

David Kirkman

4/14/01

tape 1 of 2

RG: This is April 14 in the year 2001 and this is Bob Gilgor interviewing David Kirkman at the Chapel Hill Public Library.  
Good morning, David.

DK: Good morning.

RG: Thank you for coming here this morning and allowing me to interview you this morning. I appreciate it.

DK: It's my pleasure, and it's very interesting just to have all these old memories jogged. Stimulating.

RG: Let's start with you telling us about where you grew up and your schooling, and take us up to date.

DK: OK. My early years, zero through ten, my family bounced around the South and the border states, since my father was a military officer, a medical intern, a medical resident, a medical post-doc, and then a medical professor. And we went from South Carolina to Tennessee to Maryland to Oklahoma, where I lived from about 1959 to 1965. And then in 1965 my father took a job at the medical school here, and age ten and eleven we moved to Chapel Hill. I attended Glenwood Elementary School for one year, the sixth grade year, and I went to the fairly new Guy B. Phillips Junior High School. I went to Chapel Hill High School and graduated in 1972. After that I went down towards Charlotte and attended Davidson College. Came back, attended law school at UNC. And that's pretty much it as far as my formal education. Where I lived.

RG: What did you do as a lawyer?

DK: After law school, even during law school, I worked for an organization called Legal Services for the Southern Piedmont. It's the Greater Charlotte-Mecklenburg area legal aid agency – a federal anti-poverty agency designed to assist poor people through, providing legal services, civil services. And for a few years I did landlord-tenant cases and domestic violence cases, consumer fraud cases, a lot of the more run of the mill type legal services such as divorce, child adoptions, child guardianships. A few other miscellaneous cases. We also would sue the state or federal government from time to time over certain benefits people were not receiving that they should have received. So I did that till the early eighties, and then it appeared that President Reagan was going to succeed in abolishing that organization, because it was federally funded, it was controversial. I came out to UNC and took a job for a while. Most of the mid-eighties I worked on the campus at UNC in the student legal assistance program. And then from 1987 through the

present I've worked in the attorney general's office of the state of North Carolina, and I handle cases involving fraud against the elderly. I work in the Consumer Protection Division, and we try to stop those who would scam old people. So that's what I've done as a professional.

RG: Sort of an advocate for the poor and the underdog.

DK: Most of the time, that's what I've done. There was one year we lived in Nepal – my wife is an anthropologist. She had a Fulbright fellowship to do her PhD research, and we lived over there, and talk about underdog – that's an entire underdog nation. But I learned a lot of things over there that had parallels back to what I had seen here as a kid, or what I saw here as a professional.

RG: When you went to school in, was it Oklahoma, before you came here? Did you go to an integrated school there?

DK: Eventually, yes. It was an all-white elementary school called Longfellow Elementary School. And it was lily-white until, I would say, fourth grade. And then there was a sudden influx of black students. The decision had been made to integrate Oklahoma City schools. During fourth and fifth grade we had an integrated elementary school.

RG: So that was '63 to '65, that's right. Then you came here and went to Glenwood '65 to '66, Guy B. Phillips '66 to '69, and then Chapel Hill High '69 to '72, do I have those dates right?

DK: You do.

RG: Can you tell me what your experience at Glenwood was like? Was it integrated when you went there?

DK: It was not. It was one of the shocking things that struck me. I was struck by the difference in accents. The quality of the school was not that great, either. I was surprised by that. Coming from Oklahoma City, one would think that Chapel Hill High or Chapel Hill would have much nicer schools. But at that time I was just sort of struck by this older school, and everybody was white. A lot of differences. But it was almost like going back in time.

RG: So the physical structure of the school was not the quality that you had experienced before, is that what you're saying?

DK: That's right.

RG: What about the education that you got there? Was that quality the same as what you had experienced before?

DK: It's interesting, as I came into Chapel Hill, the school system, there must have been some kind of assumption that because I was from Oklahoma I was stupid, or I had not been learning at the level that the Chapel Hill kids had been learning, and so - it wasn't correct, but nevertheless I was put into some of the lower tiers. They had tiered learning back then, and I was put into the lower tiers of math and English. Everything else, we all studied as one class, but when it came time to learn English or math, we'd go into these separate classes. And so I was thrown into these lower tier classes, and started noticing the caste system that existed in Chapel Hill at that time. And I harkened back to it when I lived in Nepal, which is a Hindu country, with the whole stratification.

But it was not until I was seventh or eighth grade in the Chapel Hill school system that I was learning math at the level I had learned in Oklahoma City. And in a supposedly more backward system, more - there was sort of an arrogance there. I don't think it has much to do with today's discussion. But anyway, that was one of the things that shocked me. But the bigger shock was, it was just lily-white. And the only child of color there was Angela Lee, Howard Lee's daughter. She was in my class. Mrs. Gordon's sixth-grade elementary school class.

RG: How do you remember her as the only black student in that class?

DK: Well, there just were no other black students. I remember - I'd gone all the way through high school with her, and even overlapped a year or two in law school at UNC. But just as I first came in, I noticed all these white faces, almost totally white. And then there along the side of the classroom was Angela. She was (?) like me, somebody new to the school. Probably went through some of the same things.

RG: Was she treated any differently from the other students, in your eyes?

DK: Well, there was, you know, the ever-present cliques and factions and groups of friends, and probably it took her a while to work her way into some of those, just as it took me a while. But I don't think she was treated badly at all.

RG: No name-calling?

DK: No.

RG: Jostling in the hall?

DK: Nothing like that. There was very little of that even in Guy B. Phillips Junior High, the following three years. There were a few incidents there, but I think, to their credit, the kids in Chapel Hill at that time, most of them were pretty decent to one another on the racial issues.

RG: You mentioned a caste system of sorts. Could you spell that out a little more?

DK: Well, in the educational system, there was, there were probably four or five different levels at which these different subjects were taught. And the stratifications were parallel to social stratification in the schools. Some of them who were the cool crowd, at least at that time, were in the top levels of Mrs., I forget her name, this one teacher who, Mrs. McAllister, taught kids in sixth grade at the highest level of math, and there was sort of an elitism there. They were basically nice kids, but the elitism would come out from time to time. The cliques and the clannishness on the playground, I guess, and other venues was always, they were the cool crowd, they were the ones everybody wanted to emulate, wanted to be. And if you were in probably the lowest level, everybody just sort of looked down upon you. And this is totally within a group comprised of white students. There was still that arrogance. And maybe some resentment going the other way. And that tiered system was used throughout most of my tenure in the Chapel Hill school system. And it dissolved away probably as I was in eleventh and twelfth grade.

RG: So are you saying that the wealthy students were also the cool students, and they were also the ones who were in the academically advanced courses?

