

in prevent^{ing} blacks ~~from~~ ^{to} registering~~ing~~. Many of them would~~nt~~ go ~~out~~ and when they would tell them things like this, they would just forget about it. But in my case, I knew what to expect, so when he told me to do that, I said, "I have my birth certificate right here, and it will prove where I was born, when I was born, that I am old enough to register." So I was registered.

I: Have voter registration drives been held in the district in which you hold office?

H: Yes, we've had several. In fact, we're in the midst of one now, ~~which~~ ^{that} I hope will be successful. Of course, the books ~~were~~ ^{will} closed January 24, I think it was the 24th, and we want to get ~~in there~~ ^{as many} ~~and~~ blacks registered as we possibly can. That's the problem with, in the black communities. You, you have an awful lot of trouble getting ~~in~~ ^{them} to register.

I: What were some of the organizations that conducted ^{this} voter registration drive?

H: Well, the one that has been most active in West Palm Beach has been the, what is ~~now~~ known as the Gold Coast Voters League ~~Committee~~. ~~And~~ in Riviera Beach, they have had very active registration drive by ~~the city~~ ^{their civic groups} out there. I, I'd like to just stick with right here in West Palm Beach because I know more about all these registration drives even though we do now have a kind of cooperative thing here on ~~Newberry~~ ^{Riviera} Beach, as on a registration drive, and we help them any way we can. The various fraternities and sororities participate in those registration drives. but, it's really a matter of knocking on doors, and getting people to register or you have to sometimes just go, actually take them to the place where the organizations have set up for registration in order to get them to register.

I: When were most of these registration drives held, in what years?

H: Well, in Riviera Beach, I think their most active drive must have come about four, four or five years ago, about '70, '71. They had, they were very active, and as a result of that, they, as you know, at one time, four of the councilmen, four of the five councilmen of Riviera Beach ^{were} ~~was~~ black. But since that time, they haven't had any real concerted efforts. The ones that we hold here in West Palm Beach are sort of a continuous things. we have them two or three times a year.

I: I've heard the ones in Riviera Beach have been rather successful.

How would you rate the ones ~~there~~ that have taken place in West Palm?

H: We have had some that I think you could say were successful, but as a general rule, they're not too successful. We have about five places where people can register, we advertise in the local black paper, and we announce it in the churches, but there is there is just a certain amount of apathy in the black community in terms of getting registered. And one of the major problems is you get them registered and they won't vote. And if they don't vote in two years, you know, they're purged from the voting list. We have that problem.

I: Are there any things which prevent blacks from registering?

H: No, we're always, right here in West Palm Beach and Palm Beach County as a whole, blacks do not have any trouble registering.

I: Well, we have a little checklist here, with this questionnaire, if you would go down each one and rate ~~it~~ how important you think they are in preventing blacks from registering. You may have covered a few of them already. And if you'd comment on each one as you go.

H: Economic dependence on whites. I don't think that that's a major factor ⁱⁿ preventing blacks from registering to vote because I don't, I haven't run up on pressure of white employers to prevent ~~that~~ ^{their} people from ~~wanting~~ ^{voting.} So, I'm going to say fairly important, okay. Now, fear of physical violence from whites, that's not important at all, they don't have to fear that. Complicated registration forms, that's not important because they're not complicated, they're very simple. Poor registration hours, that's not important, because we have, we have registrations like on Saturdays, and in various places. Registration not held often enough, now, that could be a factor.

I: Dr. Button wanted to add to that question, removal from rolls ~~from~~ ^{for} non-voting. I think you already mentioned that. ~~If you were in~~ _____ ~~then~~ how could you _____?

H: That does, and I really, I really do not, I, that's one state statute that I'm in, I'm in complete disagreement with. I think it should be every four years, because people are interested in more interested in voting on an election year when the president is being elected, and then they argue with the local government, this will get people out to the polls. And now this indifference of blacks to voting, I ~~want~~ ^{don't} rate that, I don't think that's important at all in preventing them from registering, but there is an apathy among blacks not to go to the polls, and I can't understand it.

I: ~~You~~, that puzzles you?

H: It does, it actually puzzles me. I think that to a great extent it's the leadership in the black communities, and the persons who have the greatest audience in the black community are the

ministers, and I just do not think that the ministers are emphasizing it as much as they should, they are not offering the kind of leadership that I feel is necessary in order for the blacks to become more involved.

I: Okay, the next few questions are asked to gather information on your election ^{campaign.} Were you able to campaign freely? that is, were you threatened in any way?

H: No, never threatened, I was able to campaign quite freely.

I: Were you handicapped by a lack of campaign money?

