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<p><b>Mary Wallace</b> Okay. So we're here today in the Glickman Library on the third floor, and I'm here with Nancy Wanderer, and we're conducting an interview for the LGBTQ Digital History Trail. And it is the 22nd of November, 2022. My name is Mary Wallace M-A-R-Y W-A-L-L-A-C-E and I'm here with.</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> Nancy Wanderer. Should I spell it? N-A-N-C-Y W-A-N-D-E-R-E-R</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> Perfect, thank you. And I just want to remind you that you can refuse to answer any questions I ask. And if you feel uncomfortable at any time, you can feel free to let me know. And we can pause or we can move to a different topic. Okay. So I'm going to start with some basic information. How old are you?</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> I'm well, I'm 74, but I'll be 75 in January.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> So happy early birthday.</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> *laughs* Thank you.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> And what terms do you use to describe yourself in terms of sexuality or sexual orientation? Like, for example, lesbian, bisexual, gay or queer?</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> I would describe myself as lesbian. I may have always been lesbian, but I didn't know it was an option for most of my, well, until I was in my probably my thirties to be anything but heterosexual. So I was I, I was heterosexual at the time I guess, and was married for 20 years to a man. But I think possibly throughout all that time I may have actually been a lesbian.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> So was there no education on any different sexual orientation other than being straight when you were growing up?</p>	<p>Date / Location</p> <p>Name</p> <p>Basic Information</p> <p>Age</p> <p>Lesbian Identity</p>



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<p>actually, most of the time. That's where my parents were from. But they, they moved to they moved to New Kensington because of my father's job.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> Would you say, you said that you [grew up in] very much a small mill town, really, do you think that that affected, your, how you perceived sexuality in the long run? Being growing up in a small town...</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> I don't think so because, well, I went to school in New Kensington up through ninth grade. Then I went to a private girls school in Pittsburgh, which had a very different well, I mean, actually, a lot of my friends were very much middle class or even some upper middle class. But at this school, it was called the Ellis School in Pittsburgh, you know, I went there on the down side of the income. There were some very, very wealthy families there and much more sophistication. But I didn't get any more insight into sexuality in a different, in a different economic, let's say, a more privileged setting than I did in my small town, you know, less sophisticated setting.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> And, so you also mentioned that you were willing to talk about class in this interview. Were there, have you gone through living [in] different socioeconomic classes or has it kind of been the same for you?</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> For me, well, it's interesting. An interesting question, I... Growing up, my parents were both college educated. My father was an engineer. And I would say we were, you know, solidly middle class not..., although he, my father's family, had been more wealthy and there was money, you know, in other generations, not particularly in my generation. But my father was had a good job and my mother eventually started teaching. And she did it because she wanted to use the money she made at work, teaching, for education for my brother and me. So both of us ended up</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p>The Ellis School</p> <p>Income</p> <p></p> <p>Class</p> <p>Parents</p>

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<p>going to private school and then we went to, you know, private colleges and she was very proud of that. Turned out she was a fabulous teacher and it was the right thing for her to be doing, whether she was using the money for us or not. She continued to teach when she didn't necessarily need to. So I would say I was very, very much middle class at that point. I was exposed to this more upper class in when I went to Ellis in Pittsburgh. When I went to Wellesley [College], there was a huge spectrum. There were people there that were, and of course in my town there were people there that were much less financially... their lives were less financially stable than mine. I had a lot of friends that were, you know, from the whole spectrum, although it didn't go so high in New Kensington which [was] much, much higher when I got to Ellis, of course, there were no poor people there. At Wellesley there were there was a pretty big spectrum, but I was still solidly middle class. I didn't have financial- I wasn't getting financial aid. My parents were paying for my college. After I graduated, my former husband, I got married at the end of my junior year, I was only 20 and the war in Vietnam played into it, he went into the army. I went home to New Kensington because I was pregnant. And so at that point we had, my former husband and I, really didn't have any much money at all. Even though he had graduated from Bowdoin, he was in graduate school, but now he was in the army and I really wasn't working. So I became, you know, back into the family, and I tried to save that money. When he got back, he went back to graduate school and we used the money that I had saved, but we were definitely more hand-to-mouth. You know, I remember at one point I realized that I only had hand-to-mouth. Is that the right expression? But anyway, we were, we were just barely scraping by. He had the GI Bill going for him and but I wasn't working. We had a child and and he had a fellowship, but we really didn't have much money. And I remember at one point I realized we were down to something like \$100 in our bank</p>	<p>Private School</p> <p>Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania</p> <p>Wellesley College</p> <p>Husband / Marriage</p> <p>Vietnam War</p> <p>Bowdoin College</p> <p>Class</p> <p>GI Bill</p> <p>First child</p>

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<p>account. And I, I got a letter from my grandmother, a card or something, and I think she had sent us- I can't remember whether it was \$1,000 or \$100- it just felt like, oh, my gosh, if she hadn't sent this check, I'm not sure what we would have done next month. Now, that doesn't mean I couldn't have asked my mother for money and she did buy clothes for me. She bought clothes and books for my son, Andrew, but we were really young. You know, we weren't destined to be poor, but we were pretty poor at that point. Then when he graduated, we moved to Washington, D.C. and he was he had a job teaching at George Washington University, making I remember it was \$15,000 a year. And we were living in Alexandria, Virginia. And it seemed like he would probably stay there, you know, at that job because he had a political science degree- government. But when we went to look at houses that we might be able to buy, we realized there was no way we were going to be able to buy any of these houses. And they were really crummy. I mean, they didn't have basements. They, they were just little houses on a slab, and even those houses we couldn't have afforded. So we said, "Well, we'll look again next year." Well then we waited another year and the houses that we looked at were the same houses, but now they were, you know, \$10,000 or \$20,000 more. So I was pretty miserable in that environment because I thought, "we're never going to we're never going to get anywhere here." We were living in an apartment, wasn't a bad place, but it wasn't what I wanted for my life. Now I had, we had, two children and I was pretty, pretty unhappy for the three years that we lived there. And when he had a chance to interview with Bowdoin, I mean, at Colby, I said, you, you go out there and get the job and get us out of here. I mean, I remember we went to a a Chinese banquet that his department, at George Washington University, put on. And we hadn't eaten out. We hadn't done anything like that. And I think we had to pay something like \$16. So I can't remember what it was to go to this banquet.</p>	<p>Grandmother</p> <p>Relationship with mother</p> <p>Washington, D. C</p> <p>George Washington University</p> <p>Alexandria, Virginia</p> <p>Second child</p> <p>Colby College</p>

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<p>And I remember there was a huge table and everybody was sitting around and they were, you know, academic types. And instead of giving us all a plate of food, there were bowls of food or containers of food, and it was all being passed. And I'll never forget this, because by the time it got to where I was sitting, there was no food left in the bowls. And we had, you know, spent the \$16 that we really ordinarily couldn't spend. And I'm looking at, you know, like a little pile of rice or something. And I remember somebody turned to me and said, "so how do you like it in Washington or something, or like it here?" And I remember saying, "I don't like it at all." I was like this whole tirade, which I didn't even know was in me. But when I left that dinner that night, I thought, I have got to get out of here. You know, this is no way to live. So I feel like even though my class may have been more I mean, I was married to a professor. I had graduated from Wellesley College. And in fact, I got a master's degree while I was there. But George Washington, I guess I should have been in a class where I could have had a full plate of dinner in front of me. But we weren't in that state. And I was I was shopping, now we had a family of four, my son Peter was at that point for those three years, he was like ages 1 to 3. And I was still buying the same number of pork chops. And I was, let's say, and I was grinding, you know, food for him at the table. And I realized I started losing weight. And I, I didn't know why. And I mean, I lost quite a bit of pound. You know, I ordinarily I weighed about 136. That was my that was in those days. That was what I weighed. And that was for years and years. And I realized, oh, my gosh, I'm weighing 125. So I made it a point with a doctor and I said, I think there might be something wrong with me. And fortunately, this doctor knew enough to talk to me about more than just, you know, blood pressure. And he said he asked me some questions. And when I described our eating, he said, you are starving yourself to feed your child. And because he was getting bigger and bigger</p>	<p>Masters degree at Wellesley</p> <p>Class</p> <p>Consequences of class</p>

