



Oral History and Folklife Research, Inc.

AN INTERVIEW WITH KIM MOODY

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIBER: KEITH LUDDEN

KJL I need to take care of a little housekeeping, here, first. Do you mind if I ask what year you were born?

KM 1962.

KJL Okay, great. We are in Augusta, and it is July 21st?

KM 22nd I thought it was. It's one of those days.

KJL 22nd [2014]. And we're talking with Kim Moody. I'm sorry, what year did you say you were born?

KJL 1962. A lot of times I've heard it said that the disability community is the one community that anybody can join. How did you join?

KM I was born into it, although I didn't really become aware that I was a member of the disability community for a few years. My parents struggled and won the battle to allow me in the first baby in the state of Maine to have a prosthetic arm when I was just a little over a year old. I was sent then away to high school and back to learn to use that arm, and it was all adults and this little teeny kid. Obviously I have no memory of that. But it wasn't until really, probably about the seventh or eighth grade--or sixth or seventh grade when I became aware as a normal little kid that I was different. That sounds odd, but I think it started to become aware to me that I was part of this different community when boys were--when girls and boys were starting to get together, because prior to that I hadn't really had to think about it.

KJL What was school like?

KM School was great. I think I probably was pushed really, really hard. Both my parents were schoolteachers, and they taught in the district where I went to school, so that made it a different experience for me in Yarmouth High School, in Yarmouth, Maine. And they, I think, pushed me from a very young age to exceed, and so nothing was ever good enough, I had to have all "A's," and I had to play sports, and I had to be the class president, and so that's what school was like, really.

KJL So were you the class president?

KM I was.

KJL Tell me about that.

KM Well, I was the eighth grade student council president, and then when I got into high school, I wanted to be the president of the freshman class, and I was the president of the sophomore class, and then I did other things my junior and senior year.

KJL When you become class president, that's a little bit of a political thing. You have to get votes, is what I mean.

KM I went to the same school kindergarten through twelfth grade, so I knew everybody knew me. I was definitely different, and sort of set aside in some ways, but more in a--not in a negative way, I was never made fun of, or bullied, or harassed or any of that stuff. It was a while ago, too. The difference, the real, astounding difference for me in my life was when I went away to college, because that was when it was clear that there were people that were uncomfortable with disability, were uncomfortable with differing abilities. And that year, I also decided at the end of my freshman year--yeah, at the end of my freshman year in college that I was going to run for class president at my college. That required me knocking on every single door in April or so of that year, maybe March of April of that year and meeting every single young woman at Wheaton College, which is in Norton, MA, which was then an all-women's college. And I think that had to do with definitely wanting to stand out and stand apart and be "more than."

KJL I'm going to caution you on the tapping, because that transmits up the...

KM Of course it does.

KJL That's fine, I didn't want to make you uncomfortable. I forgot to ask where you were born.

KM In Brunswick, ME.

KJL So you went to school in Brunswick?

KM No, in Yarmouth.

KJL In Yarmouth, Okay. So the difference--the disability--whichever word you want to use--didn't really play a factor in running for class president?

KM You know, Keith, it's interesting. I've never been asked that question, so it's interesting for me to think about that. I would guess that it did play a factor; that again, being different from all the other kids, or standing out in any way--having one arm--is a physical disability that is very visual, unlike many disabilities, and so I think I always had to try to run faster, or jump higher, or exceed in the Presidential Physical Fitness Award, or exceed in the poetry contest or the spelling bee. I think it was always there as a factor. I definitely know that when I went to college, that the political piece that you're talking about had to do with my having one arm.

KJL How did it factor in in college?

KM In the same way that I just described. I think that I stood apart, and I was at a fairly elite little women's college, and it was a big shocker for me to be around girls who drove BMW's and

wore their nightgowns to breakfast. And I came from a small town, both parents being schoolteachers, never of great means, and they were uncomfortable with my disability. They would stare and they would talk and there were the really snobby girls--that's a terrible thing to say, but it's true--who really were awkward around me, and were condescending, and--and that's when I first experienced having people speak loudly to me, as if I also had a hearing impairment because I had one arm; and speak really clearly and eloquently, you know--whatever. So that was a real change for me.

