

DAN ROYLES: This is Dan Royles interviewing Duncan Teague on May 21, 2013 at his lovely home in Decatur, Georgia for the African American AIDS Activism Oral History Project. To get started, could you just tell me a little bit about your early life?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: My early life, meaning? Because I'm of an age. My early life here, or in Kansas City?

DAN ROYLES: Let's start with Kansas City.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Sure. I was born in Kansas City during one of the Kennedy administrations. (laughs)

DAN ROYLES: I'm pretty sure there was just the one. (both laugh)

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Well it depends on how you characterize it. Anyway, I was born to Russell Lee Teague and Alice Jean Teague. My father was a minister and a warehouseman for John Deere and Company, and my mother was a beautician, or as I told the church when I was about seven or eight, a cosmetologist.

DAN ROYLES: Could you tell me a little bit about your educational history?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Sure. Formally we were in public schools. The Kansas City school system is still a mess, but it was just starting to become a mess when we were in sixth and fifth grade, I think. My parents took us out of the public schools and put us in Immanuel Lutheran Grade School. So, I was in Immanuel Lutheran from sixth grade to eighth grade, and then I went to Bishop Hogan High School, where I finished. One semester of that I was at Tri-City Christian Academy, which was horrible. And then I went on to college, and I drew a ring around Kansas City that was just far enough away that I wouldn't be surprised

by visits from my parents, and I was looking for small private schools where I thought I could thrive. So I ended up at Ottawa University, which is much bigger, much more thriving now. When I arrived at Ottawa I think they were at 480-some students. They have much more than that now because of satellite campuses and online courses. I stayed there for two years. When I came out to my folks in '82 I took a year out of school, and then I went to Benedictine College, because that was a big school. They had over a thousand students—

DAN ROYLES: Very big.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: —between the two campuses, because at that time Benedictine was on the north campus with the monks, and the south campus with the nuns, of St. Scholastica. It was already a co-ed school. I got my Bachelor of Arts from Benedictine, and it was concentrated in theater arts. That brings us up to '84, when I graduated, and that summer my cousin Tony Clark, who's not actually my cousin but it's easier than explaining all the connections, sent for me and I came to Atlanta.

DAN ROYLES: When you came out to your folks, how did they react?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: It was pretty rough. But I came out to my parents in '82. I came out to Crystal Cherry in the cafeteria of Bishop Hogan in 1978.

DAN ROYLES: While you were still in high school.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: While I was still in high school. So I'm not one of these folks who thought they had to get married, who felt like they needed a relationship with a woman to legitimize their place in the world, and all that kind of mess. I never wanted to do that to women. And I loved women, but I knew I was gay, and so I didn't want to do that. So when I

came out, I came out. And I have lived as a gay person since 1978, and especially since '82, when I came out to my folks.

DAN ROYLES: When you came out to your friend in high school, did you come out to everyone at your school, or just to one or a couple people?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: I didn't need to. (laughs) I am not somebody who passed, and I don't really think I thought I was passing much. The turmoil that people talk about having in their late twenties or whatever, I had that as a teenager. And so when I came out to Crystal and then Tony Clark, I felt really good about it, and I felt very free. My plan was to come out to my parents much later, as a successful businessman. That was the plan, but that wasn't how it worked out, and I'm glad it didn't work out that way, because I've lived free, basically, as a gay adult person.

DAN ROYLES: Did that not work out because you chose to come out to them earlier, or was it something else?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yeah, and I didn't go into business. (laughs)

DAN ROYLES: Also that.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: And the scenario of, Oh I'm a successful businessman and I've treated you all wonderfully with the gifts of my financial success, and now you just need to know I'm gay—that was a fantasy. And I'm really sorry for the men who are trying to do that crap. If they're that freaked out or upset or homophobic about your sexual orientation, it doesn't matter. And my parents had an effeminate male child the whole time I've been on the earth, and they still freaked out. And they had deep religious reasons for it. I've gone way past

that point, but I know what it means to come out to your parents and not end up on a made-for-television movie where, two weeks later, you're in a PFLAG meeting. That didn't happen. I actually came out twice. I came out in '82, stayed in Kansas City for a year, thinking that if I stuck around, we could rebuild our relationship and they would understand what it meant for me to be gay, we would have all these textbook conversations about sexuality and whatever—of course that didn't happen. I went back to school, I graduated, I moved here to Atlanta, pursued my life. In '92 I was about to move to New York to be with my boyfriend Paul. And I thought, you know, I'm of a certain age now, and I'm not going to lie to them about why I'm moving to New York. So I wrote them a letter, and they were not ready. It was as if it was the next month in 1982. And also, I did The Experience workshop, and that helped build my strength up about being more genuine about who I was in more aspects of my life. I just wish that it had been more culturally sensitive for African American folks.

DAN ROYLES: What is The Experience workshop?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: The Experience was a child of Est that grew up in the gay community. Honey Ward is the current facilitator, and she was my facilitator back in '92. Rob Eichberg was the founder. And their goal was by the year 2000 for—let me see if I can say this right, you're going to have to fact-check this—that being gay would not be a negative issue by the year 2000, that was their goal. And they wanted to do it through self-empowerment, through what we would do to take care of ourselves.

DAN ROYLES: And you say that you wish it had been more culturally sensitive.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yeah, because it was perfect for white boys and some white women. It

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didn't have in it, to my understanding, allowances for what it meant to be African American, and especially for my story, a member of the Black church, and how that skews all the stuff around homosexuality, same-gender-loving behavior, gayness, whatever you want to call it. And my parents weren't prepared, even though they had ten years to get ready. They just got entrenched in their church stuff (conservative religious beliefs about homosexuality) and tried to get me to be a quieter gay. But between '82 and '92 was the AIDS epidemic, and I wasn't being quiet.

DAN ROYLES: When did you first hear about AIDS or what would become known as AIDS, if that wasn't in use yet?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: I am almost certain it was an episode of Phil Donahue. And I'm almost certain, because of timing, that it had to have happened while I was at Benedictine, a conservative Catholic school that had issues around sexuality anyway. So there was no information on campus, it wasn't discussed. And in Kansas City it wasn't discussed openly until years later.

DAN ROYLES: So it was something that you were aware of by the time that you moved to Atlanta.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Oh very much so.

DAN ROYLES: When did you become aware of the toll that it was taking on Black communities, or was going to take on Black communities?

DAN ROYLES: When I got to Atlanta, it was the summer of '84, and the presence of the epidemic wasn't so in your face down here, because we were about eighteen months to two

years behind San Francisco and New York. So people knew of stuff going on in other places, but we had this impression we were safe down here, and the party was still going on. And it was a fun party. Black gay organizing was starting to bubble up in new ways. It's always been going on in Atlanta, but it was starting to bubble up in new ways around that time. And it was because of the attraction of moving to Atlanta. So a whole lot of Black gays and lesbian, and white gays and lesbians, were moving to Atlanta. The weather was fabulous, we had a whole lot of gay stuff going on, there was Black gay life here that was fun, exciting. I was here for two weeks, and I had a boyfriend. His name was Brian and he was gorgeous. So I was just sort of living my life here doing survival work as a waiter, trying to establish myself as young gay man, and I was a part of Black and White Men Together. And our chapter was a very thriving chapter, and a big chapter. We had over a hundred members. Before I arrived they had just hosted the national convention here. I hooked up with Black and White Men Together-Atlanta in January. So that's January '85. I did the AIDS 101 workshop in October of '85. And by that time Black and White Men Together already had, in the baby organization that was AID Atlanta, a board member, a volunteer, the treasurer of the organization, a legal assistant—all of these were Black men in Black and White Men Together. And they were talking about how they were going to do education and prevention. That's how I got started.

There was a meeting in DC to discuss how BWMT would participate in doing education in the gay community, and BWMT Atlanta made sure I was at that meeting. It was Melvin Ross who told me point blank, "Duncan, you are going to that meeting on behalf of the Atlanta chapter," because they were so proud of the Atlanta chapter. And that changed my life. I think that was '86 but you'll have to check, because the dates are a little muddy in my African American AIDS Activism Oral History Project by Dan Royles is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

mind. So by '86 certainly, yeah, and that puts us right in that two-year period. By the end of '84, '85, '86, we're starting to see it, and we're starting to see it among our friends, and then the rest of the story, essentially. The late eighties, it was horrific. And because I worked in HIV and AIDS, I couldn't get away from it, and I didn't want to. I thought I was doing good work.

DAN ROYLES: And this is when you were working for AID Atlanta?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yeah, '86, '87.

DAN ROYLES: What kinds of outreach and prevention would you do?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Then I was just going anywhere they would let me talk, and at the potluck dinners for Black and White Men Together I would repeat the phrase that was on our posters, "You're no less a man for playing safe." And I would talk about using condoms, and I would talk about when we would have AIDS 101 and when we would have workshops and stuff. I was trying to seduce the audience because I thought that was more interesting.

DAN ROYLES: More interesting than—?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Just standing up, spouting off facts. Because it was a social occasion, it wasn't deliberately for HIV and AIDS at that point.

DAN ROYLES: Aside from BWMT, what kind of groups would you go to?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Anybody who would let me in. And I had a little task force of people helping me from the community, from—she's now at CDC, but it was Shaunette Crawford, it was—oh my goodness, I can't remember their names. It was a couple, and they were some African American AIDS Activism Oral History Project by Dan Royles is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

very successful Black folks, and I think she was a nurse. And so we would get requests for somebody to come and talk to a youth group or talk to a gay men's group, and I did it. I wish I had been more strategic, but I was just trying to do what I could, without a whole lot of training, by the way.

