

Women of the Atlanta Student Movement
2017 Women's History Month Finale Panel
March 31, 2017
Transcribed by Ella Greer

Dr. Sheila Smith McKoy: So I have the privilege of greeting you this morning and welcoming you to this momentous occasion at Kennesaw State University. This occasion, of course, would not have been made possible without the pioneers that you're going to meet. These living legends you see on stage now. So I want to take just a moment for you to welcome them with a round of applause.

(Audience applauds)

Without their stories, your story might not have been possible. Without their willingness to stand up and fight, your space may not have been guaranteed in many of the places that you go. And because this is dedicated to women, I wanted to call your attention to uh, something that I think is very important in terms of how people stand and become recognized as people who are participating and literally changing the world.

I'm going to talk to you a little bit about a poet called June Jordan. How many of you have heard of June Jordan? So all the English faculty has raised their hands, yay English. Um, and part of what I want you to remember about her is her profound words are perfect for what we are going to do today. In 1978 she presented a poem called, "For South African Women," and was focused on the uprisings in South Africa, many of which over decades and decades led to the first all-race elections in South Africa in 1984. She called this poem "For the South African Women," and part of what she did was sort of catalog how as mothers and freedom fighters, they'd changed the world. There's an important uh, quote that this poem ends with and it says "We are the ones' that we've been waiting for."

In this wonderful exchange that you are about to have with the living legends and the legends that you are becoming, we are the ones that we've been waiting for; this moment is a moment of change for you so that you can understand how to articulate your voice in powerful times of change.

In sort of celebration of June Jordan's work, I wrote a poem called "For Those Who Came." This is for you. Because I'm so young, I can't use bifocals, so I'm taking these off.

"We agreed to come here in that space before time
we agreed to meet here in this now at this gathering
sisters and allies
We have come to reclaim this Earth, blessing her and her
inhabitants
in the marmy waters of peace
We who have overcome the fallacies of Eden
refused to be offered again as virginal gifts
we who have been hunted and witched join our individual and
collected power
we who were renamed and outcasts reclaim ours and our sisters'
voices
we who have been raped and taken no longer gather to mourn for
we have recognized ourselves in each other and we have
remembered our stories.
We agreed to come here in that space before time we agreed to
meet her in this now sisters and allies in your sweet company we
take the breaths of a new day. Welcome to those who came.

Dr. Jeanne Bohannon:

Thank you so much, Dr. Smith McKoy. I am grateful for you and your support of this digital humanities project and every time I walk into your office with my shoulders down you say to me put your shoulders back and keep moving forward, and that is what I take back to my students so thank you so much.

And I would be remiss today if I didn't say a special thankfulness to our university partners who made this event possible. President Olens and his office. University Events who put uh, the logistics together and made everything so, so easy. The Leven School of Culinary Sustainability and Hospitality who will be hosting several of us after this event. Our deans, Dean Dorff, Dr. Leger, and especially Dr. Carmen Skaggs who has created opportunities to connect us with research partners like University Archives. We are indebted also to our friends at UITS who are recording this event and partnering with us to document the oral histories of the people, places, and events of the Atlanta Student Movement. And most importantly I want to thank our students whose work on this project has transformed a seed of an idea to social justice in action. These students, my students, you, all of you who are sitting in here have created digital content in

semester-long workflow environments based on IRB approved research in physical and digital collections, interviews, and cultivating relationships with alums of the movement. These students have already done a lot of really good works. That seed which was the genesis of this project was planted by someone who is also close to my heart today, my grandmother Mary Gladys Dixon. One afternoon in 2009 during one of our weekly visits, our talk turned to her youth. Mary was a single mother who raised two daughters and supported a multi-generational family working for almost forty years as the head cashier at the Rich's Department Store's employee cafeteria. She was 33 in 1960 and remembered the sit-in at Rich's. She told me in passing that day of a small act of kindness that she and her fellow employees did for the students in October of 1960. I was surprised that she glossed over this part of her story, but she said to me that "Sometimes ordinary women are called on to do extraordinary things to help their neighbors." And that was the kind of person she was, the kind of person who thought of her acts of kindness as simply a way of living, a just what an ordinary person should do. And while I agree with her on those points, I disagree that women who affect social change are ordinary, they are anything but. I would argue today that we are celebrating extraordinary women who have done equally extraordinary things in extraordinary times.

So when we began to put this event together, I knew I wanted to link it to this sustained civil rights DH project. So Dr. Sara Holliday who was this year's Women's History Month coordinator and myself brainstormed about what we wanted our audience to take away from a panel presentation describing women's experiences during the sit-ins at Rich's, Woolworths, and other lunch counters around the city. Rich's, by the way, was the first retailer in the South to desegregate its lunch counters which is compelling because it was also the largest and indeed central of the economic and popular culture of not just Atlanta but the entire South.

And so we had this seedling ready to blossom, ready to grow, and I thought to myself there is only one person I can turn to in order to make this project happen, to make this event happen. Only one person who would be able to serve as a foundational voice of a rhetorical recovery of all of these marginalized voices. Someone who could tie it all together. And that person is Dr. Lonnie King. Over the past several months Dr. King, who was the leader of the Atlanta Student Movement, has mentored and inspired my

students, my colleagues, and me. Giving freely of his time, day or night, always a cell phone call away for even the most obvious of questions we had as we started to dig into the stories of the people, places, and event surrounding the movement. Dr. King has driven up to campus on so many occasions to meet and speak with students, to guest lecture for us in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and sometimes with fellow movement alum Charles Black just to talk about plans for growth of this project in the future. As my students can attest, he has a memory better than any of us. He can tell you when and where movement activities happened right down to the day and often the time of day. And not just monumental events like the sit-ins and economic boycotts but also the mundane activities, the negotiations, the day-to-day processes which are also so vital to the success of social movements. Dr. King was also the chair of the committee of the Appeal of Human Rights which was formed on March 16, 1960, and included representatives from all six Atlanta area HBCUs.

Now I want to take just a moment before we get started with our panel and tell you some information about Dr. King that you may not know. He served in the United States Navy. He was the first African American elected to serve as the president of the Washington D.C Young Democrats Club. While in D.C he worked with Youth Organizations United which was a coalition between Young Democrats and Young Republicans in Washington in the mid-1960's. In that role, he was the moving force who convinced Senator Morse of Oregon to get President Johnson to grant Washington D.C home rule through executive action while Morse sponsored legislation to make home rule permanent for D.C through an act of Congress. In our conversations, Dr. King has often relayed to me that this was one of his finest moments in his lifelong battle to let freedom ring wherever he was living. After D.C Dr. King returned to Atlanta and waged a successful suit against the FCC, which resulted in the integration of Atlanta's television broadcast media. He holds Bachelors and Masters degrees in Economics and Public Administration, an honorary doctorate from Piedmont College for his lifetime of work in civil and human rights. And now he is currently dissertating at my alma mater, Georgia State University, writing his book on the movement's three-stage strategy of political, economic, and legal resistance. There is so many more things I can tell you about this living civil rights legend, but you're gonna have to wait for our DH project to progress to hear the rest of the story and the multitude

of other narratives that tell a forgotten and misrepresented history because we are putting it right. I do want to share one of my favorite quotes from Dr. King, one which my students and I use as motivation in our work and it is right there on the big screen. "Democracy does not run on cruise control." And with that let's welcome Dr. Lonnie King who will frame the movement for us and provide us some context of the central role that women played in our fight for civil rights as we begin our Women's History Month panel. Dr. King.

Dr. Lonnie King: Thank you very much, Dr. Bohannon. Good morning to all of you. May I have a good morning back?

Audience: Good morning.

Dr. King: Thank you, thank you. I'm somewhat demanding sometimes so bear with me. I want to thank you Dr. Bohannon and President Olens and others in the administration here at the school for this wonderful idea, this wonderful project. It's been a long time since things have gone on in the 1960's and I don't think enough has been written about the vital role that Atlanta played, and Rich's Department Store played in desegregating the South. When you have 58% of all the merchandise that is sold in the eight southeastern states being sold in Atlanta Georgia through your store, that's power. It's interesting because the Rich's Department Store and the Atlanta Student Movement are inextricably tied for the rest of our lives and maybe for eternity. And the longer that we get away from 1960 there seems to be more of an appreciation for how Atlanta did it their way. And what I mean by that is this, the morals of Atlanta at that time were separate and unequal. If you wanted to make things equal, you would get yourself in deep trouble in Atlanta Georgia. Almost the same amount you would get into in Mississippi. And I want to go into this because our history books, young people, have been whitewashed and you don't see too much in there about protests, about nonviolent protests. So the generations that are coming along do not know what a terrible time previous generations have had in this great democracy of ours and in this great city of ours. Atlanta though, even before the Civil War, has always been this unusual kind of city. They didn't really 15:03 to the whole idea of desegregation until the 60's. But still you had an intellectual lead here, white and black, unequal, that worked together for the overall good. And it is that particular element in Atlanta's character that is going to make it continue to be the greatest city

