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gay, years, people, pride, aids, gay pride, community, young, hear, gay men, stonewall, dealing, learn, lesbian, celebrate, work, accept, men, great, women

SPEAKERS

Jack Jackson, Larry Lingle, John Burgo, Jimmy Carper



Jimmy Carper 00:01

Go. Okay, Laurie?



Larry Lingle 00:05

Yes. My name is Larry Langal.



Jimmy Carper 00:09

And just don't repeat the questions and like I said, Well Edit. Edit me out. What is your name? When did you come to accept your being gay?



Larry Lingle 00:20

What was that like for you? Okay, my name is Larry Lingle, I accepted being gay in 1974 when I was 37 years old, calculate fast. It was very liberating when I finally came to terms with it. I'd known I think for some years I was gay, but really come to terms accepting it was about a year after my divorce, and it was, as I say, very liberating. To hold this, would that be easier? Yeah, not sure i saying, Oh. Where were you? Where were you in? 1969? What were you doing? What was your life like?



01:05

1969 I was married. I was living in Fort Worth, Texas. I was teaching history at Texas Christian University. And that was it.



 Larry Lingle 01:20

When did you first hear about the Stonewall Rebellion? What did you think about gays and lesbians rioting in the streets of New York?

 01:29

Well, of course, I heard about it when it happened because I read The New York Times. My feeling was, again, secretly knowing I was gay. I was very sympathetic. I was involved in the anti war demonstrations myself at the time, I thought it was a great thing.

 Jimmy Carper 01:49

Work What does Lesbian Gay Pride mean to you now? How will you celebrate Pride this year?

 01:58

Well, let me answer the let me say celebrated by being a be in the parade Sunday, the store our store, Lobo will have a booth at Star night 91. So I guess in that sense, that's part of how we celebrate it. We decorate the store. We celebrate Gay Pride Week, actually year round at Lobo. But we do get a little more involved during Gay Pride Week. What Gay Pride means to me. Again, I think it's something that everybody should experience here around. I think it's very important that we take pride in being gay and lesbians, first of all, because it's, it's good for us individually. Everybody, I think should have a very positive attitude towards themselves. And it comes I think, with pride, and I think they should be proud if they are gay, and if they're lesbian.

 Jimmy Carper 02:49

have gay and lesbian people changed much in your experience? How and why do you think?

 02:59

Again, my experience of gay life has since 1974. As far as changes, yeah, radical changes, I guess since I came out. AIDS has completely changed our community, I think the main thing I noticed is, and Bill White, my lover and I have discussed this often. In the early years. We seem to do very few women, gay women are lesbians. And we find now that some of our best friends are women. I think that's been a radical change. I think for both men and women, gay men and women discovering suddenly that there's this whole other community that we actually do have something in common. And I think part of that is because family more and more gay men are realizing that there's a hell a lot more to being gay than sex. And once they get that through their heads, then they realize that we have a lot of common goals and just common ideals that we share with gay women. I think it's that's been the biggest change I've seen it's been it's been radical What do you think of young people in the community today? Do you have any advice for them?



04:19

Well, I guess my only contact mainly with with younger members of the community is primarily through the store or through the caucus or other activities. I find them much more liberated than I ever was at that age or even after that age. If I have any concern is I think a lot of younger gay men don't always understand the the impact of aids I think there's a tendency to just slough off safer sex among younger man that that concerns me, but otherwise I find that much more together much more dedicated, much more comfort. Trouble with themselves. And certainly younger men and women were years ago.



Larry Lingle 05:07

Okay, one more. What do you expect your life to be like in the future?



05:15

I don't. As far as the future. I think I take the attitude. I don't know, maybe more people take the attitude. I think we are at least I think more in terms of day to day at this point. Given the health crisis and everything else, I don't really plan even in terms of the business, I don't really plan that far ahead. And as far as life, we really do take it a day at a time. And that's, we like to think it's getting better every day. We watch all the reports say that are coming out of Italy right now in terms of the AIDS conference. There seems to be a lot of I think hopeful signs on the AIDS front. But again, I think I'm just hesitant to to plan too far ahead at this point.



Larry Lingle 06:03

Great.



Jimmy Carper 06:07

Totally different than any other interview.



Larry Lingle 06:51

Testing 123 Testing testing okay. What is your day? When did you come to expect your being gay? What was that like for you?



Jack Jackson 07:11

I'm Jack Jackson. I came to accept it. When I was about 19, which would have been almost 50 years ago. I had been aware for a long time but didn't know that they actually was a real group of people. For a long time, just like many others, I'm sure. I considered myself the only one.

