

University of Virginia School of Law
Arthur J. Morris Law Library | Archives & Special Collections

Oral History Interview Transcript
Cover Sheet

Narrator: Chloe Fife

Interviewers: Addie Patrick, Laurel Lehman

Place of Interview: Zoom

Date of Interview: March 4, 2024

Recordist: Addie Patrick

Other People Present: N/A

Recording Equipment Used: Zoom

Transcription Equipment Used: Otter.ai

Transcribed by: Jane McBrian

Subjects: Law—Study and teaching; Sexual minorities in higher education; University of Virginia. Lambda Law Alliance

Forms: Informed Consent Agreement, Deed of Gift

Project Title: Lambda Law Alliance 40

Project Abstract: Lambda Law Alliance 40 is a multimedia project produced by Law Special Collections to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the University of Virginia Law School's chapter of Lambda Law Alliance (1984-2024). In collaboration with current UVA Law Lambda members, Law Special Collections conducted oral history interviews with past UVA Law Lambda members and officers from the organization's four decades to highlight individual experiences and document the organization's forty-year history.

Interview Abstract: Oral history interview with Chloe Fife, class of 2022, via Zoom, on March 4, 2024. Fife discussed her time as a member and president of UVA Law's chapter of Lambda Law Alliance, highlighting the group's events and activities, including a successful campaign for the installation of gender-neutral restrooms in the Law School.

Beginning of interview

Addie Patrick: Okay. Hi everyone, today is March 4, 2024. My name is Addie Patrick and I use she/her pronouns. I'm the library coordinator at the UVA Law Library and I'm Zooming in from Charlottesville. Today we're conducting an oral history interview with current and former members of the UVA Lambda Law Alliance, UVA's chapter of the Lambda Law Alliance, to document the group's history in our archive, but also to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the group. So, to start, we're going to go around with introductions. Starting with Laurel.

Laurel Lehman: Hi, I'm Laurel [Lehman] (class of 2026), I'm a 1L in Lambda. And actually, as of last week, the incoming vice president of community engagement for Lambda. And I use she/her pronouns.

Chloe Fife: My name is Chloe Fife (class of 2022). I am an alum of UVA Law and of Lambda. During my time at UVA Law, I was the president of Lambda, as well as just a active participant in the organization. Thank you for having me.

Laurel Lehman: Right, so—

Chloe Fife: Sorry, and I use she/her pronouns [laughs].

Addie Patrick: Great. Well, what year did you graduate, too? I think I should have said that.

Chloe Fife: I graduated in 2022.

Laurel Lehman: Great, so we'll go ahead and dive into questions. So first—oh, I have the background doing that. Well, we'll have some fun effects on there [laughs]. First, I was hoping you could talk about why you decided to attend UVA Law.

Chloe Fife: Yes. I obviously, like most students, there are a lot of factors that went into my decision. One of the big reasons I chose to attend UVA Law is I got a chance to meet some of the folks in Lambda while I was going through the process of selecting schools, and I felt like the Lambda group at UVA was one of the most tight-knit groups I had ever encountered at a school. And I thought that was really cool. I was really early on into my gender transition, I'm a transgender woman, at that time, and I wanted to find a place that would be very supportive of me during that process. And I felt like Lambda at UVA would be able to help me with that. Obviously, there are other reasons, too. It's a, you know, it's a great school and a cheap city [laughs]. So, it was one of the many factors that went into my decision.

Laurel Lehman: Yes. And you kind of went ahead and preempted the next question, which is, to what extent did your identity play into that decision and kind of how so? And

UVA Law Archives Oral History Interview with Chloe Fife '22 | Page 2

that encapsulates that really well for us, thank you. So, I'm also curious if you visited Charlottesville before you came, or whether it was kind of sight unseen, and what your first impressions of Charlottesville were?