DK: Uh huh. There were exceptions, obviously. But the core of the, sort of the higher stratum there on the male side was a guy named John Barry, who was not from an academic family but from a very wealthy family. And the others around him happened to be professors' kids, for the most part. On the female side, man, they were, I didn't notice it as much on the female side. I just remember which girl was good-looking. (laughter) Which girl was too smart for me to hang around. But the stratification, it was pretty obvious from an early state, during my tenure in Chapel Hill. I'm trying to remember Angela Lee in that class. I know she did very well, academically. Socially I don't know if she'd have the same qualms about what she was seeing. This is the sort of thing you would see in any school, actually. It was always in-crowd and out-crowd and outcast crowd. As I went through school that dynamic changed, and the more rebellious kids became the cool kids. Some of the people in the earlier higher strata were considered nerds by the time we got to the end of the road.

RG: Are there any other memories you have of Glenwood that you want to share, or review there?

DK: Not really. It was a nice place to go to school. It was, you could tell everybody there had some kind of connection to the university, directly or indirectly, and was the son or daughter of a staffer or faculty member or a merchant or service person who served the university and the university community. It really was a university town back then. Such a small town that Estes Drive, the part in front of what's now this library, was paved, but as you crossed Franklin Street and went over toward the bypass, it was a gravel road. This was the outer boundary of Chapel Hill. And it was a small place then.



RG: Did you feel that the teachers were role models for you, mentors, that they were your advocate?

DK: At the time I seldom thought that, at Glenwood. But in hindsight, I think they really were. Mrs. Gordon, I recall, started to push and elevate me up through the stratification fairly quickly. And she seemed to encourage me, even though I was sort of a slacker as an academician back then. My interests were elsewhere. I was more into basketball, sports, Boy Scouts, all kinds of other things. Staring at Laura Kreps. And her beautiful daughter, Juanita Kreps. (laughter)

RG: Well, let's move on to your experience in Junior High School, Phillips, Guy B. Phillips Junior High.

DK: Yes.

RG: What are your memories of Phillips?

DK: A lot of new faces. That school was comprised of people who had come out of Carrboro Elementary, Estes Hills Elementary, and Glenwood. And so there were a lot of new faces, and there were a lot of black faces. It became more like what I was used to from Oklahoma City. And it seemed something that suited me more personally, and I actually thrived in it more because most everybody was a newcomer there. There were still these little groups and cliques to which I did not belong, at least up to that point. But it was a fresh start for everybody, and there were all these students of different backgrounds, colors, and we were just thrown into this mix. A junior high school life style, going from class to class, seeing each other in the hall and the lockers, and it was much more a much more dynamic existence there.

And racially, I guess I mentioned it was more a school of color. The racial harmony there, even at the time I was very impressed with it. There was still this segregation, this stratification of classes. White kids still attended individual classes mainly with other white kids, with some exceptions. But I guess like sports, school dances, even the lunchroom, there was a lot of interaction from the very beginning. And I recall that in seventh grade we had this fabulous ninth grade basketball team, with a lot of excellent athletes on it, black and white, and we were very proud of that. Usually the other schools that would come in and play us were just these lily-white schools from places like Northern Durham or Southern Durham or Cary. And we were all quite proud of that. The atmosphere in the hallway or in the parking lot or during lunch or when we were all playing basketball together, there just wasn't much racial animosity, at least not on the surface.

And during my tenure there, I remember Angela Lee being elected either as ninth grade class president or student body president. There was a lot of interracial dating, at least during eighth and ninth grade, as I recall. There was grouching about it, here

and there, but it nevertheless was happening, and people were fascinated by that phenomenon. It hadn't been seen.

RG: Was it interracial dating in one particular form, or was it black female – white male, black male – white female, sort of that kind of inequality.

DK: It was almost totally black male – white female. Usually black male athlete – white female. Not always. I cannot recall a black female dating a white male. It might have happened. At that time, across the nation there was a time of a lot of tension, the (?) of what was going on in '66 and '67. Yet in popular culture, it was a fantastic time to be a junior high school kid. Rock and roll music was really starting to open up and evolve. Rhythm and Blues and Soul and Stax Records and Motown, everybody was fascinated by that. The music was superb for a kid. And the movies were starting to feature black actor, even casting them in the white (?). Things were changing, and students were excited by it. Some of them, depending on their persuasion, saw it as a threat, but I think for the most part they thought it was cool. They thought the music was cool, they thought the athletic teams were cool. Charlie Scott showed up at UNC during that period of time, and people were just wildly enamored of him.

RG: White and black?

DK: White and black. And I remember just going to see Charlie Scott, watching him practice, and greeting the team as they would get off the bus from a game. And there would be Charlie Scott. Everybody shaking his hand. It was a fantastic time, and a lot of things were opening up. Maybe not fast enough, maybe not in the right way, but in the hearts of a lot of these white kids, things were opening up. Opportunities were opening up for the black kids, I think. Their older brothers and sisters were not able to experience a lot of what we were able to experience at that time. There was a lot of down side to it as well.

RG: What was the down side?

DK: A lot of it happened in, sort of came to the surface when we were in high school.

RG: Let's stay with the junior high, and then we'll get on to that. I wanted to hear more of your experiences at Phillips.

DK: Well, just as in sixth grade, when my interests were in girls and playing sports and Boy Scouts, it was the same in eighth and ninth grade, which was junior high. I was on the Phillips eighth and ninth grade basketball teams, I don't know why, but I was on those two teams, and it was like the one I described a moment ago. It was very (?), predominantly black eighth grade – ninth grade team. The stars of the team, almost all the stars were black. We would travel to places like Roxboro or over to Raleigh, Hillsborough, play teams that were still lily-white, pretty redneck, and catch the catcalls as we got off the bus from time to time. But we were very proud

of it. We had this super camaraderie, traveling to and from these games. Lot of singing and chanting, lot of dirty jokes, lot of Doug Clark and the Hot Nuts songs were sung and recited. Just a lot of back and forth, giving each other a lot of shit, in a jovial way. Cause that's what jocks are.

RG: Was there support for the black athletes, black students, when you would go someplace where it was all white and you were hear these catcalls? How was that handled?

DK: The catcalls were usually not in the gym, not where you would have someone in authority to make them shut up. It was usually lingering afterwards outside of the gym, or between the gym and the bus. Redneck kids from Carrington Junior High would shout some kind of shit. I mean, we wanted them to get the crap beat out of them, (?), one of these white kids said something, and the next thing you know he's up against the wall, he's getting (?). But there was not much of a need to intervene on the part of our coaches or our administrators, that I recall. Occasionally, in ninth grade, we would go over to places like Shepherd Junior High, where I was – I think it was Shepherd – it was the junior high that was affiliated with Hillside High School. It was the black junior high.

RG: Was it Whitted?

DK: Wittit. We would go to Whitted, and then John Birch and Bob Dylan would be about the only white people in that whole facility. But we were treated fine. People would make fun of how bad we played. (laughter). There was not much direct insult thrown our way. And, you know, we could see how it felt from the perspective of our black colleagues on the team.

RG: How did you feel?

