, you've got the most beautiful voice, and you're so pretty," and I know she was just like "gosh, you are all like up in my stuff, back off some," but she kissed me. The '80s were an interesting time for everybody because that's when at the bars and things, that's when drugs came in. Cocaine was really big and poppers. Everybody did poppers. It's called 'VHS head cleaner.' It was a little bottle about this big and you would put your finger over it and you would, *amyl nitrate* is what it was, *amyl nitrate*. And you would sniff this into your lungs

and it was like euphoric. You had this really euphoric feeling and you felt the music and you danced. I mean everybody, and they would pass it around on the floor from one person to the next to the next and the next. It didn't matter who handed it to you, you just did it. So, I do remember that was part of that whole phase of my life... It was so freeing and then the name *amyl nitrate* definitely made it more freeing. Then I realized after a while that was probably turning my brain to plastic and was probably doing damage to my septum so I stopped doing that. I'm pretty good about, you know, I may try something but then, "no, I don't like it." I have never been habitual with stuff. In that time, especially in Roanoke, that was a big part of Roanoke and a big part of the bar life. So...

14:15

ZW: The '80s were an important time in terms of the fight for gay rights, were you a part of that movement, or is there anything you can say about that?

14:23

BM: Yeah, yeah I was. When I came home I got involved with Pride.¹ Like I said that's when I became the proudest lesbian in Roanoke, especially when I came back told all those lesbian friends of mine that I used to say "no, no, no," "guess what? I got a girlfriend." They're like, "we could have told you that!" I guess they had gaydar at that time and thought I was a big lesbian. I think the saddest part of that time period was, like I said, the reaction that parents treated their children. It was so easy to turn your back on your child. [It's] heartbreaking now for me to look back at it to think that my father would even say those things to me and that my mother who was, to me, my whole life, was the right hand of God, would not even defend me. So, I knew this was going on with other people because I wasn't the only in the world going through it, and then I would hear... we had so many suicides. I know suicide is, especially amongst the GLBTQA population, it's so prevalent now, but then it was as well. And not only that, but gay bashings before "gay bashing" was given a term, it was hugely part of a way of life. I mean you had to... there were people who got shot outside the bar. My ex-girlfriend stood there and got shot with BB guns. They were all standing in line. There was a time when you had to stand in line outside The Park to get in. I mean, it would take 20-30 minutes to get in because there were so many people in line to get in that bar. It was really obviously dangerous. Once I heard that Darlene had gotten shot with a bb gun... Then one night following church, my preacher's son and the assistant preacher's son came down and stood outside The Park, and I think that was because they had heard I was down there, and I was such a big part of the youth group, that they wanted to see if I was down there. And they stood out front and called everybody fags, and dykes, and queers, and "you're going to hell." All of that type situation and so you're even getting that from your peers, let alone an older generation. It was a very scary time in the '80s because it was on that edge of the sword where more people were coming out but you were scared to come out because of how society perceived you.

17:18

¹ Roanoke's Pride in the Park festival was first organized in 1989. The organization Roanoke Pride, Inc. emerged out of those festivals circa 1997.

ZW: So, speaking of gay bars, there's a rumor that you once were running a gay bar?

17:25

BM: Yes! I went into that aspect of it. It was called The Alternative. I don't know if I lucked into it, because it was a \$10,000 a month rent, but everything was in there. You walked in, the lights were there, the music system was there, the kitchen was there, the dishes were there, the forks were there, the papers were there, the pens were there, and everything was there. We just had to walk in and kind of take what used to be a country line dancing bar that was on the country channel. It was CMT [Country Music Television], carried Roanoke, Virginia, and it was called Valley Country and I mean it is a huge warehouse. The Park, the whole upstairs of the Park was the size of my dance floor so that tells you... I mean, even back to the dressing rooms. The whole size of the upstairs of The Park was my dance floor. I had a person that was involved at the time as my show director who was into drug activity, goes back to the cocaine aspect then. I had to make a decision one night when I watched people go in there and all my staff was looking at me like, "what are you going to do?" I had already been to the owner of the building and said "Will you help me?" And he didn't help me, so I closed the doors and went home. That's all I could do. It was either that or somebody is going to come in and I was going to get busted. The cops were going to come, ABC [Alcoholic Beverages Control board], something. I was not going down. This was not Barbara's life, this was his life, And so I had to make a decision about that. Owning a bar was fabulous, especially during the '80s, well early '90s, it was fabulous. It was '90-'91 is when I had it.

