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SPEAKERS

Robert Briddick, Timothy Vale

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Timothy Vale 00:00

So this is an interview with Robert Briddick conducted by Timothy Vale on September 20 2018. At Robert's home here in Houston. The topic of today's interview is Mr. Briddick's life and participation in the Diana Foundation, Houston's oldest LGBT organization when he was a member of he was also president of the organization from 2005 to 2006. How are you doing today? Bob?

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Robert Briddick 00:23

I'm really good. Thank you.

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Timothy Vale 00:25

Good. So I thought we'd kind of start from at the beginning. And so why don't you tell us a little bit about

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when and where you were born and

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what your childhood was like.

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Robert Briddick 00:36

I was born in Dallas Texas May the 19th 1937 and went through high school there graduated

I WAS BORN IN DALLAS, TEXAS, MAY THE 10TH 1937 AND WENT THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL THERE. I GRADUATED FROM WOODROW WILSON HIGH SCHOOL. I HAD WE WERE A MIDDLE CLASS FAMILY, NOT RICH, NOT POOR. AND I STARTED WORKING WHEN I WAS 13. I HAD A PAPER ROUTE, AND WAS WORKING FROM THAT POINT ON IN SOME CAPACITY, UP UNTIL I RETIRED. HIGH SCHOOL WASN'T MY FAVORITE, FAVORITE PERIOD, EXCUSE ME, WASN'T MY FAVORITE PERIOD. BUT WHEN I GOT TO COLLEGE IN NORTH TEXAS STATE, I DISCOVERED THERE WERE A WHOLE LOT OF PEOPLE JUST LIKE ME, I SUPPOSE SORT OF BLOSSOMED IN COLLEGE. OKAY, COLLEGE WAS A VERY HAPPY TIME FOR ME. I WAS I HAD A DOUBLE MAJOR ART AND ENGLISH AND THEN A MINOR IN AMERICAN HISTORY. NORTH TEXAS IN THE 50S, NORTH TEXAS STATE COLLEGE WAS A VERY VIBRANT TIME, AND IT PRODUCED A NUMBER OF PEOPLE, THE MOST NOTEWORTHY PERSON FROM THAT TIME PERIOD, WENT ON TO BE AN F TROOP, AN EARLY TV PROGRAM. I WAS INVOLVED WITH THE COLLEGE PLAYERS, NOT AS AN ACTOR, BUT IT'S AN ARTIST. AND I DID A LOT OF PROGRAMS AND ADVERTISEMENTS FOR THEM. AND WE CONSIDER OURSELVES AVANT GARDE, OF COURSE, AT THE TIME, WE WERE JUST HAVING A LOT OF FUN. AND IT WAS ONE OF THE HAPPIEST PERIODS IN MY EARLY LIFE. AND THEN WHEN I GOT OUT OF COLLEGE, I WORKED A YEAR TEACHING SCHOOL IN DALLAS. AND THEN I GOT DRAFTED. IN THOSE DAYS, WE HAD TO SERVE IN THE MILITARY, IT WAS REQUIRED. AND I HAD TWO YEARS OF ACTIVE DUTY, WENT THROUGH BASIC TRAINING AT FORT BENNING, GEORGIA, AND THEN SHIPPED OUT TO KOREA. FORTUNATELY, THE FIGHTING WAS PRETTY MUCH OVER BY THE TIME WE GOT THERE, OUR HAD STOPPED, I GUESS THE CEASEFIRE IS WHAT THEY CALLED IT. AND FORTUNATELY, WE NEVER DID HAVE TO GO INTO BATTLE WHILE I WAS THERE FOR THAT YEAR. NOT MY FAVORITE YEAR. IT WAS CONSIDERED A HARSHSHIP TO DO TO HER. AND IT WAS. BUT I CELEBRATED MY 25TH BIRTHDAY IN KOREA. AND I WAS YOUNG AND RESILIENT. SO I GOT THROUGH IT AND SURVIVED IT. CAME BACK TO THE STATES AND TAUGHT SCHOOL FOR A FEW MORE YEARS. BUT A FRIEND OF MINE, LIVING IN FORT WORTH, OWNED AN ADVERTISING AGENCY AND THOUGHT I SHOULD QUIT TEACHING AND COME TO WORK IN HIS AD AGENCY. SO ULTIMATELY, I DID AND STAYED THERE FOR ABOUT SIX YEARS. ADVERTISING IN THOSE DAYS WAS CONSIDERABLY DIFFERENT THAN IT IS TODAY. BECAUSE THE ARTISTS ACTUALLY DREW WORK, THERE WERE NO COMPUTERS. AND IF YOU WANTED TO RENDERING, THE ARTISTS ACTUALLY DID IT. AND I WAS THE THE PRODUCTION MANAGER FOR THE AD AGENCY. AND IT WAS A VERY EXCITING SIX YEARS.



