

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH ANN D. SMITH

CONDUCTED, EDITED, AND INDEXED BY THOMAS A. SCOTT

for the

KSU ORAL HISTORY SERIES, NO. 139

MONDAY, 20 MARCH 2017

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KSU Oral History Series, No. 139  
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Monday, 20 March 2017  
Location: Sturgis Library, Kennesaw State University

TS: The interview today is with Ann D. Smith. Ann came to Kennesaw State University in 1988 and made a career here and then went on to Reinhardt University after that for a few years. Why don't we begin back at the beginning with your background? I would guess you must have grown up in Mississippi.

AS: Yes, I grew up in Bayland and Yazoo City, Mississippi. However, I was born August 2, 1944 at a military hospital in Fresno, California. My parents were Charles Edward Pinkston and Sadie Smith Pinkston. My father was a World War II veteran. He was born and reared in Bayland, Mississippi and returned there after he was honorably discharged from the United States Army. I was reared by his parents, Moses Pinkston and Annie Brown Pinkston, on the family farm of my Uncle Thornton Miller and Aunt Magnolia Miller in Yazoo County, Mississippi. I have fond memories growing up on the farm. However, I always preferred reading a good book and World Book Encyclopedias to farm life. I never took a liking to such farm work as tending farm animals, picking cotton or gardening. Due to the laws of segregation there were limited opportunities to attend social events outside of the Black churches, schools, family gatherings, and Black clubs, hotels, and restaurants. I do recall having to comply with Colored and White Only signs all over public places as well as doctors' offices. I also experienced sitting on the back of the bus during a trip to and from Chicago. Once we crossed the symbolic Mason Dixon line traveling north Blacks could sit any place on the bus. Traveling south, however, as I recall, the demarcation line was just before crossing the Mississippi River to enter Tennessee. At that point Blacks had to return to the back of the bus. For my own safety during this era my grandparents taught me the importance of adhering to segregation laws, but that didn't stop me from questioning these laws.

After my grandfather passed we moved to Yazoo City, the city (smile). The year I entered high school my family, which consisted of my grandmother and my cousins Clementine Lamb Friley Davis and Lora Antionette Friley, moved to Yazoo City where my Uncle Jimmy and his wife currently resided. Clementine was older and more like a sister than a cousin. She was a teacher and the first in our family to graduate from college. Clem was a mentor and role model for the family, and she inspired younger family members to seek degrees in higher education. Of course, during these times, she had to attend graduate school out of state due to segregation of institutions of higher education in Mississippi. It is so ironic that the State of Mississippi paid out of state tuition for her to attend the University of Indiana. In fact, she inspired her son Randall Pinkston to earn several degrees including the J. D. from the University of Connecticut. During his long and distinguished career in journalism Randall served as White House correspondent [1990-1992] during the administration of President George H. W. Bush.

TS: Talk about your education. I know you went to Mississippi Valley State University, State College at the time you were there. I'm presuming that you went to segregated schools in Mississippi in that period and then Mississippi Valley. I didn't realize that Mississippi Valley was as young a college as it was. I found out it wasn't even founded until 1950, so it was kind of an equalization school at that period when they were trying to figure out how they could get around integration by equalizing education.

AS: Upon graduating from Yazoo City Training High School in 1963 I was accepted to Mississippi Vocational College which was later named Mississippi Valley State University. During this time, all the Black high schools were called training schools, and the White secondary schools were designated as high schools. I attended Mississippi Valley State University on an Attorney Herman DeCell Academic Scholarship and a choir scholarship. The DeCell Scholarship was provided by a prominent White attorney and his wife, Mrs. Harriet DeCell. I received my B.S. degree in sociology with a minor in social studies education in May 1967. As a member of MVSC 42 Golden Voices choir, I was afforded an opportunity to travel around the southeast as well as the east coast. The east coast tour culminated with a performance at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City. The choir also had an opportunity during this tour to attend and perform at the 1964 World's Fair in New York City, which was being held there at the time. I think this experience provided by Mississippi Valley State provided me with the beginnings of a lifelong appreciation for world cultures. I will forever be appreciative for the education that I received at Valley. In fact, my undergraduate class of 1967 has just celebrated its Golden Anniversary. So, I am now also a recipient of a Golden Anniversary Degree from Mississippi Valley State University. I achieved a lot of milestones in 1967, including marrying my husband Donald Smith. Don graduated from Mississippi Industrial College in Holly Springs, Mississippi with a degree in mathematics. At the time of our marriage he was teaching mathematics at Central High School in Coffeerville, Mississippi. And if we fast forward three years later we became the proud parents of our beautiful and talented daughter Donna Michelle Smith.

TS: It looks like you started your teaching career in an historic black college as well at Rust and before that in public schools. When you started public school teaching in 1967 was it a segregated Black school or had it integrated?

AS: My first teaching position was at a segregated high school. I taught social studies at Montgomery High School, which was located in Louise, Mississippi in the heart of the Mississippi Delta. In addition to my teaching responsibilities I also served as co-senior class sponsor, advisor of the yearbook, homecoming co-chair, and senior class play advisor. In fact, this class will be celebrating their fiftieth anniversary this year. I recently received an invitation from two of my former students, Roy Straughter and Linda Williams, to attend their class reunion. I am looking forward to seeing my former students and to hear about their life stories after 50 years.

TS: You were very young at the time.

- AS: I was very young. My second high school teaching position was at the all-Black Rogers High School in Canton, Mississippi. It too was a segregated high school. However, after teaching there for two years, the courts finally required the State of Mississippi to comply with the way overdue *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. So the Rogers High School District was ordered to integrate its school system. To comply with the court order the faculties of Rogers High School and Canton High School merged, which resulted in a surplus of teachers. My husband and I were recent hires, and the merger resulted in termination of the recent hires at the end of the school term. We were fortunate to not have a lapse in employment because we applied for a position at Leflore County High School and were employed there over the summer. It was a formerly all-White high school located in Itta Bena, Mississippi. I am certain that it, like the Canton School System District, was under a court order to integrate its school system.
- TS: Okay, so they were late in integrating in Mississippi.
- AS: Oh, yes, very late since the *Brown v. Board* decision was reached in 1954 and the Civil Rights Act in 1964, and now we are into 1970! Welcome to my home state!
- TS: Georgia wasn't that much ahead. I remember Virginia [C.] Hinton [longtime Kennesaw English professor] used to talk about people in Georgia saying, "Thank God for Mississippi."
- AS: Oh, yes, and we used to say, "Thank God for Arkansas." Since that time there has been a lot of progress in my home state of Mississippi. For example our current mayor of Yazoo City is Ms. Diane Delaware who is Black. However, the state still has miles to travel before it reaches progress made and true equality for all (smile).
- TS: Why don't you talk about what the segregated schools were like? I've heard different stories. Some people are very nostalgic about those old segregated schools.
- AS: Yes, I really do have fond memories of my elementary and high school years even though these segregated school were often lacking in resources. The schools in Mississippi during the time that I was attending school were separate but not equal. However, these deficits in the segregated schools were offset with very passionate and qualified educators who provided students with a love for learning in a very caring and nurturing but challenging learning environment. We started each day with morning prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag followed by instruction in core curriculum classes. Our teachers were very inspiring and taught us that if we put our minds to it we could achieve any goal that we aspired to reach. There were some deficits certainly due to a disparity in resources to support the curriculum. However, I was taught by highly qualified and nurturing but challenging teachers. I was provided with a strong knowledge base in the core curriculum and extra-curriculum as well as implicit curriculum. They taught me the importance of a strong work ethic, the role of our ancestors (hidden curriculum), how to be self-reliant, and critical thinking skills as well as a passion for learning. So the deficits were not in teaching, but limitations in subjects offered as well as resources to support

them. For example, there was not a variety if any of foreign languages offered when I entered high school.

During my elementary school years teachers visited homes to become acquainted with parents and the student's home environment as well as to share student progress. Parents often visited the elementary school to attend parent teacher meetings or serve as a volunteer to assist teachers, especially after the harvest. During my elementary years some of the inequities consisted of buildings without adequate heat, old school buses that were subject to break down, and of course we were issued old textbooks formerly used by White students.

I attended W.A. Campbell Elementary School, which consisted of two classrooms. One classroom consisted of pre-primer through third grade. Students in grades four through eight were assigned to the second classroom. During my fourth-grade year W.A. Campbell Elementary was consolidated with Hall Elementary School. Hall Elementary School afforded me with a wonderful educational experience. However, I do remember some of the challenges experienced there during winter months. We were assigned by our teachers to go out to the creek side near the school and gather wood so that the teachers could build a fire to heat the classrooms. There were times we did not start class until almost noon because the morning was devoted to building the fire and attempting to keep warm, especially during cold damp winter mornings. Of course, due to the wood being damp there was often a problem with smoke, so windows and doors were opened for ventilation while attempting to heat the classrooms. What a wonderful experience in outdoor education (smile).

Our extracurricular activities at Hall School included music, sports, and plays; heaven and hell parties on Fridays; as well as homecoming events. In the Heaven Party there was singing and praying and eating ice cream and cake. And in the Hell Party there was music, dancing, and eating hot spaghetti. Guess where all the students wanted to pull a ticket to attend? You are correct if you guessed hell. The parties were held on a Friday afternoon if everyone performed well during the week. I guess of all my learning experiences at Hall I am most nostalgic about my participation in music. Mrs. Catherine Brent, one of my favorite teachers, taught me how to sing the "Tennessee Waltz" and a list of other songs. So, the foundation for my vocal training was shaped during my elementary school years.

When I entered seventh grade, Hall Elementary School and Campbellsville Elementary School were consolidated. All the consolidation in my opinion probably was implemented to maximize resources and avoid implementing *Brown v. Board* by making segregated schools somewhat equal. Campbellsville Elementary School was housed in a newly constructed building that included a lot of classrooms as well as a gym and a cafeteria. We also received new textbooks as well as resources for the library and playground equipment. These were exciting school years. I tried out for basketball, but did not make the team. While I did not make the team during my seventh-grade year, I did achieve some milestones during my eighth-grade year. I wrote the class song and graduated as valedictorian of my eighth-grade class (smile).

At the end of my eighth-grade school year my grandmother, my cousin Clementine Lamb Friley, and my cousin Lora Antionette Friley moved to Yazoo City. I enrolled in Yazoo City Training School. This was a much larger school than all the others that I had attended. However, I found this school to be very inviting, and the teachers were challenging. There were more students enrolled in my new high school than all my elementary schools combined. I enjoyed all my core classes, but wondered why the girls were required to enroll in home economics courses and boys in auto mechanics and agriculture courses. During high school I participated in many extracurricular activities. I joined the Yazoo City Training School Choir under the direction of Mrs. Yvonne McCoy. She prepared us to perform a diverse repertoire of choral music. She was an exceptional choir director and mentor. She lived the principle of *in loco parentis* [Latin for “in the place of a parent”]. It was under her guidance that I competed in the Mississippi Black High School Choral Competition Festival. In this competition I was awarded third place in my category as a first soprano for my performance of “Oh, Worse Than Death Indeed!” and “Angels, Ever Bright and Fair” from George Frideric Handel’s oratorio *Theodora*. I also had the honor of performing a solo at my high school graduation. As choir director, Mrs. McCoy also went the extra mile to seek out scholarships for graduating senior choir members. She used her weekends and resources to personally travel with us to auditions. My audition was held at Mississippi Valley State College on a Sunday afternoon with the choir director, Professor Henrietta McCallum Lowe. After a successful performance, I was awarded a four-year scholarship to attend the college. I guess not until the advent of television did the extent of injustices created due to segregation laws become common knowledge around the country.

TS: Television made a big difference?

AS: Yes, it showed the world how Black citizens and other minorities were being denied their constitutional rights due to segregation laws. My, just think how tweets and social media would impact the Civil Rights Movement today.

TS: How big were your schools?

AS: W.A. Campbell consisted of approximately 100 students, Hall Elementary School consisted of approximately 200 students, and Campbellsville Elementary probably consisted of around 700 students. Yazoo City Training High School consisted of approximately 1500 students.

TS: What towns were they in?

AS: W. A. Campbell Elementary School was in Bayland, Mississippi. Hall Elementary School was located in Potosi, Mississippi. Campbellsville Elementary School was in Holly Bluff, Mississippi. And Yazoo City Training High School, of course, was in Yazoo City, Mississippi. All my P-12 experiences in segregated schools were in Yazoo County Mississippi. The county seat for Yazoo County is in Yazoo City. I was reared in Yazoo County; however, my father was in the military and stationed in Fresno, California

at the time that I was born. My father was from Mississippi and returned there after he returned home from his duty in World War II. My mother was from Alexandria, Louisiana. While he was deployed in the war, Mother became very independent and enrolled in Beauty College where she earned her license and went to work as a beautician. When he returned, I was told that he did not appreciate her independence, and they divorced. She was ahead of her time as a very independent minded professional woman.

TS: That was common during wartime, I imagine, for the women to learn how to get along without their husbands.

AS: Yes, after my parents divorced, as I mentioned, I was sent to live with my paternal grandparents on a family farm in Yazoo County, Mississippi. My father returned to Mississippi, but she stayed in California. My mother relocated to Los Angeles where she resided until her passing two years ago at age of 92.

