

Oral History Interview: Sky Anderson

Interviewee: Sky Anderson

Interviewer: Mark Bowman

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Mark B. This is Mark Bowman, and I'm here talking with Sky Anderson. It's March 20, 2013, and we're at Sky's home in San Jose, California. And Sky, thank you for taking the time to talk with me and record your story. And I guess we'd like to kind of just start at the beginning—where you were born, when you were born, what your family situation was like, sort of the heritage you came from. So just tell me a little bit about your origins.

Sky A. Okay. I was born in Massachusetts, Lynn, and I was born in 1939. And my family, like second generation Scots, both sides. And so it was a little different growing up in that with the bagpipes and everything, but it was a lot of fun.

And I was the oldest of five kids, and at a very young age, around, I'd say, four or five, I knew I was different. As a matter of fact, I knew I was a boy. With everything in me, I knew I was a boy. I'd do stuff with my mother as long as I got jeans and a cowboy belt, I remember that. That's how, that's the deal that she got me on.

Mark B. Uh-huh.

Sky A. But I didn't think, you know, as a little kid you don't think anything's wrong. And I worked in the garden for my...down in the...it was like a little alcove thing, and I'd do the stuff like that, and then I used to take care of the birds on the hill, and all the sparrows, and I did the funerals for all the animals in the neighborhood.

But I would drift up. Everybody liked me. It's been this way all my life. Everybody liked me, but I always disappeared, if that makes any sense to you, because it's always been if I tell you who I am, you might—remember John Powell's book, if I tell you who I am, you might not like who I am, and it's all I've got. And I've always had a sense of that, since I was little.

And then maybe that comes from knowing I was different and then the conflict with my parents wanting me to be a little girl, and my fighting that inside of me and trying to not hurt them. It's amazing what we know as children.

Mark B. Yeah. When do you think your parents had a sense of that and started responding to that?

Sky A. I think my mother knew when I was a kid.

Mark B. Okay.

Sky A. The way I acted and the little battles we'd have.

Mark B. Give me a couple of examples. What are some of the things your mother would do?

Sky A. Well, you know, she'd just try to get me to dress up differently, and to be...this is how girls are and that, and I'd say, "But that's not me." Even as a little kid I'd tell her no, no, and I would have fits, lock myself in the room, anything. Plus we had this tension because I was sick a lot as a kid. I was in bed a lot and in the hospital.

Mark B. Did you have a chronic condition?

Sky A. Yeah, it was...I had a lot of trouble, and I used to...I'd bleed a lot from the nose and mouth, and just a lot of different... I was a premie, to begin with, so there were a lot of problems and that. So I think a lot came from...

But I set myself up in the hills by my house. I knew, I built myself a little...I thought, like I was, I believed I was American Indian. I had this whole fantasy world, and I built my little place, I'd get away. And I prayed. I had a great sense of God. I had a great sense of the spirit with me through it all, and I knew it was going to be a journey. It's funny how I...I knew it. I knew this is a journey.

Mark B. Your family's religious background was?

Sky A. Protestant.

Mark B. Presbyterian or...?

Sky A. No, Congregationalist.

Mark B. Congregationalist, okay.

Sky A. Yeah. My mom didn't...church drove her crazy. A lot of her brothers, they came over from the old country, and they were all in show business. And she wanted to do that, and then she got stuck with me, and that changed her whole life. And I think she suffered for that most of her life, you know, so...well, she told me she...

Mark B. And your father worked as?

Sky A. He worked as a steel worker. He worked about three jobs to keep supporting us and all this stuff. And he was a union activist, and he did a lot of good stuff in Lynn with the battles, and he used to work with the guys that were in trouble. He did a lot of stuff, so that sense of social justice and all that I got from him. I used to get up in the morning, and he'd put on the coffee when we got older, and I'd sit there and we'd talk about different issues, and justice. And so, I mean, it just was burned in his heart. And he sang in the choir, in the men's glee club. And he'd take us—he was the one that took us to church on Sunday.

Mark B. So you did go to church with your dad?

Sky A. Yeah. Yeah, all of us would go. My mom would never go, but she'd have dinner ready and we'd all come home. But yeah, and then we all joined the choir and stuff. And even I was in a lot of this stuff, but I always...you know how you can be there, but you don't...you know if they only knew? That was...I had that sense in me all the time growing up, if they only knew. And, you know, so I never spoke of it. I'm trying to think how I can go into it.

Well, when I started to develop as a girl, I was furious. My mother was trying to get me into one of those things, and I was furious. I didn't even talk about it, I was so...I was furious, and I ripped that thing off. I was so furious, you know, and I used to lie in bed at night and pound my chest, pound my chest, oh, please, God, don't do this to me. I was so mad at God. I was so mad at everybody. How could this be happening to me? How am I gonna live my life like this? You know, how am I gonna live my life?

And so I did, I had...well, when I was older—I'm jumping ahead—when I was on my own, I ended up, I had a breakdown, a nervous breakdown. I tried to kill myself. But then when I heard...I was in high school, and I was working at Woolworth's, and one of the girls there, women, young women, said to me—she was real cool, and she said to me that...she invited me to her house and then she asked me if I was a butch. In those days, that's the language we had, butch and femme and all that stuff. Do you remember that?

Mark B. Of course, yes.

Sky A. Yeah, we had our own definitions and that, and I said, “What the heck’s butch?” I didn’t know what she’s talking about. So then she started—it scared me at first—she started talking to me about this whole lifestyle. She wasn’t gay, but she had friends that were. But then she maybe was bisexual. She said, you know, she did all this trip with me, I don’t know. And I was so ah, you know, what is she talking about? I gotta get out of here, and I couldn’t... And we got talking though, and...no, I didn’t stay. I had left. I left and I got the bus and went home quickly.

But I was so curious that it was a couple of nights later I went and went with her home, and I ended up staying over because it was so late to go home. But I sort of liked the idea that maybe that’s who I was. That’s a definition. Maybe I wasn’t really a boy, maybe I was a butch, and that I was gay. And that made sense to me. Okay, I could live like that, and I could bear all this other stuff if that’s who I am. That makes sense, okay. I’m born this way, that’s what I am. So I started to fit into that role, or try to get into that role. My family hit the roof.

Mark B. This is later high school, right?

Sky A. Yeah, my senior year. I graduated when I was around 16 from high school.

Mark B. So you were academically very gifted then, huh?

Sky A. Well, yeah. You had to do, you know. I didn't have anything else to do. I just studied and studied, keep my mind on...well, besides, I liked to study. I wanted to go to college so bad, but only boys go to college then, and my dad...that's how it had to be. And the irony of it is my brother hated it, and I loved it, and I couldn't go. But eventually I started to.

