

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

***HISTORY OF THE COBB COUNTY BRANCH OF THE NAACP AND CIVIL RIGHTS
ACTIVITIES IN COBB COUNTY, GEORGIA***

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INTERVIEW WITH HUGH GROGAN III

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CONDUCTED BY JAY LUTZ

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Kennesaw State University Oral History Project
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Interview with Hugh Grogan III
Conducted by Jay Lutz
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Telephone interview

JL: This is Jay Lutz, I'm interviewing Hugh Grogan, III; this is a telephone interview. For the purposes of this interview I'll refer to the interviewee as Hugh. He is the son of Hugh Grogan, Jr., the first African-American councilman from Marietta, Ward 5 and also president of the NAACP. Hugh, can you tell me where you were born and a little bit about your background?

HG: My name is Hugh Grogan, III. I was born in New York City, New York, Mt. Sinai Hospital. Actually, my mother and father met in New York; their background is from Cartersville, Georgia, and Marietta, Georgia. We left there in the 1970s, me, my mother and my brother, Reece Grogan. From there I attended St. Joseph's Catholic School up until the fifth grade, and after that I went to Marietta Middle School—actually it was Marietta Junior High back then. From there I went to Marietta High School and from there I attended the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga from which I have a degree in criminal justice. I met my wife, Tammy Grogan; she is from Memphis, Tennessee. Once graduating from there, we moved back to Atlanta for about ten years. From there we located to Memphis, Tennessee where she's from and that's where we've been living since 2000.

JL: What, if you don't mind me asking, what's your birthday?

HG: June 10, 1964.

JL: Do you have any memories about living in New York?

HG: Yes I do. I remember growing up in New York; we stayed in an eighteen-story apartment building. I don't remember the street but my mother gives me memories of Lenox Avenue and like I say, in the apartment building, my father used to be part of the NAACP there. He worked with Mt. Sinai Hospital there. He was part of the first kidney dialysis group, I guess, back then; it was doing mostly experimenting with kidney dialysis and things like that. Like I said, I just remember my father was a part of that, even though I was kind of young. I remember my mother used to be a nursing assistant there. We moved from there when I was seven or eight, so most of my memories of there are, like I say, my father being a part of the NAACP, my mother giving me fond memories when they danced in the Audubon ballroom where Malcolm X was assassinated and things like that.

JL: I know you had an aunt who worked with Adam Clayton Powell. Do you remember anything about her or anything with her work with him?

HG: I don't remember too much about her work, but then, like I say, I was fairly young. I remember my aunt worked there, I visited her a lot. Her name was Rose Phillips; well, actually that's one of the reasons my father really came to New York. He graduated from Morehouse early, [starting in what normally would be the tenth or eleventh grade of high school], but he had a scholarship where he graduated from there, and he went to New York to originally attend St. John's University to be a doctor. I'm not sure how many years he attended there. He stayed with my aunt there at that time. From there at some point he had stopped going to St. John's and started working at Mt. Sinai Hospital on the dialysis treatment.

JL: Do you think there was anything in New York that inspired him to come back to Marietta and be as active as he did?

HG: From what I gather, when he left Marietta he didn't really notice the political arena in Marietta because I guess he grew up in that environment. When he went to New York, I think New York was a much faster pace than Marietta. He saw how everything, like people in the NAACP, how fast paced the political arena was in New York. When he came back from New York he saw Marietta and what he thought needed to take place. I think that's when he really started getting into politics because he knew when he came back he felt like a lot of things weren't correct. In the political arena that he had seen when he went to New York, he brought all those things that he'd learned from New York working NAACP, being around the people that he was around in New York because I think New York was a much faster pace than Marietta. He brought that back to Marietta. A lot of his friends have told me the same thing. When he came from New York he had a different mindset about politics and he saw things that needed to be changed in Marietta that he felt he could possibly contribute to.