H: No, I wasn't, I wasn't hampered by campaign contributions. ~~we've got~~ ^{we've got} ~~was just~~ I had about three or four ladies who got out there and really, really drummed up the campaign contributions. My campaign fund was adequate the first time I ran and also the second time. Now, many of my contributions came from whites. I had, there were many whites who ^{were} working very hard to help and raise campaign funds, and ~~many~~ ^{making} contributions.

I: Why did you decide to run for office? Was it your own decision or were you selected by a group of _____?

H: It was my decision, and when I ran, the school board was partisan, as you know, in Palm Beach County, it is now non-partisan. I ran the first time in 1970, and it was partisan. It was a decision I made on my own. As a teacher at Palm Beach Community College, I'm exposed to the products of the Palm Beach County school system, and I was worried, or disturbed at the way they were being prepared for college. Those ^{students} who were ~~trying~~ ^{applying} out ~~for~~ ^{to} the junior college, and I just felt there was something that could be done, and I decided that I would get in there and try and get on the board, and see ^{if} I couldn't make some kind of definitive contribution

or changes in the product that we put out in Palm Beach County.

I: When the elections were partisan, which party did you run?

H: Democratic.

I: ~~Did~~ ^{Then} you belong to the Democratic party?

H: I'm a registered Democrat, *yes.*

I: Have you ever received any support, financial or otherwise from the Democratic Party?

H: No, I have not.

I: What were the two or three most important issues, you mentioned the product of the school system. Was that the issue that you ran on? What were the two or three most important ~~issues?~~

H: ^{Well} ~~^~~ One of the things I advocated was that the school board meetings should be held at a time where working people could, could be present. That was like seven o'clock in the afternoon, ~~As~~ they are held now. This was changed after I got on the board. I also stressed the very, I think ~~definitely~~ ^{definitively} the fact that there was a chasm that existed between the community and the school, I hit hard on that. I hit hard on the fact that we were not teaching our students to read, that this needs, needed to be emphasized much more, and we needed to sort of return to the basics and cut out some of the frills, and teach the students how to think, and one thing I said over and over again was that we must prepare our youth to live in a world ~~that we cannot~~ ^{foresee} because we are constantly changing, and most of them will change jobs at least three times during their lifetime, so it's a matter of being able to think and being able to be retrained to do something else if automation, for example, wipes out the job you're on. And this has happened, you know, ^{over} ~~in~~ the past twenty years. These are,

these are some of the key issues that I raised, and one of them was what I refer to as visibility, that is, being responsive to the people, being available so that the people have a problem and they want to call you, answer your phone and talk to them. Listen, that's what I've practiced since I've been on the school board, listening to people. People will call me from all parts of the county, and they will say, I'm calling for a group, and we decided that we would call you because you seem to, you seem to really have the interest of the people at heart. And I, I have said many times to my fellow board members that I get more phone calls than all of them, I do.

I: Well, do you think the issues that you raised in your campaign were the major issues facing the blacks in your community?

H: I wasn't campaigning as a black candidate. When I made my announcement, I said very specifically that I'm running for a seat on the school board, to do what I can for all of the schools in Palm Beach County, and I feel, I feel that the blacks have been neglected, and certainly, we do have to fill this void, but we, my personal feeling is that we, we've got to educate all of the children, and once we, once we begin to do this, in the same way, under the same conditions, then we won't have so much black/white problems.

I: The next few questions now are asked to determine some of the conditions which have enabled blacks to win office in Florida. How were you elected, at large, or by district?

H: I ran from a district, but elected at large.

I: How many people are in your district? I don't know how ~~accurate~~

applicable

~~through~~ that question is, since you ran at large.

H: Well, we have seven districts in Palm Beach County, and if I recall correctly, we, we're districted according to ^{the} number of registered voters, and ^{then} last time we were districted, districted, I think that there were something like 26,000 people in each district. Now, however, since that time, many more people have registered so we will probably be redistricted again sometimes ^{or} soon according to statute.

I: You say you ran from the district, did you have to win an election inside the district, or...?

H: Yes. You see, when I ran the first time, there were four candidates from my district, three white and I. And I got the largest number of votes, and a man named ~~John~~ ^{Jay} Jay Solomon got the second highest number. I did not get a majority, so I had to enter into a run-off with him. Well, I, I won the run-off. Then I opposed the incumbent, Bert Johnson, who had been on the school board for eight years, and won quite handsomely, ⁱⁿ something like ^{twelve, thirteen thousand} ~~12,000 or 13,000~~ votes. And that was in ^{the} ~~a~~ general election ^{when} ~~with~~ over 100,000 people ^{voted.} In fact, I got the highest number of votes than any other candidate running for the school board, and, and, most of the candidates were running for other offices, such as ~~of~~ the legislature, the county commission. I think one county commissioner got more votes than I did, one state legislator, and Paul Rodgers, I mean in Palm Beach County.

