

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

**Interview with Rissa
February 18, 2017**

Interviewers: Omari Chancellor (Emily Brun also present)

Interviewee: Rissa

Date: February 18, 2017

Location: Roanoke Diversity Center

Transcribed by: Ta'Tyana Buster and Jac Frost

Duration: 56:22

0:00 – gender identity and clarification of terminology
2:34 - childhood in Lynchburg (late 1970s/ early 1980s); wearing women's clothing; stealing clothes; Jerry Falwell and the Moral Majority; conservatism of Lynchburg at the time
8:17 - acceptance in early school years; emotional challenges dealing with a hidden lifestyle; encounter with the criminal justice system (early 1980s)
10:48 – encounter with the court system; being labeled as having “homosexual” tendencies
13:02 - race and sexual attraction
14:22 - attending a boys home in Winchester, Virginia (1984-1987); early sexual experiences
17:25 - sexual attraction in the boys home; school life
19:14 - sexual experimentation in the boys home; how race and sexuality were perceived
22:24 - dealing with race at public high schools in Frederick County, Virginia, and Winchester, Virginia (c. 1986-1987)
26:37 - confrontations in high school, race and identity related; being feminine in a masculine environment
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34:44 – incarceration, and introduction to the LGBT community within prison
36:20 - experiences in prison, including sexual assault (1994)
38:26 - fond sexual encounters and relationships in prison
39:57 – memories of the AIDS epidemic (late 1980s – early 1990s)
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43:29 - prison charges and motivations (early 1990s – early 2000s)
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48:10 - LGBT celebrities and their present impact
51:28 - moving to Roanoke about one year ago
54:33 - Roanoke Diversity Center

0:00

OC: Hello, this is Omari Chancellor. I am here with [Rissa] at the Roanoke Diversity Center. It is February 18, 2017, Saturday. [Rissa] is a transsexual woman, pronouns preferred [are] she/her. Now, [Rissa], can I ask you what does that identity label mean to you?

0:34

R: I quite frankly think there's a difference between transsexuals and transvestites, which I think most people think transvestites, see transvestites, as [a] “drag” type of person. I feel like as a

transsexual that I want to make a transition from the male sex over to female and I take some steps to get from one to the other.

1:16

OC: Do you want to tell us a little about those steps?

1:18

R: Typically I had to go see a psychotherapist for a session. The psychotherapist wrote me a letter stating that basically I wasn't crazy, I'm of sound mind, that he saw me as a person who needed to be on hormone treatment. So, he wrote me a letter so that I could go to a medical doctor to have the prescriptions prescribed. That's just one phase that a person can go through. There's also sex reassignment surgery and breast implants and that type of thing that a person can also choose. This of course is the male-to-female transition. It would also be done female-to-male for those individuals.

2:34

OC: Okay, thank you. Can we get into your childhood and when you started forming, during your formative years, when you began to think about identity and how you identify and started exploring things?

2:50

R: Sure. I started dressing in women's—in girls' clothes—when I was ten years old and I was pretty secretive for about a year until my mother walked in on me one day and saw me wearing some of her clothing. Her reaction was laughing at me, and she thought it was very funny and did some snickering which hurt my feelings pretty much, so mostly I stole these clothing. Once I didn't like the way my mom's clothes fit, I figured that I could get some smaller clothing that fit, I start stealing. My mom would go in my room, take whatever female clothing I had, and then I would just go and find a wig and go steal some more either from some store or somebody's house or whatever. That was the cycle I was going through for three or four years.

4:16

OC: And this was in the 1970s? You were ten, eleven [years old]?

4:20

R: Yes, late 70s.

4:22

OC: Okay, late 70s. Can you tell us about, I know you grew up in Lynchburg?

4:28

R: Right.

4:29

OC: Right, can you tell us about sort of the community there and how that affected the way you sort of sifted through your identity growing up?

4:38

R: Well, at the time... Lynchburg we had the wonderful Jerry Falwell alive, and he was a very conservative pastor. He also had a Baptist college back then, and he preached under a platform of Moral Majority, and was not tolerant of anything outside of biblical—what they considered straight bible. So, if there were any LGBT people, a community in Lynchburg at that time,

talking late 70s, early 80s, they were definitely in the closet or undercover. But I'm positive that there were some LGBT people back then. They just weren't in the open. They're not going to walk down the street and say "Heyyyy!"

