

SNCC 50th Anniversary Conference  
Shaw University, Raleigh NC, April 2010  
Transcript Video Recording #2  
(Raw, unedited, no annotation)

Speaker 1 (00:18):

My name is, and thank you for coming, uh, to this opening workshop. Um, I've been asked to act as a moderator and, um, so I will do my best. Um, I'm gonna start with saying

Speaker 2 (00:32):

That, um, and with, in relation to the loss of time, I'm gonna ask these panelists who are here, all of whom are esteemed members of basically early SNCC, uh, to introduce themselves, tell you some background about what drew, the, what drew them, excuse me, to, uh, the civil rights movement specifically and SNCC, uh, in particular. And then, uh, we will, uh, at some point open the floor for Q and A, uh, does that seem like a fair way to go? All right, I'm gonna take the liberty of giving you a couple of words on Joni Trump, who, uh, is a young, young woman here at my far left. Um, I was in church, um, and, uh, it's a Lutheran church. Any of, you know, the Lutherans they're very, you know, kind of laid back. Don't get too much involved with anybody, including Jesus, but we won't go there.

Speaker 2 (01:30):

And there were announcements being made during the service and this little bitty person stood up and gave such a roaring speech about what was going on on the civil rights movement. And we had to get involved. Oh, I'm also from DC as back as background. So now you get all of that in the mix. And that just, that speech just stayed with me forever. I mean, I carry with me to this very day, uh, and the person who gave that speech to an all black Lutheran church was Jonie Trump Powell. And she's with us today to my left. And with that, I would like to let you know that she's in my highest esteem. And she was one of the impetus that led me along several trails that ultimately ended up being sned Jonie.

Speaker 3 (02:20):

Thank you. Thank you for that. Um, introduction or reminiscent. What brought me into the civil rights movement was basically I was a southerner. I grew up in Virginia under the dire threat, um, to my col college entrance and high school diploma of massive resistance. Closing the schools. I had classmates mind you, this is all white schools, classmates who had lost a year of schooling because we had entered position, which is reentered our, um, political book vocabulary. And this really caused you to think about the issues. Um, plus the church. Um, as I was telling, one of my friends, the king James version do unto, unto others, as you would have them do unto, unto you for such as the kingdom of God. And as much as you've done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, you've done it unto me. We remember these verses and talked about the meaning on Sunday, and then we walked out into a segregated society and I felt as a southerner, I had, I wanted to make my Homeland the best place in the world.

Speaker 3 (03:33):

And when I had the opportunity to do something, I would do it well. I was at duke university, uh, when the sit-ins started and Durham was the second city, from what I understand to have sit-ins and a few of us at duke joined the NCC students. And one thing led to another. I did not make it to the first, um, meeting here at Shaw. The, because they were, I was considered a person to be sent to Shaw, but it was decided that a white woman coming would be provocative to those who might want to bring harm and to lessen the chance of violence here. And to protect me personally, I didn't get to come. So I'm doubly the law to be here this time.

Speaker 4 (04:26):

I'm, I'm going to stand up cuz I'm gonna look at you and thank you. Um, my name is Dave Dennis, and, um, my, I was a former, uh, work with core rather Corfield secretary back in the sixties and I became very much involved in snake, uh, in, uh, 1961 and especially 1962, when I went into Mississippi representing core, uh, as part of their, uh, movement in Mississippi then. But in terms of how I got involved in the movement as I was not one of these students who was out there flaming about civil rights and stuff, I was the first I was born on a plantation. I'm a product of a sharecroppers family in Louisiana. And when I went to high school, went to school and when I graduated from high school, I was the first person in my family to graduate from high school. So going to college was the least thing was expected from my family.

Speaker 4 (05:31):

When I graduated from high school, I was told that I had really made it and there was jobs were waiting for me cause there was no dream of people going to college, something how my life is, but I got a scholarship, two scholarships and uh, to go to college and went to di university and uh, in high school, uh, when we had a reunion, I was voted as the most unlikely person to be doing what I was doing. And one of my classmates was also bored the same way. One of my best friends in high school I graduated from was about God by the name of Heit brown, better known as rap brown, uh, was my classmate. And to give you an idea where we came from was that the, we were went to the Southern lab school in bat Rouge. And when the students walked out in 1960 rap and I were there, we left, we said, no way, we're gonna get involved with this.