JL: Was there any particular reason why your parents decided to come back to Marietta or do you think it was to come back and try and help the community?

HG: Marietta has always been his home. Originally, my mother is from Cartersville, Georgia. My father is from Marietta, Georgia, which is probably about thirty miles apart. They never knew each other before they went up there and one day someone introduced them and that's how they met. My father's roots have always been in Marietta, really Lemon Street. He always told me that he's always enjoyed the community; he always felt that he wanted to uplift the community, be a part of the community so he's always wanted to come back there. Me and my brother used to ask him, "Dad, you could have done just about anything you wanted to do." And he said, "This is where I want to be." The changes that he wanted to make, he wanted to make the changes here, which was in Marietta. I've talked to a lot of his friends and they've always told me that he's always been the sort of person that anybody who wanted him to help with any kind of matter as far as taxes or Social Security suit, political issues; he was always willing to help. I guess when you're younger and you're aspired to be certain things and sometimes you don't quite understand the things that your father does but when you get older you know, the people that he always introduced me and my brother to, they were people that he worked with. In Atlanta he used to help Mayor [Maynard] Jackson campaign; he took me on to

help him campaign. He used to, when they had the Senate, I used to be a page and I never really understood the significance of that until I grew up. He always had me in political arenas to meet the people that he used to deal with. Back in that time he'd have me associated with people in Marietta and I know Deane Bonner and a lot of the city council people. He used to introduce me to all those people. When you're young you don't think anything about it but now once I go back I associate with all these people now—Philip Goldstein. I know a lot about Ward 5. I knew the reasons, he used to tell me about the zoning laws and how they sued the city to get those changed. I know one time there was something about the recreation center; he used to be a lifeguard there when he was growing up in high school and he loved the community so much. They would never fix the swimming pool, so I remember going on a march from Lawrence Street Recreation Center up to city hall. When you're young you don't think about it, but he did that just to get them to upgrade the swimming pool. He's always loved that community.

JL: Let me go back a little bit on you. What was it like, because I'm assuming you were about seven or eight when you moved to Marietta?

HG: Well, actually, I don't remember really moving back to Marietta, but I remember my family being back in the area because we used to stay on Page Street. There was a house on Page Street, actually the house that, he was a good friend, he was related to us, Reverend Moss used to live there before he passed. Right across from that used to be my father's campaign headquarters, this little, bitty house at the time. I don't actually remember moving back here, but I remember my father, just when he started getting actively involved in different organizations and things like that. Me and my brother used to just be along with him. You know, at the time, following the NAACP, he would tell us things about it. We were young, okay. NAACP might take us to banquets and things of that nature, but we didn't actually realize the significance of it until we got older in middle school and high school. When he was on the city council, he ran for city council, campaigned, and we used to help him pass out flyers and things like that. He has a city council plaque over what is now Marietta City Middle School but it used to be Marietta High School and there's a plaque with the city council on there. Once you read that you realize the things that he contributed to the community and how much, actually when I go back home people always tell me what my father has done and the contributions that he's made and all the people that he's helped in many different areas, not just politics. They would come to him to answer questions about different things they used to do for—maybe it could be taxes, it could be social issues, it could be anything and he would always have the door open for them.

JL: One of the interviews that we've done was with Deane Bonner and she was telling us about the issues she was having with finding housing when she first came to Marietta and she said the thing everybody told her was, "Go see Hugh, go talk to Hugh."

HG: Right. Actually, because my father used to go over and talk to Ms. Bonner all the time and we used to go over there as kids and I've known Ms. Bonner ever since I was in elementary school, middle school. He used to go talk to them; they would talk about

things that go on in the community, and everything my father did. He would always put us in the arena to know these people just from a standpoint that, "When you grow up, these are very important people that we deal with even though when they get older they will be able to tell you about your father or you'll say you met Ms. Bonner or you met Mr. Anthony Coleman." Things like that. So when he was telling me that now I realize that Anthony Coleman probably would have never been a city councilman if it weren't for him being the first black city councilman in Marietta. And I've always been introduced to all these people, not just by my father but my mother also.

