N. Undergraduate Internship Program

Interview N-0049
Danny Bell
9 October 2017

ABSTRACT

Interviewee: Danny Bell

Interviewer: Emma Miller

Interview Date: October 9th, 2017

Location: Davis Library

Danny Bell was born and raised in Eastern North Carolina near Clinton, North Carolina. His mother, a schoolteacher, is a member of the Lumbee tribe, and his father, a farmer, is a member of the Coharie tribe. Danny discusses his Native American identity and feeling both parts Lumbee and Coharie. He discusses growing up learning in segregated Native American schools for most of his childhood. He mentions that they lacked a gym, a lunchroom, any type of outdoor sporting area, and new textbooks. He talks about his transition from the East Carolina Indian School to a predominantly white institution his senior year of high school. He mentions that he did not face much discrimination, but that it was as generally challenging as moving to any new school. He talks about his decision to attend Eastern Carolina University, then Eastern Carolina College, and how he was drafted to fight in Vietnam. He mentions not wanting to go into the infantry, so he was a clerk instead. He was in the Army for 6 years, and then the National Guard for 26 years following his time in Vietnam. He discusses his job at the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs and how important it was to him to learn more about the history of Native Americans in North Carolina. He then begins to discuss his time at UNC, moving to Chapel Hill in 1988 and starting as a loans office in the office of student aid. He mentions befriending any Native American student, staff, or faculty that he could find- he believes it is because of these friendships that he was contacted to help begin the American Indian and Indigenous Studies program. He mentions Professor Townie Ludington, and his pioneering efforts to begin the program. Bell then discusses how important it was to him to receive the C. Knox Massey award, and how it was because of the hard work of others in that program that he was able to succeed and be recognized. He closes the interview talking about ways that Carolina could improve the visibility of Native Americans on campus, and how the efforts towards diversity are headed in the right direction, but they aren't enough yet. He mentions the importance of not excluding Native Americans from the conversation of diversity.

FIELD NOTES – Danny Bell

Interviewee: Danny Bell (James Daniel Bell Jr.)

Interviewer: Emma Miller

Interview Date: October 9, 2017

Location: Davis Library, 3rd floor study lounge

THE INTERVIEWEE: Danny Bell is a retired staff member at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He worked as a student loans officer and as a program coordinator and advisor at the American Indian and Indigenous Studies program at UNC, as well as an advisor to the Native American Law Student Association and Carolina Indian Circle. He was integral to the creation of the AIIS program.

THE INTERVIEWER: Emma Miller is an undergraduate student majoring in Public Policy and History. She is currently a collections intern at the SOHP. She recorded this interview as a part of the intern's project on Native American students and faculty at UNC during the Fall semester of 2017.

CONTENT OF THE INTERVIEW: I met Danny at 9:00 A.M. at Davis library on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Danny discusses his childhood, and feeling equal parts Lumbee and Coharie as his parents come from two different tribes. He talks about attending segregated all Native American schools for most of his education, up until his senior year of high school. He then discusses his time in Vietnam, his work at UNC, and how to increase visibility for Native American students on campus.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVIEW: There were a few small issues with sound quality. There appeared to be construction occurring during two different parts of the interview, where hammering and jackhammering can be heard. Thankfully these construction noises lasted no longer than a few minutes. The interviewee had an important phone call that he was waiting on, so his phone was turned on and vibrated a few times, and he received a call once. Voices can be heard from the phone from the voicemail. Other noises came from the fact that the interviewee was sitting in a creaky chair that creaked every time he moved.

NOTES ON RECORDING: I used the SOHP's Zoom 5 recorder.

TAPE LOG – Danny Bell

Interviewee: Danny Bell

Interviewer: Emma Miller

Interview Date: October 9th, 2017

Location: Davis Library

Comments: Only text in quotation marks is verbatim- all other text is paraphrased, including the interviewer's questions.

