

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
ROSE WILSON-HILL
NOVEMBER 5, 2015

Q. I am Deb Ballam. Today is November 5, 2015, and I am interviewing Rose Wilson-Hill, whose birthdate is?

A. May 29, 1945.

Q. Thank you, Rose. It's so wonderful that you could join us today.

A. Thank you.

Q. We're so pleased that you could be one of our voices in the "Voices of Women" project.

A. Actually, it's my privilege.

Q. Could you describe the positions you've held and the different roles you've played at Ohio State, in what units, and over what time periods?

A. Oh, that's a long one. I came to the University in 1971 when the late Dr. Frank Hale had been appointed Associate Dean of the Graduate School and Professor of Communication. He asked me to come and serve as Assistant to the Associate Dean. I did until 1978, when he became Vice Provost for Minority Affairs, and he asked that I join him in Minority Affairs, as Director of Special Programs. It so happened that in those years I had worked very closely with him and really was directing certain programs already. I believe Dr. Al Kuhn was the Provost at the time. Frank asked Al if he could bring the programmatic thrusts that we were working on in the Graduate School, to the Office of Minority Affairs. I directed those programs through the vice provosts administrations of Dr. Joe Russell and Professor David Williams. Professor Leroy Pernell succeeded David, and Leroy asked that I serve as Director of Administration in 1993, but when the title was

finally reassessed, it became Director of Administration/Special Programs. I served in that role until 1997, when Leroy accepted a deanship elsewhere.

Q. And who were the people you reported to after Leroy?

A. There was so much going on at the time with the Young Scholars Program. It was in director transition and had recently joined the Office of Minority Affairs (OMA), having reported to the Office of Academic Affairs directly. With these additional administrative duties, Interim Vice Provost Barbara Rich asked that I would serve as Special Assistant to the VP with added responsibilities of giving tutelage to OMA's business office. I have held the Special Assistant to the Vice Provost title and Director of Admin/Special Programs since that time with varying duties on the special assistant side of the ledger.

After Barbara, the Administration conducted a national search and Dr. Timothy Knowles was with us for a year. When Timothy left, Associate Vice Provost and Associate Professor Mac Stewart was on board in an interim capacity for a year or so, then the Administration appointed him permanent Vice Provost and later also Chief Diversity Officer. Mac had long service at the university and retired in 2010. Professor and Chair of the English Department, Dr. Valerie Lee was appointed Vice Provost and Chief Diversity Officer in 2010. Also with long years of service at the university, Valerie retired on June 30, 2015.

Q. Just retired.

A. Yes, she just retired. And now Professor Sharon Davies is on board as Vice Provost & Chief Diversity Officer. Sharon also is Executive Director of the Kirwan Institute. I don't know if you are aware, but it was the fall of 2010 that the Office of Minority Affairs officially became the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI). Kirwan Institute changed

reporting lines to ODI during Valerie's tenure and The Women's Place to ODI during Sharon's tenure.

Q. Fantastic. I didn't know that.

A. So we may be, I dare say, the largest ODI of its kind in the country. I have had the privilege of reporting to and working with all of the vice provosts. The late William Holloway, first Vice Provost for Minority Affairs, did invite me to join what was then OMA's Coordinating Council, affording the opportunity to work closely with him. He later took a position as director of the Nigerian Education Program in the College of Education, and he retired after that time.

Q. So you could write the history of diversity?

A. Oh my gosh. We started working on the history a little while ago, although many other meaningful stories are etched in memory and have a powerful place in my life, like proofreading dissertations and theses, writing proposals that were funded and creating programs – all activities with untold rewards.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about your family and background and experiences that shaped you before you came to Ohio State in 1971?

A. My family: My mother is still very alert and in her 90s. My father actually passed in 2000. Mom was an excellent homemaker while dad, although a builder, had a chronic heart condition for years. The doctor told him that if he didn't quit, it was going to quit on him. And so he retired from his work in Bermuda, and he and my mom went to live in Tampa, Florida. They were there for 16 years and, unfortunately, with multiple medical emergencies relating to his heart. He had bypass surgery. He had high blood pressure. He was a "type A" personality. But when we were little, I clearly remember my dad saying

that we had high-class values, even though we didn't have high-class money. I vividly recall my mother and father always saying to us, "You have to be better than good". And that is something that has stuck with me all of my years. Even when I came to work for the Office, what is now the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the diversity agenda was a hard sell. The whole of diversity was hard to sell to some, in part, because of the history in America. Whenever I have had the sense that people have this stigma about diversity, I go back to my parents instilling, "...we had to be better than good." And so it is with my stance now, the programmatic thrusts that I have created, and those I administer. My staff will tell you, some of them have called it, "Ms. Roseisms," which is kind of funny, but I enjoy being "better than good."

