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**U.16 Long Civil Rights Movement: The Women's Movement in the South**

Interview U-1089

Annie Ruth Locklear Revels

10 April 2013

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## **ABSTRACT—ANNIE RUTH LOCKLEAR REVELS**

Interviewee: Annie Ruth Locklear Revels  
Interviewer: Marvin “Marty” Richardson  
Interview Date: April 16, 2013  
Location: Dining room of Revels’s home, McLeansville, NC  
Length: One audio file, 235:40

(Annie) Ruth Locklear Revels is a member of the Lumbee Indian Tribe and a former educator and former Executive Director and founding member of the Guilford County Native American Association (GNAA) based in Greensboro, North Carolina. She was born in 1936 in the community of Union Chapel about four miles from Pembroke in Robeson County, North Carolina. The interview focuses on Revels’s career in education, being the first Indian in the Charlotte school system and her challenges in overcoming stereotypes of Indians and other minorities, especially after integration. She reflects on how she realized the inequities of the Robeson County Indian schools only after teaching a white school in Charlotte, NC. She discusses how she overcame racial prejudice while a teacher at Ragsdale High School to become well-liked and winner of several awards and honors. Mrs. Revels discusses how and why she got involved in American Indian affairs and how and when GNAA was started and its programs. She also discusses her experiences on the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs and as a part of United Tribes of North Carolina, the North Carolina Indian Economic Development Initiative and other Indian organizations. At length she discusses the plight of the North Carolina Indian Cultural center and explains why it was unsuccessful.

## **FIELD NOTES—ANNIE RUTH LOCKLEAR REVELS**

Interviewee: Annie Ruth Locklear Revels  
Interviewer: Marvin “Marty” Richardson  
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Location: Dining room of Revels’s home, McLeansville, NC  
Length: One audio file, 235:40

THE INTERVIEWEE: (Annie) Ruth Locklear Revels is a member of the Lumbee Indian Tribe and a former educator and former Executive Director and founding member of the Guilford County Native American Association based in Greensboro, North Carolina. She was born in 1936 in the community of Union Chapel about four miles from Pembroke in Robeson County, North Carolina. Mrs. Revels attended Union Chapel Elementary School and graduated from Pembroke High School in 1954. In 1958 Mrs. Revels received a B.A. degree in English from the historically Indian Pembroke State College (now UNC Pembroke). After graduating she taught English at Pembroke High School for two years, during the time when Robeson County and other places had three segregated school systems: black, white, and Indian. Mrs. Revels married (William) Lonnie Revels and moved to Charlotte, North Carolina where she taught school at Herbert Spaug Jr. High School and was the first Indian to teach in the school system there. The family then moved to Greensboro, North Carolina where she taught at Ragsdale High School in Jamestown, Guilford County for sixteen years and had as one of her students Pat McCrory during his senior year. Later Mrs. Revels served on the selection committee for the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics to ensure diversity. In 1975 Mrs. Revels and her husband Lonnie helped organize an urban Indian organization called the Guilford Native American Association. Mrs. Revels has also served on the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs as a representative of the Guilford County Association for Indian People and on the United Tribes of North Carolina Board, which sponsors the annual Adult Indian Unity Conference.

THE INTERVIEWER: Marvin “Marty” Richardson is a member of the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe and a graduate student in the History Department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is also a field scholar at the Southern Oral History Program.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVIEW: The interview was conducted in small dining area in the home of Ruth Revels and her daughter Jennifer Revels Baxter in McLeansville, NC halfway between Greensboro and Burlington. The house itself is fairly new and located in medium-sized subdivision that runs parallel to Interstate 85. The Revels home is decorated with beautiful American Indian artwork and family portraits. One standout display is a collection of potted plates and pots done by nationally known Haliwa-Saponi artist Senora Lynch, which sits in a glass case. The visit began with small-talk with both Ruth Revels and Jennifer Revels Baxter present. Baxter only stayed a few minutes and then left to run some errands. Mrs. Revels was very talkative and very detailed in her discussion. She rarely paused to allow the interviewer to ask a follow-up question and the interviewer was very respectful of this community elder. The

interview focused on Revels's career in education, being the first Indian in the Charlotte school system and her challenges in overcoming stereotypes of Indians and other minorities, especially after integration. She reflects on how she realized the inequities of the Robeson County Indian schools only after teaching a white school in Charlotte, NC. In Charlotte she was able to order supplies and other materials free of charge, whereas in Pembroke she and other teachers had to pay for supplies out of their own pockets. In addition, Indian and black schools received old discarded textbooks from the white schools. In the Greensboro area, Mrs. Revels was able to get a job at Ragsdale High School and faced prejudice as an Indian, but also won several awards and honors. Later Mrs. Revels discusses how and why she got involved in American Indian affairs and how and when Guilford Native American Association (GNAA) was started. She became the Executive Director of the GNAA in 1977 and was the first American Indian woman in the state to achieve such a high position. She also discusses her experiences on the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs and as a part of United Tribes of North Carolina, the North Carolina Indian Economic Development Initiative and other Indian organizations. At length she discusses the plight of the North Carolina Indian Cultural center and explains why it was unsuccessful.

## **TRANSCRIPT: ANNIE RUTH LOCKLEAR REVELS**

Interviewee: Annie Ruth Locklear Revels

Interviewer: Marvin Richardson

Interview Date: April 16, 2013

Location: McLeansville, North Carolina

Length: 2:35:40

### **START OF INTERVIEW**

[Transcript begins at 05:58]

Marvin Richardson: Well, today is April—. What is today? April 16?

Ruth Revels: Mm hmm.

MR: April 16, 2013, and the time is 3:18, and I am at the home of Mrs. Ruth Revels.

Could you tell me where we are right now, the address here?

RR: Marty, my home address is—. I'm sorry. [Laughs]

MR: I think it's 24.

RR: McLeansville, North Carolina. We are located between Greensboro and Burlington.

MR: Okay. And if you could, I just want to start off, if you could just tell me a little bit about yourself.

RR: Marty, I'll be seventy-six years old next month—I'm sorry, seventy-seven—and I was born in the community of Union Chapel, about four miles from Pembroke in Robeson County,

North Carolina. My parents were Mr. Willard Locklear and my mother was Pearlie Emanuel. They were married November 18, 1918. My mom died in June of 2011 and dad died in March of 2009, so we were very fortunate to have them live as long as they did. My grandparents lived on the farm in the Union Chapel community. My mom and dad moved there when they married, lived for a while with my grandpa and grandma, and they lived there until their deaths, so that was home. It still is home. The home place is there. I have two brothers and two nephews and two nieces that have homes right there on the farm. The farm is still on a rural dirt road, very little change in the whole area, except of course they've built nice homes and things like that, but still a dirt road.

I attended the elementary school at Union Chapel and then graduated from Pembroke High School in 1954 and graduated from what is now the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, which then was Pembroke State College, in 1958. I started teaching English at the Pembroke High School and taught there for two years. It was a wonderful experience. At the time our schools were still totally segregated. We had four Indian high schools. Pembroke was in the little town of Pembroke, and of course it had several feeder schools from all of the schools I mentioned, Union Chapel and so on, and I felt pretty lucky and blessed to get a job there because we kind of considered it an elite opportunity to get a job at Pembroke High School because it was the largest of the [schools]. The other schools were very rural. Most of the teachers were men and most of them were older, and so I felt very proud to get a job there teaching.

It was a very good experience. I had cousins, friends of friends, just about everybody, you know, from the community in my class, and I taught tenth grade English, four sections of tenth grade English, and I taught sixteen years and that was one of the most outstanding, smartest classes overall that I ever taught. They weren't divided, you know, academically, like

academically talented, college prep, and so on. They were all mixed. The school system was very poor for Indians. Of course I did not realize it. I'd gone to school there; I had gone to the college. At the time I graduated in [19]58 with about three hundred students, all Indian. Well in the fall of 1954 the civil rights legislation had said that all state supported schools must integrate, so Pembroke State College had three white students who came to play basketball our first year, but again most everyone were Indian.

I had got a good basic foundation because I had been blessed to have an outstanding English teacher in high school, actually two, for four years. So I had to work very hard to challenge these students. They were not only smart but I was young, just out of college, and they were going to give me a challenge. But we got things settled, who I was and what was expected, and it was one of the greatest experiences of my life. Out of that class there are two attorneys, there's a doctor, there's a dentist, Ms. Louise Cummings, that you may know, just recently retired from—Dr. Louise Cummings—from the chairman of the English department at North Carolina Central. There were just such outstanding students in all areas—the pastor of one of the largest Indian churches in Robeson County—and I'd like to share this little story with you. The first year of the Science and Math School I was asked to serve on the selection committee, and Dr. Ehle, who was the founder of the Governor's School, great author, one of the most outstanding educators and civic persons in the state, he was chairing the committee. We agreed that because of the inequities between the large urban schools and a lot of the school systems versus the rural school systems and, like in Robeson County, three-way segregated school systems, and because we wanted to make sure we selected students equitably, geographically, racially and so on, we decided that we would score or rate the students from the more rural, lowly-funded schools in a separate pile, and we did. When we were going through them we

divided into groups and we would—. Well for this we just had one group. We would read them individually and then compare them, and as you know they were just science and math students and the science and math teachers had recommended them. We were reading and Dr. Ehle said, “Well, I am glad to finally find a science teacher who can write in complete sentences,” and of course someone said, “Who is it?” and he said, “A Vicky Brooks at Pembroke High School,” and I was so excited because I had taught her English.

So those are little things that mean a lot to you. They stay with you, they make you want to work harder, and of course I have cherished that story and that experience because when I graduated, Marty, and went to my first school—. We moved to Charlotte and I started teaching there at Herbert Spaugh Junior High, and when I went for the first day of orientation and the principal was telling us, you know, that the supplies that the teacher had ordered the last year were all on our desk, and that if we needed anything extra to get with a secretary and make out a list, and all of these kinds of things, and where we could get our books, I’d never heard this. My two years at Pembroke I got a roll book and a key to my room. I’m not even sure we had individual keys, but I got a roll book, and then we got the students’ folders, you know, when our homerooms were assigned.

