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Fall 2015

### Robyn Cline

Robert Sammons

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## **Robyn Cline**

Interviewer: This is a conversation with Robyn Cline for the Kentucky marriage equality and religious liberty oral history project. We are in the studio room of Breckenridge Hall and Morehead State's campus located in Rowan County, Kentucky. Today is July 13th 2016 and the time is 9 am. Thanks, Robyn for coming and speaking with us. We do appreciate that. My name is Sherry Kelly.

Do you care to give us a little bit of background information like where you were born and where you grew up?

Cline: Oh, yeah! I was born in Fleming County and I've always lived in Rowan County my whole life it seems like. I moved out occasionally just for a little bit here and there but honestly this has always been my hometown. Rowan County.

Interviewer: Okay, do you want to talk about some of your childhood experiences?

Cline: No. I can't babysit. Oh my gosh! (laughs) Oh, I don't know just...It's so like I said I've always lived here, had a happy life. I've had good life. Been blessed and healthy.

Interviewer: Okay! What is your current occupation?

Cline: I'm a hairdresser. I own a hair salon here at Morehead.

Interviewer: Okay! Do you want to talk about some of your religious upbringing or religious background?

Cline: Well, there really kind of was none until one day when my mom was driving down the road. She had taken my two sisters to town and everybody was coming home. There was an accident. My sister died like that. What do you do? You're at early, early 30s. A mom and dad, seven children, one's dead, what do you? Where do you go? Who buries her? Who preaches? Oh, my gosh and that all of a sudden somebody had asked my mom and dad to go to church. Well, they decided, okay. We'll just go and they went to church in Morehead called The House of Prayer. Well I never left. Been there since of seventies. That is how it came up. We just always believed in God. Know He's real, have a relationship with Him and won't trade or change it for nothing. So, keep your million. I'm okay with where I'm at.

Interviewer: You've kind of already answered where you go to, your current Church. It's still the House of Prayer?

Cline: Yeah. In fact, our pastor said that just by age and timing, that my husband now is the pastor of the House of Prayer. Yes, and our pastor still stays with us and he's amazingly calm. The senior pastor, he turns 84 at the end of the month. So, Joe and I now pastor the church and help out to become a part of that family to lead people to Christ.

Interviewer: Okay. How did you become involved in the religious liberty movement?

Cline: Gosh! I think it just comes to you one day. I'd heard one time that Kim had known about this months before it happened. Well I never go to the courthouse early and I just, maybe I just didn't pay attention. Maybe I just didn't know. Just one thing led to another. You started hearing it on the news and with the changing and I don't...it just came about. All I can say. I don't remember the day I gave it a thought.

Interviewer: How did you first react to the US Supreme Court's decision on same-sex marriage?

Cline: Well, I remember exactly where I was. Exactly what happened. I was in a church conference in Tennessee, sitting in the second row and they just announced that the Supreme Court had ruled on the behalf of gay marriages. I was like, wow, this isn't the nation I was raised in. This isn't that country I went to school in. We do that? Well, and all of a sudden someone had got on, because I love the Jewish history and I love the Jewish months and their feast days, their holidays, their seasons. We looked up and oh my gosh it is the 9th day of Tammuz. Well, big deal. But it is a big deal if you know what happened on the ninth day of Tammuz in first Kings chapter 24, Kings 25 verse 4. That's when the last king of Judah was named Zedekiah. And all the Nebuchadnezzar and all the Babylon army was coming in. And like, they're breathing down their neck and that's the day they kicked the wall down. Sin had just entered into the walls of God's people. Oh, my gosh. This, too, happened on June the 26<sup>th</sup>. Tammuz, the ninth, the same day. I'm just saying, like, the enemy had broken into our walls and it would only be you know days or months later to see how the wall would get bigger. And sin would more abound and things would come to pass that we never thought that we'd ever see, much less our children. We have to think about two men or two women being legal? No, not my...surely, we had not fallen that far from the grace and the laws of God. And I'm a crier, it's just how life is. I'm just amazed. That day, I did think, wow. Someone made a comment, surely this isn't the country we were raised in. And it's not. People sin every day. You think this is the biggest sin? No, but it's the one we legalized. We said it's okay. That's the shocking part, that we're here now. And I think it's so good that you're doing this interview because since that day, last June the 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015, my gosh. The hole, it's been breached. It's gotten bigger and greater. Now we're talking about boys going to the bathroom in girls' bathrooms. Really? How silly is that? Just go to the bathroom. It's getting bigger and the wall's coming down and the hedge of protection is lowering and we're a target now.

Interviewer: What was your reaction to the Rowan County Clerk's decision not to issue marriage licenses to either straight or gay couples?

Cline: Well, I think it just seemed like she was saying so you don't think I'm just picking on you let me just do it to everybody and that way it won't seem so judgmental.