DK: A little bit afraid. I was also trying to interact with people over there, and there was a little bit of wariness, I think, on the part of some of the people I would come and try to chat up. Like I'm sitting in the bleachers during the junior varsity game, eighth grade was called the junior varsity. We'd talk to some of the players from the other team. It was not a totally relaxed conversation; they just kind of looked at me like what is this white kid doing, talking to me, chattin' me up. I'm sure there were parallels the other way around. But it was extremely enlightening to go through all that.

RG: You had mentioned that while there was a merger of black and white schools in the junior high school, there was this tracking, where many of the classes were almost all white.

DK: That's right.

RG: And so, are you saying that within each individual classroom there really was not an integration?

DK: I'm absolutely saying that. They were basically white classes and black classes, side by side. But the individual classes in any one subject, and it usually was English or math, was usually an all-white class or an all-black class. And sometimes in the mid tiers there would be true integration.

RG: And how did they rate those classes? Were the white classes the higher academic levels and the mixed classes the intermediate and the black classes the lower? Is that fair to say?

DK: It tended to fall along those lines. By ninth grade I'd made it into the higher stratum of the caste system for English studies. And that class was totally white. The class I had English in eighth grade was actually a fairly integrated class. I remember three or four white kids in that class, out of 22 kids in the whole class. My eighth grade class, I remember Donnie Tucker was in there. He was one of the most gifted students, academically and athletically. He was in that class in eighth grade. There was a young woman named Audrey Johnson. You know, I kind of had the hots for her, I thought she was rather attractive, but I didn't have the courage to ask her out, or anybody else out in eighth grade.

RG: A black girl?

DK: Yeah, she was only there for about one semester. She moved into town, and then she was gone at the end of the semester. But in that more mid-range English class it was like upper middle, there were still kids who weren't white. Whereas, by the following year, when I supposedly made it to the top, and I still don't know how I made it into that class, but I was in that class, and we were just as white as that piece of paper in front of you. Very prominent kids, and academically, most of them ended up in the good schools. Sons and daughters of professors and wealthy merchants. They were just white as could be.

RG: Did you see any difference in how the African American students were treated by the teachers?

DK: In the classes, individual classes like civics, P.E. - what were some of the others? - science, I didn't see much differentiation. I didn't see much of it at all. I never saw a teacher do anything overtly racist, or say anything overtly racist about a black kid. Or disparage a black students. I'm sure there were slights delivered that I couldn't perceive at that time. I'm sure there were. But I think most of those teachers were fairly progressive and really valued having those kids in their class. Thought it was important. And to the extent that I remember any of my teachers in eighth to ninth grade ragging on students, it was usually the spoiled, smart-ass white kids who were trying to disrupt the class. I hope your microphone can pick this up, because I had my knee in front of it the whole time.



RG: Yeah, it'll pick up all that. Was there any reference, at any time, to a black history in the classes you were taking? Or to the individual history, the community history, where the African American students came from, what school they came from, the traditions of their school?

DK: In junior high, I think the history class I remember was seventh grade North Carolina history. There was almost no reference to black history other than in the slavery issue. It wasn't until tenth grade history class when we really sunk our teeth into those issues. The history teacher we had there, Mrs. Clayton, taught from John Hope Franklin's book, *From Slavery to Freedom*. But in junior high, I don't recall anything of that sort. The English classes that I had in eighth and ninth grade, the teachers would incorporate black writers into the curriculum. And from that you would obviously get a taste of some of these history issues. But I don't know that it was affirmatively taught, other than that.

RG: Did you have black teachers at that time?

DK: I did. I know I had Mr. Peerman for P.E. and Health class. I had Mrs. Harry in ninth grade, I 'm sorry, in the seventh grade, as a music teacher. Trying to recall some others.

RG: What about your core curriculum classes? English, math, science, courses like that. History, social studies.

DK: No, I don't think I had a black teacher for any of those classes.

RG: Did they have any black teachers for any of those classes?

DK: Yes, they did. They had, there was a black science teacher in seventh grade, as I recall. I can hear him, because we had one of these double classrooms with a partition in the middle, and I always had my head leaning against that partition. I could hear him. I think his name was Mr. Samuel –

RG: Goldston, was it Mr. Goldston?

DK: Let me refer to this junior high school publication. It may have him in there. Mr. Goldston, I recall, was there as well. Let's see, this is ninth grade, Mr. Goldston, science. Yeah, he was there.

RG: And there's Mr. Foremans, yes, but I guess he was white.

DK: He was white.

RG: So there's a mixture there, but –

DK: There's Mr. Samuel. He might have been South Asian. He was certainly a gentleman of color. Mrs. Barnes, I never had her, but she was well-known and well-regarded. Mrs. King taught social studies, and I think she was in the class next to mine, but I never had her.

RG: Betty King.

DK: Mostly they were white teachers.

RG: Tell me, the junior high –

DK: The assistant principal my ninth grade year was Bennie Renwick, Hayden Bennie Renwick. He was also my ninth grade basketball coach. And his career seemed to take off rather quickly. He was, when I was in eighth grade he was a P.E. coach and junior varsity basketball coach, and the next year he was assistant principal. The following year he was an assistant dean at UNC or something like that. So he was, in a way, a role model for a lot of people, just the way he skyrocketed. He was a colorful fellow, very tightly strung, he was a good coach, he wouldn't take any crap off of any official or anybody, especially in an opposing venue. I remember one time he jumped in some guy's face who was the starter. He was getting mad at me because on this whole cinder track at Cary Junior High School, or Cary High School, I was digging little divots to stick my cleats in as I took off. And this guy was jumpin' all over me about it, and he was jumpin' all over him. So you're talking about teachers who would go to bat for you, we had plenty there. And he was one. He could jump in your shit also. We had a lot of teachers who, at that time, seemed to really care about the students. They seemed to care about integrating things and not inflaming things. At least not overtly. I think in the end inflamed a lot of things in an unconscious manner.

RG: How so?

DK: Through slights. Through maintaining the stratification. Maybe some of the unspoken feelings that they might have had towards kids who came out of the segregated black schools in this community.

RG: How did you perceive black students you came in contact with?

DK: Well, I think the most contact I had with them, starting out, was in band class. There were a lot of kids of color in band class. And I perceived them just to be my buddies and my friends. The occasional black face that you would see in English class, like there was a fellow named Christopher Smith in my seventh grade English class, and in other classes, I remember thinking he must be really smart. If they've got him in here with all these white kids. And that was just my view of it, he must be smart. Because down the hall would be a class full of black kids. And everybody, whether they'd say it out loud or just thought it, probably believed, well,

they're in there because they're not as smart as we are. That was the message we were still receiving.

RG: So the flip side of that, one student who you felt must have been really smart was – the mass of the black students who had come there weren't really smart. And you think that was a pervasive – well, that's not a fair question, because you can't (?)

