

Interview

with

LOISTINE DEFREECE

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By Goldie F. Wells

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INTERVIEW WITH LOISTINE DEFREECE

Goldie: I am in the home of Loistine Defreese in Lumberton, North Carolina. Today's date is February 16, 1991, and Mrs. Defreese is a 1989 principal and she has the distinction of being the only female principal that we have on the list of a traditional high school. She has agreed on this Saturday afternoon when I kind of unexpected dropped in to just chat with me for this research. Mrs. Defreese, I am doing research for my doctoral dissertation at Chapel Hill and what I am doing is using the oral history method talking to principals who were principals in 1989, and principals who were principals in 1964. I am doing a role comparison to see if they look at the role of the principalship in the same way. So I just want you to talk to me and tell me some things about your principalship and I will use that to compare with what I have found from other people. First I want you to tell me something about yourself and how you became a high school principal.

Mrs. Defreese: First, I was a high school English teacher in the same school that I am principal. After teaching there for about 5 years, we got a new principal then, and he observed me teaching a couple of times and asked me if I would consider being his assistant. I was shocked because I never thought of being a principal. I always just loved teaching so I said, well, yes, because I did not think he was serious about it. Later, I think it was about May, he came back to me and he said I am going to submit your name to the superintendent for my assistant next year. I said, okay, just like that and sure enough, Mr. Young, who is a member of the Board of Education, called me that night and he said, well, hello Mrs. Assistant Principal. So that is when I knew that it was for real and I worked with Dr. Gainey for 5 years and then he decided to leave to go to Williamston. At that time the position was open at Lumberton Junior High School for a principal. So I applied for that position and I started to work there the next school year. After staying at Lumberton Junior High School for two years, the senior high school position became available. Well, I always thought of the high school as being home because I had spent so much time there and several of the teachers from the high school called me and said, Mrs. Defreese, please come back, please come back so I thought about it and I talked with my husband because he works there. I asked him how he felt about me going back, that I would stay at the junior high because I was happy there but I always loved a challenge and he said that it would be fine. He said, go for it! So I applied and got the position.

Goldie: Had you done administrative work when you were asked to be assistant principal?

Mrs. Defreece: No, I went back to school after working with Dr. Gainey.

Goldie: So you have been there at the high school for two years.

Mrs. Defreece: This is my second year at Lumberton High School.

Goldie: Do you have any educators in the family? Do you come from a line of educators?

Mrs. Defreece: No, I do not. I am the first one in my family to graduate from high school and I am from Lumberton.

Goldie: Now I want you to tell me something about Lumberton High School, about the racial composition, the number of staff members, number of students and some of the history.

Mrs. Defreece: Okay, we have right now about 830 students. Tri-racial; We have blacks, Indians, white, and a few Asian students from India. We have about 60% white, 40% minority.

Goldie: Do you have any assistant principals?

Mrs. Defreece: I have two assistant principals, one white and one Indian.

Goldie: So you have all three races in the office. How many counselors do you have?

Mrs. Defreece: I have two counselors, a black counselor and a white counselor. We are getting ready to consolidate. I'll have about 1400 students next school year. In Robeson County we have ten high schools and we are putting them into six for the next school year. In fact, yesterday we had an orientation for those students who are coming to the high school from the other smaller high schools.

Goldie: Will you become one unit?

Mrs. Defreece: We are one unit now.

Goldie: Oh, you just consolidated the high schools because you have too many high schools.

Mrs. Defreece: Yes, because we've been in this system only two years. We were in Lumberton City Schools but now we are in public schools of Robeson County. We had five administrative units to merge.

Goldie: Now I am going to ask you something about your school and some of your responsibilities and I will give you different areas and just tell me how you deal with it.

Goldie: Supervision of personnel and selection of teachers.

Mrs. Defreese: Okay, here in the public schools of Robeson County, first we review applications at the central office and then we select applicants to be interviewed. They interview first, a team at central office, then they send them to me. I interview them and make the recommendation of the person I would like to hire and usually we get that person. As far as personnel evaluations, I do the majority of all observations especially with the ICP's and probationary teachers. Of course I do more than half of the others. We have three observations. We observe half of the faculty three times and the other half once, those with career status.

Goldie: Curriculum and instruction.

Mrs. Defreese: Well, I am the instructional leader.

Goldie: Tell me how you maintain that status.

