

Interview of Ann Giagni

UCLA Library, Center for Oral History Research, University of California, Los Angeles Interview of Ann Giagni

Transcript

Interview with Ann Giagni

Session 1(11/6/2013)

00:01:57

Born November 9, 1948 in New York City; early move childhood to Whitestone, Long Island, attended PS 193 and St. Luke's Parochial School in Whitestone, New York; move in fifth grade to Baldwin, New York, attended Coolidge Elementary, Baldwin Junior High, and Baldwin Senior High

00:05:23

Early memories of New York City; mother's family background and early life; mother's interest in the Theater; father's family background and early life in theater, radio, and films; father's early dance career, choreography.

00:09:14

Parents meet in New York City dance studio in 1940s; importance of father's career; father's family background and early interest in dance; mother's character, work in Theater, experience on Broadway; parent's relationship

00:13:38

Mother's role at home; childhood spent in Theater; father's choreography career, travel; Theater world and culture in 1950s and 1960s

00:18:37

Italian and Irish heritage; show business and family; mother's family background; exposure to rural life; growing up on Long Island, New York; tomboy and friendships with boys; working-class in Whitestone; playing sports

00:21:59

Ballet, dance classes, family support; quitting dance after high-school

00:25:55

Family conflict over dance; move to New York City at age 18; attending and leaving New York University (NYU) School of Arts for Dance; moving in with Nicki Colatini (spelling?); returning to NYU

00:30:25

Childhood dance and theater; exposure to gay men and gay male couples during childhood; parents attitudes towards homosexuality

00:34:47

Race and ethnicity, in dance, racial tensions in Whitestone and Baldwin, incident with African-American high-school teacher, at NYU

00:40:20

Parents political views and activities; family's economic status; father's founding of Union of Stage Directors and Choreographers; father's experiences as a choreographer and intellectual property; Tap Dance Kid.

00:42:10

Catholicism in childhood and adulthood

00:45:50

Mother's family; parent's expectations; academic interests; experiences in Greenwich Village and Washington Square

00:49:40

Brothers' interests and professions; gender and ballet; family's economic status; father's career; parent's relationship; traveling to Los Angeles, California for summers

00:53:33

Traveling; summers in Los Angeles during high school; 11th grade year in London, High Spirits, Arts Educational Trust School and social class

00:56:46

Social life in high school, shyness, dating; socio-economic class and childhood; ballet; no concept of existence of lesbians; mother's reaction to her coming-out as a lesbian

01:01:20
Social life, dating in ballet; politics, initial support for Vietnam War; family's Democratic politics; 1968 Democratic Political Convention in Chicago, Illinois and rejection of political party membership

01:05:00
Vietnam War and anti-war activism; student activism at NYU, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) meetings; dorm politics; shyness; Weathermen's blowing up of house in New York City; students killed at Kent State; Stonewall Riots

01:07:51
Dorm life; living with family at the Dakota, commuting to NYU; Columbia University Protests and violence; attending March on Washington; explosive atmosphere at the time; bomb scares at NYU.

01:13:26
Entry into activism, politics; dorm politics at NYU; overcoming shyness

01:17:39
Social life at NYU; academics, English; living with family, commuting to college; student activism; politics in New York City

01:21:22
Social life, dating at NYU; realizing she was a lesbian; lack of awareness of lesbians

01:26:34
Job at Chase Manhattan; first lesbian relationship; move to Los Angeles in 1971

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Session 2 (11/22/2013)

00:04:32
Assassination of President John F. Kennedy; Catholic Church and sexuality; sex education at home and school; sexuality and culture in 1950s and 1960s.