TAPE INDEX

Time	Topic
[Digital recording, starts at beginning]	
0:01	Introduction: "My name is Emma Miller and today is Monday, October 9th…" Interview to focus on Bell's work assisting Native American students at UNC, and his work creating the American Indian and Indigenous Studies Program.
2:00	Talks about where he grew up near Clinton, N.C., his mother's Lumbee heritage and his father's Coharie heritage, and what his parents did while he was growing up.
3:45	Discusses tribal identification and feeling like he is "as much a Coharie as I am a Lumbee."
6:50	Bell talks about his transition from a segregated Native American school to an integrated predominantly white institution his senior year of high school.
11:40	Bell begins to discuss his time in Vietnam, a war he was drafted to fight in. He discusses being a clerk in Vietnam because he didn't want to go into combat. He talks about misinformation about Vietnam and makes a comparison to Silent Sam and serving in "different capacities and different situations".
14:15	Talks about how not being either black or white was an advantage while in the service because he could befriend either group of people and not feel out of place. Says he did not experience any discrimination while in the service.
17:10	Bell begins talking about his time working with the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs and how he enjoyed working with

	them and learned more about the issues and the history of Native Americans in North Carolina.
18:55	Bell discusses the difference between state and federal recognition in Native American tribes and the perception of how if "you aren't federally recognized, you aren't a real Indian".
21:45	Discusses his transition from North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs to UNC to be a loans officer in the student aid office.
23:00	Talks about how he connected with Native American faculty, staff, or students when he first came to campus. It is through these connections and Townie Ludington that he was contacted to help form the American Indian and Indigenous Studies program.
26:15	Talks about the "missing link" of Native Americans on campus at UNC and how diversity efforts rarely include Native American peoples. It is this desire to fix the "missing link" that drove him to help create the AIIS program. "Efforts towards diversity and inclusion are often a one-size-fits-all… there needs to be a focus on Native Americans just like there was a focus on African-Americans."
31:30	Discusses not receiving much push-back during the creation of the AIIS program, and how people were mostly supportive.
32:45	Bell discusses terminology for Native American peoples and says "anything not derogatory" is acceptable. He says most Native Americans prefer to be recognized by their specific tribe and that non-Native peoples should be "tribally specific whenever you can".
35:45	On working with Native American students in the Carolina Indian Circle and the Native American Law Student Association: "they all needed more than just an advisor… they need people to understand us at all levels".
39:20	Discusses the importance of Native American lawyers who practice and understand tribal law because of the different rules and treaties that Native American communities have. He believes that Native American children benefit the most from these lawyers who understand delicate situations and keeping Native American children connected to their culture.
42:30	Discusses how receiving the C. Knox Massey service award "validated some of the activities I've been involved in".
46:00	Bell talks about how Carolina is moving forward in their relations with Native American students, but that there's much work to be

	done and lots more of awareness needed on campus about Native American students in higher education. He discusses how we need more Native American faculty in the provost and in the chancellor's cabinet, and that having Native Americans in the administration would help the awareness issue.
49:40	Mentions the names of other important members of the Native American community that we should consider interviewing.
51:15	Closing remarks, Bell mentions that it is important that we continue to collect and archive stories of Native Americans and that continuing to collect these stories is one of the best ways we can help Native American communities.
52:54	Interview ends.

[Digital recording concludes.]

TRANSCRIPT: Danny Bell

Interviewee: Danny Bell

Interviewer: Emma Miller

Interview Date: October 9, 2017

Location: Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Length: 52 minutes and 55 seconds

START OF INTERVIEW

Emma Miller: My name is Emma Miller, and today is Monday, October 9, 2017. I'm interviewing Mr. Danny Bell at Davis Library in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, about his life and his work assisting Native American students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Danny, can you introduce yourself?

[0:00:21.2]

Danny Bell: Yes. I'm Danny Bell, or I'm officially James Daniel Bell, Jr., Lumbee and Coharie Tribes, Eastern North Carolina, and I live now in Chapel Hill.

[0:00:36.5]

EM: Great. And do I have your permission to record this interview?

[0:00:39.9]

DB: Yes.

[0:00:41.5]

EM: Thank you. Can you just start by telling me a little bit about where you grew up?

[0:00:46.8]

DB: Well, starting before I grew up, my mother is Lumbee from Prospect section of the Lumbee Nation area of Pembroke, North Carolina, and she graduated from Pembroke State College for Indians in 1945. Her first job was teaching at the Indian high school in Sampson County, Clinton. This is one of the third Indian high schools in North Carolina, the third system. Cherokees had a high school, Lumbees had one, but this high school in Sampson County was a regional Indian high school. It was called the Southern County Indian School. My father was a Coharie from that area. I grew up a mile or two away from the school and went to that school for eleven years, until they integrated the American Indians into the local white school. This is two years before the African Americans were going to be introduced. So I lived in the Indian community there, Indian church, Indian school, and mostly segregated environment.

[0:01:53.1]

EM: Great. What are your parents' names and what did they do when you were growing up?

