SNCC 40th Anniversary Conference: Workshop on Strategies and Tactics for Organizing

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Date: April 2000
Location: Raleigh, NC - Shaw University

Panelists
Muriel Tillinghast - SNCC Organizer / Project Director in Mississippi / Advocate for education and women's leadership
Victoria Gray Adams - Citizenship Education Program, S.C.L.C., 1963-1966;
National Committee, Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, 1964-1968;
Challenge delegation, Democratic National Convention, Atlantic City, 1964

Lawrence Guyot – SNCC Organizer / Chair of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party

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****NOTE:** Video begins with workshop already in progress. **

Muriel Tillinghast: …at the middle of the night with people, the sheriff, depending on his mood or his ability to be the local Cardillo to set dogs out. You could have the local crazy set loose. You could have the local trustees let loose, all kinds of things. And I've worked in the county of— Issaquena County [MS] is one of black counties that was set up right after the Civil War. The blacks never controlled any part of the county? Are you ready for this?

Whites came in from Arkansas and ran the whole natural gas operation, which is where the money in the county was. We didn't have a car. We literally walked that county. So you needed a good pair of shoes. I remember when I met the sheriff early on, Sheriff Davis said, "hi, y'all." 'Cause southerners are funny. They'll greet you and shoot you too. He said "how y'all," a bit agitated.

That kind of conversation—I'm walking down the road. He said "Where are you going?" No place, no place. So he'd go on about his business and another day he'd come back and he'd see me again. And the sheriff said, "I'm building you a jail out there." He's building this, cement,

one room's number out in the middle of nothing. I mean, heaven helped the poor soul who has to live with this because this unrelenting sun is really gonna bake this poor soul. And he said, “I'm waiting for you to do something.”

Then another time he came through, I mean, every week he was improving his local, judicial control system. He had this pickup truck and then he had this barb wire over the back of the truck so that if he had to pick us up, he was gonna put us in the truck.

Luckily for us, he never did. Because one of the things that I always tried to do, I always try to be articulate. And sometimes I was not opposed to joking with him. I would say, “Oh, Sheriff Davis, oh no, no, not, not me this time? And he would go on away.

I tried to be the willow. If he was blowing hard, then I was bending. I didn't wanna go tat for tat. I wasn't gonna win that. A lot of times we just wanted to know where I was going. So I'd stop in the middle of the road and wait, I'd sit, sit down in the grass because I didn't want him to know where I was going. I may be going to somebody's house who was weak. You understand what I'm saying?

I went to a man's house one time and he ran whiskey. And if you know anything about the state of Mississippi, Mississippi's dry. So anybody who's got whiskey—what do you call it? That white lightning.[1] Yeah. That's run by the sheriff. So I'm sitting up there talking literally with the sheriff’s men about joining us to go register and vote.

I’ll never forget, this man had this water glass, a white lightning and his position was, “This is what I do for my living.” Now you talkin’ to me like a man, you drink that white lightning and still have the same conversation with me at the end of this glass that you having at the beginning of this glass. Convince me that this is what I need to do. And I will be there tomorrow.

Well, he had talked to the wrong person, ‘cause at that point I could drink many, a skunk under the table and I sat there and I said, “For real? And he said, “For real.” I said, “You got time.” He said, “Yeah.” Good. And it took me six hours and I sat right there at the table and I was giving him a lesson. Each—the conversation was always around freedom. It was always around the right to dream this new world.

I used to say to people on the plantation, have you ever thought that you can live in the big house? Never crossed their minds in life. Never. They had never even thought of it. The notion—have you ever left the plantation? Have you ever read a book of choice? So, it wasn’t always, go register to vote.

[1] White lightning refers to illegally distilled homemade whiskey, commonly known as moonshine. The term is especially associated with the rural South, including states like Mississippi, where alcohol was prohibited ("dry") in many counties well into the 20th century.