DK: No, I can't. I feel sort of ashamed taking that view, because when I arrived in Chapel Hill, I was the victim of that same sort of stratification. There was a lot of assumption that I wasn't that smart, because of where I came from. And yet here I was a year later, taking the same damn attitude. But I remember thinking, well, Christopher Smith must be really smart. Donnie Tuck must be really smart. Angela Lee must be really smart, if she's in this class with all these white kids. And so I did have that reaction, at the least. I'm sure I was not alone. But in other classes, in P.E. classes, music classes, band class, those were fairly integrated, they were not stratified, and people got along extremely well. A lot of joking around, a lot of interaction, about as much as you can interact as a seventh grader. Kids then didn't really have parties very much, or go out and socialize together.

RG: Did you have ever any of the students sleep over at your house, or did you sleep over other students' homes?

DK: No. I don't remember that very much. Sleepovers. I was very involved in Boy Scouts back then, and I guess you'd call that a big sleepover. We would go on a camping trip once a month.

RG: Was that integrated?

DK: No. I think all the troops back then were white, that I knew of. There might have been a black Boy Scout troop; I just didn't know of one. There was a young fellow who joined our troop, he was from the Piney Mountain Road community, one of the many black subcommunities in Chapel Hill. He came down to our scout meetings and joined our troop for about a year. But he didn't stay around very long.

RG: Are there any teachers or events that stood out in your mind when you were at the junior high school, Phillips?

DK: The two that stand out the most were Bill Peerman, the P.E. teacher and coach that I had; also there was Zora Rashkiss. The two of them stand out for totally different reasons. I guess I'll start out with Bill Peerman. This is something that bothers me to this day, the fact that Bill Tiernan, (?) when I arrived, he was the coach of the eighth grade basketball team, and he was the P.E. coach, was called the P.E. instructor, coaching this little eighth grade basketball team. This was in '66-'67. The coaches of the ninth grade team, which was the varsity at Guy B. Phillips, were two fellows named Katz and Janowitz, from up north. Two young guys. Katz had

played on the UNC basketball team, either varsity or junior varsity, and perhaps had a valid reason for being the coach.

But as time wore on, as I went through junior high and high school and I started learning more and more about Coach Peerman, and the fact that he had been a magnificent coach at Lincoln High School, had several championships at Lincoln High School in various sports, and yet when I got to Guy B. Phillips, he was the eighth grade basketball coach behind two young white guys, the head coach at the old Chapel Hill High, Bob Colton, was the head coach of the basketball team out there, he was the head coach of the football team out there, and maybe he was a very able administrator, but what little I saw of him as a coach, he seemed a good ok coach. But damn it, he didn't have all those championships behind him. He didn't have that kind of history.

And I was blessed to have Peerman as my coach in track, basketball, and football at Guy B. Phillips Junior High. And he was also coach when I was there in high school, in Chapel Hill High. But for reasons I'll tell you later on, I kind of got out of high school athletics. But most of my interaction with him was in junior high, eighth grade through tenth grade. And he, by the time I was in ninth grade – actually when I was in eighth grade he was the coach of the ninth grade team. And again, it was this magnificent team, it was integrated, people were extremely proud of it, he was a fantastic coach. (?). I Had Benny Renwick of the eighth grade team, and eighth grade, Renwick and Peerman both coached the track team. It was our very first track team at Guy B. Phillips. We were great. We just kicked butt. We had a wonderful team.

And it, too, was fairly integrated. We had people like Bernard Watson, who just won every race he entered. Earl Bynum was a really good sprinter. We had some so-called distance runners like, I was a distance runner. 440 was my race, and that was considered a long-distance race back then. And I was pretty damn good. And we had a killer 440 or mile relay team, that was me and Bernard Watson and some others, and nobody could beat us. And Renwick and Peerman put that team together. And it was fantastic. And again, we would go off to these little schools in surrounding counties, and everybody was white. And we were just proud of it, we had this integrated track team, and kicked butt.

And it was the same the following year, when I was on the ninth grade basketball team, Coach Peerman was the coach of that. We had a fantastic basketball team; people were proud of that team. Track team was pretty good, but nobody ever goes to track meets. Even to this day. Unless they're in Europe. But Peerman, during those years, he seldom let it out that he had bitterness about the way he was being treated. Even at that moment. He would talk about these fantastic championships, he would talk about these characters who played on his team, cut-ups, jokesters, colorful players. He would talk about people like Thurman Couch, who was a fantastic football player – Couch, Thurman Couch. I think he played in Iowa or for Iowa State. He had stories about players like those, and he would regale us with



them. And he'd do it as we were suiting up to go out and practice on the football field, he would talk about them on the bus trip to a game over in Cary or Hillsborough. He would often incorporate them into the motivational speeches at half-time. Tremendous motivator. He actually formed our ninth grade football team. He put it together; I'm sure he had to get the ok and some funding from the school system -

RG: You mean they had no football team before then?

DK: No, the junior high had no football team at all. And so I remember at the outset of our ninth grade year, this notice goes up on the wall that there's gonna be a football team, and tryouts. In fact word of it got out even before school started. There was gonna be a football team, everybody get in shape, start doing your conditioning. And so we did, and we had a big tryout, and he selected a team. It wasn't that great a team in the end, but again, it was the same sort of team, it was team of color. It was criticized for having too many players of color, but the fact of the matter was, that the really good athletes and really good football players were not the lily-white professor kids, they were kids from the black community. And so, I've got a picture here that shows those of us who were on that team, and it really was predominantly a black team, even though the black student body was fairly small.

And I remember then the catcalls, and the comments in the hallways. Often by parents, when you were out in the community, and here comes this black football team. There was some bitterness over that, and he at one time alluded to that, and during the beginning or aftermath of practice talked about, people are complaining about how I put this team together, and we're gonna show 'em. By putting together the best team I can, we're gonna represent Guy B. Phillips. We're Falcons, we're gonna do all this wonderful stuff. We're gonna show the world. And that was his style.

He would also put on that team some people from the black community who seemed to be at risk, and I remember a couple of guys who nobody would think they'd be decent football players. But Peerman put them on there, and also put one of 'em on our basketball team, because he was concerned about him, and what was gonna happen to this fellow. And unfortunately it didn't work, although his pride was just welling and he was very happy with himself, and in the end he kind of spiraled down in life. I even would see him in the court system years and years later and just - but Peerman, to his credit, was trying to reach out and help that kid by putting him on that football team, by putting him on the basketball team. Three or four months later, the football team did ok, I think we won three and lost two.

One of the most interesting vignettes I can share with you is, we didn't have a blocking sled. All football teams, especially the linemen, need a blocking sled to start practicing your blocking and learn how to block hard and block straight ahead, and not block too high and not block too low. We didn't have a blocking sled, and so Coach Peerman calls on one of his buddies, the shop teacher, who had been the

shop teacher at Lincoln. I think he was now out at the high school. And the shop teacher came out one day with, he had a pile of lumber, and he hauled the lumber down the hill onto the practice field at Guy B. Phillips. And this fellow –

RG: Was that R.D. Smith?

