ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
JOHN SYDNEY EVANS
APRIL 27, 2018

Q. Tell us your name and where you're from and how you came to Ohio State.

A. Okay, my name is John Sydney Evans, Jr. I was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1943. So that makes me about 74 now. Neither one of my parents graduated from high school. I think my father got to the 8th grade. My mom got to the 10th grade. My parents were from Tuskegee, Alabama, but they migrated up to Cleveland in the '40s. Really, right before the war, World War II. And I pretty much came to Ohio State, it was the big school in the state. I think Howard Hopalong Cassady was the big football player when I was a kid. That was the only choice that I had when I came. I didn't apply to any other schools. The school that I really wanted to go to at that time, 1961, was Duke, because they had a great program in parapsychology. And that was something that I was always interested in, the super abnormal. But I couldn't go to Duke in 1961 because Duke did not accept black kids prior to the Civil Rights Acts in the late '60s. So, for a lot of the schools in the south –Georgia, University of North Carolina – blacks were not allowed to go there in that timeframe. So, Ohio State was my first and only choice.

Q. What was your impression when you came?

A. Well, my impression when I got to the campus was pretty negative. The reason I say that is that there were no dormitories on the north side. There were no dormitories on the river. There was no dormitory space, so I was given campus housing during orientation. And it was a very, very short orientation at that time. Like one day almost. So, I'm given this housing list and I go around and I couldn't find a place to live. I came back to Cleveland and I tell my father I couldn't find a place to live. My roommate, his name was

Will Vance, retired judge now, he came down the next week and looked for housing, because we were going to be roommates, and he could not find a place to stay. So, the following week my father, my uncle and Will and I came down and we spent a whole Sunday trying to find a place to live around the campus. Couldn't find a place to live. So, my father saw a maintenance man and most of the staff, really all of the staff at Ohio State then [on a Sunday], there were no administrators, there were no teachers for all practical purposes. So, my father asked the maintenance man, who had his maintenance uniform on, "Where do the black people live in Columbus?" And he said, "Oh, they live on Long Street. Go down High Street to Long and make a left." So, my father drove us down High to Long, made the left turn and when we got to Cleveland Avenue, we looked to the left and there was a "For Rent" sign on an old Victorian house that's long gone. And my father, we pulled in, and the lady was really taking care of World War I veterans. That's who were living in this house. And my father said, "Do you have a room to rent?" And she said, "Yeah." So, she showed us this room with one old iron bed in it, sagging mattress, the old coil springs underneath. And she said it's $25 a month for this room. And my father said, "Well it's for both of these, my son and his friend." So, she said, "Well, it's going to be $25 apiece." And there was one light bulb ceiling fixture. She had like a 25-watt light bulb in there. But that's where we stayed our first quarter. We were on quarters then.

The unfortunate thing that happened that year was in November. The [public transportation employees] went on strike in Columbus. So, for five weeks we walked from Long and Cleveland Avenue to the campus. So my first impression really was that how could I go to school if I didn't have a place to live? We would put a 100-watt light

bulb in the fixture to be able to study in this one little room. When we would go to class we'd come back and there would be a 25-watt light bulb where she had replaced it, because she didn't want to use that much energy. So that was my first impression of Ohio State. The counseling was virtually non-existent. I got put in a math class where I needed a prerequisite for that class. And I was always very good in math. And I said, "Why can't I understand this particular math?" And come to find out there was a course that I should have had before that class. And I was struggling with the course. The professional attitude of the staff at this University, it was not good. It was almost like we were not really welcome on the campus. I mean, I never saw a black professor until much later, really much, much later. It was non-existent.

Q. Can you talk about connecting with other black students and finding each other and kind of the process – what it meant to get together and share experiences with each other, and kind of how the Black Student Union came into existence. How did you go from being fairly isolated to this amazing group of connected people?