KJL So what did you do about that?

KM Worked really hard. And that's when I began to think that--I never--I look back on this now, and think that everybody in Yarmouth, ME treated me as if I were exactly the same as everybody else. Which is great. We talk about inclusion, we talk about wanting people with disabilities to have all the same experiences as everyone else. We talk about disabilities being fully included into our communities. One of the things that's odd to me, though, is that nobody ever, ever--a guidance counselor never pointed out to me that, "Hmmm, you know what? You have a disability that might actually be an asset in terms of thinking about where you want to go to college or thinking about what jobs you want to have.

You know, I've been working at the Disability Rights Center for almost thirty years, now, and so have been embroiled and engrossed in disability rights for my entire adult life, virtually, and I think now about how we are clear with our youth that we want them to become educated, we want them to go on to higher learning. And there is sort of a--by pushing for inclusion we've almost created this difference.

And I think--Hmmm, I've never articulated this before. It wasn't until I got to college that I saw myself as really different from other people, and that I saw that other people saw me as really different from them, and not as good as. I was on the tennis team at Wheaton College, and I was a good tennis player, when I left the state of Maine, and I played regularly at Wheaton with the number one, two and three on the team. We played at night because we were all addicted to the sport, and I was of equal playing level to them. And the coach at the Wheaton College tennis team made me the ball girl, essentially. She wanted to make me the manager of the team. That was astounding to me, and so I quit, which was the first thing I'd ever quit--maybe the last. But I've been much more careful about who I associate with and who I have in my life, I think. It's pretty clear when you're fifty-two years old, by now, who are our friends and who aren't. But you're right about it's a club that anybody can join, because--and that's what we preach around here that disability is such a natural part of life experience, and anybody can become disabled at any time, and so it seems to me to be the most obvious movement to want to be a part of, whether you have a disability or not.

KJL Tennis is interesting. That would not be what I would have guessed

KM What, that I play tennis?

KJL I would have guessed track or something like that.

KM Well, I always wore a hook. I have one on order now, I'm getting a new one. I wore an artificial arm from the time I was a year and a half to the time I turned--or when I was thirty, my first child was born. And I had always worn this prosthetic device and would not go out of the house without it--never wore--I guess it's vanity, you know--never wore strapless anything, because I never wanted the straps to show--as if people couldn't see this great big artificial arm; something that over twenty years of growing up with this thing. And then when I strapped it back on to leave the hospital with my brand new baby, and went to pick him up out of the bassinet, and realized, "Ugh, I don't want this thing on!" because it was just not--it's a stainless steel hook. And so I took it off, put it in my bag, and really have never really worn it again, since, except for biking, or playing tennis, or doing skiing. Because it just was--I thought I could not live without a prosthetic arm until I was thirty years old, and then I was liberated in many ways. Really weird.

And so a lot of people that use them have felt the need to, including the Hanger folks that make prosthetics. They're right downstairs and all over the country--to ask me why I don't wear one. "You should have an arm." I think that they think because I'm the Executive Director of Maine's protection and advocacy agency, that I should be flaunting a prosthetic device. And yeah, they're great assistive technology and they work, but they're not for everybody. So anyway, yes, tennis. So now I am taking tennis lessons again at age fifty-two, and my game is even better than it was when I was nineteen, so I love it.

KJK So if you were born in 1962, you would have been a little shy of thirty when the ADA was signed, is that right?

KM Well, yes, it was signed in 1990, as you know. I was working here, so that obviously changed our complete way of doing business, it changed changed our lives, because this organization opened in 1977 and we had the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, what was then PL94142, and we had "504," section 504, we had the Rehab Act, but boy, oh boy! I started her in 1987, and so just three years before the act was passed and obviously those of us were here at that time, it was a much smaller cadre of fairly radical disability advocates, I would say, at that time, and so obviously our focus for 1988 and '89 was to really work with our national partners, to make sure that we were involved and at the forefront of getting that act passed. For us, of course, like the entire disability community across this nation, it really was monumental, a civil rights act.

