

Interview
with
VENTON BELL

January 30, 1991

By Goldie F. Wells

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INTERVIEW WITH DR. VENTON BELL

By Goldie F. Wells

Goldie: Today's date is January 30, 1991. I am in the office of Dr. Venton Bell who is the principal of Harding High School in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Goldie: Dr. Bell, I would like for you to introduce yourself and say that you know that this interview is being recorded.

Dr. Bell: My name is Venton Bell and I am principal of Harding High School and I am aware that this interview is being recorded.

Goldie: I'm so pleased that you answered my questionnaire and sent it back to me. I am doing research on the role perceptions of Black high school principals. I wrote to the State Department last year to find out how many Black administrators we have at high schools. They sent me a list of 41 and of those 41 some of them are principals of what we call the alternative schools and not traditional high schools. Back in 1964, there were over 200 Black high school principals so I am interviewing principals from 1964, and 1989, and then I am going to do a comparison. I am using the oral history method so I am interviewing you and it will be transcribed then I will make some analysis from my findings from these interviews. You will get one of the transcriptions back so that you can see if you need to make any revisions before I use it.

Goldie: I want you to tell me how you became a high school principal.

Dr. Bell: How did I become a high school principal? Everything will be pretty right except for the dates. It has been so long. I started out teaching in 1966, in a Black junior high school--Yarbrote. Later the name was changed to Kennedy Junior High School here in Charlotte. Having been a product of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system myself as a student, teaching in junior high school and coaching when we had the desegregation I was transferred to South Mecklenburg High School. It was when they were closing down the Black schools and getting the Black teachers absorbed into their system. We went to the high school at South Mecklenburg and taught math there for a while. While there I became--the principal there had me doing other duties in addition to teaching like covering the halls and chaperoning the cafeteria. He apparently saw some things that encouraged me to help him out more in the office area and while doing that I began to like that type of stuff so I thought about at that time maybe pursuing an administrative certification. I had already received my Master's degree at Notra Dame at the

time but did not have an administrative certification so then I began to work on my administrative certification at UNCC. One person that I worked with at South Mecklenburg is Jimmy , who is now the area superintendent for the South Olympic area and the assistant principal at South Mecklenburg at the time I was there teaching. He and I got to be quite good friends so he got his first appointment as the administrator of the Metro Center Evening School. He asked that I go down and work with him as a second job in the evenings. There I assisted him very much with that and I began to even like it--because he was off campus a lot and I got a chance to run the school. I liked it even more. So he and I became closer and when he received his first high school principalship or first real principalship he worked it out so that I would go with him to Olympic High School as his administrative assistant--no teaching assignment just number one assistant. I worked there with several other assistant principals and got so I enjoyed the job a lot. Then the bug bit me again so I finished my certification at UNCC and from there I stayed for numerous years as an assistant to the principal. Then I went over to the assistant principal at West Mecklenburg High School for about six months and there I received my first principalship which was in the junior high school. I remained there for five, six, or seven years I guess and then from there I was transferred to Harding as principal and this is my fourth year at Harding High School.

Goldie: Tell me something about Harding High School.

Dr. Bell: Harding High School started in 1935, way back in the old days before I was born. Harding was originally located to the best of my knowledge near Irving Avenue. You probably heard about Dorothy Counts? This was the school that she tried to enter but it was located on the other side of town. At that time it was all White. Harding, the new plant, came here in 1955 or 1957, and they moved it to this side of town. It originally was a predominantly White school. In fact, I look at the yearbooks and see how they have changed over the years. We have a carload of yearbooks in the media center and I just discovered those things there. It has changed gradually. Harding was located in a neighborhood setting and the neighborhood around here immediately a while back was predominantly White and the school was predominantly White. It reflected the student body and over the years the school has changed from White to Black. We are about 64% Black in the school. Harding has one of the unique characteristics as does West Mecklenburg. There are eleven high schools and there are only two high schools in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System that have grades 9-12. Harding is one of the schools. We have a population of approximately 900-1000 kids which makes us not the smallest high school, Olympic being the smallest, but we are the smallest if you take out the 9th graders we would be the smallest high school. With the 9th graders, we are not