DK: It was R.D. Smith. He and a helper or two started sawing and bolting this thing together from these two by fours and two by sixes, and all of a sudden as we practiced we could see this blocking sled take shape. It didn't have all the springs and the metal sled devices underneath it, but it was taking place as a blocking sled. And then as practice wore on, R.D. Smith would strap on these old cushions, blocking cushions. You could tell they were like World War II vintage, they were just so old. They were made of canvas. And at the end of practice, Coach Peerman, after – he would practice with you hard, he would run you to death, and it was hard. I remember he was so excited about that blocking sled, he made us go in there and start blocking on it. He and R.D. Smith and some others were standing on the sled, which coaches do, shouting and barking at us to push harder and push harder. And I remember it was just sort of this getting by on a shoestring, almost, to construct the equipment that the football team needed to function. And they did it. And the fact that R.D. could just put that thing together so quickly (?).

**End of side 1.**

**Side 2**

DK: We had just finished the vignette about the blocking sled, just throwing things together. Didn't have the resources to do with something readily made. One time, before health class – he was also my health class instructor – we were standing in the hallway. I was one of his athletes; I was on several of his teams. And he would hang out with them at casual times as well, talk to us, and regale us with some of these stories I mentioned. But at one time, one afternoon, before it was the moment to go outside to the trailer to go to our health class, he was expressing some bitterness about who was the head coach at the high school, Chapel Hill High, at that time, and how he had been shunted off to this junior high to be a P.E. instructor, and to be the eighth grade basketball coach.

RG: Not even the ninth grade, the highest position there. He was eighth grade.

DK: He was the eighth grade basketball coach, behind two guys in their 20s named Katz and Janowitz.

RG: Who were the ninth grade coaches.

DK: They were. And he was quite bitter about that. And mentioned all these championships, and alluded to the absence of those kinds of championships in the old high school, Chapel Hill High School. And he talked about some of his

colleagues and where they ended up. And a lot of them were either out of academia or in the junior high schools.

RG: Elder black coaches?

DK: Teachers. Teachers and administrators.

RG: And administrators.

DK: And he was talking about Mr. McDougle. Mr. McDougle would, when I was in junior high, come and teach as a substitute. He said "What happened to McDougle? Why isn't he high in this school system?" And he would talk about things like that. I can't remember all the names that he would bring up, or the incidents that he would bring up, because it's just so far in the past, but I do remember being shocked by his expression of bitterness. And he was expressing this not only to his black athletes, but to white athletes as well. And I would sort of study him, based upon that comment, for the rest of my tenure as one of his athletes, because he was holding it in most of the time, his feelings about this. And we had a spectacular year, in ninth grade, athletically. We won the conference championship with that magnificent team that we had.

RG: The football, or basketball?

DK: Basketball team, I'm sorry. The football team ended three and two, there really wasn't a conference. It was such a new creation. But the basketball team, we won that conference. We beat out a very powerful Whittid Junior High School for that conference championship. And Coach Peerman was very proud, and he got us these little gold basketball, hang around a chain around your neck or on your letter jacket, that said Conference Champs 1969. He presented those to us with great pride, and then – I look at them now, they're very tiny, but to date it's still one of my biggest trophies. The track team, just like the year before, even though we didn't have Bernard Watson or some of these other great athletes, we still kicked a lot of butt, and we were very proud of what we did. We were an integrated team, and we could all sing the latest Stax Records and Motown tunes, to and from the track meets.

Also, in the social realm, there was a lot of interracial dating, same as I explained before. But mostly it was happening in ninth grade. And partying – there were parties where black kids would show up at white kids parties. There was a lot of hanging out after school, sometimes going down and playing pickup games at Warren Gym, or just hanging out at Hardee's. It wasn't a segregated existence, you know totally, the way it had been earlier. The election of Angela Lee to, I think it was student body president, it might have been ninth grade president, that was a big deal. My best friend John Birch was running for that as well. He and Angela had a fairly decent, fairly cordial election campaign. John mentioned that he did get some nasty phone calls about it from people he didn't know. But in the end, Angela won, and she won a lot of other recognition, as I recall, during the Awards Day. We

would have an Awards Day, like at most schools, towards the end of the semester, and Angela was recognized. David Caldwell was recognized. John was recognized, John Birch. But it was almost unnoticed that a lot of these recognitions were going to black students in our class. Maybe that was just my naiveté now.

RG: You say it was unnoticed that recognition was going to them? How do you mean that?

DK: I put it rather poorly. It was, it was not the sort of event where people said "Wow, she's black! And she won this election." Or "Wow, he's black, and he's got this all-around achievement award." I'm referring to David Caldwell, it was just, "Hey, David won this award! Isn't that cool?" And there was not that much backbiting and cattiness from people who were of the persuasion that we would rather go to an all-white school. I mean, there were kids like that, but they kept quiet. It was a sort of cordiality and a camaraderie that reached across racial lines, to a fair extent, in a genuine way. And it was quite a contrast to what we all through, black and white, in the high school a year later, in the subsequent two years. The racial harmony in that little junior high school was decent, was fairly good. And I learned to have black friends, and black teammates, black colleagues. And it was very important to me personally. I could have grown up just another little southern bigot but for that experience at Guy B. Phillips Junior High School in the late sixties, hanging out with them, idolizing Charlie Scott, idolizing the Temptations, all those things. Very, very important.

But looking back on it, I can see that the seeds of a lot of problems that occurred later on were right there in front of me in junior high. In addition to these segregated core classes that we discussed a minute ago, there was a sort of lack of connectivity between the white progressive leaders of Chapel Hill at that time and the white, I'm sorry, the black educational and community leaders of Chapel Hill at that time. There was, I think, an inability to interact as well as the kids were interacting. There was a desire, maybe it was an elitist notion on the part of some of the blacks, you know, you have to obliterate this black separate school system. We have to bring everybody in; this is a mark chain (?).

And I don't think there was as much reaching out as should have been, across that line. And I think the experience of Coach Peerman is just symptomatic of that. I think that – well, let me give you another vignette. This is involves an English class of ours. And it was an English class that was all white. We, in addition to learning how to compose stories and papers, essays, and to read, we explored a lot of issues, ranging from the Vietnam War to the Jewish Holocaust, sexuality, human sexuality, and some racial issues. We would do choral readings, within the class, of works by Langston Hughes and other black writers. And it was sort of a ritual, from time to time we'd get up and chorally read one of these poems or essays.

One day, in late 1968, I believe it was, the English teacher, who was without question one of the spiritual leaders or intellectual leaders in this movement to fully



integrate Chapel Hill, invited the newly-elected mayor of Chapel Hill, Howard Lee – and as you know, Howard Lee was the first black mayor of a predominantly southern white town, predominantly white southern town. It was all over the news way back then, national news, statewide news. He was the deal. And a lot of us were really excited when he ran for mayor. We couldn't stand his opponent, (?) if the opponent were in our school. We really wanted Howard Lee, and these were white kids, and black kids. He was another hero of ours at that time, just like Charlie Scott. And so he was invited by our teacher to our English class. And he began to speak of his experience growing up in a segregated southern town, the good experiences and the bad experiences. Talking about wonderful incidents of interaction between whites and blacks, and some pretty nasty incidents. And mainly he was talking about pain of segregation and how it made him feel. And about himself, and how it made him feel towards white people. Powerful stuff. We were mesmerized by this.

