**Merrill Eskew Video Transcript**

00:06 Jerry Wray, Merrill’s partner

I met Merrill, my lover/partner through a coming out support group. I was one of the facilitators and Merrill was one of the participants. And we started dating soon after that.

00:23 Amy Eskew, Merrill’s daughter

“I want to laugh with you. And I know there won't be anyone miss sharing my joy. I want to cry to you, but I know there won't be anyone to wipe away my tears.” My parents got divorced when I was in second grade. So, most of my life with him was spent with him as a single parent. He loved taking us on vacation. In the summers, we were usually gone for a couple weeks, hop in the car, drive, you know, a million hours.

00:56 Jerry Wray, Merrill’s partner

Merrill was working as a flight controller. And getting tired of doing that. We were sort of looking for something else for him to do. He was looking. And we discovered The Little Professor was for sale. I had a full-time job at the university so, it was basically Merrill running the store and me dropping by after work and on weekends.

The illness developed slowly. He was losing weight for probably a year.

01:30 Amy Eskew, Merrill’s daughter

There wasn't a lot of time between his diagnosis and when he passed. I think he was diagnosed in ‘88 or ‘89. I was told my freshman year of college in 1991.

01:44 Jerry Wray, Merrill’s partner

After we did our year-end inventory in 1991, he didn't go back to the bookstore at all. Maybe dropped in occasionally but was not well enough to actually work at the store.

02:04 Amy Eskew, Merrill’s daughter

When he was really sick. I did see him a few times. I don't know how many. There were times that he would not allow me to come when I wanted to come because either there were sores on his face or he was not feeling well or he just the appearance was gonna freak me out. I think looking back on that I should have ignored him and gone anyway.

02:25 Jerry Wray, Merrill’s partner

One of the things that came out in the last two years of his life was how little he complained about the difficulties he was having. I'm not sure whether you would call it stoic, but he did not spend a lot of time thinking “Oh poor, me or why me” and just dealt with it on a day-to-day basis mostly.