in the world not just in America when it comes to trying and bringing people of different persuasions together to ask them to work our difficult problems many of which are tied into race and we seem to be able to come together in Atlanta and do that and for that I am happy that I've spent most of my life in this city. I wasn't born here but grew up here, and I was nurtured by white and black people in this city. Young people let me just briefly state that what we had to change in Atlanta in 1960 was a culture. Now I won't go into all the other stuff that you probably know because many of you had probably had your history, but there were no rights that anyone who looked like me were rejected of. Or should I say no white person was bound to respect any rights that we had? So as some of the famous people who were scholars said, "there's nothing on earth as an idea whose time has come." So when those four young boys sat down in Greensboro, North Carolina on the first of February 1960, that act alone was a catalyst, it was a match that struck young folks like me in the right way. And we pretty much decided if not now when and if not us who? Now wars, historically, are fought by the young. They are planned by the older people but are fought by the young soldiers. But this is the first time that the young soldiers, both men, and women, both planned and fought the war. Today we're here to try to honor some of those young ladies who helped us fight that battle. Not enough has been written about their contributions. 60% of all the folks who got arrested in Atlanta, Georgia in the movement were women. But it's ironic because when I first called the meeting of people in Morehouse College at Sale Hall, about 25 people showed up. Mr. Charles Black was one of them, and he can tell you that we didn't have any ladies in there at all, none. The place was full of football players; I was a football player and a few people like Charles Black that I had accosted on the campus. But I was perplexed; I said: "we need to have some women in this movement." So I called my major advisor that night, my mother, and I said: "Momma, we need to have some women in this movement, but they wouldn't come to the meeting." And she said, "You go over the Spelman and talk to those ladies, and they will come and if the ladies come then the men will come too." And so I said, "Momma I don't know a soul at Spelman," she said, "but they know you," why do you say that? "Because you run those touchdowns on Saturday. And those girls are there, and they know your name." So I went over there, and sure enough, she was right, momma was right folks. The ladies came in, and they did it. they did it. Every time we wanted the students to march, four or five thousand would march downtown, the

preponderance of those were ladies. Look at the pictures; they were there. Whenever it was time to possibly 19:39, they were there. One young woman, when I got the word a person had put a cigarette out on her shoulder. Can you imagine that, putting a cigarette out on a young lady's shoulder because she had the audacity to want to ask for a hamburger at this particular restaurant? These are bad times. I'm hoping that they'll never come back, but I don't know, not after what happened in November. There are people who do want to turn the clock back, but I'm convinced though that the same folks who saved us in the 1960's, the ladies, by being the ones who went to jail more than anyone else, who got cigarettes got put out on their backs, who did other things, who made the picket signs, who marched the picket lines, who put 2,000 pickets from Rich's Department Store all the way up to Davis and Patson's and then back down to Rich's. Most of those were ladies, and they have not been given their credit, so I want to commend those of you here at this college, at this university for thinking about the young ladies. Their appearance on the scene to help America, to help Atlanta was forecast by W. E. B Dubois. Dr. DuBois in the book that he wrote called The Souls of Black Folks says that there will be a time when the oppressed will rise up, and those people will say, "ten million strong, that we are going to work irresistibly toward the Goal, out of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, where all that makes life worth living - Liberty, Justice, and Right - is marked "For White People Only." He said this in 1903, and it was true in 1960 when we started this movement. I want to say to the ladies who are here that I humbly appreciate all of the efforts and sacrifices that you have put in and I think the college needs to be commended for honoring the ladies who are nameless, faceless persons who manned the picket lines, who cooked the sandwiches, who kept us going, who kept up propped up. Thank you so much Kennesaw State University for doing the right thing and honoring these unsung heroes especially during Women's History Month. Thank you so much.

Shiloh Gill:

Hello and good morning. I'm going to try a Dr. King, "good morning everyone." Good morning. My name is Shiloh Gill, and I'm the President of the Georgia Student Movement. I have the distinct honor of introducing today, Dr. Rosyln Pope. Dr. Pope is a notable figure within the Atlanta Student Movement and served as President of the Student Body at Spelman and was one of the original members of the Atlanta Student Movement. With all of her many accomplishments, her contribution on the Appeal for

Human Rights is one of her most notable achievements. As a founding document for the fight of civil and human rights, Rosyln Pope helped to create an invaluable piece of history that will forever live on. Ladies and gentleman, again I am so geeked to introduce Dr. Rosyln Pope.

Dr. Rosyln Pope:

Good morning and thank you so much for that lovely introduction. I appreciate it, and I am very glad to be here with you and am grateful to Kennesaw State for making this possible. I am going to talk about the Appeal to Human Rights and what it contains. Are the copies distributed, does everyone have a copy? I never know where the microphone is supposed to be for the best effect.

I wanted to start by giving you a little bit about what we now call the backstory. I hear that a lot, the backstory, where this orientated. I wanted to let you know that I was born in Atlanta. My siblings and I were born at home at Ashby Street which is now called Joseph Lowery Boulevard. And I grew up in the Atlanta Public Schools, E.R Cater Elementary, and Washington High. These schools were segregated, everything was segregated. We were in the middle of the Jim Crow system. We were not allowed to eat with whites, or worship with whites, or become educated with whites. It was a horrible system which probably on many of us has resulted in damage to our image, to our self-esteem. But this is how we grew up. We knew that we were using old books because in the textbooks in the schools you could see that they had been at another school before they came to us, so we got the hand-me-downs. And we realized that we were somehow not as, I don't want to say good as, but not as uh, we were not valued. We had no value. We were hand-me-down kinds of people. The thing that we did have during those days were excellent teachers. We had teachers who, you know, had grown up before we had grown up and therefore their experiences living in the South were worse than ours. They were so determined that we would become well educated, that we would move on from school to school and receive higher degrees and that we would raise families the way they should be raised. We had wonderful educators; we had wonderful pastors. We lived close to the university center where Spelman, Morehouse, Clark, Atlanta University, the Theological Seminary and the graduate school were. And so we had our share of concerts and lectures and activities built to help our spirits grow. And uh, that was the fortunate part. the harmful part, of course, was the system itself. So when we left our homes and our schools and our churches, and we went to department stores, for

example, we had to confront the water fountains, ones for whites and the ones for colors, they were actually labeled colored and white. And we were not able to shop like other people, we couldn't actually try on shirts, clothes, and shoes, and hats. We just had to buy them and hope for the best. So there were a lot of very demeaning characteristics in this segregated society until somehow the idea of this is enough came among the students. Lonnie mentioned the Greensboro Four who sat in and Woolworth's and actually inspired us to start our movement. So sitting on Spelman's, near Spelman's campus in what was called Yates and Milton's Drug Store, one day I was confronted by Lonnie King and Julian Bond and they said, "you know at Greensboro they started a movement and we need to start one in Atlanta." Well, part of the backstory was as you heard Lonnie had been in the Navy. Well, I had been what is known as a Meryl Scholar which allowed me to spend a year and two summers in Europe, striding and traveling. They were grants initiated by Charles Meryl. And one year before I was selected, one student from Spelman had gone and studied abroad. The second year of the program I was selected along with Marion Wright and the two of us were able to go to Europe and study abroad. Go to Europe and study and travel. So the thing is, that being outside of Atlanta, outside of the country, and seeing that I was treated no different than anybody else. I could get on the bus and sit in the front if I wanted to, I could go in any restaurant. I didn't have to worry about climbing the stairs to see a movie. I didn't have to worry about having my fill of concerts and those sorts of activities, so it was a different life. And when I came back for my senior year at Spelman, it was almost unbearable. Because for a year I had been just a human being and coming back I was going to be subject to the same kind of treatment that I had endured for 20 years already. When Lonnie and Julian Bond said we need to do this, I was just sitting there in the drugstore wishing a movement would come and present itself to me because I felt so alone, I couldn't start it on my own. The reason that women weren't at that meeting was because we didn't know about it. Once we found out, there was no getting rid of us. So um, what had happened was that the six college presidents had gotten wind that there had been a meeting and that plans were being made to demonstrate, to picket, to sit-in, and all of those things and they became very worried. And they called together three people from each of the six schools, the president and vice president of the student bodies and one other person. So the 19 of us met with the college presidents and to make a long story short, Dr. Rufus Clement, who

was the President of Atlanta University, said “we don’t want you to do this, we object to you making these plans, but if you insist, you have to let the citizens of Atlanta know why you’re doing it, what your plans are, and you need to draw up a manifesto to state your case.” Lonnie had formed a committee which didn’t work; you couldn’t write it by committee. He ended up saying to me (looks at Lonnie.) So we had run out of days by that time, you know it should have already been done, but when I put pen to paper, it began to sort of unfold on its own because those thoughts had already been concretized inside me and so they came out. One of the questions that people ask about is why it was called an appeal for human rights and not an appeal for civil rights. And I have had to explain that it was our humanity that was threatened. If we were full human beings as I had felt when I was in Europe, I would not have been blocked from every entry that other people were allowed to pursue.

So it was called an Appeal for Human Rights, and if you want to look at it just for a second, you will, of course, read it on your own, but the first little paragraph simply states who is presenting this, uh, this manifesto mentioning all of the colleges and so forth. And also expressing our unity, that we were all together, that we were not this college or that college but all of us were joining together in hearts, minds, and bodies in the cause of gaining those rights which are inherently ours as members of the human race and as citizens of the United States. When they went on to talk about the misconception that people seemed to assume that everything was fine and that black people wanted to live like that, they didn’t want to inspire for anything more and the last sentence of that makes clear that every human being, every normal human being wants to walk the earth with dignity and abhors any and all prescriptions placed upon him because of race and color. And the next one we talk about, we can’t wait any longer. You know, 400 years of slavery and then Jim Crow for another 100 years, it was too much. And we said that we didn’t want gradualism, we had already been patient, we had been gradual but we wanted it now and we were going to aim for full status as human beings in the United States. And then there’s a section where we talk about those things that human beings should have.

I mean it just follows that if you are a human being, you are going to need education and jobs, good housing, being able to vote, hospitals, recreational businesses like movies, concerts, and

restaurants. There were about 800 white policemen in the city of Atlanta at that time, and 35 were black people. There were all of these discrepancies in the way that we lived compared to the white people lived in the city of Atlanta. So we had become tired and anxious and ready for change.

And this is the document that was printed in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution on March 2nd, 1960. It then went on to the New York Times and other papers around the country and across the world. Senator Jacob Javins of New York made sure it was placed in the Library of Congress. And so it has had a lot of exposure but not enough because our own children, our own offspring, don't understand their own history, don't understand the cost that was paid for them to enjoy the benefits that they have today. Let me ask if you have any questions about that. Be sure that you read the summary because um, that's very important.