MR: Where was this again, your new experience?

RR: In Charlotte. At that time there was the Charlotte school system and the Mecklenburg school system. Now they are integrated but it was Charlotte school system, and of course it was totally segregated. But when I got to my room and all of this material was in there and I thought—. And he said that we could get with the secretary and order new material. Well one of my classes was going to be speech and drama so later I thought, I’m going to need some stuff for that, but I went to the secretary and asked her, did I understand Mr. English correctly,



that I could order some things, and she said yes. You see, it was such a shock, because at Pembroke High School for two years the teachers had to pay fifteen—. We had stencils. I don't know if you're familiar with a stencil, probably not, but it was this long, green thing that you typed on, and there was this big mimeograph machine. You put it on there and you ran your copies, and the mimeograph machine was in the little office next to the principal and you had to give him your copies and he ran them off, or had someone working for him to run them off. You couldn't even go in and run off any material. So needless to say, we did not use many of those and we certainly did not use them to run off assignments or extra work, and we had to pay fifteen cent out of pocket for every one that we used.

Our library was the best one of the Indian [schools] in the county but very, very poor. We didn't even have enough books to assign students to read [for] book reports. So the Scholastic magazine had recommended books to read that we could order and I had each of my students to order a book. I think they were like maybe \$1.69 or something like that. Someone made us a bookcase, and they would read their book and then turn it in. We collected them, they gave them back; therefore we built us a library where they could check out books to do book reports.

Then, I guess the worst thing that I found was we had always wondered, even when I was in school, why we got books with white students' names in them. See, at that time, just like at home you have certain names. If you're a Richardson or Lynch or, you know, some of the others, you almost know that you're Haliwa-Saponi. Well the same thing was in Robeson, with Oxendine, Locklear, Lowrie. Even Hunt, Cummings, Chavis, some of the names that were also not technically Indian, we could tell. We knew our names. When we got our textbooks it was always fascinating, when I was a student, to look and see whose names were in our books, and the same thing when I taught. We still got books with names in them. We never received a new

textbook. I found that when I went to get my books I got new textbooks and there was a teacher's manual with my literature book and with my English grammar book, because you got a teacher's manual with your books. They sent so many teachers' manuals per book. Well, I was so excited about that, and my brother-in-law, Julian Ransom, taught English and I was showing it to him, and he said, "I've never seen it," and he'd been teaching for years. So I began to tell the teachers, you know, you could order them from the publisher in the book, so everybody in English started ordering those books. Then I found out that every so many years, I think now the maximum is five, the state textbook commission evaluates the books and decides whether to upgrade them, discard them, or what, and so we were getting the discarded books from the white school system.

MR: Why do you think that you all got the discarded books?

RR: Because they didn't have to pay for new books, or they didn't—. I don't know how, if the money came out of their budget, it probably did, and they didn't have to pay for new textbooks, and they were doing the black and the Indian schools the same way. So we were getting the discarded textbooks, and anything else I'm sure. We had the superintendent, of course—. There were two superintendents during my years there as a student and a teacher and they were both white, and you had—. Now this is ridiculous, Marty. I don't know if you've ever thought about it or ever been aware. In Robeson County you had six towns, incorporated towns, and you had the county, and the majority of the Indian schools were in the county. I remember one school, Philadelphus, between Pembroke and Red Springs, that was maybe a first through the third grade, and maybe one black, but the majority of the schools were in the county, but in each town you had a white and a black. So, think about it. You had twelve school systems right there, and then you had the Robeson County school system and it was white—. I really don't know if they had a white and a black or whether these schools were part of another system. But

anyway, you had the Indian, so even at that, that would have been thirteen school systems in the second poorest county in the state, where you're providing buses, separate salaries for superintendents, and the whole bit, and that's what we had in that county because of segregation. Of course I know it was everywhere but I don't know if any other schools—. Yeah, I do know. They did have separate school systems, because Clinton had a separate school system, you had one, Waccamaw-Siouan had one, and in the later years Cumberland County, Les Maxwell, had one, and I know they had one for the Saponi. And we didn't have a large tax base in Robeson County because it was mostly a farming county, so that could tell you the kind of education we were getting.

But one of the good things that I remember about my education, at the university the Indian students, we were the university, and we had opportunities to be the stars of the baseball, football, basketball teams—. I mean baseball, basketball—. We didn't have football at that time, and I don't know if we—. I think it was mostly baseball and basketball. We had opportunities to be the officers of the student council, other organizations that we had, classroom officers, to perform in plays, and we had opportunities to develop as leaders, and I think although we didn't come out with the greatest academic backgrounds we came out as leaders and we came out with the independence and the ambition that we needed to get the academics wherever we went, because when I started teaching at Herbert Spough and then later at Greensboro I loved teaching drama and speech, but especially drama, and I developed the full program at Ragsdale High School in drama and all I had ever had was two little courses at the university. But I loved it so much and I was smart enough to not come in and open my mouth about things and to recognize my limitations, but to know where I can get it and to associate with people and get involved in programs.

So I won honors at Ragsdale High School and I was well respected and well regarded. I taught our new governor at Ragsdale High School when he was a senior, and he participated in the play, M\*A\*S\*H, so we've had a longstanding relationship. I taught students that graduated and scored sixteen hundred on the SAT, went to MIT, all over. But again, going back to Pembroke High School, there was nobody I ever taught that was smarter than some of those kids that I taught, even with those limitations.

MR: A question, and then I'll ask another question. You mentioned Philadelphus. For the transcript we like to make sure that we get the proper spelling of those words. Can you spell Philadelphus?

RR: Okay. It was spelled P-h-i-l-a-d-e-l-p-h-u-s.

MR: Okay.

RR: And there's a Philadelphus Road in Robeson County near Pembroke and Highway 72. If you know Highway 72 that comes out to 711 that goes to Pembroke from Red Springs—or 710, yeah 710—Philadelphus School was right there, probably about two miles from Red Springs.

MR: Okay. Something else, you've talked a lot, and that's good, I just want to—. I have a few questions, or at least one right now. You mentioned that when you started teaching at Pembroke High that you were one of very few women. Tell me about your experiences being a woman teacher with all those other men.

RR: At first when I was young it was kind of—. I just looked at in a way as being very special, I mean, wow, because most of these—. My teachers were still there, and as I said most of them were older, and the women there, Ms. Clarabelle taught home economics, Ms. Lucille taught girls' P.E. and health, and Ms. Lolita taught art and—. No, Ms. Lolita taught business and

Ms. Magenta taught art, and I'm sure they had some other courses. But those were the women and those were the courses that they were teaching. And Mr. [29:45] also hired Gilbert Sampson, who was a classmate of mine, to teach math, so we were the only two young teachers there.

But at first, you know, being young and ambitious and excited and feeling kind of like you were select, but as I got older, and especially when I went to Ragsdale High School here in Jamestown, near Greensboro, I began to really see the difference. The principal was male, all of the assistant principals were males, and [most of the coaches and P.E. teachers], and that's where the emphasis [was], you know, sports of course was where the emphases were placed, and as I went long and learned more and more I realized that not one of these principals, not one of these assistant principals, had ever taught in the classroom. They really knew nothing about the classroom. They didn't know anything about the problems of the teacher, having to—. At that time, my experience is, we didn't have a planning period. We had a homeroom, five classes to teach, and a study hall. You had to keep a study hall. You had to take your students to lunch, or lunch period was a class and lunch, so we had no free time. What you did you did on your own time.

At Ragsdale I did the plays. I did all the plays, and some of my years I helped with Homecoming and things like that, but that was always on your own time. You had to go back at night—no money, nothing—and I began to notice that difference in a different way, as well as in later years when we integrated I began to notice the differences there. So I began, without ever planning to, to speak out because there was something there that I saw and I didn't realize it because I didn't do anything about it. [I didn't realize it while I was teaching at Pembroke but] then I looked back on my school years and I began to even see the inequities, not that much while I was there but after I left and I looked back, and I realized that I was beginning to feel the

differences that was probably building up some resentment but I didn't act on it, because we were just brought up that way. We lived with segregation; we never questioned anything. We were brought up, most of us, in all-Indian communities, Indian churches, and so we didn't question.

But I began to see several inequities at the school, even economically and socially, and territorial. Ragsdale was in this little town called Jamestown, and Jamestown was an old community, pretty affluent. The kids came from Sedgefield, which was one of the most affluent communities in the county, and basically another community. They were pretty affluent, they had a small town mentality, those who came from Jamestown, so people like I, who came totally from outside, you began to feel that you're not really a part of it, as well, as I said, socially and economically. There were a lot of children there with lots of money and so on, and teachers.

MR: Well, I wanted to ask you, how did you, during segregation, how did you even get your foot in the door to even teach, because I'm assuming when you say "affluent" that this was a white school, right?

RR: Yes.

MR: How did you even get yourself, as an Indian person—?

RR: That's a good question. In Charlotte I was the first Indian to ever teach in the school system that they knew, an admitted Indian. Marty, this is another thing that has been such a big part of me as far as my work and commitment to Indian people and to equality and so on. I remember sitting there in front of the man that was interviewing me, and he was looking at my transcript, you know, how they look and they're not saying anything. I am sitting there, just twisting my fingers, and thinking, "Lord, if I had it to go over with I would have put 'white'

where I put 'Indian' because he's going to see that 'Indian' and I'm not going to be hired."

