

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEWEE: Dr. Betty Stewart-Dowdell

INTERVIEWER: AaBram Marsh

DATE OF INTERVIEW: March 15, 1995

M: I am conducting an oral interview with Dr. Betty Stewart-Dowdell on March 15, 1995, at 4:06 p.m. in the conference room of Little Hall on the fourth floor. Where were you born?

D: Gainesville.

M: So you are a native of Gainesville?

D: Yes.

M: You did your schooling here?

D: Yes. Kindergarten, elementary, and high school.

M: To what schools did you go?

D: St. Augustine's Parochial School for preschool, Duval Elementary School, and Lincoln High School.

M: Lincoln High School at the time was an all-black school?

D: Yes.

M: When did it become integrated?

D: I think maybe there were one or two interns from the University who came in about 1966 or 1967. As far as students, I do not think any students were out there when I graduated in 1968. They closed down the school after I graduated. They closed it down before the graduation of 1969.

M: Are your parents from Gainesville?

D: Yes.

M: What are their names?

D: James L. Stewart, who is deceased, and Dorothy Jean Hickman.

M: Do you have any siblings?

D: I have sisters.

M: Their names please.

D: Meretha A. Stewart and Mayetta Green.

- M: What are some of your earliest memories of growing up in Gainesville, particularly in a segregated town?
- D: I can remember parochial school being in a classroom with little wooden desks in a little wooden school building. I think it still stands. It may have a different name now. There were two teachers, Mrs. Gibson and Mrs. Harris. Mrs. Harris still may be alive. I think Mrs. Gibson has passed. That would be the earliest memory, I guess. We were all black there.
- M: When were you born?
- D: 1950.
- M: During this time of segregation, how was life here in Gainesville?
- D: I did not really know it was segregated because everybody I dealt with was black. I really did not think about white people, where they were, or what they were doing. I did not think about them not being in school. I just figured they did not go to school, or I really did not think about where they went as far as schooling. I know we caught a bus and went to school. I remember seeing buses with white kids on it. I never gave much thought to their schooling. I went to a black church. So it was a community-based relationship that I had. I really did not have that much to do with white people at the time. I [remember] going to certain stores. There were quite a few black businesses back then. I guess going downtown to buy clothing. I really did not do a lot of restaurant eating when I was younger. We did not go out to restaurants as much as people take children out now to restaurants. So I did not really have that much of an association with them.
- M: What about interaction with other blacks? How was the black community in Gainesville at that time?
- D: The black community was very tightly knit from your home, neighbors, church, and teachers. They all were intertwined. Everybody more or less knew everybody or knew some member of the family. I was the only child who was here going to school because my sister is older than me. She and I never lived together. She was away in another state. For those of my friends and their friends who had brothers or sisters, more or less, they were known by what their brothers and sisters had done before them as far as school is concerned. There were expectations of people because of other brothers and sisters. Some people may have gotten the short end of the deal because of other brothers and sisters. Everybody knew everybody. If you did something in school your neighbors knew it. Your

neighbors wore you out on the way home, your parents wore you out, and your teachers wore you out.

M: What do you mean, wore out?

D: Either with words or physically. HRS did not come into mind about whether or not you would go to jail for hitting someone. I do not think anybody got killed by being spanked, paddled, or whipped. You just respected your elders no matter who they were. It was not like kids now. You could not say, "You are not my mom. You are not my dad. You do not tell me what to do." You did not hear that back then. You did it because they were older than you. After they got through doing what they were going to do to you, you knew they would tell your parents. They [your parents] were going to do it to you too, or thank them for doing it to you.

M: How about the church?

D: The church played an integral role because most of the ministers were leaders in the community. They were looked up to mainly because they had an audience of people every week to whom they could talk. These people could spread news about what was going on and get the word out. I do not know if they were respected or tolerated by the white community. I think the white community knew they needed to have some kind of relationship, hopefully a working relationship with black ministers because of their relationships to their members. So I think a lot of the white people in power went through black ministers to get things done or to find out things.

M: We will fast-forward to your time in high school at Lincoln. How was it there?

D: Lincoln was a good experience. I had good experiences in school. It was a good experience because I was a good student. I did my work well. Everybody expected me to do work. I expected to do work. I did not have any trouble with academics there. I was in the band from seventh grade on up. That was a good social outlet because I learned to play the clarinet and participated with all activities. I went to football games. With band you could hardly do anything else because of practice after school. The extra time you had during school was your hour [for] physical education or band. I enjoyed it.

M: When you were preparing for college, where did you apply?

D: I know [I applied] at Bethune-Cookman. I am not sure where else I

applied. I was eligible to come here to the University of Florida, but opted out because I had had a segregated experience throughout my life and did not feel it was necessary to change it then. I thought it had been good and taught me well. I do not think I applied here even though I was eligible to attend. Back in those days, they had something called the Florida Twelfth Grade Placement Test. I think you had to make 300 in order to be able to apply to a state university. I think I made 322, but I do not think I applied here. I went to Bethune-Cookman mainly because at that time I was a Methodist and my father was Methodist. I do not think I got any more money because of that. I may have gotten \$200 from the Methodist Church to go there because it is Methodist-run. It was not a scholarship or anything because I was Methodist. I just felt comfortable going there.

M: What did you do at Bethune? Were you in a band?

D: No, I was only there for one year and one-half. I pledged Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. We were in a tight curriculum. It was on semester terms. The curriculum we were on was some kind of high speed, but based on test scores and high school grade point averages. We were on a fast track. I think we were taking seventeen or eighteen hours per semester. Most of them were heavy in the humanities. It did not give a lot of time for other stuff.

M: What was pledging like at that time?

D: I really cannot remember pledging. I think there were twenty-seven of us who pledged that particular sorority at that time. I cannot remember one step [as in "stepping"] we did. I remember getting ill. We started pledging in the fall of 1969. I came home for the Thanksgiving holiday. I came home to get a lot of different things I needed to take back due to pledging, little items from the mall. I remember walking all day Saturday because the mall was closed that Thursday. [I spent] either Saturday or Friday getting things. When I got ready to get up that Sunday morning, my leg was swollen. I could not move it. It was stiff, puffy, and swollen. I ended up going down to Daytona to let them know I could not come back until they found out what was wrong with my left knee. I remember going and getting fluid drawn from it, and having it sent off somewhere. [I was] diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis. It was not anything fatal. I just needed to be off [my leg] enough for [the swelling] to go down so I could bend it. I could not even bend it because it was so puffed. I remember missing what they called Hell Week. I guess that was a blessing as far as pledging was concerned. I could not be there. My doctor would not release me to go back until it went down. I transferred at the end of that semester. I went back to finish out the semester, and then I transferred in

January to the University of Florida.

M: In what were you majoring?

D: Psychology.

M: And you transferred with that to the University of Florida?

D: Yes.

M: Why did you transfer?

D: Well, [tuition] was getting expensive. I do not even know what it might be now. It was going up every semester. I only went there three semesters. Each semester [tuition] went up. I did not see where I was getting that much of a difference in education. It was cheaper to live home than to go there. I came back.

M: When you came here, what year was that?

D: January 1970.

M: How old were you then?

D: I was twenty that February.