Chloe Fife: Yes, I attended Charlottesville, I mean I visited Charlottesville [laughs] before I decided to attend UVA. I came during admitted students weekend, and it was a blast. I suppose my first impressions were—I grew up in a small city in southern Utah, and Charlottesville kind of reminded me of it a little bit, for better and for worse. And but I really, I thought that it was kind of a cool city where I felt like I could really focus on my studies and be around a lot of cool and smart people. So, I suppose that was my first impression.

Laurel Lehman: That totally tracks. And was there any, did you have a sense of—what was your sense of kind of the LGBT community in Charlottesville? Or Lambda's connection to it or any of like, did you have kind of different views of when you came here of like, oh okay, what—of town/gown at all? Or was it—did kind of the feelings around Lambda sort of translate into feelings from Charlottesville?

Chloe Fife: Yes, I, and I felt this way during law school, too. But I, frankly, felt that UVA Law was a little bit disconnected from the rest of Charlottesville. And so, I didn't get to meet a lot of folks., you know, LGBTQ folks from Charlottesville when I was visiting. So that—I guess that didn't factor into my decision as much, although I knew that Charlottesville was a city that I felt more comfortable in than some of the cities I lived in in Utah, [laughs] as far as identity goes, and so I think that that was one thing that I had in mind as I knew that Charlottesville would be more accommodating to me than I had been used to.

Laurel Lehman: Yes. And then when you visited the Law School, and then when you got—when you showed up bright eyed and bushy tailed in August, what were your first impressions of the Law School?

Chloe Fife: Yes, I had a lot of first impressions, as I suppose we all did. Obviously, I was very excited, got into, you know, a very good law school. I was very excited about becoming a lawyer. And so, this whole law school experience felt very, almost regal [laughs] to me. You know, I come from a background where I didn't really even meet a professional until I was an adult. Both my parents worked as—at the same restaurant growing up. So very blue-collar background. And so, walking into the law schools, it felt like—especially UVA Law and the building that it's in, felt very—like I was kind of walking into a new world. But yes, I, it was a very welcoming community. I had met Jennifer Hulvey, who was the financial director when I was a student, and she introduced me kind of to the Law School community. And so, what a wonderful first impression. Jennifer Hulvey is a wonderful human being that cares very much about the LGBTQ students at UVA Law. So.

Laurel Lehman: Yes, I think Dean Hulvey has provided a [that kind of a space] for so many of us and so it's—glad we get to hear that here, too. And then sort of transitioning into—so now you're on campus, and what would you say that the—you could, I was hoping you could speak about the sentiment toward LGBTQ+ folks, while you were a student, from other students, from the faculty, from the administration? Like, obviously, Dean Hulvey was part of the administration, but the administration is a lot broader than just that. Sort of what the sentiment vi—I was about to say sentiment and vibes, the sentiment was [laughs] toward members of Lambda, or just in general to queer folks, while you were a student?

Chloe Fife: Yes, and I think I'll get into this more when we get into the Lambda-specific questions. But as far as the broader community, I, there was, of course, a bit of a mix, as there is everywhere. I came out as a trans woman and started to transition almost literally the day I began orientation [laughs] at UVA Law, and so I got kind of a unique experience. I mean I—my classmates were absolutely wonderful about it. Everybody gendered me appropriately, which was something I was very worried about. The administration, you know, found out the day before I was set to attend orientation, and changed all of my pronouns on my name tags, and my name, and everything. So that was really wonderful, a great introduction, and really showed that there were people who cared deeply about the LGBTQ community on campus, or sorry, on Grounds [laughs]. But the—yes, I mean, obviously, there were some challenges, which I suppose we will get deeper into with some of these other questions, but there were some individuals who struggled to have trans people in their classes. And you know, there were certainly some people with less familiarity with trans people, as opposed to other members of the queer community. And so, I think that there was generally a positive sentiment, but there was also a lot of education and a lot of tolerance, for lack of a better word, going around as well.

Laurel Lehman: Absolutely. And then, kind of placing this in context, you said you graduated in 2022 and we've got forty years of Lambda history here. So, there's a lot of things that are varying across those. What would you say the level of openness was for LGBTQ students at UVA when you were there?

