U-28

Interview

with

CLINT LOVELY

August 4, 2005

by Elizabeth Gritter

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Transcript – Clint Lovely

Interviewee:	Clint Lovely
Interviewer:	Elizabeth Gritter
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Length:	2 cassettes, approximately 2.5 hours

START OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

ELIZABETH GRITTER: Is your full name Clinton?

CLINT LOVELY: It's Clint, not Clinton.

EG: Okay. [The tape recorder is] picking up fine, so it's good. Do you have a middle name?

CL: No.

EG: Neither do I, not many people-

CL: Not many people like that!

EG: My mom doesn't have a middle name and I think my grandmother on that side also doesn't have a middle name.

CL: I just think my parents couldn't think of anything, so they just said Clint and left it at that.

EG: Yeah. My brother just has a middle initial, R. My mom wanted it to be Robert after my dad, but my dad didn't want that so [he] just [has] an R.

CL: Okay, well that works for him.

CL: I think I got that in 1966.

EG: I know you went to Central High School and when did you graduate from there?

CL: 1962.

EG: What is your occupational experience?

CL: It's been in education, I have been a teacher, coach and a recreation supervisor.

EG: Okay, so did you start as a teacher at Central?

CL: Yes, at Central. In fact I started teaching at Central in 1969.

EG: You were telling me that you taught there until 1996?

CL: Yes, that is right.

EG: What did you teach?

CL: I taught Health and Physical Education.

EG: I am aware that you were the football coach?

CL: Yes.

EG: When was that?

CL: I took over the football coaching situation in 1975.

EG: Okay and how long were you a coach?

CL: Oh goodness up until about 1996.

EG: Oh wow! Did you coach anything else?

CL: Yes. [interruption] I coached baseball.I have coached track and field and coached basketball. I think I have done it all.

CL: Supervisor.

EG: When did you start working here?

CL: Five years ago.

EG: So like from 2000?

CL: Yes, about 2000.

EG: If you would start talking about the area you grew up in and what community you were a part of in Louisville.

CL: Sure. I grew up in an area called Smoketown; it was the Shepherd Square housing projects. The name of it was Shepherd Square. We always referred to the area as Smoketown, and that goes back farther than me. As to why we referred to it as Smoketown, I don't know, but that's what it was--Smoketown. A lot of us came from areas that didn't have running water, toilets or let's just say plumbing. We had plumbing and running water in the projects, so we really felt like we had made a step up in our lifestyles. A lot of us came from short streets in the alleys and things like that, so we really moved up when we moved into the projects. Or so we thought.

EG: What did your parents do?

CL: My mother worked in a cleaner's and my daddy worked various jobs from construction to janitorial work. I was one of the few people that had a mother and father together at that time in the projects.

EG: Were most people single?

CL: Yes, the vast majority were either raised by grandmamma or one parent. Most didn't have two parents, they had the single parent dwelling.

EG: Was this predominantly or all black?

academically as well as socially. They didn't have any problem with taking a ruler to our hand; if we got out of line they would discipline us with a quickness. They kind of put the fear of God in us, and I guess at that time you could do that. So the education we got was pretty good.

EG: What were the resources like?

CL: Books and everything like that?

EG: Yes.

CL: As far as I knew we had the same books that everyone else did. Now I didn't know and I still don't know to this day whether we did or didn't. I know we had the Dick and Jane books, the *Weekly Readers*-was it a *Weekly Reader*? I have forgotten exactly what it was, but I know it was the same book that the children had at the white schools. I'm pretty much thinking that in our area we had the same advantages as far as materials, financially though, no. The books and all that stuff we had the same. Most of the teachers that taught me had Master's degrees, they were very educated teachers.

EG: What about your high school experience?

CL: High school experience, we were ninety nine and three fourths percent black. We had an awful lot of pride in our school; it was the place we wanted to be. It was the focal point of our black community because it was the only school there, and it was our entertainment. We looked forward to the football games on Friday nights; we looked forward to the basketball games in the winter. So this was the form of entertainment that we had in our black community and we lived and died Central High School. It was everything to us, and it's not that way now.

EG: Did you play sports for Central?

played Shawnee, the Catholic schools Flaget and St. Xavier and I forgot to mention Desales, another Catholic school that we played. The rest of them we played out in the state, other black schools like Lexington-Dunbar, Owensboro Western, Bowling Green High Street, Paris Western and we would travel to places like Evansville and play Lincoln. So that made up the Buckeye Schedule, schools like that. The historical black schools that are not in existence today and other regions of the state and even other states, that's who we would play.

EG: How was it playing against the white teams, were there any instances of discrimination?

CL: As an athlete I never saw an incident. Athletes historically kind of respected one another, you were doing the same thing and you had that respect for one another. Obviously you knew that one was black and one was white, but once you got on the field it didn't matter. You just played hard because you were on different teams.

EG: Was that the same for coaches and referees?