When my father would take my sister and me on the sites where he was building, I remember being very intrigued with how the mortar was laid, or the slates being placed on the roofs, or how the piping was done. As a little girl I remember the detail of it. And come to find out, my second name could be "detail" as I remain meticulous about my work. I later understood that when Valerie was leaving and Sharon was coming on board, Valerie was very generous in her commentary about my work ethic. I am just so humbly grateful when I review the impact of my family dynamic, which carries me through my life. And then my other experiences, when I went to Oakwood, now Oakwood University, I was invited to serve as Executive Assistant to the President, who then was Frank Hale.

Q. I didn't realize that.

A. That's how I came to Ohio State, The Ohio State University. But in that role, there was just so much detail. When the Board of Trustees came to town, I don't know if you're

familiar -- you've been at Ohio State for so long, too, but with that protocol there was so much pomp and circumstance. I was right in the middle of preparing for the Board meetings, making sure all of the packets were together, and just having creativity as an Executive Assistant in support of the President. Just being as gracious as I knew how to be was all a part of working in the President's office. There was an aura about this work that could not be diminished at any time. So that piece also carried forth in my work, going back to that "D" word (detail) that we talked about before. Other rich experiences, fast forward - oh gosh. The privilege of being able to meet incredible people here at the University, so much a part of our work in the Graduate School administrative offices and in ODI, inviting all manner of prestigious persons to campus, negotiating their contracts, greeting and sometimes escorting them when they arrive, making sure all of the i's are dotted and the t's are crossed, etc. So I've had one-on-one time with our guests. I remember Julian Castro, who is now in Washington as Secretary of HUD (Department of Housing and Urban Development). He keynoted the 20th National Conference on Diversity, Race & Learning. I recall escorting him to the airport. He was getting out of the car and I told him again what a wonderful addition he had been to our Conference. I said, "I look forward to one day voting for you as President of the United States." Of course, he smiled. But it's experiences like these that have just so strengthened my reason for being, and the contributions that I hope I have made in some small way in my role here.

The other piece, my work as a Special Assistant and Director of the Administration/Special Programs unit, has allowed me so much flexibility/creativity. I actually wrote the proposal to then-Vice Provost Leroy Pernell and asked him if we could

begin a national conference in 1993. It remains the university's most comprehensive two-day diversity conference and happens each May. Fast forward to a couple of years ago, we received an e-letter from an administrator at the University of Birmingham in England. She was questioning GPS, the university-wide annual visitation days for honor students across the country and Puerto Rico. October 16 – 18, 2016 marks its 46th year. She saw it on the web and wrote, "We just have nothing like that at the University of Birmingham. Really no intense diversity programs." That inquiry evolved into my sending a proposal to (Vice Provost) Valerie (Lee) and (Associate Provost) James (Moore), asking if we could host a visiting administrator in residence whose work would be to study diversity and to seek what that visiting administrator would bring to us, resulting in a reciprocal collaboration. Since the University of Birmingham and OSU are part of the U21 schools, we thought to begin this new venture with, although not limited to, the U21 schools. So fast forward to the summer. The University of Birmingham administrator came. She received funding from the University of Birmingham and she shadowed us for two weeks, not just in our shop, but she experienced a more inclusive view of diversity across the campus. She met with the Chief Diversity Officer in the College of Education, the Chief Diversity Officer in Engineering. We made sure that she interacted with areas of campus that would be of maximum benefit to her and the U of B. The Graduate School was also included. It is initiatives like these that just help to keep my juices flowing.

Q. It sounds like your parents' legacy has carried you well through life and through Ohio State. Ohio State has certainly benefitted from all the things you've done, it's clear. It's

been clear to me for years and years, what a valuable person you are to the University.
What a legacy from your parents.

