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### **N.3: Undergraduate Internship Program: Fall 2013**

Interview N-0020  
Daniel L. Leonard  
27 September 2013

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## ABSTRACT – DANIEL LEONARD

Dan Leonard reflects on his childhood in rural Davidson County and recounts memories of growing up in his father's church while describing himself as a non-practicing Protestant Christian. He discusses graduating pre-med from Catawba College as well as the experience of coming out and dropping out of UNC medical school. He recalls stereotypes that homosexuals couldn't be doctors and men couldn't be nurses. Leonard recalls the founding of the Carolina Gay Association, work with Human Sexuality and Information Counseling Services, the Southeastern Gay Conference, and the Lambda newsletter. He describes the visibility of CGA on campus as well as the locations of its original meetings in the Lutheran and Catholic student centers. In describing southern identity, Leonard describes the discourse of gay identity as he grew up. He goes on to reflect on the gay community including gay bars and tea rooms, public health concerns for the LGBT community, and the misconceptions, spread, and available testing for HIV/AIDS. He discusses the passage of Amendment 1 in North Carolina, experience in an LGBT senior center group, his own activism, and networking with other activists through Facebook.

## FIELD NOTES – DANIEL LEONARD

Interviewee: Dan Leonard  
Interviewer: Corinne White  
Interview date: September 27, 2013  
Location: Interviewee's Living Room, Carrboro, NC 27510  
Length: 82:46

THE INTERVIEWEE. Dan Leonard is a registered nurse residing in Carrboro who attended UNC as a graduate student in Pathology and co-founded the Carolina Gay Association in 1974. While at UNC, Leonard also worked as a counselor with the Human Information and Sexuality Counseling Services. The North Carolina native later went on to receive an Associate's Degree in Nursing from Alamance Community College. Having been involved with the Chapel Hill-Carrboro LGBT community from the 1970s to the present day, Leonard has a wealth of knowledge about the history of gay life for students and community members.

THE INTERVIEWER. Corinne White is a UNC student and intern at the Southern Oral History Program working on a project with other SOHP interns about sexuality at UNC in the 1970s.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVIEW. The interview was conducted in Leonard's living room with both interviewer and interviewee sitting on the couch. Leonard was candid, and cracked several jokes throughout the interview. The interview topics included social life in Chapel Hill for the gay community, the Carolina Gay Association, the Human Sexuality Information and Counseling Services, the spread of HIV in Chapel Hill, and the interviewee's perspectives on the gay rights movement. There is a brief disruption in the interview at 58:20 when the interviewer's phone rings (the phone was the recording device). At the end of the interview, Leonard said he was interested in unrestricting access to his first interview with the SOHP.

## TAPE LOG – DAN LEONARD

Interviewee: Dan Leonard  
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Location: Interviewee's Living Room, Carrboro, NC 27510  
Length: 82:46  
Comments: Only text in quotation marks is verbatim; all other text is paraphrased, including the interviewer's questions.

### TAPE INDEX

| <u>Time</u> | <u>Topic</u>  |
|-------------|---|
|             | [Digital Recording, Starts at Beginning]  |
| 0:00        | Introductions: this is Corinne White with Dan Leonard.  |
| 0:15        | Childhood memories; lived in rural Davidson County by farm; memories of a "southern country woman"  |
| 1:55        | Remembers watching coronation of Queen Elizabeth II with neighbor; father was minister of Emanuel Evangelical Church  |
| 2:38        | Describes church; father had "edifice complex" because loved to build onto churches as they moved around  |
| 3:55        | Identifies self as non-practicing Protestant Christian; "I maintain my Christian beliefs, but I'm not active in any church"   |
| 4:50        | Graduated Catawba College, took pre-med   |
| 5:30        | Couldn't psychologically deal with coming out and being in med-school at the same time; "I was too psychologically conflicted" "Being gay and being a doctor was totally unheard of in those days"  |
| 6:38        | Thought about being nurse in eighth grade, but wasn't option for men; "I was a sickly child. I assume the influence was the positive interactions with the doctors who took care of me"   |
| 7:36        | Exit interview at medical school; "I was told that gay men could not be doctors. That was the official opinion of the school."  |
| 9:17        | Founding Carolina Gay Association with Mike Grissom; spring 1974 had organizational meetings for CGA and filled out the paperwork; group started meeting officially in fall 1974  |
| 10:24       | Reverberations of 1969 Stonewall had reached Chapel Hill; there was a gay group in Raleigh not associated with NC State and one at Duke   |
| 12:23       | Three-pronged reasoning for starting CGA: political, personal growth "which was my interest coming from the Human Sexuality Information and Counseling Services," and social  |
| 13:32       | Consciousness-raising groups: 10-12 people would meet once a week for 10 weeks out of the semester, no formal program, chose discussion topics by consensus. "A great way for people to understand themselves as well as the diversity of the gay community." |
| 14:20       | No lesbians involved early on; BGLAD  |
| 15:30       | First Southeastern Gay Conference in 1977; Tuesday night socials  |

