

***Approved**

SCHEDLER HONORS COLLEGE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Bradley Moore Oral History Interview Transcription

Narrator Name: Moore, Bradley

Interviewer Name: Ziegler, Griffin

Date of Interview: 03/30/2022

Location of Interview: Bella Vista, AR (Remote Interview - Zoom Recording)

Acronyms:

GZ = Griffin Ziegler (Interviewer)

BM = Bradley Moore (Narrator)

UCA = University of Central Arkansas

RA = Resident Assistant

URGE = Scholarship grant for research

Interview Summary

The following is a recorded oral history interview with Bradley Moore conducted by Griffin Ziegler on March 30, 2022. This interview is part of the Schedler Honors College Oral History Project where current students and alumni are asked to reflect on their time before, during, and after being in the UCA Honors College.

Readers are asked to bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of the spoken word, rather than prose.

The following transcript has been reviewed, edited, and approved by the narrator.

BM: All right. I just sent it. If they did not come through for some reason, let me know.

GZ: OK, I'm going to check my email right now and see.

GZ: Yup. I just got it.

BM: Good deal.

GZ: Awesome.

GZ: Thank you. And I'm going to go ahead and go over our last form, which is the deed of gift. Actually, no, I don't have to do that. That is a signed form. OK.

BM: OK.

GZ: So if you're ready, I'll go ahead and start the oral history interview.

BM: Sounds good.

GZ: So let me get my notes ready. I just I just got back from the Founder's Day event actually slightly rushed, a little unprepared. But I'm really excited for this.

BM: I was just digging on your shirt.

GZ: Yeah!

BM: I was like, I know that face!

GZ: I just got it at this event and I was like, "How fitting would it be to show up to the oral history interview with it?"

BM: Excellent. Excellent sartorial choice.

GZ: So I do have to ask for the sake of the interview. I'm just going to ask your age and ethnicity if you're comfortable with providing that.

BM: Yeah, I am 49 and Anglo.

GZ: OK. All right. So, what are your pronouns?

BM: He/him.

GZ: Where are you from?

BM: I grew up in Heber Springs, Arkansas. It's a real small town in the north central part of the state.

GZ: Did you like growing up there?

BM: No.

GZ: Why not?

BM: Well, it was hard. It was difficult. I actually love the land. I grew up on a farm. I actually feel really blessed for the way that I grew up. My grandparents on both sides of the family were much older. My mom's parents were born in 1889 and 1904, and my dad's parents were born in like 1909 or 1910 and 1917; so, like much older and they were very Ozark people. So I grew up riding horses

and, you know, farming and watching my dad plow the field with the horse, and going and gathering wild animals and wild medicinals with my grandmother on the mountain side. Stuff that most people my age did not experience. I remember going to an outhouse and my great grandmother's house because she didn't have indoor plumbing. That was wonderful. Then I started school. It was apparent to everybody who knew me that I was queer from a very, very young age and the older I got, the worse it got, the harder it got. It was the late 70s, early 80s. I graduated high school in 1991. I wish I could say a lot changed there, but it hasn't. It's not as backwards as it used to be, but it's still pretty backwards. I was so glad to get out of there.

GZ: I bet.

BM: Oh my God, I was like ecstatic to get to UCA. I still didn't know what I was doing. Like, I had a really hard time coming out because I literally didn't know what "gay" was. Had nothing to base it on. And like, no, I had no idea. I knew the way that I felt; there was nothing to reflect that was what it was, I guess I knew that it was not how my friends felt and I knew enough to keep my mouth shut. But like, I didn't know what was happening. I remember when I was in about eighth grade, I went to stay with a friend of my dad's for part of the summer. He had a really close friend who was paralyzed from the chest down from an accident when he was in college. His house had a basement that he had difficulty accessing. I would go and stay with him and do chore chores and stuff, and he would teach me different kinds of crafts and he did leather crafting and things like that. And so he taught me how to make boxes and how to make shoes and shirts, things like that. My dad was in the buckskin and rendezvous stuff, so I was very into history. He was cooking supper one night and just out of the blue, he asked me if I had a girlfriend.

BM: And oh, I guess it was just banter to him because I was still, I was also pretty little kid. I was eighth grade, you know, 12 years old or something and I just started to cry and he's like,

BM: “Oh, shit! What have I done?” and he got me calmed down, and I told him “Something's not right.” But I was able to kind of explain to him how I felt about. “A lot of people go through that,” he said, “for some people, it really is a phase and you get out of it and for some people it’s not,” you know. “Don't tell anybody. You have to protect yourself. Definitely don't tell your parents until you're able to get out on your own and support yourself because I don't know what they'll do.” And so that was pretty much what I lived by until I got to college and yes, it was crazy. I knew a guy who was not in Honors, but he was a friend to the LGBTQ community on campus. Who is also, you know, most of those were in the closet and he was raped at an arrest on the interstate outside of Fort Smith. He disclosed it all to his RA and his RA told other people and it got out all over campus like wildfire.