A. I think the black student community always had somewhat of a cohesion because we would see another black student and we'd wave at them and say hello. The kids who we called townies back then, who lived in Columbus, it was literally was like a commute. They would come and when their classes were over, they were gone, you know. But we would congregate in the tavern in the Student Union. Of course, we always had people who wanted to play Bidwiz cards down in the card room in the basement. I mean later on we had to go and take people out of the Bidwiz room. And we always had some people that were into the soap operas, Days of Our Lives, As the World Turns, and there would be people who would make their schedule to coincide with the soap operas, so that they

wouldn't miss the soap operas, you know. That was back in the days when there was only three TV stations, ABC, NBC and CBS. So, it wasn't like we had cable or anything. And little television, maybe 19 or 20 inches. Everybody would be crowded around one TV, trying to see how the soap opera involved. And that was a gathering place for quite a few of the students. We knew where to find people, I'll put it like that. I think by and large, even to this day, if you're a black student at any major university, if you see another black kid, you're going to say hello to them, or nod your head or make some sort of a gesture. That was part of the camaraderie. We were all in the same situation as far as the lack of class material, lack of counseling. I'm so impressed now with what's happening today. It's different, night and day from what it was when we were here.

Q. So how did the Black Student Union take shape?

A. I think the evolution of the Black Student Union taking shape was the fact that we were, I just go to the point where we were so frustrated with what was happening on the campus, what was happening around us, what was happening in the real world. The '60s were the height of the civil rights movement. We had a number of organizations that we knew were trying to advance everything for blacks. We had SNCC – Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. We had CORE. I talked to a student recently and they didn't even know what CORE was. I said, "Well, that stands for the Congress of Racial Equality. And a lot of people know about the NAACP, a little bit about the Urban League. We had leaders that came to the forefront, like Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr. Of course, Malcolm X was assassinated in '65. The Black Student Union started coming together really in '67.

We wanted to have a Black History Week in the Student Union. And I put up displays of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, civil rights people. And the Union was very, very resistant about us putting up anything. And it was called Black History Week then. So, we put up an exhibit up anyway in the Union. But we literally had to guard the exhibit every day, from the time the Union opened until it closed, because it was obvious to us that there were white students that didn't want to see anything about blacks in the Student Union. We had never had an office in the Student Union, any black organization. That was a startling observation to most of us, that we needed to look at this a little bit differently. So, we started having meetings and talking about what was happening around us, and more importantly what was happening at the Ohio State University, which was not a positive for a black student. We all pretty much had the feeling that we were not really welcome here. We were not really welcome here.

I would make observations about the sports, how black kids could come here to be, I call it the new minstrel show. We can perform as athletes. At that time, quite a few of the athletes never graduated from Ohio State, football players. And we had Woody Hayes who had a very, very poor reputation of how he treated football players, let alone the black players. I mean I know one particular football player, I started in '61 and this person was supposed to graduate in '64. I won't mention his name. But he kept coming back after '64 and he finally got his degree in 1971. So, I just saw exploitation. Ohio State produces a lot of money from the athletics program. When I was a student, it was a $15 activity fee. That got you football tickets, basketball tickets, everything. From what I gather now, the students almost can't afford to go to the games. But those were some of the things. I wasn't the only person that was cognizant of that situation. But we would

talk about it. I would make comments that we never really had anyone black writing for The Lantern. I think Barbara Reynolds was about the first black to really have somewhat of a regular byline in The Lantern. We ended up having to start our own black newspaper, and it was called The Black News Notes. I typed the papers on a mimeograph material. And that was the old crank. It wasn't even an electric one. And it was four pages. I would type it up and run the mimeograph and bring it over to the Union. We would staple it. It was the black version of the news. This was before CNN or BET, Black Network TV. It was our interpretation of the news. They gave me a program on WOSU, somewhere around '67. I had a program on Friday from 5-5:15, a fifteen-minute program. But I knew that WOSU then was a clear-channel station. In 10 or 12 states you could hear WOSU Radio. It was AM, of course. And I would give my interpretation of the news events for the week. And I think it had quite a bit listenership. So, we were educating, reading. I would go to New York, a legendary black bookstore in New York, 125th and Lennox. I think that's where the big federal building is now and the Clinton offices. In that part of Harlem that is now being gentrified of course, seriously gentrified. But I would bring books back from the black bookstore and everybody would want to read the books, because they didn't know anything about these books. So, it was an educational project. But I think education is an everyday experience. I tell everybody, try to learn something every day. If it's only one thing, one word, one definition, but I think the learning process, it never stops.

