

**The Lemon Street Schools Oral History Collection
Marietta City Schools System, 2019-2021
Cheryl Long interview
Conducted by James Newberry
February 5, 2020**

Complete Transcript

Interviewer: This is James Newberry, and I'm here with Miss Cheryl Long on Wednesday, February 5, 2020 at her home in Powder Springs, Georgia. I want to thank you for sitting down with me. Ms. Long, do you agree to this interview?

Long: Yes I did.

Interviewer: Thank you so much. Could you please tell me your full name?

Long: Cheryl Elaine Long.

Interviewer: What's your birthdate?

Long: 3/6/1950.

Interviewer: What are your parents' names?

Long: Fred and Lucile Long.

Interviewer: What do they do for a living?

Long: Okay, my father worked for the General Service Administration for the government, which is located in Atlanta. My mother was a homemaker.

Interviewer: How many siblings do you have?

Long: There was eight children. Of two deceased, six of us are living.

Interviewer: Where do you fall in the lineup?

Long: Number two. Number two of seven. I'm number two.

Interviewer: Tell me where you grew up.

Long: I grew up in a section of Marietta called Louisville. That particular area is located not far from the Marietta Square. Maybe five blocks from the Marietta Square, right off of Powder Springs Street, right off of Wright Street. It's a section of town called Louisville. Born and bred.

Interviewer: Could you describe the Marietta of your childhood?

Long: Marietta of my childhood? We had, it wasn't a lot of flares. We had just modest living. We played outside. We were always outside. We had a school teacher, Kindergarten school teacher, had her back yard. Her back yard was turned into a playground for the neighborhood. Miss Louise [Burford 00:01:56]. She always wanted that to remain a playground for the youth. We lived on that playground. Softball, baseball, swing set, you name it. We were there. Basketball as well. That was our area. From there to my house, you can almost like throw a rock at it, that's how close we were to that. A lot of times we didn't ... Because there wasn't a lot of things to do, we basically played in our yards. We played together with the neighborhood kids, and we'd all invent our own little activities. We had jump ropes. We had old tires off of cars. To get a tire, and to be able to roll a tire in the streets, that was wonderful. Some people had swings in their yards, through the trees. We had a very modest, wonderful childhood. We really did.

Interviewer: You mentioned your father's job. How did he get to work?

Long: My dad drove to work every day. I think he had like a carpool. They carpooled to Atlanta every day.

Interviewer: How often did you go to Atlanta?

Long: I didn't go that often until I went to school. I went off to school. My college days were spent in Atlanta.

Interviewer: Did you travel at all out of Marietta as a child?

Long: As a child, not really. It was not as safe as you think it was. We had, at one time, a local bus that would go from Marietta to Atlanta, it was through Smyrna, local stops. Stopped at every corner. We didn't do a lot of going back and forth to Atlanta. At the time, it wasn't as safe as you'd ... Our parents didn't allow it. If you were going to go somewhere, you'd go with your parent, if at all. Atlanta was not even one of the things that we thought of.

Interviewer: What do you mean by, "It wasn't safe?"

Long: You have to remember, this is the time, the years, I grew up, I was born in 1950. I grew up through the years of '55 maybe when we started doing things, '55, through all the '50s, '60s. It wasn't as bad as I'm making it sound like, but our parents weren't comfortable with us out of their sight. It was more of the community, it took a village to raise us, and the whole village looked out for us. We felt safer that way.

Interviewer: Okay. Let's talk a little bit about your education.

Davidson: [inaudible 00:04:50] integrated. It wasn't integrated yet, so that's why ...

Interviewer: We also have Ms. Long's sister here, Cynthia. Cynthia, can you tell me your last name?

Davidson: Davidson.

Interviewer: Cynthia Davidson, and she may chip in from time to time.

Davidson: I'm sorry.

Interviewer: She brought up that it wasn't integrated. What do you mean? Do you want to elaborate on that Ms. Long, or Ms. Davidson?

Davidson: Ms. Long can do it. She was a little more than I did. Go ahead, Cheryl.

Long: Those years were segregated years, where everybody had their own. We felt comfortable within our own rights. We had our own churches. We had our own stores. We had our own dry cleaners. Everything, beauty shops, barber shops, and we had the different activities that were centered around blacks, and it was simple as black/white. I mean I could tell you some things that black water, white water. Those things, of course, thank goodness no longer every exist ever again. Because we were younger during that time, it didn't affect us like you would think it would. It didn't bother us at all. It was just a sign of the times. Because it was a sign of the times, it wasn't like we'd like how can this be? Why can't we do this and that? It didn't bother us to say we need to go into the house and ask my mom, "Why can't we drink from this fountain?" It never dawned on us. It was no big thing to us. We lived that life accordingly. I think our parents made it comfortable for us. They didn't make a ... I'll say my parents did. We were always taught we were as good as the next person. Don't ever feel like you're not because you are. Always she said, "There are things that's going to be happening throughout your life that you're going to learn, and you're going to wonder about." You've got to remember, we didn't ask a lot of questions as kids. We can get talked to, and even scold, and we didn't talk back to our parents. When they said, "Don't do this, and don't do that," that was the end of it. That was the end of it. It wasn't like now, kids will say, "I don't know why we can't do that because ..." Oh my goodness.

Interviewer: [inaudible 00:07:28]

Long: That is right. We had so much respect for your elders it was unreal.

Interviewer: One of the things that's really emerged in this project is that idea of absolutely separate, segregated, but a thriving community [crosstalk 00:07:48] ...

Long: Correct.

Interviewer: ... for black Mariettans.

Long: Correct.

Interviewer: What interactions did you have with white people when you were a kid?

Long: When I was a kid around what age group? Not a lot. Not a lot at all. Again, like I said, we had our own churches. We had our own school. There weren't really a lot except when it came time to ... I remember I got a job babysitting. I would babysit for white families. To us, that was kind of common. That was very common. We'd babysit maybe for like four hours or so. We went to the homes to babysit their kids, maybe a little younger than us. Not even that much younger than us, where their parents go out for the evening or whatever. Then, we made our little money to take home.

Interviewer: What age were you when you started babysitting?

Long: When I started babysitting, I was about 14.

Interviewer: Do you remember any of the families that you babysat for?

Long: Oh goodness, the [Mosley's 00:08:58]. I know Betty was the daughter of Randy Mosley. Those are two of the kids, one of the kids. I don't remember. I remember the Mosley's.

Interviewer: How much were you paid?

Long: If you were paid 75 cents an hour, you were big time. It's between 50 cents and 75 cents an hour, but again, see that's big money really. As long as you can save your money, you're able to go to the store, say for example, and put something on layaway. Took forever, but you can do that. Those are money. Those are money. Things didn't cost as much.

Interviewer: Did you go to white-owned stores and business in Marietta?

Long: Marietta Square, yes. We would go buy like ... The Marietta Square, they had where you get your clothes, your shoes. [Butler 00:09:59] Shoes was there, and [McClellan's 00:10:01], new clothes. We shopped, that's where we shopped at Marietta Square.

Interviewer: Did you notice any difference in the treatment for you as a customer versus a white person?

