

Transcript for Rev. Harry Stock interview from the Called and Holy: Virginia Theological Seminary LGBTQIA+ Oral History Project

Joshua Waits: This is Joshua Waits, the archivist at Virginia Theological Seminary. I'm here with the Reverend Harry Stock. The date is May 10, 2023, at approximately 1:30 in the afternoon. Reverend Stock, thank you for joining me today.

Harry Stock: Thank you for having me.

Joshua Waits: So we're going to start with just some basic biographical information. Could you please tell us your full name for the record?

Harry Stock: Reverend Harry B. Stock.

Joshua Waits: Alright. And your preferred way to be addressed?

Harry Stock: Harry.

Joshua Waits: Harry, alright. And then we, would you mind telling us how you identify, and the pronouns you prefer us to use?

Harry Stock: He and him.

Joshua Waits: Alright. And your sexual identity?

Harry Stock: Gay.

Joshua Waits: Gay, alright. And when and where were you born?

Harry Stock: I was born in Steubenville, Ohio on December 5, 1940, just a few years ago.

Joshua Waits: So continuing on with some basic biographical information, would you mind sharing with us some of your autobiography, both sort of historical and spiritual autobiography as it were?

Harry Stock: My spiritual autobiography, my spiritual autobiography really began when I was in West Virginia University, my at my pre-seminary days. I bounced around a lot from, I was in a Pentecostal church, and the Evangelical church, a Charismatic church, a Lutheran church, a Baptist church, and I ended up in the Episcopal church. Quite a journey, and I struggled all those,

through all of those looking to find out where I belong.

Because I was struggling with being a gay man and at the same time having spiritual feelings. And I couldn't understand how I could have both. So I kept looking for a place that I felt I could be at home. And so I bounced from church to church to church to church. I did a lot of reading, I read a lot of different books. My, I believe my real launch into my spiritual journey was actually through Pat Boone.

Joshua Waits: Really?

Harry Stock: Yes. I was up real late one night watching the 700 Club, believe it or not. And I was doing other things and I was watching, and doing other things. And there was a woman on there. And I'm not, I don't know today what she was on there for. But she kept saying, "And I read that book. And that book just changed my life." And then I was doing things. "I read that book and that book changed my life," and I found myself sitting on the couch, saying, "What book did you read?" And then so finally, she said the book was Pat Boone's *Shout it from the Rooftops*.

So I immediately, we didn't have Amazon dot com in those days, so I, I within the next couple of days, went and ordered that book. And when I got it, I spent the day and part of the evening reading it from cover to cover without stopping. And it was just...my feet never touched the

ground. And I was really very moved by it and moved by what Pat Boone was saying about how we should be in our spiritual journey. And so I was very satisfied having read the book. A couple of days later I'm reading the newspaper. And I opened the newspaper, and there is a full-page ad

saying, "Pat Boone family appearing at this club in Pittsburgh."

And at this time I was in Morgantown, West Virginia. And I'm saying, he's appearing in Pittsburgh. So now, and get this. I pick up the phone and I call where he's staying. And the receptionist at the hotel answers. I said, "Would you please put me through to Pat Boone?"

Yeah

no, I don't think so. And, of course, I'll leave a message, and I said, "Well, would you at least talk, leave a message with his manager?" So believe it or not, the manager called me back. And I

said, "Well, I read this book," and, and, and here's what's going on with me.

And I just really wanted to have a little while with Pat to ask him some questions. And he said, "Well, I'll talk with Pat and I'll get back with you." I left it at that. And I thought that would be the end of it. Well, he did get back with me, and he said, "Look, Pat's, Pat and his family are appearing at this club in Pittsburgh." Can you come on so-and-so day, and we'll have you ,a guest to see the concert? And then Pat will meet with you after the concert.

So I went and I was ushered down to tables in the front. And I got to see the whole Pat Boone family in the concert. And when it was over, I met, a gentleman came to me and he said, "Would you please come with me?" And I said, "Yeah." We went through this door, and we started to go down this long hallway. And there was Pat Boone in a receiving line shaking hands with people. And my thought was, "I'm not going to be able to ask him anything standing in this line." And as we're getting close to the line, the guy, I stopped at the end of the line. And the guy said, "No no no, come on, I'm taking you to his dressing room."

