



Interview with Delores Davis

MOHAI, *Seattle on the Spot* Oral History Project, 2018.104.4

Narrator(s): Delores Davis

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Interviewer(s): Howard Giske and Chris Jones

Interview with Delores Davis about life in Seattle's African American community in the Central Area in the mid twentieth century.

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Transcriber's Note: Areas of uncertainty have been marked with an asterisk (*).

[0:00:00-0:00:25 unrelated production talk, sound test]

[Statement begins]

Howard Giske: I'll-I'll do the official part and get started, and then we can just start talking. So, we're-we're here on the 12th-er, 13th of February 2017. I'm Howard Giske. I won't be the interviewer so much as the sound recording guy, but this is a-a recording we're creating for the collections of both Black Heritage Society and Museum of History and Industry, uh, for the Al Smith exhibit that we're working on. Uh, so, Delores, could you state your, your name, please?

Delores Davis: My name is Delores Davis.

Howard Giske: Okay. And I think we know how to spell that, but maybe you could spell it for the, the transcriptionist.

Delores Davis: D-E-L-O-R-E-S Davis, D-A-V-I-S.

Howard Giske: Thanks so much. Okay. And, um, your, uh, date of birth?

Delores Davis: August the 31st, 1929.

Howard Giske: Okay. And the place where you were born?

Delores Davis: Chicago, Illinois.



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Howard Giske: Oh, I didn't know that.

Delores Davis: Yeah.

Howard Giske: That's great. And if you want to share this, the names of your parents and the date and place of their births.

Delores Davis: My father was Felbert, F-E-L-B-E-R-T Smith, and my mother was Lillian, L-I-L-L-I-A-N Hamilton-Smith. My father was born in Mississippi in 1905, and my mother was born in Mississippi in ... I think 1910.

Howard Giske: Okay, thank you. And how long have you been living in the Seattle area?

Delores Davis: I moved to Seattle in 1947.

Howard Giske: Okay, thank you. And Chris, do you want to do the, the same thing for you and introduce yourself?

Chris Jones: My name is Chris Jones, born and raised in Seattle. Um, fortunately, I'm a longtime family friend of Mrs. Davis, and I'm very pleased to be involved in this interview with her. Hoping to find out some things about my past that I didn't know. And I was born in August, just like Ms. Davis. I'm on August 20th, '57, and she being something I didn't know, August 31st. I'm also seeing that she has a mother named Lillian, and my grandmother's name was Lillian, so the commonalities are abundant.

Howard Giske: Small world.

Delores Davis: My middle name is Lillian.

Chris Jones: There's another one.

[Laughter]

Chris Jones: My father's name was Clifford Phillip Jones, and he was born in Spokane, Washington, and my mother's name was Corellen* Peters-Jones, and she was born in Hinton, West Virginia.

Delores Davis: I think I should be probably saying my maiden name was Smith, because certain people—that's what I was when I came here, was Delores Smith.

Howard Giske: How many degrees of separation here, (laughs) not much. That's great.

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Chris Jones: Okay. So, as we continue, um, as Howard stated, we're trying to some background on people who have been in Seattle and may have been active in the era of the photographic exhibit. If they did not know Al Smith, then we're interested in capturing information about the times and how living in those times in Seattle impacted Mrs. Davis and her family. So, if Ms. Davis would take over and kind of tell us a little bit about her history as she moved to Seattle, and what are her memories of first moving into the area.

Delores Davis: I also want you to know that I respond in more detail to questions. (Laughs) But I-I left Chicago because I wanted to get away from an unhappy situation, and I had an aunt here who had come from St. Louis. She had taken some classes in St. Louis and was—and at that particular time, they were going ahead, and they were interested in getting people to come here for the war effort, and so she was able to drive with her cousin to come here. By her coming here, meaning she lived in Port Orchard and went to work at the navy yard. By the way, she did it so she could make at least a dollar an hour. And she always had been a perfect person for me because of the fact my mother died when I was two, and she came to take—she took care of me most of my life. So, when she moved out here, I had an opportunity to come and live with her. And the opportunity came because of the fact that I had graduated from high school, and my father didn't think there was anything better'n Chicago, but he didn't—so he didn't want me to come out here, but that—but he allowed me to do that for different reasons. So, I came out here by train in 1947, and for the first time I had a room of my own. My aunt had me available—had made arrangements for me to meet some young people, and I celebrated my birthday here at eighteen years of age and had my picture in the paper, and they had a Black newspaper. I don't remember the name of it. And I was on the cover of that and I got a chance to meet a lot of the young people that were college age people, and all of a sudden I was a part of the group. I went to Seattle University. At that time, Seattle University, as now, was the private Catholic university. I didn't realize at the time it was Catholic, but I just knew that the price was cheaper than the University of Washington because of the fact the university would charge more for people that did not live in the area. And so, I was able to go to Seattle University for fifty-seven dollars a quarter, which was fantastic. It allowed me to be able to live and work in Seattle. And I did start—I worked every summer, um, in Seattle, um, as a—in a printing shop as a person that was at, um, what do you call it—women—hotel for women, so I-I wound up working all the time while I was going to school. Because I was working and going to school I did not participate in as many things going on in the area that I would have been doing otherwise, but I was active in the college years versus a little bit later on. So, when I moved to Seattle, I moved into, um, the area which was a mixed area of Black and

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white even though it was a central area. We were living—had a home there. I did not experience a lot of the different problems that a lot of other people had experienced, because I came and moved into the area with my aunt. I was in college—

Chris Jones: What area was that? Excuse me for interrupting you.

Delores Davis: It was the Central Area.

Chris Jones: Central Area.

Delores Davis: Twenty-fourth Avenue. 430 24th Avenue. I think it was called Avenue North at that time or maybe Avenue East. Yeah. Anyway, about three blocks off of Madison on 24th Avenue. And I—um, as I said, I participated in the school. At that particular time, I think there were about eighteen Blacks in the school at Seattle University. And so, we knew each other, but again, with me working I wasn't—didn't participate with them as much. I did get an opportunity—I was in for the NAACP group for the young people citizens. I was a part of the AKA sorority and very much involved with that. I was a part of the civic organizations that they had for—which was really nice. Because at that time, we tried to get a lot of people from different ethnic groups together to participate for community activities things. And so, I was there with some of the ones that were—became very active with the Filipinos and with the Japanese, um, and with Caucasians. We had several of those groups.

Chris Jones: You also said that you had met my mother at this time. Was that before you got into your college activities or afterwards, or when did that occur?

Delores Davis: Actually, I did not meet your mother actually until—actually, I had graduated from college in '51, came back for the summer, and as I said, she was working at the drugstore, Gideon's Drugstore on the corner of 21st and Madison.

Chris Jones: Okay. So just for sequence, you graduated and went back to Chicago?

Delores Davis: No, I graduated and went to Boston College for—to get my master's degree.

