

Interview

with

PHILIP L. MAHIN

August 1, 2005

by Elizabeth Gritter

Transcribed by Emily Baran

The Southern Oral History Program  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Transcript and tape on deposit at  
The Southern Historical Collection  
Louis Round Wilson Library

Citation of this interview should be as follows:  
"Southern Oral History Program,  
in the Southern Historical Collection Manuscripts Department,  
Wilson Library,  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill"

Copyright © 2006 The University of North Carolina

**Transcript – Philip Lawrence Mahin**

Interviewee: Philip Lawrence Mahin  
Interviewer: Elizabeth Gritter  
Interview date: August 1, 2005  
Location: Louisville, Kentucky at the Gallery House Bed and Breakfast  
Length: 2 cassettes, approximately 110 minutes  
Interview note: Mahin is African American, and Gritter is white.

**START OF TAPE 1, SIDE A**

EG: This is Elizabeth Gritter interviewing Phil Mahin in Louisville, Kentucky on August 1, 2005.

EG: I'll be listening to make sure that it's recording. [laughter]

PM: Sure.

EG: I haven't had an interview yet where it's not recorded, but I'm always kind of nervous about that. And I just, to start—

PM: I hope you got the dates and everything.

EG: Yeah.

PM: I'm fuzzy on a lot of dates.

EG: Yeah, that's fine. That's typical. I mean, I think if someone did an oral history of me, I would have no idea when certain things happened. I mean I can't even remember what happened a month ago sometimes.

PM: ( )

EG: But first I just need to fill out some basic biographical information.

PM: Sure.

EG: Is your full first name Philip or just—

PM: That's right. P-H-I-L-I-P.

EG: Okay, and do you have a middle name?

PM: Lawrence.

EG: Okay, and how do you—

PM: L-A-W-R-E-N-C-E.

EG: Okay, and is there a suffix at all, a senior or a junior?

PM: Oh no. It could be Mahin.

EG: Yeah, M-A-Y-H-I-N.

PM: No.

EG: No?

PM: You spelled it wrong. M-A-H-I-N.

EG: M-A-H-I-N, okay.

PM: Correct.

EG: Okay, and let's see here. I have your address and your home phone number.

And what's your date of birth?

PM: 11-8-49.

EG: Oh, you're the same age as my mom.

PM: Okay.

EG: And were you born in Louisville?

PM: Correct.

EG: Okay. Let me just see here. Yeah, it should be recording. I'm just going to listen here. And your spouse's name, I know, is Vickie. Is it, how do you spell Vickie?

PM: V-I-C-K-I-E.

EG: Okay. Yep, it's recording just fine.

PM: Okay.

EG: And do you have any children?

PM: Yes, two.

EG: And what are their names and—

PM: Kawaune, K-A-W-A-U-N-E.

EG: K-A-W.

PM: A-U.

EG: A-U.

PM: N-E.

EG: N-E.

PM: And NeShaune. N-E-

EG: N-E—

PM. Capital S.

EG: Capital S.

PM: H-A-U.

EG: H-A-U.

PM. N-E.

EG. N-E. And what are their dates, or years of birth?

PM: Let's see. My son is twenty-seven, July 9th. What would that be, twenty-seven from 19—help me out now.

EG: Twenty-seventh—oh, twenty-seven.

PM: Yeah.

EG: July 9th.

PM: Let's see.

EG: Let's see here.

PM: Because my daughter's twenty-four. Her's is April 22. I keep doing that twenty-seven from—

EG: Okay, I can figure it out later.

PM: Yeah, just—

EG: Yeah.

PM: Twenty-seven and twenty-four. That'll be good enough.

EG: For right now, their ages?

PM: Yeah.

EG: Okay.

PM: I can get it for you in a minute.

EG: And your daughter is Kawaune or your—

PM: My son's name is Kawaune.

EG: Your son's name is Kawaune, okay.

PM: My daughter's name is NeShaune. She's twenty-four and he's twenty-seven.

EG: Okay, great. And your educational experience? Where did you go to high school?

PM: Shawnee High School.

EG: Oh sure. And when did you graduate from there?

PM: '67, 1967.

EG: Okay. And where'd you go to college?

PM: Kentucky State College back then, but it's a university now.

EG: Okay.

PM: In Franklin, Kentucky.

EG: Is that where the gold is or am I thinking of Fort Knox?

PM: Oh no, that's in Fort Knox.

EG: Yeah.

PM: Franklin's about fifty miles from Louisville.

EG: Okay. Is there a military base there?

PM: In Franklin, no.

EG: ( )

PM: But this is a college town.

EG: Okay. And what did you get a bachelor's in?

PM: I got my bachelor's in Health and Physical Education.

EG: Okay. In what year?

PM: I finished in 1971.

EG: Okay. And do you have any other educational experience?

PM: I have a masters in what they call education, administration or education or whatever.

EG: Administration and education?

PM: Well, no. They consider it, they call it, they have a general term for it. I believe it's education, just a masters in education.

EG: Oh, okay.

PM: So I got my masters in it—not in administration, I'm sorry—it's in education.

EG: Where from?

PM: University of Louisville.

EG: Okay. And what year?

PM: I finished in '81.

EG: Okay. And you were telling me over the phone that you taught at Brown School?

PM: Correct.

EG: Like the color brown, B-R-O-W-N?

PM: Correct.

EG: Okay, and that's where you began teaching?

PM: Yes.

EG: Okay.

PM: That's my first permanent job as far as teaching. I was a substitute teacher for awhile. I would substitute out in the county, which I thought was the public schools but at that time you had county schools, then public schools, and I was naive on that. I thought everybody was under the umbrella of the Louisville public schools, but they weren't.

EG: Okay.

PM: So I substituted out in the county for about, oh about six to eight months.  
[coughs] And then I got on as a teacher at the Louisville public schools.

EG: Okay.

PM: The county schools, you should know this, county schools are kept more or less out in the suburbs.

EG: Okay.

PM: The public schools were pretty much in the inner-city.

EG: Okay.

PM: And so this kind of, it coincided with the White flight, to be quite honest about it. You know, most of the Whites moved out into the county, so they started their own schools.

EG: Right, right. I want to ask you more about that in a minute.

PM: Sure.

EG: So when you were a substitute teacher, was that in 1971 or 1970?

PM: That was in '72, no it might be later than that, let me see. I would say '72, '73, in that range.

EG: Okay.

PM: Because I got hired on at the public schools in '73.

EG: Okay, and how long did you teach at Brown?

PM: I taught at Brown for twelve years.

EG: So until 1985?

PM: Correct.

EG: Okay, and then you were saying you were at Southern Middle School?

PM: Yes.

EG: Okay.

PM: I was about four years there, I believe, four years there.

EG: Until like 1989?

PM: That's correct. Then from 1989 to 1994, I was at Butler High School, Butler Traditional School is what they called it, but Butler High School. Then from '94 until I retired, which was in, I believe I retired in 2000, I was at Fern Creek High School, which also turned into a traditional school, Fern Creek Traditional School.

EG: It was turned into one while you were there or—



PM: Well, yes.

EG: Okay.

PM: There's a, I can expound on that later, but there's a difference.

EG: And at all of these schools did you teach physical education and health?

PM: Correct.

EG: Okay. Well I guess since you brought up White flight and that was one of the topics we wanted to address, I was wondering what you observed about that in your capacity as a teacher and citizen of Louisville at that time.

PM: Basically it's their prerogative. If they want to live in the suburban area out in the county, that's fine. I don't think it's any different than any other cities, I don't believe.

EG: Right.

PM: So when I grew up in the West End, there were still vestiges of a lot of White people who were still, lived in the West End. But basically what happened was the Whites moved out of the West End and moved farther out so the Blacks came in and just took it, took it over basically. Whites moved out and the Blacks moved in.

EG: Did you, have you lived in the West End, did you live there—

PM: Yeah, I grew up in the West End.

EG: And did you live there when you were teaching as well or did you live in other areas?

PM: No, I lived in the Bardstown Road, so the East End of Louisville, when I got married, which was in, we got married in 1973, I believe. And when I got married, we moved to, this part of the city was not considered the East End—I mean it's not considered the West End, it's the East End of Louisville. And it might be considered suburbia a little bit but it's still in the city, but that [was] where I lived when I got married. But until that

time I lived in the West End and I got married when I twenty-five, I believe, twenty-four or twenty-five, I'm not good on, somewhere right in there.

EG: Sure. And what was your educational experience like growing up?