In the last paragraph, we say, "We, therefore, call upon people in authority, state, county, and city officials; all leaders in civic life, ministers, teachers, and businessmen, and all people of goodwill to assert themselves and abolish these injustices. We must say in all candor that we plan to use every legal and nonviolent means in our disposal to secure full citizen rights as members of this great democracy of ours."

It was well intended, it was heartfelt. Uh, it did arouse quite a bit of interest and of fear in some people. Our wonderful governor at that time, he wrote that he didn't think this could have been written by any student in the state of Georgia. And I thought well he doesn't think much of Georgia's educational systems. He accused us of being communist you know, so people in high places said terrible things about it. But um, I hope that more and more people, especially young people will somehow get to know an Appeal for Human Rights in this area, in the state of Georgia and should be part of history.

Anything from anybody?

Yes?

(audience member asks question) 40:19 (inaudible)

Well, when it was presented from the college campuses, it had to be voted on. This was not a unilateral kind of presentation. These

student body presidents and the college presidents presented it to each of the campuses, and they voted that yes this is what we want to say. So it was originally signed by the president of each of the six institutions. Except for one, one of our college student body presidents was fearful, and so the secretary signed for that particular person, I won't mention the school.

But I don't think I understood your question exactly. Oh, ok. Well, thank you so much for your attention.

Joseph Kimsey:

Hello, I am Joseph Kimsey. I was uh, one of the members of the first class that worked on recovering the people, places, and events of the Atlanta Student Movement. Originally I was supposed to introduce Mrs. [?], but unfortunately, she could not make it due to the I-85 bridge collapse. But I do have the incredible honor of introducing Mr. Charles Black today who is an alum of the movement as well as a member of the 1962 graduating class of Morehouse College. Today he is going to talk with us about his experience fighting hard-won battles in the struggle for civil rights in the American South. Not only was Mr. Black a member of the movement but he would also succeed Dr. Lonnie King as the chairman of the movement. Now he is actually an actor who can be seen in movies and films such as Selma currently running in theaters. So students, faculty, staff, friends, please join me in welcoming Mr. Charles Black.

Mr. Charles Black:

Thank you very much. I had always wanted to be one of the girls'. You know uh, my desire was to matriculate into Spelman College, but because of some sexual bias, I had to go to Morehouse, uh as close as I could get. But I assure you I took every class that I could on Spelman's campus.

As Lonnie indicated, the success of our movement was largely predicated upon the presence and the activism of the women. Not only were they participants but they were leaders at every level. Lonnie had a co-chair uh who was from Spelman College. And uh, the leaders made all the difference. Now if you want some guy, if you want somebody to just talk and pontificate, you can call us, but if you want some work to get done, you got to have some women. I can tell you that, isn't that right?

I tell you the thing that made the difference in our movement and makes the difference in every movement is that you got to

understand that a movement is by its nature multi-dimensional. Which means that it involves a deep commitment to a lot of principles from a part of a lot of different people doing a lot of different things over a period of time. And this means that some folk will be out front, some folk will be willing to go to jail, to picket or sit-in and the like, but others won't be prepared to do that, but their involvement is as significant if they are making phone calls, providing transportation, making sandwiches, boycotting those places that uh, you have a problem with, putting their homes up as collateral to bail people out of jail as what happened here. All of those things matter, and if you don't have that kind of diverse, multiplicity of involvements, you don't have a movement. You might have a slogan, you might have an action, but you don't have a movement. You got to have all of that.

This one young lady who stands out in my mind, who was a big inspiration to me. Ruby Doris Smith was her name, Spelman student who was as determined and committed as anyone you could imagine. If there were two or three people going to do something, Ruby Doris was going to be one of those folk. One of the things that she did which was kind of comical, she went into Grady Hospital one day, and went into the white section and uh, told the folk that she was very sick and uh, that she needed some attention. They said, "well we can't serve you here you have to go to the colored section, but you don't look sick to me." So she threw up on the desk and said, "is that sick enough for you." That was Ruby Doris. Ruby Doris was also one of the original Freedom Riders, uh and she also committed herself to long-term voter registration activities in the Deep South. Ruby Doris ended up dying at the age of 25 because she needed to be in the hospital for her various health conditions but chose instead to be out doing voter registration and then like. And she didn't get the care that she needed and ended up dying at a very early age. But she was one of those folk that had that level of commitment, and there were many, many others. As Lonnie has indicated, the overwhelming majority was usually women who made the difference. And many of us came because the women were going to be there 46:59 WORD.

But I want you to recognize that people like Rosalyn and Dr. Gwen over there who you'll hear from, brought others with them. And whenever we were going to have a large march or anything downtown, we would assemble on what was called the Port Wrangle in the center of the Atlanta University campus and the

first people who would come would always be the ladies of Spelman and we would march together through the other campuses and others would join us as we went through. And uh, in every instance the women would outnumber the men. Many of the men, with a lot of bluster and swag, would say things like "well I can't go down there because I don't know what I'm might to do to those folk," well we know what you're going to do, what the rest of us are going to do. Get yourself hurt or go to jail or whatever. But they were really, in fact, afraid and wouldn't admit that and would refuse to participate uh, with that kind of guise. But the ladies had the nerve, they had the commitment, they had the polish, they had everything that it took to make the difference, and I thank you for uh, honoring and recognizing their contribution today.

Thank you very much.

Eddie Ward:

Ladies and gentleman, my name is Eddie Ward. I am the current Vice President of the Georgia Student Movement here at Kennesaw State. I'm just really pleased to have the opportunity to introduce our next guest speaker, Dr. Gwendolyn Middlebrooks. She is also one of the original members of the Atlanta Sit-In Movement of the 1960's who was arrested twice for picketing the Georgia State Capitol and also the courthouse. We are honored to have her here today because she's continued the fight for equal human rights for people of color and minorities all across the world. Her courage, selflessness, and remarkable vision has inspired many other women and people of all race and creed to join in the fight for fighting for human rights. But before she became known as Dr. Gwendolyn Middlebrooks, she used to be Dr. Luther King Jr.'s and Dr. Coretta Scott King's babysitter. So without further adieu, please join me in welcoming Dr. Gwendolyn Middlebrooks.

Dr. Middlebrooks:

Good morning, thank you so much. Thank you for that introduction. I wish I knew what uh, I was going to say. I really don't. I planned to say one thing, and as I listened to everybody, I changed my mind. Um, that's okay, isn't it?

I've known Lonnie a long time, I've known all of the previous speakers a long time but Lonnie the longest. Lonnie and I went to the same church; we went to the same high school. He is older. I really became aware of his leadership ability when I was in the eighth grade, and what I really want to say to you and I don't

know how I'm going to back into this but, your feeling for being a change agent an activist starts early. If you listen to what, uh the introduction told you about Lonnie, he's doing things early. It's something in you that calls you to serve others and to do for others that prevents you from walking past children that you see during school hours who are begging on the street. I mean, you scan the environment, and you see things. There's something about it; you just don't wake up at 40 and say, "wow, I'm an activist, I'm an advocate, I'm going to do something." There is something in you. When my mother answered the phone when I called from the jail, she said, "Oh, you didn't have to call. I knew you were in there."

You know, it was something about. And I was not a rebellious child, but like Rosalyn, for years I was not comfortable about what was going on, and somehow that manifested itself in the behaviors my mother saw. And she knew that if something was going on to overthrow the racism, the segregation that was insidiously ingrained in our community and throughout the South, she knew I was somewhere doing something.

But I met Lonnie um, and saw him as a leader in the eighth grade because he competed against Vernon Jordan for president of our student body at Howard High School and beat him. And what a, one of the ways, you know he's always the strategist, planning. He just smooched up to all of the eighth graders; we were in the eighth grade. The eighth graders outnumbered the upperclassmen so he could get more votes that way. We didn't realize it, lollipops, whatever. But he had a good platform; he had a good plan, you know improving food in the cafeteria, whatever, wonderful idea. So when I got to college, and you know you have to watch persons with whom you rub elbows. When I got to college, and he approached me about the idea of helping out our recruiting students. Because when I was in college, the guys couldn't be on campus after five o'clock in the evening, I was at a girls' school, Spelman, female institution. The guys couldn't be on campus, so you know he was recruiting different people, a planner, an organizer, get people to do what he couldn't do. Good leaders delegate responsibilities, so he had experience in leadership that he really demonstrated. So anyway, it was my role initially to talk to the students on Spelman's campus throughout the night, knocking on room doors, "would you come with us, we are going to sit-in tomorrow," and Lonnie um, had not indicated what time. We were just supposed to meet on the Atlanta