It was opening—I used to call it—opening up the curtain at the window. That's what I used to call it. And I said, "And look out and don't be afraid to see what's out there." And you're gonna have to be responsible now.

So when I finished this glass of whiskey with this man six hours later, and I said to him, two things. One, you're gonna have to break the tie with the sheriff because you don't wanna be in a position where the sheriff is going to think that you are being duplicitous to him. That will put you in a worse position than the one you are already in. And you're gonna have to find some other work.

And one of the things I keep saying to young Black people—think of a job, think of ways that you can work independently. Think of being able to support yourself, develop technical skills, find a niche. Because if you plan—if you have the mentality of going in to get that desk, that seat and that agency, they got you already, they got you already.

Audience Question: You said something about opening up the curtain. So this is my next question. Can you go into how the movement helped you with your conscience? 'Cause I wanna talk about women and feminism and the women's movement, how it sparked the women's movement. So how did it help you raise your self-worth, your notion of self-worth and your confidence and stuff like that. And if you know cases of different women where that's happening. If you can give us examples.

Victoria Gray Adams: [indistinct] … from the beginning. Muriel talked about it depending on whether people owned the land or not. I was born into a family of land owners. Property owners. My great grandparents had owned property owners and had farms and animals and all that sort of thing. And I told you about, very early on you're given a task, a chore that you were supposed to and nobody ever expected you not to be able to do it.

Once you had reached the point in your growth when you should be able to handle it, then you handle it. And it didn't even occur to you to think that you couldn't do it or that you maybe ought not to do it. You did it. And your tasks of course become more complex and more demanding the older you got and the more you grew.

And I don't remember ever being told, Victoria, you need to do this or Victoria do that. And I said, I can't do it. Are you kidding?

Muriel Tillinghast: Well that kind of thinking never crossed your mind.

Victoria Gray Adams: It just wasn't there. I had the confidence. Now I know that that was an exception. Also, where in the state you lived also made a difference. Because there were others probably who did not have that confidence because there had been nothing in their lives that trained them to be so. I had a good self-image. I had high self-esteem.

And so that was not an issue for me. That was not a problem for me, but I knew that it was for others. So here again was another part of my task—was to find ways to help people to discover their real worth in whatever ways that revealed themselves.

As we worked together, as we did citizenship education, as we set up a telephone tree in the community to alert people that something is about to happen and make sure that the word get around the community rapidly, in fact. As you involve people, as people become happy, certain potential gifts reveal themselves.

And, and when you see this, then of course you zero in on that, you encourage them, invite them to cultivate that. Many of my citizenship education teachers—I mean, the first question would be, "You really think I could teach this class?" Of course you can teach this class.

I could see that they have that potential. And you built that self-esteem or that self-confidence. People only need a couple of victories in order to begin to know that they have something of worth to share with me. I dunno if that gets to your question?

Muriel Tillinghast: I'd like to answer from my perspective because it took me another 20 years to get a lot of it together. I had to have my own family. I had to start raising female children to begin to put the other pieces to it. Because in my own personal experience, my grandmother was a very strong woman and had been very active on behalf of Black people.

But when it came to some of the socialization skills—and especially [since] I was in a largely female household—so I really didn't know anything about men. They were just a phenomenon for me. To a large degree, I dealt with an unknown quantity. When it came to book reading and all that kind of stuff, I had that down pat, but developing personal confidence and interpersonal skills and all that kind of stuff, it took me a while to really kind of get it together.

Just to give you some examples, I was very confident about being an organizer. I've been organizing since I was nine years of age. So when I came to SNCC I was like a veteran, are you kidding me? I can take 10 counties. If I could stay up that part at night. I worked with two men in Issaquena 'cause I finally pulled out of Greenville [SC] and just went into Issaquena and I told them what to do. And literally I told them what to do.

We talked about it, but, you have to have—organizing in part is convincing people or working with people towards a commonality. But the other part of it is, you'd be surprised how few people have vision, how few people have any sense of what is beyond tomorrow, what is possible, what are we capable of?