PM: Well, in my opinion, I had a great educational experience because [at] the schools that I attended, in elementary and primary grades, all the teachers mainly cared for you. They took a personal interest in you, not only just with me but all the students that were there. And they were considered, I don't consider them segregated, but they were predominately, you know, Black schools, African-American schools that I attended, most of them. Especially in my middle schools years, our junior high, back as it was called back then, so I attended Duvalle Junior High, that was an all-Black school, and I attended Virginia Avenue. I attended three different elementary schools but the one I remember the most is Virginia Avenue and Stephen Foster. Virginia Avenue was predominately an all-Black school. Stephen Foster was pretty mixed. What I remember about my early childhood was that the teachers really cared about the—I know I'm being redundant, but—they showed a definite interest in you, and they knew your parents, not just my parents but they knew everybody's parents. It's kind of like a family. It was a community. Some of teachers that taught me might have attended my church, and so it was a community. That's about the best way I can put it. And after that, I went to Shawnee High School. There I experienced, quote, unquote, integration. And there my educational experience wasn't as quite as, best term I can put on it right now is happy. I didn't really, Shawnee High School was okay. I liked the people who I associated with, you know my peers and everything, but as far as the teachers, I can't remember hardly any of my teachers there. Most of them were White and the school was probably about sixty percent, as far as the ratio of students, I'm trying to remember, I'd say about sixty-five percent White, maybe thirty-five percent

Black, as far as students. But as far as teachers, I think we might have had two Black teachers out of that whole school, which held about, oh I'd say about two thousand students. It's quite an amount of students. And so I didn't, I can't even remember any of my teachers there, to be quite honest with you. I remember one or two of them. I didn't feel like they really cared about my future. I was kind of like a number. To me, although it was a small setting, I just don't feel like they cared; I missed that. Because see all my brothers went, and my father, everybody in my family went to Central High School, which is a predominately, you know, a Black school. But I wanted to be different and I wanted to do something different. I didn't want to follow behind their footsteps so I started to try Shawnee, which was in our neighborhood, it was in our neighborhood. It was in the West End. Like I was telling you, there was still quite a few Whites that lived in the West End. A lot of them lived over on the Market Street area. But in the heart of the West End, there were mainly Blacks. What I'm talking about is Cecil, Greenwood, Chickasaw, Park, Shawnee area. But in other parts of Louisville like Main [Street] going toward downtown area, a lot of Whites lived there. So we still had quite a few Whites that lived in the city, quite a few of them, and then there's quite a few Whites who went to Shawnee, like I said, there was about sixty-five percent. But Shawnee was an okay school, it was alright, but I enjoyed my junior high school, my elementary schools a lot better, because as I was saying to you before, there was a, they cared about you. They cared not only about you as getting your school work; they cared about you as a person.

EG: What about your academic experience there? Did you feel that there were less resources in the Black schools than if you had been the White schools?

PM: I was well-prepared, in my opinion, in the Black schools because I think mainly of that fact, I never forget when I took English at Shawnee, I got straight A's, and

everything they were talking about I had learned at Duvalle from my teacher. Her name was Mrs. Larue. I'll never forget her. She was very stern and strict as far as teaching us the academics. So I didn't see any visual things that we lacked. Of course, I was a teenager then. Maybe we didn't have some of the things White people had; I don't know. I had no comparison. But when I went to Shawnee, there was nothing that Shawnee could put on me that would, anything I hadn't experienced at Duvalle.

EG: Sure.

PM: In other words, I had already learned some of the academics that they were teaching me there. I had that at Duvalle, so I was well-prepared.

EG: Sure. What made you decide to want to be a teacher?

PM: Well my father and mother always encouraged me to be a teacher. That was supposed to be a well-respected, I'm looking from their point of view, that was a respected vocation, and they wanted me to go further than they did, although they both attended college, but they didn't graduate. But anyway, they considered that a respectful vocation and so I enjoyed physical education and I'm a pretty decent athlete. I didn't play a lot of high school sports but I was a pretty decent athlete, I thought. And so I guess it was just a natural fit. They had always pushed that on me. I mean, they always encouraged me to do that and that was the career that they thought would be good for me, and so I just took their advice on it basically.

EG: What did your parents do for a living?

PM: My father was an insurance executive for Mammoth Life Insurance. My mother did, she was mainly a domestic wife but she did other jobs. She was a beautician also. She worked for the city but she mainly, when we was growing up, she was a stay-at-home mom and my father was mainly the breadwinner. But after we reached our mature

years, say fifteen, sixteen years old, then she got involved in politics. Also she was a master beautician. So she worked for the city and that's basically what she did.

EG: What did she do in politics?

PM: What I remember is she, more than anything, she would always handle the, what do call it, the polling sites. That was one of her jobs. She would campaign for certain candidates but mainly she was over at the polling site in our neighborhood and then she would do, as I said, odd jobs for the city. That's mainly what I remember that she did for the city.

EG: And would she, at the polling sites, like hand out campaign literature or work as a poll worker or register?

PM: Both.

EG: Yeah.

PM: Yeah, both because we would have it in our garage, that's where polling site was.

EG: Oh, okay.

PM: Yeah, she was the head of it, the supervisor, however you want to call it.

EG: Okay.

PM: Whatever terminology they used back then.

EG: Sure. What was your experience like as a substitute teacher in the county? You were telling me a little about that.

PM: What I remember more than anything, first of all, I was probably the only Black teacher there in most of the schools that I went to. I saw a lot of, for lack of a better term, when I would come in there, there might be about oh maybe three or four Blacks in the classroom and you can tell that they were proud to see me there, to see a Black face. I

could tell that in the--. Just from my conversations with them the times I substituted, because I thought I did a good job of substitution and a lot of the principals wanted me back. So mainly, that's what I remember of it. All the students respected me, be they White or Black, because I always commanded that, and I always treated them fairly and then so they respected that. But I could tell there was a certain amount of pride that the Black students had when they saw me there. It was some of the, "Hey, it's good to see you, somebody my color." And some of them, a lot of times, would take up for me, ( ) when I was correcting the student, "Hey you better do what Mr. Mahin said," because they felt proud to see a--. So my memories of the county, I always had pleasant experience there. The people were okay, the principals and everything, they would ask for me back. But I didn't see too many Blacks in the administration or even teaching. There weren't too many.

EG: What about how the White students reacted to you and White teachers? You said you commanded respect. Did you feel any sort of prejudice from them or discrimination?

PM: No not really, because I probably didn't stay long enough since I was substitute teaching. They would ask for me back. No, I didn't experience any. Plus the students, most kids are going to do, be they white, black, purple, green or blue, they going to do pretty much what you ask them to do. They want to be corrected and disciplined. They want you to guide them and give them direction. So most of the kids responded to me in that way. They didn't look at me, I don't think, maybe initially they could see I'm Black, but I think once they found that I was a fair person and that I treated everyone with respect, they went along with it.

EG: Sure.



PM: So I never had any problems with that.

EG: And was this elementary—

PM: This was high school.

EG: This was high school, okay, sure. So if you would tell me a little bit about your experience at Brown School and I guess you could start with how you came about teaching there.

PM: Oh boy. Well Brown School was kind of like a dangling participle. Well let's put it this way. You've heard of a dangling participle, right, in English and in grammar? Something that is out here that's different from all the rest of the schools that were in the public school system, also the different county school system. It was an entity by itself pretty much, although it was under the umbrella of the local public schools. It was an alternative school that was an experiment, probably the best term I can give you, it was an experiment where we were venturing in where kids would be self-motivated and they would use a lot of creativity strategies and self-motivation strategy to get the young men and women learn what it is they needed to learn. So we would use different strategies. It was a small setting. J. Graham Brown School was in a hotel, we were located in a hotel, can you believe that? J. Graham Brown Hotel. And so my experiences there were quite different from what other teachers experienced at other schools, because they didn't have this kind of atmosphere. You're talking about the most kids I would have in my class would be about fifteen to twenty kids, sometimes I would have thirty or forty elementary kids, but the school went from the third to the twelfth grade eventually. It grew. At one time, it went from, if I remember correctly, well again it went from the third to the twelfth grade, that's what it was. And it kind of evolved. It's kind of like a baby from the embryo

state, so I was there when it was an embryo and when it was definitely an experiment.

Teachers would be referred to as their first names.

EG: As their first what?

PM: In other words, you would be referred to, the student would refer to you by your first name.

EG: Oh, that is different.

PM: Yes, and so we were definitely unconventional. The purpose of that was supposedly we were supposed to get a closer contact with the kids and they would feel more comfortable with us, because we were doing a lot of different strategies, creativity, like I told you, self-motivation-type techniques to get the kids to learn. It was definitely a quite different experience than teaching in regular public school. It wasn't a regular public school.

EG: Right.

PM: Okay. So I wanted to give you that picture of it. So anytime you have a school in a hotel, okay, it went from the first to the, I think the elevator, the floors went from the first to the twelfth floor, I believe. And I'm teaching health and phys ed in a hotel. They renovated the hotel, they made some adjustments to it, but it still, it wasn't conducive for health and phys education. So we would do a lot of health and phys education at the local Y, which was right across the street from us, we would go there. And I would take them to the park and then we'll do some things at the Brown Hotel. But eventually we evolved and got what we called a quote, a regular school. We moved into a regular school, which was old Ahrens High School. That's where it is today, okay. So that's pretty much in a nutshell, you can write another volume on Brown School.

EG: Yeah.



PM: But that's another, it really is, I think it's probably one of the only experiments that was probably in the United States. There's probably others that had done it but we were the first one in Louisville, probably in Kentucky and the other surrounding states. A lot of schools didn't do that.

EG: Right, because when I think of alternative schools, I think of a program with kids with disciplinary problems, and that wasn't it at all.

PM: No.

EG: It was this experimental—

PM: It was just the opposite. You're trying to increase the intellect. We're trying to take them higher but using different strategies, different unconventional strategies. Like I said, most of the teachers went by their first names, including even the principal. Her name was Martha Ellison and she was a dynamic principal. I remember she did a superior job, I thought. She was the first principal of the school. So it was something quite different, but it has evolved now and it still has the same pretty much format, but I think there's a little bit more of a discipline side. I don't know if they still go by their first names or not because I haven't been to Brown in awhile. Maybe that's something you can check out for yourself but I don't know.

EG: Right. What is the racial balance of the school?

PM: About half and half.

EG: Okay.

PM: That's what they wanted to strive for, to make it about half and half.

EG: And did it stay that way during your time there?

PM: Sure. That was one of the goals to keep it that way because they wanted to get a balance.

EG: And what about the socio-economic makeup of the students?

PM: Little bit of both. We had some that were from the high side of the socio-economic, some from the low. So they didn't discriminate one or the other; they tried to get a mixture of both.

EG: What about the racial balance of the teachers?

PM: About half and half.

EG: Administrators?

PM: Yeah.

EG: Wow.

