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## Patricia Davidson, December 1, 2018

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MJ: Okay we're back online now. So, go ahead

Dr. Patricia Davidson: Okay.

RB: Today is Saturday, December 1st 2018. This is Rachel Burns. I'm a graduate student in the Historic Preservation Program here with MJ Jones and other HP grad student we are in Halle Library today speaking with Dr. Patricia Davidson. PD is a former student of Eastern Michigan University. During her time here Davidson was highly involved in bettering conditions for African-American students on campus her involvement included volunteering with Campus Service Corps and taking part in discussions with administration after the takeover of Pierce Hall in February of 1969. Today we are interviewing her as a part of our taking great risks Oral History Program. I have a couple of preliminary questions to begin with for verification you attended Eastern from 1968 to 1970 right?

PD: If you say so. [laughter]Okay, that sounds right.

RB: Okay. How did you select Eastern Michigan?

PD: Well there were two issues. One, my sister had preceded me and the other reason was that the two schools I had chosen wouldn't take me because I hadn't completed the 12th grade and we only- and I graduated after the 11th grade but Eastern did 'cause they don't have a 12th grade.

RB: Okay.

PD: And they said we had this I had Michigan the University of Michigan and Ohio State felt that I had to do a 12th grade 'cause I didn't have a 12th grade and I had already graduated but Eastern chose it.

RB: So you always knew you're going to go to college in the United States?

PD: Pretty much so it was a very violent time in Quebec when the French separatists were taking control and they had a very violent movement, putting real bombs in these mailboxes, and all mailboxes are outside of schools, and we on a regular basis had to leave school or we were very young we had to go into the classroom on the other side of the building because there were real bombs put into the mailbox until the bomb squad arrived. So it was a very violent time and not a very inclusive time and so we ended up deciding that long time ago, our parents decided it for us and so we made those plans very early on.

RB: Okay. So when you arrived at Eastern, could you kind of describe what it was like being a black student at that point, like what the conditions are like for African-Americans on campus?

PD: Well there, I was put in a room with the three students, a dorm room and the one student was white, one two is black and the white student's parents immediately removed her from the room. So similar to what happened to Michelle Obama when she went to, I think Yale or Princeton, wherever she went. So that was so common and that was expected. Well, we were told immediately by the older student that that was expected and so the two of us ended up rooming

together in a very large room which was really made for 3 people each. So that's what that was my first 24 hours and then after that, it was during the, it was a time when the Civil Rights struggle had probably reached its peak, we were going into the Black Power struggle, we were going into the anti-war movement and all those kinds of things were happening and so it was a time when all students of different backgrounds and races and- and political force were organizing around a whole lot of things. So it wasn't unusual for students to organize because that was happening everywhere throughout the country as was mentioned at our large session that there was well over a thousand student rebellions on campus throughout the United States all during the 50 years or 49th through the 51st, it being 49, 51 years ago that was happening on all campuses.

RB: How did you choose to get involved with student activism?

PD: Well, it was very hard not to. I came up in a very socially conscious home with folks that were involved with A. Philip Randolph. All of the men in Canada, all black men in Canada, the only job they could hold were porters on the railroad and even though we didn't have segregation that was placed in law. It was done, I mean that's what was done. We didn't necessarily have a law that said it but it was clearly being done. We had a very cohesive black community and I just grew up in a home where we constantly talked about all the liberation struggles whether it was what was going on in Ghana or South Africa. It was just that kind of a situation where we just always talked about liberation struggles and the people in United States and A. Philip Randolph and Martin Luther King. So we are very conscious about everybody's struggle and that's basically what we were doing and so it was kind of a given that I would end up doing that. Although everybody on campus figured that one thing they used to get was "well, you don't know that you're black and all that because you're from Canada." Sorry, I keep a very cohesive black community which had its own community center, a church, and it was extremely active in Civil Rights issues and people couldn't, they couldn't kind of believe that but there were large Black communities all over the world that most people didn't know about them.

RB: Were there specific issues that you knew you wanted to be addressed when you got involved on campus?

PD: Well, we had all the same issues. The issue was the laws have just come down about desegregating schools and so we had a situation where you know, we wanted a certain percentage of students on campus. We wanted faculty and administrators, we wanted just about everybody in the country was asking for Black Studies departments and things like that. So I mean it wasn't that we were so unique. We were asking for the same thing that everybody else was asking for and we wanted cultural programs and all that. We also started, since African-Americans were not usually included in the homecoming process, we started our own homecoming process. I was the first I was the first queen that's called the Black Queen and then after that the Eastern started including African-American women in their homecoming process but we started our own. So those were some of the things that we ended up doing. So I mean, but this is usually done all over the campus, I mean all over the country and even though some of the students you talked to may think that they were more unique than everybody else, I think that we were pretty much doing what the rest of the country was doing at that time. So it was pretty much a national movement and we were all pretty much do it some of the same things around the

