

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH COBB COMMISSION CHAIRWOMAN LISA CUPID

CONDUCTED AND EDITED BY THOMAS A. SCOTT

for the

COBB COUNTY ORAL HISTORY SERIES, NO. 102

WEDNESDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER 2023

Kennesaw State University Oral History Project
Cobb County Oral History Series, No. 102
Interview with Cobb County Commission Chairwoman Lisa Cupid
Conducted, edited, and indexed by Thomas A. Scott
Wednesday, 20 September 2023
Location: Kennesaw State University Archives

TS: I wanted to start with your background. I know you're the daughter of immigrants from Guyana. Could you talk about your parents and what brought them to America and maybe how your background as the child of immigrants maybe shaped whom you became?

LC: Yes. Forgive my limited interpretation of my parents' consideration for coming here. But I do know that my dad's mom was here first. She was working as a nurse and was able to help make a way for not only my dad and my mom but other family members over time. I can remember her sponsoring people to come to the U.S., but it was an opportunity for people to improve their walk in life. And I can say from looking at my parents' accomplishments and that of other family members that they did accomplish what they originally set out to do, which was to come here and improve their quality of life.

TS: Do you know about when they came to America?

LC: My parents in the 70s. My grandmother, I'm not familiar with what year.

TS: I've been doing my research. I guess the good thing about being from Guyana is that it's English-speaking, one of the few places in South America that you can say that.

LC: Yes, exactly. I think that is a unique aspect of where my parents are from. There's a Dutch Guiana [Suriname] and a French Guiana. We are from the English speaking country of Guyana.

TS: That helps.

LC: Yes.

TS: But, I noticed that they didn't get their independence until 1966 from the British, which is quite late, actually.

LC: Yes, strong British influence. I can say that even from a language perspective, but also in some observances that my mother had growing up. I remember Princess Diana getting married [in 1981] and that was a big deal, and just some of the considerations that they still have for England.

TS: I remember an interview with Betty Siegel, and she told this story a number of times of getting up early to watch the wedding of Princess Diana. And that was about the time they were at the beach, I think—I may be botching the story—but she had applied for the job [as president] at Kennesaw, but hadn't got the word yet, and the word came that day.

LC: Yes, oh! What a milestone! She could say she felt like it was a regal opportunity.

TS: You're right. Exactly. Your father worked in the auto industry?

LC: Yes.

TS: What did he do?

LC: He was originally, I perceive, a manufacturing engineer, and ended up becoming an operations manager.

TS: So, he had a college degree?

LC: Yes, he did.

TS: Before he came to America?

LC: No, he received it here in the U.S. at New Jersey Institute of Technology [Newark, New Jersey].

TS: All right. I guess that explains your suburban background then.

LC: Exactly. With the engineering degree my dad ended up moving to a number of places, and then we eventually settled in metro Detroit where we have the Big Three automotive companies. That was most of what I can remember of my dad's career is being in the automotive industry.

TS: Great. Well, I'm going to read you a quote that came from your mother, Yvonne Smith. This was when you got sworn in after one of your elections, probably 2012. She was talking about your childhood, and she said that she knew it was obvious early in your childhood that whatever your profession turned out to be, it would be serving others. She was talking about you in high school. You were taking advanced classes, you were working in a store, and you were teaching violin.

LC: I was taking violin, but I was tutoring during that time, yes.

TS: But she said, "Lisa's willing to help anyone, regardless of their social economic status. She would get up early in the morning, stay up late, and never complain."

LC: That's interesting.

TS: I think you were a workaholic from the beginning.

LC: I've got a feeling I still am, yes.

TS: Well, talk about your growing up. What was it like in suburban Detroit? Were you the only Black family in your neighborhood? Was it a diverse background? What was it like?

LC: That's interesting. When you're young, you observe things differently than when you're older. But I do remember there being some movement and transition not only in our local community but even in our church, which wasn't far. We moved to Southfield, Michigan, which had a significant Jewish population. And that probably speaks to my advocacy for sidewalks, because on Saturday, they would walk to the synagogue. So, sidewalks were something that I was always used to seeing in our community.

And also even the recognition of Jewish holidays was a part of our growing up. But over time, I saw the community become more diverse, perhaps Jewish families moving. I could tell that from looking at documents that were in our home from the prior owner of last name, I think, Rosenthal, which I would presume is a Jewish name. But looking at the demographics of our community, even school and church over time, it became much more diverse. And I will say diverse meaning more African Americans moving in.

Not only did we have a diverse community by way of Jewish households, but persons from Middle Eastern or Arab nationality were also a significant demographic within our community. We grew up referring to many of them as Chaldeans that were in our school. And so, I would say it was very diverse from that perspective from Middle Eastern to Jewish families and African American.

TS: Did they get along or were there tensions?

LC: If there were tensions, they were never observable to me. I do perceive, being older, that growing up we all interacted, irrespective of race. We played together, did things together. But I do perceive that there became a time where our interactions were more segregated where you certainly saw cluster of students...

TS: As you got older?

LC: Yes, as I've gotten older, because I remember my mom asking me about why I have certain friends over other friends, and I never perceived it to be intentional. It just kind of gravitated that way. Perhaps, you become aware of your likenesses or differences, or maybe how you've grown up or certain things that make you start to coalesce with persons more like yourself.

TS: Yes. So, you graduated from high school. Why Georgia Tech?

LC: Why Georgia Tech! Hmm.

TS: Of course, it has an excellent engineering program, but...

LC: Exactly. I think there were some broad considerations for why an engineering school and then some things more discrete. From a broad perspective, the predominant influence in my life was my parents. My parents were from a Guyanese background, and there really was no strong Caribbean population where we grew up. So, I felt that we were a bit insulated. And yes, from a cultural perspective, there are just some uniquenesses perhaps in traditions and how you're raised.

But my dominant influence, other than going to church on Sunday, was in my home. And my dad was really the most dominant influence on me from a professional perspective. He would take us to work with him sometimes. My mother, she would take us to work with her when she was younger, but more from an obligatory perspective. My dad was taking us to show us what he did. My mom would sometimes have to take us, because there was no other choice.

TS: What did your mother do?

LC: She was an administrative assistant for an organization called Wayne Center, which helped families with special needs.

TS: Fantastic.

LC: Yes. So, I think some of the service side may come from my mom and some of the things that she exposed us to. But yes, I tell...

TS: I guess, stereotypically, the boys go into engineering and the girls go into something else. Not in your household?

LC: It's funny, because I was in a family of all girls. And I remember remarking when my dad would take us shopping that he's trying to make a boy out of us, because we used to wear polo shirts and little khaki pants, pretty conservative dress home. And we were very engaged in athletics and sports. I know he's had an influence in that. My mother had us involved in other things. I could say we probably had a well-rounded childhood.

TS: What sports did you play?

LC: Soccer, of course. My dad was our soccer coach when we were younger, and that's a dominant sport of the Caribbean. But it gravitated to basketball. And

eventually, I found from playing basketball that I was pretty fast. And so, I transitioned to running track.

TS: What'd you run?

LC: I was, perhaps, most decorated as a high school athlete in the 100 and 100 hurdles, but I did everything. I ran Cross Country. I ran the 200, although I probably wasn't the best there. But I remember running everything. I ran the 300 hurdles. I used to run everything in a meet, the most events you can run. I was observed by an Olympics coach, and he ended up coaching me between my junior and senior year.

TS: Wow.

LC: That was pretty neat.

TS: Georgia Tech had a women's track team, didn't they?

LC: They did.

TS: You didn't want to go out for that?

LC: I did. I remember speaking with the coach, because she has a Detroit background as well. I remember speaking with the coach about running track at Tech, but the idea of doing sports in college was really unheard of by my parents. Why would you go to college to participate in sports? I really didn't have anybody supporting me in that aspect. I thought, "When I go to Tech, I'll just focus on school." But when I got to Tech and I saw the athletes, my heart just gravitated back to that track. And so I...

TS: So, you did run track?

LC: I walked on to the team. But I felt that that probably wasn't the best way for me to join a team, because every year my paperwork would somehow get muddled, and I would end up not getting a chance to compete. So, after that happening during my second year and you're training up to three, four hours a day sometimes, I just decided to turn my attention towards community service. It was very intentional. The day that I walked away from track, the next day I opened up the yellow pages and looked for volunteer and service organizations and found a Boys and Girls Club. That changed my life. I think it changed my trajectory to even consider that service was something I would end up doing in a greater capacity.

TS: It's interesting. I ran track in college.

LC: You did? What did you run?

- TS: The half-mile was my best event.
- LC: Okay, awesome; so, that's kind of a speed-endurance race.
- TS: And I ran Cross Country. I think I saw that you're still running.
- LC: I do. I believe I'll be a runner for life if God gives me the opportunity. Growing up, speaking of the influence my parents have had on me, and my dad particularly—he used to get up in the mornings and run. I remember a few times he would allow my sister and I to ride our bikes with him as he ran. I think that helped to make me a fast runner, but it's just something that's ingrained. My dad ran. My mother used to go to the gym on Saturdays, and I think being fit and taking care of our bodies is something that's been a part of our household from growing up.
- TS: Now somewhere after you got to Georgia Tech, your parents moved down to East Cobb. How did that happen?
- LC: I don't even know. After I got to Georgia Tech, it seemed to happen simultaneously.
- TS: They wanted to go where you were?
- LC: It seems like I was being followed. But my dad coincidentally got transferred, I remember, in mid-August, and I was starting school in mid-August. So, while I was going and transitioning into the dorms, my parents were looking for houses and ended up moving to East Cobb.
- TS: And that's somewhere near Johnson Ferry Road?
- LC: That's right, off Johnson Ferry, between Post Oak Tritt and Sewell Mill Road. I know that, because I used to run it. And I'm there with my parents, with my dad particularly and sometimes the dog.
- TS: But you lived in the dorm?
- LC: My first year, I lived in the dorm until I realized that I needed more structure in my life than what I was willing to give myself. And perhaps it was a self-imposed...
- TS: It's hard to live in a dorm with everything going on, I think.
- LC: I grew up in a pretty isolated, very structured, pretty strict home, and going to college was overwhelming. It was very clear to me, particularly from a grade perspective, in my second semester, that if I didn't impose some structure, I was

not going to complete Tech. So, it's weird that I chose to move off campus to go live with my parents, because I felt like I needed that.