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<p>and eating more and more and I was still buying the same for pork chops or whatever I was buying, I wasn't taking more from my former husband. My older son was getting his share. But the more Peter ate, the less I ate. And I was literally starving myself. So I guess I can relate to not having enough food to be food insecure, even though in theory I was in a very professional class. And when we got to Maine, he did get the job at Colby. And things eased up and we were you know, we weren't able to consider ourselves wealthy at all. But but I was back kind of where I expected to be as far as having enough food. I don't know if money, although my my mother still my parents still paid for a lot of stuff for us. So I don't know if that's that's helpful.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> Absolutely. No, that was fantastic answer. You mentioned that your grandmother had sent you some money and that you could have also ask your your mother for money, too. Are you were you close with your family? And are you, were you close with this throughout most of your life?</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> Well, yes, I was very close to my to my mother. And, of course, I felt I mean, I felt close to my father, too, in the way that I mean, I would never confide in my father about anything. But but I was very close to my mother. And and and she did do a lot to help us, which was one of the issues that came up later when I came out, because my mother had been my great greatest supporter and appreciator and I've been married 20 years. She thought I was very settled by then. I was working too. And and then when I actually came out, she just we had a terrible, terrible falling out that lasted for quite a few years. So, yes, I was close to my mother.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> Were you close with her after that falling out?</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> Well, all right. So I. I came out in around 1987, and, um. Well, how long</p>	<p>Colby College</p> <p>Family relationships</p> <p>Relationship with mother</p> <p>Coming out</p> <p>Falling out</p> <p>Came out around 1987</p>

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<p>           did that last? I mean, she wouldn't come to my law school graduation in 1990, even though I was getting an award. This was at Maine Law. And because Susan was going to be there, my partner. And so it was certainly very. Tough at that time. Then my son Peter started being in musicals. He had a good voice and he was a good actor. So she came up for a couple musicals. So he was in and there would be moments of things being better and then she would go backwards again. I don't think. Well, let's see. It took it probably took a good. Ten years, I think, to really get to a peaceful place. But then. Not long after that, my son Peter wanted to marry an African American woman, and he did marry in Africa. And so as she was finally settling down a little bit on the lesbian daughter thing, now she has a her precious grandson is marrying an African-American. So then we started up again. We had more battles about that. What finally really, really solidified us, I think, was when I got multiple myeloma, which is cancer of the bone marrow cancer, the bone marrow. You know, it was something that many that was in 2009, the December of 2009. Many people used to die right away after getting that. And then they had read about the time I got diagnosed they had come up with a better drug formula. It was a combination of three drugs that had a lot of promise. And I took those three drugs and I, I went, I had a stem cell transplant. And there was a whole year of, you know, intensive medical involvement during that year. Susan and I, a friend of mine from college had said, "start a caring bridge site", which is it's almost like having a blog. And it was something that's set up for people who are going through serious illness. But you can write on it and say anything you want. So we also had we felt we thought we were just going to put medical updates, but we we decided to we both like to write the book pretty good writers. And anyway, we started writing on that blog from that site every single day. So for one year, this would have been from from January 2010 to January 2011.         </p>	<p>           Law School graduation in 1990            Susan            Her son Peter            Peter marries a Black woman            Diagnosis of Multiple Myeloma in December 2009            Stem cell transplant            CaringBridge         </p>



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<p>One or the other of us wrote and we wrote about not just the medical stuff, but, you know what we were thinking about musings, telling stories, whatever. We ended up with, if I'm not correct, I think we ended up with over 90,000 hits on this thing. But the most important thing was that a friend of my mother's was printing it out for her every day and bringing it to her. And one of the things that came out of doing this, it was good for us to do it. But a lot of people were exposed to what a relationship between two women who are, you know, are spending their life together in a committed relationship. What that actually sounds and like not just the medical part, but the day to day part and how we talked about each other or how I would describe her, how she understood all the medical stuff and she would take notes. Anyway, whatever we said, I can't even tell you right now. But she, and you could go look at it if you wanted to, its caringbridge.org and you would just look for my name. It's a in the caringbridge is all one word. The site is open, so if you wanted to go and just poke around in there, you could, and if you have trouble with it, let me know and I can send you the link. But anyway, that year, and I also had promised her as a Christmas present that year so I got I was getting diagnosed it early December so Christmas is coming, and so for a Christmas present, I told her I would I would call every single day- that was going to be the Christmas present. And that also ended up being a really important thing. And what's funny is that, yes, she would talk to me for a few minutes, but lots of times she talked to Susan longer and by the end of that year. And how old would she have been? Well. She was born in. Do the math. She was born in 1919. And this is 20- 2009. Does that make her 90? So that was the year when we finally completely healed the thing. And even in terms of Peter. Actually it was before that we healed it with Peter. And I guess we had healed sort of healed everything but a little, you know, maybe three or four years before that. But that year, with the Caring Bridge and</p>	<p>90,000 visits to CaringBridge site</p> <p>Talking to her mother everyday</p> <p>Her mother born in 1919</p> <p>Healed relationship with Peter and her mother</p>

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<p>her seeing how Susan was taking care of me and how we were doing this together, it made a huge difference. So luckily, she lived to be 94. So I'd say we had four years of the best relationship I can imagine with my mother. And back to, you know, everything I hoped for before we got into all the trouble. It's a lot of a lot of time, though, was up and down, up and down. When I first came out to her, she called me up and told me. "I would rather if you had killed somebody in an alley than this." And honestly, I don't know what it was about it that bothered her so much because she's not was it wasn't a religious thing. But here's something else you might want to check out. Actually, if you go to to WGBH Frontline. I was at a program my mother and I both were in this program called Hillary's Class. And do you know about this? You heard about this?</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> My professor told me about this.</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> You should watch it because that was done for our at the time of our 25th Wellesley reunion. So that would have been about three years ago. And we were we were just going into a really good place for the first time around the time of that show. And she she agreed to be in the show. And she talks about her feelings about this. And and I talk about my feelings about her and what we had to do. I had to decide what to do with my life. And I think it would be helpful for you to see it might be good to have it in the archive, a copy of it in the archives. But it was, the idea was it was a program that was done by Frontline. Do you know, Frontline on public television?</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> Yes.</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> Well they these two young ,they were in their twenties I think, feminist producers I guess you could say whatever they were had this idea they wanted to do something on on the second wave of the women's movement. And they thought</p>	<p>Mother died at 94</p> <p>Faced with her mother's biases</p> <p>Hillary's Class</p> <p>Frontline</p> <p>Hillary Clinton</p>

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<p>maybe if we, and Hillary was Hillary Clinton was was first lady at the time, and they thought maybe we should do something not with Hillary, but with some other members of her class and interview some some members of her class who've had lives the last 25 years, which were the 25 years of the second wave of the women's movement at that point, because that really didn't exist when we graduated from college, but it began to be something. So she interviewed, they interviewed a lot of people and then they boiled it down to about, I don't know, five or six of us that they featured in this program. So there's a range of people, but I'm the one that has the sexual orientation question and and when they interviewed me, of course, I was talking about my mother a lot and they said, "well, you're talking about your mother a lot when we talk to you, do you think your mother would be interested, would be willing to be interviewed?" I didn't think she would. I didn't even think she wanted me to be interviewed. But she said okay. And she said, okay, and she's really good and I think it would be good for you to watch it.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> Absolutely.</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> So, and I think you'll get a feel for our relationship when you see us together in that. I mean, we really loved each other very much, but we really did struggle. It was it was the one struggle I had. My children were fine about it. My friends were fine about it. I didn't get any difficulties in my career, although I worried about that because I was just getting ready to start a new career at the time. No problems with any other part of my life except with my mother. The person who meant the most to me.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> From what you said, it sounds like, you mentioned your mother and your father and then you mentioned that you were previously married to a man. Would you say that those two men, your ex-husband and your father, were they kind of just in the</p>	<p>Sexual Orientation / National Television</p> <p>Mother / Daughter Relationship</p> <p>Career and coming out</p> <p>Father and husband</p>