TS: She was independent, I guess. Did you feel rejected?

AS: Oh, not at all. My upbringing is an amazing story. I was three months old when I went to live with my grandparents. My grandmother was sixty-four at the time and grandfather was probably almost seventy years old. Can you imagine older grandparents taking on the awesome responsibility of rearing a three-month old? I grew up in the “village.” [“It takes a village to raise a child”] (smile). My grandparents were the parents of eleven children. I received love and support from my grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, as well as support from my parents in their own unique way. I grew up around my extended family. My cousins often came over and spent the night with us. We spent Sundays going to church followed by Sunday dinners with family members or on the church grounds. After Sunday dinners, the adults would sit around and visit while the children played outside. During these times children were expected to be seen and not heard (smile).

A treat on Sunday evenings after all extended family left was to listen to programs on the radio. My favorite program was “Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar.” Some Sunday evenings after my grandfather passed on for entertainment Mama and I would also sing hymns and she would tell ghost stories and, of course, talk about her ancient history, about the arrival of her ancestors as slaves. Then around the time I was in the third grade Clementine, who had married and divorced, returned home along with my little baby cousin, Lora Antionette. It was fun having a baby in the home as well as a live-in teacher. She would assist me with my homework using the Socratic method. Clem taught me how to learn as she would never share answers to my homework questions, but instead she would direct me to a resource to find the answer on my own. She was a great teacher and most of all a loving and caring big sister who included me and other cousins on field trips with her students.

Now what I would not give to hear Mama’s stories about her grandmother’s parents being auctioned as slaves at a port in New Orleans where families were often separated after arriving from Africa. Of course, at the time I was too immature to appreciate this

rich oral history. Mama lived to reach 100 years of age. She passed on in 1978 the same year that I earned my PhD from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and accepted my first teaching position in higher education as a professor at Rust College in Holly Spring, Mississippi.

TS: How about that?

AS: Yes, I have such fond memories of growing up with my grandparents and appreciating the values that she instilled in me. I inherited my grandmother's stature and many of her mannerisms. She was the family matriarch who inspired us all including Clem to obtain an education even though she only completed the third grade. She instilled in us the concept that education was the key to a successful future—and, of course, as she would also remind us, a way out of the cotton fields (smile). While she was not qualified to assist me with most of my assignments, she came up with all kinds of strategies that in her opinion would help me learn and retain knowledge. She held me accountable for doing my homework even if none was assigned. She would often say, "Okay, gal, now you make sure you get these books out, and you study your lessons." She had a favorite test preparation strategy. To prepare for tests she always instructed me to sleep with my textbooks under the pillow of my bed, so that my brain could absorb and retain the information needed to pass my examinations. I guess it never occurred to her that attending school with a crick in your neck could have a negative impact on your performance on the test (smile).

TS: Well, I always thought it worked that way. Sometimes, if you just have books around you the information seems to seep in through osmosis.

AS: Exactly. That is correct. So that is a little bit about my background. Yes, I attended all segregated schools until I entered graduate school. Unfortunately, my grandfather passed on during elementary school, and so I did not have an opportunity to enjoy as much time growing up under his influence as I did with my grandmother whom I called Mama.

TS: Did you say they own their farm?

AS: No. My Aunt Magnolia Pinkston Miller's husband, Uncle Thornton Miller, owned the farm where my grandparents and I lived. My grandfather worked on the farm and so did my grandmother. My grandmother was also a midwife. I recall Whites and Blacks coming to our home sometimes in the middle of the night to request her services. So she would be gone sometimes overnight, and my grandfather would take care of me and the home. My Uncle Thornton and Aunt Magnolia Miller passed some years ago. My Aunt Magnolia left her share of the farm to my daughter, Donna Michelle Smith, and her niece, Audrey Kemp. They rent out the farm to Mr. William Horton, a local farmer.

TS: As a college professor, looking back now, how well do you think you were prepared academically?



AS: Looking back, I think that my overall academic preparation provided me with knowledge, skills, and values to become a successful college professor and overall productive member of society. Given the disparities in funding of segregated schools there certainly were some deficits in resources provided teachers to deliver the curriculum. I am sure that the teachers in the White high schools were provided resources to offer a much more enriched AP [Advanced Placement] curriculum than the one that I completed in my all Black segregated high school. Nevertheless, I still obtained a rich educational background, which informed my performance in teaching, scholarship, service, and leadership as a college professor.

TS: You majored in sociology?

AS: Yes, in college I majored in sociology and social studies education. From my major I gained a knowledge base about the role that gender, age, race, and other factors play in society. One of my favorite sociology professors was Dr. Mary Benjamin, a graduate of Clark Atlanta University. She had a way of bringing theories of [David Emile] Durkheim and others alive and applicable to everyday societal issues. At one point during my major I considered attending Clark Atlanta University to become a social worker. However, after completing education courses in my minor, I developed a love and passion for my minor in social studies education. I always enjoyed social studies, and two of my favorite subjects were world history and American Government. So, I became a convert of my minor.

TS: Even through college did you find some deficits in resources?

AS: Correct. For example, the library holdings at Mississippi Valley State College were very limited compared to the extensive and current holdings at SIU, a predominantly White university where I earned my graduate degrees.

TS: At Southern Illinois?

AS: Yes, Southern Illinois University. After teaching high school in Mississippi for ten years my husband and I decided to further our education and attend graduate school. We applied and were accepted at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. I enrolled in the master's program in secondary social studies education. Since he held a master's in mathematics education he was accepted into the doctoral program in mathematics. He received a teaching assistantship to fund his doctoral studies. I received a fellowship to earn my master's degree, and upon completion of my master's degree I enrolled in the doctoral program in curriculum and instruction with a concentration in educational leadership. My doctoral degree was also funded through a teaching assistantship. I enjoyed serving as a TA of undergraduate courses in the teacher education program.

TS: Mississippi Valley State has about 2500 students now [2,455 in the fall of 2016]. What did they have back then?

AS: I am not certain, but I believe the enrollment was about 1,000 at the time that I attended, but it could have been larger. The atmosphere felt smaller, and I knew most of the students. The president [Dr. James Herbert White] encouraged a family environment. In fact, he encouraged students to call him Daddy White and his wife Mama White. I guess they took the concept of *in loco parentis* to an extreme (smile).

TS: I saw where there was a student protest over something he had done a few years after you left there [in 1969 over students' desire for more Black history courses, Black speakers, and books in the library by Black authors].

AS: Correct. While Black history was always taught as part of the hidden curriculum, students were seeking to include Black Studies as part of the explicit curriculum. They were also asking for diverse speakers and more resources to support all other areas of the college. While President White was an exceptional leader, he was not without his critics. He received mixed reviews because he appeared to some groups to be very paternalistic, and others saw his leadership style as that of an Uncle Tom.

TS: Well, he had to be, didn't he?

AS: Of course, during that era he had to use a particular style of leadership to secure resources required to fund the college. His style somewhat reminds me of a story that has been passed on about a grassroots civil rights leader in a local community. According to the story, a Freedom Rider got off a bus in a small rural area in Mississippi, went up to a large plantation home, and knocked on the door. When the lady of the house appeared, he asked her if by chance she knew where Negroes were holding a voter registration meeting that evening. She said, "No, but let me ask John, my gardener." She went and found John and asked him if he knew the location of the meeting. His response was, "No, Miss Sally, I don't know nothing about no meeting, but think it might be offered at the nearest church." That evening, when the Freedom Rider attended the meeting, guess who was presiding? None other than the gardener, John, who said, "Less call this meeting to order" (smile).

TS: So Dr. White said what he had to say to keep his job?

AS: Correct, to keep his job and provide for the education of Black students. I found President White to be a very student-centered leader. Perhaps I am overgeneralizing, but I found him to follow through on his promises to students, as evidenced by the outcome of my request for support. As I shared earlier, my education was funded through scholarships, so I did not have disposable income to pay for anything other than the basics during college. Well, due to some oversight during my freshman year, I forgot to return several library books and incurred a library fine. And the librarian was a librarian who guarded the books as if they were Picasso paintings (smile). So, I received this scathing letter from her saying, "If you don't pay this library fine, you're going to be dismissed from the college." I forget how much the fine was; it wasn't very much; but again, I was a struggling poor student. I thought, "Oh, this is horrible." Unlike some of the young people today, you did not call home for assistance unless there was a true

emergency. So, I thought, “What am I going to do?” So I recalled that in one of our convocations President White, Daddy White, said, “If you have any problems, just come and see me.” So I marched over to the president’s office, and I asked his secretary if I could speak with Daddy White, and her response was, “Why do you want to see the president?” And to show you how small the school was, I shared my concern, and she said, “Okay,” and announced my request to the president. So I went on in, and I shared with him my notification from the wicked librarian.

TS: The wicked librarian?

AS: Yes, but she was equal opportunity wicked. So, I told him what was going on, and he said, “Oh, baby, don’t worry about that; you’ll be just fine.” I said, “Really?” He said, “Yes, don’t worry about it; now go on back to your classes.” That was the end of it.

TS: So, you paid the fine, and that was the end of it?

AS: I paid the fine, and that was the end of it. But think how empowered I felt leaving his office as the result of him taking time out of his very busy schedule to offer a freshman reassurance. This is just another example of how my prior educational experiences and role models prepared me for my role as a college professor. I have very fond memories of my professors and classmates from Valley. Some of them went on to become distinguished in their respective fields.

TS: They turned out a lot of NFL football players too.

AS: Yes, they sure did.

TS: Jerry Rice and Deacon Jones.

AS: Correct. I forgot to mention that my high school, Yazoo City Training School, also turned out a number of professional NFL football players. [William Ferdie] Willie Brown went on to become very renowned with the Oakland Raiders [as a cornerback from 1967 to 1978 after playing for the Denver Broncos from 1963 to 1966]. I think he’s a coach for the Raiders now or if he is not a coach he is on the board or something. [Editor’s note: He was a defensive backfield coach for the Raiders from 1979 to 1988; in 1995, he returned to the Raiders as director of staff development and is still affiliated with the team]. In my hometown we have a street named after him.

TS: All right! Yazoo City Training School?

AS: Yes, back to the influences of my hometown of Yazoo City, I would be remiss if I did not expand on the role that the DeCell family played in funding my college education. My academic scholarship was funded by Mr. and Mrs. Herman [B.] DeCell. He was an attorney that passed on much too soon. Herman DeCell and Harriet DeCell—she’s now Harriet [Causey DeCell] Kuykendall. She still lives in Jackson, and we keep in touch. This was a White couple that wanted to make a difference by funding the education of a

promising student at my high school back in 1963, and I was the fortunate recipient. They not only gave of their resources; they also gave of their time to inspire me to do well in pursuit of my college degree. For example, they attended all of my annual Christmastime performances of Handel's *Messiah* by the Mississippi Valley State 42 Golden Voices. By the time I graduated I had enough of good ole Handel, yet they appeared to enjoy each performance (smile). These are the kind of human interest stories about Mississippi that do not receive a lot of publicity.

TS: I was going to ask you if you had something like the Fisk Jubilee Singers.

AS: Yes, very much so. Like the Fisk Jubilee Singers we went on tours and raised funds, friends, and prospective students for the college. As I mentioned earlier, my most memorable concert tour was an east coast tour, which included performing at the 1964 New York's World Fair. We traveled as I recall via rented Trailways Buses. There was a lot of fundraising to support this tour. Our food and lodging, for the most part, were provided by the churches where we performed. We didn't stay at hotels. We stayed with church members of different churches all the way up the east coast.

We performed concerts at various locations during our travels up the east coast. We departed for the tour at the end of spring semester and returned during the first term of summer school. I am indebted to my dear friend Queenester Woolfork for sharing her statistics notes from Dr. Hance Gamblin's class while I was out of class on tour.

TS: Segregated hotels existed still in the spring of 1964 even up the east coast?

AS: Yes, exactly, coupled with the fact that we couldn't afford the cost for food and lodging. I will never forget the first time I saw the New York skyline as we approached the city. I remember our choir directors asking us to remain in our seats and "act sophisticated" (smile)!

TS: You graduated from Mississippi Valley State in '67, and then you started your teaching career. Let's see, you had a major in sociology but a minor in education?

AS: Yes, my minor was in social studies education. I developed a passion for teaching and especially teaching high school students where sometimes I taught 150 students over a course of six class periods.

TS: In '67 you go straight from college to your first teaching job at Montgomery?

AS: Correct. Montgomery High School in Louise, Mississippi. It is a farming community.

TS: Did you say you were already married at that time?

AS: Yes, I married during my student teaching just before graduation. My husband graduated from Mississippi Industrial College two years before I graduated and had accepted a teaching position as a mathematics teacher at Central High School in Coffeenville,

Mississippi. Later he accepted a position working with adults at the STAR [Systematic Training and Redevelopment] Program in his home community of Ofahoma in Leake County Mississippi. [Editor's note: Funded by the federal Office of Economic Opportunity, the STAR anti-poverty, anti-illiteracy program ran for six years in the late 1960s and early 1970s until funding was eliminated]. So, we had a commuter marriage during our first year of marriage.