So he takes me to Pat Boone's dressing room and he says, "I don't know how long that will be, but he knows you're here. And when, when he's finished out there, he'll, he'll come in." And he did. I mean then we had maybe a half hour, and I told him about being homosexual and struggling, you know, spiritually with it. And I got words of encouragement that, that I, I, I don't have time to tell you all of the words of encouragement that I got with him. But it was a time that that launched, really my spiritual journey. I ended up kneeling on the floor and him laying hands on me. And and, and and I'm going to be into the Holy Spirit and praying; and basically telling me, "You are who God has created you to be." And don't try to change. God is calling you, you know.

And that was the first time I had heard somebody say, "God is calling you." So that was part of my spiritual journey. That began the, uh, insight that I was getting that God was calling me to ministry. And then I ended up at The Episcopal Church in Morgantown, West Virginia. And through the Bishop of West Virginia at that time, Bishop Campbell, I began my quest of seeking out Holy Orders, and ended up here.

Joshua Waits: Did you, were you out to your bishop,

Harry Stock: Not Bishop Campbell. And following Bishop Campbell, it was Bishop Atkinson.

He was the bishop that, um, brought me here. When it came time for me to make the decision to go, to go to seminary, I really wanted to go to Union.

Joshua Waits: Right.

Harry Stock: I felt safe going there. But Bishop Atkinson was on the board here, and he made it perfectly clear, if you want a scholarship, then this is where you'd go. So this is where I, this is where I came. And this is how I ended up here at Virginia Seminary, basically, only because Bishop Atkinson was on the board. And I was told this is where I would, would come.

Harry Stock: By that, yeah, by the time I had graduated, yes, he knew. And he knew through the process. But it was an understanding that I wouldn't embarrass him, and that I would not be blatantly, you know, I I don't want to see you out marching in the street carrying signs, this kind of thing. Your sexuality is between you and God, basically. That changed with him later. We'll, but we, we'll talk about that of a couple of things that happened when I graduated.

Joshua Waits: Okay.

Harry Stock: But he basically knew that, yes.

Joshua Waits: So you get told to come to Virginia so you can have your scholarship. You apply and you get accepted. In the application process, did you tell – ?

Harry Stock: No.

Joshua Waits: – Anyone?

Harry Stock: No.

Joshua Waits: But you, so could you explain how you either came out or lived as a openly gay man at Virginia Seminary?

Harry Stock: I was a little radical because of the discrimination and the oppression I was facing, I don't know. I don't know what I thought I was gonna face when I came here. I never thought about any discrimination. But I was in the process when I left West Virginia University to come here, I was basically in the process of, of starting to come out as a gay man. And when I

got here I was a little surprised at some of the discrimination that I faced. Little things like sitting – is Johns Hall still here?

Joshua Waits: It is.

Harry Stock: Okay, that's where I was. I was sitting in the common area watching TV, three or four other guys sitting there. And somebody coming in and saying, "Hey, Bob, Lou, yada-yada, I'm going to a movie. You guys want to go?" "Yeah, we do," and they all get up and leave, but hey Harry, do you want to go? Having that kind of thing, or or having my tray in the refectory, and gonna sit down at one of the meals, and have people actually get up, actually get up and leave. because I was sitting down there. Having tracts slipped under my door with biblical scriptures, "God condemns homosexuals," or things scotch taped on my door so when I would open the door in the morning, I would see those things.

I'm not sure I, I expected that. And I'm not sure how surprised I was that I was facing it. But it caused me to be a little, you know, to be a little, little radical in the sense. I I remember my junior year when they were having the election of class president. I decided I was going to announce that I was going to run for class president. Well, that did not go up, over very well with a lot of students, especially with the, the administration. And I was literally called into the office by the dean and, blatantly told, "Do you know what would happen if some of our donors found out that a homosexual was running for our class president? How much donations and money we

could possibly lose?" That was the kind of things that, that happened.

Of course, I never withdrew from the race. I'd never had any idea that I would even get any votes. I knew I'd get about three or four because I have, I had some allies that were very good friends. I had three married couples who were extremely close and and very good friends. They were my allies. They were my support. They were my foundation that I would run to when I wanted to cry, and beat my head against the wall or something. So I knew I'd get a few votes, but I never expected to win. I only did it to put it in your face. And to be called into the office and say, "You need to withdraw because oh my gosh, we can't it known that you were running." That was kind of, you know, that was kind of a shocker.