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<p>background of this? They didn't have... Did they have strong opinions on your coming out or did it affect them or did they voice those opinions?</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> Well, my, my husband at the time I mean, I, I was very open with him when I began to realize what was happening with me. And he had this idea that we could still be married. And I could figure out we could figure out some way to. You know, had this all come together and. And of course, that was it was not a good idea. But we we struggled with that for about two years. And and toward the end of that, he became very controlling. And as long as he was sort of in charge of what I was what I was allowed to do or not do or whatever, he was okay. But when I tried to be more autonomous, it just broke down. So that was pretty much the story with him and with my father. My father was just very confused about the whole thing. He what he said to me is, I don't understand. You said this just doesn't make sense. You know, he he looked at my life. He looked at my marriage. It didn't seem that bad. It wasn't that bad. He wasn't it wasn't a big religious thing, although my parents were both churchgoers, but Protestants, they were. They were, you know, that wasn't a big deal, really. He just didn't understand it. And I tried to I tried to talk to him. And it turned out that he had right around the same time that I was coming out, he was diagnosed with colon cancer. So he only lived five years after all this began. So I never really know knew how he would have where he would have come out in the end with us. He didn't he didn't make as big a fuss about it. His mother. He was just more. Shaking his head. And I remember at one point he said he thought we should not try to talk, not try to have communication. That it was too too painful. I think that was too painful for my mother. And I think it was pretty painful for my mother. But she was fighting it tooth and nail. And it it it was there was no way to win for her to win. What did she think? I was just going to go</p>	<p>Ex-husband</p> <p>Controlling husband after coming out</p> <p>Father</p> <p>Religion</p> <p>Father diagnosed with colon cancer</p> <p>No communication</p>

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<p>back to to my husband. I mean, way too late for that. I don't know what I think that was. Part of the problem is she didn't know. But I remember at one point. So on the one hand, she said, I think she would have rather had me kill somebody in the alley at another point. Little further along, she said, You are more yourself now than you were when you were married. And I thought that was pretty significant. And we also Susan and I took her to meet some friends of ours because I guess because they were older, these women had been together for a while. One was an artist and one had been a teacher. And, and. She really talked to them. And I remember hearing her say to them something like, you know, you're lucky you had a chance to have this. And she didn't exactly say, I wish I could have had this kind of a relationship because her relationship with my father was solid, but he wasn't exciting. And, you know, her real enthusiasms and passions, I think, were for her women friends and her college roommate. And, you know, she had the traditional marriage, but she could see that what these friends of ours had and what Susan might have was a lot more fun and a lot more emotionally satisfying. So hearing her say this to our friends, Joy and Marilyn, I thought, you know, part of her range may be that she never she never thought this was an option for her. Whether she would have gotten that way or not, I don't know. But it wasn't something she could have chosen. And I also think there was some jealousy that I now had, another woman that I loved so much, someone other than her. So I think it was complicated and it wasn't the traditional religious or although in the show, in Hillary's Class, she does say something like, "it wasn't so much what we thought", meaning her and my father. "It was what other people would think". But then, ironically, she moved to a retirement community and she lived in her apartment and she had a lot of friends there. And so, of course, we were coming around, even though some days, some years it was better than others. But we were there. Her</p>	<p>Relationship with Susan</p> <p>Her mother's passions with women in her life</p> <p>Emotionally satisfying</p> <p>What other people would think</p>

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<p>friends really liked us and got it what we were. They got what our relationship was. And it turned out that what other people would think, what other people thought was, hey, they were really nice, you know, let's spend time with them. So I think that helped for her to be in a community where her friends actually had no problem with us at all, a lot less problem than she had with us. So so she learned and I give her a lot of credit to get to 94 and at 94 to have been able to come to understand things that she didn't understand from her own upbringing. She got there. So and I feel satisfied. I feel like our relationship came together in the end.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> That's wonderful.</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> Yeah, it really was.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> So you mentioned that you attended Wellesley. What did you major in?</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> The majored in English. My mother had majored in English. She was an English teacher, so I thought maybe I'd be an English teacher. And I was for a while. In fact, I my my career began at Unity College. Do you know, Unity? It's in Unity. It's Unity, Maine.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> Yes.</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> Yeah. So we moved to Maine and at the time. How many students would have been there? Maybe 300 students, and most of them were men, and a lot of them were there with learning disabilities and problems and either getting a job. First, I was just going to be an arts humanities tutor, but then they needed someone to to head up this department that was sort of it was an academic center that was academic support and, you know, teaching remedial reading, remedial writing, remedial math. And they needed somebody to direct the program. And of course, I'm coming from no job, too. We'd like you to direct the program. And I thought,</p>	<p>Mother's friend's understanding</p> <p>Satisfaction at end of relationship</p> <p>English major at Wellesley</p> <p>Career at Unity College</p> <p>Unity, Maine</p> <p>Teaching remedial studies</p>

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<p>well, okay, so I tried it and I did love it. And so I was teaching, writing. And then I realized I liked the counseling aspect. So I decided I, I it wasn't another master's, but it was the equivalent of another master's in in counselor education for Orono. So, I wanted, I decided I wanted to be a guidance counselor. So I went. So I started doing that while I was working. And part of being a guidance counselor was I had every year of teaching English- teaching. So I taught one year in the junior high school in Oakland, Maine. And my mother had been, you know, like a master teacher of this age group, which was junior high. And it was really tough. And I realized I did get the hang of it by the end of the year, but I realized this is not right. This is not the group I should be teaching. So I actually ended up on. I did like being a guidance counselor. I was a guidance counselor for one year in Skowhegan, but then I got offered a job at Colby. They were starting up their career services, they're redoing their whole career services thing. So they asked if I would be the assistant director for [career] services at Colby. So I took that job and that got me into the college environment. So I ended up being the well, I ended up being the co-chair of the of the Women's Studies program there, even though I wasn't professor, but I was so interested and I and I did a lot of work. I wrote the first the college's first sexual harassment policy. And I did co teach a class and women's studies. And I was the I was the faculty advisor to both the women's group and the gay and lesbian group on campus. So this really plunged me into a lot of stuff that that was very exciting for me. And then in the midst of all this, I began this coming out process and also a coming out career wise because I realized I wasn't really going to get where I needed to go there. As Assistant Director of career services. And I had I had thought about going to law school in college, but then I ended up getting married before I even graduated. But I did graduate. So I had this sort of bursting out of coming out and wanting to go to law school kind of all at once.</p>	<p>Program director</p> <p>Masters in Counselor Education</p> <p>Orono, Maine</p> <p>Guidance Counselor</p> <p>Oakland, Maine</p> <p>Skowhegan</p> <p>Colby</p> <p>Directory for Career Services</p> <p>Co-chair of Women's Studies Program</p> <p>Faculty Advisory for LGBTQ+ groups on campus</p> <p>Law School</p>

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<p>And so I did. So I started law school here. And in the end, I thought I was going to practice law, but I ended up coming back and teaching. And what I taught was kind of like English for the right level. So I taught I was the director of the legal research and writing program in the law school. So and then I, which I absolutely loved and it was I loved legal writing much more than I loved writing about literature. I had such a such a purpose and the and the analysis that goes into it in the organization. So I did that. That was that was really my career for 20 years here at at Maine Law. So I'm not sure what question you ask me, but hopefully that answered something.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> It certainly did. So just to clarify, you went from you. Got married your junior year of college in 1968. And that was that that was at Wellesley...?</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> 1968. That was at Wellesley.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> And then from there you graduated there and then eventually ended up going to community college, which then led you down the path to...</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> Yeah. And by then I had gotten a master's degree at George Washington in it was it was was, it is, was in education and it was called supervision and human relations. It was it was to prepare me to be like a department chair or something like that. I just I didn't even care what I took. I was home with children and I, I, I remember I was spending the summer with my mother, you know, we had a shoot, a place on the lake in western Maryland. It wasn't very far from not far from Washington. So we would get out of there in the summer and Cal would stay and teach summer school or something what he was doing. But I would I spent the summer with my mother and my kids on this lake. And I remember at the end of one of the first summer that we were there, I'd had one</p>	<p>Maine Law</p> <p>Legal Writing</p> <p>Career at Maine Law</p> <p>Married 1968</p> <p>Masters degree at George Washington</p> <p>Supervision and Human Relations</p> <p>Summer with her mother</p> <p>Western Maryland</p> <p>Ex-husband</p>