CL: I can't say the same for some referees because we have actually had some games taken from us; I guess it was a sign of the times. The referees, I guess felt like we weren't supposed to beat them. Sometimes I think a lot of officials, even to this day, feel that it is okay for black teams to lose. It doesn't hurt their feelings as bad as when it's a mixed team or something like that, it's like they are insensitive to how we feel. It doesn't matter. When I was coaching football at Central, I used to ask the referee don't we deserve a chance to win as well as the other team, all we ask is that all things be equal. We don't want anything else; just let the kids decide the issue. You look at the flags and the disparity of the calls, it was awful. It's gotten a whole lot better now. It's gotten

would speak up for something, sometimes, other than that dollar. So that's where we are with him.

EG: I guess I should ( ) [laughs]

CL: I'm don't mean to be talking about Michael Jordan, but we- [tape stops/distortion] -how many people went out and got dinners Rob and Charles Barkley to sell something? Not many.

EG: Exactly!

CL: Not many, because they speak up, they are controversial and they say things.

EG: I grew up in Grand Rapids and my dad is an avid sports person, so it's so easy for me to get going about sports. [laughs] We probably should talk about a few of these other things first. We'll come back to it.

CL: That's a big area; we are basketball country down here. These people love some basketball.

EG: When you went to Central as a student, what did you think of the academics there?

CL: As a student? Here again, not knowing what other people were doing I thought it was fine. I thought it was excellent. As it worked out it was excellent because we sent kids to Northwestern, Harvard, Yale and all the big schools academically. They have gotten scholarships, so our education was excellent.

EG: So people were going to Northwestern, Yale and Harvard back when you were a student there?

CL: Yes. Absolutely. Yes, it was excellent, it really was. We had different levels of education at Central when I was there. We had what we called the College

Blueboy Café and we would be in front of The White Swan Restaurant, any restaurant up there, and we would do our demonstration thing. A lot of us got locked up.

EG: Were you arrested?

CL: No, fortunately I didn't ever get arrested. I don't know how I didn't, but I never did get arrested. I guess I was always one in the back, I don't know, but I never got arrested. A lot of my buddies did, they got taken down to the Juvenile Center and their parents would come and get them. We went through all of that to have the right to sit down and eat at The Blueboy Cafeteria or some of the restaurants at the time up on Fourth Avenue.

EG: So your ( ), you were doing sit ins?

CL: Yes, we were doing sit ins at Walgreen's, Taylor Drugs and all the drugstores. At the counters and everything, we did all that. Some of us got spat on and naturally the insults, the jungle bunnies and the spear chuckers and all that. We heard all that, but we vowed that we would not retaliate. That was the thing that we had to take.

EG: Were you involved in any other Civil Rights activities or groups?

CL: When I was in college we went down to Mississippi, I didn't go, I was playing ball- wait let me get this together, what was the march on Selma?

EG: In 1965?

CL: Yes, we had a big rally and we threw in our money and rented a bus. We drew lots to see who went. Everybody wanted to go, but if you didn't have your number come up you couldn't go. We sent about twenty five kids down to Selma, Alabama.

EG: Did you go?

EG: You had water unlike some of the other-

CL: Yes, seriously, I didn't know I was poor until the government told me I was poor, and I resent that to this day. I was not poor, they made us poor. I know I am not making sense.

EG: You mean in terms of the distribution?

CL: In terms of who we were and what we were about. My mother and father worked every day. My mother didn't have the luxury of staying home and raising me per say, I was kind of a latch key kid, but I knew exactly what I was to do and what I was not to do. She instilled that in me. I had that respect for my mother and that fear of my mother and daddy. I never knew I was poor until these people came around and told us that we were poor. It never sunk in; I didn't know what they were talking about.

EG: So, you resent that society viewed you as poor and didn't recognize all that you had.

CL: Yes! I had everything, we had a meal, we had a television, and I had clothes, what more was I to have at six or seven years old? I had everything that I was supposed to have. Then came the commodities, and in my opinion I think it did my race of people more harm than good when they started that anti poverty program. I really think it did us more harm than good, because we were making it. Families took care of families. Do you understand what I am saying?

EG: The communities taking care of each other-

CL: Yes, I mean if one ate we all ate. We took care of one another. There wasn't any way in the world that anybody in my family would be without food, that's

stopped] ...and now we have a generation of people who are doing this, the hand is out. We have trained them to accept this.

EG: If you ( ) talk about the community at Central that you experienced as a student, but then as a teacher before busing. What sort of impact busing has had on that community?

CL: I keep going back to the pride factor. When I came back in 1969 to teach at Central, the pride was still there. We had so much pride in ourselves and our community. Our kids wore three piece suits to school and the girls would come in heels, I mean they dressed for school. Now you are talking thirty years ago, they came to school clean. They would not dare come to school dirty. The vast majority of our kids were good students. Then we had the lower half that were not good students, but we had the comprehensive program so we had something for everyone. That changed with busing. I guess some change is good. I don't know how it's going to end up, but I see some of the kids that were going to school at that time; some of them are doing well and some of them are not doing well. I guess that goes for every generation. The thing that I loved about Central, and everybody loved about Central was that it represented the black community. Now, I don't think we have a high school that represents the black community anymore. I don't think we have a focal point; our focal point now has gone to the University of Louisville for whatever reason. Most of the brothers rally behind the University of Louisville because we see that as being a black situation.