Also my junior year, I shared something with my my class that I had never shared with anybody. Never having had the, no one, it was prior to – it was after the Pat Boone. I I was very high after the Pat Boone experience, that I knew I was being called. But I kept doing the roller coaster ride.

"Yay, I am going to, no, I'm gay. Yeah I'm gonna be a, a minister; no who are you fooling?" So I still was riding that roller coaster ride. And it was having about two weeks before I was scheduled to come in here. And I had already notified the university that I was leaving. And I was two weeks away of coming here. And I was having a really bad day.

And I went to my priest at Trinity Church in Morgantown, Father Glover. And I was sitting in his office and I'm crying. And I'm saying, "I don't know, am I making a mistake? Am I doing the right thing?" And he said, "Let's go upstairs, want to have some prayer." So we went up into the sanctuary. And now, the sanctuary there has these big stone, uh, the floor, I think it's stone. And to kneel on them, to go completely into the sanctuary and kneel on them, it was not very comfortable. And I'm kneeling on them. And he's praying.

And while he's praying I started to hear this noise. And and, and people tell this all the time about this noise that they hear. And I started hearing this really loud noise. And it kept getting louder and louder. And I thought, "Oh myy goodness, I'm gonna be sick." I'm gonna be so embarrassed of, if I get sick in front of Father Glover. And the noise became really louder. And I looked up and I could see his lips moving. And I knew he was praying but I could not hear a word he was saying. And I said out loud, "I have walked with you on a path, but your feet were bare. It's only when I put shoes on your feet that they will see where you have walked."

And as soon as I finished saying that, the noise subsided. And I looked up and Father Glover was

looking at me. And he had tears coming down his cheeks. And he pulled me up and he embraced

me. And I said, "What was that?" And he said, "I want to go down to our office," or his office. And we went down to his office, and he opened the Bible to Romans 10 verses 14-15. And he says, "How will they know about Him if one has not been called to preach? How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news." And I knew. Sorry, I get, but that's a very personal story. I never at that point ever doubted again. I never had a roller coaster ride from that point on.

I knew.

So I came into the seminary, and in our junior year at our retreat. I don't know where the retreat was. I remember the big fireplace and we're all sitting on so, those couches, and lounges, and a little over to us are sitting on the floor. Or we're sitting in a big circle. And whoever was in charge of the, of the retreat was going around asking people, "Well, what brought you here?

What was the turning point of your life when you came here?" And then the person who was not a supporter or an ally said, "Harry, what was your turning point? What brought you here?"

And I remember seeing the look on my friends', my supporters' face. That question was asked to

me, especially by the person that it was asked. And I shared that story, I said, "This is what brought me." And there were some tears when I finished that story. And it, and it was very quiet, and nobody said anything for a little while after I finished that story. And finally he, he said, went on to the next person.

Two days later I was called into the dean's office again. And I was given a business card of the therapist that the dean wanted me to see because I have the audacity to believe that God really talked to me. You know, those were the kinds of things.

Joshua Waits: Was this Dean Trotter?

Harry Stock: No this was Dean Reid.

Joshua Waits: Dean Reid.

Harry Stock: Dick Reid.

Joshua Waits: Okay.

Harry Stock: God bless him. There was a lot of homophobia here. And the the sad thing about it was they didn't know what to do with it. Faculty, I had some faculty that were very homophobic. But I had some faculty who were homophobic, but two of them, Dr. Ross, the Old Testament professor — he took the time to find out who I was. He beat me up at first, but little by little became more personal. And he began to see who is this man, Harry Stock. And I could see the homophobia, little by little being dropped by him, and he and I be, be, when I finally, by the time of my ending here — I won't say we were close friends — but we were, he was congenial to me.

Joshua Waits: So where was —was the, the majority of professors that were homophobic towards

you? Or was it just like a handful or?

Harry Stock: Of the ones that I had, pretty close to the majority. One in particular, really, really, in particular, Dr. Scott —

Joshua Waits: Yes.