M: When you came here, what kind of experience was that?

D: Very different. When I transferred back, I stayed at home. I did not stay on campus to save money. There was really no need to stay on campus except if I needed a social life. I knew everybody here, so I really did not need to stay on campus for a social life because a lot of my friends with whom I graduated were here in the City. There were not really that many black people here on campus who were going to school to even think about socializing with them. I think there may have been about 100. If there were 150, there were just barely 150. There were not that many in class. If you have one other black person in class with you, that was an oddity.

When I first transferred back here, I had to take physical science and biology together for three semesters. At BCC, the first three semesters were heavy in humanities, so we took art, humanities, history, and all kind of things like that, but no sciences. That was supposed to be starting in the next semester I was there. I did very poorly in physical science and biology the first semester, almost as poorly the next semester. I think the

next semester I made two Cs, which was very different for me in my academics because I graduated valedictorian from high school. I had a 3.2, 3.7, 3.9 GPA at BCC. Even when I pledged, it did not go below a 3.0. I do not know what the GPAs were, but I know that with Es and Ds, they had to be below a 2.0 the first three semesters here. I withdrew in spring in 1971. I think after the spring of 1971, things started looking up. I did not have to take the physical science and biology anymore. I was able to find other courses.

M: What do you think contributed to the academic problems?

D: Not having a background in the sciences. At Lincoln we had maybe two chemistry classrooms, and maybe one or two telescopes. There was just something to show us what chemistry or biology could be like, but it was not a true picture of biology like at Gainesville High School. Every student, more or less, had a microscope. There were three or four labs or classrooms. You had ample time, and books and slides that were clean and fresh. You had little jars that you could put stuff in instead of having to rinse out and wash out whatever.

M: Gainesville High School at that time was white. What was the reaction of those white students to all these black students that came?

D: To what?

M: To the University of Florida.

D: I do not know. We did not have a problem with the students. The faculty, I think, resisted. All 150 did not start at one time. There was a program. It now stands for talent search, Upward Bound, and student-support services. It was something out of the Department of Education, a grant program. I think Elmer Tossie must have written a grant to bring minority students here on campus in some kind of developmental courses. I think over the one or two years, they amassed about 150 students who were still here even though I did not come here for that program. The students did not really have a problem with that because you are talking about 1970 or 1971. You are talking about the Vietnam era, hippies, yippies, bare feet, long hair.

M: People would sit on the Plaza.

D: Afros, sandals, dashikis. A lot of white kids wanted to be black. So it was not a problem with white students. Faculty resisted more than anything else, I think.

M: How so?

D: They just were not used to having a black person in a class and assumed that a black person could not do the work. [They] really did not know how to deal with them, feeling that most of the black people here on campus were admitted or were here because of some federally funded program. [They felt] we were all high risk.

M: Where did you stay at when you were here?

D: At home.

M: You just commuted to campus. Where did some of the other black students stay?

D: There were some in the Towers [Beatty Towers), I know. Different places on campus--the ones who were on campus who were not from Gainesville.

M: You said earlier within your Gainesville community it was very tight knit at the time. Did you see that here at the University?

D: No. The reactions of black students to each other were probably even worse than the reactions of white faculty and staff members because they did not know whether they were black, white, whether they wanted to be associated with blacks, whether they had come to integrate, mingle, or whether they could go in or out. They had been just plain afraid. I noticed a lot of times going across campus that people would not speak. You would very seldom see another black face.

When you would see one approaching, you would get ready to speak. You spoke to anybody no matter what sorority or fraternity they were, whether they were light skinned or dark, afroed, or wigged. You would get to these people and they would turn their head, look away, or hold their head down when you would get near them to make the salutation. Like I said, it bothered me because I knew they were suffering. When I left campus, I went home to a bunch of black folk, community. I had a church here and old classmates. I did not know what they did. I guess they just were closed up in their rooms over the weekends or at night. There were quite a few who were like that. There were exceptions. People that knew they were black and were still black. They wanted black friends.

M: Did you make any friends of those students?

D: There were a few. Willie Jackson, Jr. His father (Willie Jackson, Sr.) was

here at the same time. His girlfriend, Delphine, he later married. Gwen Francis was here at that time. I cannot remember the last name of Leonard. He was a football player at that time, too. Joe McLoud, I think he is back here in Gainesville. There are a few.

M: What did you all do socially?

D: Most times they would have something like little dances or something in the rec rooms or halls. A couple of times they would have a concert on campus. I remember Minnie Ripperton came. This was before she got famous, I guess. She sang out by the pond at the Union. The Orange and Brew and the Copy Center were not down there. It was an open area. That is where the band usually stood. Everybody else kind of sat around the rocks. They would bring people like that who would straddle the fences for us, [and] we would gather. Everybody played cards. That was about it. Like I said, I was not here on campus twenty-four hours a day, so what they did at night or on weekends I do not know, unless there was something specific for me to come back over here for on weekends.

M: You were talking about how the administration and faculty had problems with black students. When did that reach its peak?

D: I think the black students more or less reached their peak. The more black students who came here, the more we saw inequities as far as blacks were concerned. Not only with black students, but with the black staff here. The staff here was mostly custodial; grounds workers, those who cleaned the dorms, cooked in the cafeteria, and those kinds of things. They could come on campus, but that was about it. That was the only time they could go into the classroom was to clean it. There were maybe one or two administrators here at the time. Roy (Ishman) Mitchell (coordinator for disadvantaged students and minority groups, appointed 1969) was one. I do not know what his title was. He was one of them. There really was not anybody else as far as a real model for blacks here on campus to look up to. So some demands were made, overlooked, cast aside, or put on a back shelf. This was during the time that Stephen C. O'Connell was president (1968-1974). I do not know exactly who initiated the demands, or what happened initially. I know that they were not looked into.

M: When was this?

D: This was the early part of 1971.

M: When you first got here.

- D: Yes, when I first transferred back.
- M: What type of demands were they?
- D: Demands for more black students, faculty, and administrators. A meeting place for black students, the Institute of Black Culture; better treatment for the workers here on campus; a certain number of blacks to be admitted every year--pretty simple demands.
- M: What was there response?
- D: Like I said, the list of demands had been going around and circulated a while before that. It just sort of came to a head April 15, 1971. Some students more or less took the demands to the office of O'Connell and stated that they would not leave until he saw them. He did not want to see them under those circumstances, to be forced into seeing them. He had not seen them in the past when they had written nice letters. So he more or less required that they be taken out of his office and that the building be locked. They had to go outside. Those who would not leave were arrested when the police were called. News spread that there were students being arrested in the office of O'Connell. There were white students in addition to black students. It was not just a black sit-in, as they were called in those days. There were white students there also. They called the school buses to take everybody who was arrested to jail. I think the tires were put out on the school buses so they did not go anywhere. [The students] were released on their own recognizance. It got hot for a couple of days. More people got involved. The next day there was marching at Tigert. It went on for about a month, I guess. It ended up with him saying he was not going to meet any demands or listen to any demands. The black students said, "We will just withdraw." We did. We withdrew in May. I do not know the exact date.
- M: How many students?
- D: 100 plus. That was when the office of the registrar was in Tigert. On the ground floor there was a mass of black students withdrawing from the University because of racist practices.
- M: What was your role?
- D: I attended the meetings that were held to discuss what was going on, what the next steps would be, and how to try to get our demands met. I was not there at the initial sit in. Just like most other students who found out about it, I felt it was worth looking into to see what was so bad about it and why they were arrested. I started attending meetings, and decided along

with most of the other students who were here to withdraw. I thought it was the principle of the thing.