[0:02:00.7]

DB: My mother is Mary Jacobs. She was a schoolteacher all her life. She taught for twenty years at the Indian school, and then with integration, she taught for ten years at the local white school. She also made baskets. She was an excellent cook, gardening, had a green thumb, and very active in the church and social part of the community.

My father was a World War II veteran, served in New Guinea. He had PTSD from that, came home, so he had some issues around the service. But he was a farmer. We farmed tobacco, corn, other vegetables, and also was an outdoorsman. He was one of

the I would say, a hunter and fisher all year ‘round, someone that everyone depended on to have a good time and to catch some fish for our fish frys.

[0:03:17.5]

EM: Great. Do you have any siblings?

[0:03:19.3]

DB: I have one brother, Philip. He lives in Clinton close to where we grew up, and he’s retired recently from working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture for thirty years.

[0:03:36.1]

EM: I know that you said that your mother is a member of the Lumbee Tribe and your father is a member of the Coharie Tribe. How would you identify yourself?

[0:03:44.6]

DB: As both. It’s hard to separate yourself from your families, and I have a large family, extended family on both sides. For enrollment purposes, we’re supposed to pick a tribe and you can only be enrolled in one tribe, but I know a number of people in the West, in recognized tribes and others, that have found a way to enroll in both tribes. But I’m as much a Coharie as I am a Lumbee, but I did live among the Coharie growing up, so that has a special place for me, from fishing on the river and everything that went on in that environment.

[0:04:29.2]

EM: Can you tell me a little about your experiences attended segregated Native American schools for most of your education?

[0:04:36.1]

DB: Well, from what I can remember, it's a long time ago, but the classes were as organized as they were in my senior year with the white school. Everything worked about the same. We had four or five Indian communities around where students came to the school from. So there was just the normal environment. We did not have a lot of the technology that was available at the white school. At the beginning, we didn't have a gym. The state built a gym for us. We didn't have a cafeteria, so they brought in warm meals. We didn't have baseball or other kinds of outdoor structured arenas, but we found a way to entertain ourselves, and the teachers made a major effort to keep us on task and help us learn what we needed to, to be successful in life.

[0:05:51.0]

EM: Absolutely. What classes did you take and what were your teachers like?

[0:05:55.4]

DB: The classes were basically the curriculum of the state. Our textbooks were standard textbooks, even though they were hand-me-downs from the local white school. They always had white students' names where they signed each year textbooks. Our teachers tried to prepare us for contemporary society, so it was not a real emphasis on the Indian culture or history. There were things thrown in from time to time, local information, but it was just basic curriculum the teachers had learned when they were taking classes to prepare to be teachers.

[0:06:50.4]

EM: I learned in my research and you mentioned that you attended a predominantly white school for the first time when you were a senior in high school. Can you tell me a little more about your feelings at that time and your experience there?

[0:07:03.7]

DB: Well, it's the big unknown to go to a new school, and the environment was a challenge. We were not the first class to go to the local white school. The school allowed Indian students to go for about two years before we went. I went because our school was closed. We had no other choice. For about two years previous to that, Indian parents could elect to send their children to the local white school.

Most people were friendly. There was not as much fighting or challenges as I thought. One thing that helped us, my cousin Christopher Hiawatha Bell was a star athlete. He was the kind of guy that people would not mess around with. Football season starts at the beginning of school. We practiced and joined the team, and he went out and he was a star athlete, so that took the edge off a little bit. But I had driven a school bus previous to coming to that for the Indian school, so I substituted for one of the local girls, white girls, who was driving a school bus. Some of the guys were a little hostile, but it was the same thing if I had transferred to an Indian school somewhere. There would have been some of the same issues about those new boys around here. Some did explain to me about all the guns they had, and I was thinking, "We have a lot of guns too. We like to hunt and are successful at it."

So it was a real challenge in a lot of ways, but the teachers were about the same as the teachers we had at the Indian school. There were not any major difference in the curriculum or in the instruction. I remember one class where we had an open-book test, and that was unusual because we'd never had an open-book test at the Indian school, but this was just one teacher. Overall, it was a new world of experience that we survived and

learned about the future engagement we were going to have with other cultures and communities.

[0:09:51.7]

EM: Do you remember any instances of maybe not you, but other people experiencing any discrimination when you moved to the predominantly white school?

[0:10:00.4]

DB: I don't remember. There was so much going on. A lot of times we want to be social and we did have homework to do, but I don't remember myself experiencing anything. I'm sure others might have, but my mother was a schoolteacher, so I knew to behave in class and not to create issues to come back to me later. But I have heard of other students at other schools that did, but I don't remember myself having that challenge of discrimination.

