

Jamison Green  
Narrator

Andrea Jenkins  
Interviewer

The Transgender Oral History Project  
Tretter Collection in GLBT Studies  
University of Minnesota

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The Transgender Oral History Project of the Upper Midwest will empower individuals to tell their story, while providing students, historians, and the public with a more rich foundation of primary source material about the transgender community. The project is part of the Tretter Collection at the University of Minnesota. The archive provides a record of GLBT thought, knowledge and culture for current and future generations and is available to students, researchers and members of the public.

The Transgender Oral History Project will collect up to 400 hours of oral histories involving 200 to 300 individuals over the next three years. Major efforts will be the recruitment of individuals of all ages and experiences, and documenting the work of The Program in Human Sexuality. This project will be led by Andrea Jenkins, poet, writer, and trans-activist. Andrea brings years of experience working in government, non-profits and LGBT organizations. If you are interested in being involved in this exciting project, please contact Andrea.

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1 Andrea Jenkins -AJ

2 Jamison Green -JG

3

4

5 AJ: So good morning.

6 JG: Good morning.

7 AJ: My name is Andrea Jenkins and I am the oral historian for the Transgender Oral History Project  
8 at the University of Minnesota. Today is March 20, 2016, and I am in lovely Victoria, British  
9 Columbia, at the second conference titled, *Moving Trans History Forward*, at the University of  
10 Victoria, the transgender archives. My guest this morning is Dr. Jamison Green. I'm just going  
11 to get started and just ask you to state your name, and maybe spell it just so our transcriber can  
12 have that information. State your gender currently, as you describe it today, your gender  
13 assigned at birth, and the pronouns that you use.

14 JG: OK. So my name is Jamison Green, that would be spelled J-a-m-i-s-o-n, Green – like the color.

15 AJ: Like the color, all right.

16 JG: No “e” on the end. And, I am male identified. I was born with a female body and assigned  
17 female at birth and raised to be a woman but it never took. I prefer masculine pronouns.

18 AJ: Oh wow. So Jamison we were just sitting here talking and I'm just fascinated – we were  
19 responding to the question how long have you been out and you stated, “Since 1966,” which is  
20 50 years.

21 JG: Yeah.

22 AJ: What has changed over those 50 years that you have identified as significant shifts in  
23 transgender life in history?

24 JG: Well first let me say that although I identified as what I called, “cross-gendered” from 1966  
25 forward, I didn't really figure out that there was language like transsexual or the possibility that  
26 one could actually change one's body in this way until much later. Probably I was aware of it in  
27 the 1970s, but I didn't actually transition until the late 1980s. 1988 was when I started medical  
28 transition.

29 AJ: Got it, but sort of socially you were . . . ?

30 JG: Socially I was different enough that, and it was clear to me that I was not like the other girls and  
31 I was not like the other boys – and everyone else knew it too. It was not something that I could  
32 hide.

33 AJ: Wow. So tell me about your earliest memory in life, just your earliest memory – the first thing  
34 you remember.

35 JG: My earliest memory in life is with my parents. I was adopted, I was four weeks old when I was  
36 adopted, and I remember . . . I don't know how old I was at the time this memory was formed,

- 1 but I remember being in a bassinette, or like an enclosure, that was high enough that adults  
2 would come and they would look at me and I heard a dog bark and I got really scared. Then my  
3 next memory is walking in the backyard with my mother and her holding my hand because I was  
4 not the most steady person yet . . .
- 5 AJ: So you were still quite young.
- 6 JG: Yeah. And then I remember learning how to ride a bike.
- 7 AJ: Some sort of bitter and yet sweet memories as well. Where did you grow up?
- 8 JG: Oakland, California – born and raised.
- 9 AJ: Is that right?
- 10 JG: Yes.
- 11 AJ: Wow, and you still live there today.
- 12 JG: Well I live in the Bay area. I wish I could afford to live in Oakland right now.
- 13 AJ: Oh wow. What was life like growing up for you in California?
- 14 JG: It was very idyllic really, to be perfectly honest. We lived in the hills so I was really close to  
15 nature and yet we were close enough to the urban part of Oakland that I could explore even  
16 when my parents didn't know I was exploring.
- 17 AJ: Right, right.
- 18 JG: I loved being able to look out and see San Francisco Bay and . . .
- 19 AJ: Oh my goodness, such a beautiful view.
- 20 JG: Yeah. I had a treehouse that I built with stolen lumber in this giant redwood tree in my front  
21 yard and I could see the bay from there. I couldn't see it from our house but I could see it from  
22 up in the tree.
- 23 AJ: Now that wasn't something that little girls typically do.
- 24 JG: No, no.
- 25 AJ: Build a tree house – and I'm just going to be sort of stereotypical, even want to go in a tree  
26 house.
- 27 JG: I was the best climber in the neighborhood. I used to charge other kids money to teach them  
28 how to climb.
- 29 AJ: Is that right?
- 30 JG: Yes.
- 31 AJ: So you were a little entrepreneurial as well.