M: Who were the leaders?

D: There were so many. Kip Smith. I can see faces, but I cannot see names. Neal Butler, who was at the time mayor and a nursing student.

M: Mayor?

D: Mayor of the city of Gainesville.

M: He was a black student?

D: Yes. He was an older student. He was one of the persons who was integral. I remember seeing his picture a lot in the paper during that time. Joe McCloud was in it. I cannot think of names.

M: Was it equally distributed genderwise--male and female?

D: I think males were more or less leading it. There were a lot of females.

M: What was the response of the Gainesville community to this?

D: I cannot remember anybody who was involved with NAACP. But there was support from the Gainesville community. Some of the community leaders tried to help out and met with us in this situation. They tried to meet with O'Connell, but he would not budge. He was very adamant about what he was going to do and what he was not going to do.

M: Was he the only one?

D: Well, he was the leader. He was the one that could say yea or nay to anything. I do not know who was under him telling him, "Do not say yea or nay."

M: What did the other University students think about this?

D: I do not know because like I said, it just was not the protest about black needs, it was also the time of the Vietnam War and a lot of protests were going on about not wanting to be involved in Vietnam and draft dodging. I get the sit-ins and demonstrations kind of mixed up because at the same time, they may have been supporting the black cause, but in addition to that there were some things people were doing based on the war in Vietnam. I remember police with dogs and water hoses behind Tigert.

The parking lot behind Tigert (the Little Hall parking lot now) used to be army barracks--little green buildings. That is what was here, just like the FlaVets used to be. That is where the summer program that Mr. Tossie manned [was]. I remember that area. I remember right behind Tigert there were a lot of demonstrations because at that time, Sponsored Research was on the third floor in Tigert. Sponsored Research housed all the proposals, grants, and awards that people had been given to work on certain defense projects. They were guarded heavily because they did not want people to get the names of people who were involved in defense projects. So police guarded [it]. Every time there was a riot, sit-in, or a march, they surrounded Tigert Hall. I do not know if they thought they were going to go in and burn them, or just get the information and distribute it or what.

M: Who was Mr. Tossie?

D: Elmer Tossie. He was the one that directed the program that brought black students came to the University initially. I cannot remember the name of the program. It was some kind of summer program.

M: There were army barracks?

D: That is what housed it. That was part of the building before Little Hall was built. It was the army barracks. They just moved the army barracks from wherever when army bases were through with them. They were just like Gomer Pyle. You would see them up on the bricks, I guess. Little green buildings. They were just like trailers at that time--modules.

M: Who lived in those or what offices were those?

D: That office was for Instructional Resources, or the testing area. It was just like they have modules on elementary campuses now, where they have trailers because they do not have enough space for buildings. It was just like trailers, but they were actually army barracks with wooden floors and whatever. I remember a lot of stuff going on down behind Tigert. I guess you could say the corner of Tigert and the parking lot for Criser with water hoses, dogs, and police trying to protect Tigert or trying to keep the demonstration from going awry. It was a combination of the Vietnam demonstrations as well as the students who were protesting the arrests or O'Connell not listening to their demands.

M: Were some of those students involved with this activity Vietnam veterans?

D: I do not know how many veterans were back by then. There were not that

many veterans that were finished by then. I do not know when the war actually started, or when we started sending guys over in bulk. There were just a few who were coming back, if any. Now that I think about it, maybe it was the next year or two. There were three guys who had been in Vietnam who came to school here on the G.I. Bill.

M: When those individuals who were involved in the sit-in left, did they come back?

D: I do not know how many actually re-enrolled. I know I re-enrolled for that summer term. I know not everybody re-enrolled. I do not know what percentage of us did. It was a tough decision at that time for athletes (basketball and football) because they were recruited and on scholarship to play sports. Leonard George was a football player. Steve Williams was another one who was a basketball player from Pensacola. I think they decided to stay. They felt they could do more good [staying rather] than withdrawing. I know it was a difficult decision for them.

M: When the sit-in went on and people withdrew and came back, what was the atmosphere like coming back?

D: Some of the demands were being met, or were met. I found out that Roy Mitchell, who was one of the first administrators on staff then, resigned or was forced to resign. He was fired or asked for his resignation by O'Connell because he was looked at as one of the persons heading up the demonstrations or behind it all. He was no longer here. Other people were hired or brought in. I do not know who the first person was. Brockett Ministries was hired to be on campus. More black students were admitted. We eventually did get the Institute of Black Culture. Things were, I guess, improved to some degree.

M: When did the Black Student Union form?

D: That is kind of debatable. I do not know if we called it a Black Student Union in 1970 or not. It was somewhere between 1970 and 1971.

M: Those individuals who participated [in the sit-in] participated in BSU?

D: I do not think there was a formal name for it. It was more or less all black students who just met to make decisions on what we were going to do as a whole.

M: Did any of those individuals who were involved in that come to any kind of prominence later on?

D: Let me think. Neal Butler was already mayor. He received his nursing degree. I think he was working up in New Jersey. Kip Smith--I think he went to Africa and was teaching over there. I do not know where he is now. He was from Atlanta, I think. Gwen Francis was down at the University of South Florida. She became a financial aid officer here, but then she transferred down to south Florida. I heard about three weeks ago, when I was down in that area, that she had accepted a job at Georgia Tech. I do not know about prominence. There are no judges that I know of. There are no Supreme Court justices, or whatever.

M: When did you graduate?

D: 1972.

M: That was pretty fast.

D: August. [It was] four years.

M: Even with all that trouble. Were there people who took longer?

D: I am sure there were. Like I said, I had gone to BCC and we were taking seventeen or eighteen hours for three semesters. So I came here with that many hours.

M: That was transferred.

D: So the only thing that really was holding me back was science and biology.

M: After this, how was your social life, like dating?

D: I think I was dating the guy I had dated through high school. That really did not have any impact on me. There were friends out here, but I was not dating them. In fact, he was in Vietnam. I really did not have a lot of dating problems, as far as I was concerned.

M: What about some of your friends? Was there dating outside--blacks dating whites?

D: No, there was not that much of that. It was not well-known if it was.

M: [What about] dating within the black community? Was that pretty much like it is now?

D: Yes.

M: Was there a Hub? Now a lot of the black students live in Murphree. Was there something like a Hub?

D: No. The Towers and Hume Hall--that was about it.

M: What was the fraternity or sorority life like?

D: The fraternities and sororities came about right after the sit-in demonstrations on campus. They started on the campus in about 1971.

M: What group was that?

D: The Omegas, I think, came first. It was between the Omegas and the Kappas that came on first.

M: Omega Thi Psi and Kappa Alpha Psi.

D: I think AKA may have come on campus first, and then the Deltas.

M: What was your involvement in that?