They could look at a child and say that, and the child is having trouble reading and writing, and say—and most people will discount—well, this kid is just stupid. What can you do with this kid? It has to be the visionary—and I mean the visionary as a parent, the visionary as a friend, visionary not just as an organizer or voter registration—to say…this cat, everybody is born with gifts. It is the parent who is the principal teacher who has to unlock the door. And you don't know what door it is.

And you may be fighting a school system. You may be fighting everybody and saying, no, no, my kid has gifts. You understand what I'm saying? And letting that come forward. I have a kid who's learning disabled. We didn't know what the problem was, but when she got to college, we finally had to tackle it because something is not happening here. This kid's got so many other things going for her. And then working on her confidence. So that was part of what kept me in terms of my own personal awareness .

Audience Comment: A comment I want to make [indistinct] and at the same time too, this applaud what both Muriel and Victoria have been saying. Since then, so often in my experience, the issue of gender and SNCC is usually framed in terms of whether or not SNCC was a half-lap behind the women's movement because the women in SNCC did not say—I agree with you [Victoria]—I agree—that whether SNCC was a half-lap behind because the women in SNCC did not say the same things. They did not have the same fights about equity that we associate with the women's movement in other places.

Victoria Gray Adams: Very different struggles.

Audience Comment: Exactly. And I think the place that we're all coming from today is a place of acknowledgement of how many women in SNCC were rather a half-lap ahead, in that they were already being powerful and refusing some of the differences. And so I think—I just want to emphasize how much we're coming from that place of acknowledgement rather than looking for a confession about—

Muriel Tillinghast: You're right. Let me tell you about somebody that we have not talked about at this conference: Ruby Doris [Smith]. Ruby Doris—

Victoria Gray Adams: You may want to give her a chance to raise her question and then respond.

Muriel Tillinghast: Ok, go ahead.

Audience Question: That's what I was gonna ask you. I was gonna ask you, how did you deal with the frustration of where you went in and you knew what you was doing, and you knew what the plan was. And even though you knew it was gonna take a while to work, to win people over, to see what the whole picture is and to see what they need to do.

How did you deal with the frustrating part of people having no vision, of people feeling that they're so helpless and so hopeless? How did you deal with that? Because that's a main problem in the community. It's a big problem.

Victoria Gray Adams: That's what I was really alluding to earlier. First of all, you find the level of entrance that you can get the person to make. For example, when I'm out there talking to people in the community and I ask a couple of questions, and then of course they make their responses. And I explained to them that what they're reading in the newspapers, what they're hearing on the radio, what they're seeing on the television is a false thing. There's nothing true about it.

I tell them about a person, one of the young people who are in the community. And I say it's really regrettable that these people are printing these lies and saying these things about people that are not true. Oftentimes these young people are here working with us. They don't have food. There are times when they are literally hungry. And if we don't respond to things—I mean I don't blame 'em. I would too.

One thing I know that you will find in the rural areas of Mississippi—people can, they raise their gardens and things, and then they can things for the winter.[2] And then all of a sudden somebody would say, well, oh my goodness, we don't want 'em to be hungry out here. I can give something. If they're willing to give me a jar of preserves or a few potatoes in the sack, that's an entry. Once you can get them to invest something, then they become curious about what's really going on.

Within a year's time, our volunteers were the best fed folks in Mississippi. I'm serious. You know what their daily contribution was? They'd come down to Freedom House and cook. So when these youngsters come in from those jobs that Muriel is telling you about? When they come in, honey, they have them a hot meal waiting when they got in there. I'm serious. They really did that.

The young men walking around, their shoes kind of wore out under the bottom. And some of those fellas find out about it. They would say to me, "I had an uncle who was really [indistinct] why doesn't [Lawrence] Guyot have such and such a thing?" I say, well, he just simply is not able to do it. "Oh, well, I'll get him some." And so what happens though, again, once you get them invested, then they get curious.