Long: Yeah, you were kind of like watched. You'd be followed. A lot of the stores would follow you from the moment you came in until the moment you actually left. You almost had to know what size you wore. You can't just go into like say for example, a dressing room to try on several outfits. You kind of need to know what size you wear. Everybody kind of knew what size they wore, so if you were to buy something, you can kind of look at it, hold it up to you, whatever, and

purchase it at that time. You weren't going to bring it back, so you need to know what size, the right size for you. They didn't allow you to bring anything back.

Interviewer: What about black-owned businesses in Marietta?

Long: There were a few of them. Not as many. Had a section of town of the Marietta Square called Lawrence Street. You had a lot of black businesses on this particular street. You had a pharmacy. We had a barber shop. You had like, we called them cafes. I think Mr. [Hanley 00:11:24] funeral home was also on that same street. You had Ruby [Haley 00:11:28] and her husband barber shop, beauty shop. What else was on there? Oh goodness.

Davidson: Café Don [Killingsworth 00:11:38].

Long: Yeah, some were cafes on that same side, but it was like a strip. It was like from, what we call it? What's the strip? Say maybe seven stores. Seven little buildings right there together. We called it the strip. Then, we had like a record shop. You basically had your own. It wasn't like ... We had a record shop. We didn't really have problems, a lot of problems. We might have been watched, but as far as being ... We weren't refused. They took our money, let's put it like that. They would make a sale. It wasn't like, "Oh, you can't buy anything here," kind of thing. It was not ever like that for us. No.

Interviewer: Okay.

Long: I know that the Marietta Square was a no-no. We couldn't actually go to the little park and play. You go around it. You don't go in there and play, or walk through it, or anything.

Interviewer: Was that unspoken or were you seeing signs?

Long: No, that was totally unspoken. It was unspoken, and we were just told as kids what not to do, and what to do.

Interviewer: Did you have a sense of what would happen if you went onto the Square?

Long: Not so much because again, you've got to remember, whatever our parents said do, we did. We might have learned it later on, but it wasn't anything like, nobody got with their own kids and in the neighborhood, "Why they say not to come do that? Why can't we do that? What is it about it?" It was never anything like that whatsoever.

Interviewer: Let's talk about starting school. At what age did you start school?

Long: Okay, I started school 1956, first grade.

Interviewer: Where did you start?

Long: The elementary school at Lemon Street.

Interviewer: Tell me about preparing to go.

Long: Oh my goodness.

Interviewer: How did you feel?

Long: Okay, we had had, like I say again, Mrs. Burford, the lady that had the big playground for us, she was the Kindergarten teacher, so we had a little graduation ceremony. We were promoted to the first grade. It was cute. Then, that next year, of course, we were all going into the first grade. It was a big thing. It was big. We were told how to act, and what to do. We had tablets, these big pencils. We were so excited to be in that class, and my particular homeroom class, my first-grade teacher is Miss [Fluellen 00:14:25]. I'll never forget her name. Our classroom was right across from the cafeteria. I mean directly across from the cafeteria. We had fun. Like I said, we were kids. We were children, and we were excited to be in our own element. It was a different world. It really was.

Interviewer: You said you had gone to a Kindergarten.

Long: Uh huh. It was Miss Burford, she was the lady she had in her home.

Interviewer: Okay.

Long: It's really, oh goodness, from here to the end of the street is where she lived. We'd walk there, and she kept us, I think, for two years.

Interviewer: Your parents paid her?

Long: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay.

Long: It probably wasn't much.

Interviewer: Sort of a nursery/Kindergarten?

Long: Kindergarten, yes.

Interviewer: You learned letters [crosstalk 00:15:17].

Long: Oh yes, she was an excellent teacher. An excellent teacher.

Interviewer: Okay.

Davidson: Her husband was a photographer.

Interviewer: What was his name?

Long: Raymond Burford.

Interviewer: Okay. He was a photographer.

Long: A photographer.

Interviewer: I wanted to make sure that the recording gets it. You started first grade. How did you get to school every day?

Long: We actually walked to school every day, therefore, you have to remember this is before they had built the underpath for the railroad tracks. We would go and you would go into ... You know where Church's Chicken is?

Interviewer: Yes.

Long: That railroad track, I mean right there by where the railroad track is, that's the route, that's our route. We walked from ... We'd get up there, and we'd wait for the train forever. We had to wait for the train of course. Then, once the train passed, and we always in groups of four, five. Groups of kids, four and five. We were always taught how to actually go around the Square, where to walk, how to walk, and stay in groups, and go around the Square. You got on the bypass. Oh goodness, all those stores not there anymore.

Davidson: McLellan. Go through McLellan.

Long: No. We had to go around the Square. Okay, you know where the middle part of the fountain is.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Long: Okay, this is around, we're talking about all the way around. We were taught when the traffic light changed, and how to go around the entire Square. Which ones do not go down this street, cut through anything, go that same path to school and back. To us, it looked like 10 miles, but of course it was probably total two miles, but we were so young. We started walking at six, seven years old, we were walking to school.

Interviewer: Every day?

Long: Every day.

Interviewer: What did you wear?

Long: Oh my goodness. In the summertime, you just wore the casual look or whatever. In the wintertime, you didn't always have gloves. We used to use socks on our hands. You didn't have the best of the best shoes. If you did, if you had a hole in the bottom of your shoe, you put cardboard in the bottom, and you keep on going. It wasn't like you had the best of the best, but we had the best of what our parents could afford for us to have, especially when my mom did not work. My father just worked, and that's a lot of kids to have. You try to do that best you can. We were happy. We were very, very, very happy kids. Very happy. Nothing bothered us. Nothing in the world bothered us. We were just happy-go-lucky children.

Interviewer: When you talk about following the rules and knowing where to go.

Long: Yeah, knowing which way to go. I think that was important to our parents because if you think about, again like I said, the signs of the times, there were a lot of prejudiced people in the world. You didn't want your child, you want to halfway know which route your child was going, just in case your child has not made it to school, or your child has not gotten home from school. That kind of gave you an edge on which way, in their minds. Thinking as an adult now, I can see that being the case.

Interviewer: It seems very structured.

Long: It seems structured, it does.

Interviewer: Did you notice kids who were just kind of doing what they wanted?

Long: Of course. Of course, they did. "Oh, I'm going to tell your mother. You're going to get a whipping." Of course, we told.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Long: Thinking now how dangerous that could have been for us, even for them. You just did everything your parents and your grandparents and all adults they do. Now, that's how much respect, again like I said, the village that helped raise us. We were so structured. We really were.

Interviewer: Okay.

Long: I think religion had a part, played a big part in it too. Growing up as a child, and knowing church, that church structure too, it felt as well.

Interviewer: Tell me where you attended Church?

Long: Marietta Chapel AME Church. This church was in our neighborhood.

Interviewer: Okay.

Long: The reason why we were so impressed with this church is because they would ring a bell whenever it was time for Sunday School. This is a language which allowed ... Oh God.

Interviewer: No, that's fine.

Long: Put your mind on a dirt road, a dirt road, and we were what about two blocks, no one block away from church. We would hear this bell ringing. We were so impressed with this bell. My mom say, "Stop running." They had little, I would say, activities for youth, in the yards, and in the different ... It was a big thing for us to be able to go to school. That helped shape and mold us as well, being able to stay in a structured religious ...