19:30

ZW: While it was open, was it a secretive, underground gay bar?

19:36

BM: No [it wasn't], because by then we were into the '90s and things had changed in Roanoke. Pride was more visible, more straight couples were coming to the bar, to The Park, as well as my bar. It had become the cool thing to do, to hang around with the gays. They had the fun, like they did the drag shows, they had the best dance music, and we were always getting new DJs in to make sure we kept the music fresh. So, it wasn't as closeted as it was in the '80s. Just in one decade shows you how it went from completely secretive to "Hey! Bring your friends, let's have a bridal party down there." They would bring all the brides and the bride would come and all her people. The groom would come and all his people and it was a bit of a, what's the word I want to use... oddity. And they enjoyed coming down there and being able to say, "oh yeah, I go to The Park," or "I go to The Alternative and dance." I think things became more accepting in the '90s right there especially at the crossover from the '80s to the '90s.

21:16

ZW: So, you're the Vice Chair of the PRISM Foundation that's based in Roanoke. Can you tell me a little bit about the organization and what they have accomplished in the area?

21:24

BM: We have only been in existence for... I don't even think it's been quite a year yet. What we are doing is we were established from Roanoke Pride to work with the greater Roanoke Valley and Southwest Virginia youth who have been displaced, or homeless, kids who want to become more involved in the gay community, but not in the teenage base. Not specifically like going to the bar or that kind of thing. But trying to be a role model to kids who need that, or sometimes we turn out to be maternal or paternal figures to a lot of the kids because you know they were kicked out of their home. It's a sad thing. I just talked about this whole lineage, and in a two decade time period we went from the same thing to what we're going through again. Parents have not moved forward that much. The greater part of society does [accept LGBTQ people], but I think it has to be the biggest shock for your parents to know. "Oh, you're a what? Oh, you're a lesbian, or a gay man, or you're transgender, or bisexual." I think it's just such a "flip out" for parents, and that's what we're trying to do is establish a situation where it's a safe haven where we can do job training. We work with TAP [Total Action for Progress] and we work with what used to be Trust House but now it's under a different acronym² and I can't remember what it's called now. Trust House will help with placing for housing and TAP works with job training so we have now established a collaborative effort and we just had a meet and greet for all of the non-profit organizations where they came in and they got to hear what we are here for. "Here's what we can offer you. You in turn help us by directing your GLBT youth to come this way, to come over to us, and that we can help them." Then, in turn, we are going to tell you how you can help us. We need you to be supportive, volunteer work, aspects about doing workshops, and there is so much there. We also just established two scholarships. One is the Pride Leadership Scholarship and one is the Helen Maberry Scholarship, which is what we call "Ms. Helen's helping hands," because my mother during my adult years became the mother to all the gays.