[0:10:53.9]

EM: What inspired you to attend East Carolina University?

[0:10:59.2]

DB: Well, everyone was going to college who could, and so after the SAT and all the other preparation, I guess I chose to go to East Carolina rather than maybe Pembroke because I knew a lot of people going to Pembroke and I thought I wanted a new adventure or to see something a little bit different, and the name was the same as our school, East Carolina Indian School, East Carolina College. So I don't know what all went into it, but it was to see something different, maybe.

[0:11:38.7]

EM: Are you comfortable speaking about your time in Vietnam?

[0:11:42.9]

DB: Yes, yes.

[0:11:45.3]

EM: Can you tell me a little bit more about your time serving over there?

[0:11:47.7]

DB: Well, I was drafted, and then my cousin Christopher Hiawatha Bell was killed. He died in Vietnam. So being drafted, everyone usually went to infantry, but I didn't want to go to infantry, so I had a choice to be a clerk, a cook, or mechanic, and since I could type, I decided to be a clerk. So service in Vietnam was a challenge in that everyone has the same kind of challenge, but there were a number of situations that we—

[interruption]

[0:12:52.6]

DB: Thinking back today, this past few weeks was the [Ken] Burns show on Vietnam War, and it shared a lot of information that I did not know about when I was in Vietnam, and I think that we have Silent Sam issues that are facing us now. I might have been a Silent Sam over in Vietnam. I mean, I didn't shoot anyone, but we all served in different capacities, in different situations. Vietnam was an experience that the horrors of the war and I've heard about before, seeing the Burns show, but maybe there's lessons to be learned that we learn that is going forward in this country.

[0:13:51.4]

EM: Do you think being Native American affected your time in the military?

[0:13:56.4]

DB: Not too much. I mean, I was in the Army for six years total and in the National Guard for twenty-five, twenty-six years, and I was not white or black, so I skirted in the middle of those two groups in ways that I think sometimes that I was able to communicate with both separately in a way that they could not—it was real interesting sometimes. With the white guys, they were talking about blacks a little bit. I was with the black guys a little bit and they'd talk about the whites. So it was just in the middle, and it was not something that I would share information, but I was able to journey with both groups without much of a problem. We expect American Indians to be able to run faster and longer and have superior athletic skills and other skills, and I had some by growing up hunting and fishing, but I was an average soldier that wanted to get along and not have any hostility directed my way.

[0:15:21.6]

EM: Did you know any other Native American soldiers during your time, other than your cousin?

[0:15:27.3]

DB: Yes, there was a number of friends from home that served in the armed services, some in Vietnam, some in Germany and different places. I met a number of people after serving in the war that have told me about their experience. But I did not know any American Indians that served with me when I was in the service, not in the Army. And in the National Guard I'd see people once in a while, but not too often, that were American Indian.

[0:16:01.7]

EM: So what inspired you to join the National Guard after serving in Vietnam?

[0:16:08.4]

DB: Well, I was working at the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs in Raleigh, and one of my coworkers in the Guard and asked me if I wanted to make a little extra money by joining the National Guard. I thought, "Well, I have the extra time, so why not?" And so this is the 440th Army Band and they needed an administrative assistant, so since I had that skill from the service in the Army, I thought "Well, it'd be interesting" and then also the National Guard Band at that time was traveling to different places, and they had a trip planned for the Virgin Islands. So I thought, "Wow, I could go in the National Guard and travel and see some places." So I joined, and we joined to a number of places in Europe and South America. It got to be fun.

[0:17:07.9]

EM: Can you tell me a little more about your job at the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs in Raleigh?

[0:17:13.9]

DB: Well, after East Carolina College, I worked for one year with Best Products, and then I had a cousin working with the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs, and I was always curious about Indian history. I didn't know anything much, and I thought, well, working with some Indian people would be fun and it'd be interesting, so I heard some people and some of the activities of the commission. And so I wanted to learn more, so that opportunity came up and I worked in a number of different programs from public information and community surveys, employment training, VISTA volunteer program.

So that was one of the best experiences of my life, working with the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs, to learn about the issues that American Indians face, to learn the history and the lack of history of American Indians in North Carolina. I grew up, we were state-recognized Indians, but not federally recognized, and so the whole issue of Indian history came to me in that experience on the Commission of Indian Affairs and the experience of finding out about all the different tribes. It really was beneficial to me.