- 1 JG: Yes, I also ran a restaurant in my father's tool shed because he put in a Dutch door, you know –  
2 it opens at the top, and there was this little counter and I thought, "Oh this is perfect, I can have  
3 a restaurant here." And all the kids would come and have breakfast in my backyard and they  
4 would buy their cereal and their milk from me and I would get my mother to buy the cereal and  
5 the milk, but I would never reimburse her. It was a good deal for me.
- 6 AJ: Yeah, you had a nice little scheme going on there.
- 7 JG: I did that for a while, and then we had rainy weather and I lost interest.
- 8 AJ: Funny. Oh my goodness. Did you go to elementary school? What was elementary school like?
- 9 JG: Well, elementary school was actually the first moment when I really got that I was different. I  
10 refused to wear dresses when I was really young. My older cousins tell me I was refusing to  
11 wear dresses when I was 2.
- 12 AJ: Wow.
- 13 JG: But, of course, I did because I didn't have any choice.
- 14 AJ: You were forced.
- 15 JG: And so on the first day of kindergarten, my parents dressed me up, you know, real nice and they  
16 both took me to the school and introduced me to the teacher, who was very grandmotherly – a  
17 kindergarten teacher. I think I was like the third kid to arrive and there were two boys playing  
18 with some fire trucks and then there was . . . I guess there was maybe one or two girls over  
19 there, so I was probably like the fifth kid to arrive, and the teacher said, "Oh, welcome,  
20 welcome, we have all these wonderful things for you to play with, there's some little girls over  
21 there and you can join them." And then I look over and I see these guys playing with the trucks  
22 and I just went right over there.
- 23 AJ: Oh wow. Was there any objection to that from the teacher?
- 24 JG: The parents, my parents, were kind of like, "Well, wait a minute." I said, "I want to do this."  
25 And the teacher said, "Don't worry about it, it's OK." And I mean, I was wearing a dress, it's not  
26 like anybody couldn't tell that I was supposed to be a girl. But the boys were like, they were not  
27 kids I knew, and I just came over and said hi and they said hi and we continued to play with the  
28 trucks, they didn't object to my being there.
- 29 AJ: Cool. So would you consider yourself a tomboy?
- 30 JG: I think that that is what people thought is that I was a tomboy and that I would grow out of it.
- 31 AJ: Yeah, but that didn't happen.
- 32 JG: No, it did not happen.
- 33 AJ: Wow. Were you ever bullied in school or what is called today bullying.
- 34 JG: I was. By the time I got to junior high school that's when it got really tough. The first  
35 elementary school I went to was K-4<sup>th</sup> grade and I went to another, larger, school for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>,

