

Speaker 1 ([00:01](#)):

Tell me about yourself. Like who are you? Let's see where to start. Um, stop HIV positive. I've been positive for 34 years. I'm 52. Okay. Yeah, I have to say. Wow. I've survived. I've, I'm a widow. In 2005 February, I was married. I was one of the first trans women being married in the state of California and I'm active in the community. 93 I was diagnosed every positive. 1987 and 89 I was diagnosed Pepsi, which happened as a period in 2007. 16 2017 I ended up with cancer and after about six surgeries, cancer free, I've read a few things. This is a little bit. Um, I was, I work with children's hospital Los Angeles. I've worked with, um, minority AIDS project. I've been a commissioner for the city of Los Angeles, HIV permits for about eight years. Okay.

Speaker 1 ([02:08](#)):

Um, I'm HASA community or the transgender advisory for transgender advisory board is about tat tat TA see. Yeah. I've got my life. What got you into activism? When I moved to California, San Francisco in 93 and 87 I was living in Atlanta and that's where I was diagnosed. That I don't know if you've ever seen the show pose. I've seen parts of it. So there's a lot I can relate to because how, um, as well ACC was the first medication I ever went to. Okay. So, um, but also just how when they go in the room to get tested, at least they had some privacy. So when I got tested and uh, CDC, we had coupon codes so everybody was in a cubicle and so you could kind of look over and you could see what was going, who was getting what diagnosis. So between that, and I've always wanted to transition into my womanhood, but growing up in the South, I never knew a lot about what that meant.

Speaker 1 ([03:44](#)):

Yeah, I know I was different and I, I had been in mental health program, so we, my mom and everybody knew there was something different, but we didn't have a word for it or a name for it. So when I moved to Atlanta, I found out what that name was. And, but at the time, my life was a little, it was one of those things where the doctors tell you, okay, most of you are going to get three years to live, so enjoy your life. And so I did a lot of that. And right before I moved to San Francisco, it became one of those things. I'm going through this and I really wanted this and there's gotta be other girls out there that look just like me that are going through the same thing. And a lot of the walls I ran up against or barriers, I ran out with the kids and trying to receive services, um, getting, getting, you know, I already had, at the time I was working two jobs.

Speaker 1 ([04:44](#)):

I lost both of those once I transition. So I was like, okay, wait a minute. I got a college education right to do all I can do whatever you asked me pretty much. And so why can I have a job? It was always, because we can't have to work in here looking like that. And so, um, I just kinda knew that there were other people, if I was going through this, someone else was going through it and it was going to be a lot harder for them if they didn't have the backbone to stand up for people. And so yeah, I had that backbone. My mother raised me till this day. She tells him you can do it, become anything you want to and whatever you do, don't be half ass at the bedside. You're going to do a fee. We'd address damn feet. There is kind of support I grew up with between before my grandmother passed, you know, um, my mom and my family, they've always been very supportive.

Speaker 1 ([05:49](#)):

That's kind of like that mean going because a lot of my friends didn't have that. They can pick up the phone and call their mom or they can pick up the phone and call their folks and say what's going on in there? And I had that opportunity and I was noticing that a lot of my community had that other black girls. And my first step into real big activism was, Oh, Oh, I'll think of it. It was on church street in San Francisco. I know it was kind of one of those protests. Like we did a lot of activism and rally and stuff like that.

Speaker 1 ([06:41](#)):

And I say around 94 95, cannabis became a big thing. People that were sick, medical marijuana. And so I got into that fight and I met a woman by the name of, she was a receiver, she below as HB, but she was a really big mentor to me. And so she owned a cannabis club, California helping alleviate kind of a problem. Um, and I was the first trans woman to work there as well as the first trans woman to have support groups. There were people that were using canvas and HIV positive men that were trained from there.

Speaker 1 ([07:39](#)):

You know, one agency was black, okay, you work here, you do this, you can do this. And then I went to central city hospitality houses in San Francisco and work there. Um, from there I worked with city of refuge youth program. The residents that has intrigued me for the LGBT community here in 2000 because while going through all of that, I was in my addiction bagging, trying to fight to survive, to be why was a lot of it, and I just kind of made up home line. I needed to get away. And so I moved motel. I got here and I was like, okay, I'm going to move more into the street and like all this good man. Okay. And that didn't quite work out. Um, one of the first things I ended up getting into with a program called HIV stuff with me as a big campaign here back in 2001.