Harry Stock: — God bless him. I went out. There was a gay bookstore in Washington, D.C., Lambda Rising. I went out and I bought nine books: Is the Homosexual My Neighbor? and all the uplifting books. And I went into the Dr. Scott's office, and I put them on his desk. And I said to him, I said, "You need to read these." Yeah and and no response; I mean, thank you. He never

said he opened one. I don't. I I, to this day I'm not sure if he ever did open any of them, or whatever happened to those books?

But he was extremely homophobic. So I mean I had, I had my roller coaster rides here. But like I said, I had some friends, too. I had some married couples who were, they were my support. You know they, they they were my sanctuary that I would go to when I needed to cry. And I had a lot of that. My other sanctuary was that chapel. And I just spent some time in before I came here. I came a half hour early so I could sit there. Even though it's just remnants, it's still there.

Joshua Waits: Right.

Harry Stock: That was my sanctuary, too. It was very, very, um, important for me to be here

when I was here. Even though I was going through what I was going through, this is where God wanted me to be. And I embrace that. And I had times when I saw the sunlight, and the light, and

I felt the warmth of this place. I've had those times. But I had more times when I felt the, um, pressure of the homophobia, you know, swallowing me up and beating me up.

Joshua Waits: When I, before you came in today I went through different issues of the Ambo [PH] from the time that you were here, the student newspaper. And there was one article.

Because you came in '75, correct?

Harry Stock: I came in '75 yeah.

Joshua Waits: So this would have been –

Harry Stock: That was a while ago, that was, I mean, it was 48 years ago, Lord.

Joshua Waits: So this one was from, from '77. So it would have been your junior year.

Harry Stock: I was here. Yeah.

Joshua Waits: And it was the editor of the Ambo [PH], David, the last name begins with a W. Anyway, he was writing about, basically the divisions of the seminary. And he said something to the effect that, basically – this is what he says, "Those with homosexual tendencies are already forced to be apart from the, from the community." Was that pretty much about you?

Harry Stock: It could be, but.

Joshua Waits: Because were you the only one, though?

Harry Stock: I was the only out one. I was not the only gay man here at the time.

Joshua Waits: Okay so there were others?

Harry Stock: There was, there were several called closet.

Joshua Waits: There was, but is that how you would describe your time here, is just you were always apart? You were never fully integrated?

Harry Stock: No. No.

Joshua Waits: How did that – You, you say you had some allies some married couples but did you –? How did that apartness and isolation feel for you?

Harry Stock: And there are sometimes I never felt it because I I never paid attention to it. Other times it was, it was very difficult. The difficult times was when I was blatantly not included in things, or blatantly, I mean just blatantly – no that's me again – medicine time.

Joshua Waits: Do you need to pause to take yours?

Harry Stock: No I'm good. The times like being excluded in, in the labs when people would be invited to go someplace, the blatancy of that. Or or people getting up from the table in the refectory when I would sit down. That's that, those are the times that I, that that I felt it because those were personal encounters.

Other times I, I would let it go over my head. The, the, the tracts under my door, I used to think that was childish. Or a scotch taping things on my door, so that when I opened the door in the morning I would see them. They didn't hit me personally a lot like, you know, the other experiences did. But it did make me feel excluded from the, from the community.

Joshua Waits: I, I've been asking everyone this question and it seems that you have this very unique experience. But where was most of the homophobia coming from towards you, through faculty, staff administration, to the institution, or from the student body?

Harry Stock: Well, that's an interesting question and I've never given that any thought. Was it more the student body or was it, or was it with faculty and the staff? I would say student body.

Joshua Waits: Okay.

Harry Stock: Yeah I would say students. I mean I'm not going to name them. But I, I mean, I just could go down the list –

Joshua Waits: Right.

Harry Stock: – Of the, of the people. The the sad thing was, and and I, and I understand it, and I never judged them nor do I judge them today from a.... But the other guys who were gay, and in the closet, they also avoided me as much as they possibly could, too. And that was, well, that was because of association. But if I would go to the discos on the weekends, I would see them there. Of course, they would all just, if I would see like you or somebody, or anybody, anybody that I would – they would go and run.

Like God, that, like, why would you run when you're in safe, and you're safe there? But many of them were afraid of that association. And, and and that's understandable. And I never really judged them at that time. And like I said, I don't judge them for that today. But that was one of the kind of things, you know, that happened to you. Now, there were a couple who we did associate off campus. We did go to a movie. We wouldn't sneak out and go to the disco on, on Saturdays. But we were not like this –

Joshua Waits: Right.