PM: Administrators, yeah pretty much. We had a Black assistant principal. They tried to strive for half and half. That was the whole purpose of it to do something different. Well see you had to understand the Louisville public school system was basically a majority, if I remember right, Blacks, like I said, at that time a lot of the Whites moved out to Jefferson county. [conversation breaks off as doorbell rings]

EG: Okay, so—

PM: So I would say this—

EG: Yes.

PM: In the early '70s, I'm not quite sure on the dates, but I'd say the '70s probably through before we got into busing, before we [were ordered to bus], the lower public school system was pretty much integrated as far as how many Whites and Blacks taught and were in administration and so on and so forth. I would say there were quite a few Blacks that worked in the Louisville public school system. And so I don't know the number; that's something that you probably need to research, and at Jefferson County public schools, I don't know, but this is my recollection of it. There were a lot more Black

professionals in the Louisville public school system, and then you had the Jefferson County public school system, where it was mainly, out in the suburban area, it was mainly the White teachers and White administrators, but in the city there was a pretty good mixture. And you had quite a few Blacks that were in administration and the hierarchy and then some that weren't. There was a lot more of a melting pot, put it that way.

EG: In the city.

PM: It wasn't perfect, but it was a better melting pot.

EG: Sure. Now did busing have an impact on Brown School?

PM: No, not really, other than the atmosphere of the city. But directly it didn't have an impact because the kids came by city bus or their parents brought them, and there was no bus for Brown School because it was in downtown Louisville right where J. Graham Brown is now. You're not familiar with Louisville, are you? J. Graham Brown is a hotel and also it's a concert area now, but it was right in the heart of downtown. So it was easily accessible to a lot of kids because you could just take the city bus and you're right there. You can take it from the opposite end of Louisville, from the East End you take the bus and you're right in, it's in the heart of Louisville. So we didn't have any problems as far as busing was concerned, but we knew about it. We saw what was going on, but it didn't affect us directly.

EG: So you didn't have students transferred into the school because it was desegregated?

PM: Right, right.

EG: So you didn't have any changes of administration or that sort of stuff.

PM: No.

EG: You mentioned the atmosphere changed. How did it change in the larger school system? What did you observe about it in that sense?

PM: Well it was pretty obvious that the White contingent, as far as I can remember, was more vocal about not desegregating. They didn't want to desegregate. Quite a few Blacks probably didn't want to desegregate either but we weren't going around, that I can recall, shaking the buses and using derogatory terms toward the kids and toward, you know when they had marches and so on and so forth, and they shot, guns were being shot. I remember it very vividly. I wasn't there, I was here in Louisville in Valley High School, I remember seeing where they ( ) a bus when the kids were being bused in. The parents were visibly, especially the White parents, I imagine the Black ones too but the White ones were more visible as far as "we don't want this." They didn't want it. I can't speak for every White person, so I imagine some of them were okay with it. I can't speak for them. All that I can tell you is that it's just like anything else, some of the Black community probably didn't want desegregation and some of them probably did want it. Because there shouldn't have been a separation in the first place, but I guess the courts felt that was the only way we going to make this thing equal, by desegregating, I guess, by ( ), and so that's when Jefferson County merged. So the atmosphere was very volatile. Now myself, I wasn't directly involved in it because I was in Brown School. So I didn't teach in that part until after I left Brown School and desegregation had already been processed. How many years would that be? Do you have the year when desegregation started?

EG: Well I know it was 1975 when busing started.

PM: Okay then, so therefore, so for what ten years, I wasn't directly involved in teaching in it other than when I was substitute teaching earlier on, but that was when we

were segregated, when there were public schools and there were Jefferson County schools. But this time they merged; the court system said, "You going to have to merge." So like I said before, directly we wasn't really affected; indirectly we probably were, you know the behaviors of the kids. They knew what was going on, that there was a lot of tension between White and Black, a lot of tension.

EG: At Brown School?

PM: No, no I don't think at Brown School because we was striving for what we were just talking about. We've already desegregated.

EG: Right.

PM: There was already quite a few Black teachers, quite a few White. See the main problem to me, let me give you, this is just my own personal opinion. When I started teaching after I left Brown School and went to Southern Middle School, there were a decent number of Black teachers that were there, and Southern Middle School has some teachers that pretty much cared about them. The main problem as I see it, this is my own personal opinion, what I didn't like about desegregation was that you lost the teachers who cared about [students]. From my background, you can tell where I'm coming from. You lost, because see when you make, you have to have so many Black teachers teach out in the county, right, there's not that many of us, okay. So maybe you might have one, one or two Black teachers in each school. You follow what I'm saying? So therefore, you don't have a lot of students, Black students, who said, well I can identify with these teachers. Quite a few, I would like, I've been in teaching thirty-some-odd years, thirty years, and there are good White teachers and there are good Black teachers, and so on and so forth. But my sense of it is that quite a few of the White teachers didn't want to be involved. You know, they weren't concerned because first of all they were being forced to teach

these kids, okay, you're being forced to do it. And then they just didn't want to; there was no connection there. Do you follow what I'm saying? You got a kid coming all the way from the West End going all the way out in the county, whereas you got schools right here in the city he could go to, he or she could go to, so but that just wasn't good, in my opinion. I think they could have, we could have gotten them just as good of an education if not better if we stayed the way we were. The main thing to me, since I'm on a roll here, you got me on my pulpit, the problem was the distribution of the books and the distribution of all the quality of the other schools. That's what the problem was. Whatever the county got or whatever the other schools got, you got to make sure everybody gets it. You follow me? So that wasn't happening. So that was the problem, that was the main problem to me. As I see it, these quote or unquote predominately Black schools weren't getting the same facilities that the predominately White schools were getting. You follow me? But as far as teaching-wise, they probably were getting a better quality of teachers, in my opinion, because to me to be a teacher, you got to care. If you don't care, you're a dead duck. I don't care if you're white, purple, green, or blue, you got to care about all the kids. And I think when you're forced to do something, I think that's what a lot, quite a few White teachers had a problem with. When you're forced to teach another race or whatever, when you're forced to do something, they didn't take kindly to that, quite a few didn't. I'm not saying all of them. I don't want to characterize every single of them. And then when you don't see yourself, I'm trying to talk as a Black person, if I don't see somebody that I can look up to, that doesn't look like me, well something's wrong with that picture. There's got to be some Black teachers or Black administrators that are smart, that are intelligent. Where are they? You follow me? So they had a problem with that and I had a problem with



that, to be honest with you. So that's how I see it. I don't know if I helped any or not.

That's just my own personal opinion.

EG: Oh that's exactly what we want. I had a whole line of questions exactly about what you covered. So did you observe—because it sounds like Brown was quite a success from how you're described it—more the sense of White teachers not caring when you went to Southern Middle School and then later at Butler and at the other school?

PM: Some, quite a bit at Butler, see yes. When I was at Butler, see you got to understand I was the only male Black teacher there, okay. We had two or three, I believe three female Black teachers that were there. No Black administrators, and although I thought that the head administrator did a good job as far as keeping discipline, did a nice job of keeping a good atmosphere as far as that's concerned, but you missed that, the kids missed that. So quite a few of the kids, Black and White, but especially Black, since I was Black and I was fair, I thought I was fair and respectful, so they would come to me. I was their refuge pretty much, especially to the guys. Plus I was the head basketball coach too. So what is your question? Repeat the question; I'm losing the question.

EG: Oh, okay. Well you talked about the sense of Black teachers caring and White teachers not seeing that as much, and I was wondering, you answered it for Butler but I'm also wondering about Southern Middle School when you were there.

PM: Yeah, well at Butler there were quite a few White teachers there that did care, don't get me wrong because now we're into '89. We're talking about 1989, so that's pretty past and plus it's a traditional school now, traditional meaning that a kid would have to apply to go there.

EG: Okay.

PM: Okay, and therefore there are certain rules they must abide by. Once you opt to go to a traditional school, you must apply to go there, you got to be accepted, and you must abide by a different set of rules than quote, unquote, the other schools that are out there. And since we're on that part, to me, in my recollection of how traditional schools started, was because in the height of busing, a lot of times they lost a lot of discipline. When desegregation happened, there was a lot discipline being lost because like I said, you had a lot of clashes between White and Black. Blacks are being mistreated maybe or given, punished more, for lack of a better term, disciplined more, because you got a disparity there. You follow me? And so the point, the main point I'm trying to make, since there was a lot of disparity in the dealing out of discipline and punishment, and then you got a lot of clashes, a lot of tension between White and Black, so what sprung up from that, quite a few Whites went to private schools, started a lot of private schools. Then the Board of Education come up with this idea of having traditional schools.

EG: Okay.

PM: Okay, so okay since they all think there's not much discipline here, we are going to start traditional schools. So the first one was Male. So that's how that sprung up, but traditional schools, basically all it is is just discipline. You know, I'm going to make my students do what they supposed to do, which should be going on all along. Follow me? And so that's how traditional schools sprung up and it's under the guise, to me, of something that should be, which normally should be happening anyway, okay. But what you had, you had people who were in positions of authority who were not, in my opinion, dispensing with the administrative part of the school system correctly. Because you had too much chaos, you had a little chaos there at the time as far as discipline being dispensed out. It wasn't done fairly, you see. You had disparity between White and Black as far as



how many teachers were White and how many administrators were White. You had a lot of disparity there so there were a lot of evil feelings, you follow me, that's going on. There's a lot of dynamics happening here. So the White people basically were getting frustrated and so were the Blacks. You know, what happened to discipline? What happened to all the discipline part of schooling? So to me, that why I think traditional schools sprung up. But to me, whoever's the administrator at the time, the superintendent at the time, should have incorporated that across the whole board. You follow me?