That's all I was thinking. I wasn't thinking about my good grades, about my experiences and the honors that I had won in high school and college and all that I had taught and everything. I wasn't thinking about that at all. That didn't even bother me. But, I thank God along the way I've had basically good experiences, because I got the job and I had a good experience those two years. I actually became something of a novelty at the school because everybody wanted to come to me with questions. They wanted to know more about Indians. There was a very good friend that lived near that I rode back and forth to school with and she was very well-to-do and had a lot of interests.

But at Ragsdale it was still all segregated, and when I came here to apply—Lonnie was being transferred here with his job—we were city and county, and the city paid a real good bonus that the county didn't pay. So I went to the city first and the guy who was interviewing me really turned me off. He didn't seem to have any interest. He kept saying, "Well, you know, Ms. Revels, we have such an outstanding school system and we pay a good bonus, and we have UNCG here and all of these schools, High Point College, and so on." He said, "We really don't have any trouble getting good teachers." So I had an appointment with the county in the afternoon and when Lonnie picked me up I was so disappointed in this guy. I said, "I need a job, not to hear that he can get good teachers." But I'll never forget Dr. Conner. He kept saying, "Ms. Revels, we've got to get you a job."

MR: Who was this, Dr. Conner? Who was this guy?

RR: Hmm?

MR: Dr. Conner; tell me who that is real quick.

RR: I don't--? How old is Dr. Conner?

MR: I don't--.

RR: Oh, you said you know Dr.--?

MR: No, I'm asking you who he is, because you mentioned him. I don't know--.

RR: Oh, he was the assistant superintendent of the schools here and he was interviewing me, and he was just so nice and so impressed and he would say, "We've got to find you a job," and he'd say, "Let me check on something and I'll be back," and he'd say, "That job's already been taken," and he'd say, "You sure you really want to teach English? You wouldn't teach something else?" Finally he said he had a job in special education, would I teach that, and I said, "Well, Dr. Conner, I want to teach English but I am desperate," and you know back then you didn't have to be certified in it. I said, "I've never taught it, but I'm sure I could teach it." So he gave me a contract to teach it and about a week later he called me and asked me--we were living in Charlotte, we hadn't moved--if I'd still like to teach English, and he said Mr. Madison from Ragsdale High School had just called needing an English teacher, so I came and signed a contract.

We were the biggest--. We were a county but they considered that the top high school in the county, and there was a lot of prejudice there. One of the coaches came in the lounge one day shortly after I taught and he said, "So, Ms. Revels, you're from Pembroke," and I said yes and he said, "I coached basketball in Whiteville for two years," and he said, "On Friday nights or Saturday nights when we played basketball and someone got hurt we'd bring them to the emergency room at Southeastern in Lumberton," and he said, "Boy, that emergency room would always be full of Indians shooting and cutting or being shot and cut and fighting." And it was



amazing how quickly I felt—. I've always said the fact that I got that first job, my confidence grew from that, but if I hadn't I'm not sure where I might have been. But Lonnie, you know, had been in the Army and he'd been around and he had already begun to speak out and look at the inequities and I had learned a lot from him. So I said, "Yes, and you know what? If you go down there, if you go to the emergency room here in Greensboro at Cone Hospital on a Friday and Saturday night, it'll be full of white boys and girls shooting and cutting each other." [Laughs]

So I didn't have to say much for them to begin to, not dislike me, but to say, boy, you'd better be careful what you say around Revels, and I became something of a conscience there, because when we integrated with black students the teachers in the teachers' lounge, if somebody started telling about a student doing something wrong, the first response was, "Was she black?" or, "Was he black?" and I'd say—. You know from experience I can be feisty. You know those men used to call us emotional women and I'd say, "I'm not emotional; I'm passionate." I'd jump up and I'd say, "Did you not have any problems before you started teaching black students? I did." And they would realize. See, I learned about things like that. People that's never lived differently, they don't think. They weren't realizing what they were saying because they had always been in an environment where they could say that and nobody was going to be different, and there were a lot of changes. They began to realize what they had said. Yes, they had problems before the black students came.

I told Mr. Madison one day, he—. After they separated and took the ninth grade from the high school and put it back with the junior high he said he had to have four English teachers to move to the junior high. So nobody really wanted to move, and I went in one day and told him, I said, "I'd rather stay here but I have taught ninth grade English and I will go if you need me to,

and he said, "Revels, don't you worry about going. You're not going. You're my only minority and I'm going to keep you." And I said, "Oh, so it finally pays to be a minority." [Laughs]

But I had good years there and it was a good school, but I just saw too much inequities and not only, as I said, racially, but socially and economically. The poorer students—. I taught tenth grade low level students for about three years when I first went there and I began to resent it, not because of them, but when you're given the low level and somebody's always given college prep people kind of automatically associate you with the level of students that you teach. I didn't feel the challenge to go and do research and do different things, and at the end of the day you felt like you had just pulled, pulled, pulled. But I got along with them fine so I went in one day and told them. I said, "Now, I might have taken it a little different when you first started doing this, but I feel like now when you say, 'Oh, Ms. Revels would be good to teach that,' that you're taking the easy way out and giving it to me because you know I won't say anything." So I ended up teaching all drama before I retired.

But back to the male thing, that's been a problem. I think it's still a problem today, Marty.

MR: How so?

RR: I feel it more with the Indian men than I do other men, and I've tried all the years—. It's never become a problem—. I don't mean a problem, but I think I have tried to understand it. Now, Lonnie, my husband, I don't think Lonnie was—. Lonnie was chauvinistic in housework [Laughs] and stuff like that, but he, if you remember, some of Lonnie's best people that he went to, that were mentors as well as equals that worked with him, were Dr. Helen Sheirbeck, Dr. Ruth Dial Woods, and strong women like that, and he supported me in everything that I did. But

I think that a lot of our Indian men are—. I don't know. I even said about our women, the older Indian women—I saw it in my family with my grandmother and different people—they just somehow pampered their boys and made more of them, and did more for them, and I think that was a nurturing thing. But if you look at LRDA [Lumbee Regional Development Association], there has never been a woman chairperson or a woman executive director. When I became the executive director of Guilford Native in 1977 I was the first woman in the whole state among the tribes, and Pat Cavan was the first woman chairperson.

MR: Pat who now?

RR: Pat Cavan. She was a Bullard, Pat Bullard C-a-v-a-n, and she was originally from Prospect. So we broke the mold, and then of course I have considered myself, and I think if you talk to them, I have considered myself a mentor to people like Gladys, Jane Jacobs, and when Linda Hedgepeth was at Haliwa, and Kathy, and a lot of the other Indian women who became directors, and they're still—. Frances Stewart Lowry is still the chairperson here, but I think—. And of course you know Melissa has really broken a mold there by being the chair, hasn't she?

MR: Well actually Ruth Ealing was the chairperson—

RR: Oh, that's right.

MR: —there for awhile.

RR: Yeah. Ruth has really done a lot of things there. And a woman has never been the chair of the commission, I mean executive director. Now Pat Clark was the chair for a brief while but there's never been a woman executive director, and I may be wrong but right now I don't see anybody that I envision—. And I'm not saying that—. It's not because they're women,

but you know yourself in all of these years with a lot of these, there's bound to have been a woman. In fact, I'm not sure LRDA has more than one or two women on their board.

MR: Well tell me, you kind of jumped into something I definitely want to get into, but there are so many things that you've brought up. First of all, how did you get out of Pembroke? Let's talk about that, and then let's move forward to how you started involving yourself, and Mr. Lonnie, in Indian affairs. How did you get out—?

RR: That's a good question too, because you know today that it's still hard to hire a lot of our Indian people because they won't leave home, [Laughs] and you're a good example, maybe. But I was teaching school and was very happy because that was kind of a tradition. That was about the only thing that Indians period—. It was the only thing professionally that Indians could get to do in Robeson, was to teach school. You could pastor a church, you could have a little store, and of course construction work, and most of the time you had to go out of the county for that, other than farming, and most of the women were just housewives. We had three Indian professors at Pembroke when I was there but we didn't have any women. We had three men. I always wanted to go to college. Back then most of us were first-time college graduates. Many of the students were still first-time high school graduates. But the parents did push us to get an education, because with segregation and the lack of job opportunities they saw that as our way out, and they basically supported us to leave the county unless we were going to teach school. I was very happy teaching and felt very proud of my accomplishment.

Lonnie graduated from Wake Forest University. See, at the time, what was strange, you could get into the private colleges but not the state supported colleges and universities. He went in the Army and we got married his second year in the Army and lived in Pembroke and I continued to teach, and he went in the Airborne so he ended up in Fort Bragg for the duration of

his time. When he got out there was nothing for him. He did not want to teach. So he had a good friend that had graduated with him who was an auditor—. What is it you are when someone looks at your car when you've been in a wreck and evaluates the damage?

MR: Just like an insurance evaluator, or—?

RR: Adjustor, an insurance adjustor. That was a good job, Ed said, so he told Lonnie he'd talk to the man and if he came up he could get a job. So Lonnie went up, he had two sisters living in Charlotte, and he went up and stayed with Del and applied for the job. Well, he didn't get it, and Ed told him later that it was because he was Indian. He said the guy said that he didn't feel that Lonnie, being an Indian, could represent him well with people; that they wouldn't respond to him. So he got a job first selling insurance and then he ended up with a real good job as a salesman with a company called Ditto that used to have these copiers with this old purple master that you'd put on them, and he did systems for furniture so he was transferred here, and after we moved here—and that's how I became a teacher. So when he got out of the Army and couldn't get a job and went to Charlotte and got this job that was pretty good, then I had Bill by that time. So we moved to Charlotte, and Del, Lonnie's sister, she and her husband were—. Neal had been transferred to Spartanburg and they were getting ready to move, and Del worked as the secretary with a—. What's a tax person called? Auditor? No, they're more than an auditor.

