

TOM MOFFETT
June 6, 2006

DAVID CLINE: Good morning. This is David Cline, and I'm in Louisville, Kentucky, on Tuesday, June the 6th, and recording an interview with Mr. Tom Moffett for the Southern Oral History Program's Long Civil Rights Movement Initiative looking at the Park Duvalle neighborhood of Louisville. Good morning.

TOM MOFFETT: Good morning, David.

DC: If you could just sort of introduce yourself, tell me a little bit about where you were raised.

TM: Okay, David. I'll try to be as brief as I can. I grew up the child of missionary parents in Korea many years ago. I was born in 1924, and my father was sixty at the time and was one of the early pioneer missionaries in Korea. I left Korea at the age of twelve and came to Southern California. I mention that because I think growing up in a different country had some influence on my understanding of social situations, even though in my early years I was just like any other kid, didn't know what I was learning. So in my high school years in California I wasn't particularly aware of racial issues. I was aware enough so that I knew it was unusual that the star quarterback at UCLA was a—no, running back at UCLA—was a black athlete, and I was aware that one or two of the athletes at our high school were black and that that made a difference, but it wasn't up front and center in my life and development. Then I went to college at Wheaton, Illinois, a very conservative Christian college.

DC: What's the name of that?

TM: Wheaton College.

DC: It's Wheaton College. Yes.

TM: At the time Billy Graham was a couple of classes ahead of me.

DC: Okay. That gives me some idea.

TM: I didn't know him personally, but several of my brothers know him very, very closely. I mention that because in my own personal development while that very conservative, evangelical Christian tradition is still a very important part of my life I have moved much more in the direction of what you might call the liberal social action stream of the Christian faith. But anyway—what am I trying to say? Well I served three years in the navy. I got out of it because it—you know, I was one of those quick midshipmen, and I didn't belong as an officer in the navy. It didn't fit me at all. Then I went to finish up college, went to seminary, and became a Presbyterian minister for twenty years, and my life was very much shaped at Princeton by one incident that sticks in my mind.

DC: Princeton University? That's where you went to seminary?

TM: A paper that I wrote, and I don't remember whether I picked—I think the topic was assigned -- it was on the view of private property in the Old Testament, and coming from a conservative Republican family that thought Franklin Roosevelt was the pits because he didn't support Prohibition, I discovered something that amazed me, that the Bible taught me that there really was no right of private property, that it all belonged to God, and that the scriptures talked about redistributing it every fifty years, that the accumulation of wealth by the strong was something that needed some remedy, and that those who had lost out in the economic race needed to have another chance to get back in it, and that that was very clearly expressed in scripture. So that opened up my eyes to a whole new approach. It wasn't that I was a rabid private property capitalist before that, but it just opened up my eyes to a new way of looking at the scene.

And then I went to the Mountaineer Mining Mission in coal camps in West Virginia where the person that had gotten that started was working very closely with the unions and trying to relate to the working people and empathize with the workers rather than managers. In that process I was introduced to the whole field of democracy in economics, and that impressed me and changed my attitudes about some things. And I also in the mining camps came face to face for the first time with the reality of racial segregation. I had never experienced racial segregation except as I intuitively saw it in the mission field in Korea where we lived a privileged life as Americans in a society that was Korean under the subjugation of the Japanese. Anyway, when I—

DC: When you were in the Navy you must have seen it too. I mean a few black cooks and like that.

TM: Well, yes. Okay. I was aware of the fact that the only blacks on the ship that I was on were the cooks, but at that point it was something I was aware of. I understood it was wrong, but it wasn't a compelling concern to me.

DC: Right. Now when you went to West Virginia was that the first time—?