00:09:20
Sex education from friends; coming-out as a lesbian, looking information on homosexuality at the library in Santa Monica, California in 1971, negative portrayals of lesbians; perceptions of lesbians; first lesbian relationship

00:13:58
Recession and difficulty finding employment, gender; move to Los Angeles, California in 1971

00:16:01
First lesbian relationship; coming out; becoming a librarian, Master's degree in Library Science at the University of Southern California (USC)

00:18:11
USC, Student Council, gay group; gay group at USC Religious Center, meeting Del Whan (spelling?); gender in lesbian and gay community

00:20:34
Gay group at USC, meeting about Gay Community Services Center (GCSC) and Morris Kight, domination by gay men of events

00:25:39
Lesbian events at GCSC, Sunday Consciousness Raising Group facilitated by Sharon Raphael and Mina (Robinson) Mayer and rap sessions; consciousness raising format; Los Angeles lesbian community

00:31:40
Thursday Rap Session Group at GCSC; rap session format; finding lesbian community and social life

00:35:26
Facilitating Sunday Consciousness Raising Group at GCSC; political issues and conflict of gay men and lesbians at GCSC

00:39:25
Political issues and conflict of gay men and lesbians at GCSC, leaving GCSC; founding Lesbian Raps and Socials Collective (LR&S) at Westside Women's Center

00:43:37
Librarian positions at Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL) in Watts, children's librarianship; Meyers-Milias Brown Act,

union involvement, Librarian's Guild, joining American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees. (AFSCME)

00:46:05

Union stewardship; family's union involvement; first AFSCME contract negotiations

00:49:40

LR&S Westside Women's Center; Fat Underground Collective; lesbian activism in 1970s, operation and experience in collectives; Lesbian Therapy Group, Sister Magazine, Lesbian Tide and Lesbian News.

00:51:56

Purpose of LR&S, events, sessions; Westside Women's Center

00:57:20

LR&S at Westside Women's Center, probation period, growth, intergroup conflict, decline; collectives' functions and formats and experience of consensus decision making.

01:02:44

Probation period at Westside Women's Center, radical politics, conflict; consensus decision making process

01:05:42

Westside Women's Center operations; LR&S begin publishing Sister Magazine in 1977

01:08:53

Involvement in AFSCME, Vice-President, contract negotiations, social change training with Shirley Zimmerman

01:11:49

AFSCME actions, demonstrations, training with Zimmerman, becoming President; Los Angeles Civil Service

Classifications, payment of librarians; California Proposition 13, budget cuts

01:14:59

LAPL career, Watts, Intercity Bookmobile, work in housing projects and schools

01:18:40

LAPL Intercity Bookmobile, improving access at Nickerson Gardens Housing Project, her politics.

01:21:46

Gay group at USC; coming-out as a lesbian in 1972; discrimination, homosexuality and municipal employment

01:25:39

Coming-out at LAPL; meeting of gay and lesbian employees; affirmative action and anti-discrimination clause for sexual preference in union contract

01:27:07

Gender presentation at home and work

01:32:14

Coming-out to family, mother's reaction; first lesbian relationship; ; early romantic feelings and experiences with women

01:36:28

Conflicts with gay men at GCSC; closed consciousness raising group with Sharon Raphael and Mina (Robinson)

Mayer's house in Hermosa Beach, California; lesbian sexuality; socio-economic class and race in consciousness raising groups

01:38:45

Printer and poet Jeanne Hruska, memorial service in 1980s, reunion of women known in early 1970s

01:42:43

Women's Track Gym for women athletes, owners Gayle Weldon and Penny Johnson, closure; Los Angeles Olympics in 1984; Gayle Weldon's memorial service, homophobia

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Session 3 (2/11/2014)

00:04:35

Conflict of lesbians and gay men at Gay Community Services Center (GCSC), leaving GCSC; Lesbian Raps and Socials Collective (LR&S); lesbian separatism in 1970s and early 1980s, women's space.

00:08:17

Conflict and dynamics in collectives; Switchboard Collective, lesbian social calendar; lesbian separatism, women's music concerts and women's space in 1970s, changes in 1980s, women's health clinics

00:11:20

Lesbian separatism, relationships with gay men, lesbian community.

