

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Summer Griffith

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Tumultuous 2020* Oral History project

Interview # T20-A-L-2022-18

Summer Griffith, who moved to Springfield, Illinois, and lost her mother during the COVID-19 pandemic, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Tumultuous 2020* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: April 25, 2022 and May 5, 2022

Locations: Lincoln Public Library, Springfield, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Amanda Riggenbach, *Tumultuous 2020* project manager

Transcription by: \_\_\_\_\_

Edited by: \_\_\_\_\_

Transcript being  
processed.

Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Time: 2:04 / 2.07 hrs.

Session 1: early life, experiences in Springfield, move to Kansas City, loss of mother due to COVID-19

Session 2: continued discussions of mother's death, ramifications of loss

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on August 12, 2022.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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## Abstract

### Summer Griffith, *Tumultuous 2020*, T20-A-L-2022-18

**Biographical Information/Overview of Interview:** Summer Griffith was born in Rosebury, Oregon, in 1982. Her father was from Ecuador and met her mother while she lived in Florida. Griffith was a self-described wild child as she spent her childhood in the Umpqua Valley in Oregon. Her mother and Griffith moved to Springfield, Illinois, in 1990. She attended Springfield High School and graduated in 2000. She took a year off before beginning her college career at Lincoln Land Community College. It was there that she nurtured relationships with her professors and developed as a college student. She describes this was the first time she was told she was smart and needed to continue with her studies. She transferred to University of Illinois Springfield (UIS) where she earned her bachelors in communication in 2005 and her masters in communications in 2008. She worked in the office of former Illinois governor Rod Blagojevich for several years while she was pursued her masters degree.

After becoming weary from Illinois politics, Griffith moved to Kansas City, Missouri, and began working as a waitress. She met her now husband during this time. She began volunteering at Reconciliation Services, a 501c3 nonprofit, before working her way up to becoming an employee and eventually a manager. At the start of 2020, Griffith and her husband decided to move with their two children to Springfield to be closer to her mother. In the beginning of March, they began looking for houses. Their plans were halted when Illinois' stay-at-home order went into effect later that month. The Griffiths delayed their move until August. They moved in with Griffith's mother and a few days later the family became sick with COVID. Griffith's mother became extremely ill and had to be hospitalized. Griffith details her mother's rapid decline and the difficult decisions she was forced to make. Griffith explains the layers of grief she experienced after her mother's passing and the different ways her Eastern Orthodox Church community was there for her family. Griffith also learned in the weeks after her mother's passing that she was invited to interview for the position of community engagement manager at the Lincoln Library. Though she initially declined, her husband encouraged her to interview, and she had a job offer. Griffith details the months following her mother's death and its impact on her, her family, and her job.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** Tumultuous 2020; Tumultuous 2020 oral history; COVID-19; COVID-19 pandemic; grief; COVID-19 death; loss of family due to the pandemic; Lincoln Library; Springfield, Illinois; Summer Griffith;

**Notes to the Reader:** Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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