Harry Stock: – On campus where we could really be seen together.

Joshua Waits: Yeah the people that I've talked to, even into the 2000s, have talked about how for

there to be, sort of, any gay community on campus. There, there could not be a gay community on campus. And so then there was always, we'll go to this restaurant in the back room where no one can see us. But you weren't included, even in those type things?

Harry Stock: We didn't really have those type of things. You mean other people who were gay on campus and and met secretly off campus? No. I never, if there was, I never knew of anything.

But I don't really believe that we had that, that kind of gathering.

Joshua Waits: Okay.

Harry Stock: I don't believe they associated with each other.

Joshua Waits: Well, because they could lose their ability to become priests.

Harry Stock: Yeah.

Joshua Waits: But that, was that a danger for you other that, other than being told, "Don't get in the newspapers, and don't embarrass me?"

Harry Stock: You know I never thought of it. I never thought of it. I never had that fear. It did come at the end of my term here. At the end the faculty did not recommend me for ordination. And I, I gave the royal finger to God. I really did. My spiritual journey hit a brick wall, and I never bothered to even attempt to climb over it. I just said, "Hey this is what I get." And I have to say this, and I'll say this even I'm saying it on film. I think that there was a part of me that was responsible for not being recommended for ordination. Because of my being so radical and my pushing it in your face every once in a while, I think that caused some of it.

The other, there was an equal amount of homophobia that, that that was there. But of course when that happens, I got a letter from the bishop saying, by the way, canon law says that I can't ordain you. I'm sorry. So I'm ready to leave here, and here's another, here, here's another thing of,

of discrimination. I go to my room and I'm putting my little key thing in, and it won't work. And I'm doing it over, and over, and over again, and it won't work. And this is right around lunchtime and everything.

So I went and the maintenance guy, whoever the person was that was in charge of that was there

at lunch. And I had taken a lot of the furniture that was in that room out and put it up in the attic, and brought in a lot of my own stuff. I had a sleeper couch, that kind of thing. And so, I went to him and I said, "I can't get in my room." And he says, "That's because we've changed the lock on

your door." Because some students have told us that you've taken some of the, of, of the furniture

that belongs to us. I said, "I haven't taken nothing, it's up in the attic." I replaced it with some of my other furniture. When I take my furniture out of the room, I intend to put the other stuff down.

And I says, and this is what I said to him. I says, "I'll tell you what." I says, "I'm gonna give you maybe three minutes. If you don't follow me and, and open that door, I will kick that door open." I mean, that this is how I, and this is right after I, I'm told my, my news, and even and continue as I'm leaving. And he did. He opened that door. And some of my allies and stuff or something, we did all of the furniture switching. We put all, everything back, and I left. I left.

As I was leaving and getting in my car one of the not out students came running up, and said, "Here, you're gonna need this," and then he turns around and leaves. And it was a check for \$600. And that was all, I mean, that was all I had, a carload of stuff and, and a check for \$600. And I drove into the district and had no idea where I was going to stay. So I'm looking through The Blade, which is a gay newspaper. And they had apartment buildings.

I went to this condo in the southwest, and I talked to the lady at the desk. And they had an efficiency open. But you were required to put the first month's rent and a security deposit, and \$600 would not cover that. So I gave her my sob story and pleaded with her. And she waived the

security deposit and so I could get a job to pay for it so I could move into this little efficiency, to this little one room, basically, every – you know what, efficiencies are like? But I had no jobs but I still had that Blade newspaper. And I'm reading the Blade. And there's an advertisement for

a projectionist at a place at that time called the Follies.

This is the, this is the part that these, these they always shocks. I mean, I've preached this among

my congregation so it's, I'm not embarrassed to say it now. But anyway, there I am with a Master's of Divinity degree, and I'm looking in the, a gay newspaper for a job. And I'm in my car driving to a male porno theater to apply for a job as a projectionist, which I got. So now I am a man with a Master's of Divinity degree running projector in a male porno place. That was probably the lowest part of my life that I could think of at that point. I was really down.