L Larry Lingle 07:50

Okay, maybe closer. Okay. What, Where were you in 1969? What were you doing? And what was your life like?

J Jack Jackson 08:05

I was in Houston, Texas. readin a very ordinary, everyday sort of life. I can remember exactly where I was when I things happened. But life was pretty much on a social plane. There were a few bars and places but I didn't frequent them a great deal was leaving a reasonably quiet life.

L Larry Lingle 08:44

When did you first hear about the Stonewall Rebellion? What did you think about gays and lesbians rioting in the streets in New York?

J Jack Jackson 08:55

Well, I guess like most people learned about it literally. The next day. I thought that it was very courageous of them to stand up against what was happening and began to feel a certain surge of pride.

L Larry Lingle 09:26

What does what being gay pride mean to you now? How will you celebrate Pride this year?

J Jack Jackson 09:34

First of all, it's coming to terms accepting yourself as an individual of who you are. While I don't necessarily go out and frighten the horses in the street. I'm not. I'm not opposed to speaking out or even acknowledging the fact I mean, it perhaps arises with some people for the first time. Don't necessarily always weigh assigned, but I have done in parades. And this year, I'm honored to celebrate Pride Week by being Grand Marshal of Houston, Texas, Gay Pride Week.

L Larry Lingle 10:31

have gay and lesbian people changed much in your experience, how and why you say?

J Jack Jackson 10:40

Yes, there have been changes, because at my age, I recall, as I said earlier, things were more on the social plane, things were not very open. And there weren't many places to go. And, very

importantly, a lot of them weren't safe to go to. Since 1969, particularly, I do believe that there's been a change, people have tended to come out more, the more open. We've learned that they're far more vast than had been expected. And we began to find, support and interact. And we became more politically active, we may become more socially conscious. And I think that this has stood us in good stead, particularly during the past 10 years.

L Larry Lingle 11:59

What do you think of the people in the community today? Do you have any advice for?

J Jack Jackson 12:06

Well, they certainly do have great advantages, particularly people in their 20s and 30s. Because it has already been a path established for them. They don't have the restrictions that many of us were obliged to conform to. They are more open. They are very caring. But sometimes I wonder whether they are truly serious as to what it's all about. Because things have become so open, and so free, that it appears to me that there are many of them. While they have the awareness of the aid situation, many of them are still so to speak, on a party circuit.

L Larry Lingle 13:20

What do you expect your life will be like in the future?

J Jack Jackson 13:26

I do believe that. As time progresses now, I'm probably going to be more even deeply involved. And I have in the past, primarily for the reason that I expect to soon have more time to devote to social work, political work, and involvement in the community in general.

L Larry Lingle 14:05

You've done that for years. What brought you to it? And how can you possibly do more than you already have?

J Jack Jackson 14:19

That Well, I don't like to talk about myself, but all my life long I have been involved in caring about other people. And that wasn't only gay people. It was things that I was brought up with. And as some people are aware, I've made the statement that I learned at an early age that I am my brother's keeper. Because I carry this into other areas people who may not consider my brothers and sisters That's the reason for that was that I had an older brother who was retarded. He was six years older than I, obviously, bigger than what I was. And I was always watching out for him taking up for him. And it led me to think beyond myself and the needs of

others. And since that time, Andy and teenage early adulthood, through through church organizations, and other civic things, I've been involved in various social volunteer type things. But as I said, earlier, again, the 10 years that have passed, have taken more of my time, because I feel that my time is fleeting, and it's necessary for me to do as much as I can, because there is a much more pressing need. There during this period of time, I have been nurtured by the warmth and closeness of my friends, my brothers and sisters in the gay community.

L Larry Lingle 16:35
Sounds great.

J Jimmy Carper 17:11
Do I hear me? I hear me, okay. No instructions. Okay, what is your name? When did you come to accept your being gay? And what was that like for you? My name is John Burgo. And I first came out when to myself when I was 16, junior in high school, and 1986. And I've been dealing with it ever since. I was like 10, or 11. You know, because things that happened in Boy Scouts and everything and, and denying it, you know, and myself, even at the same time that I was lusting for all the men that were around me. And it was, I was really lucky. When I came out. The reason I came out was that an exchange student and German exchange student was living with my family and sharing a bedroom with me, and I was madly in love with them. And I had a terrible crush on him. And that's the point where I could no longer ignore the fact that I was gay, where I was just like, totally, I was really upset when he wasn't there. I was incredibly jealous of his girlfriend. And I said, you know, the reason you feel this way is because you're gay. And so the very first person I told was a teacher in high school, and she was my best friend. And things were great. I mean, things were great. She was very accepting. And very, she really made a lot of support in in dealing with us, and also in dealing with my feelings about him, which was the big stress in my life. And I just started telling people, and probably by the end of that year, I told maybe a dozen people in my high school and people that I knew and except for when I told my mother, I got nothing but fairly positive responses. And so it made me feel very confident about coming out a lot to a lot of different people. Where were you in? 1969? What were you doing? What was your life like that? I was. I was being born in September of 1969. So my life was pretty simple. Just a little Queer baby, doing the things that little Queer babies do, like most other babies. Okay, when did you first hear about the Stonewall Rebellion? And what did you think about gays and lesbians rioting in the streets in New York?