TS: Well, you knew a lot about transportation early on in Cobb County then.

LC: You're right.

TS: Trying to get from Johnson Ferry Road to Georgia Tech.

LC: I knew about it intimately, because I remember having this old Toyota Tercel and only had one rearview mirror. This predated me, it seemed. I remember trying to get out of the subdivision and make a left onto Johnson Ferry, and that car would speed up [making a sound of an engine speeding up], and all the cars are coming around the curve on Johnson Ferry. So, yes, I know about the traffic on that road and know about the commute from East Cobb to Atlanta very well.

TS: So, mechanical engineering sounded like you're following your father.

LC: Yes.

TS: You graduated in mechanical engineering, so, you stuck it out all the way through.

LC: That's a good word to use, stuck it out. I think even prior to going to school, I started to feel a sense of desire to do something else. But I didn't have anybody really steering me. My mother who doesn't have a college degree was a very strong writer and exposed us to books very early. But in high school, I wasn't a strong writer until I went into my senior year, and I had a teacher just demolish my writing in front of the class...

TS: Oh, no!

LC: About how poor it was. But what she did was she taught me how to write. She made me read my paper in front of the class, which she again tore up. And then she taught me about how to make my writing come to life. And she had me read my paper afterwards. And I loved her after that. I loved this "mean" lady. Her name was Meinweiser. I remember looking her up. She could have been "Meanweiser" instead of Meinweiser. She had a very tough way of teaching, but it made me walk away from her class with confidence and even interest to want to teach. I do have some teachers in my family who are in that profession—an aunt in particular was in that profession, but I didn't have anyone to guide me directly. And so, I ended up getting a post-bac in English when I left the field of engineering, just because I felt like there was a part of me that was very interested in writing.

In fact, I used to have to write standard operating procedures being an engineer, and I got to be so good at it that I was tasked to be the person to write the standard operating procedures. So, I was curious about this unexplored part of my interest and ended up eventually changing it. But I stuck with engineering through Tech. It was hard. It's what I knew. I felt I could be gainfully employed. There's a part of me, even as an older adult that never wants to let my parents down. So, I felt I owed that to my dad to get that degree.

TS: So, is Kodak your first job when you get out?

LC: Yes, first job when I graduated.

TS: And then, you took an aptitude test at Kodak?

LC: That's funny. I must have shared that somewhere. Yes, I was the first recruit at Kodak in a manufacturing leadership rotation program. Just by the grace of God, I got that job, because at Tech, the average grade of a graduate at the time was 2.6, and I didn't have the average. No, I didn't.

TS: You didn't make all A's?

LC: I didn't make all A's until my last semester at Tech. In a sense, similar to going to law school, I make my best grades when I seemed to have the most pressure, because I was running for office while in law school and had babies. I made my best grades then.

TS: But you were doing so many other things.

LC: Yes. I really was. So...

TS: And grading was a lot tougher then.

LC: Grading was a lot tougher. But somehow the [company] knew that Tech had a different grading model. When they saw my resume, they saw some of the student leadership experience, what I did with the Boys and Girls Club, and how that branched off to other things. And so, they asked me, would I be interested in starting their manufacturing leadership rotation program, and they train me to become a supervisor. And I was certainly interested.

As they grew the program, they gave the participants the aptitude tests. During my review of my aptitude test, the HR manager over the program called me in his office and said I was the only one that scored high on public service. He asked me if I ever thought about that as a profession, and I said, "No, not really." I said, "I have a lot of community service experience. I volunteer a lot. That's probably why it came up high on the aptitude test." But I think it sowed a seed of

discontent that as I was working, I just started to imagine myself doing something different.

TS: Now when does [your husband] Craig come into the picture?

LC: Craig came in the picture at Tech.

TS: He's an electrical engineer?

LC: He's an electrical engineer. I met him when I was finishing up my sophomore year, and he was finishing up his freshman year, and we both went to this leadership program that was at Berry College. I remember seeing this person. I thought, "Oh, my gosh, he's so handsome!" When I spoke with him, I found out he was a year younger than me, and so I tried to connect him with someone who I ran track with who was a year younger than me. And somehow she just didn't know who this person was.

TS: You tried to set him up with somebody else?

LC: I tried to set him up with somebody else, because I thought he's a nice guy, and she's a nice girl.

TS: But he's a year younger than you?

LC: He's a year younger than me, and I never thought to date someone that is a year younger than me. Well, we're married now, so those thoughts changed. But I remember her not ever knowing who this guy was. Then, years later, I looked at this Georgia Tech pamphlet, and it had a snapshot of students in a classroom. They're sitting in the same row in this pamphlet, like, four students down from each other. And she never knew who he was. I just thought that was ironic.

TS: Wow. So, when did you get married?

LC: We got married in 2002, July 6.

TS: Okay, and so you were well out of school by that time.

LC: I was 25, and I graduated—I didn't take long...

TS: Well, you started there in 1995, so did you get through in four years?

LC: No, I was on the five-year plan. We started dating my last semester at Tech, and we got married two years afterwards.

TS: So you took your time?

LC: It depends, if two years is considered time. Nowadays, a lot of people wait until their 30s to get married.

TS: When do you move to South Cobb County?

LC: We moved August of that year.

TS: So, 2002?

LC: I may have still been working in New York or transitioning to Atlanta at that time.

TS: With Kodak in New York?

LC: Yes, I was in Rochester.

TS: So, that probably slowed down the dating process for a while?

LC: We were, yes, a long distance couple. We dated by phone, with a new salary, my husband still being in college. At times when we could travel, I would remember visiting him when he got his first job and him visiting me in New York. And we both ended transferring to Atlanta after we got married.

TS: Where were you working in Atlanta then?

LC: Kodak. Coincidentally, I just saw a gentleman who I worked with for Kodak in Lawrenceville. We had a logistic site, and so, I worked there on a rotational assignment. My husband was transferred. He worked initially for Sprint, and was initially in Reston, Virginia, for training and then moved here to Atlanta.

TS: Okay. So, you're still commuting into Atlanta from Cobb County?

LC: Yes, to Lawrenceville. My husband got here before I did, so he looked for homes. He's pretty astute with money, and he knew we were going to live off of one engineering salary. The best buy that he could find was in the Six Flags area. We lived around different places in the perimeter. As a student, he lived in the Cumberland area. I had lived in East Cobb and spent a semester with my aunt in West Cobb. So we kind of knew Cobb. When we moved to Austell, I would travel in the morning with no traffic, forty-five minutes to Lawrenceville. On Friday, leaving the office at 2:30 or at 03:00, it would take me about an hour and a half, two hours to get home.

TS: I've noticed everybody seems to leave about 2:30 or 3:00 on Fridays.

LC: Maybe they all had the same idea. Maybe I should have just stayed till the end of the day.

TS: Stay till 5:00, and everybody's already gone.

LC: Yes.

TS: That was a long commute. So you learned something about transportation from that too?

LC: Yes, sir.

TS: All right. You're involved in a lot of community activities at the same time. Can you talk about that a little? I know that's going to lead to you getting involved in politics.

LC: Yes. My husband was pretty involved as a student at Tech. And so we had this idea—we moved into a neighborhood that was newly built—so, one day, we would just go around and meet all of our neighbors. And so, I think that began our interest in the community. I learned about a civic organization called the Austell Community Task Force. I started attending their meetings, and opportunity just seemed to have presented itself. Beyond that we were going to town hall meetings. We wanted to know about our community. I was involved with the task force. I remember being involved and being given a committee assignment. At the time, I ended up transitioning from my career as an engineer to go back to school.

TS: Yes. I was going to ask, when is it that you go to Georgia State [University] for public administration?

LC: Initially for English.

TS: Well, that's what I saw. I was wondering how that worked out. You were going to get a master's in English?

LC: I had this plan. I started getting a bug in high school about doing something different. I thought about engineering, I thought about law, I thought about teaching, teaching law, and ended up resting on what I knew. But as I was working for Kodak, I told you I just had a seat of unrest. And I remember having this epiphany that I was so used to the technical world I would never consider something different if I didn't just try. So, I decided I was going to have this game plan and become an attorney. I started going to different seminars; I'm going to law school. I remembered hearing that if you don't have over a 3.0, it will probably be less likely for you to get into law school. So, I thought, "Well, I can write. I love the thought of learning more about writing." And so, I decided to get a post-bac in English from Georgia State.

I did that while I was an engineer at Kodak. I did very well at Kodak with an assignment that I was given. I had opportunity to move, and I wanted to stay with

the company. But I knew that moving out of Atlanta wasn't going to be in the cards for me. So, when I came to that crossroads, I decided to leave Kodak. I was just ending up pursuing my English post-bac full-time. And I prepared for the bar exam shortly after finishing that degree.

TS: Okay. So, you go to Georgia State Law School?

LC: Well, let me even back up. Yes, because it wasn't that quickly. I remember having jury duty. I think I wanted to do law, but I had jury duty, and I ended up working for someone who was over the Regional Business Coalition [RBC of Metropolitan Atlanta], which is the Chamber umbrella for all of the Chambers [of Commerce] in the metro area, [Executive Director] Stephen Loftin, who lived in Cobb. That was my first insight into public service and government, and the bug just bit me. I started meeting people like Sam Olens [chairman of the Cobb County Commission from 2002 to 2010 before being elected attorney general of Georgia] and David Connell [president and CEO of the Cobb Chamber of Commerce from 2010 to 2017] and seeing the mayor walk through the Metro Atlanta Chamber and seeing developers. At that time I lived in the Six Flags area and was concerned about my community. So, I started inviting leaders to come to the Six Flags area to see what we can do to improve our community. And through that, I just got an interest in doing more.