EG: Yeah.

PM: But that didn't happen. So thus traditional schools sprung up.

EG: Sure. Oh that's interesting because one of the themes we've run across with our oral histories has been the chaotic atmosphere as you just described it, and also not only oral histories but looking at the research and the Civil Rights Commission--it did this hearing--and the testimony talked about the disproportionate amount of expulsions, suspensions that went to Blacks, and I didn't know that the traditional schools were a means of correcting that.

PM: Well, no—

EG: Or is that just your—

PM: Traditional school, in my opinion, was a means of correcting--. First of all I believe it sprung up because the Whites had a system, we got to have some discipline here.

EG: Okay.

PM: Okay. And it probably ( ) the Blacks, probably did too. So we said well, look, let's start a traditional school, do something different, because they were losing control.

EG: Yeah.

PM: Do you follow me?

EG: Yeah, it was more to deal with the chaotic atmosphere—

PM: Right.

EG: As opposed to the disproportionate expulsions.

PM: That too.

EG: Well that too, okay.

PM: But that probably had something, but I don't think they rose up because of the disproportion of expulsions.

EG: No, no.

PM: I think they were trying to get a remedy, in my opinion—you ask some of the people like Louis Coleman and some other people out in the community—in my opinion, what I think it was trying to do, it was trying to remedy part of a White flight. In other words, a lot of the White students were going now to private schools and they were coming to private schools, and now how are we going to get our students back?

EG: Yeah.

PM: You see. That may have, as I said, probably alarmed quite a few Blacks. I don't think there were too many Blacks at private schools; there were some. But there was more of that, and so they said, "Well look, we got to get our students back," you see. And most of them were White that were leaving. There was probably some Blacks too but I don't remember any. You probably need to check with historians of Louisville but this is all, I'm going from what I know from my personal experience. That's how I saw it, that they wanted a remedy for this, and this was their remedy to bring the White students back into, and possibly the Black students too, and like I said, they wanted, this was a remedy, "we need discipline here." And so I think that helped also.

EG: I'm just going to check the tape because I think I'm going to turn it over.

PM: Okay.

**END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A**

**START OF TAPE 1, SIDE B**

EG: Did you feel that that worked, the traditional school approach?

PM: Sure. Because as I stated before, my whole background, my foundation, let's put it that way, in dealing with kids, and my main thesis on that is that kids want to be disciplined. They want to know what are their parameters. And so with that premise, it worked because they wanted to know how far they could go. And I think when in the heart of desegregation a lot of things went on, they let them go too far, you see. In my opinion, the leadership of the educational system at that time was very sparse; it wasn't good, in my opinion. It starts with the top. And so we lost a lot of that. So going under the premise that most kids want to be disciplined and they want us to set parameters and they want to be treated fairly, they wanted to be treated with respect, that's why the traditional schools worked. It's just basically saying, "Treat me fairly, discipline me fairly, and I'll do what you want me to do." That's traditional school. That's all it is. And you stand behind what you say, okay. You stand behind it and you treat everybody fairly and that's how it prospered.

EG: How did it compare then to the environment at Southern Middle School when you were there? What was—

PM: How did traditional school compare with the, say again?

EG: Well I guess a better way of phrasing that would be the chaotic atmosphere that you described, is that what you experienced when you were at Southern Middle School?

PM: A little bit, not quite as much because the principal that was there had a pretty good handle on what was going on and he and she—well we had two, we had three, two or three different sets of principals, but—they had a pretty good feel for dealing with the kids and treating them with respect, so the leadership was pretty good. You had a nice balance of Black and White teachers. You need that. I don't care what you do. It had a pretty good balance so each particular segment of society was being taken care of. We'll actually go, Whites go either way. Whites go to meet Black or Whites and vice versa. There were quite a few White teachers that cared there at Southern. At Southern Middle School, that was a really rough school. You had a lot of kids that came from a poor environment, quite a bit of them. I'd say about at least sixty-five to seventy percent.

EG: What do you mean by poor environments? You mean they came from poverty or—

PM: Socio-economical.

EG: Okay.

PM: You know, lower socio-economical status, okay.

EG: And where is Southern? Is that in the South End?

PM: South End of Louisville.

EG: So that's where, well, the heart of the busing resistance took place in '75.

PM: Sure, but see I didn't go there, you must understand, until it went twelve years when I was at Brown, so things had kind of simmered down. You follow me? Okay. So therefore, there was a lot of influx, a mixture between Black and White, so you see you needed balance. You can't run a school, let's look at it the other way, let's look at you got a school and all the Whites are going to this Black school and all the teachers are all Black and you got one White teacher. How would you feel? If all the White-- You are a white

person, you go to this school, and all the teachers are Black and you only got one White teacher or one White administrator. How would you like that? Would you feel comfortable in that situation?

EG: I don't know if I would.

PM: I don't think you would.

EG: Yeah.

PM: If you didn't have somebody who looked like you. You follow what I'm saying? So when you break down that disparity between White and Black—I'm sorry, that's just the way society was set up. I didn't make it that way, okay—so when you break up this disparity between the White and the Black as far as who was being taught, administratively and teacher-wise, and there's an equal amount or good balance between Black and White, you see, then you're servicing everybody. You follow what I'm saying? But in the heart of busing you had a big disparity, okay. You had a lot of Whites controlling, you know, the whole situation. And then you got an influx of Black students coming in this. They're being forced, these White administrators and White teachers are being forced to teach them--You follow me?--where they had been teaching White students all along; maybe one or two Blacks sprinkled, one or two Blacks a year in there, but they hadn't been forced that many Blacks. You see, you follow me?

EG: Yes.

PM: Okay.

EG: Well one of my interview subjects, Bob Cunningham, he talked about how he was very concerned about the psychological effect of Black students going into an all-White environment.

PM: Yes. That's what I'm trying to give you the reverse of. If you don't understand, just reverse it a little bit.

EG: Yeah. What was the Black-White ratio in terms of students when you were at Southern Middle School?

PM: Oh, I'd be guessing. Shoot. I would say, when I talked there it had to be about sixty-five percent White, thirty-five percent Black.

EG: And you said the teachers, it was half and half?

PM: No, about like it, about the same thing.

EG: About the same thing.

PM: About thirty-five, about thirty percent Black teachers and sixty-five percent White. But it was a pretty decent balance, a lot more than what other schools had, you see. Because some schools just had, like I told you, think about it now, I'm teaching at Butler High School and I'm the only male teacher. This is 1989.

EG: Yeah.

PM: So we had at Southern Middle School, we had about, oh quite a few I'd say, about six, seven, eight, even nine Black teachers. That's quite few. I wouldn't say it'd be thirty percent but that's a pretty good number compared to what other schools had. Yeah, I'd say that's probably about what the ratio was, about sixty-five percent White, as far as students, and thirty-five percent Black.

EG: And you were saying at Butler High School, that some of the Black students would come and kind of seek refuge in you or look up to you or ask for your guidance.

PM: Sure.

EG: If you would talk more about that or give me some more, like an example or some specifics about that, what those dynamics were like.

PM: Well what you mentioned about Bob Cunningham hitting on it, what you're talking about, see you have to understand the psyche there, that they felt like they can relate to me, okay, because I am one of them. You follow me? And so therefore, they felt comfortable with me. And then, I'm not trying to be arrogant or nothing, but I know what kind of person I was. I treated everybody fairly and they knew that and they knew that be they White or be they Black, they knew I cared about kids, be they White or be they Black. So they respected that and then a lot of Blacks came to some White teachers, because you can tell the White teachers who cared and who didn't, you see, who were just there for the money, who were just teaching and didn't really care about the kids. There were quite a few White teachers that cared. You could tell, you can tell by when you get a mixture of both of them, so you get Blacks coming to them and you get Whites, then you know. But if you're only just getting White students coming to you and you're not getting any Blacks coming to [you], then you know which one you're caring for.

EG: Right.

PM: Okay. But if you get, so there were some White teachers there that you could tell that had both, but not that many. So the reason why they would come to me was pretty much because of that reason. They were pretty much like what you alluded with Cunningham saying that the psyche-- I was more ( ), I looked at more than just them being a student. I'm looking at your future. I'm trying to help you associate how to get through Butler, you see. Don't let Butler use you; you use Butler. And then a lot of teachers, some of the teachers, quite a few teachers that tried to take advantage of them or mistreat them, okay, if that would happen, they would come to me.

EG: Yeah.



PM: And I would kind of be like their savior a little bit and then I would address it, okay. I would say, and they knew they could come to me and they knew that I would, because Mahin would say something about this. It's not going to get by. So I would get to the correct people who I needed to say, ( ) "It's not going right. So and so's not treating this person right." So they would look into it. The principal of the school, although he and I may have had different philosophies on some things, but I thought he did a good job of dispensing discipline.

EG: Was he White or Black?

PM: He was White. He was White. And I think in doing that, he was pretty fair in that, and I give him credit for that. He set a nice atmosphere as far as discipline, okay. He did a good job and I thought he was pretty fair, although he and I on some things, we were diametrically opposed on a few things, but I give him credit where credit is due. He was good in that respect and that meant a lot to me. It makes some difference. The kids kind of knew that even though he was a White guy, even though he might have had a few prejudices, you couldn't tell it, because he was pretty fair. And the assistant principal was a fair guy, he was a White guy, he was fair. And you could tell that because all the Black kids would come to him and all the White kids would come. You know, kids would generally go toward the person who treats them fairly; it don't matter whether they Black or White. If you treat me right, you treat me with respect, and you care about me, then they're going to come to you. And so to answer your question after beating around the bush, the Black kids of course are going to feel more comfortable around me. Also me being the head coach, that didn't hurt none either.