And then he started to turn to a topic which was very current amongst us kids, and resonated very deeply with us, because it was an issue in our class, and in our junior high. And this was a young, 15-16 year-old black man feeling attracted to a white girl. And he talked about seeing this girl, thinking she was pretty, and how he'd never thought of a white girl as pretty before, and having these ambivalent feelings, and gnawing about how just thoughts like that, in very recent decades or even at that very time, could get him in a lot of trouble. And he talked about how conflicted he was as he felt this attraction for this white girl in his community. And you could have heard a pin drop at that moment, because, as you may know, this man is a very good story-teller, and he can recount events in a very powerful way.

And everybody was on the edge of their seats, all these kids were leaning forward, trying to glean everything he was saying. And the English teacher interrupts, and breaks out these Langston Hughes and Carson McCullers and other essays and poetry and says "Kids, we're gonna read this to Mr. Lee. We're gonna read these things to Mr. Lee." And so here we are, we're reading Langston Hughes, we're interrupting this wonderful story by this famous black man we considered a hero, and we're looking at him like "We wish we could have heard the end of your story." He's looking at the class like "What's going on here?"

And that incident has lived with me for a long time as something that I, that colors my view of Chapel Hill's white leadership back in the sixties. It was a situation that demonstrated a lack of any desire to hear the other side. It was more like "Come, come over to this side of the divide. We don't want to hear about your past. We don't want to consider all that. We just want to show you how beneficent we are, how progressive we are. Look, our white kids are reading Langston Hughes poems to you. Don't tell us your story." And I think that must have happened as well, as these decisions were made, back when I was in fifth grade in Oklahoma, to integrate the school system in Chapel Hill, and how it was done. And how all these wonderful teachers and coaches were slighted, if not slapped in the face, by the way they were treated and placed in this new integrated system. And how history was

basically flushed away, the history of Lincoln High School, by their people who, no question about were extremely progressive, extremely liberal, far ahead of others here in the South. But even they didn't have the ability to listen, or care too much about this tradition that was Lincoln High and the junior high and the elementary school. It was almost like "You've been through a lot, now forget about it and join us here on the plateau."

And a year later, at the high school, I saw all that come to fruition, all the after-effects and the indignity that was involved in that sort of attitude. Because we had, fairly early, my tenth grade year at Chapel Hill High – this was in 1969 – a pretty nasty riot. It was provoked by bitter feelings about the obliteration of Lincoln High School as the two schools merged, the old Chapel Hill and Lincoln High School. There was this new school, consolidated school, and what was it called? Chapel Hill High School. Lincoln High School's mascot was the tiger, colors were black and orange; Chapel Hill High School, the old high school, their mascot was the wildcat, the colors were black and gold. What was the mascot of the new high school? It was the wildcat. What were the colors? Black and gold. Lincoln High School, I think their paper was called the Echo, the student newspaper. At Chapel Hill, the new Chapel Hill High School, it was called the Procodian, and that was the name of the student newspaper at the old white high school.

The same for the school annual. You have an old copy of the Hill Life, 1971, right there. The Hill Life was the name of the annual at the old white Chapel Hill High. And the bitterness amongst the students, apparently in the community as a whole, the black community, over the obliteration of these traditions from Lincoln High, was palpable as soon as you walked into the high school. And I always wondered why that didn't exist in junior high school, but it was a brand new high school with a new name and new colors and new mascot. But I think as these students walked through the doors of Chapel Hill High they were just smacked in the face with this big insult.

And so we had a fairly serious incident out at the high school in the fall of 1969. And it wasn't so much people fighting – there was a lot of smashing things and entering classrooms and throwing desks around, throwing them at the wall. Nobody was really targeted or harmed, as I understand it. Nobody really was harmed very badly. But it was extremely terrifying. I remember when it happened. And they say that Bill Peerman almost single-handedly broke that thing up. He and another white coach on the JV team, Mr. Stricklund, Bill Stricklund. Both of those men were former pro football players, and apparently they came down the hall and were yelling, first at their athletes to get the hell out of the main classroom building and get over to the gym, and then everybody else to get out of the hallways. And they, they kind of broke it up.

But the aftermath of that was a lot of people being suspended; there were assemblies where the issue was discussed, and it was the first I'd ever heard of or noticed these disparities. But we did have a good assembly back in 1969 in the gym.

Students were actually talking about this, and some of the white kids were saying "Well what's so wrong with keeping it as the Wildcats? What's so wrong with the Hill Life? What's so wrong with the Procodian?" And then these very eloquent older black students, who, I don't know that they had gone to Lincoln, maybe their brothers and sister shad, they got up there and told exactly why it was such an insult. And that was where the issues were laid out. One of the issues was the name itself, Chapel Hill High School. Why it wasn't Lincoln. And that issue wasn't gonna go very far, because the town was Chapel Hill, and most places, if they had one high school, it was named after the town.

But the bitterness over all of these obliterations of things pertaining to Lincoln was pretty obvious. And it was said in the hallways, it was said amongst the adults in Chapel Hill, if there's ever another high school in Chapel Hill, we will name it Lincoln High School. That was one of the things that was probably said to assuage a lot of these feelings. It was almost like a sacred promise, although there was never anything put in writing. But I think people at that time felt the reaction, felt the pain, over all this. White and black really wanted that to happen. And Chapel Hill being so transient, I think that got forgotten. And a few years back when they named the new high school East Chapel Hill High School, so that these probably white doctors' kids whose parents work over in Durham, or out in the Park, when you apply for a position in a major university somewhere else, it just looks better to have Chapel Hill this, Chapel Hill that, than to have Lincoln.

But when they declared that the name of the new high school was gonna be East Chapel Hill High, I said "Those assholes." My reaction to that was, here's another violation of trust, here's another example of forgetting some very painful history. It's like these people, the Chapel Hillians of today, are totally clueless as to all these issues that happened back then. And some of the promises or assurances that were given to meet across the big divide that still existed even in this heyday of integration in Chapel Hill, the team mascot colors were changed to the Tigers'. I think that was about the only other real change that occurred.

The tensions remained in the high school for the next couple of years. We had another bad incident in eleventh grade, as I recall. The socializing seemed to diminish considerably, across racial lines. There was still cross-racial dating, but there was actually some bitterness that didn't exist in the junior high school. It was rather sad. These friends didn't want to talk to you. If they talked to you, they gave you crap about white people this, white people that. People with whom I'd shared a lot of good times as a third-string basketball player or a second-string football player, and they weren't interacting with me anymore, and vice versa. It was, there was sort of a trichotomy there at the high school. There were the black students, there were the long-haired white students, and there were the sort of rednecky white students. It was just everybody sort of went to their corners, and it stayed that way almost to the end.