the smallest high school. We have approximately 30-40 ADM positions, 17-19 vocational positions, and one of the unique things about us is we have the BEH classes here, three units of BEH--two of self-contained cross-categorical classes here and we have 50-60 students who are in the resource program. So we have a wide, wide range of students. Our socio-economic level is not the highest; it is quite low not only for the Blacks but for the White students. We are very competitive based on what we are dealing with based on our socio-economic ladder. One of the other unique things about Harding is that we also has an evening school that operates here. When we get ready to leave then the school is not closed. Another set of students come in and this is a set of students who come from all the surrounding high schools and may have been high risk students or dropped out before who go to school here in the evenings from 3-9 o'clock at night. Those are a couple of the characteristics but basically we have always been known to be highly competitive. We have Morehead scholars, we won the Field Houston award for the last upteen times Harding has had either the male or female recipient of that. We have been known to be highly competitive athletically. Scholastically we are definitely improving. We have a very, very dedicated faculty.

Goldie: What size is your faculty?

Dr. Bell: As I said before we fill 91 boxes. We have 35-40 ADM positions. We have 17 vocational positions and we have the Special Ed, band, and all these other things but we usually fill about 91 boxes. We have 5 secretaries, 3 assistant principals, 3 guidance counselors, 2 media specialists with an aide. We are a very accomplished high school.

Goldie: What is your racial makeup of your faculty?

Dr. Bell: Charlotte-Mecklenburg have a goal to keep you within the 30% range as far as--and it is similar to the student body. So we are on the upper part of 30% minority faculty on our staff.

Goldie: But your minority enrollment is about 64%?

Dr. Bell: Yes.

Goldie: Now I am going to ask you something about the responsibilities you have and how you deal with them? Tell me something about personnel and teacher selection.

Dr. Bell: Okay. I have an organizational chart. I have 3 assistant principals. The hiarchy or the organization chart of the principal is that I supervise 3 assistant principals. Each one of my assistant principals have their responsibility for a certain faction of the campus. For example, one of the

assistant principals is in charge of the custodians and that means that he is in charge of anything to do with maintenance. He will have so many teachers he is responsible for observing during the year. He may have three different departments he is working with--the vocation department, and maybe another department. He is responsible for doing that. Anything related to maintenance that is his wing. I have another assistant principal who is in charge of the secretaries. We are trying to cut down on my scope of trying to manage. One assistant principal is in charge of secretaries and all the duties and things that are related to secretaries or fall in her realm and she also has a certain number of teachers in certain departments. Whatever her major is, if it is English then she has English teachers and some other teachers that she is responsible for doing basically their evaluations and PDP's and things of that nature. We have another assistant principal who is a science major. She is in charge of the guidance counselors. The head guidance counselor works directly with me too but as far as the person in charge of that department is the assistant principal who has the guidance counselors and then she has the duties that are associated with that fall in her range. My job is mainly to manage the three of them and see that they take care of things. Also the financial secretary usually falls directly under my jurisdiction and the athletic director. Those are my responsibilities. We go down that line and that is usually the form of our organization chart that we have and it seems--it is new this year. We have not had that before and also there are certain teachers that I am in charge of. I'm a math major therefore, I am in charge of the math teachers and all new teachers coming in and several parts like that. We try to split that up equally so that we have the same number of observations and that type stuff.

Goldie: Selection of your teachers.

Dr. Bell: We have a personnel department here in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System. Once you identify a vacancy and turn it in to the personnel department their responsibility is to pool the "best fit" candidate based upon the description of the job that you have available in the system in their files. Once these people have been identified these names are given and screened initially by the personnel department. Then these names are given to the principal to his designee. What we do here once we identify those persons we have interviews set up with them and we have members from our faculty advisory committee. Those are people who are elected by the faculty as their liaison between the principal and the teachers. We select certain people from that committee and the department chairperson from the department where the vacancy lies, one of my assistant principals on the team and then myself. We usually go through and observe the people and interview them and then

make recommendations to me and usually we have some kind of consensus and that gives some ownership as far as who is going to be with the faculty. It makes them feel better if they help me select the people so teachers have input in that especially the faculty advisory committee.