EG: So the focal point in terms of the sports, the community center point? Were there community events at Central?

community and spirituality. It was almost spiritual, if you understand what I mean. If we lost, we cried because it hurt. When we won, the whole community was happy.

EG: [Did] they have political activities at Central? I know there's a high school in Durham which is also a center point for the black community and they have polling places and [it's] where the black political clubs organize.

CL: No, we never had that at our high school to my knowledge. Maybe years before I got there we did, but not to my knowledge. However, let's say we had a conference or something; all the black leaders would come to Central. So in that vein maybe it was a political thing.

EG: I know too that Lyman Johnson-

CL: Lyman was my teacher.

EG: Was he?

CL: Lyman T. was my Civics teacher, and I used to marvel at him about some of the things he had done. Some of the cases he had in court and integrating the University of Kentucky. A lot of people didn't realize that Lyman T. was the one who integrated the University of Kentucky. Lyman T. Johnson integrated the graduate school there. He got threatening letters and things like that, just a whole lot of stuff. Lyman was a pioneer.

EG: You said that you first had this consciousness about black and white societal discrimination while you were in high school?

CL: Yes, because we started playing them, when we were playing St. Xavier and Flaget. I never really played against them in an organized sport; we would always play against other black teams when I was playing pee wee. My first integrated competition was when I got to high school. I guess the excitement or anxiety because of the fear of

CL: Yes. There was no way in the world he did not hear this week in and week out, he had to hear it. He was oblivious, apparently, or he concurred. For whatever reason, we would always go to the back of the bus.

EG: Even though it was integrated?

CL: Yes, I don't know why we did that, I guess we felt like it was safe or something. I don't know.

EG: Did you grow up sitting in the back of the bus?

CL: I never rode the bus.

EG: You had just stayed in the neighborhood.

CL: Yes, I never rode the bus. When I went anywhere I went with my parents and we drove, so I never really rode the bus.

EG: I have heard that from other black people, that even after the bus was integrated a lot people would still go to the back, some of it was just out of habit-

CL: I don't know what it was, but I feel like it was for safety.

EG: Oh, from the people who were calling you names?

CL: Up front. I knew there was no way in the world I was going to sit behind them, so we would go to the back. After a while it stopped, it actually stopped. We were on the bus with kids from St. Xavier and Flaget, two Catholic white schools, and it stopped.

EG: Do you know why it stopped?

CL: I don't know. It just stopped. I think around 1960 or 1961 it just stopped. Maybe they got tired or maybe they realized that what they were saying wasn't about anything, I don't know it just stopped. I will never forget the day, it was 1960, and we

married and then went into the service. I can still sew, I was trained very well. I can make pants, make a suit, I can use the press to iron, I can write a measure-I can do all this stuff, because my background was such that I got that training in high school. I can count my money, so I was prepared to do something else. In playing ball, I guess my skills were pretty good and I got a scholarship to Kentucky State. I wasn't going, but my mom insisted that I go. When I got to college is when I felt ill prepared. I did not feel like I was prepared properly. I didn't take the courses in high school because I was in vocational education, and I did not go to a college that offered vocational. They offered Agriculture, but not what I was taking, so needless to say my first year was a struggle. I did okay in English, but not great. A little bit more was required than what I did in high school. History required me to take World Civilization, and I had just taken US History in high school, so I had to really buckle down and get myself together because it was more than I realized. I would recommend now if I were to do it all over again that I take the right classes. Particularly when I got into sciences like Kinesiology, Physiology and my Anatomy it was killing me. It took all I could to do these things, but I did overcome and did the hard work necessary.

EG: So do you think if you had taken the classes in the Preparatory Program in high school you would have been okay?

CL: Yes, I think I would have been because my other classmates were. They were fine, they were excellent, and they were doing a great job.

EG: So you went on an athletic scholarship?

CL: Yes, that's the only way I was going.

EG: When you were there did you decide you wanted to be a teacher?

I taught strictly health. I taught four health classes and I did hall duty, each teacher was assigned extra duties and mine was the hallways.

EG: What did you think when you learned that you would be undergoing desegregation and that Central would be experiencing these radical changes?

CL: A lot of anxiety believe me. A lot of anxiety because everything I had done had been with black people, I had not really done a lot with white people. I did take classes with white people at Kentucky State, but they were in the minority. [laughs] If you understand what I am saying.

EG: Yes, it was a historically black school.

CL: Yes, black school. There were only about two or three white students in a class, so we knew they were there but they didn't bother us. Some of them were real good people, we had a lot of good times with them. To be scrutinized as a teacher teaching whites, I said dag gum do I teach them the same way that I do black students? So there was a lot of anxiety, on both sides I would think. Because they didn't know what to expect and we didn't know what to expect. I do know that tension was high, tension was very high. National Guards and police were all at the school when school first opened up.

EG: In 1975? They were all there? How long did they stay there?

CL: Yes, yes. I would say they stayed there several weeks. There was a lot of tension. I will never forget one time when I was coming down my hallway-I was working in the summer time on a paint crew, I had a paint crew and we would paint, for instance, for the board of education. Let me back up, the first anxiety was merger.