Anyway, Bernard had his own auditing firm and it was just him and his bookkeeper and Del, and then they didn't have—. I remember while I was working there he got the first copier and it was this big old copier that had water in it and the paper was on rolls and it wasn't very efficient. But a lot of the job was typing and you had to type all the tax forms and all of the audits and everything. So we moved in December and Bernard told Del he would be interested in interviewing me, so I went for an interview and he hired me and I worked there until the next

August when I got a job teaching. That was good experience for me because other than tax season I got a chance to help do small books, you know, say he was keeping books for you. So I learned a lot from him. I remember him telling me—. He said when he interviewed me he went downstairs to his friend's office and he called back up there and I answered the phone, and he said, "May I speak to Ruth Revels?" and I said, "This is she." He said if I would have said, "This is her," he would have hung up and sent me home right then. [Laughs] So he was very strict on your typing. He'd say, "I don't pay myself to proofread, so when you bring me something that you've typed you'd better make sure that I don't find any mistakes, or if I find one and you have tried to white it out I'd better not be able to see that you've whited it out," because you know that was all we had for correction.

But anyway, I learned a lot from him. I learned a lot about business and a lot that helped me with teaching and when I went to Guilford Native. So that was how I left Pembroke and then started my career there, I mean started working there and then came to Greensboro, and we've been here since. I started as the first executive director of Guilford Native August the 17<sup>th</sup> of 1977, so I retired from Ragsdale that summer. Guilford Native was able to get a grant from ANA and it was supposed to begin October the 1<sup>st</sup> and they would be able to hire a director out of it. I had got really interested in the Indian affairs because Lonnie and Pat—. Lonnie was the chair of Guilford Native, Pat Cavan was the vice chair, and Pat worked with the Title IV program then in Indian education. They would get to go to the conferences and were getting to work with Indians and I would be so excited to listen to what was happening. It was so new to me. Of course I had got involved with the community some and I just decided that I wanted to go to work with the Indian organization, so I retired that summer and started to work with Guilford Native and I retired from there after twenty-two years. My years since then I have just spent volunteering so,

as you know, I'm still active on the commission, the United Tribes, and the Indian Economic Development Initiative.

MR: How and why was Guilford Native started?

RR: Oh, Guilford Native was started—. It organized formally in September of 1975. The first real problem that many of the community members became aware of was the high dropout rate of students in the schools. They were dropping out not just in high school but all the way through school. If they went to school and didn't like it then the parents could just tell the teacher, "We're moving back home," and the school system never knew that they had dropped out of school. The parents who were coming here were coming to look for jobs but every weekend they went home. Socially they didn't adjust. There was nothing for them to do.

MR: When you say "home," what—?

RR: Pembroke mostly, to Pembroke. The majority of them were from Pembroke. We had some from Cherokee, some from other tribes, a few, but the majority of them were from Pembroke or Robeson County, so their social life was there. When I went to Guilford Native in 1977 we didn't even have a major elder community because when they got old enough and retired they were going back home. So starting to look at things and check a little bit, and just getting the people together, you found out how many—. Nobody had children, at least in high school. So Lonnie was the chair of Guilford Native and they started organizing some community meetings, and a lot of people would come. They were very interested, almost as many from High Point as from Greensboro, and they started meeting at a church, Emmanuel Baptist Church, because a lot of Indians went to that church. So they started telling their problems and their needs and their concerns, and I remember one man saying, "Ms. Revels, my children are so happy at

home, but it looks like when they leave home to go to school they have come down from the mountaintop.” That was the way he described it, and he said, “They are not happy and they don’t want to go to school.”

We had just got the Indian education program in the city schools, [1:01:45 and Pat was in]. We didn’t get it in High Point city schools and Guilford County schools until after Guilford Native came into existence. Then we had people telling us about—. See, the reason there was a large migration to Guilford County was because of the textiles, Burlington Industries, Guilford Mills, and Cone Mills, the furniture industry in High Point, and the hosiery industry in High Point. There were tons of jobs for—. You could come off the farm and get jobs and you did not have to have education, and of course what was forcing those people to come here was the mechanization of farming, when everybody was being displaced by tractors and all of that stuff. So one night different ones were telling that they wanted to learn how to read and write, you know, when you asking them why they would want an Indian center, and when they finished Lonnie said, “I’m going to pass around this paper and I want you to write your name and your address and put down anything that you’re interested in.” [Laughs] He got to this man and the man said, “Mr. Revels, I told you, I want to learn how to read and write.” [Laughs] We weren’t even understanding their problem, and a lot of them would tell you that they were intimidated to go apply for social services or help or whatever. They didn’t know where to go, and they didn’t like going to talk to white or black people, and a lot of the things they said was they were intimidated or embarrassed to tell a white person they couldn’t read or write, or if they asked them for help then they would just say, “Take this paper and fill it out,” and they’d say, “I’m not going to tell them I can’t read and write.”



So there were just a number of things like that, so that's how Guilford Native came into being. When I talk about Guilford Native, Marty, I have a circle, and in here we talk about the board, and of course the staff or the governance, and then economic and social and cultural development. This is my own thing. I kind of compare some of the urbans to the tribal and the reservation, of how they began, and I say Guilford Native began basically for education because of our great concern. Then our next step was the social and that was helping people to get services. We started the clothing closet, the food pantry, and transportation and things like that, and under that we eventually had a daycare. Then we went to the cultural, which was our powwow, and then we had festivals and we started the gallery. Then we went to economic development. We started a housing program. We bought two apartment complexes, one was a duplex and one was a triplex, and we were renting those plus helping people to build houses, and in the economic development we also started the program called Guilford Native Industries where we got contracts with private industry and hired the people to fill those. They were subbing the work out and we were hiring basically hardcore unemployed, especially women who had never worked, had all the problems with transportation, children, daycare, and so on, and we were making income from that. We had that program for seven years and our largest year we made five hundred and fifty thousand dollars clear after paying. We had as many as forty employees. So we called that economic development.

Then after assessing everything that we had tried to do to help the people one of the big needs was the spiritual. There were many that had been up here years and never gone to church. They wanted a church. They didn't feel welcome at the churches—well, others did—they wanted an Indian pastor, and we found that when there was sickness or death we could not give them that comfort and fill that need that a pastor could, that a church could, of all of these things that

we could help. So my uncle, Sim Cummings, and Rev. Bob Mangum, became interested in looking at talking to us about starting a Native American United Methodist church, the United Methodist Conference wanted to do this. They had a national ministry. So we ultimately started the church and it actually started in a warehouse. We rented some space, just enough to pay light bills, and they held church there for two years. Then we bought a—. We had established a good relationship with volunteers from the—oh, my gosh—the Unitarian church, and about the time we were ready to start looking to buy one they were moving and building a larger church so they worked with us to buy their church. The conference helped us with a large down payment and we paid for the church.

So all of this grew out of what I told you about those meetings, and we were able to open the art gallery with money that we generated from the workshop. We bought two buildings that were located near us and we started our housing program. We did a lot of things, but that's the way we began. You'll have to cut me off about answering too much, but back to this, that's how we started, and when I became the executive director of course Lon resigned as the chair and Pat became the chair, and we had a real good board all the years that I was there. We had two non-Indians that served on our board for awhile and then somewhere back there ANA came out saying that your board had to be Indian and we changed that. Then we became a United Way agency. When I left we were getting eighty thousand dollars from United Way a year and we were getting a lot of benefit, and it was hard, and it was probably more Lonnie's political than it was anything we were doing. They were impressed with what we were doing but some of them continued to have a problem, because you know most United Way agencies are either Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts—what's the other things? I mean they're kind of one focus, and they kind of had trouble with understanding how we could do so much. We set ourselves up, which is true,

that we operate like a tribe but we're not a tribe. We're self governing. They also wanted us to put other people on the board and we fought that and won. We said our purpose is, for the last five hundred years, or however long, the white man has told the Indians, "This is what you need, this is how you do it, and we'll do it for you," and the whole purpose of the Indian centers and the tribes now with ANA is not just economic, social, and cultural self-sufficiency but governance self-sufficiency. The board members need to learn how to govern and let them, along with the community, determine the needs.

MR: Now when you say ANA you're talking about the Administration for Native Americans, right?

RR: Mm hmm.

MR: Okay. I just want to make sure that we get that.

RR: Yeah, we were funded in October of [19]77 and we were very fortunate. We got ANA funding up until about—. I resigned in [19]99 and I think they got it about two years after I left, but we haven't had any since.

MR: And that's been a hard nut to crack recently.

RR: Oh, it's very hard.

MR: I don't they've even—. They haven't released the RFA for this year.

RR: Yeah, [1:12:03]

MR: Just to—. Hmm?

RR: It's been very hard, and right now, you know, there's only four of the tribes that get housing money, and with the urban centers and the smaller tribes not getting housing money, as

you know some of the smaller tribes don't even have an office operating daily, but like the Saponi, they've got good community support. There's three of their board members, one lives here, one in Winston-Salem, and Sheila in Burlington, and they go home to board meetings. Charlene and Julia are on the board and they go all the way home for board meetings.

MR: Can you give me a sense of what was the Indian population up here when y'all started Guilford Native?

RR: It was about three thousand, and that—. You know, you already had ANA when you came to work there, but we had to identify a minimum of a thousand Indians in order to apply for ANA, and in those early days one of the things that I don't take credit for, or that was a blessing to us, as people heard about us people became interested. You know, that was kind of a beginning of the interest in Indians anyway, and a professor, Dr. McIrvin—I've forgotten his [first] name—Dr. McIrvin, he was an anthropology professor at UNCG, and I don't remember if he came to a powwow but somehow he heard about us and he came and met with me one day, and he was interested in taking his class and designing an instrument for us, since we had just started out, that would gather information about numbers or numbers of households and basic areas of need and all kinds of information that we could retrieve from that, and he would use some of his students to take two or three of our people out and train with them, and they could take them to the places and they could be the one—because they knew they weren't going to give non-Indians information—and he would train them. So we had already identified in other ways the thousand people for the ANA grant but we took that instrument and we hired two extra people and between him and them they would go out and get that information—and, see, they were also getting other than numbers—and then gave it to him, and he was analyzing it and giving us the information back that we could pull out and use as we needed it, if we were talking about

housing, and then it not only identified housing but the different areas underneath it, people without bathrooms and transportation and stuff.