[2] Referring to the practice of self-reliance in rural Mississippi, this quote highlights how people sustained themselves by growing their own food and preserving it through canning, reflecting traditions of resilience, resourcefulness, and community survival in the face of economic hardship and systemic neglect.

They get to meeting these young people, listening, sharing. And finally…"you reckon I could pass that test?[3] Oh yeah. We offer to enroll them in one of the citizenship education classes. If they weren't quite ready for that, while they're down there in the kitchen or whatever, somebody will go back there and sit with them, bring the form along.

And little by little, you find something to affirm. You find something that they can buy. And you just—you work from there. You work from there. And like I said, one or two victories and their self-confidence goes up, their self-esteem goes up, and they become braver and braver. And then you look up one night and here they are at the mass meeting.

Let me tell you this. I had a very close friend who was—when the movement came to Mississippi, I was an independent businesswoman. And I had a very dear friend who had also served as a member of my firm prior to my finally closing the business down and going full time with the movement. And her husband told her—and she told me this later—"I know that you will follow Victoria anywhere, but please hear what I say this time. Not this time, 'cause it's very, very dangerous. Those people will kill you out there"

And so she, again, as I said, distanced herself. She took her husband's advice, distanced herself. I met here somewhere one day and I said, oh, by the way darling, there's going to be a very important event taking place tomorrow. Reverend [John E.] Cameron is going to declare for congressional candidacy. He's going to run for office.[4] And she said, "What is that?"

And so I kind of took the time to explain to her what it was. I said, it's gonna happen at 12 o'clock sharp. So you should be off of work by then. You can come by and see what's going on. Seeing is better than hearing. She said, "Ok. I think I'll come." When she went to work the next morning, she told her boss lady that she was gonna get off early today 'cause she was going to a political meeting. She didn't know what a political meeting was.

Muriel Tillinghast: I thought she would have told her.

Victoria Gray Adams: So her boss said, "Listen, you don't have time for any socializing. You have a job." I mean, this is the way she talked to her. She didn't argue with her, she just went on about her work. So by the time she had done everything she needed to do, she went in looking for her, and she had gone into her room and gotten in the bed.

And so she went in and said, "Miss, I'm getting ready to leave now. Is there anything else you need?" And the lady forgot she was supposed to be asleep. She jumped out of bed and said, "I told you that you have a job. You cannot be going to these kind of things." And she said, well,

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[3] During the Jim Crow era, Black voters in the South were subjected to literacy tests, constitutional interpretation exams, and other arbitrary requirements designed to suppress Black political participation.

[4] Reverend John E. Cameron was a prominent civil rights activist and minister based in Florida. He served as the president of the Florida State Conference of the NAACP and was a key leader in voter registration efforts and the broader civil rights struggle in the South.

ma'am, “I am going. Now, if there's something else you need me to do, I'll do it before I leave. But I'm going.”

She said, “Well, if you go, don't you come back.” And she said she stood there and said, “Thank you very much.” She said, and I got my stuff together—all of my stuff—where before she would’ve left her work. She said, “I will tell you no lie. When I walked out of that house and started down the street, for the first time in my life, I knew I was an adult, that I could decide what I was going to do”

She said, “I can't describe it for you, the feeling that came over me.” Because if anybody had told me she would’ve done that—probably ten minutes before she did it.

Muriel Tillinghast: The situation just evolved and she just stepped to the place.

Victoria Gray Adams: Absolutely. And she said that—

[VIDEO CUTS FROM WORKSHOP TO STUDENT AND ATTENDEE INTERVIEWS]

Unknown Interviewer: why don’t you share your SNCC impressions?

Student 1: I think that the conference is great. The best part that I like about the conference was when Mr. Bob Moses got his award because he is truly a great man. And the Algebra Project, by me being in it, I can say is a great program. And he did so much for the Algebra Project—not only for the Algebra Project, but for other people. And he just made so many people’s lives better. And I believe that he really deserved the award that he got today. And that was the best part.

