

**Record Series #:** 1121-1001  
**Name:** Proud Savannah Oral History Collection  
**Dates:** 2021-2022  
**Extent/Size:** 25 interviews  
**Language:** English

***Scope and Content:***

The Proud Savannah Oral History Collection is one of the products of the Proud Savannah History Project started in 2021 by the City of Savannah Municipal Archives to document the history of Savannah's LGBTQ+ community in their own words and own voices. The collection contains oral histories surrounding the topic of LGBTQ+ history, advocacy, and life in Savannah, Georgia, ranging from the mid-twentieth century to the present. The oral history collection is ongoing, and the collection is expected to grow.

***System of Arrangement and Ordering:***

The Proud Savannah Oral History Collection is arranged alphabetically by interviewee's name. See the attached inventory.

***Conditions Governing Access:***

Individual interviewees set their own restrictions. See inventory for restriction notes and release dates.

***Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use:***

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***Digital Access:***

The oral history interviews and corresponding transcripts are available digitally online through the Voices of Savannah portal at: <https://www.savannahga.gov/3319/Voices-of-Savannah>. If you have issues accessing the material, please contact the Archivist via email at [Archives@savannahga.gov](mailto:Archives@savannahga.gov) or call the Municipal Archives at (912) 651-6412.

***Related Collections:***

Record Series 1121-1002, Robert W. Bush papers, City of Savannah Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia. Available online at: <https://www.savannahga.gov/3510/1121-1002-Robert-W-Bush-Papers>.

***Access Points:***

AIDS (Disease)  
Allen, Trent Oral history interview  
Bush, Robert Oral history interview  
Church work with gays  
Coming out (Sexual orientation)--United States  
Dunn, Robert Oral history interview  
Edminster, Clinton Oral history interview  
Gay activists  
Gay bars  
Gay communities  
Gay couples--Legal status, laws, etc.--United States  
Gay youth  
Graves, Gene Oral history interview  
Guterrez, Maria "Chela" Oral history interview  
Hardnett, Candace Oral history interview  
Hester, Billy Oral history interview  
Hill, Mark Oral history interview  
Homophobia  
Johnson, Van Oral history interview  
Legal assistance to gays  
Legal assistance to transgender people  
Mauldin, Todd Oral history interview  
Miller, Pamela Anne Oral history interview  
Montoya, Orlando Oral history interview  
Oral histories (document genres)  
Purtee, Kurtis Oral history interview  
Smith, Roger H. Oral history interview  
Transgender people  
Walden, Tracy Oral history interview

***Preferred Citation:***

Record Series 1121-1001, Proud Savannah Oral History Collection. City of Savannah Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

**1121-1001-GSM-gau (USMARC); GSG (OCLC/SOLINET)**  
**City of Savannah Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia**

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*Processed by:*

B. Ellis, Fall 2022.

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**Inventory:**

*Digital access to recordings and transcripts available online at:*  
<https://www.savannahga.gov/3319/Voices-of-Savannah>.

*Interviewee, Date of Interview (Item #)*

**Allen, Trent, April 18, 2022 (Item 1121-1001\_0020)**

Trent Allen is a queer transgender man native to Georgia. He moved to Savannah in 2012 to attend Armstrong University (now Georgia Southern University-Armstrong Campus), where he served as the president of its Gay-Straight Alliance. He has participated in various Pride events throughout the Savannah area, like Tybee's Rainbow Fest and Savannah Pride. He now works in animal rescue and welfare.

**Bush, Robert, November 10, 2021 (Item 1121-1001\_0012)**

Robert Bush (1964-) is a gay human rights lawyer native to Georgia. He was raised in middle Georgia, attended the University of Georgia Law School in Athens, and then moved to Savannah in 1989. He is involved in First City Network and Community Action Group. He was the first openly gay columnist for *The Edge*. He won the Stonewall Bar Association Award in 2004. As a lawyer, he is an LGBTQ+ advocate, publishing and circulating legal material to aid LGBTQ+ members in court.

**Dunn, Robert, November 4, 2021 (Item 1121-1001\_0014)**

Robert Dunn (1961-) is a gay man that spent his childhood in Alabama and then all over the United States. He moved to Savannah in 2003/2004 with his husband, Todd Mauldin, after living in Charlotte, Chicago, and New Jersey for many years. He came out when he was 29 following his divorce from his ex-wife. He served as the executive director for Standout Youth.

**Dunn, Robert and Todd Mauldin, November 12, 2021 (Item 1121-1001\_0016)**

Robert Dunn and Todd Mauldin are a married gay couple both raised in the South. They moved to Savannah in 2003/2004. Having met in North Carolina in 1991, they married in March of 2011 in the City Market.

**Edminster, Clinton, September 21, 2021 (Item 1121-1001\_0006)**

Clinton Edminster is a gay man from Alaska who moved to Savannah in 2009 to attend the Savannah College of Art and Design. He is the owner of the store Starlandia Creative Supply in the Starland District. He's a member of the Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Business Association.

**Graves, Gene, November 22, 2021 (Item 1121-1001\_0018)**

Gene Graves (1953-) is a gay man born in Fort McPherson, Georgia. He moved from Atlanta to Tybee Island in 1995, after losing his partner of 13 years in 1994. He now lives in Darien County. He is AIDS-positive. He has been very active in First City Network

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since 1997, serving on the board as treasurer for many years. He did advertising for *Network News*. He ran Standout Youth's youth group as interim director.