Mark B. How was your relationship with your siblings growing up?

Sky A. I was the oldest. My mom was sick a lot, so I was the one in charge. I was the parent.

Mark B. Oh, okay.

Sky A. Yeah, at the same time with all this stuff. I had to take care of them and get them all in order, and if my mom went off, which she'd do a lot, I'd protect them. I was the parent. So when I left my home, all of that was bitter. Bitter, bitter.

Mark B. When was it you left? How old were you?

Sky A. I can't remember. I block a lot... I couldn't have been...before I was 18.

Mark B. Okay. Shortly after high school.

Sky A. Yeah. I mean, and my...they gave me a choice to knock this foolishness off, you know, or, you know, get out, so I had to get out. And I had a lot of religious friends, and so—

Mark B. From what settings?

Sky A. I was a leader in high school. You know what you do when you don't want to have excuses for everything? What do you do? You become a leader. I didn't realize how smart I was then, but that's what I was doing, protecting myself. I got the most popular when I graduated from high school, stuff like that, because I was there for everybody. I'd go to kids' houses, believe it or not, that were in trouble with their parents, and I'd go sit down with them with their parents and help them work out their problems. And yeah, I just, I mean, I was just crazy. So that's how I saved myself, I helped a lot of them, but I also was helping me at the same time. So yeah, a lot of stuff I block so much.

Mark B. That's okay. I had some sense of my early years, I kept myself very busy, and that way I didn't have to think about myself, was a way to avoid having to deal with my own issues, was always being busy with other people's issues.

Sky A. Yeah. And that way also you don't look...people never look down on you or suspected anything of you because you're busy, you know, and always doing all this stuff and, you know, and trying to fix me up and, you know.

Mark B. So when you left home you stayed in Lynn? Where did you...?

Sky A. No. When I left home, geez, how did I do it? You know, I don't... I tried to stay with some friends. Oh, I went and I stayed with the nuns in Brighton, because I was going to Boston College at night.

Mark B. Okay, so you were going to Boston College at night, uh-huh.

Sky A. And I stayed with the Cenacle nuns in Brighton. They took me in. And it just was a wonderful place, and they were wonderful. And staying with the Cenacle nuns, I got to meet priests and teachers that came into the city from all over the world and deal with all kinds of theologies. I'd have dinner with them and I'd sit and I'd talk with them and debate issues, so I loved it. I mean, it was glorious to me.

And also I was safe, and I was with God. I was in a setting that I could feel the presence of the spirit. I was just really...you know, I just felt... And then I decided I was gonna give my life to God. As a matter of fact, as a little kid I did. That's when you... My cousin, I had her go with me to the—

Mark B. Was this in the Congregational church or this was in the—

Sky A. The Congregational church. I had her go with me to the garden because I felt that—the preacher had preached this heavy message—that I had to make a decision where I would be with God, so I did it. I don't know, I was only about six years old, something like that, and I asked God to come into my life and to use me, and that I could be a blessing, even though I was mixed up, you know. And I felt that...you know, I had my cousin come in case anything happened, and she'd tell my mother and then I was trying to do good. And I didn't die, so I guess I, you know. But it was very moving. Something happened in my heart and I knew that.

Mark B. So a close personal connection with God was an important part of your spirituality growing up?

Sky A. Yeah, and Jesus Christ, too. I felt a very close connection to Jesus Christ. Very, very real to me, very present all my life, because I was so alone in so many ways.

Mark B. So alone, yeah. Did you study religion at B.C.? What were you studying there?

Sky A. Sociology.

Mark B. You got a bachelor's?

Sky A. No, I never made it that far because I didn't have the money. I went four nights a week. That's how I was doing my college and that. They put me in advanced classes like rhetoric and all that with the professors and stuff. I had wonderful opportunities. But I had to support myself, you know, because after a while I...I was going to enter the convent.

Mark B. Okay.

Sky A. Yeah. As a matter of fact, I did.

Mark B. Okay. The Cenacles?

Sky A. Uh-huh, yeah, the Cenacle nuns. And they loved me and they were training me, and it was wonderful. But, and this is the truth, and I could be as isolated as I wanted to be, because it was a semi-contemplative

order, and it was a wonderful place. A wonderful place to learn and everything. Except after my second year, there was a nun there, Sister Mary—well, I shouldn't say that. Anyway. And she came after me, and she told me that she knew I was gay and that she had been fighting it all her life and she was... And I got so—I wanted to get out of there quick.

Mark B. So she tried to develop a relationship with you—

Sky A. Yes, yes.

Mark B. —or she was persecuting you?

Sky A. No, she wanted to have a... And I come to find out with many novices that had her visit. [*Laughs.*]

Mark B. Uh-huh.

Sky A. So I wanted to get out of there because I knew the feelings. I could not overcome the feelings. And I would not... I, you know, I was brought up with integrity. I could not...that's all I better say because I've really blown it in my life, but I couldn't keep the vows. I couldn't make vows. I couldn't do it. And I was ready to crack. And the topmost superior talked to me, and I told her, and nothing had happened. She just wanted me to just pray about it and think about it and she would help me.

And they weren't judgmental or nothing. I didn't get anything... They would have supported me. But I knew, no, no, no, I liked it. I liked it

very much, and I knew that you have to want to, and I did not want to let that feeling go away. I didn't. So I had to be true. So when I left—and that was very, very sad, and the nuns were wonderful to me—I had no place to go, and I ended up on the street.

Mark B. In Boston?

Sky A. Yeah, mm-hmm. And at that time all the gay community, at least in the section I was in—

Mark B. This was around what year?

Sky A. Sixties.

Mark B. Early '60 or '60s, okay.

Sky A. Yeah. Or late '50s and '60s. A lot was squished in. I even entered the Marine Corps, because I didn't have any...and I got to be almost a private out of the—

Mark B. So you were on the street for a while and then you went into the service?

Sky A. Yeah. What do you do when you can't get a place to live?

Mark B. So you went into the Marine Corps as a woman?

Sky A. Yeah.

Mark B. Okay.

Sky A. But then...and I was well recognized, I was outstanding.

Mark B. What did you do? What was your work in the Marines?

Sky A. I did stuff on publishing and working on printing and doing different types of writing.

Mark B. And where were you stationed?

Sky A. Parris Island, South Carolina. I was stationed there. Then what happened—and this is the truth—I forgot all the dates, and I can't remember dates.

Mark B. That's okay.