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<p>year living there and, you know, basically getting nowhere with anything much. Being really unhappy. And I remember to say to him, Get me into some sort of master's program. I said, I don't even care what it is. And just, you know, I guess we thought education might be the thing. So he went down to the office, I guess, at the Education Department, at George Washington. And and I had my GRE scores. I had my transcript from Wellesley. And I didn't even I didn't even show up or fill out an application. I guess Cal filled out the application and attached those two things and they just accepted me. So when I got home from August down in Deep Creek, which is the place we went in Maryland, I started, I started not full time, but I started this master's program. So the second two years we were there, I was I was doing that and I did completed. And I remember I remember writing papers and take home exams while sitting by the kitty pool, you know, with with my son Peter splashing. And but it was fine. I mean, I had a 4.0 average. It would be even higher if they could have given me the pluses that I was getting. But I felt really energized again, like I was back doing something and and that's that master's I think did help prepare me to be a, you know, department head at Unity. So I went from that master's and I applied for the job at Unity, but we were still moving. But I was just going to have this half time tutoring job that they ended up offering me this other job. So I was there for two years and then I went. Then I went to [teach at] the junior high. Meanwhile, getting the the 30 hours at Orono for counseling. And then I went to Skowhegan for the year as a guidance counselor, which I really enjoyed. And then I came to Colby for three years, in three years, five years and in the career services. And that was when I my kids were a little bit older. This was the end of the eighties, toward the end of the eighties. And I just, I, I was ready for something else. Like my whole life was going to be turned upside down. So. So I came out and I went to law school once.</p>	<p>George Washington</p> <p>Deep Creek, Maryland</p> <p>Part-time Master's program</p> <p>4.0 average</p> <p>Tutoring job</p> <p>Teaching junior highschool</p> <p>Skowhegan / Orono</p> <p>Colby</p> <p>End of 1980s</p>

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<p><b>Mary Wallace</b> It sounds like you, you've done a lot with education.</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> Yeah, it was it it was kind of funny because I did end up and then in the end ended up back in education.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> Was that was that was that ever in your sights? I know you said your your mother was a great English teacher and you said that maybe you wanted to be an English teacher. But did you ever think that you would go through this this long road through Academia?</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> And I and of course, when you were going through the road, you don't see how it all fits together. I mean, when I was one of the reasons I want to go to law school was because at Colby, I wanted to have the tools to do things like sexual harassment or but in the end and I did I was well I clerked for a year with was. Daniel Wathen, who ended up being the chief justice of the main Supreme Court after. After law school. That's a typical thing you might do. So I thought for a year doing that, that involved a lot of research and writing on my part. And then I then I went to Pierce Atwood, which is the big corporate law. I mean, I did it because I needed the money now, because I had gotten divorced. Another time actually, I did. I should mention there was another time when I wondered if I was going to have enough money because also the kids were going to college and well, that's a whole other story. But anyway, it wasn't the right place for me at all. I mean, I can't even tell you how not right that was for me. Well between the clothes you had to wear, the shoes you had to wear, the goals of the whole thing, which was to make money for people or keep them from losing money. I did get I did get involved with employment law a little bit. And I could have maybe gotten into the sexual harassment training and stuff. But after that, I guess it was a year and a half there. I just knew I was I</p>	<p>Education</p> <p>Academia</p> <p>Colby</p> <p>Daniel Wathen</p> <p>Pierce Atwood</p> <p>Divorce</p> <p>‘</p> <p>Money troubles</p> <p>Sexual Harassment work</p>

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<p>couldn't do it, even though it was the most money I could have made in the whole state of Maine. It's a really good job. So I did leave and I went to work for the state Maine Health Care Finance Commission, which involved health care finance, which was not anything I was least that interested in, but I really like the people there. Fortunately, in the end, the legislature abolished the Maine Health Care Finance Commission, and I had to reinvent myself again. I had to I had to think of what now? What? I didn't want to go back and practice the law like I was doing. I didn't really want to work for the attorney general's office or something like that. So it would have been the same as practicing law, but for a lot less money. And so it turned out I went to an alumni alumni lunch, Maine Law alumni lunch, and they were giving a report on the, the ABA had done an evaluation or accreditation thing and they had said everything is good here except for two things: one is the library needs something, whatever it was. And the other thing is you need to get a decent legal research program. And I had taught as a student for two years, but it was a student run thing. It was. So if you got a good student teacher. You might learn something. But what did we know? We hadn't practiced law. So anyway, I listened to that speech and had my lunch, and afterwards I went up to speak to Barbara Evans, who was the kind of like the dean of students. And I said, Oh, Barbara, I'm going to be out of a job soon. Or how about you? I think you're retiring. You know, I think I might be really good at your job, which was a dean of students type job, and I think I probably would have been. And she laughed and said, Oh, no, if everybody wants my job, no, I'm not retiring. And then I hadn't thought about this at all. I mean, not even for a second when I heard them talking, but out of my mouth came these famous words. Really, Barbara, it's not your job I want. I said, I don't know why the law school doesn't hire me to direct a legal writing program. And I didn't think a thing about what I was saying. And she said, Stay right there.</p>	<p>Maine Health Care Finance Commission</p> <p>Maine Law</p> <p>ABA</p> <p>Legal Research Program</p>

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<p>I'm going to get the dean. She went got the dean. She got a couple other people. She and she said, say that again. Say what you just said again. And I thought, my gosh, she's taking me seriously. And then I thought, well, this is something I would what I'd like to do. I didn't really know what it entailed, but I knew that I had taught it for two years, and I had an idea what it might take. So I said it again. This was in. In July. And the dean said, okay, this was like a Friday. And he said, by Tuesday. Write something up and give it to me. So I wrote something up and I gave it to him and he called the faculty. It's a small faculty. He called called them one by one because they were all off campus in the summer. And he called me back and said, You've got the job if you want it. And so that was the beginning of that. And I got to create the whole thing and and that, you know, looking back on the junior high English. Wrong, wrong class. Wrong students in the class lawsuits. The right students. And I just just loved that job. So that was it.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> That sounds amazing. Were you... So through all of these all these different schools you've been to, you mentioned that you were an advisor for some...</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> The women's group.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> Yes. Yeah. So were you active, like politically in that way on your on many of the campuses more than that or...?</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> I think my activism began in Colby and that would have been when I was. I suppose I was sort of. Yeah. You know, I was in my, my early to late thirties and that was it. Well yeah, actually, because this was also the time when, you know, there was a lot going on as far as women's consciousness raising. And so actually, you know, starting it was the late seventies that I got there. Prior to that, I'd been kind of stuck in this young mother ghetto type situation in</p>	<p>Director of Legal writing program at Maine Law</p> <p>Teach junior high</p> <p>Advisory work</p> <p>Women's Group</p> <p>Political Activism</p> <p>Colby College</p>

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<p>Washington, and there wasn't any particular activism about anything. But when I got to Colby, I was on a college campus and there was a lot going on in the women's that was those were the days of the, you know, people doing self-examination with mirrors. And, you know, there was just a lot going on at that time. Late seventies to mid eighties. And I did kind of throw myself into the whole thing. And and that's why, you know, the activism for me wasn't so much going to the marches and things like that, but getting involved with writing the sexual harassment policy and affirmative action and we were we were we were mostly I was mostly advocating with the college administration about things and then becoming a part of the Women's Studies Program and teaching a women's studies class. That was a huge dip into activism. And because we were I guess my activism oftentimes has taken the form of teaching. So it's not so much I'm more of a marcher now, but at the time it was more of a how can I how can I help these young people, particularly young women, get a handle on the fact that I mean, because that group at that age didn't think that they were being discriminated against in any way. So our class that we taught for one thing, was to help them see through literature and other things that, you know, there is feminism is important and needed and changes needed. And and they it was really an exciting time for me and the I remember. This would have been in 1987, I put on a conference at Colby for all the women's studies programs in Maine. And I bet, you know, people from different campuses, including USM. And it was really it was really exciting. So that was that was where activism really that was probably my most fertile time for activism. And then it just became a habit. Later I was appointed to the it's called DACOWIS, the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services. And I was actually nominated by Olympia Snowe. And it came because I had served on another commission for gender justice in the courts. After I'd clerked for the judge that clerked for</p>	<p>Women's Consciousness Raising</p> <p>Washington, D. C.</p> <p>Self-examination</p> <p>Late 1970s</p> <p>Harassment policy / affirmative action</p> <p>Women's Studies Program</p> <p>Teaching as Activism</p> <p>Literature</p> <p>1987 Women's Studies Conference at Colby</p> <p>USM</p>