TS: And you said his name is Donald?

AS: Yes. He and his cousin Ferr Smith along with Richard Polk and others were active in the NAACP in his Leake County community. Ferr Smith, who was an attorney, also graduated from Mississippi Valley State College and the University of Mississippi Law School. He was one of the first [Black] Mississippi representatives [Mississippi State House of Representatives from Carthage, Mississippi, 1993-2016]. They were very active in the voter registration initiatives. I am not sure they worked with Mrs. Winson [Gates] Hudson, who was a major leader in the Civil Rights Movement in Leake County Mississippi. My involvement was limited; however, I do recall being invited out to attend a few Sunday evening meetings held at various churches. I was selected to take minutes of the meetings (this was the era!) To my surprise during the meeting some of the men placed guns on tables so that they would be readily available in the event an intruder such as the Ku Klux Klan showed up to cause harm. Black or White activists or anyone suspected of participating in the Civil Rights Movement to challenge segregation laws were labeled as agitators. Often innocent citizens were subjected to harassment, job loss, or even murder. These were still extremely turbulent times in Mississippi. Believe it or not, this was in 1967 after Freedom Summer, and there was still fear of retaliation for seeking constitutional rights of Blacks and other minorities.

TS: Wow. Let's see, Freedom Summer was '64 wasn't it? Did you have any involvement with that?

AS: That's right. No, I did not, but I believe that my cousin Randall had some involvement, but I didn't, no.

TS: Okay, so you were just the secretary (smiles)!

AS: Right! The safety zone!

TS: Why don't you talk about integration of schools in Mississippi and how that affected you?

AS: I never attended an integrated school in Mississippi. My first experience attending an integrated school was during graduate studies at Southern Illinois at Carbondale. I did not experience any racial discrimination in the program. However, during my doctoral program in some of my educational leadership courses I observed there was a slight difference in treatment based on gender of classes that consisted of mostly male students. The courses were taught by White males. Also most of my classmates in these courses were also male. The males were called on more often, and their responses to questions

appeared to receive more validation than those of the few female students. I think this experience affected my interest in gender equity and led to selecting a dissertation topic, which explored the impact of Title IX legislation.

So how did teaching in an integrated school in Mississippi affect me? I was one of four of the first Black teachers to integrate the faculty at Leflore County High School. My husband and I were interviewed by the principal, Mr. Glenn Norwood, in 1970, and we were also greeted by the assistant principal, Mr. Irvin Whitaker, who was Black. We had a successful interview and were offered contracts. Don received a contract to teach mathematics, and I was offered a contract to teach social studies. The experience of teaching in a formerly all-White high school in the Mississippi Delta in the 1970s was quite daunting. I was surprised that there was not more overt resistance to our employment. But, overall, the first year and subsequent years ran smoothly, thanks to the leadership of these principals. I can assure you that while the integration of Leflore County High School went smoothly during this era, this was not always the case of school desegregation in Mississippi schools. In fact, in some districts the scene was more like the one experienced by Ruby Bridges when she integrated an all-White School in New Orleans in 1960. However, my no means was the first year without challenges.

Oh, yes, there were two other Black teachers employed at the same time as we employed. Mr. Billy McGhee taught vocational education, and Mrs. Brown taught art education. My husband and I were the first Black teachers appointed to teach core curriculum courses. All four teachers were assigned different preparation periods. Therefore, we felt isolated since there were limited interactions with our White colleagues. I do not think the White faculty had heard of Invitational Education or Dr. Betty [L.] Siegel and William [W.] Purkey's research (smile).<sup>1</sup> In fact, I do not recall any diversity training programs at that time. Schools were integrated, and students and faculty were expected without conflict to make the adjustment and sing "Kumbaya, My Lord," and get along. Desegregation was rather smooth, but during my first year at Leflore there were some uncomfortable times.

For example, when I entered the teachers' lounge, my colleagues ignored me or left the lounge. I also recall returning to my classroom after lunch to find the words "niggers get out" written on the chalkboard. Of course, one Black student and I were the only two Blacks in the classroom. I simply erased the board and started to teach the class in absolute silence. During one of my 10<sup>th</sup> Grade World History classes, one young man had the habit of asking questions from the back of the textbook to see if I knew the content (smile). Finally, a memorable class consisted of my 5<sup>th</sup> period pranksters, mostly

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<sup>1</sup> As colleagues at the University of Florida in the late 1960s and 1970s, Siegel and Purkey began to hold summer workshops for principals, teachers, and school board members on strategies to humanize teaching and learning. In 1982 they co-founded the International Alliance for Invitational Education. They co-authored a book, *Becoming an Invitational Leader: A New Approach to Professional and Personal Success*, published by Humanics Trade Group, Atlanta, 2003.

very bright students, many of whom were athletes. As I recall Johnny Higginbotham was the class leader of their clandestine activities. The second year things began to settle down. I have fond memories of teaching and making a little bit of history.

In retrospect, this teaching experience taught me how to be tolerant and appreciate other cultures. I also learned that the principles of teaching used to deliver instruction to Black students were appropriate for all students whether they were the children of plantation owners or university professors or the children of parents who lived and worked on plantations.

Years later, just by chance, I ran into Carol Hightower, one of my favorite students from Leflore County High. In fact, back in 1982 my family and I stopped over at Lookout Mountain on our return trip from the 1982 Knoxville World's Fair. While there we ran into Carol and her family at the same site. I did not recognize her, but she remembered me and reminded me that I was her teacher many years ago at Leflore County High School. She introduced me to her family. As I recall at the time she was residing in Jackson, Mississippi, and employed as a registered nurse at one of the hospitals in Jackson.

TS: Were the student pranks something they would do to any young teacher or was it because you were Black?

AS: I do think that some of the mischievous behaviors would have also been directed toward any young teacher. So the little darlings were prepared to challenge this young teacher for all she was worth (smile).

TS: So, you stayed there for five years I guess in Leflore County? And that's about 130 miles south of Memphis isn't it?

AS: Yes. Itta Bena is located near Greenwood, Mississippi. I guess it could be considered a bedroom community for Greenwood. It is rural or more of an exurb. There appears to have been a lot of progress in race relations made in Itta Bena. The mayor of the city is Mrs. Thelma Perkins Collins, and she is a native of Itta Bena. She is also a graduate of Mississippi Valley State University and a former classmate and choir member of mine. There are also quite a few notable people from Itta Bena, including Morgan Freeman.

TS: Okay, that's great! I also found out that Ida B. Wells came from there.

AS: Yes, she did. Mississippi is the birthplace or former home of so many notable Americans, including several from my hometown of Yazoo City, including [writer/editor William W.] Willie Morris and Mike Espy, former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. I do not know if you are into country comedy, but Jerry Clower lived there [for more than thirty years]. He graduated from Mississippi State University in agriculture. The character in his jokes was Mark Ledbetter. I would also add to the notable list my own cousin Randall Pinkston, a retired journalist for CBS News. Also, another accomplished Mississippian, while not from my hometown, is B. B. King, the King of the Blues. So Dr. Scott, if you

happen to travel through the delta, the B. B. King Museum and Delta Interpretative Center is a must visit especially for a historian. It is stunning and rivals some of the top museums around the country. It is in the Mississippi Delta in Indianola [county seat of Sunflower County]. It's about an hour and fifteen minutes away from Yazoo City.

TS: I was thinking there's a book about civil rights in Sunflower County.

AS: Yes, in fact there are several books about civil rights in Sunflower County. You are referring to the legacy of the Carter family who fought for school equality. One is titled *Silver Rights: The Story of the Carter Family's Brave Decision to Send Their Children to an All-White School and Claim Their Civil Rights*.<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Mae Bertha Carter who lived in Drew, Mississippi, had the courage to send her children to integrated schools in Mississippi. The other book is a children's picture book titled *The School is Not White! A True Story of the Civil Rights Movement* by Doreen Rappaport.<sup>3</sup> There is also a documentary, *The Intolerable Burden*, about the family's desegregation of schools.<sup>4</sup> Drew is about an hour from Yazoo City.

TS: Okay, so you stayed there several years. I'm a little confused about when you left. I know you earned your master's in '76.

AS: I taught at Leflore County High School for five years and resigned to attend graduate school at the end of the school term in 1975. I received a fellowship to enroll in the master's program in Secondary Education Social Studies at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale and earned my masters there in 1976 and doctorate in 1978.

TS: And you said your husband went there too.

AS: Yes, our family moved to Carbondale and lived in graduate housing at Evergreen Terrace. My husband was accepted in the doctoral program in mathematics and awarded a graduate teaching assistantship. We enrolled our daughter at Brown Kindergarten.

TS: You have one child?

AS: Yes, we have one child Donna Michelle Smith. Don was assigned as a TA to teach undergraduate courses in mathematics.

TS: I guess that Southern Illinois and Carbondale are not that far away from the Mississippi Delta.

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<sup>2</sup> By Constance Curry and published by Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Hyperion Book CH, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Directed by Chea Prince and produced by Constance Curry, Icarus Films, 2003.



AS: No, it is not that far, but during winter months the weather tended to get much colder. The temperature could suddenly drop, and you felt like you were in Chicago. My experiences at Leflore County High School prepared me to enter and succeed as a graduate student and Teaching Assistant. Teaching at the predominately White high school prepared me for teaching as a TA at a predominately White university.

TS: While you were teaching at Leflore County High School, was it under a Freedom of Choice plan or was it fully integrated? There didn't seem to be a lot of Black students.

AS: It was fully integrated at that time, but the Black students had not felt comfortable enrolling. Many remained at the all-Black high school, Amanda Elzy, but later they were bused over to Leflore County High. The Freedom of Choice strategy was more prevalent in the 1960s, and by 1970 the U. S. Supreme Court ordered schools to integrate or lose all federal funding. The courts would not accept any more delays in Mississippi to the implementation of *Brown v. Board* and the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

I am not sure why, but somehow the process of desegregation in Leflore County appeared to be in incremental stages. At this time the all-Black Amanda Elzy High School in the country was still open for attendance. It was my understanding that they could stay at the Black school because they didn't have the same kind of [court] order that Rogers had, the school where we had last taught. So, they could gradually phase in their desegregation plan.

TS: So that does sound like Freedom of Choice.

AS: Yes, I guess that was Freedom of Choice, which would explain why parents were reluctant to send their children to the newly integrated school for fear of repercussions such as the ones experienced by the Carters and other Black families.

TS: So was that a good experience at Southern Illinois University then?

AS: Exactly. I graduated from SIU in 1978 with a PhD in curriculum and instruction and a concentration in educational leadership. My graduate coursework provided me with knowledge in curriculum development, instruction, and foundations of education. I also took courses in school law and other topics that prepared me to serve as a leader in P-12 schools as well as to be a professor in higher education. I had some exceptional professors, including Dr. Billy G. Dixon and Dr. Robert Buser. They modeled best practices in teaching and scholarship. I was also appreciative of the mentoring provided by so many of my professors.

TS: Talk about some of your mentors.

AS: Some of my mentors were Dr. Billy Dixon in Educational Administration and Curriculum and Instruction; Dr. Arsene [O.] Boykin; Donald Beggs, Dean of the College of Education and Human Services; and Dr. [Arthur L.] Art Aikman, my dissertation chair.

TS: What made them good mentors?

AS: They took a holistic approach to educating graduate students. They were very demanding and interested in my intellectual and career development. For example, graduate students were invited to attend faculty retreats and conferences, submit papers for publication with faculty members, and engage in other professional development intellectual and networking opportunities. I was also nominated for and inducted into the honor society of Phi Kappa Phi. As mentors, thesis faculty also went the extra mile to assist me with securing employment after I completed my program of studies. For example, prior to defending my dissertation I found listed in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* a job announcement at the University of South Carolina at Spartanburg for the position of assistant professor of curriculum and instruction. I think that was the title of the position at any rate, and it was a perfect match with my qualifications. I applied, submitted my application materials through the Office of Career Services, and was invited for an interview. My preparation for the interview from Career Services was very helpful. However, I felt that I needed more guidance from the perspective of a leader in higher education. So I consulted with Dr. Billy Dixon to prepare for the interview, and he shared the types of questions to expect during my interview. Dr. Dixon also contacted the dean of the College of Education at SIU and asked if he would provide me with questions from the dean's perspective. Dr. Donald Beggs not only provided me with the kinds of questions to expect but also held a brief mock interview with me, which proved to be most beneficial. Their mentoring paid off. I completed a successful interview and was offered a position as a professor of secondary education at the University of South Carolina at Spartanburg. However, I received a call from Clem that Mama, who was 100 at the time, was very ill. So I decided to decline the job offer and seek employment at a university in Mississippi. I applied and was accepted for an appointment as assistant professor of education and chair of the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Rust College.

TS: Didn't your husband teach there as well?

AS: Yes, we both applied for and accepted teaching positions at Rust College in Holly Springs, Mississippi. I was offered and accepted an appointment in the Department of Education in the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Don was offered and accepted an appointment in the Department of Mathematics. We enrolled our daughter, who was entering third grade, in Holly Spring Elementary School. This was her first experience attending an all-Black school. She enjoyed her two years in attendance and made a lot of friendships and received recognition in her studies as well. Perhaps Title IX motivated the college to hire a female chair (smile).

