

Interview with Stan Pearson

18A BST

F: Where are you from?

S: I am from Madison, Florida.

F: Madison?

S: Yes.

F: I t<sup>h</sup>ought that you were from outside of Madison.

S: It is a place called Cherry Lake but it is in Madison the same county.

F: What schools did you go to?

S: I went to three schools in the county. I graduated from Madison High School. I was one of 23 students who intergrated it in my junior year there.

F: Was that the first year that it was intergrated?

S: Yes. I stayed there for two years until I graduated.

F: Why did you decide to come here?

S: Well, I am interested in medicine and I knew that they had a Medical School here and I t<sup>h</sup>ought that the undergraduate program would be better and would be better preparation for going to Medical School.

F: Had you thought of going anywhere else?

S: I thought of going my decision was either to come here or go out of state somewhere.

f: Where else had you thought of going?

S: Vanderbilt, or either Some small colleges up in one in Ohio, Muskengum or Oberlin.

F: Are those black schools?

S: No

F: They are white schools?

S: Yes

F: How did you find out about them?

S: Well, through correspondance and the guidance counselor at the high school.

F: At Madison? I just wondered because the schools I have not even heard of. What made you decide to come here?

S: ~~Well~~, it was in state and it would cost my parents less and I thought that it was a pretty good school.

S: Had you visited here before?

S: No, well yes. I came through one in a science convention in my junior year, and that is about the extent.

F: What other school would you have liked to gone to?

S: Now that I look back over it.

F: Yes'

S: I would like to go out west somewhere.

F: Why is that?

S: I think that the atmosphere is more condusive to overall education.

F: In what kind of a way?

S: I feel that there is more world awareness like this is a very apathetic campus here and it gets you down. No one cares about anything here except grades.

F: Do you think that most people care about grades here?

S: That is all that they care about like they do not raise relevant issues.

F: Well you are not saying that most of the people here are real grinds because all they care about is grades? Are you saying that?

S: I am saying that most of them are here.

F: Well, let me say it this way. I ~~would~~ have thought that most people here do not even care about grades very much.

S: Well, that is true too.

F: What you are saying is as far as other kinds of things.

S: Yes

F: There are several schools where many people are not interested in the kinds of things that you are talking about but they are real grinds and everyone studies and are very academic like there were no other things in the world. Here people are very interested in other things.

This is a partying school or something like that.

S: They are not actually learning how to communicate with other people. I do not think that they become much more socially aware by being here.

F: Do you have any black friends at the college from high school?

S: Most of the students that I went to high school with went on to junior college or some form of higher education .

F: Do you get to see them much?

S: Well, not much I very seldom go home. I see some of them when I do go home.

F: Why do you not go home more often then you do?

S: Well, I think that Madison is a very sterile environment and I am at the point now that when I go I want to see new people and new experiences and things like that.

F: I was in Madison for the first time two weeks ago. Have you gotten the chance like your experiences in college with other kids that you graduated with from high school?

S: Not really, we never sit down and reflect upon it because I do not know if their ideologies are different from mine.

F: How it that?

S: Like more or less caught up in the Black Socialist thing to sort of speak, <sup>of</sup> searching for a black identity something like this.

F: How do you feel that you differ from them?

S: I am not interested in the black identity bit. I am interested in getting along with my fellow man be black or white whatever. I ~~XX~~ do not direct myself to all black functions or something like that. I thing that the only way that the world can be better is by associate action between blacks and whites so that they can understand each other better and can communicate better.

F: That is something that we have talked about and it would seem that you would have static from certain black students on this campus with an attitude like yours. Let us talk about that. When you first came here, was the campus any different then you.

thought that it might be?

S: Not really, I knew that I have never had too much trouble adjusting to new places. I felt that my Freshman year here was better than my Sophomore year to the extent that more was going on campus before the racial issue. The race issue is very stale here and after Marshall Jones lost his tenure here and the SDS was disbanded and stuff like this. This is just a stagnant environment. New things were said in other areas but as far as social climate is concerned you know that is being taken care of.

F: How was the social climate here?

S: It was very scary you know you come from a so called very conservative community or town and you do not really know what to expect. When you hit an institution that is so liberal you do not know how you do not know how to place yourself in context with the whole university whatever you do not know what the mood is and stuff like this. You do not want to push yourself too far and get shot or something like that. I have not had any trouble. I always do things that I want and I have not let that bother me any.

F: Do you have more contacts with blacks or whites here?

S: I am in contact with more whites.

F: Socially

S: Yes

F: DO you think that there is a need for more things for blacks to do on this campus?