DAN ROYLES: When you say "more strategic," what do you mean?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: I wish I'd been more skilled in program planning, in community building, in advocacy, development, and all that kind of stuff that would have maybe changed things. Maybe, I don't know. Mostly what I was doing was fighting against a tide of intentional apathy, because people were scared to death. They didn't want to know what HIV and AIDS was—I mean, what AIDS was, because it became HIV later, if I'm not mistaken.

DAN ROYLES: So would you talk to mostly African American groups?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yeah, because we had three outreach workers. We had a gay outreach worker, we had a Black gay outreach worker, and we had a youth Black outreach worker. So it was presumed that the white gay community was being taken care of, which they were, and that I was going to do the Black gay community. And then of course, because of the reality of where we were at the time, that meant everywhere in the Black community, because we were everywhere. At least, that was my thinking. And so I ran myself ragged, and I didn't have a program on paper, and that was not helpful. And there were other people who really wanted autonomous Black gay AIDS work, especially in Atlanta, and some of those people were not exactly helpful to me. They may have actually been detrimental, because my work was interracial, and through Black and White Men Together.

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And there was a divide, at least conceptually in people's heads, about who Black and White Men Together was, and who the other Black gay community were. And I now know that that was theoretical, that many of us floated all over the place, and that had we been willing to work against some of those divides in a different way, things might have also been different. But the big thing—the *big* thing—was back then we had no support from any of the mainline institutions from the Black community. Not an iota. They did not want to touch AIDS. Not the Black church, not Black educational institutions, and certainly not the government. We had a governor who actually threatened AID Atlanta. They really wanted the gays to die quietly in some corner and leave them alone, because it was causing them to break all these Southern taboos around sexuality, and especially homosexuality—and disease. This is not the first terminal disease to hit the South, but polite folks don't talk about that. When I think about it, we did monumental stuff. Crazy, monumental stuff. Because there was really nothing logically that said any of this was going to work in the culture we were operating in.

DAN ROYLES: When you say there was a perceived divide between BWMT and the rest of the Black gay community, what is the nature of that?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: First of all, it's a misnomer to say "Black gay community." There were communities of men who had sex with men who were out and open and never went into the white gay community because of racism. There were men like me who floated all over the place because we dated interracially, we were given access to the white gay community without as much hassle. There were those of us who were a humongous community of transplants, who didn't have to worry about aunty or momma or grandmomma finding out

what we were doing down here because we were away from home. And then there was the community that thought Black men who date interracially are traitors, are not being real to themselves, not supporting the real Black community, all sorts of craziness. As though we somehow appeared out of the ether on the edges of white gay community and didn't come out of the Black community. And the irony was this: so I'm a part of Black and White Men Together and that's how I'm really developing my leadership and connections. But I'm also starting to develop in other ways, too. And there was really a need for an out Black gay organization, and one of its first organizing meetings was in my house, where my white lover, out of understanding and his maturity, went in the bedroom, shut the door, and read his book for the two-and-a-half hours that we were meeting or whatever. We, men and women were forming the African American Lesbian and Gay Alliance. That's the kind of ridiculousness that flies in the face of that perceived divide. I knew at that time, and still could name, well Charles Cummings—Chuck will forgive me for outing him in this—Chuck was very much a part of BWMT, but he was very much the author of the ad in *Creative Loafing* that helped us have our first meeting. He's in California. And Crawford Jones, who was co-author of an article that we wrote, which was really sort of naive and misinformed, but it kick-started a whole lot of attention, that went into the *Gay Center News*. Good lord. And they accidentally printed it twice in the same issue. So it went everywhere, and oh my God, the flap I took for that. Because we put out an article about why there are no Black gay organizations in Atlanta. And what we really should have put was the word *out* in there, because there were Black gay organizations, but you had to go to the bar where that organization was connected to, and you had to talk to the people who were in that organization to get in, because they weren't in any of the papers. And that organization that

started was the African American Lesbian/Gay Alliance. That was a confluence of some of that bubbling up. It wasn't just me, but it was some men like me doing HIV and AIDS work, who wanted to see another kind of organizing happen. There were some folks who were hooked in with the National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum. I'm sorry, that didn't exist at that time—the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays with Gil Gerald. They were talking about starting a chapter in Atlanta, and AALGA got that energy. And then there was the old party networks of the gorgeous, middle-class Black men who knew they needed to start doing something around HIV and AIDS. Marquis Delano Walker was our first male co-chair who was on the Board of AID Atlanta as an out man living with HIV and Carolyn Mobley, who was “the Black lesbian” of Atlanta at the time was the female co-chair.

DAN ROYLES: These other groups that you talked about that were kind of secret or clandestine, where you had to know the bar—

DUNCAN TEAGUE: And they didn't consider themselves secret because they were known in the Black gay and lesbian community, and they didn't ever cross the color line. So they felt like, Well if you were over here, you'd know about us. But that's not out.

DAN ROYLES: What were they called? What were some of their names?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: The Gay Atlanta Minority Association, GAMA. And they had even given an award to AID Atlanta. So they really were insulted by the article. But I promise you, I could never have found out when GAMA met without going down to the Festival Lounge and talking to Theo Thomas. And some of that was, to be fair, was the lives of Black gays and lesbians and bisexuals and transgender and other queer folk who grew up here in Atlanta. They grew up with a certain mindset about what it meant to be gay, and few of

them would challenge that, because this was home. And for all of us transplants, we were like, “Why don’t you put it in the paper? Why aren’t you out about it?” And they had a different mindset about it. And I think maybe I would have had a similar mindset had I stayed in Kansas City. But I didn’t stay in Kansas City, I came here.

DAN ROYLES: So when you would go and talk to groups as this representative of AID Atlanta, or doing outreach for AID Atlanta, were the messages you brought different from the ones that were delivered to white gay groups? Were they tailored, or were they the same?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Later on they got tailored. I did my own translation and my own tailoring, because we’re not talking about a whole lot of money. I was part-time. AID Atlanta was so small, we had one desk for three outreach workers. And the reason it worked is because we were never all there at the same time. (laughs) It sounds funny but it’s the truth. Yeah, we tailored it. And then tailoring became really essential. We were not naive. When I got to the National Task Force on AIDS Prevention, that was work deliberately targeting Black and White Men Together chapters and Black men, and it was very distinctly targeted toward African American same-gender-loving folks. But that was later. Early on—you’re saying, Was it tailored? Could I just get some brochures? And I remember being too smart, too just out of college, and the brochure that me and one of the really—it’s Roger Bakeman, who’s a retired professor from Georgia State now—and some friends developed, but with Roger’s statistical knowledge. And we had pie charts because by ’86 Black folks were already overrepresented in the epidemic. We only make up 10 to 12 percent of the US population, and at that point we were making up a fourth of the cases or

something. So that's double representation. So we already knew in '85 that this epidemic was overrepresented in the African American community. So yeah, we tried to tailor, but we were just doing the best we could with what we had. That's not an excuse, that's the reality. Because nobody's throwing a whole lot of money at this at that point. It was the wrong administration.

DAN ROYLES: The wrong presidential administration?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yeah, wrong, and gubernatorial here.

DAN ROYLES: When did they money situation change?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: You can check this, but in my mind I think it was when the national association of mayors got involved and started pushing Congress. And when there was—unfortunately the voice had to come from more powerful Black folks about the epidemic.

DAN ROYLES: You mean like the Black mayors?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yeah, the Black mayors, but mayors of large cities with large Black populations, who couldn't have avoided it. They could sort of make some noise that could be heard.

DAN ROYLES: Does anybody in particular come to mind?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: I want to say that Maynard Jackson in his second term was far more supportive than the previous mayors, and of course Clinton replacing all that had happened was different. And actually, I hate to say it, but the first Bush was far more humane than anything that the Reagan administration did. And then celebrities jumped on board, like Liz Taylor and what have you.

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DAN ROYLES: So when did you start working with NTFAP? [siren in background]

DUNCAN TEAGUE: It was developed and they had that big meeting in Washington, so I want to say it's '88 or '89, because my time at AID Atlanta was over in '87.

DAN ROYLES: Why did you leave AID Atlanta?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: I was asked to leave, because I wasn't strategic, I was just running around doing outreach and education, which is what I thought I was supposed to do. What I really needed to be doing was developing programs, and I didn't have that kind of training. Remember, I'm a theater queen who just landed in Atlanta, and I'm just trying to do something that's helpful.

DAN ROYLES: So they wanted you to be developing targeted programs?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yeah, or developing a program that could take on a life of its own and be more than me just running around. And I'll be honest, I didn't have the skills at that time, and there were other folks interested in some autonomous Black organizing around AIDS that didn't include AID Atlanta, and they could not have supported me publicly, they thought. Or helped me. And I was too out for hometown Atlanta folks.

DAN ROYLES: So the people who were looking for an autonomous—

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Black response to HIV.

DAN ROYLES: Is that a Black gay response?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: No, that's a Black response. And my harping over and over again about gay was not what they wanted to hear. And the old Atlanta establishment didn't want to

hear it. You know, gay was something that was supposed to be quiet. And I said, We're dying. I was pretty dramatic. That was my training. (laughs)

DAN ROYLES: So when you came to NTFAP, what kind of programs did you work on?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: They already had the programs because they already had the brains working on program development. So all I had to do was take what they had and bring it back here. So *Hot, Horny, and Healthy!*, which was the prevention workshop, and I was an excellent facilitator, if I do say so myself. People liked it and it was fun. I was in on some of those pilots of that. NTFAP at that point had the money to fly us around to trainings, so I have a certificate that says I was trained in clinical trials. I didn't remember any of it until much later, because I wasn't trained in science, so that was a stretch. And also—yeah, I need to say this: that I was out not only as a fairly confident or—well I don't know how confident I was, but I was out and loud—femme Black gay man, but I was also out about being HIV negative. That gave me some influence in some circles, but it also put me out of other circles, because a lot of the men involved, of course, were positive. They were loving and supportive, but our dealing with the epidemic was different on a day-to-day basis. Now to be honest, until I had that first test here in the eighties, I thought I was positive. There was no reason for me to believe I wasn't, especially after I'd been in a significant relationship for almost two years with a man from San Francisco. It turns out he was negative, thank God.