KJL And how were you involved in pushing for the ADA?

KM Right here, I was just doing my little job, which was to advocate for people with disabilities to make sure that they're getting access to employment, and adequate and safe housing, and to make sure they're not being secluded and restrained at Augusta Mental Health Institute, or Bangor Mental Health Institute. But I rode a bus to Washington, which is the biggest

part of, probably--I wasn't involved in any of the higher level stuff. I was just a--well, let's see, '62, '72, '82--I never thought about it that way. I was 28 years old, and working here in our employment and mental health program, so...

KJL Did you follow it?

KM Oh, yeah! Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Not just follow it, I mean we have a very sophisticated national organization [National Disability Rights Network], and they'd been around really, since 1977 and when we started. And so even by '87, they were still very involved and the guy that is the Executive Director there, Curt Decker--you've heard his name--He's still there, and I'm the incoming President of that board again. I've been around a long time, I've been recycled. And so they were really very much there. And we had a really close relationship with Chai Feldblum, who--I mean everybody says that they were an author of the ADA, but she really was, I mean she was the bee--you know who she was, right?

KJL No, I don't

KM Well, Chai, C-H-A-I Feldblum. She is a Georgetown law professor. She is currently a Commissioner on the EEOC, and maintains her law professorship at Georgetown. She clerked for the Supreme Court, I mean she's just a--one of those high level attorneys. She was a keynote speaker at our dinner a couple of years ago, and she's just phenomenal. Anyway, so Curt Decker, from the National Disability Rights Network and Chai Feldblum were right at the forefront. So personally, I was--It was an every single day, pay attention to what's happening with this thing. Personally, it would be considered lobbying, if I were to tell you that I had called lots and lots of people to get them to call our delegation, but of course I did. Just not on work time. We all did, we all did. We were calling everybody that we knew, everybody that we'd ever worked with to try to get as much support as we could for that law to go into effect. And so we were all listening very carefully to everything that Justin Dart was saying at that time and it was a great time. There was a lot of hope, then, you know. Oooh, gee, I almost burst into tears! That's interesting.

KJL I'm sorry, what was that?

KM I almost burst into tears right then. That's weird.

KJL Tell me about the day it passed. Kathy [McInnis-Misener] told me quite a bit about the day it passed the House and the Senate. It passed the Senate second, I think--the House first, and then the Senate second.

KM Yes.

KJL What was it like when you heard that it passed the Senate?

KM Well, I went down to Washington between that time, because lots and lots of people did. Because we were mad! How could this be happening? How could the House pass this, and the Senate not let--and let it languish, you know? So what was it like? Wow. And like I just said, I think there was just so much power and hope and dreams. It was just an incredible time of the real heart of a movement.

So we had people from all ends of the spectrum, both ends of the spectrum; people that wanted to work with everyone to make sure that we could get everyone on the same page and find consensus and all that--all the way to the other extreme of people that were just so angry that this was taking so long, and made so much sense, that how simple is this to do, and so we were having lots of discussions, we were--there was a movement here in Maine. There were a number of people that were people with disabilities--more so than there are now. They're picking it up again within the psychiatric survivor movement, and as you saw in the Deaf community, certainly in the intellectual disabilities community to revive that feeling that was then, which was a real true empowerment of people with disabilities; and internal empowerment of--you know, I think at some some point, Keith, the feeling was for people, "I am no longer ever going to be considered 'less than.' In fact, I think I might be better than you because I have a disability." I mean, there really was some of that going on, I think. Probably all across the nation. But just the internalized repression, I think, that's inherent in any civil rights movement seemed to really be gone. And so people were banded together, so you didn't have the various communities of disability fighting like has happened in the past and again. And it was very powerful. Powerful.