24:46

BM: I mean, I had boys come in the house. I dressed them in drag and they went out as girls and my mother would have to have them come in, "Oh, let me see what you're wearing." She did sewing for them, "here, let me take that for you," put on a zipper or whatever, and then she saw girls come in and they all left as boys. My mom became from that woman who sat across the room from me originally and wouldn't even look me in the eye and was so heart-broken that her daughter was a lesbian, now was one of my biggest supporters. My dad, as well, when I had the bar, he had had strokes and by that point some of his... masculinity... he wasn't on guard all the time, and this was an embarrassment to him. He would hold dollar bills up and shake them to all the drag queens and he loved all the drag queens. He had so much fun. It's amazing that my parents who were in their 50s, well, let's see.... I was 20, my mom was in her 40s. No, she was in her 50s, so 50s and 60s, and 70s even, being my biggest supporters. My mom and dad backed me on the bar and so it's just nice to see, if I can give this kind of guidance to the parents working with PRISM or even just talking to people like PFLAG [Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays] where we can go and do workshops with them or through the church, you know, whoever wants us to come in, we can become a positive role model. I think my mother, funny, and my dad, who were my worst nightmare at first became my biggest supporters. That's what I want to do. that's what I want to be to kids, and that's why I got involved with PRISM.

26:57

² Trust House is now part of ARCH, which stands for Advocate, Rebuild, Change, Heal.

BM: We will be giving out the two scholarships this fall, should be soon, because most people probably use it for next semester. The really cool thing is that there are so many possibilities of what we can do. I've talked to... there's a new personal safety group that just opened up here in Salem, as a matter of fact. I saw they had just opened and I thought, "okay, here you go, I'm a marketer." I don't care whether I was a hairstylist or whatever I did in my life. I think marketing. That's the way I look at it. So I thought "okay," so I called this person up, "would you ever be interested in working with the GLBT youth?" and he said "well, sure" and I said, "here's what we can do. I'll get you advertisement, free advertisement. I'll get television coverage, and I'll get newspaper coverage, if you will do a program for these kids" and he said, "We'll do it," and I said, "You give me six months to right at a year and I promise you I will get the kids if you will do the program" and he said "uh, sure, because we can use all the advertisement we can get." So, I mean, there are so many different programs that we can offer to kids. There are so many different things that our community as a whole can give back, and to me that's part of it. I want to teach these kids if you want something you better be darn well ready to give back, and at the same time you're getting, because I think that's probably one of the most important lessons I learned. You know, don't ask for something unless you're willing to do something for it. Nothing comes free in this world, but in the same respect you should want to do something for somebody else because they did something for you. PRISM is going to be a great foundation for making some changes in that aspect. We just had one of our people on our board... He's a young man. He's just decided that he's going to go to Richmond and start a new life, so now were going to be looking for a couple more people to put on the PRISM board. Right now we're looking at filling these positions so we can get things going. We are also going to become a non-profit status, so we'll eventually not be an entity of Roanoke Pride. We would be a separate entity and the lady that works for TAP, Jen Nelson [Jo Nelson], is also one of the vice chairs. She will help with job training and she is a very vital part of this because she is also a social worker. So, maybe taking the kids to look at higher education. Because I think that is a major thing these kids, they think, "I don't have any family. How am I going to go to college?" and I think that's part of what we are going to be there for, too. That's why we established the scholarships. That was my first thing. I want a scholarship. I'd like to please name it after my mom. For the simple fact that she had an open door policy and I've had more gay people live at my house than you could shake a stick at. I really have. One time I had like four of my gay male friends living in the basement in our den because they didn't have anywhere to go. My mom was like "well, now I'm gonna fix dinner and you all just go on downstairs and Barbara get them some sheets and blankets and stuff." I mean she couldn't see anybody ever be in a [bad] situation. So, that's just where my foundation comes from, with wanting to be involved with PRISM and not just with Pride because I still work with Pride, too. I mean I still do. I'm involved with doing the events and the festival and I've been on television and [laughs] I've been interviewed forty thousand times, you know. They know me. A lot of Roanoke knows me. And a lot of the politicians know me because I make sure I go up. It's part of my marketing. "How are you doing? My name is Barbara Maberry, how are you doing? I'd like to know how you're going to be working with the LGBT community." And they're like "whoa..." Like Sam Rasoul, I love him, and he's been a big supporter of our community and we are very lucky to have him. That's how I got him. I just flat out asked him. "What are you going to do for me? What are you going to do for our community?" And he's been so helpful. And he told me "well, you put me on the spot. What am I supposed to do? I have to answer to your questions. You're a constituent." And I said "that's right!" That's part of why PRISM... I mean, we can't be

politically motivated once you become a nonprofit. However, before that time period, I'm going to grab everybody I can. John Edwards, he's been very vital for us. The local mayor [Sherman Lea] has not been so forthcoming and I can understand that he's new and he doesn't want to, you know... And he's very church-based and he doesn't want to really, I guess, come out too much as an advocate for the LGBT community. But we're going to get him, too... watch. [*laughs*]