Goldie: Curriculum and instruction.

Dr. Bell: Naturally if you have gone through your courses you know that the principal is going to be the instructional leader in the school. I tell you you don't have too much time for that type stuff. You being in the central office I'm sure you go visit schools too and you know you try to maintain and try to keep the paperwork from overtaking you. My main instructional person--I originally had two assistant principals and an API (assistant principal of instruction). That person still has that big responsibility working directly with the principal. She is basically responsible for making sure that we--she meets with the department chairpersons to discuss concerns they have and she meets with us as individual principals and individual administrators meet with our own departments. For example, I meet with the math department when they have concerns and Ms. Smith will meet with the vocational people when they have concerns and whatever department you are assigned to. In Charlotte-Mecklenburg a lot of our curriculum stuff is passed down to us because we have a person in the system who is the "curriculum specialist for math", and they simply feed us the data and we get memos telling us what we can do and we can't do. You don't have too much flexibility in being able to do a whole lot because somebody has already made the decision in the hierarchy and you simply have to implement these decisions so there isn't that much decision-making as far as the curriculum is concerned except for how you can make things fit into your particular school.

Goldie: Discipline.

Dr. Bell: Discipline is a nightmare. This year in the conference planning stage one of the key things that we are working on this year was this one. I am supposed to be a disciplinarian, I don't know. Last year we had this discipline plan of what the penalties were. Then we had a card that we kept on students. You don't come to the office, you don't have a card. Once you come to the office then we make a card on you. The card is kept in a central location. Everything is put on the computer and so when you put down the offense the student did, the date and the person who dealt with him and the teacher who referred him and then what he did. If it is something trivial then we usually deal with the kid. But if it is something the parent needs to know about because we have more severe consequences in the future then we make sure the parents know about it the first time.

For example: If you've got profanity the first time, two hours detention after school and parental contact. On Mondays and Fridays we have a teacher who stays she is on a flex schedule and she stays one hour after school for detention for two days a week.

Dr. Bell: Just two days a week--because you have to let the kid know about it in advance so they can take care of it. The second time you do this if you do profanity directly toward a teacher it is automatically out-of-school suspension. We go through that as our plan that we had last year. So we revised it this year and we go the whole ten yards.

Goldie: Yes, it is. It goes from front to back and it is from 1-12.

Dr. Bell: What it does, it keeps consistency. You don't want to have one where your kid does something and then my kid does something and then I give your kid one punishment and give another kid another punishment. That would create a lot of problems. So we needed some kind of consistency. So all of my administrators had this in their files so when the kids does something we look at the card to see where they were, this your second or third offense and we can see what the penalty is going to be. This does not take out some of the random stuff that happens but it cuts down on the random stuff. It makes the decisions more meaningful and you can discuss it with somebody intelligently. So we decided not to use this this year except for major things. We decided to go to a uniform discipline policy. You see these posters now in the teachers classrooms. This year because of our competency school planning the problem that we had was that if a kid does something here like profanity one time and you give them a first penalty and he does something down here in the school parking lot, we have a parent conference and you keep going through the same things over and over and yet the kid commits different offenses. So we want to find some way of dealing with a kid instead of having him commit so many different offenses and then having to go so long then he commits offenses then we deal with him. So we went back and revised the plan and said, the first time you are referred to the office if it is not one of the major offenses, you get the warning; the second time you are referred to the office regardless of what it is. If it is something we find you guilty of, you get the one hour detention then we go down through the line. The administrators are having difficulty getting adjusted to it. It has been very hard.

Goldie: It looks like it is easy.

Dr. Bell: It's not. Suppose you are going through this process and all of a sudden a kid comes up and he has been fighting or suppose a kid comes up with something that is

really trivial. I told John, anybody who didn't bring his homework in today that I was going to send them to the office. Sometimes that does happen. Okay? Then you've got the kid in the office two times already and you have to put them in ISS or something like that. You see, that doesn't give you the flexibility you need.