6:01

OC: So there was no platform for organizing?

6:04

R: No.

6:08

OC: Okay. And you told me this is the early 1980s, this is going on? Did you have anyone to talk to? Did you have anyone to sort through these feelings with? Express what you were feeling?

6:23

R: Absolutely not... and I wouldn't even [try], with the atmosphere, like I said, because Jerry Falwell. He didn't start out in the late 70s and early 80s. He had been preaching for years up to this point. So the atmosphere was terrible. There would be no way that I would try to say to anybody that I was either gay or transsexual or anything for fear of being ridiculed or made fun of or perhaps even some type of violence. And along with that the AIDS epidemic had just come out like early 80s and so that just—even though I wasn't very educated about AIDS back then—it would not have been to my best interest to say in a conservative town which was ultra conservative that, you know, I'm transsexual, because I think if somebody like Jerry Falwell would have heard that he probably would have flipped his wig.

7:51

OC: So, you know, did you have any spaces that you could feel safe or just any safe haven that you felt at your most comfortable during this time?

8:00

R: No.

8:02

OC: No. Okay.

8:04

R: I didn't know how to find them.

8:06

OC: Right, okay.

8:07

R: ... because I was a kid. I didn't know who... if there was anybody, *if* there was anybody I could call up. I just didn't know.

8:17

OC: And what about school during this time? What about how was this affecting academic life or how were you navigating school at this time?

8:26

R: I actually enjoyed school very much because school was like a safe haven for me away from

my mother and she's like a totally different subject and I pretty much did good. The kids at school, they didn't really... they weren't educated about LGBT issues either, so I don't know that they knew what to look for. So it wasn't really something that they could really point out. We were just kids and it's not like today you could go to a school and an elementary school kid could probably tell you some stuff about LGBT people, you know.

9:22

OC: And did it ever reach a boiling point? Keeping all this bottled up? All these feelings and, you know, just the exploration of your identity?

9:32

R: Yea... like I said, after I've gone through this cycle of stealing clothes and stuff and dealing with my mom from eleven to fourteen years old, which is from '82, '83, maybe '84, I ended up... [pause]... assaulting someone, and so that was pretty much because all my feelings and emotions were not getting dealt with. And it just became a time to where it had to explode, it had to go somewhere, and so this person got assaulted. And I had to go deal with the criminal justice system.

10:41

OC: Okay, and where did that take you? Did they have you speak to someone? Or did they charge you and just send you away?

10:48

R: I did actually get a charge but the court wanted to do a psychological evaluation and the psychologist first spoke to my mom. My mom revealed to them about my dressing in girls' clothes. In light of that, [then] the psychologist talked to me. His opinion was that I had some homosexual tendencies, that I had an overbearing mother, that I needed to have an LGBT support system and things of that sort, and he wanted me to get counseling dealing with those particular issues.

11:50

OC: Do you feel like a lot of the language you use now to identify yourself or identify others in the LGBT community, do you feel as though the psychologist did a lot of this and helped you sort through it, or were you still, you know, exploring that and figuring out what to call how you see yourself, how you regard yourself and others?

12:15

R: I actually think I learned terminology and what's what just through dealing with other LGBT people. I think the psychologist helped maybe a little on a small scale in the very beginning. I mean deep down inside I'm dressing in girls' clothes. I knew that I'm different, that there's somewhere in this other spectrum over here that I fit in better, and so I think I learned more by just being around others and learning from them.

13:02

OC: And up until now how did race also affect you? Cause I mean, you are black and this is the South so I mean... was there...?

13:12

R: Well, it's affected me very personally because typically I've always been a transsexual who's been attracted to Caucasian men, and living in different parts of Virginia—not only have I lived in Lynchburg, but I went to a boys home up in Winchester, Virginia which is Frederick County

up next to West Virginia—and I mean white men were attractive to me and it was an issue. And so even being here in Roanoke I'm somewhat reserved with that just because I know even though race relations have come a long, long way, there's still some issues.

14:22

OC: Well, you had mentioned that after the psychologist you got into some more trouble and were sent to a boys home?

14:31

R: Right.

14:32

OC: Okay, tell us about your time there.