Now, at that Follies they had male strippers. Several months later, two, three months later, I'm not sure, they were scheduled to have a famous male stripper or porn star appear there. The place

was packed. Men were lined on the walls. They get a phone call from this guy, he's still in

California. He, his plane had been canceled. The owner of the Follies are going crazy. So I said to them, which was true, "I used to be a dancer." And I had a whole bunch of Egyptian paraphernalia. I said, "I'll dance," and I said, "But you need to give me time to go home and get all my Egyptian stuff and everything." And some of the other guys are gonna have to help me set it up.

So I went home and I smoked a joint. I went back and got the guys, they helped set up all this paraphernalia. Now, here I am a man with the Master's of Divinity degree, and I'm a male stripper. And I packed it. I was really good at what I did because of all of the Egyptian stuff. Plus I never went down all the way, I always wore a jockstrap. I'd buy a jockstrap. And that drove 'em crazy, but I never went all of the way. I got to the point where the owner was sending me out to clubs that he owned, that he owned the country, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Atlantic City.

I was in Texas, in Houston, Lemon Drop, Lemon Tree, Lemon something was the name of the club. When you walked into the entrance of this club, if you went to the the right and went up the steps, it was all female strippers, just to the straight people there. And we went to the left, and we

went up. It was all male strippers, the gay men went. I, of course, was dancing on that side. And I, I was dancing there. And then Saturday night when I went back from my performance, I felt like God went like this: I want you to go to church tomorrow morning.

And I, I mean I literally, it was in my motel room laughing thinking, "This is bull crap." But I did. I looked in the directory and I looked up the Church of the Redeemer. That was all I could think of because I had their albums of that choir of that church. And Sunday I went to church, and I cried like a baby through the whole service. I just cried. And when the service is over I was in the coffee hour. And I was leaning up against the wall. I was glued to that wall. And a really old man, bright white hair, elderly came up to me, and he said, "I want to say something to you. Please don't be offended. I noticed you crying in the service. But God is telling me that it's time for you to go home, and I don't know if that means anything to you?"

And I wasn't sure whether that meant anything either. But I did, I came home. Now to back up a little bit. One of my other experiences while I was here was the First Filbert Church that they sent me to out in Falls Church, the Seven Corners. A very, Evangelical, The Episcopal Church, why they would send me there. I don't know. That church was having problems. It was during the time when the church was debating whether it could be, a gay man could be ordained? And that church was having all kinds of dialogue. And they were saying some really nasty, nasty, nasty things. It was my turn to preach one Sunday. So I came out in the pulpit, and there were people crying. Some people got up and walked out.

And when the service was over, of course, I was – "By the way, the rector wants to see you in his

office," and I go in there, all the vestry's there, you know. "You are never to come back here. We will call the seminary tomorrow morning, but you are never to come back." And I expected. So the seminary sent me to St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Foggy Bottom. And the priests there was

John Wilbur, who over the years became my very best friend. And I'm the priest that I am today because of John Wilbur. Because he slapped the gayness, gayness out of me. Yeah and he said,

"You are a priest first, who happens to be gay. You are not gay who happens to be a priest." But anyway, they sent me to St. Mary's Episcopal Church.

And Father Wilbur used to always tease me because I used to use the term woogie. I'd say, "That's really woogie," and say woogie? But anyway, now here I am. I came home from Texas. I get a phone call from Father Wilbur saying, "I'm gonna say something to you and do not be a smartass. But I had a dream last night that God said it's time for you to come home. And I know that's woogie, but I want to see you tomorrow morning in my office."

So I went the next morning in his office and he said, "We are going to go to the faculty. And we're going to appeal for them to reverse the decision." And I said, "Father Wilbur, do you know what I've been doing?" He said, "Yeah." And I says, "No no really, do you what I've been doing?" And he said, "Yeah, you started off as a projectionist in the Follies and then you started off as a dancer in the Follies. And now you've been going to God knows where all over the country taking your clothes off." He said, "I know everything you've been doing. I don't care." He said, "It's time for you to come home. God told me that last night. And I know that sounds woogie." He says, "But when that happens to me," he says, "I listen." He said, "Here." I said, "What's that?" And he said, "This is a business card of my therapist. That I've told him all about you, and I want you to see him. Don't ask me any questions, don't ask him any questions. You just go, and you see him, and you let him ask you what he wants to. And you just shut up and be

there." So for, I think it was like almost two months I saw this man. And we did.