I: How many people are in your district?

H: It's hard to tell how many people are in my district, I would imagine that in my district now there is upward of 30,000 registered

voters. Well, now, this is just registered voters. It's probably twice ^{that} ~~as~~ many people in my district, including children and so on, you know.

I: What percentage of that is black?

H: The percentage of the people in my district that are black would be something like ^{maybe} fifteen per cent.

I: What percentage of blacks of voting age in your district are registered to vote _____?

H: In my district I, I would imagine, now I can't be sure about this, I ^{could} ~~can~~ talk about it on a county-wide basis, but in my district, I would imagine that, oh, sixty-seven per cent of the blacks are registered to vote.

I: What percentage of the blacks who are registered to vote do you think actually voted in your election?

H: Well, when I ran the first time, in 1970, I think perhaps seventy to seventy-five per cent of the blacks voted. Now, in 1974 when I ran, uh, I don't, I don't feel that that, that the percentage was that high.

I: Do you think you got any votes from whites?

H: I know I did, I could not have been elected because at that time only about one twelfth of the registered voters were, were black. ^{and} so, I beat my opponent, I have fifty something thousand votes and he had something like forty, maybe ^{even} 41,000. So you see that means I had to get a large percentage, I had to, I'm sure I got a larger percentage of white votes than my opponent did. In, in both elections, in 1970 and in 1974.

I: What kind of percentage would you guess that that was of white vote, of your total vote?

H: Oh, in the first election in 1970, I would, ~~there~~ I would imagine that out of the total vote I got, or more than likely, eighty to eighty-five, well, eighty per cent, I would say, ~~that~~ of the vote was white. In the second election, I would say, uh, sixty per cent. You see, it was in the, we, we have changed the way we elect the board members since we are non-partisan. We, we're not on that first primary ballot, we're on the run-off, and at that time, 1974, there wasn't a very much interest in the run-off because there were not that many key people, or key officers in it, so the turn-out was rather small. I ~~made my point~~ ^{beat my opponent} by something like a two to one margin, but the turn-out wasn't ~~good~~ ^{oh} but about, ^{oh} I'd say, twenty per cent of the total registered voters in the county.

I: Um hmm. In your first election campaign, inside your district, your three opponents, how many of ~~them~~ ^{those} were black?

H: I was the only black.

I: And how about Mr. Johnson, he was a white man, wasn't he?

H: ~~Yes~~, Mr Johnson was a white man. I'm the first black who has been elected to any, ~~to a~~ ^{to a} county wide office in Palm Beach County.

I: Um, that's one of the reasons ^{that} I'd like these tapes for the Oral History _____ so many of the people we talk to are history makers as far as that goes. _____ that's have you, have you ever had to run against a black opponent? Did you say your second term?

H: No, no. In the second, in the second, my second, um, round was against a lady, an anti-bussing lady, and she lost, she lost badly.

I: Um hmm. What percentage of the total votes did ~~she~~ ^{you} end up getting when you were going through your campaigns?

H: In the first campaign, I imagine I got about sixty-five per cent of the total votes, sixty to sixty-five per cent. Second campaign, about the same amount.

I: Okay, these next few questions are asked to determine how well black officials in Florida have been able to benefit those that they represent. In what ways do you think you've helped blacks in your district, or in West Palm Beach by holding office?

I don't know if that's your view.

H: Well, you see, that's not my, that's not my view of things. My view of things is that I'm a servant of the people. Now, one of the things that I addressed myself to when I was first elected was the fact that there was a great disparity among the blacks in administrative positions. Now, this is one of the things that I ~~adressed~~^{adressed} myself to, and to a great extent, this has been rectified. We have five areas superintendent, two of them are black. ~~in Florida~~
I don't think this would be ~~this~~^{that} way if I were not on the school board. Uh, we have a black women principals, we have more black principals of high schools in Palm Beach County than we ~~do~~^{did} before I came on the board and with the, with the hassle, with integration and so on, I think that the blacks would have gotten the shaft much moreso than they have, if I had not been on that board. And, and I'm very willful, I don't pull any punches, but I don't work just to see that blacks are promoted, I try to work to see that those people who are qualified within the district are promoted, and that, that's what I advocate.

(Break in tape)

I: Do you feel there's anything that has prevented you from doing a better job on the school board, especially in regard to benefitting blacks?