So we were able to put together some really good information that helped us with grants. We wrote one grant, and I can't remember to whom we wrote it, but a professor at UNCG came and asked me—he did workshops on fundraising and grant proposals—asked me if he could use it as a model for his work. I had gone and worked with Ruth Locklear at LRDA and she had helped me with proposals, and everything that I found that I thought could help, I attended, Marty, and I've heard a lot of people say, "Oh, I went to that workshop, or went to that conference, and didn't get anything out of it." I never said that because you might not get anything from the presenter, but as you know you could meet people and they could tell you what they were doing, and I always said I'm not a creative person but I'm good at taking ideas and making them fit your situation, and that was really how our workshop, called Guilford Native Industries, began. I got the idea from the Mental Health Association, who has this workshop for the mentally retarded, and the guy met with me and he said he didn't feel like it was any competition, because they do different things.

So it was just a lot of ways, and you're ambitious, you've worked in different areas. Your decision to go to school, how many people would have left what you did to go back to school to do something that you want to do, that you see a real future in it, and that's the difference between—. You can't train people to do a lot of those things. You can't train people to see the value in working more than 8:00 to 5:00, and I always told them, I said you can leave here if you want to and you can go out and qualify for lots of things to do because you've had opportunities to work in so many areas, but you've got to want to and you've got to do some things that aren't going to be 8:00 to 5:00. And, as I said, we were blessed at that time because we just had so

many people wanting to partner with us and wanting to help us, and just like becoming a United Way agency. United Way still had a lot of prejudiced people on it, because they've always funded mostly the lily-white groups, and, you know, CEOs and so on, but the smart people on there realized that it was more to their advantage to fund us and work with us than it was not, because at the time they were spreading their wings, wanting to increase their funding up to ten million, eleven million, so on, and they knew that some of the workplaces would give more if they saw they were working with more minorities and with poor people. So there were some things to our advantage.

MR: I want to go back. I want to go back, and I'd like for you to tell me what you know about the commission. How, when, and why did the Commission of Indian Affairs start?

RR: Okay. I am pretty sure that the commission became a state agency in 1971, and it started—. Ruth Dial Woods and a few people got together—. You don't hear this much, but they got together, and you know Ruth, don't you, from Pembroke?

MR: I think so.

RR: Dr. Ruth Dial Woods.

MR: I don't know if—. I've heard of her.

RR: Yeah.

MR: But I don't know if I've really met her much. I would like to talk with her.

RR: Yeah, she's someone that would really be good, and she could give you a more definitive answer on this. But they got together, you know, as people were back then, and talked about needing something like a state agency, needing the state—. The state was not doing

anything for Indian people and not involved. As you've heard from my scenario about teaching school, the state was just as negligent as they could be about what was going on back then with the segregated schools and the rural schools. But they were talking about the need for a state agency, so according to Ruth and a paper that I've read they met with a couple of people from the General Assembly and talked to them about it, and I won't fill in the details but they agreed and then they got, you know, the tribes to buy in, and as you know Chief Richardson was the first representative from the Haliwa Tribe and he was elected the first chair. Well, let me go back a little bit before then.

It actually started with I think Mr. Dalton Brooks, Paul Brooks' brother, [who] was the first chair for a short while, and Mr. Early Maynor was the first executive director. Of course they're both deceased. It was very loosely organized at that time. And then the first members of the commission were the Lumbee, the Haliwa-Saponi, the Coharie, the Waccamaw-Siouan, [Pause] and, let's see, I guess the Cherokee. Who did I leave out, that's the early state-recognized? Maybe those five.

MR: Yeah. I think that's all who was state-recognized at the time.

RR: And then next they brought in—. The Cumberland County Association for Indian People petitioned and they became a member, and then in 1977 Guilford Native and Metrolina Native American Association petitioned and they became members, and then the last ones to become members were the Saponi, the Meherrin, Occoneechee, and the Triangle and that should make the twelve. Is it twelve, or fourteen?

MR: I'm not sure.

RR: It's eight and four. Yeah, it's twelve. So those are the members of the commission. There are some appointees or designees, like about five or six of the secretaries or commissioners have a designee that attend. The secretaries, they usually don't attend but they have some good designees.

MR: What were some of the activities or what were some of the goals of the commission? What were they doing at the time?

RR: Their initial goals were to represent the Indian people of North Carolina that had state and federal recognition, and I think because they didn't take in everyone to begin with—. Even though a lot of these tribes had applied and had recognition from the state, I can't remember exactly why the commission didn't bring them in. They may not have wanted to come in, because I know the Saponis had state recognition for many years. But their primary goals were to represent the people, to have a viable organization to represent the Indians of North Carolina, and have it state-connected, which meant that it would maybe guarantee its longevity, would make the state feel some recognition of the Indians, and force them to give some funding as a way of making sure that it was staffed and could do programming. So, the way they did that was by making the tribes and organizations members, and as you know the Lumbee had three representatives, I guess because of their population, and the others, everyone has two representatives except those last four that came on. The state had, you know, they had to approve the number you bring on because of the budget, and they did not approve bringing on more than one because they said that we were so large and there were, of course, economic problems with the state, and they limited us to that. Now since then there's been efforts to try to get the others to have another member but it hasn't happened yet.



To kind of make us all legal and a part of an organization that could advocate for us, because the main objective of where the commission comes under, it comes under those programs that are called advocacy, and the commission's initial intent was not to run programs but to help tribes and organizations to find resources to run programs. But as they got started they got, you know, a certain amount of money. I think even today the budget that the commission gets is for Greg and his secretary. I think it was for four positions and it's still the same, and if the governor's budget passes one of those positions will be cut. So they don't get a lot of money, so they started having to actually go after some grants to get enough money, I mean to have staff that could kind of double and do some things other than what was in their program, and the one thing that the commission does agree on, they will not go after funds—they've long had that agreement—they will not go after funds that would be in direct competition with the tribes, like they've never tried to go after ANA or anything like that. They do operate a WIA [Workforce Investment Act] program but it's called Balance of State money. They can't touch any money in your district, any in ours, or any in Cumberland, or any in Metrolina, the Lumbee, the Waccamaw-Siouan, Coharie, any of those tribes that get WIA money, but they have an amount that they call Balance of State, so any counties that we don't serve, that we're not designated for funds, they get a grant that [1:29:08 Elk] operates.

MR: What do you think have been the successes of the commission since it started?

RR: I think—and I'll name this even though it's called a disaster now, and we could talk about the cultural center a whole day if you wanted to hear the real story. [Laughs] But I think one of the big assets, looking at it from the perspective of having been an executive director, when I came on as executive director, Harvey Green, who was your representative, of course James Hardin at Cumberland County, Vail Carter at Metrolina, Greg Jacobs at the Coharie, and I

can't remember the guy's name that was at the Waccamaw-Siouan. We were all relatively new and didn't have a lot of training, and Ken Maynor was the executive director of Lumbees, well they were just so far out, they had millions of dollars, and then Deese was the—. When they got ANA funding they called it an ANA program, see, which ANA never liked because ANA began as core administration. They funded you as start-up money, they funded you to pay your executive director and your fiscal person, and an economic developer and so on, but Jay, Ken, and them just used Gary to meet with us, Gary Deese to meet with us.

But the commission got a grant called Capacity Building and they were able—. Janet Jacobs was in charge. One of the things it did was it brought us together as executive directors once a month, and we met in Raleigh for a day, and Janet, they were able to bring in like David Lester when he was the commissioner at ANA. They were able to bring in people from different funding sources, community development, a lot of funding sources that we once had access to and is no longer there, and they actually came in at different times and met with us, spent a day with us, told us about the program, told us how to get it, gave us a name to work with. It was a face to face meeting and we learned so much and we made so many contacts that other executive directors have not had access to, so that was one of the best things that ever happened, and of course that money didn't last but a few years. They've done that in some other instances, like with the commission members. I don't think there's enough training that goes on with new commission members but there's efforts to.

Then I think the second thing that has always been good for me, it sounds good to funding sources and to people that you're talking [with] in your community to talk about the Commission of Indian Affairs as a state agency. It gives you some validity and some credibility. Just like after we became a member of United Way and we would tell someone we're a member

of United Way you almost had, you know, you didn't need any other references, so the commission has been good for us to use to say we are a member of, in addition to, you know, the meetings and so on.

I think the three—. I'll just quickly tell you, the three other things that I think it has done, it did set up United Tribes, and the main purpose of United Tribes was to raise funds, plan, and implement the Indian Unity Conference, because when the commission was doing it we found out that all of the money—. See, everything the commission does has to go through the Department of Administration. If they write a one-page press release it's got to go through and be approved before it can be sent out. Well all of the money that came in—the commission can't handle money—was going to the Department of Administration, to the treasury, and we found out that any money that was left over from the banquet went to the general funds, I mean from the conference, went to the general funds. So everybody started [complaining about it] so the commission voted that they would set up United Tribes and, working with the commission and all of the tribes and having a representative from everyone, we would do the Unity Conference, which the commission is very involved in.