Chloe Fife: Yes, I'd say over three quarters of us were open about our identities. Yes, I mean, there were plenty of very openly queer individuals at the Law School. People spoke about their identities in class, people spoke about their identities in the halls, you know, at events, and it was very much a part of the conversation at UVA Law. So, there was quite a bit of openness. There was also some folks that chose not to be open about it for various reasons. And so that still continued while I was attending the Law School, but I would say, very few of us chose not to disclose our identities.

Laurel Lehman: Yes, and then sort of in that moment, we also have a lot happening at both the national and state level, right? So, this is, so *Bostock [v. Clayton County]* (590 US __ (2020)) is 2020. There, you start really having the push for a lot of state laws, a variety of state laws. What would you say kind of the—to what extent did LGBTQ issues

UVA Law Archives Oral History Interview with Chloe Fife '22 | Page 4

play into conversation, whether that's from the perspective of like, historical legal issues that were unfolding at the time? Whether that's in classes or in just, even in conversation between folks?

Chloe Fife: Yes. I, it was very much a part of the conversation, though I went to law school at an interesting time. The same year *Bostock* came out, in 2020, was the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. And so, we, you know, my class as a 1L began taking virtual classes the spring of my 1L year, which is about the same time that *Bostock* came out. And so, a lot of the conversations were happening virtually [laughs]. And, you know, we were socially isolating and so there wasn't a lot of opportunities for people to naturally have conversations about these topics for what you would think is the traditional time as a law student to have these kinds of conversations during con law, which is my spring—what I mean by con law is constitutional law. And, but it still definitely came up, I mean, for better and for worse. When these decisions were coming out, there were professors that would start the day to kind of acknowledge in classes that maybe didn't even have to do with the decisions, or the kind of world events that were happening. Professors would stop and acknowledge that something had happened, give people a space to talk about it, and kind of like digest it together. At the same time, there were some professors, for example with *Bostock*, that they required their classes to argue the dissents' point of view and would cold call people and try to have them make the best argument they could for the dissent. So, it certainly was, you know, kind of a divisive topic.

Chloe Fife: And, on top of all that, particularly with anti-trans issues, we reached, I think, the beginning of the height of anti-trans laws and discrimination throughout the United States when I was in my second year of law school. Anti-trans bills began making the news for, I mean, there were hundreds and hundreds of bills being introduced throughout the country, some of them began to pass gender affirming care bans for trans minors, began to pass—and those started to move through the court system while I was in law school. And during my third year, I think that that really became, when we were back in person, a big part of the conversation. You know, I held several events, particularly on these issues, to raise awareness throughout the Law School. And we did phone banks and we, you know, met with doctors in the community to discuss what these care bans meant for trans kids, tried to kind of brainstorm ideas to address these anti-trans bills throughout the country. And I think that that was one of the most special moments I had at the law school, the Law School community and Lambda in particular came together to really kind of try to make a difference on that front.

Laurel Lehman: Yes, that's a really powerful atmosphere to kind of be in the thick of, especially as distinct from what's happening. And I wonder if—are there any anecdotes in particular from the, just like, made you, that felt particularly powerful, kind of in that what I'm sure just felt like a marathon?

Chloe Fife: Oh, geez, I don't even know where to start. I suppose one anecdote that I can think of is I was sitting in a room full of all these doctors talking about how we could

prevent Virginia from passing some of these same bills, and kind of like get ahead of it in a way that I think Virginia has shown itself to be able to do since. You know, Virginia has blocked several anti-trans bills since I came to the Law School. I think that there were a few representatives from the Virginia congress that showed up and listened to these conversations and discussed with us and cried with us. And, you know, told us how invested they were in this issue. And got to, you know, really hear from both the legal and medical community how big of a difference this meant to trans people in Virginia. I think that that moment will stay with me forever, and that event, because not only do I think it showed how committed people are in Virginia and at UVA Law, but also because I do think that we were able to really make a difference and make trans rights a focus. And you know I won't declare that UVA Law completely—you know, we can't take total credit for this. But I do think we made an impact on how much awareness there was around these issues in Virginia.

