

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Glenn Ronald Ducote, Sr.

COLLECTION: 4700.2115

IDENTIFICATION: Louisiana State University bachelor's and Law School graduate; Attorney

INTERVIEWERS: Whitney Craig, Elaine Maccio

SERIES: Baton Rouge's LGBTQ Community: Then and Now

INTERVIEW DATE: November 11, 2009

FOCUS DATES: 1970s - 2009

ABSTRACT:

Tape 3967

Introduction; Ducote is sixty-eight; was active in student government at Louisiana State University; was married for sixteen years, has two adult sons; describes community involvement with United Way and other organizations, some that he helped to found; his wife founded an organization in the aftermath of school desegregation; racial justice is important to him; describes community involvement and service related to gay community and AIDS; pulled back from many organizations because it was time for other people to become involved; was a founding member and first secretary of the Louisiana Gay Political Action Caucus (LAGPAC) in 1980; he didn't come out until he was almost forty, knew from puberty that he was different; Ducote knows interviewer Craig's grandparents from Rayne, Louisiana; he suppressed the gay part of his life, married someone he met at LSU; counselled with chaplains at LSU's Newman Club who said his gay feelings were just a phase that would pass; had a happy marriage for sixteen years; previously saw a psychiatrist in Baton Rouge who said that there was nothing wrong and advised him to build his self-esteem and be honest with himself; around age forty, began feeling depressed; frequent travel with his wife brought him to San Francisco where he toured the gay neighborhoods; that led to more feelings of depression; scheduled another trip to San Francisco and signed up for a workshop called the Advocate Experience led by David Goodstein; felt he was the only married man dealing with gay feelings, another participant shared his similar experience; part of the program was writing a letter to someone you cared about, he wrote to his wife; upon arriving home, gave her the letter and they cried and discussed trying to make the marriage work; he and his wife attended the EST program; he got a sense of himself through the Advocate and EST seminars; fear of telling his parents; agreement with wife that he could spend every third weekend in New Orleans didn't work, so they divorced; divulged the news to friends at a New Year's Eve party, some friends took it well, others got ugly; has no recollection of Stonewall Riots; telling his two sons about the reason for the divorce; he was especially close with his twelve year old son, got him ready for school each day; after immediate

family, "I didn't really care who knew"; when he came out in 1980, gay scene in Baton Rouge was not acknowledged, there really wasn't a gay community; Larry Fremin founded the Krewe of Apollo; AIDS crisis in early '80s brought the community together, individuals stepped forward and organizations were founded; First Thursday, a social organization for men, started off as an elite group, he rallied for more inclusion; social scene around bars and clubs was active; became an alcoholic after coming out, feels he was making up for lost time going to bars four or five nights per week; went into recovery in 1982 and attended Alcoholics Anonymous meetings for gays; ten-year relationship with a doctor ended when he stopped drinking and the doctor didn't; other long-term relationships he's had; participation in a gay men's support group; feels he wouldn't be alive if not for good social work; he and his wife saw Marian Wood for therapy; he maintains a friendship with his wife who has been remarried for over twenty years; recalls a wonderful Thanksgiving dinner with the doctor, both of their former wives, their children, their parents, and some in-laws, "a Norman Rockwell moment that will never be memorialized on the cover of the *Saturday Evening Post*; had no regrets about coming out, no adverse effects in his job with the attorney general's office; at George's Place one night, group of straight men came in and began harassing patrons, group was ejected and began burglarizing cars in the parking lot, police were called but sided with the thieves and arrested the bar patrons; that incident led to a plan for sensitivity training for the police department which never happened; disturbing experience with Mayor Kip Holden when attempting to have gay and lesbian representatives at Democratic convention in New Orleans, Kip assured Ducote that he would vote in favor of those representatives, but voting records showed he did not; Ducote "wrote him a long letter in which I told him that civil rights were not just for blacks and that we had our own issues and that we needed support"; concerns of some gay men getting older that they don't have family to look after them; he has his children and his former wife to help him; is disappointed at friends who have not stayed close over the years; most important relationship for him now is his aunt Levie, a nun, who is still living at age ninety-four; she is the first person in his extended family that he came out to, he cherishes their relationship; suggestion to interview Bob Patience; conclusion.

TAPES: 1 (T3967)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 59 minutes

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 23 pages

OTHER MATERIALS: Biographical data form; Correspondence (2 pgs)

RESTRICTIONS: None