[0:18:55.7]

EM: I want to go back to you mentioned about being state recognized and not federally recognized. How do you think that had an impact on your tribe?

[0:19:05.9]

DB: Well, federal recognition is like the gold standard for Native Americans. Sometimes issues are that if you're not federally recognized, you're not a real Indian, but when you really look at the engagement between the explorers, people from Europe, and American Indians in this country when they came over, we were the first ones to make contact on the East Coast. So we did not have as many treaties to engage in or did not have the opportunity to hold out and get the federal recognition. If we were on the West Coast, it would have been totally different; we would have been federally recognized.

State recognition, to us, everyone knew we were American Indian. We went to Indian schools and churches. We had customs and traditions that still maintain, that gave us that connection. At one time there was a little bit of a feeling that there was something missing, but then when you look at the relationship between the federal government and American Indians, federal recognition does not make that much of a big difference. It

does for gaming. Some tribes in the right locations have made a lot of money to help their tribes and their community by gaming, but there's a lot of tribes that have federal recognition that live in isolated areas in the West and they're still suffering. They don't have the standard of living that you think being federally recognized does. So I'm okay with the state recognition. I would like to see federal recognition, but we have a lot of work to do with state recognition that can be beneficial, and we should be proud of whatever we have that is able to keep us connected to our past and our present and to the future engagement around our issues.

[0:19:05.9]

EM: Absolutely. I'm going to transition now into some questions about UNC [University of North Carolina]. What brought you to UNC?

[0:21:46.2]

DB: Well, I was at the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs on soft money, we were always writing new grants, so it was the end of the funding cycle. And I had married and we had a child here in Chapel Hill. My wife was going back to graduate school. So I was needed in Chapel Hill to help with the childcare, and happened to make that arrangement, and so looking at jobs, there was a job opening with the Student Aid Office. So I applied and was accepted as the loan collector and loan disperser with the Scholarships and Student Aid Office. I was able to start working a couple of months after leaving the Commission of Indian Affairs, and served me well for seven years, learning a lot about the university and issues around student financing.

[0:22:54.3]

EM: How did you get contacted to be part of the American Indian and Indigenous Studies Program here at UNC?

[0:23:00.9]

DB: Well, coming to Carolina and working with the Student Aid Office, Loan Office, I did not sever any connections or engagement with the American Indian community. I still maintained some ties there, and I tried to find any Indian faculty, staff, or students on campus, so I got to know a few students and I met the first, as far as I know, Indian staff that were working at Carolina. So I hung around and stayed involved in that way and met other people around campus. I met a few faculty and a few administrative staff that were interested in American Indians. So I was lucky enough to be involved in a couple of activities with Professor Towny Ludington, and so when his effort and other administrative efforts were made to do some surveys and get information about American Indians, I was lucky to be around and able to provide some information about local Indian tribes, since I'd worked with most of the tribes at the Commission of Indian Affairs. So that opportunity came and the position opened, and I was able to join that effort.

[0:24:35.4]

EM: Do you remember the names of what you said was perhaps the first Native American faculty on campus besides Towny Ludington that were helping you?

[0:24:44.2]

DB: We did not have any American Indian faculty when I came to Carolina. There is on record a faculty member back in [19]88, but I know that the students and I reached out to this person and they never responded, never got in touch with us. But there

were a couple of staff members. I know Anthony Locklear was working with students' success in the College of Arts and Sciences. But as far as faculty, there were none when I first came here that were engaged with American Indian students, and I've got a list of faculty that were people around, and anytime there's activities, I tried to reach out. Now, when I was with the student scholarships and student aid, I did not have that responsibility, but when I started with American Indian Studies, I tried to reach out to everyone that was at the university to be engaged in American Indian Studies. So, slowly we started some faculty at Carolina.

[0:26:13.4]

EM: Why did you want to help start that program?

[0:26:16.4]

DB: Well, it was going to benefit me, but also it was a missing link. Carolina over the years, everyone talks about diversity and talks about minority issues, so we were missing, I thought, in most of those activities. So it was a way to help, and a lot of this came from working at the Commission on Indian Affairs. When I was over there, we were aware of what was missing in the history of American Indians in North Carolina and the whole Southeast, and we were aware of how we were not involved in those issues. So looking at Carolina, I saw all the wonderful things going on, but then there were no Indian faculty, there were no Indian courses. We were missing in almost all of the programs going on at Carolina. So it seemed natural to be involved, and that was one of the things that I was charged with, was to keep a connection with the Indian community, to help faculty and research and support also for American Indian students

and a way of bringing in resources that might understand what challenges they have and how to help them be successful.