But two other things that they have done, well three that have proved to be valuable—. There's some problem now, as you probably know, with the, [Pause] oh, gosh, SACIE. What is it? State Advisory Council on Indian Education. But that came out of the commission in organizing, and the members that are elected, nominated from their tribes and urban centers, go through the education committee for approval, of the commission, and then are sworn in, you know, to SACIE. Another thing that they did that has proved very successful was to create and spin off the Economic Development Initiative. It has the potential to be great. I can't say it's—. It's still struggling because it's struggling to get money, you know, to find a sound base of

funding, and we hoped that would be the state but right now it's not looking that good, because as you know when you were at the tribe there's only so much money you're going to get from like the Z. Smith Reynolds, you know, one-time funding and so on. But they spun that off and set that up and we got a hundred and fifty thousand dollars from Z. Smith Reynolds the first year, when Lonnie was the chair and Lonnie was there, that helped us to establish it and have an office.

Then also one of the big successes that ended up being one of the big failures was the North Carolina Indian Cultural Center, and that was one of the best examples of the tribes working together to get something accomplished that we ever had. Gov. Hunt was the one who basically came up with the idea that he'd like to see a tourist attraction in the eastern part of the state that might become equivalent to the Cherokee and their tourist attraction in the western part of the state, and he talked particularly, you know, about somewhere located near or on I-95. So [the] owners of the cultural center, which was the Riverside Country Club, came to Lonnie and Bruce and some of the commission members and wanted them to buy that land because they were about to go bankrupt, get the state to buy it and build something there, [and the] commission put together that they thought they could do it and they planned a day for the commission members to go to Raleigh and meet with their people and present a plan. Chief Richardson went and met with his representative, Tom Carter with his, and everybody instead of saying we're going to go meet with them—. You know, like you ask for something you'll get it from your people. I go; I'm not going to get it.

So that was very successful and Gov. Hunt approved it and the General Assembly approved funding for the commission to appoint a member from each of the tribal groups to serve on a committee, or to serve as the first board members, and they gave a hundred thousand

dollars to this first board to get organized and hire staff and start trying to put the cultural center plans together, which happened. And Marty, you know, I wouldn't even attempt to say what happened to anybody because you've heard so many things, but I was serving as the chair at the time because Gov. Holshouser was appointed the first chair and he served for a while, and we had some really hard hitting people, good people that knew how to get money and support and everything, but it came down to a very political issue. When the state bought the property everybody, as I told you, the members that owned it came and that's what they wanted us to do.

Well, when we hired Dr. Scheirbeck to come in as the first executive director and we started with the plan and everything, we talked with some of them and we said we don't want to see this property, what you have here, just go unused. It's probably going to be about a couple of years at the least before we start building anything. So we said we want you to continue to use the golf course, we want you to continue to maybe repair the pool and use the amphitheater, and we actually charged a dollar a year for whatever. LRDA used their WIA money to remodel and get the swimming pool going, and of course there was a group that took over the golf course and of course Strike at the Wind had their board and they were still doing the outdoor drama, and we were going along our way, making plans and doing things, and we had the architectural drawings. We were getting money from the state, but the state wasn't giving the money to us. The state was giving the money—. Like we had a vote on the architect, but you know we were going to use the one the state recommended, and the five hundred thousand dollars to do the architectural drawings went directly to them from the state. We didn't get it.

But there was quite a bit of money that we raised and we had everything ready to raise the money and start the first phase, which was going to be a longhouse, you know, that could serve as a meeting space. It could serve as an archival room; it could serve as a library. We were

going to have a little restaurant in it and there was going to be the great hall, you know, because it was built like the Algonquian building, you know. It looked kind of like an eagle and it would have the great hall where you could put art exhibits in there, have receptions, just all sorts of things, and that would represent the Algonquian culture. Then we had the Mississippian, a round building that would seat two hundred people where you could have small performances on stage, you could bring groups in to tell them about them or to watch something or to meet for a tour, and it would have space that you could hang art or do things with, and it would be the round building and it would be built on the berm. So then we would have the—. What would the other culture—? The Siouan culture. Now am I getting wrong on the Mississippian and the Siouan?

MR: Mississippian I guess is a cultural area. I mean that's—. Yeah.

RR: Yeah. We would then of course have the powwow grounds and festival grounds and we'd have kiosks set up where say Guilford Native had developed some things that we wanted to do. One of the things we did at that time was the Indian greeting cards, or Karen had wanted to have a kiosk for her paintings, or Sonora to sell her pottery, or anyone that would have kiosks that would be yours, you know. You could come, you could have someone to run it, keep it open all the time, or you could come on weekends or when we had festivals. Oh, I know. The Mississippian was to be the theater, then we would still have the outdoor theater but we could have small theater groups in the one that had the stage.

And the lake, there's an island on the lake and we planned that we would have that island where you could take the canoe out to it and we could have Boy Scout groups, Girl Scout groups, or just groups that came and wanted to live like an Indian of long ago for a week or whatever. You'd cook your own food, something like the Boy Scouts do. And then we had the Lumbee River run through there and we would connect the Lumbee to the lake and you could really just

take a tour in the canoe all the way down the Lumbee and come over to the lake, and we were going to have some things like recreational but we would try to make them more like outdoor-ish and so on. We planned to use cypress trees—they're very plentiful there—to make a longhouse where you could do storytelling or different things, and we were going to have a space for campers.

Then probably the last phase would be built on the other side of the river. It was 74, now they've changed, but it's the old 74. We own land out there and we own the land next to the cemetery of White Hill Church, and we'd already talked and had in our plan that we could negotiate with White Hill Church to use that as an a re-interment area if any Indian remains were found that no tribe claimed, and so on, and eventually we would maybe put a larger museum over there or expand to some other thing. But it was—.

MR: So what happened? [Laughs]

RR: [Laughs]

MR: What happened to these grand designs? I know, like you say, you could probably talk all day about it—

RR: And we had even—

MR: —but give me the quick and dirty, as they say. [Laughs]

RR: —hired and done a nice fundraising video with it. It had different people from the tribes come down and participate, and the tribes had all bought into it. I wish I had a copy—I've got to get some copies and bring home—of the plan that we had done, you know, and did a market survey, and everybody from everywhere had bought into it and was very excited. Politics got

into it. We had a commission meeting, I'll never forget, that March and asked the commission to vote for us to close the golf course, and oh, my God. You would have thought that we had asked for a public hanging. Now I'm telling you, we went through all that, the owners knew it, everybody knew it and agreed to it, because they were going to go bankrupt and they agreed, and what the white people would have probably done was just closed everything and gone ahead and made their plan, but when we let them keep it then they started yelling that this was the only golf course that Indians could ever play on and now you're going to close it. They just raised the public interest, got local politicians involved, and they got support from some of the General Assembly, and I think Gov. Hunt, he had pushed it, but you know it wasn't like a fight that was important enough to exchange Green Stamps for, and a lot of votes down there and everything, so they didn't take our fight and we just lost support.

They treated Dr. Helen so bad she just said, "Ruth, I'm going back. I can't stay under these conditions." You would know if I told you, Marty, but leaders said things like, "I'd rather not even build it then to see Helen Scheirbeck get credit for it." See, it's that old thing, bringing Helen in. She's the most qualified person, she lost many and many a dollar because she gave so much and she wouldn't keep up with the travel and never got paid. But it was like bringing her in as an outsider, and she's going to get the credit, and you know that's still a big issue today and you know how that is, and again when you talk about some of the chauvinism, that's some of it. It was like—. And you know what? The saddest thing, the Museum of the American Indian had not even been thought of. It wasn't even in the minds. If it was, it hadn't been brought out and put on any paper. Helen went right back to DC and she was very instrumental in building that building. She got on the board and then she was hired. She was called assistant director for programming because [1:51:04 Wes] didn't have an assistant director. It was just whatever you



were in charge, they were all assistants. But she actually represented him, because, you know, he was gone a lot, and she was probably more instrumental than any one person in building that facility.

MR: Can you spell her last name?

RR: It's S-c-h-e-r-b-e-c-k.

MR: For some reason I thought there was an "I" in there somewhere.

RR: S-c-h-e-i-

MR: Okay.

RR: -r-b-e-c-k, and it's Helen Maynor Scheirbeck. She was married to a—oh, I can't even remember—Chippewa, and had one daughter, but they separated and she never did remarry. And, you know, that's my version. If you told some of them they'll say that's my version, but I was there every step of the way, I was on the first board, and people supported us. We had even raised money—. We were going to build the [1:52:24], you know, for the storytelling and different things, with the cypress knees, and we hadn't quite had anybody work on it and figure it out, but somehow we were going to put a metal plate or something on each cypress in honor or in memory of somebody for a hundred dollars, and people like Mr. Cerles had paid, you know, for his son, a lot of people, for a son that died in the Army. A lot of people had given us money to do that. People were excited all over, and I remember how excited Mr. Earlise Jacobs from the Waccamaw-Siouan and people like Mr. Carter, and I can't remember if Marty was your first—. I mean, oh, who your first person—. I can't remember if it was Archie or not. But anyway, all of the representatives were excited at first, and while were doing that—. And we had had a ground

blessing ceremony and hundreds of people there for the ground blessing ceremony, and of course Strike at the Wind was there. The Lumbees had their powwow there.

MR: Around what year was that, the Cultural Center?

RR: Let's see. I think—. Gosh, Marty, I can't remember the exact days.

MR: It had to have been, what, probably the mid [19]80s, I guess?