GZ: Oh, no.

BM: He disappeared. To this day I have no idea what happened to him. I had another friend who was in Honors named Leonard. He was an RA in the dorm that I lived in, an African-American fellow and graduated, got his PhD. He was doing pretty significant AIDS research living in Washington, D.C. and he had an altercation with his partner and his partner literally threw him out of their window of their apartment, a multi-story fall. And so, not very many of the people that I knew from back then are still alive. A lot of them have AIDS, others succumbed to suicide and overdose. Some died by violence. Some just disappeared. There aren't very many of us that I knew from back then that are still around that I know how to contact.

BM: I knew another guy in Honors named Melvin, who was a little bit older. He was a journalism major, and he used the PAC Center that I was talking about, the computer center, to make these kind of spoofs of the Echo called the Yako. It was like this scandalous rag, you know, just mocked

everybody. And eventually it became an actual offshoot of the Echo for April Fools. I don't know if they still do it. They used to do this April Fool's issue, and it totally came out of this Honors College kid. It's funny and lambasting everybody, no matter who.

GZ: Oh, that's so funny. Of course, it's an Honors student.

BM: Yes, for sure. Yes, it was a really weird, hard time. I remember when I finally worked up the courage to tell Cindy she was like, "Brad," I didn't know how she would respond. I had no idea. She's like, "Well, of course you are." I was like "You know?" I was like, "I didn't know!" and she's like "What? How did you not know?"

BM: How do you explain this to somebody? Like, there's no language. I can remember when I was working on my thesis in '97, I found a book referenced through one of them. One of the source books that I was using, it was written by a poet. Her name is Judy Grant, and it's called *Another Mother Tongue*. And it's really dated now. But at the time, it was a collection of queer words. It was so powerful. To read about these hidden lives, and kind of glimpsing this understanding that you're not the only one. And you're not the only one who felt like you were. And you weren't the only one who didn't have words to really understand or to process who and what are you. I mean, it's really, really important. Wish that the book is still in circulation because it really gave me an appreciation for what other people went through. It was what we had, even then we had more than they did.

GZ: Yeah. Do you have any friends in high school that you confided in about this or did you not tell anybody besides that one person?

BM: Didn't tell anybody at all until college.

GZ: What was it like coming into college? I mean, you told Cindy, but did you confide in anyone else?

BM: Eventually. I was really painfully shy before Honors. I remember—I say this: I think that everything happens for a reason. But technically I wasn't supposed to be in Honors. I went down and registered for classes. Back then it was like a sit down at a table and they would tell you what classes you needed and you would, kind of, negotiate around and then you'd go to a table where a lady was with the computer and she would type it in and see if they were actually still open or not.

GZ: How tedious!

BM: Oh, it was awful. It took hours and she finally got me registered, and she's looking at my stuff and she's like, “Well, you've got really good grades. Are you in the Honors College?” I was like, “I don't even know what that is.” And she's like, “Oh, you should go over to McAlister Hall to Norbert Schedler.” And I was like, “OK, I will.” And I hightailed my butt across the road and rolled up to the Honors College, which had just been completely renovated, they had just done a total renno' of McAlister. Rolled up in the brand new office, and here was this little old guy with round glasses and I walked up and said, ‘Who is that little guy?’ I thought he was the secretary. I rolled up and said, “Hey, I'm going to be in the Honors College!”

BM: And he says, “Excuse me?” I said, “I'm going to be in the Honors College!” And he said, “And who are you?” “Brad Moore!” He said, “Where are you from?” And I told him. “Well, I'm Dr. Norbert Schedler,” and he said, “You know, I like your initiative. I'm going to give you an interview.” He said, “Come back next week.”

BM: And so I had this crappy, crappy '68 Chevy pickup. It probably wouldn't have made it to Conway. So I borrowed my mom's car and it broke down on the way down there. It was a hundred and eight degrees that day. The air conditioner went out. When I got to Norb's office I was absolutely soaked with sweat. I was very overweight, like very overweight and just soaking wet with sweat and anxious as all get out. At the end of the interview, Norb said, "Well, I'm not sure you can cut it." And I was like, "Nobody tells me I can't do something." And so I'm like, all here with the devil and I decided to get in. And little did I know he was totally playing with me. He was a master of reading people and knowing exactly what to say to bring out their best. He was like another dad to me.

BM: One of the best mentors I think we ever had. My senior year started in the fall of '96, which is when the Clintons passed the Defense of Marriage Act. And it was a big deal for everybody and my research project for that year was on the economic impact of what happened to same sex. We're just looking at the shift in tax codes for 6 to 10 per cent of the population suddenly being able to marry and what that would look like. And with the law just a massive loss of revenue for the government and ended up doing a campus presentation on it. The president of the ACLU for Little Rock, Rita Sklar came, the president of the Little Branch of the Gay Lesbian Task came, and we gave a three part presentation. Obviously very controversial. It was an election year.