Laurel Lehman: Absolutely, and I guess, just to pivot then—thank you that was great—to pivot a little bit on to Lambda specifically, where I'm sure like a lot of this was held, and going—pulling back a little bit, how did you learn about Lambda for the first time? Was it when you were applying, or when you kind of came to campus and visited, or sort of what was that? What was, how did, and—I'll just let you answer the question. How did you learn about Lambda for the first time? [Laughs.]

Chloe Fife: I think the first time I heard about Lambda was back to Jennifer Hulvey. She invited me to a recruitment dinner in Utah. She said it was the last recruitment, you know, assignment she would take is going to Utah every year to speak to potential students there. And I got a chance to meet her. And I was talking about, you know, being open in Utah. And she said, Yes, well, we have an amazing Lambda organization that builds itself from the ground up. That, you know, from back in when it was almost impossible to be open about being queer, to being one of the biggest and most cherished organizations in the Law School. And I thought that was really fascinating. I think from there, I got to meet the president at the time, Jess Feinberg (class of 2021), who is an amazing human being as well. And she kind of introduced herself, told me about the community, introduced me to other members of the community. And that's kind of when I decided it was—or got to see how great it was.

Laurel Lehman: And then when you got to campus, was there a process to join the group?

Chloe Fife: So, I don't remember how I joined the group to be frank with you. But I remember how we invited people when I was president [laughs]. So, every year, folks could select whether or not they are queer on applications to the school and also whether they're willing to disclose that information. And in a very confidential process, we were able to kind of use that list to reach out to individuals and ask them to join Lambda. And that's all it took is, you know, if they said yes, or you know, they wanted to join, then they were in [laughs]. So it was that simple.

Laurel Lehman: And then I guess well, I imagine this will have changed a lot, especially with kind of before and during COVID, and when things went virtual, but what were Lambda meetings like? What activities did the group do? What kind of stands out?

Chloe Fife: Yes, I mean, Lambda does, did all sorts of things. I think the first meeting I ever attended was kind of a general body meeting that introduced everyone to the Lambda group and who was running things and what activities were coming up. And I mean, like the meetings really ran the gamut. I mean, we would—I think for as long as anybody I went to school with could remember and who they were friends with could remember, we had the best Feb Club party in the Law School, which is a, you know, events that occurred every February where every group put together a party for the whole Law School to attend. And Lambda is known for really just throwing the best parties. So that was one really fun part of it. We did some educational events during COVID where we, and we'll get to this again in just a moment, where we spoke about intersectionality and, you know, what Black queer folks experience in Lambda. We did phone banks, we did—I mean, I'm sure I am not even remembering, there were so many different kinds of events we did.

Laurel Lehman: And then in terms of the people who made up those events, what were the group's demographics like, and how did issues of intersectionality affect the group? And also recognizing there's a lot of letters in LGBTQ and sort of like, even the breakdown there, what did that look like?

Chloe Fife: Yes. When I was in Lambda, it was still primarily made up of mostly white cis gay men, as most LGBTQ organizations are to this day. And, you know, I think as I kind of took on the presidency, and throughout, like, my predecessors time as president, we, there was a recognition that there needed to be more intentional efforts to make other folks feel included in Lambda. I do think I personally felt very included and welcomed as a trans person in joining Lambda, and that was fantastic. But there were and are so few of us trans people attending law school, that we just didn't make up a huge portion of the demographic. And, you know, I spoke to a lot of Black members of Lambda, who felt a little bit as if Lambda had struggled to address issues of race, whereas the—BLSA [Black Law Students Association], which is the Black students' organization at UVA Law, struggled to address issues of queer identity, and there was a difficulty kind of marrying those two things together. And I think that is something Lambda struggled with, is making sure that, you know, folks that aren't traditionally included in LGBTQ spaces, in queer spaces, felt included. And yes, that's something that we did work on. But I think it's probably still something that it's working on today. You know, it's I think, bi [bisexual] people, people of color, and trans folks were certainly underrepresented in the group.

