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A Conversation with Meghan Griffiths

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A Conversation With Meg Griffiths
Caroline O'Connor and Owen Camas
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College of the Holy Cross
Making History (HIST 299-01)
Prof. Stephanie Yuhl

Caroline: Alright, so, um, just we have to do this for recording reasons, its Monday April, 23rd, 2018 at 9am, and are you aware that you're being recorded?

Meg: Yep

Caroline: So, do you want to start?

Owen: I guess just to start off, how did you decide to come to Holy Cross, and what was your transition from high school to Holy Cross like?

Meg: Sure, so I had been educated in Catholic schools my entire life and so it felt really natural for me to look for another Catholic undergraduate education. And I had an older sister who had done the college hunt before me, and a twin brother. And so, when my sister came looking at schools, she came to Holy Cross, and we are very different, and she, I remember her and my parents came home from that visit to Holy Cross and my mom said "well your sister hated it so you're going to love it," and so I always kind of had that in the back of my head. And a year later when I started doing a college hunt, Holy Cross became one of my top choices, as I was really looking for a small school, a liberal arts school, somewhere where I felt like I could see myself fitting in and where I'd feel comfortable. And I had that moment that so many Holy Cross students talk about, stepping on to campus and looking around and being like, "this is it", "this is where I want to be." People would ask me, "what's your first choice" and I would say Holy Cross and they'd say "what's your second choice" and I would say Holy Cross. I really wanted to be nowhere else but there, and I am very grateful that that is how this story unfolded. I think my transition was pretty seamless in a lot of ways. The community felt really similar to where I had grown up. I had a kind of a slow process of getting involved as a first year student, I was a little hesitant to try new things. If I didn't have someone to do it with me, I wouldn't do it by myself. I think part of that is because I had a twin brother so I always had a buddy to do everything with, my first day of everything. And so it took me a little while, if I couldn't convince someone to do something with me, I didn't do it. But probably about half way through freshman year, I realized that that was really limiting. And so, I tried to get involved, even if it felt a little risky, and wound up applying to be an orientation leader for my sophomore year. Really, kind of that spring semester of applying for things as a freshman, kind of catapulted me into getting much more involved. I joined our chapel choir, I sang in chapel choir, I don't know what else I did so early, but orientation was I think really the big thing for me, and finding folks that shared some of my values and who are excited about the same nerdy things I was excited about, really helped me transition well and meet a bunch of different folks from across different class years. Also as an orientation leader especially, in that summer, I was really able to build relationships across different class years.

Caroline: Great, and what was your class year?

Meg: I graduated in 2004.

Caroline: Okay. Um and so, you were a student from, you graduated in 2004, so what was happening in the world then, what was going on in the United States, and outside of the United States that may have impacted your experience at Holy Cross?

Meg: Hmm, yeah. Well, 9/11 happened the very beginning of my sophomore year, and I remember, being in class, and my boyfriend at the time, sitting next to me and whispering into my ear, that a plane had just hit the World Trade Center building. And I sat through that class, being like, what is happening? And then classes were pretty much cancelled for the rest of the day, and I just remember going and sitting with friends and watching the news. I grew up in New Jersey, I didn't know anyone in New York, but there's a lot of students who grew up in New York and New Jersey who knew folks. Phones were jammed. I just remember people being pretty frantic about not being able to be in touch with people that they loved, and it was a scary, confusing time. So then, we also went to war. I was involved in Pax Christi, we talked a lot about that. What it meant to be a country that was invading in the Middle East, and so there was a lot of conversations, and protests, and peaceful prayer and fasting that we did in response to some of that conflict and war. And, it was also, the sex abuse scandal in the church was breaking open around that time. And I also remember, I think, that there was a student death that happened. And so I just remember my sophomore year and junior year as being this huge kind of mix of really hyperlocal and national, international conflicts and scandals and just difficulties. So, that didn't color my entire experience, but that was always present in the background. And I don't know if you know that there's, you probably have heard, or maybe experienced, that you can break in to one of the towers in Fenwick and O'Kane.