- 1           and in 6<sup>th</sup> grade I was in an experimental class for kids with high IQs, so that made me part of  
2           kind of a special group.
- 3   AJ:     Sure, which makes you stand out.
- 4   JG:     Yup, although actually in many ways it was not . . . it was great to be in that group.
- 5   AJ:     Positive, yeah.
- 6   JG:     Because everybody was really accepting and that whole cohort was totally fine with me being  
7           unusual and choosing . . . the teacher would say, “We want to do this kind of a project now.”  
8           There was a lot of emphasis on science because it was the time of Sputnik and so I would say,  
9           “Well, I want to do this project. I don’t want to do that, I want to draw pictures of dogs.” And  
10          they would just let me do what I wanted to do basically. So I was happy. Junior high, though,  
11          was when things got really ugly and high school was also kind of brutal. I was a very outgoing  
12          kid, I had a lot of friends, and I just persevered through the bullying and the teasing. Guys would  
13          run up and kiss me on the side of the face and run away. You could tell it was some kind of an  
14          initiation rite that they had going.
- 15   AJ:     You’ve got to go kiss that . . .
- 16   JG:     That thing – yeah, right. It was weird. I got in trouble . . . in my senior year I was the  
17          photographer for the school newspaper. I had to cover the football games and so I wore cut-off  
18          jeans underneath my skirt and I got in trouble for that.
- 19   AJ:     Really?
- 20   JG:     I mean there I am running up and down the sidelines in front of all the students and sometimes  
21          tripping or getting knocked over and all this stuff, I’m not going to do that in a skirt. I got called  
22          to the principal’s office and told that I was improperly dressed for a school function by having  
23          cut-off jeans on under my skirt.
- 24   AJ:     Wow.
- 25   JG:     So I had an assistant photographer by that point, he was a younger guy, and I said, “OK, you do  
26          the football games.” I was pissed, I was really angry.
- 27   AJ:     Yeah – no, that’s terrible.
- 28   JG:     Yeah.
- 29   AJ:     Do you think the sort of bullying and sort of teasing was around your identity?
- 30   JG:     It was totally around gender perception. It was around my inability to fit in, it was . . . people  
31          would always say, “Are you a boy or a girl?” Even though I was wearing girl’s clothing. But I  
32          didn’t wear the same kind of girl’s clothes that other girls wore. I had . . . I really had a hard time  
33          wearing . . .
- 34   AJ:     The frilly . . .?

- 1 JG: Yeah, I never could wear anything ordinary. I wore like a school uniform – we didn't have  
2 uniforms. I wore a . . . my favorite skirt was a gray wool skirt, solid gray, with pleats so that I  
3 could move around. I wore, usually like a white oxford shirt, like a button-down boy's shirt, and  
4 often I would wear a Pendleton shirt over that.
- 5 AJ: Oh wow, like one of those wool . . .
- 6 JG: And if it was too warm, then I'd wear some other kind of jacket-y thing that was light and I wore  
7 athletic socks and tennis shoes. So the socks, like crew socks. I was just not your typical girl. I  
8 literally could not get myself, and believe me I tried a few times, to wear make-up. Friends of  
9 mine said, "Oh, if we just did your hair you'd be fine." And so I'd let them do my hair and then I  
10 felt like such an object, I just would feel so stupid and hideous. They would giggle at me and  
11 everything and say, "Oh, no, you look cute." I'm like, "No, no – I don't." And it was just . . .  
12 awful.
- 13 AJ: I'm sorry you experienced that.
- 14 JG: It could have been worse, it could have been a lot worse.
- 15 AJ: It could have been a lot worse, and unfortunately it's sort of some of the similar narratives to  
16 what we hear from lots of trans people around growing up. Did you have siblings?
- 17 JG: I have a younger brother who my parents adopted when I was almost four. He's . . . I call him  
18 Mr. Normal, he's very normal.
- 19 AJ: Very normal.
- 20 JG: He's a very normal guy. He was a sweet kid.
- 21 AJ: Is he married now?
- 22 JG: He's married and had one child and got divorced, and then married again and has two other  
23 children. And now, his youngest . . . well, his second son who is the first child of his second  
24 marriage and he is married now and his daughter, who is his youngest child, is probably heading  
25 toward getting married.
- 26 AJ: Wow. So, you came out quite some time ago even though you didn't start using language  
27 around being transgender and sort of moving towards medical transition . . .
- 28 JG: Right, because I didn't know it was possible. But I did talk to people about the fact that I believe  
29 that some people are like this, that there is nothing wrong.
- 30 AJ: OK.
- 31 JG: And that maybe they have to make choices about things that are different but there's no reason  
32 to be beating them up and that kind of stuff. So I would actually speak out about that.
- 33 AJ: You were advocating for . . .
- 34 JG: Yeah. The first time I did a panel discussion about it was in 1968.
- 35 AJ: Is that right?

