

SOHP Series: Desegregation and the Inner Life of Chapel Hill Schools**TAPE LOG – PROFESSOR JEROME SEATON**

Interviewee: Professor Jerome Seaton

Interviewer(s): Jay Moore and Lea Fisher

Interview Date: Wednesday, April 18, 2001

Location: Professor Seaton's office in 413B Alumni Building at
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Topic: An oral history of Professor Jerome Seaton. Seaton is a professor in the Curriculum in Asian Studies. He teaches Chinese history and poetry. He is from West Lafayette, Indiana. He was an undergraduate at Wabash College, which is a men's college in Crawfordsville, Indiana. When he was a senior in college he transferred to Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana, so that his wife could continue her education along with him. He went on after graduating to receive his PhD in Chinese at Indiana University. In 1968 he moved with his wife and one year old son to Chapel Hill where he accepted a job with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He has three children, two sons and an adopted African-American daughter. He was one of the creators of a co-op, private school in Chapel Hill called Green Willow. He was a member of the Board of trustees at Green Willow.

The interview began where we had left off on our last interview with him. He began to tell us about his experiences as the parent of an adopted African-American daughter. His daughter, Tammy, was accepted pretty well into her school environment. He told us of the sports teams she was a member of and that she had been named homecoming queen. But there were incidences that scarred her Junior-High and High School experiences. Some of these include being accused of selling dope, trouble with her coaches, and not being included in the yearbook as Homecoming queen. He also told us of his dilemma as not fully understanding the white or black side of integration because of his experience with his daughter. He also went into a few details of the experiences his sons had being from a mixed race family.

START OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

JEROME SEATON
APRIL 18, 2001

[We neglected to make the typical opening announcement, which would have been, "This is an interview with Professor Jerome Seaton. My name is Jay Moore and I'll be interviewing with Lea Fisher. Today is April 18, 2001 and we are on the 4th floor of Alumni Building and today we will be discussing the Integration of the Chapel Hill School Systems."]

JEROME SEATON: Now I meant to say that, I meant to have figured out a way to do that, which was to say, "AND SO I FINISH MY CALL FOR MARXIST REVOLUTION OVER THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD. OH, ARE WE ON!" [laughter]

JAY MOORE: Yeah! [laughter]

LEA FISHER: OOOPS! [laughter]

JS: It's either Marxist Revolution or Wagnerian Opera. One or the other.
[laughter]

LF: So, I guess just start. Last time we kinda left off before we really talked about your children in Chapel Hill schools and your daughters experience. And we talked a little about that when we came in and didn't have the recorder with us. But if we can go over some of it again.

JS: Ummmmm... let's see, yeah, that's how we actually finished up talking. We lived in the country and our kids went to Green Willow. And I bragged a little about how well the kids at Green Willow did and they really did. Its really true and amazing, people from all different kinds of backgrounds, that went to the school and the kids came out amazingly well. It may just be that people, whose parents cared enough to look for something different, did a good job of raising their kids. But the teachers were good too.

But the school was falling apart and we lived out in the country and the Chatham County schools had only just integrated. When did they integrate? They were among the last twelve school districts in the United States to integrate. We were told. I don't know if that's true or not. But we really didn't want to put our three kids on the school bus as a mixed race group and get them picked on and then my daughter had asthma and that made it real easy to make the decision. She was having to come home from school once a week at the hippie school and the hippie's school was here in Chapel Hill and my wife and I were both here. My wife at the time was going to graduate school and I was working here. So we were both here five days a week. So if anything happened with my daughter, as far as her health was concerned, we could take her home. It wasn't convenient but we could still do it. But if we had to, if she went to school in Pittsboro we would have to get contacted here, go all the way to Pittsboro, go all the way back to our house and then could we come back to town or what would we do with our daughter. It was just too complicated. So we had just bought a house, we had been renting out there for a long time and we had just bought a house out there in Chatham County. We decided to rent it out and rent a house in town so we could go to Chapel Hill schools, which turned out to be perfect because we got to go to Chapel Hill schools and the bus stop was right out front. And I think I told a little bit of the story about the teachers in the elementary school on Ephesus Church Road. They expected our kids to be wild, crazy hippies and they were surprised that they were kids who cared about learning and that they were much better integrated, because they didn't have any race problems. And it wasn't just that they were an integrated family, they never even thought about that. It was that in Green Willow School there hadn't been any difference. So they did fine. In fact

