

CHAPTER 22
GLORIA HARVEY FULWIDER

**(BA Degree in Sociology and Spanish
Masters Degree in Education)**

*I've been in the storm... too long,
Lord too long mmmmm...*
*I've been in the storm... too long
Lord, I'm trying to make heaven my home*
Freedom Song



“In the class of 1964 I was Gloria Harvey, but I married a classmate, Jerome (Wes) Fulwider. He was killed in the Air Force. I grew up on Saint Phillip’s Street in Selma, across Broad Street. As a child, I always knew we were different. There were only three Negro families who owned grocery stores. There was Pete Rogers Grocery Store on First with Cecil Rogers, there was the Mason Grocery Store across the Payne School, and then there was our store. My daddy named our store The Silver Dollar Grocery Store,

and it was on St. Phillips Street. We owned the grocery store. My mother worked in the grocery store and my father worked at the ice house. He had his own route and had people working for him on his route. He sold coal and ice. The Ice House was on Jeff Davis, by the railroad tracks.

I remember when the white wholesale suppliers came to our store to bring supplies, and my grandmother was sitting outside at the store, when they brought the supplies in they always called her Auntie, and my grandmother would take a step - They called her Auntie, and my grandmother took on an air about her and said, "I'm not your grandmother." That was their way of addressing elderly Negro women. It was said sort of disrespectfully, the way they called them Auntie, and if they would did them by their name they called them by their first name. They wouldn't say Mrs. James; they wouldn't give them a title.

That was one experience when I was very young that led me to see that we were being treated unfairly. Another one was when we went downtown. The highlight of going downtown was going to Carter's Drugstore and they had this double scoop, it might've been a triple scoop ice cream cone. But we couldn't go inside the store to get it. We had to go the side and buy it from the window. And we always had to drink out the colored fountains in Woolworth and Cress's. We couldn't go to the white fountains, and they were much nicer than ours.

I got involved in the movement right after it started in 1963. I remember it was on September 16th, right after they bombed the Baptist church in Birmingham on Sunday, September 15th. That Monday morning we went to school, and Terry Shaw was the one who led our group from from Hudson High. I remember Annabelle Sanders, Lula Belle Williams, Betty Fikes, Evelyn Mann. I was in jail with them. We left from The First Baptist Church. Annie Young was there, Jessie Jackson and Tucker. I remember using the phone and calling my mother and telling her that I just felt we had to go. She said, "I think you're gonna have to go to jail." I said 'Well then that's a fact. Before that day they had let us out. But that time they didn't let us out. That time Worth Long was in jail too. That's when he received that beating.

They took us to the city jail; there were about sixty of us. I think there were about thirty-five to sixty of us in that one cell. I said, surely they're gonna let us out. But no, they took us to the county jail. I said, surely they're gonna let us out, but no, they put us on the bus and then they took us and they made a right turn, and a left turn, and they took us to Camp Selma. They put us all in there together. Betty Fikes was there, Evelyn Mann and a whole lot of others. I thought Betty was gonna sing and sing and pray and pray, but no, they were talking about looking for their boyfriends. Charles Bonner was over there in Camp Selma too.

We spent the night there, and the next morning I remember they gave us white bread and syrup. And then in the morning I thought they were gonna take us back so they could let us out. But no! They made another turn and took us to Camp Camden. And we stayed in Camp Camden, but at least they had mattresses in Camden and I remember crawling 'cause the boys were over there on the other side. Crawling and looking at the weather and crawling. It was nice when I realized Wes was in jail too. Wes was in jail because he had a toothache and was driving Tucker's car, and that's why that's why they picked him up. They kept him for two weeks 'cause they thought he was a leader. There were about sixty of us in a long room, sort of like a gym, and we had mattresses on the floor. I don't remember any blankets, and there was only one toilet and one sink. I don't remember the jailers saying anything to us.

I do recall that when they were taking us to Camp Camden, Annie Pearl was sitting up there talking. She was sitting on the seat with me. She just talked and talked a lot of smack. And then she was going on and on what she wasn't going to do when that man came back, and one of the white jailers came back and told her if she didn't shut up he was gonna stick her with his cattle prod. They had those cattle prods. And so she kept talking and she kept talking and he came back again, and she started again and that's when I remember telling her, "Just hush, girl, please just hush, I don't want him to stick you with that cattle prod 'cause he's gonna come back over here and stick me too."

I decided to be involved because I just thought it was wrong the way we were treated, and it was what we were gonna

do. I was telling my mother that I thought freedom was going to come to us, and we were gonna demonstrate and they were gonna listen to us, and we were gonna be free. Freedom, freedom was gonna come once the marching stopped. But it didn't, and my mother told me, "it's gonna take a lot of time. You know, it's not gonna happen like that." I insisted, "We need to just stick up and take it for ourselves." My mother had always taught us to be strong and stick up for our rights, because my mother spoke up too. She wouldn't let anybody say anything to us, and she always told us that we had to stand up for ourselves. So I came for that, and my father wanted to own his own business and be in his own business so he didn't have to work for the white man.

Charles Bonner and Cleophus Hobbs and Terry Shaw were our student leaders. I I remember Cleophus Hobbs being passionate about the movement. I remember him leading. He and Charles were great friends, Charles tall and thin, and Cleophus short but strong. I remember that we were all at the debutante ball together, Charles and Viola, Cleo and Roberta Tate, and Walter Harris and I. We used to go over to Marlowe's house after the debutante practice and we talked and had different little activities. We used to have those little dances and we used to talk. I Loved that. I remember doing the waltzes.

I went to the meetings in the basement of Tabernacle when Bernard LaFayette and Colia taught us how to fall and how to hold our heads down. He taught us how to fall and how to pull our arms under and rolled over in a ball. I couldn't go all the time because my dad died when I was seven and my younger sister was five.

The first time I saw the KKK was when I was in the sixth grade and they came down Green Street. I went to Green Street Baptist Church and every year on the last Wednesday in August we had a picnic and went out to Joyland. The kids came from all over the city and went to this picnic. I was talking to Ida Mooney, Margaret Kastarshin, Donna Hammler, and Loreen Vasser, on the Tuesday before the picnic. It was getting dark, around 8:30 to 9 o'clock. And there they were, the Ku Klux Klan driving down our street, Saint Phillips Street, and they had the inside lights on. And they had their hoods on. And for us it was just running, running, as they drove down our street. I felt so much fear! I was afraid. My

sisters and my neighbors ran off to look and count them but I ran into the house and tried to go under the bed. I was so scared. I think that was right after Emmett Till. They had killed Emmett Till over in Mississippi. My grandmother read it in the paper and talked about it and everybody was upset about how they had done that to him.”