TS: So, Title IX did make a difference?

AS: Yes, it made a difference. Title IX legislation has required schools to provide equal opportunities for women in education. I think equal funding and treatment often receives most attention. But Title IX has also influenced counseling of girls to enter careers traditionally held by men such as STEM [science, technology, engineering, and

mathematics] fields. It has made a significant difference in gender role expectations and treatment. Most recently, through a google search, I was pleased to find that my research is also contributing to the literature on gender issues. I found that my dissertation is cited as a reference in Maggie Wilson's book on *Gender Issues in International Education: Beyond Policy and Practice*.<sup>5</sup>

TS: It's still making a difference.

AS: It's still making a difference right, exactly. Even to this day it seems to still have an impact, I think, on the discussions about gender bathrooms; and transgender equality is an extension of Title IX legislation.

TS: For your dissertation,<sup>6</sup> what did you study, schools around Carbondale?

AS: The sample size consisted of secondary schools in the state, based on different sizes and locations such as urban, suburban, and rural high schools.

TS: These were schools in Illinois?

AS: Yes, the sample was limited to schools in Illinois. So this was not a national study. Dr. Boykin and I were able to present the findings at a conference in New York, and also submit a short article for publication, which was accepted in *Phi Delta Kappan* Journal. The findings showed that the larger schools, urban and suburban schools, most often self-reported compliance with Title IX regulations.

TS: The rural schools didn't?

AS: Yes, at the time of the study rural schools did not self-report as often to be in compliance in as many areas as their larger urban and suburban counterparts. The comments were the most telling. Some of the concerns with Title IX were registered by parents who did not approve of coed physical education classes and, of course, feared that the law would destroy important male sports programs.

TS: But your study is like only five or six years after Title IX [signed into law by President Nixon on June 23, 1972].

AS: Exactly. So, I am sure some high schools needed additional time and resources to comply with the legislation.

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<sup>5</sup> Maggie Wilson and Sheena Erskine, eds., *Gender Issues in International Education: Beyond Policy and Practice* (Routledge, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> Ann Dolores Pinkston Smith, "Secondary School Programs and Title IX Legislation: Perceptions of Selected Secondary School Principals" (Southern Illinois University at Carbondale 1978).

TS: So, it took a while to implement it?

AS: Yes, and I think the legislation still has its critics. Many leaders in education appear to still have the perception that the women's sports are taking away from the resources of men's sports, including football.

TS: I understand. I ran track and cross country in college, and a few places have done away with male track teams to try to balance the funding for men's and women's sports.

AS: Exactly, so you are acquainted with concerns that have been raised about implementing Title IX legislation.

TS: People in wrestling felt that and a few other sports, but it's not going to affect basketball or football.

AS: Correct, some sports were affected.

TS: We've started having reunions of our old track guys from the 1960s.

AS: Where did you graduate?

TS: The University of Tennessee.

AS: Oh, impressive, UT the flagship university.

TS: I've been doing some interviews of the guys on the track teams back then, including a woman that trained with the track team before there were women's intercollegiate sports in the Southeastern Conference and then became the first women's coach at the University of Tennessee in 1974 because of Title IX. She has some wonderful stories about how they basically raided the Physical Education Department and took faculty members and made them coaches, while they were still on the payroll as physical education instructors. That's how Pat [Head] Summitt got started in basketball at Tennessee. She was a graduate assistant, and they said, "Why don't you coach the basketball team?" So, at any rate we've come a long way since then.

AS: Yes, so Coach Pat Summitt owes some of her successes to Title IX. She just recently passed on sadly [on June 28, 2016] while so very young [age 64]. Any age below 90 is young (smile). I just reread her New York Times Best Seller, *Reach for the Summit*.<sup>7</sup>

TS: Title IX sounds like a good dissertation to do. You finished that in '78 and then went to Rust College. By the way, I found out that Ida B. Wells got expelled from Rust College way back when. She was rebellious in the eyes of the president. I forgot what it was that she did, but she expressed her opinion, and she got expelled.

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<sup>7</sup> Pat Summitt, with Sally Jenkins, *Reach for the Summit: The Definite Dozen System for Succeeding at Whatever You Do* (Broadway Books, 1998).

AS: Yes, she was a pioneer in the movement for civil rights. Rust College has established The Ida B. Wells/Roy Wilkins Lecture Series named in her honor.

TS: But, at any rate, you stayed there two years, so what was that like at Rust College?

AS: Rust College is a small, historically Black college that is affiliated with the United Methodist Church. It is located in north Mississippi between Oxford, Mississippi and Memphis, Tennessee. It is located on a beautiful campus with a mixture of buildings constructed probably during the nineteenth century and more recent architecture [including Frances Hathorne Alumni and Public Relations Center, built before the Civil War and remodeled in 1905 and several times since then]. My family and I lived in faculty housing across the street from the college. While the student population was predominantly Black there were also some international students enrolled. The students were so bright and so very eager to learn and be mentored. Many of the graduates were employed as teachers and leaders in P-12 schools in Mississippi and outside of the state, especially in neighboring Tennessee.

Many of my first invaluable learning experiences as a teacher and educator were made Rust College. Everyone carried a heavy work load and wore many hats, so the college provided a lot of opportunities to support and enrich faculty performance in teaching as well as scholarship and service, even though the emphasis was on teaching. In addition to my discipline-based professional development experiences, one of the most memorable conferences that I attended annually was the NAFEO (National Association for Equal Opportunities in Higher Education) Conference held in Washington, D. C.

During my appointment at Rust I taught classes in addition to serving as chair of the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences, as certification officer, and as director of student teaching. I was young at the time, and some of the faculty in the department were much older and more experienced, which made for interesting dynamics. However, they were nurturing, and it was delightful to serve with them. They were very patient with me as a young inexperienced leader (smile).

TS: But you had a PhD.

AS: Yes, I had a PhD. So the leadership position was initially a little bit of a challenge.

TS: I bet they resented it.

AS: Well, no, in retrospect we all worked well together as a team for the common good of the students. Because of their dedication and commitment, we achieved a lot of important milestones. For example, Rust and Ole Miss held a few joint student teaching seminars to examine topics of interests to our students, as well as provide students from diverse backgrounds the opportunity to learn from and about the culture of each other. There were high placement rates of teacher education graduates. Our graduates were employed

by local school districts in northern Mississippi as well as other locations around the nation.

I served at Rust College for two years. Rust did not offer graduate programs, and since I had an interest in teaching at the graduate level, I decided to apply for a teaching position at Memphis State University, which was only 45 miles from Holly Springs. I applied for an opening in the Department of Educational Leadership at Memphis State, and after an interview was offered and accepted an appointment as assistant professor. I submitted my letter of resignation to my Rust College administrators, Dean T. C. McKinney and Dr. William A. McMillan, President.

After receiving my letter of resignation, Dr. McMillan asked me to reconsider my decision and remain at Rust. He told me that I would be a “little fish at Memphis State, but if I remained at Rust I could continue to be a big fish in a little pond” (smile). I thanked him for his advice and all the opportunities provided under his leadership, but told him that my decision to accept the position was final. So, my family and I moved to Germantown, TN, a suburb of the metro Memphis area, to be near my job. Don continued to commute to Rust College until he was hired at Shelby State Community College in Memphis. And we enrolled our daughter Michelle, who was entering 5<sup>th</sup> grade, in Campus School, located on the campus of Memphis State University.

TS: How big was Memphis State at that time?

AS: In 1980 Memphis State probably had an enrollment of approximately 10, 000 students. It is a predominantly White public research university. At the time the department was not very diverse. The members of the department consisted of all White males who were former superintendents and principals, and one Black male and one White female and me. I found teaching graduate students to be intellectually stimulating. Most of the students in the program were employed in school settings. So they could take content learned in class and immediately apply theories to practice, which made for rich action research. I was afforded an opportunity to engage with students during completion of their research assignments by serving on masters and doctoral committees. I was also selected to chair a doctoral student dissertation. I served on and chaired lots of committees, so I was assigned a very heavy teaching and service load in addition to supervising a load of student teaching. I also taught night classes some semesters at the satellite campus in Jackson, Tennessee. My most rewarding experience at the university consisted of serving as chair of a SACS [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools] accreditation team at Haywood High School in Brownsville, Tennessee. I had an exceptional team of educators from public schools and higher education representing all disciplines. Thank goodness (God) the visit was a successful one.

TS: Were most of the graduate students also male?

AS: Yes, during my first year there appeared to be more males in the graduate program.

TS: And faculty too, I guess.

AS: Yes. The department lost ground in diversity when the one White female resigned. The overall climate was not a level playing field for diverse colleagues at the time of my appointment. In 1985 Dr. Oscar Love, the Black male colleague who was hired at the same time as I was, and I resigned our positions from the university. After the three minorities resigned, the department returned to a faculty of all White males. I was employed there from 1980 to 1985. However, overall the move to Memphis was an excellent move for our family, as our daughter could receive an excellent education at Campus School and White Station Optional Program. She also excelled in music, playing the bassoon in her school band as well as in the Memphis Youth Symphony. Her best friend to this day was made at Campus School.

TS: Are you saying that in the early 1980s there still weren't a lot of women that were aspiring to be principals or other school administrators?

AS: Yes, in the early 1980s there were not as many women enrolled in the Educational Leadership Department and going into administration. They were not aspiring to these roles, which traditionally had been an all-male club. However, by the mid-1980s with the implementation of Title IX more P-12 schools as well as higher education institutions started to hire women in leadership roles.

TS: So the discrimination was gender and not race?

AS: Well, during my appointment I felt at the time it was more gender. However, it probably was a combination of gender and racial discrimination. Prior to my resignation I initiated a search for positions in higher education out west. I learned early on that you never resign a job until you have another one (smile). While growing up I watched the evening news with Chet Huntley and David Brinkley. Chet always made his home state of Montana, the Big Sky Country, an ideal place to live (laughter). So while there were no openings at universities in Montana there was a perfect opening at Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, NM. I applied and interviewed for the position. My husband appeared to have my excitement for the adventure. However, I think our daughter thought we both had lost our minds (smile). We moved as she was entering 10<sup>th</sup> Grade. My husband was offered a full-time teaching appointment in the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science.

TS: I was wondering how you got out there because when I first contacted you I was thinking that you were kind of living in exile.

AS: Well it was kind of like that as we lived out on the plains of New Mexico. It is a beautiful state. The locals described Portales as having a rugged kind of beauty. Living there afforded us an opportunity to experience the state's rich culture found in Albuquerque, Carlsbad Caverns, Santa Fe, and other sites. I still miss the authentic chili rellenos and other foods unique to the state. So, we did not move to the Big Sky Country of Montana after all.

TS: That's a long way from New Mexico.

AS: I know my geography was a little off (smile). Well, we did enroll students from Montana and Wyoming (laugh).

TS: So, Eastern New Mexico University.

AS: Yes, it is located in Portales, New Mexico, on the eastern plains of New Mexico. I taught there from 1985 to 1988. It is one of the largest public universities in New Mexico. At the time that I taught, there was a diverse student population consisting mostly of Whites, Hispanics, international students and some Native Americans with a very small representation of Black students. The faculty consisted of gender diversity and some Asian and Hispanic faculty members. At the time, there were only three Black faculty members on campus, and I was the only Black female faculty member. I was the only Black in my college and department. My colleagues and I were very supportive of each other. The administration supported faculty travel to conferences and other activities to inform our teaching, research, and service. It was also supportive of other initiatives.

I enjoyed a very enriching teaching experience teaching at ENMU. The culture of my students was rich and varied. I attended their parties, weddings, and rodeos. One student who lived in the rural New Mexico mountains even shared some of her family's bear steaks with me along with a recipe for preparing them (laughs). I performed in many roles besides my teaching responsibilities. I served as advisor to the Black Student Association as well as advisor to the Black Choir. The international students from my classes, whose native homes were in Thailand, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, and Switzerland, just to name a few, selected Don and me as mentors and parents away from home. So, they often visited and accepted invitations to Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner. The year my daughter was enrolled in French we hosted a French student, so our home at times looked like a little UN (smile).

Our home was located across the street from campus. So it was very accessible to students. ENMU had an office of student affairs, but on predominately white campuses minority students, regardless of their majors, often seek out Black faculty as mentors. I appreciated serving as a mentor of Black students and other minorities, but it required extra work on minority faculty that is not required of White faculty. Black faculty on predominately White campuses are often expected by minority students and the university to serve as their mentors and advisors regardless of their majors. So as a Black faculty member, you assume two appointments and at the same time are required to excel in your discipline in order to be awarded tenure and promotion.

As an associate professor of secondary education the courses that I was assigned to teach included the methods course for secondary school teacher education majors, introduction to education, and student teaching supervision, as well as teaching other courses in the undergraduate and graduate program. I taught courses on campus, and some semesters I taught at satellite campuses in Hobbs, Roswell, and Artesia, New Mexico.