00:15:52

Bisexuality; sexual identity terms used in 1970s, dyke, contemporary terms

00:21:58

Women's culture in 1970s; Women's concerts, tours, Margie Adams performance at Woman's Building, Meg Christian, Holly Near, Cris Williamson, Vicki Randle, audience relations to performers, changes in 1980s

00:26:30

Change in women's concerts in 1980s; social life, dating in 1970s; AFSCME activity, becoming President in 1979; consciousness raising group; LR&S; race, lesbian social life, Debreta's events for African-American lesbians; purchasing home in Venice, California in 1976

00:29:56

AFSCME involvement, equal pay for equal work campaign 1977, outreach, political fundraising

00:37:05

AFSCME work, meeting with union representatives and Los Angeles City Council Member Art (Arthur K.) Snyder, lessons learned

00:43:17

Work with Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL); going to work for City of Los Angeles, supervising Public Information Unit for Rent Stabilization Division, Cultural Affairs Division

00:48:58

Work for City of Los Angeles, Youth Fair Chance Grant in 1990s, Linda Griego; relationship of unions and management

00:54:43

Events at Woman's Building; lesbian community in Venice; joining Whitman-Brooks, becoming a member of Southern California Women for Understanding (SCWU), Myra Riddell, non-profit status

00:59:24

SCWU events, Breakfasts for Understanding, June Mazer; Briggs Initiative 1978, coalition building across gay male and lesbian community; oral history with Lillian Faderman

01:04:21

SCWU organizational structure, Steering Committee, membership rules, mission, conflict, decline; Chair of Beach Cities Chapter; meeting Myra Riddell, June Mazer, Bunny MacCulloch at SCWU; volunteering for SCWU in 1990s, Jean Conger

01:10:44

Women's Chorus Collective Collection at the June L. Mazer Archives; lesbian response to AIDS epidemic, impact community; LGBT Archives, Libraries, Museums and Special Collections Conferences (ALMS)

01:14:30

AIDS epidemic, theater community, impact on gay male and on lesbian community

01:19:26

Changes in lesbian community in 1990s; SCWU membership, purpose, conflicts and tensions

01:24:59

Sisterhood Bookstore, lesbian community in 1970s, women's books, Mina Meyer, oral history project at the Mazer Archives

01:28:46

Women's books in 1970s and early 1980s, "When God Was a Woman," "The First Sex," and "Chalice and the Blade," impact; Catholic religious beliefs

01:31:40

Information for and about lesbian community, finding lesbian community; discovery of Gay Community Services Center (GCSC); Lesbian News, the Switchboard Collective

01:37:38

Illnesses as a teenager, again in 20s, misdiagnosis, return of illness in 1985; producing Berlin to Broadway with Kurt Weill, decision to close show, conflict

01:47:45

Illness in 1984-85, potential diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis (MS); homeopathic treatment with Ananda Zaren, homeopathic treatment protocols and remedies, slow improvement in health

01:50:02

Improved health; return to activism in 1995, volunteering at SCWU, Jean Conger, joining June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives Board of Directors

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Session 4 (2/24/2014)

00:02:50

Illness; volunteering with Southern California Women for Understanding (SCWU); changes in Los Angeles lesbians community from late 1980s-early 1990s, closure of lesbian bars

00:06:18

Interest in June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives (Mazer Archives), Jean Conger, interview for Board position with Board members Irene Wolt, Marcia Schwemer and Degania Golove

00:10:52

Joining Mazer Board, Board members in 1997, first Board meeting, becoming President

00:16:39

Mazer Board Co-Presidency with Degania Golove, early days as President; SCWU, Connexus; move of the West Coast Lesbian Collection (Mazer Archives) from Oakland to West Hollywood, California

00:20:25

Conflict with Irene Wolt and Degania Golove, Irene Wolt leaving Board

00:24:23

Making changes at Mazer Archives, Conflict with Degania Golove; changes in Board membership, Degania Golove leaving Board; managing volunteers

00:32:24

Volunteer Jo Duffy, role in running Mazer; Mazer subject files, cataloging; location in Whorley Building in West Hollywood

00:34:51

Changes in Board membership

00:39:04

ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives (ONE) and Mazer offer and discussions of shared building at University of Southern California (USC), lease agreement and cancellation of, building condition

00:42:18

Relationship of Mazer and ONE; configuration of building offered by USC, cancelling lease; lesbians on Board of ONE, Jeanne Cordova, Ivy Bottini, Yolanda Retter; relationship with Yolanda Retter.