EG: Yeah.

PM: You know, so but the main thing they saw in me was that I cared.



EG: Sure.

PM: That's the main thing. And I think that a White teacher and vice versa can go across those barriers if you show them you care, if you show them you're respectful, you show them you care about them and you're fair, it don't matter. See kids can see through that.

EG: Right.

PM: Okay.

EG: I have a bunch of questions really running in my mind because what you say is rich, and I keep thinking of other follow-ups, so let me pick one. Getting back to our initial discussion of Brown School, how big was Brown?

PM: At one time, we started off with a hundred and, maybe two hundred students, when we first started. Yeah, I think about two hundred students from third to twelfth grade. Like I said, it was small classes. And then it grew to six hundred. It just eventually grew and grew and grew to where now, I'm not sure if they go to the first through the twelfth grade or not, but anyway they probably got about eight hundred, nine hundred students now.

EG: Wow.

PM: Yeah, it's still there, you know. And it's still the same format but as things evolve, things are going to change. I don't think it's as free as it was when I was there.

EG: Yeah.

PM: Okay. When I was there, it was pretty free. ( ) Anything goes. Teachers could do anything. You could come in with a guitar and you could teach English, ( ) didn't do nothing like that. You could do anything. The modus was help motivate the kids.

Everything that helped to give them self-motivation or to foster creativity back then, hey that was the modus operandi. That's what happened.

EG: Yeah, right.

PM: But you know as things evolved, you can't let everything be free. You follow what I'm saying? There had to be some parameters.

EG: Right.

PM: So it was an experiment.

EG: Yeah.

PM: In an experiment as time goes on, you mature through it. I'm pretty sure Brown is probably at the apex now, I would think, after going through all that. It's been quite a few years.

EG: Now did it start around the time that you began teaching there?

PM: Yeah. That was my first teaching job.

EG: Yeah. Did it start then?

PM: It started at the same time.

EG: It started that same year, oh okay.

PM: I was right there when it was a baby, when it was born. Yeah, right there.

EG: I kind of implied earlier that it seemed like it was a successful, these were successful strategies or that it worked well in terms of Black-White dynamics and education.

PM: Sure, I thought it did. I think we had to grow into it though, just like anything else, because it was something different. And I think some of the teachers were a little bit too free. You know, you had to set some parameters; it was a little bit too free. But it grew. It finally matured.

EG: What were some of the other creative strategies that were used there?

PM: Well I didn't venture out too much because I controlled my health and phys education part of it. You probably need to talk to some of the professors other than me that were there, that were in the academic part of it, because I was mainly the phys ed part of it.

EG: Yeah.

PM: Okay. So you got to understand the atmosphere. You're in a hotel so a lot of your classes are in hotel rooms where you got couches and things like this. You don't have the traditional format where you got desks and all that. We didn't have that, see. So you had ballrooms and things like that as your classrooms.

EG: Yeah.

PM: You feel what I'm saying?

EG: Yeah.

PM: So it was fairly unconventional. And so it lent itself for creativity and more freedom and so on.

EG: By the space itself.

PM: Yeah. I couldn't tell you some of the strategies that the other teachers used. All that I could tell you is the strategy I used, which was probably somewhat conventional, I was more of the conventional type, because that's the way I learned when I was coming up. So therefore I didn't, I tried to foster a lot of creativity and self-motivation also, but I still knew there had to be some discipline involved. There had to be some parameters that had to be set. So I wasn't as, so far as letting kids go run free, okay, I didn't believe in that, but I went ahead with the concept of letting them call me by my first name. I really didn't like that either, but I went ahead and rolled with it.

EG: Yeah.

PM: And that was kind of giving up myself a little bit because like I say, I'm from the traditional setting, my upbringing is. And we did a lot of different things that were unconventional. We did the handball, a lot of things, there were a lot of different sports that we delved in, table tennis. We did a lot of different things. You wouldn't believe. We even played garbage-can basketball. You wouldn't believe it. You would have to see it to believe it. A lot of different things. You had to be very imaginative to come up with different strategies to reach the kids.

EG: Yeah.

PM: And see like I said, I would use the Y and I would use the park, and I would also use Brown School, the things that were there. So I would come up with different strategies to get them involved physical-wise. But I didn't see all of what happened academic-wise with their strategies because I was so busy taking care of my business.

EG: Sure.

PM: So I couldn't tell you, but I could tell you there were a lot of different things tried. Like I said, people would come in with guitars and they would sit around, they would encourage them to bring in their own instruments, they would do all, they would try anything. Anything and everything was go. You do your thing. As long as you were teaching, you could try anything, you could do anything, because you got a small setting. You got maybe some classes only had maybe only five or six students. You see what I'm saying? They would take them out in the city. They would take them through downtown Louisville. They would learn that way. And see that was kind of unusual. So you could use the resources of the city.

EG: Yeah.

PM: So that was different. And so they would take them downtown and use all the resources of the city that was available to them, and you can see that a lot in 1973, 1974, 1975, you can see that, kids all roaming around in the city. So that part was good. You had a lot of resources that were available to you in downtown Louisville.

EG: Yeah.

PM: And so the teachers used that.

EG: How did other teachers outside the school view the school?

PM: They probably viewed it as special, you know these cats or these guys are special. You would kind of get that ribbing sometimes, you know, "Y'all ain't part of the mainstream," which we weren't.

EG: Right.

PM: Like I said, I didn't experience desegregation like they experienced, the teachers that was in the schools like Valley and schools all out there, well all the schools that was out in the county. They were doing the grunt work, so to speak. They were doing, they were dealing with that. They were dealing with the dynamics of the White and the Black relationship, and the dynamics we spoke of earlier. I didn't have to deal with that until later on.

EG: Right.

PM: Until after I finished at Brown School. So we were considered kind of like outside of the realm of what they were doing. You follow what I'm saying? That makes sense to you?

EG: Yeah that does. And you mentioned too at Butler High School that some of these Black students who would come to you would talk about different treatments or mistreatment that they had experienced.

PM: Sure.

EG: How frequent did you run across this sort of stuff there?

PM: Well I wouldn't say it was like everyday, but I would say maybe about once a week, a kid would come to me with concerns, some legitimate concerns, and we would look into it, and I would talk to him, talk him through it. But it wasn't like an everyday occurrence. For the most part, the kids were being treated pretty fairly. You just always got some, you know quite a few of those teachers didn't want ( ) to be the devil about it, they just wanted to be different.

EG: So it was more kind of experiences they had with teachers?

PM: Mainly teachers, and administrators too, some of the administrators. Like I said, basically when they got to the administrators, they pretty much treated them fairly but they've got to go on the recommendation of the teacher.

EG: Yeah.

PM: Okay, they got to back the teacher, and so if the teacher said you did something wrong, they got to back them up. So you can't fault them for that. So I was kind of like the first line of defense for them. They would come to me and say, "Well coach, man, how would you handle that? What would you do?" And what I would always generally tell them is get your parents involved and I'll go check it out myself, I said, but you bring in your mom or dad up here. Let them know that there's somebody here to care about you. See quite a few of the teachers thought they could treat Blacks, well they can treat them anyway they wanted to, because they felt like someone didn't care, like the parents didn't care what was going on. You follow what I'm saying?

EG: Well what are some specific examples of like how the teachers would mistreat the students?

PM: Well as far as grades, as far as--. Well one of them had come to me, what was one particular one I remember off the top of my head? Oh yeah as far as being treated, on the fair and equity of dispensing of the grades, of "Why did so and so get that and I did the same thing that he or she did," who happened to be White, and why are you treating, it's just a treatment, an unequal treatment. You follow me? And you knew who the teachers were. There wasn't a whole lot of them, but there was quite a few. I mean you knew who the teachers were that didn't care about them and maybe well I'll do more for Elizabeth than I'll do for Joe over here. I'll give Elizabeth more of a break. I'll do this more for you, Elizabeth, than Joe. Joe, I'm not concerned about you.

EG: Yeah.

PM: You know, that kind of thing.

EG: So—

PM: That was about it.

EG: So the constant and kind of some recurring complaints were unequal treatment in terms of grades—

PM: Right.

EG: And not paying as much attention to them.

PM: Right.

EG: Were there any other recurring complaints?

PM: Those were basically about it, the ones I described to you. Unequal treatment and basically, I don't care about you.

EG: Yeah.

PM: You see kids can sense that. They're not dummies. And so they would come, and a lot of times I would, the situation would be taken care of, I'm kind of like the front



line person, so I would tell them how to handle that situation. And what I would always tell them was, "Look, you put the onus back on the teacher. You don't let them get away with nothing. So if you got paperwork, if you got documentation and so on and so forth, make sure you keep your documentation. Make sure you dot your i's and cross your t's. That way, you don't get caught in a lot of situations, okay?" And so they would listen to me and they would under--. And I said, "You make those teachers responsible for doing what they're supposed to do," because a lot of times they're young like and they don't understand, they don't understand all of the dynamics and all the procedures as far as, you know, they're kids. And that's what we do for, to guide them, so I would guide them through that in that way. And also I would encourage them always bring your mom and dad. Bring somebody, bring some ( ) but not just me. You need to bring Dad, you need to bring Mom. Let them know, hey, there's somebody backing me. You're not just going to get to treat my kids any old way. And then that made a difference, okay. So teachers thought, "Oh, I'd better get my act together."

EG: Right.

PM: Okay, and so that kind of alleviated a lot of the problems.

EG: Sure.

PM: Before it got to the administrative part. You follow what I'm saying? Okay.

EG: And you said too when you brought up these things to the administrator that they would generally be fairly receptive of—

PM: When I would talk to them?

EG: Yeah.