Student 2: I agree with her. The conference was great. I hope to come to the next one and that's it.

Student 3: And I agree with him. The conference was great.

Student 4: I really enjoyed this conference. It gives me an opportunity to get to know about my heritage, to get to know about the accomplishments that others laid the way for us, to be able to go before other people and do other things.

It's showing us what other people had to do to pave the way for us, to come and be able to just be here today. And all the accomplishments that they had to go through, and all the hardships that they had to go through, for us to be able to be standing here and listening to them and getting the understanding of what the project was about.

Lawrence Guyot: I think what we had here today in the 40th anniversary of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee was a history that dealt with its development—who developed it, why it was developed—and the role of Ella Baker and the real accomplishments of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Its early maneuvers in McComb, its move into the Delta of Mississippi, its pulling together the Freedom Summer project, which as far as I'm concerned was the most creative, extensive, inclusionary, indigenous political operation ever done in the Civil Rights Movement. It involved the National Council of Churches.

It involved the creation of the Freedom Democratic Party. It involved the Wednesday Group, a group of people who flew in every Wednesday, got information, and then flew back out and talked to their congressmen and their senators. It involved the creation of the Freedom Schools. On today, 2000, you can go to the NEA [National Education Association] building on 16th Street in Washington, DC, and buy that curriculum.

The politicizing of the gender question was done by a memo written by Theresa Del Paso, Casey Hayden, Emily Schrader, and Mary King. That memo was fed throughout the country and led to the politicizing of the gender question as we know it today. So the ramifications of this conference will live on as long as people question: What is citizenship? Who has the right to vote? Who has the right to make the decisions? And how do we make America what it's supposed to be?

SNCC without Mississippi would not be SNCC. But Mississippi would not be changed without—Mississippi recently electing a governor, [Ronnie] Musgrove, who was not supposed to win. The organizing of the Black vote in Mississippi made that happen. So I think that we have a lot to be proud of. And the young people who turned out today from across the South have made it very, very clear—they're not gonna wait for us to tell 'em what to do. And as Julian Bond, who spoke here today, said: if they want to take the torch, that's what they got to do—take it.

Student 5 [Krista Henson]: Hi, my name is Krista Henson. I'm in 11th grade at Lanier High School in Jackson, Mississippi. I'm a part of the Young People's Project with Dr. Moses. And I think that the conference was very well put together. I learned a lot about the movement, more about Dr. Moses's past, how SNCC got started, and what they're doing now. And I think it's great and I hope to be back next year for the 41st year anniversary.

Student 6 [Tiffany Amberson]: Hi, my name is Tiffany Amberson. I'm in 9th grade at Murrah High School, Jackson, Mississippi. I'm also part of the Young People's Project with Bob Moses. And I learned how Ella Baker started it and how she related the students as her children from what they did within the movement. I learned about Bob Moses's past and I learned about his plans for the future and also for SNCC—what they want to do. And I guess they want to start from young people, and so that's what we are here for.

Student 7 [Erika Henkle]: Hi, I'm Erika Henkel. I'm a sophomore at Provine High School in Jackson, Mississippi. And today at the 40th anniversary of … of Ella Baker, I learned a lot about her as well. We were here. My congrats to Dr. Bob Moses for winning the Ella Baker Award. I had fun at this. I participated in the weldings workshop and I think they did a great job. I commend them all for that as well.

Unknown Interviewer: You'd like to share your impressions of the conference?

Student 8: …I'm just getting a feel for it today and hopefully I'll get more tomorrow, but I've been enjoying myself. I guess I'll expand later.

Student 9: I guess I thought it was really interesting. I'm coming back tomorrow. I'm kind of looking forward to coming back to hearing some more discussions on some more issues. I especially—I wish I could have gone to more of the specific discussions, but because they were all at the same time, it was unfortunate. We were only able to go to one, but I'm really looking forward to tomorrow.