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We did



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newspaper ads, direct mail pieces, TV commercials, I actually got to write some TV scripts and even was impressed timer to to acting in them. Very happy time. The ad agency went under. I was in limbo for about three weeks. But a friend of mine back in Dallas where I'd grown up was starting a Full Sail designer showroom and decorative Center in Dallas. And he needed someone to handle his advertising and also to sell which I had never done before really. And so I got this job with him and was working in his show and for two years. And then when he opened the place here in Houston, I was transferred here to manage the showroom at the definitive Center in Houston and stayed there pretty much the rest of my working life



Timothy Vale 04:59

so Growing up, what were your kind of interests, your interests? And what did you want to do? What did you want to do with life really?



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Well, I mean, my goal was to have a relationship, to honor townhouse, and to be solid. And ultimately, I managed to do all of those things, not necessarily in the order that I elected them. And I wanted to ultimately, I wanted to do some work in the community. But that came later, I was very happily involved with my friends, playing bridge cooking, we formed a cooking club, which is still in existence, the core minutes. And we traveled a lot together, as well as working hard. But my life changed in the late 80s. The advent of the AIDS crisis changed everything. For everybody that I knew it affected all of our lives. And I was in a long term relationship at that time, and he was one of the early aids victims, he got sick on the 15th of August and died on the 31st. And this impacted my life enormously. I did not content content, I did not get the disease, which is another story. But it impacted me enormously. And from that point on, like a lot of my friends wanted to do something. I wanted to do something serious to help. But we really didn't have any experience with helping in this area, because it was new to all of us. And it quickly became obvious that the most pressing need was for money. And so we got into the business of fundraising. And again, we didn't know much about it. So we kind of flew by the seat of our pants, and made it up or learned as we went along, kind of like on the job training. And I have been very active in the community in that regard, ever since the late 80s. In one degree or another.



T Timothy Vale 07:40

So I know you mentioned I know you mentioned your interest in traveling. And I was figuring Why don't we talk about that a little bit. Where did your interest in traveling?



07:52

When I was little, taking vacations was a big deal. But we took our vacations here in the United States, because we didn't have a lot of money. And my father's hobby was fishing. So we generally went somewhere where he could fish. But we went to a lot of far flung places. And the great outdoors really captured my imagination, even as a little boy. And then as I grew up with mice interested in history, I wanted to go to some of the places that I read about in history books, and it just sort of expanded from there. When I was in Korea, we got to take r&r and the government would fly as different places as planes are available. And so I got to go to Japan to Japan, and spent a two week r&r In Japan, which was incredible in 1961. Because when you got out into the countryside there, the people were still dressed in the traditional kimonos, you know, now in Tokyo, it was like being in New York, it was a very westernized city. But out in the countryside, it was very much as it had been two years ago. And it just sort of my interest in trails sort of grew from that. When I was back in the United States to buddies and I, we were all school teachers at the time, we had a summer off, and we decided we were going to go to Europe. And in those days, they had a book called Europe on \$5 a day. You could actually do it, believe it or not. Because we were traveling on a shoestring. And we rented a car and drove that we were all over Scandinavia and Norway, Denmark. And then all over Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Italy. It was an incredible trip. And my mother would have died if she'd seen some of the places I slept. cuz economy was the name of the game. But we had a lot of fun. And it was a very enriching experience. I think I saw every church in Rome. If I missed any there weren't significant, among other things that we saw. And Rome is still one of my favorite cities, I've now been there three times. And it's one of my favorite places. In 2000, I got to go to Russia, I've always had a absolute fascination about Imperial Russia. So this was the realization

of a life lifelong trip. And we were in Russia two weeks and half the time we were in Moscow and half in St. Petersburg. And I told the friend that travel, but I said, we're gonna stay in five star hotels, we're going to have an English speaking guide, and we're going to have a driver, I'm not going to fight the Cyrillic alphabet. And we did that and it was worth every penny. And I would very much like to go back to see the things that we missed. There's so much to do, and see that you just can't do it all in two weeks. And I still traveling. I've traveled to Europe a number time with some my young friends. They've taken me abroad. We've been to England, to Italy. And we're going this Christmas, we're going to Nuernberg for the Christmas market. And we're going to Dresden and Krakow, Prague and Warsaw, those areas of Czechoslovakia, and Poland, I have never been to so I'm very excited about that.