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<p>he became chief justice. And and I worked with him and some other women lawyers to set up this commission on gender justice in the courts. And that looked at how women are discriminated against in the legal in the legal system, a lot of in terms of divorce and things like that. And then a woman who worked as a scribe for that had had been on this defense advisory committee for women in the services. So she nominated me. I didn't even know about this at the time. We had the two women senators and all of, you know, was one of them. And she sent my name to Olympia Snowe and and I was appointed by secretary of defense. Who's the main one? Oh, my gosh. You can say it. I'll think of it anyway. The secretary of defense to this commission, it was a it was a national thing. There were 33 of us all over the country. And what we did was we went. We went to different bases. Navy bases. We bases all over the country. But of course, you tended to do in your own area. And I would run focus groups with soldiers, sailors, whatever. Different groups like commissioned officers and noncommissioned officers, some that were just women, some that were mixed women and men. And we would try to get a handle on how things were going for women in the services. And then we would get together in these meetings of four times a year and, you know, pass resolutions and pressure the government. And this commission had been going on for 50 years and Sandra Day O'Connor had been on this commission at one time and some other famous people. And I think Helen Hayes maybe and it was instrumental in dealing with things like sexual harassment at the Air Force Academy. We found out that women pilots were dehydrating themselves when they were before they would go up in airplanes because they didn't have any escort to go to the bathroom. And these are the kinds of things we were able to find out in these focus groups. So this was another way where, again, my activism wasn't so much marching around, but actually being in a position where</p>	<p>Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWIS)</p> <p>Clerking</p> <p>Gender justice</p> <p>Nomination</p> <p>Olympia Snowe</p> <p>National Commission</p> <p>Women in the Services</p> <p>Sandra Day O'Connor</p> <p>Helen Hayes</p> <p>Women pilots</p> <p>Activism</p>

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<p>I could make a difference, either teaching somebody something or in this case, being on this commission. There's a committee called a committee. And then what do you know? George W Bush after 911. That was when we were getting ready for our meeting. Right before that happened. Right after that happened. And when we got together for our meeting, it was announced that he was abolishing the thing to too many problems. Right now we can't deal with this. He abolished it after 50 years. So that was the end of my because I think it's possible I might have gone on to be the chair of this thing because I was feeling very, very energized by it. It was a wonderful experience. So anyway, that and then other things I've done in my life, I was first on the board of the Maine Women's Fund, which raised money for grassroots cause organizations. And and that was very important to me for a long time, trying to think what other kinds of things. So I guess, yeah. So my activism continued, but it continued more in terms of having leadership roles in, in things.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> So you mentioned it kind of came to fruition in the late, late seventies for you at Colby?</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> Well, late seventies when I got to Colby and then late eighties was when I had my my big earthquake and came out and and went to law school. So it was the decade of the eighties. A lot was happening. And then some of this other stuff I mentioned came after the eighties. You know, the DACOWIS Maine Women's Fund and that stuff that was that was more in the 1990s, 2000.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> Do you think that that you getting to Colby in the late seventies and then, you know, becoming more active through the eighties and the late eighties when you came out, did do you think that led to you, do you think that was a factor in you coming out?</p>	<p>9/11</p> <p>Abolishment of DACOWIS</p> <p>Maine Women's Fund</p> <p>Leadership roles</p> <p>1990s and early 2000s</p> <p>Activism contributing to coming out</p>

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<p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> Absolutely. Yeah, no question. One thing was working at Colby because the gay students liked me and felt comfortable with me. I didn't think I was a lesbian, but I. I knew I was a very supportive person. I learned a lot. I mean, they more or less taught me things. They they took me to concerts. They I learned about what things I might want to read. I mean, it was I learned a lot. I learned a lot from the students. And and I learned I began to get it about myself. And I think maybe if I hadn't gone there and had that experience and been, you know, been with the students, I'm not sure how long it might have taken me or if I ever would have gotten there. So I'm very grateful to them and a lot of them, I'm still in contact with them. So it's nice. I mean, I was supposedly helping them and I was but reading the resumes and things like that. But they were teaching me about themselves and teaching me about things that I didn't I had an inkling of, but I didn't really I hadn't really grasped. Kind of like my mother with that caring bridge. You know, when you're actually sort of immersed, it's a whole different thing than just thinking about it intellectually. And I should say that when I was at Wellesley, that must be when I first heard of the concept of being a lesbian, or I don't even know if the word was used. But being in a, you know, you know, two women being in a relationship, what we understood was that if anybody got caught in that situation, they would be kicked out of school. And so not only was it not an option, it was it was a punishable offense. So I certainly wasn't going to be going there. And, of course, I was in a relationship with with my future husband anyway. But, you know, it was kind of scary. And I guess that was the idea, you know, keep us scared. I now know that there were people in relationships and it was going on while I was there, you know, right under everyones noses. But I certainly didn't.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> So at at Wellesley, you also I mean, with all of the things that you</p>	<p>Gay students impact</p> <p>Caring bridge</p> <p>Wellesley</p> <p>Lesbian</p> <p>Homosexuality criminalized</p> <p>Homophobia</p> <p>Fear of being gay</p>



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<p>mentioned that you did the the documentary on Hillary's Class, you participated in that. Did you have like any do you have a relationship? And how often did you have a relationship with Hillary Clinton? Were you friends with her?</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> Oh, yes. You know, we were friends and our relationship was mainly being in college government together. We were more like almost like colleagues, you might say. And well, I actually remember I remember a professor that often speaks for me about Hillary. We both took the same class together as political science for first year, first political science class. And I have a really strong memory of him approaching the two of us after that class and saying, You two need to get involved in politics. You know, we need leaders like you. We we need you to two people in politics. And I remember thinking politics. And, of course, we did get involved in politics on campus. And I doubt either one of us thought we were going to get involved in national politics or. And, of course and I don't think she thought she would for a long time. But I remember he had singled out the two of us. And it turns out that that was our freshman year. It turns out we both did run for offices on campus. And and prior to my junior year, we ran against each other. And it was for the junior position on the Senate, the student Senate. And I beat her for that election. And I'm pretty sure that if I hadn't gotten married, we would have run against each other again senior year. And I probably would have been the one that was president of college government. But I didn't run. I'd gotten married, I was living off campus. I kind of gave up all that. And I always think it's kind of funny because you hear people talking like she was the only leader, you know, of her class and her at Wellesley. She was she was the one. And I think well, maybe yes maybe no, and I was president of my class, too which she never was. Sometimes they say that, that she was president of the class, but she never was. So</p>	<p>Relationship with Hillary Clinton</p> <p>Friendship</p> <p>Political Science class</p> <p>Involvement in politics</p> <p>National politics</p> <p>Freshman year at Wellesley</p> <p>Running for Office</p> <p>Student Senate</p> <p>Competition</p> <p>President of College class</p>

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<p>that's my little footnote to history. But I used that... 2016 I decided I wanted to be a delegate to the National Democratic Convention or the Democratic National Convention for Hillary. And I found out how to do it. You have to actually run for election yourself at the, you know, the state convention. And so so, so. So actually, another Wellesley woman helped me to know where all the ropes were. You had to get so many signatures and you had to and then you had to campaign. You had to have little things to pass out. I had a T-shirt with a picture of Hillary and me on it. And and then I, I decided I was going to send an email out to all of the the the Clinton delegates, because I had to be elected from among the Clinton the people that were delegates from from all over the state, but just the Clinton ones, not the not the Bernie ones. And so I said it wasn't Bernie, it was Bernie. And so I sent out this email. And first I just sent out something saying, you know, that I knew her and I really want to stand up for her and all. But and then I decided I'm going to send out a second one. And this one I called, "The rest of the story" and I told that story about how I had beaten her for the election and then I had stepped aside and that allowed her to become president of college government. And I said, so that time I stepped aside. This time I want to step up and be a Clinton delegate and I got to the convention, I had my little cards to hand out, and I was, you know, saying, "oh, hi, I'm Nancy Wanderer here's a card", you know, and they say, oh, I'm voting for you for sure. They liked that email and I won. And I beat people from well, you know, that I'd been elected to office here and in Portland and and at the state level because it was only a few elected. I think we had a total of I don't know, they might have been six or something like that. And anyway, it worked and, and I wore my t shirt, you know, with my picture of the Hillary and me. And I was so proud to be there and so glad. And she she has been a friend through the years and I've seen her. I don't see her often. I don't go visit or anything</p>	<p>2016</p> <p>Delegate to the Democratic National Convention</p> <p>Running for election</p> <p>Clinton delegates</p> <p>Bernie Sanders</p> <p>Beating Hillary Clinton</p> <p>College government</p> <p>Winning Delegation seat</p> <p>Friendship throughout the years</p>