TM: When I went to West Virginia as a young pastor trying to reach the people for Christ and found that the blacks were on the fringes, they were part of the union, but even so they were on the top row, and then the whites were next, and the managers were in the big houses on the bottom row, and there was a racial segregation in spite of the efforts of the union, there still was a distinct racial caste system. Trying to reach out across that I discovered was very, very difficult and didn't have the wholehearted backing even of the other Christians that were in my church. It had the backing of some but not all. So I became aware that this was something that seemed to me to be completely

contrary to what I was understanding was the message of Christ and the message of any kind of real understanding of the fundamental basis of our American protestations about what we believed.

That became more and more important in my life, and I moved from there to an inner-city church in Wheeling where I didn't have a whole lot of success in pursuing some efforts in including some blacks in the congregation because there was such a resistance on the part of the majority in the congregation. And so then I moved as an assistant pastor to an integrated congregation in Kansas City, Missouri.

DC: And when was that?

TM: That was 1960.

DC: Okay.

TM: In '54 when the desegregation decision came down I had just left Four States, West Virginia, and gone to Wheeling, and then in '60 I went to Kansas City, Missouri. This was a former downtown First Presbyterian church that had gone way down, and been resurrected, and become an intensely subsidized effort that involved building a congregation but also a social ministry. I was one of a subsidized staff to try to make something happen there. But it had a very energetic and capable head pastor there who had a congregation of about a hundred people of whom about half were black and half were white.

DC: What was the name of the congregation?

TM: It was the First Presbyterian Church of Kansas City, Missouri.

DC: First Presbyterian. And subsidized by whom?

TM: Beg pardon?

DC: Subsidized how?

TM: Through the Presbyterian churches of the area.

DC: Okay. Thank you.

TM: So in that experience I, for the first time, was working very, very closely and intensely with African-Americans, and learned a great deal, and became more and more committed to the—I guess it began to become clear to me that what appealed to me personally was standing with people who were being oppressed and neglected and not having any illusions about being able to be their savior, but just that somebody needed to stand beside them and work with them because they had persevered and overcome mountains that I couldn't dream of, but there still was a long way to go. So I guess since then my focus has been to try to continue to be a supportive part of the black community and find ways to be useful and helpful, and I came to Louisville. The church that I was serving in Kansas City no longer needed me because they were trying to become a combination of four different denominations, and they didn't need two Presbyterian pastors. So I looked for another place to go, and I came to a church in Louisville that had recently integrated and spent five years there during which time the area became almost completely black and the church became almost completely black.

DC: Which church was that?

TM: That was the—well, when I came it was the New Covenant Presbyterian Church at Thirty-Seventh and Broadway. It changed names, became Covenant Memorial when another church joined with it. It has since merged with another church so it no longer exists as that particular congregation.

DC: Did you end up then as one of very few whites in that congregation?

TM: Pardon?

DC: Did you end up as one of very few whites involved in that congregation?

TM: Did I end up as—?

DC: One of very few white people in that congregation?

TM: Oh, I was their pastor for five years, and during that time the congregation, it still had quite a few white people on the rolls, but there were very few that were still active.

DC: Right.

TM: And I was the white pastor of a black church which was a problem particularly in that time that was developing increasingly black consciousness.

DC: What years was that?

TM: This was '66 to '72.

DC: Okay.

TM: I was feeling somewhat ineffective. You know, it became more and more difficult. The time had passed when blacks were looking for white churches to join, and they wanted their own churches so the mission of the church became a little more difficult than it had been a few years before. I didn't feel I was doing a terribly good job of helping the church do what it needed to do. I was doing an adequate job, but I just didn't feel that it was as good as it needed to be. For that and other reasons I went to a counseling thing to see if I belonged where I was and belonged as a pastor of a church. There were some other things going on in my life related to my marriage that inspired me to do this too. And the clear result was that I was doing something that was important, that I thought was important, but didn't quite fit my personal, individual makeup, and I

would probably be better in a more structured kind of occupation than one that needed a lot of individual initiative, and working with people, and so forth. Anyway, so I decided to change. I'd always enjoyed math, and so I thought, well, I'll maybe take up economics, or accounting, or something, so I turned to accounting, went back to school, got my accounting degree, got a job here at Park Duvalle, and I've been here ever since.