JL: It sounds like your dad made a point to make sure that you and Reece were always involved. Would you say that was correct?

HG: That was correct. He always inspired us to be involved in community organizations and I think that's one of the reasons that when I graduated with a criminal justice degree to be involved with people. That's what he always did was being involved with people. You don't ever think about it, so you get older and it's like, why do I want to take this route as far as my degree. I really think it was because of my father because he was always involved with people, helping people, doing what he could in any way, any form, any fashion to help people. When I came home, when my father passed, they had the Lemon Street parade, and we came down there and everybody was like, how's your father doing and shaking our hands and remembering us and remembering things we participated in with my father. My brother was the same way. He's always told us, be respectful, get involved in your community, do things for your community. I used to remember vividly, which I really wish they would do now, they used to have block parties. Everybody used to come out, I'm not sure the name of the football field, but there's a church [Turner Chapel] there now in Marietta; right off Page Street, there was an old football field but they built a church on it and you'd have block parties there and have local bands. We used to get McDonald's and we'd come down there and provide drinks and hamburgers and they would have contests and have the community more involved, so the kids would have different things to do. When we lived in Kennesaw in this apartment they used to have the same thing; they used to bring the bookmobile over there and kids would go over there and get books and they would have the same contests for the community, not just our community, people would come from Lawrence Street, Lemon Street, those would all come to the community for the kids to have something to do and the adults would be there cooking and making sure they would have bands playing and contests and different things. Over in Louisville [community] they would have Halloween contests, different things for the kids to do like softball contests. And it was more community involved and we would participate in all those events when we grew up we would get a sense of community involvement and what we need to do to keep our kids involved and keep them on the right track.

JL: Is there anything during your father's tenure as NAACP president, anything that you remember, anything specific?

HG: As far as the NAACP tenure I don't remember anything specific, I just remember the involvement and really reading what he used to be involved in. Like I said, I was much

younger, so I more or less would be with him, and I more remember a lot of the events. I used to have NAACP, well Ms. Bonner used to be involved in a lot of NAACP events, but I don't remember anything specifically that she used to be involved in.

JL: What about when he wins the election to be councilman, do you remember any of that?

HG: Yes I do. I remember that vividly. When he first decided to run he always told me, just remember I was the first black city councilman in Marietta when he decided to run. When they decided to sue the city for zoning, he ran shortly after that, maybe a year or two after that, and I remember vividly passing out flyers and leaflets. One of the main reasons that he won the election was because he was so involved in the community before he even ran for city council. He used to be involved with the city hall, and I remember Mayor [Dana] Eastham vividly, and he used to work with him, and he used to be so involved in the community with the recreation department or city hall, the people in the community, NAACP, things like that. So when he ran people already knew what platform, what he stood for so they were willing to help him get involved in that. Right across from, on Page Street, on the corner of Page and Fairground there used to be a little, bitty house that he used to have his campaign headquarters in, and people were willing to help him because they knew who he was because it wasn't like he just came on the scene and wanted to be city councilman. Everybody already knew what he was doing for the Marietta area even years before he decided to run. So when he decided to run everybody already knew what Mr. Grogan had done this and what he stood for; so they were willing to help him, all the people in the community were willing to go knock on doors, help him with the campaign, pass out flyers. Actually I remember there was a run-off; I've forgotten who the run-off was with but he had a run-off for Ward 5 and he won the run-off and they came and took him and my mother's picture which he framed them hugging and said he won the Ward 5 campaign. Everybody in the community, from all his friends, like I said, he grew up in the community anyway so everybody knew him so basically they knew what he stood for, it wasn't like they didn't know anything about him. I remember me and my brother helping him pass out leaflets, and people would carpool to help in the voting area; they were willing to use their car to take people to the voting area. Me and my brother look at it now, he still has in his paperwork a copy of the first flyer that said, "Vote for Hugh Lump Grogan"—that's what his aunt named him in New York, Lump, that's where the name came from originally. I'm not exactly sure what the Lump means, but that's where that nickname came from, from his aunt who lived in New York. We still have his old flyers; he saved them. We still have his old flyers from when he ran. He has a picture that was framed of him and my mother hugging when he first won city council.