Interviewer: How any days a week at church?

Long: How many days a week at church? Okay. You would go to the Young People Department, which is called YPD. They had activities, and if you're in the youth choir, you could go for rehearsals. Then on Saturdays, they'd have events for the kids, structured events. Softball games, different things like that for us. It was exactly kind of what we needed. We really needed all that. All that was, I'll say, full circle. It became full circle for us. Then, as you get older, and get older, and get older, I remember the days that we, my first job when I worked at McLellan's five and ten cent store. Oh, you couldn't tell me nothing. That was very, oh around the time they were having sit-ins at the different restaurants, not restaurants, drug stores. That's where I worked. I worked as a dishwasher. I was so excited. Of course, I had this one gentleman that would not let me. I graduated from the dishwasher to being a short order. I could make sundaes, I could make sandwiches, and said, "Oh, I graduated from that level to..." Oh my goodness, I had this one gentleman would not let me wait on him for nothing. He would never let me take his order. Now, nobody stays on one page on the newspaper for an hour and not turn the page. He'd wait till I'd totally get away and then he would give his order to some other, I'll never forget that, giving his order to some other restaurant cashier girl. He would never let me wait on him. But then to me, that didn't make sense to me, but it didn't matter. It didn't matter. Things like that didn't matter. We were as close as we were to the Atlanta area, but all the things that was happening with Martin Luther King and Dave Abernathy and all those, Jesse Jackson, still all that that was going on. It never phased us that much because we were in our own little world 18 miles away.

Interviewer: So, did you see any activity in Marietta?

Long: Only when I was younger, much, much younger and I didn't really see it. But down the street from where we lived, a cross was burned. KKK burned a cross. Okay, that happened, and we were immediately sheltered. We immediately sheltered and it was not talked about anymore. It wasn't talked about anymore, but that did happen in our neighborhood.

Interviewer: What were your parents' views on civil rights protest and the leaders in the [crosstalk 00:23:53]?

Long: Okay. The leaders? Oh, okay then. Let me go back and say we had basically, say for example, we had our own leaders in the neighborhood, more or less. A lot, again, came out of the churches. My father was from Alabama, so he came out of a whole different world. He was one that never wanted to go back to Alabama once he came here. Things happen to him, it was a bad situation for him. They didn't really talk about it. We were never allowed to even hear adults talk, because we had to get out the room. If they were having conversation with another adult, even though they may be talking about what you're asking me about, I didn't hear it. We didn't hear it because we were always told once an adult comes and, say for example, your mom has company coming and you all have company, "Go out into the yard and play." We didn't hear the conversation. Like I said, my mom always structured us and told us that, "You are as good as anybody else and always know that."

Interviewer: Okay. So, McClellan's, what age were you when you started there?

Long: Oh, let's see. I had my first job there, I was 15.

Interviewer: Okay. That was white-owned?

Long: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay.

Long: The majority of the square is Jewish owned, and that that particular store was Jewish owned as well.

Interviewer: Okay. Who did you interview with?

Long: The lady next door was our cousin. Her sister worked there and she was a cook. She just happened to be visiting her sister that day and I think I had asked somebody, I think I was asking my mom, she said, "Well," I said, "Well, can I borrow? Can I get 25 cents? If I get 25 cents, I won't bother you anymore for the next week or two weeks." She said, "Girl, if you don't get away from here..." But by my cousin, heard her, it wasn't a scolding but it was a scolding. She said, "Well listen, I know somewhere where you can make your own money. You can have your own money. Don't worry about it." She said, "Listen, can she come and work for where I work now as a cook?" I interviewed for the little dishwasher job. I was shown the ropes, and I was so excited, so excited to have a job. Oh, it was something.

Interviewer: How much were you paid?

Long: Oh, hardly anything. Probably I might have made for the week \$7.50 cents, if that much.

Interviewer: Did you go immediately after school?

Long: I went after school, immediately after school. Then, I walked up there because again, like I said, it's going towards the square, it was close to the square.

Interviewer: Do you remember that owner's name?

Long: Oh my goodness, I do not remember their names. I do not.

Interviewer: Okay. So, let's return to Lemon Street Elementary.

Long: Okay.

Interviewer: You have to imagine that I don't know anything.

Long: Okay.

Interviewer: What was the sort of layout of the school?

Long: The layout of the school? Okay, there were several classrooms. Let's see. First through, I know there were at least two to three grades. There were at least three first grades, maybe three second grades, maybe three or four fourth grades. We had that many grades. Then, that was all throughout the elementary part, and the cafeteria where, like I say, was there. We had another little area where we played. It was cemented in, it wasn't dirt, but it was a place where we'd go out for recess.

Interviewer: That behind the building?

Long: Behind the building.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Long: Yes, yes, yes. Then, we had an area, we could use to call it the annex. I think you might know where it is. You go out the door, you go up, there's a few, one or two steps. It was this whole little strip of classrooms. I think that was the fifth or sixth grade classes.

Interviewer: So, the upper grades in the school.

Long: Upper grades, yeah. It was a little more than the sixth, I think, sixth grade classes. Fifth and sixth grade classes were there. Yeah.

Interviewer: Right. So, the building was fairly new, 1951. What was its condition? How was it kept when you were there?

Long: Oh, let's see. I was there in '56, so it was very good. Oh, it was well-kept. Well-kept. Like I said, it was something that was new to us anyway. Like you said, it wasn't that old. I don't even know what year it was built. It was built in '51?

Interviewer: '51.

Long: Okay, yeah. So, about '56, and so I went there for the first through the fifth grades. Then from there to Wright Street School, sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, and then back to the Lemon Street High School years.

Interviewer: For the elementary school, do you remember how it was heated in the winter?

Long: We had those, what are the things on the wall called? Is it steam, electric? Not electric, I want to say electric heat. I think it was electric heat. Usually you see those vents on the walls. It was electric heat.

Interviewer: Okay.

Long: It was electric heat because that particular building was, I mean it was warm. If it was cold outside, we were definitely warm inside. We didn't have any problems with that.

Interviewer: What sort of desks did you sit at?

Long: Oh my goodness, I think I even saw... Well, I can't say them. A regular desk, wooden desk. We did. Up under the desk is where you place your books and we had a place for our pencil on top of the desk, a long, oblong place for our pens, pencils and pens. Then, we had the black board, the big blackboard, like a double black board up there. That was it. Then, we had places to place our coats and everything. Then, our book satchels, and everybody had a book satchel. But it was just a basic classroom.

Interviewer: What subjects were you learning at that time?

Long: Oh, see, I wish I could have found out book. Do you know I still have my third grade book?

Interviewer: No.

Long: Yes, I do. I don't know where it is. I didn't want to tear the house up. But anyway-

Interviewer: Like, your textbook?

Long: Actual textbook with my name in it, and I remember that book. See Jane Run, See Dick Run, Spot-

Davidson: Scott.