BM: You can imagine how that went down. Norb told me he wasn't going to be able to come because he was doing interviews. Yeah, well, something happened. They ended early and he snuck in and watched from the back and after it was over with, I was getting ready to leave and he caught me and he said, "If anybody had told me as a freshman 'You'll be able to pull something like this off' I would have laughed at them." He just turned around and walked out. But from Norb that was like high praise. No, he didn't do that. It really meant a lot to me. But yeah, really intense experiences there, for sure.

GZ: So I do know that Norb was teaching classes in the Honors College at the time, did you actually take him in any of your classes?

BM: Sort of. I never had Norb as a small group teacher, just because of the way that the classes rolled out. I did take some classes with him and they were wonderful. There was a level of intensity to Norb you describe. He was unbelievably intense and unbelievably gentle at the same time. His ability to draw people out in the best possible way was just uncanny. I think if you get the opportunity to go back and look through some of these interviews, I think you'll have a lot of people saying things similar to me as far as just what he was able to do for them to change them and to heal them. It was like a forging process. I talked to Norb about this after graduation, because I had a lot of friends that started Honors and for whatever reason didn't finish it. Norb was always really disappointed and hurt, but not by them. That's not the right way to say it. It always hurt him when people didn't finish the program, not because of them, but this...

BM: You know, there's a process to a program where there's this opening up and this process of expansion. But then there also has to be a point where it's brought back to a unified whole, and I didn't understand what was happening until it was over. You really have to go through the whole thing to understand the full product. The thing about it is that process will happen for you over and over again in your life. You may not recognize it in the moment. But... sort of alchemy. I mean, I don't know. I would not be the person that I am today if I hadn't been through it. And to be perfectly candid, I don't think I would be alive. I mean, I don't think I would have lived. I was vulnerable enough, insecure enough, broken enough that I probably would not have made it. There were times when I barely made it with the program—oh, gosh, bad times. But if I hadn't had that to hold on to, that family, that goal to finish and to prove Norb wrong or, from reality, to prove him right. I needed that.

GZ: Well, that is really touching to hear, and it's kind of gratifying in a way because I definitely feel the same way about this program. You know, I'm a trans man and the coming out process is very rough. The Honors College really did help me through those through that process. How specifically did the Honors College help you, I'm assuming, with that process?

BM: Oh gosh, so many things I could say. I guess, in one way, providing with the mirror to grow into the person because I don't know how your process went. For me, I went from being afraid of everything to being out and proud, like angry, almost aggressive nature. I went through a period where I was going to fight people.

BM: There was a guy my senior year. He was a freshman and I was going through a lot of processes and I was taking a dance class on campus to get one of my... usually they would require PE credits and the one that I was taking was a ballroom dance class. I had to look at myself in the mirror every day and realize that I wasn't a small person anymore. That I was tall and big, a head taller than anybody else in my class. And I was like, "Holy shit, I'm a big dude. Why am I letting these people run over me?" Because I still thought of myself as small. [INTERRUPTION]

BM: [00:24:38] Oh, but I was walking across campus back to the dorm, and he was out front with his friends and they were hanging out and there were some guys from the Kappa Alpha house who were not being kind. And I got really angry. One of them was calling him awful names and he started to cry. I was in that kind of curve of the sidewalk coming up from Short/Denny Hall, across the street from the music building. And I saw it and I threw myself and I hit the guy. I hit him so hard he skidded on his butt. And it was just not my proudest moment. It's funny to laugh at now. Oh my. And this poor kid was terrified because he was trying not to be out, trying to be quiet about it, etc..

BM: Hold on. Let me put her out. [INTERRUPTION]

BM: [00:26:18] There were some not super nice people about it in Honors, too. But having that microcosm of a world to be able to test out ideas and identities and experiences was really helpful. It kind of provided a safe place for me to process things in. Having adults, oh my God, having adults around that were accepting was novel and so new for me I couldn't even comprehend it. I told Norb way before I tell my parents. And Norb begged me not to tell my parents, even after I was able to prepare myself, I was so afraid for, you know, just knowing where I came from, parents were farmers. He was really concerned because he knew how close I was to my family and there was a lot of fear there that I would lose that. Luckily, that's not it—took them a long time, but they they came around to it.

GZ: [00:27:53] What was their initial reaction when you came out to them?

BM: [00:27:58] It was really funny. I had met somebody, met this guy. I thought he was the one, of course. That lasted about two weeks. It was awful. But you know, you fall in love like you do and then you're both really angry and it falls apart. And then I went home and told my mom, and she cried and cried and cried and then she's like, "Please don't tell your dad." And I waited a week and I told my dad on the 4th of the July. They're sitting there reading the newspaper, and I told him. Mom was in the kitchen, of course, she heard me telling him. She comes in the living room from the kitchen just sobbing. And my dad's like,

BM: "Did you think I didn't know?" And I was like "What do you mean?" And he was like, "I've known since you were three years old." Didn't like it but he knew. It's taken them a long time. They like my partner. They get along great. They're as supportive as they can be. They're almost eighty. I

mean, now it's so much not a part of their world that it's difficult for them to understand, but they're at a place now where they just happy. I'm glad that it got to them. You know, because I have a lot of friends that that's not how... you know. I'm glad about that.