Mrs. Defreese: Well, it is a difficult job because trend of the responsibilities of being principal has changed. In the last few years a principal is supposed to be the instructional leader and not the disciplinarian, the person who sits in the office and the teachers just send students to that person. That role has changed. The principal should not be in the office. He should be very visible. I like to be in the hallways and in the classrooms. That is my joy. That is what I like about the job mostly. I don't like being in the office. I'm only in there when I have to be in there. Right now I am in there more than I like to be. We are in the effective schools movement and I've been working on that a lot and with the consolidation process that makes me stay in the office a little bit more than I like to be doing--paperwork. I have to tell my teachers that the role of the principal has changed. We are no longer going to discipline your children. That is your responsibility. We're giving it back to them where it belongs. I tell them that if you send them to me, I am not going to be there. I am an instructional leader. I enjoy working with the curriculum. That is what I did as an assistant principal and I do that and I do my master schedule. I register every student who comes in that school because I want to meet the child. Once the guidance counselors see them, they send them to me and then I register them and put them into the various classes and have a chance to talk with them. When students want to withdraw or dropout, they must see me first. I just don't give that responsibility to the guidance people. They have the withdrawal form once I tell them it is okay to withdraw.

Goldie: But you have counseled with that child and you feel

that you know how to handle that child?

Mrs. Defreece: Sometimes I am able to talk them out of withdrawing or suggesting alternatives to them before they leave. I always make parent contact. If they are 18, it doesn't matter. They said, Mrs. Defreece, I am grown. I say no, you are not grown yet. You might be 18 but you are not making house payments. When you start making house payments and you have a job and you are paying rent or whatever, then I think you are grown but until that time you are not and we don't have grown people in this school as students.

Goldie: How much do you depend on department chair?

Mrs. Defreece: A lot. They play a big role in the school. I don't see the principal as sitting there making all of the decisions. I have involved students as well. We have a Student School Improvement Team. That came about as a result of effective schools since we are with Senate Bill 2 and State Accreditation we thought we would involve our students in that. They think of incentives to improve attendance, the dropout rate; they sponsor assembly programs; they do bulletin boards; they do Parent Night; they work with Open House at the beginning of the school year; they are involved in various activities. The latest thing that they did was the Gold Card. We had to pass into our central office staff some Federal forms and you know how difficult it is to get students to bring forms back to school, especially high school students. So the student school improvement team came up with the idea to give the students Gold Cards. Those who brought theirs in on time the Gold Card would give them the opportunity to be released from their fourth period class three minutes early to go to lunch. So that was a big thing for the kids. They enjoyed it. I had several of the kids come up to me and say, Mrs. Defreece, that was a good idea except it wasn't mine. That belonged to the Student School Improvement Team and I gave Jason Norris' name, who is the chairperson of that team, and said, you be sure and mention it to Jason so that he can tell the other students about it. Our Student Council works well in the school. My department chairpeople meet with me on the budget; I lay it on the table. They know how much money we have then they put in a request for what they need for the year and of course some of the departments will say, well, we are not going to get any money this year because of the tight budget. Those departments who really have to have the money should get it. Of course that is biology, industrial arts, art classes with your ceramics, and all of those classes it takes a lot of money to run those programs. They make a lot of decisions. Any major decision that is made about the school, I involve them in those types of decisions--site-based decision-making. And of course the NCAE President is on my staff, Richard Munroe. He is a social studies teacher.

Goldie: Oh, and you had Rose Marie Lowery who was from here and is in Raleigh now. I used to work with her a lot in NCAE.

Goldie: Discipline and how you deal with it.

Mrs. Defreese: We have a discipline policy. We have a student handbook and the rules are spelled out in that handbook. And of course, the teachers have rules, no more than four and they do not conflict with what is in that handbook and they have a policy for sending them to the office. We have discipline referral forms to use. They are for minor infractions when they don't have to send the student to the office for immediate discipline. If a student is cursing a teacher, fighting, under the influence of drugs, very, very disruptive--those occasions, they don't have to do a write up. They can send those students to the office immediately. We have in-school suspension. We try to use that before we use an out-of-school suspension. Fighting, the first offense is usually in-school suspension, however, it depends upon how disruptive the fight was. Sometimes if it was very disruptive, we send them home. If they are easy to handle, if they stop when you say stop, or just when you pull them apart and there is no cursing and no trying to get at each other again, then they get in-school suspension. I always have a hearing anytime before they go home for the out-of-school suspension. I give the students a notice of the charges and hearing then the parents will come to the school with them. That gives me a chance to decide how many days because they know once they get that notice of charges, that they are going home. They know that, they know the rules.