Sky A. I never talk about this. But yeah, and the military decided to do a purge. And what they did is they went to all the different bases and the different ones that were pointed out as possibly being gay and that were interrogated. Especially they were trying to find out, and the lieutenants and all this stuff, they wanted to get them out.

Mark B. And this was primarily looking for lesbians or gay men or both?

Sky A. Both.

Mark B. Both, okay.

Sky A. But, you know, they took all the lesbians in this one place and the guys in the other, and it was horrible. These guys came in and they were

questioning us. Every day we had to go over there and they would question us. And they were filthy. I mean, they'd talk, you know, if you had—they'd grab onto their crotches, and if you only had a taste of this, and they'd do all this stuff with us. Just awful. And I'd stand up to them. And some of the women couldn't stand it. They got sick and teary and stuff like that. And I'd, you know, I'm insane anyway. I can't stand injustice, and boom, I'd be in the middle of it.

And all we had to do was give ten names each and they'd let us go. And I used to coach everybody no matter what, you need to talk, anything, look over, do anything you want, all of us, let's pull together and do not give into this. Do not give in. And some people did. And they didn't care if it was true or not. Just even a suspected, you know. And that's how I was one of them. And I knew the lieutenants and the stuff like that. But I wasn't gonna, you know. It was horrible. They were horrible, horrible to us.

And finally, what they did to get us off, we had to write a paper. Well, they pretty much, they dictated it to us. I have it in my house. And they stood over us, and it was lewd. It was horrible. But I had gotten to the point, myself, I was gonna crack. It was a couple of weeks straight of all this brainwashing stuff every single day. People don't believe—well, maybe now they do.

Mark B. I think I remember this about Parris Island. Correct me. It was in the news, right?

Sky A. I don't know.

Mark B. I clearly remember something about a purge and that Parris Island was one of the places that was really difficult.

Sky A. Yeah, I never saw it in the paper. Oh, my god, it was awful. You can't believe it. It was just really... I could not believe this is the United States of America and we're going through this kind of stuff. So I ended up signing one of the papers, and so what they gave me is an other than honorable discharge. They didn't give me dishonorable. And it broke my heart because I was doing good and I was learning a lot. But it was a, you know, why...oh, how could they get away with this?

And I tried to tell my commander, but nobody wanted to hear it. Nobody wanted to get touched by it, like we were lepers. Nobody wanted to get touched by it. There was no one to turn to. It was so horrible. And then they told my family, which made it even worse in my family. Because I had dress blues and everything, because I was an honor, you know.

Anyway, it was just really horrible. They made it really, really horrible for me. And I just...I thought I'd have a nervous breakdown. And some people tried to commit suicide.

Mark B. You were in the service a year or two?

Sky A. Almost a couple years.

Mark B. Almost a couple years, okay. And where did you go from there?

Sky A. Especially those of us who were going to be leaders, they wanted to...

Well, one good thing is that—I just want to tell you this because as horrible as it was—they were kicking me out and nobody would...you know, we'd come in the barracks, no one would see us, no one would speak to us. They turned their backs to us and everything.

And then one night I just, I...I got drunk and I just stood on the tables and I just talked to them about humanity, and our differences, and I did this, I preached this whole sermon to everybody, and I just told them that they shamed me. All the times I carried you and I did this, and I said and shame—I just did this whole thing, and I walked out and I wouldn't come back in, and all the sand fleas were eating me.

But they all got together and they took up a collection for this other woman, Sandra, and myself. She wasn't even gay. And we both got kicked out. So that we'd have money. And they took care of us, so it was really strange how that worked out. And so we went to Florida and I got a job singing jazz in a nightclub.

Mark B. Oh, you're a musician. I didn't know this part of you.

Sky A. Yeah.

Mark B. What were the musical roots? You had done music all along?

Sky A. With my dad, since I was a kid sang. Yeah, my dad was a singer and I used to sing, and yeah. But then I always was shy, except if I... You know, I just, I don't know.

Mark B. Shy except for if you had been drinking is what you're saying, right?

Sky A. Yeah, yeah. So I...well, I didn't go looking for the job. I was sitting at the bar one night and they were doing a number, and I just started singing. And I love blues. I love the blues. And it's like gospel. You put it all together, it's the same soul thing. I love it. And yeah, so I remember that. And then I don't know, somehow I got really used. I was very naïve, and I got really taken, and I ended up with nothing. And my family totally, totally was shamed and disgraced.

Mark B. So you had no communication with your family at this time?

Sky A. No. Oh, no, no, no.

Mark B. None of your siblings you were in touch with?

Sky A. No, nobody. As a matter of fact, they did have me come back home and they had a roundtable meeting with me, and they just really read the riot act on me. It was just really horrible. And they disowned me.

Mark B. So you're in Florida singing jazz.

Sky A. Yeah, I don't know if I was in Florida then.

Mark B. Okay.

Sky A. Oh, yeah, I ended up in the nuthouse in Boston somehow in the midst of all this. I had almost—

Mark B. You mentioned you had a breakdown, and so that's what happened?

Sky A. Oh, then I was working at MIT. I came back to Boston and I got a job. I was working at MIT in cancer research and stuff like that, and some crazy stuff happened. And I was helping kids on the hill, gay kids on the hill, Beacon Hill in Boston. And I was helping some of the kids who were doing drugs and stuff like that. And so between the stuff that I did, this one night—and the gangs had warned me to knock it off, you know, that was their turf, for me to mind my business. And there were a few of us on the hill working to try to help the kids.

And so I took off, and then anyway, they were waiting for me one night when I came home in my apartment, and so they beat me and shot me with drugs and raped me. And that really did a job on me. And so...how God works, huh? They left the apartment sort of open, and there's this book I always have loved called *Mr. Blue* by Myles Connolly. You ever hear of it? Anyway, it's a really lovely... Anyway, this woman, this young woman that I had lent it to who was in trouble a few years before that came looking for me on this night. Isn't that peculiar? And found where I was, and came in and found me on the floor, and rushed me down, and called the ambulance, and got me to Mass General Hospital.

And I was all...but I had this necklace on with the female signs, and they just left me on the table, and they weren't helping me. And she came in and saw me and she screamed at them until they got me the help. And I just...yeah, I... So I ended up, I woke up in Erich Lindemann Mental Health Center about four days later, still in my stuff, puke all...I was a mess. I was a mess. Talk about hitting the pits.

But the woman, the psychologist that I got, she was a young psychologist, and she had somehow got stuck with me. She wasn't supposed to have me, but she got me. And she knew, because even when I was...I talked about being Indian, I talked about being a boy in my sleep when I was going through all this, that I was a boy, I wanted to be free. And I was praying out loud to God and the Indian spirit. I mean, I must have been a trip.