country. Basically was an identity issue. Most people had come from segregated schools in Detroit or other surrounding places and so as a result, you know, there was a whole movement to become, you know, to get a better piece of America. So that's basically what everybody was fighting for and then in the midst of all of that came the Vietnam War. Some people were discussing that whole issue about whether we should be fighting in a civil war and the meaning of that and the whole draft, which was also very unfair because they actually cleared out all the graduating classes of historically Black colleges. They just went in and everybody who graduated had to go to war. So we paid a greater price in the Vietnam War than other people did in the country. So, there were all those issues that were just constantly coming up. Of course we had just finished a whole series of King -- Dr. King had just been murdered and of course the Kennedy murders and then all of the rebellions that took place throughout the country and so in fact, at most everybody went to school with had just come out of Detroit and the year before, that summer before had just come out of the other rebellions in Detroit. So that was a very tumultuous time anyway for everyone and so this was just you know, we were basically searching for things to do and how to make a difference. and we were also trying to figure out what we were going to do with our lives and you know, it was during that time that we were trying to decide what would have the greatest impact, what kind of profession should we have and most people did Sociology or Psychology, something on that order and then during that time as we were discussing what we should be doing with our life, pretty much most of us realized that we needed to do something other than work for the government as social workers, so that's when many of us chose to pick careers where we could actually have some independence and actually do something in the world so I chose medicine, my sister chose agriculture, many people chose different careers like that so that they could end up having a little bit more independence and give a little bit more back to the community as opposed to being social workers and things like that that most people gravitated towards thinking that that was how they were going to make the greatest change when we realize that wasn't actually going to be the case. So we were confused, we were looking for answers. I mean it is one of those times where everybody was looking for answers as to changes in the country and the world because we were also part of the global discussion because there was some colonialism in the world so at the same time that we were dealing with those issues, we were also fighting on those fronts as well and trying to support people in the struggles all over the world. So we were concerned about the imprisonment of President Mandela and in the African National Congress. So we were involved in all the struggles that were taking place at that time both locally and globally. You still there?

RB: Uh-hmm.

PD: Okay.

RB: So when you speak about being involved locally. Is that how you choose to get involved with Campus Service Corps?

PD: Yes, well we actually decided at one point when we realized that one person, who's Marshall [Jennings] but he was actually involved with it and then he was, he pointed out to us at night that there were all the people involved in the service corps were all African-American children and it's already has a very large white, you know, large poverty among white people and so we brought that up as an issue and we thought that they should be involved with those kind of folks

as well or we were involved with the blacks too, you know the young black and so that's how we became involved. And then of course it was also at a time when the Black Panthers were active and so many of us, not necessarily wanting to be part of the Black Panthers, but wanted to duplicate some of the things that they were doing and so we did some we did exactly what they were doing with your breakfast programs and summer camps and things like that. So we started participating in that and then we actually made that suggestion during that time. Well, if there's so many poor white children in town, why aren't you all involved with them? So, they basically disbanded because they somehow could not get involved with them, with poor white people in their surroundings so they disbanded but so we pretty much became part of that campus service group. We did summer programs as well. We did summer camp and I'm not sure that the summer camps were all that was probably also the Rec Department got involved so it's probably a combination of things that we came up with. I'm not sure. I don't remember where the funding came from within-- some of that may have come from Rec, the Rec, the Recreation Department during the summer but we, you know, we were involved in whatever social programs were available. Something we should be leading them and playing a role so people could see role models and to make sure that they were being run appropriately and not necessarily being run by people that were paternalistic and didn't really understand the people at that time so... So that was part of the big movement as well was that we needed to make sure that we were that whatever moneys were given out to the community were spent appropriately and by the appropriate people. So that's one of the reasons why and then I came from a community that was very much like that. I mean that's how our community survived with that. That we were-- we have a whole long history of we, we were close to community and a large number of the people were constantly coming into the city were immigrants. And so as people, more people came in, didn't know the culture, didn't know that it was 20 below zero and it wasn't 80 degrees year round and making sure that people had a place to stay and knew that town had clothes, I mean there was -- we had a colored women's club that probably would be 100 years ago now, we meet the boats coming in from the Caribbean during the winter because people didn't even know what winter was. So you have a whole tradition in the community that came from of making sure that everybody in the community was helped so. It was just kind of, you just basically doing what you were taught to do or what you observed as a child and you just basically continue those kinds of things. So I came from a community that was always helping everybody out with a small community and maybe 10, 15,000 people that we all helped everybody out and we came from a very politically active community that was very conscious and was always discussing all of the issues that happened around the world and liberation of black people around the world. So when you grow up hearing that all day and all night from people and observing what they're doing then you just kind of continue that when you move out on your own. So it was just a natural evolution.

RB: Were you ever involved in administrative or leadership roles in campus service corps?

PD: No, I don't remember that I was. I think there was really only one person who did all of that and that was Marshall. I don't know maybe other people. I don't remember other people doing that but it's possible that other people were. I just don't personally remember that. You would have to probably ask Marshall that he was the first person who was involved with the campus service he was at the Campus Service Corps before we even came and he was the one that let us know what was going on and all of that so I personally wasn't any. Well I should base on what

was said, there were other people that they would talk to about how they had use of the car and everything so other people eventually did get some leadership roles, so I don't remember being personally involved in it.

RB: When you say that your role was more like in the fields doing the Breakfast Program and stuff?

PD: Right. Right. Right in the field, right. I don't remember having, I don't remember being named anything. If I was, I don't remember it. I do remember doing a summer camp that was actually in the community and I remember that but I think that may have been a combination with the Rec center money as well but I do remember having to do a summer camp.

RB: Was this educationally focused?

PD: Yes.

RB: Okay.