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Timothy Vale 11:43

Do you have an avid so do you haven't had any story that traveling adventure that you would consider like most special or?

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Special?

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Timothy Vale 12:01

I think when I was in Russia, with the guide, he was a very excellent guide. And we had set specific things we wanted to see before the trip and it was all prepaid. And you paid for the trip by which items you wanted to go and see. But after we'd been there a day, he said, you know more about our history than some of the Russians that I know. And he said, I think you would kind of like to see, and Dada. And so he took us to some places that were not part of our trip. One was Peter the Great's log house, it's a very famous place. He took us to one of the working cathedrals there which was in the 60s most of the churches are still closed. But there was one that with I think it was St. Nicholas was that I may be wrong about that. But I think he was the patron saying that the sailors and the comments never shut it down. And they were having a service. And these were just a few of the extras that he added in. And I was I was very proud of that. Because I never thought of myself as knowing that much about the history. But apparently he thought I did. And that was that made a special trip even more special.

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Timothy Vale 13:24

Right? So when did you when did you realize that you were that you were gay? And what was it kind of like in those days?

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I was 11. Believe it or not? A lot of people have trouble believing that. But it's true. And I realized in gym class that I was more interested in looking at the boys in the locker room, and I wasn't playing baseball or football, which I was never very good at always the last one chosen.

It does affect you believe it or not. But anyway, I became very aware of that. And the like when you were playing touch football and things like that. I would respond to the touch internally, you know, in a different way, then, obviously, it was meant. But I realized that it was being touched like that was very wonderful. And you had to be very quiet about it because there was nothing open about gay life. And then of course I didn't know it was gay that when I was 11, but gay people have an uncanny sense of finding each other. And so I found a gay friend in high school, actually, when we were 13 I guess separate in junior high school. But anyway, we went on to high school together and he was Sperry out there. And he knew an older man who was mentoring gay kids, and took me to this house where the solar cake did this was. And that there I met a lot of older gay people. And in fact that better man, and he's 30 She fell in love with me and taught me all the ropes about gay life. And I was 15. It was a sad end because the the police, of course, got onto this man and arrested him and he went to jail for mentoring the gay kids. And we were fortunate. He didn't keep any letters or anything like that. So they had no way of tracking us down. But it was quite a jolt to see him carted off to prison. But gay life in those days was all very closeted. There was there were gay bars, if you were 21. But the bars in those days were completely different. I never did go to the bars a lot. It was too dangerous. The this was the back in Dallas and the Dallas Police had vi squad people in plainclothes in the bars. And if you hit on somebody, they would arrest you for soliciting. Believe it or not, you never left the bar with somebody. If you were if you actually connected. You would go out to have coffee. Would you like to go and have coffee with me? Oh, sure. Well, let's meet at Lucas b&b Cafe. Nothing was ever said about sex, just in case. And then when you got to the coffee shop while everything kind of roll up and you got down to business. But you had to be really very careful in the bar itself. And there were periods when the police would go through the parking lot and write down license plate numbers, and then check and look you up and then let your boss know that your car had been seen a gay parking lot, things like that. It was really hateful. But it happened. So professional people entertained a lot at home. And more so than in the bars and God just did not go to the bars a lot. Except maybe on Halloween. In those days also cross dressing or anything like cross dressing was illegal. So Halloween was a really big deal because then you could dress up as a woman and get away with it. Otherwise you have any other time that you're you'd be arrested drag shows were not common at all they were a extremely rare. And I remember going once from we heard that there was going to be a drag show in Fort Worth. And we actually drove to Fort Worth because it was such a big deal. But the people giving it would not let you in unless some of their friends would verify or vouch for you. Anyway, everybody arrived at the place and then all the doors were locked all the window blinds were drawn and then the drag show went on it was a whole different experience that the drag shows today which are I would guess commonplace. But in the in the 60s that wasn't the case a whole different world.