EG: Yes, I have heard about that.

CL: I was sent to Ballard High School. Now, what happened was that the Board of Education made a ruling--I want to say it was the State Board-- that all head coaches had to be in the building. I was the head football coach in 1975, so instead of me going to Ballard I came back to Central. I was all ready and set to go to Ballard, when here again came a phone call telling me to go back to Central.

EG: So you've been assigned to other schools but have never gone to them!

CL: Yes, that's two of them. [laughing] So, that's what happened there. I was coming down the hall, I will never forget this, my football team was depleted and I was going to have a ( ), we were going to a ( ) football team. They got bused out to various schools. I was coming down the hall and I saw two white kids coming down the hall and we introduced ourselves. They were two of my first white football players. One was named Marty Burden and Keith Boyd, they came in from ( ) High School. That really went a long way as far as breaking the ice, for me anyway.

EG: What do you mean?

CL: Talking to them, finding out that they were eager. They had just come down to check the school out. They knew they were going to be bused to Central. So I think it went a long way and opened the door for both of us, I know they went back and talked with their people.

EG: Okay, so they came down before school started?

CL: Yes, even before practice started. So, everything was fine.

EG: So, what impact did desegregation have on your teaching?

CL: My teaching experience? None, because I was a P.E. teacher and I just decided I was going to teach P.E. the way I teach P.E. It was the way I had been teaching

CL: So they still hadn't had the experience about being around brothers, because once school let out they got on the buses and went home; other than the ones who played sports.

EG: How did it go with the interaction between the black teachers and the white teachers that came in at Central?

CL: Some resentment in all honesty at first among the few black teachers that were left, because some of the teachers including me felt that the white teachers thought they knew the answer to everything at Central, when they didn't.

EG: So, kind of a superiority thing?

CL: Yes, we are in control. Just stay in your place and let us run the show now. Kind of like we have taken over. That superiority thing, I guess by the sheer force of numbers they could do that, but we fought it and we did gain control over certain things. Particularly the athletics, they tried to come in and change what we did and how we did it and when we did it. We regained control of that; we were not going to give that up. The time of day we play, the day we play on, and what side we should be sitting on in basketball games, we were not going to let that happen and it didn't happen. They tried, but after a year everybody kind of mellowed out.

EG: You said there was a lot of tension at first during the first few weeks with the National Guard. Did you observe tension between the black and white students?

CL: They kept their distances at first, but the kids on the athletic teams were close, but just the normal students kept their distance.

EG: Did that stay consistent?

Klan are watching you. Well, you talk about getting shook, I was very sick. I called the police and gave it to them. They reassured me that they were going to look out and watch, but hopefully it's a prank. Somebody had used an air pistol and shot out all the windows in our bus one time too. So, we did have some tense moments.

EG: When was this incident?

CL: This was in 1975.

EG: So, in the fall?

CL: Yes.

EG: What other tense moments do you remember?

CL: Tense moments at Central? We didn't have too many, the tense moments were out at schools like Valley High School and J-Town High School where they actually would brick the bus and shot through the bus windows. That was out in white people's neighborhood. The black people took to busing better than the white people; we took the change better than they did. We didn't have any incidents of rock throwing or bottle throwing or fire bombings; we didn't have any of that down here. But it was out there.

EG: Were you ever in that area or affected by the violence in that area?

CL: Yes. I was taking a kid home one time; I think his name was Durbin. He lived in J-Town and he had missed the bus, so I said I would take him home.

EG: This is a white kid?

CL: Yes, a white kid. We get to Taylorsville Road and he said coach, you better stop here. Stop right here coach. It was a mile from where I was going to let him off, but as I looked up you could see the street blocked and there was a demonstration going on. He said coach I can get home from here, I can just walk from here. My eyes got really

CL: I am aware of some of the things.

EG: Do you think maybe you would have had a different answer back then?

CL: If somebody had asked me if I was for integration in 1975 I would have said no because I liked things the way they were. But, you have to change. Like I said, we lost a lot, but we did gain. We as a people gained and some white people gained as well. So it was a win win situation I guess for both people.

EG: What did you think of the recent lawsuit that looked at the ( ) from Central High School?

CL: I was worried about it. I was really worried about it. I think basically it was done for athletic reasons. We wanted to regain, like I said we want to regain the power that we once had as a basketball team and as a football team, where we were the most feared athletic program in Louisville and one of the most feared athletic programs in the state. It was control, we could thump our chests. It was a focal point. I think that is one of the reasons we are doing it, because it can't be about education. All teachers are certified by the state of Kentucky, we are all teaching the same thing; so why should I have to be in an all black school to get that? Before, thirty years ago I loved that situation, but that was then. That was back in 1975, I loved it. However, in 2005 we cannot go back.

EG: So you were not supportive of the lawsuit?

CL: I was not. Money is everything. Money means a lot, if you don't have money coming into the school the way it should be coming in you cannot do the programs that you need. To attract that money you need to have the right kind of kids in the school to get that money. It's no secret that Ballard has what it has because of the

Central. Those are the kinds of doors that were opened up to us. I remember one year I had a parent to pay for my football banquet.