[0:27:45.3]

EM: Can you discuss some of the challenges that you faced while trying to create the program?

[0:27:50.8]

DB: Well, the big problem that continues is that most people don't know anything about American Indians. They don't know the history of American Indians. Even today, most people— a lot of people move into the area from outside the state, so they don't know the history, but even people from within North Carolina don't know much about us. And then there's the efforts toward diversity and inclusion are sometimes a one-size-fits-all, and the challenges, we need a focus on American Indians in the same way there was a focus on African Americans. And the focus on American Indians, the challenge is looking at all the different tribes. One effort can't really address all the differences of our tribes, from the Cherokees in the mountains to the Waccamaw Siouan and Lumbee toward the coastal areas.

And then other challenges, with not understanding American Indians, there's the challenge of terms they use. In academia and society, there's a lot of use of the term "people of color" and "communities of color." Well, those terms were terms used in the 1700s, 1800s to not identify us as American Indians, so in a way, it's not an endearing term that American Indians use for ourselves.

And the challenges of how do we get the American Indian communities engaged in higher education. Now, any complaints I make about Carolina, you should be aware

that Carolina is doing more for American Indians than probably any other university in the state, and there's so much more to be done all across the state. But since I work here, I'm aware of some things, but we're doing more with the American Indian Center, with the courses we have offered here, the faculty--American Indian, and the non-Indian faculty--and then a number of wonderful people from the Southern Oral History Program in Wilson Library, the Center for the Study of American South, the research labs of archeology, there's a number of wonderful programs around Carolina to support American Indians themselves but also for non-Indians to learn about us. But then we're missing faculty in the arts. We've not had a performing arts program with an American Indian group in ten years, fifteen years. A number of places that we need attention to, and it's coming that way, but we always want things to be faster than they actually are, but we are moving much faster than any other school in the state. So I have a concern, but I have a celebration that we are doing some good things here.

[0:31:25.0]

EM: Absolutely. Did you receive any pushback from the administration when you were trying to create the program?

[0:31:38.8]

DB: I didn't, but I was not an administrator. Professor Towny Ludington was instrumental in developing the program, recognizing it. I know that he had a postdoc fellow that was doing a course on American Indian Studies. Blythe Forsee [phonetic], was her name. The provost at that time was interested in including us, and the dean of anthropology might have been. There's a lot of support, but I didn't get any pushback. People didn't really know how I fit into the whole scheme of things. I was not faculty. I

was a staff that was showing up at a number of different functions, but I thought that the more people saw me, the more they might question and be receptive to a conversation about our presence here and issues that might be helpful to us.

[0:32:45.9]

EM: Definitely. I know you mentioned terminology being an important issue and a challenge that you've faced and that the Native American community has faced. Is there a specific terminology that you would prefer people to use, that you think is the best term to use?

[0:33:03.3]

DB: Well, for me, I like the terms—anything that's not derogatory, that's along the lines of American Indian was one of the first terms used to describe us. Well, okay, that's sort of a Pan-Indian term, as is Native Americans, but they can be used interchangeably. Anyone talking about Indians, there's Indian Americans that are not American Indian, so it depends on where you are when you're talking about it. A lot of people do want to recognize their tribes, and when you're talking about us, be tribally specific whenever you can and use terms that engage with the community. Find out what is the preferred way of referencing them.

[0:34:05.6]

EM: Can you tell me more about your work with Carolina Indian Circle and what role you played there?

[0:34:10.2]

DB: Well, the Carolina Indian Circle, I was over in Raleigh about the time they were starting, so I went to a powwow that they had put on, but my first engagement, I

guess, continued when I came here in [19]88, [19]89, and I tried to attend their functions, but I didn't have an official role with them at the time, but I tried to be supportive and supported activities that Anthony Locklear was engaged with them. But when I started with the American Indian Studies, it was an opportunity then to be supportive, and working with students, I got to realize that as you get older, students need young people around, but they do need some people that can be advocates for them. So I wanted to find out more about the Indian students, so I went into the archives and found letters they had written and more information about challenges they'd had in the past.

[0:35:24.7]

So after I understood how to work with younger people, everything went well. I served as an advisor to the Carolina Indian Circle, First Nation's Graduate Circle, and then Native American Law Students Association, and they all needed more than just an advisor. They all needed faculty and needed people to understand us at all levels. You can still read, as recent as last year, where American Indian students at Carolina Indian Circle still feel a need for some attention to their issues, and we're moving the first direction, but we've still got a ways to go.