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<p>like that. But we've we've we've stayed stay connected. And she in fact, when she went to China, you know, she gave a speech at the the U.N. speech. I had told her that my son Peter was studying in Beijing at the, so he's going to be there at the same time you come to give the speech, I had written or a note or something. And she her office called him up. I guess I gave some I don't know how they got contact information. I could never call him up. They called him and said, where are you going to be tomorrow at 1:00 or something like that? And you said, well, I mean, I don't know, I guess it could be here. They said, Well, the first lady is going to call you if you're at this number and this place tomorrow at 1:00. And she did! And she she had the same kind of conversation than anybody would have with the son of a college classmate. You know, it wasn't a fancy conversation. It was, you know, how you like in your classes. What's it like for you in China? I mean, she she that was and that was directly after she gave that speech. I just thought that was phenomenal that she would be that, that, I know what the word is... It was just a wonderful thing for her to do. I didn't expect her to do anything. And what was funny was there were a couple of Wellesley women in this program that he was in. He was at Williams, but it was a program, some other college sponsored this program. They were all there. And and he and he said to them, hey, you might want to hang around tomorrow at 1:00. You know, Hillary Clinton is calling me. And they said, oh, yeah, right. You know, you got a bridge to sell, you know, whatever. And so they went off somewhere. And so I she was talking to her. She said, are there any Wellesley students around? She would've talked to them, but they had gone off somewhere. So anyway. And then my other son, Andrew, who graduated from Maine Law, he ended up as an intern in the White House the year Monica Lewinsky was there. Can you believe it? And I don't think he got that from any pulling any strings either. You know, I didn't I didn't. I later told her that</p>	<p>Hillary Clinton U. N speech in China</p> <p>Beijing</p> <p>Her son Peter</p> <p>Peter interning at White House the same year as Monica Lewinsky</p>

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<p>he was there, but I never said he's applying for this job. I don't even know how he got that job. But anyway, so he he really he thinks she's, you know, the greatest. So so I feel like our whole family has a nice connection with her. And, she, after that, Hillary's Class thing came out, she invited our class to the White House was our it was sort of like a reunion at the White House. So I was there and she, I ended up just by chance, ended up sitting with her. It wasn't planned, but I ended up sitting with her. And she was she was so impressed, really, with my mother on this Hillary's Class program. And she took a napkin and wrote a note to her, Dear Mrs. Wander. And then I've got it for him to actually I can't remember everything she said, but it was something to the effect of that. She was just so pleased that I was supporting her friend and my her daughter and my firm and Hillary's friend, Nancy and and all the best and whatever. And signed it. And somebody took a picture of us. And so I've got this picture that has the picture of the two of us at that table when she, you know, at the time. And then this little napkin is is in the in the frame. But anyway, so I would say, yes, we are we are friends. We're friends are friends. We'll always be friends.</p>	<p>Hillary's Class documentary</p> <p>Class reunion at White House</p> <p>Hillary Clinton note to Mrs. Wanderer</p>
<p><b>Mary Wallace</b> That's lovely. Did you- how did you feel? I mean, knowing her personally, how did you feel about her efforts to become the first woman president of the United States?</p>	<p>2016 Presidential election</p>
<p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> Well, you know, it was kind of funny. I, I of course, I, I think she's the most qualified person, perhaps, that we've ever had. I don't know. Maybe George Washington. I don't know. But she was she was she's so smart, so such good experience, so dedicated. She's a hardworking person and a extremely ethical person. Despite. I mean, I don't I don't I've never understood the people that tried to drag her down, but... Based on my own experience of running against her in an election. She</p>	<p>First woman presidential candidate</p>



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<p>from no, I think it was Nebraska. And she interviewed the three of us over a period of time about various things. And and then the idea was that she was going to it was going to be somebody sitting with each of us the night of the election, filming us, watching the first woman elected president. That was the idea that was going to be the documentary. So Susan and I had this woman sitting in our living room filming us as we were watching the devastation of that night. She finally, of course, put the camera down. And, I mean, we were just, it was just horrible. In the end, she did finish the film and I might be able to send it to you. I'm pretty sure I can. I have a link to that, too. She she was going to give up the project, and then the Women's March happened and. Which we did go to in Washington. She went too not to film us, but she filmed and she put a different ending on the film. And the ending had to do with the Women's March and and the future. And it turned out to be a really kind of a nice little film, but it didn't have the ending we thought it was going to. So she has shown that film various places. And we've got a couple of times when I've been there too, on a panel or something like that. And Hillary's Class, I don't know if it's still used, but it had been used for a lot of years in women's studies programs because it showed the struggles of our era of women, where we were doors were opening, but there were problems. I think the problems are still there.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> Thank you for that answer. Because we don't have that much time left...</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> Yeah.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> I do want to ask you, you said your partner, Susan, that you're with right now- kind of want to take it back to love and romance in your life.</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> Oh, yeah.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> So I wanted to ask you or can</p>	<p>Election night 2016</p> <p>Women's March</p> <p>Romance</p>

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<p>you tell me about the first time that you think you fell in love? And was it with a man or was it with a woman?</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> Oh, well. I think falling in love, I mean... The man I married, I that was a more of a gradual thing. I learned I came to love him and it in a romantic way. But I think it took a little while. The two falling in love that I remember, one was with a man, the other was with Susan. The one moment the man was my freshman year at Wellesley and I didn't go particularly go to mixers. I had a very active social life that year. I think I had come from a situation where I was maybe too small, too tall, and maybe a little bit too intelligent for a lot of the guys that I knew. And so I had some boyfriends, but it wasn't what you call a, you know, a wildly the active social life. When I got to Wellesley, there were lots more intelligence men around and a lot taller ones. So suddenly I was, you know, Miss Popularity. So I had I had I had a lot of people asking me on dates that I went on, but so I didn't really go to mixers. But for some reason this mixer was in the dorm and I decided I would just go downstairs to see what it was like. And I met this guy and I remember it being like a falling in love instantly at first glance type of thing. Turned out it didn't really go anywhere because for one thing, he was pressuring eventually a lot for sex. And then the other thing was he was Jewish and my family wasn't very happy about that. And it turned out I had dinner with his parents, so I realized they weren't very happy about me either. So that kind of died down, died out. With Susan I, I was not looking for a relationship. I was married. I'd been married at that point for I was 17 years or something like that. And. And I just figured that was more that was my life. That was it. There were times I was more excited about that than others, but that was it. And a friend of mine had asked me to go to this, this program that was a women's Wellness Program at UMF, it was a Saturday, because her therapist was giving the keynote speech</p>	<p>Being in-love</p> <p>Gradual love</p> <p>Loving a man and a woman</p> <p>Two instance of falling in-love</p> <p>Wellesley</p> <p>Dating</p> <p>Love-at-first-sight</p> <p>Boyfriend being Jewish</p> <p>Relationship dying down</p> <p>Meeting Susan</p> <p>UMF</p>

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<p>and she was too embarrassed to go, but she wanted me to go and take notes for her, this is a professor from Colby, so I didn't really want to go, but I did it as a favor to her. So I went to this thing and turned out there were these several women from my church who were going to this thing, Methodist Church. And I said, Okay, well, I'll drive them. And so I drove this car full of women and we got there. It turned out one of the women from my church had met Susan, I think it was two years earlier at a similar program, and they had both had a really wonderful conversation about Mace Arton, the poet, and she remembered her. So she saw her. The woman from the church saw Susan and said, I'm going to interview Susan and Nancy, because I think they would really like each other. So she brought her over, you know, with a blueberry muffin or something. And that was the early in the morning on that day. And I thought, Oh yeah, she seems nice. So we sat together at the first session and we just we had such a good time because these mothers, these other mothers were saying such stupid things, like how much fun it is to take your children to the YMCA and, you know, a whole group of children and getting them in and out of their bathing suits. And we knew that was crazy. How could anyone enjoy that? And we both had children. We both had two children. So, you know, when you sit next to somebody and you're kind of giggling and elbowing each other. Anyway, we had that experience then at lunch, then she went somewhere and I went somewhere. And at lunch I saw my group that I'd come with, plus another woman that I knew. And we were sitting down and I saw Susan was kind of standing in a doorway by herself. And I thought, Well, I'm going to invite her over to sit with our table. So I invited her over and we had, you know, lots of conversation and people were kidding me about a lot of stuff. So she she learned a lot about me at that table. And then the day went on and I ran into her in the ladies room. I remember. And I had I think it was the year that I was doing the</p>	<p>Friends from Methodist Church</p> <p>Meeting Susan</p> <p>Bonding</p>