EG: Your football banquet?

CL: Yes, paid for it.

EG: That was the end of the year, when parents came?

CL: Yes, at the end of the season. Do you know that everybody at that banquet, about sixty of us had a big steak, a baked potato, salad, dessert and tea. They were big sirloins on that plate, we had it made! That was fantastic! She saw to that, she took care of that because she wanted to take care of her son. She wanted to make sure her son didn't have his banquet in the cafeteria, we had this thing at ( ). Those are the kinds of things I am talking about, things coming to us that ordinarily we wouldn't have had coming to us.

EG: I also heard, I think it was coach D who mentioned this to me, that the facilities at the school really improved.

CL: All of a sudden they got better. Although it was in the planning stages, they hurried it up and got it done. Things got better. From that standpoint, you have to have money or clout. I remember the Governor of Kentucky, John Wyatt Brown's son- who has a political office now, I think he's the Attorney General, anyway he is something up there in the state. John Wyatt Brown sent a bus down to Central High School to pick up friends of John Wyatt Brown Jr., his son. They all went to the state capital and had dinner. I remember several of them were black kids and they came back and told me they had so much fun. It was overwhelming to most of them; they had never done anything like that.

CL: Maybe I should push that up to about 1990. I bet if we go back and check our records our testing started to fall off in 1990. The reason it fell off in 1990 was because we were not attracting the best of students. Before busing we had all the best black kids academically, so when we took our tests the results were high. Then when busing started we lost a lot of kids who didn't test well to other schools and we got an influx of white kids in who tested well; so our testing was good. Then it started falling off about 1990, so there is a correlation between integrated schools being better testers.

EG: So why did Central not attract as many good students?

CL: Now we are not. The rules changed. They stopped busing white kids out and they started these Magnet programs to try and attract them to go to that school on their own. At Central we maintained it pretty good, but we still didn't get the best because they were not coming for law, government or for some of the other programs that we had. They were coming, but not like they were when they were forced to come.

EG: Okay, it's now a choice instead of just forcing them to come.

CL: Yes.

EG: I read one article that said the athletic budget decreased after busing happened?

CL: I don't think so.

EG: Okay, so maybe that was wrong.

CL: Now, it could be right but I don't think so. Maybe because we were getting so many perks we did not need as much in the budget? We didn't pay for ( ) on fields, the board paid for that. We didn't pay for transportation to the games, the board took

vocational schools. Everybody is not great at tests. Everybody is not going to be a tester and they base everything on tests. Some of our kids don't have the aptitude, white or black, but they can learn how to do that skill. They can learn a trade and make as much money as a lawyer or doctor.

EG: How did your administrators handle desegregation?

CL: By and large at first there were more black kids being expelled or suspended than white kids, it was just overwhelming in numbers. Our kids do act differently, they say things differently. I don't know if it is a cultural trait or whatever, but we at Central know this. We know what a kid says and what he means, we know that and we will take a little bit more because we know he is not going to bust a grade. When they got out there to the county schools, as soon as they said one thing they were gone, out the door to the board. It quieted down a little bit but there is still a disproportionate number of brothers being suspended than whites.

EG: Did you try to do anything to address that?

CL: We actually didn't have that big of a problem at Central because we only had seventeen percent black students there. So we didn't really have that big of a problem. I did notice a couple of assistant principles that would look for anything that the black kid did, it was like they would go out of their way to look for a problem and I did address it with them.

EG: At Central?

CL: Yes. It happened with one of my football players and I did address it. There weren't but a few of them in the building and it was about a cap. He told the kid to take the cap off; the kid took the cap off. When the kid got down far enough down the hall the

EG: Okay. He too talked about how he thought that initially it worked well at Central but then he placed it in the 1980's, where he thought there were reject teachers coming in and people were finding loop holes-

CL: He's right, he's right. I say it hit its threshold in 1990. You could see it changing around 1987 or 1988, but in the 1990's it almost went rock bottom again. We got one teacher, Lord bless his soul, he didn't like being around the kids so he would spray them with disinfectant. [laughing] Serious, he would spray them with disinfectant.

EG: He got away with that?

CL: Apparently. He was a white guy. He'd come in and spray them-he was a real odd fellow.

EG: The administrator or the Principle didn't do anything?

CL: I don't know, they were in that man's room one hundred times. There was another teacher that would go outside the building and smoke him a joint of marijuana and then come back in and try and teach class. It was just awful, the teachers we had…they were rejects. They were rejects. Nobody else wanted them so they got sent downtown to Central. That's when I say our education started to drop. Do you see the correlation? Coach D is right, he was there with me. He is right, he is absolutely right.

EG: That's just horrible.

CL: That's the actual truth.

EG: I believe you.

CL: I don't know if it goes on everywhere else, but it went on here. I don't know if the board actually knowingly did that or it just turned out to be that way.