Anyway, so, but she just was, you know, wonderful to me. She was wonderful to me. And she's the one that got me talking about, you know. But she thought that I wasn't a boy. She didn't really get this transgender thing.

Mark B. She didn't get transgender, okay.

Sky A. So she thought, you know, same thing, like the butch thing, but she didn't call it like that, but she was putting me into that category. Not really, just leaving it open for me, but trying to help me to see that I really, you know, had many gifts and that this is who I probably was, and I should get into

the gay—she didn't try to get me out of the gay community. She wanted me to get in with some good people, and she talked to me about stuff.

I ended up twice in there. Anyway, one of the times, somehow I got...some people took me and I was court committed for three months. That's how close I came to dying. But somewhere along the line in my wonderful stay at Erich Lindemann, some friends of mine came to see me and got permission to take me out to this church. So I'll bring us back, no matter if it fits in the right order or not.

Mark B. It's okay.

Sky A. And I went with them. I didn't want to go church, but to go out, I was dying to go out, and as long as I was taken care of. And right up on the hill in Boston is MCC. That's where they took me, to MCC. And it freaked me out. These gay people, and they have nowhere to go this far with God. I really was freaked at the...oh, it was horrible.

Mark B. Tell me about it. What was it like? What do you recall? What do you remember?

Sky A. Well, I liked it, but then, when they were doing communion, and the audacity. They had no right, you know. 'Cause all my old stuff about gays and God, and that we had no rights, and that we're all right as long as we knew our place, sort of like. And then seeing that, I was freaking out, but I was liking it at the same time, and the music and the preaching. And

it was so beautiful, it was freaking me scared till like I ended up leaving. I don't know if they introduced me to the...if I stayed long enough, but I wasn't gonna go back. And then—

Mark B. Were they meeting at Old West Church then? Where were they?

Sky A. The Methodist church.

Mark B. They were meeting at Old West, right. It's where MCC was.

Sky A. I think that's where it was, yeah. And so I—

Mark B. And Nancy was the pastor then?

Sky A. She was assistant pastor.

Mark B. She was assistant. Do you remember who the pastor was?

Sky A. Larry Burnell.

Mark B. Oh, Larry Burnell, okay.

Sky A. Larry Burnell.

Mark B. Okay, so you walked out.

Sky A. Uh-huh. But then I ended up going back a few weeks later, and I went, and then when the communion, I went to... They started playing "Just as I Am." I was walking down the aisle. I decided I wanted to try it. I had to do it. They started playing that "Just as I Am," and I...oh, I fell apart,

you know, and I went to communion, and it was wonderful. And then I just kept going. And it was Nancy who came and got me out of Erich Lindemann.

Mark B. Okay.

Sky A. And then I stayed with her.

Mark B. This is probably the mid 1970s, I'm guessing, correct?

Sky A. Yeah. Well, early 1970s.

Mark B. Early 1970s, okay.

Sky A. Early. And then I started going to church all the time, and then I ended up working on the staff, being an exhorter, and I ended up getting licensed after a while. And then I was...because once I could be free to be who I was... But see, I didn't...I just thought I was a butch.

Mark B. You were still trying to figure out who it was you were.

Sky A. And I thought I was fine. When I went to communion and all this, I found my place, this is it, I am fine, I am free. And this is who I am. And so...

Mark B. Were you working, too? Did you have employment?

Sky A. Yeah. I think I did some work, and I earned some money through the church. I did different things. Very simple, a little simple. I can't remember what I did.

[Break]

Mark B. So tell about how you came to understand your gender identity. How did that transpire for you?

Sky A. Well, I got myself...I was in a relationship, a very beautiful relationship, and it was very loving. But I couldn't get this...I couldn't...I just knew the more I ministered in the church, in the Fellowship, the more I studied, the more I served and helped others, the language I was saying to them, I started saying it to myself about accepting who you are and being free. And I knew that when I came out, it was going to be sad.

Mark B. Did you know other trans people? How did you make that connection? Or it just all happened inside you?

Sky A. I had heard about a couple in the paper of...what was that famous trans person that I can't remember the name?

Mark B. Rene Richards, the tennis player?

Sky A. Yeah. And stuff like that. And then there was also Rene from Australia that's a clergy, was a clergy at that time. And Rene was becoming a woman, became a woman. And I just knew...I just knew, the more I started to learn, I tried to find everything I could about it. Go to the library, everything I could about transgender, being transgender, and that that was part of my grief, that I could never find a way to be free, to be who I was. And I knew...

And I never felt macho male. See, that's one of the things that got me all messed up, too, because people would always tease me that I'd be too femme and all those things. You know how we get into all the labels?

Mark B. Yes, uh-huh.

Sky A. You know, like men all have to be a certain... You know, 'cause we do the same stuff. But I knew, and I talked with my lover about that. And I think I broke her spirit. But she was wonderful. She was trying to be loving and supportive of me. And I don't want to talk a lot about that. But I ended up trying to understand, and I made some bad mistakes. And anyway, it ended. But we're very good friends to this day. But I got really messed up. And when I came out to the Fellowship... 'Cause we had been the couple. We were very well-known in the Fellowship.

Mark B. So how did you come out? How did that happen? You made a public announcement?

Sky A. Yeah, we just told people, because we were a model. And it was surprising how many people were furious.

Mark B. Oh, okay.

Sky A. And a lot of the women felt that I had betrayed them, all my sisters, because it was that time, and the struggle, and all that stuff, and I was one of the leaders for feminist rights. And I still am.

Mark B. Where were you living at that point?

Sky A. Oh, God, I can't even remember.

Mark B. Okay.

Sky A. I don't know. I got really messed up. I ended up on the street. I ended up...off and on in my life I've lived on the street. And on the street, I got really lost, and it was, I think, Jeff Pulling, at one point—do you remember Jeff?

Mark B. Of course.

Sky A. Came and got me and he took me into his house. Oh, and...yeah. Reverend Ken Martin. Ken brought, when I first was coming out, brought me and my...over and we spent time talking about me and Bonnie Daniels, and talking about... And then, after all of that, I don't know, somewhere I ended up really gone. And I had done stupid stuff. I hurt—

Mark B. So this is probably early 1980s now, or is it still 1970s?

Sky A. Well, no, 'cause I had been ordained shortly after that as me, as trans me.

Mark B. Do you remember the year you were ordained?

Sky A. 1979.

Mark B. '79, okay. And you were ordained at General Conference in that year?

Sky A. Yes. In Los Angeles I was ordained.