Father Wilbur scheduled to come here to see the faculty. And we made the appeal to the faculty.

This therapist came and he presented this raving review of, man, I don't know who it was. I never

met him. Whatever then he saw in me something that I didn't see in me, but Father Wilbur and he

saw in me. And he presented it to the faculty. And the faculty reversed their decision to have me ordained. And they contacted Bishop Atkinson. Bishop Atkinson then came here to Washington, D.C. ordained me as a deacon at St. Mary's Church.

And then after my first year, brought me back to West Virginia to St. John's Cathedral in Charleston to be ordained a priest. Even then, God bless whoever it was, while I was out to dinner the, the evening that I was being ordained, someone, I don't know how, got access to my hotel room, and took all my vestments. So when I, when I got to the church I said, I told Bishop Atkinson what happened. And he was furious. And he stood up the first thing, when we processed in, he walked right up to the microphone and he said, "I want to say to this, this is what happened. This man is to be ordained, and someone went in, and stole, took his vestments.

That is not going to stop him."

I was ordained in an, in an accolade robe that came up to my knees. It was hilarious. When it was

all over and I went back to my room the vestments were laying on the floor and leaning up against the door of the hotel. And my first thought was, "I bet you they just cut them up or shredded them there." They they never touched them. All they wanted to do was to disrupt that service, but they didn't. And here I am today. I was ordained by Bishop Atkinson.

The reason why I'm not an Episcopal priest today is because after I was ordained I was released by the bishop because he basically said, "Hey, there is no place in West Virginia I could put you." I mean, West Virginia was very conservative. As a gay man, there was no church, "So I'm releasing you." So I stayed in D.C., and at that time, Bishop Walker, God bless; I mean, what a man.

Joshua Waits: Right.

Harry Stock: So I became a supply clergy, you know, and I went from church to church, like if a priest was sick on Sunday or sabbatical or something, whatever. I just floated around, which was really great. I loved that. And I was at St. Mary's Church, is my home church. And Father Wilbur was my mentor and my best friend. And my partner, Mark, and I, had begin, had been together for a number of years. So we couldn't get married at that time, but they had what was called then a holy union.

So Father Wilbur performed a Holy Union for Mark and I at St. Mary's Church. And a couple of weeks later, I get a letter from Bishop Atkinson saying, "Harry, word has come to me over the mountain that you sit at the altar and proclaimed your love for another man. And that you are now involved in another church and you've left the faith. I'm therefore defrock, according to canon law, defrocking you as an Episcopal priest. You can no longer yada-yada-yada-yada." I thought it never stops.

Joshua Waits: Is that, this, he did this without a Title IV process?

Harry Stock: I have no idea. But maybe he did. I don't know. I, all I know, what's the title? I don't even know what that is.

Joshua Waits: That's the process by which you defrock a priest. It's – it's a trial.

Harry Stock: I had no trial. All I got was a letter saying I was defrocked because I stood, stood at the altar, and declared my love for another man. At that time there is a, there was an MCC Church. It still is in Washington D.C. And a group had broken from that church, and they wanted to start the second MCC Church. Yeah, are you familiar with the MCCs?

Joshua Waits: Yes.

Harry Stock: Okay. They wanted to start the second MCC Church. I ran into one of them in a grocery store, Paul. And he said, "Wow, I'm really glad I ran into you." He said, "We thought of you. We're starting a second MCC Church and we needed somebody who's clergy just to help us

on Sundays until we can get established." And I said, "Paul, I don't know anything about MCC." And he said, "I'm, well, we just need some clergy help." So I was helping him get their church established.

And they had, uh, what they called a district coordinator, which would be like our bishop. The district coordinator was of the supervisor, or like maybe a four, three or four state region. And of course he had to approve that new church being started, so he called for a meeting. And then that

little group met with him and and asked me if I would go. And so I went. And he's going around. And he saying, "Okay I just want each one of you to tell me why you're going to, why do you want to start a new church?" And they're all saying why they want to start a new church.