The graduates of ENMU's teacher education programs were highly recruited and accepted teaching positions as well as leadership positions in New Mexico, other states, and abroad. One of my students from Thailand became a principal of a school in his home country. So the overall experience was another excellent one for our family. My daughter, despite not wanting to move to New Mexico, really thrived at Portales High School, where she was only one of three Black students. She was in the honor society, a staff member on the school's newspaper, and an all-state bassoonist. She was selected to participate in an exchange program in Carmaux, France. She was also selected to attend Girls State held at New Mexico Military Institute in Roswell, NM. Things did not work out quite as well for my husband even though he received excellent ratings as a faculty member. After the first year of his appointment his contract was not renewed. His position was filled with a faculty member who held a doctorate in mathematics and computer science.

TS: He had a one-year contract?

AS: He was offered a year-to-year contract to teach mathematics and computer science courses. I accepted my appointment on the condition that he would be offered a position. After his contract was not renewed, he found an announcement listed in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* for a professor of mathematics position at West Virginia State College, now West Virginia State University. He applied for the position and was offered and accepted a position as assistant professor of mathematics.

Our daughter graduated two years later. So, after she graduated, we decided to return home to the southeast to live closer to aging family members. I found an opening listed in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* for an appointment in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Kennesaw State College at the time, now, of course, Kennesaw State University. I applied for the position and fortunately received a call from you, Dr. Tom Scott, as a member of the search committee, inviting me to campus for an interview. I was so impressed with your very warm and inviting invitation that I knew immediately that unless something went terribly wrong during the interview that this was a university where I wanted to teach. We were also attracted to Atlanta. Don's brothers were living in Atlanta, so we had visited them and attended meetings in the metro area. So I knew the area was a place where my family and I also wanted to live. You offered me an interview, and I was not disappointed. I enjoyed the people and loved the location. My first formal interview meeting was with two delightful professors [Dr. William D.] Bill Impey and Dr. Ralph [J.] Rascati. They took me out to lunch at Rio Bravo over behind Town Center Mall. We had a nice time. They interviewed me there, and they were very excited because at the time the mall had just opened. So, we talked a lot about recent growth in the area.

TS: It opened in '86.

AS: Yes, so it was relatively new. My next interview was with search committee members Dr. Diane [L.] Willey, Dr. Nancy [S.] King, and Dr. [Judith Ann] Judy Mitchell, the department chair. Again, everyone was very kind and cordial, and I really enjoyed

meeting the committee members. The vision that had been shared by all was a perfect match with my philosophy of teaching and the mission of a university. The interview went off well except a minor snafu. While we were dining, suddenly, we look up and there was a red streak across Dr. King's forehead and lovely white suit. We were thinking, "Oh my God, is Nancy bleeding?" Fortunately, she was not. But, unfortunately, the young waiter who had not mastered the art of shaking a catchup bottle with the cap closed, accidentally spilled catchup on her. The waiter and manger apologized and offered to clean her suit and perhaps other compensations. We all laughed, and as usual Dr. King was so very gracious about the incident.

TS: Poor Nancy!

AS: Poor Nancy, right. And I was thinking, "Thank God it's not me in a strange place sitting there as an interviewee splattered in catchup!"

TS: I don't know how I got on that committee.

AS: Well, I'm glad you were on that committee.

TS: I think [Robert L.] Bob Driscoll was the chair of it if I'm not mistaken.

AS: Dr. Driscoll was the dean of the School of Education, and Dr. Judy Mitchell was the chair of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. I believe the chair of the search committee was Dr. William D. Impey. I remember that Dr. Mitchell and I established an immediate rapport because of professional as well as personal interest. She is a native Californian, and I was born in California even though I was reared in Mississippi. I also had a very successful interview with Dr. Driscoll and Dr. Edwin A. Rugg, the vice president of academic affairs. I was not interviewed by President Betty L. Siegel. After a successful interview, I was offered the position and accepted the offer. This is the best professional decision that I have ever made. So thanks to you and all who were involved in the hiring decision (smile).

TS: I think I called one of the references for you, and his comment was, "You'd be crazy if you don't hire her! You better grab her up fast!"

AS: Great, great! I appreciate these positive comments from my references.

TS: Of course, I was in the History Department, but was that the time that we were doing the PTEUs [Professional Teacher Education Units]?

AS: I believe that the PTEU was established after the Bagwell College of Education [BCOE] experienced an accreditation problem [between 1993 and 1995 with the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)].

TS: I guess that leads into a question. What was it like to come to Kennesaw in 1988, and why did you come here?

- AS: Since I had done my homework, I was not surprised that the college was predominantly White. [Editor's note: In 1988 275 African American students attended Kennesaw State College, just 3.2 percent of the total student body. The faculty was a little more diverse: the 23 black faculty members made up 10.1 percent of the professoriate]. In fact, the composition of the faculty was like prior predominantly White schools where I had previously taught when I arrived in 1988. Dr. Kathleen [L.] Pinkett was the only Black faculty member in the department, and only a few Black students were enrolled. I remember this one minority student who was asked to be involved in many activities.
- TS: Cobb County was 10 percent black by 1990. The percentage was growing, but it had been about as lily white as you can get before that [only 4 percent black in 1980].
- AS: Oh, yes, that thought occurred to me after speaking with someone in the office of the Cobb County Sheriff Department prior to our move to Cobb County. During my interview I inquired about housing for my family and me if I were offered the position. Dr. Mitchell recommended Sedgefield Apartments where she and other faculty members had resided until they became familiar with the area. So after I returned home to Portales, I contacted the sheriff's department to inquire about the safety of the complex. I called and said, "I am going to be a new faculty member at Kennesaw State College and will be seeking housing in the area." I informed the representative that I was considering moving to Sedgefield Apartments and asked him how safe it was to live there. He said, "Yes, it's okay, but a lot of coloreds live there."
- TS: So he didn't know whom he was talking to on the phone.
- AS: Exactly, so I said, "Okay, thank you so very much." His response clued me in on his perceptions of Blacks [laughs]. There is still a lot of progress to be made, and we have miles to travel to improve race relations in Cobb and the nation. However, there has been considerable progress since 1988. In fact, two of the major donors to my endowed scholarship have Cobb County Office of the Sheriff Department connections. These most generous donors are Mrs. Penny Warren and Sheriff Neil Warren.
- TS: So did you stay at Sedgfield?
- AS: Yes, our family moved into Sedgfield Apartments and enjoyed our time living there for three years before we purchased a home in Kennesaw.
- TS: So he came with you then?
- AS: Yes, my husband resigned from West Virginia State College when I resigned from ENMU and accepted the position at Kennesaw State University. He applied and accepted an assistant professor of mathematics position at Morris Brown, which went defunct [lost its accreditation and federal funding in 2002 and filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in 2011]. He taught at Morris Brown for fifteen years. Since he was employed in the Clark Atlanta University Center his children could receive a tuition waiver. So, Michelle considered

attending Spelman College, the University of Georgia, and Kennesaw State University. She was accepted at all three institutions but selected Kennesaw State University.

TS: So, she graduated from Kennesaw?

AS: Yes, she graduated from Kennesaw State University where she was a professional student (smile). She majored in French with a minor in Creative Writing. However, her priority was participating in all the extracurricular activities. She was a member of Model Arab League with advisor Dr. Michele Zebich-Knos, who is now professor emeritus of Political Science and International Affairs. They traveled to Savannah and won an award. I am sure there was connection to her major (smile). During the trip the team ran into and took a photo with Mr. Billy Payne and former Ambassador Andrew Young who were visiting Savannah to prepare for the 1996 Summer Olympics, which was hosted by Atlanta. She was an active member on *The Sentinel* staff, reviewing movies, and she had some really rewarding experiences on the staff. She had an opportunity to represent *The Sentinel* at a famous campaign rally for Vice President Dan Quayle that was at North Metro Tech [in 1992 when he was running for reelection]. You might find her article, if you go back to the archives in *The Sentinel*. So, she truly took advantage of so many wonderful learning opportunities afforded Kennesaw State students in and out of the classroom. Michelle, regardless of some challenges, enjoyed her college life (smile). She has spent most of her career in the book world, working at Barnes and Noble and serving as a library assistant with the Sturgis Library before she resigned in 2007. She is now in between positions and writing as well as engaging in some volunteer work at West Cobb Regional Library.

TS: Poor Dan Quayle.

AS: I know too funny! I think he had difficulty with spelling something [potato]?

TS: Yes, I vaguely remember that.

AS: So yes, my appointment at Kennesaw State University, overall, regardless of a few challenges, proved to be a very rewarding one for my family and me. At the time that I arrived the college was taking off to become, according to President Siegel, the “Harvard in the Pines” with a national and international presence. Of course, there are not a lot of pines remaining (laughter). I am so honored to have made a small contribution to the mission of the university under the leadership of President Siegel, President Daniel S. Papp, Vice-Presidents Ed Rugg and Dr. Lendley C. Black, Dean Driscoll, other leaders and most of all some exceptionally hardworking and dedicated colleagues.

TS: We might talk about some of the positions you held. You came in '88, and you were interim director of graduate studies in Education by 1990. Was Bob Driscoll still dean at that time?

AS: Yes. Prior to my appointment as interim director of graduate studies I taught undergraduate and graduate students as well as supervised student teachers and, of course,

participated in service, scholarship and professional development activities. Two of my most memorable classes, and there were a lot of them over the years, consisted of my Social Studies Design and Application 4-8 class and my Post-Baccalaureate Methods of Teaching classes. Teaching these classes provided me with a wonderful introduction to the college and community. The post-bac students brought such rich experiences from their careers to inform their learning and ultimately their role as a teacher. I remember one evening two students who were Viet Nam veterans discovered that they had been in combat together. One was a fighter pilot and the other a helicopter pilot. They had interacted with each other and recognized their nicknames. So many of our students were so well prepared in their content as well as foundations of education. We did a lot of microteaching in the class, and students critiqued their lessons with precision and often with reflection of a professional educator. Some of these students are now leaders in area schools. For example, Mr. Trey Olsen is serving as deputy superintendent of school operations, personnel, and support for the Cherokee County Schools District. Mrs. Annette Bishop is serving as assistant principal at Chalker Elementary School, and Mrs. Valerie Zenus, who teaches at Webb Bridge Middle School in Alpharetta, was selected as one of Georgia's 2010 Master Teachers. There are so many other alumni who are teachers and leaders who are now making contributions in the field of P-12 education.

TS: When did [John A.] Beineke come in as dean?

AS: Dr. Beineke came in [in 1991] after Dr. Driscoll resigned as dean and returned to teaching. Dr. Driscoll served at one time as interim chair of the Department of Early Childhood and Elementary Education and as interim chair of Secondary and Middle Grades Education. So, Dr. Beineke came in after Dr. Driscoll. Dr. Beineke was the dean when we failed our teacher education accreditation visit, mostly because of the unit's conceptual framework built around a complicated model of a tree that very few of us could fully explain with clarity (smile).

TS: When did Deborah [S.] Wallace come in?

AS: Dr. Wallace was appointed dean of the Bagwell College of Education in 1993 after the college failed the accreditation visit and Dr. Beineke resigned as dean and returned to full-time teaching. The Professional Teacher Education Unit (PTEU) was established under the leadership of Dean Wallace. So four colleges, consisting of the Bagwell College of Education, Science and Mathematics, Humanities and Social Sciences, and the College of the Arts, as I recall, became responsible as a collaborative model for the preparation of teachers. Dr. Rugg required meetings of the PTEU on Saturdays to prepare for our very successful reaccreditation. As you recall, we had fun at the Saturday meetings. Dr. Deborah Wallace was instrumental in strengthening existing programs and initiatives as well as taking the college to the next level with fund and friend raising. Dr. Clarice C. Bagwell became one of the major donors of the college while Dr. Wallace was dean. Dr. Wallace later on, following a successful accreditation visit, returned to full time teaching. She also much later served as interim chair of the Department of Inclusive Education. After Dr. Wallace resigned, then Dr. Jane H. McHaney assumed the title of interim dean [from 1998 to 2000]. She resigned and accepted a position in Arkansas as

dean [of the College of Education at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway]. Following her resignation I assumed the position as interim dean [in June 2000], and Dr. Beverly F. Mitchell assumed my position as interim assistant dean of the Bagwell College. Dr. Yiping Wan was hired as the dean [in June 2001].

TS: Right, I remember that. Well, why don't you talk about some of those responsibilities, beginning with your first administrative job as interim director of graduate studies in the School of Education in '90 to '91? How did that come about?

AS: Well allow me to describe the context in which I was appointed as interim director of graduate studies. When I arrived at Kennesaw State College the infrastructure was nowhere close to resembling what it is today. The college was in a growth mode. The faculty, staff, deans, and chairs were expected to assume a lot of roles. Dr. William D. Impey was chair of Curriculum and Instruction when I arrived fall of 1988 because Dr. Judy Mitchell had just resigned to return to full-time teaching and later director of the Center for P-12 Schools Partnerships and Outreach.