JL: I actually have a copy of your father's resume, and it says Lump listed as his middle name, which I was wondering where that came from. I didn't know if that was a family name or something.

HG: Actually his name is the same as mine. He's Hugh Lewis Grogan, Jr. and I'm Hugh Lewis Grogan, III and his aunt, I forgot the story behind it, but his aunt in New York gave him that middle name. I guess it might have been one of those days that she came

up with a nickname for him and whatever that nickname was it stuck with him. So yes, that's a family nickname.

JL: Your father served as councilman for one term. What do you think happened when he ran the second time? What do you think went wrong?

HG: I think actually when he ran the first time it was a different era. How can I explain it? It was different times—they knew things needed to be changed in Marietta. To me it was a different time. When he ran the second time there was it was a different connection between the people. A lot of things had already been done; it wasn't that, I guess more like a unification type of atmosphere. People had gotten older and those that ran with him or worked with him, I think there was a lot of the discipline of the younger generation started and there wasn't as much backing as there was when he first started in Marietta. I tell my brother this today, I said, "When we were growing up in Marietta we knew just about everybody in the Marietta area." We knew them, and I think when my father ran the second time Marietta started growing and so it was a different atmosphere. More people didn't really know who he was; it was a younger generation and people start representing or caring about different things than they did when he won the first election.

JL: Tell me a little bit about, as you were growing up and a little bit about your brother, what were some of your experiences like going to high school and your dad is the councilman?

HG: Well, me and my brother when we were growing up we never felt any different as far as my father being city councilman because he always kept us involved in the community. To us it was just another job for him because back then we knew the people in the community, and it was just that my father was a city councilman. No one treated us any different because he was a city councilman. We were involved in everything in the community that he was involved in, so whenever he went somewhere it was, okay, this is Hugh Grogan; city councilman was on the side. We know he's the city councilman but this is Hugh Grogan, he's a member of the community. He was treated just like anybody else in the community. He made sure that we were involved; we would go through the recreation centers, the block parties and so we had already grown up in the community anyway so the people knew who we were but we weren't ever treated any different. My father raised us to be respectful; he was involved in everything that we did anyway. For example, my brother played high school basketball; he was always on the sideline. I played basketball for the recreation center, flag football; he was always on the sideline. It wasn't like okay, Mr. Grogan is the city councilman he's up in the stand; he would always be involved. When we were growing up we didn't feel any different because everybody knew us in the community and they didn't look at him as Mr. Grogan the city councilman, they looked at him and us as that's Mr. Grogan, those are his kids, he's part of the community first then city councilman. It wasn't that we were treated any different, but he used to take us to city council meetings; we would sit in the chambers to listen. He would always say, "You need to read the newspaper, you need to make sure you're involved, know what's going on in that area." But as far as us being any different, we weren't treated any different. He didn't want anyone to treat us any different besides being respectful to us, and he wanted us to be respectful to other people. As far as city

councilman, we weren't treated any different because we were part of the community first before he was city councilman, and when we grew up everything was like, okay, my father sponsored a lot of stuff, but we were there with the other kids and he didn't want us to stand out or anything like that. But he wanted us to know what was going on in Marietta. Whenever he did something as far as the zoning, as far as with the city, with the swimming pool, he would make sure we knew who the mayor was, he would make sure we knew who Mr. Philip Goldstein was and who his father was, working on the Square. He wanted to make sure we knew the history of Marietta, behind how Marietta came about. As far as Lemon Street, the school, segregation, he made sure all of that was instilled in us, but he didn't want us to be any different from any other kids in the neighborhood. So we never actually felt any different.