But now, in terms of the neighborhood, when we moved to Louisville the church was here in the west end a little bit north of here, and the church helped us find a place to live in that neighborhood. I lived there even after I resigned from the pastorate. Incidentally, I demitted the ministry. I didn't want to continue to be a pastor in name only, so I'm a lay person. I'm not a minister any more, and I'm still just as active in the church as I was before.

DC: Okay. But there's a formal process that you go through?

TM: Yes. But I stayed in that neighborhood. My wife divorced, but I stayed there, and got the job here at Park Duvalle, and about five years later, or six or seven years later, they wanted to remodel the apartment so I looked around, and I found a place to live that was much closer to here, and so I've been living for the last twenty-five years about three blocks from the health center.

DC: Okay. All right. In what was and still is a largely black neighborhood?

TM: Yes. Yes. I've lived in a largely black neighborhood all my thirty-some years in Louisville. In the early years we were on the edge where blacks were still in the minority but moving in, and it quickly became largely black. Then I moved to a neighborhood now that had always been pretty much black.

DC: And were you accepted into the neighborhood?

TM: Oh, yes. I've always felt very, very comfortable. I won't say—I could describe one or two incidents that might sound a little bit otherwise, but fundamentally I've—you know, there's just no two ways about it. In spite of what blacks have suffered in this country, they are very, very friendly to white people.

DC: Um-hum.

TM: I get VIP treatment all the time. That's the only thing that bothers me is that I still feel that life is not fair because I get, as a white person living in a black community, I get treated with kid gloves. A black person living in a white community gets treated like dirt. That's just a fact of life.

DC: Right. And you've witnessed that first hand.

TM: Absolutely. Every day.

DC: So you changed professions, but maintained an involvement, an interest, a commitment to social justice in this community?

TM: Oh yes. Yes. My life hasn't changed that much. I'm still trying to live the same life that I was living as a pastor because I wasn't a pastor because I wanted to be a pastor. I was a pastor because I thought that was what God wanted me to do as part of what He wanted me to do in this life, and I discovered that that wasn't the way, and I'm more comfortable spending my "working time" in a job that is more structured and has outcomes. You know whether the numbers add up or not.

DC: Right.

TM: But the focus of my life is not those numbers. It's trying to make a difference in this world. For me, I've been more comfortable when my whole life wasn't involved in trying to be the leader of a group that was supposed to be making a difference

in this world. I have something that I do that I feel I do reasonably well, and then I can devote my "spare time" to doing something that I find much more difficult and I don't do as well, but it gives me a great deal of—it's just something I have to do.

DC: Um-hum. And what do you do? How are you involved in the community?

TM: Well, I'm involved in the community I would say in three ways, three fundamental ways. I'm involved in the community because I worked in the community in the health center that serves the community, that is a helpful institution in the community. It's not perfect. It could be a whole lot better, but it is an important asset in the community. I'm involved in the community because I'm a part of a church, which is not in this particular neighborhood but it's in the Smoketown area near downtown, which grew out of a Presbyterian mission, Sunday school mission, to the black community a hundred and more years ago, and that whole effort over the hundred years culminated in a Presbyterian community center and a church, or several churches, and I'm a part of that congregation and that effort. And I'm involved in the community as a part of the Kentucky Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression which is a community group that intentionally tries to be a balanced group of African-Americans and whites working together on action projects to bring justice and change in the community. I got started in that close to thirty years ago, perhaps around the time of the busing. I can't remember whether it was just before or just after that I actually got involved with that organization.

DC: I remember now how I was led to you, and it was from Alice Wade at the Kentucky Alliance.

TM: Okay. Okay. Increasingly in recent years because the Kentucky Alliance has a lot of potential and doesn't always live up to its potential I've put an increasing amount of my time into that effort. So.