Speaker 1 ([08:54](#)):

And um, I did that. So I ended up with my picture all over classes and billboards and everything. Um, from there I ended up on a commission. Yeah. I guess ever before, let's see, I work in [inaudible] project children's hospital. Well, victory starts now, which is a big, have one of their first houses called Bonnie Brae house, which is a LGBTQ house for people that are reentering into the coral or a mental health, have mental health issues. And they're reentering. Okay. Anything you don't do? Well, I just recently in the last year, I quit doing a lot of activist work and I've kind of stepped back and I did a lot of acting. I did extra work for transparent. I've been on the cover of, I've been twice.

Speaker 1 ([10:48](#)):

Yeah. I've had probably about a handful of trans women that have been gone through a complete surgical transition. That's what I'm feeling today. My note is still kind of messed up my muscles. I just recently had 13 different things done, 11 hours worth of surgery November 18th. So yeah. Are you feeling okay? Like everything's kinda like still tied up in their face a little bit? Yeah, I'm okay with it. And right now I work for Starbucks. I work for Starbucks and Olympic endo and I've been there for a year. I wanted the only transplant network there and they also pay for my surgery. Um, so star record, do backup everything.

Speaker 1 ([12:13](#)):

Yeah. Yeah, it is. Yeah. So what would you say are some of like your highlights? What's something really, really proud of that you've done? I'm like, Oh, this is one thing I'm, it's like well I'm really non for like being a commissioner where they can be commission and pack. Okay. Which we just recently did a big, there's a mural that sits in the gallery of the city hall and um, it's for black trans women that have pass. Okay. Mmm. A lot of the magazines I've gotten like bite magazine, I did the cover for them. It was around crap. Crap. Okay. Just working harder for my community. I mean I think the biggest thing that I'm really satisfied with is when I got married in 2005 sad though because October, 2005 to passed away, we didn't know he had cancer. So like last minute he was in his court stage pretty bad.

Speaker 1 ([13:45](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. Real question now cause I can never remember what I'm trying to ask people. What would you say is the most challenging thing that you experience during your process? Far as activism and is there a most challenging thing or is it all, I don't think a lot of it was challenging for me in that sense cause I've always was one of those people that I didn't come in knocking on a door. I came in knocking on the door once I learned my voice. Oh you're gong to take care of you might not like it.

Speaker 1 ([14:37](#)):

So I say one of the worst things that have happened from 13 as attack, I had two military guys saved my life pretty much. And so in California, probably first girl that has had a case go to trial and say like 12 years in prison, which is more than I Packers. Um, when she was killed, they got last time. They got that in seven years and it killed her. So yeah, it probably had that happened. And just working with the police department, I tell a lot of people, a lot of it, had I not been a commissioner for the city, things might not have went away. They weren't, I was in a position of being someone on the corner. I might not have gotten the thing.

Speaker 1 ([16:13](#)):

What would you suggest? Like what are your like number one kibbles here's how you would get educated in everything that you want to know about what's your, you know what, when you walk in the door, know what you're talking about. The other thing is involve yourself with community. Talk me, you can't act. I don't know what the problems are because your problems are for you might not be the same for somebody else. It might be different for somebody else. Um, and know going in and you can't give up because the minute you give back, you might've been closed the door and everything else because that next step, that next step might have been that that opened up all the doors. So never give up regardless of what happened. Never let your path predict your food. Where do you go in 2020? Like what?

Speaker 1 ([17:55](#)):

It all depends really on that often. Yeah. I mean we still have to deal with Trump again and I mean, yeah, he's been in page, but he's not out of office. So as long as we're dealing with him, I feel like we need to go in fighting, standing up. Do you know we have to make a noise, we have to be loud and we have to go in, remember, right, you can't go and have fads. You know what the problems are. So it's about making sure everyone else knows what the problems are and being, I don't know, just being very private.

Speaker 1 ([18:45](#)):

The one thing I can actually say about our community right now is that we have a lot of young people that are willing to step up and stand in, do fight. So for the older community that has been doing those

by for so long, our faces are constantly always saying, but now there's some good faces coming in and they're educated so and I really pushed for education. Definitely too much education around leaders around being an active communicator for your community. Because if you're going to be one of the people that everyone looks up within a four mile range, right, then you really need to know that. You need to know what's going on and put your face out there for them, not just for them, but for everybody else to be able to see that. How do you like, tell me everything, but yeah. Awesome. And I mean, what was, don't get, you can go, go me. Yeah.