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Ja'Nae Lehman, Oral History Interview, 2022

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Eastern Michigan University Archives, Oral Histories

Interview with Ja’Nae Lehman (JL) conducted on November 30, 2022 via Zoom by EMU undergraduate Stephon McArthur (SM) for You Li’s Journalism 313 course.

Transcribed by Stephon McArthur

SM: Hello My name is Stephon McArthur, and I am an undergraduate student at EMU, and I am here today. Lehman, I am an undergraduate student here at EMU, and today I am going to focus on Ja’Nae hardships and what she had to overcome during the COVID-19 pandemic with losing some people. Those are some family members and things that she had to go through, pros and cons. So, Janet, I would like to ask you, what medical concerns did you have before the pandemic started that you were worried about for all?

JL: I was not worried about anything before the pandemic started. All my worries and concerns happened after the pandemic spurred not like after the pandemic started, but when it started. I think before I was just taking it day by day and doing what I had normally done. So, everything was yes, I think everything that I was worried about or whatever started taking place, while the pandemic started.

SM: Okay. Did you have any challenges that you had to go through during the pandemic when it first came about?

JL: I think the challenges for me were just making sure that there was social distancing. My

health was because of my regular doctor's appointments for the heart I had during COVID was like when it first started. So just knowing to socially distance me and make sure I am cautious with everything. Meaning like, you know, being cautious with whomever who is around and how much I am around them or continuing to wear my mask and wash my hands, pulling on hand sanitizer, or sanitizing things like that all. So that was my concern was just making sure that I was cautious.

SM: I know. Could Covid-19 have been prevented before the pandemic? Before the country was in the pandemic.

JL: In my opinion. I do not think so. Things could have been different if COVID had been prevented before it all came out. But also, too, I feel like either way something would have happened and may not have been as big of an impact on us. If they took it more seriously in the beginning, it would prevent it from happening in some way, just like having us know about it before it started getting as serious as it did. Um, but I think either way things would have happened. Just not as big as it was.

SM: And I know that you have a strong take on the COVID vaccine. Can you tell me why you want your take on it?

JL: Yes.

SM: You know, having a little bit of it affects yourself and the people that you love and surrounding you.

JL: Mm-hmm. Yes. So. So, the reason I am extraordinarily strongly about the vaccine is that I do from personal experience and from what I have seen, the vaccine has done for people. Thank goodness I have never had COVID but from what I have seen for my loved ones that have had COVID but have the vaccine, I do know that it can. Limit the side effects or not make them shoot me or not make them as big or strenuous as if you did not have a vaccine. So that is one reason. And then another reason is that the vaccine is. It is now scientifically known to be a good thing. And yes, there are side effects and whatnot, but that is with really any vaccine. I feel like it is going to have side effects. Oh, and from my loved ones and everything out there, it can be a little tricky because you do not know if the vaccine is going to affect you all with the health conditions you already have. Like my grandfather, for example. All we do not know is if the vaccine caused him to have a second stroke. We will never know that or my stepmom who had COVID the second time she has her vaccine. Oh. And I think from what she has told me. The side effects were as serious as they were before the first time, she had it and she did not have the vaccine. She had a big fever. She got chills. She said she threw up sometimes and whatnot. And she was tired. But the time. And she did not have the vaccine. She. Yes. She was only tired. And I was really. So, I feel like it is, um. It. It just depends, you know? But encourage people to look at the vaccine because it is just for me, it is that extra cushion.

SM: And my last question is, do you think some special rules should be in place right now? Because according to the CDC and other data I have looked up, are people still getting sick? Do you think they should be like a special mandate or like still a social distancing I

know COVID stills spreads because people are getting sick. What do you think they need to take in place? So, we still must maintain our safety so people can still not be sick if they are alive. What do you think needs to be in place?

JL: Oh, I think there should be a mask mandate and I think that there should be a vaccination mandate. It depends on the place. I know some kindergartens and middle schools and high schools. They had the mask mandated, but they have taken it away. But I think there should be a mask mandate in school or even in college. There should be because the college is bigger, there are more people there and you are surrounding yourself with many people. So, you do not know whom they are encountering or who you could be contacting. So, I do think that there should be a mask mandate in schools if not in the hallways or just outside of the classroom, there should be mask mandates in the classroom. All I do know about the vaccine mandate, you work in a medical field, and it does depend on the office where you work. Some do require you to have your vaccine and keep up with your boosters and whatnot. And then others are just like, you can just have your first vaccine, and then that is it. Or your first two, I should say, and then that is it. I think that it can be tricky because everyone has their own opinion, you know. But I do think that for the medical field, people should be keeping up with their vaccination boosters and whatnot because the medical field is the most serious field one coming to terms with working with people who do have COVID or experiencing COVID symptoms. So, it could be not only themselves but their patients. And I would say danger. I do not know if that is the right word to use, but it could put them in that situation. And so, I think just continuing to have your mask on and continuing to be vaccinated, I feel like those

would help a lot. Social distancing. I feel like people are going to have a challenging time socializing with having to have social distancing, whether at the store or a public place in general or a crowd, and getting together with your family or whatever. Social distancing can be extremely hard. Could be one of the hardest things out of those three options. Um, but I mean, as I said, it depends. It depends on the place. It depends on what the setting is, the number of people that are around you, and all things like that. To just like finalize everything that I have said. The vaccine and the mask mandate are the most important things when it comes to preventing COVID from continuing to happen.

SM: Okay. Thank you so much for the interview.

JL: You're welcome.