PD: Oh, we made them that way. I don't know if that was the original intent of being everything educational and I remember serving breakfast and lunch and we made everything educational.

MJ: Can I jump in for a sec?

RB: Sure.

MJ: We've heard from a few other people that we've talked to that you and your sister were two of the most, if not the most effective members of the student activism because you motivated people so much and that you were so good at organizing the effort and I'm wondering if that has to have a lot to do with the way that you were brought up.

PD: Definitely. Yeah definitely, because I came from that kind of community that was always organized, highly organized community.

MJ: Did you find that students here that activists here were surprised at that level of organization that you brought?

PD: I don't think they ever mentioned it. It's the first that I'm hearing about it.

MJ: Oh. They've been mentioning a lot.

[laughter]

PD: No, I don't know every voice you get that, but I guess after 50 years of thinking about it. But, no they say I motivated them to be motivated and that's nice but no they certainly didn't say that at the time.

MJ: Well, now you have something on them so.

[laughter]

MJ: Okay.

RB: So when you were attending Eastern, were you also in the Black Student Association?

PD: I think we formed it at that time. I think that's when we formed it. If I'm not wrong, these were the first classes of large numbers of Black students being brought up, because remember this was just the culmination of the whole, the violent part of the Civil Rights struggle where the laws ended up being passed and so we were the recipients, the benefactors of all that, all the marches and the bloodshed and all of that that you saw going on for the decades prior to that and so we were in the first classes where large numbers of people actually came- came to school. So I don't know how many, you'd have to look at the numbers, how many before 1968, how many black students came up in any- we're actually in Eastern in any large amount. It couldn't have been much before 1968, it maybe 1967 or so but they couldn't have been many years prior to '68 where there was black students in large numbers like we were brought up, like we were admitted to. So you know, that that made a big difference in that we were coming up in fairly large numbers in the hundreds. So I don't think- you'd have to look at those numbers. I don't think there would have been too many years prior to that, where people were brought up in larger numbers and you may want to look at those numbers to see and that may be a good thing that for you to look at, historically, that what was what was the admission rate in '67, '66, and '68 because I suspect that the numbers started to increase somewhere in the late 60s.

RB: Yeah.

PD: And so the numbers were not very large and so when you bring in large numbers and then at the same time you have this whole social consciousness movement taking place over everything from the war to African liberation, to integration and all those kinds of things, you know there was just so many issues going on worldwide at that time and also that there was just so much for everybody to be involved with so I think it had to do with the fact that we had a critical map and so that we could make demands because we did have a critical map. We kind of felt emboldened in and I think that it is our generation that caused the tuition to go up because the tuition was like \$20 -- \$200 dollars or so. \$2000 for foreign students and then after that the schools started moving the tuition's up to around \$20,000 and it's been going up ever since and the reality is, if you don't let people come in at those rates because then anybody can go to school and some of it and then people also could drop out of school for a semester to protest or get in. It was a lot of people to do and it wasn't a big deal for them to drop classes when they only had to pay whatever, 100 dollars for the class so I think that was one of the reasons why they drove the tuition so you would have to think twice before you started dropping classes when you're paying 40,000 dollars tuition. That's stifled protest on the campus because only certain kinds of people can come and clearly you had to think twice before you drop class at the protest and get involved in things in this class and all that kind of thing when you're paying 5,000 dollars for a class. So that was part of why everything was increasing nationwide. So we were basically part of the whole national or international social movement that was taking place so even though some

people may have thought we were unique, I don't know that we were that unique. We were doing what everybody else is doing in the moment.

RB: Sure. Can I ask about the takeover of Pierce Hall?

PD: Okay.

RB: Were you were you there during the takeover?

PD: Yes I was.

RB: So before the takeover occurred, were you involved in the planning meetings?

PD: I don't remember planning meetings. Robert Smith has a whole different recollection and he says that he thinks that they had a very small number of people doing that. I remember a public meeting or where that was discussed. Like I said, he says his memory is such that he says that didn't happen and it was a very small medium size, but I remember it being said publicly so that's my recollection and so anyways, obviously that was foolish because they [state police officers] were in the basement waiting for it so but anyway he I don't remember I know I wasn't in any small planning meeting.

RB: Okay.

PD: I remember large meetings and I remember it being said. No, maybe takeover what I said, maybe just meet there. I don't remember that part but I just know that there was a whole lot of large meetings where the plans would being discussed and if he says that the takeover was not discussed publicly that he would know because he would have been in those meetings.

RB: Okay.

PD: But I do remember very public meetings which is kind of silly but we were immature and we thought that would be good.

[laughter]

PD: Oh there's a thousand black people here, we can say what we want!

[laughter]

PD: So that our level of maturity, you know, I mean that's exactly what's happening and I said I-- But he says that we didn't discuss takeover but I just remember we had very radical meeting being said publicly, but I'll go with his memory and clearly whoever he was meeting with meeting with. He have meeting with else.

[laughter]

PD: That was our level of maturity and we all and like I said, then we got we went in and we all marched into the hall and then as he said, Thigpen bought or whatever found the locks and put the locks on the doors and when that happened it came up from the basement and- and my memory, now they're saying that it was only the state police. I thought we had National Guard with bayonets on the campus. No, I don't know why I remember bayonet, but you'll have to look at the history of whether the National Guard has ever come on campus, I thought I remember seeing that. Not to that day but at other times.