Chris Jones: Okay, that's important. Let's, let's say that you achieved your master's. Congratulations.

Delores Davis: Yes, I did (laughing).

Chris Jones: In Boston, after graduating from Seattle U.

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Delores Davis: That's right. And it was interesting the way I got it, too, because I knew that I needed to have education to be able to make it. I wasn't the pretty, light skinned, long-haired girls, and so I knew I needed to have education, so, I focused on education. So, when I got ready to graduate with a sociology degree at Seattle University I asked my professor, "What are some of the things you can do with a sociology degree?" And she said, "Teach in an inferior Black college." And so, I realized I needed to go and get more education because I wanted to be able to work in social work. That's the focus that made me go ahead and get more education. I tried to figure out where to go. There's six Catholic Jesuit graduate schools, and I chose based on what area I wanted to see. I didn't want to go to the south. I'd been to Chicago and St. Louis. I figured if I go ahead to, um, New York, I wouldn't see Boston and Washington D.C., but if I go to Boston, I'd see Washington D.C. I made an application to one place. They had me talk to—I can't think of the Father's name now who was the head of Catholic Children's Services here, he approved of my coming, and I was able to go.

Chris Jones: So your masters was also in sociology?

Delores Davis: Social work.

Chris Jones: Social work

Delores Davis: Social work. They didn't have social work classes in undergraduate schools at that—in that particular time. So, I went back there for one year on money that my father had given me, my mother—not my mother—my aunt and I had saved and went back there. And when I left, I needed to be able to get a scholarship to come back because I didn't have any money. Oh, by the way, at the time - at the time I was back there I stayed with Lillian Gideon's parents in Roxbury, Massachusetts. And so, the man who owned the drugstore where your mother worked was the family that I stayed with in Boston while I was going to school back there.

Chris Jones: M'kay.

Delores Davis: Now, it's a two-year program, and you have to have training in an agency. And so, I was in school in Boston, but I was working in an agency in New Bedford. When I came back to summer—to Seattle I was thinking that I wasn't going to be able to go back without a scholarship. I was fortunate enough to be able to get one, but I was trying to look for jobs. And it was because of my desire to look for jobs, and I went to the drugstore, at Gideon's Drugstore, thinking about a job is how I got a chance to meet your mother, and we became friends, and close friends. And she knew a person that needed to be able to have a dress for graduation, and I had that kind of a dress,

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a white dress, and so we sort of talked about that. And based on that dress, we sort of got together. I only saw her during that summer. I was fortunate at the last minute, and that was an interesting story, to be able to get a scholarship to go back. And so, I went back to Boston and was able to go ahead and get my degree. Met a migrant worker while I was back there and got married and lived in Hartford, Connecticut for one year and then returned to Seattle. And I returned to Seattle in 1954.

Chris Jones: So-so when you returned to Seattle and found a home you guys moved in, is that the home where I remember visiting you guys? Because like I said, my-my memory of those times—I was - I was young. I don't really—

Delores Davis: Well, no, let's go back, because I think you'd find that interesting. I came back to Seattle, lived with my aunt for about three months. My husband wasn't able to find a job because of not having a high school education and be a migrant and be Black, and—but I got a position right away at Catholic Children's Services. We were with my aunt, had some difficulties with too many people in the kitchen, and so I started to try to find a place. It was very difficult. I did not like to be accosted because of my color, and my husband was not interested at all in being able to be involved. Now, he could be able to get away, because with his accent he was different. He wasn't Black American, you know, and so the whites accepted him, okay? But he didn't want to go through all the pain that you'd have to go through, because we went through Route 66, and it was very difficult and very painful. So, when we were looking for a place, I was the one that made the telephone calls since I did not want to see—didn't want to hear things that were negative in person. I always asked them, “Would you rent to a Negro?” I called one hundred times before I got a yes. And when I did get the yes, I said, “Well, you won't be sorry because I'm good people.”

Chris Jones: So that was one hundred calls—

Delores Davis: I was so mad, mad at myself.

Chris Jones: To the Seattle - the Seattle area?

Delores Davis: In the Seattle area trying—one hundred calls in the Seattle area.

Chris Jones: So one hundred calls—

Delores Davis: In the Seattle area.

Chris Jones: In the Seattle area? I just wanted to make—

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Delores Davis: To find a place to be able to—that would accept us as far as an apartment is concerned. As I said, I was very devastated to realize I had to go ahead and apologize for who I was. Anyway, uh, the man said, “Yes.” It was in the Broadway area that we could have stayed, but my husband said no. He didn't want to live there. And so, we found another place on Yesler and 31st, down in that area. We lived there for a while. Um ... and then—oh, yeah—and then—no, I'll take that back. We lived—we did also—okay. I lived there for a while, and we decided to adopt a child. And after we had that opportunity, we moved to a place on 23rd Avenue in the 400 blocks, so just about two blocks up from where I had lived with my aunt before. And, uh, we lived there for about a year, moved down—two blocks down, back in the same area, stayed there for several years and that's where I had most of my children. And I think that I was living there on 24th Avenue, and you might—that might have been the first place that you might have seen me, because the - because you and my—and your mother and I both—our children are very close and similar with ages. You know? And I think that one of the pictures that I had showed you being pretty small, and so I'm sure I was in that same area then. But then we left there and moved to 31st and East Pike. And I think that's where we were for most of the times I was around in the community. And left there and moved in 19—oh, was it 1969, '68? To Beacon Hill.

Chris Jones: So that's—now that's where my brain kicks in—

Delores Davis: Yeah, Beacon Hill. Yeah.

Chris Jones: And I-I remember vividly the house on Beacon Hill.

Delores Davis: Yeah. Yeah. On Beacon Hill, yeah, because we stayed there for about twelve years almost. That's where we lived when my husband died in 1971.

Chris Jones: So, you'd-you'd talked about the issues he had gaining employment. Now this was during the war years and the war effort. What-what kind of, uh, employment was he finally able to secure?

Delores Davis: Well, that's interesting. What war were-were you thinking about?

Chris Jones: Well, I—when I—

Delores Davis: When you say—

Chris Jones: Early-early on, you were saying that you, you came up to the Seattle area because of the war, the employment for the war effort, so if I - if I flipflopped on my dates—



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Delores Davis: Well, you flipfopped on it, I'm afraid.

Chris Jones: Okay.

Delores Davis: My aunt came here to be able to—because of the war effort.

Chris Jones: Okay. Excuse me. Thank you.

Delores Davis: Okay, and that was in the '40s.

Chris Jones: The '40s. Okay.