33:20

ZW: So, other than PRISM is there any other organizations that you've been involved with around Roanoke?

33:26

BM: Yes, sorry [*phone rings*]. I worked with, now it's the Drop-In Center, I worked for the Western Virginia AIDS Council, is what it was called originally. I think things changed in the early 20s [2000s?] and they established like a new foundation for their organization. [*Apologizes again for phone making sounds*]. They did health education. I went to prisons, I went to high schools, I went to colleges. Talked to churches and it was always about sex, condoms, safer sex, STDs. I was the original condom lady. I would go around the bars and do outreach and handout safer sex packets and that's how they knew me. "Here comes the condom lady!" So I worked with them. That was in the '90s, as well; and then in the mid to late '80s I was the executive director for one of the AIDS service... We established an AIDS service organization. At the time Ryan White and the Western Virginia AIDS Council was the only thing that anybody who was HIV-positive could tap or could utilize as an organization. We were called "Sisters in the Name of Love" because a bunch of drag queens started it because they knew if they could do fundraising then we could provide funds for people who needed it. Food, clothing, housing stipends, whatever it was. Then we were active for about five years, became a nonprofit organization. Then right in the beginning of the '90s is when Ryan White got more funding and they really didn't need our organization anymore. They had the infectious disease clinic at Carillion so things changed with that aspect of it. I used to be the choir director for the Metropolitan Community Church for three years. [*Phone buzzes again; apologizes again.*] I think that's as far as the organizations here in Roanoke. I believe that's about it on those.

36:25

ZW: You're married.

36:27

BM: I am!

36:28:

ZW: Can you tell us a little bit about your partner, and you have a child? Could you tell us about him?

36:36:

BM: Terri is my wife. We met 16 years ago and she's 16 and a half years younger than I am, and we were together twelve years, and it was right after the first wave of the legalization of gay marriage came out. [Washington] D.C. was a location. Virginia hadn't even and weren't going to recognize what the United States was trying to do for the rest of the states, so Terri and I went to D.C. We figured, "well, here comes 12/12/12. Maybe we ought to get married since we've been together for 12 years." We got married in D.C. A wonderful guy who married us: Wes Jamison. He's a minister for a church in Maryland. We were his first official gay couple that he married, that was legal, after the law became legal. We take great pride in that. Then, in 2014, my mother's... I lost my dad in '96 so Terri and I still lived with my mom so I could take care of her because she was in failing health throughout those years... In about 2014 she had first [a] stroke and some major health issues and Alzheimer's was becoming very prevalent so that was another reason why we stayed with her. She was in the hospital and Terri and I were talking about having a baby because we went to the doctor and the doctor said "you're aging out there Terri if you don't start doing something soon." They kind of looked at me and I said "uh, I had a hysterectomy at 38. That's not going to be a part of it. This one can't do that." They talked to Terri and explained what the risks were, what we could do while she was 36 [years old]. My mom was in the hospital and we already kind of discussed all this and it probably wasn't the opportune time to be having a baby while my mom was at this point in her life but I talked to a friend of mine and he's a gay man and we were talking about looking for a donor. I, of course, being the researcher that I am, I went out and I was researching every aspect of how we were going to do this without going to a sperm bank and spending hugely big bucks on going to a fertility doctor. So I found what we were going to have to do, and I happened to talk to my friend Dewey and I said "you never thought about becoming a dad, did you?" And he said "what?" and so I explained what we wanted. "We don't want any financial obligations; we are not wanting to share custody. We just need your sperm." He started laughing and he said "Barbara, I'd do anything to make you happy." I thought, "God, that sentence will last in my mind the rest of my life." That one statement. Then, it became kind of a joke because then we were like "ok, now we were going to go through ovulation testing and we had to do all that kind of thing." They said "when your LH surge is up, that's when its best to do it." And so, the morning of, there was the LH surge up and I was like, "Dewey, Dewey, we got to do this today. Now what are we going to do?" Now I'm flipping out. I lost my cool at that point because now I'm going, "it's got to happen right this minute," you know? And how are we going to do this? Do we come to your house or you come to our house or whatever? And needless to say, he brought his deposit over to my home and he said "okay, well I'm going to see y'all later. You be good and good luck and here we go!" We tried October; funny, this is our anniversary month for that. We tried once on the 13th and again on the 15th and got pregnant, we believe, the very first time. Which was a whole funny thing because my wife watched... well, I inseminated her at home, and she watched the Redskin football game on television! I said "flip your legs over your head and here we go" and she said "can I watch the game?" and I said, "I don't care if you watch CNN, you do what you want to watch, just keep your legs over your head" because that's what I'd heard, that was a sure fire way of making sure everything went the right direction. We found out afterwards that it doesn't matter whether you put your legs over your head or not, sperm swims upstream! But we got pregnant.

