

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Gwyneth Milbrath

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

Interview # T20-A-L-2022-02

Gwyneth Milbrath, a nurse, assistant professor, and director of the Midwest Nursing History Research Center, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Tumultuous 2020* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Location: Midwest Nursing History Research Center, University of Illinois Chicago, Chicago, Illinois

Date: January 17, 2022

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Amanda Riegenbach, project manager *Tumultuous 2020*

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 2:51 / 2.85 hrs.

Transcript being
processed.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on March 11, 2022.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Gwyneth Milbrath, *Tumultuous 2020*, T20-A-L-2022-02

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: Gwyneth Milbrath was born in Syracuse, New York, in 1987. She spent much of her childhood in Manassas, Virginia and attended Osbourne High School. She began her studies for a Bachelor of Science in biomedical engineering at the University of Virginia. During her studies, she completed an internship with a local hospital where she realized her true passion for nursing. Upon her graduation in 2009, she attended the University of Florida's expedited nursing program, which she graduated from in 2010. She worked as an emergency nurse at the University of Virginia Medical Center and was certified for sexual assault cases as well as pediatric emergencies. After caring for an infant who passed from a vaccine preventable illness, Milbrath became interested in public health. She worked on her Master of Science of Nursing and Master of Public Health while beginning her Ph.D. in Nursing. She graduated with her MSN and MPH in 2014 and earned her Ph.D. in 2017. During this time, she moved to Colorado with her husband, where he began his Ph.D. program. While pursuing her Ph.D., Milbrath worked as an emergency room nurse at University of Colorado Health. She began her position as assistant professor at the University of Illinois-Chicago shortly after.

At UIC, Milbrath began working in the Midwest Nursing History Research Center. In the autumn of 2019, when the director abruptly retired, Milbrath replaced her. Her first event, a speaker series in March of 2020, was the most successful in the MNHRC's history. Shortly after, however, UIC began remote learning, and the state of Illinois went into shutdown. Given her numerous qualifications, Milbrath began to apply for nursing positions in Chicago hospitals. Unable to find work in Chicago, Milbrath found a travel nursing agency that agreed to work with her. Her first assignment was in a rural northwestern Colorado town for three months. Her next assignment was in Morton, Washington, from September to December 2020. From January to March 2021, Milbrath worked in a hospital in Everett, Washington. At the end of March 2021, Milbrath returned to Illinois. Throughout her entire time traveling, she continued teaching as a professor and worked on a variety of grants for the MNHRC. Over the summer, she worked as a traveling nurse in Atlanta, Georgia. During this time, she caught COVID-19 from an infant. She completed her contract in July and returned to Chicago in August. During this time, the MNHRC was awarded the two grants Milbrath had been working on. The autumn semester of 2021 was remote, but Milbrath stayed in Chicago and took the time to recover from the busy year. At the time of the interview, she had recently begun working part time as a nurse at UIC's hospital.

Subject Headings/Key Words: University of Virginia; University of Illinois-Chicago; Midwestern Nursing Research History Center; Chicago, Illinois; Everett, Washington; Morton, Washington; Atlanta, Georgia; COVID-19 pandemic; pandemic; nursing shortage; nursing crisis

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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