Attendee: Am I responding to any kind of questions or just giving some general comments?

Unknown Interviewer: Just general comments and reactions—your most compelling experience?

Attendee 1: The most compelling experience has been—there's been a number. One, being in the presence of Bob Moses and Casey Hayden as we just kind of figure out how to create this space, to create some positive social change in American society. That's been positive—just being around so many people that you've read about and have talked about as a budding historian. It's great to be able to put names to faces and actually meet and greet some of the folks who've done so much to make a positive impact on American society. That's it.

Attendee 2: The presence of movement activists who have contributed so much to the uplift of America. But also the other thing that's inspiring is to listen to younger people and also people who weren't in the movement in the sixties who are talking about getting active for social change. I think all those conversations have been very positive.

Hollis Watkins: My name is Hollis Watkins and so far I think the conference has been going good. It's been a good process of sharing. I think it's good in particular that enough people here have got different pieces of the puzzle—putting it together—that allows one to get the whole.

I'm very impressed also by the large number of young people that are out—not just ordinary young people in terms of just being out, but ordinary young people who seem to be doing meaningful work, are interested in doing meaningful work, and are very inquisitive. They ask good questions and make good comments. So far I've been very impressed.

SNCC Member: I'm ready. Do you want to ask me anything?

Interviewer: Just your impressions of the conference—sort of the best experience you've had here, most compelling thing that's come across to you.

SNCC Member: My impressions of the conference have been that it's like—it's like seeing a long-lost family member. Because you have a lot of these folks who've come back together and who can share stories and who bring home memories about a lot of things that many people in 1990 have forgotten ever occurred. There's another generation who are not even aware that these things took place. They just sort of take for granted what happens now.

A lot of the advantages that young folks are able to enjoy now are as a result of the extreme sacrifices that people during the sixties had to make. I guess to really simplify it, there are those who are sticking their hands out for what others stuck their necks out for. And I think the conference is great. I'm enjoying it. It's a learning experience. You got some things to say?

Millicent E. Brown: Ditto to that. As a historian, I think the most profound part of the conference was the presentations that shared that the movement did not stop in [19]65 or [19]66, and SNCC in fact did not.

I'm a member of SNCC in the late sixties, and as we moved from some of the direct action activities and moved on to the economic development as well as political activities, it's a part of the story that very often is not included because people get into the more dramatic times in the early sixties. So I find that in addition to everything that's wonderful about the reunion and the remembering, I'm gratified and humbled that we're beginning to piece together the rest of the story.

[CUTS TO NEW SECTION OF VIDEO]

Student Question: Why do you think voting status is such a [indistinct]. It seems like not [indistinct] we don't appreciate the right to vote. Why do you think there's been such a decline?

Marion Barry: I don't think we see the connection between our well-being and voting. Because they've heard politicians say, "Vote for me, you'll have better streets, you'll have all this," and it's been bullshit. And so they've gotten disillusioned with it. They don't believe that there's any

connection between voting for a candidate and their conditions. I think once they start beginning to see the connections, they begin to vote.

See, Mississippi and other places—they saw a connection. They saw how all the tax money was being spent over in white communities. And the schools were better. Roads were better. Everything was better. And they saw that by voting, you could change it. And even the white politicians at some point began to be more responsive because Black folks had the balance of power. A lot of those counties—African-Americans made up the majority of the county.

Student: Prince George's County.

Marion Barry: Yeah, because there was an all-white government. Over time, it changed. So we have some comebacks.

Student: I was just wondering, because I mean, like, I realize, it's a huge problem.

Interviewer: Can you share some of your impressions of the conference so far?

Marion Barry: Oh man. It's mind-blowing. It's so great to get people back together—reunions—to think back on the struggle, the freedom, call you to renew your energy, renew your commitment. That is I'm glad God let me live 40 years to see it.

Student [Bakari Sellers]: In this conference, I believe that the evaluation of the problems that the generation that passed before me faced, and how they fought against them and developed a better system for me to live in.