A. Yes, yes and oh how kind! And my mother, as mentioned, into her 90s and very with it, feels proud of the kinds of things I do. Two other pieces, I shouldn't forget. The first, my wonderful, though brief, marriage to the late Billy Hill (who passed of heart failure in 1995). He was head football trainer, co-head trainer for the other 31 sports and a part of the faculty in the older HPER (Health, Physical Education and Recreation) department in the (then) College of Education. That chapter of my life I deeply cherish, also having the privilege of lead instrumental activities in seeing the endowment in his honor come to fruition in 1978. Secondly, you know the University is high on our contributions in the city. Connecting town and gown, I've been honored to sing with the Columbus Symphony Chorus where I auditioned and began in 1974. We perform huge and major musical works of all times for chorus and orchestra, on a continuum, for the public to enjoy: *Verdi Requiem*, *Elijah*, *Carmina Burana*, etc., etc.

Q. Really? I had no idea.

A. Yes, you must come sometime.

Q. I had no idea, wonderful.

A. In fact, we're getting ready to perform Alexander Newsky (cantata) and some John Williams works the mid-part of November. Our language coach has had us totally consumed in perfecting the Russian.

Q. How wonderful, I will have to try and come.

A. Yes, you must.

Q. In what ways do you generally identify yourself, both in terms of how you see yourself as well as how others see you? Just the different identities. People have different identities in terms of gender, race, sex, religion, class.

A. I think I just call myself a multi-faceted woman who is a Christian. I believe in God. There are so many things in my life that have happened, little things, that I just can't attribute them to anything other than – I call it, 'God smiling on my life'. I simply don't have another answer. And I guess because I was raised as a Christian, I don't know that I want another answer. I had a friend once who has now passed, God rest his soul, but he used to say, "Rose, there's a category that I have in my book and it says, 'Here are the things I want to ask God when I go to Heaven.'" So I always think of that. Things happen for a reason and a season too, you know? So of course I'm a black woman and I'm very proud of that. For a long time my father would want me to say I'm a black Bermudian. He would remind me that I've been in America for so long, since basically I was 14 years old.

Q. So you were born in Bermuda?

A. I was born and raised in Bermuda. I came to the U.S. when I was 15. I went to school in Jamaica when I was 13 and completed my last year of high school in Holly, Michigan. Both were private boarding schools. I went from having 100-degree days to freezing my behind off in the winter. You know how winters are in Michigan? But yeah, I'm a blend of many categories. My dad, with his strict British island persona, would say that I have become too Americanized for his liking. I've forgotten my roots, he would say. But I like a more holistic, world-view approach. I certainly am secure in my identity obviously. And so I try to kind of live by that. Did I answer your question?

- Q. Yes, that was excellent. I'm guessing people would have to do that, although they might not realize it. You would have to do the holistic approach. Every person has multiple identities, so they would almost have to, but they might not even realize it.
- A. But they have to come together at some point and make you who you are.
- Q. And all these identities as they've come together in this holistic way, how have they shaped your life, both before you came to Ohio State and while you've been at Ohio State?
- A. You know, someone sent me an article of a Bermudian lady who works for the *Huffington Post*, and I Linked-In with her in the last 2-3 months. She tells a story about moving to America in her younger years and balancing her Bermudian upbringing, being very strict. It's not American in terms of how family discipline, I'll put it that way. It's very much what one might call an island concept, I don't know how else you would frame it. Again a reference to my dad's words, "If you spare the rod you spoil the child," and we experienced many whippings when we were growing up. In later years, he would brag, "None of you fared any differently. You're all on the right track." So he felt that his discipline was just fine. But as she moves through talking about the transition of Bermudian culture, coming to America and trying to fit in – it made me think, 'I mirror just that'. It was a real transition, and I don't know that I've totally mastered it, but I recognize the wonderful melting of the two, after all, I have chosen to make America my home. I'm an American via formal citizenship process many years ago. But there are still all of these other pieces that absolutely have shaped my thinking and behavior. I go back to that better-than-good concept that my father and mother instilled in all of us (four

children). It's a part of my whole presence. And it has had an enormous impact on just how I view me. Am I making sense?

Q. And I'm sure you've passed that down to all the thousands of students you work with. So the legacy goes on for lots of other people.

Q. When you think about just your life at Ohio State and all the identities you have, the holistic identity, what has the climate at Ohio State been like for you in terms of how your identities have worked into the University?