Speaker 4 (06:31):

We left and went to his house and played basketball. So, and when I went to college, things happen, let's talk about fate. As my involvement in the movement was nothing to do with in the beginning. What I thought was about commitment is what you read about people doing. When I went to college, I wanted to be electrical engineer. My ambition was to be to the top of everything. I was gonna try to be the best I wanna be president of my, as I wanted to be president of the student body. And those things happened. But when I, when it got to di university, there were people already in jail from sit-ins. So I read about the sit-ins and heard about the sit-ins and all that was like Jesus, no way. And then what happened though, was by getting along at core was recruiting students at di university when I got there. And so one day I was walking through campus and I looked up and that was this person standing on platform like, and speaking to students and she was gorgeous. And I was said, I've got to meet this woman.

Speaker 4 (07:43):

And so I went to talk to her name was DARS castle, she's dead. Now she was part of the castle family in new Orleans. And she's the one talked me into going to meetings with her because she would not date me unless I went to these meetings. My first arrest when Julian was talking about hit runs core, had a thing called hit runs at that time in new Orleans and on Saturdays, they'd go and sit in, police would come up and they would tell 'em that you have to leave. So, uh, move would be arrested. So you'd give 'em that. That's a warning first. And then the next thing the students would get up and they would leave when you do this, but you closing down a lunch you're being affect with police all around people not going. So it was effective tactic.

Speaker 4 (08:26):

So finally I said, well, I can do this. Well, I decide to do it on this side because I still had not dated Doris. And now a month that passed by. And so I go with her to sit in on this particular day, the police department changed the rules. They did not say get up and move. They said you under arrest. I was the only one in the group who was arrested, charged with two charges. Not only was trespassing, but also a resisting arrest because the fact is I was trying to convince, just let me go.

Speaker 4 (09:07):

Just gimme the same chance that you gave the people last week and you would never have to worry about me. So really, and truly is if that had not happened, that would, I would not have ever been arrested and probably never got into the movement. And this went on in life is it was by chance. And it wasn't until, uh, the freedom rides, uh, core had, uh, was new Orleans was the area was a site whereby the Fri rides was supposed to end. And so we were there, uh, preparing for that is I remain active and core, but I didn't sit in anymore. I didn't do that kind of stuff. I was more sort of a, not call a spectator, but I would participate in meetings and things I needed cause I was gonna graduate. And they brought in the first group when a group, uh, kids, students were beaten in and freedom were beat in Anton, Alabama.

Speaker 4 (10:05):

They brought in the people and we received those cause that was the best places to get care. And when they saw them there, something happened there, it wasn't the beginning of my involvement of the movement is still a commitment. What happened there was, was that Diane Nash, who was really the heroin of the person who really had to be responsible for the continuation, the freedom riders becoming what they really are. You get to get that credit Diane in the Nashville movement group. And so what had happened there was, was that they had decided to continue Jim farmer. And most of the civil rights leaders had called for moratorium. And there was a young people around the country who began to scream out and say no moratorium, but we don't continue this. You know, this ends the movement to larger state. So John Lewis and the group of the CT and, uh, the rest of them decided to continue.

Speaker 4 (11:02):

If you remember from Montgomery and to, uh, I mean from Birmingham to, into Birmingham, from Birmingham to Montgomery, Alabama, and then that was a group of young people in new Orleans who were meeting. I was one of those people meetings. So they had a meeting at, at the castle house, which if you read Etheridge book, you notice is that of all the freedom riders over 40% of the freedom riders went through that house nine 17 north Tante, which is a castle house in new Orleans. And so what happened here was, was that I decide to, to, uh, at that meeting, I like Johnny Walker, red Jerome Smith, DARS castle again, and a couple other people is decide that they want to go. And that's the last I remember because John, uh, they bought me a ball of John Walker red. The next thing I remember was, was I ended up in Montgomery, Alabama waking up on the train with people running after me. And I was caught in the situation is, and really how it got out of Mo uh, getting into the movement really was, was really beginning, was the only way the best way to get out of Montgomery was to get on that bus.