Laurel Lehman: And then in terms of interacting with Law School faculty or administration, what did those interactions look like?

Chloe Fife: So those were also varied. I've already spoken about Jennifer Hulvey. So that was one way. Jennifer Hulvey was kind of a unofficial adviser to Lambda [laughs]. She was very connected and had many conversations with me when I was president and presidents before me. And another name that will probably come up a lot in these interviews is [Professor] Anne Coughlin, who is the, you know, our official faculty member, advisor for the group. Anne Coughlin has for decades, I believe, been a huge component of the Lambda group. She has always supported Lambda and she kind of always made sure that there was somebody in the room for faculty, in the faculty and administration, that was thinking about Lambda and kind of was there to support whatever we needed to do. Yes, and I suppose also while I was president, one interaction we had with faculty was talking to them about installing gender neutral restrooms at the Law School. So that was another way we interacted with the administration. I, you know, one of my goals as the first trans president of Lambda was to make sure we got gender neutral restrooms in the Law School. And, of course, the pandemic impacted that, but we were able to speak with the administration. And sometimes those conversations were, frankly, quite heated [laughs]. But we got there. And now the summer after I graduated the Law School installed gender-neutral restrooms on the main floor, the main hallway with the largest classrooms, right next to the men's and women's restrooms in that hall.

Laurel Lehman: And as a 1L, people have no idea that those weren't just part and parcel a couple years ago, so thank you for the work you did there. That's, it's pretty incredible even just to watch a couple of years go by and the change that can happen there and like know that that's the fruits of—. And I guess that also kind of—taken together across your time in Lambda, how do you reflect upon that time and all the different moving pieces therein?

Chloe Fife: Yes, I mean, it was really a great time. I think Lambda was a big reason why I enjoyed my law school experience. It was really an honor to be able to lead the organization, especially during COVID-19. The protests around George Floyd's death, you know, there was a lot of change that needed to happen in Lambda, and around the world. And it was just incredible to see Lambda come together during those times, and, you know, raise money and raise awareness and try to make a difference. You know, we all got to experience being advocates and being community members at a time where being queer was maybe a little bit harder than it had been for the preceding years. And so, I look at it fondly. I do think there were moments that were frustrating as well. There was still some friction around our identities in the Law School and in the world. But overall, I think it was just a wonderful experience.

Laurel Lehman: What do you hope for the future of Lambda?

Chloe Fife: Yes, I hope that it continues to keep fighting, both for more inclusion and for, you know, the world at large. I think that that's kind of baked into what Lambda is about. And I don't want that to change. I hope in the future that queer students of color can feel completely welcome and comfortable in the group. And I hope one day that, of

course this goes beyond Lambda, but that queer identities won't be so marginalized and there won't be quite a need for the tough conversations that Lambda kind of supports students through.

Laurel Lehman: And then what advice do you have for current and future LGBTQ+ law students?

Chloe Fife: I would say [pause] first, recognize that your identity is not that represented in the law to this day, no matter what it is, no matter who you are. Queer identities are just not represented among lawyers. And that is hard. It will make things feel more difficult, feel a little bit like you're trailblazing at times. And that's not—it's not a fun process. But it's so, so necessary. I would just say spend your time in law school learning how to build community, how to advocate for yourself, and how to be the kind of lawyer that matches your identity. Because queer lawyers are not only needed, but we're—we make a difference just by existing in this profession. And you'll need those skills out in your lawyering career to both be who you are and also just kind of make way for yourself and others that, you know, will—as other queer lawyers in the profession.

Laurel Lehman: Right, thank you. Those were all the official questions on the list, I want to check and see if there's anything else that you were like, Oh, I'd really meant to talk about this, or like, This is this a thing that was an important part of my time at UVA or in Lambda that I think should be reflected in here. And if not, that's totally okay. I just want to make sure there's a space for it.

Chloe Fife: Let me think about that for a second.

Laurel Lehman: Take your time. And Addie if you have anything feel free.

Addie Patrick: I maybe do have some follow-up questions, but you think a little bit. [Pause.]