my oldest son's teacher in the 6th grade put him intentionally with the two black kids in his class, in a work group or something like that. Because he thought being from an outside group that he would need it. But it turned out that the three of them got along so well, they had to break up the group. [laughter] And sort of integrate the rest of the class because they were pushing everybody else around.

Where else do we go with that? Junior High? The junior high experience, my daughter was the queen of the May. She was elected the most popular girl in the eighth grade and she was elected the most improved on the soccer team. She went out for soccer in the ninth grade. I guess the ninth grade was in the junior high in those days. I don't know if it still is. It was then anyways. She went out for the soccer team in the ninth grade and hadn't played in the seventh and eighth grades and she was a star. But she didn't like it. It was hard on her knees; she had weak knees and ankles. She didn't like it as much as basketball. So she didn't go on with it. This will be part of the story of her high school.

LF: What junior high did she go to?

JS: She went to Grey Culbreth. Which actually they started. My son started at the one up the hill on Elliot Road. What's that school out there? Darn. Then Grey Culbreth got bussed too. At first there was an unbalance and they bussed white kids into it because there were too many black kids. That's Grey Culbreth before they built all those new houses out there. And it had a lot of Carrboro and some Chapel Hill Northside black kids in it. The kids who were going to Lincoln School before it was done away with. So they bussed in some white kids and we actually got into a funny thing there where they had to bus our daughter. We told them "Look we will raise hell if you bus our two sons to this

school and don't bus their sister, because she's black. I mean you're bussing out of our neighborhood because it is this kind of mixed neighborhood. She's a member of this mixed neighborhood so take her along. Help out the integration idea. She'll be able to say to some black people who don't know white people that they are not all bad. They're all bad except my two brothers." [laughter] That's actually just about what happened.

Anyway she was just a super star. She was again not the best in her schoolwork but she worked at her schoolwork. She just got along with everybody and everybody loved her. She was elected the most popular girl in the school. Then the principal of the school called us and told us that Tammy was a dope dealer.

LF: Who was the principal? Do you remember?

JS: I don't know. Her husband was first a schoolteacher out in Pittsboro and then he was one of the partners that started He's Not Here. What was his name? Dave? You'll find that out if you need to. Anyway, we said, "What do you mean?" If she were a dope dealer then we would know because she would have money. [laughter] And that would be as easy as that. And if she was smoking dope, that's something that you would have to watch. Although I could smell it. I mean, you know. I wasn't totally naive. But if she was selling dope, she'd have money, she'd have things, she'd have gold. She likes all that stuff like all the kids do and we don't have any money, so she doesn't get it. If she had that money she sure as hell would spend it. She wouldn't be putting it in some bank in the Cayman Islands. [laughter] "Well she's awfully popular?" [quoted from principal] Can you believe? She had decided that my daughter was a dope dealer because she was popular and there was no way that a black girl could be more popular than any white girl in the school. Even among the white boys. Given the fact that she was not obviously