(Laughs)

So, I was an adventurous student, who went with some friends and it's got so many letters and little pieces of paper ephemera up there from previous classes that went and left notes just about this, about what was happening in the world when they were a student. And I remember going there and writing about the war and some of the other major things that were happening in our country at the time. So, if you're a fan of history, as you might be taking this class. I mean, the College is pretty aware that people break in to. It's very simple to get in there. You could also take a little walk through past Holy Cross students experiences talking about what was happening when they were students.

Caroline: Wow, that's awesome.

Owen: I might have to give that a shot now.

Meg: I didn't tell you to do that.

(Laughs)

Owen: We'll delete that part.

Caroline: We'll edit that out. And so just on the campus, what was the Holy Cross community like at that time?

Meg: Yeah, so, I mean, it was eighteen years ago when I started as a student. Which- ooh- that feels like a really long time ago. Like, as long as you've been alive, basically. A little bit shorter than that. And, you know, I felt like campus was definitely one of the more progressive Catholic spaces I've ever been in. So I remember feeling like I was very, like my faith is very important to me. It was probably more important to me at that time in terms of my development, and so I remember being really struck by the nature of the "Catholicness" of campus, being really a lot more progressive than I've been accustomed to. And so, I felt like in the midst of all those moments or just in the day to day life of the college, there was a strong sense of community and belonging, that I perceived through my lense of being Catholic, as really being about the mission of the campus. I think it was pretty early in my time at Holy Cross that this, like the orientation leader phrase of "Live the Mission" really became a thing. So, that's been the kind of mantra of orientation probably since about the time I became an orientation leader. Because Brenda Hounsell Sullivan was new at the time and was directing, she was kind of the overseer of student orientation. And Kristine Goodwin, who's no longer there, but is actually on my campus, where I work now, was also pretty new. And I just remember feeling like the mission was really central to everyday life. This idea of caring for others, of attending to folks on the margins, and that was very much present to me. Now I know not every student was as attentive to that, but I had a proclivity, I think, to be seeking that out because of the ways that it aligned with my values. And I think we did have some incidents on campus around the LGBTQ community, and it was not a particularly racially and ethnically diverse campus at the time. I don't really remember there being racial incidents as much, but I had a dear friend who was one of the very few out LGBTQ folks on campus at the time, who did receive some hate, I wouldn't call it mail, it was, he worked in Kimball, and people put notes on trays because they knew he was working in the back, that had pretty nasty homophobic slurs on them. The way the community responded in that moment was, I think really telling of who we were. And there was a huge outpouring of support for this friend of mine, who was a little bit afraid to go to work, and we kind of like hung out outside his door to make sure nobody wrote stuff on his whiteboard, and, there was a big rally and march, and external signs of support from a lot of allies. And so even in the midst of this community, where I felt really welcome, and felt like there was all these pieces of it that were really meaningful to me and aligned with my values, that it was still an imperfect community. Every community is. And as progressive as it felt, it still, there was still tensions and challenges, and I'm sure not everyone felt that sense of community in the same ways. But when someone was

singled out, when someone who's on the margins was just so overtly discriminated against, there was a strong sense of, like a wave of support in the midst of that.

Owen: For our next question then, its, when and how did you first come out, and then also related, were you out during your time at Holy Cross?

Meg: Yeah, so I was not particularly out to myself when I was at Holy Cross, so I mentioned that I had a boyfriend, I dated a guy for my sophomore through senior year, I think, so I came out the year after I graduated, when I fell in love with a woman for the first time. So, it wasn't that I was in the closet, it was really that I was not particularly attuned to that and aware of it. But I remember my mom, after I graduated, before I came out to them. I had a number of friends who came out after they graduated, and I remember my mom being like, "Why were you friends with so many people that are now coming out as gay?", you know. And I was like I don't know, like those are my friends, and I think I did have at least one, like I said, good friend who was out, and I knew a couple other people who were out on campus, but there were not a lot of us. And, I think, when I think back about my experience at Holy Cross, and my coming out process, I think that my experience in my classrooms were, really helped me kind of process a lot of that. So I took, I was not a Religious Studies major, but I took probably about three or four Religious Studies classes. I was a self declared, self designed American Studies major. Stephanie Yuhl was my advisor, and I was like basically how can I take as many classes as possible with Stephanie Yuhl.