I ended up working for the Governor's Office. They had a fellowship program that I pursued and was hired there as a policy analyst. I think the more I got into the field I started to see perhaps what the next trajectory of my life could look like. I thought I could better improve my community if I got an MPA [Master of Public Administration] and do some nonprofit work. But whenever we had land use and zoning in our community, these hotshot attorneys seem to know what to do, and they seem to be steering the course of my community. I felt like our community should be steering the course of our community. So, "Why don't I get my MPA and get my law degree at the same time." So, that gave me the wind beneath my wings to be serious about the law degree. I ended up studying for that. And my husband helped me in studying for it so much that he ended up taking the bar exam as well. We both got accepted in the Georgia State Law School at the same time.

TS: What years were you in law school?

LC: He started, I believe, in 2007, and I started the year after. I was just hired at the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget [OPB, in 2007], and I wanted to work there for a year first. So I believe I started law school in 2008.

TS: I was just trying to do my math. I guess this is before you had any kids?

LC: Not long before.

TS: Yes. They came about 2010 or something?

LC: I wonder if I started in 2007, because I didn't know I was pregnant until I was in my first year of law school, and I had my first child in 2008. I can't remember how I found out I was pregnant. But I don't perceive that I knew when I was accepted. I was going to pursue it, because I remember having a very unique experience my second semester.

TS: We can find the right date. Nobody can remember those dates.

LC: It wasn't yesterday, was it?

TS: No, a few years ago. So, you go through law school. And let me ask you: your husband and you have a practice together? Is that right?

LC: Well...

TS: No?

LC: We never practiced together. He helped me study for the bar exam, but it became very clear to me that our paths were separating in law school even before having my first child. I was working, but very soon after I had my first child, and he was pursuing law school full-time. Because I was working at OPB initially, I was pursuing law school part-time, because of work. Then, I realized because of having a child and then working that I was going to have to have another focus.

I ended up leaving work when I started law school. That's for another reason. I got laid off in 2008, during the housing downturn. I was working for a developer at the time. But I ended up getting a GRA [graduate research assistantship] where I was a research assistant. So, I was getting paid through that, and I had a child. Becoming a mom was the most, what's the word I can use, paradigmatic shift for me, because I never perceived myself to be a mom. I never prepared myself for it. I didn't do things to me that I see some of my girlfriends do that I think are more domesticated. I was an athlete. I was pursuing an engineering degree. I was about my career. I realized I'd never pushed myself to hold anybody's child. I was never interested in some things that they were interested in.

Then, when I had this child, I realized, I felt lost. I felt that I didn't know how to care for somebody else other than myself. And I didn't feel I was doing the best job caring for myself at the time. So, for me, law school was a struggle to the extent that as a mom with motherhood I struggled to try to transition into something that I didn't feel was by Mother Nature the natural evolution of who I was. From the trajectory in my habits in life, it just was something that was a different life.

My husband graduated in three years, and it took me about four or five years. I was getting my MPA at the time too. My attention was gravitating towards building stability in my home, because as I grew up, and I saw how hard my parents worked when transitioning to the States and creating a life for me and my sister, one thing that I think we always felt we were short of was time with my parents. And I didn't want to be that parent as much as being a parent felt initially awkward for me. I knew that I wanted to be present. My husband went to big law life, and I ended up running for office. I can't say I have a less busy schedule. I just never perceived I was going to be pursuing this full-time, working 12- or 15-hour-days like he did initially. I just knew that.

TS: I saw somewhere that you, at least for a while, were homeschooling your kids. And I was wondering where did you find the time?

LC: This gets into perhaps some things more personal. So I ran...

TS: You can just say what you want to say.

LC: I ran for office when I was in my last year of law school.

TS: I didn't realize that.

LC: Yes.

TS: So you hadn't had a chance to take on the Garvis Sams and the John Moores and so on at the time?

LC: Not as an attorney; I felt like I was better prepared to begin to address things because I had some legal background. But, no, I never practiced law. My husband, when he graduated, immediately took the bar. I didn't. Again, my focus was you do the law thing. I'm going to run for office. My plan is to serve my family and serve my community. I was pregnant with my third child while I was in office that I realized, "If I don't take the bar now, I probably will never do it," because my life was busy with children. But I had a very difficult time in my life in 2015 with the policing incident.

TS: I wanted to ask you about that later on. Go ahead and talk about it now.

LC: Yes. It changed everything in my family's life.

TS: Talk about that. I remember reading about it in the paper at the time.

LC: I'll personalize it, again, talking about the transition to home school, and then I'll talk about that incident. From going through that, having a child, losing a child during that year, after having a child, becoming pregnant, losing a child during that, the only reason I was taking the bar was because I thought I was having

another one. And things just became very stressful. My oldest child was a stellar student in a private school. My youngest child was struggling. I remember one time telling the teacher, "If you call me one more time about my youngest child's struggling, I'm going to bring him to work with me and educate him myself, because it's interrupting my day."

One time my husband and I got into a heated argument. It started over the homework, because homework was so stressful for us. We had a long day at work, and then homework would take two or three hours for these kids who were only in elementary school. I remember one day feeling like our whole family needed a reset. We needed to do things differently. And so we ended up homeschooling to reset our family, so that we can put first things first. And it gave me some time to spend with my children more and to realize my son who was struggling was actually a gifted learner. My son who was doing excellent in school is a great memorization learner. He struggles in comprehensive learning. These are things that I didn't know until I started homeschooling to learn there are different styles of learning.

But with the policing incident, while I was studying for the bar, I was studying at home. Boys have a different relationship with their moms. My children are mother's boys growing up. I remember my husband said, "Lisa, if you don't get out of this house to study, you're not going to pass this bar exam." He knew, because when he prepared for the bar, he would go lock himself in the basement. I remember one time even taking my child on a trip, so my husband can focus on his exam. And so, I think in his way of returning the favor and knowing what it took to pass the bar, he encouraged me not to study at home.

Before I ran for office, I was a HOA [home owners association] president for a time. I befriended a hotelier not far from our home. He had a conference room, and so, I asked him if I could use his conference room to study for the bar exam.

TS: And this is leading to the police incident?

LC: Yes. I was studying there every night. Sometimes, I would go there and study all day, study at night, sometimes till 1:00 and 2:00 in the morning. I remember this one particular incident, because I think when you have a pivotal event that occurs, you start focusing on all the things that have transpired. I remember leaving the hotel one night and talking to one of the staff members before I got in my car. He and I were just talking in the loading area, unloading area of the hotel. My car was parked out in front of it. I can't remember what we were talking about, but I got in my car to go home. Usually, when I go home at those times, nobody is on the road. This place was about a mile from my home, maybe a five-minute drive, just right around the corner. I remember I was seeing a car behind me. And then, as I made a right turn, it was behind me. Then, I made a left going down the street, and it was still behind me. I made a left into my neighborhood, and it made a left behind me, which seemed again very odd.

TS: So this is not a police car with markings on it?

LC: No. It wasn't a police car. It was just a vehicle, which made the whole incident difficult, because this is around the time where there were these incidents happening in Atlanta where people would just bump you in the back. You'd come out and you check on your car, think it was an accident, and then they would rob you. As I go up to my stop sign going up towards my street, this car starts following me very closely. That's when I knew something is wrong here. Later, I found out, this was an unmarked car, and the officer didn't have the equipment in his car to run my plate. So, he's trying to see my license plate and call it in. All I know is somebody's veering up to me...

TS: Getting very close.

LC: Getting very close. And the car to me at night looked very seedy, because its lights weren't fully bright. One of the lights was either out or partially out. So it just kind of looks suspect.

TS: Somebody needed to pull it over.

LC: And so, I thought my house is about the fifth or sixth houses on the left. But there's a very short cul-de-sac on the right. I thought, if I go into this cul-de-sac, the chances of this car going into this cul-de-sac of, like, five or ten homes out of a neighborhood of about three hundred homes, is very small. But then I'll know. Well, I turned into that cul-de-sac, and that person followed me. So, that's when I start to panic, thinking that I'm being targeted. I remember just throwing my bags in the floor, looking for my cell phone, calling 911, and racing out of my neighborhood, and going to a gas station, and just feeling vulnerable. And after calling 911, I learned that it was a Cobb County officer.

TS: The 911 operator told you?

LC: Yes. Needless, to say that spun into a whirlwind of...

TS: Did you ever find out why they were following you?

LC: Yes. They stated that there was crime occurring at the hotel. So, they were staking it out—not staking it out, but they were sitting there, I guess, trying to proactively catch somebody in crime. And they perceived that I was somebody there to commit a crime.

TS: Why?

LC: It's because I was there at night. And that became part of my argument of why I pushed so hard against the county. I kept telling my story, because it became an

issue of presence. It became an issue of just geographical circumstance. You are in an area that's a high crime area. You are at a building or business that has crime associated with it. You are here at a certain time at night. We're perhaps used to addressing crime at certain times of night in this area. So therefore, for you to be out is for you to perhaps be doing something nefarious.

TS: Yes. I saw a quote from you about the police should be policing criminals and not neighborhoods. Is that what's happening? They're policing a neighborhood?

LC: I believe that when they aren't targeted, that's what ends up happening. I can't speak for all officers, but I think from the communication with leadership and just with persons who have general thoughts about policing in Cobb and policing in certain areas, that certainly seemed to be a reasonable interpretation that if you are here, something can't be going well with you to be here.

I had a glimpse of this. Perhaps, I didn't know how acute it was, and perhaps I did. When my husband and I started getting involved in our community, we knew from a service perspective, things were difficult. I knew after leaving metro Detroit, and I heard about gunshots in the City of Detroit, I never heard of any in Southfield, which was the adjacent neighborhood. But in my neighborhood in South Cobb and Austell gunshots we're occurring. That was a regular occurrence. I remember as a law student we had a career fair for summer jobs going to the DA's office in Cobb or the solicitor—I can't remember if it was the DA or the solicitor—and seeking a summer position, and I was telling them where I lived. "I lived in this area. I'm looking for a job. What do you think I should do?" And the first response was, "Move."