Q. Can you talk about the things that the Black Student Union wanted to see happen at Ohio State? Things that had been discussed with the administration prior to April 26, 1968? Some of those demands, and kind of why you saw them as valuable and beneficial?

A. We knew that there were no black courses at Ohio State at all. It was obvious to most of us who read the history books that they were not correctly written. The whole thing of Lincoln freeing the slaves, etc. I tell people, you know, it's like the New York Stock Exchange was put together in 1840. And that was basically to formulate the price of cotton. And the term King Cotton – 70 percent of the wealth in America was from cotton. And of course, there was this dichotomy with the New England people who felt that we're not in the slave states but most of the mills were in New England then. So, a lot of the prominent Ivy League schools, the money from those schools was from people who made their millions back then from cotton and directly related to slavery.

I think from the process of trying to tell the University that we don't have any black professors here. They would never let more than three blacks into the law school. They would never let more than three blacks into the medical school. We may have had 400 black students at that time. There were very, very few black people in the Graduate School. That was obvious to us. People wanted to go to law school after they graduated from here, but they knew there was a quota. By the time I graduated from Ohio State, there had never been a black professor in the law school. In most of the disciplines, not only were there no black faculty but there was no black content into what was being disseminated, whether it was social work, psychology, you name it. We still have whole areas of concentration where still there are very, very few black people, let alone people who have the credentials to be at a school like Ohio State, to be able to be in front of the classroom teaching. I don't think that's changed that much. There's maybe a 200 or 300 percent increase from where we started, from where we were in the '60s. We still have a long way to go. We still have a long way to go.

It was obvious to the University, when we would bring it to them, course content, staff. My whole time at Ohio State, we'd go to Student Aid to try to get a loan or whatever, there was some reason that we couldn't get the loan. I think my grand total of loans at Ohio State was $200. And there were a lot of students who didn't have the money. They couldn't come back to school. There was no empathy there. The attrition rate, when I started at Ohio State, I think, was maybe 50 percent of the black students at the end of the first year never came back. They didn't come back. I've been encouraged with some of the things I've seen at the University the last couple of days, with having support groups and having programs there, that not just black students can identify with. But I think a lot of the content was put out there for white students. We shouldn't be ignored. For literally centuries. This goes back to 1620. The fact that we had already been out of slavery for less time than we were in slavery, that's an indicator right there. We knew what happened after the Civil War. There was 11 to 12 years' worth of open activity, then there was the whole Jim Crow thing that came in around 1877, and the states' rights, the rise of the Ku Klux Klan. Certain major [Supreme Court] cases, Plessy vs. Ferguson, [which established] separate and equal. One of my favorite things to say has been for a long time of being separate and unequal. So that's a phrase that I've used for 20 or 30 years. That we're separate and unequal.

Q. Going back to you personally, what did your parents think about your activism in college? How did you see yourself in terms of your activism? What was your mission?

A. My parents came from Tuskegee, Alabama. And Tuskegee is the site of the infamous Tuskegee syphilis experiment. And my mother knew Nurse Rivers. And that was the black nurse [who had helped coordinate] the study of over 600 black men. They talk

about a very small community, Tuskegee maybe had 10,000 people there. My parents, they saw the effects of discrimination. My mother was relatively young when I was born, 17, 10th grade education. My father was 20 when I was born. He was in World War II when I was born. A lot of discrimination that he told me about, coming up as a child.

And in the service. The service was segregated in World War II. My father was one of the last of the real buffalo soldiers. They all had horses. And when they would go to France, or in Europe where they would have extra rations, and they would give the extra rations to the people who needed food. And the white females would come up and hug the black soldiers. And the white American soldiers were very, very upset of seeing that happen. You've got to understand, it was still an era where, if a black man and a white female for example, even hug or kiss or show any type of affection, a lot of people would say, "Oh I'm liberal," but they're still upset about it. My father's camp was attacked by white, American soldiers [from the Navy]. His best friend was killed. My father, a white American soldier threw kerosene on him and set my father on fire. When my father came back from World War II, he took the GI Bill and he became a welder, a certified welder. But he couldn't get into the welding unions. All of those things where he could have made maybe two or three times the money that he was making in a factory. That was denied him.