And I'm just sitting there thinking, okay. And then he goes, "Well, we have with us an Episcopal priest, the Reverend Harry Stock. Why do you think they should start a new church?" And I'm

thinking, what? And I said, "Well," to him, I said, "In the Bible Jesus said, 'Do you love me,' and Peter says, 'Yes.'" And He said, "Do you, do you love me?" And He keeps asking him, "Do you love me?" And He, and He ends up to say, saying to him, "Build my church." I says, "Evidently, all the people in Washington D.C. are not being loved, and God is calling another church." And I'm sitting there thinking, "Where did that come from?" You know, what are you saying? And he, he just looked at me and he said, "Okay, I approved of the new church, and they started

that new MCC Church, which they called Disciples." And then it said, and then my defrocking comes along. And they said, "Well, why don't you stay with us?" And I stayed with them. And I ended up being ordained into the MCC Church. And I became their pastor. And I pastored them for 15 years. It was an MCC Church with a flair of the Episcopalian, but. All the smells and bells and everything coming out of the MCC Church because of the, the Episcopalian came with me.... So today I'm, I'm the founder and the president of Scrolls Revealed Ministries.

And in 1980, while I was at St. Mary's Episcopal Church I started to teach a Sunday school class

on homosexuality in the Bible. Other churches started to hear about it. And I started to go to other churches and on Sundays after church was on, and doing some Sunday school classes. It became a series of little lectures, and then turned into a workshop, and then turned into a seminar. And for 42 years, I traveled around the country to 19 states, the colleges, and churches,

teaching this seminar on homosexuality and Bible on Saturday, and then preaching at the church

on, on Sunday.

I have since then retired that seminar. I just this past November, after 42 years I did the last one at Westminster Presbyterian Church in D.C. I'm 82 years old and to get in my car on a Friday and drive 12 hours somewhere, and and then get up on Saturday and do a, you know, a six-hour

seminar, and then get up on Sunday and preach these services, and then drive back on Sunday, it

was just too much. And so I retired the seminars. And I'm now on basically a preaching schedule. I have a sermon called homophobia in the Bible, a deadly combination.

And so now, I'm just basically going to churches preaching that sermon. But the roof over all of that, though, despite everything that went on here, the roof over all of that, that I can sit here today and tell that story, and tell you where I am today. The roof over all of that is VTS. I may have had a rough time here. You know, and I may have, I may have some scars, but I wouldn't

be where I am today if I had not been here, and gone through what I did here, and experienced what I did here, and got what I got from being here. Like I said, there was a lot of light times. There was a lot of sunlight. And I'm really glad I didn't go to Union. I'm not sure if, you know, the things would have been the same?

Joshua Waits: Can you tell us some of those sunshine moments?

Harry Stock: Yeah the chapel, participating, you didn't have, have to ask me twice to participate. Some of the professors who were not homophobic, actually going to their – I'm, no I'm sure the faculty housing now today is much different than it was here. But there was some

beautiful faculty housing here when I was here.

Joshua Waits: And they're still there.

Harry Stock: Man, and to go to their house and have dinner, you know, with their family, to, to to actually be told by my homiletics instructor that I was a good preacher and would be a good preacher. To have the times with the married couples that I did, associating with them. To have a

homophobic professor melt in a sense, and change over the time, you know, get to know me those are all pluses. Those are all pluses.

And to know that there were students behind me that were not even in my class who were noticing me. The two that I told who contacted me about this program, that I, you know, they weren't even in my class. And they were, they were behind me. And they were supports. They were, they were support that I didn't really even know that I had at the time.

So yeah, I mean, you know, they were the good times. I would not trade for a minute nothing that happened here. Because I believe that God takes the pain and uh, gives you the strength to grow from it. And everything that I've told you here today may have been painful, but God has.... I mean, if you just look at the succession of all the stuff that I told you, God has just used it all.

Joshua Waits: Anything else you'd like to share with us?

Harry Stock: I don't know. I've told you so much.

Joshua Waits: Thank you for sharing with us. And thank you for being willing to be the first person to sort of take the heat, and yet also to still extend grace to this place.

Harry Stock: I am so excited to know what's going on here now. I mean, I am just thrilled at the experiences that LGBTQ people are having here now. It has to be just a blessing and, and to know that there are faculty. Things have changed. Things have changed. And I just, I just give glorious thanks for that. And Josh for people like you, too, who, I thank you for what you're doing. To do what you're doing is very important. History is very important. Because that's how we learn. We learn from history.

Joshua Waits: Right. Thank you.

Harry Stock: Thank you.

Joshua Waits: Alright.

[END OF TAPE]