- H: That's a hard one to answer, ^{I've} ~~I~~ won some and ^{I've} ~~I~~ lost some. I've won, I've lost some that I thought were very important, when I say won some, I mean, by that I mean that I have won some victories that were for people that would have benefitted blacks, and I won some that, that were not just for blacks, but for the people as a whole. ^{For} ~~So~~ what I felt was a goodly system, which naturally would have benefitted blacks. But I don't think that the overall, looking at the overall picture that I have been prevented from making my views known and getting some of my views put into, uh, put into operation, or put into practice.
- I: As far as preventing you from doing a better job, would you go down this list and rate these things, comment on each one of these, as far as how important they've ^{been} ~~set~~, if they're important at all in preventing you from doing a better job?
- H: Now this first one, the office has no real authority. The authority really rests, in not in one individual, but in the school board sitting as a board. So I would say that the, that's not, that's not important. Outvoted by white officials, well this has happened sometimes, so I'd list this as fairly important. Not enough revenue available, now, that's very important. Unfamiliar with administrative duties, well, you see, ^{as} ~~the~~ board members you are not supposed to be involved in administrative duties, yet you should be familiar with them. ^{And} ~~^~~ being in the teaching profession myself, and having studied administration and supervision I do know something about it. Having been, I've never been a principal, but I have been an assistant principal, so I've had some administrative experience. So this, this would not be important. Lack of cooperation from whites, no, that's not important,

I've had good cooperation from whites. Lack of cooperation from blacks, now that has been a problem, so I'd put that fairly important.

I: Black citizens, or ^{other} by ~~by~~ elected officials?

H: Black citizens. Do you mean, you, you're referring to officials here?

I: No, I think that it's probably referring to citizens.

H: Lack of cooperation from state officials, no. That's very important because I've had some, I've had some, Some situations with the ~~government~~ ^{governor} that I, I was, I ~~feel~~ ^{felt} very strongly about, and I felt as an elected official who was elected on a county-wide basis, that some little things that I was saying to him were important for, not just one segment of the community, but for the whole community. ~~as~~ ^{So} I think that's, that's been very important. now, ~~not~~ in terms of the state board of, I mean, like Commissioner Turb. ~~A~~ very ^{good} ~~good~~ repoir with Commissioner Turb. I, I know him even better than I do Commissioner Christan. But the, the governor, I've had, I've had some problems.

I: What were the issues between you and?

H: Well, one of them was the appointment, I was on his advisory committee when he had an evaluating committee. The appointment of a particular school board member. Now, I felt that my input to the governor should have been very important, because I was serving on the board, you see. And I don't, I don't address myself to an issue if I do not have something very very substantial to back up my views. ~~and~~ ^{And I did.} ~~ideas.~~ There used to be in Palm Beach County, a power structure that controlled who ran for the school board, or who won the election for the school board, and, and he

was appointing a person who, who's father was the leader of that power structure _____. This I learned by, from whites, I didn't learn it from blacks. This was brought to my attention even before the man named even came in, you see. And the way in which it was done, we met as a committee and we were told by the chairman of the committee that we should not, we must submit three names. Well, the committee, we had four names. The committee decided to send one name and the chairman of the committee said that "I know the governor's going to send it back." Well, he did send it back and by the time we met again, another name had appeared, and I really don't think that....

I: That it was the man that uh, you talked about?

H: It was a man, yes, it was a man that was appointed. And I, I think that the, I think that the government should have been more receptive to my views because I was serving on the school board, I was serving on the committee, in fact, I was the only black on the committee, and I don't think that he gave me credit for, for knowing as much as did about the background of the Palm Beach County school system, you know. And, too, I think it was a lot of shenanigans, you know what I mean when I say shenanigans, a lot of, a lot of trickery, a lot of ~~skulduggery~~, a lot of political....
skulduggery

I: Backscratching?

H: That's right, that's good. Political backscratching. I haven't gotten over it yet, I, I still think it was a very, very unwise move on the part of the government.

I: Could you tell me more about that power structure that you mentioned

that got, seems to control elections back and forth?

H: Well, at one time, and I learned this from more than one source, at one time, if you wanted to run for the school board in Palm Beach County, you had to ask a certain man.

I: What, what kind of power did he have, I mean, was it economic or political?