Chloe Fife: Nothing's coming to mind. Great job covering all the topics [laughs.]

Addie Patrick: Yes, Laurel, this is excellent. I had—so I don't want to push too much on things like friction and heated conversations and things like that, because you're, it's well within your right not to disclose things that you don't want to talk about. But I am a little bit curious about the gender-neutral restroom battle, I guess, a little bit. What was some of the pushback that you received in those conversations?

Chloe Fife: Yes, I suppose I should tell the full story. It's fairly public anyway. So, [laughs] I, you know, I, yes. So, when I started my presidency in Lambda, I reached out to the Law School administration, including the dean of the Law School and said, Hey, I really think we should prioritize getting gender-neutral restrooms. Not only is this just human decency, and there are people that need these bathrooms, but there will be

UVA Law Archives Oral History Interview with Chloe Fife '22 | Page 9

more nonbinary law students and students that feel more comfortable using gender-neutral restrooms coming through these halls every year. And I was one of them. When I was in law school, in between classes, there were two gender-neutral restrooms in the library. It took me sometimes ten, fifteen minutes to use those restrooms between classes. And it was an incredibly frustrating experience. And I wanted future law students to not have to deal with that and get the same bathroom experience as anybody else in the Law School. And, you know, when I reached out, I was told, in the midst of the pandemic, Let's wait it out a little bit longer. You know, Let's wait until there's less social distancing and we'll talk again. And I thought that was fine.

Chloe Fife: In the meantime, I got to speak to faculty members like Anne Coughlin, who told me that there was once a time in the Law School where the situation was exactly the same for women's restrooms. The women's restrooms were tucked away in places that were hard to find and kind of difficult to get to in between classes. And everyone kind of didn't understand why the women's restroom needed to be there next to the men's restroom. And, you know, that kind of reminded me why it's so important to get these gender-neutral restrooms on the main halls next to the men's and women's restrooms. I knew that, for me, was a question of dignity. Putting these restrooms away where you can't see them sends a message to folks that need to use those restrooms. And the spring rolls around, Trans Day of Visibility, we received an email from the Law School administration saying that they had installed a gender-neutral restroom on the third floor of the Law School, which most law students at the time didn't even know existed. Laurel, you may not know that there's a third floor to the Law School [laughs].

Laurel Lehman: That was the face I just made. It was like, The third floor? [Laughs.]

Chloe Fife: Yes, it's quite tucked away. The only real people that use it are the Law School Foundation. And so that to me signaled, at the time, that it was not only possible to install gender-neutral restrooms in the Law School, but it was easy because they did it quite quickly. And to me that was quite offensive on Trans Day of Visibility, because we had asked to be a part of the conversations of these gender-neutral restrooms. We'd asked specifically for gender-neutral restrooms on the main floor for a reason. And we were told it was too difficult. But if it was so easy to transform a bathroom into a gender-neutral restroom on the third floor, then we didn't understand why they couldn't for the main floor either. And just because it was such, to me, it was—it felt a little bit like a slap in the face. Being the first trans president, being excluded from these conversations, not being updated until these restrooms were there. I went public with it and put out a series of tweets [laughs] explaining the situation. Because, you know, we kind of felt a little bit excluded, obviously. Well, first that did garner some attention throughout the Law School community and beyond. A lot of alum found those tweets, and that got us a conversation with the dean. [Laughs.] So, you know, and it was—. You know, looking back, I don't regret tweeting about it, there may have been a more diplomatic way to handle the situation. But I don't regret it, simply because like people had been asking for gender-neutral restrooms at that point for years and years. And so, we, I felt we were in a position that we wouldn't be taken seriously unless there was a large amount of

UVA Law Archives Oral History Interview with Chloe Fife '22 | Page 10

support behind us and unless people knew exactly what the situation was around these bathrooms at the Law School. We sat down with the dean, and we asked for gender-neutral restrooms to be installed on the main floor by that summer. And the dean was going to hear us out, though [pause] there were still some hiccups there as well.