DC: Um-hum. You joined this staff in '72?

TM: I beg your pardon?

DC: You came to the health center in '72?

TM: Yeah. Um-hum.

DC: And can you tell me just a little bit about what its mission was as you saw it in those days and its origins?

TM: I wasn't aware of the health center really. I didn't live in this particular neighborhood. I wasn't aware of it until, well, I guess I knew vaguely that it existed. I was looking for a job. I had only just barely begun. I think maybe I had had a semester at JCC [Jefferson County Community College] of accounting and discovered that it was interesting, but it was too easy at JCC and I needed to go to U of L [University of Louisville], so I transferred and started in at U of L. But I was looking for a job. I thought I'd have to get a job with GE or whoever, wherever I could get a job.

DC: Right.

TM: I had resigned from the pastorate. I didn't have any livelihood except a little bit of money in savings, so I needed a job. I had already joined Grace Hope Presbyterian Church—and a member of the congregation said, "Well, I'm a transportation driver at Park Duvalle Health Center, and they're looking for a junior accountant. Why don't you apply?" So I applied, and I got the job. It was about five years old. It had been founded by Harvey Sloan. In order to get the job they had a process. They interviewed me to be

sure that I was sensitive to the fact that this was a black community, and we were serving poor people, and could I relate to them in a positive way. That was a part of the requirement for a person to get a job here. It was a very important part of the requirement. So that suited me fine. I thought this was much more to my liking than what I had thought I might have to take at GE or wherever.

DC: Right.

TM: So it just was really a blessing, and I just have enjoyed it ever since. And one of the first things I did was, along with a few other people but I was fairly influential, I sat down with Sterling Neal one day and said, "What would it take to organize a union of the employees at Park Duvalle?" The closest we got was we organized an employees' association. We never became a union, but we had an active employees' association for four or five years, and then it finally petered out. By that time I had become a part of management which made it a little more difficult for me to be a strong—

DC: What position did you end up with then?

TM: Well I started out as junior accountant.

DC: Right.

TM: And then after I graduated, and got my accounting degree, and took the CPA exam but never got the CPA because I didn't go on to work for a CPA, but anyway, after I graduated the position of—wait a minute now. Before I graduated I think the position of manager of accounting came open. I can't remember whether it was before or after I graduated I got that job. And then shortly after that, definitely after I had graduated, the comptroller left, and with some trepidation they put me in that job because I really didn't have very much, hardly any experience that qualified me for it. But I had

just gotten my degree, and the organization believed in in-house promotions, and so on and so forth, so they gave me a chance at being comptroller, and I was comptroller for about five years which meant that I was one of the top four managers of the institution.

At that time we had a very, very capable executive director from the community. He was building the institution in very positive ways, and some of the process of computerizing, and getting into the modern age was a little too much for me and we both recognized it, so he found somebody else to be comptroller and put me back in the manager of accounting [position] where I belonged, so then I stayed there for a good many years. Then I retired and stayed on for a couple of years as a part-time consultant, and then I retired completely. And then they had a problem and they needed some help to straighten out the accounting department so they called me back to serve temporarily, and I'm still here helping.

DC: Okay. Right. And do you see that going on for a while, or are you trying to get back to your retirement?

TM: Well, I've gotten hooked on having a little extra money, so I'm not rushing to go back to retirement. I've stayed longer than I expected.

DC: Can you tell me a little bit about the relationship between the health center and its community over the years?