I remember my father's first houses. He purchased those houses when he was maybe 23, 24 years old, after he came out of the service. But there was redlining. There were certain neighborhoods that he could live in, and most of the neighborhoods he couldn't live in. I look back on those neighborhoods now. … When I lived in Columbus, there were no black people living in Bexley or Upper Arlington, even if you had the

money. When I moved to California, I ended up living in Mill Valley. And I found out that the first blacks didn't move into Mill Valley until 1951. And that was a black dentist. You had to be overqualified. But he had to get a white friend to buy the property, then sell it to him. That homeowners got upset and said there was a restrictive covenant that you're not supposed to sell to a black person. But old neighborhoods like Shaker Heights in Cleveland, Jews couldn't buy property in Shaker Heights. So, it wasn't just blacks who were kept out of neighborhoods. Property has gone up 400-500 percent in those areas, and where my parents live, it used to be called Mt. Pleasant, and it's now like urban blight. On my mother's street there are maybe 10 empty houses. When I was in Columbus in the '60s, the east side was a nice neighborhood in quite a few parts of it. And I go to parts of the east side now, and I see that black middle-class people can now move to Bexley or places of that sort.

A lot of these communities – Reynoldsburg, Dublin – that was country. Those were farms when I was here. There was no Highway 670. I-71 was not complete when I started at Ohio State. It stopped around 161 out there. Going to Cleveland, it stopped in Medina. And it took years to connect the whole interstate system. I-270, that was non-existent when I was here. But those beltways, it's not just here but that was the pattern. The whole interstate highway system, which was put together by Dwight Eisenhower in the mid-50's, so before that there wasn't the highway system that we know now. But that also changed the whole housing pattern, shopping centers, malls, etc. You had so many of these communities like little towns, where they had restrictive covenants that blacks couldn't live there, not at all. And I think that affected the whites and it affected the blacks. So, all this has ramifications.

Q. Given everything that your parents said, did they feel good about you getting active and trying to make things better?

A. I think my parents were very, very proud, because they figured someone had to take a stand. And if it was their son who did it. My mom was a little reluctant initially. The FBI sat [in a car] outside of my parents' house after the Administration Building take-over for six months, intimidating my parents. Of course, the neighbors would say, "Well, Mrs. Evans, what are those two white men sitting out in front of your house every day? What's that about?" "Well, you know, my son, you saw him in the papers, saw him on TV, what he was trying to do. He was trying to make it easier for those coming behind him." And that was the motivation. I don't think any black student should have to go through what I had to go through when I came here. Not having a place to stay, not getting proper counseling, not seeing people like me in the classroom teaching. There's all types of psychological ramifications that reinforce your patterns, whether you're Black, white, Asian, Muslim, etc. You get these different types of things telling you what's your place, where you should be, lines of demarcation, don't step here, don't do this. We don't like you because of your religion, your color, your beliefs. My parents were very, very supportive. My mom, when I came down from Cleveland yesterday, my mom genuinely thanked me by saying, "John, you tried to do what you could do." So, they were proud of me. My father died 21 years ago. My father was a fierce advocate of helping, making everyone – our welcome mat at our house still is a real welcome mat. We welcome anybody, whatever your orientation – is – sexually, politically, you could be right wing, we have Trump supporters in my family. But we treat them just like they're regular people. That's the way I was brought up. I think my parents would be very, very upset if I

deviated from being first and foremost a human being. That's what I've always tried to do.

Q. So, can you talk about what led to the Administration Building takeover? The events of the day before?

A. We had four black female students on the campus bus talking about Martin Luther King's assassination. The bus driver didn't want to hear the conversation. He called the police. He really didn't want to let the girls off the bus. The police came and were abusive toward the four females. They walked over to the Union. The police station was in this neighborhood where we are now. I guess they have a new police station. But they walked across campus to the Union. And we were there, 10 or 15 of us black students just conversing. They basically told us what happened. And so we walked back over to the police station and we asked the police captain, chief, what was the situation. Why did this happen? And his report was mostly disbelief, "Oh no, my policeman didn't do anything." And the girls were very upset, which they had a right to be.