Long: It was Spot. Spot was a dog. See Jane Run. It was that type I've learned. Then, like I say, it was each year we'd advance further to the next level. So, we went a quarterly. Again, curriculum-wise, I can't even imagine what everything was like then, but we did what we could. The way we were taught were by the teachers that taught us what they knew to teach us. They were professional and we were excited to learn what. We were just kids, kids.

Davidson: A lot of the books were torn out and the pages were torn out.

Long: [inaudible 00:31:26].

Interviewer: Tell me about the materials that you used, the textbooks.

Long: Okay, the textbooks that we used, of course, they were from the other schools and they were, maybe if your name was number five in the book and all your pages was in there, that's a decent book. You know what I mean? It's not like you were there, you got this copyright book that was actually copyrighted of whatever year it is, and your name is the first name in the book. There was no such thing as that. We had to use the books that were being thrown away from the other schools. That was the books that we used, that we were given, and we didn't know any better. We didn't know any better. We were told, "If you didn't have page 12 in your book, well look on with somebody else." Somebody else will team up with you, and then the two of you all would look. That person might have page 12 in the book. So, it just became a pattern. I'm sure now thinking back, it had to be aggravating for the teachers as well, but those were the kinds of books and things that we had. Like I said, again, they taught us what they knew to teach us. I'm sure the curriculum was not what they wanted it to be, but that's what it was during that time.

Interviewer: You mentioned Ms. Fluellen. Who were some of your other teachers?

Long: Oh, my goodness. Did I have Ms. Jenny Hill? Jenny Hill Gresham? I had Ms. Owens. You talking about in elementary?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Long: Oh my goodness, let's see. Do I even remember my school teachers? Her name was Ms. Cross. She's another one of my favorite teachers. I was her favorite too. Ms. Cross, Ms. Fluellen. I remember my favorite teachers. Let's see, let's see. That's all I remember for elementary. Ms. Williams was my fifth grade teacher. I don't remember the fourth.

Interviewer: What about the administrators, the principal?

Long: The principal that I remember, of course, is Mr. Ruff. Mr. Ruff was our principal at the time that I was in first grade. He was our principal. Then for elementary, I mean for, yeah, later on in elementary, I had Mr. M.J. Woods, I don't know if you heard that name before.

Interviewer: Oh, yeah.

Long: Okay. He was one of them as well.

Interviewer: At the elementary school?

Long: At the elementary school. No, at the Wright Street, which would be, I guess sixth, but what do you consider six, seventh, and eighth? Now it's considered that it's a junior high.

Interviewer: Junior high or middle.

Long: Junior high or middle. At the time, they didn't consider that.

Interviewer: So, he was over at Wright Street when you got there?

Long: Mr. Woods was, correct. He was already there. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. How are students recognized for good grades, good behavior, that type of thing?

Long: Oh, okay. Just the norm. Like, you always had the smart kids, you had those, and you had those, the ones that made the loudest noise. You can imagine, they were the one that were always making the E's and the D's in the class, and you always had the ones that were trying to get their lessons, trying to be quiet, trying to do the right thing, and those that were being told, "you're going to be sent to the principal's office if you don't stop the noise." You always had those kinds in there. But overall, we did good. We did real good, because everybody wanted to be on the honor roll because it was exciting. You wanted to be on the honor roll. You wanted to be the best at what you could be.

Interviewer: Where there like end-of-year ceremonies where-

Long: We had different ceremonies we used to call science fairs, we just have like May Day activities. Even in our PE classes, we would have like, ohm what was it you call that? That's where I learned how to square dance too.

Interviewer: A field day or?

Long: Yeah, field day. I love square dancing. Oh, oh, goodness. Goodness. Goodness, goodness, goodness. Because, I was one of the ones that was always volunteering myself to be in everything. They said, "Who all wants to," and before they can say anything, my hand is already up. My mom wanted to just beat me down. I know she did, but I was always the one. Thank goodness that she could sew.

Interviewer: Right.

Long: But, I was one of those ones that in science fairs. What we have? Oh, you name it, we had it.

Interviewer: Do you remember the hobby fair?

Long: Hobby fair? It wasn't May Day? It was around the May Day thing? Okay, hobbies, it was something I was in. It might've be hobby fair. Whereas, I won the best dress doll. My mom made this Brat doll made this whole outfit for me and I won second place. That's probably what it was. I was a little majorette. whatever it had, I was it.

Interviewer: So, tell me about then your transition to Wright Street.

Long: Okay, I transitioned to Wright Street. Now, that is something I was trying to ask my classmates about as well because that puzzled me. I was always wondering, "Why did we go to Wright Street?" Then as I was talking to my classmates, they were saying, "Cheryl, you got to remember where we lived, they were building, they were doing government projects," we called them projects, Johnny Walker's homes. Okay? They were building all these government, they were about, oh, about 400 units, individual unit. So at that time, the same time, they were building a school, which is right down the street for where the, now we live in the house right across the street, where I was living in the house, but we saw it being built. We saw people moving, and that meant it was a bunch of kids, bunch of kids in those projects. That's what filled up that school down the street. Of course, here I am living, like I say, I can throw a rock at the school. Of course, I'm going to go there. My mom's not going to let us continue to go to Lemon Street when we can go right down the street. So, I don't know why that school was actually built, but I was, because again, like I was talking to my classmates, they were saying that they think it's because of the way the government was structured in that area.

Interviewer: Yeah. It's interesting, and this is, just allow me this little detour, Lemon Street seemed so central to education for the community.

Long: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: So, did you have any sort of sadness leaving the elementary school to go on your side of time?

Long: Of course, you don't want to leave your friends. You don't ever want to leave your friends. You know how you befriend people? You just never want to leave them, never wanted to leave. So, little did we know, they are going to be coming over there too because they were being bused over there. Little did we know, we were very excited then to learn that.

Interviewer: Yeah. But of course, you'd ultimately end up back at Lemon Street High.

Long: Back together anyway. Yes, back at the high school. Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. So, you entered in the ninth grade?

Long: I entered in the ninth grade, the high school.

Interviewer: Tell me about Lemon Street High School. We'll sort of do the same thing that we did with the elementary school.

Long: Okay.

Interviewer: This building though is no longer there.

Long: The building is no longer there? Oh my goodness. If you all could have gone into that building, that building, we were so excited. We were so excited. That particular building had the library in it, it had the principal offices, had the biology labs, the auditorium, the basketball court, home economics was in there. Oh goodness, I'll never forget that thing. I had to do a dissect. Ugh.

Interviewer: Had to be interesting.

Long: He was hating it.

Interviewer: Like a frog or something?

Long: I had a frog thing. I about died. I had to dissect a frog. I thought, "Oh, my goodness." Then, we had, it was kind of sort of a language lab, had our typing classes. Our typing classes where there. I got to tell you this little funny thing about my typing class, ninth grade of course. Okay, the teacher's about this tall, Ms. Hardiman. Anyway, the way they taught the typing class, okay, say for example, I'm looking at this. Right behind her desk was the big chart and it gave all the letters that's on the typewriter, just like Q... We had to learn the keyboard, of course. So, here I am with my silly self, now the actual typewriters didn't have letters on them because the mindset is to learn the keyboard. If you don't know the keyboard, then you kind of glanced up there and could. I'm raising my hand telling the teacher that, "There's something wrong. I have a tore up typewriter because the letters are not on the typewriter." Well, she said, "Cheryl, we'll talk about it after class."