Goldie: Do you consider discipline a major problem at school?

Mrs. Defreese: No, not a major problem. Anytime you have teenagers you are going to have disruptions and you are going to have discipline problems but at Lumberton Senior High School we just don't have a lot of discipline problems. I believe this year we have only had three fights and that is unusual. We always have to knock on wood when we say it but it has been a good year. We haven't found any guns on campus, we have found knives. Some of the students will tell us that this person has a knife and that is an automatic suspension--ten days. That is in our board policy and that is automatic.

Goldie: Transportation.

Mrs. Defreese: One of my assistant principals handles the transportation. We have 7 buses and our buses take our students home first and then they pick up the elementary school children. My assistant principal handles the activity buses and of course our main school buses.

Goldie: Utilization of funds. You touched on that earlier.

Mrs. Defreese: Well, we have a budget as I said before, and after meeting with the department chairpeople we figure out how much we want to give each department and that is the way the money is spent.

Goldie: Cafeteria management.

Mrs. Defreese: We have about 9 cafeteria workers and a cafeteria manager who is the immediate supervisor for the cafeteria workers. I do visit daily the cafeteria to not only see the cafeteria workers but to check on the students but my main purpose is to be visible there as well as in other parts of the building and to establish a good working relationship with the cafeteria staff because you want them to feel a part of the school day. The manager has a mail box. Everything that goes on at the school she is aware of it. She is involved in some of our staff meetings and they work very well with us.

Goldie: Did you select the manager?

Mrs. Defreese: No, the central office did.

Goldie: Buildings and grounds.

Mrs. Defreese: One of my assistant principals is in charge of buildings and grounds. We have a janitorial staff of six and one person is in charge of the grounds--one of the custodians.

Goldie: Community relations. How does Lumberton Senior High fit into this community and what does the community think about the school?

Mrs. Defreese: Well, we have lots of community support at Lumberton Senior High School. We have a Booster's Club for athletics and we have Band Fans for our band. There are just great supporters of the school. Not only are those organizations involved in the schools but we have a Volunteer Corp of parents and other citizens who are involved in the school. They do a lot of volunteer work. We have a parent who serves on our School Improvement Team. She is there for every meeting and she is in charge of the Parent Volunteer Corp. They come out and they serve as secretaries for a couple of hours, they work in the media center, they work in the classrooms. The business community, which is a big help to the school, work with me on providing incentives for attendance. We have a drawing each marking period. Those students who did not miss a day are able to put their names in the box and then we draw one name--for example Belk. They give us a gift certificate for \$25 and that student will get

that. This community is really involved in the school.

Goldie: Where do you do your drawing? Do you have an assembly or just do in the office?

Mrs. Defreese: We just do it and announce it over the intercom.

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

Mrs. Defreese: Principals don't have as much control as people think they do. Years ago I think--I don't know if they had the control but it just seemed like they did. Probably as a teacher I thought the principal just had lots of control. But they don't. I tell my students that I have rules just like they have rules. I say, now here is your student handbook, now your teacher has a book with rules in it that she has to follow and now look at mine. Mine is bigger than any of yours. I don't think a person really needs a lot of control over a school site. I think you should be the leader of course.

Goldie: I think you are referring to cohesive authority but do you feel you have natural authority to do anything that you really need to get done or to effect change?

Mrs. Defreese: Yes, yes. I do have that authority. Definitely. I have not wanted to do anything that I did not get the full support of central office and I am a person who likes to do things differently, not the same way all the time. I like to take a chance. I'm a risk-taker.

Goldie: Do you ask afterwards or do you ask first? Risk-takers sometimes try something and then if -- you have your rationale and then if someone asks about it you can always back it up.

Mrs. Defreese: I always do what I want to do and then I let them know that I have done it. We were in a meeting in Raleigh, because I am on the District Improvement Team for the public schools for Robeson County, and we were at one of the workshops with Dr. Larry Lazotte. I told him, Mr. Johnson, I don't always follow those rules that are in the handbook. He said, You don't. I said, no, I really don't. Sometimes I just do what I want to do and he said, give me an example and of course I told him, I said, now, we have a rule that if a student misses more than 12 days in a semester or more than 24 in the year they fail but I don't follow that in all situations. I've made exceptions to that and of course it wasn't just to break the rules. Because I support the rules but in some instances when you are working trying to keep students in school, if you follow it every time you are

going to lose a lot of students--and with one student in particular that I was working with last year, a young man who was a grade behind and who was a senior--at the end of the semester he had missed 15 days and I wrote a contract for him. I told him that if he came to school regularly for the rest of the year that I would approve of his--they have to give me a letter appealing the number of days that they miss. I said, "Now you must come to school unless you are in the hospital and if you come to school sick then I will look at you and tell you whether you are sick or not. Then I will tell your mother that you can go home and I said, other than that, I want you here." Sure enough, he did not miss another day the whole year and that was just wonderful and so Mr. Johnson said, well, Mrs. Defreese sometimes you have to make exceptions to the rules.