Mark B. What was that experience like?

Sky A. Well, you know, everybody was—Papa John did it.

Mark B. Okay.

Sky A. That's me with hair.

Mark B. Mm-hmm.

Sky A. Right there, and Nancy. Troy is there.

Mark B. We'll have to get a copy of this picture to put with this interview.

Sky A. And this is me in MCC San Jose.

Mark B. Uh-huh.

Sky A. MCC San Jose. It's a little dusty. Some other people.

Mark B. So your ordination went okay.

Sky A. Well, yeah. The thing was...yes. But I still felt, I didn't feel accepted. And I don't know if it was just me or it was something. Papa John was really wonderful to me. Everybody was being nice to me, and nobody was being mean to me, you know what I mean? But it's different.

Mark B. There weren't any other trans clergy in MCC at that point, correct? You were the first one?

Sky A. Rene was. I don't know if she was still...if she did any ordination or finished anything.

Mark B. There may have been one other?

Sky A. Yeah.

Mark B. Okay.

Sky A. But that was me. And so...and everybody was good, but I think people... I had broken hearts because, you know... I don't know. I don't know. I mean, you know, but I did. But by the grace of God I am who I am, but it was...people were counting on me in one way, and then I let everybody down, and I became a real jerk in the process of it in some ways.

But I remember, you know what, my heart was breaking, and Nancy had invited this friend of mine, Marge, to stand with me in my ordination, and I didn't want that. So it was all meant right, but it just... And Marge is a wonderful friend, but I just didn't know, I was so conflicted by the whole thing when I was there, I wasn't going to do it. And then everybody talked to me that I was called to be ordained. And I don't know, it just got really...oh, boy.

And then right as I was ordained, right after I was, Willy—I think it was Willy—started singing, “Humble me, humble me, humble me, and let me do thy will,” and he started the people singing very slowly, and they started singing, and then he started the rocking thing, and then they started

building it up until, oh my God, it was so powerful. It's like he saved my life.

And the anointing of the Holy Spirit, I could feel it. Not when I was on the stage, but when we started, the people were anointing me. And so that... But then I got... Oh, and at the same time, oh, yeah, I forgot. Then I didn't know where to go. But...I just forgot his name. How could I ever? God forbid. Reverend...I see his face. Stan Roberts. Did you know Stan?

Mark B. I don't recall Stan, no.

Sky A. Oh, you would have loved him. He was a young evangelical. He was dynamite, and such a cutie, such a wonderful guy. And he called me. He needed me in San Jose. I had gone into the Fellowship office. I was working at the Fellowship office on the switchboard.

Mark B. Okay. This is in West Hollywood?

Sky A. Yeah. And I got a call, and it was Stan on the other end of the line, and he needed me to come to San Jose to help him. And I wasn't going to any churches, nothing. I just, you know, I knew I wasn't too popular.

Mark B. So you didn't feel like you were fitting in, so you were just...?

Sky A. Yeah, I didn't know who I...I was so messed up. You know, you get to feeling—

Mark B. What were you doing with your transition then? Were you just dressing differently? Had you started—

Sky A. Well, I always looked like a boy. I mean, look at... I mean, if you saw my pictures, I always looked like I looked at my ordination, you know what I mean? I just always short hair, I've always... And I can't remember when I had my surgery. I can't remember how I did it, how I got the money. It wasn't till I came back to California, that's right. Stan brought me back to California. And one of the reasons was he needed me to help him because remember Anita Bryant and John Briggs, Senator John Briggs?

Mark B. Mm-hmm, right.

Sky A. Well, Briggs had come to San Jose and was organizing all the churches, and I am a social justice preacher, and I know how to move the system. And he needed me to come out here, and he was sick. And he said when he'd get stronger, then I could go, but if I'd come and help him. And to make a long story short, he had AIDS, and he didn't know it, and he was getting sicker. And all of a sudden he disappeared, and I was there, and he told the church to make me pastor. Oh, and he...oh, that was a time when so many people were dying, it was happening.

Mark B. This was what, '82, '83?

Sky A. This was not long after my ordination. It was probably '80, '81.

Mark B. '80, '81, okay.

Sky A. Yeah. He was...well, yeah. And people didn't know. And then the hospitals treated them terrible. I mean, it was just horrible. Anyway, he wanted me to take care of the church. See how he was? He didn't tell me he was...he told me he was sick, but he needed me to take care of the church, to take care of the community, because it was the religious... Briggs came to town and he called 40 evangelical churches together, and they were meeting to organize against the gay community. And it was ugly, ug-l-y, you know.

And the day he was gonna meet, and I got—ahh—Miss Atlas Press. Were you familiar with any of the thing here? Miss Atlas Press, the lesbian women, Nicky and Johnny. Dynamite. They were articulate. Terrific work they did. Anyway, when I got the church going and that and we did work together, I'd get them—and they were atheists—and I'd get them singing at the rallies, all the hymns and everything. They'd always tell me, "You owe me big, Anderson." I got everybody involved in this.

And when they were all meeting down at one of the buildings downtown, the 40 clergy, I put on my clerics and that, and I figured I'm gonna sneak in, and then I could speak within. Let people see me and then I could speak within, and of course the Holy Spirit's gonna come and everything is gonna change, the jerk I am. So I get in there and someone noticed me, and they called me the pastor of Sodom. [*Laughs.*]

Mark B. *[Laughs.]*

Sky A. And they threw me out. They threw me out of the place. They wouldn't let me speak, nothing. And so we were outside and we were singing and stuff like that. And so then I started working with the community. We were all organizing, and I was one of the organizers. I'll give you the book, too, on that whole time, all the different stuff in the gay community in San Jose.

Mark B. Okay.

Sky A. Yeah, I'll let you have one of those. Ted Saul put it together. And it's so good. But even in their churches, they had a picture of me as the pastor of Sodom. It was horrible. But we worked with the community. We did everything to keep people safe and to stop what was going on. That happened, and then in the background it's slowly coming out about the AIDS thing.

Anyway, Stan, he got very, very sick, and I ended up taking over the church. Not for long. I took it about three years, three or four years, because after all that was done and we made it through, they didn't want me. They loved me, but they wanted... I knew. They didn't say it to me. I said it to them, 'cause I was too much into the social justice, and they wanted someone that could heal them and free them and love them and, I don't know, just be regular people, not a raving maniac, whatever. But,

you know, listen, I'm the one that told them I know you're ready to move on, and I was, too.

Mark B. You don't think it had to do with you being trans?