A. Fortunately for me, I'm not a rigid person. I will come to a task and whether or not I've done it before, I will make it happen. There is an inner drive that says there has to be an end result, that whoever asks of me a task, they have had the confidence that I can and will achieve it. Here's a good example: Then-VP Mac Stewart asked me to serve as the ODI main officer on the SAS Building Committee – that is the Student Academic Services Building on Lane and Tuttle, opening in 2010. I had been on the Lincoln Tower Move Committee since 1991. That committee evolved. It would meet and not meet, meet and not meet. And finally, when the Administration decided that ODI would be a part of the Student Academic Services Building, there were five of us who worked very closely with our VP's, representing each of the five SAS service floors. The Lane and Tuttle location was a parking lot and now it is a building with attached garage, \$66 million [total]: \$33 [million] on the building, \$33 [million] on the garage. I had not, heretofore, had such an assignment in my life except for watching my father build his houses back in the day. Having handled other assignments for Mac, he knew the ODI voice had to be someone with detail, patience, fortitude and expertise to manage four years of long meetings, making important decisions with him and completing all of the necessary

follow-through within hot deadlines. So that kind of answers your question in a roundabout way. You see what I'm saying?

Q. Yeah.

A. It's applying yourself, whether or not you think you can do it, and always finding ways to get projects done. That has been my drive and whatever is my place or has been my place here, I've tried to make it happen, regardless of who I was working with. My family is very cosmopolitan. My brother-in-law is from Morocco. At one time my youngest brother was dating an English nurse. My other brother was married to a French Canadian. I see race but it's not an impediment to what I do. I like President Drake's inclusive excellence with diversity. I loved when I heard him express that because it raises the bar to a different level. In all of my interactions with any persons across the campus, I don't care if you're green. I don't care what your philosophy is. But as long as you come to the table and you want to take us from here to here in an upward trajectory to make a difference, that's what's important. We find a way to work with you, and if you don't want to work with us, there's somebody else who can and will collaborate to get our job done.

Q. I suspect that's why you've been so effective. Because you're in a unit, and really your whole career at Ohio State been in a unit that has focused on diversity.

A. Yes.

Q. I'm going to change the questions a little bit, because they're tailored for people from all parts of the University. The next set is really about diversity. Just generally speaking, because you've been here since 1971, what are the main kinds of diversity issues that you have been able to observe during that time? What kind of progress? Because you have a

unique perspective in terms of most of the women we've interviewed, because you've been looking at diversity initiatives in terms of a University-wide view for 40 years or so. So what are the main challenges, what are the main accomplishments? Where are we moving in terms, because ODI deals with lots of different types of diversity too.

- A. Yes, we do. When we came in 1971, we were told that, and you're going to smile in a minute, how I connect to this, there were "no qualified black students". The departments absolutely told us that. (The late) Frank (Hale, then Associate Dean of the Graduate School) and I had incredible strategy sessions. He was a very creative person. And we would sit and talk about, how are we going to manage this? He would remind me that he had been invited to come to this University and a part of his work is supposed to be Minority Affairs. I recall one day he said, "I've got to work with these academic units, and they're telling me they can't find qualified black students." At the time, there was not much talk about including the Latino/Latina population or Asian American or Native American. It was primarily black students, and I think this came out of the riots and all that was going on in America in the late '60s. Our response was, "Well, if they can't find them we'll bring them." That's how the annual visitation days started. But in order to bolster the visitation days, both of us got on the road. He would go one direction and I would go the other. We visited historically black colleges and universities and some predominantly white campuses. I was on the road for 18 years. He was on the road for maybe three or four, until he really felt like it was solidified, the visitation days that is. We brought students to campus and I think in the '70s and '80s, Ohio State was the number one producer of black Ph.Ds in the country. But it was a concerted effort to try to change the complexion of this University in terms of the student body at the graduate