S: Well, sure because there is really nothing that caters to black needs like this. I do think that there are blacks on campus that have a different ideology from mine and I think that they should be accommodated. I guess that it would really increase boredom for them if they had nothing to do.

F: What kinds of things would you have?

S: Well, I do not know. I have heard a lot of comments over the past couple of years from the Black Student Union that the black student sort of get together and promote

their own culture.

F: What do you feel about that?

S: Well, like I said I am of the belief that everyone should do his own thing like associate with the people that he meets and I do not necessarily search for black friends it is just whoever I like and through interaction you become closer and better friends something like that. The fact that I am not around too many black persons all the time effect me one way or another.

F: Would you be in favor of them building a Black Student Union?

S: I really do not know because I would not for my own personal benefit I would not care one way or another but I think for maybe for the social welfare of other blacks that it might be appropriate.

F: Do you think that would sort of interfere with you sort of value of people getting together and knowing one another if there was a special place for blacks to party and study and so on.

S: Yes, that is one reason that I would not be in favor of it. It sort of isolates you from the rest of the campus. You sort of segregate off in your corner and forget about the rest of the University and stuff like this. I do not think that you have trouble trying to identify and interact with other persons you know communicate.

F: Why do you think that the black students want it?

S: Because most of them come out of predominately black communities and most of the persons that they have communicated with in their entire lives has been blacks and I think that they feel strange trying at this point to find different set of values.

F: They why do they come to a predominately white school?

S: Because a degree from the University of Florida for a black person is more than a degree from a black university, as far as getting jobs and salaries and stuff like this. I think that a lot of them are willing to sacrifice a little social life

life for this advantage later on.

F: I have heard that certain black students that did not like some of the things academically on campus and that the professors told them that if they did not want to do the things maybe not in the middle class white way but the standard way then why did you come here. So it would seem that in addition to making the sacrifice that the blacks want to create a school within a school. The blacks want to write differently from the whites and want to punctuate differently from the whites which is so silly and the teacher got so ticked off and said well then okay why did you come here if we do not do it just the way that you want to do it. So the argument is and I think with reasonable credibility that the people want a degree from here but they do not want to do the things required for getting a degree from here. Does that make sense to you?

S: Yes. I do not think that they are bucking against the requirements here but they think that a lot of the proposals that are being pushed toward the black studies and things like this. I think really it is for the welfare of the entire University community because there needs to be educated toward black goals and black values and black culture and stuff like this to understand better the position of the black students.

F: What about dating on this campus? How is that for black students?

S: Well, to me like a long time ago it does not make any difference to me personally who I am seen out with.

F: Let me say this some of things that I ask you I ask you as a black person because that is the way that people perceive you. Now what is in your head is also important and they are not one in the same. In other words when I ask you what it is like for a black person dating on this campus that is an legitimate question whether or not that you want to see yourself that way or not part of reality is the way that other people see you. I think that you can answer it both ways but they are both important. Your attitude could be that it does not matter to me but it matters to other

people.

S: Like who?

F: People that you come in contact with. You sit in the classroom and say to yourself that it does not matter to me that I am black but it may matter to some people in the classroom that you are black.

S: That is their problem the way that I look at it. Like my friends and I tell them the same thing I say it does not make any difference because I am mature enough to know what I want and they should be mature enough to know what they want and that each person is an individual and they should do mostly what they want and you respect them for this. Most of my friends know this and especially about me because this has come up several times and I have told them.

F: What kind of things have come up?

S: Well, you know they ask who are you going out with this weekend and I give a name and they say .

F: Black friends or white friends?

S: Mostly white friends. Then they go to the next question and now it is sort of a game and they say okay you know what I am going to ask now is she black or white. I say what difference does it make and stuff like this and it is really just a game because they know that I do the things that I want and do not have any inhibitions about doing the things that I want to do.

F: Do you date many blacks or more whites?

S: Well, mostly I do not know, I will say it has been more or less more white. There is a scarcity of black girls on campus and even more scarce is the number of black girls that I want to go out with.

F: Why is that?

S: Well, on basic principles I am very particular about the persons that I date like virtues and things like that.

F: How do you think black girls feel about black guys dating white girls?

S: I really do not know. I have not really asked around or try to find anything out.