DAN ROYLES: What was that first testing experience like?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Oh my God. One of my dearest friends, and actually my first ever boyfriend—and it was a boyfriend, he wasn't a lover, he was my boyfriend from college.

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And we're out of school, and young adult gay men, and we both know we need to go get tested. I really believe that the reason we were able to do it was because we had each other, and our tests came back negative and we both cried, because we couldn't believe it. I need to also remind folks that there was a moment when we had the test, and we didn't have what I would say is viable treatment options. So you could tell somebody they had the virus, and then you couldn't tell them what they could take to make them better. So one of the slogans when I first got to AID Atlanta was "No test is best." Because we didn't know what the government was going to do with the information that told them that these gay men had this strange epidemic. Were we going to be quarantined? And this is during the height of the Jesse Helms era, when the good senator from South Carolina could do anything, shut anything down. Oh my God, it was rough. And this is not this mouth swab and you go in the waiting room for twenty minutes and come back and talk to the counselor. This was a needle puncture, a blood sample, and two weeks' waiting to find out what your results are. And then you've got to go back to the clinic and get your results. It was nothing but anxiety. Oh my goodness. It's a miracle anybody came back to get their results. And all we had was AZT, which was changing Black folks' hair and skin, and if there's anything we don't want you messing with, it's our hair and our skin.

DAN ROYLES: How would it change?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: You looked like you had a perm, and folks who had dark hair all of a sudden turned auburn. And then you got splotches sometimes because of the amount of AZT people were taking.

DAN ROYLES: So talking about doing the *Hot, Horny, and Healthy!* program, can you just

describe that?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: (laughs) Off camera I'll show you the suitcase with the dildos in it.

DAN ROYLES: You can put it on camera. (laughs)

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yeah, I could, but I'm not going to.

DAN ROYLES: I'm just saying, I don't mind. [41:35]

DUNCAN TEAGUE: It was condom negotiations, trying to build self-esteem. We did awareness, prevention, and education, all at the same damn time. It went on forever, it was almost a three-hour workshop. We had relay races, we had discussions, we had small groups. We had really deep sharing about how people felt about being involved sexually with other men. And I say this now, because of course hindsight is twenty-twenty, but I wish we had a whole 'nother workshop called "Holy and Gay" or "The Church and Gayness," because I now know that we did three-and-a-half, four-hour workshops with men who would go to church on Sunday and have the whole thing negated with two sentences from their minister. And so I'm trying to build their self-esteem, build up their love of themselves and their partners, and they're part of spiritual communities that tell them they're dying and going to hell, and AIDS is the justification for it, and basically prevention was "don't have sex," which hasn't that worked over the centuries? (laughs)

DAN ROYLES: So it was designed to be for Black gay men, though.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yes it was. It was very intentional for Black gay men.

DAN ROYLES: So how was it designed for Black gay men?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Because Phill [Wilson] was in on the ground floor on it, and the language we used, the scenarios we talked about, they came right out of the Black gay community. There wasn't a need to translate, because we developed it. More about the language—the information was basically the same. Put on a condom, and this is how you put on a condom. Maybe we were more willing to talk about people's reticence around it, because the brothers will tell you if they don't want to wear a condom. So will white boys, but anyway. But this far precedes the barebacking thing.

DAN ROYLES: As a—

DUNCAN TEAGUE: As a cultural phenomenon. This is back when you could get condoms at a gay bar, how about that? Shucks. Now, they were being supplied by health departments and by willing volunteers and little agencies like AID Atlanta. But this is also during the time when the community was so trauma-stricken that we cared about each other. We knew who was dying of this disease because we were taking care of them, because nobody else wanted to. And the bars and our meeting places were supportive, and the drag community was amazing. Nobody can talk to me about drag queens, of course, for very personal reasons, (laughs) because I've put on a dress or two. But as an institution, drag didn't skip a beat. They were raising money to bury children, to pay for medicine, to send them to doctors. There were networks that said, Well you go over to Dr. So-and-so and tell them we sent you. Because we didn't have all this stuff that we have now. There was no clinic. I never received a "no" about doing something in the community from anybody in the drag community. Now the leather boys, please don't get mad at me, I operated in that world more. I know the leather community was doing their thing, but yeah.

DAN ROYLES: The leather community was less—

DUNCAN TEAGUE: No, they were doing their own thing, I just wasn't a part of that community. I like to dance and go to shows, and so I knew what was going on there.

DAN ROYLES: So when you would do a *Hot, Horny, and Healthy!* workshop, where would you do it?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: In people's homes, in people's private homes, and they would invite their friends, and their friends came. This was before cell phones were in everybody's hands, and somehow or another the word would get around. Sometimes you'd get to the party and start out with ten, and they realize they're having a good time, call their buddies, and you five or six more guys coming over. But they treated us like we were gold. When people knew the work I was doing, they were so respectful, so loving to me, and so supportive. And I was a waiter, but because of that people cared about me.

DAN ROYLES: We should probably pause quickly because the lighting has changed a lot.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yeah, the lighting has changed.

pause in recording

DAN ROYLES: Okay, and we're back. So we were talking about *Hot, Horny, and Healthy!* and doing that in Atlanta, and you said that the language and the scenarios that you would use were taken—

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Directly out of the Black gay community.

DAN ROYLES: Can you elaborate or give me some examples?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Sure. We had a list of definitions so that when we talk about—I can bring the manual, or did I give the manual to the archives?

DAN ROYLES: I think it's in the archive, I think I saw it there.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: We had a list of definitions so that a facilitator—oh, and also we were not only trained to facilitate, but to train facilitators. Like Amway. (laughs) So that it could spread out if it needed to. And I did train some facilitators, and some folks did help me. I wish I had gone further.

DAN ROYLES: What were some other NTFAP programs?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: You know, you had to explain cunnilingus. Or in one community it is “tossing salad.” The activity in another community is—oh, what's the other—this is crazy, I'm so old I've forgotten the—“rimming,” yes. You want to use the term that the group identifies with, so that they understand exactly what you're talking about. And if you have to break it down further, if you see a sort of a blank look, or people start using bravado, pretending as though they know what you're talking about, you break it down further. And also we had to become comfortable in using language that, frankly, health departments don't really like you using, because we weren't from the health department. We were from the community. And I loved that power. So that I could explicitly explain to men how they could choose to remain to safe or safer. And it was also intentionally geared to be empowering, and as much as possible not the guilt trip, Oh don't you dare do blah blah blah. And we talked about the gradations of safety. So if you can't do this, can you do this? If you can't do that, can you do this? Can you reduce your risk with the people for whom you are more clear about their status? And also there was that thing about—which always

come up in the gay—monogamy, non-monogamy, coupling, being faithful, and we had to navigate that stuff because folks—and we were still doing this, by the way, in the 2000s, when I was doing education and prevention around developing the use of tenofovir. Same stuff. Because my long-term relationship might be just a fly-by-night for you. But for me, I'm in a deeply committed relationship. Now hopefully it's not the two of us in the same relationship. (laughs) Like we would talk to kids in Piedmont Park, and this was not that long ago, taking data down, and, "Are you in a long-term committed relationship?" "Yes." "How long have you been in it?" "Six weeks." Well you know, I'm of a certain age, six weeks ain't long enough for me to—uh-huh honey. But for a kid who's nineteen or twenty, and all he's ever done is semi-anonymous or sort of friendly, amongst-the-pack sex, that he's been with somebody for six weeks— (sound of thunder) oh my, what am I revealing?

DAN ROYLES: I don't know. (both laugh)

DUNCAN TEAGUE: And some of that stuff was still true back then. And also letting people have their sexuality. That was clearly a part of it, that we weren't trying to say, No you cannot. We said, If you do, you are putting yourself at risk for some behaviors. But we really wanted folks just to have the knowledge, and then the awareness and the education to make the right choices.

DAN ROYLES: Aside from "Hot, Horny, and Healthy!" what were some of the other things that NTFAP did around AIDS prevention?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: NTFAP was strategically located and powerful enough, because we had this task force that was literally all over the country, and you were empowering Black gay men to do organizing, and to do education. And so it wasn't even an unspoken benefit that

those guys, once they put them together, sometimes those men became organizations, or became groups that were important to their communities. Because all of a sudden, they were doing something positive together, they were helping each other out in a significant way, and they were answering to this epidemic that nobody else was doing anything about. So we changed some stuff, the landscape of some Black gay organizing through the National Task Force on AIDS Prevention, a product of the National Association of Black and White Men Together. I'm saying all of that explicitly, because there are so many people who want to write BWMT out of the gay history, and they can't do it out of my story.