Interviewer: What was your involvement in the movement?

Cline: You know, honestly it was just prayer. I'm not gonna go fight with somebody. If you want 25 kids or one, I don't care. And if you want to be gay then okay, you know. I don't wanna judge you, make you feel bad, because again there's all kinds of things that people do that may not like. But who am I to tell you, you know, "you're going to hell." Really? I pray. It is praying

for peace, praying for harmony, praying for Kim, that what she felt in in her heart was the right thing to do. Praying for her strength, protection of her family, those who work in the office with her, no matter how they feel or what they see. Just watch over them, because innocent people can get caught in the crossfire of something they have nothing to do with.

Interviewer: So, did you participate in the protest?

Cline: No.

I: Okay. I have other questions for you.

Cline: Okay!

Interviewer: Since you did not participate in the actual protest, did you go to any prayer vigils or anything like that?

Cline: Yes. They did have one down the courthouse. It was very silent, peaceful, quiet, coming together. Churches, people, Christians, and we prayed.

Interviewer: So, you went to the one at the courthouse here in Rowan county?

R: Yes.

I: Okay. I know there was also one in Frankfurt. Did you attend that one?

Cline: Yeah! Okay, yeah. Matt Bevin was running for governor at that time and I just remember seeing him. Like, oh that's Matt Bevin. Yes, and that was also good. A beautiful day. Again, it's perfect peace, harmony. Everyone got along. And it just spoke for the goodness of what the law of God says and how we need to stand behind it and with it.

Interviewer: At the prayer vigil in Rowan County or the one in Frankfurt, were there people there also that were for the gay marriage or the marriage equality?

Cline: I don't think at the one in Morehead that I remember. And I think I remember seeing someone in Frankfurt. But they're just giving their opinion, their advice. If I'm right. Okay, I don't remember that being blown out of proportion or anybody getting upset or any anger.

Interviewer: So, in those environments would you consider it to have been safe?

Cline: Oh, yeah. Definitely.

Interviewer: Did you think that the Rowan County clerk best represented the cause of religious liberty?

Cline: I don't get what you mean.

Interviewer: Do you think she was the best person to represent this whole religious liberty?

Cline: Oh, was she the best person? I don't know if anybody's perfect or the best, but she was in that position. She was the one in the position that had to make the decision whether she stood on the Word of God or went with man. Because it was just a ruling. It wasn't even a law. They just ruled it. She didn't even choose it. It happened to be there. You know, may have just kind of where God had placed her at.

Interviewer: What do you believe was the appropriate way to handle the situation?

Cline: I have no clue in that format. Yeah. I know I would've done what she'd done, I think, if I'd have been in her shoes. But I wasn't, so I don't know. Does that makes sense? She did the right thing. That was the right choice of stand up for the word of God.

Interviewer: So do you think she deserved to be imprisoned?

Cline: Gosh I'm not real legally minded to know that all the rules and regulations and all that.

Interviewer: Just in your opinion.

Cline: Oh, I say not but I just don't know. It was good that she did it. I mean, you know, that she went through with what they asked her to do. It showed that she'll stand no matter how or where she is. So, I don't know if it's right or wrong. I hate the...

Interviewer: Do you think she should have received any punishment?

Cline: You're talking all legally now. I don't know. You know, I'd say it was a ruling. If it's a law, then you have to go by the law. But I was thinking, I was thinking I was hearing someone say that the Kentucky law, that it says that marriage is between one man and one woman. And she was really abiding by the law of the land. It was not made a law. That could be right and that could be wrong.

Interviewer: What were your thoughts upon her release?

Cline: It was great. That was wonderful. I...

Interviewer: Were you there?

Cline: No. No. No. I've heard people with the Grayson had to walk three miles just get to Grayson. I think I'll just stay back here. But no, I was really happy. I was glad that she was released. I'm sure she was too.

I: What are your thoughts on the reactions of your local elected officials?

R: Like, things that I heard that they said about her? I mean, things like that? Oh, I mean everybody has to, you know, you get to make your own mind up while you're here. Just hope you made the right decision while you're here. Honestly, everybody can say what they want to say. Just remember, you'll be held accountable for what you say one day, so be careful what you

say. How many times have as a mother said “my child will never,” and they did it. Just when we say they won't, they do. So, I try to be very cautious and not to say things. But when it's a truth is the truth.

Interviewer: What are your opinions on the outcomes of the religious liberty movement?

Cline: I mean, things that happened since that day or...

Interviewer: Concerning Kim Davis the Rowan County clerk, or anything, like you said, that's happened after that, during that time or after.