And it was as a result of a lot of these things, I believe, that happened back in the mid-sixties when decisions were made, when people were not listened to, it was just assumed that we're gonna help them by obliterating their past, their traditions. To this day, I think, many of the problems in Chapel Hill relate back to what happened back in the mid-sixties and the very late sixties. The decisions that were made by people who had very noble ideas, but just did not know how to communicate with people across the racial divide. Didn't know how to listen.

RG: Do you think after the riot that they listened any better, the white administration in the high school?

DK: I think there were efforts made to have more black administrators there. Bill Peerman, maybe coincidentally, was made head football coach the following year.

RG: 1970?

DK: I think fall of 1970. By then, I think Coach Peerman had been sort of in the background of football coaching, and his knowledge as a coach and the football techniques that he knew of and the strategies were kind of dated. And it hurt him, I think, as a coach. His teams, they did all right, but they were nowhere near the spectacular teams he had had before. But there were some black assistant principals. It appeared that there were more black teachers at the high school.

But the polarization that occurred, I think the window of opportunity had been lost. There was, as I perceived it, just too much resentment, and too much of a belief that this was a white high school, why invest yourself in the events at this high school and the activities of this high school and the studies of this high school? And it probably reflects a lot of things that we still see to this day in the school system in Chapel Hill. It's becoming more and more affluent, more and more lily-white. When I was coming through school, especially in the classes above me, there were a lot of prominent black students, academically, going to Ivy League schools. And I wish I could remember some of their names. It seemed that there was a decline in a desire to learn, to excel academically in the black community, that occurred while I was going through. There was just this sort of resentment towards the way the system was set up, and how it really didn't seem to value the accomplishments or the past of black students that came through. There was, again, this notion of "Our past is being forgotten, our talents are not being appreciated. We're just told to function like a white kid."

RG: You had mentioned an assembly program, and I wonder if you can recall whether you had regular assemblies at Phillips Middle School, and whether you had them in the high school?

DK: We had various events. Usually they were things like Awards Day or some speaker would come. Band concerts, things of that sort.



RG: So it wasn't a regular thing, it was sporadic?

DK: It was sporadic. And it was not issue-specific. We had some issue-specific assemblies at the high school. I remember that sophomore year about killed me. It began with that incident I described a minute ago, and it ended with Kent State. And we had a big assembly pertaining to Kent State. And a lot of anger over Kent State. Again, this tri-polarization was very evident at that point. You had, over Kent State you had the longhairs, just absolutely pissed off about what had happened. And I include myself in that group. You had the sort of redneck crowd, who thought well, yellow-bellied chickens don't want to go fight in Viet Nam, shoot 'em, that was their attitude. And then a lot of the black students, as well as one of the speakers that was invited in from a black college, I think it was Orangeburg, down in South Carolina, they were saying "Hey, this same thing happened at Orangeburg, and it didn't even make the news. All these black students were shot up by these highway patrolmen last year. And why are you crying about this when it happened to us and nobody cared?" We had some very colorful assemblies during our tenure at Chapel Hill High.

RG: Do you remember sit-ins at the high school, where some of the black students didn't go to class, trying to bring attention to the inequities that they saw?

DK: I think that might have happened the year I was still in ninth grade. There was something of that sort when I was still in junior high, and we would hear about it. The incident I mentioned a minute ago, back in 1969, the principal's office was occupied. I remember that, because we were right across the hall in the library classroom. Miss Peacock was keeping a stiff upper lip and teaching us library science. As we could hear all the singing and chanting and everything's going in Miss Marshbanks, principal's office right before that.

RG: This is right before the riot or the day of the riot, immediately before?

DK: I don't know if that was happening concurrently with the so-called riot. It's hard to call it a riot because people weren't fighting. It was just a lot of –

RG: Demonstration, let's call it.

DK: Very physical demonstrating. I think as a lot of these fellows were going down the hall and bursting into rooms and saying "I'm sorry, Miss Barter, but we have to do this," flinging desks around, and then leaving, there was also another group in the principal's office. And that's what I heard. That group was fairly vocal, and I can just picture being Miss May Marshbanks, the principal, just not having a clue as to what to do about all this. But I think that might be the sit-in, or one of the sit-ins, that you refer to. The year before I think there was something similar, but I wasn't privy to it.

RG: Did you see sit-ins at Phillips? Or complaints there?

DK: No.

RG: It was like a completely different environment, as you've described.

DK: It was. There was an altercation where people were mad that Decatur Jones, a white students who was – he marched to the beat of a different drummer, was being picked on by one of the principals, and I think a bunch of people just stood outside the principal's office and chanted a little bit. And when Mr. Renwick came out the door they all ran. But that's the extent of anything like that.

RG: I understand they had chains and locked some of the doors shut?

DK: At the high school?

RG: Yeah.

DK: I don't recall that. I just remember exiting fairly quickly out the library exit when the cops showed up. There was another incident the following year, and I'll share it with you because it relates back to some of these same friendships I discussed that I developed in junior high. The incident then, in fall of '70, was provoked by the murder of a black man at the UNC Student Union at a dance. A white motorcycle gang from Durham came over and something happened up there on campus, and the fellow died, a black gentleman was stabbed right there in the Pit on the UNC campus.

And so the following day, I was walking down the hall to turn in a paper to my chemistry professor and I had to do some little exercise, I was walking down that hallway to the chemistry room, and very quiet, nobody in the hallway, and all of a sudden this door bursts open. All these black students come out. This was way down the hall. And they come surging down the hallway towards me, going past me, and all of a sudden it stops. And the next thing I know, I'm slammed up against the lockers. I've got my arms straight out, I'm being held against the locker. And Tommy Noel, who eventually ended up on death row, very scary fellow – nice guy if you knew him from sports, but when he wanted to be, he could be very scary. And he was the big, massive, muscular very mean looking fellow. And if he got face to face with you and started staring at you and telling you he was going to kill you, you would have been well-advised to be in fear of your life. In fact that's exactly what was happening to me. As I was being held, all these other people were sort of punching at me and poking me, but Tommy Noel was almost nose to nose with me, telling me he was going to beat the shit out of me.

As this was all happening I sort of looked past him and there, on the far side of this hallway were some of these same guys that I watched play basketball when I was a third string basketball player at Phillips Junior High or when I was a track runner, football player. These were my friends, these were my teammates. And they were

looking at me and they were looking at this incident. And I could see in their eyes a real feeling of ambivalence in these friends of mine. They were scared. They were probably not as scared as I was, but they were seeing something unfold that they didn't feel totally comfortable about. I'm sure of that. And the way they were looking at me as if to say "I can't do anything about this," and these furtive glances to the left and to the right, like you know is somebody gonna come and break this up? But I remember looking at these guys like "Can you help me?" And they're looking back like "Uh uh." It was a scary moment.