D: I was involved minimally because there were not that many. I think the alumni chapter pledged the group that was here on campus because there was no other way for them to pledge. I was involved with it minimally at that time, not deeply involved.

M: Did you keep in contact with your sorority sisters from Bethune?

D: Yes.

M: What about those students who were not in Greek letter organizations?

D: They had fun too, I guess.

M: After the sit-in, what was the reaction around campus concerning black students and their demands?

D: I know there were more black students who became a priority of campus life. I cannot remember exactly when the Institute of Black Culture was established. I think the quality of life for black students improved when the Institute of Black Culture was brought on campus. It provided another place to go as an outlet for social activities, as well as educational activities. I think with the increased number of students here on campus there were more students who were black in classes with each other. That improved the academic side for black students to be able to see

another face, and to be able to get together with them for studying or planning class activities.

M: Who was the director of the IBC?

D: I cannot remember the first director.

M: What kind of social programs did the IBC put on at this time?

D: I think black students used this as the overall umbrella for the Black Student Union. Meetings were held there for different groups or organizations. The earliest thing I can remember would be putting on a conference called Black Americans Against the Odds. It was put on once a year. It grew to include invitations to people who were not just Florida residents, but also to southerners. It changed its focus. I think it went on for about eight or nine years. So that was a major conference that came out of the Institute of Black Culture. The gospel choir was a main focus of attention for black students and came out of the Institute of Black Culture at the same time.

M: Were you involved in any of these organizations?

D: I worked with the conference, Black Americans Against the Odds Conference. I was not involved with the choir.

M: What activities did the BSU put on at this time?

D: They started having Black History Month. They started off with Black History Week, and then it went to Black History Month. Conferences, workshops, relationship workshops for black couples, bringing different groups here. I think the Alvin Ailey dance troupe was one of the main groups being brought to campus at that time. Rod Rogers Dance Company. Speakers, lecture series, and those kinds of things [were brought to campus].

M: This occurred after the sit-ins and throughout the rest of your undergraduate career?

D: Yes.

M: After you receive your bachelor of arts degree, did you go directly to your master of arts degree program?

D: Yes.

M: You also got a master of arts in psychology?

D: Yes.

M: Why psychology? Why continue on with psychology?

D: I thought it was an interesting area. I really did not do a lot of exploration in it. I could see that in order to really do something with a degree in psychology, you really had to go ahead and get a master of arts degree, doctorate, or that kind of level of a degree in order to be able to use it. I liked psychology. I guess I was rebelling because everybody I knew who was in high school or had some kind of potential for going beyond high school wanted to be a teacher. I did not want to be a teacher. I figured if I went into psychology, I would not have to teach. I have fallen into that same vein as they have.

M: What did you do while you were here working on your master of arts degree? Did campus life change any during that period?

D: When I was working on my master of arts degree, that was a different level of activity for me as far as student life is concerned. I found my own efficiency apartment and lived off campus but close to campus. I biked in and out to campus.

M: Where did you live when you lived with your parents?

D: In northeast Gainesville.

M: Then when you got your apartment?

D: The northwest Student Ghetto area.

M: How was the Student Ghetto at that time?

D: It was a nice place to live. It was close to campus. The apartment was inexpensive. I cannot remember the rent now, but it was really inexpensive even then. It was a nice brick efficiency. I think it was called University Apartments. It had a pool. There was no worry about crime in that area. The Western Sizzler Steak House was on the corner where Burger King is now. Everybody sort of minded their own business, but at the same time, you knew that if you had any trouble you had neighbors who would help. It was a nice place to live.

M: At this time you also were an advisor to the Black Student Union?

D: Not while I was in grad school. I was after I graduated, after I began

working here in 1974.

M: Who did you work under while you were doing your masters?

D: I worked under Robert (C.) Ziller (professor and chairman of psychology, appointed 1970) in social psychology.

M: What was your field of expertise?

D: I was working with him about self-esteem, especially self-esteem of black kids. I worked in the elementary schools.

M: After you received your master of arts degree in 1974, what did you do before you started your doctorate program?

D: I finished my master of arts degree in August 1974. I knew I was tired of schooling. I was tired of being broke, and I wanted to make some money. I was looking forward to starting work. I had done some interviews, and I started work that same month with the Office of Student Support Services here on campus.

M: What is that now?

D: It is now just Upward Bound. It is under Minority Affairs and Special Programs. At that time there were two programs; the Special Services Program and the Upward Bound Program. I was hired as the coordinator for the Special Services Program.

M: What did you do as coordinator?

D: I supervised peer counselors, coordinated a monitoring program for minority students who were admitted under the special admit program, planned programs, and carried out activities to foster their growth for their first year of enrollment.

M: In your interaction with these students, what backgrounds did most of these students have? Did they lack a lot of skills necessary for college, or did they just need a little adjustment?

D: I think most of the problems they had were adjustment problems. At that time (not today) it was more prevalent to find first-generation college students who had not had the experience of going away to college, and pretty much had not had the experience of going away to a predominantly white college or university. I think most of the adjustment came from realizing how large the university system was here on campus, in population as well as geographical location. If they were lacking in any

area, be it math or English, they tried to overcome that lack of efficiency at the same time they were adjusting to the University and being away from home. They had the same kinds of adjustment problems that any student had, but maybe in addition to that they needed some extra work on development areas like English or math.

M: Do you still that in students today are in as great a frequency?

D: Pretty much so. I think that the first semester in school (all students) should take twelve hours of free time so they can get adjusted to the University without seriously damaging their GPA. Most of the students--not all--come to the University underprepared for what it is going to take to survive. They are not used to someone not telling them when it is time to study, when it is time to go to bed, do not go to that party, come home early from that party. [They do not know how to] prioritize activities. You have social activities, academic activities, and personal activities. You have to map them all out, and get your schedule together. I think it takes most students a year to adjust to being on their own without parents calling them, being their alarm clock for them, or being the monitor for them in all their activities.

M: Is this all students, or primarily black students?

D: Predominantly all students. I think white students probably have a little more of an advantage because all through life the majority of them have had it put into their heads that they are going to college, go away to school, and so they are pretty much expected to do that.

M: Those that come here.

D: Right. I think with black students it is not until really recently that they have been instilled with the idea that college is a definite.

M: How much were you getting paid as the coordinator?

D: I think it was \$16,000 or about that much.

M: How was that in the mid-1970s?

D: That was pretty good because I had not amassed any bills except for corporate loans on campus that were going to be due as one got paid. It was not like I had to start paying on four or five loans at the same time, simultaneously. I think I got a car just at the end of graduation, which was an old used car. I did not have a whole bunch of bills, and I moved back home. So that was pretty good for me.

M: At this time, how was the administration? I think President O'Connell had left. How was the administration dealing with the increase in black students?

D: I think that the idea was that there needed to be an increase in students, faculty, and staff at all levels. That was what the University was moving toward. I cannot remember now the presidents as they came down. I looked at my diplomas and I remember O'Connell had signed one. (Robert Q.) Marston (president, University of Florida, 1974-1984) had signed the third one.

M: If you get another one, (John V.) Lombardi (president, University of Florida, 1990-present) can sign it.

D: I do not think Lombardi will have any trouble with signing one.