Speaker 4 (12:21):

But I'm only saying this very briefly to say that, first of all, my beginning in the movement was by, I call it accident of fate. It had nothing to do about commitment you at that time, I learned and became commitment in Montgomery in an all night session with Dr. King Diane bevel and a group of young people who sat around and talked about death, life commitment, fear, and being a Fred. And so I'm doing that just to open up this pieces about how it all started. It wasn't about just playing commitment, but it's about things that went around me. What happened around me in my life is that drew me into being where I am or was at that time. I am today,

Speaker 5 (13:17):

I'm Johnny Parham, and I'm really standing in for Lonnie king to whom Julian in his very fine inclusive history of SNCC, uh, made reference. We were a part of the Atlanta movement. And Lonnie of course, was the person who waved, uh, a copy of the Atlanta daily, rural in the face of Julian and challenged him to begin to organize city ends at the time of, uh, the Atlanta student movement 50 years ago, which is very hard to believe because, uh, when I see all this gray hair and some that's not so gray, I want you to know now I was very young, but this is gray die. I wanted to look distinguished. So, Um,

Speaker 5 (14:24):

Basically we, um, many of us, Julian Lonnie and I were, uh, we went to Morehouse college and there was a president there named Benjamin ma and he spoke to us every single Tuesday morning in chapel. Students don't know anything about this, but during those days we had chapel five days a week in college. Now this was not necessarily a religious ceremony. This is frankly where Morehouse brought to the campus, some of the most outstanding speakers, five days a week. And so we were kind of indoctrinated into challenging the system. Well, that was, that began to form a kind of undergirding for which ultimately followed when we were sophomores, a group of ministers. This was, I finished Morehouse in 1958. Um, in 1955, it was really about the beginning of the sophomore year, a group of ministers under the leadership of a doctor, William Holmes's borders, um, organized a kind of challenge to segregated seating on the public transit system.

Speaker 5 (15:58):

And this was under the EEGs of the NAACP. Well, there was a student chapter of the NAACP and we kind of joined that chapter. Uh, somehow we were able to scrounge up 25 cents to buy a membership. And that was at the time referred to as kind of subversive organization, because that's, for those of you who are here. And I just met a young man from the university, which academy, who was brought here by his teacher, uh, and other students. And I applauded them. Uh, this was an era when the NAACP was red baited. And so you were really considered a communist overthrowing, an outside agitated under the influence of outside agitators. So we had our NAACP cards, which we carried with. Great pride. We boarded those buses. We would sit on the front two seats. We were, of course by law. We were supposed to go to the back.

Speaker 5 (17:11):

There would be an observer who would go to the back. And we essentially wanted to challenge the segregated seating in public transit in Atlanta. But the city of Atlanta, they were, they were really some smart folk. They must have studied the ways of the north because rather than those customs, those laws, they simply took the buses out of service. So they, you know, sorry, this bus is no longer working out of service. And so that kind of, uh, ended up the, the movement pretty much was dissolved. And then in 1960, I was at the time a student at the Atlanta university school of social work. And we then began to the segregated seating in public accommodations. Now, there, there actually are four people whose names should be embedded in all of our minds. We know, I mean, we could wake up in the middle of the night and give the name Rosa parks and describe what she did, but too frequently, when about Greensborough and the four students, we really need to know who those students are, who they were cause they're real heroes.

Speaker 5 (18:56):

50 years ago when we came to Raleigh to organize stick at the invitation of Dr. King, an invitation to students who'd been arrested in the city. And I had the pleasure of meeting EAL, Blair junior, one of those students, EAL Blair, remember that other students are Franklin McCain, Joseph McNeil, and David Richmond. These names are historic names, and we should know them. We should not just refer to the four students who sat in and began this very courageous at effort, which we all ultimately followed. They had the courage and we then were encouraged to follow their leadership. So this is basically it's Joseph McNeil is in the audience. Where's Joseph McNeil. Oh man. Guana, Guana. I mean, this is historic. This is, this is something like being in a room with Rosa parks. So let's all make certain that we introduce ourselves to Mr. Magna. Thank you so much. Well, this is basically just a brief overview and I'll turn this back over to Muriel.

Speaker 2 (20:54):

Thank you.