PM: Yeah. They would look into it.

EG: Yeah. What about what were your relationships like between these teachers who were the problematic ones?

PM: They didn't like to see me coming around.

EG: Yeah.

PM: Okay.

EG: Yeah, I'm sure.

PM: They didn't like to see me coming around. Period.

EG: Yeah.

PM: Because they knew I'm not going to let you screw over my kids.

EG: Right.

PM: So there's a tendency for me, let's be honest about it, to look after what I considered my kids, my Black kids more, because they're the ones who are getting screwed. The White ones are not getting screwed, more than likely. Although quite a few White kids come to me too. Oh yeah, it wasn't just all Blacks, you know ( ) Whites, they'd come to me, they'd ask for my advice and things about life and stuff like that. Not too much about teachers mistreating them. A few times some of the teachers would mistreat them, they would say, "Well coach, man, what do you think about it ( )?" But not as much as the Black ones did, okay, because they weren't being mistreated as much. Some of them probably were but they would come to me, and it wasn't just all Blacks, Whites would come to me also.

EG: And you made the point too that there were some White, it wasn't like all the White teachers were bad.

PM: No, there were some good White—

EG: There were some very good White teachers.

PM: Sure, there were some good ones. I still remember quite a few of them today.

EG: Yeah. And did you become friends with any of the White teachers?

PM: Sure. Those are the ones that I was friends with, same ( ). You could tell what teacher cares. Those are the ones that we became friends, still friends with some of them today. And counselors, there were a couple good counselors that were there. So it was a good school but you just got to kind of watch it. You know, there's something to be said, and Butler wasn't the only one, but you got to think about it for a minute. You got a school that holds maybe two thousand students, and you got about I don't know how many teachers—well forty, fifty, sixty, fifty-five teachers, I can't remember—fifty-five, sixty administrators, and you don't have but one Black teacher. See what I'm saying? So something's wrong there somewhere, so they changed it now but you know. So I was the advocate of that, so they kind of knew me as a person that would stand up and I was kind of like the spoiler, whatever you want to call it. I was the advocate for, that things were going to be done right and I'm not going to let you, you know. So kids knew that and the teachers knew that too.

EG: Sure.

PM: And so some of them didn't like it.

EG: Yeah.

PM: Because I knew it was wrong.

EG: Right. What was your experience like as a basketball coach there?

PM: It was okay; it was pretty good. It's just like anything else, when you win there's usually no problem. Is that what you mean, experiences I—

EG: I know it's a very broad question. I should be a little more focused.

PM: Yeah. There's no problem when you're winning.

EG: Yeah.

PM: They accepted me; they hired me, which was very unusual for the times. I was a first Black coach at Butler. There weren't too many Black coaches in Louisville at that time. The only Black coaches that were in Louisville were at the predominately, quote, [black schools] that had a Black principal. So I had a White principal who hired me; you got to give him kudos for that. I probably should have been hired a long time ago, but we're not going to get into that. That's another story. But anyway, I was the first probably Black coach in a predominately White school, not one of the first, but probably one of the—. Pretty much that don't happen too much, too often in Louisville, to have a Black guy in a predominately White school. But most people accepted me really well because, as I told you before, if you treat people right and you treat them fairly, and you treat them with respect, they'll respond to you. Be they adults or be they especially young people, we've never had a problem with young people. But adults are the ones that usually, to me, are the ones who cause any problems, quote or unquote, whatever, ( ) an adult. But I didn't have any problems with the adults. Most of them were pretty receptive to me because we won most of the time, we had a good winning season, and then I think that they knew that I treated everybody fairly. I didn't have any problems with that. I think I was pretty well-respected. I imagine there were probably some out there that hated my guts like anything else. I haven't got time for that. And so to answer your question, I got more positive feedback than I get negative. I got some negative, now you know, it goes with the territory.

EG: Yeah, it does when you're a coach. No one going to—

PM: So you just got to roll with the punches, but for the most part it was a good experience, you know. It was quite a good experience.

EG: What about opposing teams? How did they treat you? Did you experience any sort of tension in racial dynamics from if you faced off with predominately White ( )?

PM: Very few. Yes, I had that happen. I was called nigger before, me and my team. But very few times that happened. I don't want to name schools. I don't want to put a blight on them just ( ). But first the most part I was treated well because I'm going to demand that anyway. If I catch it, I'm going to demand it. But there were a couple of schools you could tell there was some who didn't like it, called us niggers and stuff like that, sure. It happened.

EG: Sure. You mentioned earlier what you saw as some of the drawbacks of school desegregation in terms of this sense of not having the same sort of care in regard to teachers as you had before then. Did you see any benefits of school desegregation at the time or later?

PM: [sighs] The main benefit I see out of school desegregation is that it stepped up the quality as far as materials is involved, okay, the materialistic aspect of schools. In other words, a lot of schools were having a lot of disparity, to quote the ones that were in the West End of Louisville, other schools were getting a lot more quality of equipment--books and so on and so forth, whereas other schools were being negated out in the West End or the southern part of Louisville, central part of Louisville. So that was the main, I think, [purpose] of the desegregation plan was that they tried to make things equal. Although it still didn't come out that way, but in some aspects--. As far as integrating the Whites and Blacks, I think there's some credence to be said to that. It's good that there's an inter-meeting of White and Black because it's going to have to happen sooner or later in the real world and the career life, you going to have to deal with it. Do you have to have it? I don't think you have to have it, you know, in schools. I'm more of a person that, I feel like let a

kid choose wherever he wants to go. I choose where I want to go. If it happens to be a predominately Black school, fine. If it happens to be a predominately White school, fine. If it happens to be half and half, fine. But I understood why they forced the issue though, because there was too much disparity as far as the dispensing of equipment, the dispensing of facility, the dispensing of material things. There was an unequal disparity there. And so if you force it and you make Whites come and blend with Blacks now, so now you going to have this disparity closing the gap. You follow me? So I see that as a positive. The other positive, I guess the positive of having Blacks and Whites together. But I went to Shawnee High School. It was sixty-five percent White, thirty-five percent Black. I chose it. I lot of people went to Male [Traditional School]. That's about sixty-five percent White, thirty-five Black. I'm saying, I guess, so my argument is do we have to have it? Why don't you just make it equal without saying we got, I'm going to bus you from the furthest part of Louisville all the way thirty miles to go to school out here? And then the Whites didn't have to come from all the way out, they didn't have to come, so that's another problem. I should have mentioned that. The Whites who lived out in the county, they're not coming all into the West End of Louisville. You see they were busing the Blacks out there so to kind of, sort of make the quota correct. Now they changed it now. I'm talking about when they first started. The Blacks were being bused out and the Whites were staying.

EG: So the burden was on the Black students.

PM: You got it. You follow what I'm saying? There's too much disparity there. See I didn't like that part of it. Matter of fact, I hated that part of it because you're losing your community. You're losing all your community base and ( ) you saying your school is better than my school, and I say bullcrap. You see, I say the schools like Central and Duvalle and Virginia Avenue, they were all Black schools, they were good schools. Let's



put us on equal footing. Now if Whites want to come to Central, fine. You go where you want to go but don't say that we're inferior to you as far as teacher quality, because you have to be White. The only difference is you might have better equipment that we should have had. So that's the only difference. So I think that's what desegregation did. It brought facilities, like different facilities that should have been at Central and should have been in the West End, the West End schools, where they started getting them now. They should have gotten them in the first place. What stopped them from getting-- Well I got to be with Whites to get it now? See so I saw, I had a ( ) problem with that, but that's with society in general. So my problem is that, that's my main problem, okay, that there shouldn't have to be a blending of two races, so we can have these facilities. We should have had facilities, I don't care what race you are. I don't care if you're Mexican. If you ( ) over here for them, then we ought to send the same thing over there for them. You follow what I'm saying? If we're all under the same umbrella, we're all under the same school system, and it wasn't that way, you see, okay. So that's why busing came up, you know desegregation came into being. To summarize, I know I'm going around ( ), the good parts of desegregation were facility-wise, that was the good part. And it probably was a good part that you had mixing of the White and Black, so you understand what Blacks go through and vise versa, you understand Whites. That's probably good; eventually it turned out to be good. But I did that when I was young so, I'm not getting into that, but that part of it was good. It forced, it finally, that it came to the part where we had to coexist, okay. But my contention is we were coexisting as it was. But anyway, we had to coexist, so that's a good part of it. Let's see. But at the initial phase it wasn't, there was a lot of high tension, very volatile. I know that although I wasn't in it--I wasn't directly in it--but I could see it and could talk to people. I knew, you know, what was going on. If you lived in



Louisville, you knew, although I was not directly, like I said, involved in it until later on. So you probably want to get some teachers that taught back then that were directly involved in it, that taught in those schools like Valley, Southern High School, all the different schools that were out, PRP, Dawes, all those schools that was out in the county. You know who they are. You need to get teachers like that.

EG: Yeah.

PM: And they can give you, they were the front line. I was not the front line personally until what, 1985. Well now that's ten years later. You follow me? So you need to get the front line of people and they can really give you a better—

EG: One of the persons I'm talking to is Clint Lovely. I'm going to talk to him on Thursday.

PM: Yeah, I know Clint.

EG: I figured you did with the sports.

PM: Yeah, well see I'm pretty sure he was in the front line—

EG: Yeah, he was at Central.

PM: There you go, there's a man.

EG: Yeah, sure.

PM: He'd be a good one to talk to because he'll give you a better perspective than I can.

EG: Well it's good though to get the alternative perspective and see where there were places in Louisville where desegregation was working even before it was forced.

PM: Sure.

EG: And to hear about these exceptions like Brown and so forth, so we don't just have this black and white portrayal of how things were.

