

SRC-6
Charles Prejean
20 pages- Open
June 17, 2002

Pages 1-5: Charles Prejean worked on exposing adults to more formal education opportunities. In the 1960s Prejean started a fruitcake business under the Southern Consumers Cooperative, at the same time creating a lending institution. Prejean describes how the Southern Consumers Cooperative got involved with the Southern Regional Council (SRC). He examines how the SRC was involved with the civil rights movements of the time and how it responded to other changes going on at that time.

Pages 6-8: Prejean discusses his interaction with the Voter Education Program (VEP). The VEP evolved into an umbrella organization to satisfy community need, often working with the same groups of people as the SRC. Prejean describes Vernon Jordan and his strengths to the project, and John Lewis' involvement and the tensions he created within the VEP. Prejean also describes Julian Noland's role in the VEP as being similar to Lewis'.

Pages 9-14: Prejean describes how he came to be the executive director of SRC in 1967. Prejean examines how the SRC responded to some of the racial issues that were going on at the time. The SRC was trying to make the transition to having more blacks involved while undergoing insults and verbal abuse when the black groups wanted it to happen quicker. Looking back, Prejean thought there should have been more discussion about putting blacks into leadership positions so abruptly. No one understood just how difficult it would be at the time. Prejean examines his feelings that racism is still an issue, though more subtle than it was in the past. Prejean feels that there is still a need for the SRC and the goals and mission that it represents.

Pages 15-20: Prejean recalls the shift in the civil rights movement in the 1970s and the effect it had on the funding of the SRC. The shift in the movement included the Poor People's Campaign, and Prejean discusses how he thought U.S. society was not ready for that. Prejean examines how he felt the SRC could have increased its visibility during these times. He describes SRC's major achievements and contributions during the 1970s and 1980s. Prejean felt their major contribution was voice. Prejean explains how he feels the role of the SRC has been unacknowledged. There was too much emotion when all the movements were actually going on. Time is needed in order for people to really understand all that went on.