Delores Davis: Because my husband and I came here in '54, and he was a barber, also, at least he cut hair for it. And so, we thought that he'd be able to go ahead and do barbering here. The problem was that as a way of being able to restrict people from doing things you had to go to barber college for six months, eight hours a day, fifty dollars a month to be able to get a license to be able to cut Black hair, but the teachers didn't know how to teach you how to cut Black hair. We couldn't afford the fifty dollars, so he went to what was then Broadway High School, that's now Seattle Community College and got training in electrical—well, it was electrical type of stuff. I don't - I don't really know the actual—I don't remember the actual class title of it, but it had to do with mechanical type of stuff, because he wound up getting a job—I'll go into that. That was an interesting way, too, getting a job where he was—he worked at—in metallurgy. And I'm doing a lot of forgetting talking to you thinking about it. I probably should relax a little bit and then keep on going on. It'll probably come to me.

Chris Jones: Would you like some water?

Delores Davis: He did not—no, I'm fine, sweetheart. He did—he worked at—went to school at Edison. He was trying to find machinery work because we needed money, you know. And when he tried to get a job, they said no. Because here in Seattle, you have to be in the union to be able to get a job, and you can't get in the union unless you've got a job. So, therefore, it was a catch-22, and he wasn't able to get a job. He took this course, welding, and it was supposed to be a three-year course. He did it in about a year and a half. The way he got his job was one of the white young men was working. He hurt his arm and couldn't work. And what he did was—the boss said, “We need to be able to finish something. It's very important. Can you find somebody to be able to take your place?” He thought about my husband, because of how good he was and how dedicated he was, but he didn't know where he lived. He had a general idea. He went in the neighborhood knocking on doors asking about him, found him, told him about it, and he got a job that Monday.

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It was supposed to be for two weeks. He was there until he died sixteen years later.

Chris Jones: Excellent.

Delores Davis: But it was the discrimination and the racism of the working world that made it difficult for him. He also did very well as far as edu—learning things and doing things, and he had to teach the others that moved up to be the supervisor, but he didn't get a chance to move up.

Chris Jones: Brings new meaning to the term, “Opportunity knocks,” the gentleman's walking around the neighborhood knocking on doors trying to find your husband for—to present him with an opportunity.

Delores Davis: Yeah, yeah, yeah. There's so many things that happened that was just unbelievable to me. I didn't have a problem getting a job. I mean, I went to the Catholics. I had my degree, and I was working there in a very short period of time. Um I adopted a girl, we adopted a girl, and seven weeks later I was pregnant. I had difficulties finding daycare that was adequate. And so, I decided to stop working. And I stopped working—oh, I'm not sure what year it was, probably 1957. And ... except for part-time work, was sixteen years out of the professional field and decided that I needed to be able to go back because my husband had his first heart attack. I went to the University of Washington and told them I had a master's degree, and I was working there two weeks later. Six months later, he died. So if I didn't have that degree, I wouldn't have been able to go ahead and get a position like that, and I had six children, the youngest one was six years of age at the time when he died.

Chris Jones: So that must have been very challenging, six children, husband passes away, you're the provider, a Black woman—

Delores Davis: That's true.

Chris Jones: Working at the University of Washington. Wow.

Delores Davis: It was hard, but the degree made a difference. I got a job. I was able to support the family.

Chris Jones: Yeah, but you're working. What kind of community support—how did that develop for—I mean, you, you've got six kids, you're working—

Delores Davis: Well, the problem is you have six kids. When you have six kids there are very few people who want to be around you to help you out.

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Chris Jones: I-I understand.

Delores Davis: Because when you go to their house their kids are trying to take the toys away from your kids, but my aunt was still around, and so she was my-my blessing. She lived with us. She was there. She was - she was my community, because of the fact that we had the number we had. Also, I think sometimes that there are people that are concerned about widows and if they're married. So, they don't want to lose their spouse, and so they don't participate with you as much, so you're alone again.

Chris Jones: So, let me redirect you a little bit, and tell me if I'm off base here. If you've got six children, when you got a chance to entertain and do stuff with your children like community activities, like the Mardi Gras or maybe taking them to Seattle Center, whatever you could do, um, with your free time and with your discretionary dollars, what kind of activities or-or places did-did you take the children at that time?

Delores Davis: Well, because of the number of children, because of the lack of income, we went camping, um, but I also wanted them to be able to see things and learn things. So, for a while, I would put a—ask them what they wanted to do, put the names in a bowl, we would pick out a name, and we'd go there on Sundays. So, I would go to the airport, and we'd be able to see the airplanes leave at that particular time. I would take them, if I can, to—I think we went one time to Olympia even, you know. We would go to parks. We'd have to go places where they were free, and, yes, we went to a lot of the parades. And we were out there early, sitting down, watching the parades. We went to the big parades. We also went to the Black parades. At that time, they had the parades—there was a combination of, um, Asian and Black. And on Jackson Street they used to have these big parades, and we'd be out there sitting on the curbs during the things. I tried to get, um, different machines. There was one called Grolier Machine, and that was a teaching machine, and so I would have that available for the children. I wanted them to do things. I wanted them to see things. I wanted them to go places, but we were limited as to the amount of things that we could go ahead and do because of the money, so we went camping. And we would also go camping at, um, on the eastern part of Washington, because of the fact that it'd be warmer. And a lot of times there was a lot of discrimination at the campsites, but primarily more at one place called Lake Roosevelt, and another place—any place that's close to the city, we'd have a little bit more discrimination than when we were out. But we would go camping starting Labor Day, and every two weeks until, uh ... no, from Memorial Day to Labor Day, and every two weeks we would go camping. Now that started primarily when my youngest child was about—oh! When he was

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actually ten months old.

Chris Jones: When you say camping, define camping. You've got six children. I'm seeing you throw everybody in this vehicle with I don't know what.

Delores Davis: We bought an Apache. We bought an Apache. The first time we went it was a big, green tent. It was terrible. I slept in the car with my baby. He didn't appreciate not being in his crib. He cried all night. I cried with him (laughs). Woke up the next day and saw this very nice couple that was very friendly. We became great friends, and we still make contact together. He was born in, I think, in '65, so we started camping around about '65, and every summer that's what we would be doing is going camping. There was a place called Prairie Market that was on Rainier Avenue way past Holly or something, and for a dollar you could join it and go there, and the first of every month you'd give them a dollar and you'd get canned foods that you could have. I would take those canned foods and save it, and that's what I would have when we went camping, okay. And so, we went—camping was—the first time was a big green tent. The second year we got a better tent, and then we also got an Apache. With an Apache, it's an open air—an open-up tent on top of a—you have on top of the car, and it sleeps eight people. Yeah, so—nine people. We had room for one more (laughs), and there I was able to go ahead and cook the food. I would—what I loved about it was you could let the kids go out. We would go to places like Sun Lakes or other places around, especially eastern Washington. They would run and play and yell. I could sit and read, and my husband could go fishing, so it gave us an opportunity of being able to do something that we—because I couldn't afford—all my friends, both the husband and the wife worked, so they had a chance to go places. They had a chance to travel, but we didn't have that opportunity, so I wanted to be able to find things that would be okay for them and camping was—I didn't like camping, but it was the thing that made it the best for my kids.