As I recall I was asked by Dr. Impey and Dr. Driscoll to assist with Dr. Impey's very heavy undergraduate advising load and student concerns. All P-12 teacher education majors were matriculated through one department. So sometimes we would work until late evening advising students. My assistance allowed Dr. Impey to devote more time to his duties as department chair. Dr. Impey was pleased with my performance, and Dr. Driscoll had also observed me work with him. So I think that my appointment as interim director of graduate studies was based on my performance while serving as an unofficial assistant chair of undergraduate advising. I am sure that Dr. Driscoll probably also based my appointment on my prior experience as a division chair of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Rust College and work with graduate students at Memphis State University. So, I entered the role of interim director of graduate studies with prior leadership experience having served in undergraduate and graduate student advising and programming.

As I recall Dr. Diane Willey was the first director of graduate studies, and so I came into an office that was well established and operational by an exceptional director. I believe my predecessor was Dr. Jane McHaney. The administrative assistant was Mrs. Myra Morgan. The organizational structure was already laid out for me to follow. As interim director, I simply had to carry out policies and procedures outlined and in collaboration with the dean and faculty, think of other ways to build on and expand existing structures including graduate handbooks, and the usual catalog and curriculum oversight. My role consisted of coordinating with the faculty and administrators to plan and deliver graduate programs, ensure the successful matriculation of graduate students from admission to program completion, maintain program data and student records, and complete other duties as assigned by the dean of the college. However, most of my time beyond the day-to-day operations such as attending meetings and returning telephone calls was devoted to advising P-12 post-baccalaureate students. The post-baccalaureate program was designed for individual who wanted to change to a career in teaching. These students held a BA or BS degree and some even held masters and doctorates in a field other than

education. They were seeking to earn a Georgia Teaching Certificate. Some of the students were already teaching in private schools such as the Cottage and the Lovett School.

There was also coordination of students enrolled in the M.Ed. programs. However, at that time starting other graduate degree programs, such as the Master of Arts in Teaching, specialist, and doctoral degrees, was just one of many long-term goals for the college and university (smile). If my memory is correct, during the second year of my appointment, a national search was conducted, and Dr. Kenneth W. Pool was appointed [in 1992] as director of graduate studies. I do recall that at some point Dr. Beverly Mitchell also served as interim director of graduate studies. After Dr. Pool's appointment, I returned to full-time teaching at the graduate and undergraduate levels as well as supervising student teachers. I served on master's thesis committees and chaired Mr. Edward Gmyrek's M.Ed. portfolio committee. It was just a delight to return to full-time teaching.

TS: Did you enjoy administration?

AS: Yes, I really did enjoyed administration. It provided me with an opportunity to collaborate with my colleagues on a broader scale to implement the mission and vision of the Bagwell College, as well as policies and procedures handed down from the university and outside agencies. Some of my favorite duties and responsibilities consisted of interacting with students, participating in curriculum planning and approval, having some influence on the hiring of faculty and staff, and working with outreach initiatives, including with P-12 schools. I also enjoyed providing mentoring and professional development opportunities for faculty, staff, and students and serving on advisory boards. Other duties included seeking out ways to generate more funds for programs, facilitating student recruitment and retention initiatives, providing resources to support faculty performance in teaching, scholarship and service, identifying ways to strengthen support units such as the Teacher Resource and Activity Center, and serving on boards of community and professional associations to provide the college and university with a presence on a local, state, national, and international level. My least favorite aspect of administration consisted of resolving personnel and/or student conflicts that could have been avoided before it reached the level of the director, chair, or dean's office (laughter).

TS: After being interim director of graduate studies, your next formal administrative role, if my chronology is right, came in 1996 when you became interim chair of the Department of Secondary & Middle Grades Education.

AS: Yes, I believe that Dr. Driscoll was serving as interim department chair when he was invited to accept a position at the Georgia Professional Standards Commission [PSC]. He asked if I would serve as interim chair during his sabbatical. I accepted the offer because I knew that I had the support of a talented faculty such as Dr. Marjorie Economopoulos, Dr. Randy F. Elmore and others and the support of Mrs. Jane Comer, the administrative assistant. During the time that I served as interim chair, through our collaborative efforts faculty and students continued to achieve and bring recognition to the department. Dr. Marj Economopoulos was selected as a finalist for the Distinguished Teaching Award.

Dr. Randy Elmore was active on the national scene with Phi Delta Kappa and other professional associations. Students published and presented with faculty at conferences. The department also established a partnership with East Cobb Middle School to begin recruiting minority students as early as the middle school level. A memorable event for me one year was serving as a member of SABAC [Student Activities Budget Advisory Committee] and participating in the beautiful homecoming event at Barnsley Gardens, where the weather did not exactly cooperate (smile). I am sure Mr. Brian M. Wooten [coordinator of student activities and, later, director of the Center for Student Leadership among other roles] also has fond memories of this event.

TS: And you were interim chair for three years [July 1996 to June 1999].

AS: Yes, I enjoyed serving as interim chair for three years. Dr. Driscoll was still serving at the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.

TS: Let's see, I'm trying to think who came in after you as chair.

AS: Dr. Marjorie Economopoulos succeeded me as chair.

TS: That's right. I just interviewed Nita [A.] Paris last December, and she came in 2000. She said Marjorie was the chair when she came in.

AS: Yes, Dr. Marjorie Economopoulos was chair when Dr. Paris was hired. How fortunate for KSU. I am also proud to have been indirectly involved in the appointments of Dr. [Pamela B.] Pam Cole and Dr. [Kimberly S.] Kim Loomis. Their appointments among others were some of the best personnel decisions made by the Bagwell College of Education and Kennesaw State University.

TS: And they both won the Distinguished Teaching Award. I've done interviews with them before.

AS: Yes, exactly.

TS: So, you did that for three years and then became assistant dean in '99. Was that for Jane McHaney?

AS: Dr. Jane McHaney was the dean at the time, and she followed Dr. Deborah Wallace who served as dean after Dr. Beineke. I was appointed by Dr. Ed Rugg to replace Dr. McHaney as assistant dean when she moved up to interim dean of the Bagwell College of Education. Our jobs were demanding but enjoyable because we had the support of an exceptional leadership team and talented faculty and staff to implement policies and procedures of the college and PTEU. I was assigned to coordinate operations with the centers as well as address all student concerns, attend meetings to represent the dean, work with undergraduate and graduate curriculum issues, and perform any other duties I was assigned by the dean. I learned so much from her that allowed me to make a smooth transition into my role as interim dean. She had a vision for taking the college to the next



level, but was soon offered an appointment by another university that she could not refuse. I hated to see her leave but understood that she had to make a professional decision in the best interest of her and her family.

TS: I was sorry when she left.

AS: I know. She went on to the University of Central Arkansas as a dean. Then she returned to Georgia as dean at Armstrong Atlantic State University. Finally, after retirement, she was appointed as an interim dean in Florida [at Florida Gulf Coast University, Ft. Myers]. She has finally retired and lives in Jasper, Georgia.

TS: Oh, really? Okay, so, you were assistant dean with Jane for a year, and then became interim dean when she left.

AS: Correct, I was appointed interim dean of the Bagwell College of Education after Dr. McHaney resigned.

TS: What was that experience like?

AS: The interim dean was probably one of the most challenging yet rewarding of all the leadership roles that I assumed. Again, I was blessed with a strong leadership team and intellectually talented and extremely dedicated faculty and staff, so my role was more of a facilitator and advocate. Dr. Beverly Mitchell served with me as assistant dean and Mrs. Elizabeth Beverly served as administrative assistant. Dr. Mitchell is an exceptional leader and scholar. She entered the position with a background in leadership, teaching, and scholarship. She came to the position with a stellar record in assessment and accreditation at the state as well as national level. So how fortunate to have her on the team and not ever have to worry about accreditation issues or anything else that she handled. Of course, Mrs. Elizabeth Beverly had multiple experiences serving under numerous deans and could be trusted to run the college (smile). The leadership team was so highly qualified and had such an exceptional work ethic, and most of all they enjoyed working with students. To manage the day-to-day operations of the college I called on my experiences from prior leadership roles. For example, some of my duties and responsibilities consisted of planning, budgeting, and personnel decisions. I also supervised the Dr. William D. Impey Teacher Resource and Activity Center, provided support for ESOL and Children Literature Conferences, and took on other duties as assigned by the administration and outside agencies. However, as dean I was not responsible for scheduling of courses.

As interim dean we continued to build on the foundation laid by prior deans of offering strong undergraduate and graduate programs with an eye on expansion of graduate programs as well as a more intentional focus on recruiting diverse students, faculty and staff, improving retention and graduation rates, and integrating technology and international education into the curriculum. During this time, the Department of Educational Leadership was established under the leadership of Dr. Linda Webb. She and Dr. T.C. [Tak Cheung] Chan were the early leaders of that department. Both had

also served as leaders in P-12 schools. They established a P-12 schools advisory board of superintendents and other leaders to inform the Educational Leadership Program. So the curriculum was informed by research as well as best practices in P-12 schools. Dr. Webb and Dr. Chan met often, and the curriculum as I recall was not approved until the P-12 school advisors gave their blessings. Dr. Shelley Strickland and Dr. Wesley K. Wicker, the vice president for University Advancement, headed another initiative in collaboration with the college to secure funds from the Roberto C. Goizueta Foundation. Funds were secured by the time Dean Wan was appointed to provide scholarships to prepare Hispanic teachers and to establish an endowed chair in Early Childhood Education. Dr. Feland L. Meadows was appointed as the first Roberto C. Goizueta endowed chair of Early Childhood Education. Finally, during my appointment as interim dean, Dr. Thomas H. Keene, director of the Office of International Programs and his colleagues Dr. Daniel J. Paracka and Dr. Akanmu G. Adebayo in collaboration with leadership and faculty in the Bagwell College of Education [BCOE] established international partnerships and secured with Dr. Vicki [Victoria M.] McClain some of the first international-student teaching placements. Some of the pioneers in integrating technology and international education initiatives in the BCOE were Dr. Michael Murray, Dr. [James M.] Jim Wright, Dr. M. Leigh Funk, Dr. Traci C. Redish, and Dr. Ronghua “John” Ouyang, during his time with the Department of Educational Technology. Their work has not only impacted students in Georgia, but as far away as the University of Cape Coast through a partnership between the Cape Coast’s College of Education and the Bagwell College.

TS: Did you do any fundraising?

AS: Yes, indirectly. However, I cannot take the credit for fundraising because the Kennesaw State University Office of Development facilitated all our fundraising efforts by introducing me to existing and prospective donors. For example, Dr. Raynice E. Jean-Sigur, Dr. Emily A. Johnson, and I provided input and visited with representatives from the Goizueta Foundation, but the grant proposal was written and submitted by Dr. Shelley Strickland under the leadership of Dr. Wes Wicker. Another major donor of the college is the Bagwell family. We continue to benefit from this relationship established with Dr. Clarice Bagwell by President Betty Siegel and Dr. Deborah Wallace. Building on the legacy of his mother, Mr. Tommy [Thomas N.] Bagwell and his wife, Mrs. Chantal Bagwell, are exceptional donors and friends of the BCOE as well as the entire university. They are exceptional philanthropists. They also made a major contribution to my endowed scholarship.

TS: Did the Office of Development tell you whom to contact?

AS: Correct, they provided contact information in some cases for prospective donors. They also provided opportunities to network with prospective donors. Many friends and donors of the college were established before I became interim dean. Again, the Bagwell family is a perfect example. I cannot thank them enough for all that they have contributed to the university and continue to contribute to the BCOE. In 2016 the new education building which houses the BCOE was dedicated in the honor and recognition of Mr. Tommy Bagwell and Mrs. Chantal Bagwell.

TS: Did you go out and make calls to people?

AS: No, not unless I was advised to do so by the Office of Development. I just attempted to build on existing relationships as identified by the Office of Development. During my appointment, we did not have colleagues assigned to the dean at the college level to assist with fund and friend raising. My, have things changed, and for the better? This is progress (smile). Dr. Siegel used to stress the importance of friend raising and fundraising to secure funds for the university. Mrs. Nina C. Frey is such a friend and a major contributor. Some members of the BCOE Alumni Club, such as Mrs. Susan Ellis, were donors and friends, as well as BCOE Advisory Board member Mr. Stewart Cobb.

TS: We've got an interview with John S. Frey Jr. and Nina Frey. Okay, so you were interim dean while there was a search going on. Did you want to be permanent dean?

AS: No, I did not have an interest in applying to become permanent dean. Perhaps at a different stage of my life I would have enjoyed the challenge. No, before I retired I always wanted to return to full-time teaching.

TS: So you didn't apply?

AS: No, in fact I actively recruited qualified candidates for the position. I personally invited Dean Yiping Wan to apply for the dean's position. His qualifications appeared to be a perfect match to take one of the state's largest teacher preparation programs to the next level. As I recall, Dean Wan was on campus for a meeting and came by the office to inquire about the position. He introduced himself to Mrs. Elizabeth Beverly and me. We both thought that he was an excellent candidate for the position. At the time, he was serving as dean of the College of Education at New Jersey City University.

TS: Dr. Wan?