level. You know, Deb, I just think folks didn't have the know-how, in some instances. Oh, I believe there was serious racism across America. In many other cases on campus, effort, there were just three of us in the Graduate School administrative office. I remember first vice provost Dr. William Holloway hosting a coordinating council with persons of color from across campus in administrative capacities in varying colleges. We would come together and talk about issues, and how we would resolve them. I've forgotten how often we met. But critical discussions began. William (Holloway) was working in Minority Affairs at the time, Frank (Hale) was working in the Graduate School, and Dr. William Nelson, Jr. chaired the (then) Black Studies Department. We often referred to them in private as "The Big 3". Later joining "the crew" was Dr. Mac Stewart who was first associate dean of University College. So, in tandem, these matters were progressing. I do believe that it started the University on a new trajectory. There were some activities prior, but I think in seeking the wisdom and collaboration of academic units, we found Chairs and faculty who were very, very receptive. They helped us to generate a list of 700 names of alumni. We simply wrote and asked, "What students do you remember who were African American, who graduated, who were your advisees? Do you know where they are?" And we began writing to these alumni across the country. Those who were a part of the professoriate, we wanted their students, who might be a fit in History or in Education or in Zoology at the time, or in Microbiology. And the book that Frank published, *They Came and the They Conquered*, I still have copies of it if you'd like to have one. It was my privilege to complete the legwork on both publications, particularly the second as Frank was hospitalized for nearly six months. The first was off the press in '73, and an expanded version in '82. It was a conglomerate of activities that

happened all at the same time, and they were infused into the University structure. So you had Dr. Holloway, working at the undergraduate level, and you had Dr. Hale working at the graduate level. And soon the College of Law was our first professional college to come on board and collaborate with the visitation days. Then the other professional colleges followed. As the years have progressed, so has the diversity agenda, being more inclusive, with focus on women's leadership, etc. I believe it was when (Dr.) Valerie (Lee) became vice provost, there was emphasis added on LGBTQ research initiatives. As we have witnessed this diversity journey, we aren't where we ought to be but, believe me, since 1971 we have come miles.

Q. I'm always interested in you and Frank Hale getting started and coordinating with Holloway. It really has become an enormous change process, I think for the University. Who recruited Frank Hale here? I'm always interested in how the change agent gets where they are.

A. Let me tell you, OSU's Black Graduate and Professional Student Caucus, has been a viable organization at this University for years. They came together and went to (the late) Dr. Arliss Roaden, who was the Dean of the Graduate School at the time, with a set of, I guess you would call them, demands. They were specific about wanting to have a black dean in the Graduate School whose work would not only be minority affairs, but it would be a substantially larger position. And that's what happened. Arliss Roaden was the conduit. I'm sure they must have had a search committee and Frank was the final choice.

Q. Was Muriel Scruggs part of that?

A. Muriel Scruggs.

Q. She might have had a different name in Graduate School. Because I know in 1971 she helped to form the first Black Graduate Professional Student group.

A. She could have been.

Q. I'll have to follow up with her on that.

A. I remember William Bradford. Bill earned his Ph.D. here in Business. Associate Dean of the Graduate School, Elmer Baumer was always of tremendous support as well.

Q. I remember (Bill Bradford). He went to Maryland and we brought him back to speak and try to recruit him. We tried to recruit him back here. We just couldn't pry him out of Maryland.

A. Then he went to Washington.

Q. How interesting.

A. Bill Bradford, Bill Cofield, Charlena and Harry Seymour. Harry's retired. They were in Communication. Charlena is at, is she the Provost at University of Mass, Amherst?

Q. I don't know.

A. Harry retired. She may be at Brown now. I can't remember but I know she's made a change in the last few years. I used to babysit their son in the early '70s. Bishetta Merritt just retired this summer where she was Chair of Communications, Radio and TV at Howard University. There were some names that I specifically remember being a part of that group. The name Muriel sounds familiar to me. If you knew her last name I would remember.

Q. I don't know what it was at that time. That's powerful.

A. Frank Hale came. Richard Armitage had the position before. I never met him as he had been out of the position for two years and retired. So the spot was vacant. When the

student caucus came to ask for a dean, the administration didn't even have to create the line, because it was there. Arliss Roaden was a powerful human being. I really did have a lot of respect for him, and he hired Frank.

Q. Could you spell his name?

A. Arliss. The last name is Roaden, just like it sounds. He went to Tennessee and was over a statewide commission of something. I can't remember now. I am just remembering. [Former OSU President] Brit Kirwan, when he was in the Graduate School at University of Maryland, actually came to OSU and spent a day or two with Frank in the Graduate School, just to kind of see how we were doing things in the Graduate School here.

Q. I imagine people from all over the country came.

A. They did. We used to have a lot of visitors, a lot of visitors.

Q. When you and Frank started, it didn't just affect Ohio State.

A. It traveled. And then Frank of course retired in '88. And Deb, I just feel so honored and blessed that I was able to continue the legacy and all of the programs that he, and he and I created in the Graduate School I now direct. And the last piece, when he retired and returned to serve as Special Assistant to then President Karen Holbrook, he created the President and Provost's diversity lecture series. When he passed, the administrative work of the series came to ODI. Valerie sent that assignment to my shop, the fall of the summer that he passed in 2011. So it came full circle.