involved in sexual activity. It must be drugs. And it was like, "You utter that in public lady and you're going to get sued. I mean you prove it and fine. We don't want our daughter to be a drug dealer. But it's not true and if you dare utter it in public. If you dare let a rumor of that go about. We will know who the source is. You'll be in really big trouble." And we looked and we asked other people's parents, you know "What, Tammy? She comes over to our house all the time. That's not what they are interested in." Maybe she accepts the people from the drug crowd the same way she accepts the people that want to be cheerleaders, the same way she accepts the people who want to do their school work, the same way she accepts athletes. Maybe that's the problem with her that she doesn't discriminate, even sufficiently to be saying to people that she ought to be saying to, to get away. She doesn't say get away to them. And that is what the teacher is seeing. But the assumption was, if a black person is popular and doing well they must have some material edge. It was scary. It was nightmarish. It was like what could you do. Be the nicest kid in the school and have the authorities assume that you were a bad person. Think of an ordinary kid, with ordinary problems. Think of how they got treated. It's unbelievable and it's really hard to know if given the chance to go through having Tammy be my daughter again. Would I have the courage to do it? Today I don't have very much energy. So I think, Jesus, I couldn't have gone twenty-five years without having to put up with that everyday. But what it was, I wasn't black; because whenever I was not with Tammy nobody knew I had a black daughter. You know the rednecks or the high-class, non-redneck, racist bigots couldn't single me out and pick on me if they didn't see me with Tammy. But I could feel the anger, injustice and fear, that black people had to feel in those days and I assume still have to feel. Maybe less. I never imagined it. I am

sixty now and I was thirty-five when I started doing that and up to thirty-five I was hip and pro-civil rights and had black friends and acquaintances that I thought were friends. It wasn't until later that I knew that it took more than that to be friends. But living with Tammy I got to know what it felt like to be black. That was real, real close to first hand. I have said to some of the people that are my black friends now, that sometimes I wish I was black. Because now I can share the feelings that black people have but I can chicken out of it. I can walk away from it and they can't. And by God people will walk away from it. People get scared and they walk away from doing the right thing. And what happened in Nazi Germany was not a bunch of people being evil. It was a bunch of people, some people were being evil, but it was a bunch of people afraid to do the right thing. That's different from being evil. And I know now what it feels like to be black and I know what it feels like to be afraid to admit it. I can't stand up and say that I am black. I keep wanting to have a pin that says, "I am black". [laughter] But it still wouldn't make me black and if I people started getting angry at me, I could take it off and put it in my pocket or throw it away. "Where was that crazy guy with that pin?" [laughter] That's a solo position, that doesn't really have anything to do with what it is like to be black. I am not really an outside observer, but I am not really an inside observer. I am not black but I am not really white. So I am somewhere in between there but it is probably statistically insignificant. Only my experiences. It is not like a white person's experience of integration and it is not like a black person's experience of integration. And I am not sure that it gives any real insights. Now my daughter's situation that I cannot really speak for. That's a real unique situation, which might offer some real insights. Talking to her about being black but knowing what its like to be white. Now she's black and they don't worry

about what white people's problems are. I mean white people have problems but that is not the issue, the issue is black people's problems. But most black people don't know what white people's problems are and they can't distinguish between what's the human condition. What we all suffer from. And what we particularly suffer from because we are black if we are all black. And she could see it both. Because she really knew her two brothers really well. She had two or three white friends that were just as close to here as her black friends were. Until her very last year of high school and on into college. When they separated and it was over, the white kids were non-understanding.

LF: Where did she go to high school?

JS: She went to Chapel Hill High. We moved into town and they went to school here all the way through and actually we moved back out in the country her last year of high school, after the other two had gone off to college. But they let her finish up at Chapel Hill High. At Chapel Hill High she was on the basketball team and she didn't get along with the coach. She was a great basketball player. Neither of my sons cared for organized sports, but they were not wimps. She was a great basketball player and I just hated that she didn't get along with the coach. In one game she was the "sixth man" and one of the starters was injured and Tammy had to play against... Tammy was five foot two and she played against a woman who was five foot eight and who was averaging over thirty points a game in the league that they were in. Tam guarded everyone until the last three minutes of the game and at that point that woman had seven points and she made twelve points in the last three minutes of the game so she ended up with nineteen. But before she only had seven points and was averaging thirty points a game. And actually Tammy didn't foul out, but the coach took her out for some reason. She was

angry with her for some reason. It was the kind of thing that made Tammy decide she wanted to be a cheerleader her senior year. She became captain of the varsity cheerleaders after never having been a cheerleader. She switched over from basketball to cheerleading and became captain of the varsity cheerleaders and the cheerleaders won the state championship. Who knew that cheerleading teams had championships? [laughter] But they did. She was something else.