RR: Yeah, it was somewhere in the mid [19]80s. I can't remember if it was [19]81—. It might have been [19]81 that we put the first board together. And see, our board was named—. Each tribe named a board member. We had two from business that the board itself selected, two from education, and two from the federal government and two from state government, and we had some at-large, and I'll tell you, for instance, Grace Rohrer, who was the secretary of cultural arts under Martin, was on our board. Dr. Joffrey Coe, who has been known as "Mr. Archeology" in North Carolina, he is the one who headed up the excavation and restoration of Town Creek Indian Mound. He was on our board. George Esser, who started the Rural Center and all kinds of foundations for fundraising, he was on our board. We just had a board of directors to be honored, I mean proud of, and I remember at least one time—. We met several times with Tom Lambeth, who was the executive director of Z. Smith Reynolds, and I was sitting with Helen and, I don't remember, there were a couple of other board members had gone with us, and some of Tom and his board, and, Marty, they were mesmerized by Helen, listening to her talk about the plans and bringing in her knowledge and what she had seen and been a part of other historical and other tourist attractions, and all the Indian people that she knew, all of the non-Indian people that she knew that had helped with projects, just no notes, nothing, and they just sat there mesmerized. I guess she'd almost been on every Indian reservation in the country. Helen was one of those that

took the brunt of the harshness from the Indians about the Lumbees and other North Carolina Indians. I mean she went among them, you know, she worked with the Indian Education and all these programs. She went among them when they called her a “nigger” and they said that Indians were black and white mixed, and she was working with them and she had just had everything in the books thrown at her, but then she had also gained the respect and the recognition. She had paved the way for us when there was no Commission of Indian Affairs, there were no Indian tribes and organizations; there was no one to back her up. She was a lone Indian, Lumbee, which represented [1:58:16] all of the state-recognized tribes, in a world of reservation, hardcore recognized tribes, so she knew. And she had been, you know, and visited the Polynesian tourist center in Hawaii and of course to a lot of the other places and she could talk about them. And of course we had our book together to show and our plans, and we had a strategy, we had had a market survey done that showed that people would travel ten miles, which was about the distance from I-95 to the cultural center, and now you know that big 74 with the, what do you call it, where all these exits and—.

MR: The interchange?

RR: Interchanges. It's right near there, and we knew that was coming. So, it was something. It's still so real to me, and there's no way that we could have ever, ever got done what she did without someone like her at the helm. Helen was a person that—. She had her friends and she had her enemies, but she didn't work at it and she didn't want it to be, but she didn't sit and smooth over everything when she knew it was wrong or soft pedal it when she knew it wouldn't get you anywhere. She was a doer and she had a goal and she was going to get there, smooth if possible, but if it took some going around she was willing to do [that], and you know

yourself that you can lose people's support that way, if you've got people that want to be pampered and don't make a move without everybody's input.

MR: Mm hmm. Besides the Indian Cultural Center, what do you think have been some of the biggest challenges for Indian people in North Carolina over the years?

RR: For the Indian people, now?

MR: Or just over the years.

RR: Over the years? I think, and you may not agree with me, and it may be—. I'm looking at it for the most part from Guilford Native and from the Lumbee, because you know I've been so involved down there because I still have seven brothers and sisters who live there with families, so before my mom and dad died I went home at least every other week so I've always had a lot of contact, and Lonnie did too, but I also can speak from what I see. Now what I see seems to be some results from most of the groups because of my involvement with statewide organizations. I think one of the biggest challenges has been, and to some extent is still, organizing our people to work together. One of the things I used to have a lot of Indians say to me here that were more successful, they'd say—. I'd say, "Why don't you come to the Indian Center?" [and they would say,] "Well, I don't have any need for your services," and I'd say, "But we have need for yours," and I'd try to get across to them, this is something that we need. We're not here just—. The poor people can't help—. If they could help themselves they wouldn't be here. But it's a center where we come as families, we come to meet, to visit with each other, we come to build a home away from home, and we need people like you who can serve on our board, serve on committees, help with activities, give us some money, help us raise money, but that was very hard to get people interested. Now as our powwows got better they would come to

the powwow, a lot of them, but it's trying to get the people to buy in to the need for a center, the need for the tribe and so on, and to get us working together. One of the things, Marty, that I think very much is needed—

MR: Keep talking. I'm just checking this.

RR: —is I think that we have Indians in North Carolina now that we ought to be looking at putting together a philanthropic association or organization. We've got Indians that could give money in major fundraising rather than us looking to the white and black all the time. But I think again that's buying into: I've got mine; let him get the same way. I see that still a lot and I've seen it here, as I've worked with others and been in their communities. They have some of the same problem. I don't think that the tribes have as much problem as maybe we do in an urban area. It's just hard to bring about.

I think the other major obstacle that maybe is at the heart of some of this, especially in the urban areas, is being taken serious and accepted as a viable Indian group, even including the commission. I used to say, Pat Cavan and I, when we would go to the county or the city or wherever, we said we want to be a part of you. You need us and we need you, and we want to be involved so that you can't just say, "Oh, there come those Indians with their hand out. What do they want now?" We want you to come to our functions, to have us involved in the arts programs and in things you do, so that we're here not just to ask for something, and that is the kind of thing, though, that [if] you don't have somebody to keep going it will—. People will leave and it will drop. So I think being taken seriously, and a lot of that comes from us not having the funds or the resources to tell our story, to advertise, to put out magazines and different stuff that tell our story. We have wonderful stories all over, and I continue to say that about the commission, but I

hear things that's happened—. Now it's better because we have Facebook and emails but still you can only put so much on there.

But there's so many wonderful things that have happened, we have all come so far, but who knows how far we've come besides a few of us, and then if we're not writing it down it's getting lost as different ones of us leave. That's why I think—. We get some criticism even from one or two of our members, saying we don't need all this information in our Unity Conference books, but that's history, and that's people's names and people's pictures, and it's telling of story and there's not anything like that, that brings it all together, being published. So I think getting us to buy into what we have and be a part of it and help support it, being able to tell our story and let people know what we are doing. We get so caught up trying to do the day to day that sometimes we can't advertise. Then I think another—. Well of course funding to do the things we need to do is always a problem, and in the Indian world we're kind of competing for that small pot of money, whether it's in our community or wherever. And then I think one of the most important ones is training, you know, having people that we are training to take places as those of us leave, like with you. Who has taken your place with the tribe, anybody?

MR: Not really, not that is comparable, no, to be honest.

RR: And so you see, that's it. You cannot have an important position—. If a position's been important enough for fifteen years, how can you vacate it—? I mean there's some things you could, if it's a position that there's no longer funding but that was just a program set up for that particular grant, but if you're a grant writer and a—. What was your other—?

MR: I don't know I did so—

RR: Jack of all trades. [Laughs]

MR: –many other–. [Laughs] I did everything, so.

RR: And, you see, that's a real problem. It's just like I look at the Commission of Indian Affairs now, and as involved as I am I don't see–. I try to imagine who's going to take Greg's position, unless it's you. So we need to be training. Look at the Lumbee tribe, fifty thousand Indians in Robeson County, most educated, blah, blah, blah, and yet they have been–. When Leon left, they hired–. Who did they hire, Darlene Jacobs, maybe? She stayed a year and they haven't had a paid tribal administrator since, and they've had Tammy as acting administrator. I don't even think they call her that anymore. I think they call her something, the administrator over housing, which she had no rights or anything. So you've got this huge tribe with probably about a total budget of sixteen million with no tribal administrator, and all of the educated and successful people there.

MR: Why do you think that mentoring, or not mentoring but having someone to follow up or to take the place, why do you think that's such a big issue? It's obviously throughout the state, I believe.

RR: I think it is a lack of, again, the inability to work together. For instance, with them, the chairman makes the final decision, as I understand it, or the chairman recommends and the tribal council has to approve. Now that must have changed since Darlene was there because Jimmy was sworn in one night as the chair and walked in the office the next morning and fired her, so. But I know Paul has presented two people to the council that they have rejected. Now, that's not to say it's their fault. To me, Paul–. I would not present you to be hired if I didn't have a majority of my council, because that's embarrassing to you, you know. So I blame both sides. They ought to come together, and if Paul knows the council—or I won't say Paul, I'll say the chairman—knows the council has to approve, why waste your time with someone if you don't

have your votes? The politics of it is, like I had a city councilman tell me one time—. Pat and I thought we had something and we didn't get up and speak that night and it didn't go over and I went up fussing and he said, "Don't ever come before this council unless you have your votes," and I said, "You mean you all sit up here and you don't make up your mind based on merit?" and he said, "Listen, don't ever come before this council again until you have your votes." So you've got to work together, you know.

MR: You've got to play the game.

RR: Hmm?

MR: It sounds like you've got to play the political game.

RR: You've got to play the game.

MR: [Laughs]

RR: It's like with the General Assembly. You know yourself, they hear the best stories and they get the best reasons, just like with proposals. Everybody has a good reason, everybody has a compelling story, but they can only fund so many so what's that difference? So I think we've got to come together and work together. It's like with federal recognition. If you were a Congressman and a Senator and you were looking at the splits, the things that have gone on among the Lumbee, especially this last time when they seemed so close, you probably wouldn't support it. You'd say there's too many problems there, if their own people don't want it, if their own tribal government doesn't want it. Some people would. They'd say, "I'm going to vote for it. That's their problem. It's nothing out of my pocket." But most people, I've heard them even say, "When you Lumbees get your act together come and see us." So I think we've got to show a



united front, at least those of us that are governing. You may not have everybody but you can have somebody going behind you.

So I think not working together, and of course as you know now one of the hardest things facing us is access to funding. When I started out there was lots of money. There was people that wanted to fund you because you were new and they had a little bit of guilt feelings about Indians, but now everybody is hurting. Like trying to keep our art gallery open; there are many major arts programs who have closed since the beginning of this recession, as you know. So I just look at some things and think we're very blessed, but a lot of it is due to the people. If we don't have committed people—. And I think another reason, Marty, that we have problems mentoring and bringing people along, when we first started, and the commission, you know, back in those early years of the [19]70s and the [19]80s, and even [19]90s, having some of these positions were really good jobs for our people. I mean if you were making thirty thousand jobs in some of the rural communities and so on—in fact in Greensboro. I probably wasn't making much more than that as a teacher.

MR: You mean thirty thousand dollars?

RR: Hmm?

MR: You said “jobs.” Thirty thousand dollars?