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Timothy Vale 18:32

And did your and I noticed you talked about your your experiences in high school, but what about in college was a different

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Timothy Vale 18:42

it was a little looser, but it was still pretty restricted that the gay people knew who was gay and who wasn't. It was a little more open particularly in the artsy grips like the music majors and the drama students in the art student. The gay element was pretty I will say accepted. But

again, it most of the behavior was not overt like you see in a lot of places today. There was still a veneer of straight behavior for the most part. Now it was at parties that would change but it was a little looser, but not anything like what it is today.

 T Timothy Vale 19:32

So I know you kind of touched on it briefly, but I thought just to reiterate. So when you moved to so when you moved to Houston, what was the city and gay community like at the time?

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This was in 1974 and I had been dating someone here previously, so I knew a lot of people when I came we had quit dating by the time I got here. Because we were opening the Houston decorative center. This was a really big deal for the interior designers here in Houston. So they had a big open house for all of us who work at the decorative center to introduce us to other people. So I had an immediate built in group of friends. Again, I still didn't do the bar scene very much, so I can't really talk about the bars a whole lot. From a personal standpoint, again, most of the entertaining and such was done at home brunches, dinner parties, card parties, board game parties and things like swimming parties. Almost most almost all of my social activity was in people's homes at that time. Things were beginning to loosen up but still weren't like they are today.

 T Timothy Vale 20:59

And how was the city itself? Like, what did you think of Houston?

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At that time, Montrose was the gay ghetto. I'm using that with quotes around it. Because as today, this is where the majority of the gay bars were. And there were more bars in this area, then. But this area was kind of seedy outside. And a lot of the this was an area that a lot of street hustlers worked. And it was considered kind of a shady area. The city was a lot smaller than

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 T Timothy Vale 21:41

gaillac was still centered in Montrose, more so than now because everything is kind of gotten urbanized. The FBI is in modules. And the escalation of the cost of living here has driven a lot of gay people out of the area. And a lot of gay bars are closed. And so it's changed a lot. I I guess you you just have to go with change, because a lot of people don't like it. But it's inevitable.

Especially when money directs so many things. And the cost of the property has gotten so valuable in this particular area that is just squeezed out a lot of the gay is still hanging on, but it's sorted by thread.

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Timothy Vale 22:35

So how did you how did you come to hear of the Diana's

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I don't know whether you're familiar with Marian Coleman or not, but Marian Coleman is one of the icons in the gay community here in the lesbian community. She's probably won more awards than any five other people for her community activists. She's retired now and doesn't do quite as much as she used to be. She's very good friend of mine. And during the 80s, she and I had worked together on a lot of fundraising events. And we have a tremendous mutual respect for each other. And she was a big dynamic. And she was the one that felt like I needed to get involved with them, and actually sponsored me and mentored me into the organization in the late 90s. Then I, after I had been Molesey that was in 98, I think so. By the time 2005 rolled around, she wanted me to run for president. She felt like that my personal style, if

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Timothy Vale 23:49

that's the best word

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would benefit the organization. And so she encouraged me to run for president and actually beat the bushes for me, and help me get elected president. And that was in 2005.

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Timothy Vale 24:07

So, yeah. So continuing on with our theme of the Diana's, I was thinking of asking you, you know, what was the organization like back then when you first got to Houston?

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It was

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well, it was it was a little more private than it is now. It was it was still a evolve from being a social organization into a fundraiser. Most of the major organizations at that time did that as a result of the AIDS crisis. And Diana was right along with them. But it was still, you had you still

had to be sponsored into the organization and voted in it was not just a shoo in thing or write a check or something like that. It was a very close knit organization. It was oftentimes accused of elitism. But that was mainly from people outside the group looking in, and that was their perception. From their point of view, I never felt it was elitist. We caught a lot of heat at the time because we didn't have anything but Caucasians in the organization. But as I tried to tell people that not you know, that's because binary groups had never applied to our and never been involved with any members and expressed interest in the organization. It wasn't, it wasn't a concerted effort to keep them out. It was just that no interested ever been expressed. But it was a little, it was very close knit. And at that time, about 20% of the members were lesbians. So it wasn't all gay men at that time, but we had a healthy lesbian contingency. Marian Coleman, being the foremost someone in the organization at that time. Even still, even though we were doing fundraising, the big deal was the diner awards show, which is, you know, their dining awards were a checkoff on the Academy Awards. It's a roast. And then in the fall the die in a country dinner Central's country dinner was the second big event of the year. And those are still very much the mainstays of the organization. All of the fundraising has emerged as more Well, I would say more important, equally important as a social aspect.