TM: The health center, okay. The health center was one of the early community health centers that was a significant part of the War on Poverty. It was one of a number throughout the country, but not a large number, that started out very strong. I would say it was probably one of the ten most effective, largest community health centers throughout the country. I could be wrong on that, but I think it was a significant leader in

the early years of the community health center process. However, I have to say that it has never in my opinion lived up to its potential. I guess I should be careful. I hope you won't—I do not believe that it has lived up to its potential because it has lacked some vision in its leadership, and it has put up with mediocrity and has not provided the quality of service to this community that the community deserves. It's adequate. It's not bad, but it's not really top-notch high quality. And I don't think that's acceptable. I wish it could be really a beacon light, and it's only acceptable. It's better than nothing, but it's not what it could be. So what I'm trying to say is that it has never really overcome our society's acceptance of the fact that service to the poor community doesn't have to be top notch, and even though the community uses it and enjoys it that is not lost on people. People are not dumb. They understand that it hasn't overcome that.

DC: Right. Now with the destruction of the former public housing units and recreation of what we have here, and this is a new facility.

TM: Yes, this is a new building, and it's a wonderful opportunity, and I think the health center has profited from that. I think the situation is better than it was. I'm still not satisfied that we're making the most of it.

DC: Did you see that as a real opportunity for change?

TM: But it's an opportunity that is still before us, and I'm personally searching for ways, whatever I can, to help us live up to that opportunity. It's like the Kentucky Alliance, and it's like Grace Hope Presbyterian Church. We're not as good as we need to be. We're not living up to the opportunity that is in front of us. I'm proud to be a part of this health center, and proud to be a part of my church, proud to be a part of the Kentucky

Alliance, but I'm not satisfied that we've reached the level of accomplishment that our community deserves.

DC: Um-hum. So the project, the historical project that we're doing as I described it to you -- this long civil rights movement concept -- do you buy into that concept?

TM: Oh, definitely.

DC: Does it make sense to you?

TM: And I think that the history of the Park Duvalle Health Center and of this neighborhood is very instructive, tells us some things. This neighborhood was an old— and I'm not familiar, I'm not a history buff, but there was "Little Africa" in this neighborhood, unpaved streets and all that kind of stuff.

DC: Right.

TM: Then they built the projects, and that was a big step forward. It provided housing that people were happy to have and gave them a step up towards something else. And the health center was built and brought much better health care than had been available before. And in its early years it was not just a health center, but it was a War on Poverty effort where people were being trained to be dental technicians. It was a training and enabling thing, and that was an important part of its mission.

Over the years, relatively quickly, that got lost in the effort by the government to say, "you've got to be self-supporting. We don't care. It's not your job to provide the employment training and a way up for the people of your neighborhood. You just need to do a good job of providing health care, and you need to do it cost effectively." So that component has gone completely out the window in terms of any incentives to keep it—

and I don't think the leadership of the health center has tried particularly. They may have some residual concerns along that line, but it hasn't been high on the priority. I think it could have been more. But I'm an unreconstructed idealist I guess.

Then the health center was struggling to try to provide good quality service in a building that was certainly not designed to be a health center. The accounting department was in the basement, and we had water flooding down on us from below and from above, and there were all kinds of problems. And the project itself began to be, instead of a boon to the community, it began to be a sore thumb and a problem, and there were all kinds of problems. And the people instead of being on their way up were on their way down and were being inundated with drugs that wasn't their fault, but nobody cared as long as they were confined to the projects and the ghetto. They would do something about drugs if they got into [a majority white suburb like] St. Matthews but they weren't going to really worry about drugs if they were in Cotter Homes, except they would pick up people and put them in jail, but they wouldn't stop the drugs.

So along came the idea, "well, the problem is the housing project so let's tear it down, and let's build a new nice residential community for a mixed income group of people." A great idea, and it has a benefit in terms of it's a nicer community, and it's nice for the new residents. Didn't do a thing for the people that lived in it before because only a handful of them were able to come back in spite of efforts, maybe token efforts, maybe a little more than token efforts, but not adequate efforts. So we have a nicer neighborhood, but it didn't help the people that were having a problem in the old neighborhood.

DC: A nicer neighborhood right here.

