

Episode 4: “Always More to Learn” with Judy Abdo

Segment Introduction

Jaeger: This is YouSpeak radio. With generous support from the Dwight Stuart Youth Fund, an inter-generational project by one institute and the outwords archive in Toronto, Ont.

[MUSIC]

Episode Introduction

Mike: My name is Mike Drake. My pronouns are he/him. I'm 57. I'm from Los Angeles. I'll be interviewing Judy Abdo, who is the first openly lesbian Mayor of Santa Monica and a lifelong educator. We discuss community-based and policy-based change in the queer community, particularly voting power. Overall, we explored the importance of self-care and open-mindedness within the community.

[MUSIC]

Judy Abdo: Connecting to the past and the future is part of what life is about. What's important is to learn from it. What is it that people didn't know at that time? What do we know now, and what would we wish had happened that was different to allow that problem surface? It's really important to be aware of what is going on in society and what it is that we can do or not do. There's always more to learn. There's never a period of time where you say, "Oh, I know everything. I need to know." That it just doesn't happen."

Mike: As activists, when we connect to the past, we have a better idea of how to get to the future and create these new worlds and new ideals for us to live in.

Mike: I absolutely love my community. I love the people that I see every day. I love the people that I work with, and I really want others like me, other trans people and other trans youth to be able to create communities and find others that they feel comfortable around, especially when trans people often feel so isolated because of the world around them and the political state and how others perceive us.

[MUSIC]

Interview Begins

Mike: Hello, I am Mike Drake.

Judy: My name is Judy Abdo. I was an "out" lesbian at the time that I was elected as mayor of Santa Monica.

Mike: Tell me a little bit about the changes you experienced in your childhood.

Judy: I did not know about being a lesbian early on in my life. I was married to a man and was in a relationship with him from high school on. It was 18 years total, and, when you start a relationship with somebody when you're 13, it was just kind of normal. We were a family together. He lived close to me in