Q. What a powerful overall perspective you have, especially how change happens. It often starts with a few individuals who do what you were doing. Bringing in all these allies.

A. I used to pull 16-hour days. It didn't matter. We were on a mission, I'm telling you. And it just felt so good to see students come that you had recruited. They would have never had that opportunity, and to see them graduate and do wonderful things.

Q. You mentioned that there are still things that need to be done. What are the big things that you think still need to be done around University issues?

A. There are so many court cases that are coming now, where people are fighting us. When I say us, I mean fighting the whole diversity matter. And the University has to remain diligent. We can't sit on our laurels. We're doing a lot. We have Diversity Officers or Diversity Liaisons in most all of the colleges now. That's something that really never happened in this context. We had folk that we could work with but not in the formal role of Chief Diversity Officers. So we are growing. But you know, you look at the enrollment and students, Latino students, not so much Asian-American students because their numbers have remained I think pretty steady; but also of Native American students. We have to do more. The fact is that we've grown and others still come and admire our work. But it may make folk think, "Oh we're doing pretty well." But we're not. We've got to work harder with our faculty of color. How many do we have, 5,000 faculty over all? In the scheme of things, there are few of color. And when you look at the fact that in this last couple of years, especially at the professorial rank, to retirement --Ted McDaniel, TK Daniel, Maurice Shipley, etc.

Q. He's retired now?

A. Yes. Vesta, TK's wife. Valerie Lee. Mac Stewart. Those are five, six at the professorial rank. So what is the University doing to replace senior faculty of color?

Q. And those were/are all powerful individuals.

A. All of them, yes. So you know, I applaud our making Gene Smith a VP. Archie was a VP. I applaud the strides that we've made. I think it's absolutely essential and wonderful. But when students walk into the classroom, we are what they see in the world. And so what they should see is folk who look like them. And more folk who look like them, let me put it that way. So I think on the faculty side we've got a long way to go. There used to be, and I don't even know if it exists now, the FHAP, the Faculty Hiring Assistance Program, where the Provost would give departments x number of dollars to boost their hiring of faculty of color. When it was existing that was some incentive for progress to happen. I don't know what it will take except that it has to continue to be a commitment on the part of the Administration, to make the faculty side of it work, to see a substantial change. The strides are real since 1971, but we must remain vigilant to the myriad of tasks.

Q. I first came here as a student in '71.

A. Did you?

Q. Well, I have pretty much been here for most of my adult life.

A. Oh my gosh.

Q. When you look back at change I think that you go through each day and think that nothing is happening. But then you look at these time spans and you think that things have changed enormously. There's still lots to do everywhere but change does happen.

A. It does.

Q. And it really happens with individuals like you and Frank and the ones you have mentioned who make it happen.

A. A whole lot of folk. Look at the Women's Studies Department. That never even existed.

Q. When I was here in '71, in fact we interviewed this person who taught the course, she taught the very first-ever U.S. Women's History course taught at Ohio State. I took that in '71. We didn't think about Women's Studies at the time. But I just think about how she was only here for a couple of years. She was here as a lecturer. But to think, when you look at so much, the whole thing with change is interesting to me.

A. Yes. And this place is big, it's huge. We ought to be number one in everything.

Q. We've talked a lot about change around diversity and the efforts to make change happen. If you put aside diversity and equity issues, because you've been here 40 some years, how has the University changed even aside from that? What are the main changes you've seen?

A. Oh gosh, look at the buildings.

Q. Now that's true, the physical environment.

A. The physical environment is incredible. I think of all that surrounds health issues. I think the University is moving in a wonderful direction to give incentives to your health package if you do this, this and this. I love the fact that, of course, RPAC is a great facility. But for the University structure to give incentives to people to be healthy, that is remarkable for a giant place like this, to make it so that each person can participate. If you just do a little something. So that's a huge change as well. The whole, I call it town and gown for a better word, but the revitalization of High Street and how it has intertwined with the University. That's marvelous because it says that we are not just The Ohio State University in and of itself, that we do worry about our community and how our community progresses. My late husband used to serve on one of (then-mayor) Greg Lashutka's informal teams. Greg wanted to have the pulse of things in the community,

and the University, too. They participated in a Dresden Day. I don't know if it was started under Greg, but that was our twin city. There were many activities that they would work on to just try to connect the University with Columbus. I've seen a number of relationship-building kinds of activities happening between the University and United Way, for example. So those are major things. The whole Medical Center strategically had the vision to buy a hospital facility and created OSU East on Taylor Avenue, to be in the heart of the black community. I think that was a huge statement on the part of the University. The collaborations that we have with the varying structures, like Battelle and Honda, and Huntington Bank, etc.