DAN ROYLES: Why do people want to write BWMT out?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: The whole interracial gay thing, it's just so exotic, so boundary-crossing, and also some men in BWMT did some really messed up things regarding race, regarding their sexual activity, regarding power, and this is not just the white men, this is the Black men, too. And some of it I think was without thinking, and some of it was just leading your life by your midsection, and not consciously considering what it means to have a lover or lovers who are not the same race as you, not the same economic status as you. Or having lovers who are a different race and the same economic status as you and the same educational background as you, when people expect Black folks to be uneducated and your lover has a PhD. That means something when you take him home to your working-class white family. (sound of thunder) Or the opposite. Okay, this is out of my own personal story, it's not BWMT's story, but it speaks to it.

DAN ROYLES: We should probably—

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yeah, we're going to have to go in.

pause in recording

DAN ROYLES: Okay, and we're back another time. (laughs)

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yes, we're back, with a new background. I probably look magical.

DAN ROYLES: We did a set change.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yes, a set change. (laughs) It happens all the time.

DAN ROYLES: Every oral history has to have a location change.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: I should have changed shirts, that would have really threw them. One of the examples of how the environment was for BWMT was, I met this gentleman on the telephone, and we really liked each other, and we of course wanted to go out, and wanted to meet. So he drove—I didn't drive at that point, so that wasn't an option—he drove to my house from about forty-five minutes, maybe an hour, from the suburbs of Atlanta. It was the far-flung northern suburbs. This was before I met David, of course, and it might fall within your time period. Nice-looking guy, met the prerequisite of being a little taller than me, charming, Southern. We had a really good time at dinner. When he dropped me off, he said, "Duncan, you didn't lie, but I have to be honest with you. My grandparents can never handle this." And I said, "Handle what?" He said, "That you're Black." I said, "Oh really?" And I'm thinking, Are they in the back seat or something? I just didn't fathom that at that point in history, that would be such a big deal. A gentleman through New Pacific Academy, was a tall, really smart, white guy from the Midwest. And he left New Pacific Academy to go back home, and he was obviously changed by what had happened while we were New Pacific Academy. I was in the Task Force while I was at New Pacific. Actually, New Pacific was one

of my references, if I'm not mistaken—I mean, NTFAP was one of my references when I went to New Pacific. And he said that he was developing a relationship with a young man who was also white. When that man found out that he had had sex with an African American and an Asian man, he couldn't handle it. This is not a hundred years ago. This is within our lifetime. So what I'm saying is that the issue around race is and was still so pervasive that it still intrudes on some people's dating lives, even if the two partners are white, which I couldn't believe that. Ironically, the second person I named is partnered with a person of color now, and they of course live in California.

DAN ROYLES: You mentioned racism in the gay community in Atlanta. Is that what you were talking about?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Well I wouldn't ever just say racism in Atlanta, because I learned about racism in the gay community the first time I ever walked into a gay bar. I was twenty-one, I decided I wanted to have a drink after work because I'm a grown man now, and I go into the Dover Fox in Kansas City, Missouri off of Main Street—it's no longer there—and they actually had a stuffed dover fox in a glass case as you walked in. It's happy hour, and I sit down, and I order my amaretto sour—yeah, I've always been a sissy. A rather stout businessman sitting next to me, who was one of the regulars, looked at me and told the bartender a racist joke. And this is my first time in a gay bar. I couldn't believe it. I really was flabbergasted. Later on in my gay life I was partnered with a gay man who had been out much longer than I had. This is my second boyfriend. He explained to me the 5 percent rule. That white gay clubs—and he was doing this explanation in 1981, '80 or '81, that's when we dated—well Duncan, of course there's the 5 percent rule. No more than 5 percent

African Americans because you don't want the bar to turn Black, because Blacks don't buy drinks. They drink in their car and they come in to dance. You don't want over 5 percent lesbians because they fight, and you don't want over 5 percent men over forty because you don't want to turn into a troll bar. Obviously he was not into being politically correct. And so the bars had that bizarre admissions policy, where if you walk in the door, or my husband—well, now my husband would have been excluded for age, but when he was younger—if you didn't fit into the young, pretty, white gay caricature that they wanted, or market that they wanted, they changed the admission price and the number of IDs required to get in, at will. And this was a practice used all over the country, so no, I'm not talking about just racism in the gay community in Atlanta. And to Atlanta's benefit, because it was the home of the civil rights movement, just before I arrived in Atlanta, Black and White Men Together-Atlanta and some of the other Black gay organizations had partnered with, I believe, the ACLU to call the bars out on this carding crap. So now in Atlanta the law says that you are supposed to put your admission policy in clear language at the door so that you cannot change it at will, and bars that don't do that threaten their liquor license. That research was done with Black and White Men Together and some of the other Black gay organizers in Atlanta. What they did was they sent in two white men, a white and a Black man, and two Black men, to see what would happen. In my history of dating, I knew that there were certain bars I could get into if I was with the right boyfriend or the right person.

DAN ROYLES: So getting back to NTFAP, how long were you with them?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: I think I was with them within the first year or two. I did the Southern States—I'm going to get the name wrong—Attitudes, Knowledge, and Behavioral Study. So

I moved from being just a volunteer and somebody who facilitated groups like that to being actually on staff. So I worked out of the Atlanta regional office, and we conducted a study with—Martín Ornelas was my boss, while he was building LLEGO—out of Grant Park, and we did seven sites, medium-sized cities, and we were trying to reach white, Black, and Latino gay men, and find out what they knew about HIV and AIDS. It was the first study of its type, and there was qualitative work done to then come in and do the quantitative stuff. Tampa was a site, New Orleans, Austin, Charlotte, Raleigh-Durham, Nashville, Birmingham. Wow, I still remember that. I was proud of that work, and that was also for me one of the shifts from local survival work and doing AIDS on the side to actually being full-time, paid to do HIV and AIDS work.

DAN ROYLES: For you personally.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: For me personally. And so I owe my professional transition to the National Task Force.

DAN ROYLES: Was that something that happened for you just by virtue of accruing experience?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yes. And they trusted me and when Martín came to Atlanta to open up the office, he was told he needs to hire Duncan. We had a wonderful working relationship, and I learned all this stuff about what it meant to be a person of color and not Black.

DAN ROYLES: Such as?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Such as, Atlanta is ready to talk about black and white, and not black, white, brown, yellow, and other folks who make up the spectrum of who is really here in

Atlanta, and that they are thriving communities, and in some cases thriving gay communities, that we are not discussing. That we do things without inviting them to the table, just like we made the accusations to white gay men about saying they're doing something for the gay community and not including anybody isn't a white gay man. And I know that there is a humongous Latino gay community here, and now of course at gay pride we see them. We don't see them a lot of other times, but yeah.

DAN ROYLES: We were talking a little bit about, off camera, Men of All Colors Together versus Black and White Men Together.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yes.

DAN ROYLES: So is that distinction just reflective of—

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Well, I'm going to say this, and it's going to make me sound as though I don't care about being politically correct, but Coca-Cola doesn't change its name when they go into a new market. They may change the recipe, but they don't change the name, because they have market value by the name Coca-Cola. That organization started as Black and White Men Together. That is the crux of the racism and the challenges that face the men in that organization. When they changed the name to Men of All Colors Together or, heaven forbid, People of All Colors Together, you've changed your market value. Yes, you have said you're now open to other experiences, but in many cases I didn't see the differences, and I didn't see the hard work to bring in other men of color and empower them to be a part of the group. I saw a change in name to be politically correct. The Atlanta chapter has been stalwart about not changing their name, and it is not because they have not been open to men of color, though they have not done—we, no, we didn't do a lot of education around

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what it meant to be multicultural as opposed to biracial. There was a Men of All Colors Together-Atlanta at one point. I don't know what their status is. I see the point, and I suppose that if you're in New York, you might have to do that, just to stay relevant in terms of that radical bent and all that stuff that Yankees do up there. Yeah, I said it. But down here, I think that the work—rather than arguing over names, which I have sat through too many meetings about, and this alphabet soup of now LGBTQAAI and XYZ, rather than going through all of that, could we just talk about how we're going to treat each other as humans? And then also keep some creativity? Like Atlanta Gay Pride became Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Pride. The trans community felt excluded, which they never were, I'm sorry, they never were. They weren't included in the name, but they were never excluded from the events or from what happened. We couldn't have done it without them. And so rather than trying to come up with something creative, now they call themselves Atlanta Pride. Well what the hell is that? That could be a Southern organization of people who like cowboys. I'm glad I'm saying this on camera, because I think our community is more intelligent than that, than these constant defaults to arguing over politically correct names that don't reflect work going on to change our hearts and our minds. Because I have said it before that you could call it Doo-Wa-Diddy, and if you'll meet my needs, I'll be a part of Doo-Wa-Diddy, and I don't care.

DAN ROYLES: So when did you leave NTFAP?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: That was the question, wasn't it?

DAN ROYLES: Well, I mean—

DUNCAN TEAGUE: I sort of officially left when I left employment with Martín in '92.

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DAN ROYLES: And the organization went on until '97?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yeah, something like that.

DAN ROYLES: Do you know why it ended when it did?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Our study ended. My time ended then. Oh, why NTFAP ended? Oh my. I have to make a choice now about what do I say, and how do I say it.

DAN ROYLES: You can edit the transcript later.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: I can, and I don't want to answer with that in mind. Okay, from my heart and soul, I think that part of the reason it ended was that the National Association of Black and White Men Together was struggling always to keep up with the level of expertise and professionalism of the National Task Force on AIDS Prevention, that there was growing lack of support among autonomous Black organizations for this interracial gay leadership in HIV, and also that the transition after Reggie left leadership was very hard, because Reggie was—I may start crying. Reggie was dynamic, intelligent, gifted, witty, vicious, smart, professional, and he knew how to run a national organization. It is very hard to replace somebody like that. I think when Reggie left, there was a real struggle to figure out, What are we doing? And without the same level of national support, and maybe even some people anxious to see NTFAP go under so that they could get the money—yes, I said it—it didn't stand a chance. That was about the time that I got out of prevention and education and got into research. Because the story was getting so horrendous from all sides, and the money was everywhere.