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Timothy Vale 26:50

So I so I know this question wasn't on the draft, but I figured I'd ask anyway. Because you mentioned the image and how the Asian crisis was both a turning point for the Diana's and also for yourself as well. And I figured I'd ask that ask about what that was like. It was horrible. It was horrible.

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It was frightening. The biggest problem at the time, the advent of the crisis was nobody knew anything about it, it just sort of came on the scene. cabanes cabanne. And the doctors didn't know what it was. It wasn't called AIDS. In those days, it was, I remember it being referred to as the gate cancer, among other things. But the it was the unknown thing that was the most frightening. And in the initial beginning, it was considered a death sentence, if you've got it, you were going to die, because they had no real knowledge about how to treat it accurately. And as a result of that, that made everybody looking over their shoulder. As he got it, he got it, whatever. And then print started dropping like crazy. And the two week turnaround was not unusual as someone gets sick and two weeks later be gone. And when you're exposed to that day in and day out, it's very frightening. It's horrible. I can remember going to visit friends in the hospital and who were who were dying, and others said you don't want to go you might get it or you would go to the hospital and they would dress you up like a hazmat suit trying to you know, with gloves and the hair all covered in a smock and face mask and all of this. It was unbelievable. We we lost a an entire generation of talent. It hit the gay community hardest initially. And of course at that time, they were referring to it as gay agencies because that this was before women had been diagnosed with it. It was the concept of safe sex gradually evolved as a result of all this but up until that time, it was safe sex was not really known or practice per se. But I think the fear is the thing I remember the most. And the sadness. I I was at a fundraiser one night gala and asked to give a talk and I said something there that I'm going to repeat to your camera. When I went to five funerals in one week, I quit crying. I haven't cried to this day. When my 100 friends died, I quit counting I noticed seem like awful statistics, but they're real. And my experience was not singular other people experienced the same thing. It's,

and to this day, I have trouble going to a hospital. When a friend is sick, just normal sickness or an operation, I have a traumatic experience going into a hospital. And I know it stems from those days. I know it does. But for those of us who survived there, some people had a, why did I survive guilt feeling? I never had that, fortunately. But it did, it did change our lives totally. And I would like to think I'm not as frivolous. As I was before this. I'd like to think I'm a little more serious. It's, and it's not over yet, you know, I work with young people, because with the treatments that they have now, and the cocktails and what other treatment methods, they contain it, but they don't cure it. And a lot of young people don't seem to grasp this idea. And I'm worried about that. Not that I can do anything about it, but it's it's not cured. It's contained. It's kind of like

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what is the treat with insulin? These diabetes, like diabetes, you know, they can contain it and they can give you medicine for it. But it doesn't cure it. Thank you. It's having a senior moment.

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Probably had more before the day. So. I don't know what I answered your question. Yeah. So

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I know you answered it on an individual level. But how about the Diana's how did

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they respond? Well, that's what Diana really got serious about fundraising. And Dinah has always

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tried to,

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to direct their fundraising, towards smaller groups that would fall through the cracks of like the big grants and things like that. They've always tried to give their money to smaller groups like, say, the PIP patrol, or something like that, which the larger grants might ignore and pass over. And they've tried to do a broad range of donations to different types of groups. And what have they had given several scholarships and things like that.

Timothy Vale 32:55

But they're still very social. So maybe as a follow up as a follow up question leading up to your, your experience as the president of the organization, what was it like in those years between the 1980s and you're mentioning 2005.