BM: And one morning she was taking me down to the hospital to be with my mom and it was before we knew and I said, “god, I have the funniest feeling today. I just feel like my stomach is in knots and it’s shaking” and she said, “are you worried about your mom?” I said, “no, I don’t think so” and she said, “okay” and dropped me off at the hospital and went home. Evidently, something went through her mind and she goes, “I’m going to go get a pregnancy test.” So she goes to the Dollar Tree... *[laughs]*... which they work, they work 100%. She goes to the Dollar Tree right below Fleming High School and goes down to Hardee’s and she’s in the stall and she comes out and there’s this little girl beside her. She walks out and she has a pregnancy test in her hand, too. And Terri was like “oh my god, everybody goes to Hardee’s to see if they’re pregnant!” You know, that was the joke. It goes along with the rest of my life. She goes over, “well, can you tell me what this means?” The girl said, “well, let’s see honey, mine has one line which means no, and yours has two lines, which means yes!” Terri was like, “huh?” She doesn’t know what to say. So she comes into the hospital and she’s got this weird look on her face. I’m sitting beside Momma and she walks over and she goes “Here.” She flips it over in front of me and I was like “what the hell is that?” and she said, “We’re pregnant.” You know, you’re expecting it, you’re hoping for it. And we never thought we’d get pregnant immediately. We thought it would be like a year or something that we would be trying. I said, “what do you mean, we’re pregnant?” She said, “we’re pregnant!” Then the very next thing, somebody comes in, well, I can’t even tell them. So, the whole time the girl is like “what is wrong with y’all?” “Nothing, why?” “Nothing.” So, we left the hospital and went up to Towers, to the Dollar Tree again. I said, “we’re getting two more tests. I want to make sure this isn’t a false positive. I just want to make sure.” We go next door to McAlister’s and we both, she does two tests, and they both came up positive. The funny thing about that is my son’s middle name is McAlister, but it wasn’t because of the restaurant. It is because his godfather’s last name is McAllister so it’s just one of those other weirdo things in my life. Every time we go to McAlister’s to eat we’re like looking at the bathroom because that’s the place. Then, Cambridge was born six weeks, almost seven weeks early.... So, he was supposed to be, due date was July the 9th, and he was born June the 10th so a premie [premature baby]. Seven pounds, nine-ounce premie. Yeah, he’s huge, he is huge. He’s two years, three months, and he is like this tall *[motions height]*. He wears 4T clothing and a size 10 shoe. They’re saying he’s going to be between 6’ 7” and 6’ 9”, yeah, yeah. I’ll be happy at 6’ 5”, maybe 6’ 4” even. So every time I see someone that’s like ultra tall, I walk over to him and I’m like “sir, how tall are you?” They’ll like “Well, I’m 6’ 7”.” I’m like “okay,” and immediately I say, “well, what size shoe do you wear?” They’re looking at me like “what? You’re a really nosy lady.” I say, “my son’s supposed to be your height and I’m just trying to figure out what size shoe he’s going to wear when he gets to be your height.” I have no filter, as you can tell, and I just ask people whatever I think. My son’s going to be a very tall young man. His name is Cambridge McAlister Maberry Craig. He has this long name that we know when he goes to do Scan-Tron sheets in first grade and everybody else is like, “Liam,” and they go “L-I-A-M,” he’s going to be on ‘A’ in “Cambridge” when the rest of the kids are over here are already on number 10 so he’s going to hate us. He’s going to hate us *[laughs]*.