Chris Jones: Well, that's what I was trying to get straight in my mind because when you said camping, I-I'm still, I'm still—

Delores Davis: Yeah, think about state camps.

Chris Jones: Trying—yeah, but I'm still trying to stay sequential, and I was trying to think, is that after the husband is-is gone?

Delores Davis: Well, it-it started when—in '65. The baby was ten months of age. We went until George died in '71. He died in '71. Never went camping after that. But before that time every summer we would go camping.



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Chris Jones: Okay, so your-your husband was-was setting up the tent—

Delores Davis: Yes.

Chris Jones: Because in my mind I'm picturing you throwing your children in this car—

Delores Davis: No, no, no, no.

Chris Jones: Taking off down the road and it's like, "We're going camping."

Delores Davis: Delores-Delores is not a nature person, okay.

[Laughter]

Delores Davis: Delores loves to go to the hotel at the top.

Chris Jones: Okay, I-I-I just—

Delores Davis: No, Delores is not that.

Chris Jones: Okay. So once the camping period was over, when the husband was-was setting up the tent and trying to find a safe place for the family to-to romp and roam, then the family activities became what outside of the home? I'm-I'm just trying to—

Delores Davis: By that time—well, remember if the baby was six or eight, that means the oldest child was fifteen. And it's hard to know what kind of activities were going on because they were doing their own kind of activities. Um ... actually, I don't remember too many things we've done after that period of time. My husband, George, had gone ahead and fixed up the-the basement, and I think that—what I found out later—he-he became disabled in '69, had his second—had his first heart attack in '69, the second one in '70, became disabled in '70, and died in '71. While he was home and disabled, I was working. And so, there was activities that he did with the kids unfortunately, I didn't know about, such as taking them to the gun range one way or the other. But as far as family activities we'd probably go to church, and we'd come home and play games. But I don't remember, I'm sorry to say, now that you asked me some of the things that we did as a family after George died.

Chris Jones: What-what church did you attend at that time?

Delores Davis: When he died, we were attending St. Therese's Church, Catholic church. When he was alive, we were going to St. Peter's on Fifteenth Avenue in Beacon Hill. My kids went to



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Beacon Hill Elementary School, and George and I were the PTA presidents for a year. And when he was disabled, he also was very much involved with Jefferson Recreation Center, uh, and that I guess—that's still in Beacon Hill, too. He was the Cub Scout person—leader at one time, and I think that was about the only activities that he was involved in with the family.

Chris Jones: So that—the—and correct me if I'm wrong, so the Catholic community, from stories I've heard from my parents and other people, the Catholic community seemed to be a little more open to the race mixing or—

Delores Davis: Yes, yes.

Chris Jones: The diversity at the time—

Delores Davis: Yes, yes.

Chris Jones: So that's where the welcoming element came in, more or less.

Delores Davis: Yes. The only ... the only incidents that I can remember of discrimination or prejudice has been individual. And—I told you about the teacher. And one time, one priest did not go ahead and follow through with an appointment. But other than that, every place that we went, you know, it wasn't - it wasn't a situation where I was concerned about. I didn't have an expectation very much of people doing things, and because I didn't have an expectation, I wasn't that disappointed when people would be negative or act a certain kind of way. I'd-I'd got a lot of that experience in Chicago, although, not from white, from Black, so that my approach was a lot different. And because I didn't have the expectation, if something had happened, I guess I was not quite as aware of it unless it was pretty obvious, but I didn't experience some of the things. I did find out later on that I was redlined, you know, in Beacon Hill, because when I moved to Bellevue from Beacon Hill the insurance went down, and some other things went down in comparison that way. So, there was things happening that I was not aware of.

Chris Jones: So what's your—what, if any, recollections do you have of community gathering places like say Seward Park or maybe—I'm familiar with, like, the Japanese Tea Garden and the arboretum and those, those public spaces. Do you have any—

Delores Davis: Yeah, yeah. Well, the, the one that I enjoyed a lot is when we were in college. There was a YWCA, and it was on 22nd right off of Madison, and that's where the sororities and fraternities were having their dances and that was kind of fun.



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Chris Jones: Is that the same one that - the same one that exists today, or—

Delores Davis: I don't think that's the same Y, because the Y that I know about—oh, that's right, where your mother worked. Um, it might have been moved from there because I think what happened is that the YMCA became more popular than the YWCA on 23rd Avenue. And so, they had a lot more of the activities. But at the time when we were, uh, in college, since I wasn't going to the Black and Tan Club and I wasn't going to some of those places where larger groups may be, the smaller groups, the college kids were going to the Y and those places. Now, you mentioned about another place I think. Uh, w—what-what was the one that you just mentioned?

Chris Jones: Like Seward Park or the Japanese Tea Garden, or some of the open spaces or—

Delores Davis: Yeah, I-I-I did not participate in a lot of those kind of things. Again, with a lot of children a lot of my activities are at home. I remember those places, because of the fact when I would visit your mother I'd be around that particular place, and so I was familiar with it. And sometimes she and I may go ahead and sit in the car and talk awhile or talk on the phone for a couple of hours or go over there to the park. Seward Park was something I didn't actually get myself involved in again until actually as my children got older. I was involved in a lot of different things but with the children I don't think I was there. I'm not sure what parks we went to. I'm amazed how much I've forgotten.

Chris Jones: So how about at the—

Howard Giske: Can I redirect one quick question, too? The sororities and fraternities that you mentioned, were you members of a particular one, or ones?

Delores Davis: Yes, yes, yes. I was a member of the Beta Theta undergraduate chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, and, um, that was the one - that was where most of our activities were involved with, the-the things going to college and being involved with that activity and working with them.

Howard Giske: Okay. And they, they had their meetings and dances at the, at the Y then, and not on campus and—

Delores Davis: No, no. We were city - we were city sororities and fraternities, not college.

Howard Giske: Oh, okay, I see.

Delores Davis: And the Kappas had an opportunity of being on the University of Washington



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campus. But they were the only ones, I think. As I said, because we had so few Black people in the city, the people that went to the different colleges all got together. We had Seattle University. We had University of Washington. You had Seattle Pacific, you know, the one in Tacoma, and so we were collected that kind of way, and this was in, as I said, the late '40s, early '50s.

Howard Giske: Okay, thanks.

Chris Jones: So, with your employment that—we kind of segue right into—back to the University of Washington. Any things you remember, activities, or things that were going on on the campus related to the community that stand out in your mind during that period?