JL: Where do you think he got his drive from? Did he get that from his parents?

HG: He's always told me that he got his original drive because his father died early; his father died when he was nine; and so he had two brothers and a sister and his mother used to work and so he used to have to come home and cook and stuff for his younger brothers and sisters. A lot of people know him too for cooking and barbequing because he knew how to cook and barbeque real well. That's where he says he really got his drive from because his mother depended on him to take care of his brothers and sisters, and he said that's where he learned how to cook. He's always cooked, he knew how to cook vegetables, he knew how to barbeque, do all this stuff. He said he got to do that because his mother taught him that because he had to help his mother with his brothers and sisters. He said, from that when he went to New York and he stayed with his aunt, Ms. Rose Phillips was her name, and she instilled that drive in him too, like to go further, your ambition keeps driving, you need to know what you want. He said that was a part of his second drive as far as when he went to New York; his aunt instilled that drive into him because New York was a whole different atmosphere from Marietta; and she instilled that drive into him to give him community involvement like when he went to St. Johns and things like that.

JL: Do you remember what did your grandmother do? What was her profession?

HG: She worked for a church off Lemon Street. She used to do two things: she worked for them, it used to be a daycare in Baptist Town and there used to be a daycare there for the Marietta community. She used to work there plus she used to work at a church. I can remember in Marietta that's on the corner, I'm not exactly sure, right when you cross the railroad tracks going up Lemon Street it's on the corner, but she used to work there as assistant in serving people when they had banquets and stuff, things of that nature. From what I gather, she was pretty strict about what he needed to do and where his career needed to go. She didn't want him just being in the streets and things like that.

JL: One of the things that I've noticed with the interviews that I've done so far is that Dana Eastham, some people refer to him positively and other people are very negative. What do you think your dad's take on him was?

HG: I remember being introduced to him a lot. I know, like what you said, some positive and negative things with him. At the time when my father was growing up in Marietta, some people had different attitudes about the way Marietta should run. But, with my father, what he would do, he wasn't intimidated by Mr. Eastham. I'm not saying he had a grudge or anything against him; anything in Marietta that was an obstacle in his way, he would do his research first. That's what a lot of people told me also. He would do his research before he even went to bat with someone in Marietta or the city council, before he even became city councilman, he would do all his research, all his reading. That's what he always told me and my brother, make sure you read and do your research before you confront anything. He used to tell us he used to do all his research so when it came to someone who was indifferent with him or what he represented, he knew what the laws were. Not that he was an attorney but he had already done his research. Maybe they would be against what he stood for, but he knew what the laws were in Marietta and so that's how he would win a lot of battles. He wouldn't go up there and just say this needed to be done, this needed to be done. He would refer to what the laws were to get things done. Even if people didn't, let's say for Mr. Eastham, if they didn't agree with what he did they had to go by the laws of Marietta and so from what I gathered, I remembered my father introducing me to Mr. Eastham as a mayor, so he never said anything negative about anybody that he met. He might always say, "Well, this is what they're doing and this is what I'm going to do to counteract this," or do what he felt was right. He would know what the law was, and he would say, "You know, this is what I'm going to do because I know what the law is." When I was growing up, he always introduced us to different people, and I would overhear different conversations of different people that he met or that people might have said, well, this isn't right on what he's doing and someone's opposing to this, but he would never say anything in a negative light about someone. He might say, "This is what they're opposing me to do this." He would go from there and say, "This is what the law says, and this is what we're going to do about this," so I never had a negative light about anybody in the political arena that he associated with.

JL: Your father runs again in the '85 election. Were you involved at all in that campaign or were you in Chattanooga at this time?