Interviewer: I don't want to embarrass you.

Long: I got laughed at the entire year. The entire year, and that's the classroom that had all the big football players in it. They'd never let me live that down, never ever.

Interviewer: Yeah, you don't want something like that in the beginning of the year.

Long: I don't ever want to do it, not in the beginning.

Interviewer: Maybe on the last week.

Long: It was awful, awful, awful. But those classes were held in that particular building. Like I said, again, we were excited. We were excited because we were, again, learning of new kids that were currently being bused from the other areas. So, you had Kennesaw, Acworth, Mableton, Austell, Smyrna that were actually physically being bused to Lemon Street during that time. So, we were getting to learn who others were in the other areas. Every day was almost like a reunion day. It was just exciting. Then, I was always in a glee club or a chorus, in every one of them. I was always in one of those. Football games, exciting. Exciting football game. We had our learning, again, the books. I can never stray from that. The way that our books were, we were still behind. We were behind in our books. But again, like I say, they taught us what they knew to teach us, and we adhere to every little word. We were all in it. It was so exciting to get up every day to go to school. That's how excited we were.

Interviewer: Well, were there differences between the sort of city Marietta kids and the kids from the other areas of [crosstalk 00:42:59] county??

Long: Yes and no. Not really, not really, not really, not really at all. Now, I could kind of tell you this a little bit. We were kind of territorial.

Interviewer: Okay.

Long: In that way, and I don't know why this was, but it happened. The sections of the black sections of town would named several Baptist town, we had about, oh goodness, about four or five different sections of town that the blacks live. Now, as long as you go to school together, "You my best friend, you my oh, I love you to death. We'll play on the same basketball teams. We do this, this, and this together." As soon as school is out, you better go to your section of where you come from. It was so territorial. Why it was like that? To this day, I don't know why but it was so territorial. Everybody loved each other when we were actually around in the environment. The actual basketball team, football teams, everybody. But as soon as school is out, oh, you got to go to where you come from. Why that was, I don't know. To this day, I don't know why we did that, why we acted like that, but I don't know.

Interviewer: Were there... Did people-

Long: It wasn't gangs, there's no such thing as a gang or anything or... It was the craziest thing, to this day. And I hope somebody else talk about this with you as well, because it was like that through all the grades.

Interviewer: What about class differences? People who had parents had a little more money, people whose parents had very little money?

Long: You didn't have a lot of those. You didn't have any big I's and little you's. Everybody was just about even keel.

Interviewer: Okay.

Long: We hardly had any... We were just about the same. There was no such thing as that.

Interviewer: Right. The situation-

Long: I mean, I'm sure there were maybe, but we didn't grow up with that.

Interviewer: So, allow me one more question on that line. Kids who lived in the projects versus kids who-

Long: Lived in the homes across the street from the project? We were the same. But we were the one that never lived in the project and we lived directly across the street from the project. That house is my mom's house, it's still intact. 60 something years old and we've always lived in that house, 64 years old and it's still... There's no such thing. No difference in me, then my girlfriend that lived across the street. We were the same. Buddy, buddy, buddy, buddy, buddy.

Interviewer: Okay.

Long: No such thing. Try to see any class differences whatsoever.

Interviewer: Okay. Did you attend athletic events and sports, things like that?

Long: I did, trust me, I don't even want this other tape, but I attempted to play basketball. I was awful. If the Harlem Globe Trotters were back then in then that day, I was one of the originals. It's only because I didn't know the game. We played it, we played the game on the playground, where we were. I could throw the ball up in a basket, that's fine, but I didn't know the game. You know what I mean? If you hit... You can foul up against somebody, but I still didn't know the game. And for that reason I was a terrible player. And when you go out for basketball, I think they expect for you to know the game. It was not ever taught to us, and the coach and I didn't see eye to eye, so, that was another thing. So, I don't know, I guess I was defiant, I don't know. I was terrible.

Interviewer: What were your areas? What were your areas of interest in high school?

Long: My areas of interest was, I was in the library club. We called The Slacks. I was in the library club, home economics club. I was in every course, a glee club, a choir there was. I was at every one of those, junior class president. I was always wanted to be able... To want to be able to organize. I was a main organizer. Especially organizing, I was a big in that one, in that area. We had our homecoming games, we had our head on, it was just exciting. When you're your own element and that's all you know, that's the pride. That's where all that set pride comes out. It really does. This is our school, this is our this, this is our that. And it's interesting our church is, oh goodness, you could just stand out the porch of our church and see all the school, the entire school. You can see that right now. So again, you got the church, you got to school and you got your neighborhood, all of that was just full circle.

Interviewer: All in that area.

Long: Mm-hmm (affirmative), all in the area.

Interviewer: So talk to me about your awareness of integration efforts in the early sixties.

Long: In the early sixties we had one of the girls that live in our neighborhood, [Daphne Delk 00:48:33], I don't know if you've heard of Daphne or not. Okay, Daphne lived in one of the projects around the corner from us, and she was one of the first blacks to attend Marietta High School her sophomore year. Okay. It didn't dawn on us about our school even being closed and then we possibly going to be going to another school system until it was our junior year. It was the spring of our junior year and we were called into assembly. It was right not long after lunch. They had the board of education, had everybody that was up there on the auditorium stage. We call it the stage. And at that time we were told the superintendent, everybody, everybody was there. Teachers, everybody was up there, that our school would no longer be... Because of the of the desegregation law, Lemon Street School will no longer exist. We will be going the next year, you will be going to Marietta High School. Okay, to us, that was devastating to us. It was very, very devastating to us because we weren't prepared for that. We weren't prepared for that. I had gone 11 years, a black school and you're going to tell me my senior year, I'm going to have to go to another school? I mean, what was that all about? What was that all about? So at the time, because it happened in the summertime and it didn't happen...We had a chance to absorb it during the summer. We didn't like it. We didn't like it at all. We didn't like it and it was just like a funeral, that before we even get out of that building, it was just like somebody was in a funeral. That's how bad it was. That's how devastating it was to us. It was the unknown. It was the unknown, and that's why we were afraid, because it was the unknown. We had been told in a PTA meeting, somehow parents were telling us that, okay, you have to worry about Lemon Street anymore because Lemon Street and Marietta High are going to have the same accreditation level. They going to bring your school up to be the same, as far as accreditation wise, I think that's how they

even said, I don't even know. It was in a PTA meeting. Our parents were telling us. And so therefore, you as parents would be able to send your kids to any one of the schools of their choice. That was in our mind, and then for us to be told that that's no longer going to happen. And I'm sure the Marietta City Government went through a lot of [inaudible 00:51:35], I'm sure. Because that's where the decisions were made, it came down through them, whether or not to close our school or not. It was a decision on that end. It was offered to us. It was devastating because our school was physically tore down. We weren't even told when that was going to be. We're hoping that the things like trophies and the band uniform, we're hoping those things were, somebody got those out and they were actually stored or something. Because if not, see, that really just crushed us. We had a whole trophy full of awards and everything and so we don't even know what happened to those and we were told some of them, Marietta had them. I'm sure not all of them. There were plenty of them. So, just everything was just... We were just crushed. We were crushed.