Delores Davis: Well, one of the things I want to say first is that in the '70s it seems like more people were interested in having Blacks involved in—in employment. And so, it seemed like they were aware and wanting Blacks to be able to come and teach—to be involved. All of sudden they had their one that was an important situation for them. And so, when I went to apply for the University of Washington, I was at the hospital. I wasn't on campus, which was different because it seemed like there was a whole different situation. And I was in the hospital. I applied, as I said, and was working within two weeks. And then one of the doctors were saying that, "Well, you should be very happy, because you got two points. You're both Black and a woman," as far as being able to get the job, you know. But I was not involved at all on the campus, so I didn't have the participation with a lot of the people as far as what was going on. By being in the hospital—I was in a teaching hospital, so I got a chance to teach the residents and teach the nurses and teach the speech therapists and be involved that particular way. But I wasn't involved at all on any of the things—the closest I came one time was when they were going to have a man from Howard come out to speak at the campus and I said, "Well, great, let's go ahead and have him be involved over here with, um—" I was at the place called CDMRC, Child Development Mental Retardation Center. And he came out to speak to our group, and I got a chance to be able to know him and find out about Howard University. But to answer your question, I don't think I was—at that time, again, when I was at the university, this was in the '70s, and my kids were then—some of them were teenagers. So, we didn't participate that much in doing a lot of things on campus. My participation on campus was taking exercise classes or, um, that's about it.

Chris Jones: Are there any other notable Black academics that you remember? I-I remember some names like maybe Millie Russell, Gertrude Peoples, or some people on the campus that ring any bells with you or might be in some of Al's photographs that you may remember?

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Delores Davis: I don't know if they'd be in Al's photographs. But they were—there were a lot of very notable people on campus, both Seattle University and, also the University of Washington. We had—because of the age that we were, we were a lot of the firsts. So, Frances Jefferson Terry was the first nurse—Black nurse at Providence Hospital. Millie Russell was very much involved with the university, and, of course, she was the head of the minority affairs. There was a Black dentist, I can't remember his name, that was instrumental in having a lot of high school kids come to the university to be able to see what science was and what was involved and telling them about what was going on. There was one man that I think that—I don't know if you all have identified—that was Vincent Lynch. He was very active in, um, as far as boxing, athletics. He was very active in the Black activist situation. What I was really impressed with him is that his mother, when she was in her eighties, went back to what we call Edison School, which was Broadway, which was Seattle Community, and was taking Black history classes at 80 years of age. I thought that was pretty special.

Chris Jones: Wow, it is.

Delores Davis: Um, well, we already know about Quincy Jones, about his activities here.

Chris Jones: Well elaborate a little bit more on the Quincy Jones—is it the Bown family connection? You told me a little bit about that.

Delores Davis: Oh, yes. Yeah, we had talked about that. Well, Quincy Jones, as you know, was very active in the musical world and was at one time at Seattle University, and I happened to be there when he was there. The fa—the family—the Catholic family that was the most well known in the Seattle area was the Bown family, B-O-W-N. They had, I think, three girls and two boys. And one of the girls, Millie Russell, became very, very famous in our community, very active in our community. She was in sororities. She was in—active in civic things. She's been in educational type of things. She's been very well known. Well, her older sister, Edith Mary Bown, has a beautiful voice, and she was able to go ahead and go to, um, the East Coast, I think it was New York, because she got a scholarship, Marian Anderson Scholarship.

Chris Jones: Excuse me. Millie Russell's maiden name is Bown?

Delores Davis: Yes, yes.

Chris Jones: Okay. Just wondering.

Delores Davis: Yes. And Edith Mary was the oldest girl's name. She went to the East Coast. Millie

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Russell stayed here, very active in all community activities, very active Catholic family. Augustine Bown, I went to school with. Patty Bown, the youngest one, the youngest girl, became very famous as a pianist and was in—played in a variety of bands, including Quincy Jones' band. The two young men, one named David ... and I can't remember the name of the other ones ... they too were active in the community, but not—none was as active as Millie Russell. Their home at the time was near the Meany-Meany Junior High, Meany School, up in that particular area, and I think that's about 19th and 18th, off again, East John.

Chris Jones: John.

Delores Davis: Yeah. But there was a-a little building, and I think that the-the nuns were involved there. And we would be able to have a lot of the Black Catholics to participate in different kinds of activities. Um, again, this was near the same area, about—all again, that Madison, 23rd, 21st area. I didn't act—I wasn't actually involved with that, but that was one of the places where a lot of the young, Black Catholics would go to for activities, just to get together to talk and maybe for other kinds of things. And Millie and all the Bown's were very active in that particular one, including also a young man by the name of Clifford Lawson. There are—there were several Lawson's around in the area, too.

Chris Jones: Yeah, I believe they—I remember a laundromat on Madison, and at the time, Empire Way, which became Martin Luther King. It was right there on the corner.

Delores Davis: Yeah, yeah that one.

Chris Jones: There was a laundromat—and the-the Lawson family. Let's switch to you for a minute because you're a very accomplished individual with your master's degree—

Delores Davis: Thank you.

Chris Jones: Degree, and you've written some books, and you've done some very extensive ancestry research. Can you talk a little bit about some of that if you'd care to share on some of your activities?

Delores Davis: Well, what had happened was that when my husband died, my youngest children were six and eight. I started working at the university, and about 1989, 1990, I happened to be talking to them and later on I heard them talking, and they made a comment, “Did dad ever work?” And I realized that they didn't know that much about their father. As a migrant worker from Jamaica, he had a rough time, and he worked very hard, tobacco fields and agricultural fields

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before he came here, so I wanted them to know about him. And so, I decided I'd have to write it down before I forgot. At that particular time, the computer was coming in. I tried to learn. I was not successful. I decided that I was not going to be able to learn the computer. They were going to be having a computer on every desk, so I thought maybe it's about time for me to start retiring. And so, one of the things I did—I retired from the university in, I think, '91. Yeah, I think it was in '91, I retired. And—because I felt that I was too old to learn the computer. So, I had a friend of mine help me with the writing of it—

Chris Jones: And by the way, excuse me. Now, you are teaching computers to seniors, correct?

Delores Davis: I'm-I'm-I'm getting to that—I'm getting to that, yeah.

Chris Jones: I wanted to make sure that that—a little focus on that.