TM: Yes, that's right. Right here. I live right next to the projects in Colonial Homes, a subdivision that was built about the same time as the projects, but was built as a private development. I'm sure it was subsidized. I didn't have any more problems living there when the projects were there than I do now. It's a nicer neighborhood to look at, and I suppose there's a little less crime, but as far as my personal—I had some kids dance on the top of my car and push the roof in two months ago after the neighborhood changed. That had never happened for the twenty-five years I lived next to the projects. So, you know, there's progress, but it's not as significant as it's cracked up to be because it isn't dealing with fundamental issues.

DC: It just shifts them around.

TM: And the health center has moved out of that old building. It's in a new building which gives it a big opportunity, but as I said, we still have the same people. We still have the same doctors. If the doctor isn't really sensitive to the needs of this person and deep down inside doesn't think this person is as important as the person that comes to the private practice in St. Matthews, we're not living up to our full potential. And I'm not saying it's any worse here than it is anywhere else, but I'm not saying it's as much better as it ought to be. But the opportunity is here, and it was a big step forward to get this building, and the opportunity is still here, and I'm hopeful that we'll rise to the occasion.

DC: I want to ask you a question that I think as a financial person I would think you'd know about. After the war on poverty money started to dry up, what kind of future did the health center see for itself, and how did it fund itself at that point? Was there a question of survival even at that point?

TM: Um. Well, the health center—hum. I would have to say that the health center adopted, the health center has done what it had to do to keep going, has done a reasonably good job of doing what it had to do to keep going. I don't think it's had a great vision of how to meet that challenge. It's just done pretty much what it's used to doing, and it just has not had visionary leadership to rise to the challenge.

DC: How is it supported financially?

TM: Well, it's—

DC: From the city, or—?

TM: No. No. It has always been a federally funded health center, and historically well over half of its support came from the federal grant, and the only other support was what it could develop in terms of earned revenue from Medicaid, Medicare, insurance, and the patient payments. For all its existence it has made steady progress as it was required to do in developing those earned sources of support, in maximizing its Medicaid revenue, Medicare revenue, primarily. It has not done as well at maximizing its insurance revenue and its revenue from private patients. The patients, it has always had a mission of providing free care to those who had no other way to get care, but with the understanding that it would try to help them get insurance, and if they had a reasonable amount of income that it would insist that they pay a reasonable portion toward their care rather than just taking free care. It has done better at maximizing Medicaid and Medicare, as I said, than it has in the other two areas, although it has made progress in those other two areas. It has been required to make progress, especially in terms of insuring that patients—nobody anymore really gets free care. There's always a minimum

fee of some kind even for somebody that has no means of support except that a occasionally an individual waiver can be granted. Okay?

DC: Um-hum. Right.

TM: It has done well enough at increasing that earned revenue so that a year or two ago for the first time all those sources of earned revenue exceeded the grant.

DC: Oh, okay.

TM: So I'm not saying it has been a failure. I'm just saying I don't believe it's lived up to its potential. I think it could have done better and still can do better. But it has a very acceptable and positive track record of progress. It just, in my opinion, can do better.

DC: Um-hum. Let me ask I guess one sort of concluding but large question which is when you first—you can answer this in two ways I guess, either when you first came to Louisville or when you first came to Park Duvalle—what would you say were the most pressing social issues at that time versus now? How have things changed? Are they the same issues or have the issues changed? Clearly health is one, but I don't know what other issues you would identify.

TM: I would say that, oh, access to health care has never been personally my main interest. It just doesn't get my gut level feeling the way certain other things do. I think there has been significant progress and that the health center has been a part of that in spite of the fact that the lack of health care insurance for so many people is still a critical issue in our society. I think for the black community in the west end of Louisville there has been progress. I think access to health care is better than it probably was when I came to town, but I don't have any way of knowing whether that's an accurate

assessment. I'm not involved in that issue to that extent, so I don't know. That's just a guess.

