

Southern Maine LGBT Oral History Project 2023 – background information:

The objective of this project is to -

- Collect oral history accounts of LGBT life, activism, commerce and culture in Southern Maine with members of the local community;
- and
- Make these accounts available through the Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine's LGBTQ+ Collection.

The Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine's LGBTQ+ collection includes important papers, photographs, and other artifacts representing four decades of LGBTQ+ activism, culture, and commerce in the Southern Maine region. The oral history project is intended to add an additional dimension to that collection. Through the oral history project, voices and stories of members of the Southern Maine LGBTQ community will be preserved and made available to the public in an effort to enrich understanding of our community and to serve as an important resource for scholars working on LGBTQ history.

The project is coordinated by the Faculty Scholar for the LGBTQ+ Collection, Wendy Chapkis, a Professor of Sociology and Women & Gender Studies at the University of Southern Maine. Dr. Chapkis has decades of experience using interviewing as a research method. The LGBTQ Oral History Project integrates USM students into the process of community-based research; after being trained, students serve as interviewers and transcribers of the oral histories. In some instances, Wendy Chapkis will be conducting the interview herself.

Prior to recording the oral histories, students engage in preliminary research on the most significant places and events central to your life history. As a narrator (an person who will be sharing your life story), you will determine which aspects of your life you wish to focus on.

To assist in preparing for your interview, please fill out the attached form and **return it to Dr. Chapkis (by mail or by email):**

Wendy Chapkis
Professor of Sociology and Women & Gender Studies
University of Southern Maine
96 Falmouth St., P.O. Box 9300
Portland, ME 04104

Email: Chapkis@maine.edu

Biographical information in preparation for oral history interview:

Name: _____ **Preferred pronoun:** she/her, he/his, they/their, other

City of residence: _____ **Age (or decade of birth):** _____

Contact Information: Phone _____ Email _____

Mailing address: _____

1. During the oral history, which of the following areas would you like to focus most attention on (check all that are important to you to discuss)?

- ☐ Family of origin
- ☐ Friendship and chosen family
- ☐ The process of coming out
- ☐ Employment
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Political activism and organizing
- ☐ HIV and the AIDS epidemic
- ☐ Religion
- ☐ Gender identity
- ☐ Race/Ethnicity
- ☐ Class
- ☐ Age
- ☐ Love, romance, sex and pleasure
- ☐ Culture and the arts
- ☐ Commerce (including LGBT businesses such as bars)
- ☐ Other: _____

2. Before the interview, we would like to become familiar with important names, places, organizations, or other relevant identifiers that you are likely to talk about during your oral history. Please briefly list **some of the places** (geography or cultural/commercial), **individuals** (political or cultural figures), **political and activist organizations or campaigns**, or **social issues**, that are important to your story:

Please return the above document to Dr. Chapkis by email or US post (Chapkis, Dept. of Sociology, University of Southern Maine, 96 Falmouth St., P.O. Box 9300, Portland, ME 04104)

THANK YOU for your participation in this important project! If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dr. Wendy Chapkis at Chapkis@maine.edu