TS: Wow.

LC: And that really offended me. Then, I asked them, "Why?" They would tell about crime. So, I think there was an attitude, and I feel like from subsequent and even preceding conversations I've had, it's just, "If you're in this part of the county, you're in a no good part of the county, and those that are there are up to no good." I certainly got the treatment of that. But I got the treatment of it as a commissioner, and I wasn't going to accept that.

TS: By that time, you were on the commission?

LC: I was on the commission. I was a district commissioner. I believed that if that kind of perception of who I was can be drawn about me, being one of the top five leaders in this county, by God, what kind of problem do we really have here?

TS: What was the community like at that time? Was the Six Flags area overwhelmingly African American? Was it diverse? How would you describe it?

LC: Yes. Even today, I perceive it to be overwhelmingly African American. I think as people move out more from the city, I've seen the neighborhood become a more diverse neighborhood. I live in probably one of the first single-family neighborhood communities that was built there in the mid-2000s off of Six Flags Parkway. We had another community that followed.

TS: So, they were living in apartments?

LC: Yes. So, I think that's what contributed to the perception of what was there. "This is a transient area." It's mostly nine or ten apartments that dotted Six Flags Drive. But I was in a new community off Six Flags Parkway. I still push back on that even with conversations today that a lot of what goes on probably for any community that's deemed perhaps a high crime community, it's not the majority of the community that's engaged in crime. It's a higher percentage of crime that occurs there than other areas, but that community, irrespective of whether my single-family home community was built there or not, was still deserving of public safety protection and not just interrogation.

TS: I've thought for years, we need a really good sociological study [of the growth of Cobb County]. I think you're doing some of that now with the county of who are the people who are living here? Why did they come here? What's the root cause of the crime in the area? I mean, why did you all move to this area? You could have moved to Johnson Ferry Road. In terms of Cobb becoming more diverse, I guess bluntly, did Black people move to Cobb County for the same reasons that white people moved to Cobb County, which is to say, if you go back to post-World War II, housing was a whole lot cheaper than it was in Atlanta, schools were good, crime was low, and you could get a nice house and a lot and so on? It might not have a sidewalk.

LC: Yes.

TS: But those are the kinds of things I think that caused the growth of Cobb County's population, along with good parks and good whatever.

LC: Yes.

TS: And to what degree was the population coming from Atlanta and what degree was it coming from suburban Detroit and other suburban areas in the north and elsewhere?

LC: I think those are all good questions, and we've been doing a lot of studies in the county inclusive of a strategic plan, but I don't know if that kind of analysis has been done, which I'd be very curious to know. What I perceive, being a commissioner, for some of the things I advocated for, I think the interests of those that live in South Cobb are the interests shared by other residents that live throughout the county. We want to create the best future possible for our

- families, for ourselves. We want good neighborhoods, good schools. My husband is a pretty practical guy who considers our resources. He knew that at the time he was working in the Sandy Springs area and I was working in Lawrenceville. He wanted to be very close to an interstate, so that we can just get on the road and go where we need to go. And he knew there was only so much money he wanted to spend. And the best home and the best community that we saw was there in the South Cobb area.
- TS: By the way, Craig must have decided he didn't really want to be in engineering too since he went to law school.
- LC: Yes. I remember him saying that from his studying he could marry his interest in business and in technology by going into an IP [Intellectual Property] space. And now my husband practices predominantly IP law, data security law.
- TS: Good. So, he's still using his engineering education.
- LC: Yes, he is.
- TS: Great. I think the first time I ever saw you was when you were running for office in 2012. I know you don't remember this at all, but Deane Bonner asked me if I would moderate a candidate forum for the Cobb NAACP, and you were there. You were running for office for the first time.
- LC: Yes. I remember with my red dress on and my hair in curls. I remember vividly, yes.
- TS: Why don't we talk about what made you decide to run? That was Woody Thompson's seat at the time.
- LC: Yes.
- TS: Woody Thompson had been in office twelve years. There was a gap between his first service and his last [1996-2004 and 2008-2012]. But I guess most people thought of him as a pretty good commissioner.
- LC: Yes.
- TS: I think he was a Democrat before he became a Republican because the county had changed?
- LC: Is that right?
- TS: I think that's true. His brother Steve was a Democrat.

- LC: I know Woody became a Democrat. I don't know if he was a Democrat, then became a Republican, then a Democrat. But I do know there was a controversy about him becoming a Democrat after being a Republican.
- TS: Oh, he switched back to the Democrats. I forgot that. About everyone was a Democrat [in Cobb County] at one time. Then, all of a sudden, when [the office holders] decided the voters had gone to the other way, they switched parties. But anyway, talk about that race. What were the issues? I know you had a very different perspective than Woody Thompson did.
- LC: Yes.
- TS: Talk about that. Who were your supporters and who were his?
- LC: That's a good question. I'd like to think the mature part of me was running for my community more than I was running against Woody Thompson.
- TS: Yes. That's a good way to put in.
- LC: But perhaps at that time, I was probably more targeted and looking at him personally. I felt like I was running against him. I was running both for and against. I share with you a bit of my service trajectory moving in my neighborhood. My interest was not political as much as it was addressing issues in my neighborhood, which span different areas.
- TS: Like zoning and police?
- LC: Very specific neighborhood concerns that were supposed to be addressed with our developer that never were. Commitments that were made, that were unmet; to gunshots at night; to seeing people walking in the road because there were no sidewalks, but we were in an industrial area seeing truck traffic competing with residents; to seeing homeless persons pandering as soon as you got off the exit; to seeing the place look unkept; to having flooding in our neighborhood when it would rain too hard. There were many issues that made me want to get engaged.
- TS: So, basically, you were not getting the services other parts of the county were getting?
- LC: That's how I felt after living in other areas. Why was this area not moving forward? I think when we bought our home, I had some rose colored glasses, and I saw that over time things were not changing or improving as I had perceived they would when I first moved in. So, I was going to meetings. Every meeting I proceeded to go to—town hall meetings, BOC [Board of Commissioners] meetings; all I knew was they were Tuesdays. I didn't know some were in the day; some were at night. I remember one time going to a meeting and hearing Commissioner Thompson speak against—he was the first person to speak against

transit service. I felt like, how can the commissioner of the area that depends on transit be the first to offer to cut transit services? I felt there was a complete disconnect. At that point, I knew there was a great disconnect between what was going on in my community and how those issues were being considered at the county.

TS: Now, was he talking about rail, or was he talking about CCT [Cobb Community Transit bus service]?

LC: I'm talking about CCT.

TS: He wanted to cut CCT?

LC: Yes. This was during the budget cuts that were being considered after the recession [of late 2007 and afterwards]. I've been serving for so long. I probably start getting involved in county meetings and civic organizations about 2004, 2005. This meeting didn't occur until about 2010. So, I didn't know anything about running for office. I really didn't care to run for office. I just wanted to make sure my area was being served. From going to those meetings, I realized there is a disconnect between our leadership and this community in more ways than I had even perceived.

I still didn't want to run for office. At that time, I was getting my MPA and my JD [Juris Doctor degree]. I remember having conversations with my husband. I had people in the community encouraging me to run for office. I was even being encouraged to run in 2008. But fast-forward, I had my first child, may have had my second child. I just didn't even see this in the cards for me even though people were encouraging me to run. I'll never forget my dad saying to me, "You want to do all this work as a nonprofit, so you can influence people to make decisions for your community when you can be the decision-maker of your community." And so, that made me realize, perhaps, I should be setting the bar a little bit differently.

TS: Well, you ran, and you won.

LC: Yes.

TS: Going back to my questions earlier, who were your supporters? Who were some of the people who backed you when you ran?

LC: My community did first. I lived in about a three hundred-home community. I would try to educate them on the matters in the community. I would bring leaders sometimes to come talk to our community. I would have events for our community and the neighboring community, which was built by the same developer, because I think those in that area were supporters. I also started a nonprofit partnership with different nonprofits in the South Cobb area. Our goal

was so that we could partner. This was encouraged by [Georgia State Representative] Alisha Thomas Morgan [2003-2015]. She invited me to a federal grant meeting.

TS: And she was in the House at that time?

LC: She was in the House at that time. I remember a comment shared in that meeting was that you have so many people from a community asking for money. If you want strength when it comes time to apply—I think [U.S. Representative David Scott [2003-present] held this meeting; I think he said or staff said it that you should be coming together and applying. So I thought, “Wow.” I remember sharing with Representative Morgan after the meeting. I said, “Wow, it’d be great if our communities came together, so we weren’t competing for funding. And I think maybe you can help pull us together.” She said, “Lisa, I think that’s a great idea, except you’re going to do it.” That became the start of that partnership. And so, I had some people who were supportive from that. And then, through that, I knew people from different areas of the county. I started to know people from Mableton, and then with the taskforce for Austell. There was a Powder Springs Taskforce and Mableton Improvement Coalition. We were in the same world. So, I realized that I knew leaders from other areas, and it spread out from there.

TS: I’ve got a quote I wanted to read. This is from Robin Meyer of the Mableton Improvement Coalition [as reported in the *Cobb County Courier*, April 25, 2017]. It says, “Whatever the issue is, she digs deep into it. She’s not generally a person to take things at face value...or at the sound bite level... Although I don’t necessarily always agree with her...I never believe that she’s where she is for lack of information.” So, it sounds like you always did your homework.

LC: Actually, I do my best to make decisions based on how much information I could get at the time. You have to remember, I used to be a policy analyst. Sometimes, I feel like I never do enough homework, so that’s why it’s hard for me to agree with you completely, because I feel like there’s so many issues going on. Sometimes, you can’t get all the information you want. But I try to make the best decision I can make with as much information as I can get at the time.

TS: Okay. You were on the Cobb County Commission for eight years as District 4 commissioner [2013-2021]. I guess you were the only African American on the commission and the only Democrat for most of that time.