47:11

ZW: So, the perception of gay marriage in society is seen as the peak of the LGBTQ community. Do you also feel that way or do you plan to play a role in the movement going forward to, you know, push it beyond just the legalization of marriage for all?

47:31

BM: Well, yes and I think some of my concerns are...and I'm an ordained minister too by the way, not that you wouldn't know that by my vocabulary, but I did that so I can marry people in the LGBTQ community because there were so many religions that weren't acknowledging [it]. As opposed to somebody having to go to the Justice of the Peace and getting married, which I think is really impersonal and it takes a part of my right away. Why should I not be able to have a minister do my wedding if he can do your straight wedding? So, that was one of the main reasons I went and became ordained and I think that with that I want to see more... I worry about adoption. I worry about divorce. I love, and this might sound a little prejudiced, but I love my gay family, I do, I love all the different people within my community. But I think because gay marriage became legal, everybody did it. Now they're all going to do it and not think about what the consequences there are after you do it and divorce. I had two couples I know right now, one's been married less than two months and they're already getting a divorce, and the other one's been married for four months and they're getting a divorce. It was... it had been a lesbian couple, and one of the people within the couple is now transgendering to male [transitioning FTM]. The other couple was two gay males, and the transgender male and one of the males from the other couple are now getting together. So, these marriages have dissolved and that's... that's my concern, that's my concern. I think it became so much of a status symbol for our community that people are not thinking beyond the end of their nose. They can't see anything past here [*pointing to her nose*] and they're not looking at "Do I really love you? or are we just in love today? and I love you and will you marry me? Oh nobody's every asked me to marry them before!" Then you go get married and then a month down the road, "I don't love you anymore." I just don't understand that and I guess because Terri and I had been together for 16 years so we kind of knew we were going to be together forever anyway so we might as well get married because we knew that we wanted to have a child. I wanted to make everything legal. I just think that for my son, or my child, whoever it had been at the time. But I'm looking at what... it was a wonderful, wonderful opportunity for all of us. It is. But it has to be taken seriously and I think, especially for gay males, you will date this week and then next week you find somebody else, the week after that I find somebody else. You know, their relationships are very short termed, as a whole, as a whole. Lesbians? "I met you today we're going to have dinner tonight and tomorrow I've got the U-Haul and I'm bringing all of my stuff to your house because we're going to live together the rest of our lives." Which, as you can see from that wedding, that's not true either because they don't last forever either. And it's sad. Not that heterosexual relationships last any longer, but right now because it is still a phenomena, everybody wants to get married and people are not looking at what the possibilities could be in a year, five years. There's no plan. There's no five-year plan, there's no ten-year plan. It's till you decide you don't want to be married to me