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Timothy Vale 33:19

In the dance? Well, I enjoyed it very much. I was very active. On the writing committee, they had a secret committee that had been established for many, many years to write the awards. And it was considered a great honor if you were asked to be on the writing committee. And I was fortunate enough to be invited by one of the longtime members. And so I was very active in writing awards, almost from the beginning, on my induction into dialogue. It was always a self contained, autonomous committee within the organization. And put, nobody knew who it was, but of course, everybody didn't know who it was. And in those days, the awards were pretty. Pretty strong. Either. Have you ever been in a shower? Have you seen any of these? The way I teach? Well, the words are pretty. Let's just say I say strong, pre mean sometimes. The theory the existing theory was if you play you pay, so if you did outrageous things, you would probably get die in a war. But it was a roast and it was always been and infant. But some of them got pretty, pretty serious. Through the years, they have tempered this and their words are not quite as painful as they once were. They're saucy, but not going for the jugular vein.

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Timothy Vale 35:24

So when you you became president in 2005, what was your experience like during that one year?

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Okay, I'm gonna level with you. It was a very unpleasant year, very unpleasant year, which is the reason I was at one year one term president

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Timothy Vale 35:50

the Dionis can have a serious award, this, the roast awards that are done to the members, but we give a serious award called the Dianna Award, which is for community service. And this usually reaches outside of the organization. This year, Kim Ogg got it just for example. And it's not given every year, it's only given as the as it's decided that someone is deserving of it. Okay. The year I was president, Mary Coleman approached me and wanted the lady victoria, who started the pet patrol, she thought she was very deserving. Okay. I agreed with her. She, it was an incredible organization. If y'all don't y'all are familiar with the pepper troll or not. But it was designed to take care of the pets of people with AIDS, who simply could not afford to keep

their pets. So they paid to have been fed, and they would walk the dog and look at it so that the people who were sick to keep their pets It was a wonderful, wonderful thing. Anyway. Octoman Yes, she's very deserving. So Marian told her. Tori, you are going to get the Diamond Award this year. And so she bought two titles for the award show at about \$2,000 apiece. And at the next board meeting, my board who apparently had some issues with Mary and I didn't notice at the time I said, Well, Bob, you know, you can't do that simple. One on say, well, the board has to vote for the Diane award, you can't give it as president, the board has to Okay. Okay. So I call them I call them emergency board meeting, thinking that they would go along with this. So they voted not to give it to him. Which really pissed me off. So here we're sitting in this meeting, that the board is there, they've all said, Well, we're not going to do this. And I said, Okay, well, who's gonna call Torian tell her. And the silence was deafening. So I and another member who knew her both called and I have always worked on the premise. I did this in business, you got a problem tell the truth. And so I just laid it out in the title and Satori I screwed up. She was very gracious about it. And she understood that she cancelled her two tables. Then Marian Coleman got really ticked off about this. And she and every lesbian in the organization resigned on mass, we lost 20% of the membership just right across the board. Well, subsequently, I learned that some of the people on the board at that time had issues with Marian and this was really a power play on their part, to sell some scores with her. I didn't know it at the time, but I found that out later, the damage was done. I I was I was ready to resign as president because I was pissed off. But that generation, if you make a commitment, you're gonna stick to it. So I saw it to the end, and let somebody else take over. We have the organization never recovered the lesbian membership from that time, we have one or two. But Marian was very outspoken about what had happened. So the lesbian community thought, well, we don't want to have anything to do with this organization. And understood that told me understood that. The irony is a few years ago, the recent board decided the Tory When she really should have had the war, and gave it to, like five years later, and then they said, Well, Bob, would you walk her to the podium to receive the award?



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But I did. I did.



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She was very gracious. Very happy to get it. I was happy for her. But it took a while. But the old board had to go, by the way, and a new board who realized how valuable she had been finally did the right thing. But all that was very unpleasant to me, left a very bad taste in my mouth. But it is what it is and you know, life goes on. You just suck it up, buttercup and move on.



Timothy Vale 40:47

So I guess kind of looking more towards more, of course, the President, what have you done with your What have you done with your life since stepping down from President



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within it because it didn't die. I was on the writing committee up until this year. I resigned

WRITING COMMITTEE BECAUSE IT DIDN'T GET IT WAS ON THE WRITING COMMITTEE AND THIS YEAR, I RESIGNED.
Finally, we had some against some internal eggs. When you have an organization built on roast awards, you're going to have a lot of angst and they change the bylaws. And as a result of that the writing committee is no longer autonomous, and it's become a part of the regular system. And I didn't like that. So I resigned from the writing committee. But I'm still very supportive of the organization. You know, you don't always get your way in life, and you just have to make the best of it when you don't, I don't agree with what happened. But the membership chose to change the bylaws and, and did. And so I'm, I'm not quite as active as a result of that. I'm still very supportive, money wise, and I help help the friends who were sharing like the diner award show or the country dinner, but it says, I told him, I thought we'll help you. But I don't want to share anything ever again. I'll let the younger people do that. I've served my time. And I'll I'll help but I won't share. And there is a big difference. If you aren't already you've shared any events or not been? Did you have you know exactly what I'm talking about?