Caroline: That's what we're doing too. (Laughs)

Meg: But I was really interested in some of the Religious Studies classes, so I took classes like Social Ethics, and Sexual Ethics with Mary Hobgood, and I took a Liberation Theology with Jim Nickoloff, before he left. And I took a Feminist Theology course with a visiting instructor, Rosemary Carbine. And those classes prepared me intellectually for my own coming out, specifically as a queer and Catholic person, because as much as I knew, like sort of the hierarchal church's teaching, I also knew that there were other scholars who were grappling with the tensions of how to be a person of faith and a person in the LGBTQ community. And so, I remember like just feeling really called to study that, and understand it and see it as part of the greater work of justice, which is what, which is one of my values. And so, and I was a Women's and Gender, well we were still Women's Studies back then, I think I was the last class before it was, what is it called now? Is it Gender and Sexuality?

Caroline: It's GSWS now, Gender Sexuality and Women's Studies.

Meg: Yeah, but, so I was always drawn to thinking about the experiences of marginalized people. And I think it's kind of fun, and interesting, and telling that a lot of my friends in college,

who were drawn to the same things, and involved in the same types of activities and organizations, wound up coming out after college. Because I think it's just, even though I didn't suspect, for most of my friends I did not suspect that they were gay, if they were closeted. But we were drawn to each other because we shared something that we didn't even know we shared, but that came out of us in different ways.

Caroline: So you've touched on this a little bit, but, while you were at Holy Cross, what did you think kept you from being out?

Meg: Yeah, I just don't think I ever thought of myself as being anything other than straight for the first 22 years of my life. You know, I've thought about that a lot, after coming out. Like, did I have girl crushes that I was not aware of? Like, what was going on? And I think there were definitely like, I remember there were certain women that I was like, oh my god I so want to be friends with her, she seems so cool. But like maybe that was, maybe I actually had a crush on them more than a girl crush, friend crush thing, but I didn't know it yet. So I think I was just not, I don't think I had a lot of models up until that point either. I was trying to think, like did I even know a gay person before I got to college? Like, I'm not sure I did. Certainly not personally, not a meaningful person in my life. And so I think I just didn't have, there wasn't visibility for me, and because I identify, I prefer the term queer, because I think it's like broad and I appreciate that. But really, I mean, I'm bi. I mean, I dated a guy for three years in college, and, um, even though I'm married to a woman, I think, you know, I don't find men to be unattractive. But I think for me, it was really just not yet knowing myself and not, and I think probably, you know just, you know I got into a relationship with a guy who was really great, and we were great together for three years, and then he was a year older and he graduated and we decided not to try and make that work. And so, you know, I was just, living my life as I had always imagined I would. And it wasn't until I actually met someone once I graduated, that I was like huh, well, I guess that's a new thing I just learned about myself.

Caroline: So, while you were at Holy Cross, you talked a little bit about other orientation leaders as your support system, but who else would you say was your support system at Holy Cross?

Meg: Yeah, I mean definitely, I was really involved in the Chaplain's office and in kind of student affairs, more generally. So, I was an RA for three years, and a Senior Resident Director my senior year. That was the year the apartments opened for the first time, way back. They didn't even have a name at the time, I don't remember what they're called now, but they were just called "The Senior Apartments". And so, I was super involved in Res-Life, I was an orientation leader for three years, and then I was really involved in the Chaplain's office through Pax Christi, I led retreats, and went on retreats. And so I had a lot of mentors, and sort of student affairs and the Chaplain's office in terms of like adult support systems. And faculty, I mean Stephanie [Yuhl] continues to be a mentor of mine, and I had some other really fantastic faculty