AS: Correct. I forgot to comment on another milestone during the time that I served as interim dean. It consisted of a trip to Ghana to observe the performance of faculty in the College of Education who had been trained to replicate the Educational Technology Center Model in the BCOE, including training of P-12 teachers in Ghanaian Schools. Dr. Adebayo wrote a technology grant in collaboration with Dr. Leigh Funk, Dr. Michael Murray, and, if memory serves me correctly, Dr. James Wright and Dr. Traci Redish. The Educational Technology grant funded a partnership with the University of Cape Coast in Ghana. Teacher educators traveled from Cape Coast and were trained in the use of technology by professors in the Educational Technology Center and other centers in the University System of Georgia. Then a faculty delegation and Dean Linda M. Noble [College of Humanities and Social Sciences] made a presentation at the University of Cape Coast University about the partnership model, as I recall. We had an opportunity to observe how well faculty at Cape Coast were using technology skills and equipment secured through the grant to prepare teachers in Ghana. We met with the deans of education and their leadership teams to discuss additional initiatives. One priority was to

receive low technology in the form of books. Since that time, I believe there have been a lot of other initiatives between Kennesaw State University and Ghana, including hosting the President of the Republic of Ghana [John Dramani Mahama] in September 2013. I have donated books for Africa and would encourage others to do the same.

TS: You were an international traveler.

AS: Yes, it was an excellent opportunity to establish lasting international partnerships to prepare future teachers.

TS: I vaguely remember a student doing student teaching in Costa Rica.

AS: Yes, the Bagwell College of Education has a real presence in international programs and partnerships. The foundation was laid by Dr. Keene and Dr. Paracka and Dr. Adebayo.

TS: You were talking about recruiting students. Did we have an initiative to recruit more Black students back then?

AS: We did, and the leader in the Bagwell College was Dr. Linda [B.] Akanbi through the Ford Scholars Program. Dr. Army Lester [III] was also very instrumental in recruiting minority students to the university through the PREP [Post-Secondary Readiness Enrichment Program] minority summer program. The Department of Secondary and Middle Grades Education also had a project with East Cobb Middle School to recruit minority students. I really think that minority students were also recruited indirectly through informal channels such as the university's partnership with Zion Baptist Church and Dr. Siegel's Minority Advisory Board.

TS: Oh, yes, I remember that.

AS: We also worked with Dr. Sandra McGarity as well as Dr. [H. Earl "Doc"] Holliday, one of the first Black secondary principals in Cobb—as a pipeline for recruiting minority students from Wheeler High School.

TS: I guess Betty Siegel was president and Ed Rugg the vice president for academic affairs through most of this time.

AS: Correct. They both were so supportive of the Bagwell College of Education and the PTEU as well as university-wide diversity recruitment initiatives.

TS: So after Dean Wan arrived, what did you do?

AS: I served with Dr. Wan as the associate dean from 2001 to 2005. Under his leadership there were advancements made in undergraduate and graduate program development and an expansion of international programs. One of the highlights of serving with Dean Wan was bringing the Sino-American Education Consortium to the Bagwell College of Education. It helped to strengthen and expand international programs. Under his

leadership the consortium hosted two international conferences, one at Kennesaw State and one in Wuhan, China. Dr. Binyao Zheng, Dr. John Ouyang, Dr. Binbin Jiang, and Dr. James Wright and others served as members of the conference program planning committee, and Dr. Zheng serve as Program Chair. The theme for the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Sino-American Education Conference was, “Preparing Educators for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Partnerships for Transforming Education in a Global Society [October 3-5, 2002].” The purpose of the consortium was to prepare teachers from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao, and the United States. The College of Continuing and Professional Education also provided invaluable assistance with the logistics of hosting the conference. Other key contributors to hosting a successful international conference were Mrs. April Addison and Mrs. Rebecca Mullinax. We worked with universities and organizations such as the Asia Society across the U.S.A. and China to promote the mission of the Sino-American Education Consortium.

TS: When did we get the Confucius Institute?

AS: The Confucius Institute was established on campus [in 2009] under the directions of Dr. Ken Jin. As I recall Dr. Wan did discuss bringing the Confucius Institute to campus.

TS: That’s while he was here?

AS: Yes, the discussions also included Dr. [Zhenyu] Li, and Dr. Barbara [S.] Calhoun [dean of the College of Continuing and Professional Continuing Education]. I believe that Emory was in competition to secure the institute.

TS: Because there could only be one in Georgia?

AS: Correct.

TS: Had you gone back to full-time teaching before the problems that led to Dr. Wan’s resignation? [Editor’s note: Dr. Wan resigned from KSU in 2007. He was indicted on April 17, 2008, and convicted by a Cobb County jury on July 19, 2012, on two counts of false statements and writings for submitting reimbursement requests for airline tickets more than the tickets’ actual cost. He was sentence to five years of probation and was required to pay restitution and a fine].

AS: Yes, I decided to return to full-time teaching during my final years before retirement. So I resigned as associate dean. My full-time teaching appointment was in the Department of Educational Leadership.

TS: So, you went back to full-time teaching?

AS: Yes, I returned to full time teaching under the leadership of Dr. Roy H. Rowe. He was an exceptional leader and such a strong advocate for his faculty and students in the Department of Educational Leadership. He was an asset to the Bagwell College as well as the university. He was a former principal in Alaska and also had prior teaching and

leadership experiences in higher education. During my return to teaching I was assigned to teach a number of courses. One assignment consisted of a team-taught class with Dr. Harriett J. Bessette. Her mentoring was invaluable since I had been out of the classroom prior to instruction being so technology driven. It was such a very collaborative teaching environment. We shared teaching ideas as well as research. Dr. Binbin Jiang and I also rode to a school to supervise practicum students. There were some very talented future leaders enrolled in the program. They completed the program and assumed leadership roles in P-12 schools, and some graduated and enrolled in doctoral programs. I am still in contact with some of my former students. Mrs. Pat Green requested a recommendation two years ago, and I believe that she was surprised when I responded (smile).

TS: Can you say anything about Dr. Wan's problems?

AS: No, they were addressed by the university and the court system.

TS: So you retired in 2007?

AS: Yes, my plan was to retire in the spring of 2008. However, after consulting with Mrs. Diana Ward in Human Resources, I was informed that I was eligible to retire a semester early in December of 2007.

TS: So, you had twenty years in the system?

AS: Yes, and I purchased additional years of service from the Mississippi and Tennessee retirement systems. Thank God for Mississippi's low-paying salaries at the time. I did not have to pay a lot to buy back the years and use them in the Georgia Teacher Retirement System.

TS: Did you have thirty years then?

AS: No, I had twenty-nine and a half. It was almost thirty.

TS: So, you retired a half year early, but then almost immediately you were back as interim associate dean, right?

AS: Yes, I came back as interim associate dean [from April 2007 to August 2008].

TS: This is when Wan leaves?

AS: Correct. I went back as interim associate dean for a year. How did I come back as associate dean? It is an interesting story.

TS: Frank [A.] Butler would have been the dean?

AS: Yes, Dr. Frank Butler had been appointed as interim dean after Dean Wan. I received a call from Dr. Sarah [R.] Robbins, and she invited me to lunch. As a retiree, I look

forward to lunches with friends at the university and other retirees. So I accepted her invitation to meet for lunch at Cracker Barrel.

TS: That's always dangerous when you have an unexpected lunch invitation.

AS: So, as I recall, after our greeting and some visiting, Dr. Robbins informed me that Dr. Black [the provost] wanted to know if I would return and serve as interim associate dean with Dr. Butler. She stated that it was for a short period of time just during the transition to the appointment of a permanent dean. I accepted the offer since the appointment was only for a year. I later met with Dr. Black to finalize my appointment.

TS: It gave you another year in the retirement system.

AS: Yes, another year in the retirement system. So I returned and really enjoyed that year serving with Dr. Butler. He is an exceptional leader who had been vice-chancellor from the Georgia Board of Regents, and interim president of Armstrong Atlantic University in Savannah. He brought a global perspective to the role of interim dean. His appointment was a perfect one to stabilize the college after Dean Wan's departure. Under his leadership there were a lot of meetings, some changes in leadership, and reorganizing to improve and strengthen the overall operations and morale of the college. I learned so much from him. He was a very inspiring, visionary, and empowering leader, but at the same time very humble. He has exceptional people skills, and so he immediately established a rapport with faculty, staff, students, and the community. There were some challenges, but Dr. Butler navigated the college back to normalcy.

TS: And we had a different president.

AS: Yes, that is correct. Dr. Dan Papp became president in 2006.

TS: So, it was a pleasant year?

AS: Correct. While there were challenges, it was a very pleasant year to return and serve with Dr. Butler, Mrs. Rebecca Mullinax, Dr. Beverly Mitchell, Dr. Nita Paris, and other members of the leadership team, as well as all my former colleagues in the Bagwell College of Education and the PTEU.

TS: I guess that period is when we're doing another search that brings in Arlinda [J.] Eaton.

AS: Correct, a search was conducted to hire a permanent dean. There were a lot of highly qualified candidates that responded to the announcement. Dr. Arlinda Eaton emerged as the top candidate. And fortunately for the college, she accepted the offer to become the permanent dean. Evidence of her dedication is shown in the growth in programs and all the new initiatives as well as her advocacy for new buildings. Under her leadership international programs have been strengthened and expanded, including more international partnerships and opportunities for student teachers in P-12 schools abroad. She and the hardest working faculty and staff on KSU's campus continue from what I am

hearing to take teacher and leadership programs in the Bagwell College and the PTEU to the next level. The program continues to graduate some of the top leaders and teachers in P-12 classrooms. I would venture to say that the BCOE, in collaboration with the other colleges, continues to be one of the premier teacher and leadership colleges in Georgia and in the nation.

TS: So you retired again, temporarily.

AS: Correct, however, I did return to Kennesaw again at an invitation from Dr. Kay A. Reeve, former secondary education program coordinator and professor of history at the time. Another telephone call! She called, she stated, while standing on the side of the road in New Mexico during a visit to her family home in Taos. She invited me to accept a one-year appointment because a history education faculty member had suddenly resigned. I guess the resignation was a week before classes started. I accepted the position and collaborated with Dr. Reeve and the rest of the history education faculty to teach an evening section of the TOSS methods course, supervise student teachers, and perform any other duties as assigned by Dr. E. Howard Shealy, the chair of the Department of History and Philosophy.

It was delightful teaching with them, as Dr. Reeve and I had experience as members of the PTEU working on social studies accreditation and presenting at the National Council for Social Studies conference some years ago in New Orleans during Mardi Gras (smile). I had also become acquainted with another colleague, Mrs. Angela D. DeAngelo, as one of my former cooperating teachers from my days of supervising student teachers at Sprayberry High School. I was impressed with the level of preparation of my students in content and foundations of education. I implemented student-focused as well as learner-centered strategies to teach the courses. We also used microteaching and strategies of teaching and assessment required in the TOSS Program. The assignments that they submitted in their portfolios were exemplars. Some of the graduates accepted teaching positions in area school and some abroad. For example, I believe that Mr. Stephen Gronsbell, one of my former students, accepted a teaching position in Japan.

So after my *final* retirement from KSU, my next full-time faculty appointment was at Reinhardt College, now Reinhardt University, a predominately White university located in Waleska, Georgia. It is affiliated with the United Methodist Church.

TS: Why Reinhardt?

AS: Well, another call! I received a call from Dr. Driscoll, who had become vice president of academic affairs at Reinhardt. He was, of course, a dean emeritus of the Bagwell College. He invited me for a meal at Cracker Barrel, but this time the invitation was to meet for breakfast. During breakfast Dr. Driscoll asked whether, now that I was retired, I would be interested in accepting a teaching position in Reinhardt's Price School of Education. He said my responsibilities would consist of working with Professor Harriett Lindsey to offer the Working Adults into Teaching [WAIT] Program at the satellite campuses in Alpharetta and Epworth, Georgia. At that time, he was attempting to grow the WAIT



Program on the satellite campuses in addition to offering it on the main campus in Waleska. I accepted the temporary non-tenure track position of professor of education and co-coordinator of the WAIT and Master of Arts in Teaching [MAT] Programs. I enjoyed serving with Professor Harriett Lindsey and Professor Nancy Carter, the other co-coordinators.

TS: Did you teach mainly in Waleska or at the satellite campuses?

AS: I taught in the MAT Program on both the main campus in Waleska and the satellite campus in Alpharetta. I also taught in the undergraduate program and the WAIT Program on the main campus and supervised student teachers. One of the highlights of my service at RU was serving as co-chair of the Year of Oceania along with Ms. Pat Drago. One of our major speakers was Consul General Duncan Cole from Australia's Atlanta consulate general office. The Year of programs at RU were so well marketed by Mrs. Marsha White, the executive director of marketing and communications. Her office provided invaluable visibility to all RU programs and initiatives and made our jobs as co-coordinators effortless. Dr. Gwendolyn Middlebrooks, an emeritus professor of education and former department chair, invited me to serve as SRATE program chair while she was president of the Georgia Association of Educators (GATE). SRATE is the Southeastern Regional Association of Teacher Educators, affiliated with the national ATE [Association of Teacher Educators].

TS: So you worked at Reinhardt for about four years?