University campus at a certain time. They told us what to wear; we were to be business casual. If you look at photos of people picketing you will not see people in denim, blue jeans, tennis shoes, never. You know the idea was that if you dress a certain way, then people will give you just a little more respect. We didn't know from that initial sit-in if people might act violently toward us and we didn't want to do anything that might encourage that. One of the things I thought about when I saw the topic of transforming activism into sustainable social change. One of the things I think exist in the minds of people that we demonstrated was that an act of activism can be peaceful. Now sometimes that acts that were designed to desegregate facilities sometimes were met with violence, but the activists were always peaceful. If there's anything that exists in the minds people, it's that you can be an advocate for change in a very peaceful manner. That's very, very important because one of the you hope when you try to sustain a social change is that you can change the people, the core values, the behaviors of the people who will support the social change and keep it going. I was arrested at the State Capitol with Otis Moss. You meet some wonderful people when you're advocates. We were arrested, we stayed in jail together. Um, one of the most powerful feelings I ever had, probably the second most powerful feeling, was when we were walking off campus to meet on the AU center so that we could get together. We didn't know where we were going to be sitting in; it was an accident that I was at the State Capitol I just go with that group. Because it was important that information didn't get out. We didn't even know the time; I just happened to be there. But to look back and see the people behind when you are doing what's right, and you unite for a specific cause, it is a very powerful feeling and I tell this story, and I know that I'm jumping around a little bit, but I have so much to say I could stay up here a long time. But when I was a little girl, teenager, younger than I was when I was in college, we would ride the bus down Pryor Road to downtown Atlanta, and we always had to stand because you couldn't sit next to a person who was white, you couldn't sit in front of them. And they would get off the bus, the end of the bus line, the Pryor Road Bus still exists, it runs north-south to downtown Atlanta. The end of the line was in the village apartments, and only white people lived in the village apartments, so they boarded the bus first. When it came down the hill to Carver Homes which was the housing project where I lived, white people already occupied each of the seats and they would place themselves in the seat next to the window. And I thought that was so mean, why, you know, you sitting next to the

window, why don't you all sit next together, but they sat next to the window. And they really did that because if they sat double, that meant one of the white persons would have been next to the aisle near colored people. And you know we were supposed to be undesirables, so they would seat themselves next to the window. You know how teenagers are, we started talking about that. We talked about it for weeks, what we were going to do about it. We thought it was so mean for them to do that. All the way, we could sit in the back of the bus, but we couldn't sit in the back behind them because they were back there too. So we talked about, "Wow, the law says we can't sit next to them, but it doesn't say we can't put something next to them." So we talked about, that was during the days when you didn't have book-bags. We didn't have; we carried our books in our arms, sometimes we put a belt around them to hold them together. So we decided we could put our books in the seat next to them. And we were talking about it at Baptist Training Union- BTW- BTU at um, at Ebenezer one Sunday and Reverend King heard us. He said, "be careful now that you don't touch them because if you know if you touch them or something then they can say you were being violent, you hit them."

Our parents and our ministers told us things as we were growing up to keep us safe around white people. Things like, if you're walking down the street and a white person is walking toward you, you've got to step out the way because if you bump them, you'll get arrested and accused of a violent act. So it didn't matter, you had to get out of the way. We were taught that there were certain things you were supposed to do. So we were talking about putting our books in those seats for weeks and weeks, and no real plan. But I was on the bus one day, and somebody bumped me and gave me a stack of books and I knew the plan, so I put them in a seat. And as the bus, we started from the back; the books would go all the way to the back of the bus to the last seat. And we had no plan for when it was going to start, but we were really, really surprised, I don't know who in the front of the bus started passing the books, but we put them in the seat, and when the stack would get very high, and the bus would move, we're holding the stack of books. Finally, the person sitting next to the window, the white person would get up and move, and we would say thank you, and we could sit down. We did that for an entire week, and I never shall forget this was my first wonderful feeling of understanding what a peaceful, unified effort could do. When we boarded that bus on Pryor Road that came out of the Village

Apartments, all of those white people were seated to the front. I could not believe it when I got on the bus. "Yes, you did it!" And it was wonderful, and we took our seats, and when older black people got on the bus who were working in various places throughout the cities, we got up and let them sit down. But it's a powerful feeling when you can see something just that small that you've done in a very peaceful manner. My husband tells me sometimes, "do you always have to be on the battlefield." I've been married 56 years to the same person although I accuse him of being about 15 different people, he's changed over time. He's said I've been about 30. But I've marched for Troy Davis, though that was an unsuccessful effort and he was electrocuted. But I can close my eyes because being an advocate for, during that period of time, for what was unjust changed me, fortified in me a belief that whenever things are wrong in this world, if I know about it, I'm always going to try to do something about it. To me, if you change people, you know, you change institutions. We were um, engaged in a revolutionary type of activism. As I said change in segregation is a big job. There are some people we know if we are realist who still retain feelings racism and bias. But we prove that if you unite around the right ideas, the right values, the right beliefs, you can peacefully change not only a system but a lot of people who support that system.

I could say more. Thank you so much for listening.

Dr. Bohannon:

And so now we'd like to open the floor up so that you can interact with our amazing panelists. And so we invite you to ask questions, uh and interact and let's all just kind of share together. And before we do that, I do want to get in one plug, and that is for the Writing 3150 summer course which is going to continue the digital humanities work that we are now doing with collecting oral histories and working with university partners to create uh, this project and to continue this project on. So if you are a student sitting in the audience and you feel called to work on a digital humanities project for sustaining civil rights and to uncover the voices of the Atlanta Student Movement, I encourage you to register for the class, Writing 3150. So now we'll start the Q&A.

Dr. Middlebrooks:

I want to say one more thing because I have so much to say. When I was a little girl, and I was a member of Ebenezer Baptist Church, if you were a member of Ebenezer Baptist Church on Auburn Avenue, that was where Martin Luther King Jr.'s father was a pastor. Every, after every sermon there was a social justice

lesson, and I knew when I was ten years old I was going to vote. He talked about the power of the vote, the importance of voting. I wanted to be 18 not so I could drink beer or smoke a cigarette. But I wanted to vote. He said that is your voice, that is what you do. I remember that there were, there were lynchings, and they would show pictures in the paper of people who have been lynched hanging from trees or wherever they were hanging from. And there would be crowds around them with children looking, people smoking like it was a social event. And he said, and I remembered it, "you talk about how bad it was that those people did that, you talked about how horrible the people were who did it. But look at the people who stood around and watched and did nothing and said nothing. That if you see something going wrong in this world and you do nothing, you are just as bad as the people who did it." And so, it's interesting when you have experiences as a young person that you remember, and so those were kind of the motivating forces of things that were in me. I didn't know what I could do, I didn't know how I could do something, but I knew that when things went wrong, I was supposed to do something. And that's what you are supposed to feel when you see things that are wrong in this world, and you want to do something about it.

Dr. King:

May I interrupt for just one moment. Uh, I mentioned when I started that the Atlanta Student Movement is inextricably tied for all humanity with Rich's Department Store. I want you to meet the man who is here representing uh, the Rich's Foundation, that's one of the big foundations here in Atlanta, he's here, and he's giving us his presence. Mr. Tom Asher would you please stand up. Now Mr. Asher is the chairman of the board, and he's the one who runs it.

Dr. Smith McKoy:

I want to say one quick thing. I am not Dr. Jeanne Bohannon, but I think that we need to recognize Dr. Jeanne Bohannon's wonderful work today and the lasting impact that it will have for not only her students but anyone who is able to use those archives once they completed, so my hats off. I also want to sort of set a context for many of you young people, uh time is a funny thing. The student movement started in 1960 in North Carolina where I'm from. Um, but that was just five years after Emmett Till was killed. It was just four years before the 1964 act was passed for accommodations. So just to put this in context, even if you traveled as a person of near African descent, you could not stay in a hotel that was designated for whites only. So I want you to absorb that for just a second. So the things that these people did, these people on the

stage did opened the door for desegregation of the schools, and I want you to know just how long it took. Though it started in the 1960's, there were still school systems that were court ordered mandated to desegregate in the 1970's and now too. Uh, my parents were not well known for their advocacy, but they were advocates, they were everyday advocates. My mother was the first noncustodial black employee of the city of Raleigh. That means she took; she took payments from people. Um and it made the news, it was picked up by the Associated Press because people were sort of dehumanized to the extent that black people weren't supposed to be able to do do things that of course we could do. And that set the stage I think for, though we are in the same generation I came in the back end of that generation. I went to segregated schools, I remember the first time that we were able to go into a restaurant that we frequented every Friday, but before the law passed, we had to eat outside. And I remember the first day that we were able to sit in the restaurant. And let me tell you it took some preparation, we were prepared for people to spit on us, to spit in our food. But it all worked out well.

I was a part of segregated schools where we had hand-me-down curriculum. We went to Catholic schools because that was the only school in North Carolina in my district that had the same curriculum though the physical plans were vastly, vastly different. One of the reasons why I am an English Professor today is because of the Catholic school that I attended, the black Catholic school, the library was a closet and you had to have a pass and good behavior to go in and I'm a little bit talkative so I didn't get to go in very often. There is an African proverb that says "we are ants on the shoulders of those who came before us." So many of the things that you are doing as women, no matter how close you are to your African ancestry and I'll remind you if you're human, your ancestry started on the African continent. Uh, many of the things that happened in the women's movement also took place because people like the panelists on stage did the things that they did. So I want to take a moment to thank them and just to provide that context for you.

Dr. Middlebrooks:

I promise this will be my last statement. One of the things I feel so strongly about and I look at you, and I'm not advocating that you overthrow the authority of this institution. But this movement taught us how powerful the students are. The most powerful people at an institution are the students. You know, you ask "who is the most important person at your school." Oh the president,

oh the provost. No, no, no. You can't have a school without students. When we worried about, the presidents the truth be told could not tell us "oh yes, go sit-in" because their job was to keep us in school and to educate us, not to tell us to go out in the street and to put ourselves in danger. So they weren't that encouraging, but when we go all the students to go, they had no choice but to be supportive. And you have to understand um, that students, the only way to have a school is to have students. And if the students walk out, then you have no school. I'm not saying to overthrow your government here, but I'm saying if you truly believe in something, if you want to support things that are going on that are unjust in society and mobilize as a student group, it's such a wonderful feeling when something gets done.

Dr. Bohannon:

So now we will take some questions that folks wrote from the audience, and I'm going share this with my students and so we'll just kind of take turns, and if you have a question that you would like to ask we'll bring the mic over to you. So someone in the audience wanted to know: "What should we students be fighting for now and can we use the same three-prong strategy that you all used in the movement?"