Goldie: That shows that you are involved with the children and your main objective is to see them finish school.

Mrs. Defreese: And to see them learn as much as they can while they are there. I believe if a child comes to school, he is going to learn.

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

Mrs. Defreese: Well, I really don't know because I started teaching in 1964. At that time schools were segregated then in the late sixties I worked in an integrated school and after working in New Jersey, I worked there for three years as a teacher and then that is when I came back to Lumberton to teach. I really don't see it as having an effect.

Goldie: Do you think that you would have been where you are today had schools--do you think desegregation had any bearing on where you are right now.

Mrs. Defreese: Well, it would have to in a way because if the schools had not integrated then I certainly would not have been a principal of Lumberton Senior High School. Maybe South Lumberton High School and I think a lot of people were shocked that I was selected as principal of the senior high school, the first black principal in Lumberton of a high school.

Goldie: Were you the first female of a high school and first black?

Mrs. Defreese: I often think about my mother who would have been so proud of me. Now she was living when I was principal of the junior high school. She died my second year that I was principal there, in fact she worked at Lumberton Senior High School in the cafeteria for twenty years and that was before integration. My daughter and I were talking about it

the other night. She said, Mama, Grannie would have been so proud of you and I said, well, Kim, at least she was proud of me already because she often told me how proud she was. In fact, when I was growing up, she gave me lots of support. She was just the role model for me. She had very little education but lots of sense. Lots of common sense. I can remember she worked for the superintendent a lot during the summer going down to the beach and doing parties and those kinds of things for him. In fact, she worked for the same superintendent who hired me as a teacher and who hired me to go to the junior high school as principal and who helped me get the job at Lumberton Senior High School. He was on the Board since the schools merged. So she always said when I came to Lumberton and started working, she said, Yes, Dr. Carrin knew that you would work because he knew her.

Goldie: Did you ever go with her down to the beach?

Mrs. Defreese: Yes, I went with her. Every time that she went, I went down there. You know they had the little cabins for the help there and my mother and I stayed there for weeks at a time during the summer.

Goldie: Do you enjoy your job? Why?

Mrs. Defreese: I am a people person and I get so much fulfillment from working. There is not a day that I leave home that I say, well, I hate to go to work today. Never. That was when I was teaching too. But I enjoy it. I work hard, I am dedicated. I enjoy the teachers, I enjoy the students. It is just a pleasure to go to work. I hear some people talk about I wish I didn't have to go to school today. I say, I can't believe you said that. I don't miss work. In fact I have not missed a day this year. Last year I missed three days of work. My son died in May of last year. He was 18 years and he would have graduated in June and he died the latter part of May. I missed three days of work. I went back to work the day after the funeral. He was an outstanding young man and he was already accepted at UNC-Charlotte and was looking forward to really doing a good job in school.

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

Mrs. Defreese: Time--not enough time to do the things that you want to do. I don't have enough time during the six hours there. I am not a person who will stay at the school and work late. I try to leave school by 4:00 p.m. unless I am involved in Staff Development meetings, ball games etc.

Goldie: Do you attend all of those games?

Mrs. Defreese: Yes. I attend all the football games, soccer

games, basketball games so when I don't have a game I try to leave the school. I do lots of work at home. I have never written up an observation at school. I try to schedule them on Tuesdays so that I can have that 5 day period and it gives me a weekend. So on Saturday mornings and on Sunday mornings I get up very early while it is quiet and write them up. I do a better job and I do a thorough job on them.

Goldie: Your English teacher skills come in real handy because I know for someone picking them up would know that this is for this person and not a lot of generic phrases.

Mrs. Defreece: Right. I want it to reflect what that teacher was doing that day and when you read it you would know that you were in an English class or a history class or a math class.

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

Mrs. Defreece: Comments from the students and the teachers. How they feel about the school and the atmosphere at school. Sometimes I get a note on my desk and it makes it all worth while when my students say, Mrs. Defreece, we have a good school, we have good teachers and you are a good principal and that makes it worthwhile. Of course, when I walk into stores in Lumberton, everywhere I go I see my students. In fact, the day that my son died one of my students was his nurse and it just makes me feel good since I have touched their lives and that makes it worthwhile.