GZ: [00:30:01] Well, I hate to move on, but I want to dig in to a little bit of the academic aspect the Honors College, if that's okay. What idea of a major you thinking of before you came to the college? Did you have any ideas of what you wanted to do?

BM: [00:30:21] I was going to be a history teacher. And then I came out, and then I was like, "I'm not going to teach at public schools in Arkansas." No way. But that did not go well. But yeah, no, I was going to be a historian. I was going to teach history and I went back again years and years and years later and did a master's in history to teach college and literally, this summer that I graduated this day went [inaudible]. World history was no longer required for high school or for college students and the job market went. It didn't exist anymore. And then the economy tanked and history jobs everywhere disappeared. So now I'm finishing up a master's in social work to be a counselor.

GZ: [00:31:37] Where are you doing your master's?

BM: University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

GZ: What is it like over there?

BM: [00:31:40] It's amazing, honestly. My partner and I live in Bella Vista right now, which is a small town right on the Missouri border, but it's very supportive. We like to ride bicycles. The bicycle shop that we go to is very, very LGBT. It's Mojo Cycling, and they actually have rainbow T-shirts and stuff.

GZ: That's amazing.

BM: I was so happy with it, and there was this very obviously queer woman behind the counter and they had the T-shirt on a mannequin, And I was like, "Please tell me you have shirt big boy sizes." And she's like, "I've got you."

BM: [00:32:35] They're always not so nice people, but for Arkansas it's pretty fantastic. They have a pride parade in Fayetteville every year, Bentonville now has its own pride festival. Very supportive. It's changed a lot from when I lived here. I lived here once before in, I guess, for about 2007 to about 2008. Not so supportive back then but it was better than Central Arkansas. Yes, it's pretty much nice. And social work is also a pretty supportive field, as well. And I want to work with with LGBTQ people, and there's no there's no shortage of that either.

GZ: [00:33:35] I really, really admire that. Like that said that sentiment. I mean, obviously, I'm a little biased because I'm trans, but it is really, really comforting to know that there are people like you out there trying to do the best for other people like us.

BM: [00:33:58] I remember what it was like not to have that. And I saw friends die because they didn't have that. And not just queer friends, but just a lot of young people who didn't have the good care and the support that they need. I don't want to contribute to that. That's what I want to change. There were people that were there for me like Norb, and I want to pay that forward.

GZ: [00:34:40] Were there any other Honors professors that were the same level of supportive?

BM: [00:34:46] Yeah, for sure. Harry Wright, who actually just retired from UCA, was the dean of fine arts occupation. My boss when I worked at UCA, but he was a creative writing professor. He actually was one of the founding professors with Norb, if not one of the founding professors, he came on very early in the process. But Harry was wonderful. I was in that very angry queer phase when I wrote a lot of really angry queer poetry. He was always like, “Wow, that’s really good. Love the emotions.” Gosh, Molly was my Core I instructor. Gosh, so many. Not a professional, but probably the main one besides Norb was Glenda. Glenda was the secretary at the front desk and she was like our mom. When bad things happened and we cried, she was the one that held us and made sure everything was going to be okay. When good things happened she was the one that made sure everybody knew about. You know, she was like the rock that everybody leaned on. I remember one time after graduation—I could tell you, I walked away after my thesis for ten years. Ended up working as a case manager at a social work program in the schools in Roger, and you had to have a degree. I had finally gone back to finish my thesis and was turning everything in. People were dragging their feet about actually getting the final grade through, and it looked like I didn’t have a diploma, and they were going to fire me. My boss called me in her office and was filling out the paperwork. Her secretary comes and knocks on the door and she’s like, “Not now, Mary, I don’t have time for this.” She’s like, “No, you’re going to want to see this.” And she walks in with this diploma and she’s like, “That’s not real. That can’t be real.” And she’s like, “Where did this come from?” She said, “UCA.” And she looked at me: “Who do you know?”

BM: [00:37:35] But Glenda had worked for Tony Sikes, who was the registrar, and she went to the professors and she was like, “You will sign this and you will sign it now.” And then she walked over to Tony and she’s like, “You will process this. He is going to lose his job today,” and it’s high speed. Had it been another five minutes later I would have lost my job.

GZ: [00:38:06] Wow.

BM: [00:38:08] I mean, Glenda, she's a force of nature. Looks like this sweet little grandma now, but she is such a force of nature. I don't know how else to describe her.

GZ: [00:38:27] That kind of reminds me of Lanita a little bit. I don't know if you've met her, but she is such a motherly figure.

BM: [00:38:37] Lanita was my candy buddy. When I worked at UCA I would go over to visit.