H: Economic. Economic and political. And this is one of the things that I think has really been eliminated to a great extent. If it had not been, I could never have been elected. But I, I ran a grass-roots campaign, and these are the kind of campaigns I believe in, a campaign that is geared for the people, and I, it is my feeling that elected officials are elected to serve the people, and the only way they can serve the people is to be in touch with the people, and I think that I am much more in touch with the, with the people who have children in Palm Beach County with the senior citizens in Palm Beach County who are interested in the educational processes, with labor who is definitely interested, and with the teachers and the teacher organizations who are definitely, than any other board member. Even at that time. Therefore, I, I figured that the governor was, was playing politics when he made that appointment. I still feel that way, and I've told him that. Lack of cooperation from federal officials, that's not important. I don't think that we have had that. Whenever we have applied for federal funds for various, uh, categories, if the applications were right, you know, we haven't had any trouble securing....

I: Has criticism or lack of support from the black community hindered you in holding office? That is, do some blacks not cooperate

believe

with you because they ^{believe} you're a token in government and have no real authority?

H: No, they, that's one of the things they can't say, they can't say that I am a token, because I do not conduct myself that way, I, I speak out quite freely on issues that are of concern to the black community, on issues that are of concern to the total community. There are times when I have to address myself to issues that are of major concern to the black community, and I don't mind doing it. And I don't, I don't mind, uh, addressing myself to issues with the black community itself should be more concerned with, either. So they can't call me a token, an

Uncle Tom, ~~a token is a~~ or tokenism, or whatever you want, however you want to put it.

I: Do you feel that white officials ever treat you differently from other officials?

H: No. No, that's the one thing that I, that I think is unique. Elected officials, regardless of the party affiliation, do, I have ^{found} ~~some~~, that they treat me the same as they do any other elected official. And this, this has been somewhat of a surprise to me.

I: This next question, I don't know how applicable it will be to you as a school board member, but what services have you provided blacks in your district that they didn't have before you took office?

H: Well, you see, this is not applicable to me because whatever, whatever services I am able to initiate benefits not just my district, but the total school system.

I: Your area of concern is education, right, because the next, the next question we have asks again, to rate how effective you feel

you've been in things like police protection, streets, and roads, housing, welfare, employment, parks and recreation, water, sewage, garbage, health and hospitals, education, and fire protection.

H: Well, I was an activist before I ran for the school board. By activism, I mean this; that I am involved in, in many areas. I do, of course, many of those things concern me. I'm president of the Gold Coast Voter's League, which addresses itself to such things as sewage, such things as the drainage system, such things as street light, street lighting, such things as stop lights in those areas. We've had to address ourselves ^{to the fact} that we needed a stop light on Seventh and Australian, right there, and also on Palm Beach Lakes Boulevard and Seventh Street, you see. *You see,* this is a black community back in here predominantly, and almost ^{100 percent} ~~one I represent~~, and when we go out to Palm Beach Lakes Boulevard before that light was there, you might have to wait ten minutes before you could get across. Well, I'm interested in the total picture of the community, so, not just education. I just happen to be a school board member, but I'm on several committees, I am on the executive committee of the Science Executive Board of the Science Planetarium Museum of Palm Beach County, in fact, I'm first vice ~~president~~ president, I'm on the board of directors of United Way, I'm on the board of directors of the ~~Urban Needs~~ ^{League.} I'm on several boards that I would say span the concerns of the total community. That's the kind of person I am.

I: As a school board member, though, can you affect much besides education?

H: Being a school board, being an elected official, but....

I: But in your job as an, an elected school board member, I mean, the school board itself, does it affect much change outside of education?

H: No, the school board itself does not affect much change outside of education.

I: I understand your other interests ^{but,} I was just wondering about the school board itself.

H: Well the school board itself is primarily concerned with the educational processes. And that is what it is designed to concentrate on.

I: How effective do you feel that you've been?

H: As a school board member?

I: As a school board member, yeah.

H: I think it's effective as any school board member that has served since I have been in this area of the country. And more effective than many.

I: Have you gotten federal funds in your district?

H: The school system has and does receive federal funds, yes.

I: Could you list some of the more important grants, and amounts?

H: Well, now, to keep up with the amounts is a very hard thing to do because, you see, you get an agenda where grants or proposals are presented and you approve it and then it's submitted to the federal government, they approve it or disapprove it. ^{But,} I would say that we get something like maybe ten, fifteen million dollars ~~\$10,000,000 or \$15,000,000~~ a year that comes into the school system through federal grants.

I: Have you been able to see that blacks are hired fairly?

H: That's one of the things that I've addressed myself to, I think I, I addressed myself to ~~just about~~ that particular issue earlier in our

conversation, yeah. I think that being black and being on the board, ^{and} quite often I have had to call the boards' attention to the fact that here we were not promoting blacks, and this was the, one of the reasons why we were having many of the problems we were having in the schools, and I, I did see some very definitive changes in the recommendations coming from the superintendant even before we went to the appointed superintendent, the elected superintendent, the last elected superintendent served for two years while I was on the board, ~~you~~ began to change his attitude in that respect.