Mr. Black:

I would like to respond first to that. Uh, when you wake up in the morning, whatever upsets you the most is what you ought to be fighting about. And I've often said to students that if you're not mad as hell about something, you ain't paying attention, alright. Far be it from us from our generation to tell you of your generation what your causes should be because there is so many. There is so much to be fixed in our society. Just take on anything that makes you mad, that you know is wrong. And organizing begins with one person, you get one other person to join you, that person gets somebody else and before you know it you have a group, and you have the beginning of a movement. Don't let the old folk tell you what you ought to be doing. We can share with you our experiences, but we didn't let the old folks tell us what to do. A lot of your generation has said to us when we've uh, been speaking, "well you know, you guys didn't really pass the torch to us." And after a while I got tired of hearing that, I said: "Light your own damn torch." The point is, nobody passed the torch to us, maybe they should have, but they didn't. We lit our own torch, and before you knew it the darkness was being dispelled, and that's what you should do as well. Now uh, remember King's speech a year before he was assassinated at Riverside Church in New York. He talked about the triple evils of racism, militarism,

and economic exploitation. We still are dealing with those three but as uh Dr. Gwen was just saying; voting is so extremely important. It's kind of like reading, you've heard the expression that one who does not read is no better off than he who cannot read, it's the same with voting, one who does not vote is no better off than one who cannot vote. And you should never allow any election to come your way without letting your voice be heard. If it's for a dog catcher or whatever it is. Voting is your voice, be heard. Always, always be heard.

Dr. King:

Let me just add to that. The Student Government Association and all the other groups here on this campus should go campus to campus and get every person on this campus registered to vote. Every person. There's 30 something thousand students here, I would imagine that all of them are over 18, maybe one or two of them might be younger, but we need to get everyone registered. And also voting, that's the second step. Registration is the first step, that's not enough, you haven't voted yet, you just got on the roles. That ought to be a goal of the Student Government Association that every student at this university is a registered voter period. I promise you have thousands of students here who are not registered. So how can you complain about the government if you're not registered and voting? See the reason why the South is red politically is because millions of people who are eligible to register and vote have not done that. Now we don't have the poll tax; we don't have people taking people out of houses and lynching them and all of those types of things, so what's your excuse nowadays. There's no reason why we continue to have these right wing people running us in the ground. And that's a part of what's going on. The other thing I want to suggest to you at this college is maybe you ought to take a good look at the education level of your community and see if you can't find some kind of way as students to go out and encourage people to go back to school or to go to school or what have you. If you look at the latest data on the education levels of this county, you find that 70 percent of Americans have only a high school education and below. That's terrible, 70 percent. And then when you overlay that 70 percent you find out that in the South, the southeast and southwest, it goes to 80, 85 percent. Education as you know because you're here is power. And a lot of people respond based on their emotions, particularly those who are not as educated as other people. So, as an institution it seems to me that our goal ought to be to get everybody in this school, and by the way, some of the people who are not registered on

this campus are going to be administrators, teachers, believe it or not. Case in point, I was one of these strange kind of students, I was always getting into trouble I guess. So I put together an economic plan with Dr. UB Williams, and I decided to go out and knock on all the doors around the college campus because that's where the teachers were living at that time. I'm knocking on doors, and I'm doing a survey. And one of the first questions I would ask is, "are you a registered voter." And I happened to go to, the first place I went was, I won't call out the lady's name but she taught me English. So I'm knocking on her door, and she comes to the door, "Oh hey Mr. King, how are you doing?" I said, "I'm fine, how are you doing doctor?" I said, "I'm doing this survey," my first question after I explained it was, "are you a registered voter?" She said, "ah, no." Now, this lady, her dad was a college president, she had an uncle who was a dean, she had a Ph.D., but she hadn't taken the time to go down and actually register. So don't just assume that because you know doctor, doctor, doctor, doctor, doctor, that they are all registered because that might not be true. So it would seem to be that if you get all 36,000 or 34,000 making sure that they are all registered and voting, that would be an important step to try and democratize Cobb County.

Shiloh Gill:

Hey ya'll, I'm Shiloh. Let me take this moment just to piggyback off of what he said; I'm going to put a plug out. Um, if you want to be a part of a group that is making social change, you're seeing some of the surroundings, you don't like it, there are things that you would like to change or even if you just want to be a part of voter registration, the Georgia Student Movement at this university is actually doing those types of things. So if you want some more information about that you can talk to myself or Eddie, you can go out to the tables out in the front, and we can link up. Okay? That was the plug, let's get the question.

Audience member:

At what age did you start to realize how wrong society was for the unfair segregation?

Dr. Middlebrooks:

I was, I was ten. I was ten. I knew that I was restricted to a certain community. In Atlanta, you could be identified by the street on which you lived. It was against the law, am I right, for white people and colored people to live on the same street. So, I mean it was just so clear. I mean if you are if you go to Atlanta and you drive on certain streets before they changed the name to Martin Luther King Jr. Drive the street was Mitchell Street downtown

Atlanta. When you got to Northside Drive where the colored people lived it changed to Hunter Street. It's just straight; it's absolutely straight. And streets still exist today and tourists sometimes come around, and they say, "Wow, you get lost around here because you're going straight and the names of the streets just change." That's because of that. So you lived in an environment, and your parents told you, "Don't go so but so far, you don't walk over in the Mathis High School district, and you don't even drive your car through there because white people live over there, and you drive around those neighborhoods."

So I was very young, I was in Atlanta when I realized that uh, there was something people felt that was different about me. People regarded me in a different way. Um, but my mother and our teachers, ministers spent a lot of time assuring us that we were okay, we were just as good as anyone else. But it was apparent once you left your household and your mother didn't take you from where, when your mother had you put your foot on a sheet of paper, or your father, and they traced the shape of your foot so they could take that cut out downtown and measure your shoe that you were supposed to wear. Now I wasn't aware of it then, but when I realized that there were other people, I didn't understand why I never went shopping without my mother. You just, there were no malls, but you weren't just free to go shop, and that was why because they didn't want you to get in any trouble. But they would take that piece of paper to measure your shoe and if they brought it home and you couldn't wear it they'd take it back. So I was about 10.

Dr. Pope:

It's almost as if you know just intuitively, oh sorry. I can't remember at the time I didn't know, a time when I wasn't aware of segregation. So uh, it's almost as if it uh, is in your genes, it's in your DNA. Because your parents have also suffered and their parents before them and it may also be the same with racism, I sometimes think that it's uh, it's handed down from generation to generation. So, uh, you know, you know pretty quickly.

Dr. King:

Let me just add if I might. I still, because I guess I have lived longer than most of the people up here, all of the people up here come to think of it. Um, I've got put a plugin for Atlanta in this sense. I've seen Atlanta operate the same way as Jackson, Mississippi and all of those other places operate. But I've also seen Atlanta, white and black after the 1960s come together, they would fight, but then they would come out of it united as Atlantans. Uh, Ivan

Allen, the famous mayor, wrote a book, well we call it [WORD] 1:24 his biography, he listed six things that had to be streamlined in Atlanta before we could move beyond the injustices um, and considered to be the capital of the South but in reality we were not necessarily. The first thing on the list that he put in his book was that we had to get the race thing right. Now, you might have a difference of view of what he meant by that but what he was talking about was the fact that you could not get major league baseball, major league football and all of those kinds of things until we got right on the issue of race. Now right may be in the eyes of the beholder because we still have an awful lot of people who should be doing better but were kept back because of their race but also there are a lot of people who have done very well in Atlanta, and that's one reason why you have a lot of people here.

Let me tell you; I teach a class down at Emory for a couple of quarters. The first time I went out there, 35 people in the class and I said, "How many of you are from Atlanta, born in Atlanta." Only three people. And so I quizzed them a little bit and found out that many of them had been brought there by their parents when they were very young. I said, "Why did you decide to come to Atlanta." They said "Well, I understand that Atlanta is a great international city and people could aspire, and they could do this, that and the other." So recognize that yes, we do have a lot of problems that we still have to solve, but one of the things that has pleased me about my hometown is that people can sit down with different persuasions and they can fight in the room, but when they finish they can come out together as Atlantans. Now that's not perfect, but you ought to live in some other places. There's a reason why you have a big traffic jam around Atlanta, Georgia, because a lot of people have bought into the image that this is a city, you know I think Hartsfield said that it was a city too busy to hate, now that's not quite true, there's a little bit of hating around here. But by and large, people working together, accepting one another as equals what have you, that's hard work. And it means that people in this room when you have children young people, and those who already have children, it's important for you to instill into them some of the principles that are in the Bible and some of the precepts upon which this country was founded, namely "We hold these truths be self-evident, that all- now they left out women, it should be all men and women are created equal and endowed by their Creator etcetera, etcetera, etcetera.

Mr. Black:

Let me uh, respond to that question that was asked. Um, you have to understand that we've been black all our lives. Now you may not believe that, but all of us have been black all our lives. But when we grew up, we lived in an insular kind of environment. Everybody in your day-to-day life were folk that looked like you. Because this assembly, for example, would be illegal, black and white folks sitting together, you couldn't have that kind of thing. So but you know that when you left that environment, where you went to school, everybody was black, you went to church, everybody was black, you went to the stores in your neighborhood, everybody was black. And when you went downtown, things were different, and those folk who were not black had privileges that you did not have, and it was obvious. We were also the generation that succeeded what Tom Brokaw called the Greatest Generation. You know, we had uncles and fathers and the like who went overseas uh, to fight to make the world safe for democracy. And they sacrificed their health and their lives, and when they came back home, they were called niggers. Some were even lynched while wearing their uniforms. So we were born pissed off. Um, you know our, the generation before us shared these experiences with us. That when they were in the foreign lands, they were treated with much more dignity than in their own homeland. Um, so seeing all the clear distinctions in our society as kids growing up, you knew we had to ride the bus in the back. We couldn't go to the restrooms except for a couple places in the basement downtown, all that stuff. And one telling thing that is quite interesting, I grew up in Miami. Now if you were as dark as the microphone but spoke a different language, you spoke Spanish, you could go to the hotels and go to the movie houses and all that. As long as you weren't an American black. And that's sick. But that's the way it was. I would hope that you take some time to learn more about what the environment was in the 50s and 60s. You know some of the things we mentioned, but there were uh, segregated taxi cabs. White and black folk didn't use the same taxi cabs. You had separate ambulances. Grady Hospital had twice as many ambulances for white people as for blacks, and all of the white ambulances were parked in the driveway. But the two colored ambulances were in use, and a kid got hit by a car a block from our office, our student movement office, you had to wait 45 minutes for a colored ambulance to be available. I witnessed that. I mean, you know, sick. All of that stuff is very sick, but it was real, and it was palatable, you saw that everywhere. So you didn't have to be too old to realize that you were being discriminated against.