M: Why did you decide to go in for a doctorate?

D: I figured I could make more money if I had a doctorate, and I figured there was something else for me to learn upon getting one. It was just a next step. I was already here; I did not have to go away to get it. So I went ahead and applied and was accepted to the program here. If I was the type of person who wanted to do a lot of traveling around and pull up roots and move, it might have been a good move. I do not see any negative consequences beyond having to do it. I like Gainesville. It is not like I do not want to be in Gainesville, or that I do like the University of Florida. The University of Florida is fine. Gainesville is home. So why go anywhere else?

M: How did the community grow during the 1970s?

D: I guess the Gainesville community grew. Most of the black people who came here to work at the University of Florida [and] get their educational degrees from the University of Florida more or less did that and left. I think that the core community is still about the same with the exception of maybe one or two people. Not one or two, but a handful of people who have come in, made a difference, and stayed. Most people come here and make little or no impact and then leave. So looking at how Gainesville has changed, I would have to look at the core community of those people who are native Gainesvillians who have been here for some period of time. There have been changes. There have been people who have been elected to different positions, people that have been appointed to different positions who have made an impact upon the lives of people here. Not only just black Americans, but others. Businesses establishments have grown, but not in proportion to what the total

community growth has been. It is very difficult for black businesses to become established, be maintained, and grow on a wide scale.

M: What events transpired during these years in Gainesville? Was there anything spectacular going on around here?

D: In the 1970s and 1980s, not a whole lot. Nothing stands out in my mind as to something that was going on. If somebody mentioned something, I probably could remember it. There was not a whole lot going on.

M: I know it must have been big when they built the Oaks Mall.

D: Yes, I guess. It was almost like it was in another city because it was out where there used to be country. It was something new.

M: So Gainesville has grown. What do you think about a lot of the growth that we have now in Gainesville? When did most of this occur?

D: It probably occurred during that time period--late 1970s or early 1980s. For black people I think the growth was not seen as something that was welcomed. It was mostly black people who did not have cars or transportation. [You used] to be able to come right downtown to do all your shopping there, your grocery shopping, clothes, take care of all your business with your insurance and all that kind of stuff, right downtown in the heart of town. Then you would go back home, which was more or less east Gainesville, southeast or northeast. That was it. You did not have to go too much farther beyond Main Street to get all you needed taken care of.

With the Oaks Mall opening up, it meant more or less [you had to have] some type of transportation [to get] out there. [You had] to be able to catch the bus out there. It also meant the closing down of downtown, which is what happened. In most all large cities, downtown buildings are closing up because [businesses] are moving to malls to try to be where people are going to be, not knowing that if they stayed downtown, people would probably end up coming downtown. So downtown became empty. For black people, a lot of them could not do business as usual because they did not have the means to get there. I have been opposed to the idea of having to go to a huge mall just to buy a pair of shoes.

M: So a lot of blacks who were in Gainesville were at the lower economic end of the spectrum.

D: Not necessarily lower economic, or did not consider themselves as lower economic. [They] considered themselves as middle class whether

anybody else considered them middle class or not. It was just that even the lower class, or if there was such a thing as the upper-middle class, had gotten used to business as usual downtown--knowing the stores, storekeepers, quality of materials, and all those kinds of things. Having to have a mall come in and thinking somebody from outside of Gainesville or the state was going to come in, whom you did not trust. [You did not] know the quality of the materials, goods, and they did not know you. You had to establish credit or establish a rapport with them. You could go right into somebody and say, "I bought these shoes yesterday, last week, or last month," without them breaking up. I think it was that kind of rebellion or uneasiness about not knowing.

M: Did a lot of Gainesville students come to the University of Florida?

D: No. Initially, it was because they did not make the required score on the Twelfth Grade Placement Test. I do not know at what point in time, but at some point in time, the Twelfth Grade Placement Test was thrown out. It was no longer a valid indicator as to who could come in. I do not know what year it was. Then the SAT and ACT scores started being used statewide as far as entrance exams. I think because of the history of the University of Florida--the sit-ins, demonstrations, hearsay from custodial staff or grounds people who worked here as far as what went on on campus and what they had seen black students go through--probably put a negative taste in the mouths of a lot of black people in the community about sending black students here.

It was okay for you to know that you could go if you wanted. Thanks but no thanks was the idea, and pretty much is still the idea. The only thing I think that is helping more native Gainesvillians or Alachua Countians come to the University of Florida is the access to Santa Fe Community College. Students have been able to go through there and survive, and probably have been nurtured to think about the University of Florida as the next possible step. I think without Santa Fe, there would not be as many students coming to the University of Florida.

M: What were these rumors about the University of Florida?

D: That you are not going to survive. There is racism there. There is prejudice there. White faculty and staff can say anything they want to say to you, and you have to sit there and take it. It was like in order to get through, you had to--not be an Uncle Tom--but you had to bite your lip and just be glad to be there instead of being able to express yourself.

M: I know at this time my uncle had just come from Vietnam, finished his associate of arts degree in Miami, and came here for architecture. He

said he will never forget walking into the architecture building and seeing this derogatory painting depicting blacks. Do you remember that?

- D: I may have been in the architecture building twice in all my years here. [Laughter] I think most black people that were middle or upper class, if they had the opportunity to go to school anywhere it was probably to Bethune-Cookman, Florida Memorial, or Florida A&M. That was where their sons, daughters, cousins, nieces, nephews, and grandchildren were told that is where they were going. More or less that is where they elected to go because they had heard so much about those institutions from family and friends. That is where they wanted to go. So you did not even think about why you would put yourself through whatever people went through when they came to the University of Florida campus when you can go [somewhere else], get it done, and have somebody to nurture you while you are doing it.
- M: Do you think this nurturing is something that only blacks get by going to black schools, or that whites get by coming to white schools?
- D: I do not think whites get it from coming to white schools. It is just the nature of the beast. The University of Florida is a very large institution. Unless you come in knowing one or two people, or knowing somebody in one or two offices who you can go to with your problems . . . white students get lost here. I have had white students come into the office crying or upset because something has gone wrong because they did not know the right person to see or talk to. Or the person that they talked to had a negative attitude or treated them in a negative way. I think there is more of a chance for black students to perceive that hugeness or coldness as prejudice, as opposed to that is just the nature of the university system. It has nothing to do with racism or prejudice. It is just the way that you react.
- M: So you think that a lot of black students take what happens as something personal against them.
- D: I think that sometimes there are instances of prejudice. It is hard as a black person to discriminate whether it is racism, prejudice, or whether they treat everybody like that. Unless you hide in a closet, under a desk or something, and watch the secretary, administrator, or professor handle everybody the same way, you might say, "Okay, it is not racism. It is the person." That does not make it right, but at least you will be able to say you can get together with this other person and they will treat you the same way. We can get together and say this is not racism, this person is just a bad example of an administrator, faculty, or staff person here, and we need to do something about them.

M: Being that most of these students who came here are primarily from the community, how is there interaction with those who are in the community?