KJL How difficult was it to get everybody on the same page? I've heard a lot about there were various pockets; the Deaf community wanted this, the blind community wanted that; mobility impairment folks wanted this. How difficult was it to get everybody on the same page?

KM In terms of the passage of the ADA, I know a lot about how that went down, because of the people that I know, and because of Chai Feldblum and Curt Decker, and many others from the Washington scene, but I wasn't there, I can't speak to that. But as you know, your question about how difficult it is to get everyone on the same page remains with every single bill that goes through our own legislature, let alone our own Congress. And it's still exactly that same way. It's very difficult. And we just have to learn to compromise. We just have to learn to figure out what the best bill is for the greatest number of people.

KJL In the 1980's there was some litigation involving busses in Portland and South Portland.

KM That was Kathy. That was the Maine Association of Handicapped Persons. No, I wasn't involved in that.

KJL You weren't involved in that, okay.

KM I graduated from college in 1980, and the first thing I did was get on a bus, and come to Portland, and go meet with Tom Andrews and Kathy McInnis. I met them the year I graduated from--no, '84, I graduated in '84--to ask for a job. I really wanted to work there. And they had nothing; they had no funding, really. They had lost funding, so they were not in any position to hire, and then a couple of years later, I was here, you know, anyway.

KJL Do you know what year that case was? It involved a Judge Alexander, I think.

KM Oh yeah, that's right. I don't.

KJL I'm sorry.

KM That's what Google's for. (laughs)

KJL So are there more opportunities now because of the ADA, in terms of employment, in terms of being able to be out in the community?

KM Absolutely. Absolutely. I think we are having lots of discussions right now about how much the ADA has done for the disability community versus how much we expected the ADA to do. And I remain--despite the fact that I run a law firm that sues people who don't treat people with disabilities the way they should--I remain very positive. I think it is a completely different world from what it was pre-ADA. If you think about it from an advocacy perspective, I mentioned earlier, we didn't have many laws to protect people's rights. We had the Rehab Act, and we had PL94142, but with the passage of the ADA, all of the sudden advocates and lawyers had a stick, so that we no longer had to just beg and plead for people to do the right thing; to provide adequate and safe housing for people, equally to other people, or employment or access to services. All of the sudden we had a law that really helped us. So yes, your question is, "Are there greater opportunities?" Absolutely, I think that not just because there is that law there, but also because of community awareness around pulling people out of institutions and having people with disabilities out and about in our community, living next door, in our grocery stores, in our banks, in our hardware stores, all over the place.

KJL You think there's greater community awareness?

KM Absolutely.

KJL What was it like before the ADA?

KM What was what like?

KJL I hear stories of, "I couldn't get on a bus and go downtown and shop. The only thing available to me was paratransit and that was for medical appointments and so forth,"



KM That's still true. Unfortunately that is still very much true. I would say that transportation is the worst area of growth for people with disabilities. Particularly in a rural state. We have terrible access to transportation, and you hit the nail on the head. People can get to their doctor's appointments, but they can't do just the normal stuff; go to the movies, go to a friend's house, go to a party. There's just no access to transportation for that, and a lot of people with disabilities still do not drive vehicles, so...

KJL So that case in the 1980's that required busses to have lifts...

KM That's Portland.

KJL It didn't affect beyond Portland.

KM No. So transportation is the worst area. But your question was "What was it like before the ADA?" Don't get me wrong, I think there's a long way to go. When I was twenty-five years old I thought that I would work myself out of a job. I really believed that. I believed that we were so good, and so committed as advocates for the disability community that we would close institutions; that we would stop discrimination; that there would be no need for us. So there's still a long way to go. That did not happen, and it isn't likely to happen in my lifetime. So what was it like before? Still the same issues I face. You mentioned the biggest one, I would say, that people complain about to us the most--inability to get where they need to go.