Goldie: So we still have to go back to teacher judgement.

Dr. Bell: Then if you don't do it then the teachers want to get on your case about it. So you have to deal with that. We're trying to tell teachers to think a little bit before they send kids to the office. Don't send them on trivial stuff that you should handle in your own classroom. So that is why that is giving us a problem now. So we're having to go back and still use some discretion in making decisions. You are not going to send a kid home because he didn't have a pencil and this is the third time he's been in the office.

Goldie: Transportation.

Dr. Bell: Transportation is done by my assistant principal, Diane Perry. That is one of her duties. When she comes in the morning she checks the buses in. We, at Harding, are on TIMS. All schools are not on TIMS but they are finally breaking them in. We are on TIMS and therefore our assignments are made through the computer. In the mornings the buses start coming in at 6:55--because we have the breakfast program here--the assistant principal is in the parking lot to check the buses and she has a check-off list to make sure all the buses are in on time. We have adult bus drivers by the way. They come in and bring the kids in and let them disembark and then they go to the cafeteria to eat because we have a large percentage of our students on free or reduced meals. They go there and they eat breakfast in the mornings and they hang out in the cafeteria or in A building. In the double deck building there is a big square place there but it is not the mall but it has a big space. They go there and they spend their time there and then they leave. We have about forty to fifty percent of our students who ride buses. We don't have as many kids with cars as some of the other schools. We have a lot of walk-ons in the immediate neighborhood and we have a lot who drive. A large percent of our students ride the bus.

Goldie: What is the number of buses?

Dr. Bell: About twenty some.

Goldie: Utilization of funds.

Dr. Bell: Charlotte-Mecklenburg is weak again in that. We have X amount of money that is allocated to the school based upon your enrollment--your 10 day enrollment. That is why

you try to get as many kids as you possibly can in the first ten days. You get so much money per student and that's out of several funds. You have instructional funds, general instructional funds, different type funds you use for certain things based upon how many students you have. You have to disburse this money--it's not really in your possession, it is money downtown--you simply write a draft on it and follow the guidelines and you have to satisfy. We allocate money into departments after I take my expenses out and what it is going to take for me to run that copy machine in there and my field trips and miscellaneous. I strike that money from my instructional allotment. The money that is remaining I simply divide the money to the departments according to the number of teachers in the department or according to the number of students they have involved in the department. The amount of that money is given to the department chairperson by the financial secretary and any requests that they decide how they are going to spend it in their department and any request that they have has to be signed by the department chairperson. I initial it and send it to my financial secretary and she subtracts that from the allotment. All the money that they are allotted they can spend.

Goldie: Cafeteria management.

Dr. Bell: Cafeteria management in the schools is put away from the principal. It is a disjointed thing. She and I communicate and make sure that we run things smoothly and we communicate as far as times, as far as cleaning the cafeteria, but the principal has nothing to do with the cafeteria. In fact, most principals don't even have keys to the cafeteria to the back part of the cafeteria. That is a complete disjointed thing from the school as far as the management. That is run completely by the cafeteria manager. We simply talk and we evaluate her but we don't have anything to do with the cafeteria.

Goldie: Buildings and grounds.

Dr. Bell: In Charlotte-Mecklenburg we have a maintenance department that is basically responsible for buildings and grounds. We have our own custodial staff that is responsible for doing the minor cleaning of the building and picking up papers before the grass is cut. All the heavy things to do we have the maintenance department that is responsible for doing that. In this system we have something that is called an operation specialist and there are five of them. They are responsible for two high schools and all the schools that feed those two high schools and they are responsible for making sure that you keep your custodial staff employed. They are responsible for doing that. You buy the supplies for those helping and you buy supplies that they are responsible for. There are eleven high schools and there

are five of those people and each one of them has three that they are responsible for.

Goldie; Community relations.