Q. You likely have already spoken to this but what are you most proud of during your time at Ohio State?

A. Wow.

Q. Because you've done lots of things and accomplished lots of things. One thing that you are most proud of.

A. Oh my, Deb. You know, it may seem very simple but the opportunity to touch lives and to know full well that that student would not be here except for the fact that we did all we needed to do to recruit that student and have him/her come. There was a young lady from Rust College in Mississippi, a small HBCU [Historically Black College/University], out in the country. She came and she was brilliant. Mac Stewart used to talk about diamonds in the rough. He used to say that all the time. Her course of study was supposed to take four quarters. And she did it in three. And she did it with something like a 3.9. What do you say behind that? When she graduated, she had a fabulous job in Chicago. We tried to get her to stay on to do the Ph.D., but she had come from a very small family, went to a

small college and wanted to earn some serious dollars. Ohio State was overwhelming to her when she came, but she was here for the visitation days the year before. She was admitted on fellowship. But this whole experience so changed her life. And when you talk about impacting a soul, that's critical. So I have to say the ability, the opportunity, the reverence, to touch somebody's life to that point just makes me shiver on the inside.

Q. And there are thousands that you've touched like that.

A. What a heartfelt privilege over so many years.

Q. Is there any experience you would consider your most powerful experience here at Ohio State?

A. I think it's that.

Q. How could it be more powerful?

A. There have been so many, Deb, so many, that I could single out. Being able to drive folk in my car, who I never ever would get to meet and greet. For example, the phenomenal Will Haygood, author of *The Butler* -- just last week we hosted him for the President and Provost's lecture series. When he left he wrote a note to (Vice Provost) Sharon (Davies) that if the Whitehouse staff would move out tomorrow and we would move in, they wouldn't miss a beat. How remarkable... how humbling of him to share that. You already know about the influence of my parents on my life. Some of these students haven't had that strong family situation from which to draw. For them to come to The Ohio State University, it is then our privilege to help them experience a living room away from home. I saw one of my former staff members Monday night at the GPS banquet, and I reminded her of how our work-study students would remain with us for their four years of study and how graduate and professional students would volunteer for any

assignments. They loved coming to our office and working our functions during down times if we needed them. We enjoyed proofreading papers and theses and dissertations, and learning a lot. There are so many experiences like this, that hone in on touching lives and being the recipients of that bonding in the most simple of ways. So I would have to leave it there.

Q. How could it be more powerful?

A. Yes.

Q. Our whole purpose of our “Voices of Women” project is really to preserve the history of women at Ohio State and to make sure we’ve captured the experiences that women have had here. Is there anything you would like to add that we haven’t touched on in terms of your experience at Ohio State?

A. I just want to reiterate this point: when you come to a situation, whatever it is, of course you have an opportunity to make yourself proud and your family proud; in my case my productivity impacts our office and sometimes the university at large. You also have a chance to make women proud. And approaching any task with a vengeance is paramount. But in the process, employ an open spirit, never being afraid of new challenges. I love new inventions, new ideas. My incredible staff is young and vibrant and energetic. And when they bring innovative ideas to the table, I engulf them. I embrace them because I know that’s our way of moving forward. I guess it is so for any woman and particularly women of color. You know this yourself because you have been a faculty member; it’s how you apply what you bring to the table and being open to new possibilities to move the agenda. We’ve got to move, in this case the women’s agenda. And if we don’t do it who is going to do it for us?

Q. A perfect way to end the interview. Thank you so much for coming today.

A. It's been my joy. Absolutely. And I really applaud you and the rest of the staff, who have taken on this mammoth task, because it needed to be done. We could never have the history of The Ohio State University written without the pen of so many who look like us. I am smiling but it is just the appropriate thing to do.

Q. That's exactly right.

A. They couldn't do without us. So we need it documented.

Q. Well, thank you very much.