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<p>Women's Studies Conference. And I, I thought maybe she'd like to come to the Women's Studies Conference. I mean, she had no reason to want to come to a women's studies conference, but so that was my reason for giving her my contact information. I said, you know, let me know if you'd like to come to the women's studies conference. Okay, great. That was great. And I guess I was just beginning to feel drawn to her. And then at the end, there was a one of these, you know, all these women's group women's things. There was a like a dance sort of thing where there were two circles and you'd rotate around and and I realized I'm watching to see where she is, to see if I'm going to get to, you know, do that little swing around and then you pass to the next person. Anyway. By the end of that, I realized I really didn't want the day to end. I wanted there to be more. So we ended up walking over to the women's studies..., there was a reception in an art gallery or something for the new women's studies director or something like that. And we got into a conversation at this reception to the point where it was so intense that I could see these women from the Methodist church coming toward us like it was time to go and they bounce off like it was almost like a like a Plexiglas wall that they couldn't get past because of the energy of. So we both eventually realized we had had to take these women home. And so she went got in her car and I got my car. And the next day I sent her, You're going to laugh. I sent her because we were talking about sexuality and things like that. I sent her a copy of Adrienne Rich's "Compulsory Heterosexuality." Have you ever read it?</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> I've heard of it.</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> Yeah, read it. It is really good. And she sent me a Mace Arton poem. We, our- our letters, crossed in the mail. We both said something the next day. And then she, it was the strongest... I mean, I was not looking to fall in love with anybody. But the</p>	<p>Women's Studies Conference</p> <p>Feeling drawn to Susan</p> <p>Intensity</p> <p>"Compulsory Heterosexuality" by Adrienne Rich</p> <p>Writing letters</p>

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<p>the attraction between us was so strong that it literally was people were bouncing off of it, I would say. And then the next time we met, we had a lunch in my backyard. And she she had had a sort of like a brush with with being in a relationship with a woman. And and she'd got divorced. And she was she and she was she said to me. And of course, I'm now I'm as I've told you, I've gotten very versed in all of this because of my work with the with the gay students on campus and all that. I understood it completely. I was very enthusiastic. And and she said to me, nope I'm done. She said, I'm going to be asexual from now on. I'm not going to get any relationships with anybody. And I so I went through this whole thing about, no, you don't want to say that. You're so lucky. You know, it seems like maybe you are going to be in a relationship with a woman. How lucky you are. I said, You know what? Here's what's going to happen. You're going to meet somebody who feels really good about their sexuality, who really loves you, and you're going to get together and you're going to have a wonderful life together. That's what I said. And then we started to walk around the side of my garage and out of my mouth this is kind of like the "you should hire me for your legal writing program." Out of my mouth came, "it could have been me. That person could have been me." I had just described myself. But I didn't think there was a chance. But I thought she needs choose to meet somebody just like me. But of course, she had just met somebody just like me. She'd met me so fast. So we, we went on for the whole rest of that year. This was in, well, it was on, believe it or not, October 11th, which later became the actual coming out day. We met that day, and it also was Eleanor Roosevelt's birthday. It's like this hugely important day. So from October till June, we spent most of our time sending each other these really beautiful cards with, you know, writing something. I don't even know what we wrote, but we wrote often. And by June. I don't know what whether she you know, I don't know what exactly what she thought</p>	<p>Susan's divorce</p> <p>Confession</p> <p>Sexuality</p> <p>October 11th</p> <p>National Coming Out Day</p> <p>Eleanor Roosevelt</p>

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<p>was happening. But I knew what was happening. I knew I was in love with her and I knew she was in love with me. And, um, so starting in June, we had to figure out what to do with this. And then there were. I guess really probably another year and a half of trying to figure it out. And I as soon as I realized I did tell my my husband, this is what's happening to me. And then we got into this whole thing of, well, we can make this work, blah, blah, blah. And it took a year and a half. But let's just say I was so relieved when it finally, we were finally separating and and I could be on my own. And I didn't, I didn't miss him. I miss my garden. Yeah, but it was so wonderful to be free to. To see where that relationship was going to go. We didn't live together right away. I think it was another year, two years, maybe even. And then we bought a house together. And it was funny because I, we said to the kids, my kids were older than hers, but I didn't. I just felt like we couldn't call the kids together. And I remember walking with my two sons at this point. Andrew was in college and Peter was high school, and we were in a part of Brunswick where there were some duplexes two family houses, but they were a little bit rough looking. And I said to him, to the boys, I said, Well, how would you feel if Susan and I were to buy something like this and maybe put, you know, some doors and internal doors in or something like that? And they said, why don't you just buy a house by just one house? And I remember saying really could we? You know, asking my children permission. And they said, yes, get a nice house! And that's what we did. So that was that year was 19... 19... I guess it was the it was it was the end of 1990. And we had had a commitment ceremony that summer, actually in June of 1990. And then we actually got legally married. Now 20 years later in Massachusetts, because they had just voted it down here in Maine. We thought we would get married in Maine. But but now I have multiple myeloma. I didn't even know if I was going to live long enough for Maine to legalize</p>	<p>Ex-husband</p> <p>Divorce</p> <p>Buying a house</p> <p>Children</p> <p>Getting legally married</p> <p>Massachusetts</p>

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<p>same sex marriage. So. So we got married at Wellesley College, where I had married my husband in a big chapel wedding with hundreds of people there. And Susan and I got married in a spoon holder and so, like a little almost like a porch that hung out over the lake. And we had 15 people, most of them our children and grandchildren, and then a few friends. And it was just it was it was perfect. So I've been married twice at Wellesley, once to a man was to a woman.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> Was the, was your marriage to Susan, was that around like 2009 or 2010 over ten?</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> Sorry?</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> So was that around 2009 or 2010?.</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> Well, that was 2010.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> 2010.</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> Yeah. And then a few weeks later, well I guess it was really a month later I went into the hospital for the stem cell transplant.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> So was that diagnosis was that you said that you didn't know if you would live long enough to see marriage legalized in Maine. Is that was that one of the propelling reasons to go get married in Massachusetts?</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> Yeah, it was the main reason we always knew we would be married. We even thought about being married in Canada at one time, but we always intended to get married legally somewhere. But we really wanted Maine. And honestly, I didn't know if I'd make it because we didn't know if Maine would ever do it. Of course it wasn't that much longer after, but also. In a funny way. I didn't, I wasn't so sure of my mother yet. I didn't know what she'd think about us getting married. But what can you say if</p>	<p>Maine</p> <p>Wellesley</p> <p>Marriage to Susan in 2010</p> <p>Stem cell transplant</p> <p>Fear of not living long enough to get married in Maine</p> <p>Canada</p> <p>Mothers's reaction</p>

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<p>someone might be dying and they want to marry someone who's going to who's going to put up a fuss about that? In the end, she paid for the lunch that we had afterwards, and her friends at the retirement community knew about all this, and they actually got a cake made with our picture on top and they asked for the program from... And at the same time we were getting married at Wellesley they had a lunch for my mother and, a surprise lunch for my mother. These are all the 80, 90 year olds and passed around the programs and it was just it was just wonderful. She she couldn't have come because she wasn't traveling. But but it felt so good to have her involved that way. And it was her friends that did it. These are the ones that, in theory, she was afraid to reveal that her daughter was a lesbian. So it was very heartwarming.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> That sounds lovely.</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> It really was.</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> Because we're coming to the end of the interview...</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> Okay. But I hope I haven't talked too much.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> Oh, my goodness. No! It's your interview. *laughs* I wanted to. I wanted to ask, looking back on your, on your life, what do you think are some of the most profound changes that you've witnessed in terms of the LGBTQ+ life?</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> Well, I remember what it was like in 1980. Well, let's go back to, to Wellesley. I mean to have it be almost like a crime. Well, I mean, it was a criminal offense in many places. I mean, that's that was where we kind of started, my first awareness. And I remember when I first came to law school, the Georgia sodomy case had just occurred where it was affirmed that it was it could be criminal. I remember that very well as a first year student at, at law school. And I</p>	<p>Retirement home party</p> <p>Heartwarming</p> <p>Changes in the LGBTQ+ community over time</p> <p>1980</p> <p>Criminalized homosexuality</p> <p>Georgia Sodomy Case</p>