So, we called a meeting with Dr. [Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs John] Corbally for the 26th, and we wanted to address this. I basically felt that the police could have been suspended pending an investigation with pay while this was looked into. When we got to the Administration Building, the police chief was there and two secretaries. They basically said, "No, the police didn't do anything." So, I'm standing here and 50 years later, still dealing with Tamir Rice's and Trevon Martin's [deaths] and police brutality. Except today you can even video it on your I-phone or whatever, and it's still, "No, my police still didn't do anything." Or Larry Garner was selling some cigarettes and the police are choking him and he's saying, "I can't breathe 10 or 11

times." And the police got off. So, we go into the Administration Building to try to talk about the situation and then we were told, "Oh, the police didn't do anything. The meeting is over." And we had a list of demands, things that we wanted to talk about. And I basically said, and I think I remember vividly myself being the unofficial spokesman. And that was always the title that I put on myself for the group, that the meeting wasn't over until we said it was over. And we ended up being there for approximately 10 hours. It felt like it was about 150 degrees in the office. I know we looked out of the second-floor windows a few hours later and there was the National Guard surrounding the building. And I think it was Dr. Corbally who kept them from attacking the building.

When we walked out 10 hours later, we had an understanding from the University, when you have to take it to that point, why do you get to that point? You feel that everything that you've tried to do beforehand has been ignored. When we left the building, we had an understanding from the University that they had not been doing enough for black students on all different levels. We asked for there to be an orientation, a serious orientation. In the summer of '68, we had our first orientation where, I think we had approximately 250 black students who came during the summer, and were given an understanding about what campus life is, proper counseling. And some of them didn't come to Ohio State but they had an understanding about what was happening on the next level. And a lot of our parents didn't have that type of background. I mean, I have a younger sister who went to Yale but one of her classmates was fifth-generation Yale. My sister is telling this person, "Well, neither of my parents graduated from high school." That means a lot. ... But you know, you're brought up with an understanding that knowledge is power. And let's try to get as much as we can. "Oh, I have a degree. I have

a Master's from this school back in the '40s or '50s." I think even now, I would venture to say that probably most of the black students, their parents don't have college degrees. And this is 50 years later. But we were there for 10 hours. It was a very, very heated meeting. But I told Dr. Corbally when we left the meeting, "Your career at Ohio State is over." And the next year he was gone. But that's who basically agreed to a lot of the problems, demands, requests, that we presented. We presented it in a logical manner. And of course, yeah, we were upset. It was a trying time. It was the prince of peace [Martin Luther King Jr.] who had just been killed. I don't think the University even really seriously acknowledged when that happened. It was just like another person. And those were indicators to us as black students about what was happening.

Q. What did you mean when you said [Corbally's] career was over?

A. Well, President Fawcett wasn't on the campus that day. He was not an advocate. We had our dealings with him and we knew how he felt. He didn't want to hear anything about this black stuff. We had a number of [administrators] on the campus who felt the same way. [Vice President of Student Affairs John] Bonner, etc. I go to the Administration Building now and it's named after [John] Bricker [alumnus and member of the Board of Trustees from 1948-1969]. Bricker was not an advocate of any of this. We had James Rhodes, who was the Republican governor. He was not an advocate of any of this. The mayor of Columbus, you've got to understand the total complexity of what was happening. The mayor was [Edward "Jack"] Sensenbrenner. And everybody would call him Senseless Brenner. He was just really, you would think that you were somewhere down in lower Mississippi or something. Columbus was a different place then than it is now. A lot of the corporations that are here. The Wexners. That wasn't happening. The

suburbs that are here. The diversity of Columbus. Major employere in Columbus back 50 years ago was the University and Nationwide Insurance, which was maybe one-fourth the size of what it is now. But if you did not work for either one of those operations, you were in some sort of a subset of people who supplied the University, or the who that worked for Nationwide. You didn't have the shopping centers. You didn't have Easton Mall, things of that sort. The major store downtown was Lazarus. And the Lazarus family controlled a lot of the politics here also. The [Columbus Evening] Dispatch, we know that was not a favorable paper for what we were trying to do as black students at this University.

Q. I was just wondering, you're standing in that Administration Building, how are you feeling? What was your emotional state? Was it fear? Was it just anger? Determination? I think it's probably a mixture but you talk about this being an emotional meeting. Over 10 hours, you probably had a lot of emotions.