Sky A. Well, some of the people were not thrilled having me as trans. It was hard at first, too, when Stan was the one that wanted me to be their pastor. And I knew. And I knew why he did it, and he knew that I was the one that I could help them through this maze. And we did wonderful things.

And one of the things I did, because the people were hating the church, and drawing away from it, so I moved us all to the fruit factory, to the Dole Pineapple Building. I got us out of the church and I moved us into the second floor, I think it was, the Dole Pineapple Building. It was less money anyway than what we were paying. And I got everybody working, and we separated things so we could have a sanctuary, and it could be a place to dance. And then we had a reception area where people would come in and would meet, so we got to know everybody in the building, and people were safe, and people could sneak in there, and then no one would know where they were going. They could come into the fruit factory.

But we set up offices, and the guys built it. They built the altars and we had a cross that was lit up. And even when—I told everybody you can rent it, even the atheists, you can come, and they'd say, "But shut that damn thing off." And I said, "But that stays," and they'd do it. I mean,

we just had, you know. But people knew my heart, and we did good. We did really good things together in spite of everything. And people loved me in spite of my being... It was easier in that time. And then afterwards, they weren't quite sure what to do with me, actually.

Mark B. Were you involved in MCC nationally? Were you going to General Conference and things like this at this point?

Sky A. Yeah. At this time, no, I wasn't going. I wasn't going, no. I didn't feel like I really belonged. I'm still not sure. I know people love me. I know Jim Mitulski. People love me. I know that. And I've been blessed. But there's this...like there's this...like when I came back to MCC San Jose—and Nancy was the one that had Michael call me to come over, and when I got there, of course he wanted to have me involved because we could reach the transgender community and all this stuff, and then also because—

Mark B. How much later is this?

Sky A. This was just a few years ago.

Mark B. Right, just a few years ago, so it's much later.

Sky A. Yeah. Because I disappeared for a long while because I did not feel like I... That's when I was pastoral...it was a...I was working...I worked with the homeless on the streets, and then I became the program director for all this area for the homeless, working with the Emergency Housing

Consortium, and I had a really good position. And I worked with the human relations.

I was the one that this armory situation that's set up for the homeless, the Human Relations Commission called me in and told me, Sky, we need to do this, you need to write a program, and if we can build this thing up and get everybody with all the homeless in all the shelters' beds, and in the armories here in Sunnyvale and San Mateo and Gilroy, if they could be full at the same time, then the county will acknowledge that it's a major problem, and they're gonna do all this great stuff.

Which, if you notice in the paper, however, we lost that, and we're still waiting. We're still waiting now. As a matter of fact, I've got all the clippings, the whole thing. I'm gonna go down to the Board of Supervisors, put it on the table. But anyway.

Mark B. So you were working on the homeless issue for a number of years?

Sky A. Yeah. I was doing...yeah. Tent City. I got involved in Tent City, all this kind of stuff like that.

Mark B. And your being trans was never an issue in those sorts of settings?

Sky A. Well, you know, no, 'cause it was so...so much immediacy to everything that we're dealing with. And I trained all the staff, which is interesting. I trained all the staff for all the programs I wrote. Barry would do all the finance thing for all the grants and everything, and I did all the narratives.

And they were wonderful and successful because I always went to the people. If we were doing a particular group, I'd go sit with them and I'd write it—they'd write it. I get the credit for it, but I have to tell, you know. But it was wonderful, and we got award winning things from the United Nations because it came from the people.

And even the armories work because they came in at six—we had to get them out in the morning. They folded up, they did all the work with me, everything, everything. I've always worked with the people. I know, you know. We did incredible stuff, incredible stuff together.

And then, near the end of it, I had to get out of there, though, because it was...I was being pushed around by the boss, you know, and I was treated like... And even the same thing, like even in MCC, what I'm talking about, is they'd have meetings with all the guys and not me. And like Michael would go to the things in the park and the gay rights march here, and everybody would meet, but not me. And that's just recently. I mean, that's how it goes, you know what I mean? And so I'm the "it" in the crowd, or whatever.

Mark B. Did you find a transgender community at that time?

Sky A. No.

Mark B. Were you part of any of the groups? You were really alone through this time?

Sky A. No, because it's mostly all female. And I did this—there is in here—

Mark B. Okay, so it's mostly...yeah.

Sky A. Well, I got into one, the trans community here with a few of the guys, and they're really good. But they are busy, and I'm busy, so it's sort of like that deal that we can connect, I know they're there, and I've done good things and I help people, but we just... And then I got my wife and my kids, five kids, all with disabilities.

Mark B. You might just tell that story just shortly, because I know it, but you should tell it for history here.

Sky A. What part of it?

Mark B. Just meeting Faye and the kids.

Sky A. Oh, yeah. So when I was going to my surgery, and it was in San Jose, so it's interesting. Stan calls me here, and I'm never, you know, that's it. I had ruined one relationship. I wasn't gonna ever get married or anything. But I had to go for surgery, and I needed to be taken care of. I had a little apartment, but I knew that I couldn't possibly go through some major stuff like that and be alone.

So I heard about this guy, another trans guy had opened his house and built on, set it up to take in...and still—well, no, it's not there. But people would come in from all over the world for surgery at Stanford and they'd

stay at this house, and would be, you know, well taken care of, and pool, jacuzzis, all this stuff so you could heal, and good for healing.

And Faye, who becomes my wife, was working with the doctors at Stanford, and they trained her on how to take care of all the surgeries, male, female, trans, all this stuff, and they treated her like a nurse first class at Stanford. And so I got to meet her, and we got to be friends. And she worked three different jobs, this wonderful person, and most of her money went to buy cigarettes, cosmetics or stuff for the people that were here who had no money for anything. That's what she did. I mean, she just...she is a real wonderful human being, not just because I love her and we're together, but just because she is a wonderful human being. And they all loved her, and everybody's proposing to her.

And then after I moved, I got better, and I got into my place, a lot of them would come in and they needed clergy before surgery, and they were afraid, just afraid they're going to hell, all this junk that we all digested, no matter where we were from. So it got to be that they would always call me because when they won't come, I'll come. And she'd tell me when to wear my collar and when to wear a tie, depending on... Anyway, but I'd go and everybody knew I was from MCC.

So I did a lot of work up there, and Faye and I got to be very good friends. And then I decided one night I was gonna ask her to go out. And then after I asked her to go out, I freaked because I knew if I go out with this

lady, and anything happens inside, I better really know what I'm doing, because God will strike me dead if I mess up on this one. So I freaked out and I called her and I said I'm sick. And she's so shy, I couldn't believe it. A couple weeks later she called me and she said, "Are you better yet?"