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<p>remember being very afraid even to have a lawyer when I got divorced because I didn't want I knew I'd probably have to explain something about the situation and, and I was afraid to do that. We, we got divorced without lawyers. So I, I, I allowed myself to just do whatever it was that my former husband said we should do as far as... And I lost so much, so much financially. I really was cheated. And that's a whole other subject that I won't even get into here. But, um... Terrible. But it was because I was so afraid. And Susan was working in schools. She was a guidance counselor for a that she was working in Lewiston of all places. And we were so afraid that if anybody knew she'd be fired when she got divorced, before she was even in a relationship with me or really anyone else, a real lesbian relationship her, her I mean, her husband thought that she was too close to this other woman and it was close to a lesbian relationship. His lawyer said to Susan, you know, in a you know, a mediation meeting. Would she be willing to take a test to prove she was not a homosexual? So the threat was that she was going to lose her children. So when we first got together, it was criminal. You could lose your children. I might never get a job in my new career as a lawyer. My mother had abandoned me and being out was just out of question. We really weren't out at all. And then National Coming Out Day started happening. I'm not sure what year that started, but the message was, "The only way we're going to change anything is if everybody comes out of the closet and they see who we are, that we're not the people that they think we are." You know, the crazy people that I mean, there are some crazy people and that's fine. You know, they're part of our community. But but there are lots and lots and lots of of gay men and lesbians. We didn't have transsexuals that we knew of then particularly, but bisexual wasn't really a thing yet to much but, "come out." I remember, you know "come out come out where you are," and then there were those some those cartoons with the person stepping out of the</p>	<p>Law School</p> <p>Divorce</p> <p>Fear of using lawyers</p> <p>Susan</p> <p>Fear of being fired</p> <p>"Homosexuality test"</p> <p>Fear of losing her children</p> <p>Mother abandoning her</p> <p>National Coming Out Day</p> <p>Convincing slogans</p> <p>Bisexuality</p> <p>Transsexulaity</p>

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<p>closet. And I think with the coming out movement. That's when things began to change. I mean, the Supreme Court could say there's no history and tradition of same sex relationships in this country because nobody knew about them. And then Lawrence versus Texas was the next case. While I was teaching, that case came up. So what would that have been? Maybe around ten years later? And and they realized there was a history and tradition of same sex relationships that should be honored. To me, going from one case to the other, the Georgia case to the Texas case, that's where we, that's where we went: from complete closeted to people being out. And we did go to a big march in Washington. It was so much fun during that between those two years, it was just I think it was. So I still no, I wasn't in law school. It was it was on. Well, I know what it was. It was about 1994, but we still, no 1993. I still wasn't out. What happened for me was Hillary Class. And once I agreed to do that, we threw caution to the wind. That was the coming out. I mean, I'd already come out in my life. But when you come out on national television, international television, I mean, my mother was getting getting letters from her students that she'd had from, you know, Australia, France. I mean. One of her cousins in Texas didn't even know I was divorced and watched the show. I mean, suddenly I just assumed everybody knew. And what a relief. So I think the coming out movement, the two cases, Supreme Court cases, and then, of course, marriage equality was the final... And, you know, in a funny sort of way, and getting rid of the "defense of" and getting rid of the "NDE..." , it was National... Whatever the law was that was getting in the way of everything, federal law, but but especially marriage equality, it seemed in a way so easy by the time we got that far. And now I feel like nobody gives a darn. You know maybe there's some zealots that are still upset about it. But we moved to Oceanview, this retirement community, and people get up and introduced themselves at a tea, new</p>	<p>Supreme Court</p> <p>Lawrence versus Texas</p> <p>March on Washington</p> <p>1993 coming out on national television</p> <p>Hillary's Class</p> <p>Mother's students</p> <p>Blocks to same sex marriage</p> <p>Federal laws / marriage equality</p> <p>Oceanview Retirement community</p>

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<p>residents. So we talked about it and decided, let's get up and just say we're married. And we didn't know these people. And they're all older. They were older than we were. We met young because of my situation. So we got up. We said we were married. Oh, they just they welcomed us with open arms. I mean, it was beautiful. There has been no problem. And I feel like. I think the vast majority of the country thinks same sex marriage is no problem at all. And when you think going from 1987, let's say, well, 86 was when Susan and I met. To this. It's it's it's incredible. It's absolutely incredible. And now the trans people are- we got to get that straightened out. But I that's those are the those are the moments that I think have made the difference.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> Do you have any pieces of advice or things that you could say to young LGBTQ members that would be listening to this... for their futures?</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> I guess really two things. One is, you know, be true to yourself. Figure out who you really are. And that's what I realized in 1986 to 87. You know, don't be afraid of it. You know, figure out who you are, be true to yourself, and then show yourself to the world and you can have an extremely happy life. I mean, I'm sure I could have gone through my life married to the man that I was married to, and it would have been okay. And I would have had children and grandchildren and it would have been fine. I have had an ecstatic life with Susan because we are really on a wavelength and we have so much fun together and we do have children, we do have grandchildren, and they're all fine with us. And Nana and Susu, to the grandchildren. And for a while, Nana Susu was almost like a you know, we're like we're like a we're like a, what do I want to say? We're, we're joined. And I think we're seen that way, even though we both have careers, we both have people know who we are individually. But most people think of us together and it feels so</p>	<p>Coming out to retirement community</p> <p>1986/7</p> <p>Trans people</p> <p>Advice for the future LGBTQ+ community</p> <p>Being authentic 1986/7</p> <p>Not settling</p> <p>Grandchildren</p> <p>Being "joined together"</p>



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<p>good and so whatever. I know not everybody wants to be with a partner, but whatever you choose, just figure it out as best you can. Go with it and then tell the world. And I really believe, I know people get hurt and killed and all sorts of things, but there's a better chance that you're just going to have a good life, I think. Now, that might not have been true 30 years ago when we started out. Now it's been 36 years. That's a long time. And I think sometimes parents think, oh, my child is gay or my child is is a lesbian. They're going to have a horrible life. You know, they're going to be persecuted. They're going to have they're not going to have children. They're all these awful things. And it's just not true. You can have children! That wasn't necessarily true when I was young, but now it is. And there are different ways. And I guess the bottom line is you can only have an okay life. You can have a fabulous life. My son is gay, too, by the way. So I have one gay son, one straight son. And they're both having a great life. So anyway, that's it. I, I think it's just a very optimistic outlook. And as I say, I feel like we've gotten there pretty much from the LG B, maybe the Q, but the T, we've still got to do an awful lot of work about that.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> Thank you for that. Are there were there anything is there anything that we didn't discuss that you wanted to talk about more or anything that I did discuss that...?</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> Well, I think we think. Well, I will mention that my former mother in law, she was also reading The Caring Bridge, and she was upset when we first got divorced because she had no inkling that we were going to get divorced. But and but afterwards, after some time and after seeing actually interesting Hilary's Class, she understood she thought she understood a little bit better, you know, what might have happened. And and she she she got back in touch. She got to know Susan. She would take us both out to lunch. And then when I got sick, when I got multiple myeloma, she told me that she was</p>	<p>36 years together</p> <p>Son being gay</p> <p>Optimistic outlook</p> <p>Still need to fight for Trans Rights</p> <p>Former mother-in-law</p> <p>CaringBridge</p> <p>Hilary's Class</p> <p>Susan</p>

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<p>glad I was with Susan instead of her son because he could never have taken care of me the way the way Susan did. And I think whoever it is, if you want to be with someone and whoever it is you do end up wanting to be with and are with, that's the kind of thing that matters. You know, what, who's going to be with you in the clinch. And she you know, we're there for each other. And the other thing we've done, maybe I should mention this is throughout our time together has been 36 years. We have done a lot of community building, especially with LGBT kind of things. And one of the big things we did was we started our Amelia Wheelhart Feminist Biking Club, which was all lesbians, you know, Biking Club. We ran three day trips. It was just all of friends. And that type of thing, that was back when it was, there wasn't a lot of community, visible community. And that's been really important to us. That was just one example I could think of more. But over the years that was that was important. And and I still think that's important. And I hope people are thinking about that, too.</p> <p><b>Mary Wallace</b> Thank you so much. That was lovely.</p> <p><b>Nancy Wanderer</b> You're welcome. You're welcome.</p>	<p>Multiple Myeloma</p> <p>Community building</p> <p>“Amelia Wheelhart Feminist Biking Club”</p> <p>Visible Community</p> <p>Thanks</p>