GZ: [00:38:48] She still keeps the candy in her office too.

BM: Oh my god, I love her.

GZ: [00:38:55] Yes, for sure. She's wonderful.

BM: [00:38:58] Yes.

GZ: [00:38:59] So what was your thesis about?

BM: [00:39:03] Thesis was on cultural representations of human sexuality. It was a cross-disciplinary study that was history, art history, anthropology, archeology, I mean, all that stuff is really probably sound sociology. But I looked at a number of different cultures; the main ones were medieval Japan, Tang China, 12th century Iran, 17th century Spain and then several 19th century Native American cultures; predominantly Sioux and Navajo. They had large, well-documented populations of, as the Sioux called them, winkte and as the Navajo called it, Nadlé [sic], who were non-binary for lack of a better word. The Zuni word would translate roughly as

“man-woman”, and a lot of a lot of examples in Zuni of men taking on the role of a woman, dressing as a woman. One of the most famous ones that they talked about was a woman and named We’wha. She actually lived at the Smithsonian for a while, became friends with President Roosevelt and when she died, no one knew. Well, I mean, some, like the anthropologists, that she worked with knew, but none of the big, rich anglers that she was friends with knew that she was a man. And it was like the talk of why should they see it, of course, when she passed away. Really fascinating about these people. Helped me to understand that while the identity that we have now may not have existed, the experience of queerness always existed. The understanding that our modern conception of it may not be the same, but that doesn't mean it's not. Things changed. One thing I've learned from history is change is constant. Ironically, no matter how much things change, they're still the same. It sounds campy or cheesy, but it's they're always going to be...

GZ: [00:42:05] I mean, I agree. Unfortunately, I do agree it is it really does suck that society is like that. So we touched a little bit on this in our pre-interview. This thesis that you were working on, was this also what you were working on that the disc was stolen, right?

BM: [00:42:29] Yes.

GZ: [00:42:30] Could you tell us more of that for the interview?

BM:[00:42:33] Yes. So, I had actually presented the thesis. I'd done the presentation, which, I'll tell that story in a minute because it's hysterical. But I was doing my final touches on the paper in the PAC Center and I went into the bathroom and when I came back, it was like my paper had been deleted. The disk wasn't in the computer anymore and nobody saw a thing. The PAC Center was completely full and nobody saw. Still, to this day, don't know who did it and I don't even have a suspicion.

GZ: [00:43:17] And I'm sure the I'm sure there was not really any good security footage to look through either.

BM: No, there was nothing like that, but it had my final, several finals for other classes, my thesis on one three-by-five disc. I killed myself for days trying to rebuild these final papers and stuff, and I got those turned in and I was just like, "I'm done," and I walked away. I can't remember how long—it was a long time after they were doing renovations on the PAC Center and Glenda actually found my disc. It still had my name on it and had written on it what had been on it but it had been reformatted. There was nothing on it. And, course, she was just livid, but here's no way to find out who do it. Nobody was going to say, "Hey, it was me." Yes, a guy or girl. I guess it could have been a girl. I don't feel like it was, but I guess—

GZ: Only men would have the audacity.

BM: [00:44:39] Yeah, I was devastated, but I think they do it a little different now. Back then, they would put like three or four of us in a room and we would go one after another and we would actually stand and defend our thesis. They always would try to pair you up with similar themes. For some reason I got put in a room with a bunch of elementary ed majors. My presentation is like right in the middle, and I've got all these really graphic slides from Greek, Roman, Ancient Persian, Japanese, medieval European manuscripts and stuff that are buried. And I've got all these elementary ed majors from the small towns in Arkansas. I'm sure you're going to know the type, it's going to sound like I'm being really crappy and stereotyping. There are all these very, large Southern women with these round, jolly faces. Every time I would say the word "homosexual", there was one lady who had taken issue with it. She looked like was going to start hyperventilating and she was one of the ones who is like crazy on her face. My mom is literally like white as a sheet.

I still think back on that, and it's just hysterical to me to watch that woman react every day. The slides would progressively be more graphic.

GZ: [00:47:05] I can picture it. I can picture the scene.

BM: [00:47:10] Have you ever seen a play called Sordid Lives?

GZ: I don't think so.

BM: Or a film—there's a film. So it was a little like it was. It was pretty funny.

GZ: I'll have to look that up.

BM: All the southern stereotypes were on display.

GZ: [00:47:30] I'm going to write that down so I see it later. Sordid lives.

BM: [00:47:35] Sordid lives. It's a little needed, especially if you grew up in the south. You're going to watch it and be like, "Oh, I know. Oh, that's like my aunt."

GZ: [00:47:50] Yeah, that's how I feel whenever I see people doing satire of southern people and it's like, "Oh, I can name someone who's exactly like that in my family."

BM: [00:48:04] Yes.

GZ: [00:48:06] So when you said you found out about the disc being stolen and you said you walked away, did that mean that you walked out of the college?