The issue that was on the table just before I came to Louisville was access to public facilities. A major breakthrough came before I moved to Louisville and opened up the downtown stores to blacks and so on and so forth. When I came to Louisville the critical issue that was on the table was housing, and blacks were being moved by real estate people into the west end, and the issue was open housing, making it possible for blacks to buy in other parts of the city and to move into other parts of the city. Crosses were burned when they moved in the wrong section of town and all that kind of stuff. The aldermen kind of sneaked through an open housing ordinance with intense pressure from the community, and there were marches and all this kind of stuff. That was what was going on at the time I was the pastor at New Covenant Presbyterian Church, so that was the issue. That issue, it's not behind us. You can't say that there's no discrimination in housing, but it is clearly not nearly—I mean there's a great deal more openness than there ever was in the past, and there is a substantial mixture in most neighborhoods. It's still true that the west end is a ghetto, but there's hardly any other part of town that is strictly off limits to blacks. There are blacks all over this county, and that's a battle that is still being fought, but it's largely being fought on a positive scale and is moving still. There's progress. It's still a problem, but it's not the critical problem.

When I came to town the educational system had had what was considered a relatively successful accommodation to the [U.S.] Supreme Court decision, but education for blacks was still a problem, and segregation was still a problem, and for a while it was being fought entirely within the city and the county was immune, and then the city

decided to disband its system because it couldn't deal with it just all by itself, and let's do this on a larger scale. That was, in my opinion, a creative step. But bussing was never implemented other than a dragging of the feet. I mean it was never implemented in a way that was designed to make it accomplish the result of improving education for blacks. Bussing was implemented to minimize the impact on the white community so the result of the educational advances that have been made is that we have—I was just discussing this with the people in my office this morning—the result has been major improvement in the relationships between people so that blacks and whites in Louisville are constantly talking to each other and interacting with each other in a fairly normal way instead of being two distinct communities that don't know each other and have no relationship. That doesn't mean there aren't still problems, but it's a completely different world than it was. It's a world where blacks and whites, you can see them at all levels just interacting in a very normal way. That doesn't mean that when they go to their private parties they're integrated always.

DC: Right.

TM: But it's a whole different world. However, educationally there has been very little change for black young people other than those who have better than average opportunities, and skills, and so forth. Even for them it can be demonstrated that they remain behind their white counterparts, and the school system has not figured out how to overcome that, and the blame is usually put in the wrong place. So what I'm saying is that [in] the educational component, we've made some major steps. Education has helped us overcome some social [problems], but it hasn't made the impact on the educational opportunity of young black people that it needs to make.

The other area that I have been most heavily involved in is something we haven't even touched on yet. I've been concerned ever since the Rodney King case with the problem of the way police treat blacks and poor people. So we've made a little progress on police accountability and police brutality and all that kind of thing, but I think it's still a major component of what ails our society because if you're concerned about young black men growing up to lead unproductive lives and ending up as drug addicts or drug pushers or ending up as prisoners and ex-prisoners in disproportionate numbers, if you're concerned about that, think about it. How are these young people going to grow up thinking positively if they continually are treated like dirt by the police officers who are the representatives of our society, and you and I don't do anything about it? I don't think it's the fault of these young people. We have to hold them responsible. We have to encourage them to overcome these problems, but it's not their fault if our society still allows people to treat them like dirt, and so they grow up to feel like they're dirt. So in my opinion—and I haven't even gotten into the economic sphere. So you have to say that the challenge of today relates to understanding that even though we've made significant progress on some things that are important but still somewhat superficial, we have a long way to go to deal with the things that are fundamentally tearing our society down and keeping us from becoming what we ought to be. It's just a tremendous challenge.

DC: When I arrived in Louisville a couple of weeks ago, I got here just after [the Kentucky] Derby, everyone was talking about the whole "derby cruising" issue which really, I think, is very illustrative of economics, police relations here.