Dr. Bell: We have a Squash Special Program here at Harding High School. We have a unique program this year that has just been started called Squash. It is a school within a school at Harding. We have it on the second floor. The 9th graders have a tendency to get lost in high school so we have isolated the 9th graders and put them upstairs on the top floor. I went to visit Salisbury and all these other type schools to look at their middle school concept. So all of our 9th graders are up on the second floor. We identify them and have them grouped into three different groups--about 100 and some kids per group and gave them four teachers. Those four teachers work with them teaching them language arts, math, science, and social studies and they have a wing. They just walk from one room to another and the teachers want to do some interdisciplinary type stuff. They can do that. If they want to teach them for two hours, they can do that. They can do what they want to with their teams. The students stay there for four periods a day and the 5th period they hit that floor. They leave that place like I don't know what to take their electives and P.E. class. But it has worked great for us. It has helped keep kids in school. They don't have an opportunity to get involved with the upper classmen and a lot of the bad habits that may have been formed by upper classmen they are not exposed to that and it is working out real well.

Goldie: Are they using cooperative learning?

Dr. Bell: They are using cooperative learning. They are doing a lot of interdishonary stuff--relating to science and math. They are working on something with gas logs and the math teacher is working on ratios within their group. The teachers have one extra planning period and that is to help the kids. We were given two extra positions this year and the teachers teach four periods and have t-planning. The teachers meet and they call parents and they meet with the students and all this has to be with the parents and then they have their regular planning period.

Goldie: Community relations. How do you think people feel about Harding?

Dr. Bell: We have a partnership with a company that gave us \$51,000 as one of our partners. Now Harding has changed a great deal. Harding traditionally was a predominantly White school and now it is predominantly White and it is perceived as being the school where Black kids want to come. We have a perception that we are trying to fight. We are athletically oriented, that we are not as academic as we should be--that

when they compare test results and you do a socio-economic return when you start comparing apples to oranges and you get that. We get that. We feel and our results show that we are doing good with the products that we are dealing with. We are making the products the best they can be based upon the product we have initially coming in to us. We think people feel pretty good about the school. The students feel good about the school. You have to realize that we don't have a neighborhood community anymore. So our kids who go to Harding may be living over near West Mecklenburg or live in West Charlotte especially if they are the Black satellite because the Black west side of town is full of Black people and that means you can't have all the Black kids going to those schools in those neighborhoods like West Charlotte, Harding, and you have to pull out of those and put them in different places and so therefore it is very diverse. We think we have a good positive image and we can do some improving on it but we are working on that trying to improve it and make it better. We would like for people to think of us as being an academic giant but that is not the way things are.

Goldie; Then it takes years because you are building a new image.

Dr. Bell: But you just can't build an image unless you have the products to build that image. In your researching I'm sure you have discovered that some of the things that affect student achievement more than anything else their success in school deals basically with the family, the families that they come from; what is the mother's educational level, and what expectation do they have. That goes back to parent expectation. Money is important but it not one of the key things it has more to do with expectations that the parent has for them and the value that the parents place upon education. That has a lot to do with this. That is something that we need to work on--we need to educate parents more to expect more of their kids and want more for their kids and that will have a bigger effect than anything else. You can take the same school and set it in a neighborhood where you have kids with parents who have Doctor's degrees, or parents who are engineers or lawyers.

Goldie: How much administrative power and control do you think you have over your school site and your responsibilities?

Dr. Bell: We try to deal with site-based management. I try to be a participatory type manager. I've been known in my earlier days when I was younger to be a autocratic teller type management, a manager. Now a lot of the decisions I let other people make decisions. I see that the decisions are being made. The faculty advisor committee have certain things that they make decisions about in that I'm just a voting

member of the committee. I try to act as facilitator. A lot of times teachers don't want to be in power to do those things but I am trying to give them the authority to go ahead and make decisions themselves. I have the authority to run the school to make sure that we run the school efficiently and effectively and that we try to give the students the best possible education that we can while they are with us. How I disseminate that "authority" is basically left up to the individual principal and we have been encouraged to let teachers have more input into running their immediate educational environment through their representatives and that is what we are doing.