Then she went to State and had a white roommate and they were really good friends. And her white roommate pledged a sorority the second semester and Tammy said, "Oh my God, I can't, because they are not taking me because I am black." And Tammy said I'm not going here anymore and transferred to A&T. She said if I want to be at a place where there is a minority, I want to be in the majority rather than the minority. Terrible mistake, we never should have let her do it. It was a perfectly good impulse. And she went there saying I'll treat white people at A&T the way that white people should treat black people at State.

And she did and she was good at it, and she was a good influence at that place. But it is a crappy school. It is just a crappy school. They just do not have the resources. If she had stayed at State, she would have been an elementary school teacher or a junior high English teacher. And be out in the world raising hell. She'd probably be an associate principal somewhere by now. And over there she had all kinds of emotional problems and probably did get involved with bad people over there. She was in a car wreck, where her very best friend was killed. She was pinned in the car with her friend while her friend was dying, bleeding to death in the car. But she ended up graduating. During her student teaching she decided she wanted to be a science teacher in high school, because she

wanted black kids to have a model black person who did science. And I thought "great idea". It was really hard for her. She was really not with it. She got a lot of tutoring and she really worked hard at it and she got friends who were doing the same thing so she had a support group.

But when she did student teaching, she did the teaching in a Greensboro City school and it was so bad that she said, she was already working part-time as a waitress, "Hell, I'd make more money working part-time as a waitress than I do working here and people treat me with respect or if they don't my manager gives them hell. Here I am in high school; I'll be working sixteen-hour days and getting paid half of what I get paid for waitressing. And the kids are uncontrollable. That is what they want me to do, to control the kids, not to teach them." I still think she could have done it. And I still keep after her to actually get certified to be an elementary school teacher.

But she is thirty, she'll be thirty-one next month and last year she decided that she was getting old and wanted to have a baby. I have talked her out of it twice before. She is going to have a baby whether the guy wants to get married or not. I said, "You can't do it. You must not do it." She got pregnant once before and I actually talked her into getting an abortion by describing what it would be like to be a single parent and that you were just damning, particularly being black and the culture that she was in, "You were just damning your kid to end up with no parents, really." I talked her out of it.

Well, now the guy is a good guy and he is in a good position. He is a chicken farmer out in eastern North Carolina. Who was a management? What do they call those? He went around to restaurant chains when they would have trouble with middle management he would come in from outside and shape them up for six weeks. His father

died and had a giant chicken farm, so he took over the chicken farm to protect the family interest and raise his kid brother through high school. And Tammy was going to move out with him and when she went out there, it was just so primitive, just primitive eastern Carolina. She couldn't make herself do it; she just had too many friends in Greensboro, from living there for ten years.

So she is living in Greensboro and he is paying and taking care of the child. They did not get married. She's hooked into being a mother now for five years, basically. Which is great, I am glad that she sees that as what she has to do. But she'll be thirty-five or thirty-six years old before she can make the next serious change in what she does with her life. She's working lunch shifts, which are six-hour shifts at a Red Lobster, where they wanted to make her a manager two years ago. And she didn't want that, she didn't want the extra work. But if she was to go and be a school teacher then the baby would be in day care, four hours a day, since she is a single parent. So that's a hassle. Which is the story of Tammy. [laughter]

LF: It's a good story. [laughter]

JM: Yeah. [laughter] Can you tell us again about the prom queen, I mean Homecoming queen story?