[0:36:12.3]

EM: Did you work at all with the American Indian Center here on campus?

[0:36:16.5]

DB: Yes, in some of their activities. While working with the American Indian Studies, the organization that helped with that was the Provost's Committee on Native American Issues, and that committee was formed at the beginning in [19]97 to look at American Indian Studies, but to look at other issues that would be important to the

establishment of American Indian students and the success of American Indian students. So the Provost's Committee on Native American Issues, we talked about and the issue came up that we needed something like an American Indian Center. So I was with the committee as we submitted proposals and received approval for funding of the American Indian Center. So we've been partners between the American Indian Center, the students, and Indian Studies in a number of events, bringing in people to talk around Indian Heritage Month, to engage in other kinds of dialogue to raise an awareness of American Indian issues.

[0:37:35.4]

EM: Can you also tell me a little bit about your work with the Native American Law Students' Association?

[0:37:40.8]

DB: Well, that's another challenge there. The graduate students and professional students are very busy, but I was able to meet with them. They welcomed my involvement with them. I would share information that I knew of events going on and be supportive as they sought to have programs or set up displays around Indian Heritage Month or raise some of the issues. One issue that they wanted was someone to teach American Indian law, so the university contracted with a judge with the Eastern Band of Cherokee to teach a course. Then over time, now within the Department of American Indian Studies, we have a faculty that has a law degree and he's a member of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Tribe. So we have people around. But the students, they come and go. There's five or six students one year, then another year there's only one or two that are involved, so it's really helpful. We have more Indian lawyers and doctors in North

Carolina than probably per capita any other state in the union, and so the law school's been very good in producing Indian lawyers to go out and serve the communities.

[0:39:18.0]

EM: Why do you think it's important to have Native American lawyers who are maybe more versed in tribal laws?

[0:39:25.6]

DB: Well, because tribal law, even with state recognized, state recognized don't have as many issues as sometimes come up with the federal. At Cherokee, I mean, there was an issue on the Cherokee reservation that the Cherokees could not arrest some people that committed crimes if they were white or non-Indian. Indian law is complicated with a lot of the issues that come up with American Indians. It's difficult to explain in just a few minutes, but as students graduate from Carolina and go out and serve in Indian communities or serve in any urban environment around the state and around the country, the issues around Indian children come up, and there's a program, Indian Child Welfare Programs, that seek to make sure that American Indians' children, if they are adopted or if they are in a situation that Social Services need to help them, that there's laws and provisions in place to help them stay connected to their culture. So Indian law is very important to help the children, for the most part, more than any other reason.

[0:41:19.3]

EM: Absolutely. I know that you're a recipient of the extremely prestigious C. Knox Massey Award. Can you tell me a little bit more about that award?

[0:41:29.0]

DB: Well, I was honored to receive that and to see that there was some recognition of activities of American Indians on campus. I don't think I did anything extraordinary for any of that, but I was involved with a number of people that saw the need to include us, and so it's as much an award for the recognition that American Indians are part of this large community. It's more about that than it was about me, and it was about Indian students that were here and asking for attention to their issues. So in partnership with a number of faculty and administrators around Carolina, it was as much their award as it was for me.

[0:42:30.5]

EM: What did it mean to you personally to receive that award?

[0:42:35.1]

DB: Well, we always like people to recognize us or say positive things about us, and so it validated some of the activities that I've been involved in. A lot of counsel, I mean, there are a lot of people, administrators and faculty at Carolina that helped me understand what higher education is all about. When I first started with Indian Studies, it was Mike Green and Theda Purdue, they were professors in American Indian Studies and history, along with Professor [Towny] Ludington, and then other administrators and all around that helped me understand how things worked. We couldn't always get things as easily for Indian students and for connections to the Indian community, but I thought it was a recognition that we were here, people were aware of our activities and what was needed, and set the stage for growth in a number of areas.

[0:43:51.2]

EM: How do you think the perspective of Native American students has changed since when you first began working here at Carolina?