PM: Yeah. The city had, desegregation was going on in the public school system, period. You follow what I'm trying to say? In other words, see there was a public school system—

EG: Yeah.

PM: And there was a Jefferson County school system.

EG: Yeah, it wasn't going on in the county but you had experienced how it was going on in the city.

PM: Right. There you go.

EG: Yeah.

PM: Okay. So you had quite a few Whites then. So what I'm trying to say is the Whites and Blacks always intermingled. It wasn't like a situation that they didn't intermingle.

EG: Yeah.

PM: Now maybe when we were in junior high school we didn't, because like I said, when I was coming up, okay you had an all-Black school that was in the neighborhood. That was just the way it was. If it's an all-Black neighborhood, it's an all-Black school there. Okay but once you went to high school—

EG: Yeah.

PM: See we had to intermingle, except for maybe Central. Central was still all-Black predominately. They had a few Whites that went there. But the other schools, Shawnee, Male, Manual, Atherton, all public schools, they had quite a few White and Black students. We're talking about in the '60s and all the way up to when I graduated in '67, even beyond that, they had quite a few.

EG: Yeah that's a really important part of the story that kind of, I think we've missed out on a little bit.

PM: Yeah so there has always been intermingling, you see what I mean. It's just that there was a, to me, I think the heart of it was there was too much disparity between the facilities part of it, of education. There was too much disparity. Why are you getting all of this and you not getting nothing? You follow me? There was not enough monies, and you had two different systems.

EG: Yeah.

PM: And you're not getting enough money here to have the same facilities that the other schools out here have, you see out in the county. So that, I think that's probably the main part of the dynamics also.

EG: Sure. In terms of your, I know our time is—

PM: Oh, we are fine. I didn't mean to ( ).

EG: Are we okay? Okay.

PM: No, no.

EG: Alright. Your assessment that you just gave me of how effective school desegregation has been, is that how you viewed it at the time or have you kind of come to those views now looking back in retrospect?

PM: Say the question again.

EG: So at the time did you believe that what really was needed when busing occurred was: [better] quality of the schools, more resources, [and] for there to be less resource disparity? So have your views kind of stayed consistent through time?

PM: That's what should have happened, you mean?

EG: On school desegregation, yeah.

PM: Yes. I believe to this day that's what should have happened. I think we've come through it okay. We've finally come through the volatile parts of it but I'm always one to believe in choice. Let me choose where I want to go to school, be it if it's thirty miles away, fine. If it's five miles away or a mile away, fine. Let me choose where I'd like to go to school. That's what I think desegregation took away and there was a disparity between, as you said earlier and I mentioned to you earlier, that I'm busing all the Blacks twenty to thirty miles to go to school, to a White school. And so what does that tell me? That tells me that the White school over here is better than the school that's right across the street from me. You understand that psyche there?

EG: Yeah.

PM: So that's the part I didn't like about it.

EG: Yeah.

PM: You feel me?

EG: Yeah.

PM: So that's telling me that's what you trying to tell me. You trying to tell me ( ), this school out here that happens to be predominately White is better than the school that just happens to be predominately Black. And I say no. So that's my basic argument.

EG: Yeah, and that was your view at the time?

PM: And that's my view today.

EG: And your view today, yeah.

PM: Now I think it's working because now we've gotten past all of that, so kids do have a choice now. They can choose. They can go to their community school if they so choose, okay. You can still go to a traditional school, you can pretty much choose, but you still have to be accepted. You have to be accepted at a traditional school. You still got

these types of schools going on. Don't make me out to be a superintendent now, now if I was a superintendent, because I'm going to leave that part alone. But the point I'm making is kids do have choices now. I can choose the school I want to go to. So that part is good because they equaled it now pretty much.

EG: Oh, okay.

PM: Pretty much so.

EG: Yeah.

PM: It's not quite exactly equal but pretty much so. Traditional schools, because they have a little bit more, that's another story. But for all intents and purposes, the schools are pretty much equal. You don't have that volatile situation because you got Whites coming down to Central and some Whites coming to Shawnee, you know, some of them come to the West End. It's not all a burden on the Blacks now.

EG: Yeah.

PM: You follow me?

EG: Yeah.

PM: And then you have choice now; I can choose now. You didn't choose back then. I'll bus you where you wanted to go, see that's a lot different. You follow me?

EG: So do you think school desegregation, the process has evolved to be now successful?

PM: It's better.

EG: It's better?

PM: Yeah, it's better than what it was, sure. I still think there's a little bit of disparity in the school system, but it's better, it's a lot better than before. Yes it has evolved. There's no doubt about that, because you don't have the same volatile situation.

You don't have the same burden that was put on Blacks. You still have a little burden that is still being put on Blacks, but not the same, not disparity as it was back then. Okay, so it has evolved to a better system where you do have opportunity to choose.

EG: Do you think school desegregation is an ongoing issue?

PM: Is it there now, you mean?

EG: Yeah.

PM: Well you know, the judge has already ruled to keep it going, that everything is going okay. I don't think it's in the limelight as much. That part of it has simmered down so it's not a hot topic. No, it's not--. What was, repeat that question again.

EG: If it was an ongoing issue.

PM: Is it still an ongoing issue now? No, not as much because kids have a choice.

EG: Yeah.

PM: I'm just trying to think it through. They have a choice to what school they want to go to and that makes a difference.

EG: So would you say you were opposed to busing back in the '70s?

PM: Sure I was, for the main reason I told you.

EG: Right.

PM: If you just make it equal, just give us equal, then let the kids choose where they want to go.

EG: And so that would have been your solution if you had had control, would be just equalize the resources and deal with it that way?

PM: Sure. If I was the governor or if I was whoever—

EG: Or the president.

PM: Called the shots—

EG: Or superintendent—

PM: To just make it equal. And I think eventually through evolving itself, that you're going to have a mixture of the races anyway you go. If my school's equal to your school, and eventually if you have something over here, if Central has a school of law, a school of medicine, a school of veterinary medicine, and I'm the only school that's got that, and if it just happens to be Black, well so what? I'm going to go to that school. You follow what I'm saying? That doesn't stop us from going to whatever school we want to go to. You feel me? What I'm trying to say is that don't stop Black kids from going to UNC-Chapel, although UNC-Chapel is predominately White.

**END OF TAPE 1, SIDE B**

**START OF TAPE 2, SIDE A**

PM: The ethnicity of the particular race does not matter if you have a quality school, and then the kids would normally evolve and go to those particular schools, be they White or be they Black. I'd rather see it done that way than forcing it upon, because if you're going to force something, force them to have equal facilities, force them to do that, okay. But don't force White students to come to my school. It's like Kentucky State University where I graduated from. Those White kids are not forced to go there. They go there because it's better for them or it's feasible to make the commute, I don't know, whatever reason, maybe they have particular courses that they want. They're not forced to come there, although that's a predominately Black school. You follow what I'm saying?

EG: Is it a historically Black school?

PM: Sure, it's a historically Black school. And so about six hundred White students go there. You follow me? So if you have a good quality education, kids don't care. If you treat me fairly, if you treat me with respect, kid's don't care.



EG: And you mentioned before how you didn't see it as a problem with kids but more so with the adults.

PM: Sure.

EG: And the parents. And that has come up to in some of the oral histories—

PM: There's no doubt, there's no doubt.

EG: Yeah.

PM: That's a main problem, I'm going to be honest with you, because we were born, not born, but we were, through the grandpa or grandfather or grandma, you know, the family have instilled the racial prejudice in them, both sides, Black and White. You follow me? Okay, so it's instilled. I mean you're not born with it but that's how it's progressed. So that would be my suggestion, but I'm not God or I'm not Jesus. I'm not in control, but if I were in control, I'd rather have it done that way.

EG: Do you think that if it had happened that way that the city schools would have had the resources on the equal level as the county schools, that there would have been more Whites then who would be attracted to these predominately Black schools? Or do you think because of the prejudices that a lot of them had in the first place that they would have stayed predominately Black?

PM: Well I think it eventually would have happened. Let's look at it this way, the suburban, quote, suburban schools that are out there now, Blacks live out in suburbia. I live out there now, my kids grew--. You follow me? So what I'm saying is the natural progression, you can't run away, the natural progression of—

EG: Of society?

PM: Of society is going to get you to the point where you're going to have to integrate. You can't run away from it.

EG: Yeah.

PM: You see, you going to have to integrate with me. You follow me? When I came up most of the Blacks lived in the city. There was quite a few Blacks that lived out in the county, there were some, but most of the Blacks lived in the city. Okay now we pretty much all over.

EG: Yeah.

PM: There's no parameters set here. You follow me? So I'm saying the natural progression of things, the natural progression of society would have evolved and it eventually would have happened.

EG: Okay.

PM: You know, so therefore eventually we would say, "Okay, well I don't mind going out to Southern High School and going twenty miles away because they got the kind of school I want." I got that choice and vice versa. I don't mind coming to the city and going to Brown School—which is located at close to Fourth and Broadway, wherever it is right now. I'm not sure exactly where it is, but down in that area of Chestnut—because they got the kind of school I want.

EG: Right.

PM: You see. I think the natural progression, just like you got now more Whites coming back into the, living in the inner downtown Louisville. Did you know that?

EG: No I didn't.

PM: Yeah, there's a lot of, quite a few Whites and there's some Blacks too that are coming back to the city ( ), a lot of, quite a few Whites and some Blacks are coming back, that's why the property's really high, are coming back to the city to live, downtown area now. I'm not talking the West End area.

EG: Yeah.

PM: There's a difference. So anyway, so I think the natural, I know I'm being redundant, but that the natural progression of society would have eventually meshed us together. That's what I'm saying.