JS: Yeah, yeah well she was their...um...sixth man on the basketball team; made herself into the captain of the cheerleading team; boyfriend was a star on the football team. The football team is actually who elected the homecoming queen. It was a thing that got--. Homecoming was a big thing in Chapel Hill High School until integration. At integration the football team got integrated and became more black than white, and then it was always the black girl that was the homecoming queen. Therefore it got devalued

in the system of things that were important. In Chapel Hill academics were the biggest important thing, and have been for a long time, say before the 50s and 60s. Things like homecoming-- This was still just a village. Then it was a normal American village and that kind of stuff was important.

It was just that important for Tammy to be homecoming queen. It was the same thing that had been done in junior high. It was popularity, Miss Chapel Hill High School, you know. And she was really, really proud of it, and waiting for the-- And of course she got through the whole ceremony and she got presented the roses, and she got the picture taken, and she was in the newspaper. She got that, that was great, but when the annual came out, she called me up on the phone crying and said, "There's nothing, there's nothing about the homecoming queen in the whole annual." And I said, "That can't be." I drove over to the school and she brought me the annual. I looked, and oh there was. On the front page in fact was a collage, montage thing with little bits of pictures. There was the lower left-hand corner-- They finally sent her a full color eight by ten with a letter saying, "We're sorry this inadvertently got left out and we admit that it wasn't in the book." But anyway, on the front page there was the lower left-hand corner of this, which was two of her best friends, who were part of the five couples that were in the actual original picture that was taken of them. It was taken of the crown being presented to Tammy in the middle; two couples in the back, two couples in the front, and Tammy in the middle with her boyfriend putting the crown on her. And the one picture that was in the whole thing was just that left-hand corner, which was the white couple in the picture. I don't know why.

I went to the-- I found my way through two or three layers of bureaucracy to the guy who was responsible for the book. I asked him politely, I worked my way up to, "Why in hell has this occurred? What am I supposed to say to my daughter?" He said, "() it's not important." I said, "If it's not important, how come you put it on the front page. You bothered to stick-- There's nothing in there at all, or if it's on the front page, then you stick in one of the black couples other than the central couple. Okay, that's one thing, but you gave yourself away man. I mean, yes it's still important, but it's important for white people and defiled by black people." He, you know, called me a few names. I told him I would be happy to push his head out the window and --.

LF: Was he a student, or a--?

JS: No, he was the faculty advisor. Yeah, and I just happened to tell that story, as I told you last Monday, I happened to tell that story to a present student who just graduated from Chapel Hill High School. He said that he had worked last year on the annual staff and the first thing they had had was a sensitivity training, at which they had looked at old annuals and see what things had raised issues. This was long enough ago that it probably wasn't among the ones that the present person remembered. [laughter]

LF: Do you remember anything about the politics of integration? How did Chapel Hill decide to integrate?

JS: That I don't. My kids were too little to be in school and were going--.

LF: To Green Willow?

JS: To the hippie school, so we didn't pay attention. I said last time; I remember the integration in Indiana, but in my hometown-- Well in my-- The school I went to there were no black people in West Lafayette, Indiana, and so there never was

integration. Now there is, 'cause there are, but that was easy. It happened in the 80s. Um, back in the 50s, or in the late 40s, Lafayette, Indiana, in the other side of the river—much bigger town with a very small black population—integrated the schools because the black schools had a fantastic basketball player. That was the reason they shut down the whole black school and put all the black school (). So they could get this guy on the basketball team. That's how important basketball is in Indiana.