Goldie: With the few blacks that we have as high school principals, if you knew of a black young woman or young man that aspired to be to be a principal of a high school in North Carolina, what kind of advice would you give them.

Mrs. Defreece: Well, to be willing to work hard and to be dedicated. If you are a hard worker and if you are dedicated, I think that you will be successful. In fact I have a student I taught many years ago, in fact my first year of teaching, who is principal in Winston-Salem, a young man. This past year was his first year. He was an assistant principal the last time I talked to him and then I got a card from him saying that he had received a principalship and he is a fine young man. I never will forget him. He was in my tenth grade English class and he was a year older than the other students but he was such an intelligent child and I wondered why he was so much older--if he had failed or what. So I pulled his cumulative record and I saw that he had failed first grade and I could not believe it. So I asked him about it and he said, Mrs. Defreece, I didn't go to school very much because I didn't have shoes to wear and he wasn't the best dressed child at that time. He was from a very, very poor family and then after he told me that well,

it really touched me and I took up a lot of time with him. I brought him home with me. I didn't have any children at that time and I would buy things for him, take him to get a haircut and I just saw something in him and he has done extremely well. I'm just really proud of him. I have done that for a lot of children. I have students who come to see me regularly that I have taught and called me and they say, Mrs. Defreese, you were such a good teacher, hard teacher you know. They said but you loved us. I believe that something is missing in the classroom now that we don't--we love children enough. I think most teachers do. I'm still a teacher and I think that is what makes me a good principal. But we are so busy trying to cover those competencies until we have left the child and I think it is important now because we have to pass those end-of-course tests and all of that but I believe that students could do better if you show them a little more interest in them as a person. When I was teaching, on Fridays after our tests, we'd have 15 minutes to talk about anything that you wanted to talk about. I gave students an opportunity to tell me what I could do better then I would tell them what they could do better. How I wanted them to improve. We talked about manners, citizenship, all of those kinds of things, dressing, etc., but I haven't heard anything when visiting classrooms and observing. I have not heard teachers talking to students about citizenship or about behavior and those kinds of things. I think mainly they are afraid to do it. I was talking to the School Improvement Team the other day about that and they said, Mrs. Defreese, you know, we are just so scared to do anything that is not related to our subject matter because of these tests we just want to teach, teach, teach. I said, but yes, you could still take some time to talk to your children. You don't have to do it everyday but at least 10 minutes out of the week to start with. I believe that students will respond better to you and discipline. Kids want attention. I do a lot of talking to students. Seldom will you see my door closed in my office. I just think a closed door is a symbol that I don't want to be bothered. I don't want students ever to think that I don't want to be bothered because I am there for them. If I have parents at the school, and a child is there to see me, I am going to see the child before I see the parents. I am going to see the child before I see the teacher unless it is an emergency. The children know that. It is amazing how students will come down and tell you things about teachers. You don't ask them but they come in and tell you what is going on in the classroom. Sometimes it is good and sometimes it is not good. I have one little boy, I call him little but he weighs probably about 250 lbs. He comes in especially when the teacher writes him up in class. He wants to get into my office before the write up gets there. He will say, Mrs. Defreese, I wasn't doing anything. She just took my name for nothing. I said, now Jim, I don't believe that. You had to do something. Well, she didn't say anything to that other

student. I said, well, you should be concerned about yourself. If you do what you are supposed to do, then you would not be in trouble and you wouldn't have to tell on anybody else. I see Jimmy sometimes at least three times a week just to talk with him. So one day, the teacher that he was having so many problems with came in and told me, Mrs. Defreese, Jim made a 100 today on his test. I put it on the bulletin board. I said, that is wonderful. I said I am going to my office right now. I was eating lunch. I said I am going to stop eating lunch. I'm going to call Jimmy to the office. So I called Jimmy to the office and he came and he was looking mad. He said, Mrs. Defreese, I haven't done nothing. I said, Jimmy, I didn't ask you if you had done anything. I said, let me tell you one thing. I am fed up with you coming down here telling me about this teacher and you hadn't done anything. Every time I see you you have a complaint. I said, I am shocked that you didn't tell me about that 100 that you made in Mrs. Freeman's room. You tell everything else but you didn't tell that. Why didn't you tell me that? He just broke out in the biggest grin. Well, he was just precious. Now come back in here and tell me some more about these 100's you are going to be making. You stop by here with some good news. That was just so sweet and since then when I see him in the hall, he just kind of has a little strut to his walk.