Delores Davis: (Laughs) I had—I had a friend writing for me and then I became embarrassed with some of the things I had to tell her for her to write up, and so I decided I better learn the computer myself. I saw this organization in the paper, Seniors Teaching Seniors, about the computer, in Bellevue, and I went there and I-I retired in '91, and in '94, I was teaching computer skills to others. But that's how I started with the book, because then I decided I needed to write something for them to be able to know. As I did that, I went to different places, because I didn't have these skills, and I heard so many people say, “Oh, I wish my father would do that. I wish my mother would do that. Can I read that when you finish?” Then I realized that maybe other people would like to do the same thing, and so I started a class in the year 2000 about writing your own life story, and I've been teaching it ever since. And I've been—

Chris Jones: Now how does that work? You go to—colleges have you come in, or how does—

Delores Davis: Well, what happened is because of this organization, Seniors Teaching Seniors, it was a private organization that taught computer classes. And so, I was a part of that organization from '94, '95, until it closed in 2013 and '14. So that's where I did the teaching at—through that particular one. As I did that, there were people that took the class that told other people about it. And there was one lady that you and I talked about before. I can't think of her name, but I will come to it, that was Edith—no, Edith Giles, who was the person very much involved with the Black Heritage—computer part of Black Heritage, and I saw her at our - at our AKA, Alpha Kappa Alpha organization, and she told me what she was doing with the Mormon group genealogy, and they were going to be combining that. And so, I told her, I said, “I'm not doing anything about genealogy, but I do want everybody to talk about themselves, because everybody wants to learn

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about their grandparents and great grandparents. I want you to write about yourself because you're going to be a grandparent. And so, you're the one—" I just found out recently—it's hard for me to believe I'm an ancestor, but I am, you know. Therefore, what I wound up doing is deciding to teach that, and as I taught it I had to go ahead and think about writing books. And once I started writing I wanted to show the people how to do things. And so, the first thing I did was to write about my husband. Then I took a class about writing and realized how bad it was and decided I needed to rewrite it. But I did want to write about the pain of the '70s, so I wrote a book about the men in the family. And then my aunt died, and I wrote about her. Then I got jealous and wrote about myself. So, most of the books that I've done have been family books. But as I teach people what to do it got to the point that I needed to do some of the same things myself. And so, where I live now, this woman said, "We're going to have people talk about the books they've written, but they have to be published." I said, "Well, I haven't done any publishing in any kind of way." I'm-I'm like so many people, I hate rejection. And so, I was scared that it wouldn't be okay. I had tried Amazon one time, and they told me about all the things that were wrong. So, I don't try to get to get into things where I'm going to be rejected a lot of times. But when she said that, I said, "Well, I'm trying to tell everybody to do so something, why don't I go ahead and try it?" And so, I decided to rewrite the book that I'd written years ago about my husband. And so, I rewrote the book called, *The Immigrant*. And that's the one that was published.

Chris Jones: Congratulations.

Delores Davis: Thank you. And I was very pleased to have that, but it was self-published, so I still was able to control what the situation was. After that, and along that, I have written books about my class, so that anybody taking my class has an opportunity of knowing what the class is about. My class is six weeks, for two hours. And the thing that I want them to do is to write in a way that's entertaining and interesting, not just factual. And so, uh, I wrote the book having to do for the class. And then I got into the writing bug, and it seemed like I just kept on wanting to write them, trying to figure out what else to write, so I decided to be able—to find out things about—not just my parents—not just one—my husband. But let me go back further and let my kids know about it, because when I came out here—I'm an only child. My husband is an only child, so my children have no aunts, uncles, or cousins. So, when we came out here it was only my grand—my aunt that was—her grandparent. So, they felt that they didn't know anybody, didn't have anybody. When I went back in 1975 to a family thing, I realized that my father had fourteen brothers and sisters, you know, and all those people had children, so my kids have an awful lot of family. And so, I needed to be able to let them know they're not alone, because as they went ahead and didn't

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have anybody but each other, because we didn't go out that much, and they didn't have any siblings, they had a feeling that they wouldn't live as long. My father died when he was fifty-seven. My mother died when she was nineteen. My husband died when he was forty-three. The kids didn't feel that they had that much going on, so I needed to be able to let them know they've got a lot more than they think they have, so I got into the genealogy. I found—my grandfather's father lived to be 108 years of age. I saw a picture of him. He had his straw hat on, 108 years of age, you know, a Black man looking really good. You know. So, he was fifty years a slave, and fifty years free, so that got me to start writing more about the-the family.

Chris Jones: Well, speaking of strength and resilience, being a Black woman without a husband, it's really interesting, and I-I've—I don't know them intimately, but a lot of the Black women of your era that I've kind of been familiar with, Millie Russell, Pat Johnson, um, Giles—

Delores Davis: Yes, yes.

Chris Jones: I mean, some very strong women that—that raised some-some very strong families and did some things in that time that—and I still don't know the entire story of how it was to be a woman in that—which is another story, be a woman in that era. Can you speak a little bit about the children? Your children are pretty successful.

Delores Davis: Yes.

Chris Jones: So you did a-a fantastic job as an accomplished mother raising six kids, five, and one adopted.

Delores Davis: That's right.

Chris Jones: And they all went on to become successful, stable adults. Can you speak a little bit about your children if you care to share and not get too personal, but say something about your children?

Delores Davis: I'll-I'll-I'll go back just a little bit. A lot of discrimination is within a culture as well as outside the culture. In my generation, women could either be married, secretaries, or teachers. You didn't wind up going away from home unless you were married or in school. I was considered and told that I was Black and ugly, and so the only way that I would be able to do anything would be through education. That's what I had decided. And so, that's what I needed to focus on, because I didn't know what my future would be. Focusing on education allowed me to be able to get to the West Coast, because it wasn't going to be through marriage, it would be through education.



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Education then was my goal and the thing that made my life worthwhile. And so I pushed education for my children, too, because with education you could probably go anyplace, and a lot of times you're accepted a little bit more and not have as much discrimination against you if you have education. That was my thoughts. And so, my children were not able to just play all the time. In the summertime, I had this teaching machine, which they had to have at least one hour of education on that particular one.

Chris Jones: And was that a plastic box with cards?

Delores Davis: This was a box—

Chris Jones: I kind of remember that, but it-it was—

Delores Davis: Grolier teaching machine.

Chris Jones: Okay. Go ahead, excuse me.

Delores Davis: And we'd—we'd have different programs, spelling and math and all this other kind of stuff, you know, and they would go ahead and do that. Oh, yeah, I did have them also at Jefferson Recreation Center for-for activities. So actually, even though my children were in neighborhoods where a lot of the other kids were not doing the same thing, for some reason or another, they did all the same thing the other kids did, but there came a time when they decided, "No, I don't want to be like that, and I don't want to be that kind of way." So even though I was doing that it had to be something else after their father died that made them want to be different, and I've asked them that a couple of times, too. And one time my son said that because of me they saw a variety of other things, and they saw they had choices. Some of their friends, didn't see any choices for them. Education again was a way for them to be able to go ahead and do things. Plus, they were gifted enough to be—have some smarts. So, my sons seem like they've done very well if you look at things from a successful educational situation. My oldest son is currently the executive director of the African American Museum in Los Angeles. My second son is—he has been—he is a lawyer. He has been a professor at one of the universities. He's currently a CEO of an entrepreneurial program that he's created and working on that's going to be connected with, I think, IBM and Watson. My third son has a martial arts business in Kirkland that he's had for over twenty years now, very active in that. And my youngest son is a graphic artist. I have—fortunate enough to be able to have nineteen grandchildren, fourteen of which I'm involved with. I have one granddaughter who is—will be getting her master's program in psychology this year. I have one granddaughter who also has a degree but not a master's, but she graduated from Hampton, and