members, that I consider to be supportive of my intellectual learning, and supportive of communities that were historically marginalized. Folks like Mary Hobgood and Jim Nickoloff, who I didn't have particularly personal relationships with, but felt as though they were people in my corner, so to speak. Yeah, so, I mean I think specifically, Kim McElaney, while she was there, I mean, she passed away a number of years ago, but she was the director of the Chaplain's office for quite some time, and a real meaningful mentor for me. And Marybeth Kearns-Barrett was there at the time as well. And I mentioned Kristine Goodwin, who was in student affairs at the time, and some other folks in Res-Life, who aren't there anymore. But yeah, I had a strong sort of, I don't know, chorus of faculty and staff support, and then, yeah. I think my orientation staff, and my Res Life staff, and those folks, but my Chapel Choir. Oh, Paul Melley, who directed Chapel Choir, was a dear friend and mentor, well, not friend at the time, but friend now. So yeah, I had a lot of folks, many people who I could go to when I was trying to make a decision, or feeling stuck in some way, who would listen and offer guidance and support.

Owen: You've already answered this a little bit, but were you involved in any clubs or organizations besides Pax Christi and Orientation that kind of stick out to you in your memory?

Meg: Hm, I was really involved in like Appalachia, you know kind of spring trips, those communities, you know, if you've done any of the service immersion trips. I went to Mexico too, through the Mexico immersion program. Like a really tight knit community very quickly because of all the, you know, small spaces, intensive time together, um so I had some great friends and relationships that I built through those experiences. And I think, you know, Chapel Choir wound up being a really important community to me as well, I had a couple of dear friends that I made through that, but also because it was connected to worship and to the liturgy, it felt really meaningful, but also really fun, like we were never too serious, especially with Paul as our director. So yeah, that's another important community to me.

Owen: And then, did these groups kind of impact your experience of being LGBTQ at Holy Cross, or not exactly?

Meg: Um, I mean, I think, like I said, I had a lot of intellectual preparation for my coming out process and a lot of experience of community and feeling seen and supported. And I feel like, for a lot of folks, and I've heard a lot of alums talk about this, because I also helped to start the LGBTQ alumni network here, we've had a lot of events where alums have come back and talked about how their experiences were drastically different as an out person on this campus, experiencing homophobia, and you know, discrimination. But for me, and I think this probably has a lot to do with the fact, in part that I wasn't out at the time, but, my involvement in the Chaplain's office, for example, never felt in conflict with my queerness once I came out. And I know that that sounds really difficult for a lot of people to understand, but I think my Jesuit education and Ignatian spirituality paved the way for me to not have a crisis of faith, or a crisis of

identity when I came out. Because there's something about the Jesuits, there's a comfort level in holding together the both and, the tension that people see between my queerness and my Catholic faith is not as hard for, I think, Jesuit educated folks, Jesuit institutions, Jesuits themselves, to hold together, and that is such a gift, because so many Catholic spaces are not that way. And so, I really feel like that commitment to finding God in all things, and upholding human dignity, and care for the person, and all those things that are integral to Jesuit education and Ignatian spirituality prepared me well, to, you know, introduce myself to myself and to others and claim my sexual identity and not feel like I was less human, or less worthy, or disordered, or any of the things that I think other folks really struggle with. I'm so grateful for my experience at Holy Cross for that reason especially.

Caroline: If you could do your Holy Cross experience over, would there be anything that you would do differently?

Meg: (Pause) There's very little I think I would do differently. I had an amazing experience. and it wasn't always rainbows and butterflies, but it really was some of the most powerful learning that I have ever done in my life. Certainly content wise, but also about myself, and about the world, and about what I care about, and what I value. I'm sure I made some decisions that I maybe would do differently but looking back, 18 years since I started, it's hard for me to imagine how would I make any different decisions. Because I also, you know, I met my wife not at Holy Cross, but through Holy Cross, she's also an alum. We were two years apart and we had a lot of mutual connections and friends and I wouldn't want to change anything that might deviate from the path that I walked to meet my wonderful wife. So, yeah I don't think I would turn the clock back if I had the chance.