Interviewer: Did that persist about that summer or more?

Long: It persisted throughout that entire summer. Yes, it did. It was so devastating to us. Yes it was. But see, then again, I'm going to go back to that because, now whereas I spent three years of Lemon Street, other classmates of mine, say for an example, those that they were bused in from Mableton, Austell, Kennesaw, they had already started to integrate the other high schools like Osborne, North Cobb, South Cobb, they had already started doing that. So if you thinking about as far as a quantity of students, there weren't that many of us left. Because the other... I guess they had stopped. If you think about it, they stopped the busing, so we were just the ones that's within that little range of kids that were left. So, as far as... So if you go back and say, well, they didn't have an X number of students or anybody left. Well that's true. We didn't, because other things were happening outside of the fact that we didn't even pay attention to. So if an interview is to be, and I can just say this to you because I know that the last two years of our school, other kids, and I call everybody kid, here I'll be 70 next month, should be asked how things were for them as well. It could have been totally different from what I'm saying to you. Totally different. Some of them have total amnesia, they won't even talk about it. They forgot about it. They don't want to talk about it, and some of them can give you an earful of knowledge. But for us too, like I say, by the time we absorb that during the summer and we entered into the Marietta High School the fall of 1967, it was a September, 1967, we were okay then, we were okay. Again, I'm walking over there. I was never bused. Walking, was never bused, two by two, three by three, though we always just walked in a group. But it wasn't really bad. Our entrance into Marietta High School, and I can truthfully say this, was as smooth as smooth can be. We had no problems whatsoever with the kids, nor do we have any problems with the teachers. I don't know if they feel sorry for us or if it was just they knew that was something that was going to be... It was going to happen. It was going to be. I mean, no problems whatsoever. [cross talk 00:55:50]. There might've been, unfortunately for us, a bunch of our friends did not come over with us. They chose to either get their GEDs from, I want to say, I

don't know if it's still called... Is it Chattahoochee Tech now? It used to be [inaudible 00:56:07] vocational before it was Chattahoochee Tech. They had just opened, it wasn't even long. They were offering GEDs and other technical classes and a lot of kids went there. Some kids went to the schools in Atlanta to the night schools, like Washington High, some kids went there. So they went everywhere. They either quit school, they went to the... And our buddies, our buddies, now these are our athletes. These are the ones that were good in track and field, football players, basketball players. We hated to see them go, but they chose not to and they weren't made to go. The parents never choose whatever they wanted to do.

Interviewer: What percentage would you say chose not to go on to Marietta?

Long: Oh, about 20%, it wasn't a lot.

Interviewer: And then at Marietta High were, in the classes, how many white, how many black?

Long: Okay. Let me start with the homeroom. Okay. I was in 2MJ, we had... Let's see, my brother and I sat... there were four of us in 2MJ. There are maybe four to five in each homeroom. I know that, 12A-J for the twelfth grade. So, that's how they kind of divided up. There might've been more in other classrooms, but I know our homeroom had four kids, four blacks in the classroom.

Interviewer: And did you see that most of the teachers came over as well?

Long: Not as many. Not so much, not so much. You had a few of them that came over. I know Mr. Walker was one of them. Ruby Williams, she's no longer living with us. That's no longer with us. Coach Wilkins, Coach Wilkins was there. Not so much. They went other places. A lot of them went back to the Atlanta area schools. You still had your predominantly black schools in Atlanta. A lot of them went back there, chose to go back there. Not to come, no, not even come. Mr. Scott, Lewis Scott was one of them. He was over there. For a minute I think he went on to Tuskegee to teach there. Had a few, didn't have a lot. Not nothing actually integrate into the new Marietta High, right? During that time though, wasn't a lot.

Interviewer: What differences in the educational standards?

Long: Major, major difference. It was major. The curriculum was unreal. The curriculum, now that I look at it and being older and having gone through what I've gone through, was probably the best thing in the world. Very structured, very structured. I think I took French, I took French in Lemon Street, I couldn't even say a quelle heure est-il, what time is it? I mean, they had this structured lab over at Marietta High and I took it and I excelled. Because the equipment you have, you got your equipment, you got your textbooks, you got your guidelines, how to learn kind of things. It was something, it was something.

Interviewer: So, you were there one year.

Long: I was there for one year, and I wish I had been there for more than that. The things that I did learn over there, and I can tell you on a positive note, were some of the things that helped me get through my first and second years at Morris Brown. And it's because I learned a different way. I fell in love with American history, fell in love with, I used to think it was the most boring thing in the whole wide world. Loved American history, but it was my teacher that did it. Mr. Anderson, mild toned, didn't raise his voice. I kept thinking, what is it... But he talked to us like it's a book and it was a book, it really was. It was how he taught it. I loved it. And English again, like I say, the literary tour, I needed that. I didn't have that in Lemon Street. I had the grandma, we didn't have it. And I can say, I didn't have it. Let me just say, our grade, we didn't have it in eleventh grade at all. I learned about it, Shakespeare, Macbeth and all this stuff. I learned about that later on.

Interviewer: Were there students who struggled?

Long: Yes, I was talking to my brother is one, Willie. He had to go back and take, I think it was one class, but summer. He got his degree, he got his diploma, but I think he struggled with English four. But they did give those kids, not only him, there were several, they had to go back and take... And they were allowed to graduate that year with the class. So it's not like they kept them back, it's just that they fell behind and in order for them to... And this is how they work with you, they really work with them, work with us, especially our class. They worked with you enough to, okay, let's see what we missed here. We've got to get you caught up. You've got to get caught up with everybody else. And he said, no problems after that. He say summer school is the best thing that ever happened to him. And they did allow that so, well, yeah.

Interviewer: What did you feel was lost in Lemon Street closing? And of course, I mean, obviously being demolished, but, in a more symbolic sense, what do you feel was lost?

Long: Selfishly, just a sense of saying our school, and I guess I'm saying it from the black perspective. We had an all-black school. It is no longer there for us. It no longer exist. It should have stayed. It should have been compared and brought up to... It was our life. It was really our life and because that's all we really knew. That's all we knew. It's really, again, you got to remember now, what ages now, we're what? 16, 17 years old kids, but so we didn't really look at things from a... What can I say, perspective? I guess we were tunnel visioned, in a sense. Like tunnel vision.

Interviewer: At what point did people become interested in that legacy? How long did that take and when did it begin to develop more?

Long: For the fact that-

Interviewer: The schools on Lemon Street, the ones that shut down when integration happened.

Long: How long did it become...

Interviewer: Yeah. I mean, I don't know if you were involved, but were you aware of people wanting to commemorate, have reunions, things like that?

Long: Yeah, there was certain groups. They did form certain groups that did want to do that. I don't know how many groups they had. I know they had one and there were the ones that were responsible for getting the plaque. You see the plaque right there on that...

Interviewer: Historical marker.