Goldie: How did the desegregation of schools affect your role as a principal?

Dr. Bell: You've got to remember that when I became a principal we had already desegregated the schools. In fact it was done when I was a teacher--so how does it affect my role as a principal? Repeat the question?

Goldie: Do you think desegregation of schools has any bearing on where you are right now?

Dr. Bell: Obviously. If they hadn't desegregated schools I wouldn't be at Harding High School. I wouldn't have been at Eastwood Junior High School. In the old days we had two different systems, the city Blacks, the city Whites, county Blacks and the county Whites. The consolidation of the school systems in tearing down the old structures in hierarchy had resulted in the closing of a lot of Black facilities and a lot of Black principals and you are probably aware of that more than I. Some of them were delegated to assistant roles when they first did it with the understanding that as schools opened they would be elevated back to principalships. I don't see how it affected me because I was not able to experience what happened back in the old part and what is happening in the new part. I feel that I have parietal with my colleagues. I feel comparable. I make sure that my opinions are expressed and I make sure that my kids get the best that they possibly can. I'm in there begging for my kids like anybody else and I don't really see how it is affecting me in any adverse way--desegregation. One segment of the students it is probably affecting because there are probably things that you would do differently and there was probably more trust among the parents when the schools were of either race. When we integrated that caused parents to be a little more sometimes apprehensive about what was going on in the schools or whether their kid was getting the shaft or if the kid was not being treated fairly. That made them question that even more. I don't think that happened as much when you had schools that were all of one race because everybody was treated the same then.

Goldie: Do you enjoy your job? Why?

Dr. Bell: Yes. I really enjoy my job. There is something you can say about being a high school principal. There is not a dull moment. There is always something new. That is why when you were setting up this interview with me I don't like to mark off time because when you mark off time no telling what may happen. I may have a parent come in who is mad because something happened last night and I have a note that my wife got for me that some kid got slapped on the bus and didn't leave a telephone number or anything. It is a very, very rewarding job. I like dealing with the students, I like dealing with the teachers. I have a very, very dedicated staff. Most of them are really, really into teaching and want to be around the kids. You have to love kids to want to do this. There is not enough money to make you stay in the position if you don't really like doing it. I like teaching. I've wanted to be a teacher since I started to school and I wanted to be around them. I hoped that someday that I would be a high school principal. I think that I have fulfilled that desire. I really like relating to people. I like trying to help kids, I like seeing them go to college, I like seeing them getting jobs. I like seeing them becoming adults, successful adults and young adults in the world whether it is going to college or whether it is getting a job in a factory. I like the idea of being able to have some impact upon their lives. To be able to help them. To be able to correct them when they are wrong. To put them on the right track. Not to punish them but to discipline them and to teach them how to survive in a way that it is "acceptable for a person to make it in this society".

Goldie: What do you consider the major problem of your principalship?

Dr. Bell: Paperwork. There is not enough time to actually get into the classrooms, to get into the buildings, to actually observe instruction taking place and to help teachers with the instruction. There are so many other peripheral things that you have to do. Get this report in, get this in, that in; there is so much paperwork associated with the job and so many other things that you have to do that you are not really able to be an "instructional leader of the school" because you are more of the paper manager of the school. It makes my job difficult and when I don't have too much input into discretion in making decisions that I think could help a kid. It is cut and dry; you've got rules and policies and it is cut and dry where you think making this decision would be a benefit to the kid but you don't make that decision because that is not the standard operating procedure. That is the key thing that I think makes the job difficult is there is so much paperwork. The federal program, the reports that you have to do that is due. This report is due and that report is due and instead of being

able to manage kids you are trying to manage the paper. In the constant changing in what is required like observations and all this type stuff that is due these things lead to a lot of problems.

Goldie: What do you consider the most rewarding thing about your principalship?