- 1 JG: Yes.
- 2 AJ: About harassment around gender.
- 3 JG: And, of course, most people thought it was basically homophobia – that because I was a  
4 masculine woman that I must be a lesbian. Well yeah, I was attracted to girls but I was attracted  
5 to boys too sometimes, much less, but I didn't think this really had to do with who I was  
6 attracted to.
- 7 AJ: It was something different.
- 8 JG: Yeah.
- 9 AJ: Did you ever identify as a lesbian?
- 10 JG: I did, I tried to. I thought well I have a female body, I'm attracted to female-bodied people, I  
11 must be a lesbian – at least I know which bars to go to.
- 12 AJ: Right.
- 13 JG: And I tried to fit in in that context and that was in the feminist movement of the late 1960s and  
14 early 1970s. It was interesting.
- 15 AJ: Yeah, because sort of male energy was not really welcome in a lot of those places.
- 16 JG: My friends would tell me I couldn't come to women-only events sometimes.
- 17 AJ: Really?
- 18 JG: Yeah, they would say, "You won't be happy there."
- 19 AJ: And even though you weren't calling yourself a man at that point.
- 20 JG: Right.
- 21 AJ: Wow.
- 22 JG: Yeah, so then sometimes they would say that I wasn't a human being, that I was a Martian,  
23 because I was so different. And these were my friends.
- 24 AJ: Wow, that's kind of tough coming from your own community, what you were claiming as your  
25 community at that point.
- 26 JG: Yeah. And in the mid-1970s, early to mid-1970s, there was in the women's community some  
27 reaction to trans women that was being talked about. And so I got in discussions with various  
28 friends of mine who were . . . like one was a medical doctor, one was a lawyer, people would be  
29 talking about what it would mean to have someone change their sex but everybody didn't have  
30 to do that. And then they found out that there was a program at Stanford and they said, "Well  
31 we should just send Jamie down there and she can enroll and then when they decide that she's  
32 a transsexual, she can just say, 'Ha, ha, ha, I'm just a strong woman. Screw you, I'm not  
33 changing my sex.'" And I said, "I don't think you should send me."
- 34 AJ: Really? Because I'm not coming back.



- 1 JG: Yeah, I probably think I would like to do that if I could. I don't know what it means, I don't know  
2 what it would feel like but I think I would like to do that.
- 3 AJ: Wow. Did you eventually go to Stanford?
- 4 JG: I did.
- 5 AJ: So is that kind of where you did your . . . started your journey toward medical transition?
- 6 JG: Yes.
- 7 AJ: How did that go? Did you have surgery out in California?
- 8 JG: Yeah. I had moved back to the Bay area and I was working and I was . . . I had a partner who  
9 wanted to have children and I said, "Well, you know, you're with the wrong guy for that." And  
10 she goes, "No, no, it's not a problem because I know that there is going to be a way for me to  
11 have children without having sex with a man." So she was thinking about sperm banks and stuff  
12 like that, and lo' and behold, they appeared. I was establishing my career and figuring I'm going  
13 to support this family and we're going to figure out how she can get pregnant. We were sort of  
14 on the leading edge of the lesbian baby boom.
- 15 AJ: Wow.
- 16 JG: This was the early 1980s, and I found out the address of the Stanford program and I wrote an  
17 inquiry and asked for information. They sent me back this big packet of stuff with all this  
18 information that was kind of off-putting and this big thick questionnaire, a 16-page  
19 questionnaire, that I would have to fill out and send in with a check for \$400 to be evaluated.
- 20 AJ: Wow.
- 21 JG: I looked through it, I put it in my desk drawer and left it there for two years.
- 22 AJ: Is that right?
- 23 JG: Yes . . . yeah, because I was pretty scared.
- 24 AJ: It's very intimidating how that process used to be.
- 25 JG: So eventually I just got to the point where I could be staring at myself in the mirror and I would .  
26 . . like disappear. If I tried to imagine myself becoming an old woman, I would disappear. And if  
27 I tried to imagine myself becoming an old man, there I would be.
- 28 AJ: You could see the old man in your future.
- 29 JG: Yeah. And it was like really spooky.
- 30 AJ: That's fascinating.
- 31 JG: And I also felt, at the same time – and I'm in my late 30s now, that all my friends were becoming  
32 adults and I was not. I was still in that space that I came into in junior high where people  
33 couldn't tell what sex I was and it was being challenged all the time and I was constantly having  
34 to be aware of how other people were responding to my gender. I got almost attacked on a