RB: Yeah.

PD: You'd have-- but were National Guard ever on campus?

RB: There is a large-scale protest in 1970 where the National Guard was called in.

PD: Okay. So my memory was correct there's a National Guard. I do remember, I do remember the lining, the bayonet, because you won't- bayonets are not something you forget.

RB: Yeah.

PD: So I do remember bayonets. So memory is not that bad and so it just one of that day though.

RB: Yeah.

PD: Because obviously you showed the pictures and it was technically the-- It was the state police that were there, I had that wrong in terms of my memory so that's how bayonets stay in your mind, as you remember bayonets, you don't remember billy clubs.

RB: Yeah.

[laughter]

PD: So but yeah, but interestingly enough it is very comical. My husband laughs every time we tell the story. My sister and I did not know we were citizen and my husband says who- you what I mean- because you know considered immigrants, not all immigrant laws, right. We did not know we were citizens but if your mother's an American then you are a citizen, right. So we didn't know that. So anyway, so we came on a foreign student visa and so we said so when this happened, my sister and I ran up to the top floor and I don't remember how many floors there were, maybe four or five floors. We went up to the top floor to get away from the state police and we wouldn't be arrested because we knew if we get arrested we'd be deported and so we ran up to the top floor and there were only two classrooms that had open closets that weren't locked and they were at either end of the hallway and both of us hid in the closet for hours.

MJ: Oh my gosh.

PD: Until we heard absolutely nothing and then we heard nothing. I don't remember who crawled out first or whether the two of us crawled out and went to the other person's closet and

then we went to the window and it was hours. We didn't come out in 15 minutes. It was hours we stayed there. We came out and we looked outside and we saw that the state police had ruined the whole building.

MJ: Oh my God.

PD: There was a circle and we were inside as the building's locked and they were outside. How are we supposed to get out? So the two of us decided that we would just walk out as if we were leaving class.

[laughter]

PD: Chitchatting as we go along. And we did just that. We walked out, we didn't look at the state police at all. We just walked along, chitchatting like we were just having a conversation, talking to each other, looking at each other not looking at them. We just kept walking and walking and we could feel them turning towards us and- and they just saw us. Again we didn't- with no eye contact, we just kept walking, walking, walking and they did nothing. They didn't do anything. They just watched us walk away although they did turn towards us but we just walked right past them. Then we passed out after.

[laughter]

MJ: Oh my gosh.

PD: And then it wasn't until, I don't know when it was, maybe a year or two later we found out somebody in- actually in a relative's family and my godmother's family said you know, we're all Americans because our mothers were Americans. Your mother is American

[laughter]

PD: My husband just said, there's not an immigrant in the United States America who doesn't know that thrash. Everybody knows the criteria that being an American. Have you all grew up not knowing the criteria to be an American? I don't know when it started. Immigrants anywhere halfway across the world who would know that.

[laughter]

PD: So my husband's just having good time laughing. He said, I cannot believe that. You can walk up to anybody from Honduras or from Africa. They can tell you that.

MJ: Oh wow.

PD: Anyway, we don't always know that. So anyway, so that was comical.

So anyway, so that's why we ran when they came and when we saw them coming and then and then Robert told the story which we had never heard before, that they kicked out people. They

knew already who they were going to arrest anyway so, they didn't they arrested whatever five men that they knew they wanted to arrest because there were hundreds of people there so they knew-

MJ: Where would they have gotten them?

PD: Pardon.

MJ: Oh go ahead. Sorry.

PD: They knew who they wanted to arrest. So we were not at risk and didn't know but anyway when that happened, we ran straight up the stairs and hid for hours.

[laughter]

MJ: Wow.

PD: We laugh at all that now. That was that was very comical. So we didn't get arrested and we ended up being stuck inside with all of them outside so that was our Pierce Hall experience.

RB: In the days after the takeover, do you remember kind of what the other students' reaction was to the Pierce Hall takeover?

PD: I guess it's just a whole lot of chaos at the time. I remember there was a lot of protests after that, and boycotting classes and like I said, I do remember the National Guard being on campus. I remember that the Buell Hall boys. The boys who lived and I remember them putting nails in a board that will be sticking out and putting them at the entrances of the campus, so that when the police or the National Guard showed up, they would blow all their tires out, I remember that.

[laughter]

RB: Oh, wow.

MJ: Jeez.

PD: You say what?

MJ: Yes. That's impressive.

PD: Yeah, I remember that, I remember another incident and I and again I don't know and this is when we were already active in the in the Campus Service Corps. I don't know, I can't put it in context of what was happening. But that maybe when the National Guard came on campus. I remember we were there was something protest was going on campus and the lights were turned off and I remember we were all hiding in campus service corps I don't remember what it's called Campus Service Corps. What was it? It was religious building.

RB: Starkweather Hall.

PD: Right, and so we were all in that building and if somebody came running in and said there the National Guard is clearing all buildings and there was tear gas everywhere and you need to get out and so I remember we all ran. It was very dark and my sister was coming from work. She was doing some kind of a, her major was social work. She's doing some kind of service thing where she had to dress up and have heels on whatever she was doing. It was like a work study kind of where you had to, you know whatever wherever she was assigned, she had to dress professionally. And I remember her being in sling back heels.