Dr. Bell: That is probably more difficult than the other one. There are a lot of things that are rewarding. I get a great deal of satisfaction in seeing a child who has is probably been a pain and finally realizes that he/she is becoming an adult and needs to get their act straightened out. That satisfies me more than anything else--when you think you have really reached a kid and gotten the kid back on the right track. It satisfies me when you see a kid who has gotten a letter saying he has been accepted to go to a certain school or he's gotten something he has really been looking for. "I've been accepted at so and so"; it is very pleasing to me the day of graduation to stand up there on the stage and be able to give the students their diploma. Seeing these people come through and knowing that these people are the ones that you will run into in life. It is very rewarding to me to go into a supermarket and somebody say, "Mr. Bell, Mr. Bell, you taught me when I was back in junior high school over there at York Road. Mr. Bell--this is my principal". Stuff like that, that is a good feeling. That the kids look at you and respect you for what you are doing and that makes you feel good.

Goldie: Do you think that a Black person needs a sponsor to become a high school principal?

Dr. Bell: Explain to me what you mean?

Goldie: I mean a person of the other culture that says that person is able to do it.

Dr. Bell: That is a tough question. Here at Charlotte-Mecklenburg the procedure is when they make that type of subjective type of stuff as far as race is--

Goldie: I mean just from experience and from what we have observed and what we know. Does that seem to be the case?

Dr. Bell: I don't know. I wouldn't say that. I would say the more exposure you have gotten by being in workshops, being around and doing things, helping with other types of activities, just not sitting back on your rump but getting involved in committees, getting exposure and letting them know who you are--that helps and when people get to know you--Black and White. So I don't think it is anything related to "race" as such. I'm sure that all in one community that wouldn't help you. The more diverse you are as

far as having people know you the better your chances are of getting a principalship.

Goldie: If you, given the fact that there are less than 40 Black high school principals in the state of North Carolina, if you knew of a young Black, male or female, who aspired to be a high school principal, what advice would you give that person?

Dr. Bell: Naturally I am assuming that that person will have enough diversion to get all of his credentials in line. That is the first thing. You need to be involved in the school and need to do things other than what is required of you and you don't sit back and just do that which is required. You expect to do A and B and do C and D too. Do a little more. Do A,B,C, and D. You need to get involved in committees, you need to volunteer to do stuff on the school campus and on the district level. You need to make sure that you get involved with your professional organizations and make sure that you are aware what is going on with those. I would suggest also that the person tries to get some linkage with a good college with some articulation at the college and the local district, local LEA's involved and some linkage between them and the college so the people can talk about them and let them know what they are doing. Try to get as much high visibility as you possibly can. Not just for the sake of being seen but also so you can learn from that. Try to seek out experiences where you can learn. If they want you to come up and work in the office during your planning period, come up and work in the office a bit. That is one of the best experiences in the world and that shows interest and also that shows the person who is the administrator that here is somebody here who wants to do something and they are not asking for something in return. That is a good way to get an experience. But you need to get yourself in line, have some high visibilities, find out what is going on, and make sure you have your credentials in order. Try to find opportunities so that you can show the things that you have learned. That is important. You have to work hard and you need to have a good trusting wife. A spouse, someone who won't mind sharing you with a lot of other people because your life is really not your own life. When that telephone rings you have to respond to it and that is very important.

Goldie: I appreciate you taking the time. We have come to the end of this interview guide. I have learned a lot with every interview that I have had and it has been quite interesting. I had some ideas when I began that there would be a lot of difference maybe between the '64 and the '89 principals but I have found that all of you are top notch and everybody knows his job very well. The answers are so similar that I have come up with the idea that an administrator is an administrator and that the years don't mean that much. It's that that is in you and the leadership ability and the things

you see in children and you enjoy people. I really appreciate you taking this time.

Dr. Bell: I hope Ms. Wells, I hope that you are very successful here with your endeavor to get your doctoral dissertation completed. I know that you are going to do a good job on it. You are going to use a lot of interviews. Just persevere and sit every Saturday and Sunday and start right in there and you will be successful with it. I've enjoyed the opportunity to have a chance to speak with you and I really apologize for the run around that we gave you initially but I am glad we were able to get it worked out.

Goldie; Thank you so much and since you were in Court One you know where I am going and I appreciate it .