Cline: Yeah. I know it's made a big impact in our, like, not just our city, not just our county, not just our state, and not just our nation. I was over in Israel. I was in Jerusalem. I was watching TV and there was Kim Davis. Oh, my gosh! In Jerusalem, on TV. Yeah, if you're always never not that far from home, I thought to myself. But, it's made a big impact. Now, what has happened since, then you may be asking me, or how I feel about what's happened. I just think, you know, honestly, the breach is getting bigger and if it's not one thing it's another. And I'm not sure if I answered you question in there. I can't remember.

Interviewer: Would you call your efforts a victory or failure? I know you went to the prayer vigils and you said that you prayed. Would you say that was successful?

Cline: That was all that was required of me at that moment. You know, I thought about it a lot, going down there or should I, should I not or you know. Yeah, and I just didn't go. So, I did what I was supposed to do. It didn't seem like a lot maybe in the eyes of other people, but if you're not called there, don't go there. So, I didn't.

Interviewer: How has Rowan County changed because of these events?

Cline: Well, some people are tickled because she stood up with the word of God. And other people are embarrassed because she stood up for the Word of God. It's not just Rowan County's changed. The whole place is changed. So, just not us, but it has put us at the center of attention. But that's okay because somebody has to do it. I'm sure she didn't wake up one morning and said “I think I'll have confusion in our county.” I'm sure she didn't say that. I'm sure she didn't want that but that's how it turned out with her decision. For she felt to follow the word of God. So, yes, it's changed. And some say to the good and honestly, some say to the bad.

Interviewer: What do you think? Do you think it's changed for the better?

Cline: In my bubble, it's always been good and it'll stay good. I'm not in other people's lives. I don't fool with friction you know. I agree to disagree. We can talk about anything you want to talk about and we're going to walk away like we did when you came in the door, because I'm not fighting over something I can't control. You make your decision and you see how you feel about things and you live and you talk and you act the way you want to. But no.

I: Do you think that that Rowan County is closer together or further apart? I know that you've kind of already...

R: Yeah. Again, I reckon it depends on where you're at. You know, who you're with. And you know, we need prayer more than ever before in everywhere here. So, maybe to some people it's not as good. Maybe we should all just keep our mouths shut, be happy and let people do whatever they want to do.

Interviewer: Do you believe this debate over religious liberty or marriage equality is over?

Cline: Oh, no. Even in, maybe it is by law. Maybe it's a done deal, but in people's hearts or people's attitudes it may never be over, you know.

Interviewer: How did you plan to continue the fight, so to speak, or continue on in this debate with marriage equality or religious freedom?

Cline: Well, I just, I live my life to the fullest. I'll do what is right according to the word of God, hope that people see a light, they see a joy, they see passion, and that will draw them to the main thing which really is Jesus. Now whether you want to talk about gay marriages, whether you wanna talk about black and white, whether you want to talk about, you know, long hair, short hair. I don't care. But we all, I just feel like I've got to continue doing the right thing to effect people in a positive way. I don't wanna tell you you're sinning, because who am I to tell you that you're sinning. If I live good before you according to God's Word, I won't have to tell you nothing, because you already know.

Interviewer: Has this event changed you?

Cline: I think as a Christian it has to. I'm sorry. I keep thinking the wall. The wall just keeps getting bigger and the enemy is coming in to take us, to carry us to a place we don't want to be and someone has to begin to fast and to pray and to fight and to live and to do the right thing that others...I don't know. They get caught in the position they don't want to be in. I never expected to be here. So, yeah. It opened my eyes. It like, it woke the giant up, you know. It woke us up but the giant's coming. I know I'm stuttering and I'm still crying. But that's it. You've just got to keep doing. We are to be God-pleasers. Not man-pleasers. So that doesn't matter, what you believe in. I mean it does matter what you believe in. Not everyone's gonna like it. Not everyone is going to agree with it. So, you know, if your favorite color's pink then just wear it. Someone else will always be blue. But it's okay. It's okay. I didn't come to save the world. It's not up to me that the world be saved, but what that He puts in front of me. So, Kim did what she had to do whether you like it or not, because that's what we do every day. What we have to do. We make decisions for our families. To take the job or to stay with our job or to go to school or...we make that decision every day of our life, to do what's best for us and our family and that's what she did that day. And whether people choose to be on her side or not be on her side, they made a choice that day. That's something that they have to know. And like that's something I don't have to give an answer to. But that's something that they get to choose, to live their life that way. So, yeah. It's changed my life.

Interviewer: Are there any comments or thoughts, anything that we can cover that you would like to say that I didn't ask?

Cline: No. No, I thought you did really good. No, it was good to bring back to my memory the things that had happened. And like we were saying even earlier that the things that's happened since that day. It's just kind of, everything catches you off guard and you go to the next thing then you go to the next thing. Really? Really? And we just need to wake up and do the right thing. So, you did a good job.

Interviewer: Thank you. I appreciate you coming and appreciate your answers and that concludes this interview.