

**Williams College Oral History Project Interview with Justin Adkins  
June 27, 2016**

Interview Length: 64 pages

Justin Adkins had just left his position as Assistant Director of the Davis Center at the time of his interview with Wendy Hopkins. Adkins, whose role focused on gender, sexuality, and activism, worked at Williams for eight years—the first two of which he served as the Queer Life Coordinator.

In his interview, he discusses leaving high school to work as a Christian missionary in India and Zimbabwe; his choice not to become ordained in the Assembly of God Pentecostal Church; and his later work with a Christian non-profit organization that sails hospital ships around the world to serve the poor. Adkins then goes into detail about his early life when he identified as a woman, coming out as lesbian, and eventually learning that gender transition was a possibility. He talks about moving to Massachusetts with his then-wife; being in one of the first recorded gay marriages in the Episcopal Church of Massachusetts; and his eventual gender transition. He defines the word 'queer' and talks about the gay liberation movement.

Adkins interview then turns to the topic of Williams, and he discusses JA trainings, and pushback he has gotten from some white students about his discussion of race and ethnicity; the changing staff at the Davis Center (formerly the Multicultural Center); the needs of the students served by the center—including on issues of gender and sexuality; and the Davis Center's attempts to tie their programming in with the curriculum. He talks about his work with Lilly Rodriguez, Arif Smith, Sarah Bolton, and Adam Falk—all of whom he respects a great deal—and his decision to take a job at Allegheny College. He ends his interview with a discussion of Williams' reputation—which he asserts is both founded and unfair—as unfriendly to the LGBT community.

**The transcript of this interview and the accompanying audio file (if available) may be accessed only in the Archives/Chapin Reading Room.**