Speaker 2 (21:02):

Well, in keeping with the format, I'll give you the down and dirty in terms of how I got in to the movement. Um, I had grown up in, uh, a Lutheran church, which doesn't exist anymore, but moving forward on that, uh, where young people ran their own organization. So from the age of nine, I was organizing chapters in, uh, hill country of Maryland. And some of you are from Maryland. You know what I'm about when I say hill country. Okay. Um, and we were the only little black church in a sea of white churches in a particular Senate, which is how the church is organized. So I early on had known about clan activity and I had known about, uh, white resistance, but also had known some people who were very friendly. And we worked together very frequently and we saw each other two and three times a week sometimes.

Speaker 2 (21:52):

And so when I got into nag, which was an accident, I was sitting on a bar stool in, uh, a bar run by Paul Dietrich who was very active, I might say, in the core, um, freedom rides. He's no law with us. Someone challenged me to go to a meeting at the May's house. Now these are all religious organizations for those of you who gotta get with it, you know, the church used to be a lot more active, a lot more involved than it is now. And in May's house, um, had, um, a meeting pretty much every weekend. And, um, I, this young woman, Janet Rose, who's no longer with us said, I'm going to a meeting. I think you need to come. And I said, I don't think so. And she said, oh no. And she wouldn't let me go. Which is another part of that whole glue kind of thing that begins to work in organizations.

Speaker 2 (22:43):

And I went there and I went to a room that was maybe a quarter of the size of, but it was Wall students, students from all around the city of New York. I mean, excuse me, Washington DC. Um, and must have been about a hundred twenty five, a hundred fifty students there. And, uh, Stokley, uh, who, you know, um, changed his name in later life. But we still call him Stokley, uh, was waxing poetically about what was going to happen. A demonstration was in motion for the next day. And in the course of event, he cast his gaze at me and said, and you are going to be in charge of communications. Well, that was news. Um, and I said, well, I don't know anything about communications. He said, oh, you will. And so, um, that night I got immersed in what you do when you're having a big demonstration at the justice department.

Speaker 2 (23:36):

And that was my baptism into the nonviolent action group, which was a precursor of SNCC. Um, we did public accommodations up and down route 40. Some of you may remember that, uh, it's very interesting going to these, uh, demonstrations. Sometimes we didn't have \$5 between us and we were half hoping that we weren't gonna get served because we couldn't pay for what we were ordering in the first place. Uh, that was our inside joke. Okay. But the Alice side joke is that we were sitting in and people by the virtue of what we were identified as black and black and white together for God's sakes. Um, we were a challenge to the existing system. So I had experiences in all kinds of desegregation. We worked very closely in nag with core. Uh, some of you will hear about collaborations between organizations, they were doing a demonstration with regard to, um, employment.

Speaker 2 (24:34):

Some of you may remember the good old days when black people did not drive buses or subway trains, or any of those other kinds of jobs that were steady. Um, and we worked, I used to wear down my shoes routinely demonstrating with core around those kinds of things. But then we did the more hot button kinds of stuff with regard to, um, you know, um, the issue moving towards voter education, voter, registration, agitation, black people, working on construction jobs, all of that kind of thing. Um, I worked out of Howard university. Uh, there was a contingent of people of Howard who were going to go south. I didn't know where, but this was this big thing. And if you managed to graduate, which was another big thing, uh, then you were expected to leave shortly and go south. I didn't know a lot about SNCC at the time.

Speaker 2 (25:25):

I knew a lot about Mrs. Sip or which meant to go the other direction, you know? And, um, three days after I graduated from Howard, my mother saw me packing up. I mean, this goes to show you about youth. I was packing books because I was going to work in the freedom school. I had like two sets of clothes in about ti you know, 9,000 books. My mother asked me, well, where are you going? I said, I, on my way to Mississippi. I mean, she had long since given up trying to direct me. And I said, um, she said, I worked all my life to keep you from being in Mississippi. And I said, well, okay. But you know, my friends are going and that's another part of the glue. My friends are going and I am going to, um, we went south and the rest of it, I guess, is history.