A. There was every type of emotion that you could imagine going on in that room. And I can speak for myself. I felt every emotion. Energy was like at 110 percent. The frustration was at 100 percent – that we even had to be there that day. Most of us were missing classes, of course. It was an insult. There were some people in the room who we had to calm down because there were folks who really wanted to get violent. If they could have gotten violent, and I'm not saying all of them, but there was a subset of people who were really infuriated. Especially some of the black women. Because this has been a pattern from slavery. Okay, we can take the black slave woman and have babies by her, etc.

I was reading a book recently and it was about Colonialism. And it was about a slave master and his accountant. He had six children by this one woman. And she had

seven children by her husband. But the husband had no rights. If the slave master wanted to come in and take the person, so a lot of the light-skinned black people that you see now, we know where that came from. My great-great grandmother was born a slave. I was 10 years old when she died. She talked to me. She was birthed by a white male person. And the black woman who had her, at the end of slavery, [my great-great grandmother at the time] was, lik,e six months old, left her in a basket on the front porch of the Jones family. So, my great-great grandmother never knew who her real parents were. So she was called a mulatto, which meant she was half white. Obama, mulatto, etc. But my great grandmother lived to be 106. She was born in 1888 and she died in 1994. So, I got stories from her. That's what's called a quadron. So, what I'm saying is that there is a history of our women being violated. It puts a psychological impact on the black male. Because if the black male says, "I'm going to try to come to the aid of my woman, my wife, my sister, my friend," there are repercussions.

And what was happening that particular day, the women were very, very upset, because they knew what had happened to them. So that raises our emotions, of course. And as I said, it felt like it was 150 degrees in the room that day. I tell people at the end of that 10-hour confrontation, I lost about 12 pounds. So, the pictures of me in the front page of the paper, The Lantern, it looked like somebody poured water over me. That was how intense the meetings got. I can't even comprehend that energy. It was phenomenal. It was something that you never forget, especially when we looked out and saw the building surrounded. It could have been a Kent State before there was a Kent State at The Ohio State University. And the cooler head was John Corbally. So, I knew that there were people on this campus who wanted the National Guard to attack the building. There were

a number of white students who were very, very upset that we had disrupted the program for that day. And that's what protests do. Protests say, "I'm at a point where I can't stand it anymore. Either you're going to deal with the situation or we're just going to stop the situation and let you take a look at what's happening here." And I think that was what happened on the 26th. We wanted people to understand that we had been asking, going through all the channels, why don't we have more black students? Why don't we have more black professors? Why don't we have more black people in the graduate schools, etc. And it wasn't happening. And something gets you to the point where you say, "Okay, enough is enough." And that was that particular day. It was heavy. That's the best word I can say for it. It was very, very heavy.

But when we left we felt that we had accomplished something. We were also given an understanding from the University that there wouldn't be any repercussions. There was even a sheet that some students signed that basically said, "Okay, we're going to excuse you from classes today." There were people who [later were] indicted who never signed the sheet. There were people who got indicted who did sign the sheet. So, it was a selective cherry-picking, who got indicted and who didn't get indicted. And that was selective justice. But you know, as it is said, no justice, no peace. That's not right but the University went overboard in the sense that they obviously had to sanction 304 years' worth of felonies being thrown at us. That was over-reaction. And I think that caused, that really gave us a lot of support, believe it or not, when they over-reacted because parents, community people – we had community people at the meeting. And they witnessed what was happening that day. And it was not a good day for Ohio State. So here we are 50 years later trying to at least bring of this up from underneath the covers

because a lot of students – black, white, faculty members, administrators – they really didn't understand what was happening behind this. And there've been publications put out which were erroneous. A lot of them are erroneous. What happened at Ohio State in the '60s? I think there's a book out about the struggles here. None of those people talked to the people who were involved in what happened on the 26th. So, it's their creation of the story.