LC: All of that time.

TS: This is a quote from you that I wanted you to talk about if I can find the quote. I can’t find it right now, but the gist of the quote is that you didn’t feel included on the commission. Does that sound correct? Can you talk about that? I don’t want

to dwell on this, but you were on that commission for eight years, and you were kind of like the Lone Ranger out there, right?

LC: Yes.

TS: I remember one run-in with Tim Lee where you ran out of the meeting, I think.

LC: Yes.

TS: I mean, he attacked you [during a verbal exchange while the commission was considering the creation of a Citizen Review Board to hear complaints about police behavior].¹ It took a lot of guts to stick in there for those eight years, didn't it? At least it sounds like it to me. I guess I really am interested in what you learned from those experiences and what it felt like to be, I guess, the one dissenter on the commission?

LC: I will say this. Most of the decisions we make will be unanimous decisions. But again, kind of piggybacking off of that comment from Robin [Meyer] that if I dissent from our board, I feel pretty strongly about my position, whether it's from a data perspective or a heart perspective. There are some things that you can get objective data, and then there're some things from a values perspective. I might make decisions based on my value system. And there were times when, yes, I did speak up with and had a difference of opinion. Yes.

TS: Okay. I did find the quote. It's from [*Georgia Trend* magazine, April 29], 2021. "As a commissioner, I didn't feel included on the board." But then you went on, "A significant priority of mine [as chairwoman by this time] is to ensure that I am at the very least engaging all our commissioners."

LC: Yes, and I need to stay true to that. I think I felt true to that to a significant extent when I first started. I don't know if I'm doing the best job of that right now.

TS: Well, I'm wondering, because the division on the commission now is three Democrats and two Republicans, three Black Democrats and two white Republicans.

LC: I think it's causing that tie that I wanted to bind us—I think it's worn it out in some very specific instances. It was worn out quickly. When I first started, I

¹ According to Atlanta television station WXIA [11alive.com, December 18, 2015], Commission Chairman Tim Lee accused Cupid of "seeking to create a media spectacle rather than seeking constructive solutions." She collapsed after running out of the room. After receiving emergency services, she returned to the meeting, and just before it adjourned, Chairman Lee offered an apology, saying, "The tone I used was not right. I have put on the record repeatedly that I will not tolerate any discrimination. There's no place for it in Cobb County."

realized there was one commissioner that it was going to be very difficult despite efforts. And then when the whole issue of redistricting and cityhood cropped up, it really created a wedge. There were some things that I did. I used to have meetings with all of the commissioners. At least, that was my goal. It initially was very difficult with one.

So, there were meetings with the other three. But I slowly started seeing that disappear. And not out of my desire. I can't force somebody to meet who doesn't want to meet. There were some things that I tried to do. I instituted some of our retreats. We didn't do that before when I was a commissioner for most of the time. I've done some other things to help prop up commissioners. But I think the task of trying to keep us together has just worn. It has just worn. Then it's a...

TS: It seems to me that when Cobb went from being all Democrat to Republican [by the 1970s and 1980s], there wasn't that much of a shift on the commission, because they were conservative Democrats replaced by conservative Republicans. Of course, 2020 was a big change in Cobb County in terms of elected officials.

LC: Yes.

TS: But it seems to me now that the difference is far more ideological as the Democrats take over the county [again].

LC: Yes. I think there are two things, three perhaps, even more. I think there are the ideological or political differences. And perhaps the polarization of those differences, I think, is more exacerbated now than I've ever seen. Perhaps, I'm seeing it now, because I'm not the only one. I couldn't afford to see it before [as a district commissioner]. I had to work with others to get things done. But I think there's also a rift between the chair and commissioners, because as a chair, your office is even isolated from the other offices in the building. You're looking at things from a whole broad perspective. As a commissioner, you're looking at localized issues. So, I think there's just that natural division and sometimes tension just through the construct of those roles. But, I also start to see a division as far as being tenured and being less tenured. Having new people on the board and persons who've been there before, I think, also created a bit of a challenge.

TS: Okay. You were a 2018 graduate of Leadership Cobb. I'm wondering why did you decide to go through that program when you were already in your second term on the commission?

LC: Exactly. I put it off for as long as I felt like I reasonably could, that being a leader in the county it would make sense to be a part of a leadership program that's in the county. But I can tell you my commitment to my family was paramount to everything, particularly after 2015. My children were very young when I was first elected; I protected that above everything. And then I protected my district above everything. So, I would rarely go to meetings that had regional focus or

anything. I just wanted to focus on District 4 and my family. I think I couldn't say no anymore. I felt like it was something that I just needed to do. I would get people to nominate me every year, and I would turn it down. So I ended up participating in the program.

TS: So, why did you decide to run for chairperson? At least by 2019, it looks like you had made up your mind that you were going to run.

LC: Yes. I think there are many factors that went into that. I think a lot of it had to do with, similar to my first run, a lot of people weighing in and encouraged me to run for chair. I was getting so tired of being sick and tired on the board that I knew I could not go another term as a commissioner. So I told somebody I felt like you either go hard or you go home. You give it all you have for the top position to truly change the dynamic or you find something else to do that can support community. So, that's what I did.

TS: So you decided to run?

LC: Yes.

TS: And Mike Boyce was commission chair at that time.

LC: Yes.

TS: He was going to run for a reelection.

LC: Yes.

TS: He had beaten Tim Lee four years earlier [2016] over the Braves [moving to Cobb County with public support] probably more than anything.

LC: Yes.

TS: I'll read a quote or two from you. This is 2019 in the *Cobb County Courier*: "I think it's time for us in Cobb County...to recalibrate to ensure that we are being inclusive to all our stakeholders here in Cobb."

LC: Wow.

TS: And you said, "We tend to be looking backwards, and narrowly, at matters instead of looking at how can we make sure this has the broadest impact on everyone, and not just for today."

LC: Wow. That sums it up well.

TS: Okay. So, that's why you were running?

LC: That's why I ran, and that's why I still continue to serve.

TS: What would you say were the issues against Mike Boyce?

LC: I can't say this was....hmm...interesting...

TS: I mean, you and Mike Boyce were oftentimes on the same side on issues and things.

LC: Yes. I will speak, God rest his soul, I can only speak from a limited perspective. He could only speak truly to his perspective. My observations were, I think he and I had a lot of shared interests. But I think he was boxed in by where the majority of the board was. I felt as if some decisions that were being made were not helping to move the concerns that I had about being mindful, at least, of all of Cobb. But when I speak mindful of Cobb, at that point, I'm probably thinking about elements of District 4, those that are moderate in income; communities of color; those that have traditionally not been actively engaged.

I found being a district commissioner, and even the chair, those pockets exist perhaps beyond; I know they existed beyond Six Flags or beyond some pockets in Mableton or even the Fair Oaks area. But I felt as if he was being boxed in not just by the majority position of the board, but I think when you're running for office and particularly running for a primary—running for office today is a very polarizing experience, because you win in the primary. And I think some decisions may have been considered that were thinking about that. But if I look at a Republican primary and a Democratic primary, you have people who are being moved for very different issues.

I felt like he wanted to move things along, and now as I look back, I feel like he was trying to moderate his position as much as he reasonably could, understanding the party that he's representing, and who would support him. But also as chair, your eyes become open to the needs of all the county. So, I think he was certainly sensitive to some of the issues that I had. But when certain decisions were being made, I felt like all it continued to do was keep us back—behind. And I felt like if you're not moving up, you're actually not just staying in the position, but you're actually moving further behind. It got to the point of absolute frustration.

TS: Yes. Well, it seemed to me he was very gracious in defeat when it was over, unlike another candidate in 2020 who wouldn't accept defeat.

LC: Exactly. I mean, we were gracious; I think he was gracious before that. I think we not only agreed on some policy issues. I think we agreed on issues of the heart where we were not going to come out and attack each other. We were colleagues. That doesn't mean we probably didn't give each other an

- uncomfortable time on occasion. But I think we had a certain respect of persons in a faith that made this perhaps a respectable race.
- TS: Well, 2020 was groundbreaking in lots of ways in Georgia, I think. But I think, Cobb County to have an all female commission elected in 2020 and a female county manager as well, who was already in the position before the election.
- LC: Yes.
- TS: That's pretty unique. Do you know of anywhere else in the country that has an all-woman commission?
- LC: It's funny you say that in the country. I'm not aware of anywhere else in the state, but I never perceived the country. That's a good question.
- TS: I'd like to know, because I've never heard of any. I think Cobb has been very unique in this regard.
- LC: I really think we have been unique. But, again, I consider that uniqueness from a state perspective, not from the national perspective that you made.
- TS: Well, we need to do some research on that, I guess.
- LC: Yes.
- TS: You made a comment in your last State of the County address. I forgot what the budget was, \$1.2 billion or something like that, and you made a flippant remark about women in power were administering it very efficiently.
- LC: Yes. I think we have to give ourselves some credit as thoughts about what leadership could look like and what we're able to do. We've been able to manage that budget and still maintain our county's Triple AAA credit rating for the time that this board has been in place. So, when it comes to doing some of the staple things of having efficient government, we've been able to keep that reputation for our county.
- TS: I think, what, has it been twenty-five years in a row that we've had the Triple-AAA?
- LC: Now twenty-six we've received this.
- TS: I guess it's obvious to everybody, but it makes a big difference if you've got a Triple-AAA rating in terms of borrowing money, doing what you need to do.
- LC: Exactly.

TS: Well, you come in also at the time of a pandemic. Could you talk about that a little bit? It certainly took a lot of your time in those early days that the country was going through the COVID epidemic.

LC: Yes. One of the blessings and banes of life is that life moves on. Because we've had to move on from the direness of that event, I think we don't sometimes reflect and think about how all of our lives came to a screeching halt. Life as we knew it, county government as we knew it, services as we knew it.

TS: You weren't having regular commission meeting for the public for a while, were you?