BM: [00:48:16] I had finished everything at that point, except my thesis and I went and got a job but I didn't look back. I don't know if you know about it, I went to a place called Vinos in Little Rock, which is a microbrewery and a pizza place, and I don't know what it's like now. It used to be like a punk rock hangout, and I got a job there as a dishwasher and a bouncer and was a punk kid for awhile. And I eventually I grew up, got a real job. Yes, I had a mohawk and I had gauges. My gauges healed, as you can see there.

GZ: [00:49:16] I'm rockin' a stud myself. Yeah!

BM: [00:49:19] If you don't go above a four gauge, like if you go to a two, it might not heal so well. But if you stay at a four or smaller, they'll heal/close.

GZ: [00:49:37] It is vital information. So just for clarification, when you did walk out, you had finished, you had basically finished—

BM: [00:49:51] Yeah, I finished my coursework and stuff.

GZ:[00:49:53] But you didn't actually graduate yet, did you?

BM: [00:49:57] Well, I went to graduation, but no, did not graduate until 10 or 11 years later. I think it was 10 years.

GZ: [00:50:12] I don't really blame you after an event like that, I probably would have had the same reaction.

BM: [00:50:20] But in hindsight, also, always have more than one backup. Oh my God. But the other thing that was really funny: Norb required me to use a computer to do my thesis. I literally did not know how to use a computer. Had a typewriter and had no interest in learning to use it. Norb said, "I'm not letting you graduate from the Honors College without knowing how to use a working processor," and wrote on my thesis contract that he would not accept it unless it was this program on a computer. I hand-typed everything back then. I was a little proud of it.

GZ: [00:51:14] How does it make you feel today, now that we're using computers as a centralized way of communication?

BM: [00:51:20] It completely saved me. I would not have been able to have a job. I mean, once I decided I didn't want to be a dishwasher.

BM: [00:51:35] Working in a bar, you don't really have to compute. Well, you probably know.

GZ: [00:51:46] Who knows? I've never I've never worked at a bar. Maybe I will in the future.

BM: [00:51:52] It was, gosh, that was a learning experience, too. Yeah. Goodness.

GZ: [00:52:01] So when you did come back to the Honors College, what was that process like for you?

BM: [00:52:20] At times it was difficult. Because it's hard to forget something like that. And while it wasn't Honors per se, it was hard to separate. If that makes sense. But I think what really started to bring me back around to was Norb's retirement for the first time. Because I had huge respect for Norb. Like I said earlier on, I think he literally saved my life. I don't exaggerate when I say that. I think if I hadn't had that influence that I wouldn't have survived if I had gone back home. I don't think I would have finished college if I hadn't had Honors like that. That social network, that safety net; safety net is probably a better way to say it.

BM: We referred to ourselves sometimes as the freaks and geeks. We were all the kids who were so weird that nobody else wanted. Oh, man, I remember going to class one time, Core I with Norb, and my dad's older brother had been in the Marine Corps and had given me some of his old uniforms and stuff not thinking that I was actually wearing them. I went to class with my uncle's Marine Corps dress jacket on with no shirt. It was black and I had long hair. Total hippie. Norb was like, "What?" He got to where he was finally just raising his eyebrows.

BM: Yes. It's funny, though, because I ended up doing my sophomore lecture on the history of clothing. I started sewing when I was pretty young. I can remember my mom and my grandmother holding me in their lap while they made clothes for us. We were poor when I was little. My mom and my grandmother made a lot of her clothes, I can remember them. I was too small to not be watched but they were busy. They would hold me while they sewed on the sewing machine and that just stuck with me. Years later, when I went back and did my first masters, that's what I focused on: how people created their identity and created their gender through the use of clothing. And they do, I mean, we still do that. And no matter how democratized they say that fashion is, it's really not. I mean, women's pants.

GZ: [00:56:05] Oh, my goodness.

BM: [00:56:08] There's little pockets there.

GZ: [00:56:17] You know what?

BM: [00:56:20] Yes?

GZ: [00:56:22] I do not miss wearing women's clothing. I will say that.

BM: [00:56:30] Yes.

GZ: [00:56:32] So where did you stay during the school year at UCA, did you stay on campus or did you stay off campus?

BM: [00:56:40] Part of the time. First year I stayed on campus. The first semester I was in State Hall. The second semester I moved in with my friend Eric, who was my one of my best friends in Honors, and we lived in South Minton Hall, which does not exist anymore. It should have been condemned long before we were there. Oh, it was awful. Oh my God. They had painted the bathrooms, they painted the tile. The floors weren't level, and so the water would just stand in the showers because the drains didn't work—the floors weren't level. This paint would stick to your feet. So then you would have to go back to your dorm room and sit there with a trashcan and peel the paint off your feet before you could get dressed to go to class.

GZ: [00:57:41] Oh my god.

BM: [00:57:42] Oh, it was awful. We had a drive-by shooting the first week of class my freshman year. And then later in the semester, somebody drove by and shot out the front windows of State Hall. Terribly exciting.