[laughter]

PD: And she had to run.

RB: Oh no.

PD: I remember everybody took off at high speed running from the tear gas and we all put the wet clothes over eyes and I turned around and my sister was not there. And here I just remember there were and I remember the National Guard, maybe the National Guard coming. You know, you could see them in the distance and my sister was nowhere to be found than I ran back to find my sister and she was tripping along with fast as she could in back heels.

[laughter]

PD: So I- I pushed her along as fast as we can to get out of the way, whoever was there was a chasing as National guard, the State Police that were gonna clear all buildings. I guess we all ran back to our dorm. I don't know remember where we ran back. We run back to somewhere but we had because they were clearing all campus building and then we had to turn the lights off so that nobody would know we were in that building. And then somebody just came in and said "get out because they're going to clear out all the campus buildings," this time we just ran and it was teargas everywhere. I do not remember when that happened in context to Pierce Hall. We're definitely after Pierce Hall. The reason we were in that building because we were part of the Campus Service Corps. So we were there and I don't remember, maybe somebody else remembers but I just remember being in that building and having to run out of it amidst the teargas and somebody coming on the council. I do remember multiple time some sort of officers or whatever, I just remembered them always to be National Guard, but they obviously weren't. I just remember multiple times we were invaded by law enforcement. So that did happen number of times and teargas was given out multiple times and I don't remember what the circumstances where, I mean obviously we're always protesting something, but I don't remember in particular a particular incident but I just know that after that. I remember one time a lot of people try to close the school down, that was a favorite tactic and then the, what do you call them, the Teamsters who are the people who drive trucks are members of the Teamsters union and even though that was a very racist union at the time the Teamsters had a policy that they don't cross picket line. So I remember one time we did have a picket. We were trying to close down the school and they wouldn't cross the picket line and then of course the police came and helped them cross the line, you know help them get through. But that was a difficult time because we were afraid that the

people who worked in the cafeteria and all that would lose their job. That was a big issue. We were trying to figure out how do we do this struggle with them. So that was a big issue that we always had to be concerned about the people who didn't have the same opportunities that we had for that was, that was a big issue. But I do remember the Teamsters turning back and then I remember the police chasing after them and escorting them through so they were kind of -- they didn't know what to do either. They were not -- they were very racist union but still they had a policy of not crossing picket lines so they were kind of conflicted as to what to do. But police did escort them pass. So some trucks were turned away. And again, I'm not clear what the issue was at the time, but it was I'm sure was after Pierce Hall but I don't know what the issues were at each one of those times. I just remember a lot of protesting.

[laughter]

PD: A lot of protesting and a lot of closing down, attempts to close down the school and a lot of boycotting of classes and all kinds of things like that. I just remember a very tumultuous time.

RB: So when I was doing research for these interviews, I came across this document that had your name and a few of the other participants on the panel in July's names for discussions with the administration.

PD: We had many of them.

RB: Could you talk about what you were discussing with administration?

PD: Probably our demands. Do you remember what was in the document?

RB: I think the one that I was looking at specifically was just for- I think it was about black faculty.

PD: Okay, I know, so everything. The starting of an African-American Studies Department, increasing the black faculty for which there was, I think, just the person who was on this. I don't remember the person -- No, two people Goines and the person- actually I don't think Goines was just on faculty. I don't think he was in administration. Was Dr. Goines on faculty? Do you remember that? Did you come across that name?

RB: I think Valmore Goines started off as faculty and then moved up to administration.

PD: Okay, so he was a faculty member and I think the only person who was administrator that time was kind of Kenneth Moon. I think there's just one faculty member at the time and I may be wrong, but I only recall one and then obviously one of the issues with the increased faculty forming the African-American Studies Department, increasing everybody around the country was talking about 10% initially. So those were given, probably even things like and I think we probably started the Black Student Union whatever we were calling it at that time, it probably started during that time. And then, of course, organizations were supposed to be funded. So we were probably asking to have equal funding with the other institutions and the other you know, organizations. So those are pretty much all the things that we were everybody around the country

is protesting wanted to have. So like just say the document that you saw was only for black faculty.

RB: Yeah, I imagine that it was in a series of other documents, but because of the nature of archives and like it's being donation based like some things might have been lost from the written record.

PD: Okay, so we must have strategized at that time, that you do one thing at a time and don't give him 10, because they'll only give you 1. So I'm sure 'cause we were very good at strategizing. We did a lot of strategizing, we thought we were very sophisticated.

[laughter]

PD: At strategizing, 18 years of age.

[laughter]

PD: We always had strategies and everybody would be discussing so it was probably a strategy to just do one demand at a time because if you do ten demands then people will give you five and do away with the other five. So you do one and then they have to focus on one so I know there were lots of different meeting. Oh, and another thing I remember, they used to come up with lots and lots and lots of food and we used to have this power failure, everybody's hungry and wanted to eat. But we had to tell each other "we will not eat!" Because it was a strategy to distract us. I don't remember who it was that used to say, "No, we don't eat. We don't eat.", he focused on the things. But he's got a big spread, figured out we'll be too busy getting up multiple times to get coffee and cake and bagels and, you know, all that kind of stuff. So I always remember say let whoever made that comment that when we go in, we don't eat because they're trying to get us that, you know, just go off track and focus on eating and we can't focus on all these. I remember we were really good at strategizing so that was one of the strategies that we cannot eat when we go into these meetings. They used to have these nice spreads and everything and all that would sit down and we will have and when you talk so. I do remember that.