14:36

R: The boys home I think was a blessing because I think there was two scenarios that could have happened. If I had never gotten in trouble again I could have kept living with my mom. My mom was a devout Jehovah's Witness. They were not agreeing to let me be gay or transsexual or anything in that spectrum of LGBT. Nothing more than straight. I think that would have been a catastrophe for me mentally, emotionally, and so the other part of it is I did get in trouble again and was eventually moved to a boys home which allowed me to step out into, and figure out what my sexuality was. Yes, I engaged in some unhealthy sex but I think the good of that situation is that I was able to find myself and be myself and not be forced to be a sexuality that my mom wanted me to be or some religion wanted me to be or somebody else. I could be myself. And so the longer I stayed at the boys home the more I felt good about myself and I felt emotionally comfortable. I felt myself getting stronger as a person.

16:38

OC: So you feel that you got more out of it than you risked by having unhealthy sex?

16:46

R: Yes, even though, like I said, even though at the time it was still a big risk because of the AIDS epidemic at the time, but still a very, very big risk. I wouldn't recommend it [*chuckling*].

17:05

OC: And the racial makeup of the boys home? How was that?

17:10

R: I would say 80/20. I would say 80% Caucasians and 20% some other ethnic group.

17:25

OC: And at this time you knew you were attracted to white men?

17:27

R: Yea.

17:28

OC: So this was...?

17:30

R: Utopia! [*snickering*]

17:35

OC: Right, so this was Winchester, Virginia, and how long were you at the boys' home?

17:40

R: I was there from [pause]... '84 to '87, so four years.

17:55

OC: And that's four years that you lived there but you weren't a student there all four years, am I correct?

18:00

R: Yes, I was still a student there because I lived there but... I was still doing their program there. I don't know how to explain that. Their school portion of the program... I was able to go to a regular public high school my junior year and my senior year but that's just their schooling program that I was able to do public school. As far as their program for their overall program for students to help them grow mentally, physically, and to help them with other life skill-type issues, I was still at the school to learn those things. I still did things with other students at the boys home for the life skill-type of things.

19:14

OC: And did any of the program directors know what was going on with the boys? That you were exploring your sexuality and...?

19:27

R: [*whispers*] Ooh, that's a good question.... I don't... no staff member has ever said anything to me, ever said anything to me about if I was doing any type of homosexual activity but I believe I think they suspected that things were going on because other students knew that I was doing things. They knew and I think some of those students would go and tattle on me. But I never got caught, so, and the students telling and me never getting caught just made the staff members I think they still felt like there were some things going on. Even though I went to public high school I didn't pursue women, like girlfriends. I just didn't pursue. It was like you know I just went through like girls and never said nothing about having a girlfriend or nothing because I didn't have one. So, I think they knew but just didn't say.

21:03

OC: Well as far as tattling goes that brings up a question. Did you find that will all the boys or with some of the boys that there was a sort of culture of acceptance as far as race or sexuality goes?

21:20

R: Some there were, yea. Some there were. Some others, their reason for tattling and telling may have been because they hated the act between two males. They hated that. Or they hated the fact that two different races was doing something. So... or both. So, which one was which, I mean I wouldn't be able to say, but definitely possible I definitely think that had something to do with [it].

22:08

OC: And what about the public high school you went to? Tell us about your experience there. What was the landscape like racially or in terms of sexuality and how far was that from the boys' home?

22:24

R: My junior year in high school was in Frederick County. It was James Woods High School. Frederick County is like Northern Virginia but it's off close to West Virginia, part of Virginia and like Maryland, West Virginia, where they kind of meet up. Anyway, it's kind of the makeup back in the '80s, or from the early '80s was that there was still racial tension, like West Virginia, and so Frederick County was, I would say it was primarily the type of county that was guys with shotguns in the back of pickup trucks and that type of thing. You know Rebel flags. You might see some tattoos on people with skinhead on it or swastikas or things like that. But that was the county part so going to school in that county was difficult. Because when I went to school I didn't see anybody of any other different race other than Caucasian throughout my whole day and so it made me stand out, of course. And, you know, I complained my first week in school I was literally in tears cause I was like "I'm not going to make this." It was like... and again I'm attracted to white guys. So, I'm like, "I'm not going to make it through this!" And then my senior year, the boys home I was at was able to get me transferred to the city school which was Winchester. So my senior year I went to John Hanley High School which was where I was able to get my high school diploma. So, the atmosphere—the racial [atmosphere]—there [was] much more racially diverse in that school.