EG: Sure.

PM: It's like Kentucky State, I take that for an example, it's like Kentucky State University. When I went there, it was predominately all Black. There were very few Whites that went to Kentucky State University. We had a few, maybe about a hundred or two hundred, and none, maybe about one or two stayed in the dorm. Now you got, now it's 2005 or whatever, now we got about, oh I guess about twenty-five hundred students and probably about six hundred of them are commuters. Most of them are commuters that are White though, and then you got a few of them that still stay in the dorm. But what I'm saying is they have no problem intermingling. They have no problem merging together, the merging of relationships, of society. There's no problem there.

EG: Right.

PM: Okay. So why would it not be so in the high school level? Why could that not happen there? So that's my thing, the natural progression of things. Just let it happen. Like as you said earlier, keep the facilities equal, keep everything equal as much as you can, and let people have a choice. I think you would have still had that same intermingling, but as opposed to just forcing me to do something. But eventually like I said, it turned out okay. Maybe not as well as it could have been, I don't know. Who knows? If you did it my way, I don't know it might have came out. I don't know.

EG: Yeah, we'll never know.

PM: Who can tell? I can't predict the future, I can't predict it.

EG: Right.

PM: I can't predict it.

EG: You said now you did grow up in the West End and then you moved to Bardstown Road—

PM: When I got married.

EG: Yeah, are you still there?

PM: Yeah, I'm out that way.

EG: Oh, and that's a suburban area or—

PM: You can call it that. Yeah, it's called J-Town there, it's what people call it. If you want to call it suburban, yeah. I'm out that way. I sure am.

EG: Okay, and has that area been the same or evolved in terms of racial—

PM: Sure, there's a lot more Blacks out there now.

EG: Now than there, because it used to be a predominately White area, I assume.

PM: Sure, all of them, everything out in the suburban area pretty much used to be, not everything but quite a few suburban and county areas, J-Town, Bardstown, out that way, what's another area, Shelbyville Road, then continuing out from all that area was pretty much all predominately White.

EG: When you moved there were you one of the few Black families that lived there?

PM: When I moved where I am right now?

EG: Yeah.

PM: No, I wasn't the first one. There was somebody there before I got there. I moved there, let's see that's been, how many years ago has that been now, maybe about nine, nine or ten years ago.

EG: Oh I was thinking—

PM: Oh you mean when I moved from—

EG: To Bardstown Road.

PM: Bardstown Road. Oh yeah, there weren't too many Blacks out there then.

There was a few, I mean there were a few that lived in the country. There was an apartment complex called Country Acres that's still there now. There were some Blacks there. It was still considered part of Louisville.

EG: Yeah.

PM: So it wasn't that far out in suburban, see it wasn't that far out in the county where you were considered to be in suburbs. It was still part of Louisville, although there wasn't quite as many a concentration of Blacks as they are in the West End, but there were quite a few Blacks out in the Bardstown Road area.

EG: Yeah.

PM: Sure. There were quite a few Blacks there. It wasn't like we were the only Blacks there, no. Now if you go a little farther out, go farther out Bardstown Road at that time, then you probably—

EG: Then that was the White—

PM: Yeah then now you're going to see more of a concentration of Whites and maybe one or two Blacks, not too many.

EG: Right.

PM: See I got a problem, I'm going to be honest with you. I got a problem with the dynamics with the West End and the East End. See I'm like this, that's why, let me say it this way real quickly, is that you should be able to live anywhere you want to choose. You want to live in the West End, you can live in the West End. Don't matter, wherever. You

go where you want to go, you see. And so we chose that particular part of town because that's what we liked, and if had been the West End, we'd go there. It don't matter to me. I'll go where I want to go, and that's part of, that's why I'm saying the natural progression of society, see, so therefore people, you know you can't run away. I know we were talking about White flight. You [whites] can't keep going, we [blacks are] going to keep going on because we are going to go where we want to go. You feel me?

EG: Yeah, I agree.

PM: And you're going to go where you want to go. ( ) you're going to go so eventually then people are going to find, well I can't run away. We're going to learn how to get along. Am I right? [laughter]

EG: Right.

PM: You're going where I live. [laughter]

EG: We're going to follow you. [laughter] [Editorial comment: he's saying that whites no longer will be able to engage in white flight, because blacks will follow them.]

PM: Probably somewhere the land was ours in the first place, you just took it from me, took it from the Indians. Some of the land was ours in the first place.

EG: Right, [blacks are] taking it back.

PM: We're just taking it back. Sooner or later you're going to ( ) so let's learn how to get along.

EG: Yeah.

PM: It don't matter. So that's why I believe the natural progression of things and then just equalize the facilities, and let it naturally happen. It's like I said, Whites coming back into the city now. Any town you refer to, that's happening all over.

EG: I think so.

PM: It's not just in Louisville. It's happening in, as far as the renovation and things of the city—

EG: Yeah—

PM: You know what I'm saying?

EG: And Washington, D.C. too.

PM: It happening all over. There's nothing to do. We can work to get along. That's how I see it.

EG: So now you're further into the suburbs?

PM: Not that far away from where I first lived there. I'm about, you know where I first lived at Bardstown Road? I'm about five minutes away.

EG: Oh, okay.

PM: Yeah, about five minutes away.

EG: Sure.

PM: But it's considered J-Town area but it's still part of Louisville.

EG: How are we doing for time?

PM: I'm fine. I got about another fifteen minutes. It's up to you.

EG: Oh, okay.

PM: It's up to you. I don't want to hold you up.

EG: Okay.

PM: If you've had enough, I'm fine—

EG: Oh no. I just have then one or two questions and then I have just a few words to go over with spelling.

PM: Sure.



EG: I guess let me just consult my list here and pick, I think we covered most of this, which is great.

PM: Can you put it on stop for a minute?

EG: Yes, I can.

[Tape interruption]

EG: I have two more questions. It's hard to pick what two.

PM: It's okay. Take your time.

EG: Yeah. I guess what would you say are the lessons of school desegregation? Or with talking to me, a historian, or a different historian, what would you like to convey about it?

PM: The lessons from desegregation?

EG: Yeah.

PM: It's pretty simple, I would think, is that we have to learn to get along with one another. That's the main lesson that I can ascertain that we should get from it. I think it taught us to, although we were forced, but it taught us that eventually we got to learn to get along, it bonded relationships in a positive way, probably at the end. But like I was saying, I think if you had just done it naturally, it would have happened, but eventually. So that's the main lesson I see out of it.

EG: Sure. And is there anything else that you would like to add about school desegregation or what we've talked about in general or anything else for the record?

PM: No, other than as I said earlier, that if we had equal facilities, I think we wouldn't have had as much of a problem, and let things happen naturally, I think things would have evolved a lot better, I believe they would have. But since it didn't, if we're dealing with what we have, I think it's come out okay. I think we finally learned to have

better relationships with one another, to be more tolerant of one another. But when it first started, it was very volatile, I mean super volatile.

EG: Sure.

PM: That always happens when you force something on somebody. In this particular situation, I don't think it needed to be forced, but then that's just my opinion. Some things probably, probably you say probably need to be forced because that's the only way we're going to get the facilities, you're probably right. Probably only going to get it if we just force ourselves into doing it, but it shouldn't happen that way. Somebody should've just came to the forefront and said, "No, this is not right. You get the same facilities that everybody else are getting." So that would be my only thing to add. You can't undo what has happened and so we just have to move on from there. And I think Louisville has evolved and still has a lot of grow. We got a lot more growing to do, especially education-wise, and that's another story. But I think we have a lot more, but I think it's gotten better. I think relationships have gotten better between White and Black, but they're still, we still have a ways to go. Oh yeah, we still got a ways to go education-wise, to me, things to be leveled up, the concept of traditional and non-traditional, that's another issue to me, that needs to be addressed. Because you got some in traditional schools and some that you don't. Some traditional schools give certain particular, for lack of a better term, rewards or particular facilities that other schools don't ( ), and see I don't like that. I would like to keep it even as much as possible. They're striving to do that but see those particular items need to be addressed, in my opinion, in my humble opinion. But we'll get there. Hopefully they'll get there before my lifetime is over. We'll see. But other than that, I will say this, I've enjoyed my-- I think Louisville is a great city to live in. I've always enjoyed Louisville because mainly the community that I've lived in, and mainly

because the community that I lived in cared about one another, and that's what made it different, and I guess because of my parents and my grandparents, that made a lot of difference. Louisville, with all its faults, some of its faults, it's a great, nice town to live in. I've enjoyed living here. But you can't get complacent. That's when you get in trouble. That's why I told you to talk to Reverend Louis Coleman, because he's been very active. I've been active in other ways, in my own particular way dealing with how I deal with things. But he's very vocal and publicly more active. Like I say, he's kind of like the social conscience of Louisville. He'd be a good person to talk to as far as he can give you his perspective on it, because he sees it, and they have what they call the Justice Resource Center, and he's considered by a lot of White people, not a lot but quite a few White people, and some Blacks, consider him a hot, what do you call it, a hot commodity as far as don't touch him, don't bother with him, or he starts trouble, but I don't look at him that way. I look at him as a person that's, he's the conscience of Louisville. If he sees something wrong, he's going to speak out about it, and I think he does an excellent job of doing that. And he'd be a good person, I think [for you to talk to]. He can give you his perspective on it. But all in all, I think Louisville's a fine little town. Yes, it's a nice little town.

EG: It sounds like your activism has been more kind of within the school being an advocate for the students and stuff.

PM: That's where it might have been. Pretty much so.

[The interviewee/interviewer ended the tape confirming spelling of proper names]

## **END OF INTERVIEW**

Transcribed by Emily Baran. September, 2005.