anymore. Wait till they start going through all of these divorces. That's why I said, when gay marriage, before it became legalized, that's the first thing I said to like all the lawyers that I knew, all my friends who are the politicians, I said, and I'm one of these people, but don't these people, don't the heterosexual people in courts and representing us in [the] senate and all these aspects... Don't they realize how much money this is going to make them because gay marriage is like that [*snaps fingers*] honey. They'll be getting divorced, this one will have six marriages in a 10 year span so look how much money y'all are going to make in the court systems and for the state, and paying taxes. That was the one thing about Virginia that really broke my heart. I couldn't get married in the place that I was born. I could not even get married in my own state because they didn't even acknowledge that I was even a human, I mean let alone that I was a lesbian. Because they didn't recognize gay life at all. We are the "commonwealth," and I don't care which commonwealth you're talking about around the United States. They're all the same. They're [Virginia's government is] a little more backwards than some of the other, more progressive states, and you know. "Why would you not want my tax money?" That was my thought process. "Why can't I get married here? What is the problem? Why do you care? I don't care who you married so everybody else can get married all they want. Why do you not want my money? Why do you not want my taxes as a joint wedding, as a joint marriage? Why do you not want my personal property taxes?" all those things because eventually people are going to... I really didn't think we were ever going to see Virginia legalize marriage in my lifetime to be perfectly honest. I thought, you know, Terri and I are going to have to move because I'm not going to live in a state that doesn't recognize me as a human. So, thank God, within a two-year period all that changed and then we received legalized marriage around the country. But there's so much that needs to be done. There's so much education within my community. Don't just go get married because you can, you know? You want to do something? Buy a dog. Get a house. Do something like that. Don't get married just to get married because you can. I think that's my biggest factor. I see too many people divorcing already or breaking up, or whatever they want to call it. I think these two couples can still be annulled if I'm not mistaken because it's been such a short term. The one's that I mentioned, and that's sad to me. It's just sad that you took the time to think that you were going to get married. You took these vows. One of the couples I married and it just, it breaks my heart because when I talk to them "oh yes, we're great. This is what we want. We've been waiting this long. We've been dating this long. Da da da da." And two months, two months it was gone, dissolved. I don't know if that says something about me as an officiate or if it says something about our community in general because it's still too easy. It's just easy. I think people should have to go through counseling before you get married. I don't care if it's a religious counseling or not. I just think that you should have to go through a little bit of connecting counseling so we can see that you know this is the right thing for us or no it's not the right thing for us. I want to see so much more change with it. I want to see that... alright, perfect example: I am married to my wife. Our son shares my last name, but my fear is if something happened to us, something happened to her, say she died, what does that do for me? Because she had him and I'm not on a birth certificate and I'm not a legal parent. So what's that going to do for me? So now my next aspect of what marriage means is that if you're married and you have a child together, after you're married, then you're both parents. It doesn't matter. I should be a parent on his birth certificate and I'm still not. That's really sad. That's why adoption... I'm

thinking, "I have to adopt my own child." I made him. I made him. But he's really not mine. That's scary. Too many couples are going through the same problems and that's the next aspect of where just because we have gay marriage we still have to have all the same aspects of what that means from straight marriage to gay marriage. I worry about the state of Virginia recognizing that. I don't know about nationally, but, as far as my wonderful commonwealth, yeah I do worry about that if something happened.

57:53

ZW: Well that's all the questions we have. Thank you for sharing with us.

57:59

BM: Bless your hearts. I probably bing bonged around like a... what's that game? Not ping pong but when pull the thing down and the ball goes up like ding ding ding that's what I felt like I did. So I apologize.

58:12

ZW: No, it was great. Thank you for sharing.

58:18

BM: I mean anything, any aspect of what I can do to help my community. That's what I am supposed to be here to do. I am trying to make a better community for my child and for everybody else's children and for the youth of tomorrow. That's why I am involved in PRISM and you know, if we all don't work together, nobody prospers. Nobody. I don't care whether you're heterosexual or whether you're a member of the LGBT and Q. It just, we all gotta work for that. I'm not going to stop working and you're going to see me at Pride or anywhere else or any of Dr. Rosenthal's things.

58:57

ZW: Well, thank you Barbara.

58:59

BM: Thank you all.

[END]