00:46:10

Mazer Board pressured to sign second lease with USC and ONE, cancelling lease

00:51:54

Work for City of Los Angeles, Fiesta Broadway, Youth Fair Chance Grant; Mazer cancelling lease agreement with USC and ONE

00:55:46

Agreement about space, collection ownership, lease with USC and ONE; relationship with ONE; survival of the Mazer

01:02:27

Relationship with ONE; Yolanda Retter and ONE's collecting of lesbian materials; grants, meeting Stuart Timmons, Executive Director of ONE

01:03:42

Survival of the Mazer; interview wrap-up

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Session 5 (3/18/2014)

00:04:02
Mazer and institutional collaborations; University of Southern California (USC) and ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives (ONE) collecting lesbian materials, relationship of Mazer and ONE; State Library of California grant and Stuart Timmons, Executive Director of ONE

00:08:02
Mazer and ONE relationship, internship program 1996-1998; inventories of Mazer materials; grants for cataloging; volunteer Jo Duffy

00:11:51
Jo Duffy stories about lesbian pulp novels and Kitty Genovese murder in New York City, collection at Mazer; retention of volunteers; staffing challenges and open hours

00:15:50
Mazer Board of Directors, members of, growth, conflict; survival of Mazer

00:19:28
Mazer Board, conflict, process of joining; romantic relationship with Francesca Taylor; Mazer finances and fundraising events

00:25:13
Mazer Board, joining, influence of Judith Saunders; renovation, physical space, and organization of materials at Mazer; Westside Women's Center

00:30:30
Renovation, physical space, and organization of materials at Mazer; Myra Riddell's mentorship, friendship; Southern California Women for Understanding (SCWU), Beach Cities Chapter; Mazer strategic plans and mission

00:35:08
Mazer Board, growth, Marilee France, Jamey Fitzpatrick, Jeri Deitrick; roles of Board members, Jeri Deitrick and periodicals; Mazer strategic planning; relationship of Mazer and City of West Hollywood

00:41:25
Relationship with Yolanda Ritter; work for City of Los Angeles in Cultural Affairs, Community Development Department, Youth Fair Chance Grant, Linda Griego, Fiesta Broadway

00:45:04
Relationship with Yolanda Ritter, archival work and lesbian politics; Yolanda Ritter and Jeanne Cordova relationship [restrict!!!]

00:48:55
Mazer Board Member Ann Pall (spelling?) from University of California, Los Angeles (UCCLA), development of relationship with UCLA and Center for the Study of Women (CSW); early meetings at UCLA with Regina Lark, Community Partnership Grant and processing of first 5 Mazer collections in 2007; OUTfest partnership with UCLA; Mazer survival and attracting new donors, physical space

00:53:00
First meeting with UCLA Library and CSW, seeking deposit relationship; Mazer Advisory Committee; researchers at the Mazer; priorities and move of personal collections into main archives space, storage of books

00:57:50
Impetuses for and development of agreement with UCLA, role of Mazer; Lesbian Herstory Archives; space in West Hollywood.

01:02:02
Non-profit organizations, property ownership, management, funding, and long-term survival Inner City Cultural Center

01:04:40
Mazer fundraising strategies, grant administration; work for City of Los Angeles

01:07:56
Agreement and collaboration of Mazer, CSW, and UCLA Library, Mazer's role; results of collaboration for Mazer, increased outreach, trust and donor solicitation; collecting focuses of the Mazer

01:10:51
Challenges and future of partnership of Mazer, CSW, and UCLA Library

01:13:31
Mazer Board of Directors, functions and operations of

01:18:31

Family relationships, with parents, brother Danny; home renovation

01:22:05

Romantic relationship with Francesca Taylor, starting a family; family relationships

01:25:32

Birth of daughter Elsa in July 1999.

01:28:30

Raising children, living arrangements, birth of twins in August 2002

01:36:48

Medical Women's International Association conference, program on lesbian sexuality and health; female doctors; female doctors in Sierra Leone

01:41:01

Partner Francesca Taylor's career, childcare; caring at-home for elderly parents; family relationships, living arrangements; choice to home school their children; lesbian parenting

01:46:13

Family life, raising children; Catholic faith and church attendance, lesbian parenting in the Catholic Church at St. Monica's Parish; place and politics of LGBT Catholics

01:50:00

Southwestern Law School; retirement from City of Los Angeles; caring for elderly father

01:54:39

Mazer Board, roles of members, role as President; interview wrap up and reflections on experience of doing a life oral history.