Still, discrimination and stigma are rampant. A law cannot change that. A law can--We can file a lawsuit using this law, and we can get press around that. And if we get the press to cover that, Keith, in the right way, there will be some sympathy for that plaintiff. Or people will read that story, and based on the comments that they read after that story, they may think, "Why does that person think they should have special rights because they have a disability?" So there's some backlash, too, I think. I mean, what was it like before the ADA? People with disabilities were far more likely to be institutionalized. All across this nation, our institutions for people with psychiatric labels and mental illness were bigger. Our institutions for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities were bigger. There's been a movement based on the ADA, because of the Olmstead decision that was promulgated due to the ADA--there's been a movement nationally to pull people with disabilities out of institutions. And keep in mind, from where I sit, the most important thing is to protect people with disabilities from abuse. That's our mandate. That's why we exist.

And so my whole career has been about that. All of the other stuff, we do, too, to make sure that people have an accessible taxi when we bring them down here from Bangor for a meeting, and they use a wheelchair. That's important, too, but the fundamental purpose of--what I consider the fundamental purpose of the ADA and the fundamental purpose of the creation of these agencies was to make sure that people are not getting locked up, shot up, strapped down, slapped around. And that's what was happening to people. And I'm not pretending that it's not still happening in all kinds of little back alleys and back wards in this country, but it's much better than it was. Just

in my (inaudible). Thirty years ago I was an advocate on the units right here, over at Augusta Mental Health Institute, and there were whole floors where people were in seclusion and restraint, strapped down, five point restraint, shot up with pretty heavy duty psychotropic medications. That's not happening anymore. So there's been huge gains. The ability for people to be employed now is so much better. Sheltered workshops. When I first started here there were hundreds of people in sheltered workshops, and I did employment advocacy, so I was in those places. People were moving widgets to bags, you know. They might be working for a company under a contract, where that company got paid by the contractor to put six screws, ten bolts and a couple of washers in a little plastic bag and staple it to go into some product. And they would sit there and do that all week long, making very, very, very much less than minimum wage.

I had a client at a sheltered workshop in the Lewiston area who complained to me because he'd been doing this job for a long time; he liked it, he wanted to be there because it was a social environment. A big, open room with about fifty people in it. They were all doing the same thing, but he ended up owing money at the end of the week, because they would have a pizza party on Friday, and they would be charged for their pizza. And so he wouldn't get a paycheck, he would actually owe money.

So what was it like before the ADA? I give enormous credit to the changes that we've seen in the disability community to the Americans With Disabilities Act, because--again, I feel teary when I think about--it just changed the world. All of the sudden we had our own civil rights act, and so it was very powerful, like I said, and truly empowering--that word's greatly overused, but it was truly empowering. People had their heads up, and I think still do. So it's continuing.

KJL So you see the ADA as a success?

KM I definitely see the ADA as a success. I agree and concur with my colleagues who say we have nothing to celebrate next summer. Twenty-five years and look how--we haven't come far at all. I understand that, but I definitely feel that the ADA has been a success. We have a lot more work to do, and we will do it. But boy! To think of the ADA as not a success is somehow putting ourselves down. or seeing ourselves as less than we are.

KJL What do you think still needs to be done?

KM We talked about it a moment ago. I think there is a dire need for continued community education. People with disabilities, by and large, and I've been working in this field for thirty years. People with disabilities don't have access to employment, at least not right now. The unemployment rates are horrendous all across this nation. And I would say that is my number one priority right now--access to employment. The movement is to push people onto Social Security, and even the good liberals want to push people onto Social Security. They say to me, "Some money coming into the house is better than none at all." SSI is what I'm talking about, Supplemental Security Income; for people who have never worked. And what I have to say to them is, fewer than one percent of people who get on to Social Security, or Supplemental

Security Income ever get off. It is a prescription for a lifetime of poverty. People need jobs. So, you know, fifteen years ago I was saying you need to shut down sheltered workshops, and I had people with disabilities looking at me and saying, “Kim Moody, who are you to take my job away. I work at this bottle redemption center, and I know I only made ten dollars a week, but it’s something to do.” And I’m saying, “You need real employment for real wages. So I was sort of - we, the Disability Rights Center--was sort of on the fringe, and now it really is about employment.