[laughter]

PD: I remember now that you when you're talking to that, we do remember little snippets because I really have not thought until you are invited -- I had not thought about Eastern really in 50 years, so it was quite interesting when you said I haven't in touch with those folks though, you know, so I have not really you know like people like John and all that. Like I was at his wedding and they all came up to my sister's wedding, which was after, this was long after. She was- this was way after she left Eastern because she met her husband in Tuskegee where she was doing a master's degree in agriculture. So this had to be a good I guess this was four years after Eastern and but they all came up as I had pictures when I was looking at pictures. I had pictures of all of them in Montreal during a snowstorm. So all the people that were on the stage were on their wedding. I can't say all but, at least half of the people. So, we all stayed in touch with one another for years though. You know, we were in touch but I can be, they can do a lot of talking about all of that. We kind of forgot about all that because we've moved on. So, but I don't

remember those strategy sessions, except for the fact about that whole issue with the food.

RB: Okay.

PD: I don't remember who was in those strategy sessions in terms of the administration.

RB: Okay.

PD: It was always an issue that we always thought that they were always one step ahead of us and we always had that. So because we were teenagers and talking to a bunch of lawyers, people you know fifty, sixty year old people to a highly experienced and we were just teenagers and we had, you know, you have to figure out how do we were new within this. Used to interestingly enough, we used to get advice from Mary Berry. Mary Frances Berry, who became head of the EEOC years ago.

MJ: Yep.

PD: And she is a teacher at Eastern. She used to teach political science while she was a law student at University of Michigan.

MJ: Wow.

PD: And she used to say- and in fact, Bob was trying to reach her for this event so that she could Skype or in or something but I guess he never reached her. But she played a pivotal role- sorry we didn't bring that up. I guess it was so much happening and the questions were carrying us in different directions. I'm sorry I didn't bring that up. She played a pivotal role, obviously she didn't want to lose a teaching position because that's how she funded her college, her law school right. She gave us all kinds of legal advice. She's the person who got a lawyers for Bob. That's how all those details about and so she played a very pivotal role behind the scenes but nobody knowing it. So she gave all kinds of legal advice and strategy. So we were smart enough to know that we were just teenagers and we did go to adults for help with strategy and she was primary person to do that. And fact, we should probably involve her, we should probably, and she should be talked to.

[laughter]

MJ: Okay.

RB: Yeah.

PD: She was everything, I told me- I didn't bring up then because there was so much, you know, either so much, you know, going through your mind that you were forgetting and bringing up and I totally forgot to mention about her and so did Bob. But she was in fact- and fact- he said to me, when I talked him on the phone before we came, he said she found the safe house for him. So, she definitely should be she should be talked too as well, because she played she was our major legal source behind the scenes that will help us strategize. We really just teenagers. This

was all her so she you know she knew all these things and so she was so we look like we are so sophisticated enough to get one of the most prominent lawyers in Detroit and all that we didn't do that on our own.

[laughter]

MJ: Yeah. I am making a note of that right now I will get a hold of her.

PD: It was adults, it was adults that told what to do and how to do this. Adults told us how to strategize, so we are always in the strategy but we always knew to talk to people about strategy because we knew that we were up against you know the big boys, you know, so we were not stupid and I guess they were trying to figure out how we could be so successful because we were another teenagers at that time.

[laughter]

PD: You know, and so I think they always thought they get outsmart us but I said we were you know we were always you know we were looking very sophisticated, but part of that was because the people to talk to you. I'm sorry I didn't mention her, but she definitely should be mentioned in all of it because she was in the backseat even all kinds of legal advice and much legal advice to the law student can give but she still learning to but she had to stop she had a sharp legal mind. So, and it was clearly much more old, she was very older enough, she already graduated and practically she was at law school at the time and they even have been older when she went to school since. I don't even know that she was to nowhere close to our age so.

MJ: All right

PD: She ended up being the head chair- head of the EEOC and she's had other government positions too and different people, different administrations, you know, different presidential position and everything like that. So she had a lot of stuff going on. So yeah, I forgot about her. So she played a major role so. We didn't have multiple meetings and if you're saying there was only one demanded at that time that was a strategy decision.

RB: Okay.

PD: I clearly had to be a strategy position 'cause you know if you do too much. They're going to give you half this way they couldn't give us half because there was only one demand.

RB: Do you think that there were certain issues that the administration was more receptive to than others?

PD: I don't remember that.

RB: Okay.

PD: I guess what happened was, I think nationally everybody had to kind of do the same thing

and they will probably talking nationally, because everybody had increase- these are laws in the I don't know if they came out of the Justice Department or Education Department, but everybody had to strive for 10% African-American admission. So that became a national thing and I don't know where that was in terms of the administration, but everybody was striving for that. So a lot of the things that we thought we were getting because we protested were things that were happening more at a national level. And so we may have thought they were giving this to us but you know but nationally everybody tried for that because I know when I went to medical school in fact your federal funds were behind that. There were federal funds associated with your compliance. So I don't remember the laws, you should look that up, but they were definitely federal law so you had to integrate and I think there were quotas, there were numbers associated with them and if you didn't reach certain numbers you didn't get as much federal money, but you may want to look at that.