Owen: You mentioned your relationship to your boyfriend at the time, looking back, is there anything you wish you'd known about that relationship or just your romantic relationships in general?

Meg: You know, I don't think so. I mean I think, you know, so he is a very conservative guy from Kentucky. And at the time even when I was a little maybe less progressive even than I am now, this was a hilarious reality to me. That I somehow wound up in a long term relationship with a conservative Republican from Kentucky. And, I really valued that relationship in a lot of ways, because we really challenged each other, in healthy ways mostly. You know, we were very careful to not go down any paths of debate that would ruin the nature of our relationship. But really, pushed each others understanding, and also I think it was the first time that I was every in a meaningful relationship with someone who had such an ideological difference, political difference, and, you know, that was incredibly valuable for my learning because I knew him as a human person, he wasn't some caricature that I could easily, kind of, toss aside his beliefs and call him crazy. I loved him, and so, you know, it really forced me to hear things that I may be

otherwise wouldn't have wanted to hear about why he believed the things he believed. And, I actually do a lot work around dialogue, in my professional life right now and I don't always remember that relationship as kind of, or think of that relationship as a starting point for my interest in connecting people who disagree with one another, but I think, you know, in a lot of ways that that was one of the starting points of that desire to create spaces where people can connect across really divisive issues and still see each other as human beings worthy of our attention, and care, and dignity. So, I mean, I think it was a fairly serious college relationship. I think there were definitely times when I thought that, you know, this might be the person that I married. But when it came down to it, I remember feeling like, I think our understandings of family life are too different for us to start one together, and so that's when I kind of decided the ideology piece might not, might be the undoing of us in some ways. And, we remained good friends for a number of years afterwards, we're not really in touch anymore but he still was someone who was really important to me and I think I learned a lot about how to be in relationships, period, through that relationship, and how to communicate through differences and challenging conversation topics. So, I'm grateful for that.

Caroline: This is something that you've definitely touched on throughout the entire interview but, do you think that the Jesuit identity and environment of Holy Cross affected your sexuality, your view of sexuality?

Meg: Yeah, yeah, I remember I mean Mary Hobgood's Sexual Ethics class was like *explosion sound* (laughs) Mind-blowing. Like, I was like "this is being taught at a Catholic Institution?" Um, and you know I wasn't here when Jim [Nickoloff] taught Gay Liberation Theology, I think a year or two after I left. Um, but even just Liberation Theology also felt like this really radical reframing of what theology is, and who God calls us to be and how God calls us to be in the world. And, I think also just like, more generally, so even outside of the classroom like Holy Cross was the first place I ever saw a lay woman preach. That also was something that was radically liberating. To see within a hierarchical, patriarchal institution such as the Catholic Church, that there could be room made intentionally for someone like Marybeth [Kearns-Barrett] to preach the Homily. That spoke volumes to me, as a young woman, as a feminist, as a progressive Catholic, that there could be space within this institution for voices that have historically been marginalized. And, um, and that they would stick their neck out, right? Because this is a risky move, the Bishop of Worcester is not a huge fan of the decisions that Jesuits make at Holy Cross. While they are not beholden to the Bishop and the Dioceses, I know a lot of other Catholic institutions that have a similar relationship to the Bishop, in terms of not technically, you know, being, reporting to them, but having a level of professional courtesy, or whatever, collegiality, and who do not make those choices, who do not stick their neck out. And, I think that was modeled over and over again in really small and in really large, meaningful ways at Holy Cross that helped me understand what my role, and my place, and my worth could be in the Church and within the College. And so, I think I felt really, like I said, kind of liberated and

grateful for the intellectual space, for the pastoral space, for the spirituality and the institutionalization of those values at Holy Cross.