- 1 BART train one time – full car of people and this one guy starts yelling and pointing at me going,  
2 “That’s a woman, that’s a woman.”
- 3 AJ: Wow.
- 4 JG: And I’m like . . . I got off at the next stop even though it wasn’t my stop.
- 5 AJ: Wow.
- 6 JG: But it was really scary, and everybody just stared and he got louder and louder and more  
7 agitated.
- 8 AJ: And no one stepped forward to intervene?
- 9 JG: No, no.
- 10 AJ: Man, there’s so many questions I want to ask you, Jamison. Did you guys have a child?
- 11 JG: We did, we had two childs – two children.
- 12 AJ: Oh, OK.
- 13 JG: The first one turned out to be a girl and she’s 31-years-old now.
- 14 AJ: Still identifies as a girl?
- 15 JG: Oh yeah, very much so – so no issues there. And she’s actually been a real champion for me.
- 16 AJ: Really?
- 17 JG: Yeah, she’s been fantastic. She’s been willing to be interviewed, she’s written things for  
18 anthologies for kids with trans parents, she’s done lectures about stopping homophobia and  
19 stopping transphobia. She’s amazing.
- 20 AJ: Yeah, that’s beautiful.
- 21 JG: And then my son is . . . he’ll be 27 next month.
- 22 AJ: Is that right?
- 23 JG: Yup. He’s had a tougher time. His mother . . . well, right after he was born was when their  
24 mother ended our relationship. And so although for the first two years I took him one day a  
25 week, on the days that my ex would be doing the pre-school thing with our daughter, and then  
26 when he got to be two-years-old she said she was suing me for non-paternity, she wanted my  
27 name removed from his birth certificate and I was never going to see him again.
- 28 AJ: Oh boy.
- 29 JG: And yet I still was seeing his sister twice a week, she would spend alternate weekends with me,  
30 every Wednesday with me, and I would go to the house to pick her up or drop her off. It was  
31 just mind boggling to me. They would hide, she had a new partner, and they would hide him in  
32 the kitchen when I would come over.
- 33 AJ: When you would come over . . . so . . .

- 1 JG: They'd put him in the high chair and he couldn't get out.
- 2 AJ: The tension, it sounds like, around his relationship is maybe less about your gender identity and  
3 more about sort of this interference or whatever . . .
- 4 JG: Well, my partner . . . my ex's new girlfriend was very intimidating by me and felt that I had the  
5 power to usurp her and she wanted to be the co-parent of the younger child and therefore  
6 there was no space for me. So I didn't see him from the time he was two until the time he was  
7 12. So for 10 years I didn't see him except in the distance. My daughter was not allowed to call  
8 me Daddy in front of her brother because he would feel like he didn't have a daddy and that  
9 would be bad. So one time I actually heard him say, after I picked Morgan up, my daughter, I  
10 heard him inside the house say, "How come my sister goes away with that man?" I mean, he  
11 didn't even know what my name was.
- 12 AJ: Oh boy, that must have been really painful.
- 13 JG: Yeah, it was horrible – it was horrible.
- 14 AJ: I'm sorry.
- 15 JG: Thank you.
- 16 AJ: But you have a relationship with your daughter now?
- 17 JG: I have always had a relationship with my daughter and yes, I have a relationship with my son.  
18 He is actually living with my wife and I.
- 19 AJ: Oh, OK. So the relationship has repaired.
- 20 JG: Yes, and what had to happen to do that is that their mother had to die. She ended up with  
21 breast cancer. She went through some very aggressive treatment and it went into remission for,  
22 I think, about seven years, and then it came back and it metastasized to her liver and killed her.  
23 And, so I inherited him at that point.
- 24 AJ: So you're married now.
- 25 JG: Yup. Got married in 2003 to this really amazing woman who is an activist on her own.
- 26 AJ: Is that right?
- 27 JG: Yes, yes. She's all about education about bisexuality and anti-racism.
- 28 AJ: Wow, I love it.
- 29 JG: Me too.
- 30 AJ: It's not surprising that you are involved with an activist because your activism is quite legendary.  
31 Can you talk a little bit about your involvement within activist spaces? I know you have been  
32 friends with so many of the sort of pioneers of what I would call this transgender movement.  
33 Lou Sullivan . . .