D: I think there still is misunderstanding [and] misconception, probably not animosity. I will say misconception for lack of another term right now from the people who are in the community and people who are on campus. A lot of it is hearsay and a lot of it is invalidated as far as people in the community having beliefs about students on campus. [They think] they do not consider themselves as black. They think they have assimilated, too good to hang with us, too good to do whatever it is we do, or too good to come to our churches or activities in the community. At the same time, I think the students on campus feel alienated from the people in the community because they do not have a lot of transportation to get into the community, and maybe have gone into the community and have gotten negative responses thrown at them. "You know, you are not white. You just think you are white. You think you are better than we are." [That] kind of thing.

I think that both, more or less, have drawn an imaginary line and said, "I will stay off campus, and you stay on campus. We will maintain our own territories." There have been a few people from both sides who have gone both ways and have been successful with it. I think there is still that misunderstanding because I do not think people in the community can understand the amount of time it takes to be a student here on campus. You really do not have a lot of time to come to meetings, do this or that. When you come to do that, you might run off very quickly at the end of services on Sunday, or whatever. It is because you have got to get back and study. You have this project. You have to work with these people at a certain time. You have this play you have to go see. I think they still view students as standoffish. Students probably view community members as strange because they do not get to know each other.

M: Was this a problem during the time that you were doing your undergrad and graduate period?

D: I think what brought the two groups together was the sit-in demonstrations and activities in 1971. There was a common ground. We were all black, and we were all wanting to see improvements. That kind of negated any kind of differences that were there. I think that happens most times with black folk. Our nature insists that we come together in time of crisis. If it is a death in the family, you will see people you have never spoken come to the funeral. People will come from Germany or Australia to the funeral of that person. If someone is getting married, which is not looked upon as a crisis (but could be a crisis), you have people coming all around to see

what is going on. If someone gets sick, if someone has any kind of problem, you will come together, forget about other differences, and join together to solve that one problem. I think that is what happened. That will happen anytime that there is a crisis whether it is on campus or in the city. If something happens in the city, there will be students here on campus, faculty, and staff who will be going out to lend a hand to try to find out how to help solve it and be involved in it. The same thing will be on campus. If there is something that goes on, people in the community are going to want to be involved, try to help solve it, and join together.

M: When these students with whom you were working here at the University, those were primarily black students?

D: Right.

M: Were these undergraduate students?

D: You are talking about my first job as a coordinator?

M: Yes.

D: At that time there were a few Vietnamese students also. Right after the Vietnam War, there were refugees coming over who were adopted or who were partially American and Vietnamese. There were more Vietnamese students. I do not think I have seen an application that says Vietnamese students. They may come now as Asian students. But [I dealt with] Vietnamese and black students.

M: What percentage were black students at this time?

D: Total in the University or in that program?

M: Total in the University.

D: Very small. Not much different from what it is now. Probably about 4 or 5 percent.

M: It has remained that?

D: I think it has increased now. I do not know what the statistics are. Maybe 6, 6.5 percent.

M: But it has remained steadily, significantly under ten?

D: Yes.

- M: Since the inception--ever since black students came. When do you think it was highest?
- D: I do not know. I remember there was a year when everybody was lauding the fact that there were more black students, faculty, and staff than any other year. I do not know what year that was. It peaked and then it went back down to normal. I do not know if departments went on some kind of a fishing trip to find more black faculty and staff or if all of a sudden there were more students that applied here and were actually accepted and showed up. It has not been consistent. It goes up and down every year.
- M: When you were working on your doctorate in counselor education, whom did you work under?
- D: (Paul Joseph) Joe Wittmer (Distinguished Service Professor of Education, acting chairman and professor, counselor education, appointed 1994); he was the chair of the department.
- M: Is he still there now?
- D: Yes I believe he is. He is no longer the chair of the department, but I think he is still there.
- M: What was your concentration?
- D: It was student personnel and higher education.
- M: Why did you pick this subject?
- D: It was the area that I was currently working in at the time. I figured that would be a good way to hone in on my activities and be able to augment what I already was learning in the work force.
- M: Did you think of staying in the academy as a professor?
- D: Which academy?
- M: With universities and colleges. Was that one of your plans at the time?
- D: Yes, I thought I probably would stay with the university and college system. I did not think about going back to elementary schools, high schools, or anything. I figured this was the kind of job I wanted to do and the degree would help me promote myself financially, but also would give me some of the learning tools I needed to better the job I already had.

- M: Do you know of any students of yours who were prominent during this time period, or of some things that were done with black students? At this time, I know you were the advisor of the BSU.
- D: There is a whole list of them. I guess over the last twenty years, I have probably forgotten the majority of them. I remember Eugene Pettis; he was the president of the BSU from Ft. Lauderdale. He was a very active student body president for BSU. He also worked as treasurer of student government.
- M: What about some other individuals like Ed Blue? He is now with the foundation.
- D: I do not remember him as a student. I can remember faces, but I cannot remember names of people. Pamela Bingham was a BSU president at one time. She held offices in student government. There are other students who were involved in other organizations. For instance, the gospel choir. I cannot remember any of the officers. Most of the time when students were involved in more than one organization, they were looked at as leaders throughout campus and were involved in more than just one activity. Back then, too, the students who were involved with fraternities and sororities were looked upon as leaders, not just with the sorority or fraternity, but also they were active as far as being involved with BSU, student government, gospel choir, or Cicerones. You just did not see them in one spot.
- M: Did black individuals get involved in a lot of white organizations during the late 1970s?
- D: They were very minimally involved. It had to do with the history. For so long, black students were not invited or did not feel comfortable being involved with those activities. It took one or two persons to go try it out and say, "It is okay, come on and try it. Why do you not see if you want to be involved in it?" I think as word got around and people found they did have time in their schedules and the skills to be involved, more and more people became involved. I know James Cunningham (from Ocala) was president of Blue Key back then. It was not a concentrated effort, like we had an all-black whatever. There were fifteen blacks in one organization. It was like salt and pepper, but mostly salt.
- M: Do you think there was apathy among black students or just a desire to stay within their own?

D: I do not think there was a lot of apathy. Like I say, it takes a lot--still--to be student here on campus. While a lot of students may have come from high schools with a lot of leadership skills and experience working with their high school newspapers, or being president of their class or their clubs, and may have wanted to become involved in that kind of situation here on campus, they had to first find themselves academically here and find out what it was going to take to keep themselves here. Since that was not something they needed to keep themselves here, I think that that was secondary--becoming involved in any organizations or activities that were not academic in order to survive. Even maybe from word of mouth or looking at other people who were called disasters who had become overly involved in activities and had taken six years to graduate with a low 2.0 GPA. Looking back, maybe some of them said, "Well, yes, I guess I could handle that. At that particular time, it did not look like something I could handle or was manageable to be able to do all of that."

M: How was life in the graduate school when you were there?

D: Most of the blacks I knew in grad school were in counselor ed. More or less, in grad school your concentration is where your department is. Most of them I knew were in counselor ed because you really did not have a lot of time to go in veterinary medicine or business administration. When will you invite grad students over? We all want to get together. If you happen to go some place and saw them at a social event, then you may find out where you are in the grad school or where you are in a department. Grad school kept you busy enough not to do that. I do not know when the Black Graduate Student Union was formed as a formal organization. I was not a part of that, so I do not know.