Long: Historical marker. That particular group I know for sure, I think Mr. Walker was also a part of that group. It really, I guess if you think about it, the generations behind us was so different. Everybody was different. Each generation was different. My generation, now my generation, okay, you got your war going on, you've got to get out there and work to... We were a whole different breed. I mean, I'm sure the generation that came behind us and the class, they were a whole different breed. To us it wasn't... We were okay, we were real okay. We got to learn how to let it go. We learned how to let it go. We learned how to let it go. We did. We had to learn how to let it go. We did.

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your post high school goals? I love this.

Long: My post high school goals?

Interviewer: Talk about what happened between you and your parents and the decisions you made.

Long: Okay. Started graduation night, of course.

Interviewer: Checking my time here. Oh we're... wow.

Long: Okay, graduation night. Okay, like I say, that's the summer after we graduate and everything. And again, like I said, I don't know how to be nothing else. I just want to be a student, oh my goodness. Okay, I'm out of school. Okay, grow up, Cheryl. You're number two of seven kids, grow up. Warm it up, you know what I mean? That summer I started working with Mr. Walker. He and I worked on the playground for the City Recreation Department in Marietta. And he and I, he was like my little mentor for the summer. I was his helpmate for the summer program that they had down on the playground. So, he and I... He would used to mentor me, Cheryl you got to do this, this is what you want to do in life. You can't carry negativity with it. You've got to do this, this, this, and this. And in the meantime, my father... people used to go around, and they had a IBM Plus.

People used to come around selling different things like, say, for example, like encyclopedias. I'm sure that that kind of stuff back then was this ... Because they don't have encyclopedias anymore. They got Google. Anyway, my father paid for a class for me, Institute of Computer Technology, and what this was, was key punching. Back in the day, they used to have cards like this, like a card, and we punch holes in it. And that card, it produced data, printouts, data, or whatever. Okay. So my father would say, he'd say, "Cheryl, would you be interested in this?" And of course he'd already paid for it before we told me. "Well, yeah, yeah, daddy." While I was working on the field with Mr. Walker, the playground thing, I had an evening class. So the evening class, I get on this local bus that went from Smyrna, upper Marietta to Atlanta, the last stop right across the street was where the school was, Institute of Computer Technology. Okay. So I went there right before I went into Morris Brown. And so I learned that, so that was something I already had going. When I finished that class, it was almost fall, getting ready to go into Morris Brown. As a freshman, of course, you're all so excited. You're so excited now to go into the school. I don't know if you even know anything about Morris Brown. You probably heard of Morehouse, Spelman, Clark AU.

Interviewer: Oh, yeah.

Long: Right now we're not closed, but we're having issues with accreditation.

Interviewer: Right.

Long: But we're still there. Anyway, back in the day and stuff, then when I started taking my classes and racing for my classes, 15 people, 35 people deep, I want this class right here. So if I got to extend this lie to get with this teacher, with this [inaudible 01:08:09]. You know how it was at registration. It was awful. I thought, "Well, my goodness." Well, anyway, once I got my classes, we just happened to be one of the classes, freshman classes, that were ... They were building this structure, male dormitory on one side, the female dormitory on one side. So, we were in temporary trailers my first year going there. That was a whole another thing too. I think the trailer was about this big. But anyway, so when we finally got into, we call it the new dorm, I was so excited. It was brand new, state of the art. But now my classes, as far as my classes, that's why I say that I came in with me having known about getting instructed in literature, and it was really a repeat of everything I had learned all those four years of high school plus Marietta. That we kind of went over ... My freshman year, that's basically what it was. I also took reading from Hank Aaron's wife, Billy Aaron.

Interviewer: Oh, wow.

Long: Yeah, she was my teacher. She was Miss Samuels, her husband passed away, but she married Hank Aaron.

Interviewer: What was your major?

Long: My major? Business administration.

Interviewer: Okay.

Long: Business administration, but the minor, at the time, was secretary of science and that was like with a lot of office machines and stuff, secretary of science, yeah.

Interviewer: How long was the program?

Long: My program?

Interviewer: Yeah. How many years?

Long: Four.

Interviewer: Okay.

Long: Four-year program. Yeah, four-year program.

Interviewer: That's Fountain Hall is there?

Long: Yes.

Interviewer: Oh, yeah.

Long: [inaudible 01:09:55] Fountain Hall. Yes, yes.

Interviewer: They're trying to save it right now.

Long: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. Fountain Hall. And then we have the swinging, oh, and that swinging bridge, the bridge, everything about that school. But my freshman year, okay, Stokely Carmichael, I don't know if you ever heard of him or not ever.

Interviewer: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

Long: He came through the AU center. All of those schools, all the Morehouse, Spelman, Clark, Clark College at the time, that's Clark AU, he came through that whole campus, interrupted the entire thing, gamut. This is what we learned about the cities and MLK. So this is where we learned all about this at that time because we weren't familiar with that, like I say, having come from where I came from. Then a lot of kids too come from South Georgia or different places. They didn't know him. We didn't know anything about that. It was petrifying to us. It really was. It really was.

Interviewer: Would you say that most of the students you were with at Morris Brown were coming from outside?

Long: All over, places I'd never heard of, Cordele, Georgia. Montezuma. I had never heard of Montezuma, Georgia in my life. I had never heard of those little towns. I'm telling you, I [inaudible 01:11:13] so many places. I thought, "Where are you talking about?" I had heard of places like Gainesville, Rome, Georgia. You know what I'm saying?

Interviewer: Right.

Long: Cartersville. These are the places I've heard of. I heard Cordele, Georgia. Where's that?

Interviewer: That's South Georgia places.

Long: It was amazing. Of course, I had heard of Macon, Columbus, Fort Valley. We've heard a places like that, but the teeny-weeny towns, we had never heard of. And see again, you're competing with kids that's valedictorians from these high schools. They graduated from the different high schools. Salutatorian, these are the kinds of people that you're competing with. And if you think about it, so that's why it was a different world. It was so different. I loved going to school there. Loved it, loved it, loved it.

Interviewer: Did you have any interaction with the Spelman women, or the Morehouse men, or the other ...?

Long: We took classes. We took classes.

Interviewer: Clark.

Long: We took classes. I took a class my ... What was that I took? Science, a science class I took at Atlanta University. It was Clark at the time. I took a class there. I took a class over at Spelman. We interacted with classes. We'd take a class, it's all over. It was open like that. Don't ask me how we get from one place to the other in two seconds. I don't know.

Interviewer: Did you know any students who were looking into other colleges and universities, like mostly white colleges and universities? Did you-

Long: At the time that I was?

Interviewer: From Marietta High, who maybe applied to-

Long: Only my girlfriend, she and I were will close. She went to Mercer.

Interviewer: Okay.

Long: She got like a part scholarship to Mercer University. She is the only one. All the rest of us, because I had applied for Morris Brown in Talladega, which was in Alabama, and I didn't want to go to Alabama. Anyway, thank goodness they didn't accept me. But anyway, she is the only one that I know that applied. Others went to Bethune-Cookman, maybe Tennessee, and Savannah State, Albany State. They went to those schools. Not necessarily to the white ... Like I said, she's the only one I know that went to Mercer.

Interviewer: Okay. What did you do out of college?