EG: In 1996 when you left, was that a reason that you decided-

CL: Well Shawnee was all white at one time. That was the school in the West End, the deep West End. It was an all girl's school and then I think boys started going there in the late 1950's. Then it became integrated and once the busing began the white people left Shawnee. The moved to PRP, they moved to Valley Station, the moved to St. Andrew Church Road or they moved East. So the school became a poor school from the standpoint that there was no money there and all the kids that went there were basically black and poor whites. The kid's who live in this area; did you see the housing around here? Adequate, I mean it's adequate. It's not really great housing, but it is adequate. Those are the kids that go to Shawnee. Do you remember when I talked about money and clout? We have none over here, and those kids are my clientele that come in here.

EG: So the black community hasn't made an effort to deal with those kids like the huge effort that they made for Central?

CL: No. Some of the black leaders that I talk to say it's because it was a white school first. They feel like the white people let Shawnee down.

EG: The black leaders you are talking to are the middle class leaders?

CL: Yes. The rash of murders in this city, there have been forty something to date, over half of the kids that were either killed or did the killing attended Shawnee.

EG: Forty something this year?

CL: Yes. The two most recent kids both went to Shawnee. There is a correlation between who goes to that school and the crime rate in the West End. If I can see this, I don't know why nobody else can see this. Pick up the paper, see where this kid went to school and it will point to Shawnee. Look where that kid went to school, it'll point to

CL: Both. We have a time frame in which each group can come in, but if we are not careful they would all be in here together. To show you the importance of recreation and the community centers, we have four in this area. We have the Boys and Girls Club, Macking, Neighborhood House and us, and it still doesn't seem to be enough. As far as integration goes, this is the most integrated area in Jefferson County. The blacks and the whites get along so well here that it's frightening.

EG: Because they are all poor?

CL: Exactly, and that's what goes to Shawnee.

EG: They go to Shawnee?

CL: They go to Shawnee. That's the focal point to me; they eventually need to do something with that school. I don't know what, but we need help-and I am not smart enough to know what programs we need, believe me I am not, but we need something at that school. One of my friends is the Assistant Principle over there and I told her that I feel very strongly that they need to have adequate security when school opens up with the rash of violence that has taken place. What better place to get reprisal than at a school when are in school? All of them are in the building. All of them are right there, but that's just my way of thinking. At least until this stuff blows over. I don't know if we have a gang war going on or what, but we have not had this many killings before.

EG: What has been the time frame of this rash of killings that you are referring to?

CL: Like the day before yesterday there were three murders.

EG: So this has been over the last few months, or the whole year?

EG: You can't make it out to be that white people are all evil and that's reason for our problems-

CL: Yes, yes.

EG: It's not about black or white there is some complicity, people of both races is what you are saying.

CL: Yes, from both races, absolutely.

EG: Did you want to say anything more about that?

CL: About what?

EG: What we were just talking about.

CL: I constantly talk to my staff and my friends trying to figure out what the answer is and we come up with different things. Some say we need jobs, some say we need more police visibility, some say it goes back to the parents in the home and I have just come to the conclusion that all of them are right. There is no one set answer, all of them are right. Now, how we get there? I don't know. I don't know how to get there, what do we do? We have got to change this somehow, and I do not know what to do. I do know the threshold is education, that's one thing I know. We set up a program in place here where at first we said we wanted everybody to have a 3.0 grade point average. We were going to take them to U of F football games and try to take them to some basketball games too.

EG: This is a program here?

CL: Yes, but we wanted them to have good grades. We had to stop and say wait a minute now, we know who we are working with. How are they going to have a 3.0 grade point average, we have to be more realistic. So, what about a 2.5 grade point average,

CL: Looking back on it I really don't think there was enough discussion with the black community. White people feel like it was poured on them, but it was also poured on us. There were two schools in question, Central High School and Newburg Middle School. They are the schools that caused the lawsuit.

EG: That caused the lawsuit that resulted in busing.

CL: Actually, I didn't know there was a lawsuit being filed until about one year after it was filed, most of us didn't. Nobody knew, that's what I am talking about. Then we started hearing rumbles of it. The first year it didn't happen, it was supposed to happen in 1974.

EG: So the lawsuit was filed by a bunch of groups right?

CL: A particular family and some groups.

EG: NAACP-

CL: Urban League, I am not sure that the NAACP had anything to do with that lawsuit. I am not sure who was in on that suit. It didn't represent the black community as everybody thought; it was a handful of people. That's one of the things I am talking about, that we as a race of people don't speak up and we don't show up. Then after the fact we are upset.

EG: That's where you would place some of the blame on the black community for not being proactive enough while this was going on.

CL: Exactly. We let a handful of people dictate what we should have done.

EG: So what was ( ) when you found out that school desegregation and busing was going to happen, were people excited about it?

CL: That sprung up overnight. ( ) and several others, I can't remember but they sprung up. ( ) is still in existence, most of them have since dissolved. They popped up and a lot of home schooling went into effect too.

EG: Did you see any impact on housing patterns? We talked about the white flight-

CL: Yes. The West End became ninety five percent black.

EG: Because the white families left?

CL: Moved out.

EG: Were you living in the West End then?

CL: I was living on Vermont Avenue, which was the West End. When I moved onto Vermont, when I was in college we were the second black family on that block.

EG: Really?