Mark B. *[Laughs.]*

Sky A. Whoa! And she says, "You owe me a dinner." And I just figured, well, okay. So then I'm thinking, well, what are we gonna talk about, just trans surgeries and I don't know. But we get out and I just...they had to tell us they were closing the place. We just connected so much on so many issues. And yeah. And I just knew that I was going to be with her. And then we got the phone call. We were just dating a couple months. We got the phone call that I told you about.

It was her aunt that knew I was clergy, and her cousin was living on the streets and doing drugs and alcohol, and she was pregnant for another kid. And the aunt couldn't...she was getting older and said I can't do this, and would I...they asked me if I could talk to the congregation and see if anybody would like a baby, and would give a loving home to a baby. And of course we had some people that really would have loved this, and they were all fathers, and boy, the whole church got caught, MCC. MCC, they're getting baby things and all. It was so crazy to watch them.

And then it just got...we got the phone call. He was supposed to be born in June or July, and we got the phone call that he was born in May with

two brain hemorrhages, blind and deaf, and probably...and cerebral palsy, and just gonna be a vegetable. That's what they said to us. But Faye and I had been fighting for a home, as I told you, for this kid.

And so the next morning Faye called me, and we had to go to the hospital to see him. Thinking of him being up there by himself was just breaking our heart. So we went to San Francisco. We went to her aunt's house, and that's where we met Francisco, his brother, two and a half years old, a year and a half years old.

Mark B. So this is John you were talking about?

Sky A. John is the one in the hospital. We named him John, because nobody saw him. He was born and that was it. This baby was on his own. And his brother Francisco was at the house, and we got to know him that way. Anyway, so we can get it done, then the uncle took us up to the hospital, and we went in and John was in this big incubator. And the whole top floor of San Francisco General is all babies recovering from drug and alcohol, and just going through withdrawal and lots of pain and all this stuff.

And we went into this room, and there's this little peanut, not even five pounds, in this big incubator, all wires and tubes all over and this poor little tiny thing. Looked like a chicken. And the nurse took him out and put him in my arms, as I told you, and Faye went, "Oh, no," 'cause she knew, oh, boy. And then I looked at Faye and I said, "He's ours," and

here we are, we're not married, we haven't been dating that long, and here we are, and we're gonna take this baby, and we're crazy. The social worker thought we were crazy. And he told us he was never going to be anything. And I told him, "Never belongs to God." Uh-uh. And you don't know what love can do.

Mark B. You have a great family.

Sky A. Oh, they're wonderful. Well, they all believe. They know God. They pray. They pray for their friends. I mean, they're just...and they're joyous, they're joyful.

Mark B. Yes.

Sky A. Not all the time. I mean, it's not all, like I told you, milk and honey. There are days when they are yelling at us.

Mark B. Have you kept connections with MCC?

Sky A. Well, I served with MCC until it just closed a while ago. And I couldn't step in. I think we made a mistake because we helped start that in the '70s. It broke my heart. And a lot of the people who were going here are not wealthy, and we couldn't make the money. But I think we should have gone to mission status instead of closing it all down, because I see people on the streets. I'll be walking downtown with my kids, and I'll hear, "Sky, Sky! Reverend, Reverend, Reverend!" And they're coming

up to me, “When are we gonna have MCC? When are we gonna have MCC?” And they’re missing it.

And I think we made a bad mistake, because I was already connected with San Jose State. I used to go over to San Jose State and do the mentors club, and I’d do things on faith and spirituality, the different...faith and religion, the difference between that, and I’d do things for them over there, training them to work with the LGBT community. And I went over as me, as transgender. And they just recently invited me to a thing, and I couldn’t go. I was very sick. But I would like to stay connected with them.

And I think we made a mistake. But I talked to Reverend Darlene—and I don’t know if I should be saying this—and I asked her...I emailed her and I just said when is MCC coming back to San Jose? And I know I can go up the peninsula, but a lot of times I can’t go.

Mark B. It’s a trek.

Sky A. And I can’t drive. Some days I can, some days I can’t. Anyway, so she wrote me and she says they are open, if I can find people not who just want a church, but want to *be* the church. And I’ve been so busy. I’m praying and joining her. I’m joining her in prayer. We are in prayer. I don’t know if I should be saying this. But yeah. And to see the guidance of the spirit and to see what happens. And so as soon as I finish—see and now also I am the acting director of Area Board 7 for the developmentally disabled.

Mark B. Oh, okay.

Sky A. I don't know if you're familiar with any of that.

Mark B. That's, I assume, California lingo.

Sky A. Yeah. And under the state we're mandated to work and to make sure that the regional centers and all of that carry out the work they're supposed to do for the disabled and that, so I'm building some bridges there. And right now we're in the process of looking for a new director, so I have a team and we're developing all of that.

Mark B. You mentioned that part of your homeless work, you were on the staff of a local United Methodist church, and you were working with trans there.

Sky A. Wow. Oh, yeah, well, I've been everywhere. Yeah, I forgot to tell you. Well, I don't know how to tell you when it all happened, but I've been Catholic and I've been Methodist, in the Methodist. I don't know if I did the Methodist before I did the... Well, Tom—well, see, 'cause we all worked together, the Catholics and the Methodists and the Baptists and all this stuff.

Mark B. You were all working on the homeless issues?

Sky A. Homeless issues, yeah. And other issues, too. And the Methodist church downtown was really trying to do something really constructive for the homeless, 'cause they were situated right in the middle of it. So Reverend

Tom McCoy, God bless his soul, my buddy, he died of cancer a few years ago. He was a great pastor, and great with the people.

So they asked me to join their staff, and they took me on. This was way back in the '80s. And openly, as transgender. I said that's the only way I'll do it, and as MCC clergy. So they took me on this—this is a Methodist church—they took me on. But the whole church voted on it. As MCC clergy and as transgender.

Mark B. Excellent.

Sky A. To work, and they gave Faye and I and my two boys—at that time we only had two—upstairs in the Young Adult Ministers House, the YAM House, they called it, and we lived there. And then I got involved in Tent City downtown, and we brought all the homeless—11 of them, not all of them—to live downstairs in the Young Adult Ministers House, and we did incredible stuff. We did incredible stuff. And Tom and the church, they were good. They were really...

And I went on a fast for 40 days to get them to open single people shelters, because they were doing stuff for the families, but they wouldn't do it, and I just felt led to go on a fast, and so I did. And the church supported me for that. They were gonna have a big lobster dinner for me when I was done. And just incredible stuff we did together. To show you how faith is faith, right? It doesn't matter our labels and the way we approach it.