DAN ROYLES: So when you left in '92, where did you go?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: For a moment I did some local work, and then I was very fortunate to work with Dr. John Peterson on his Young African American Men's Project. And then he also got funding to do another study, a comparative study, and I was his research coordinator on that. So my life changed completely then, because I was still doing AIDS work, I was still being viable in the community, but I wasn't being shackled under community non-profits struggling and doing all sorts of craziness, and I was in the university, with full benefits, with a decent salary, working with a respected researcher.

DAN ROYLES: How did you get linked up to that position?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: John Peterson was in the first discussions about the National Task Force on AIDS Prevention.

DAN ROYLES: So it was through the KAB [knowledge, attitudes, and behavior] study that NTFAP did? The Southern States?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yeah. But he had been in on the first discussions about NTFAP because John was in California, and he moved to Atlanta in the latter years of his parents' lives, and they lived in Florida. Were both his parents alive when he moved here? Yeah, his parents were elderly and lived in Florida, so this was closer.

DAN ROYLES: So, he was there when NTFAP as an organization got started?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yeah, prior to that. He was friends with all of them, still is.

DAN ROYLES: So, you were at Emory with him?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Not Emory, Georgia State University.

DAN ROYLES: How long were you there?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: I worked for John for six or seven years. And that takes us out of— because I started with John (pause) in '94? Good lord. Yeah.

DAN ROYLES: So after ending the work with John Peterson, where did you go from there?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: I worked for Caminar Latino with another professor at Georgia State, the late Dr. Julia Perilla, for two or three years, and then I took some time and I worked for ARCA on what was supposed to be a part-time, temporary position. I got on the tenofovir study and I was there four years, and then my calling to ministry took over my life.

DAN ROYLES: When you were at ARCA—

DUNCAN TEAGUE: AIDS Research Consortium of Atlanta, headed by Dr. Melanie Thompson.

DAN ROYLES: Where were they headquartered?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Right here in Atlanta. And at that time—it is now a hole in the ground, because they've demolished the building, and it was an I.M. Pei building, but it was probably something he did in high school. They were on the corner of Juniper and Ponce [de Leon]. (The structure has been replaced with the former I.M. Pei lobby and the addition of condos or apartments built much taller above where we worked on the first floor.)

DAN ROYLES: So you worked on the tenofovir study.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yes.

DAN ROYLES: What did you do?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: I was the recruitment and retention person.

DAN ROYLES: For a clinical trial?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yeah.

DAN ROYLES: Were you working with Black gay men?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: And white gay men. But my concentration was on trying to get the cohort of Black gay men into the study. I was able to do it finally when I had an experienced team from Emory. Once again my cousin comes back into the picture because he was working with the team. It was Ben Hadsock and Genetha Mustaaftaa, my cousin, Tony Clark, and—oh my God, he's gorgeous and I can't remember his name and he's going to hate me for this—it'll come to me. Jeff Todd. And a young beautiful woman who had always worked in the community. She grew up in Youth Pride, Nicole Pitts.

DAN ROYLES: Was recruitment into the study challenging to do?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Extremely. Because tenofovir is an HIV drug, and the study was to give it to men who were HIV negative for two years, and it's a pill a day. And it was a double-blind study. We didn't know who got the real drug, neither did the participant. We were not only testing the safety of tenofovir in HIV-negative men—so as my friend in New Orleans said, “You're turning us into guinea pigs and we don't even have the virus?”—but we were also testing, would gay men, and particularly younger gay men, take a pill a day. That was a challenge for a lot of them. But tenofovir has gone on to prove somewhat effective in prevention, and I'm proud of the work we did.

DAN ROYLES: So it was part of the research for PrEP.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yes, very much so.

DAN ROYLES: I think when I was looking in the papers, I saw maybe a printout of some PowerPoint slides that I think are from the tenofovir study, and I saw in there—I don't know how big a part of the presentation it was—but I saw some slides about Tuskegee.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yes.

DAN ROYLES: So was that something that came up when you were doing recruitment into the study?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: If you do human subjects research in the South with Black people and you don't talk about Tuskegee, you don't know what the hell you're doing, because it is going to come up. Now younger cohorts don't know what it is. They don't know what it means. But they know the word, and they know it means we shouldn't do research. So you have to address it, and directly, and so we did. And every time I did recruitment, I went right there. I had to tell folks, No, this was not about them giving a drug that made Black people sick, this was about letting Black people not take a drug that would heal them. So let's get the study correct first, and let's also realize that Tuskegee means that it should, and we pray to God, never happen again. So yeah, so we went there. We didn't wait on other people to raise it, because they did, and rightfully so.

DAN ROYLES: Was there any other pushback that you got?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yeah, I don't want to take that stuff because it's going to turn me into looking like somebody with HIV. And for certain men who've been experienced with watching their friends take HIV medicine and watched the side effects of the medicine, they were very leery of it. And my own personal pushback, that I had to make some progress on, obviously I have, is that we have a prevention method, it's condoms. Why in the hell don't African American AIDS Activism Oral History Project by Dan Royles is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

we use that? Why are you making us take drugs that could do all sorts of things to us? Let's just really work this condom thing. And it took my husband, who's an epidemiologist, to sort of tell me, behavioral methods and trying to get humans to change one of the most basic human pleasurable things, which is human sexuality, we're never going to get there 100 percent. And we're never going to stem the tide of the epidemic with just behavioral change. To have somebody I love and care about tell me that so soberly really started me thinking, Okay, if we never can get there, then what's the next option? And it probably is going to be a medical intervention. Unfortunately, we do trust pills more than we trust condoms.

DAN ROYLES: Did you guys meet through your research work? [29:30]

DUNCAN TEAGUE: No, no, no. We met because one of the female co-chairs of AALGA was Brooke Perry, and she's a very out, proud lesbian, and she's like my play daughter. She has a daughter so that makes me a play grandfather, but anyway. Brooke Perry is a Quaker, and Brooke Perry worked tooth and nail to get me to meet David Thurman, and it worked, finally. She was relentless. I didn't drive, so I rode with Brooke, and if we were going east, the car would go west to David's house. She would pass by David's house and go, I've got this friend who's a doctor, he lives in this house. I was like, Oh, okay Brooke. (laughs) And that went on for almost a year. I mean, she was determined.

DAN ROYLES: And you were resistant?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: I was quite resistant. I didn't trust Brooke's opinion of gay men. Brooke is strikingly attractive, she's very beautiful, and straight men are always hitting on her, and she can't stand it. So I knew how she felt about men, and I thought, Well I don't trust her.

But it turns out she did have good taste. And she was working David on the other side, too.

DAN ROYLES: Matchmaker.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yeah, and she's done it two other times, and it has worked.

DAN ROYLES: It's a skill.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yeah, it is. She's a yentl. (both laugh)

DAN ROYLES: Yenta of Atlanta. So I want to talk about ADODI Muse.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Sure.

DAN ROYLES: Do you want to just tell me about ADODI Muse?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: No, you've got to ask, because it was my life. I'm getting emotional now. We talked about AIDS and I didn't get emotional, and now you talk about ADODI Muse, I get emotional. Wow. It was that significant. We did some of the most important work I've ever done, and we did change lives. Both versions of ADODI Muse.

DAN ROYLES: You mean with different members?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yeah. It's one ADODI Muse though, really.

DAN ROYLES: When did it start?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: When did we say it started? Okay, Tony passed away in '98, so late '95, '96. And this harkens back to the beginning of the interview when I was talking about being a theater major. Actually, you know, when I graduated I was so insecure and had so much internalized homophobia about who I was in the world that I didn't think I had much to say on stage. And I guess I wouldn't if "on stage" it means that most of the leading men African American AIDS Activism Oral History Project by Dan Royles is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

look like you.

DAN ROYLES: You mean white?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: White, and male, and good looking, and young. There are other stories out there, and I had a story. I've been writing poetry since certainly college, but I think I wrote a little bit in high school. And ADODI Muse was this experiment because there was all this Black gay writing going on in the late eighties and nineties, especially around HIV and AIDS, and I'm very proud to have been in *The Road Before Us* with Assotto Saint. I met Assotto, and I met Essex, and I met—no, the way I talk about that is, I have been read by Assotto, I have gone out to dance more than once with Marlon Riggs, and he was amazing on the dance floor, and he was a gentleman, and he was so sweet. He really was Southern. He was a transplant to California, but he really was a Southern gentleman. And Essex was just so gregarious and so loving. Essex introduced me to Meshell Ndegeocello—

DAN ROYLES: Like personally?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yeah, we were at the National Black Arts Festival and he said, "Do you know Meshell?" And I said, "No," and he introduced me to her. I don't know that she remembers me, but yeah.

DAN ROYLES: When you say you were read by Assotto, you don't mean on the page.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: No, I do not mean on the page. I mean he was editing my work and wanted to correct something that he got wrong culturally. Once I explained the metaphor he left it unchanged. It was his book, and he was going to have it right in all ways.

DAN ROYLES: Just to clarify.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: But it also was a give and take, because Assotto and I were friends and we had a very dear mutual friend here, who is Franklin Abbott, a well-established poet and a white gay man who's an advocate, an ally on all sorts of levels. Very pro-feminist. I have some of his books up there. But Franklin and Assotto were buddies, and I think that's how I met Assotto.