25:10

OC: The less eye candy, right?

25:12

R: Yea [*chuckles*].

25:16

OC: And did that make junior year particularly hard because I know you are attracted to white men and you know it was pretty conservative and a little racist...?

25:28

R: It made me have to go through an emotional rollercoaster. Because I wanted to be there. Because I wanted to see what I saw, but I didn't want to be there. And so I could get up in the morning—I like school, like I said—I could get up in the morning excited about going to school and rush off to school but as soon as I get there and go to a couple of classes I just be like "why am I here? Why am I still putting up with this?" But I don't want to say that the whole school was like that. It's just some bad apples, because by far the whole school wasn't exactly, you now, had a problem with me. It was just certain individuals. But they made it tough.

26:37

OC: Did you have any particularly bad altercations or confrontations with other students?

26:45

R: Yea, they weren't... I don't know.... I guess on a scale of 1 to 10 I would say they were maybe a 3. Because I would get bumped around. I've gotten bumped around a few times. I've had sometimes when I've had guys say things to me. There were a few times when I felt like I wasn't going to make it home that day. You get a couple of football-sized players that are mouthing off at you that... I don't know.

27:37

OC: Do you feel like these altercations were mostly because you were black? Or because you were trans? Or because you were exhibiting sort of like a sexuality or identity that was just other

than what they felt comfortable with? What do you think?

27:53

R: I would say that I think that it was mostly because of my skin color, but however, I want to say that I don't think that I came off 100% masculine either. So I am sure that I was a person that had some feminine ways to me that people could see, especially the guys. I had some ways that you probably could see that I didn't realize that I was showing at the time. So, I would say mostly racial but I think some femininity was in there too.

28:47

OC: Going all the way back to when you were growing up in Lynchburg, did you feel like you had to put on sort of a super masculine façade to defend yourself or just keep you safe and secure?

29:09

R: I wouldn't say 'super masculine façade.' You know like [*deepens voice*] 'Hey, what's up?' It wasn't like super masculine. I think, at the same time, I think I had to hide a lot of femininity.

29:30

OC: Okay, well what kind of...?

29:32

R: Like, for example, if I'm sitting here in a room, like I've done here today, I can sit here and I could cross my legs and do whatever with my wrists, and it's cool. But I wouldn't have done that back then. I would be pretty much trying to stick to at least the minimum masculine protocol that you would expect out of a guy, and it would be the minimum. Then, like going to the boy's locker room, that's like a totally different thing but I mean it's the same thing. I have to look [large] type of thing and then try to act at least as best I can to be the minimum amount of masculinity that I can muster and not appear in any way feminine because it's just gonna not be good. At least that's my perception back then.

31:20

OC: Okay, so you finished up in Winchester City High School.

31:25

R: Right.

31:28

OC: You finished up well? Good grades?

31:29

R: Yes.

31:31

OC: You went on to college?

31:32

R: Yup, I went to Ferrum College here, down in Ferrum, Virginia, right down the road.

31:41

OC: Well, why don't you tell us about your experiences there. Did you explore your sexuality there as well? Did you have any relationships?

31:54

R: I did not explore my sexuality there. When I went to college it was '87. This was considered Southwest Virginia. It was still almost as equal as where I came from, pretty much, as far as what people said about this area. And I'd be seeing certain same types of things: you know, rebel flags, people also with different types of tattoos on them, and things like that. This was an area that I felt like I didn't want to be flamboyant, and the last mistake that I felt like a trans person could make is let a person know that I like them and they were like super straight. That just seemed like it would put my life in danger, because if they're like super straight and then they go on this "that mother f-er is gay!," when he goes and tells his friends it just magnifies this whole thing and here I am, on a campus with people who... you know, I don't know what's coming. You've got guys... I'm living in a dorm. Fortunately I had a room by myself. Now, I was still young because I went to college at 19. I graduated high school at 19 and went on to college. I was not going to try to bust anybody's bubble and take a chance on me getting assaulted or hurt or anything like that.

34:15

OC: So needless to say, there weren't any sort of LGBT groups on campus or in the area?

34:21

R: No way. Not back then. I'm sure there is now, though.

34:28

OC: Well, in that case, when were you fully introduced to an LGBT community or other LGBT individuals? Did that come right after college?