I: Revenue sharing, that doesn't affect ~~you~~ the schools?

H: No, revenue sharing does not affect the school board directly, revenue sharing comes into the counties and the municipalities.

I: Have there been any black protests, sit-ins, boycotts, or riots in your city in the last ten years?

H: Oh, yeah. We've had....

I: What were some of the issues?

H: We've had riots at some of our schools, the issues involved are racial in nature, until ^{when} it gets to the point of being a riot. You might have to bus students ^{from}, for example, we have to bus students from Delray Beach to Boca Raton, black students. Well, the, the, much of the Boca Raton population would like to see Boca Raton be a white oasis. And they, this, this exemplifies itself in their attitude. at home, therefore, its going to exemplify itself in the attitude of their children at school. And the Delray Beach students who are black resent having to be bussed ^{down there.} And especially having to be bussed somewhere where they don't want, where they are not wanted, you see. So this has created some problems. We

had, we had demonstration when they were closing down all of the black high schools. Every high school that was all black was phased out. And the, the reason is simply that the black high schools were not equipped as well as the others? It was, it was a logical thing to do, but it was, it was not a fair thing to do. And then the black high schools were situated right in the heart of black community~~ies~~. Two have become junior high schools, all whites are bussed in, Blacks are bussed up. But this created a problem for a while. I think it has lived from a long way, and people are accepting, both black and white, the fact that we had, we were under a court order to do something, and we had to do it the best way we possibly could. And I think that eventually people will begin to accept it and I think that they are accepting.

I: What are some of the effects you saw in _____, those riots? ~~and~~ I mean, were there any _____?

H: Well I didn't, I think, I think perhaps they served in a constructive manner because they, they made the people themselves realize that it was necessary for them to sit down and talk. And by that, I mean ~~mean~~ the parents, you see. it made the parents become more involved in the school community. ^{And} when I say the school community, maybe I should say the school center. Blacks and whites got together and sometimes it was not as quiet as it could have been but they learned that they had to talk to each other because their children were the ones that were involved, so in a way, I think that some constructive things came out of the riots.

I: The next few questions are asked to enable the assessment of black politics in Florida in general. you mentioned Governor Askew before, the next question is

Briefly, what is your opinion of Governor Askew? That is, do you think
he's been favorable in attitude and
policy towards blacks in Florida or not?

H: I think overall his attitude has been favorable, however I do not think that the governor has, I don't think that the governor listens very closely to what black elected officials have to say. Now, ~~mean~~ he ^{has} done some things that some people figure another governor would not have done. I don't look at it that way. I figure that he has made some appointments that were, uh, let's say that were, were not expected at that particular time, but I do not think that it's just Askew, I think it is the time in which he lived, and regardless of who was governor up there, that some of these things would have been done. some of the appointments, for example, ~~would have been what~~ he brags about he appointed black judges.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

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H: So I personally do not give Governor Askew an exceptional amount of credit for these things regardless. I think that the times dictate that these things must be done. And I definitely do not feel that he listens to the black elected officials enough. But I tell you one thing, when he needs help he'll call on you. Now ^{I'm} ~~I've~~ always served on some committee. In fact, I had to pull this....I have an organization, and I mean when I'm running for office, you've got to have an organization. you've got to have an organization that is well-defined, that is on the ball ~~and~~ ^{and} understands something about politics, that understands something about the people in the community, and his organization was, ~~in~~ Palm Beach County, was in, in disarray three weeks before the general election in 1974, and they came and asked me if I would bring my old group in and help, and we did, and I think that we were instrumental in helping him carry Palm Beach County. I don't think he thinks about things like that. ~~isn't~~ Maybe he does, he knows them, of course he knows it now, because I had to write him a letter where I pointed this out to him, because there was some other things that were happening in Palm Beach County.

I: So your relationship with him has been pretty much geared down _____ exactly what he means.

H: That's right. It's been one of, one of where I have done all I can for him, anytime he calls upon me, you know, anytime his supporters call upon me, but I haven't seen nothing in return in

terms of my input to him, you know what I mean?

I: What is your opinion of some other state officials, and state representatives. I know you mentioned Mr. Charlington, I imagine you worked pretty closely with him.