DB: The perspective's changed some, but when you look at Indian students coming from Indian communities, this is a major leap to come from a rural community to such a big city of UNC-Chapel Hill, in the same way that it is for non-Indian students coming here. You come from a rural area to Carolina, I mean, you might have been following Carolina basketball, football, or some other community people that have attended school here. But they're aware of a lot more resources that are here. They talk to some of their peers and family that have come to Carolina. More and more people have come to Carolina, so there's more people to talk with about the experience. But the student voice, though, is still not fully heard, and we need to build a stronger relationship between the students and the faculty we have on campus, administrators, and better understand student issues and help students better understand their place in the university. What are they going to do when they leave Carolina? How can they be leaders and be change agents to help people get along a little bit better?

[0:45:41.2]

EM: How do you think Native American students are represented on campus today?

[0:45:45.3]

DB: What do you mean?

[0:45:48.3]

EM: I guess just how do you think maybe Carolina represents Native American students or—

[0:45:59.7]

DB: I don't know. It's hard to say. I mean, I know the at the American Indian Center they have a big board where they have Post-It notes, and students can post thoughts they have and aspirations. Carolina is moving forward in listening to students, but we need to help students be aware of how to think about Carolina, how to think about their lives. Coming from rural communities, sometimes it's a little bit more limited in courses and resources than some students coming from urban environments, but then American Indians from urban environments don't have the cultural connection and resources that are much more prevalent in the rural communities, tribal communities. So it's a delicate dance that we're moving forward on, but it's going to take more awareness building up Indian students and Indian communities about what higher education is all about and what higher education can do if the right kind of communication is going on.

[0:47:27.3]

EM: What, in your opinion, could be done to help Native American students and student programs gain visibility here on campus?

[0:47:36.0]

DB: Well, what could we do? I have thought about we need more administrators. We have Indian faculty, we have an American Indian director of the American Indian Center, director of the Center for the Study of the American South, but maybe in the chancellor's cabinet, serving the provost areas. And then American Indian staff. It's hard for Indians to have to move people, to find the jobs up here and the experiences at other places that Carolina requires for you to be employed. There's a lot of historically black schools and other environments where African Americans have had received some

experiences that they could be hired here. We don't have that many American Indian—we have one American Indian university, Pembroke, and our numbers are so small, that experiences and diversity activities and student affairs activities, but hopefully giving American Indians, with the qualifications, a chance to work in the university in a variety of settings, Student Affairs to Admissions, to other kinds of cultural activities. Building a larger group of staff would be very helpful.

[0:49:28.5]

EM: Absolutely. Do you have any ideas of other people you think would be integral to this project or people whose stories you think we should capture; maybe other people we should interview?

[0:49:39.9]

DB: Yes. There's a number of people, not many, in this area, but I know there's Bruce Jones that lives in Raleigh, who was the director of the Commission of Indian Affairs for many years. He has a lot of stories to tell. There's a number of people that tried to come to Carolina back in the [19]50s to attend Carolina, and Carolina would not accept American Indians for a long time. But some, like Dr. Ruth Dial Woods in Pembroke area, she got her Ph.D. in education at Carolina. And there's a number of early students, undergraduate students, some in Raleigh, Pembroke, Clinton, Cherokee. We have a number of people that have come through Carolina and are fortunate to have graduated and gone back to contribute to their communities and their tribe. So there's a long list of people. Some have experiences that would resonate. Most do. And then there's another, the first American Indian woman to graduate from Carolina, Genevieve

Lowery Cole, who's over in Durham, and she graduated in [19]55, [19]56. So she has some stories to tell that would be helpful.

[0:51:14.6]

EM: Absolutely. Is there anything today that we didn't get a chance to talk about that you would like to discuss with me, anything from your childhood to your family now and your experiences at Carolina?

[0:51:26.6]

DB: No, there's a lot of other voices out there and a lot of other stories to be told. As long as the stories are being collected and archived, that is an effort that I hope that we can do more of, is archiving, helping the tribes to archive information about themselves, helping them tell the stories. If Carolina can find a way and resources to do more archiving information in the Indian communities, that would be my wish. All is well, and especially with we have the American Indian Center here, the Center for the Study of the American South, and American Indian Indigenous Studies, and if we can help with the archeology a little bit more, too, there's a number of areas, but Carolina is positioned well for engagement in these areas, and I look forward to hearing the next generation tell us their stories about how that is moving along.

[0:52:41.4]

EM: Absolutely. Thank you so much for speaking with me today and for agreeing to tell your story. It was amazing to talk to you.

[0:52:49.5]

DB: Thank you very much for the opportunity.

[0:52:50.9]

EM: Absolutely. Thank you, Mr. Bell.

[Recording ends at [52:55]

END OF INTERVIEW

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