Although it's not totally right, which is what we're talking about in the conference—how do we get to a just society? We realize that the society we live in now is not just. And this conference is kind of giving us options and teaching us how they got to what they believed was a just society, and how we should attempt to do it once more.

Student: I'm looking at this conference as an opportunity to meet some very wonderful people. I mean, this is a tribute to Ms. Baker. But also, it's kind of developed for me as a way to identify how we help our people, how we narrow the generational gap and learn from the older generation, and have the older generation learn and listen to us.

So that it's not just somebody talking at you about what happened, but have them listen to us, and have us listen to them—instead of screaming, , "our generation is faced with this" and them saying, "oh, well, we dealt with this like this," and trying to put them together. That's pretty much what I'm looking at.

SNCC Member: I've had prior experience in civil rights, all the movements. And I'm here to just share experience and meet a lot of people and talk to young people, see what their ideas are and what changes they think should be made. And there's a lot of pressure on these young people and young students that come to these conferences because their needs and their ideas are different.

And we are set in our ways and want to change. And we have to change in order to work and learn from these young students. And that's why I'm spending time talking with them—is trying to learn to get their ideas and what they think and what changes I need to make.
And I don't want to give up the power, and I don't want to pass the torch on to them. So they gotta take it from me. But I appreciate them. And they should. Because they have good ideas. And their needs and their ideas are different because of technology and the changes. And I enjoy talking because they have a lot of ideas, and we should be flexible.

Interviewer: How do you think things are different now, than they were in 1960?

Student [Bakari Sellers]: I believe I can say the problems that I face today—I believe they're different from the problems they faced then because we have more opportunities. And some of these opportunities, they are opportunities, but they still may be harmful. As I was saying earlier, I have some friends that are in prison, some friends that are dead because of a gunshot, and also have some friends that are addicted to drugs.

And where I face these problems today, they faced problems of injustice, oppression, and racism. And I believe, although those three things are prevalent—they're major fixtures in our society today—but other problems have risen. And those are the problems I come in contact with on a daily basis. Whereas I don't believe this gentleman right here had to face, or at least not to such a great extent.

SNCC Member: If I tell him we still have the same problems, but just a little different, he wouldn't believe it. But they're still here. It's just different. When you go in these small towns and areas, they're still there. It hasn't changed. It's just the face that changed. The community changed. But it hasn't changed. We still have the same problems.

Interviewer: And those problems are what? What are the problems?

SNCC Member: We have basic problems in education—school level—or how they treat kids in school. They make 'em line up for this, line up for that, line for that. When we went to [the] cafeteria when I was in high school, we could eat lunch with the next class, the senior class or the junior class if I'm a sophomore.

They can't do that. They have to—their class sits in a certain position. Can't talk, can't do..we could do—we had the freedom of the school. We didn't have strenuous rules and regulations because our parents—we knew what we were supposed to do when we went to school. They have a lot of pressure.

Student [Bakari Sellers]: I believe a lot of the people in the movement and during the sixties had the parental foundation. Whereas a lot of them—some of—not gonna say all of them did—but some of them had both a mother and a father. Whereas we live in the age where divorce is popular and where you have a lot of single mothers and teen pregnancy.
And that kind of deprives the youth—well, I'm not gonna say the youth, 'cause I'm one of them—my generation—of some of the opportunities and advantages that they had. You have anything to share on that?

Student: The problems today, I think, are educational. And not just educational like our school systems—it's educational…parents aren't teaching their children. We're not teaching our brothers and sisters. I feel that everybody is different and it should be appreciated that way. We don't have kids walking up to other kids or the older generation just walking up to somebody that they might be different from.

That's the first thing that I think needs to be tackled—is people have to just accept other people. Make a friend that doesn't look like you or that doesn't come from the same economical background. And you will learn. And that's where the education needs to happen, I think. And if that happens, we won't have issues like the flag coming down in South Carolina or anything like that. Any other questions?