GZ: Wow.

BM: Yes, my friend Jerry also lived in South Minton, who is one of the older queer guys that I knew. A football player who lived in North Minton, North Minton was the athletic dorm, South Minton was everybody else, would constantly mess with Jerry. He had this old, crappy car and he would drive around, when you could still drive in campus, and he would drive around to his parking spot and this guy would jump out and hit the back of his car and throw stuff at his car. Just terrible things, and jumped out and slammed his hands on the back of Jerry's car while he was driving. He wouldn't report it because he didn't want anybody to know that it was his car.

BM: [00:59:00] That was always kind of a funny story that floated around. And then my second year, I moved into Short/Denny when it first became co-ed. It was not an Honors dorm yet. Then I moved off campus after that. I lived off campus for a couple of years and then for my senior year they made Short/Denny the Honors dorm, and so I moved back into Short/Denny Hall to save money because I wanted to go to Honduras for study abroad. So, to save money I moved back on campus. It was really hard to be back on campus after you'd had an apartment.

BM: Yeah. Where do you stay?

GZ: [00:59:57] I am in Farris.

BM: Oh, nice.

GZ: Yeah, the new Honors dorm. But I'm actually about to move off to an on campus apartment myself, so I'm going to experience that process soon.

BM: [01:00:08] Congratulations.

GZ: [01:00:10] Thank you.

BM: [01:00:12] Very excited, man.

GZ: I had a question, but it just it just left my head. What was the food like on campus? Because I know there's the stereotype of it now. What was it like when you were living on campus?

BM: [01:00:27] It went through phases. My first year, it was awful. Awful. Awful. But then the second year they renovated the—what year was it? I don't remember what year. While I was there, they actually gutted and renovated Christian Cafeteria and after that it was really good. They had a lot of different things, like a lot of choice. Now we had options, there was a place called the Bear's Den. That part of the student center doesn't even exist. There was a place called if the pizza and a place called the Bear's Den. You could go and get equivalency bucks, use your card to get to pizza or you could use your card to get, like, a burger. We ate in those lot. Well, there used to be a Papa John's on the corner across the street. You know where the bear sculpture is now on the building? It used to be an old, two-story building there, and it was a Papa John's pizza. We went there, also, a lot. We'd play Dnd the forum and we'd have a pizza delivery.

GZ: [01:01:51] That's so cool. Oh my gosh.

BM: [01:01:54] Oh yeah, we used to play a game called Running Man. I don't know who all knows about this. We would be shocked now, I'm sure. We would like to chase each other around in McAlister Hall after hours in the dark, and I literally got knocked out because I fell downstairs. Okay—funny, funny, funny story. I was teaching for Honors on the fourth floor and while I was teaching there, I fell down the stairs and broke my foot.

GZ: [01:02:33] Oh, no!

BM: [01:02:35] But I also fell down the stairs as a student. Someone was chasing me and I was trying to run, and of course I never wore shoes. Oh my God, I never wore shoes.

GZ: [01:02:51] Those stairways are slippery.

BM: [01:02:54] Those wide sandpaper strips. I caught my foot on one of those and fell all the way down the stairs. Going from the third floor to the second, hit the wall, bounced off the wall, down the rest of the flight of stairs and then into the wall across the hallway.

GZ: [01:03:13] Oh, my.

BM: [01:03:14] And my friend Mary, she sees me on the floor and there's blood from where I had my foot on the sandpaper.

GZ: No. Oh my god,

BM: [01:03:31] There are so many funny, funny things. I remember hiding one time—there's a—do you go into McAlister very often?

GZ: Yes.

BM: You know, when you go in the back, there's that lobby in the back with the elevator.

GZ: Yes.

BM: There's the double doors right by the elevator. That's the art history slide collection. And there are two louvered doors that are always locked. Well, that is a coffee kitchen with a little counter and a sink and there used to be a payphone right next to it, and I would hide in that cabinet and we played hide and seek and nobody ever found me. People would come down to use the payphone and I would talk to them through the louvered doors.

GZ: [01:04:33] That is so funny.

BM: [01:04:34] Oh my God. Yes.

GZ: [01:04:37] Oh, that's hilarious.

GZ: [01:04:43] Well, now I remember the actual question.

BM: [01:04:45] Oh, good. OK.

GZ: [01:04:47] So you mentioned studying abroad in Honduras? Did that actually happen?

BM: [01:04:52] Oh, yes. Yes, it was wonderful.

GZ: [01:04:55] What year was it that you studied abroad?

BM: [01:04:57] 1997. I went to Honduras and we covered the entire country, except for La Mesquitia, which is the eastern portion in Honduras. It's basically a malarial swamp and it wasn't safe for us. So we went from the Guatemalan border in the mountains, in the north, all the way down the western side of the country to try to Choluteca on the western side, and then we cut back across the central part of the country through Tegucigalpa, which is the capital of La Maria, which is a cloud forest. It's one of the highest peaks in Honduras. Since it's so tall there's a rainforest on top of the mountain.