H: Yes, I, I worked, I worked, even though I was running, and at the same time this helped me to be able to help his campaign as I moved around. Some of the others, like when the Attorney General Shevin ran, he met with a group of us. Dick Stone, for example, had lunch with a group of us, and in fact, my campaign manager, right here in Palm Beach County was contacted by Stone's people, and we lent support to his campaign here. But, you, ~~but~~ but you don't, I think they forget these things once they ^{are} elected. Now, Chiles is up for re-election. I got a letter, I was recently elected chairman of the school board of Palm Beach County. The first black in the county, in the state to become the chairman of ~~the~~ ^a school board in the state of Florida, and I got a letter from Chiles, congratulating me. But now, Chiles wants something from me ^{now,} you see what I mean? I haven't heard from him before now.

I: You, you mean you actually have the type of organization that national and state-wide officials come to, come to, pay comments to at election time?

H: Well, you see, you see, nobody believed that in 1970, that a black man could win a seat on the school board because it is voted on county wide. Even, even the editor of the Post, who was Gregory Fall ~~at~~ at that time, told me I didn't have a chance. And I told him I felt that I did have a chance, and I proved that I had a chance, and I have had tremendous support county wide.

Therefore, when these people get ready to run, they figure that Dan Hendrix can influence people, you know, so that's when they, that's when they get in touch with Dan Hendrix, ~~You~~ know. But otherwise, then they forget him. Now, I'm not that kind of, I'm not that kind of elected official. I, I think that I must serve those people who worked for me, who helped me, those who voted for me, and those who did not vote for me. But I certainly do not forget those people who contributed to my election in a very definite way, by getting out, helping me, and things like that. I have, I, I worked at the junior college, and as such, I've come in contact with many youth, many of the younger group of people. And really and truly, they were, to some extent, the backbone of my, of my support in the white community.

I: Did you get a lot of help from Palm Beach students, Palm Beach Community College students?

H: Yes, I do, I do.

I: What do you teach there?

H: I'm a math teacher. And one, and another thing that helps me is that I ^{am} ~~am~~ sponsor of the junior college chapter of a national honor scholastic fraternity, which is known as Phi Theta Kappa. This puts me in very close contact with a couple of hundred students besides the students I teach, you see. And since I have been sponsor, we have attended every national convention, we hosted the first state-wide convention, in fact, we're hosting the one next year, and we're very pleased to be able to host the state Phi Theta Kappa convention in the bicentennial year.

I: Um hmm. Do you feel like your, the students play a prominent part in your election campaigns?

H: I don't feel like it, I, they do. They, they actually do. Or in anything I'm trying to do, I can get those students to play a very prominent role.

I: What effect has running for and holding office had on you personally and you're family?

H: Well, I'll be very honest with you, it takes you away from your family a lot, it, it puts a lot of pressure on you in terms of your health, you have very little time to do the things that you would really like to do, you can't even hardly have a hobby, ~~because~~ ~~it's~~ ~~you're~~ as busy as I am, I usually have me a garden back there in my back yard. I haven't had time to even begin the garden this year. I had one year before last, one last year, this year, it's all grass back there, I haven't even had time to get out there and work on it. So it has taken away much of the things that I enjoy doing, you know, personally, and it has taken me away from my family quite a bit, I have, uh, two small children, a little girl, eight, and a little boy four and a half, and I don't get a chance to spend as much time with them as I should or as I would like to because of the, the pressing problems that have been connected with the school board since I've been on it. It's been just a series of crises.

I: ~~Why~~ Well I, seems like ^{we've gone through} a quite a few questions, but I'd like to ask you about the crises ~~of those crises?~~ ^{you just mentioned. What have been some}

H: All right, the very, the very first one was when I came on the school board, they had not come up with a suitable plan for desegregation. Well, when, when we presented a plan to ~~Jerry~~ ^{Jared} Eaton, ~~he~~ ~~said~~ he said that the plan was not acceptable and that we had to come up with an acceptable plan within ~~two~~ two weeks. This

Was ~~is~~ a crisis. We had school board meetings ^{that} ~~and they~~ were packed with people who were objecting to what we had to do. You, you, we have had, we have had riots in three or four of our schools since I have been on the board. These are, these are crisis situations. We have just had a , a very, I think, disturbing situation with the Lake Worth High School situation. One of the board members suggested that we combine the junior high and the high school to get the high school off the double session, and bus the junior high schools to what is going to be, beginning in 1977, no, in 1976, next year, beginning in 1976, a middle school in Boynton. Well ^{the} people were up in arms about this, ^{you see.} ~~so~~ you hold hearings and you've got people blasting and screaming and saying what they are not going to do, what you shouldn't do, and it's just been wringing me since I've been on the board.