Speaker 2 (26:12):

The bottom line of what I wanted to say to you is that being an organizer begins with organizing. It's not necessarily organizing for the movement, the skills that you develop and working with people, getting them to respond, getting them to follow through, coming up with accomplishments or things that translate all across the board and, and doing field work, which was different from office work, your ability to be a field secretary for snake and earn that wonderful \$9 and 64 cents a week was your ability to organize. And so with that, I'm gonna open the floor for, uh, Q and a, from those of you back there who are wondering how we get to be up here, and you can ask us all the, you know, down and dirty questions that we didn't have an opportunity to expound upon. So the floor is now open. Is that GI walking first to the hello GI good morning time.

Speaker 6 (27:21):

I wanna congratulate from panel presentation. And I think that it's very important that all of us get as much out of this conference as possible. Accordingly, Vivian, you stand up Viv. Vivian is McComb. The whole history of snake specifically begins and ends in McComb. So if you were in MCCA or if you know someone who worked in MCCA, please give their name and address to Vivian mial Vicky Milo, Dick mial. If you are, if you are interested in

Speaker 7 (27:55):

Learning why and how Mississippi is the only state that compels the teaching of civil rights history in a location, Vivian Malone, it's being done in McComb, McComb bomb, more churches is 1964 than any other 10 cities in Mississippi. I, I hope that you will spend your time networking with people because you're sitting with the greatest organizers who ever existed in America.

Speaker 8 (28:24):

Well, thank you. Thank you.

Speaker 9 (28:27):

I was just looking at the whole idea of convictions. How can we get young people, uh, to have some of those convictions? There's so much, so many enticements, uh, so many pressures on their time. And also the, to, uh, another issue was spending news like Virginia, this whole Confederate thing, and highlighting that

Speaker 5 (28:49):

Just a month ago. We celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Atlanta student movement. And, uh, that celebration began on March 15th, exactly 50 years from the date, uh, on which we began the sit-ins in Atlanta. Uh, we have here in the audience, uh, Dr. Maryanne Booker, who was 50 years ago, you would not believe it. But 50 years ago, she was a member of our committee on the appeal for human rights as a student from marsh brown college. Um, now one of the things that we sought to do was engage the participation of students. We did, we sought to do this on the 30th anniversary of Atlanta student movement. Uh, we actually had planned it to concur exactly on the anniversary, but then we changed it just so that we could schedule it. Uh, when students

returned the campus from spring break, we sought to do it on the 40th anniversary and certainly on the 50th anniversary.

Speaker 5 (30:02):

And during a wrap up of the 50th, we kind of, uh, tried to analyze what went wrong. And very honestly, we are still at sea as to what did went go wrong because we were really not, not successful in engaging the participation of students in this activity. But one of the things that grew out of this analysis was that let's suppose that 50 years ago, some of the, uh, old Negro leadership of Atlanta had approached us and said, we want you to attend a meeting that we're convening to talk about. Some activities that occurred 50 years ago, we would not have cared less about at activity. So I think that what happened 50 years ago, really when Joseph McNeil and his colleagues went to the Woolworth store, they identified an issue that was common to students clear across this nation. And I think that that's, that's where we miss the boat.

Speaker 5 (31:31):

Some somewhat we, we we've, of course this is a very important kind of historic, uh, analysis. It's a, it's wonderful historically to revisit this, but I really think that it it's, it's, it's gonna rest with the students to identify those crucial issues. And that's what Mr. Nash with his students he's trying to do that. It it's very important. We, we have struck out over the past 30 years in terms of trying to get the students from the Atlanta university center, the largest, historically black higher education center, this country, which has more than 10,000 students in that center. And throughout the years of celebration, if we combined all of the students who attended it probably would, I would say maybe we got 50. Okay. So this is this, I, I think the students have to arrive at the issue that's burning to them. And yet there are many issues, but, you know, we can't dictate that. That's my view.

Speaker 4 (32:57):

Yeah. I want to, that's a very important question, sort of to the heart of where we are and why you here and, and how we got here When we were young and we were in the backwards of Mississippi and Louisiana, There was already people out there, it, and with a conviction. When we, when the clan was after us, we always had a place to go. There were people who guided us and hit us people who fed us. And when we brought, you read a lot about the thousand students coming into Mississippi, what you don't read about us. Some people had a different type of conviction or commitment. Those are people who actually housed that thousand students. There was a group of people and they were car caring members of the AACP. Mr. Turn bowl, Mr. Damer, the rest of them are the name go on and on co chin. Some of 'em carried guns. The deacons for defense in Louisiana protected us, were car caring members of the NAACP. Now where that came from, or the fact is that in reconstruction, They opened up education for black people is there were 300 schools set up that began immediately of people being able to teach other people slaves next slaves on how to read and write where that conviction came from a commitment for those particular people to be able to learn and do that when it was an death sentence, if you caught being caught doing that.