34:44

R: I would say that my first real interaction with the LGBT community was during a time when I was in prison and they recognized me from the beginning and approached me and had some conversations with me and tried to teach me how to be safe, tried to help me get a safe roommate, that type of thing, and how to deal with prison life. That interaction, because of all the places that I've been in Virginia, I never really ran into any other transsexuals. Not saying that they weren't there, just I never ran into them or never had conversations with anybody. So unfortunately it's sad that I went to prison and had to learn from that experience about my community.

36:20

OC: Do you have any particular instances or experiences that resonated with you from prison, good or bad?

36:33

R: I had one bad experience. I've been raped when I was in prison in 1994. It was three black men [*long pause*]... I would say I don't think that was my determining factor to be exclusively attracted to white males. I actually think that every race has attractive men and that's honest. But that was the only incident that was really negative that happened. I think that was mostly because I was naïve. I pretty much didn't want to have... I was attracted to guys in prison and I didn't want to just get with anybody, and so by me saying no, it was very offensive to some of the guys in prison, but I got through it.

38:26

OC: Did you have any sexual encounters that you remember with fondness even to this day that really helped you sort through any feelings you still had that you weren't sure about?

38:41

R: I would say yeah. Yeah, I would say I've had a number of interactions that were very, very, very positive. And that's just because it wasn't just all about the sex, it was all about talking and helping each other out and being friends with each other and helping each other get through the situation of prison.

39:21

OC: Did you have any relationships in prison?

39:27

R: Yeah, I would say one. One relationship that lasted three years and that didn't happen until very later on in the 2000s. But that was the only one.

39:51

OC: Were they black, white?

39:53

R: They were Caucasian.

39:57

OC: When you went to college and into prison, this was the early '90s. You were just coming off of the AIDS epidemic. I know you said you didn't really think about it much, but looking back at it now were there any stigma that kind of affected you in major ways?

40:19

R: Particularly in the '80s?

40:21

OC: In the late '80s coming into the '90s when we were coming off of the epidemic...

40:27

R: I would say that even then in the late '80s, it was hard in the community to... It was hard for me—even though I knew I was trans—it was hard for me to put on the persona that I was trans. It was hard for me to put on the persona that I was trans just because I didn't have the support out there with me. The general feeling of the community was that AIDS is an LGBT issue. We started it and dog gone it, to see an LGBT person, for some people, meant violence because they had family members that died from this. It meant a lot of animosity. I wanted some support, basically. I wanted some people, if I was going to be... so that we could do the walk together and not have a trans person way up here by themselves and not say that they're trans and get no support and end up getting hurt or something.

42:15

OC: At this time were there any celebrities or people in the media to look to that you recall?

42:29

R: I think Elton John—I guess he was out back then. I don't remember very many. Maybe Rock Hudson. He was an actor. He had a pianist named Liberace who was very flamboyant. But in general, you couldn't really touch them. You could be mad that they were who they were but...

43:17

OC: Celebrity is celebrity.

43:18

R: Yeah, you can't knock them out on television, or hurt them on television.

43:29

OC: Okay, so you spent post-college, up until moving here last year, mostly in prison.

43:36

R: Mostly in prison.

43:38

OC: Can you tell us a little about what you were charged with?

43:42

R: In 19... [pauses] '94? Maybe '92... I was charged with a forgery, uttering. Couple of counts of forgery, couple of charges of uttering... burglary. I went to prison for that and I was released in 1999. Then in 2000 I got credit card fraud, credit card forgery, and credit card theft and went to prison that year for that.

44:32

OC: Can you tell us what motivated that behavior, those actions?

44:37

R: All of my crimes have been motivated from the desire to make some type of transformation from male to female. I needed money and I wasn't going to get it from my mom, and so, at the time, as distorted as my thinking was, I thought the best way to do that was to go back what I normally did—back when I was eleven years old—which was steal. So I stole checks, and I wrote them. I tried to steal people's money through the checks. Same thing with credit cards. It all goes back to trying to steal something that doesn't belong to me in order to help with my transformation.

45:41

OC: And during this time were you corresponding with your mother? Was she in the picture at all? Were you guys communicating?

45:49

R: We were communicating. In fact, each time as it happened, that I went to prison, I was living with my mom and that just made me—living with her just made me want to get some money even more so that I could move out. Go be myself. So, I think living with her and not having the communication, the healthy communication, is why I was going down that bad road.