Dr. Smith McKoy:

Again I think my role here, um in the seat of Dr. Bohannon, is to provide context. I was born in 1958 in Raleigh North Carolina in an all-black hospital. The operatory was on the third floor, and there were skylights. The reason for that was that they did not budget for electricity in the operatory. So even in the operating room in this all black hospital there was no electricity, so I want you to just sort of think about that for a minute. Uh, I was born in that hospital in 1958, in 1960 um, the North Carolina um, opened it's first, uh integrated, in quotations marks, hospital. That meant though that black doctors only saw black patients and white doctors did not see black patients. But it just so happens that um, this was revealed in a documentary I did about that hospital that the very first people to occupy that hospital the weekend before it was open was the black mother and her child who just happened to go into labor when they had closed the doors on the black hospital. Jack Johnson, the famous heavyweight fighter, died at St. Agnes Hospital, why? Because he could not be admitted in Henderson, North Carolina where he had an accident, he had to come 45 minutes to St. Agnes to assist, and he died in that operating room where there was no electricity. So just to provide that context, you didn't have to figure out that you um, were being discriminated against. Not only did you have to know where you could and could not go, but it was for your safety to recognize these things otherwise you might not actually step out.

Though uh, the store that was equivalent to Rich's in North Carolina was Belk's. And at Belk's Department Store, we could only shop in the basement, and the bathrooms were segregated. So my mother was a quite the character, and she decided we weren't going to use the colored bathroom anymore because they never cleaned it. And so we went into the white restroom, and the clerk followed us, I must have been about five, and the clerk was saying you can't come here and she said "Well they can use the bathroom here in the white restroom, or I'll have them go in the hallway, which one would you like us to do?" And so we broke those boundaries. Eventually she became a partner with Belk's to provide clothing and assistance for underprivileged children in that hospital where she used to work so it paid to know that you can get out of your racial place and make change but it also was necessary for you to know that it was dangerous and it could have threatened your life.

Amira: Okay well hello. My name is Amira, and there is a student in the audience who asked if your movement had begun in 2016, do you see anyways that you all would have used social media to move the movement efforts forward?

Panel members: Could you repeat that please?

Amira: Yeah no actually I'll just speak like this, I don't like using this. My name is Amira, and there is a student in the audience who asked if your movement had begun in 2016, do you see anyways that you all would have used social media to move the movement efforts forward?

Dr. King: Yes, yes, let me answer this. In order to have a movement you got to have a plan, and you have to have a way to execute the plan, and you also have to inform other people if you want them as to what your plan is all about. We started out in the summer of 1960, uh I assigned Julian Bond to write something called "The Student Movement and You." And we put out 20,000 copies of that document, 8 1/2 by 14, every Sunday uh, at the churches. A man named Kasoot Hill, of Hill Office Supplies, came by my office on Auburn Avenue when I guess we've been in business for about a month down there and had it sent out for four weeks. He came by, and I was a little stunned when he came in because I had never seen him before and the secretary had let this tall, white guy in there and my life was kind of shaky at that time you know someone might assassinate me just to be very honest with you. So when I looked up here was this tall, white guy, he had gotten back there where I was, and I didn't know what he was going to do and I guess it must have shown on my face because he quickly said, "My name is Kasoot Hill, I own Hill Office Supply up the street." I knew then he was a white, I mean a black guy who looked white. He sat down, and he said to me, 1:35:17.

Mr. C. H Scott, the editor of the paper and the owner, had written an editorial against us. He said, "it's a shame what Mr. Scott is doing, we need to get another newspaper going here. I have one called the Atlanta Inquirer that I've gotten permission from the state to start, but I don't have anyone to write it. I have an editor, but I need some reporters and what have you." So he said, "if you stop publishing that Student Movement and You, use the Atlanta Inquirer, give me the staff to write it, and you all can write anything that you want to write to carry forth the same message that you were carrying out in the Student Movement and You."

I'm happy to tell you that that newspaper, the Atlanta Inquirer is still running today fifty-something years later and it was started by those students. You can start it, and you can do it, and it can last especially if it is a good idea.

Mr. Black:

We ought to contrast, you know, the social media of that day to social media of today. What we had were telephone booths every now and then on street corners. In the dormitory where I lived on campus, there was one telephone on the first floor. Nobody had anything called a cell phone; those things did not exist. We communicated by uh, bullhorns, you know we didn't have beepers or anything, no beeper or any of that stuff, no pagers, none of that. Uh, we had to do flyers and get them out by hand to people and all of that. So you're talking about an uh, a significant capability of communication where you can pick up this little phone and communicate all around the world in an instant. I mean nobody could have dreamed of such a thing in our time. So we were able to uh, succeed with our movement with the limited communication capabilities that we had, ya'll ain't got no excuse.

Alright, and the next question from the audience is uh, "How can white students best be allies for the project that is currently going on here and also in general? How can white students be allies for the project?"

Dr. King:

Let me just tell you that the best way to be an ally is to contact the people who are doing the work and volunteer to get involved. We had white students almost from the beginning and throughout our movement. A lot of them came in from Harvard and Yale, and Dartmouth, you name it. Columbia, major schools.

Mr. Black:

Shorter College.

Dr. King:

Shorter College, that's right, yeah. They came in, and they worked. Many of the white students got beat like the black students did. So its possible to make it happen. uh, our motto was simply this, "If you want to come and help us change the world, change Atlanta, change the south, come on. We're not going to guarantee that you won't get hurt, you won't be beaten, but come on." But I learned something more recently over the last two years as I was writing my dissertation. I was reading a book written by a black policeman who was there during the time of the movement. I did not know Charlie, that they put the whites in

a different van than us, are you aware of that? So they put us in, they put the whites in a different van, and from what I understand is that to show the policemen's disdain for the whites that joined us, they would speed up and shove on the brakes, speed up and shove on the brakes. Now they weren't laced down or tied down, so they were literally carrying those children, they were knocking them up against the wall. That was their way of showing from the police department the disdain. Now Mayor Hartsfield sent out the order we're not going to abuse these children. William B. Hartsfield. Chief Jenkins who worked for him carried that out. But Chief Jenkins was not in every patrol car, not in every paddy wagon and what I am learning here ex-post-facto is that some of these white kids got treated worse than the some of the black kids because I never heard any black students tell me that they got bumped around, and pushed around. But some of the white paddy wagon drivers showed their disdain by punishing the white kids who came down from the north, some came too from Emory by the way, to help us. So this, I maintain that the biggest problem that we have in the present is ignorance, ignorance. And also, I won't say hereditary but certainly social conditioning, what does the Bible say, "Train up the child in the way he should go, and when he is older he will not depart?" There is just too much of that going on, and our children are being told the wrong thing, and the wrong stuff is being painted on their slate at a young age, so it keeps on growing, it keeps on growing.

But the question was how can we find the way to erase some of this stuff that is causing this country to be split down the middle based on race.

Dr. Middlebrooks:

As Roslyn said from the beginning, the appeal was an appeal for human rights, not just for a certain race of people. And so if you keep that uppermost in your mind that when you do something to help other people who help yourself. It's about helping everybody, that's just so important.

Dr. Pope:

Just speak to someone of a different race if you have never done that before. I can guarantee you that there are some black students on this campus who don't feel welcomed, who feel neglected and discriminated against because it hasn't gone away so just a welcoming kind of attitude, a smile, you know, can go a long way to helping to ease any tension that may exist on either side.

Dr. Middlebrooks:

Tell you a quick story, and I won't name the county. I and the end of the story is that things are better now. I was called by a national office in January to take over an organization in a county, and some of my friends said, "oh you know where you are?" It was 19 miles away from my house. And I didn't think very much about it, the man who was running the recreational activity, leisure time activity was ill, and I got a call from the national office, "Gwen will you go out there, you are the closest certified person in Atlanta, and take it over until the person gets well." When I walked in, they were all white and all over the age of 60, you could hear a pin drop. And as I was, as the lady was introducing me, one man who was the oldest one in the group just stood up and started talking to go on with what they were doing. And one week after I got there the man who was running the activity died, so the national asked me to stay. And so I was staying and smiling, and smiling, and smiling and so one day, fast forward, I was gritting my teeth and staying there in September, the older gentleman who had interrupted me the first day walked up to me as I was picking up something from off the floor. He said, "You know Gwen, they had wanted to use one system and I had elevated them to use a higher standard from what they were doing." And I said, "This is what's done across the country, you've been using something that is no longer appropriate. And he said to me, "You know we've been talking behind your back while you were gone and we decided that we would rather use in other words system number two and we outnumber you." And when he turned and walked away, I said, "That may be true, but I'm the manager, I'm in charge, and this is what we are going to do."

Well when I got home, I was bothered all the way home, and I called the national office, and I said, "I want to discontinue this particular organization," and the lady said to me, "Well wait till next year because you won't be able to open it somewhere else." And I sat and thought for a while, and I said, "You know what, I'm not going anywhere, they have a lot to learn from me." And so I've been there, I've continued. He's one of my closest supporters now. And I said, and I was really, for a moment there was something I've never done, I almost left. So even on a small, I mean this was a small community outside of Atlanta, they've been in the newspaper recently if you really think of some racist things that have been going on there. And I said, "You know what, I need to stay because my presence will help them change. They have probably never been around anybody with my kind of hair and my

color skin, and they can learn from me.” So sometimes just by being in the mix with somebody, you can affect change.