Speaker 4 (34:37):

And I, when I was talked about a little bit about how I came on, I about people read about you, Mr. Magne, when you sat in, Always wondering, and I'm gonna ask you that question is When I got out there in the sixties and stuff, is someone had paved the way and had done it when no one ever had done it. What caused you to do that? What caused you to walk out there and sit down at that lunch counter, knowing what was going to happen before anybody else did it See, that's where I called it a different type of a commitment and a conviction. See, you didn't have anyone really to follow, to see as an example, you just went out there and, and

Speaker 10 (35:31):

Did it

Speaker 11 (35:35):

Microphone

Speaker 12 (35:37):

Be?

Speaker 3 (35:38):

I think, um, we're absolutely right that the next generation has to define its own problems, its own issues. But I've always felt in talking with student groups and with my colleagues that what they can take from our experience back 50 years ago is a way of looking at things. Um, the strategies that we use, the techniques, whether it's strategic nonviolence or belief in nonviolence, it's the sense of solidarity we had with the nonviolent philosophy during, from Gandhi, that if one person fell by the wayside, others would step up to take their place, not just one person, but two or three. When Hank Thomas on the freedom rides, who was part of our nag group in DC, we saw pictures of him by the burning bus in Anton, within hours. We had people from nag on their way south, just like the Nashville students were. In fact, we had so many that we were second only to the students in Nashville for sending our students, our students going on the freedom rides when Paul Dietrich called from the basement of that church in Montgomery with just minutes to speak, the message was we're trapped in the basement of the church, send more people and more and more came.

Speaker 3 (37:06):

We had three people on the first bus buses into Jackson. It was that sense of solidarity and support for each other that kept us going. And I think that's one of the main lessons or messages that the next generation can take from us of sticking together. Don't be sidetracked by thinking, oh, he's talking to the police or what have you, but hang together on your cause and do it your way. And of course I hope it's a nonviolent way.

Speaker 2 (37:38):

Thank you. You will ask the question directly. I wanna give you an opportunity to answer.

Speaker 13 (37:47):

Thank you.

Speaker 14 (37:50):

Thank you.

Speaker 13 (38:01):

When I'm asked that question of, of why, uh, three thoughts come to mind and, and the first thought is, uh, angry. I was angry. I was angry at segregation. I was angry because I had to live under, my parents, had to live on and if I were gonna have kids, they were gonna live under two, unless we did something. So anger was a key part. I would say that's about, uh, 40%, the other, uh, 30%, I would say it was a strong moral conviction that segregation was evil. Uh, I believe in the brotherhood of man, uh, the oneness of mankind and that strength and belief and moral conviction was so important in the end, particularly when times got hard. Uh, and, and the last factor, which would probably be 30% is people at the time thought that my three colleagues and I were crazy

Speaker 13 (39:06):

And being crazy's like a badge of honor, because we were doing something that people didn't traditionally do. You didn't in those days were a risk averse. You didn't take chances. You didn't do things. Uh, you didn't go in harm's way. Um, and to, uh, be defiant, it was just something we didn't do. So people said those boys have to be a little touched. And, and so that's like a badge of honor, uh, and in terms of, uh, what we do today and how we talk to youth, uh, I say that my age



group, uh, it's all our watch young people's watch, uh, as people in their sixties and seventies, it's our watch. We all need to get together and, and, and be vigilant of all the stuff that's going on. Uh, hatred is, uh, hate groups are proliferating, uh, violence in our communities. I mean, we have a, an issue, rich environment, things we can coalesce around. We just get on need to get on with the business of doing it, um, uh, enough talk and, uh, probably enough talk on my part. Thank you very much.