- 16:41 Chapel Hill town ordinance to prevent anti-gay discrimination in municipal hiring; no “big campaign”
- 18:51 Joined Human Sexuality Information and Counseling Services in spring 1972; one of two gay trainees; had giant notebook of resources for questions; all trainees had degrees of specialization “I became the homosexuality go-to person”; visited various physical education classes to talk about gayness
- 20:31 Abortion counseling at Human Sexuality Information and Counseling Services (HSICS)
- 21:10 Describes presentations to classes about “gayness”
- 22:16 Describes the kinds of questions students had for him at the HSICS; remembers student asking him if he could tell he was gay “Your eyes. Your eyes are soft and not hard”
- 23:36 More on consciousness raising groups; each small group had a facilitator; no specific recollections on topics, but guesses they spoke about religion and STDs
- 25:32 Racial and socioeconomic diversity in the CGA; “Lord knows we all thought we were poor back then”; reflected general socioeconomic background of university of “people who weren’t in fraternities”
- 27:05 Did not work with other groups on campus “we were the odd people out”
- 27:27 Visibility of CGA on campus; Lambda Lambda Lambda Rush CGA posters made during fraternity/sorority rush, put on pillars of Wilson Library; notices painted on the cube outside student union; Lambda newsletter
- 29:55 Spring 1973 met in Catholic student center and Lutheran student center; “it’s interesting that in the south, a gay group started meeting in religious facilities”
- 31:41 Identity as a southerner; “I was probably obviously gay to everyone since age 5, but I didn’t know it. Although I was occasionally harassed and bullied in high school it wasn’t a big deal.” Parents had college education and church was very liberal “so there wasn’t a lot of negative talk in church about being gay.”
- 32:54 Discourse about gays growing up; “Of course it wasn’t discussed by anyone anywhere. To say it wasn’t discussed is to say it was a social norm.”
- 34:00 Discussed not fitting in because his parents were educated in a rural area; “being odd or different from such an early age was sort of normative for me, that I never fit the mainstream anyway.”
- 35:10 Realized from a young age that he was not like other boys; recalls bullying incident; “there are ways to deal with discrimination and bullying that are positive as a opposed to rebellious” “I realized I was different; but I did not feel that I was discriminated against because it wasn’t discussed”
- 37:44 College was an opportunity to meet other young gay men “I knew it was a no-no” “In college, my frequency of male contacts increased over time”
- 38:55 Arrived at UNC; heard from young age that there was a queer and communist behind every tree in Chapel Hill
- 40:12 Not sure if he had encountered gay stereotypes other than statement from medical school professor who said gay men couldn’t be doctors
- 41:40 Reflections on mentors at the medical school
- 43:14 “Gay bars and t-rooms are not for everybody”; more reasons for founding CGA
- 45:16 Dinner party circuit for the upper echelons; Friendly Castle

- 47:26 Hoagie Gaskins was first acquaintance to die of AIDS in 1983; diagnosed at a time when no one knew how to treat AIDS
- 50:50 Social gatherings at Friendly Castle
- 51:30 Gay bars in Chapel Hill; Pegasus and Tempo Room, which was mixed bar, straight until 9 p.m., then gay; then gay bar moved to Henderson Street after Tempo Room burned down; owner of Pegasus died of AIDS in 1984
- 54:07 Gay-related response to AIDS epidemic was being planned at time of Pegasus owner death; lack of medical testing options to check for HIV/AIDS
- 55:27 “There were 9,000 different rumors” about how HIV spread; little realization of incubation period length
- 56:18 CDC epidemiological study of HIV spread in Chapel Hill; couldn’t find a case control group
- 57:51 Personal response to AIDS epidemic was to reduce number of sexual partners
- 58:20 [Recording disrupted]
- 0:13 People believed AIDS was acquired from big cities, not locally; has always been HIV negative
- 2:14 HIV test became available in 1986 which coincided with safe sex movement; some gay men are upset that they cannot be blood or organ donors; “that is a public health policy for the greater good”
- 4:31 Speaks to progress of gay rights movement; at time of CGA founding, “I don’t even think the idea of gay marriage ever crossed anyone’s minds.” Adding bisexuals and transgender people to the movement
- 6:08 Group at Chapel Hill Senior Center for LGBT senior citizens; wonders why a transgender person would choose to be public; speaks about friend who died of heart attack from hormone treatment
- 8:44 Inclusivity and the movement; “I accept it as part of the broader sexual liberation movement that people are free to be who they want to be”
- 9:24 Amendment 1 passage; “I keep that sign just to remind people that this is something that needs to be worked on”; engaged to partner but would probably not get married until moved to state with same-sex marriage
- 11:14 Explains why he has stayed in North Carolina; “living in southern Orange County, you might as well live in San Francisco as far as discrimination is concerned.”
- 12:25 Believes it will be a “long time” before North Carolina has marriage equality
- 14:19 Time requirements for students make it harder for them to explore different social options for gay and lesbian students, but they can be more open with their identities
- 15:09 Experience having student boarders
- 15:49 [Leonard’s partner, Nathan Zalman interjects in the conversation]
- 16:03 Other boarders worked in the area; long-term tenants were a waiter downtown and someone who worked in the UNC radiology department; all student boarders in community were gay “wanted to live cheaply among gay people”
- 18:41 “Over the years, I’ve been involved in various aspects of the human rights movement”; describes activist involvement in civil rights, gay rights, inmate rights, patient rights, mental health rights and senior gay rights

19:27 “I am always willing, and perhaps too willing to answer questions about health, or  
gay-related health and mental health”; networking on Facebook with gay activists  
22:28 “The issue of gay marriage is interesting to me but it’s not a hot-button issue, it’s  
not something I want to march up and down the street about everyday”;  
experience in senior center LGBT group; “there’s a lot of ancient knowledge to be  
gained from that group”

[Recording ends]