M: It was after you had done most of your graduate work. You finished your doctorate in what year?

D: 1982.

M: You published your dissertation?

D: Yes.

M: What was your dissertation on?

D: It was a long title. I do not know if I can remember the title. What I really looked at was trying to predict success of admitted students by looking at high school GPA, SAT score, personality, self-esteem, and first-term college GPA.

- M: What position did you get at the University after that?
- D: After my dissertation was completed and I had my degree, I was working even though I was taking classes. The position as director of academic counseling and tutoring came open. I accepted that position.
- M: When was that?
- D: That was in 1979. That was a parallel that the University ran to assist specially admitted students. The Special Services Program was a federally funded program. The University was supposed to have a program in place that the federal government was augmenting. But instead, the only program they had was a Special Services Program. The University backtracked and established a program.
- M: Who was in charge of this program?
- D: The PACT Program was a new program formed under the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. There was no director because it was a new program. Essentially, it was doing the same thing I had been doing as the counselor coordinator for Special Services. It was the same thing that the director of Special Services was doing.
- M: Who was that director?
- D: (Gwenuel W.) G. W. Mingo (appointed 1974).
- M: Were specially admitted students primarily black students or students who do not meet the qualifications?
- D: It began predominantly with black students and a few Vietnamese students. It has grown now to about half black students and half Hispanic students.
- M: What program is there for white students who are having a tough time academically?
- D: They can go to any advisor. We do not necessarily prevent other students from coming to see us. It is the Office of Minority Affairs and Special Programs. If someone needs help, most times they do not care what the title of the office is that gives them the assistance. There is nothing specifically for white students, except for the advisors in individual colleges or individual instructors who might refer them to other offices.
- M: How much were you getting paid in this position?

D: Which one--the PACT Program?

M: Yes.

D: I cannot remember what I started off with. \$11,000 or \$12,000 was the first one. This one was \$16,000.

M: What do you think that would be equivalent to in the market of today given inflation and whatever?

D: I have no idea.

M: You stayed in the same place in the ghetto?

D: No, I moved back home when I started working in 1974 as a counselor coordinator.

M: Around this time, there were still more students involved. Students I know, like Ava (Lora) Parker (bachelor of science degree, 1984; juris doctorate 1987), who was in law school, and people like that [still were involved]. Do you remember people like that?

D: I can remember people. I am not as old as I think I am, but there are different eras of people by which I sort of remember people. Even with peer counselors and student assistants I can remember a name, but I cannot put a face with it.

M: Do you think there has been a change in the abilities, capabilities, or enthusiasm of these student leaders? Is it stable, has it fluctuated?

D: I think the involvement level has changed. I do not know the reason why. I think students now are using the idea or conception that it takes a lot to stay here, so they are not going to get involved because they need to study. At some point in time, there needs to be a balance of both. When you put yourself in a room, lock it up, and say, "I am just going to study-- that is all I am going to do," [that] will not make a rounded person. Some of those activities help in academics because you are getting involved and meeting other people. You have to benefit from that experience. It is difficult, I think, to reach that balance. For each individual student, it is different. You cannot say, "If they are involved in these four activities, I am going to go out and become involved in four activities." You, first of all, have to know yourself and know what your capabilities are and what you are able to handle. It takes at least a full semester and probably a whole year before you can find out what it is you are able to handle and how

much you are able to take on and still be a student in good and regular standing.

M: Did you publish after your dissertation?

D: A couple of things. Basically articles about the type of work I was doing with students, working with peer counselors, the kinds of things that could help students, and the kinds of things that could help train peer counselors.

M: Were you looking to stay in counseling administration?

D: Pretty much so.

M: You were not trying to go into the academy as a professor?

D: No.

M: That was a decision you made a long time ago.

D: Yes.

M: After this post, what did you go on to do?

D: Essentially the same thing. I am still directing a program for specially admitted students. The name has been changed back and forth. It is now Student Enrichment Services Program, and it is still under the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. It is still under the Office of Minority Affairs and Special Programs. It is pretty much about the same.

M: What did the salary increase to?

D: About \$37,000.

M: From \$16,000 to \$37,000.

D: Or \$12,000. I do not know what it started out at over the years.

M: How many people worked in the office initially?

D: Which office?

M: The office that you were in after you finished your dissertation.

D: The PACT Office consisted of myself, a secretary, two graduate assistants, and at the most, maybe ten peer counselors. There were only

two full-time staff, and that was myself and the secretary. Graduate students were part time and on an assistantship.

M: What has it grown to now? How many people are working?

D: There is a secretary, a full-time coordinator, and still student assistants, graduate students, and peer counselors.

M: Around how many total individuals?

D: About twenty-five, I guess.

M: From five to twenty-five.

D: About fifteen.

M: Over a ten-year period.

D: Well, from 1979 to now.

M: About a fifteen-year period. Where did the funding come from primarily?

D: From the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

M: And it has remained that way?

D: Yes.

M: Has liberal arts been pretty receptive in doling out the funds?

D: Pretty much so. In good years, there have been better raises or more monies in OPS are expended. [But the college has] had to cut back because the University has had to cut back because the state system has had to cut back because the monies are not there and the legislature is cutting back. Everybody is taking cuts as far as programs, departments, and things like that.

M: How much were students getting per hour back then?

D: Whatever the minimum was. The minimum wage has gone up on campus just like the minimum wage off campus.

M: Were there any significant events on campus in campus life during the 1980s?

D: I do not know. I guess I am trying to think what year it was. I do not know

when the O'Connell Center was built. That brought up a ruckus because it opened old wounds from the riots. Folks were trying to find out why people did not want the center named the O'Connell Center. [We had] to refresh the memories of people and educate people about the history behind that name. It was built and it was named, so I guess it is okay.

M: How did you feel about it?

D: It should not have been named the O'Connell Center. It most definitely should not have been. I did not have that much say about it.

M: Throughout the 1980s were the Reagan and Bush years. Conservatism was growing, I assume, on college campuses. Was there friction between black and white students?

D: I do not know if there has ever been a whole lot of friction between students. It is usually with administration, the administrators, and black students. [There was] even [friction between] administrators and white students. I think when you start doling out funds and resources, that is one way white students and black students have been pitted against each other, even black students and Hispanic students. If you say, "We only have this one dollar, and you each want the majority of it," then you say, "You need to talk with them and tell them we do not want that much. We do not need that much." Or you tell them why you need so much. I think any conflicts are probably the result of not having the needed resources.

M: How are gender relations between this time period--when you came to the University up till now? How have male-female relations been? I know that in the mid-1970s, a lot of women went to and disrupted a Florida Blue Key banquet because Florida Blue Key did not admit women at the time.

D: As far as black females being involved in the feminist movement, there have been a few that have taken that road. The majority of black females who are on campus here are satisfied with staying with the struggle of color as opposed to gender. They see that as a major battle as opposed to a feminist movement. There are a few that are involved in, if there is such a thing, the feminist or the NOW (National Organization of Women) movement.

M: Do you think black women are more active or more influential in black organizations than white women are in their organizations? Are they just kind of the same?

D: Run that by me one more time.

M: Do you think that within black organizations, at least student organizations, black women are able to obtain more power or influence than white women are within white organizations?