HG: Yes, '85 I was in college, so I wasn't really involved in it as much with that election. He was telling me about it; he would call and tell me about it; and my mother would tell me what was going on; and he would tell me what was going on; and it was more like there wasn't a lot of support like the first election. Like I said, it seemed like there was a time change. People weren't as involved like they were with the first election. Seemed like there wasn't a push. In the first election there was more of a push to get things done and get them in there, and it seemed like in the second election there wasn't much of a push as there was in the first election. It seemed like in the first election there was something new, and he was the first black city councilman in Marietta, and at that time there was a push to do that and a lot of people in the area wanted things to change. In the second election there seemed like there wasn't a push like there was with the first election. My brother was there, but he was younger; I think he was in middle school. I'm not exactly sure how much he would remember of that time. My dad used to tell me during the

election I would ask if he needed my help or anything, and he said, he always wanted to make sure that me and my brother got our grades, finished college and things like that. I pledged a fraternity and he came up there to see me when I pledged even though he was in politics; he would come up there and see me and said, "Make sure you and your brother finish your grades." He would always make sure we came first. Before the politics, he made sure his kids got their grades before all the other involvement that he had so that's one of the things was that he made sure that we graduated; that's what he wanted for us.

JL: You chose criminal justice as your major at Chattanooga. How come you made that choice?

HG: When I originally went to school I was a business major, and the more I thought about the things I wanted to do as far as, I think I got my social skills from my father, being involved in the community. I wanted to be, my father always wanted to be involved with the children and them being involved with the community, trying to make the system better. He wanted us to help people in the community and I think I got that sense of drive from my father, which I didn't really realize until I got older. I wanted to be more involved with people, not just sitting in an office and not seeing people. I wanted to be involved with people, talking with people, seeing what you can do to assist people. I did my first internship with Mr. Philip Goldstein at the solicitor's office or the DA's office up there, and that's when I first started experiencing dealing with politics and people and things of that nature. From there on I've always wanted to be in the community dealing with people, seeing what I could do to assist people, talking with people, and I still do that to this day.

JL: Tell me a little bit about your time with Mr. Goldstein?

HG: I first met Mr. Goldstein when I did my internship with his office. At the time he was assistant DA or assistant solicitor, I forget which one he was, but I did my intern with him. He was my supervisor at the time. I think that was '85 and I did my internship for a summer with him and he was very knowledgeable of the DA's office and things like that and I did my internship with him. He would come down there and tell me a lot about the DA's office or the solicitor's office whichever one that he worked for. But that's where I actually started getting my criminal justice knowledge from, on working there. I think that's another reason why I changed my major and from there I worked with him for a whole summer. My father actually introduced me to him before I was even in college so I knew of Philip and I actually knew his father. His father used to own a lot of businesses on Marietta Square and I knew his father. I knew Philip also. My father used to talk about when he went to college and graduated from college or law school. He would talk and I would know about him before I even met him. So that's the way my father was, he introduced me to people like Philip Goldstein. Before he even became city councilman so I knew him. I didn't know him well, but I knew of him, and I knew when I saw him I knew who he was, so when I got my internship with him I already knew him, and I felt relaxed with him and he taught me a lot while I was up there. When I graduated from

University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, I ended up getting my first job at the Cobb County Pretrial there, and that's where I worked for the first ten years after I graduated.

JL: So did you live in Atlanta or did you live in Marietta?

HG: I graduated in '91 and we moved to Gwinnett. My wife's brother-in-law from Memphis moved to—we got married in Memphis—and they moved to Gwinnett, and we stayed with them for about a year, and I got my first job. Actually, they called me a little bit after my honeymoon for pretrial services. I worked there from 1991 to 2000. I was on pretrial services in Marietta for Cobb County Pretrial.

JL: And then you put in for I guess, was it a . . . ?

