



Matt Gatson

Matt Gatson attended Michigan State University between 1981–1985, majoring in telecommunications. When asked what he's been doing since graduating from Michigan State, he simply says, "I'm in show business." Matt has been working as a producer for the last 27 years and says that he is now at a point where he can choose whether or not to work, and that he would like to travel.

While at MSU, Matt was the director of the Lesbian and Gay Council and says, "It was under my auspices at the time that we got really involved with our parent group which was ASMSU at the time... we challenged all of the RA's, all of the leaders on campus in an ad in the student newspaper to have an open meeting with us." He recalls that those ads created a lot of controversy not just at the local or even state level, but nationally as well.

While he remembers the LGBT community being very active during his time at MSU. "I think it kind of ebbs and flows," he says in regard to why the LGBT community has not always held a consistent level of visibility over the years. "There'll be a hot button issue and all of a sudden there'll be offshoots, people make new friends, people fall in love and whatever happens it does quiet down again until the next issue... Unless a concerted effort is made like you guys [MSU LGBT Resource Center] are doing."

He doesn't recall there being very many authority figures who were openly gay, and says, "it would have been a lot easier," if there had been.

While Matt says that he has "retired" from the front lines of gay activism, he is very involved in educating college aged people on the importance of safe sex. He says, "Kids are of the ilk that they don't need to use a condom because even if they get some disease like HIV/AIDS, their mindset seems to be that it doesn't matter because there are drugs that will keep us alive. What they don't realize is the effect of those drugs on their lives, the fact that it's not just take two pills every morning and you'll be fine, it's take twenty pills a day and suffer the side effects in order to stay alive." Matt thinks that this is an initiative that the LGBT community should be particularly involved in.

When asked if he had any advice for LGBT students at MSU, he said, "I think the first thing is you have to be comfortable with yourself. I'd like to say that we can all live lives 100% out 100% of the time, that's not necessarily true, and many times it doesn't matter. Don't hide from people. If somebody asks you or you start getting those fishy questions, look 'em in the eye and tell 'em... it's amazing, people are not always motivated by hate and bigotry, many times they're motivated by curiosity. Be yourselves, use common sense and certainly, if you can in most cases not hide, don't hide- you'll be a hell of a lot happier."