CL: The first thing that happened was they built the school which took over one side of the street. The next thing was that all the white people on my block were gone within five years. There wasn't anybody left within that five years, all of them had gotten out of there; all the way down Vermont Avenue.

EG: After the busing, or before then?

CL: Just a little bit before busing is when they started leaving. Just a little bit before, because I moved down there in-

EG: Because more black families started moving in there.

CL: Yes, you could see it. They were running.

EG: Did you live there at the time when you were one of the few black families on the street or were you in college in the dorms?

pockets of it. You can tell when you drive by and you see their houses, they are alright. They are not going to move, they have been here forever. They were born here and they are going to die here. They are not going anywhere, you know the group.

EG: These are older people?

CL: Yes. This area kind of takes care of itself, it takes care of it's own.

EG: So there is still a community feel to this area?

CL: There is a lot of pride in it. If you come here as an outsider you could get into some serious trouble if you ruffle some feathers.

EG: If you what?

CL: If you come in wrong, you know, come in and think you are going to do something down here--they are not going to have it.

EG: Oh the community is going to band together.

CL: Yes, it isn't going to happen. They are very clannish and it doesn't have anything to do with race down here, it's just the way they are. They are protective of one another.

EG: Class bonding. Let me look at my question list, we have covered most of these things I think. I usually do most of the interview from memory. Is there any other topic that we haven't talked about you think would be really important to discuss?

CL: The media. The media was very active at that time. I bet I got letters from everywhere because people that I had gone to school with or had met in my life had seen me on television or read about me in the newspaper.

EG: ( ) your being a coach?

CL: Yes me being the coach of an integrated team.

CL: They did. Not a lot, I just know they were in favor of it. We had a black newspaper, I guess we still have it, called the *Louisville Defender* and I cannot remember the stand that they took. I cannot remember the stand that the *Defender* took. We got a lot of coverage in the *Louisville Defender*; they came out and interviewed whites and blacks. We all got interviewed. Overall, other than the two minor incidents that we had at Central we adjusted well. In fact, I think we adjusted too well.

EG: How so?

CL: Well, because we didn't have any major problems like some of the other schools that were having race issues, like I said, though there weren't many blacks there to have any issues with. We couldn't go over twenty two percent black, we were at seventeen percent constantly. So out of fifteen hundred kids, I'm not even sure how many that it, maybe one hundred and something kids or not even that many. So we didn't have any problems. The white kids really started liking being downtown, they enjoyed it. A lot of them didn't want to leave to go back to their own schools. They had a tenth grade class, what was it A, B, F and Q they stayed. There was another group that came down for one year and then they went back to their own schools. We started getting more and more of those kids to stay, so it looked like they decided that all of a sudden this was working too well and changed everything.

EG: You mean the rules or the system?

CL: Yes, where they were busing kids in and kids were electing to stay for programming. All of a sudden they changed it and they were no longer busing white kids in but continued to bus black kids out. That's when we became a career magnet school.

EG: So when these programs changed-

EG: Right it's the black students-

CL: Going there. Now the white kids who go to the inner city schools elect to go there, they are not forced to go there. It's not their district. There is a district line drawn in the West End for where kids will go to school. See right here [he draws a diagram], this is the West End right here. This pocket goes to PRP, this pocket goes to Easton, and this pocket will go to Wagner and this pocket to J-town. See, they have it all chopped up and all the blacks live in the neighborhood where they go to school. They don't have that out in the white neighborhoods. We are the only ones that are still being bused technically. We are the only ones still being bused. We are still busing, but it's just us. It works, that's the sad thing about it, it works. Our kids adjust to anything, and they have adjusted to being bused out. It's just the way it is. Now, if you say to the kids that live in the PRP district-which is where Shawnee High School is-that they have to go to Shawnee, the black kids will rebel because they do not want to go to Shawnee.

EG: They want to be bused out?

CL: They would rather be bused anywhere rather than go to Shawnee.

EG: Because of the poor-

CL: Because of the image that it has. Now how did the image get like that? Who did that? Shawnee once was considered an academic school, before it went down to the bottom. I have a lot of empathy for Shawnee because I worked there. I know there are good kids there, but the perception is you would not want to send anyone there. The perception is that there are a bunch of thugs there, but it's not true. Well, it is true and it isn't-I don't know how to explain it. It is because there has been a high rate of violence not in the school, but by kids that attended that school.

EG: The kids are? So they are not focused on the learning, ( ) on the gangs or those groups?

CL: Yes, they come to school as an outlet, a safe haven, somewhere away from the crap in the streets.

EG: The drugs and all that sort of stuff?

CL: Yes.

EG: Would you say that desegregation has been successful?