DAN ROYLES: Where does the name "Adodi" come from?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Well we thought that it was a Yoruba word for men who love men, and it may be. But in modern Africa, ADODI translates as "butt-fucker." And an African came up to us, came up to Tony specifically because Tony was definitely the leader of ADODI Muse. His work was the body of work that we would mainly perform, and then me and Malik would put in our stuff. We started out as a writer's collective that was doing performances, and it was obvious that a lot of men that were in the original ADODI Muse were not interested in performance in that way, and the three of us were. So we started becoming more prominent as performers, and we were ready for that. So the performance group ADODI Muse sort of eclipsed the ADODI Muse and outsiders collective. Tony wrote prolifically because he was already HIV positive by the time he was twenty-something, and knew it, and he was already on disability in his late twenties. So he had time, and he was the community's volunteer. He wrote, and wrote, and wrote, and wrote, and wrote. And he wanted to publish Black gay writing, and so that's what we initially started out as. And as the three of us started separating ourselves and becoming more on stage, we became more comfortable and more whatever as a unit, and we were doing Tony's work. But the African guy comes up to Tony and says, "My brother, your work is powerful, but I must tell you that

‘adodi’ means ‘butt-fucker’ in Africa.” And Tony said, “I know.” (both laugh) And he didn’t know, but he was just that kind of queen. To be honest, it is hard to have Jupiter and Saturn in the same orbit, and Malik sometimes got crushed between me and Tony. He was often in the middle, but Malik had the voice and the look, and he is a talented writer, and we would strangle it out of him. Yes, I said it, Malik. Because Malik is actually introverted. Expert on stage, but he wasn’t like me and Tony. And Tony and I had a great respect for each other, loved each other, but we went at it, baby, I’m not going to lie, because that’s a lot of energy. We have very different styles, and Tony’s from Albany, Georgia, and I’m from Kansas City, and Malik is from Detroit, Michigan. So we had different stories and we had different ways of being in it. Tony was very much a radical, and I would like to think I’m a moderate. Yeah, there are people grasping their stomachs and hearts right now, What do you mean, moderate, girl? But yeah, so Tony took ADODI Muse in the, We are here, we are Black gay men, standing tall with our heads held high. That was Tony. And then the car accident happened. While Tony was headed to DC for Labor Day with Wallace Henry and Darryl Moch. Wallace lost a finger, and Darryl got shook up some but was physically all right, and we lost Tony to a head injury. And life in Atlanta has never been the same. Tony started a writers event called Speak Fire—it’s still going on. He started the Black Gay Poets Society, I think is what he called it. He started ADODI Muse, he was one of the founders of In the Life Atlanta, which does Black gay pride. He did it all. And as opposed to the Atlanta I-must-be-closeted milieu around Black gay identity, people like Tony from Albany, Georgia and Pat Hussain from right here in Atlanta were really like, Closeted? He didn’t have a moment of it, and didn’t have time for it either, really.

And I want to mention another friend of mine, who has not given me permission to mention African American AIDS Activism Oral History Project by Dan Royles is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

him, but he was a non-performing member and he is actually one of Tony's dearest friends, from Americus, Georgia. He is a co-founder of ADODI Muse, and he's never been on stage as in ADODI Muse, but we would not have gotten there without him because we started in his apartment. I will send you that name when he gives me that permission. He helped bring us to New York, so we have performed in New York, off-off-off-off-off-off-off-off-off-off-off-off-off-off Broadway. But we have done two performances in New York, so I can say I have been to New York.

DAN ROYLES: I know there were other groups with the name Adodi. There was an ADODI Philadelphia—

DUNCAN TEAGUE: No, there is. There is and there are. And there's ADODI International, of course, in New York. Yeah, I'm hard on y'all. You New Yorkers, you can take it. Go get therapy. There's ADODI Chicago. They are support groups that do retreats. They are not performance groups. ADODI Muse is a performance group. And because ADODI was not known broadly, we were ADODI Muse: A Gay Negro Ensemble. That's how we are billed. And it is so funny to see the white gay folks try to navigate around the subtitle, because they didn't know they had permission to say "negro." It's crazy. It's a lack of history. There was a whole point in American history when Black liberation was about the New Negro. During the Harlem Renaissance we were "negro." We certainly weren't "black." And "colored" was something else. So we used "negro" proudly. Also it was just about editing. "ADODI Muse: An African American...—" that's just too long, so we used "negro" and we were happy with it.

From '98 to late '99 to early 2000, Malik and I tried to keep going. And we did, and there's a

couple of photographs of just me and Malik. We did good, but it's hell to go from a trio to a duo, because there's a missing voice, and also because of the personality differences between Malik and I, and because of me trying to fill in part of the space that was left by Tony. I was becoming so outrageous and so big on stage, we were sort of becoming a Black gay Abbott and Costello or Gracie and Allen. And that's pushing Malik toward the straight man, which is the last thing he wanted. It wasn't fair to Malik, so we sat down and we talked about it. This story is the God's honest truth, we sat down and we talked about, Are we ready now? It's almost been two years, are we ready for a new voice in ADODI Muse? Because we were sick of each other, and just the two, because there's things you can't do onstage with just two. If you add just one more person, it opens up this plethora of stuff you can say and do. We came up with a laundry list of requirements. One was that the new voice had to come with their own body of work. They had to be unique. They had to be Black, gay, and out. We weren't tolerating—child please, there's no way we could go back in. They had to be willing to wear a skirt, because we wore skirts. They had to be fun to work with. We came up with all this stuff. Then we did the real magical thinking thing. We said, We're not going to publicize this. We're going to wait on the universe to send this person. Don't ever do that, because the universe will fill your order, and the universe did. Malik was working at AID Atlanta, and this big, gorgeous guy got hired, named Anthony McWilliams. We got booked to do the prevention conference, the big U.S. prevention conference that's typically here in Atlanta. Malik was working at AID Atlanta, but I wasn't doing prevention, I had been doing research for a long time at that point, and I thought, I want somebody who's doing prevention work with Black gay men to be on stage with us to answer questions. Because I haven't been doing it in long enough, and I want the current

answers, and I want the current way that things are happening. Malik was cool with that, and he said, "I think we can get Anthony from AID Atlanta." So Anthony comes and sees us perform, and after the performance—he's six-foot-four, about two hundred and some pounds of gorgeous—and he is jumping up and down like a seven year old about how excited he is to see us perform. And I'm like, This boy wants Malik. I'd never seen anything like this. And then he starts saying, "I do poetry." And I'm like, Yeah, sure you do. (laughing) I was being such a bitch. So Anthony comes over here to meet with us to talk about it, and he starts talking about he's career, and he complied with everything we asked for. And he's big and gorgeous and he's going to give us a new look and a whole different feel than when Tony was in the group, which is something we needed. Then he preceded at my kitchen table to do "Out." "I'm out, O-U-T, for the whole world to see. All you parasites and leeches wanna be preachin'—" the whole poem, he did it from memory as spoken word at my kitchen table. We were blown away, but of course I couldn't let him know that, and I said, "Do you have anything else?" (both laugh) He looked at me like—

We told him we would discuss it and I think Malik kicked me, because we knew he was it, and then the rest is history. Anthony was actually in the group longer than Tony, technically. We have done the National Black Arts Festival and supporting events of the National Black Arts Festival. We've toured colleges, we did the first—what is that magazine that they published during the Harlem Renaissance? Countee Cullen and—they have resurrected that as a Black gay literary conference, and we performed at the first one. We've done many AIDS things, and the Southeastern Gay Men's Health Summit. We opened for Kate Clinton when Creating Change was here, not this past year but when they were here before. We performed for Shirley Franklin—there's a picture of here, she's the former African American AIDS Activism Oral History Project by Dan Royles is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

mayor of Atlanta—and we did so many gigs with John Lewis that he knows us. The Mountaintop Festival at Highlander Center, where Rosa Parks was trained. She wasn't trained at the location they're at now, but at the Highlander. I'm very proud of that. That was me and Tony, emceeding their artistic festival. We did Idapalooza with the faeries in the woods. Anthony will never forgive me for that. Anthony's from New Jersey by way of Philadelphia, and he had never been in woods, and he had never been at a faerie gathering, where there's a little bit of electricity and no running water, and the outhouse is this sanctuary on stilts. He still hasn't forgiven me for that, but we did a fabulous show. In Tennessee at the faerie commune IDA. The artistic cohort to Short Mountain. And Gay Spirit Vision, we did that a few times. Tony Daniels actually did Gay Spirit Vision when they used to do stuff here in Atlanta. And we put out a CD, and it's all over the place now thanks to digital stealing and stuff. It was the intersection of a lot of what I wanted to do in life.