GZ: Wow. Sounds beautiful.

BM: It's one of the most beautiful places and one of the most terrible places and one of the most wonderful places I've ever been all of this time. I saw so much poverty, and I met the most beautiful people, and they were so kind and loving and very accepting of us. I got into a horrible argument with a Honduran doctor on the airbase in Comayagua because he was very homophobic and he was blaming all these issues on gay people. And it's like, yeah, if your straight, married men weren't cheating on their wives.

GZ: Right?

BM: [Inaudible] Like, don't even go there. Oh my gosh, because I was like, I was not having it—I was mouthy.

GZ: Yes, I mean, there's being mouthy and there's also standing up for your beliefs.

BM: [01:07:19] True. But I was this–

GZ: [01:07:23] By the way, I I admire you for that courage. I don't think I would have been able to stand up to somebody like that.

BM: [01:07:32] One of my best friends in high school, when he came back from the Gulf where he started college, and he was actually at Jonesboro, and he had a lot of friends in the LGBTQ community at ASU, and he was always telling them about the risks I was having at UCA. And one of his friends used to call me queer warrior cat.

GZ:[01:07:58] Oh my God, that's funny.

BM: [01:08:12] I was also scared and everything. I remember walking–Cindy will tell you. Do you have Cindy in class at all?

GZ:I have not had Cindy yet, but I have had many interactions with her and she's very sweet.

BM: [01:08:25] When you see her next, ask her to tell you the story. Me walking her back to her dorm at Hughes Hall for safety. We had–there were some assaults going on campus and campus at that time was not well lit at all. There was like a night light on the whole campus. I mean, it was it was better than that but not much. They had said, “Women please don't be walking alone. Always get someone to walk you back to the dorm. Hughes Hall was like, at the ass of nowhere on the far side. I'm walking her back and we get in front of the student center and there used to be all these big overgrown bushes. And there were stray animals and lots and lots of stray cats. And Cindy and I are walking along and we're talking, and, of course, I'm not paying attention to anything I'm just

running my mouth and this cat wiggles the bushes and makes this noise. I jumped and landed on my butt and Cindy said, "Some help you are!"

BM: [01:09:50] Oh, she does her rainbow rights class. So if you get a chance to take that class—

GZ: [01:09:58] I was actually going to take that class. But it conflicted with my schedule and I wasn't able to unfortunately.

BM: [01:10:05] Yes if you get the chance. I used to go and talk with them about queer subcultures. Because I lived in New York for a while and was exposed to a lot of different subcultures, and I would always go—when I lived in Conway, we're always—was great.

GZ: [01:10:37] Well, I don't want to keep you too much longer, so. Is there any advice that you would have for future or current honor students?

BM: [01:10:52] Do the reading. Do the reading.

BM: Absorb every moment because it's fleeting and make the connections with your classmates. Don't discount that. The connections that I made in Honors are people who are as close to me as my blood family. Closer. Take advantage of that. Be a part of your community. Get involved and take every advantage that you can. Travel abroad, URGE, any of those things. Do those things. I did an URGE grant and went to Washington D.C. and went to a conference on outdoor sculpture. I went to Honduras. Things that a kid like me who grew up where I did would not have gotten otherwise. My family certainly didn't have any. Be a part of the conversation because it's hard to once you graduate. Things change. It's hard to find conversations like that, communities like that. Ideas become precious.

Yes, just get involved.

GZ: [01:13:09] Reflecting on your Honors experience, is there anything that you would go back and change about it?

BM: [01:13:16] I would actually do the reading. I was easily distracted. I'm still that way, I probably have ADHD and didn't realize it. Yeah. Oh, definitely. Or do I? I would have been more involved, I was pretty involved, certainly, but I think I would have done more. I feel like in a way, I was handicapped because I had missed out on a lot in high school, obviously being queer. You don't date. Well, all those teenage experiences, so I would be M.I.A. a lot of times from Honors. I didn't want to date in that pool because all kinds of awkwardness. There were big blocks of time where I wasn't there. I was getting the experiences that I needed, but I missed out on things. Because you're young and you think you're never going to get the chance. I wish had priorities then. For sure.

GZ: [01:15:04] Well, Bradley, is there anything else you'd like to say before we end it?

BM: [01:15:10] I really appreciate you. I really do. It's been an honor to get to talk with you—

GZ: Likewise.

BM: and to get to this bit. You give me hope. You know, you always wonder what the next generation is going to be like. That's one of the reasons that I wanted to go back and teach for Honors when I was able to because you always wonder, like, what's it going to—we know it's going to change, it's not going to be worse. I'm glad. But it's it's really an honor to see where you guys are headed I appreciate it.

GZ: [01:15:59] I appreciate you so much. Thank you. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to talk to you. I'm going to go ahead and pause or stop the recording.