LC: Correct. We started back a lot earlier than some others. In March, I think, things came to its height of 2020. But I remember in May we started meeting remotely at that time in our offices with cameras on. Cobb was one of the first counties to start back regular meetings. I can't remember when we started meetings in-person. We may have been meeting as a board in-person, but with masks on and distanced at the time.

TS: It's incredible how much money came from the federal government.

LC: Oh, my goodness.

TS: American Rescue Plan Act. I've got \$147 million.

LC: Correct. And that followed \$132 million from the CARES Act.

TS: That's right, so, the two together, you've got a quarter billion.

LC: A lot of money.

TS: I know there's a little controversy I guess from that commissioner you were talking about earlier over the \$90 million that went to nonprofit providers. Well, we don't need to get into that.

LC: I don't consider that to be more controversial than others...

TS: Well, there was a question about your husband being on the board [of one of the recipients].

LC: Oh, I don't remember if she was involved in that or not. I can't even remember the details of it. But, yes, he was serving...

TS: Well, he was on the board of the Center for Family Resources.

LC: The Center for Family Resources. Yes. And they were recipient of our CARES Act funding. I think we were trying to ensure that some of our local organizations were helping with the emergency. We were distributing CARES Act, but I believe this was Emergency Rental Assistance. We were giving some of those funds to organizations outside of Cobb, and I was trying to get them to our organizations that were providing rental assistance in Cobb.

TS: So that's what the Center for Family Resources was doing?

LC: Yes. They are our significant provider for services in addition to MUST Ministries. And we also brought Sweetwater Mission to the table. But to be honest, there are about eight or nine organizations that are traditionally funded through our CDBG program, our Community Development Block Grant program. But there was not an appetite to expand the program beyond five providers, and we already had two that were outside of Cobb. And so we just looked at who are the dominant providers.

TS: You mentioned the home rule issue a little bit earlier, I think.

LC: Yes.

TS: We did an oral history with Jerica Richardson. Of course, she's the one that was affected when the legislature redistricted her out of her district.

LC: Yes.

TS: I guess, she's running for Congress now, but to me there is an interesting academic issue over who should have control over districting. Maybe there's a larger question in here too beyond the issue of what the state legislature or the county commission have control over. Do you have any opinions on what we should be doing in the country to stop partisan gerrymandering in general? I'm not saying that this particular district has partisan gerrymandering. People can decide for themselves, or you can tell us what you think. But just maybe on a philosophical level, is it a problem? It seems to me that it's a problem in the country and has been forever, I guess. What can we do maybe to make sure that everybody is represented equally in a country? Is it having an appointed redistricting commission? Can politicians handle this without being partisan?

LC: That's a good question. Maybe it's a combination of the two. I think we're so far gone, it's hard to consider how this gets dialed back. One thing I've learned as an elected official, it takes some time for you to learn the process. And then as you're learning the process, you become an expert in that process. It's difficult to want to see things change at that point.

TS: As you become more of an expert, it's harder to change things?

LC: I think so, because then to me that will be a diminishment of power. It took you so long to get it, because usually when you start, it just takes some time to understand and be able to become effective in that system. I guess, even from a federal level moving into certain types of positions or committees or roles, that it is difficult, I think, to consider an elected official depersonalizing it to look at a broader interest. But I do perceive that they are able to represent their constituency in determining what the outcome is or if something were to be different.

What I see as a result of it is that our politics are polarizing where you win your election in the primary. But less people are paying attention in the primary. Those that are more wedded to those interests that reflect a party interest, I think, are going to be more acute at the primary level, which I think fosters that divide. There really is no need to come back to the center when there's no debate or competition at that level. No true debate that would impact outcome; I would say that for a lot of our jurisdictions. Somebody who looks at this a lot longer than I would have to probably proposes a better solution than I can, just on my observations.

TS: Okay. But the county has drawn its map, and I guess that's in the courts now.

LC: Yes. Tongue in cheek, we've drawn our map. Really, the map that we've adopted is a map that was supported by our local delegation, which is a majority Democratic legislative body. But the state body is mostly Republican. I think that may have lent itself to us not having the same autonomy that we've had in the past where if our local delegation passes a map that would ultimately be the map.

TS: So by tradition, if the local delegation wants this map, it's rubber stamped at the state level, but not in this case?

LC: Yes. And this isn't just for Cobb. It's been other counties across the state have had that similar issue, which makes it very difficult to perceive that this isn't due to partisan interest.

TS: Well, it should be interesting to see how the courts handle it.

LC: Yes. I think what makes Cobb different than the other jurisdictions is that we're the only county, I perceive, that has impacted a sitting elected official in their term. This is not the first time lines have been redrawn and people have been redrawn in their districts unfavorably. I think this is the first time somebody has had their district drawn while they're in the seat and expect them to not be in a position to continue serving, because they're drawn outside of their district.

TS: But in this case, she's going to be able to stay in until her term ends.

LC: Right. Now, certainly she can unless it's...

TS: Depending on the courts?

LC: Depending on the courts, depending on if the legislature does something different. And, whoever comes next to her, our maps that we've supported as a county will be the maps until there's a successful challenge.

TS: Okay. Well, it's interesting, isn't it?

LC: To say the least.

TS: To say the least. I wanted to talk about some of the major policy issues in transit. We've talked about that earlier on when you were trying to get from Johnson Ferry Road to Georgia Tech and what have you.

LC: To the other side of Johnson Ferry.

TS: I guess, we're going to have a referendum next year?

LC: That's the plan.

TS: And I guess part of the issue has been over how long the plan's going to be for, ten years, twenty years, thirty years, whatever?

LC: Yes.

TS: For Cobb County, historically, I think there was a feeling that rail transit is too expensive for a county where you've got people spread out all over creation in single family homes and not enough concentration near the train stations, I guess, to give people an incentive to want to use the rails.

LC: Perhaps.

TS: Okay. I mean, that's what I've heard.

LC: Yes. I think of Kennesaw State, which is on I-75 North in Cobb County. How many students are here? I think this is a good population that could be sourced. I found it very interesting in a recent visit that I took to New York. I visited an uncle in New Jersey by train in an area that is predominantly single family home. But yet, they have a rail line that goes into that community. And a lot of their citizens commute to other parts of New Jersey and to New York with that access. I would have to compare population numbers to see the comparison or contrast with Cobb; to see, if it can work there, why not here?

TS: So, you want to run rail or you're thinking about running rail lines into all parts of the county?

LC: I don't think that...well, let me just concur with you. I don't necessarily perceive rail being an option that's viable for all of the county. I don't know if it will be initially for any part of the county due to the significance of cost—the timeline it would take to possibly acquire property for that kind of undertaking, unlike bus rapid transit, which can utilize existing roadways.

But the arguments around density, I don't know if that's conclusive. It's arguable that it's not always a chicken and egg argument, because you can build it, and that density might follow versus having to build it only because that density preceded it. In an area like KSU where you know you're going to continue to grow as a university, you have a sizable population. So that's why I hesitated when you stated that, because who's to say that there could not be significant value today in having rail here, to bring metro Atlanta to the doorstep, because Kennesaw State is attracting students certainly throughout Cobb, throughout metro Atlanta, throughout the state, throughout the nation, or region, and even the world.

So, you can't tell me that this Cumberland area couldn't be ripe for [rail transit] based off of its development today or that KSU couldn't be ripe for it. Arguably, there are other parts of the county. Perhaps the Six Flags area couldn't be ripe for it today, but I don't know if there is the willingness to invest the type of dollars for rail today.

TS: Because it's expensive?

LC: Yes.

TS: I guess, the question is, where would you put the rails if you ran them? Right down I-75?

LC: That's the challenge with having an already built out environment, because to build it in a place that's built out would, I'm sure, have more engineering costs and even to create that type of project to understand the feasibility.

TS: Do we know who rides the buses? I think when we started CCT, the argument was it's going to help people get to work.

LC: There was a study done in the county in 2016 that identified 80 percent of our users at that time were using it to get to school or to work. So, that's a number that I go to often to signify the importance of rail to us, not just solely from a transportation lens, but from a workforce and economic development lens.

TS: I guess it's related to transit, but you were talking about sidewalks earlier, and there is a term "pedestrian deserts." I guess we've got plenty of pedestrian deserts in Cobb County where you take your life in your hands if you get out and walk.

LC: Exactly. I won't even call it a desert. It's probably a term that's direr, because that's exactly what it feels like when you're walking, just in dealing with traffic during the day. And if you can imagine walking at times where it's darker at night and just the poor visibility factor multiplies the risk a lot of people who are utilizing their two feet to get from point A to point B are facing.

TS: Yes. I think you've been very much concerned recently about pay for public employees and making it possible for them to make enough money to actually live in the communities that they're serving. I think you said in your State of the County address [June 12, 2023] that we've got a \$17 minimum wage.

LC: Yes. So I think if you work here, you should be able to live here. If we're creating an environment where that's not possible, then we better be supportive of how we get people here. You can't have both and think that we're going to have a structurally sound place to live in and to shop in. It just doesn't work that way. I think it's been a very difficult argument to make about how livability and transportation fit, but also how livability and the service level of our county also dovetail. We're being mindful of serving our residents, so that they can have a high quality of life here. That costs money. Not just from an infrastructure perspective but from a service perspective, we have to pay people to deliver the service. And if you're expecting a high quality of service, that costs a commensurate amount of money as well.

TS: Your ARC representative [Mike Alexander, ARC Chief Operating Officer], when you were doing your State of the County address, if I heard him correctly, said half of Cobb residents spend over 30 per cent of their income on rent. And that's higher than it's supposed to be, I guess.

LC: Correct.

TS: I was listening to a radio show this morning that gave me some new terms like middle housing [medium-density housing] and upzoning [increasing zoning density to encourage affordable housing]. I wanted to ask you, I think it's fair to say that you're in favor of more affordable housing in Cobb County.

LC: Yes.

TS: And I know it's controversial.

LC: Yes.