**Gutierrez, Maria "Chela," October 12, 2021 (Item 1121-1001\_0010)**

Maria "Chela" Gutierrez is a gay woman and fire department captain born in the Delta in Mississippi. She moved to Savannah in 1998 with her then-husband. Within three months of arriving in Savannah, she was divorced and openly came out at age 28. She is active in the Savannah Fire Department, having started there in 2005. She is a member of the PROUD Savannah Task Force, created in 2022 by Mayor Van R. Johnson II.

**Hardnett, Candace, September 2, 2021 (Item 1121-1001\_0004)**

Candace Hardnett is a bisexual woman and pastor from Virginia and California that moved to Savannah in 2008. She founded Agape Empowerment Ministries in 2009, a non-denominational Christian church in Savannah, after seeing a need for a church that was queer affirming and welcoming to African Americans in particular. Hardnett served in the U.S. Marine Corps for five years. She is the chair of the PROUD Savannah Task Force, created in 2022 by Mayor Van R. Johnson II.

**Hardy, David (Item 1121-1001\_0026)**

*Biography and online access pending*

**Hester, Billy, October 4, 2021 (Item 1121-1001\_0008)**

Billy Hester is a straight man and the pastor of Asbury Memorial Church. He is a native Savannahian, although spent some time living in New York City before returning to Savannah in 1991. He has been dedicated to ensuring his church and other churches in the AIDS Interfaith Network in Savannah are gay-friendly.

**Hill, Mark, August 30, 2021 (Item 1121-1001\_0003)**

Mark Hill (1950s-) is a cisgender gay man from West Virginia. He moved to Savannah at age twenty-nine and has since lived in Savannah for almost forty years. He has been very involved in the queer scene since the '70s. He was on the board for the Downtown Neighborhood Association and served as executive director for Savannah Pride for 16 years.

**Johnson, Van, May 17, 2022 (Item 1121-1001\_0021)**

Van Johnson (1968-) is a straight male from Brooklyn, New York. He moved to Savannah in 1985 to attend Savannah State College. After being involved in politics in Savannah for many years as an alderman, he became the 67<sup>th</sup> Mayor of Savannah in January of 2020. In 2020, he created the PROUD Savannah Task Force.

**Kreuger, Mark, August 10, 2021 (Item 1121-1001\_0001A) and August 31, 2021 (Item 1121-1001\_0001B)**

Mark Kreuger is a gay man from Wisconsin. He moved to Savannah in 1980 and has lived here ever since. He was heavily involved in the start of First City Network and continues to be involved today. He is the co-founder of Savannah Pride.

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**Mauldin, Todd, November 4, 2021 (Item 1121-1001\_0015)**

*also see* **Dunn, Robert and Todd Mauldin, November 12, 2021 (Item 1121-1001\_0016)**

Todd Mauldin (1965-) is a gay man that was born in North Carolina. He moved to Savannah in 2003/2004 with his husband, Todd Mauldin, after living in Charlotte, Chicago, and New Jersey for many years. He came out at eighteen and has never been in the closet since. He has been HIV+ since 1991. He is a drag performer known as Blair Williams. He was involved with First City Network (on the board and treasurer for some time), Pride, and Standout Youth.

**Melander, Ron (Item 1121-1001\_0023)**

*Biography and online access pending*

**Miller, Pamela Anne, October 20, 2021 (Item 1121-1001\_0011)**

Pamela Anne Miller (1950-) is a lifelong activist from Florida who moved to Savannah in 1996 to live with her partner and start a behavioral health collaborative. She is currently a seniors' real estate specialist. She was involved in First City Network, its queer library, and revamping the First City Network Newsletter's logo. She came out in 1985 at the age of 40. She formed the LGBTQ and Police Collaborative, and she is a member of the PROUD Savannah Task Force and Homeless Authority.

**Montoya, Orlando, August 26, 2021 (Item 1121-1001\_0002)**

Orlando Montoya is a gay man from Orlando who moved to Savannah in 1998. He worked as a news producer for a morning radio show for Georgia Public Broadcasting for fifteen years. He came out and became involved in the queer scene in Savannah in 1999 at the age of 24.

**Purtee, Kurtis, October 6, 2021 (Item 1121-1001\_0007)**

Kurtis Purtee is a gay man and police captain from Flint, Michigan that moved to Savannah in 2005. In 2019, he was elected as the first openly out gay man to serve on the Savannah City Council when he was appointed as District 6 Alderman. He is a member of the PROUD Savannah Task Force, created in 2020 by Mayor Van R. Johnson II.

**Smith, Roger H., November 5, 2021 (Item 1121-1001\_0017)**

Roger Smith (1968-) is a gay man born and raised in Savannah. He attended Armstrong State University (now Georgia Southern University-Armstrong Campus) and after graduating, worked at a private school in Savannah, then the Massey Heritage Center, Georgia Historical Society as director of education. He now works at the Learning Center at Senior Citizens, Inc. He always knew he was gay but didn't come out openly until after he had graduated college.

**Walden, Tracy, March 18, 2022 (Item 1121-1001\_0019)**

Tracy Walden (1965-) is a lesbian woman born in Germany to parents in the Air Force. She moved to Savannah in 1985 after getting out of the U.S. Marine Corps. In 1995, she joined the Savannah Police Department and has worked there for over twenty-seven

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years; she was the first ever openly out queer person hired there. She worked unofficially as an LGBTQ+ liaison for many years until the position became official.

**Item 1121-1001\_0022: Restricted until 2043**

**Item 1121-1001\_0024: Restricted until 2028**

**Item 1121-1001\_0025: Restricted until 2028**