RB: Okay.

PD: But there were definitely federal laws either of the Justice Department of the Education Department but your money federal money was attached to you, integrating your school so I know when I went to medical school that was the case because they had nobody, again I was in one of the first classes that was had more than one black person and more than one woman and all that type of thing. And so, this was like a national trend where everybody had to do this because your federal money was tied up with it. And like I said, I don't know what department that came out of and what law that came out of.

RB: Have a couple of questions left. Could you talk about the changes that you were able to see to the university by the time you were leaving?

PD: I left after two years to go to University of Michigan, which was my original chance to go to, now they would thank me, now took me because I started college. Well, I think the department I think the beginnings of the African-American studies department was beginning then, do you remember the year you started?

RB: I think the official year it started was '74, but it was like was a special topics like program that existed.

PD: So what they probably did was they probably were doing courses and not necessarily a department?

RB: Yeah.

PD: So the courses were introduced definitely the missions were going up so you saw it in the emission. So those are the major thing administrators are being invited in the things like that. And the same thing, the exact same thing was going on in University of Michigan campus because they had a strike before that called the BAM strike months before we did. And so they had the same demand 10% admission and they actually achieve. They quickly achieve their 10% admission in both their law school and their medical school and all that, they did that very good. In fact, they were the school is the largest professional black- largest student population and

professional schools in the country for a long time. So there's that. There's when very, very rapidly. But again, This is like a national trend that people were, you know, doing they're either doing it without being forced to do it and other people you know they drag their legs for decades and you know they were forced eventually do because it was definitely federal money attached to that and I'm not sure the laws and all of that, that went around with that but for me, so that was happening nationally it wasn't like as teenagers were responsible. We just may have moved you along a little faster, but these things are happening at a national level, the NAACP and other organizations as GOP and all these Urban league and court all those organizations had the ear of the President, they makes us to sit down with President and make these demands and so a lot of this was we were just there pumping it up and you know I don't think we need to take credit for what's happening nationally and the laws were being changed a lot of this was that, you know, these are part of laws that were not yet- not maybe not a law but in terms of the federal money that was being spent and the pressure that was being put on them as a result of the civilized struggle. So we were just beneficiaries and so even though we ended up you know making a big fuss. A lot of this was coming down the pipe anyways, it was they were forced to do all this. So we just may have pushed along a little faster, but some of those are the changes the thing much everybody saw, nationwide.

RB: Okay. Do you remember the process of becoming first black homecoming queen?

PD: Yes, we had a campaign and we had posters up as I was looking at one of my flyers that my husband said, you have the grammatical error, don't take that to Michigan.

[laughter]

PD: I'm so- It happened- you right there's a grammatical error in that. And so the slogan was "If you're black vote for Pat" because that rhyme, right?

[laughter]

PD: And it's YOUR. My husband said "put that poster away that's a grammatical error you don't want to take that to the archivist!"

[laughter]

PD: It was so funny that I didn't even notice that he was sitting [inaudible] but anyway that made a poster that everything and then Julian Bond came on campus and I had a whole group of people in my dorm that were helping me out I was in Wise hall and they were all helping me with the campaign so somebody Addy Moure of a broader to be on how we were staying with a brother Joe is down there to Eastern couple months ago, she would run the people that was there when approached to Julian Bond and asked him, for he say something about their candidate and so Julian Bond actually read my slogan.

RB: Oh wow.

PD: And put it in a poet and he put it in the form of a poem right and we just fell out laughing

when that happen. So he came to speak and so we got him involved in the campaign too and so that people campaign and it was the first time was because- and because you know we were not really, you know, it wasn't really a friendly environment to go into the bigger campaign. Although the following year somebody did enter, an African American woman did enter to be in the school wide contest and I don't even know how long the black Queen contest lasted, it may have only gone for two years.

RB: Okay.

PD: I have to look that up, but I don't know how long run because eventually everybody was welcome into the into the bigger campaign into this school I campaign. We campaign and but then it was not supposed to be a beauty contest was supposed to be one where you got you ask the whole lot of historical questions and you know political questions about "what's your position on this, that, and the other." So we deliberately didn't want it to be a bathing suit type campaign right?

RB: Uh-hmm.

MJ: Yeah.

PD: No entertainment, singing and dance, no tap dancing and all that kind of stuff, right. So it was a panel of people for which Frances Berry was one of the panel that she was for I'm sure she was horrified at the thought that she had participated in such a thing. It was not her thing.

[laughter]

PD: She was not at stage but anyway, she did, she did participate and the panelists ask you questions and all that. And then I think it was the voting process it was also voting process so anyways, I won that. And then we ended, so we made a float within the, I guess was a homecoming parade and we had a float and that's where you saw the picture you had a picture on your wall and then you ask me for the pictures you have it for the pictures because I had pictures. The picture you had on the wall did not have any in and you said you didn't know who was a queen other people who are in the picture I said the true queens are in the picture, whoever took picture took it in such a way that the second tier, which I was on the higher tier would not seen.

RB: Okay.

MJ: Oh.

PD: So the archivist asked me for my pictures because I've got all my picture. So she took my original pictures and she said she's going to reproduce.

RB: Okay.

MJ: Great.

RB: Cool.

MJ: I've always wanted to look at context of that photo that's hanging there because I love that photo.