It is about, Keith, that two parents that have three children, two of whom don’t have disabilities and one has a disability. The two kids that don’t have disabilities, the parents are doing all this preparation for the lives of their children. They’re taking the SAT’s, they’re getting ready, where you gonna go to college. And what are they--more often than not--planning for their child with disabilities? Which waiver they’re going to go on; where they’re going to receive their services? Where they’re going to get day-habilitation. Where they’re going to be during the day. Not, “How are we going to prepare them for work?” And it is absolutely true that every person can work. Every person has something to contribute. And we’ve seen it now. All across this nation we’ve seen people with significant challenges, significant disabilities who are gainfully employed. And so, that’s my soapbox right now. That, the ADA is remarkably helpful with, because it’s getting more and more difficult for employers to discriminate against people with disabilities.

So I fear the hand-in-hand thing. Yes, we need to make sure that employers understand that they cannot discriminate against people with disabilities, while at the same time educating employers and the community about how hard people with disabilities will work once you hire them. And that sounds, even discriminatory, but you know, it’s like if you’ve wanted to work for many many years, and you can’t find employment, and when you do, man, you are thrilled.

So we have (inaudible) in Maine, which is actually the Tampax Company; it’s now owned by Proctor and Gamble. We gave them our business award because they made a commitment to hire upwards of sixty people with disabilities. And I’m not talking about in an enclave, with all people with disabilities working together. This is spread out throughout their organization in Lewiston. Walgreens is a national model, but they’re doing that in Maine as well. And now LL Bean is coming on board. And the State of Maine, the Department of Health and Human Services has a huge commitment right now in this administration to work for people with disabilities. So they’ve--a huge commitment to working with the Chamber of Commerce, and really helping employers get over the fear of hiring people with disabilities, because a lot of it is about that. It’s just different; it’s just change. And so once regular old employers understand that people with disabilities are not scary to hire, they hire us. What do I think needs to be done? People need access to jobs, and transportation, as I mentioned.

KJL What is it that employers fear about hiring persons with disabilities?

KM You know, I think it's just what every single person fears about people with disabilities. Anybody with a disability knows that wherever we go, we get watched and stared at, and it's only the little kids who have the guts to come up and ask us why we're different, and even then, their mothers often say, "Stop it! Stop it! Stop it! Shhhhh Shhhh! So it's just a pervasive, I think, fear. I don't know. I'm not going to pretend to psychoanalyze the human race, but I think that some of it has to do with, "There but for the grace of God go I. I'm glad that's not me with one arm."

And maybe just difference. We're so trained from birth to just see human beings as they're supposed to be, in the media and everywhere else, that maybe it's just that. I think that for employers; it's tough being an employer, I am one. And the biggest challenge of being an employer is your employee; and that's what they bring in from home, and what they're going through, and it's their divorces, and their home sales and their births and their deaths. People have a lot of problems in life. And so you're taking regular old employees and adding on what might look like yet another issue, concern, or problem. I think that's probably what it is.

KJL What do you think has been the biggest advance at the state level in the last twenty-five years?

KM I would have to say there's a couple: Closing down Pineland institute over in Pownal that had a thousand people in it at one point in time. It was a hell hole. People with developmental disabilities, many of whom were placed there as infants and should have been in public schools, and should have been educated. Closing down Pineland. Downsizing and the ultimate closure of the old Stone Augusta Mental Health Unit here in Augusta; closure of sheltered workshops--only a few left now, so people are hopefully more gainfully employed. Pineland probably being the biggest. Twenty-two states--no, I guess there are a couple more, now. There's only a couple of states in the union that don't have institutions and we're one of them.

KJL Now, the issue of sheltered workshops was exploitation, or low pay, or...?