D: I do not have any inkling because I am not involved in any white student organizations. I do not know what kind of power or perceived power they might have.

M: You brought up some individuals, I think, who were influential in the 1980s. Those were Ava Parker and Pamela Bingham. Could you tell a little bit about these individuals?

D: From what I can remember? If I had brought a list and looked over a list, I probably would be able to pop over a lot of people. Ava worked as a peer counselor in our office, so I got to know her from that point onward. I kept in touch with her throughout her law program. Pamela is about the same difference. She never worked with me as a peer counselor, but became aware of her leadership abilities through the Black Student Union and other organizations she became involved in [such as] Student Government.

The same with LaTasha Gethers. [She] was another student who just recently graduated with the same kind of leadership skills, and had sort of a road map or goal, knowing where she was going. There have been guys. Eric Lucas was another BSU president who was working with Proctor and Gamble for a while. There are quite a few students who come through here with leadership capacities, who I think were outstanding in their time. Every year or two years, students come through here like that. It is relative to what is needed and what they are able to give at that particular time and junction in their lives.

M: So you do not think that students over the time you have been here have been any better or less than or more capable or less capable than those prior?

D: It is just the level of involvement and what is needed or demanded at that particular time.

M: Have there been any scandals or critical events that you can remember from the 1980s till now that you can remember that occurred here at the University?

D: Scandals with students, organizations, or what?

M: Either.

D: Scandals. I do not know of any scandals. I know there was a problem with funding from Student Government for BSU for general activities as well as Black History Month funding. There was no scandal. There was a sit-in and near riot.

M: Can you describe that please?

C: I cannot even remember what year it was.

M: I believe it was December 1991.

D: I thought it was in the 1980s. It had to do with BAM.

M: I think it was the Black Awareness Movement.

D: It had to do with the Black Student Union coming up for funding as all organizations do for special events, especially for Black History Month. In previous years leading up to that, black students had to seemingly fall under the gun of Student Government, Accent, or Student Government Productions as to who would come in as speakers, concert artists, or groups. BSU wanted their own money. They wanted their own say-so. They wanted to be able to pick and choose what kind of activities they wanted for Black History Month. There was a sit-in [and] a demand list or demonstration as to what was wanted. A lot of people were involved. [It was] again a crisis-type situation.

It brought a lot of students together and melded groups that had built up barriers because of fraternity, sorority, or organizational ties. The barriers kind of broke down-- whether you were black or not black, whether you were getting what you wanted or not getting what you wanted. I think it was a good experience for black students. I think it was a reality check for white students and white organizational administrators. They got a chance to see black students unite on a common ground and get some things accomplished.

M: What transpired during this time? You said it was a near-riot.

D: Students were used to telling people when they could speak, stop speaking, the meeting was over, and people were out of order. People respected that, but that did not work at that particular meeting. I think the police were involved. There were some people who took it upon themselves to go to Student Government. I do not know if it was the finance offices or what. I guess [it was] on the third floor. [They] went to look for some files or to put some files back. They sat in there and were

not going to leave from there until something was resolved. I think that is when the police were involved in trying to remove some people [who were] occupying the building.

M: About how many black students were involved in this?

D: I do not know. Initially at that particular area maybe a couple hundred.

M: Do you think this was a spontaneous event or was it planned?

D: I do not know. I think that some people probably had it in their minds what they thought they would do or might do if demands were not met or if their views were not heard. I am not sure that there were vocal people who got together and said, "This is what we are going to do if this happens. We will take over this building or this office." I think individually that some people had to be thinking, "If they laugh in our face or if they throw us out . . ." I think that thoughts were there, but I am not sure whether they had been verbalized to a group of people.

M: So you do not think any organization had anything to do with it?

D: No, I do not think it was. The issue was more or less organizing the actual demand list. I think it was working within a system. If someone wants to speak, get your name on a list; if you do not want to speak, give me your time. I think they were working under the organized way the system had established itself.

M: Some years before this, I remember there was a White Student Union.

D: There was an attempt at a White Student Union.

M: What was that?

D: There was a group of people who wanted to have a White Student Union because there was a Black Student Union. It fell through because they could not get an advisor and all organizations had to have an advisor. They really did not have anything on which to preface their organizational needs, except the fact that they wanted to be a student organization. They wanted to get funds from Student Government and have themselves listed as a student organization.

M: Were there tensions between them and black organizations or black students?

D: I think most black students laughed at the idea that there was any such organization which was needed. There was no need for it.

- M: I heard things before I got here. Black students were being harassed by police officers or things like that around campus. Do you know of anything like this?
- D: I did not know anything like this on a first-hand basis. It was just word of mouth. Some students would tell me what was going on.
- M: Was this chronic or just one of those things that just happens to this person or that person?
- D: I think it was probably more than one instance of it happening. It still happens. There are very few times that a black male walking through campus at 2:00 a.m. would not get stopped or looked at a second time by a patrol car. They would probably drive back by to see him, where he is going, what he is doing, if he has tools in his bookbag, if he just came to break in some place, or if he is out of breath and running away. I am sure there are still instances of that happening.
- M: That does not happen to a white male?
- D: I do not think to the degree that it happens to blacks.
- M: Over the years you have been here the campus has changed a whole lot. Do you see this growth and change for the better, or just one of those things that happens?
- D: It is just change. After twenty years of being here, I guess what somebody sees as a new and improved idea is something that happened already in the past. Change may look like change and progress is really history repeating itself.
- M: So the more things change, the more they remain the same. You think the end of reformative action is pretty much some things are happening as they always have been.
- D: It comes up. The _____ case keeps raising its head. [It is like] the arcade for children arcade where you are hitting little popping heads that keep popping up and you try to hit as many as you can to get scores and points. It will keep popping its head up until somebody abuses it and knocks it back down.
- M: The same with race relations on this campus.
- D: I think to a larger degree they are improved over what they have been in

the past. It is still not where it should be because you really cannot legislate the personality of somebody, and you cannot legalize a non-prejudiced society. You still have individuals who still have their individual backgrounds and history and only act certain ways to certain types of people, whether they are black, blue, short, tall, heavy, or skinny. You still have those instances of prejudice.

M: In your position with the Office of Minority Affairs and Special Programs, how do you relate with all of your wisdom that you have attained over the years to the students that come in to seek your advice?

D: I guess the same thing I said a little while ago. There is really not that much new. It is more or less history just repeating itself. I do not treat it trivially. If someone comes in with a problem, it is probably a problem that someone has had in previous years. If it is pregnancy, mother-father divorce, a sister or brother back home in jail, on drugs, or financial, academic problems (cannot get through these math classes), it is really something that has happened in the past. It just depends on what skills you find in this particular student as to how they are going to be able to deal with it.

M: Are you a religious person?

D: Yes.

M: How does that make you the person that you are and have been?

D: I guess it has to do with not trying to be judgmental of people. Most of the time, people make an assumption of persons on first contact. They try not to be judgmental of people and put people in pigeon holes as to how they may relate based on what they look like, where they come from, or what they may say initially. Try to get to know people, treat them as individuals, and not say you are like all the other people who come from Miami. You are like all the other Alphas and Kappas. Most people are deeper than that.