TS: But do you have any thoughts on how...one of the things I was hearing this morning is it's just the law of supply and demand, that the demand for housing is much greater than the supply.

LC: Correct.

TS: And a big part of the problem is I've seen in Marietta duplex houses disappear to be replaced with \$400,000 townhouses. But a big part of the problem has been government. It's been zoning that, I guess, middle housing, smaller houses, basically, have been zoned out because of density issues or what have you. I guess there's a question in here somewhere. What's your vision of what the county ought to be like in terms of housing? And should there be more affordable housing? Where is it going to come from? Is it going to be churches building affordable houses on some of their properties? Or how are we going to do this?

LC: We're trying to understand that. We recently had the Atlanta Regional Commission conduct a study of our housing inventory, and they provided some suggestions on policy for us to begin to tackle this complex, but serious, need nationally and certainly locally. I don't have all of the answers. I can share with you some observations.

TS: Okay.

LC: One of them, as recent as yesterday, we had a zoning for single-family senior homes that was asking for a greater density than what the future land use maps of this area would have. There was an interest to reduce the number of homes that could be within the future land use map specifications. But the district commissioner provided opportunity for them to build more homes. So it gets them a greater density, but not the greatest density that they desired. Certainly, the more homes you build, probably the more shared cost between each of the homes and the developer can reduce the cost. So there may be some question of affordability, I guess, to offset supply and demand if there are more units out there. But I think that what she did was she considered how could she provide a greater supply but in a way that was consistent with the character of a community.

If there are not wholesale changes to future land use, which is that comprehensive look at development and where the community and the commissioners desire the community to go, I think, whatever you do to address affordability should be similar to what we've planned for. Either those future land use plans need to change or we'd look at how we can perhaps increase what we're providing within that framework. So, she was able to do that yesterday, I believe, with some concession.

I think there's also another way which could be of controversy, but gets to the duplex argument, is that you can look at your existing inventory and character that I may have a single family home community, but it has that single family in that single family home. But there are some communities that may allow the home to be partitioned so that two families can live there. That works from a structural perspective. It has the same look, but you're providing more opportunity for people to live there.

TS: We did it during World War II. In fact, the house I'm living in now was divided in World War II.

LC: It's interesting you share that, because sometimes I think we need to realize, we're not always reinventing the wheel. Sometimes, when new ideas are shared, it's such a shock to the way things are that it's not perceived that at some point, this idea truly had utility, and it was actually implemented. So, I'm going to share that that this was implemented then.

I lived in Rochester, New York, and I have a twin sister who lives in Louisville, Kentucky. You see these older homes that have been partitioned. It's so interesting—the vibrancy that comes out of these communities. You see younger people living there. Some of the same establishments, you may see seniors who are living there, who are trying to perhaps not have to take care of all of the landscaping of a property. So what's been done, but then it gets to density of not just the physical structure. Do people not want other people living by them or only want a certain number of people living by them? And then there's a thought of this is a family living next to me. It could be an individual, because we also have restrictions on how many unrelated people can live in a single-family residence. So the character is not just the structure itself, but the character becomes who are those people by me? How are they living by me?

It's very difficult to overcome that when you have an elected official that wants to zone in a way that comports with those that are actively engaged in the zoning process. You want to be responsive as an elected official. You want to be responsive to who is in front of you, but also to those broader needs. And I think that's where the challenge comes.

TS: Yes. You've done, I think you call it, a disparity study?

LC: Yes.

TS: Which, I guess, is designed to bring more minority-owned businesses where they can do business with the county. Is that the idea?

LC: Yes. We just awarded a contract to have an economic disparity study completed. It's a legal step for any procurement department, I believe, in government, to set any goals around particular populations, whether it's women-owned businesses, minority-owned businesses, and we're also looking at service-disabled veteran-owned businesses.

TS: So, they're veterans, but veterans who are disabled?

LC: Yes, who are disabled in the service. This is a term that's identified through the Small Business Administration where there are certain considerations for that

class, which is why it's so tightly labeled. So we are consistent with that approach.

TS: So, this would be to give them a fair shot of getting a government contract?

LC: Yes. And it's—you say a "fair shot." So, looking at their proportion in the population, seeing can we provide a goal number that's commensurate to their proportional existence within a market.

TS: Okay. I wanted to ask you about the Braves.

LC: Okay. I was thinking about that—"He's not going to talk about the hottest topic."

TS: Okay. Well, I don't want to miss that. I know you voted against the deal originally to bring the Braves here, because you said they hadn't studied it enough and it needed more discussion. But you're a big supporter of the Braves now, so...

LC: I would say, I never have been unsupportive about the Braves. I have not been a fan of the terms and the timing and the level of transparency of how we crafted those initial agreements to have them come into the county, which created this framework of how they were going to exist here. I believe that if we spent more time going through the terms of this document that we could have had a greater return to the county. Don't get me wrong. We've had a great return to the county. We could have had an even greater return that could have considered some other positive impacts that the stadium could have had here.

TS: I guess the question at the time of the debate was how much of an economic impact the Braves were having in light of how much the county was paying to get them here. Do you have any thoughts on that?

LC: Yes.

TS: Okay. I'm sure you do.

LC: Well, look, this is a significant investment! Talking about timing, one of the things that made this challenging at the time to consider this \$650 million joint venture is that we were still coming out of the detrimental impact that that recession of 2008-2009 was having in the county. So, a lot of our service levels weren't even restored to pre-recession levels at the time. And we were always telling our citizens, our staff, "Just wait; we'll get there." So, you don't have money to restore your service levels to what they have been in the past. But all of a sudden, you find hundreds of millions of dollars to spend on something that is far outside the scope of traditional considerations of public service. That was the challenge at the time. It's not that I don't think that Cobb could be innovative or should be innovative or should invest in things that help to build our county. It

- was just the cloak of those circumstances that made this very difficult to come out in support.
- TS: Yes. The Battery [the mixed-use development next to the baseball stadium] seems to be booming economically.
- LC: Every time I go to the Battery, I'm just intrigued by the vibrancy out there. It doesn't matter what day of the week, what time of the week, people are out there eating and shopping; kids are playing in the green; it's a vibrant place.
- TS: I think the interesting thing is that the Braves didn't add to the traffic problems so much, because people are getting there early and staying late.
- LC: That's a good point. I thought that was well thought out—that people really spend a whole day there when there's a game.
- TS: Yes.
- LC: Hopefully, they want to spend the night there too with one of the hotels.
- TS: Apparently, a lot of young couples are moving into that area too.
- LC: Yes. I think the Cumberland area has, perhaps, always been considered more of an urban-approaching area if not urban. So, I think younger families have been attracted to that area and Smyrna. Smyrna is one of our more family-oriented communities with younger families. Yes.
- TS: Well, I wanted to wind things up with some maybe visionary type questions of where you think Cobb County is going. You said in your State of the County address that embracing diversity is our economic future. Can you elaborate on that a little bit, embracing diversity is our economic future? I mean, we're right on the cusp, if we're not there already, of being a majority-minority county.
- LC: Yes.
- TS: Kennesaw State has a majority-minority student body already, although the faculty is not there yet. But the student body...
- LC: Interesting.
- TS: Certainly is. It becomes a little bit more diverse with each passing year.
- LC: Yes.
- TS: What's the connection with embracing diversity and our economic future?

LC: Okay. Let's look at this from a statistical perspective. If you were to look at the socioeconomic character of the county, what is the median income of a certain household based on race? There are disparities if you were to look across racial lines. But yet a lot of your economic momentum comes from those median income levels. I'm able to attract certain types of businesses who are going to frequent there. I even had banks say there has to be a certain home price there for them to consider moving into an area. So, if you are looking to an activation of an area, if we have a growing minority population that is not as economically solvent as others, but they're growing, that means that we might see that economic median income fall. So to me, if we want to maintain our strength and vibrancy and vitality as a county, we want everyone doing well and improving where they are on that economic spectrum.

Now, I would say income level is strongly correlated with education levels, and that is strongly correlated with the strength of your schools. So, if we want to maintain our strong school system as a county, there should also be consideration around the income levels around our schools and educational attainment. If you were to look at one of these very glaring maps that I viewed from these engines that assess the quality of schools, and you were to look where the green flags are on one of these maps and look where the red flags are, they are strongly correlated with income levels here at the county where the red flags are more strongly correlated in those limited income minority areas. But we're growing in minority population. I think it's important to look at how our education system is being responsive to communities of color, to make sure that those students are able to be just as successful as the majority of our populations.

From a building perspective, I think, it's important for us to look at how we don't just segregate housing so that we are pigeonholing areas to always have challenges with schools and challenges with attracting grocery stores or other amenities, and look at how do we create a possibility for having mixed income in these communities, so that we don't have areas that are well established that continue to move ahead and areas that are just in decline. So, it's from a geographic perspective but, as we said, also from a demographic perspective, as persons of color are moving throughout the county, just making sure that we are doing things to ensure that everybody is going to be doing well here. And I look at that from a business perspective.

Now, if you have minority businesses, and they're faring well, they might be hiring minority employees. They're increasing the likelihood that anybody in their organization is going to be able to do better economically. So, to me, it just makes sense as we're diversifying as a county, to make sure that we are doing those things that will keep us economically viable into the future.

TS: Is the ARC study available to the public?

LC: That's a good question. It should be. It can be if it isn't. I don't know, but it certainly can.

TS: I'd certainly like to read it.

LC: Yes. I think it's worth posting.

TS: It's interesting to me that as the county has become more diverse, it has remained just as affluent as it ever was, if not more so.

LC: Interesting.

TS: Yes. Although that's taking the median income.

LC: That's a very good observation.

TS: There could still be a whole lot of people that are way below the median that I know you're concerned about.

LC: That gets to an observation that you've made; do you perceive that persons of color are moving here for the same reasons that others are moving here? And perhaps, so. For one, if you look at home prices, certainly you would think that those moving into single-family homes are those that can afford to move here. And, perhaps, there's becoming greater parity amongst our citizens, irrespective of race, based on just their income, that there are probably persons who are earning more and able to afford more here in Cobb.