KM Both, yeah. Oh, I gotta give you a--yeah, our national organization just put together from all of us statistics on--Did you hear about Henry's Turkey Farm? A couple of years ago, now, Henry's Turkey Farm was a place in Iowa that was a turkey farm, and this big house that was way beyond substandard living; cold in winter, hot in summer, ridden with rodents and all that stuff. And a bunch of men were in there. They were all men from Texas who had been shipped here to work on this turkey farm. Henry's Turkey Farm took their Social Security checks every month, the whole thing; said it was the rent. And they worked. I mean, that's one of the grossest jobs on the planet to work, you know, killing turkeys and chickens and all that--really smelly. And they were found out and they were--It as the biggest verdict in the history. I think Henry's Turkey Farm has gone bottom up, so they're never going to see the--that's a very, the most famous disability case in the last five years is Henry's Turkey Farm. So that's about sheltered workshops. That's about putting a bunch of people with disabilities together. The real world doesn't even see them. You've no idea what's going on in there. They're bussed there in the

morning, work all day doing whatever; bussed back. There's a guy up in Aroostook County named Steve Richards, who I've know forever, and he runs a provider organization up there. It's a huge provider organization for people with intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities. And he used to run a sheltered workshop that made pallets. And I just went up and visited up there. It was all people with disabilities in this same building; yes, making subminimum wage and nobody's looking in there or anything, and I just--

Anyway, he has completely integrated it now, and it's so cool, because he was one of the old school. I shouldn't say this on tape, but you know--been a provider since the seventies. So there's nothing wrong with having people with disabilities--You know where sheltered workshops, subminimum wage came from. From World War II, and the guys were returning home and they were so damaged that America figured they couldn't work and so it was a training, you know, awesome opportunity. "Put a bunch of us disabled veterans in a room and begin to retrain us to work so that we can then go out and get jobs." And what happened after that? "Oh, we made a lot of money off of it because we could pay people subminimum wage to do this menial labor all day long." and somebody's making really good money, so they started just populating those seats with people with disabilities. And that is a huge--all across this nation--again, Maine, we are light years ahead of other states in that regard.

KJL The issue with the Baxter School, if I understand correctly--this was before I came to Maine, so I'm a little fuzzy on it--that was in the eighties?

KM Yeah, that was before--that was when I was in high school and college, so I wasn't really...

KJL Were you involved with the settlement at all?

KM This agency was. I was not. We have assisted a lot of individuals over the years, that have called up for representation on various matters related to that, but no, I wasn't really around. But that's another one I guess-- You asked what were the most positive things in the last twenty-five years. That would have to be Pineland, AMHI, and sheltered workshops.

KJL Did you encounter very much resistance to the disability rights movement from friends and family and the like? Did you encounter pretty much a positive response?

KM What do you mean? I don't understand.

KJL Well, the attitude, of "Well, what's all this special rights about?" and "Can we afford this?" and...

KM No. I have a very strong personality, though. I can't see my family or my friends ever--I mean I've spent my entire career talking about these issues to people though. So yes, lots of conversation with family and friends about all of the stuff that you and I have been talking about.

Why do I do what I do? Why do I continue to do what I do? I have seen people abused, I have seen people neglected. I've seen people thrown out of their apartments, and fired from their jobs, or not hired. It's really important to me that the general public understands that people with disabilities are not victims, but that we also don't want special rights. but that we are different, and we are seen by the public as different. And so, I guess, yeah, I would say--thinking about my father, now. He's gone, but [he] probably didn't think this was a real job, you know, Gay rights, disability rights, you know. I don't know. I'll have to think about that one more.

KJL You've been very generous with your time

KM It's fun. I never do this, It's fun, so thank you.

KJL Are there things you want to point out to me that I'm not thinking about to ask?

KM No, but I would--You're going to continue to do this. One thing that I would do is some of the questions about the early on stuff, I'd put at the end, because I was totally floored. I've never been asked those questions before, and so I didn't know how to answer them. But then you asked other things that are much more real today, and so I kind of warmed up, and whatever, and so...That's just a suggestion.

KJL I appreciate that, thank you.

[End of interview.]