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Timothy Vale 42:26

So I felt like I needed to, I felt like I needed to ask this question at the break, because we never did get to it. But I know we noticed your extensive art collection. And I thought we just talked about that for a second. How did that start?

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Timothy Vale 42:45

Well, I art was one of my majors in college and I've always done artwork even since when I was a little boy. And then of course, taking art history in college really opened up a whole world to me. Artists and what have you. And I became obsessed with Tissot's work. He was I don't you may or may not be familiar with his work. But he was real big in Paris at the end of the 19th century. And he did the famous Moulin Rouge posters that you see advertised a lot of the story when I was in college was what's the definition of an intellectual. That's somebody who knew Toulouse-Lautrec was before Moulin Rouge was made the original movie. Anyway, I became very obsessed with his work and a work of the Impressionists and things like that. And it's just sort of grew from there. And then the Euro worked in advertising and public relations that compounded my interest. And on the wall right there to the left of your to the right here by the door, or to lose my tracks. I was actually able to find some that I could afford, once upon a time and I always wanted to own some so and some of the artwork was donated to me by artist when, when I was in the Design Center. We carried artists and if you sold enough of their work, they would give you a piece and I have several pieces by the artist Jamali. Again, he gave them to me because I sell so much of his work. I could never afford it. Even then it was expensive. And I went through a period where I was really obsessed with Asian art. So you'll see a lot of Japanese woodblock prints. And I know a lot of artists and we trade those a piece on the easel by Cyril Flores over here. The handy dandy we he would trade up to me for a piece of my artwork. There's a Richard floor on the floor over there. And it's just a kind of collect all like, not with the idea in mind that it's going to appreciate or anything like that. I don't think a collection has any soul if you collect that way, I just clicked the things that really appealed to me. And friends who are my age or older, keep saying, Bobby, it's time to start downsizing. You're too old to keep collecting stuff.

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45:32

QUESTION

So why?

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Timothy Vale 45:34

What does age have to do with that? My executor is going to have a full time job, just getting rid of all this stuff. But in the meantime, I enjoy living with it, you know, it brings me great pleasure. And I move stuff around you, you come next month, and you might see a completely different arrangement of artwork. Because I get tired of things being in the same place all the time. There's a lot of Mexican colonial art up the stairwell, I went through a period where I was obsessed with Mexican colonial art, which may sound strange, it's all religious base. Now, I'm atheist. But there's something wonderful about the art form that it really appeals to me. And I have, there's several carvings that are really museum quality. Santiago on horseback over here, and then the St. Michael, which is on the stairwell. These are both 18th century pieces, and then museum quality. Again, though, but because I liked them. And I'm still producing art myself, I had four shows at the DMLs and gallery, I do cut paper collage. Now I'm doing them with found objects and but I haven't had a show in about four years that I'm okay with that. Because it's the creative process. I really like. I'm not driven to show the work. I do sell it from time to time, but it's not a driving force for me. But I love living with beautiful things. And I guess I will keep doing it as long as I live and can afford it. Why not?

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Timothy Vale 47:20

It so maybe kind of starting to think about kind of like looking back at looking back on everything you've experienced and witnessed and everything. What do you think about all the changes that have taken place and Houston in the gay community since you arrived?