I: These last few questions are asked to compile an overall group profile of black elected officials in Florida, and again, no individual answers will be recorded. Um, what date, I know you ~~hold~~ us, the county-wide school board office, what date were you first elected?

H: I was elected in the general election in November, I don't ~~know~~ ^{remember} the exact date, possibly the second, of 1970, 1970, but you know the date ^{is the} ~~what, refers to~~ ^{first} Tuesday in November, right, in 1970.

I: The date you took office for that period?

H: Well, at that time, we were supposed to take office two weeks after the general election, however, we did not, because our commissioners did not arrive on time, it was about three weeks before we took office.

I: And, number of times run for office?

H: I have run for an office twice.

I: Um, your age?

H: I'm ~~52~~ fifty-three.

I: Your occupation?

H: I'm an instructor of mathematics at Palm Beach Junior College.

I: And what was your father's occupation?

H: My father was a farmer. I was born on the farm, in Georgia.

I: And what's the extent of your education?

H: I have a master's degree in mathematics, a bachelor's degree in industrial education and mathematics, and I've done, oh, several, I've studied at several institutions, ^{with courses} ~~which of course is~~ beyond the master's degree. When I came to Florida, I had, I held a life TS6 certificate, that is called in Georgia, which is equivalent to the rank 1A in Florida. But of course, they, they don't ^{accept} ~~then~~ ~~say~~ that, in fact, they didn't have such a certificate ~~when I~~ ^{came to} ~~in~~ Florida, and they don't give me credit for that ranking ^{as} of now, in Florida.

I: What's the salary that you receive from your elected position?

H: We don't get a salary in Palm Beach County. ^{I: No salary.} ~~At~~ We are nonpaid, right, no salary.

I: Were you active in the civil rights movement ^{of} ~~in the~~ 1960's to '66?

H: Not as active as I have been since then, because at that time, I was working very hard to try and get my master's degree. And I spent a year in school at the University of Ohio, under the National Science Foundation, in the summers, I was attending school, so, my participation, really active participation was not what I would, would, was not what it would have been if I had not been pursuing my education more so.

I: Then you didn't belong ^{to} NAACP ^{or} ~~then~~?

H: Oh, I am a member of the NAACP, I have been a member for years.

I: When you were a student at the University of Ohio, was there much black activism?

H: No, it wasn't. I was, I was in the University of Ohio back in the year of '59, '60. There was not very much activity in terms of civil rights there. Perhaps it wasn't needed because I, I didn't encounter any, any prejudices, in terms of the students that I associated with. I encountered some with the professors, and you still do anywhere you go, all over the country you encounter some. If you're black.

I: Okay. What church do you belong to?

H: I am a member of Paine church. I'm chairman of the trustee board of that church, ~~now~~ I'm, I'm really involved in community activities from the church to some of the others that I mentioned, like the United Way, and some of these that I mentioned, many more than I should be involved in. In fact, I've got to get out of some of them. I'm on too many boards.

I: Okay, well, the next question is, are you an official in the church, and you just mentioned that you were. Are there other community organizations or activities that you're involved in?

You just mentioned about four or five of them.

H: ^{yeah,} I mentioned earlier that I was president of the Gold Coast Voters League of Palm Beach County, I am treasurer of the Florida State Voters League, uh, I'm ^{a member of} ~~on~~ the board of directors of the United Way, I'm a member of the board of directors of the Urban League, I'm a member of the executive council of the Boy Scout Council. I can't even remember all of them.

I: I've never, I've never heard of half that stuff there.

Okay, one, one final question. Do you think that winning and holding office in Florida has been worth your effort?

H: Yes, I do. It's been rewarding, it's been taxing, family wise it's been taxing, health wise too, but, it has been rewarding and I think all of the problems that I've had, and ^{the} problems that I face now, are, I really think it's worth it. And I think more people should ^{become} ~~get~~ involved. I encourage my students to become involved in the, in the political structure of our country because it is my sincere belief that we can make the next 200 years much better than the past 200 years were. And the only way we will do it is that the masses of the people realize that they do have a voice in government, and that voice is their ballot, and they should be concerned with electing people who will be dedicated to serving the people, and not special interests.

I: Then you feel the ballot in which has been gained very recently for ~~the~~ black people in most parts of the country valuable weapon?

H: It is, it has been a valuable weapon, a viable weapon, and I think that it will become even moreso as blacks become better educated to the fact that they can make the difference. in many, many elections all over this country, blacks hold the ballots of power, and I think that they must learn to use this, and to use it effectively. This is one of the things that I'd like to see happen. We hold the ballots of power in Palm Beach County. If we could get them registered, and to the polls.

END OF TAPE [END OF INTERVIEW]