Dr. Smith McKoy:

It would also help to remember that race is a social construction, it's not real. There's no biological difference between you that defines me as somehow being differently human than you are or me. I think James Baldwin might have put it best when he says, “As long as you think you're white, I'm going to have to be black.” Somewhere along the line, we have to recognize that all of humanity began in the same space and if you are a human then race shouldn't matter and you should be able to contribute where you can bring your heart and soul to make social change.

Shiloh Gill:

This is so awesome guys. The next question is, “In your opinion what else could have been done to improve this movement?”

Mr. Black:

Our movement?

Shiloh Gill:

Yes.

Mr. Black:

Well, I think we made some tactical and perhaps some crucial errors. One of them which was that we didn't make a point of ensuring that successive generations would be as imbued with the same knowledge and passion that we were. We had assumed a great extent that once barriers came down, people would interact, get to know each other as human beings and all would be well. Well, what we neglected to realize was that bigots had babies you know and those babies were taught to be bigots too. And so there was uh a continual effort throughout the past fifty years undoing all of the good we had attempted to do at that time.

And I think the other thing we might have done differently was to focus more; we should have focused more on economic empowerment in addition to you know voter involvement. Um, so the people understood that this country moves, this capitalistic society in so much is determined by the dollar. The thing that made the difference with Rich's Department Store in coming around was that they lost 10 million dollars over the Christmas holiday because of our boycott so all of the sudden they understood what we were talking about. Uh, so I think that if you focus more on economic empowerment and opportunities for training and knowledge of management and business as an

important entree into a more equitable society, I think things may have been a little bit better.

Dr. King:

Let me just add to that, what Mr. Black was saying. Uh, Dr. Bohannon had brought forward a comment that she heard me make once when I said, "Democracy does not run on cruise control, you got to keep your hands on the steering wheel in order for it to work. If you put it in automatic, it won't work," as I understand. But we, we need to look at what has been successful. Thanks to Dr. EB Williams who taught Economics at Morehouse I was able to devise a strategy that was voted on by the students, they embraced it, the idea was an economic boycott of downtown Atlanta with Rich's Department Store is the principal target and uh, I learned that we cost Rich's Department Store 20 million dollars in the Christmas holidays in 1960. Now, Dick Rich told Chief Jenkins office and me in June before we started the boycott because you know we had announced it. He told Chief Jenkins, he told me in front of Chief Jenkins that if I brought my black ass back into his store again that, "Chief, I want him to put under the jail" basically. And so with that, he had no more to say, and I asked him "Mr. Rich I'm coming back in the fall of October the 19th and I'm bringing thousands with me, so Chief get the jail cells ready." So Dick Rich got up and walked out of the meeting, turned red, and I never spoke to him again in life. However, once they lost that 20 million dollars and then we called for the boycott to be extended because they didn't give up over the Christmas holidays, extended through Easter, within 30 days the same Rich's Department Store and the merchants downtown signed an agreement, the only time it has ever been signed in the south, to desegregate. Most of the time the south would wait for the federal courts to order them to do certain things. That didn't happen, and I promise that Rich's Department Store had a lot to do with the signing of that agreement. What I didn't know was the impact of the economic boycott because I didn't know at that time how much. And Mr. Tom Asher, I happened to come in when he was making a speech down at Georgia State a few weeks ago, and I was stunned when Tom spoke, just tell me PHRASE 1:51:15.

But anyway, when I came in the room, Tom was saying, "when we lost the 20 million, guess how much that is in today's dollars? 553 million dollars." I was stunned that that was the case. Economics can bring about a lot of change. Stop worrying about whether or not people love you and just have to be treated fairly, and if you pull the dollars out somehow or another the most reactionary

people become far more receptive of some of the ideas that you are trying to bring forward. The ideas you are bringing forward are not ideas of hate; its ideas of equality, ides of justice, it's ideas of fairness.

Mr. Black:

Let me say this about Rich's, two things about Mr. Rich. Rich's was everyone's favorite store which is why they were our main target. And the reason why they were everyone's favorite store is that they had a stated policy that no sale is ever complete until the customer is satisfied. And what that meant was, if you bought something from Rich's today and 10, 15 years later didn't work anymore, they'd take it back. They'd give you a refund or an exchange for that product. Everybody knew that so they loved Rich's. Everybody loved Rich's, so we knew that if Rich's uh, you know failed everyone else would fall behind. Now about Richie Rich's redemption, now I had the occasion to negotiate the desegregation of movie houses. Hartsfield was still the mayor at the time and uh he brought, you know we had been picketing and carrying on for a while, and uh he brought with him to this meeting of my little team and the owners of the theaters, the chief of police and Richard Rich, okay. So when the uh, theater owners were explaining all of this stuff about, "well we're afraid there will be somebody yelling fire, and there'll be stink bombs," and duh, duh, duh, it went on like that. And my response was that I'm sure Chief Jenkins can retain law and order in Atlanta, "can't you Chief?" And which of course he responded in the affirmative. But Mr. Rich chimed in and said, "That all of those fears that you have, I had too. And none of that stuff happened, and I'm sorry I lost all of that money you know with that boycott." And so his input was very pivotal in uh my being able to negotiate within four hours the desegregation of all of the movie houses in town.

Dr. Middlebrooks:

I thought about um, I was trying to write the names of the people, I forgot, two books. And Charles was right; I guess there was no plan made in sustaining and ensuring that the future generations would uh, not only know what we did but know how to use it to, uh...

Dr. Pope:

To move forward.

Dr. Middlebrooks:

To move forward, right, thank you. Thank you.

I thought about it when I read the Michelle Alexander's book, "The New Jim Crow," where she exerts that slavery was replaced

by Jim Crow and the new Jim Crow is the War on Drugs. That there is a systematic effort of the white population to make sure they are never going to be on the bottom, that when you erase one unjust system, they are going to put another one in to ensure that they will always be suffering. And you have to read; I think his name is, I said I wasn't going to forget it because I met him, Ibram Kendi, Kendi. And you can look him up on your book who wrote "Stamped from the Beginning," he's been promoting that book at the American Historical Society. Uh, a history of racist ideas in America. Very, very interesting how generations of people have a system for keeping things going. And so as we were, we were so busy being advocates for uh removing segregation until we, we just assumed the ball would keep rolling, and those of us who believed uh that, that is wrong just did not have a plan in place to assure that future generations would keep the movement. But read those two books, they are very, very interesting. Uh, The New Jim Crow is very interesting, and Kendi's book is very interesting.

You met him? You know the book? Very good.

Dr. Pope: Which one, "The New Jim Crow?"

Dr. Middlebrooks: No, Kendi's book. Is it Ibram, did I get his name right?

Audience Member: Ibram.

Dr. Middlebrooks: Ibram. I-B-R-A-M. Kendi. K-A, from Florida.

Dr. Pope: And what is it called?

Dr. Middlebrooks: "Stamped from the Beginning" colon, "The History of Racist Ideas in America." Is that right? You got it on your iPhone?

Eddie: We only have time for two more questions, this next question is going to count as one of the two. And the question is directed towards those who have been jailed. It goes, "Could you please talk about some of your experiences while, that you had while were you were in jail during the movement in the 1960s, the Atlanta Student Movement sit-ins in the 1960s?"

Dr. Middlebrooks: Well I was too young to be frightened, and all of my friends were there, and so I don't have any really bad experiences to report. Except the good ones. The prisoners loved us; they were so happy

to see us. They were patting us on the back and congratulating us, thanking us for doing what they couldn't do. Jail was wonderful; it was really, really wonderful. And you know we were young people, they were so glad, they were hugging us. There wasn't a scary moment that we experienced; it was really, you just felt like a million dollars. And I remember I was poor, and I have lived in the housing project, and you think about doing something, you never know what you're going to do, and you don't know if they're going to put you in jail, that's the last place you ever want to go. And when you walk through the jails the people are grabbing you and hugging you and saying, "Thank you and "I'm so and so, and I'm in for this." They were just, they loved us, they loved us, and I think that was it in a nutshell.

Dr. King:

Let me just comment on this. When I was arrested in February 1961, women were, Dr. Middlebrooks was arrested and so were the other ladies from Spelman. So when I got to the courthouse that day for my arraignment and what have you, um, I walked in and Atlanta had a policy or Fulton County, the first person who was white, a black would have to sit on that side and everybody else who came in knew that it was custom to follow that pattern. In other words, if Tom Asher came in and he was white, everybody else who was white would have to come in and sit behind Tom Asher. Now Tom might decide the next day he's in court to sit on that side and everybody who came in would sit on that side. That was the understanding that Atlanta operated under these courthouses. So I came in with Gwendolyn Middlebrooks and a couple other ladies from Spelman for my appearance before the court. So when I walked in, I said you know I'm not going to go sit over there. Why am I coming into a courthouse of justice and I'm going to go sit in the segregated? So I went over to the white side to sit down. Gwendolyn Middlebrooks and two other ladies say, "Well we are going to go with you." So the four of us sat on the white side of the courtroom. Judge Webb, Webb I think was his name, he told the bailiff to go and get those folks back there who were breaking the law basically, so the bailiff came back and asked me and Gwendolyn the other two ladies to come up because he wanted to see us. So I got up, Gwen and the others got up, but he said, "No leave the ladies back there, they are just following that boy." And I came down, and he put me in jail for contempt of court for five hours. He took me downstairs right then, and I had to stay for five hours.

Another time that when I was in jail was when Dr. King and I went to jail on October the 19th. So he and I were in the same jail cell out on, in Jefferson Street. It may be in a different location now. Uh, and we were there for several days, and when we finally got out, Mayor Hartsfield negotiated a settlement where they can kind of, Rich's and the others try solve this. Dr. King was then, when they came to let us out they said, "Well you have to stay." And the DeKalb County Police were there, handcuffed him, and take him out to DeKalb County to go before Judge Mitchell and you all, I'm sure you know a lot about what happened out there. They were considering; they took him to what was the place?