46:35

OC: And a lot of the tension that you had with her was motivated by her religious beliefs, right?

46:39

R: Yes.

46:40

OC: Can you tell me what your relationship with God is as a result of that?

46:49

R: I am spiritual. And I have a lot of moments that are spiritual. I don't think what religion I choose is really based off of my mother but just based off of a question that most people can't

answer and that is the same thing I ask my mother: how do you know that your religion is the correct one? Because most of them have had some guy that said he has heard some thing from God. The Jehovah's Witnesses got their own Bible. The Mormons got their own books and bibles. And which one is right? Nobody can answer that. So that's why I don't really get into religion, but I enjoy spirituality and I enjoy being spiritual and having a spiritual experience.

48:10

OC: There weren't a lot of celebrity trans individuals back when you were growing up, but these days things are a little more progressive.

48:24

R: Oh, yeah.

48:25

OC: Do you feel as though Bruce Jenner—now Caitlyn Jenner—has positively impacted the progression of the LGBT community, or any others?

48:41

R: I think yes and no. I think Caitlyn Jenner has been positive. Because he stood up, he was a popular person, he had beautiful daughters, and he got up and said "I'm transgender." And he took some steps to show the world that he was transgender. The only thing I think that he has not done is to be an advocate. It's good to hear him having done what he did. I wish that he would be an advocate for people who still feel like they cannot come out for various reasons. Whether their mom's religion, or for kids that get kicked out of their house and have to live on the street because their moms kicked them out of the house because they're trans or because they're gay or something. What can you do for advocacy? And I haven't heard Caitlyn do that. Same thing with Laverne. You know, Laverne Cox, I think she's done some things on the advocacy level but that's what I'd like to see. Some of the superstars who have transitioned and have been successful, to step out and say "we need more people..." Because I think they already know. They know the battle inside of their mind, their brain, and feeling like they can't come out because they have a wife. Caitlyn Jenner, he was married, he had kids. The fear of coming out and saying "I'm really a female on the inside. I want to be a woman." They have kids and the younger generation get out of the fear of being themselves. Not making a mistake, feeling like society demands that you marry someone of the opposite sex and have children and whatever and lie about your sexuality. You don't have to do that now. You can be yourself.

51:28

OC: Things have absolutely become more progressive. Here, we're now still in the South. You did grow up in the South, southern Virginia. Tell us about your move to Roanoke last year. How's the community treated you since you've been here? How have you felt? How have you identified with it?

51:47

R: I did pretty good. I think a lot has to do with my age and how long I've identified as trans and how comfortable I am with it, and not being scared of people. Not being scared of hate. I think the more you stand up to the bully, the bully backs off because the bully finds out that unless he's going to do something really crazy, he backs down. I think just being older and the wisdom I have gained over the years has helped a lot. The education, the things I've learned, and all of that has helped.

53:03

OC: I know you haven't been here all that long, but have you had any meaningful relationships? Romantic ones?

53:11

R: No, not yet. I haven't really been looking. I just figure if one comes my way, one will come. But I'm not really looking.

53:33

OC: So would you say that you've made the best out of Roanoke and you'd consider this a proper home now?

53:42

R: I won't say that I won't move somewhere else in the future. Not the near future but in the future. I would say that I'm comfortable with Roanoke at this time and out of all the places that I've lived in Virginia, I'm feeling most comfortable in Roanoke. I think it has a lot to do with how much the community has learned about LGBT people and have accepted. Acceptance has been a big part of it—society as a whole, I'm saying.

54:33

OC: Well, on that, how's the [Roanoke] Diversity Center? How is your relationship with the Diversity Center and how has that impacted your time here?

54:40

R: I visit the Diversity Center quite often. I use people here to come and vent and talk about things that are issues with me. I try to do the same thing. I try to be an ear for somebody else, a young person who may be struggling with something that I'm familiar with, that I've gone through myself. So I'm able to both help and get some help. I think sometimes support is about just being there, being available, and sometimes people have something they want to talk about. Sometimes they don't. Sometimes they just need to be around somebody else that's like them just so they can be sure that they know that they know that they know that they know that they are who they are, and sometimes all it takes is just being in the same room. That's what the Diversity Center does.

55:59

OC: Okay, thank you. We have learned a lot and we're glad to have spent this time with you. That concludes our oral history with [Rissa]. Thank you.

[END]