DAN ROYLES: Can you talk about how in ADODI Muse you address HIV and AIDS?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Oh please. Well first of all, Tony was out about his HIV status. So he said, "I'm a Black gay man living with AIDS, and I didn't get from the warm confines of my mother breastfeeding me. I didn't get it from a blood transfusion. I got it from loving another Black gay man." It was in the poetry, and it was there. I wrote a poem called "AIDS 2000" where I talked about the apathy around HIV. This is long enough after the medication, where people are starting to talk about it not being around, and it's not that serious, and how ridiculous that was. We did—I can remember the character, I can't remember the name of the poem. We had a piece where Malik plays a person who is obviously struggling physically with an illness, and his buddy is coming over—Anthony—

trying to get him to go to the doctor. The poem is “Boo this Ain’t the Flu.” And I arrive wearing a floor-length, white satin—and it is wedding gown fabric—but it is a white satin hood. Like Little Red Riding Hood, only to the floor, and it flows and it floats in. My character is Denial, and I never say a word onstage in that white cape. The reason I made a lot of our costumes, and the reason I made Denial out of white satin was because I said, Denial is not ugly. Denial is beautiful. Denial is seductive. Denial makes you think, Oh well I should just go have another drink and party with my friends and whatever. Denial can’t be something grotesque, and if it had been a black hood it would have looked like stereotypical theatrical Death. I said no, Denial is pretty. We would have folks come up to us after the performance and go, Oh my God, I never thought about it like that, I never saw it. Or, The men in my life died quietly. Or, We never talked about it in families and stuff. So we broke through people’s stuff and gave them facts. One of the proudest moments was when John Peterson led the YAAM study, it was qualitative, and so we had all this data—oral interviews from all these gay men, across Atlanta. There was a requirement to share it with the community, and I said, “Why don’t we give it to ADODI Muse?” So myself and the late, Dr. Jeffrey Woodyard and Derrick Reese, who was on our staff, three gay men, edited down all this data into a script, and then the script was given to ADODI Muse, and ADODI Muse performed it. That was before Tony died. It was one of the most powerful things we’ve ever done, and we performed it for a packed house of Second Sunday, a Black gay men’s discussion group. That was like, I don’t know how to talk about it, because it was my AIDS work, my artistic work, and my prevention work, all there.

DAN ROYLES: You mentioned Second Sunday. Can you talk a little bit about—

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Oh, Tony was on the topics committee for Second Sunday, so for one year ADODI Muse was in front of Second Sunday every damn Second Sunday of that year except one time. He never said it was ADODI Muse, so he was getting all of this work out of me and Malik. Now Malik was a part of Second Sunday anyway, but I was like, They need to pay us! Second Sunday was a discussion group that met on Second Sundays, and because of the need and the desire and the energy behind the gay family around Craig Washington and the gay family around Ulester Douglas, who is very prominent in the domestic violence world. Ulester is a psychotherapist and a leading counselor and therapist in that area. Ulester always had this cadre of gay men around him. His gay family and Craig Washington's gay family linked, and became the leadership of Second Sunday, and it just exploded. E. Lynn Harris debuted one of his books to an audience of over three hundred men at Second Sunday. When we did—"Burning for Your Touch" was the name of the script from John's research—we had over two hundred men in a room that was probably only supposed to have a hundred and some. Second Sunday fed men in the community for so long, but like anything that mushrooms like that as a volunteer effort, it started to implode because you're burning out people who work forty hours a week or more. Producing Second Sunday, and it was a production, was a lot. Carlos Cordero from New York, with his crazy self, he was on the topics committee and did some really cutting-edge stuff.

DAN ROYLES: Cutting edge?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Carlos did a live condom demonstration. He said, The brothers need to see it. We didn't go that far with the National Task Force, we were federally funded. But this was in the community, and when you have the power of the community without all that

other crap, you can do what you want, and they did. They did discussions on domestic violence, and had men sitting on stage, coming to terms with not only what it meant to be hit, but to hit, and they apologized to the person they hit right there in the meeting, in front of God and everybody. It was wonderful, but it needed the undergirding of professionalism, and they were so resistant to it. Not everyone, but some. Because to do that, that was a job that nobody's being paid. And yes, this is the difference between being Black and gay and white and gay. White gay men would have written grants and hired staff and Second Sunday would have its own building by now. That's my fantasy. Now I'm sure there are white gay men out there going, Yeah, I don't know what you're talking about. But my experience was that that happens when they see that opportunity.

DAN ROYLES: When you say a live condom demonstration—

DUNCAN TEAGUE: I mean a live man with an erection putting on a condom.

DAN ROYLES: That's live.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: That's live.

DAN ROYLES: You said that you couldn't do that with NTFAP because it was federally funded—

DUNCAN TEAGUE: And we wouldn't have wanted to do it. We weren't going for that kind of shock value. We were going for a longer-term relationship, and NTFAP wasn't so theatrical. It was about community building and prevention work, and also timing wise, we didn't have time to waste on—child, please, take this dildo and put that condom on it, and you know what you're doing.

DAN ROYLES: But there was a point, I seem to remember, that the group drew some negative attention because of being federally funded for doing something that was as explicit as it was, or as sex-positive?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: I don't remember this. This might be after I left, because there were folks who never wanted gay men to get a dime to do anything about preventing HIV. So that that would happen doesn't surprise me.

DAN ROYLES: Okay. So do you want to tell me about being called to ministry and what you're doing now?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Okay, let's go back to Kansas City. So I am Russell and Alice's oldest son, and we're at Westminster Baptist Church where my father is the minister and was the minister for thirty-one years. In adolescence my voice changes, and so I develop a very good baritone voice. So I am the lead vocalist at the choir, and I already was a student leader, and I'm already known in church. I actually accepted a call to ministry, but because I knew I was gay, or at that moment, I was so young, a homosexual. I think I was fourteen or fifteen, or fifteen or sixteen, something like that. And I said—I edited it. I said, I'm accepting a call to gospel ministry, to gospel music, which I was already doing. Had I been Pentecostal, they would have said, No, that's not the case, you're called to a ministry bigger than that. But we weren't Pentecostal, we were Baptist, and so they accepted that, and I think they were scared to death that it might have been bigger than that. So now, looking back, the same Duncan who arrives in Atlanta at twenty-something, accidentally gets involved in AIDS work when nobody wants to do it, when everybody's scared of it? Doesn't that sound like missionary work?

I was constantly in search of a spiritual community. I went through MCC for a moment. I was singing—actually, Carolyn Mobley and I sang at the Festival Lounge once. And the first number I ever did in drag was “Walk with Me” by Vanessa Bell Armstrong—with lyrics “I Want Jesus to Walk with Me.” So my first drag number is a gospel number, and it was about encouraging people to go to the National March on Washington, in “For Love and For Life,” a production of SAME, Southeastern Arts and Media Education Group, which went on to produce a newsletter, which became *Southern Voice*. That was directed by Rebecca Ransom, God bless her soul. Rebecca has Alzheimer’s.

So if I change the lens just a little bit. Not even a lot. You could say that I have been involved in ministry all along and didn’t know it. And when I accepted my call, I was at the First Existentialist Congregation, and Jack Smith died. A friend of David’s, a co-worker of David’s from CDC, founder of one of the programs there, and ex-lover of a dear friend of ours, Terry Allen. We went to Jack’s memorial service at Oakhurst Baptist Church, and I didn’t know Oakhurst’s story back then. So I’m expecting to go to this Baptist church and have this man quietly put away. Rev. Lenny Peters, the minister at Oakhurst, is radical. He and Jack and Terry and Lenny’s wife, did contra dancing together. In tribute to Jack, the music starts, and Lenny starts dancing with his wife, and then he pulls Terry up out of the audience and starts dancing with him. A straight Baptist minister is dancing with the surviving partner of an out gay man who died of AIDS. At the memorial service. In a Baptist church—or the sanctuary was being redone, so they were in the basement. And I’m like, Whoa. And when I got home, however you define that little voice in you, I heard it saying, “I can do that.” And I argued with myself. Now I don’t know whether I should put this on tape or not, because some of them are going, “Well you know she’s crazy anyway.” I said to myself, “I can do

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what?” And it was just clear, the reasoning was like, if Lenny Peters can do this, I can do this. That was in '99? Yeah. October of '99. I didn't tell anybody. And now, Rev. Janna Nelson, one of the ministers at the First E, was trying to put together a transition team of ministers, and she said, Duncan—I was on the worship planning committee—I want you to be a lay minister on this transitional team since Rev. Lanier Clance has retired from illness. And Rev. Marsha Mitchiner, the current fellowship minister there, was also a minister, and so it was me, Marsha, and Janna as an interim ministerial team.

So, I accept my own call to ministry, and less than two months later I'm being asked to be in a ministerial team, without them knowing I've accepted a call to ministry. I told a friend about this, a colleague, and he said, “You're on the fast track.” So, I stayed at the First E two years, and I now know that if you're a substitute teacher, when the real teacher comes, you need to go home or go somewhere. They were in the process of picking the next minister, and I sort of knew who it would be, and I had a real emotional sense that my time there needed to end. Intellectually I also knew that if I wanted to become a professional minister, I couldn't do it through the First E, because it's that one congregation, which was loosely affiliated with the UU—Unitarian Universalists—but if they ordained me, it would just be there. If they trained me, it would just be there. It wouldn't be recognized. So I went looking for the right community for my ministry, and I saved the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta till last, and I arrived, and it was like I knew I could be there. I still wasn't confident enough. I thought I could hide in the pews because they had all these members, and the minister pulled me aside and said, “Are you over here now?” And I said, “Yes.” And he said, “Well that's good, because I need you on the lay minister's team.” And I said, “Well don't you want me to join first?” And this was Dr. Edward Frost, one of the best African American AIDS Activism Oral History Project by Dan Royles is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

preachers in the UU. He said, “Oh, that’s a formality, don’t worry about it.” So he actually put me in ministry there before I was even a member. I couldn’t hide in the pews, and went on. I kept questioning it, and I kept getting answers from bizarre places, and so before a brick fell on my head with the answer wrapped around it, I decided I had better go to seminary. So I went to seminary and all along this process, my husband has been 120 percent supportive.