Panel Member:

Reedsville.

Dr. King:

Reedsville I think it was at two o'clock in the morning with a German Shepherd back there not on a leash back there with him. So that was the other time, and then I guess I went to jail two or three other times, it gets kind of foggy now. I think the most harrowing time I had was when I went to jail in Athens, Georgia. I spoke at Payne College, and during that time when you travel around Georgia it was like being in a milk truck or something I got in at Augusta, and they ended up taking me around Athens. So when I got to Athens, I had to go to the restroom and mind you I'm just speaking at Payne about desegregation and all of that kind of stuff. So when I got off in Athens, I went into the white bathroom, not the colored bathroom. And of course within a matter of a few minutes here comes the police to grab me and arrest me. They took me to the, not the city jail but the county jail. So they put me in there, and I asked to call my lawyer, and they said, "No, we'll let you do that later on." So around three o'clock in the morning uh, they finally came and said, "Okay you can call your lawyer." And so I said okay, his name his Donald Hollowell and so they called Mr. Hollowell, and Mrs. Hollowell answered the phone, and I said, "Mrs. Hollowell, this is Lonnie King," and she said, "What kind of trouble are you in now?" So I said, "I got to talk to Mr. Hollowell, I'm in jail in Athens, Georgia and they won't let me out here." So she put him on the phone, and he came on with this, "Hello young man, what are you up to now?" And so he proceeds, "Let me speak to the jail." I don't know what he said to the jail but when he finished talking the jailer went from "yeah, yeah" to "yes sir, yes sir, okay," and they hung up the phone. And they let me out and took me back to the Greyhound Bus Station now mind you now that I'm out here now at four o'clock in the morning and they close the station at

midnight. So I'm out here sitting until six when the next bus is going to come. I wasn't sure whether I was going to make it the next two hours because those folks kind of talk to one another and so someone could have been told I was sitting out here and come and get him. But Hallowell got me out with a phone call, now what he said to them I don't know, but he got me out of jail. So those were the kinds of things I'm going to tell you about that happened uh when I went to jail in Atlanta. I went to jail in other places , but we are going to talk about Atlanta right now.

Shiloh Gill:

And our last question which is so fitting is, "what was the most memorable event during the Civil Rights Movement that still affects you today."

Dr. King:

Well, I guess the most memorable event was when we tried to settle this um, whole case and I got this telephone call from Jesse Hill who had an Atlanta life later, who told me to come to the most important meeting of my life. And when I got there, here were all the powers that be including Mr. um Neely, Frank Neely who was the chairman of the board of Rich's Department Store. And that was one of the most traumatic meetings I've ever been in in my life. First of all, the leadership of the black community, of the Negro community, they were on the other side. The white community was on the same; they were all on the same page because Daddy King said, "Boy, you are wrecking this town, I baptized you." All that was true, but I wasn't wrecking the town I was trying to save the town. Be that as it may, that meeting ended up with them agreeing to sign for the desegregation of downtown Atlanta. I said I'll be willing to do that on one condition, that it was in writing and that I didn't have to go back and tell my committee my recommendation was that we accept it. When Herschelle Sullivan who was with me and was my co-chairman, she and I got into the car to go back, Mayor, uh sorry, Ivan Allen who was the President of the Chamber of Commerce had the press outside his office at the Chamber of Commerce and he went on, and he had a press conference, and he began it by saying that, "the negro students had agreed to end the boycott and the lunch counters will open tomorrow, reopen segregated." And that's all he said. That created pandemonium in the African American community, pandemonium. They had a big meeting, 2,000 people were there, a few nights later, they raised holy heck. The only thing that changed that saved us that night was because Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. came at my request to quell that crowd. And the greatest speech he ever made, and you heard a lot of his

speeches, I content is the speech he made that night because they booed his daddy several times. Daddy King got up and was trying to say the agreement was fine so forth and so on. And one lady up in the balcony said: "And that's what's wrong." Cause he said he's been pushing for civil rights for 30 years, and she said, "that's what's wrong." And the place went up, they roared. So then I said to Mr. Carr, hold him, I got to try to get him on the phone, I said this place is about to get out of hand. So Dr. King had just come back from , and he was living on Sunset at the time, so I called him, and he said, "LC," they called me LC, he said uh, "I'm having a little cold." And I said, "We need you down here tonight." And so he said, "Well, yeah I heard about the agreement and what have you while I was out of town." And I said, "Well, they booed your daddy, and it's getting out of hand, please come down." So he came down there, uh, when he came in I told Reverend Dr. Borders that he's there. Dr. King at that meeting took the citizens up the mountain, down into the valley, up the mountain, down into the valley, quelled everybody. And I never would forget him saying, "I would not have done it the way Chamber of Commerce and the black community, I would have done it this way, but we gave the people our word, and we need to keep our word, and if they gonna do this at a time certain that they signed, I suggest that we go along with it. We cannot afford to have the cancerous disease of disunity affect this community." Greatest speech he ever made, if you ever get the chance to hear it, it knocks out the March on Washington speech because he did it in Atlanta, Georgia number one, he was crying, tears were coming out of his eyes because they had booed his daddy but he also, this was his hometown, and he had been involved at Rich's and others earlier.

So those were the kinds of things I wanted to say to you. I hate to have to say all of this on Women's History Month, Day. But, if it were not for the 60 something percent of the participants who were female, I do not know where we been. And I want to say thank you Gwen and Roslyn and all the other ladies, you all, you all are part of a group who brought me here, nurtured me, kept me going to school, kicked my butt, we love you and thank you all for saving us, men.

Mr. Black:

I noticed that the President uh, arrived at some point and I think it's appropriate for us to express our thanks for your support of these efforts, uh, you know, we are happy that you are doing that.

Dr. Middlebrooks: I want to tell about one event. The day we picketed Rich's and the Klans' also picketed.

Mr. Black: Oh yeah.

Dr. Middlebrooks: I tell you, they did a better job of helping us close Rich's down than we would have never done. People were so afraid for us to be there; they were so afraid for us to go. We said that we were not going to break the plan, we planned to be there. We were marching, what was it, clockwise and they were marching counterclockwise. And since they had gotten such bad press they did anything they could to prove they were not violent, so we kind of changed them. But because the Klansmen were in town, nobody came that day, so they finally realized they helped us by coming not hurting us, and they stayed away.

Mr. Black: We made this observation about the Klan. Yeah, yeah, when they, when the Klan folk first started coming down here they had on overalls under their robes, and they had uh, they walked around looking like they would normally looked. And after a couple of days, they came back with shirts and ties on to a reporter from the paper asked them why the change and he recorded those guys saying to him, "We wanted to show these students we's dignified too." But we got to have fun with these guys uh, they you know, the normal robe was all white with the cap, but they had different colors for different rank, you know there were some that were green, some I think were red and yellow and all these different colors. So I went up to one of the guys, and I said, "Man that sure is a pretty blue, where can I get one of those?" He didn't know what to say but uh, we won't forget their participation because they helped us to have an effective boycott.

Dr. Bohannon: We are out of time for the panel, but I did want to, just for me and for my students say thank you because you have transformed us and I look forward to continuing to do this digital humanities work with you so we can transform everybody else. Thank you so much.

And we are also grateful that President Olens was able to fit us into his schedule today and I would like for him to say just a couple of words about Kennesaw and our commitment to digital humanities.

President Olens:

Thank you, so it's great to be here. Thank you very much and what a great panel, thank you very much for all that you said. The panel demonstrates the need and value for public digital humanities than anything I can say. And the efforts that Dr. Bohannon and many others at KSU are involved in to promote public digital humanities. About two years ago I had the honor to be on a panel at Emory Law School. John Lewis was there with Freddy Gray, most of you have probably never heard of Freddy Gray, but the panel knows Freddy Gray. I want to get him to campus, he's got to be 82, 83, and that's part of the importance of getting him here while he is still in great health. Freddy Gray was a young lawyer from Montgomery, and he went to Case Western to go to law school, and he immediately had on his mission to end um, segregation. And he ended up representing Dr. King numerous times along with Congressman Lewis, the Selma Battle, the Montgomery Battle, et cetera. And it's so important that you have the visual story that these individuals present and that other individuals can present because there's that day in the future where you can't meet with any of us in person. And I thought that one of the funniest moments that night other than the great admiration I now have for Freddy Gray was when John Lewis started talking about the great value of lawyers. And you know as a lawyer any time someone wants to talk about the great values of lawyers, I'm going to listen. And of course, it was the lawyers that got y'all out of jail as you were talking about with Donald Hallowell. And then I got to know when I came to Atlanta all about Herman Russell and how he was head of the pack to put up the money that would put up the money to get folks out of jail, the bail that was needed all the time. But it is so so important to be active in this public digital humanities work to hear about ordinary people doing extraordinary things. The public pays attention to those extraordinary things, but they don't comprehend that they are ordinary people who are 99.9 percent of the time are leading those efforts. SO what a great panel. Thank you, thank you very much. Anything that KSU can do to stimulate public digital humanities work, to provide these opportunities is time very, very well spent. God bless y'all and thank you.

Dr. Bohannon:

And so we would like to thank you all for joining us here and again I do have one more plug before we leave. Dr. Seneca Vaught wanted to talk about just real briefly about a class that we're offering in the fall out of ISD. So remember, Writing 3150 in the

summer and then we got another class about the 1960s coming up in the fall.

Dr. Seneca Vaught:

Thank you so much for your dialogue, thank you so much. We would like to continue this discussion um, this Fall with a course being offered in the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies by Dr. Robbie Lieberman, sitting over there. The course is The US in the 1960s and certainly, many of these questions, these discussions, and this camaraderie will part of that class so please um, take that up in your schedule and join us.

Dr. Bohannon:

And thank you all for joining us and again thank you for everyone who is here.