Speaker 2 (40:23):

Um, I wanted to add my 3 cents in there before we move on. And the young man here in the yellow is the next person to be recognized. I will say very directly. You have to believe in something in order to move it to the next level. I would say that, you know, behind this, um, very brief overview are a variety of people who were encouraging a variety of people who, when we asked the questions, why, and this started as children, didn't tell us to shut up and sit down. They encouraged us to go on to try to find out the answers to the why. And then if you couldn't answer it, then you were to continue to probe. Most of my relationship in the movement has been one of curiosity. Well, why not? Why can't we do this? What's the problem who's holding this back.

Speaker 2 (41:11):

And you can come up with that for anything we had teachers. I mean, the quality of instruction at Howard was very, very interesting from one professor to another. There were professors, uh, like, um, Nathan, um, I can't think of Nathan's last name, but he did the black scholar, uh, who was one of our, yeah. Nathan Hare, who we educated actually, you know, Stokley and I were in the same class and he was teaching population on this in, um, sociology. And basically he just said, well, you got it. You, you teach the class because obviously, you know, more about certain things than I do. And in the course of the dialogue between us, our class moved us exponentially. I mean, it was believable. It's like getting on a rocket ship in that class. Um, and there were other teachers I will tell you that the administration was often very negative to those same teachers.

Speaker 2 (42:03):

I mean, we went to an, any number of faculty trials for professors. I mean, there's a whole lot of this story. We just don't have the time him to tell, but you I'm gonna say in terms of very specifically speaking to you, you don't pull commitment out of air. It comes from something, it comes from a belief system. Some people don't have a belief system. Well, they need to get it. Okay. And you heard me talk about the church. It's easy to migrate a belief in brotherhood to a belief that we need to make this a more brotherly and sisterly environment. That's a very easy migration. So I just wanted to throw that out. Yes, sir.

Speaker 15 (42:46):

I'm just in turning from Chicago and, uh, uh, list to y'all stories. I wanted to know. Um, would you have changed in the, about the, any, just like any, any other organizations y'all, when would you change like anything about what was going on?

Speaker 2 (43:06):

I believe the question is if we had a chance to go back through history, would we have changed any of the things that were going on? We'll have to sit for a long session on that one, you know, does anybody wanna take a, a quick on that? Okay. Hold on. By the way, we have to leave here exactly. At 12 o'clock we're putting this back on schedule, so please keep your comments short.

Speaker 5 (43:29):

That's hard to do, um, just briefly and we've discussed this, uh, uh, and I think one of the, I guess, an oversight, well, I would, I would say naivete, we felt that back 50 years ago, um, we felt that all we had to do was to bring about some kind of institutional change and that perhaps the world would follow, but there was a very wise person. My, the Dean of my school of social work was Whitney young. And he pointed out that there's, that the people, a segregationist says, one of the

things that we do, we have a victory and we go out and have a celebration. And then we have an awards dinner, and we really celebrate, but that negative group never stopped working. And we see that happening today with regard to the Obama administration, they perhaps were laying low in January and anticipation of the inauguration, but their forces were at work.

Speaker 5 (44:52):

So our naivete was that we felt that once we had desegregated the lunch counters and won public accommodations and then voting rights that perhaps the, the victory was won. And so Lafa would perhaps lead to a, a, a more ideal state, but that didn't happen. And so our naive tape perhaps should have continued the organization. It was finally, um, when Julian was describing this marvelous history stick and how it ended, um, I began wondering what was it that should have been done to continue such a magnificent force of organization. And that's perhaps where we dropped the ball, that that structure should have been there so that we would not have to contend with the hustlers who have hustled this movement. And there are many such people out here who've kind of pimped the movement. So that's, uh, that's a brief analysis.

Speaker 4 (46:21):

I, one thing I would've changed, would've been much more attention to economic development. And the second piece would have, if we had done that, I think we would've nines. What I call the Trojan horse of the civil rights movement, which was this civil rights act of 1964, which has really caused the demise of our, uh, the surgeons of the civil rights movement, in my opinion.

Speaker 2 (46:50):

Thank you. There was a hand in the back that I saw and I told, okay, I don't see that. Yeah. I think it was back here. Yeah. Okay. Well, I know it was in this area. Five more minutes people. Okay.