PD: It is a bad photo of the queen that is. [laughter]

PD: But anyway, so she took that, she said we going to play that whatever the queen did it but yeah so that we have a float and I don't know that the second year we did that. And again, I don't know, you have to find out how long that contest lasted, but I do know that there was one of the contest and after that it may have dissolved because people are allowed to enter the main content.

RB: Okay.

MJ: What year you were the queen?

PD: It had to be I was only there from '68 to '69 so it's probably was '69 you said from '68 to '70 so it must be in '69.

MJ: Okay because I know the first black homecoming queen of the whole school was her name was Patricia Swan in 1972.

PD: Okay. So, you see that they probably didn't have to have a black contest, that's right.

RB: Yeah

MJ: Right, right.

PD: So, I read a bit. I know it was my first year there so must have been '69 but you have the newspaper.

MJ: Yup.

PD: You have the newspaper.

MJ: We'll find it out.

PD: Yeah. So, and then and I know there was one of the following year. And I can't remember their after that they've been disbanded at that point. So yeah, that was so, we were basically- and I guess that that was that came out of the black student union and I don't know when the black student union formed. I don't know if it was there when I arrived, or if it came about during that time, after all the protest.

RB: March of 1968. So I think right before you came.

PD: Oh, it was formed in '68.

RB: Yeah.

PD: Okay, so I came in '68. Okay, so that was the semester before I came. Okay, so it was a new organization. So as a result, they made the decision to do the black queen contest. And so then they must run that in '69. So, and that type of thing. So, so I know with the new organization, they couldn't had to be a new organization because we were not on campus in large numbers, you may want to find out a history of when black students came in larger numbers because it couldn't have been much before '67.

RB: Yeah, I think every college in Michigan didn't start taking racial demographics for their universities until 1966 so I'll have to compare 1966 onward.

PD: Yeah so it had to be around it probably wasn't even that. So they probably haven't after the rebellion. Well, that that was that was that came out of the demands out of the court Kerner's commission and all those kind of commission's that came out nationally. So all of that came out of those commission's that happen nationally and all that but what to do and how to solve the problem the rates and all that kind of thing. So we were probably '68, '67, we're probably the larger out of the beginning of taking substantive numbers of people and that was that was pretty much nationally when all that began to happen.

RB: Okay, well I don't have any other questions would you like to put anything else out for the record?

PD: No, no I just did. I am glad to saw the Mary Berry- Mary Frances Berry but you should see she'll talk to you.

RB: Okay.

PD: Or at least they may want to get Bob to talk to her first and then he can if he said he didn't reach her and time for the and then get some of her historical perspective on them on the role that she played and all that type of thing. She may think it's a minor role, but for a bunch of teenagers it would not have been a minor role of adult given us legal advice strategy. She may say I didn't do anything but she definitely it was significant to have an adult as much as she was added up to the older than us by a few years, you know, give us surprise. So, this is spark my memory, a little bit.

MJ: It usually does.

PD: Yeah. I haven't thought of this in 50 years this was a lot of fun.

MJ: Good.

RB: Thank you so much. We really appreciate it.

PD: If you wanted to talk to my sister, you know, you could do that by Whatsapp.

MJ: Well we- we could do it how?

PD: By WhatsApp.

RB: WhatsApp?

MJ: Okay.

PD: You know the app. It's called WhatsApp.

RB: Yeah.

PD: She does communicate internationally through WhatsApp.

MJ: Okay yeah I've tried to reach her several times without any luck.

PD: But how are you trying to reach?

MJ: Just phone numbers that were given and I think that's it.

PD: Well did she give you a cell number?

MJ: I have a phone number that she or someone put on the sign in sheet for the event .

PD: Okay because you could do WhatsApp put into that WhatsApp on your phone I presume.

MJ: I will very soon.

PD: Okay. And you put a cell number into that and then you just call her on WhatsApp.

Male Host: Okay I'll do that.

PD: As soon as you put WhatsApp on the phone anybody of your friends who are already in your phone in your cell phone their cell phones in and all that will start popping up. You'll see a whole directory of all your friends that use WhatsApp.

MJ: All right.

PD: You may not have what I'll do is I will text you- this is- let make sure that this is a cell phone that I have of you? this?

MJ: Yeah. This yeah this is my cell phone you can text me.

PD: This is a 945 number?

MJ: Yep.

PD: Okay, I'll text you her cell number and then you put the WhatsApp in there and then you can reach her at all times you that's the only, they only use WhatsApp down there.

MJ: Okay.

PD: They don't use they don't nobody calls because they have to pay for their cell phone.

MJ: All right.

PD: You know, like minute per minute. So everybody uses WhatsApp and Hang-Up and all those kind of as another way that she communicates internationally. So Hang-Up.

MJ: Okay.

PD: So what I can do is I can give her your cell number too, so that she can also because she can call on a landline to Hang-Up.

MJ: Okay, that's another.

PD That's another way people communicate internationally without having to pay for it.

MJ: Okay.

PD: So then I'll put her cell number in your phone once I get off the phone.

MJ: Sounds great.

PD: Okay, well, nice talking to you.

MJ: Yeah. You too.

RB: Thank you once again.

MJ: It's been a pleasure.

PD: All right, take care.

RB: Bye bye.

MJ: Bye bye.

PD: Bye.

[END]