

SRC 16 Summary
Isabel Rogers
March 1, 2003

Isabel Rogers begins by giving her personal family history and educational background (page 1). She talks about the differences she saw in the political climates of Florida and Virginia that she noticed when she went from Florida to Virginia for her master's (pages 1-2). She talks about where her concern for the segregated South originated, including the influence of her Virginian parents, her church background, and the deeper principles of respect and dignity (page 2). She talks about her role as part of a movement against segregation while in college, and then while she worked with students at Georgia State College for Women (page 3). She talks about the environment of the school and the challenges she presented to students to get them thinking about what the Christian faith requires (page 3). She discusses the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, which desegregated schools, and the effect it had on the small community that she lived and worked in (pages 4-5). She talks about the loose alliance of like-minded whites and blacks that met at the Episcopal rector's house, their surveillance by local police, and their efforts to build bridges with the black community (pages 5-6).

Ms. Rogers talks about the development of mass black activism and the mobilization of white liberals in the 1950s (page 6). She tells how during much of this time she was working on her doctorate in theology and ethics at Duke University, and her support of the movement by the Presbyterian church in Chapel Hill (pages 6-7). She talks about the inspiration of Martin Luther King as a radical that pushed the moderates to stay active, and about the different methods the two groups employed to reach their goals (pages 7-8).

Ms. Rogers tells how she got into her teaching career in 1961 at Richmond, the classes that she taught, the student makeup (page 8-9). She talks about the situation in Richmond as just beginning to try to change the segregation pattern (page 9). She talks about her introduction to the Human Relations Council and the constituency of the group (page 10). She tells a story about Charle E.S. Kraemer, the president when she began working at Richmond, during the poor-people's march in 1968 as an illustration of his stance on segregation (page 10). She talks about the other white professionals she came into contact with through the Richmond Council on Human Relations, specifically mentioning a restaurant owner named Wally Bless (page 11). She talks about the closing of the Prince Edward County schools that chose to close rather than to desegregate from 1959-1964 (page 11).

She talks about her friend, Virginia Paine, that helped to establish an intentionally integrated Presbyterian church, and the resistance that she met with those types of efforts (page 12). She talks about her work with the council and her ascent to the presidency, as well as some key people she worked with on the Richmond Council on Human Relations (page 12-14). One of those she mentions is Hilda Warden, who worked with the Offender Aid and Restoration (OAR) organization that kicked off in the late 1960s and early 1970s (page 14). She talks about women being more involved in the Human Relations Councils because they were more free and more liberal, and the causes behind these tendencies (page 14-15).

Ms. Rogers talks about the sense of family within those who were active, some important activists, and the antagonists of the movement that they jointly faced (page 15-16). She talks about her feelings as the movement became a southern-wide movement and how events in Birmingham in 1963 renewed her commitment to bring about change (pages 16-17). They talk about the effect of the Kennedy assassination, Lyndon B. Johnson's commitment to civil rights legislation, and the need for government intervention (page 17-119).

Ms. Rogers talks about trying to reach out to those not involved in the council who might be open to the council's concerns (page 19). She then sets out a hierarchy of which churches were the most amenable, and those that put up the most resistance to desegregation (pages 19-20). Next she talks about the interactions between African-Americans and white liberals during the late 1960s during the Black Power era (pages 21-24). She talks about Richmond never being a place of violence and attributes it to good black and white leadership (page 24). She tells a story about a liberal Presbyterian pastor in North Carolina who defied the Ku Klux Klan (page 25). She talks about emergence of black political leaders in Richmond, as well as some other leaders within the Human Relations Councils (pages 25-27).

Ms. Rogers talks about the Poor People's March and the white liberal support as it came through Richmond (page 27-28). She talks about her parent's awareness of her movement activities and their affirmation of her freedom (page 28-29). She ends the interview by characterizing the work of the Human Relations Council and the contribution it made in securing statutory equality in Richmond (page 29).