Speaker 16 (47:03):

Um, hello, my name is Cynthia Brutus and I attend Bates college and Lewiston, Maine, and I'm, I live in Brooklyn. I went high school in Harlem, and I noticed like, there's get frustrated because there's a lack of agency within the students, within my community. I don't know if it's because we're like the community is so, so segregated. It's predominantly African-American. So if you're within a box, you don't really see what's outside. So you're not aware. You're not like politically aware. So like on campus, when I try to bring up issues of, um, race people, um, label me as being a radical label, me as being Malcolm X, like they, they, they ridicule me like mock make a mockery of what I talk about. Like it's just to address. So like, it's hard to kind of mobilize these people and try to tell them about these issues, cuz they don't take me seriously.

Speaker 16 (47:50):

They just undermine what I'm saying. Cuz it's Cynthia. Oh, she's always doing that. So like don't pay her no mine. And like you said, you had mentioned before that you guys had people to pave the road for you. But I feel like we don't even have many, um, people who we can relate to in our generation that we can like look upon to like be our role models and it's sense because since you guys had the role models, you had more of somebody who to lead you and to say, okay, come into the movement. But there's no, the students are more interested in materialistic things. And they aren't really interested in like, um, mobilizing and changing their plight. They don't understand that race and socioeconomics are correlated in their anyway. So it's kind of difficult to even get a unifying eye further.

Speaker 2 (48:35):

I, I got the down and nerdy and I'm gonna take this one. Um, I'm gonna say to you that, um, we are giving you a very fast overview. This was not an easy process. There were are not a lot of people who encouraged us. There were people who denounced us. There were people who called us communist. Our parents were in fact intimidated on their jobs. I mean, there's a whole history

here that we just don't have the opportunity to open that can of worms. I'm gonna tell you that. Not in every place and in every time can you, but you can learn and you learn to take it to the next level. When we went into the prisons, we began to understand that there was a whole group of people we never saw. Okay. And then we began to understand about prisons. And then we got to understand about prison, industrial complex, et cetera. So I'm gonna say to you that everybody's not gonna be receptive. Sometimes there are gonna be faculty members that will, you know, put up with your agitation, cuz that's what this, this is. Uh, and who will encourage you, continue on your life is in front of you. Don't worry about the rest of it. That's what I'm gonna say to you. That's a short, okay. Um, we have, we really have time for one more question. I know

Speaker 2 (49:57):

She's been like really reaching over there. Hold on.

Speaker 17 (50:02):

Uh, hi everyone. My name is Hena. Um, I'm from Massachusetts. Um, I came to the us from Brazil when I was six years old and I'm undocumented. Um, in my organization, uh, in Massachusetts, we're called the student immigrant movement and we're a youth led organization. Um, and we kind of go around marching, undocumented and unafraid. Um, but there's still a lot of people who are really afraid. Um, and I just wanna know how you guys founded your own inner strength and how you, you guys showed it to other people and got them to be unafraid.

Speaker 18 (50:34):

That's a great, good

Speaker 19 (50:35):

Question.

Speaker 18 (50:41):

Speaking out on the undocumented, I worked in an elementary school where we had a policy of don't ask you no appeal. And that meant as to a person's legal status. As

Speaker 3 (50:50):

Far as the government was concerned,

Speaker 3 (50:54):

Um, to not be afraid, once you accept the worst thing that can happen, then you don't have anything to fear. In our case, the worst they could do was kill us. I carried a new Testament with me, a very small one, and then it was a copy of my birth certificate so that my body could be identified if need be the worst they could do was kill us. And once you accept that, you have nothing to be afraid about. Think of what the worst they could do, send you back to Bruce Z, perhaps separate your family, but you can survive. Families have survived that for time I Memorial and you've got each other for support. We used to sing. We shall overcome Helen O'Neil, which, who was mentioned earlier, um, is not being able to be here because of her recent death. I remember going to Baton Rouge, um, in a car sitting in the backseat, our agreed up on story. If we were stopped, I was the only white person in the car is that my father was white. We figured the sheriff would understand that, but we were very, very weekly trembling singing. We shall overcome. That was our source of strength in the music and knowing that we were there for each other. So look to each other for your strength and accept the worst thing that can happen and go on.

Speaker 2 (52:27):

Thank you. It is now 12 o'clock. I'm sorry, but we have to bring this session to a close before you go. Please note, you are asked to take the stairs and not the elevator and this a session is now at a close. Thank you.