1 JG: Yes, Lou Sullivan, Kate Bornstein, Sandy Stone, Steve Dane who was the first famous trans man  
2 in the modern era.

3 AJ: Is that right?

4 JG: He didn't last very long. His story made the front page of the *New York Times* the day before  
5 Renee Richards came out.

6 AJ: Oh wow, so he was overshadowed.

7 JG: Yeah – gone, right. But yeah. My activism . . . well basically, I thought I was going to . . . we had  
8 one kid, another one on the way, I was going to get my sex changed and go home and mow my  
9 lawn. It was not going to be an issue, but it turned out to destroy my relationship. So, we  
10 ended up selling our house and I got a little condo in Emeryville and started being more active  
11 with Lou's group - although I had been going to meetings, they only happen four times a year.

12 AJ: Oh wow.

13 JG: So I had been going to meetings . . . (phone rings) oh-oh, do you want to stop for a second?

14 AJ: So we're back. And Jamison, I know that you need to get going pretty quickly here and . . .

15 JG: My life is a whirlwind.

16 AJ: Yeah, absolutely. I'm so glad I got a chance to slow you down for a little bit. And we were just  
17 talking about some of your activism but how do you see this enormous visibility that  
18 transgender identity, transgender communities have been sort of privileged to, I think is a word  
19 that we'll use, how do you think that is affecting the movement? And I'm thinking particularly  
20 about Caitlyn Jenner and Laverne Cox and this just increased level of visibility around  
21 transgender people.

22 JG: I think it's great, I think it's absolutely crucial. We're not going to get anywhere without being  
23 visible. If we're not visible we don't exist. This was something that I felt pretty early on when I  
24 realized . . . the first thing that I realized was I suddenly didn't have access to my health  
25 insurance because I was now trans and there was an exclusion in the health insurance – and that  
26 was in the 1980s that I realized that. I thought at the time I have no power as an individual.  
27 Who has power to change these policies are the customers of the policies, which are the  
28 employers – the companies, and we have to find a way to change that up, you know, get them  
29 to have the institutional will to demand of their insurance carriers that they remove these  
30 clauses. And I actually did that. I accomplished that by getting the city of San Francisco to do it  
31 first based on our . . . I worked for several years to get a non-discrimination ordinance passed  
32 and they actually invited me to sit down with the city attorneys and draft the ordinance. I made  
33 sure that it talked about gender identity and expression because that applies to everyone, not  
34 just trans people.

35 AJ: Exactly, which is something that gets lost on a lot of people because people just don't think  
36 about their gender, they just accept it and . . .

37 JG: And I think it's really important that we have to recognize that things are difficult for masculine  
38 women and feminine men.