Q. So, you left feeling like you really accomplished something. Can you talk about what happened after that?

A. We ended up getting a Black Studies program. We got an understanding that there needed to be some sort of recruitment of black faculty. A lot of it was put on the students. Can you find someone with these credentials? And we were saying there is a very, very small pool of those people because this institution is a good example of it. How many black Ph.D. candidates do we have here? How many people even in undergraduate? So, we as students were asked to come up with names of people who we could talk to, to try to find folks here. But it was a hard process. The acknowledgment that we wanted a Black Studies program, that we wanted an Extension Center, that we wanted something from Ohio State in the community that was built eventually on Mt. Vernon [the Community Extension Center run by the Department of Black Studies]. I still don't think it's adequately funded. It's almost like a step-child of the University. And I think a lot of students don't even know about it. They don't even know about it. But it was an understanding that things had to change. That was the bottom line. And there were some whole efforts and there were some half efforts. It was like almost dragging somebody across the finish line. I think we've still got work to do. I'm seeing progress.

If you were to tell me to time leap 50 years, I would say that I would have thought that we were doing better. I would have thought the racial climate would have been better than it is in America. Now I think to a certain extent we're going backwards on some of the politics. Here we are in a country that's supposed to be the leader of the world, free world, and we're short changing education every day. I think every school teacher should be paid at least $100,000 a year for what they are doing. That's not happening. I have friends who are teachers and they are having to bring pencils for the kids, paper, composition books. That should never have happened. We have people that want to privatize the schools. But that's what happened with the whole criminal justice system, with the explosion in the number of prisons that have been built. The fact that there was 300,000 people in jail in 1970 and there's 2.3 million in jail now. There's supposedly 500,000 in jail in China. There are four times the people in China [as those who live in the U.S.]. But we've got four times the number of people in prisons [as China does]. And a lot of them as we know are there for simple crimes.

It's amazing to me now that we have the opioid situation. And it's not dealt with the same way the crack epidemic was, or even marijuana. There's things that you can do in California that you can't do in Ohio right now. We had medical dispensaries of marijuana in California 15-18 years. With about any doctor [you could say], "Oh, I'm having problems with my sinuses." "Okay, here's your prescription." I think there's not a correlation with the crime on that. I think a lot of people don't understand, and I'm not an advocate of it, I'm just stating the facts, that up until 1936 marijuana was not an illegal drug. Then it became illegal. So, when I'm looking at the politicians, like [former U.S. House Speaker John] Boehner here in Ohio, now getting on a board. But, "Oh, he's

evolved now." Well, I think everybody can evolve. So how can you be a staunch person against it and now you've got to be on the board of a corporation that's going to obviously make money on this endeavor?

Q. Can you talk about June, when the indictments came down? Can you talk about kind of how the aftermath of the Administration Building takeover, how that kind of played out? And how did you decide to come back?

A. I never left. I never left. When we got indicted, that was the phase of things that happened with me. It was a grand jury indictment. So, we didn't know who was on it. Students scattered to the four corners. It was a secret indictment. That's what grand juries are. You don't know who is on there. So, we requested the names because those were people who were picked up in the dormitories. Kids 18-years-old, handcuffs put on them. And we said, "We're looking for a catastrophe to happen." So, we got the name of everybody that was on the list and we said we would bring them in for arraignment. Then I got arrested for draft evasion. They said, "Oh, you're evading the draft." I said, "I got three weeks to graduate. How could that happen?" Well, someone at the University, and we pretty much know who it was, called my draft board in Cleveland and said basically, get this negro out of here. Then I got kicked out of school. But I never left. There were people on this campus who wanted me to leave Columbus, and I never left. And seven quarters later, there was a petition, there were 8,000 student signatures on the petition, demanding that I get back in school. And that was spring quarter of 1970. And we ended up, the coalition between the blacks and anti-war people and everything, were closing the whole University down in 1970. There was tear gas galore, shots. There were some people who died during that time that was never really publicized. And that was the time of Kent

State. But I never left Columbus. I said I wasn't leaving until I got my degree. So, I had community people that supported me.

I had a great landlord. His name was Paul Querkin, and he never asked me for my rent for that whole year and a half. And he could have, I didn't have the money. I think there were people who thought I had some secret slush fund but I had community people who would bring me food, groceries. Bill Davis from the NAACP, Bob Brown from the Urban League, these were all people who quietly supported me. They were reluctant a little bit publicly to do it because of their stature and their positions, but these were people who kept me alive during that period. I thank all of those folks. But … it was a little weird after the Administration Building takeover. We knew that the University was going ahead on one level or another. We knew that there were a lot of people who thought this was an affront to them, that we were demanding. We paid taxes also. The returns that we get from this University or any other university or entity that gets funds from the taxpayers, they have an obligation to say this is what we're doing. This is how we're returning an investment on the dollar. The University was not happy. And as I said, the President of the University was definitely not happy. And we knew he was not happy. But we pressed on. We couldn't let Novice Fawcett be an indicator of which way we were going.