DAN ROYLES: So now you’re—

DUNCAN TEAGUE: In the final stages—not the final stages, that sounds like cancer—I am in formation as a Unitarian Universalist ministerial candidate. I will go before our Ministerial Fellowship Committee to be welcomed into the ministerial association next March. March of ’14. And that’s to be my make-up visit for my visit in March of ’13. And I’m putting this on tape because it has connected me to people. When I went before the committee, I had gone with the self-confidence and assurance that I would come out with the top score, 1, or at least a 2. I had done a mock interview, and left the mock interview with a 2, and they were pretty hard in the mock interview. I got to the real thing in Boston, and I gave a ten-minute sermon that was wonderful. They loved it. I sat down to answer questions, and I proceeded to have a panic attack, something I’ve never experienced as an adult. Obviously I’ve been onstage. Never before eight intellectual Unitarian Universalists. But something happened when I sat down before them. My mind went blank. I couldn’t access anything. I’m not proud of it, it was pretty humiliating and hurt for a while. It’s more than a month now, it was April fourth. I’m not into numerology, but my mother’s birthday is March fourteenth, and it seems weird that I’m going to see them March of ’14. What I know for sure, thanks to

Oprah—this I’m stealing from Oprah—what I know for sure because of this experience is that I’m not the first person to mess up. And not because of intellectual reasons. Some other things were going on. Some other profound things. And that if I had gotten the 1 or the 2, I would be now interviewing for a church, and I would be doing it without some of the relationships that I have developed since April fourth, when that happened, and without the connection that has deepened since then, between me and all these people out here who have had to have do-overs. Or who’ve wanted things in life. And one of my dearest friends said, “Duncan, I don’t want to wish this on you, it’s not what you wanted, but I’m glad you now understand what it’s like for some of us who don’t just succeed all the time, and for whom every time, it’s difficult. And we have to do it over and over again.” That kind of depth of being connected to people I really appreciate. And I am a minister. I have been for a long time. I have a technical hurdle to get over, and I now have a prescription to help with the panic. I don’t know if I need it or not. I’m not grateful for that moment, that was horrible, or the twenty-four hours after, when it starts to become real. But I am grateful for this time now.

DAN ROYLES: Looking at your life so far—personal, professional, whatever—what are you the most proud of?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: My marriage is one of them. ADODI Muse. Making the decision to tell Crystal Cherry in Bishop Hogan’s cafeteria that I was gay, and not trying to hide, not trying to do what a lot of folks did, or what was de rigueur at the time. Because I have paid dearly for it and I have lived like a queen on a throne, and experienced a level of freedom that few people had, especially as young people. It also means that I can’t blame anybody else, and I

typically don't.

DAN ROYLES: Is there anything else that you wanted to say that you didn't get to?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Oh God, you don't have enough tape for that one. That I really hope and pray that there will come a time when the specialness of being gay is really embraced in a way that doesn't require that we try to make ourselves into something else. I am involved in the struggle to get us as free as other folks, but really maybe we want to be freer, since we have some stuff they don't have. Since we make the world so beautiful for them, maybe we should own some of that, and own it in a way that makes us even more fabulous. That's what I want.

DAN ROYLES: Thank you.

pause in recording

DUNCAN TEAGUE: This is the poster "No Less a Man for Playing Safe" from the "P.S. I Love You" campaign that was in the early (actually mid) eighties. I actually knew the model, and didn't know he had done that, from AID Atlanta. I love it because that was what started me on my prevention work. Ironically in the—I can't read the date on this one, oh there it is—2005, notice we still have a torso, but this one is different because now we can't waste the space without putting a bunch of letters across the thing. And we've stripped him of what makes him look manly, the hair, and there's corporate sponsorship at the bottom. No corporate sponsorship here. This is from Tennessee Valley, the RE (religious education) program gave that to me my last Sunday there of my internship, because Kim Mason, who is their director of Religious Ed and I, were buddies, and I told Kim that that heart drawn by one of the kids in RE should be their logo. She did the work on it. "Love is the spirit of this African American AIDS Activism Oral History Project by Dan Royles is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#).

church is something they say every Sunday.” I just love it. I don’t think she’s ever going to use it as their logo, but she gave it to me. My diplomas. These African proverbs, “He who does not continue his field will die of hunger,” and that’s a Ghanaian proverb. The one up here says, “He who conceals his disease cannot expect to be cured.” Those are from a campaign in the nineties, two-thousands, done by an African American artist for the American Red Cross. I’m sorry—is it the American Red Cross that does the blood drives?

DAN ROYLES: Yes.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yes, American Red Cross. There was a series of seven, two of them are in my play son’s room, and I kept them. ADODI Muse, you want to see those. There’s a postcard of myself, Malik Williams, and Anthony Antoine. And then behind it is the original ADODI Muse. I’m a little younger there. And behind them is Craig Washington on his forty-fifth birthday. He’s older than I am. (both laugh) Craig is going to edit that. Oh, my mom’s picture. I’m dancing with Michael there at a wedding in—it was at least a year before I met David, so I think that’s ’92. I still have my long hair. But the significance of it is that this was the wedding of Hubert Alexander and his lover, [Ken Smith], whose name has left me now. But anyway, my boyfriend at the time wondered, “Why did they go through all of this stuff about the wedding?” It wasn’t in any way legal. And it’s very good that they did, because both of them died of HIV within three years after that. And that’s James Broughton. And this is a dear friend of mine who was the first Latino gay man I knew, Joseph Anthony Baptiste, who became part of ACT UP-Kansas City. Yeah, I can tell this. When I told Anthony that I was doing AIDS work, he and his lover basically said, Duncan, we think that’s really good, and we’re not interested. And it was before they knew their own status. So the irony of that,

and that that experience actually happened twice in Kansas City. I was actually given a steak dinner with baked potatoes and salad in the wonderful home of a man who was a big-time Black organizer in Kansas City, and he basically said, Kansas City isn't ready for this, and we're not interested in it, Duncan. And he's no longer with us. For now, that's enough. (Joseph Anthony also died of HIV)

pause in recording

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Here are some of the recognitions that ADODI Muse got over the years, and myself also. I went to the opening of *Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men in the South—A Theatrical Production*, not the readers theater production, but a full-fledged theatrical production. They flew us to Chicago, there were about twelve of us there, and E. Patrick Johnson did a fabulous job. They gave us this poster and I had it mounted. This is an ADODI Muse certificate of appreciation from the Southeast Regional Gay Men's Health Summit. This is from the Social Security Administration, where ADODI Muse performed at their gay pride celebration in 2002. This is ADODI Muse's plaque from the women of Zami, the Black women's organization, where we gave out a scholarship seven years? And Charles Stevens was the first Tony Daniels Scholar under that program. This is the first Black Gay Pride march proclamation, given by the first lesbian on the city council of Atlanta, Cathy Woolard. And Cathy and I actually go back to the second March on Washington for gays and lesbians in '87. That one. Because Cathy was on the big board. This is my wedding certificate. (Royles laughs) We had a few people at our wedding. This is a Quaker wedding certificate, and the reason it is so constructed is, Quakers have radical equality. So everyone is revered on the same level as a minister. In the branch that David is a part of, we were married

under the care of the meeting, and in the same way that a minister would sign your wedding certificate, the ministers signed our wedding certificate. We had three hundred people there, and we had to move the ceremony in one week because the venue we had was too small. Somebody invited too many people. (Royles laughs) And this is our legal certificate.

DAN ROYLES: From Canada.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yeah. It's from Toronto. And I love the difference in the size, because this is about our faith community supporting us, and about our religion, and about what was important to me and David as a couple religiously, spiritually. This was legal. It's just a license. An important license, but it's a license. That's all it is. I think that's all I have for up here.

pause in recording

DUNCAN TEAGUE: —the significance of this. Annie Archibald, like miss lesbian, founder of, way back in the day Gay PAC, which became something else, which became the Georgia Equality Project, which is Georgia Equality now, a statewide gay and lesbian legislative—Joan Garner who is now Commissioner Joan Garner in Fulton County, me—we're all buddies. Joan is the first out lesbian elected to the Fulton County Commission. Her wife, Jane Morrison, is the first elected judge in Fulton County, in Superior Court. Lynn Cothren, personal assistant to Mrs. King for twenty-five years.

DAN ROYLES: Coretta?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yes. And Judy Colb, the founder of PFLAG-Atlanta. We're all very dear

friends, and this was back when we would try to have dinner every now and then, when we could.

DAN ROYLES: What about the picture underneath it?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: The other picture is ADODI Muse doing our thing at a rally in—what was this one? '04?—oh, this was (sighs) the twentieth anniversary of the AIDS epidemic. And behind it is AIDS Survival Project.

DAN ROYLES: I think I see, is there the NAMES quilt?

DUNCAN TEAGUE: Yeah, the NAMES quilt is there. That was an emotional performance. The portrait is done by a co-worker of David's. There is a sculpture, but—sure. That's on the personal side of things. (footsteps) I'll turn on some light. There's a wedding picture of me and David. This is the sculpture I wanted you to see, because it was done by Noah Saunders, and there's a picture of David asleep on the couch, holding his glasses, and the book is on his chest, so it's the truth. And Noah Saunders is an up-and-coming artist who now lives in Athens, and he is amazing. (Noah has gone on to show in Europe)

DAN ROYLES: It's a neat piece.

DUNCAN TEAGUE: And there's a wedding picture of me and David. I think that's it.

(Addendum)

Joan Garner died of cancer while in office and I did her eulogy for the memorial with Linda Bryant, co-founder of Charis Books and More at Ebenezer Baptist Church. Rev. Dr. Warnock was the host minister present on the dais. Judy Colb has passed from contracting Covid 19 in her 80's.

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ADODI Muse has regrouped once more and is planning recording and to perform the current members are myself, Anthony Antoine and Holiday Simmons, who is now the youngest member and is a recognized organizer and poet.