Chloe Fife: First, you know, [pause] essentially, we were told that we ruined the trust of their relationship by going public with this information, and that we had handled ourselves inappropriately. And that, from the, that we would be taken on a tour of all the gender-neutral restrooms in the Law School to show that they already exist, which of course I knew where they were, because I was using them. And also told that they would be following a building code that stated that gender-neutral restrooms should have the doors taken off of them so that people would feel safe using them from assault. And I [laughs]. Yes, so that was the reaction that we got. And so obviously, that got quite heated for me, because I disagreed with a lot of things there. And I felt like we—Lambda should be very involved in these conversations, that the gender-neutral restrooms should be no different than any of the other bathrooms in the sense that everybody—they should have a door. And we should get it installed as soon as possible. We also disagreed and thought that the way that we handled it was an incredibly effective way to get people the bathrooms that they deserved. And it turned out that it was a very effective way to get the bathrooms installed. And they weren't installed that summer, but it took one more year and they were installed the summer after that. So, that's kind of how the conversation went. Yes, so it was a little bit heated. But at the end of the day, I think we were able to come to agreement that these bathrooms needed to be installed. And that's what mattered to me.

Laurel Lehman: I'm also a little curious—so following up on, so when you tweeted it out, kind of recognizing how quickly things can go viral online, in law school communities, and how quickly they can spread. Did you find that—it seems like that's where you got kind of a groundswell of alum support. Would you say it was primarily that, or did it bleed into parts of Twitter that were not as supportive and what was your experience? It seems like writ large, you're happy with having gone that way. But I'm curious what your experience online was and what—if that said anything kind of about online ecosystems at the time for queer folks?

Chloe Fife: Yes, I mean, did—yes, I mean, the vast majority of the responses were positive, in that the vast majority of people that reacted to these tweets wanted to see the bathrooms installed. There were a few people, I don't know necessarily who they were, how they fit into the UVA Law community, but were confused why a trans woman would be advocating for gender-neutral restrooms, because in theory, I should also be advocating for using women's restrooms. And so, there was kind of a little bit of confusion and also some transphobia around that, in the way that people kind of tried to invalidate using gender-neutral restrooms in general, because some trans people use men's or women's restrooms. But yes, I mean, in the context of the Law School, and when I did from time-to-time tweet about the Law School, I generally got positive responses.

Laurel Lehman: Thank you. Go back to Addie's [unclear].

Addie Patrick: Yes. Thank you for that, that was an excellent telling of that story. Thank you. And yes, I think I'd second Laurel's points. I—change happens so fast at the Law School, and the institutional memory for students is good in some ways, and not so good in others, not necessarily in a good or bad way. But yes, I think, Laurel, you're totally right. Students would now never think that those restrooms had never been there. And I mean, too, Anne Coughlin's point too about the struggle for women's restrooms. We've done some oral history interviews with previous presidents of Virginia Law Women, and I mean, in the 1980s, one of the big stories at the time, in the Virginia Law Weekly, was that there was a former men's restroom that had been converted to a women's restroom and all the urinals were still in the restroom, you know. So that, there's pictures of that. And that was a big story for a while until finally the urinals were removed. But at the time, the administration was like, Why do we need to take the urinals out? Just don't use them. You know. So, you know, it's a multi-year situation. But I did have another follow-up question because I was really interested in your story about Lambda meeting with the doctors, and it sounds like some legislators, to talk about these various trans bills that were coming in through the legislature. I was wondering if you could just expand a little bit more on that singular event? Or was that multiple, a series of events? Or what—how did that happen?