Q. So, is there anything else that you think the record should show?

A. I think the record should show that by us being here 50 years later, we're still concerned about the University. We're still advocates of the University. We want to see it being the best University that it could be. And we've been working on this for over a year and a half, of trying to bring to the forefront a recognition of what happened 50 years ago. And

as I said, we still have a lot of work to do. But I think the University is trying to go in the right direction. I was pleased with the way the week has gone so far. It sort of brought tears to my eyes with some of the things yesterday. I talked to my 92-year-old mom last night in Cleveland. And she asked me was the program. And I said, "Mom, the program has been amazing. I've been very, very happy. And if I had to do it over again, I would do that."

Q. What were your favorite parts yesterday?

A. I liked the students at the Alumni House telling us what their backgrounds were, their inspirations, their majors. When I was here there were very, very few blacks in the business school. There was hardly anybody in the pre-med programs. I don't ever recall a black female student being in engineering. Things are opening up. There's always been gender bias. But I want to see as many females in engineering, business or medical fields as we possibly can. I was really encouraged with that. I was encouraged with the President. I came in with some reluctance of President Drake. I think he allayed a lot of the fears that I had. Because a lot of us have never really felt welcome back here. The University never reached out and said, "Let's try to find these students that went through this in '68." We have people that are still affected by this. I talk to students that live in California. They wanted to come. But they said that the University should pay for us to come back to the campus. The University should have had a block of rooms for us to stay and not have to go out of our pocket. We've got people here that came in from New York and Los Angeles and Milwaukee, etc. And a lot of these people I hadn't seen in 48 years. I graduated in '70. So, I hadn't seen them. And so it was a homecoming. And you look at homecomings as something that's positive. I never hardly hear people saying, "I went to

homecoming and I had a rough time or a bad time." So, the program yesterday of interviewing of various people for their reflections and how they felt about this, I thought that was very, very good. The staff and the camera people and all of the folks, I've been really pleasantly surprised. But I'm glad that I'm not really surprised because you are the people that I really expected, and I appreciate that tremendously.

Q. (Unintelligible)

A. In my father's regiment they had horses every place they went. They had horses. But I was really surprised with even with a lot of the WWII books, they never state that when the war was over in Europe, they deployed the black troops to Japan. And when they dropped the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, three days later they sent the black troops in. And my father was in Japan when they dropped the bombs. And he said you couldn't touch any metal because you would get third degree burns. This was three days after the bomb. And my father lost most of his WWII buddies between the ages of 45-50 of cancer. And I've never seen anybody in the history books say, "We sent the black soldiers after we dropped the atomic bombs." So, a lot of our kids, parents died early. They died early.

But that was about the last of the horses being in the service. My father basically said everyplace they went, their horses went with them. So, he was all over Europe, France when he got burned. When the American soldier threw kerosene on him, he spent six months in the hospital. And all of the doctors wanted to amputate his leg. And this one doctor, white doctor of course at that time. I don't even recall there being too much publicity about any black medics, doctors especially in WWII. But he was able to save my father's leg. That made a tremendous difference, after he came out of the service, of

what he could do for him and his family. I think of what would have happened if my father would have been an amputee. Back in those days, when they didn't have the prosthetics that they have now. But my father owned a lot of property in Cleveland. He would get up and he would paint houses. He'd fix the plumbing. He could do the wiring. He glazed the windows. Put new window panes in. So, he was a jack of all trades, and that's how he was able to make a substantial amount of money from real estate. But had he been an amputee, as I remember amputees when I was a kid, and most of the time they were on crutches. They didn't have an artificial limb. So it was an interesting time after WWII. There was an article some time ago showing how many whites got MBAs after WWII at Harvard, and how many of these are CEOs of major companies now. And of course, that generation is dying out now. But those were the people who were able to pass wealth onto their children. There's a trust fund where I can pay for you to go to Ohio State and not have to take the loans out. It made a difference. It made a difference.

Q. We better wrap it up.