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Timothy Vale 47:40

Well, up until this year, I was very happy about it all. I felt like we made a lot of progress. I'm really concerned about the current political situation as it relates to gay people. Because there's a lot of factors out there that can impact us. The event Jellicle Tea Party group or so my way or the highway attitude. The Republicans being anti gay. We have a bigot vice president. And, among many other things, all this bothers me. And of course, what I've tried to explain to my idiot Republican friends, sorry, the few I have learned is what really worries me the most is the supreme court situation because this president can possibly put as many as three new members on that court. Well, that's hurt. The current thing with Kavanaugh is a perfect example of what I've been fearing all along. Because for all the all the rhetoric about what a good guy he is, he's still an ultra conservative, and that will tip the court for generations to come. And I won't live to see it, but I worry about things like Roe v. Wade, gay marriage and a few other things that we have gained, because the court can reverse this decision. You know, people look at me when I say that, well, you know, slavery was upheld by the Supreme Court for years. Until it was reversed, you know, these things these inroads the gay community has made can be reversed as well. And that worries me. So I see optimism and Beto O'Rourke and Joseph Kennedy the third, I have my fingers crossed, in both cases, but I'm really I'm really anxious right now about the future of the gay community with the current climate that we're living through.



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And



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so as a result, I I too old to get out and marching the streets, although eventually I may have to, but I give money to the ACLU and to Sierra Club. All Americans United things like that, that I'm never going to be fighting for the issue that I'm in favor. It's a very scary time we're living through I think, and gay people should never take anything for granted. Believe me, believe me, the the ultra lunatic fringe evangelicals will take it all away from us if they could. They're horrible people.



50:29

If you're going to bend your arm sore, I suspect you're not. I wouldn't be surprised if you were I, I've had to unfriend a lot of people on Facebook because of it.



Timothy Vale 50:44

So, on that note, do you think about are there any kind of challenges within the gay community itself that still are QC that still needs to be addressed?



Timothy Vale 50:58

Yes, I do not understand what Kevin Republican I'm sorry. How there can be a gay group supporting an organization that Dems our lifestyle and will take it away from us is beyond me, I have posted several times on Facebook. Please explain this. To me. I have several political friends I have posted on their message board, will somebody please explain how Log Cabin Republicans can justify it. And so far, nobody has, nobody has come forward. The fact that this can exist really worries me. This the the best hope we have is to hang together. And if we don't do that, it could be our undoing. And groups like that are to me very detrimental to the gay issue in the gay cause. I don't take anything for granted as far as what we have achieved, because it's been too hard to get here. And I've seen too much. And



Timothy Vale 52:02

it's it's frightening to me to see gay people behave that way. As you were saying about the the internal issues within the gay community that still exists today. I didn't. Oh, you were still talking about? Well, I think I think that the key



Timothy Vale 52:20

if we could do it would be to interact more the different organization to different key

organizations, to cooperate, interact more together, I think that would be the best route to go for all gay people. Because the vote is the bottom line here. And if all the gay organizations could take a like or think in agreement, it would be good for the for the whole movement. I don't know that that will necessarily ever happened. But I think that that would be the key. It's it's like the women have the women can control every election if they wanted to, because they've got the majority of the vote. And there's a lot of power in that kind of organization if we could have some individual to organize everybody. Again, I don't know that I will see it happen.

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Timothy Vale 53:19

And when you think about the future for the Diana's

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well, they are

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actively

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seeking membership, people that will be able to contribute to the organization, it's an ongoing thing. And

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it is a very

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Timothy Vale 53:50

vital part of, of the organization to get the numbers on. The current president is very dedicated toward expanding the membership. And like any organization, you know, we have a certain amount of attrition every year. And so we are working diligently to fill those slots, but not to just have a warm body there but somebody who is truly interested in working with the organization and contributing to quality individuals. And that's pretty much up to the members to reach out to their friends and present them and so forth.

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Timothy Vale 54:35

So as maybe like a final as our final question for today. If you know based on your life, your experience, you had to say anything to to maybe a younger gay person or someone looking to get involved in the community, whether it be the Diana's or another organization, what advice

would you give

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Timothy Vale 55:05

Find something to be involved with. That really is reflective of your personality and your interest, first and foremost. And do it with dedication, don't just do it to use up two or three days a week, going to meetings or whatever, do it with true dedication. And give it your all. Don't just give it lip service, but really put your shoulder to the will and work within the organization. Hopefully for some kind of a meaningful experience for yourself, as well as contribution to the organization.

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Timothy Vale 55:47

It's it's easy to be

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involved with this superficial things. We all like to have a good time we all like to party in real life during but it's also good to dedicate a part of your life to something responsible and give back to the community.

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Timothy Vale 56:13

All righty. Well, thank you very much, Bob. It was a pleasure. It was a pleasure talking with you and it was certainly a fascinating interview. Well, thank

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56:21

you. Very honored to be a part of this