HG: Well, actually what happened, my wife graduated, so she has a degree in business management, and she worked for Kids R Us, which was in Town Center Mall at the time; she was assistant manager. She's from Memphis, and it just so happened they had an opening in Memphis for relocation as a manager. Where I was at the time, there wasn't a lot of upward mobility, so we decided to relocate to Memphis. From there I did a little bit of investigation and found out that they had—Memphis is in Shelby County and they had a Shelby County pretrial, and we moved there from Georgia in 2000. About two or three months after we moved here I got a job with Shelby County pretrial and I worked there from 2000 to 2005. From there I worked for Shelby County Child Support and again, I was working with people; I was working children. Actually, as of the first of October everyone got laid off in Shelby County Child Support, and now I'm back with pretrial services in Memphis, which I started October 1.

JL: Tell me a little bit about what you do with pretrial?

HG: Well, when I first started with them I worked actually in the Shelby County jail. I used to work in booking and processing. Anyone that came into the jail, basically any jail has to be booked and processed and we gave them special deputies and then we have the authority to give them bond, everybody has to get a bond when they get out of jail.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A
START OF TAPE 1, SIDE B

JL: Okay, we're back on, sorry about that.

HG: What we did is set bonds for anyone that came in jail, no matter what they came in jail for for those cases, and I worked there from 2000 to 2005 in the jail. Then I went to child support, and when I worked in child support basically we would have people that would come in for child support, and we would have to locate the fathers and get the fathers in court to set an order for them to pay child support payments. Now I work for, I'm back with Shelby County Pretrial I work for in a new unit for that department for people that commit serious offenses; you go through their criminal histories and we go in front of a judge and tell them we want to put them on a temporary supervision. By that it means we

do screens, drug screens, rehab, maybe get their GED. I teach anger management classes, the relapse prevention basically is what keeps them from doing the same thing over again. These are people who can't get out, and basically we try to relieve jail population. This is a brand new program with pretrial services. I also have electronic monitoring and work with the police department also.

JL: It sounds like the job that you chose is community minded.

HG: Right. Like I said, my father always had an involvement with community, and I really enjoy what I'm doing, and he always drove us to be basically involved with our children. That's one of the main things is me and my brother make sure we stay involved with our children. He used to tell us I want you all to keep going. He used to call our team G for Grogan, the Big Green Machine. It was like our team was like a machine. Me and my mother and my brother are machines, the Green Machines, the Grogan Machines to keep us going, to keep us moving and things like that.

JL: How was your dad as a grandfather?

HG: He was good as a grandfather. He always loved his kids. He would call them and speak to them and talk to them and ask them how they were doing, and he would make sure he asked, what do you want to be, how are your grades, you know, he wanted us to make sure we kept them involved in something so they would always, even though they spend time on computers and they love to play the games and things like that, he would always want them to be, he said, "Make sure they're involved in something. Make sure if anything they get good grades. They can't do anything without good grades. They can't go anywhere without good grades." So when I was down there, my son is real small, but we used to take them over to his house and he would get involved with them, and he would always give them something, a book to read, or give them something, you know, read the book, and he just enjoyed being with them. He always stayed in the community, so he would go up to the area and tell them where the old Hattie Wilson Library was or where he used to go to school or tell them, your dad used to play over here. He would always give them a history of where his family came from. That's what me and my brother have tried to instill in our kids to make sure they come around each other. We have two cousins, like I said, my father's brother and sister passed, so we always try to make sure we stay and keep the family together, and he always wanted to instill family in us and make sure we stay together. He would call them and talk to them all the time and ask them how they were doing and how they're grades were doing and make sure you mind your mom and dad and be respectful and keep the grades up and things like that.

JL: I've asked this next question to everyone that I've interviewed about your dad and the question is, if there was one word to describe your father what would it be and why would you choose that word?