- 1 AJ: Absolutely.
- 2 JG: And the assumptions that we make about people's size or how they look and all this are so  
3 damaging and so limiting. You don't have to be trans to experience that. So that's where I  
4 always wanted to go, basically. So I've just been opportunistic in terms of, "Oh, I see a little  
5 opening, I'll go there."
- 6 AJ: Sure.
- 7 JG: And see what we can move and change. I've kept on doing that and I seem to be kind of  
8 creative at it because people keep coming to me and asking for my ideas. I think I am, because  
9 it does come sort of spontaneously to me. When we passed the non-discrimination ordinance in  
10 1994, I turned . . . I don't know what made me think of it, but I turned to the human rights  
11 commission guys and said, "Guess what? Now you're in violation of your equal benefits  
12 ordinance." I didn't even know what I was saying exactly.
- 13 AJ: Wow.
- 14 JG: Yeah. And they went, "What? What do you mean?" Because the equal benefits ordinance was  
15 the thing that drove domestic partner benefits across the country.
- 16 AJ: Right.
- 17 JG: And they're very proud of that. And I said, "Yeah, I bet you if you look at your insurance policies  
18 that you offer your employees, that there are exclusions in them and that means that your trans  
19 employees can't access their health care. Not only is their needed care unavailable to them  
20 around trans issues, but basic health care is often denied under those circumstances.
- 21 AJ: Yes, they are.
- 22 JG: And they went, "Oh my God." And it took six more years of continuous pressure to get them to  
23 finally do something.
- 24 AJ: Wow.
- 25 JG: And then we got data, so several more years after the plan had been implemented, we got data,  
26 utilization data, that we could use to make the case for companies to not . . . for employers to  
27 ask their insurance companies to remove the clauses. My contention always was that this  
28 should not cost anything, there should be no cost associated with adding the few trans people  
29 that they have to the roles. It's like what are you going to do, so an extra person has an  
30 appendectomy? What are you going to do?
- 31 AJ: Right.
- 32 JG: The way we do health care is not to say, "Oh, we have our quota of appendectomies, sorry."
- 33 AJ: Right, yeah. That's not feasible or logical.
- 34 JG: Right. And we'll pay for an open-heart surgery for somebody but how many trans people could  
35 be taken care of with the cost of one open-heart surgery?

- 1 AJ: Right, exactly.
- 2 JG: And if three people needed open-heart surgery, they'd get it.
- 3 AJ: Yeah, if 15 people needed open-heart surgery they'd get it.
- 4 JG: That's right, they'd get it. So what's this about? It seems to me it's about prejudice and bias  
5 and ignorance so let's fix that.
- 6 AJ: Wow, yeah. You have been doing some amazing work around policy and now you're the  
7 chairperson of the board of WPATH, the World Professional Association for Transgender Health.
- 8 JG: President of the association – yes.
- 9 AJ: President. What's that like?
- 10 JG: Well, I'm the second trans person to be president of the association. There's a lot of really  
11 wonderful people associated with this group, people who have been working in this field for 40  
12 or 50 years some of them. The new people that are coming in are so enthusiastic and so really  
13 want to help people in ways that I think many trans people would have been suspicious 20 years  
14 ago. "Why are they interested in us?" You know?
- 15 AJ: Yes.
- 16 JG: But, we're very fortunate, I think, these days, I think because of visibility, and because of having  
17 developed a vocabulary to talk about our issues – that's so important to visibility, even though  
18 we still argue among ourselves about what the terminology needs to be, and that's just the way  
19 human beings are, that's OK – that doesn't bother me. You just have to go for it – pick one,  
20 don't get stuck, pick another one when a better one comes along, allow for other people to  
21 have a different choice for you and keep moving forward – it's all right. So, developing that  
22 vocabulary, having the dialogues amongst ourselves, taking those dialogues public, getting  
23 opportunities to publish, and taking care of our own media also has been very important.
- 24 AJ: Wow. And WPATH has been sort of leading the way in education around transgender issues  
25 particularly in the medical profession.
- 26 JG: Right, which is crucial. The intersection of law and medicine is where we are most oppressed  
27 and it's also where we're most vulnerable. It's also where we need the most support in order to  
28 find our place in society and to be healthy. Without health care you're not a human being,  
29 that's how I feel about that.
- 30 AJ: Wow – say more about that.
- 31 JG: If you are denied access to health care, you're basically being told you are not worthy, you are  
32 not . . . to expend energy on you is a waste of my time because you're less than human. That's  
33 how it feels to me.
- 34 AJ: Yeah, I couldn't agree more. I'm going to try to wrap this up with one last question, Jamison.  
35 You know, right now we see these beautiful young children being able at 5 and 8 and 10-years-  
36 old, to say to their parents, "You know, I am a boy," or, "I am a girl." And these children are