Owen: Just based on your experience, is there any advice that you'd give to students who are coming out at Holy Cross or who are struggling to come out at Holy Cross?

Meg: Hmm, yeah, so I was at the Lavender Graduation yesterday which was so wonderful, I'm so grateful that that's happening. And we had an alum speaker and a couple other folks offer some words. First of all, I'm so impressed, I'm always so impressed by Holy Cross students that, you know, the twenty or so students that were recognized yesterday, every student had someone say a little something about them. They are some of the most involved, well-rounded, smart, talented students at our campus, and they happen to be queer. And so, I think as I was sitting there yesterday thinking about how different Holy Cross is, how, in terms of visibility and things like that, and also how the struggles of your people are the same. And there's something that's kind of timeless about figuring out how to live your most authentic life, whether that's because you're a queer person, or because of some other identity or experience. Um, so I mean I think it's really hard to think about words of wisdom or advice that don't sound trite or overdone. But I mean, I think, based on my experience, I would say it was really helpful for me to study things and learn. And learn, you know, not just what traditional culture says, but also to find the voices that are not in the canon. To find the voices of people whose experiences mirror your own, whose stories can shed light on the struggles and the joys and hopes of living an integrated, authentic, and out life. And there are so many great examples of that now. So many more than there were twenty years ago. I think I would just encourage folks to connect with people whose stories resonate and to practice telling their own stories in ways that feel really authentic, even if they're not perfect. Even if they're a story of uncertainty, or transition, or fear, or um, anxiety. That speaking truth to who you are, out loud, even if it's to yourself, is all a part of the process of figuring out how to live your truth, out loud, every day.

Caroline: And then, kind of going off that, what advice would you offer to LGBTQ seniors who are about to make the transition from collegiate into professional life?

Meg: Join the Alumni network. No, but actually like, there are so many more of us than they've probably realized. I think the Holy Cross experience is something that we can connect with across the decades. I mean, we have alums from the 60s and 70s that are part of the network, all the way up until last year's graduating class. I think, um, that network is really powerful in terms of, like I said earlier, just connecting with people who are living authentic lives and connecting with their stories and sharing yours. But also, you know, helping you navigate the difficult decisions around applying for jobs, and going to graduate school, and figuring out how you want to be at what stage in your career, or how to do research and figure out if an organization, or company, or school, or business is going to be LGBTQ friendly. You know, I think the network of alums can really help in those transitions. And finding a community of folks, whether

it's alums or not, who, when you move to a new city or you if you are starting a new job, I think trying to build a community of folks that share your values and some of your experiences can be really helpful as well. I was just listening to, there's a podcast called "Nancy" that is all focused on the LGBTQ stuff and they just did an episode on how to find your "gaggle." And they call it a gaggle of gays and, so that's like a real thing, that I think it's important for students to know that whether your looking specifically for a community of LGBTQ friends or just looking for community in general, that it is hard work. And so, you know, when you have a caller calling into a podcast that's nationally and internationally known, saying "I don't know how to do this well," maybe that's a helpful reminder that it is not something that happens accidentally. And not to be discouraged if it's difficult because there's a lot of other people out there who are also looking for that and struggling to find you. So, you know, to just have some patience and persistence through that process I think.

Owen: And then for our last question, could you share a story about, or a moment about when being LGBTQ impacting the experience that you had at Holy Cross? I know you've already shared a couple.

Meg: (Pause) I mean I think mostly the really formative one that comes to mind is the experience of my friend, who you know, being the target of some homophobic slurs and commentary. But more importantly, the response of campus in the midst of that. And so even though I wasn't, I didn't identify as a member of the community at that time, I felt deeply committed to a public stance against homophobia, and in favor of solidarity and equality for my LGBTQ friends and community members. I don't really remember exactly who showed up from the administration but I remember that it was, there was a conscious choice on the part of lots of faculty, staff, and administration to show up, as well as students, and to make sure that in the midst of that incident, that not only my friend, but any other student who might have been out or closeted, at that time knew that that was behavior that the College would not stand for, and that they were not afraid to make a very public response. You know, as someone who works in higher education and has for most of my career, I know that that doesn't happen easily, that even if it feels like a no-brainer on the part of the administration, that that is a huge risk in a huge risk in a lot of ways, and that it takes a lot of people organizing to make it happen as quickly as it can, and to be thoughtfully done, and not thrown together, and not undercut. And so, I really, now looking back at that, really can appreciate how seriously the College took that moment, and how artfully they responded.