AS: Yes, four years, and I enjoyed assisting Professor Nancy Carter who was the coordinator of the MAT program. In collaboration with the faculty she designed the MAT in Early Childhood. The program allowed students with degrees in fields other than teaching to earn initial Georgia teacher certification. We worked together to prepare a lot of fine educators in that program that have gone on to teach in P-12 schools in Georgia. Some of them are now leaders. Our service area included Cumming, Blue Ridge, Jasper, North Fulton, Gwinnett, and some of the same areas served by KSU. I enjoyed my time teaching at RU and experiencing the growth in programs. I just recently received a request from Ms. Tiffany Cole, one of my former MAT students, to provide a recommendation. I think she too was surprised that I am around and responded (smile).

RU like KSU now also has a football team (smile). As much as I enjoyed my time at RU, after Dr. Driscoll passed on [June 21, 2012], I decided to retire. Plus, the drive from my home in Kennesaw to Waleska and Alpharetta and getting home around midnight after teaching night classes was getting to be a little exhausting for a mature person (smile).

TS: Well, it was about time to retire.

AS: Correct. I enjoyed spending forty years in education, and now I am into my third act. My husband also retired from his position as an assistant professor of mathematics at Talladega College. I now have more time to spend with my family and friends as well as enjoy interests and causes. I enjoy having lunch with retiree friends as well as friends

who are still working at KSU. Dr. C. Gwen McAlpine, Mr. Mansour Abusaid, Dr. Jim Wright, Ms. Arlene Paige, Dr. Valerie Whittlesey, Mrs. Linda Caudell, and I have our standing semester lunch to enjoy each other's company and listen to me gloat about the joys of retirement. I serve on a limited basis as a volunteer with NAMI Cobb (National Alliance for Mental Illness). I enjoy attending church, plays, and the opera; visiting museums; going to the movies on a weekday afternoon; and traveling back home to visit family in Mississippi. A trip to visit Mr. Thierry Cintas and his family in Southern France is on our bucket list. This was the host family for Michelle when she participated in the Nacel Open Door High School Short Term Exchange Program.

TS: Let me ask you some general overall questions. First, what kept you at Kennesaw for twenty years?

AS: I have so many fond memories of my time spent at Kennesaw State University. I remained at Kennesaw for twenty years because of the support of colleagues and opportunity to teach and develop programs that valued and supported the centrality of teaching as well as scholarship and service. My philosophy of teaching and serving in higher education was in perfect alignment with the mission of the university. You were my first contact with the university, and I found your invitation to the interview to be very welcoming. I also experienced the same kind of support when I arrived on campus for my interview with other members of the faculty and the administration. That support continued during my subsequent employment. For example, when I arrived at then KSC, I was assigned two mentors through the CETL [Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning] Program under the leadership of Dr. Donald W. Forrester. I was assigned to Dr. Natalie J. Mathews and the late Dr. William D. Impey. Dr. Mathews introduced me to Black faculty and staff on campus and members of the Black community, such as Mr. Winston Strickland and others. Dr. Impey introduced me to White colleagues as well as others at the university. Both mentors provided me with guidance in accessing resources to support my teaching, service, scholarship, and overall professional development to succeed as a faculty member at the college. I am forever grateful to both of them.

Dr. Diane Willey and I shared an office. She was the best office mate ever. She was one of the founders of the College of Education and, as I recall, the very first faculty member in education at KSC. Her mentorship was invaluable, and she was so giving of her time and guidance at the college, state, and national levels. She introduced me to and provided me with opportunities to take on a leadership role in the Georgia Association of Teacher Educators. I was elected membership chair, a position that she had formerly held, which also led to increased involvement in the national Association of Teacher Educators. I also owe her a great deal of gratitude for her mentoring and introduction to the college. During my first year I was invited to a Christmas party at her home and had a wonderful time.

Other mentors in the Bagwell College of Education included at the time Mrs. Elizabeth Beverly, Judy Mitchell, Dr. W. George Hess, and Dr. Robert L. Driscoll. The list is endless. Alex Haley used to say, "Anytime you see a turtle up on top of a fence post, you know he/she had some help getting there." President Siegel often used this quote during

her commencement addresses to the graduates. During my career, I have been so blessed to serve with some highly intelligent and compassionate educators. Of course, I have encountered some thorns along the way but my grandmother taught me that thorns are what make a rose garden beautiful (smile).

TS: Do you think Kennesaw was unique in some ways?

AS: Yes, Kennesaw State is unique in many ways. In 1988 when I arrived President Betty Siegel often stated that Kennesaw State College was on the move. It was evolving from a junior college into a four-year college and aspiring to become a university all within a short period of time. KSU has achieved in a short period of time what it has taken universities centuries to achieve. It is now a university, and with the merging of the two campuses [of KSU and Southern Polytechnic State University] it is still on the move. I recall asking Dr. Betty A. Smith [professor of anthropology] during one of our PTEU meetings if activities ever slowed down at Kennesaw State. Her response was, “No, we are always developing new programs.” I thought this is a great place to work where change and innovation is welcomed.

President Siegel’s invitational vision was unique. It was not fully achieved, but the goal was establishing an inviting climate and culture, with programs, policies, places, and procedures based on the invitational education research of Dr. William Purkey and Dr. Betty Siegel. She and Dr. Ed Rugg were also strong believers in the village model of collaboration. The Professional Teacher Education Unit was an outgrowth of this belief. It truly became a national model for preparing teachers. Dr. Rugg, Dr. Helen S. Ridley, and I presented the PTEU Model at the Renaissance Group Conference. The Renaissance Group is a national consortium of colleges and universities committed to the idea that the preparation of teachers and collaboration with P-12 schools is an all campus responsibility.

The college was unique in its commitment and support of innovative and expansive curriculum development and professional development opportunities. I remember all the support provided for many national and international conferences. Some of the conferences sponsored during the time I was at the university included at least three National Blacks in Higher Education Conferences held at the Atlanta Hilton and Towers in Atlanta under the leadership of Dr. Rodney W. Dennis, Dr. Harold L. Wingfield, and Dr. Rosa Bobia. It was a premier conference, which included scholars from around the country and perhaps abroad to present their scholarship and discuss issues of diversity as well as topics related to teaching and learning. During this era, I do not believe there were a lot of predominantly White institutions sponsoring such conferences. The university also hosted The Renaissance Group conference during the time that I served as interim associate dean [April 18-20, 2007]. Finally, the college also supported hosting several Sino-American Education International Conferences under the leadership of Dr. Yiping Wan held on our campus and in Wuhan, China in 2004. I also found my participation in the Cobb Education Consortium and Leadership Kennesaw to provide me with information to strengthen my knowledge and skills in leadership. These are just a

few of the unique characteristics of Kennesaw State University, which were continued and strengthened by President Daniel Papp and Provost Lendley Black.

TS: How had we changed from when you arrived in 1988 to when you retired? You were talking before the interview about how you couldn't find the entrance today to the Sturgis Library.

AS: There has been a complete transformation of the predominately White Kennesaw College where I arrived in 1988 to the Kennesaw State University I experienced by the time that I retired. When I arrived Kennesaw State College had more of a small liberal arts college climate and culture with some professional programs. It was not well known outside of the state and region. For example, when I attended national conferences, I was often asked, "Where is Kennesaw State College?" Also most high school students were not selecting KSC as their first choice. During some of my student teaching supervision visits out in area high schools I would ask high school students which college they planned to attend after graduation, and very seldom was KSC mentioned. By the time I retired high school seniors and transfer students were identifying KSU as their first choice to pursue undergraduate and perhaps graduate degrees.

The Kennesaw State University that I retired from is a predominately White comprehensive university with an international presence as well as a national presence and with a stronger presence in diversity. For example, Dr. Kerwin Swint, professor of political science, is often interviewed about elections on local, national, as well as international media outlets, which brings recognition and distinction to KSU. It has also been listed in *US News and World Report* Best College rankings. I believe it was also aspiring to become a Research I university, offering doctoral programs and a stronger emphasis on faculty performance in traditional research. It now had more of a university of the community focus, as evidenced by the offerings of the College of Continuing and Professional Education. Finally, by the time I retired there were plans to offer more online program options.

TS: I still find it hard to believe we've got 35,000 students.

AS: Exactly. Perhaps within the next years KSU will be classified as a Research I university with all the students and resources to support such a mission (smile).

TS: And a large number of faculty members [1,119 full-time and 829 part-time in the fall of 2016].

AS: Yes, the size of the faculty and staff has almost grown to match the student body. This is progress. As I stated, when I arrived on campus today, I had to be shown the entrance of the library (smile).

TS: What about diversity?

AS: I am sure there is always room for growth to address all aspects of diversity in higher education in general, as well as at KSU. However, Kennesaw State has made excellent progress in this area since 1988. I am pleased with all the progress. [Editor's note: During the fall semester of 2016 some 7,408 of KSU's 35,018 students were non-Hispanic Blacks (21.2 percent); 1,442 students declared two or more races (4.1 percent); 3,041 students were Hispanic (8.7 percent); and 1,597 students declared Asian ethnicity (4.6 percent). There were 19,845 White, non-Hispanic students, but the percentage of White students was down to 56.7 percent].

However, there is still much work to be done to strengthen and expand on existing policies and programs that support diversity. As I walked across campus for the interview, I was surprised to see how diverse the student body seems today, unlike the diversity in 1988. For example, in 1988 my daughter was the only minority in most of her classes. When I retired there were programs and initiatives in place to inform and support diversity policies and programs on campus. Some of the structures were informal, and others were formal. However, they all supported the mission of valuing and celebrating diversity as well as social justice.

I recall that when I arrived I could count on one hand the number of minority students in the College of Education, and there was only one Black faculty member in the college. Over the years KSU has actively recruited and retained Black faculty, staff, students, and leaders, as well as community advisors. KSU has an opportunity to serve as a model in diversity practices and programs, building on its existing foundation. Some of the programs on which to build to strengthen diversity on campus include but are not limited to the President's Minority Advisory Board, representation of minorities on college and departmental advisory boards, Office of Minority Students Affairs and Retention, the Black Student Alliance, the Hispanic Student Association, Goizueta Scholarships, the Native American Association, the LGBT Association, the Confucius Institute, the International Student Association, the Black History Month Program, the Black Studies Program, and the NAACP Club. On the faculty side, there was the Black Faculty Association, the faculty mentoring program offered through CETL, the Office of Conflict Resolution, the Office of International Affairs, the Zion Day Program, the African Resource Group, and others.

Many of the faculty recruitment initiatives resulted from KSU's national and international presence. I recall Dr. Guichun Zong, who is now a professor in the Department of Secondary and Middle Grades, telling me at the end of one of the Sino-American Education conferences that she was interested in joining the faculty at KSU. There were similar conversations with some participants during the Blacks in Higher Education conferences. Also more intentional efforts were made to recruit and retain Black faculty and staff. Dr. Linda Akanbi excelled in bringing in a strong representation of highly qualified Black faculty as well as Asian and other faculty and staff while she served as chair of the Department of Early Childhood and Elementary Education and while Dr. Deborah Wallace was dean. Of course, there were all kinds of student recruitment programs, including the Ford Scholars Program. So the short answer is a strong foundation and infrastructure have been established from the office of the

president to the leadership of Dr. Jerome Ratchford and Dr. Nancy King in Student Affairs, upon which the university can build, maintain, strengthen, and expand its commitment to diversity. I am sure the football team has also helped to place KSU on the map by attracting fans from all demographics (smile)! I am sure there are mixed reviews from different camps about the value of football and what it brings or takes away from the campus.

TS: I think it's positive in lots of ways. We're still not the University of Alabama where football runs the university.

AS: Correct. My husband likes to watch Paul Finebaum [on the SEC Network]. I do not think he is going to be on campus soon [for the pre-football game festivities before a nationally televised game], but perhaps we might be surprised when he and his crew arrive in Owl Country next year!

TS: Kennesaw's football team has been pretty good the last two years. I guess they'll be even better this year. I like to go watch their games if it's not raining.

AS: Exactly, when the weather is fair, and when it is not too cold or too hot. So I guess this makes me a fair-weather fan (smile).

TS: I'm out of questions. Can you think of anything that you'd like to add to the interview?

AS: Yes, I would like to encourage anyone who is interested in donating to the preparation of a future teacher or leader enrolled in the Bagwell College to please go online to [giving@ksu.edu](mailto:giving@ksu.edu) and contribute to my endowed scholarship. The scholarship is a needs-based scholarship that aids full-time or part-time undergraduate students in the Bagwell College of Education and graduate students in the Department of Educational Leadership. It is designed to fund the education of prospective teachers in kindergarten through secondary as well as leaders in education. Three recipients have been awarded the scholarship. My family and I contributed to the funding of the scholarship, but it took a village to fund it. I truly appreciate support from so many generous donors and most of all the hard work and dedication of Mrs. Debra Day, director of development for the Bagwell College, to ensure that the scholarship was fully endowed.

TS: Good for you!

AS: Thanks. What does the Bible say? "Unto whom much is given much is required [Luke 12:48]." That's what the scholarship is for to play it forward and give back.

TS: Great.

AS: Dr. Scott, thanks for an invitation to participate in the KSU oral history series.

TS: Thank you for coming and talking to me. I appreciate it.

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