J John Burgo 19:45
I first heard about it when I was in high school. When I was a junior after I told that teacher, I was still dealing with water problems. And there was this youth counselor that came to the school once a week. And so my teacher helped me arrange a time to go See her and I went and talked to her. And then she went back to the county agency that she worked for and found everything she could in their files about gay people. And she copied made huge copies for me, and brought them back to me. And one of them was an article in the American Library Association Journal that talked about Stonewall. And I was just really excited. Because almost as soon as I came out, I was like, I was an activist, you know, I would get really pissed off when

I heard people you know, like in Congress like Jesse Helms saying stupid awful things and and when I just heard about, about it in the police riding the bar and, and, and all the patrons fighting back and everything, I just felt so excited and energized.

J

Jimmy Carper 20:48

What does Lesbian Gay Pride mean to you now? And how will you celebrate Pride this year, I think it's a time for us to remember everything that we've accomplished in the last 22 years. And to be really angry about the things that haven't gotten done, not not angry at ourselves, but angry at all the stupid people and the stupid society that stands in our way. And to remember all the things that we still have to do in dealing with AIDS and helping gay and lesbian youth. And, you know, getting some real political power for ourselves to represent ourselves in government, and the violence, you know, and all these problems that we still have to face. But to celebrate the fact that we have come so far, and that we really have a community of people who are working to end these problems. And what I'm gonna be doing this year is I'm going to events and like I've done every, every year, as soon as I came out like that, that first year when I was 16, a lesbian teacher that I knew in school, who I come out to took me to see party glances, it was my first Gay Pride Week event. And so ever since then, I've done something. And so like, I want to see play this week, and going to going to the parade, of course, and marching with the people from U of H. And, and just trying to be with as many as my friends as possible. Have gay and lesbian people changed much in your experience, how and why do you think? Well, I don't think that game was mean, people have changed too much since the time that I came out to the present, because it was only six years ago, five years ago. But I think in talking with people, and reading about the last, you know, 22 years, and even before then, I think we will have changed laundry, people are coming out more. And people are realizing more and more that, you know, when they get a negative reaction from people about their being gay, it's not their problem, it's the problem with the person who's giving them the negative reaction. And I think that's a big change in the last. I mean, it's a big change for myself, you know, from when I was 16, and I was terrified about my mother, you know, having a fit, if I if she found out I was gay to saying was she has to deal with it. It's her problem, not mine. I also think that, that people are starting to realize that the problems that we face as gay and lesbian people, no matter what group we come from, or what gender we are, or what color our skin is, or what language we speak, or what we like to do in bed, are a lot of the same problems. And we really have to work together to overcome them. What do you think of young people in the community today? Do you have any advice for I think that young people in the community today have I think they see a lot of those things that that other people saw as dividing factors, like men and women, or black and white, that divided people in the community, I think for not all young people, but for a lot of young people. They're getting over that, you know, the young men are learning to, to change their behavior towards women, so that they don't, they're not patronizing and they're not behaving and even unconsciously sexist ways. And younger women in the community are learning that there are young men who want to change and giving them the chance to change. And I think there's a feeling more that you know, rather than being gay or lesbian, or black and white wall, Queer, and we're all together, and there's a strong feeling of community. The advice I would give is that I think a lot of young gay people also tend to overlook the accomplishments of the generations before us. and that they, they look at the past 20 years and they see older people as not having, not having accomplished very much. And I think they really have to look at everything that's happened. And look at everything they've done. And learn, learn from learn from what the community has accomplished, and also the mistakes that the community has made to learn. You can't just like start over and we will not just we're not we're not coming from nowhere. We have a whole past

behind us that we have to respect. What do you expect your life will be like in the future? I don't know. I mean, better and better all the time. I think in Houston, I see a lot of changes that people are coming out more people are getting more involved in the community, that, that they're there people are saying, you know that they can do their own thing and do what they want and not feel ashamed of themselves. I feel more and more part of the community in Houston. You know, I don't know if I'll always be here. I'll probably go to law school or graduate school somewhere. But I just feel I feel really good about the future. I just don't see any specifics. That's it