- F: You know there has been quite a bit of buzzing in the air.
- S: I could care less. I think that everyone does his own thing. The fact that I am not around the black students that much I do not really know what the feelings<sup>is</sup> and I could not make a judgment but I would think that there are some resentment to this maybe.
- F: Why is that?
- S: I do not know. They might feel that they are not good enough. That might be their rationalization for it.
- F: Why do you think that black guys date ~~XXXXXX~~ white girls?
- S: I do not know. When I am taking a person out, I have basically the same criteria sort of respectable, basic certain middle class values to a certain extent and like I very seldom compromise at the risk of not dating at all. I have these standards and I keep them.
- F: What about as far as students on this campus. I know you in a different way than most of the students that I have talked to. How do you feel about being black in a campus that is overwhelmingly white? Do you feel that the students are pretty friendly in general? What is your perception of that?
- S: Well, the students that I have had contact with are friendly but then again there might be that 15,000 or so that I do not really know how they react or what their ideas are. The persons that I have been in contact with during my three years here for the most part are very friendly.
- F: What about instructors?
- S: Well, instructors I would say from friendly to sort of indifferent. They have been co-operative most of them that I have had.
- F: What about the staff people clerical people and people like that?
- S: Well, I do not really have too much contact with them. The most contact that I have ever had with the administration is now that I am working for the University to a certain extent and other than that I have sort of steered clear from the administrators have used the counseling and stuff and that is about it.

F: You say that you steer clear of the administration is that an intentional thing?

S: I feel that they are not going to tell me what I want to hear anyway and why bother.

F: They are not going to tell you what you want to hear?

S: No, like I might want to take courses and they might say that I should not take them and stuff like that.

F: What about you are a member the BSU?

S: Yes.

F: Are you active in that?

S: Not very I go to the meetings sometimes.

F: What kind of feelings do you have when you go to those meetings?

S: I am not sure what you are asking?

F: I intentionally made it sort of vague because I wanted to see what you were going to say. Obviously, a lot of the [unclear] ? [unclear] have espoused that the BSU meetings seem ineffectual to what you are saying here.

S: I see. I go to the meetings and I do not say anything basically I just go and watch and listen and just observe more or less because true a lot of ideas that they express are really different from mine and I would not support.

F: Do you speak up?

S: Not generally, because I have been to too many where controversial subjects have been raised and stuff like this. If the time came, I would.

F: What do you think about black leaders on this campus?

S: To me Mitch Dasher I really like him. He is very, I do not know, he has , I do not know, how should I describe him. He is real honest and people listen to him and I think that he is one of the few persons on this campus that when he gets up to speak that everyone in the audience listens. He really has something to say. He has good ideas.

F: Do you agree with most of the things that he has to say?

S: I agree with a lot that he has to say. When he speaks a lot of times, he says

he might be sort of revolutionary in his thoughts and stuff like this but you have to agree most of the time with him in that what he says is right and when he speaks he knows what he is talking about. HE is well informed and he knows what is going on.

F: Can you think of anything off-hand that you disagree with him about?

S: Well, maybe I disagree a little bit in the like he is chairman of the BSU and maybe I disagree a little with the organization of the BSU. The way that they have their organization structured and their tactics maybe the basic organization. They have it sort of organized on the principle of the Black Panther Party like their Minister of Information is Defense. The Minister of Defense I do not like. The guys that are running it I do not think that they are very realistic. I guess they are more militant.

F: Who else are leaders?

S: I think that Mitch is hte most outspoken guy. I think that Larry Jordan I do not think that most of the black students like him.

F: Why is that.

S: I really do not know. SOMething happened and I really do not know about it, but at a meeting when his name is mentioned there are shrills from the crowd or something.

F: Who else would you name that most black persons look to as being leaders.

S: Maybe Fred Reddy.

F: That is the first time that I have heard that name mentioned and it kind of surprised me.

S: He is a Sophmore and he has some pretty good ideas and he is in Pre-Med.

F: What is his name?

S: Fred Reddy R-E-D-D-Y

F: What about people like Steve Baker and Don Dixon?

S: They are Mitch's friends and they more or less follow Mitch. I would not personally think that they are leaders.

F: Do you ever catch any static for not being militant enough or being black enough or something like that?

S: Maybe I do but I never hear it. It would not bother me one way or another not unless they started something verbal attacks or something like this but I have not heard any.

F: It seems kind of illogical to me that they are quite as laissez-faire as you make them to be because they really jump on some people.

S: Who?

F: Some of the super-militants. I heard that some girls wanted to start a Brownie troop in town and they really caught hell you know this we are not going to let you do that. Did you hear about the play that they had at Norman Hall two weeks ago?

S: You mean when it was <sup>interrupted</sup> ~~interrupted~~?

F: Yes

S: Well, that is all that I know that it was interrupted.

F: Did you hear why?

S: Did they not say that it was not relevant and that this was not what they wanted. I do not really know.

F: Do you agree with that in interrupting the play?

S: I do not know what the play was about.

F: It does not matter.

S: No, I am more or less a non-violent black.