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she's in the entertainment business in L.A. doing very well for herself. I have two granddaughters that are going to be graduating from Howard this year. Um, I have one son—one grandson who has been very active in college and very active in the Black community, very actively, almost militantly, who is in New York. He's—he's still probably going to college, married to a girl who is—had graduated in—in education. And then I think—and I've got a son who is—a grandson, a grandson who has been very much active in the college community, and one daughter—one granddaughter who is now taking online courses from the University of Pennsylvania, so even the grandchildren continued with some of the educational situations. And so, yeah, I feel very proud about that because I think that even now your opportunities of being able to do things—when I got my master's degree, I went to work at Catholic Children's Services. At that particular time, there was a young girl there who was working there for five years. When I started with a master's degree with no experience, I started at her salary. She'd been working there for five years. You can't go up any higher as far as salary is concerned unless you're going to get more education in some of these jobs. So, I mean, to me, no matter what you do, whether or not you go ahead and get professional things or whether or not you go ahead and get laboring things or you just live, the education allows you to have a broader life. Be able to think, how to be able to vote, how to be able to talk, how to be involved. And so, it, um, it's one of the vital things in my life. Thank you for saying that.

Chris Jones: Well, that's why the apples didn't fall too far from the tree. You set the—the example for your children. They were able to see their single mother doing things in the academic world. I don't know the home situation when you came home, these kids running around at dinnertime. I don't know how the home life situation was working out, but if you're out there working every day, coming home, and they would hear actually—I'm guessing the discussions about the workplace—

Delores Davis: Yes, that's right, social work. Yeah, yeah.

Chris Jones: And things that are going on and kind of absorbing that.

Delores Davis: And I tried to take them to different places. Oh, there was a lot of tears on my part doing all that work by myself. Um, but, um, yeah, I recall one time—it, it was hard, but I recall one time I finally learned how to be able to do some things. You know, you have your children, and you have—you wash the dishes, you dry the dishes, you put them up, you know. And then someone will stay in the bathroom a long time, so they don't get a chance to go ahead and do this, and there's a lot of fighting going on. “You haven't done yours, you haven't done mine.” And so, I wound up saying, “You had the whole day. Each person's responsible for everything that happens



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that particular day.” They got to pick the food, they got to cook the food, they got to wash the dishes, so everybody had one day. And since I had six children, it was really beautiful. I didn't have to worry about one day myself from that standpoint, but I didn't start it in enough time. I didn't start it until the youngest one was about ten or eleven, and by that time, one of them had already left the house, so I had to work two days a week instead of the other way.

Chris Jones: So, the family home was on Beacon Hill where the children spent most of their formative years growing up, correct?

Delores Davis: Yes, yes.

Chris Jones: Did they—were they involved in the busing that was going on at that time, or no?

Delores Davis: No. Oh, the—no. The busing for-for my kids was when Bellevue was trying to be able to integrate more Blacks into the area, and so my oldest son was at Franklin. And they were talking about the fact that they could bus you over to Bellevue and you could be able to go to school there, except that he was over sixteen, so he took my car. So, they were a part of the busing thing, but they didn't ride the bus. You know. But what they did was to go to Newport High School when we were living in Beacon Hill, and they got involved there. My son, the oldest son, he got involved with communication, and I think that's what happened, because he got involved with the TV world, and so he was very active in that, and he's been in the entertainment business until he got into the museum business. My second son got involved in taking debate, and he got tenth place in the nation and went—and he was also very active in creating a debate program at Howard. And the third son was more into—all of them were in sports, but the third son was much more into sports and acting a little bit. He also went to Howard, but he didn't finish. The others—George finished with—he has a Master's in Business Administration. George—John finished because he has his law degree.

Chris Jones: So were they all—did they all go to school on the Eastside, or did they stay at Franklin?

Delores Davis: No, they went to school on the Eastside.

Chris Jones: All-all of them?

Delores Davis: Yeah, I was living in Beacon Hill. George was at Franklin, went to Bellevue. And it was interesting, because he stayed at that—and then he went back to Franklin but for only one quarter and then came back. He said that in Bellevue all the teachers were saying, “Have you filled

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out your application for college? Have you finished? Where are you at? What's going on?" At Franklin, they were just as hard, but nobody was asking him about college. In fact, what we found out is that most of the times a lot of the Black kids who were going to Garfield, they were having them take woodshop and home economics. If they wanted to go to college, they had to go to Broadway High School before they would be eligible to have the classes to be able to go to college. So, when George was at school, at Bellevue, then John decided to go there at the same time. It was a way—because what I felt - what I felt was if I could get them in the schools to learn and be able to make something of themselves and compete with whites so they got the same kind of learning and the same kind of jobs that whites have, I could be able to help them with the social things because they were having problems. And apparently, a lot of them I didn't know because I was a single mother. I'm sure my sons protected me from a lot of things that were going on. I didn't know that every time that Michael went out at night and get off the bus he was running to get home, because of the fact the police was after him. I didn't know any of those kinds of things until later on when the kids would get together and talk about it. I found out a lot of stuff that was going on from that standpoint. So that—I felt that if they were able to have the education to be able to compete, whatever thing they needed to know having to do with the Black culture, I'd probably be able to do. Well, I wasn't able to do it, you know. They learned on their own, but there was a difference because of the fact of being around a lot of whites versus being around a lot of Blacks. They did have some difficulties. My son said that the difficulties primarily was my daughter not having as much contacts and dates, but they had a lot of fun. It wasn't that much of a problem from that standpoint. So, when they go to school where there's a lot of whites you get a chance to learn about education, you were able to advance. They didn't have as many problems as far as fighting or a lot of gambling type of things, or a lot of problems that a lot of times the Blacks were going to jail for. But they had a lot more of the drug stuff that was in the white schools and a lot of the fighting and other problems in the Black schools, so you pick your poison which one you want to be able to go to. I forgot about that. That's why I said questions always bring other things out.

Chris Jones: No, what's interesting is I had some neighbors that instead of going to our local schools they went to O'Dea, or they went to St. Joe's—

Delores Davis: Yeah, yes, yes, yeah.

Chris Jones: Where the majority of my friends were in the public schools: Meany, Garfield, Harrison. And I'm not disparaging any academics one way or the other, but they—there—there was a - there was a difference that you could tell—



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Delores Davis: Very definitely, very definitely, very definitely.

Chris Jones: There was a separation as far as even as your social interaction and the things you did after school and at home. It was a total different environment.

Delores Davis: That's right, a total difference, and it was a disadvantage in some respects. I know my kids, even now, say that they don't know some of the Black songs that everybody else seems to know. They don't know some of the expressions, you know. Yeah, their—

Chris Jones: There's some cultural things that are different.