Long: Out of college. Tell you what. I knew I had to have a job because I had to pay back this money that I borrowed for four years. What I did was I had two thoughts in my mind when I first graduated. I always wanted to go into service, military service, because I want it to travel and see other things. Well, I wasn't smart, I didn't use the head. I should've joined the National ... What do you call it when ...? The reserves. I should've done that right out of school. Didn't do it, didn't do it. So I wound up going to Coming back home because I knew I was one of the ones ... I'm a mama's girl. Y'all knew I was coming back home. Anyway, I applied everywhere you can imagine to apply for, everywhere. I know there are 50 applications I filled out everywhere. I had so many applications that say I was over qualified, to the point ... It was scary because I'm thinking, "Overqualified? At least just let me work in the housekeeping department, just somewhere, to get my foot in the door." Well, that was no such thing as that. I remember one day my mom and I, we were cleaning out the closet. I had applied at WellStar. It wasn't WellStar at the time, Kennestone Hospital. Okay. By itself. They hadn't even attached themselves to all these others. Okay. That's one of them being the applications I filled out. So I got the phone call. It was about three o'clock in the afternoon and the guy who was in the data processing department of the facility of Kennestone, called me and asked me, Bill McCormick, I'll never forget his name. Bill, he was the nicest person. He said, "Well, Cheryl, would you like to ...?" "Miss Long, would you like to come for an interview?" And I said, "Well, do you want me to come now?" He say, "Well, no, you can come tomorrow by eight o'clock," and I'm ... Y'all are so serious.

Interviewer: You're like me. Jump on it.

Long: I said, "I'm on my way," right? He said, "No, you can come tomorrow." I was there ... I think it was I had a 9:30 appointment, and so I was there. I guess they were impressed with me. He hired me almost on the spot, after I had told him my situation, and I had taken the class, the ITC, that computer class. He was impressed with that. I think that was one of the things that got me in the door. Okay. And then from that he says to me, "Okay. I don't really think this is what you want to do." I was preparing work to go to the key punch operators. I'm doing like ... This is manual, all this is manual. An adding machine I can do it with my eyes closed, that I'm balancing this, I'm balancing that, getting all the charges on a patient, gathering every charge from the moment you come in the hospital and say, "Hello, how are you?" And they flap that thing on your arm. They start immediately charging you for everything you do from your first

sneeze. Those are the things. We had manual slips with charges checked on them, so that's what we did. We gathered them in bunches of 50, say, radiology, X-ray department. They check off what they've done to you, and then we would get batches of 50. We put them together and hand them to the ladies so we could get printouts of what everything is about for your bill, so you'd be happy when your bill comes. But anyway-

Interviewer: [crosstalk 01:17:18].

Long: Uh-huh (affirmative). That's okay. Then Bill say, he say, "Cheryl, you know you really don't want to do this, do you?" I said, "No, not really." And then he said, "Well, I tell you what. So we've got another position coming up, data control clerk." That was a step higher than that. So I did that. As a matter of fact, do you know I stayed in that department? It was data controller, that was my title in the data processing department of Kennestone Hospital. I stayed there for 42 and a half years. But now the reason why, the reason why, unless I was technical in the way of a lab- You know, worked in the lab as a ... What do you call those people that take your blood? Phlebotomist, or either worked in a department itself, which is a clinical department or whatever. I didn't have those credentials. I would've had to go back to school to get to become a nurse and [inaudible 01:18:22]. That was the highest paid department in the hospital. Through the years, with technology changing the way it changed, which it was not a slow thing, like right now, what you doing now, it's probably outdated. You know what I'm saying?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Long: Everything now, that's how quick and fast it was going. They were bound and determined to stay up with the high, with a quick, with the most advance information that they could, the hospital was. For that reason, for that reason, and I promise you my mindset was, "I'm going to stay in here for five years. I'm leaving because I'll have that behind my belt, five-year experience." Five became 10, 10 became 12, 12 became 15. It was unreal how quick and fast things start happening. Then you got to remember they attached themselves to other facilities. When Windy Hill Hospital became WellStar with the Hill. Cobb Hospital became WellStar Cobb. You had Paulding, WellStar, they started gathering and purchasing these other hospitals. One of my jobs was to go out to train the people at the different facilities to bring them up to par, to weight, and I loved it. Absolutely loved it. That's really why I stayed in that department. Again, like I said, it was the highest paid nonclinical department that you could be in. Yeah, I stayed there. I started working from home four years, I've worked my last four years, I worked from home.

Interviewer: So 42 years total. So that means, I mean, just recently.

Long: I retired in 2015.

Interviewer: Okay. Wow.

Long: And I'm still tired too. No, I'm not. I don't do that.

Interviewer: What do you focus on these days?

Long: I focus on working and my civic activities, my church activities. I'm a part of all kind of community activities. I'm not as mobile as I once was. And for that reason, I can't do ... I think the Lord just slowed me down. I was all over the place, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah. So he said, "Okay, I'll fix you." But I still am active because I tell people, I say, "I may not have the mobility I had, but I got my mind." Thank goodness for that. I can plan something, I can plan a wedding for you. That was one of my things I was going to be, an event planner. That was my biggie be. That was going to be my thing. I was going to use my basement to have ... You have to have the area. Oh, I was [inaudible 01:21:13].

Interviewer: So now you do that but more?

Long: I do it. I do it in a different format. Yeah, I do, I do. Like I say, if you hear my sisters, my classmates say, "She tells everybody what to do."

Interviewer: But you know the best way.

Long: I try to get them to take it over, but they won't. "Well, you know nobody's going to take it over, Cheryl." Oh, goodness. I don't want to hear it. Anyway, then my church activities is very much a part of my life, so that's what I do now. I did sing with the Cobb County Mass Choir. It was a community-base choir composed of members from maybe 20 different churches in the Marietta area that came together as a group. We sang at our very first NAACP, it was 1985, NAACP convention that they have here. They had just opened. They had just started their chapter and we sang it, and we stayed together for 20 years.

Interviewer: What part do you sing?

Long: Alto, second soprano, first and second soprano. Do I have more seconds? Okay. Second soprano, first, second Alto.

Interviewer: So everything.

Long: Everything. Everything.

Interviewer: I want to thank you for-

Long: You are more than welcome. Did you get a copy of our album? Is that something that you know who wrote the words to our alma mater?

Interviewer: I don't.

Long: I don't either, but ...

Interviewer: I can find out.

Long: Find out for me.

Interviewer: Okay.

Long: And I'll sing it for you the next time you come back.

Interviewer: Okay. You don't want to do it on the ...?

Long: I can do it now if you want to.

Interviewer: Okay.

Long: Oh, my God [inaudible 01:23:04]. [singing 01:23:06-01:24:39].

“To our dear alma matter, your name shall always be, a light to ever guide us through defeat and victory, we shall do our best to serve thee, noble deeds thy will achieve, in sun and rain we shall remain faithful to Lemon Street. God speed your noble deeds we honestly believe deep in our hearts the glow with ever show. We lift our hearts in song to thee we do believe and this we want the whole wide world to know, we shall do our best to serve thee, noble deeds thy will achieve in sun, in rain we shall remain faithful to Lemon Street.”

Interviewer: Thank you so much.

Long: You're welcome. I don't know what that sounds like.