CL: Oooh wee! Personally for me it has. For me it has because I never would have gotten to meet and experience some of the things I have experienced had it not been for integration. It worked for me. I can't speak for everybody else. I think it has been successful and I also think it has not been a success; it is both sides of that coin. Like I said, if thirty years ago you told me you wanted to integrate I would say I am against it, I'm totally against it. But it would be all for selfish reasons, all because I was an athletic coach and I wanted to maintain that power I had athletically. I am just going to be honest; I wanted to maintain that power that we had at Central. I didn't want anyone else to have that power. We were black and proud and I wanted to maintain that power. Now, it's more than sports. It's more than sports now. Sports are still the focal point of my life, but there is more to it now. It's about getting these kids educated and having them be able to have a dream. Have them be able to have a dream and be able to try and obtain something for themselves, so that is the most important thing now. I won't try and correlate sports with that, but I drove all over Tennessee trying to get my girls in school for basketball next year, the ones I coach at Shawnee. We went all over trying to get them in and fortunately we got them in and I was just determined that they would go on

CL: Yes, its nuts. Then I was talking to him two weeks ago and he said the media paints the West End as being a very violent place. I looked at him and said you do have to admit that things have been pretty rough. He said violence and crime happen everywhere and I agreed that it does. I said you can't go anywhere in the town where there is no crime, but the difference is the killings. The killings are the difference. I mean people get killed out where I live too, but not like this. We blame what is happening in the West End in our neighborhoods on the media, somehow or another it is the media's fault that these killings are going on.

EG: The perception that black people don't like the perception the media has of the West End and they are using that as a crutch so they don't have deal with what's actually going on.

CL: Right.

EG: Why have there been these murders, has it been related to drugs or what?

CL: Yes, a combination of drugs and--I would say that over half of them are drug related and the other half is due to the ninety five degree heat and the high heat index and we are getting mad and killing each other.

EG: The heat? [both laughing]

CL: See when you haven't been trained to sit down and talk out your differences your first reaction is to get out your gun and shoot.

EG: Have you tried to do any conflict resolution classes?

CL: We have had that in here, but it didn't work. It doesn't work. All these things are good, conflict resolution and other programs, but it does not work. I have not seen it work and I think we are fooling ourselves to think it will work.

in a few minutes. He just walked in there and when I get finished with you he is getting ready to go. I am getting ready to put him out for disobedience, insubordination and being smart with us. He is going to have the rest of the week out of here, but that's neither here nor there.

EG: You have to be tough or like you said they will run you out.

CL: Yes, I have to be in charge here.

EG: As supervisor are you in charge of the whole center?

CL: Yes. I have to be in control.

EG: Let me just look over this and see if there is anything else. I guess I would ask more about what you said about the black community also being complicit in this.

CL: Yes it was.

EG: If you would just talk a little bit more about what you mean by that.

CL: I want to make sure I understand what you are after here, as far as us promoting busing or not wanting busing?

EG: I guess not being proactive enough in trying to solve-

CL: Okay, exactly what I mean is this: it was a handful of people that initiated a lawsuit and the rest of us didn't know it, even the professional brothers didn't know it. I am in the teaching profession and I had no idea that a lawsuit was filed in the Federal courts to integrate the schools. Mind you, the schools could not be integrated if we didn't merge. We had two different schools systems. We were integrated in the Louisville Jefferson County School System, the city school system, yes. We only had so many schools so we were already integrated. We had an open door policy; you go to school where you want to go if they have the room to accept you. So we had blacks at Iroquois,

Then busing started and I think we let them bus all our kids-initially I felt like we were taking the brunt of the busing, and we still are. That's why I say I don't think we were vocal enough and loud enough and demanding enough to keep more of our kids in our neighborhood schools. Then Shawnee never would have fallen on hard times. Iroquois never would have fallen on hard times. Weston High School never would have fallen on hard times. With all of us being bused out in great numbers we had nothing to sustain the schools we had in the West End.

EG: ( ) West End schools closed at that time as well?

CL: None of the high schools closed.

EG: Some of the elementary schools?

CL: Elementary and one of the middle schools closed, but none of the high schools closed. They kept them open. There has been talk of closing Shawnee and there was talk of closing Central, but that is not ever going to happen. That just is not going to happen, but believe me there was strong talk of that. Then there was talk of changing the name which also is not going to happen. One time we were known as Central Colored High School, that was back in the day. It changed back in the late 1950s or 1960s, not that long ago, from Central Colored High School to Central High School. I think if you look on the side of their wall outside of Central High School on the Chestnut Street side, unless they sandblasted that, it used to say Central Colored High School still up there in the brick. I think they got it out, but it was there when I was going to school there. You had to really look to see it.

EG: It's what?

CL: The rest of the world is so against the United States it's not funny, it's really ridiculous.

EG: As a follow up to that question, what inroads do you see that have been made?

CL: In roads that I see have been made are better jobs, better housing, attendance at colleges and universities that we once didn't go to and total integration in certain pockets in this community. Now we have not quite gotten there with the wealth yet, but we are getting there. So from that perspective I see a lot of in roads. There was a time that I wouldn't be sitting in here as a supervisor; there was no way a brother would be down here in Portland.

EG: Is there anything else that you want to add?

CL: No. I have a lady that I think would be of great assistance to you. She was the Personnel Director in the old City School System before the merger and she also went out to the board and ended up as the head of the board. [tape stopped]

END OF INTERVIEW- Interviewer continues by going through list of proper words spelling and pronunciation.

Transcribed October 2005 by Chris O'Sullivan