Delores Davis: There's very definitely a difference, and beside the fact is there's so few Black Catholics. The majority of Blacks are Protestants or Baptists or Methodists if they're active. There's very few, I think. I gave a presentation at the church one time and I realized that eighty percent of Blacks are religious, but only three percent are Catholic of that eighty percent, so it's a very minority thing, and most of them are in Louisiana, of course. You know, that's where a lot of them are—from that standpoint. So-so it was different, and they did feel the difference, both by being around white and also being Catholic at the same time, you know.

Howard Giske: Could I circle back on a couple of things—

Delores Davis: Please do.

Howard Giske: That you talked about?

Delores Davis: I think I got away from what you were talking about.

Howard Giske: Oh, no, it's totally fascinating, good questions too. Um, you mentioned—and this is kind of getting into the-the, the weeds of Al Smith's work in some ways, but you mentioned a, a guy named Lynch, a boxer. Is that—would you—

[the following conversation refers to photographs that Giske shows Delores]

Delores Davis: No, no, no. You've got a picture there of, of a man standing on an airplane and two men in the airplane.

Howard Giske: Okay. Oh, okay.

Delores Davis: The man who's standing on the airplane is Vincent Lynch.

Howard Giske: Vincent Lynch. Okay. Oh, fighter pilot, not a boxer?



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Delores Davis: Well, he was a boxer.

Howard Giske: Oh, that, too? Okay.

Delores Davis: Yeah, he was a boxer, but um—

Howard Giske: I-I remember that one then. Yes, okay.

Delores Davis: Yeah, yeah.

Howard Giske: Okay, thanks.

Delores Davis: And I can't remember the name of the man who was in the pilot's seat, but I knew him, too. Yeah.

Howard Giske: Okay. And you mentioned some of the parades. Was this one that you ever went to by any chance, the Mardi Gras parade?

Delores Davis: Well, I went to Mardi Gras parade. Oh, yeah, this is the girl who became the queen. I don't know if her name was Marie, or what. I can't think of her name.

Chris Jones: I love that look that you're giving me. You're looking at me like I would know it, and I'm looking at you like, "No, I can't help you."

[Laughter]

Delores Davis: No, I know you can't help me.

Howard Giske: Well, even a first name. It's more than we have when we walked into this room.

Delores Davis: I don't know, I don't—I-I keep thinking it was Marie, but I don't know for sure.

Howard Giske: Okay.

Delores Davis: She was just a beautiful, very nice girl. No, I went to several parades, and as I said, primarily Jackson Street. The Jackson Street parade was the one that was there. Other than that, we went to small neighborhood parades.

Howard Giske: Speaking of the neighborhood, I-I lived just a block or two off of Madison, pretty close to 21st, and you mentioned Gideon's Drugstore. Can-can you tell us more about things—y-your mom worked there, too?



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Chris Jones: And I had no idea until I talked to Ms. Davis about some of these things about my mom. My mom was a, um, letter carrier, along with her sister. And my mom and her sister went to Garfield High School, and I did not know about her early employment, um, the things she did as a young adult. It wasn't really shared, and-and to be honest, didn't really interest me as I'm growing up. I don't care. I-I don't care.

Delores Davis: See, that's the reality.

Chris Jones: I don't care. You know, I don't share. I don't care. I got to get my business.

Delores Davis: That's what I'm saying. Yeah. My mother was a child?

[Laughter]

Chris Jones: You just see them as an adult, so all these revelations I mean, I'm-I'm going on sixty, and you're, knock on wood, eighty-nine years old going strong.

Delores Davis: Going on eighty-eight.

Chris Jones: Going on eighty-eight. You have—teaching classes, full of energy, so glad that I've reconnected with you—

Delores Davis: I am, too.

Chris Jones: Through Facebook of all things and exchanging messages, so this is just really fascinating. I really, really have enjoyed being educated on their young adult years.

Delores Davis: Well, it's kind of fun to be in a situation where you're important all of a sudden just because you've lived a long time.

Howard Giske: You've got great stories to tell. Then with the drugstore, is there—when I was a kid, the drugstore in my neighborhood was so important. That's where all the kids hung out. You'd go and get—there was magazines or comic books and candy and stuff. Was-was Gideon's kind of a—

Delores Davis: But that was - but that was - that was the kind of thing you did when you were in junior high, I think, and I was in - I was in the college thing at that time, so I wasn't - so, you know, I wasn't a part of that.

Howard Giske: Oh, okay.



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Delores Davis: But I was going to show you that—this is Gideon.

Howard Giske: Oh, great.

Delores Davis: And he was, um, from the east, I think—

Howard Giske: Yeah, it says Canada.

Delores Davis: And very influential in the community, very much interested in being able to be advanced. His home on—he was the first Black family to live in the Lake Washington district. They had to go ahead and have other people go and apply to—for looking at the houses. And then they go ahead and bought the house, you know, but a white person had gone there to the real estate situation from that standpoint, you know. Yeah, he had seen that.

Chris Jones: I saw it earlier, but—

Delores Davis: But anyway, what I had on that there's—that was in an article, and you all can pick up the article and get all that information too, if it's anything you want. But no, I was - I was home during the summer, and I was looking for a job, and so I wasn't that active in doing a lot of social things. But at the same time, like I said, this was—here I am back from graduate school, so when I went to the drugstore it was primarily to get an ice cream soda, talk to Corellen*, or to see if I can get a job.

Howard Giske: They had a soda fountain sounds like. That's not something you see now.

Delores Davis: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah, no, no, no, no. No, all the drugstores had soda fountains. And when I was in Chicago, they had ice cream places, too, and for twenty-five cents you can get two scoops of ice cream with nuts and coconut shreds and sauce.

Chris Jones: Chocolate syrup.

Delores Davis: Yeah, a sundae—a sundae and a banana split. Those were the things that were just really so special and Chicago's a special place for me.

Howard Giske: Yeah, I lived there for almost two years.

Delores Davis: Is that right?

Howard Giske: The worst winter on record, '78, '79, and the mayor lost his job, and I didn't see my car for about three months.



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Delores Davis: Oh, yeah, that's what's going in certain places on the East Coast right now. I remember going to school in Chicago. Um, see, one of the things with me is that a lot of Blacks felt that public schools didn't teach Black kids, and so my first school was a private school, one room with a teacher, and then she got married, which you've heard about. And my father felt that I needed to go to Catholic school to get educated, so I was in Catholic school. And then—why did I start this subject in the first place?

Howard Giske: I was gabbing about Chicago, but that's okay.

Delores Davis: Yeah, so I was in—I was in Catholic school, and that's where I had my education, but it was something else I was thinking about. I forgot

[Production talk 01:17:39]

[Statement ends]