TM: That's something that the Kentucky Alliance for a number of years was actively involved in. I spent several evenings walking the streets, walking Broadway in the middle of the night, and you saw things that you didn't like to see, but here was a genuine "of the people" kind of celebration. It wasn't made in Madison Avenue. It wasn't developed by the city fathers. It just developed out of the people, and it had its problems, but the people of the community and the people in positions of authority couldn't find a way to work together hard enough on dealing with the problems and ended up saying, well, the only thing we can do is shut it down. And that's a disaster. Sure, there were good reasons for being disturbed and saying it isn't what it ought to be, but just because you've got a serious problem doesn't mean that the answer is to walk away from it and say toss it out. You need to work harder at it. But that's a difficult job. And I have to admit this last year the Kentucky Alliance just wasn't up to it. We had spent several years working hard to be involved in the community dialogue, and encouraged talks with the police, and all that kind of stuff. This past year, for a number of reasons, we didn't have the energy to get involved in that so we were just on the sidelines like a lot of other people, and the disaster happened. It is an excellent illustration, just like you say.

TM: One of the community meetings that was held after that disaster, there had been several where people were venting their frustration at having had it shut down like this, one of the panelists at that meeting started out by saying, "But you know, why is it that with all our young people going off to prison, and all our young people not getting educated, we're having this meeting on cruising on Broadway? Where were we when we should have been dealing with the important problems? And now we're all upset because

we had to shut down this thing. What's so important about cruising on Broadway?" There's an element of truth to that, but there's also an element of truth to what I was saying earlier, that this is symptomatic of our society saying it doesn't matter what "these people" have developed. So it's not that different from saying it doesn't matter whether a four year old gets a good education. It doesn't matter whether people have a good cruise on Broadway. It just doesn't matter as long as it's those people.

DC: Right. Right. I think that's the message that was very clearly expressed.

TM: But for the community it is difficult to know where to put your energy to solve this problem. Do you put your energy into trying to save cruising on Broadway, or do you put your energy into trying to educate your four year olds? Part of us says you've got to do both, but the other part of us says, well, you don't have the energy to do both so which do you choose?

DC: Right. And with so many issues. Yeah. Right. I've taken up a lot of your time.

TM: Well, I've gone on and on and ranted and raved.

DC: Let me just ask you as a last question -- if there's anything else you'd like to add, or if there's anything I didn't ask that you thought maybe I should have asked or that you thought I might ask about?

TM: I don't know. I've gone off on a lot of different things, and I don't know if I've been helpful.

DC: You've been very helpful.

TM: But I do believe that you're exactly right, that these things are all connected, and that there is a long term, and you have to keep working. You never know when the

opportunity is going to come for some kind of major breakthrough, and it doesn't happen every day. Martin Luther King didn't know that the Montgomery bus boycott was going to be a turning point in the history of this country. He had no idea that that was going to be the case. Nobody did. But you work, and if you work somewhat effectively you may be able to take advantage of an opportunity that if you hadn't been working might have been lost. There were some people in Montgomery that had been working, and it was because of what they had been doing that the people responded. And we don't know why that happened there and it didn't happen somewhere else, but you just have to keep working and believe that history does move, and that there is a positive hope, and it doesn't matter if things are looking bad right now. It could turn around tomorrow. That doesn't mean it's going to be solved tomorrow, but the long haul is the way you have to look.

DC: Thank you very much. Thank you.

TM: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

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WORD LIST:

PAGE ITEM (first occurrence; subsequent occurrences are spelled consistently throughout so global search and replace can be used to fix them.)

- 1 Park Duvalle neighborhood
- 3 Mountaineer Mining Mission
- 4 Four States, West Virginia
- 9 Smoketown area

- 10 Alice Wade, School: JCC
- 11 Harvey Sloan, Sterling Neal
- 15 St. Matthews, Cotter Homes
- 16 Colonial Homes subdivision
- 21 Rodney King