And then, at that point, totally out of the blue, an upperclassman, a black upperclassman, down at the far end of the hall, he was apparently watching all this unfold, and was part of the group as well. He starts running forward and said "The cops are coming, the cops are coming. Run!" And all of a sudden, these fellows let go of my arms, Tommy Noel turns, he and everybody else go running down the hall. This guy, who I had played basketball with in (?) gym, and did football practice when I was a JV football player, he was a varsity player in the high school. This guy turns and looks at me, and he blinks. And he runs down the hall. (laughter) Which I just thought was the cleverest thing.

There was a lot of anger there, no question about it. There was also this desire not to engage in all this. There was conflicted feelings on both sides. And you know, in the end it was, my ass was probably saved by some friendships developed through one of the few institutions that was truly integrated, that involved daily interaction with exchanges of ideas, and that was the athletic program in junior high and high school. But for that, I wouldn't be sitting here talking to you, I don't think. Cause Tommy Noel, one punch, I would have been gone. He was a pretty fearsome fellow.

RG: You talk about that without any resentment in your face or your voice.

DK: Well, had I not looked across the hall at these friends of mine who were up against, standing against the lockers, and they were very easy to spot, because they were much taller. The look in their eyes is the reason I'm not that resentful. I cannot articulate, even though I tried to here, the look in their eyes was they really didn't want this to happen. They were angry about what had been done, they were angry about how black people were being treated in general, in Chapel Hill and elsewhere, and that came out throughout the rest of my career at the high school. But they still could not see doing what was about to happen. Yet they couldn't control it.

And so I understand now that a lot of people that were involved in that incident in the hallway were sort of swept up into something bigger than they were. And their personal beliefs probably just had to be suppressed at that moment, or were suppressed by the action of the larger group. And I think a lot of us have found ourselves in that situation as well. It might not have been a racially tinged incident, it might just be the excitement of a football or basketball game, but we all start

behaving in different ways in emotionally charged moments with a lot of people around. So that's why you don't see me being angered about it.

RG: Are there other events, or other thoughts that you have, that you'd like to share?

DK: I'm sure some will come. But those are the main ones. The situation with Mr. Peerman, and the situation with that English teacher and Howard Lee. They're so symptomatic of what the problem was. And a lot of the other incidents that happened were matters that would have popped up in any community, not unique to Chapel Hill. They probably aren't worth mentioning or talking about. But it was a wonderful time to grow up in Chapel Hill.

RG: If you were white, maybe.

DK: Yeah. If you were a white kid, it was a wonderful time to grow up in Chapel Hill because I don't think a white kid growing up in Chapel Hill now could learn the things about racial interaction that I learned at Chapel Hill High at that time. Or at the junior high. Or at Glenwood. And it certainly helped me when I was a Legal Aid lawyer to listen when I would deal with a community group. It was almost always a low-income black community group. I would listen, I would not try and dictate anything, or come forth with my ideas till way down the road after a lot of things had been sorted out, fleshed out. Bitterness was expressed towards me, or racist comments were expressed towards me, I could always hearken back to what happened at Chapel Hill High, or junior high and know where a lot of it was coming from. And get past it.

A lot of the people that I went to high school with, from the black community, I know they have some bitter feelings. We had a wonderful impromptu reunion about four or five years ago, at what used to be called Colonel Chutney's, and might still be called Pantana Bob's. And these two rock bands, rhythm and blues bands, that had formed way back in the mid-sixties and late sixties, one white and one black, were playing together at Pantana Bob's. One of them was Kenny Rand's band, and they were known as Liquid Pleasure. They're still fairly prominent. And the other one was I think The Nomads. And they still play. So they had this reunion, at Pantana Bob's. And one band would play, and the next band would play, and sometimes the band members would get together and play together. A lot of members of the black junior high and high school communities were there at that event. And a lot of the whites still in the neighborhood were at that event.

It wasn't publicized. There was just a notice in the paper about it, an article about David Hackney, one of the guitar players from one of the groups, and so just spontaneously this event occurred. And there were still a lot of good feelings there. But a lot of the discussions talked about how problems you see in Chapel Hill could be related right back to how integration was handled way back then. And again, it was, some of these same themes were sounded, not by me, but by a lot of the black students, former students, that I was talking with.



One of them, however, I don't know if I could find him in the book, he and I used to play in band together. He played bass clarinet, and I played tenor sax. And we were sitting there, and we were talking, and "What went wrong? What happened to Chapel Hill? Why can none of us Chapel Hillians live here anymore? Why did the racial harmony never get to where people expected it to be?" And this one guy, I think he was, I don't think it was Joe Council, but – he was sitting and talking to me and saying "It's because of the real estate community trying to make Chapel Hill this tiny preserve, and keeping it a unique enclave, a village, and not letting it grow." He said that priced everybody out of Chapel Hill, including the black community. He said it priced the black merchants out, priced everybody out. It became an elitist community. That's why we don't see you in here very much, which is true, I cannot afford to live in Chapel Hill. He said that's why you don't see us here anymore either. There were other reasons as well, obviously. But he had a unique take on it, that, again, very progressive forces, in trying to have neighborhood preservation, as they call it, preserving the natural beauty of Chapel Hill, progressive forces actually turned out to be some of the most reactionary, as far as practically eradicating the remnants of the black community in Chapel Hill.

RG: Do you think, harking back to high school, do you think there were many people who had the same feelings about the integration process in high school, felt the same way you did? I don't know if I phrased that – let me go back. Do you think that there were many people who had the same take, the same ideas, that you just expressed about the integration of the high school when you were in high school?

DK: I think so. I think so. There are some who, at that time, still were not crazy about the idea of integration. Many of them went off to private schools. But I think the bulk of my friends shared similar views. I think they did. I mean, we were seeing what was going on in the nation as a whole as well. We thought blacks had been screwed over long enough, and felt they should be helped. They shouldn't be attending segregated schools any more. We probably, too, fell prey to this notion of, well, it's sad that you have to go to that all-black high school, but the past is forgotten. And it wasn't until the incidents in tenth grade that we were educated.

RG: There was a sizable group that didn't want to integrate, among blacks. That just wanted equality: same equipment, same physical plant. And they loved that school, as you know, now. Lincoln High School was as important to them as their church, in many ways. The church and the school were tied together, as you well know. I heard from a lot of the people I've interviewed, a lot of the black people, African American people I've interviewed, comments about how they felt the white teachers perceived them. How did you, a white person, perceive white teachers treating and seeing the black student?

DK: I was probably too imperceptive to perceive much way back then. In the high school, so much of which is a blur now, I don't think there was this comfort level of interacting with the black students that you would see with the white students,

among a lot of teachers. And just a willingness to talk, or to talk in a non-patronizing manner with black students. It didn't seem to be there.

RG: So you could see that.

DK: Yeah. There was a little bit of patronizing nature in the way they would speak to them, if they did at all. There was one horrible incident involving a teacher who arrived in Chapel Hill, probably my junior year in high school. He thought he was just so cool in interacting with blacks that he could use the word nigger with impunity. This was a – I just now remember this, it's prompted by your question – this fellow, who was from up north, and comes down –

**End of side 2**