F: Do you ever catch any static for being in a fraternity?

S: Not at all because like Mitch has been over to the house a couple of times a year.

F: What for?

S: He came over with our release from law school and Fred Reddy has been over.

F: As what a guest for dinner?

S: They come over for lunch or stuff like this.

F: Do you think that more blacks would like to be in a fraternity?

S: I really do not know. I think that the way that things are now like if you are searching for this black identity thing like blacks want to be with blacks and I think that because of that there is a sweep away from wanting to be socially intergrated with whites.

F: Do you think that is sort of a superficial thing or that people have really internalized that?

S: The way htat I look at it is well this search for this black identity and everyone has been trying to go their separate ways and make it. I think that they fall back and find out that it will not work that way that they have been trying to intergrate for the past ten or twelve years or whatever. They find that has not worked too well and they are trying to back off and regroup together and then use a different approach.

F: I just thought of something funny. Have you met any friends in college? Quite a few. What kind of changes would you like to see brought here?

S: Well, I think that there should be a few. First of all, I think that there should be a few administrative changes like President O'Connell.

F: Why?

S: I do not like him because he is too much of a politician. I do not see why he accepted the job of President in the first place like back in the Supreme Court he was supposedly non-political and then he comes here and he makes all of these political moves like I regard them as political moves. Some of his decisions and the basic way that he has been handling the campus, we could have more black students here and more administrators or higher quality administrators and we could have more black students I feel.

F: Why do we not?

S: I do not know. I really do not. I know one reason that a lot of blacks do not want to come to start with. Why come to a conservative Southern school when you can go to a more or less liberal Northern school or something like this? We are going to

hassle with the people that you have to deal with plus the books too it is a tremendous pressure. I disagree with a lot of the decisions that he has made concerning well the rationale behind them. One thing, you heard about this black week ~~didn't you?~~ HE does not take a stand one way or the other.

F: What was his stand on it?

S: This is what Mitch presented to the BSU, he said that O'Connell gave him the go ahead for Black Week and that we would have funds and when Mitch presented the expenditure or requests for money he said that they could not get it because they were out of money or something like this and before that Hugh was down here and they said that they were going to have a black week and Lester Hale said that they would underwrite the costs. When the time came for Black Week they set it back down.

F: O'Connell said that Hale never said that.

S: Well, I do not know. THIS IS WHAT I heard and this is what Mitch said and it is somewhere in the transcripts or something.

F: Do you think that it is more important to have more black professors here?

S: I think a lot of black students would feel better if there were more black professors here. I think that qualified black professors would be good for the whole University community. I think black professors not so much for the black students as much for the white students.

F: Why?

S: Because I do not know. I think that most of the people that come here do not in any way identify with the blacks or do not have an idea what it is to be black and have not had too many experiences with blacks. I think that we need communication and contact with all areas of black culture perhaps in the educational process. It makes people become more aware and they lose a lot of their inhibitions and prejudices.

F: More interaction.

S: Yes

F: Also, you probably think that you would have more black students?

S: Sure, because then more whites would come in contact with the ~~XXXXX~~ blacks. Like now it is 150 blacks on campus and like if you were say real prejudiced or whatever and you do not want to associate with blacks good like you could steer clear and stuff like that. I figure that if there were more black here there would have to be some sort of confrontation where people can exchange ideas and understand each other.

F: What do you think could be done to encourage more blacks to come?

S: Well, they have got to be sure that they will get a fair shake.

F: What does that mean?

S: They are not going to be screwed up by the system. They have to be guaranteed that the professors is going to be fair. That they can find some sort of social life coming from a predominately black community and how well can they define themselves in a white context. What role should he play or how can he exist in a white atmosphere.

F: Do you think that most blacks have an attitude about this school that would encourage more blacks to come?

S: I really do not know. I would I encourage as many as I can. I really do enjoy it ~~enjoy~~ here. I think that there is room for a lot of improvment. I have made the best with whites the best that I could.

F: What does your family do?

S: My mother <sup>is</sup> employed by the Public Board of Instruction and my step-father is also.

F: What do they do?

S: My mother teaches elementary school and my step-father teaches high school.

F: In white schools?

S: Black schools.

F: They still have separate schools?

S: Well, not legally. When I was a Senior or Junior they had a proposal in Madison County where mother teaches that they would abolish all schools and make one big school. That was voted down. They are going to have to do something and make

some adjustments either bus or someway to get the schools mixed. I figure that if they had done that back four years ago they would have been a lot better off. Like they had been bucking the system to get around it but they are going to have to do it anyway. I think that the students that are losing are being hurt more then they benefited.