Goldie: Because he knows that you care about him. The first thing is to become involved with the students and I tell the teachers when you have any problems with discipline, back off of the academics. Look at where you are with involvement and most of the time you are not very high from one to ten. You are not very high on involvement so you need to get some involvement and then children will do things because they like you and they will listen to you. A lot of teachers are not risk-takers. That is why you are not in the classroom now because you took the risks but they won't take the risk. My first principal told me, whatever you are doing in your classroom be able to back it up with an educational principal. Know why you are doing it. I think that you can explain just about anything.

Goldie: We talked about the advice you could give to a young black and do you think that a young black needs someone of the other race to say that they can do it or to help them along. You kind of talked about knowing some people who helped and you even say that Dr. Gainey helped. Do you think that is the case--that you need someone like that?

Mrs. Defreese: Yes, definitely you do but you are going to have to be able to do the job. You have got to have the capabilities there and if someone sees it in you and wants to help you, sure. I can tell you this. I don't like people who don't work with me to want to help me. This is political. I can remember when I applied for the job at the

junior high school. My pastor called me in one Sunday at church and said, Mrs. Defreese, he said, I heard that there is an opening at the junior high school for a principal, are you going to apply? I said, yes, I have already. He said, would you like for me to speak for you. I said, no, but thank you. I said, I'm going to let the work that I have done speak for me. I just don't want to get involved in those kinds of things. He was in the House of Representatives. You probably have heard of him, Sidney Lockes. He was in politics and I would rather not because he didn't know what I could do. I went to his church and he knew that I was a fine person and that kind of thing but he didn't know my abilities as far as teaching and being a good administrator. Those people who know me and have seen me work, they could recommend me.

Goldie: Do you think you need to know the politics of the operation to be a good administrator?

Mrs. Defreese: Yes, and to set those things aside and not get involved in it. I try not to get involved in any political situations. I vote and do what a citizen should do but as far as getting into the political arguments and campaigns and those kinds of things, I don't get involved. I don't belong to a lot of organizations with women and even in church because lots of times people expect things from you when you are those types of organizations. I belong to one sorority and I am the only black from Robeson County and they are from Robeson, Scotland, Hoke Counties--three counties--Delta Kappa Gamma. I am a trustee for Southeastern General Hospital there and I am on the Family Alternatives Board and the Health Cooperation Board in Lumberton. I do serve on those types of things but just the gossip sessions, no.

Goldie: I have heard people say that being a principal is a lonely job and the superintendency is a lonely job. I know a lot of things you just have to pull away from.

Goldie: Well, I have come to the end of my interview guide. Do you have any words of wisdom you would like to do?

Mrs. Defreese: No.

Goldie: As far as our black children and black educators, have you just looked at the situation and found out where we are going?

Mrs. Defreese: Our black boys. I have had three suspensions for the rest of the year and two of them were black boys. It is sad and this is the first time I've had to suspend students for the rest of the year. They had folders with discipline problems and you reach a point where you have to do something. You have no choice and we are losing them. We just don't have the homes to support these students as we

used to.

Goldie: How many black teachers do you have?

Mrs. Defreece: Probably about eight out of sixty-two.

Goldie: Do you have men?

Mrs. Defreece: Three and this is something that I want to work on with black boys--black role models. Judge Richardson who is a friend of mine is black and is from Robeson County. He is going to work with me. We have a black public defender and he is on the School Board and I have known him all of my life and he is going to work with me. We are going to get a group of black men together to work with these students. We are going to reach out into the factories where we do have some white collar black men working. We want to establish a partnership with the community to involve them in working with our black young men. We don't have as many problems with the black females as we do black males.

Goldie: You may be the reason for that. Role models I think, seeing someone and seeing that there is a better way and they see how you dress and how you do and I think if we had more black men it would help.

Mrs. Defreece: And it is going to take the black men in the community to do it.

Goldie: Well, I appreciate your taking the time to talk to me and it seems that all of you have some of the same ideas about where we need to go and I know the children at your high school are blessed to have you as their leader. As an instructional leader I am sure the faculty is glad to have a person who knows where they are going and that is strong enough to deal with the situation. It has been a pleasure meeting you and talking with you.

Mrs. Defreece: It has been a pleasure talking with you and thank you.

Goldie: Thank you.

Mrs. Defreece: You are welcome.