HG: Amazing. When we were younger, I guess when you're younger you don't realize the things that my father instilled in my brother and me until we got older, how many people knew him, how many people at his funeral said thank you, your father helped me with

this or he helped me with that. I had a gentleman when my father used to be in New York, he called me a month ago and he looked me up and he just thought about my father's name and he knew my father in New York. My father used to be involved in things and he said, "Hugh you don't know me and I read in an obituary that your father had passed. Your father has helped me so much. He said, "When I first met him, when I came out of the military I was introduced to your father and your father offered me to stay with him." He said, "You don't know me, but I know your father and your mother well." And he was so touched with what my father did, just becoming friends with my father, he said, "I've got some pictures that I have to send you." These pictures that he sent were over forty years old, and he put them on a disc and he sent one copy to my mother and one copy to my brother and one copy to me and that tells me how much my father touched people. When it came to all these people that he knew, there came a proclamation from the city, the people in the community said, "Obviously you're father has done so much for me . . ." for different things, like taxes, community service, his door was always open. When you're younger and you're in high school you just go along okay, that's my father, he's my father. But when you get older and people tell you and instill in you what he has actually done, it makes me very proud and makes me want to get more community involved and more keeping my family together because instilling what he has done. Once you get older you start thinking about what your parents instilled in you. A lot of people have come up to me, Ms. [Deane] Bonner, Mr. Philip Goldstein, Anthony Coleman, so many people who my father introduced me to in the community which made me very, very proud that he was my father because of all the things that he instilled in me that I've really realized once I've gotten older.

JL: Tell me how you found out about the NAACP naming the award after your dad and how you felt about that?

HG: My mother is still close with a lot of people my father knew. My mother is still close with Ms. Bonner; my mother knew Ms. Bonner also and she told me that Ms. Bonner wanted to try to get an award, an NAACP award. She called me and I spoke to Ms. Bonner and she said they're trying to give your father and Oscar Freeman an NAACP award and asked me if I would be able to come and they wanted to do a slide show presentation. At the time, I called Ms. Bonner and I said, "We should be able to get a slide show presentation. I got my father's nephews and my brother to do that because I wasn't there in Georgia because I'm in Memphis and they got it together and they made a slide show presentation. I wasn't able to attend because I had just started a new job, which I told Ms. Bonner. They took pictures and everything and it was almost like I was there because they took pictures and showed me all the awards that he received and things of that nature. Ms. Bonner was the one that told me about it. What we're trying to do now with Ms. Bonner, I've been keeping in touch with Ms. Bonner a lot and we're trying to see if we can possibly get a street named or something after him. I've known Ms. Bonner for years, so we still keep in touch and like at Thanksgiving I'm coming down there for Thanksgiving and I'll probably go visit Ms. Bonner and talk about some things they're trying to do with the NAACP and keep my father's legacy alive. When he passed, and he always used to tell this, he said, "Whenever I pass the only thing I want just cremate me. Just go over to my house and talk about me on Lemon Street." He just wanted us to go

over to Lemon Street and talk about him. Just reminisce. He said he didn't want anything big or anything like that, so basically Ms. Bonner was the one that actually spearheaded NAACP. She got in touch with my mom and my mom got in touch with me.

JL: Let me ask you as my final question; is there anything that I haven't asked about, any stories, anything that your father did that you would like me to include as part of my project?

HG: The thing that I want you to remember about him is that he was a very caring person. If he had the chance to do anything else, I would say even the mayor or anything, he would chose to stay in the community that he lived in. He could have moved anywhere and he could have probably moved anywhere in the country, and he chose to stay in the community because that's what he wanted to do. He chose to be there. He wanted to uplift Marietta. He didn't want to do anything else but uplift his community, which involved his family. That's all he wanted to do was uplift the Marietta city. He was very passionate about that. That's basically what I want everyone to remember about him, and that's probably what most people do remember about him. We're trying to everything we do to keep that legacy alive.

JL: Hugh, let me thank you for being a part of the project and sitting and doing an interview with me. I'm going to shut the tape off now.

HG: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

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