Then I remembered the cook in my fraternity house in college telling me-- We actually had some conversation about how naïve people were, what a favor I thought I was doing him, but you know, maybe he enjoyed letting me know a few things. Anyway, he was the-- He was black. He said he discovered he was black when he was in high school and the baseball team went out of town to play baseball, and the other team wouldn't play baseball because Crawfordsville had a black player on the team. He wanted to know who that was. [laughter] One of the guys said, "It's you Marcus." [laughter]

Anyway, he was also the president of the NAACP in Crawfordsville, and he simply in the late 50s, middle 50s-- They were well integrated when we got there; played football against black kids in the 50s from Crawfordsville. Uh, he simply looked at the school budget and the black school budget and went to the school board and said, "Look, it's costing you people one-hundred thousand dollars a year to keep my sixteen black kids in a separate school. Is it worth that to you? We used to be friends." Of course he did used to be friends with all those people before those KKK years. He said, "We used to be friends, we can be friends again. It's coming, and you know it's coming in the court. Right now it's costing you this much money every year. You're talking

about raising taxes, but you don't have to raise taxes, just shut the school." And that's the way it worked, with pure economics.

LF: How was Chatham County able to hold out so long, and Chapel Hill wasn't?

JS: I don't know. I don't know. This is probably a poet's answer, but you may have noticed, or you may not have noticed--. You probably didn't cause I didn't see it in the Chapel Hill paper. It was in the Chatham County paper. About two months ago, the Chatham County Sheriff's Department made a terrific marijuana bust. They got--. You do know that story?

JM: Yeah.

JS: Okay, well they made a big bust, do you know the rest of the story?

JM: Then the drugs are, like gone?

JS: About half of what they had taken. They couldn't find anybody--. First of all they claim they couldn't find anyone to destroy it. There was so much that it wouldn't burn in the, in the standard way, or whatever, so they buried it.

JM: In the landfill?

JS: Yeah, okay, and nicely bagged up in the plastic bags of course. Two or three weeks later someone came and took about half of it back. This is what, three or four million dollars worth of marijuana at those inflated prices they always give ()? [laughter] At that we all laughed. It's really funny. Pull one over on the sheriff. You know, and then two weeks later, someone came and stole the rest of it. So they stole it all back! Now how much of that is stealing, and how much of that is the sheriff and um--? I'm not going to say it. The tape is on there, okay?

This is a poet's way to answer the question of how could Chatham County have held out for that long. Well, it's because the people of Chatham County get along so well together. It's because of neighborliness, you know? The white people were all neighborly with each other about keeping black people out, and the black people were all neighborly with the white people about not doing what they were not supposed to, or else they were going to get shot. It was very backward for one reason or another that I don't know about in social history. It was very much more like Mississippi or Alabama in Chatham County. It may simply be that the, that there were big old plantations in Chatham County for agricultural or economic reasons that there weren't in Orange and Wake County, and so on and so forth. So there was an established slave culture over there that held on.

Um, in Orange County between here and my Chatham County home, there is a black community that's been black, like Holly Springs. It's never been incorporated, but there's like ten families and twenty houses on Loop Road. Those people got hold of their land right after the Civil War, and they held onto it when people came and started telling them, "Why, we got your deeds." They said, "Well, you're going to have to come and kick us out and some of you are going to die if you do." Now, in other places there never was, people never got their land. They never got their fifty acres and a mule cause there was either someone around who was bossing them around, or being patronizing in a positive way. But Chatham County was very backward and remains very backward.

LF: Did Hillsborough integrate at the same time that Chapel Hill did? I can look it up--.

JS: I don't know. That would be Orange County schools, rather than Hillsborough. Hillsborough certainly was not near, didn't have nearly the desire that Chapel Hill did. In Chapel Hill there were by the 50s, there were more damn Yankee progressives in town than there were—and more southern progressives too—than there were knee-jerk radical KKK, redneck honkies, or whatever. [laughter] And in Hillsborough this wasn't true. In Hillsborough there were more knee-jerk honkies than there were Yankee radicals. [laughter]

LF: Jay, do you have some other questions?

JM: I don't think so.

LF: I know there are some other things I wanted to ask you. Let me just think for a minute. Is there anything we haven't asked you about sons' experiences?