- 1           being supported by their parents in ways that I couldn't even imagine 25 years ago when I came  
2           out.
- 3    JG:     Oh yeah.
- 4    AJ:     How do you think life is going to be like for transgender people 50 years from now?
- 5    JG:     Well my hope is that transgender people will be much more accepted and acknowledged, that it  
6           won't be such a big deal and that we don't have to grow up being traumatized because that  
7           affects so much of our lives going forward. It affects our choices of careers, our ability to be  
8           educated – to go through education, our ability to interact with the world and really express  
9           ourselves is all affected by how we're traumatized by being laughed at, by being ignored, by  
10          being told how wrong we are.
- 11   AJ:     By being murdered like so many trans women of color in the streets and all around the world.
- 12   JG:     Yes – well, and Brandon Teena too.
- 13   AJ:     Absolutely.
- 14   JG:     It's not just women of color, everybody is subject to this stuff, although yes more women of  
15          color are affected visibly as far as we know, I know of at least one, possibly two, trans men who  
16          were murdered and were not recognized to be transgender.
- 17   AJ:     Yeah.
- 18   JG:     So . . .
- 19   AJ:     That certainly happens. But it sounds like you're feeling optimistic.
- 20   JG:     I have to be optimistic – I have to be optimistic, otherwise I wouldn't do what I do. I believe that  
21          the world can change in a positive way, I believe that there is room for all of us, I believe that we  
22          don't have to compete with each other. I'm sorry that Caitlyn Jenner wants to take over and be  
23          the advisor to the President, the new Republican President whoever that turns out to be, and be  
24          his trans advisor.
- 25   AJ:     Yeah, well let's hope that that doesn't become a reality.
- 26   JG:     I really hope that doesn't become a reality but she has a role to play too, there's room for her  
27          too.
- 28   AJ:     Absolutely.
- 29   JG:     She has a privilege that almost none of the rest of us have and she doesn't quite grasp it. But,  
30          you know, even Renee Richards didn't turn out to be the big spokesperson for the community.  
31          We don't know who's going to be the big spokesperson but everybody gets excited in their early  
32          transition and thinks, "Oh, I can save the world. My story is going to be the story that does the  
33          trick." And it isn't like that, it just isn't. You really need to have some perspective and  
34          understand that you can't do anything by yourself. You need lots of other people, you need  
35          skills . . .

- 1 AJ: To get through all the land mines that are inherently in any social movement.
- 2 JG: That's right, and you need to have a bigger picture, I believe, than just yourself. You need to be  
3 outside of yourself, you need to look at what are the other intersectionalities of impacts that are  
4 affecting people because it's not just trans people that are suffering in these ways.
- 5 AJ: Exactly, exactly. Thank you so much for your time, for your wisdom, for your advocacy over the  
6 years that you have been on the front lines trying to make lives better for trans and gender non-  
7 conforming identities. Is there anything that I didn't ask that you feel is really important to be  
8 stated?
- 9 JG: Well you know, I can talk for hours and hours and hours about this stuff, you can hear that my  
10 voice is hoarse from being at this conference, but I think I've pretty much covered the basics and  
11 left a message of hope.
- 12 AJ: And you have, absolutely have. What did you think of the conference?
- 13 JG: Oh, I really liked it. It's a nice mix of academic and non-academic. All of the ways of looking at  
14 history and collecting history being discussed – really, really important. The different age groups  
15 associated with trying to establish what is this movement and how do we describe it. And what  
16 is our history?
- 17 AJ: Right.
- 18 JG: And seeing the research that the young people are doing to try to discover what happened is  
19 pretty interesting.
- 20 AJ: Yes. Dr. DeVor has . . . Aaron DeVor has really created quite a different kind of movement, a  
21 movement around preservation and advocacy, I think.
- 22 JG: Right. It's really important that we know what our history is in order to not continue to re-  
23 invent the wheel. We really have to be able to understand the context that we are in now and  
24 how to move out of that, how to move forward in a way that is organic, that isn't completely  
25 disruptive, and that allows people to grow at their own pace, and to learn at their own pace –  
26 because that's what is going to keep us solidified.
- 27 AJ: Exactly. Thank you so much, Jamison.
- 28 JG: You're very welcome, Andrea. Thank you so much.
- 29 AJ: Until we meet again.
- 30 JG: Yeah.
- 31 AJ: All right.
- 32 JG: Take care.
- 33 AJ: Bye-bye.