Caroline: And then as the interview comes to a close, is there anything you want to say about your time at Holy Cross or about being an LGBTQ identified alum, or just any closing remarks that you have?

Meg: I guess I'll just say how impressed I was by how quickly the College allowed for the organizing of this alumni network to happen. Again, being on the inside of higher ed, I know that this is not always a simple, easy, or quick task. I think some of your classmates may have interviewed Phil, my co-founder, as well, this past week. And Phil and I really responded and volunteered to cofound and co-chair this network because students invited alums back to campus for brunch during homecoming. And that happened one year, I think it was when Pride was still called ABiGaLe, it was like five, or six, or seven, seven, or eight years ago, maybe now, when the first brunch happened, and they got us in a room and started talking about how they wanted to be connected to alumni and that we should try and make something happen more formally. And then it happened a second time, and in between those two years, nothing had happened, because no one stepped up to say I'll do it. And so that second brunch, Phil and I both, and a couple of other alums as well, stood up and said "Okay, we are committed to making this happen." And we met with the alumni office and Tom Cadigan, who is another alum who works in the office, that Phil knows pretty well from his time at Holy Cross. Tom was like "Okay, so we just see if we need a mission statement and we need some volunteer leadership positions and job descriptions written." And so we were like great, so we met, we had a brainstorming session, we put together a mission statement, we mapped out some leadership positions, presented it to Tom, Tom took it up the ladder, and so it was like done, stamp of approval, you have an alumni network, there it is. Father Borroughs came to one of our events at one point. It's not lost on me that that could have been a lot more difficult at another institution. In fact, I was talking to a colleague this morning about how I went to the Lavender Graduation, she doesn't work in my office, she works kind of in the more administrative side, and she was like, "Oh was it controversial? Were there protests?" And I was like "No, no" (laughs) "This is not a controversial thing at my alma mater. To honor LGBTQ seniors who are graduating." And so I just continue to be incredibly grateful for the witness that Holy Cross can be to other catholic institutions about how to honor its mission and not see the mission as antithetical to also embracing its LBGTQ students, staff, alumni, faculty, etc. Yeah, that's my parting words of gratitude.

Caroline: Great, and just to end the interview would you mind if we asked you just a few questions if you're willing to self-identify in a few categories.

Meg: Sure.

Caroline: And so, your year of graduation, you mentioned was 2004?

Meg: Mhm.

Caroline: And your major, you mentioned American Studies?

Meg: American Studies and then I was a Women Studies' concentrator.

Caroline: And then your gender identity?

Meg: Female.

Caroline: And your sexuality.

Meg: Queer or Bi.

Caroline: And racial slash ethnic background?

Meg: White.

Caroline: And your current or former occupation?

Meg: Higher Education Administrator.

Caroline: Okay, well that is all that we have for our interview.

Owen: Thank you for doing this.

Caroline: We really appreciate that you took the time to speak with us.

Meg: It's a pleasure, thank you. And I'm really grateful that this project is still happening, I know that Stephanie Christ started off and Stephanie Yuhl's continuing it, so I'm really grateful that you're able to do this as part of your learning. As someone who does experiential, service learning work on my campus, I love that this is a way that you're both learning about oral history and the work and the content, but also in a really meaningful set of conversations and thank you for helping archive them for the future or for more and more folks to know these stories and share these stories.

Caroline: Great, thank you so much.

Owen: Thanks again.

Meg: You're so welcome.

Caroline: Bye.

Meg: Take care.

49:16 - Interview Ends.