Chloe Fife: Yes, so I dedicated my last semester of law school to these anti-trans bills. And I kind of went out on my own a little bit to do it. I did have the support of Lambda, but I also connected with other student organizations to do this and kind of branched out and relied on these organizations for support. But I did it kind of without—outside of an organization. We held several events on the anti-trans legislation. I think it started with—there was an event put on by the Federalist Society, called "Does Women's Rights Require Abortion?" And they invited a speaker who's a renowned anti-abortion feminist, who's also a trans exclusionary radical feminist, which is a feminist who believes that trans women should not be included in their definition of feminism. And we put together a response event to that within the same week. We found out about the event on Monday, we spent two days putting it together, and we had a response event called "Does Men's Rights Require ____ [blank]" and then below the blank, we had things like Viagra and other, [laughs] you know, items of men's health. And we obviously meant to be a little bit satirical, and we invited a bunch of speakers to that event. It was really incredible what we were able to put together in the span of a week. We got a trans person who studies trans health care, we got the—one of the leading advocates for the Equal Rights Amendment to join, and we kind of just started with an event both talking about reproductive rights but also about trans rights and trans people's access to health care because of the way that intersected [with that FedSoc event].

Chloe Fife: And then from there, the anti-trans bills continued to be passed, and so I decided to continue having events. [Laughs] And so, the next event that we held, we started by doing a bake sale for trans youth in states being impacted. I believe Texas

was the state we focused on at the time, because it had passed a—or there was an opinion released by the attorney general that would have classed gender health care as child abuse in minors. And we raised a record amount of money to support the organizations in Texas supporting trans youth. And to commemorate the bake sale, we held an event, I gave a speech talking about how much these anti-trans bills mattered to the trans community and how much of an impact they were making across the country. And kind of gave people an opportunity to hear about it and how much it actually impacts, on a personal level, a trans person's life. And then we did brainstorming sessions during that event. We split off into groups, and we kind of talked about what Lambda could be doing as an organization and the Law School community could be doing as a community to support trans youth. And that's where we came up with the idea to do phone banks. And we called lawmakers across the country that were considering gender affirming care bans to advocate against them. And we coordinated with Anne Coughlin, who was starting the Sound Justice Lab, I believe it was called at the time. And as one of her first events, under the Sound Justice Lab, we reached out to healthcare professionals in the area who focused on trans rights, and worked with trans minors, to discuss the healthcare aspect of all of this, because we wanted—the goal was to have to—.

Chloe Fife: I'll backup to say that one of the goals that I had, and that other people that were coordinating with me, including Anne Coughlin, had, was to take a really holistic view to this anti-trans legislation. We thought the Law School could be a little bit more cohesive with other professionals in the area and other areas of expertise. And so, one of the ways that we wanted to do that was to bring in doctors that were experts in gender affirming care that could really describe, from a professional point of view, how this impacted trans kids. And we had, you know, the whole room turned out. We had lawmakers there to speak about these anti-trans bills as well, so that's kind of how we got some lawmakers to show—in the room as well. And we just kind of had a discussion about what these anti-trans bills meant and how dangerous they were, to not only the trans community, but just the law in general. I mean, these laws mirror a lot of the ways—and you know, I wish I could quote it, but there are papers that discuss this, that mirror *Dred Scott* laws. And it's a really big momentum, from my perspective, very momentous moment because if people are able to succeed in passing the anti-trans laws and direct the way that trans people live, then it'll become easier for them to do so for other identities. And so, we were really just trying to draw the strings together a little bit and show the community how much this mattered. So that was the point of the event, and it was an incredible, very successful, event.

Addie Patrick: Was it at the Law School?

Chloe Fife: It was, yes.

Addie Patrick: Those are the two follow-up questions that I have. I don't know if, Laurel, you have any?

Laurel Lehman: No, that's great. Thank you. And thank you for all the grunt work you did for Lambda we have today. We were literally talking about like, Alright, how do we want to think about phone banks for the fall when we got together last week, so.

Chloe Fife: I'm so happy that you all are still doing that.

Laurel Lehman: There wasn't any this year, as far as I know. I might have missed it, but I flagged it as like, Hey, it's '24, both advocacy and also making sure we have spaces for folks to decompress after whatever happens in November. So, we'll keep it going.

Addie Patrick: Right. Well, I am going to stop the recording now and then we'll have a couple of minutes to say our goodbyes. Thank you.

Chloe Fife: Thank you.

Addie Patrick: Okay.

End of interview