When I left the YAM House and I was working, I don't know, but I was still doing stuff with the homeless, and Father Luis [Baldonado] from the Catholic church, Our Lady of—I shouldn't say this, but I will, this is the truth—he came and got me. He wanted me to work, 'cause they had all the immigrants coming, because it's primarily a Hispanic church, and they have all the immigrants come. And there were so many that wouldn't go for help, and they didn't know what to do with all of them, and they were homeless, and all this stuff that was taking place. And so he asked me to join the staff.

And so I said I'll come and I'll help you, and I helped him set up stuff. I set up a medical clinic. I got doctors, a Jewish doctor to come and do stuff with the poor. Well, I did all kinds of crazy stuff, got everything going. We acted as bridges to get people into services and worked with clinics to get them to accept the people who were coming in. So it was just really crazy.

But then he asked me, he called me and he asked me to become a pastoral associate, which works closely with the priests. And so I said, "Father, you gotta sit down, I gotta have a talk with you." I said, "Father, you can't do this with me." And he says, "Why, what are you talking about?" I said, "I am transgender." And he looked at me. His eyes were big. And he sat down. "Oh," he says, and he thought for a minute. This is a very holy man, I'll tell you. He says to me, "Well, I'll tell you, I don't want

your body, I want your heart.” And he says, “And the spirit is with us in this. You come with me. Help me build.”

So I became a pastoral associate in a Catholic church. And Father let me...I did all kinds of stuff with the food program, and did all this stuff with immigrants. I've done everything. And with the poor. I really do well working with the poor and the disabled.

Mark B. A rich ministry. A very rich ministry, Sky. The significance of your name. You chose the name Sky?

Sky A. I chose it because...well, it's an island off the coast of Scotland, and I'm a Scot. And also it's androgynous. And in many ways I feel that way, that I am male and female, both and neither, and I feel that way, so I don't really... A lot of trans people get mad at me. I know that when I was up on the hill with all the guys, and all the guys were talking about what they're gonna do when they got out and what they're gonna do with the women, and I'm, “What are you talking about? How can you forget?” And they'd be furious at me. “I was never a woman!” “Oh, the hell you weren't,” I'd tell them.

‘Cause I really...you know, how can you talk about your sisters like this, when so many of us have been abused and know that, how can we be that way? So that doesn't make me very popular, because I'm not being a man. So I don't, you know. And even within...I don't really fit in many...I don't have a role, you know what I mean?

Mark B. I hear that.

Sky A. I just...I'm male, but I'm just who I am. I don't really fit, you know what I mean? I never have. I don't.

Mark B. What's your connection with MCC these days? Your feeling? MCC has come along on transgender? There are more trans people who are in MCC.

Sky A. Yeah, I know that there are, and I think it's getting better. I think MCC's willing. I think they've got a long way to go, though, I really do. Ah, you know, if you only knew how heartbreaking. I mean, you think you've come so far, and then I'd be, like when I'd be out with Michael—he was the pastor of MCC—and at the parade, and then he'd leave me with all the kids, and he'd be with the real men, you know what I mean, not include me. You don't need to be told a lot of stuff, you know, it's just I'd be treated in different ways. I just, I don't know. I think the willingness is there, but I really think we've got a long way to go. And maybe I don't know enough of the churches and the clergy. I think a lot of people are okay with it.

Mark B. Any other aspirations for your ministry or your life, things you want to do yet?

Sky A. Well, right now I'm writing a book.

Mark B. Tell me about the book. You're writing a book on?

Sky A. On my family and me. And I'm gonna probably...I'm debating with Faye how far I go, and do I write a separate book on us. So we're just playing it by ear and see how far we go, and how we play it. I'm sort of thinking at the end I might just really let people know who I am, oh, by the way, you know. I don't know. I'm thinking. I don't know. Because I just really...I really feel our story is... You know, why do we do this? How can we expect the straight community to be accepting, and they are. Look at how wonderful that's all getting.

But we're the stepchildren, even as the LGBT community. LGB. The "T" is a token. Almost everybody says that. How can we do this? I don't know. See, like people say, well, we don't mean it. But see, we've been told, as gay men and women, gay and lesbians, how did that feel all the years that you heard it? It was never acceptable to be in that place. Never acceptable. And I refuse to be, you know. I'm nobody's token. I'm nothing. And I just... I don't know, so...

But I don't have hard feelings, and I love MCC, and I would love to have MCC back in town before I kick the bucket. I'm 73. And it's getting harder, and I've got a lot of stuff. I'm working on end of life things for my kids right now and all this, which I have to do realistically, because we have no family. My family's not...you know, my family, I didn't tell you, for 20 years didn't speak with me. And I was never...I never went to a wedding. I never went to...I never was part of anything.

Mark B. No nieces and nephews or anything like that?

Sky A. No. And now they've come back for me. And it's awkward. It's okay. And I love them. I always have loved them. And so I...it's sort of awkward, though. It's sort of the same kind of thing, you know. They love me. But I love them, and we're doing okay. It's just don't push it. I don't want to push it. You know, life's too short.

Mark B. Yes.

Sky A. You choose your battles, and God knows we've still got a lot of battles, right, ahead of us. I mean... 'Cause it's not...and see, my feeling is like I, my job I'm doing—I don't get paid for it, but this is a state position, appointed by the state and the Board of Supervisors to do the work I'm doing. And I accepted the position that the director at the time, Jane, God bless her, she died, but I accepted the position. They came after me and asked me to get on this board because of all my kids and the multiple disabilities, and so the information and the knowledge that I've got, and also the work with other communities that are in the struggle, like homeless people.

But I told them I would only—they took me out to lunch and I told them straight out that I will come. I am a clergy person in MCC, and that's got to be clear, straight out, and also I am transgender. They nearly fell off of the...

Mark B. Uh-huh.

Sky A. But they said yes, because I said you cannot...and I really wanted to do it, 'cause I will not come on there and pretend, turn my head the other way on LGBT issues. And there are many gay people taking in children, and also there's many gay people with disabilities, and they need not to be out there afraid to ask and not be brought in. So that's all okay. Not everybody on the board knows yet. I mean, most of the board, but they just changed a lot of people, and we don't announce it. But it's just who I am.

Mark B. It's who you are.

Sky A. By the grace of God.

Mark B. Good. Thank you for your time. That's a rich story, Sky. Thank you for taking the time to share that journey.

Sky A. Well, you heard some of it before at the table with my kids.

Mark B. That's good.

Sky A. Yeah, I love to tell it, the part about my family.

Mark B. That's good. Thank you.

[End of recording.]