



## From the Archive: “Notes to Self”



Questions prepared for (Long Island "R") home - Smithville,  
Dr. Tittley N.Y.  
Wed. Dec. 17, 1937

1. Examination - thorough, internal, for embryological development.
2. Hormone test - ovarian examination
3. Determination of whether or not a pseudo-hermaphrodite.
4. What is Dr. Fox's analysis? Is she willing to experiment?  
With male hormone?
5. Does she want me to stay out here?
6. Possibilities of a job here, while gaining weight and learning  
trade; leaving the race question in the open, etc. [They tried to  
palm me off as  
a Cuban]
7. Where do you think is the seat of conflict - in the brain,  
the body, the glands - or where?
8. Where could I go to get an answer? What fields are doing  
experimentation and have the equipment?
9. Why this nervous excitable condition all my life and  
the very natural falling in love with the female sex? Terrible  
breakdowns after each love affair that has become unsuccessful?  
Why the willingness to fight instead of running away in  
this instance?
10. Why is that my greatest attractions have been toward extremely  
feminine and heterosexual women?
11. Why cannot I accept the homosexual method of sex expression,  
but insist on the normal first?
12. Why is it that I believe that psychiatry does not have the answer  
to true homosexuality, but that experimental science does? (Don't know)
13. Why are you so interested in my gaining weight, unless you  
attach some importance to my case?
14. Why do I desire monogamous married life as a completion?

## Pauli Murray Papers at Harvard

### "Notes to self," December 17, 1937

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love with the female sex? [...] Why the willingness to fight instead of running away  
in this instance?
12. Why is it that I believe that psychiatry does not have the answer to true  
homosexuality, but that experimental science does?
19. If it is a question of race conflict, submission to authority, being hemmed in by  
restrictions, why is it I am proud of my negro blood, that I do submit to Authority  
as far as I am able, until I am proven wrong, or my point of view is accepted?



Tuesday - Dec. 16  
morning

Interview with Dr. [unclear] (German Psychiatrist)  
(Some of these questions asked Dr. Halz)

1. How long do you suggest that I stay here? (8 to 10 days)
2. Permission to go into city - Permission granted for Wednesday  
bathrobe  
mittens  
bed-room slippers  
(typewriter)  
poetry
3. Sedatives and waking up in the morning?
4. Why no bowel movement?
5. Why the internal conflict that won't let me rest? no answer
6. Periods of ups and downs - why the extreme affect by nature.  
No answer
7. Why has everybody been so nice to me considering the fact that I'm not a paying patient. (Later discovered that I was a paying patient.)
8. Why do women mother me eventually?
9. Why does my conflict take the form of over-activity instead of drink of some other mal-adjustment.
10. Why the rapid pulse-beat and heart beat in spite of sedatives?
11. Why did my menses stop for 5 months when I was 16? During this period I gained about 15 pounds.
12. Why does my conflict take the form of "trying to help people out."
13. Why do I tend to believe so firmly in myself in spite of the accepted rules of Science?  
answer - overestimation
14. Why the inverted sex instinct - wearing pants, wanting to be one of the men, doing things that fellows do, hating to be dominated by women unless I like them? - Answer glandular
15. Do you think I have a mother fixation?
16. Why are both men and women attracted to me in different ways? Men are always patting me on the back, women always

## Pauli Murray Papers at Harvard

### Interview with Dr. -, German Psychiatrist, December 16, 1937

5. Why the internal conflict that won't let me rest?

12. Why does my conflict take the form of "trying to help people out."

13. Why do I tend to believe so firmly in myself in spite of the accepted rules of science? Answer = overestimation

18. Why do I expect so much out of science, and yet have a deep religious nature?

18. (again) Why do I look and act like a 14 year old kid when I am 27 years old? Answer - that I look like a 17 year old.

23. Does either science or medicine know the answer to homosexuality (no.)



**“One person plus one  
typewriter constitutes  
a movement.”**

Making connections between Pauli Murray’s  
“Notes to Self” and Murray’s letter-writing  
campaign to gain admittance into law school






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HOWARD UNIVERSITY  
Washington 1, D.C.

June 19, 1944

Dear Professor Powell:

I received your letter of June 13th denying my application to do graduate work in Law at Harvard University. I would characterize our correspondence to-date a "comedy of errors".



Without commenting on your assumption as to my sex, since you have not subjected me to medical examination, I am interested in the democratic technique of free discussion and reexamination of traditions and policies in all democratic institutions.

Your letter raises the broad problem of whether or not women should be admitted to Harvard School of Law. The deeper implication is whether or not legal talent, since you are dealing with the application of a law student primarily, should not be given equality of opportunity to make its contribution to the American body of law and policy-making through access to any law institution of learning such talent desires to develop itself.

Would you therefore indicate to me the correct channels of appeal from what appears to be the decision of the Committee on Graduate Studies? Would you also inform me as to where the policy which you have enunciated may be found in the representations you make to the public regarding admittance to the Law School, such representations as are placed in your various catalogues? Will you also inform me as to what body has determined the policy which you have enunciated?

With all good wishes, and with the hope that Harvard will change its mind on the second and third strikes, I am

Fraternally yours,

SGD Pauli Murray

P.S. I read your article in New York Times Magazine, June 18th, with keen interest. You are somewhat of a dry humorist, aren't you.

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July 20, 1944

c/o Att'y. Hugh McBeth  
524 South Spring Street  
Los Angeles 13, 1944

To the Faculty of Harvard School of Law  
Cambridge 38, Massachusetts

Attention: Professor T. R. Powell,  
Chairman of Faculty Committee on  
Graduate Studies


Dr. James B. Conant, President

(2) Following my application to Harvard School of Law, I have applied to every major law school in the country which has the courses and faculty I am interested in. Yale University is giving no graduate courses at the present time. University of Wisconsin discourages graduate work there because most of their faculty members are on leave with the Government. The University of California has accepted my application but cannot offer any courses in my field until March 1945. Many of the courses I would be interested in at Columbia are not given until the Spring of 1945. So that, if I am to continue graduate work at all during the coming year, it will have to be at Harvard.

(3) My further reasons for requesting admittance to the Law School are outlined in the attached copy of a letter to Mr. Smith. Will you kindly return this letter?

(4) I know the overwhelming power of tradition, and am aware of the difficulty involved in asking you to change a long established policy. I am not asking admittance to Harvard dormitories, but merely the right to sit in your classes, have the use of the 550,000-volume library and get credit for a year of graduate work.

(5) I assure you that you will have no cause to regret admitting a woman to the Law School. If I doubted my ability to do competent scholarly work, I should not apply. Do you not feel that if I could measure up to the standards of many of your warm friends and products, I could measure up to your own standards?



Humorously, gentlemen, I would gladly change my sex to meet your requirements but since the way to such change has not been revealed to me, I have no recourse but to appeal to you to change your minds on this subject. Are you to tell me that one is as difficult as the other?



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Wherever new opportunities are opened to a class of persons hitherto denied such opportunities, such persons extend themselves to prove themselves worthy. You are not denying a mere woman an opportunity. You are denying a promising and potential legal scholar the right to use 550,000 volumes in your library and the opportunity perhaps, to make a contribution to legal thought, to say nothing of the traditional quality of the Law School faculty.

I am therefore, making application, for a re-hearing of my appeal, and am in the same mail making application to the faculty of the Harvard Law School for a change in its own policy regarding the admittance of women. Could any intelligent individual do more?

Sincerely yours,

*Pauli Murray*  
Pauli Murray