JS: Oh, well my older son was a very big--. He's skinny, but he's six feet tall and took karate when he was a little kid just for fun. A real aggressive--. He loved to play tackle football without pads (). So the kind of kid who was going to get in trouble in school, and the kind of kid just right to be, to get involved in interracial troubles because if anybody picked a fight with him, he was going to fight back first then straighten it out afterwards. I was really worried about him. I said it was probably really lucky that he got put with those two black kids at first, and that's what they were doing. They were bullying everyone around. The three of them together. [laughter] he fit right in with what they were doing. He had certain values that came from the hippie school that he passed on to them. They all like each other now, you know, and have gone pretty much their separate ways.

Um, but when he got to high school, I don't know what story must have come with him. Anyway, something happened. When he got to high school, a bunch of kids ganged up on him and he—it became quite famous because it was probably the first time that anyone really effectively used karate in school [laughter]. He kicked one guy in the chest and knocked him way down the hall, and then grabbed the other guy—he used to do one-hundred pushups everyday when he was fourteen years old—grabbed the other guy by the shirt and banged him up against the wall just like that. So he goes WACK and then BANG. [laughter] And then he turned around and looked at the rest of the guys, and they all went off after the guy that he kicked down the hall to see if he was okay, you know. But then, we were really afraid that he was going to be in trouble cause he hurt these two guys and shamed them in front of somebody.

So when he went to school the next day, he was surrounded by a bunch of black kids and one big, big senior. This is when he was a tenth grader. One big senior, who he couldn't have fought if he had a knife, came up and said, "There's nothing wrong with this boy. I've heard about this boy. This boy's sister is black. If you were picking on him, you ought not to have been, and you probably ought not to pick on him anymore either, cause if he don't beat you up, I will." And that was the last time anybody ever picked on Jerome. Um, but I think that was the sister part. The fact that he was in some familial way actually part of the black community was more important. Well, he stood up for himself too, you know guys appreciate that.

Then, did he have a black friend? No, in high school he didn't have a black friend. Uh, including the two guys that came from the uh, actually the two guys didn't come from junior high along with him. He got bussed out of that school district and they

didn't get bussed out of that school district, so he didn't get to stay with his elementary school friends in junior high.

My second son is such a weirdo that he didn't even get along with the white kids. [laughter] He was, is, incredibly smart. Duke had a program where they had seventh graders take SATs in seventh grade. They had like seventy-five thousand people take these exams. Charlie came in fifth.

LF: Geez!

JS: Out of seventy-five thousand people that Duke selected. He got interviewed to go to Math and Science, and coming away from it he said, "I don't want to go there, those people are snobs. I want to go to Chapel Hill because it's a better school." He hung out with the brainiest of the brainiest of the brainiest, but didn't care very much about impressing. He actually got an "F" in a class at Chapel Hill High School. In a government class where he knew everything before he went in, but he just didn't like the teacher and he refused to accept any authority that he didn't have respect for. But, so he was a total absolute nerd, and had no contact with anybody outside of people who were only interested in intellectual things. He won a national Latin poetry prize. [laughter] And he, you know, did it for fun. It wasn't like a big deal and he didn't keep on studying Latin. He just thought, "Hey, I can do this."

LF: Were schools like Math and Science and School of the Arts integrated about the same time?

JS: Math and Science was started so late that there wouldn't have been any issue. I don't remember when, but...um... the School of the Arts was earlier. It struggled. They had drama school for high school kids, and it turned out being so emotionally dangerous

that they had kids committing suicide every year for a couple of years. And they actually closed down the drama school part of the School of the Arts and made it a junior college. Eventually, it was brought back as junior college, but it just had graphic arts and dance for a long time. Yeah, my eldest son actually went there. It's funny, I had forgotten that entirely. My oldest son went to School of the Arts for his senior year. He didn't have any black friends over there either.

END OF INTERVIEW