TS: You said in a *Georgia Trend* interview a couple of years ago [2021]—I guess, the question was, “Are you optimistic about the county's future?” And you said, “The future belongs to the optimists. Even when there are challenges, you can't lead focusing on the [difficulties]. I have to think, what are the opportunities?” I thought that was a great statement.

LC: Thank you.

TS: Could you elaborate on what you see as the future for Cobb County?

LC: Perhaps, I can look at it through an optimist's lens.

TS: Maybe I should ask, what do you want the county to be, say, twenty years from now?

LC: I think we continue to build on our strengths. We have a great school system, generally; I share with you some pockets where our performance levels are different. We do have beautiful communities, great amenities. We continue to attract top businesses here. What's the secret sauce? Let's keep that going. But I

think we have to ensure that the pockets that we have that aren't as successful have the ability to be. So it might not be that we create another Cumberland or Town Center area. How do we have more broad scale neighborhood development that could be building the economic strengths of communities that are ripe for redevelopment? I think that is an opportunity.

Something that I think people can rally around is to me having those walkable or bikeable areas. People love parks and recreation. I'm very proud of our Parks and Recreation department and amenities that we have here. But are they accessible? Do people get there? Could they walk there? Could they run there? Also, I think people are getting around differently. So, making sure that we have those options available. Eighty percent of our riders are utilizing our bus system to get to school and to work. We want to make sure we continue to be a strong, educated county. Can people get to KSU conveniently from throughout the county?

We can provide services that can help to bring areas of the county that wouldn't traditionally get here by car here to the county. Something that I was alluding to with the sidewalks—are we a healthy county coming out of the pandemic? I've learned that those that were probably more susceptible to death were those that had health challenges even leading into the pandemic. So, what are some things that we can do, whether its sidewalks, giving people an opportunity to walk through their community, or looking at how we're distributing amenities throughout the county? Are there grocery stores that people can get to? How was our health service being provided throughout the county? I think there's a number, like, 14 percent of our residents here don't have insurance.

TS: Oh, really?

LC: Yes. So, there are some things to look at not just from a built perspective or just a race and income perspective, but some of those other indicators that hint towards the health of our community. Yes.

TS: Well, you've won every award in the world, I guess: the 2021 Woman of Distinction from Cobb Executive Women, and I could go on and on. There's a whole laundry list of awards. I'm wondering maybe if we could end—I know you're probably not thinking any further than the 2024 election right now. I wrote down in my notes 1924, but I meant 2024. What are your aspirations for the next decade?

LC: I look forward to having a whole week where I get eight hours of sleep per night. I think that's going to be in my future.

TS: I would wonder, you must not sleep. You can't do all you do and get much sleep at night.

LC: I mean, that's a serious goal because I try to be as present for my family as I try to be towards the community. And so, the reality is it means that I sacrifice some time that I have for some basic things and inclusive of that. I never perceived in most years of my life that I would ever be in the position that I'm in today. I don't think that I've gotten here by setting my eyes on a particular position. I've gotten to this point of my life through service. I want to lean with that and proceed that whatever doors open for me will lead off with me serving.

What I would like to do perhaps is be even more intentional about that though with another term as chair and maybe beyond it. Something that I've been mindful of is our younger population. I've started a [Cobb County] Youth Commission. And I've also started Cobb 101 [Citizens Government Academy] to make sure that information about how Cobb County runs is being shared broadly, because I believe the more educated people are, the more engaged they will be, because they understand how government runs and the more effective they can be in impacting its outcome. So, educating the public, I think, will probably be something I want to be even more intentional about—bringing in younger people, because as my children get older and I get older, I see that if we're not bringing people up, then we can't complain about the rift or divide, lack of knowledge that people may have about local government. And so, there's more I want to do with that.

I also have a heart towards the underserved. I have this law degree, and I always wanted to be an advocate for the voiceless. Somehow, I still need to convince myself that I'm passionately doing that work as an elected official. I want to be doing that kind of work as an elected official. There's just a different approach to doing that, I think, as an attorney practicing in a courtroom, than someone who's a policymaker. But I want to make sure that my time is spent bringing up people who have not necessarily been reflected in our policies, so that everybody here has a chance of success.

TS: Wow. Is there anything that you wanted to talk about that we haven't asked in this interview?

LC: I was thinking about that. Again, I was thinking about the Braves, wondering will we talk about the Braves, because I think that was a defining moment in my life. That was a defining moment for me as a commissioner. I can't think of anything in particular right now.

TS: Well, I think what you just said is a good way to end the interview.

LC: Yes, sounds good.

TS: So we'll just stop it at this point. Thank you very much.

LC: You're very welcome.

INDEX

- Alexander, Mike, 33
- American Rescue Plan Act, 28
- Atlanta Braves, 25, 36-37, 41
- Atlanta Regional Commission, 33, 34, 38
- Austell, Georgia, 10
- Austell Community Task Force, 11, 22

- Berry College, Rome, Georgia, 9
- Bonner, Deane, 19
- Boyce, Michael H. (Mike), 25-27
- Boys and Girls Clubs, 5, 8

- CARES Act, 28-29
- Cobb Chamber of Commerce, 12
- Cobb Community Transit (CCT), 21, 32, 40
- Cobb County, Georgia
 - East Cobb, 6
 - Transportation, 7, 10-11, 37
 - Austell/Six Flags area, 10, 12, 17-19, 22, 26, 32
 - Cobb County Commission
 - Police controversy, 14-17, 23
 - Election of an all-woman commission with a female county manager, 27
 - Triple AAA credit rating, 27
 - Redistricting controversy, 29-31
 - Transit referendum, 31-32
 - Pay for county employees, 33
 - Affordable housing, 33-35, 39
 - Economic disparity study, 35-36
 - Role in bringing the Braves to Cobb County, 36-37
 - Growth in population and diversity, 18-19, 37-39
 - Fair Oaks area. 26
 - Center for Family Resources, 28-29
 - Emergency Rental Assistance, 29
 - Community Development Block Grant Program, 29
 - Cumberland Mall area, 32, 37, 40
 - The Battery area, 37
 - Town Center area, 40
 - Parks and Recreation Department, 40
 - Cobb County Youth Commission 41
 - Cobb 101 (Citizens Government Academy), 41
- Cobb County School District, 38, 39
- Cobb Executive Women, 40
- Cobb NAACP, 19

Connell, David, 12

Cupid, Craig, 9-10, 12-15, 17, 19, 21, 28-29

Cupid, Lisa

- Family background, 1
- Grandmother, 1
- Father, 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, 21
- Mother, Yvonne Smith, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14
- Childhood experiences, 2-7
- Undergraduate experience at Georgia Tech, 4-9
 - Participation on track team, 5, 9
 - Involvement in service organizations, 5, 8
 - Move out of the dorm, 6-7
 - Undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering, 7-8
- Sister, 6, 14, 35
- Parents' move to East Cobb, 6
- Early knowledge of Cobb County traffic problems, 7, 10-11
- Post-baccalaureate degree in English, 7, 11
- Work for Kodak
 - Writing standard operating procedures, 8
 - Participation in a manufacturing leadership rotation program, 8
 - Work in Rochester and work in Lawrenceville, 10-11, 35
 - Decision to leave Kodak, 11-12
 - Attendance in Georgia State Law School, 12
- Law school, 8, 12-14, 17, 21
- Marriage to Craig, 9-10
- Living in Six Flags area, Austell, Georgia, 10, 12, 17-22
- Community service in Cobb County, 11, 20-22, 41
- Policy analysis for the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget, 12-13, 22
- MPA in Public Administration, 12-14, 21
- Children, 12-15, 21, 24, 41
- First election to Cobb County Commission, 14, 19-22
- Home schooling, studying for the bar exam, and a policing incident, 14-17
- Home owners association president, 15
- Service as a district commissioner, 22-26
- Graduate of Leadership Cobb, 24
- Chairwoman of Cobb County Commission
 - Efforts to include and engage all the commission, 23-24
 - Reasons for running for chair, 25-26
 - Running a county during the COVID pandemic, 28-29, 40
 - Thoughts on redistricting controversy, 29-31
 - Thoughts on transit referendum and need for sidewalks, 31-33, 40
 - Thoughts on land use maps and affordable housing, 33-35
 - Disparity study, 35
 - Move of Atlanta Braves to Cobb County, 36-37, 41
 - Thoughts on embracing diversity as Cobb's economic future, 37-40
 - Vision of Cobb's future, 39-41

Awards, 40
Creation of Youth Commission and Cobb 101, 41

Detroit, Michigan, 2, 3, 5, 17
 Automobile industry, 2
 Suburb of Southfield, Michigan, 3, 17
 Wayne Center, 4
Dutch Guiana (Suriname), 1

Eastman Kodak Company, 8-12

French Guiana, 1

Georgia State University, 11-12
Georgia Tech, 4-11
Guyana, 1, 4

Kennesaw State University, 2, 31-32, 37, 40

Lawrenceville, Georgia, 10, 19
Leadership Cobb, 24
Lee, Timothy Douglas (Tim), 23, 25
Loftin, Stephen, 12
Louisville, Kentucky, 35

Mableton, Georgia, 22, 26
Mableton Improvement Association, 22
Meinweiser, Ms., high school teacher, 7
Meyer, Robin, 22, 23
Morgan, Alisha Thomas, 22
MUST Ministries, 29

New Jersey Institute of Technology (Newark), 2

Olens, Samuel S., 12

Powder Springs Taskforce, 22
Princess Diana, 1-2

Regional Business Coaliton (RBC of Metropolitan Atlanta), 12
Richardson, Jerica, 29-31
Rochester, New York, 10, 35

Sandy Springs, Georgia, 19
Scott, David, U. S. Representative, 22
Siegel, Betty L., 2

Small Business Administration, 35
Smyrna, Georgia, 37

Thompson, George (Woody), 19-21
Thompson, Steve, 19