RR: Yeah. So these were good jobs for Indian people, and they were exciting. Now I think that one of the results of our success of the Indian programs is Indian people have good jobs. We're not competitive. Or, like you said, they're not going to move to Raleigh for a job at the commission that's not paying any more than they're making and have to come somewhere where there's higher cost of living, take their children out of school. If they finish school in

Raleigh they may stay there, you know. So there's that problem of how do you get people. Like at Guilford Native there's nobody—. Rick only has two and a half staff with him, so there's nobody to mentor as far as at the workplace. At one time Rebekah Revels and Brandi Brooks were real interested in starting a so-called young professional organization but I guess, you know, their lives changed.

So I think there's some maybe loosely, some young people working together, but you've got to come in not with a superior attitude or, "I know it all," or, "I'm ready for you to move out and me to come in," because there's so much to learn that you need to go in, especially to a job like Greg's, you know, and I'll tell you the truth, Ms. Velina Ebert had planned to take my job when I left. She had come over and spent a lot of time with me and the last board meeting that I was having she was to come to the meeting and we were going to have her sign a contract. [Laughs] She came in the meeting late and you could almost tell that something was wrong, we didn't know what, and at the end of the meeting she announced that she had changed her mind about taking the job.

MR: What's her name again?

RR: Velina, V-e-l-i-n-a.

MR: And what's her last name?

RR: E-b-e-r-t. Her maiden name was Hammond. She told us, after most of the board left, that she just thought about it and thought about it and she just wasn't willing or ready to give her time that she had seen me—she was on our board—that she had seen me put in it and that needed to be there, if you're going to do all those programs and all those activities, you know. You had to

be at this meeting, that meeting, and if you were going to get funding from the Arts Council you had to go to their big fundraiser, those sorts of things. She was honest about it.

So, a lot of people, as I said, used to think that they were able to get better jobs and didn't want to give that much time, and I don't—. I think when I was working sometimes I thought that the staff should be willing to give more. I never thought they should give what I gave, but now I understand that. After I've left there I look back and think, if Lonnie and I hadn't both been going in the same direction and involved in the same things we would have probably never kept our marriage together [Laughs] but we were both going. Do—

MR: It's a challenge.

RR: —those things make sense to you, from where you stand?

MR: What?

RR: The problems, some of the major issues that we've had.

MR: Yeah, definitely, definitely. But I'm going to need to start wrapping up.

RR: Okay.

MR: So do you have any final thoughts?

RR: The only other thing I'd like to say about my journey, it has been a wonderful journey. The only regret I had about leaving the classroom, that I ever had even till now, was I would have had a much better retirement program and social security and health insurance, and that's again another one of the hazards of working with the nonprofits, unless it is a state job, because we could not afford. Now Guilford Native did pretty good. We did have full time health insurance coverage when I was there and we had a 401(k), which was limited to what we could

put in, and the agency match, so even with what the staff was willing to put in if the agency could have matched more it still—. It wasn't as much as some would give where you were making more money. But we did have that and we had days off and so on, but it wasn't anything like retiring from teaching would have been, and that's, especially since Lonnie died—. See, I retired in [19]92, I mean in [19]99, and Lon died in 2003, and that took away a lot of my financial security. That's the biggest thing.

Other than that, everything was basically pluses. I got a chance to learn so much by traveling, going to other Indian centers and to reservations and meeting so many people at Indian conferences, getting to know our own tribes in the state, and learning the history and getting to be a part of the opening of the Museum of the American Indian and other things. In my position as executive director, if I had wanted to pick up the phone and call the President I could have. I had that authority. I may not have got through to him but I had a lot of authority to do things, and a supportive board, you know, and get things done. Also it was wonderful establishing the church where the people still go, and very excited, and we have continued to have an Indian pastor, and to see that, and I got a chance to travel a lot through the United Methodists on a national basis and learn a lot about Indian religions and how they were blending the tradition with the contemporary in their worship services and the Methodists were supporting that and finally accepted it. I just could never have had the experiences, and now at my age I'd like to have some of the money, but [Laughs] I still value those experiences and I think it was good for my family. It certainly was good in all the things that Lonnie accomplished.

I've had a lot of accolades and a lot of honors but to me it was like teaching. The yearbook was dedicated to me in 1974. That meant so much more than other kind of honors because that came from the students. So when the people do something it means—just having

them, and having them, you know, want to talk about some of the good times [Laughs] we had, and being able to literally help. We were able to see some successes, a lot of people coming back and back and back for the same thing but a lot of successes, in the education, and in transportation, housing. We worked with people that were still—. When I'd ask them they'd say they didn't have a bathroom. [I'd say,] "Well, what are you doing?" [and they'd say,] "Using a bucket," and we brought them out to—. They ended up in low income housing but it was real nice, and now they're in housing for the elderly, real nice places. Just so many wonderful things.

Mr. Ken Locklear was our first pastor, and I believe he was thirty-two when he came here, and he pastored our church for seven years. He said he had to come to Greensboro to learn how to be an Indian because he never encountered, you know, doing any of the powwows and doing things. We actually took the collection in baskets. We just started bringing some of the tradition. Derrick Lowry used to play the flute some and things. He left us and went to SEJANAM, where Darlene Jacobs went. He went there, that Southeastern Jurisdictional Association of Native American Ministries. He went there to Lake Junaluska and was the executive director for maybe five years and during that time he got his—. Well he had got his divinity degree and his master's from Duke. He got his doctor of theology while he was there. And then when the pastor retired at Prospect United Methodist Church in Pembroke, which is the largest Indian Methodist church in the nation, they hired him, but they would never have even looked at him when he first left there. So we felt, you know, like we were a stepping stone for him to get to that, and I looked at a lot of people. I don't take credit for them, but Guilford Native was a good stepping stone to where they are today, and you want to say, look what we did—Guilford Native did—for you. Why don't you come back here? But that's not—. It's got to be an individual choice if I give back something. I think that's another thing; that our people have

become like everybody else, you know. It's money and things, and the kids, young people, everything is for them. [Laughs]

MR: I need to verify a few spellings with you.

RR: Okay.

MR: Or clarify a few things before we wrap it up. You mentioned, I think it was Mr. Lonnie's sister, Del.

RR: Del, uh huh.

MR: How do you spell her name?

RR: It's D-e-l-l-a.

MR: Okay, Della.

RR: And her last name is Hartis, H-a-r-t-i-s.

MR: Okay. Now you mentioned Mr. Cerles. Do you know how to spell his last name?

RR: His last name is C-e-r-l-e-s, but I can't remember his first name. He's from Clinton. He's deceased but—.

MR: Yeah, I remember him.

RR: You remember him, don't you?

MR: Mm hmm.

RR: He used to go to the powwows. I can't remember his last name but you could give Greg a call, or someone there.

MR: Okay. And you mentioned Tom Lambeth. How would you spell his last name?

RR: L-a-m-b-e-t-h.

MR: Okay.

RR: And Tom was the executive director of the Z. Smith Reynolds at that time.

MR: Okay.

RR: And one other thing that I would just say, Marty, I don't know how many of these you want to do, but I mentioned a couple of people. You definitely would want to interview Ruth Woods, and what about Lonnie's sister, Rosa? You know Rosa.

MR: Rosa?

RR: Rosa Winfree.

MR: Yeah, mm hmm.

RR: She lives in Kannapolis, but I know her phone number.

MR: Okay. What's her phone number?

RR: She started the Indian Education Program in Charlotte that became a great model. She served on the Metrolina board for awhile and she was very active in the Charlotte area, and she is the one—. Well there were three of us but she basically has taken the helm of the Indian women's conference and made it a success.

MR: Okay.

RR: [Conference for American] Indian Women of Proud Nations, you know.

MR: Mm hmm.

RR: And if you need any others, there's quite a few. One of the women here, Daphene Strickland, her name is spelled D-a-p-h-e-n-e, Strickland. She has a wonderful story. She was one of the first—. She and her husband came here during the migration. There was a program that was a federal program called Upward Mobility that actually helped bring a lot of people to this area, and people would come and get a job and go back and tell others and Daphene and her husband came. I'll tell you this very quickly. She was, I think, about sixteen, maybe, when she and Daniel were married and she came, and she had the experience of—. She had two children and she took them to a daycare and they said, "I'll take this one, but I won't take that one." Donna was real fair and Darlene was very dark, and that was the way segregation was at that time. She got involved—. She was hired by Bruce Jones, who was managing this program, Upward Mobility, and she worked in this community, helping bringing people and helping get jobs and things, so she's been quite involved, and she was not one of the founders of our church but she got very involved. She and her family were attending a Baptist church and her daughter was a great musician so we hired her as the pianist, and she's now a minister in a church here, and they got very involved in our church. She is, I would say, more of the leader of the church now, other than the pastor, than anyone because I just couldn't keep up with a lot that I was doing and wanted to go in some other directions.

But she has a story a lot different from mine in some ways of how she got involved. She got her GED and she got her two years not too long ago from the community college, and then she went to Guilford College under a special program and graduated, and she's done well. She was ambitious and she was so determined that no matter what she'd done—. She may not tell you this, but she had basically not felt up to where she wanted to be until she got that college degree.



But she's done a lot and, as I said, a lot of us, in fact probably everybody you've talked to, we've done some similar things but we've gone in different directions and they've come about differently, which is natural.

We were blessed here to have—. I think we were the only group in the state that ever became a United Way agency, but not Barry will tell you when he was in Baltimore and they got funded what a pain they were to work with. I think they finally told them they could keep their money, because they wanted you to change and be so typical [of United Way agencies] but we were able to get out of it.

MR: Well, I'm going to need to wrap up.

RR: Okay.

MR: So, I appreciate it. We're going to end, and it's about—. It's almost ten to 6:00, so—.

RR: Oh, really? [Laughs] Okay.

MR: Yeah, so we're going to—.

RR: Well do you feel satisfied with—?

MR: Yeah, I do, I do. I do.

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcriber: Deborah Mitchum

Date: May 3, 2014

