

SNCC 50th Anniversary Conference
Shaw University, Raleigh NC, April 2010
Transcript Video Recording #16
(Raw, unedited, no annotation)

Speaker 1 (00:00:17):

And having said that, you know, uh, this panel's political impact of SNCC. And, um, there are lots of ways to look at the political impact of SNCC. And I'm gonna tell little small story that yesterday, whatever it was in the presentation conference been here for, and, um, 1965, uh, Atlanta, well actually did 64 reinforced from that, um, election of the city to assembly districts that actually were districts that neighborhood in before that of the city. And you were a Johnson, we were a Johnson, a man of history cause he was important to getting back into the, um, so Nick's office was in one of these districts, obviously, you know, uh, and a man named Howard, priestly a minister, nice guy, you know, but he wasn't active in the movement. And I said, well now break the national office of SN we gotta have into this.

Speaker 1 (00:01:40):

Julian lived in the heart of the father was a historical person in education in America. His mom was, uh, you know, an important presence in the city of Atlanta. Um, and so we talked about it and I think we started beat up on Julia to go run, was having an executive committee meeting in it might have been. And, and charliebb went over there to convince foreman to help us run this campaign, to give us some money. So, and there was always this dialogue that think about electoral politics and direct action into the right thing, the wrong thing, you know, what have you, but I said, look, this is our national office. We, you know, we can't have a voice here, you know, where we gonna have, why don't we tell other people to have a voice? So anyway, foreman gave us \$500 and told us to go for it.

Speaker 1 (00:02:33):

And Judy Richardson, Charlie myself, we opened an office in a, um, petitions office on hunter street. She gave us the front window, a desk, couple chairs, and then went to town and that election became history. But cause of that election, a guy named Richard Hatcher called Jim about a year later and wanted to know he would come up there and help him organize his campaign. And back then, there weren't any mayors of what they call major cities. And that year Dick Hatcher was running in Gary and Stoks was running in Cleveland made. So, you know, these were major cities, uh, from our perspective at that point in time. And we ran, so here was SNCC, which really wasn't in the electoral business at that level, you know, engaging. But yet we had a history of electoral politics because we saw that as a way of people locally saw that as a way to, to express their opinions, to take charge of their communities as they did in Mississippi.

Speaker 1 (00:03:38):

And as Julian talked about in the number of challenges and things. So one of our impacts was to begin to be a part of this emerging surge of, of electoral politics in America. And, um, you know, that was indeed significant, but the impact of SNCC, you know, crossed over many, many, many elements from the civil rights bill, which led to issues involving those who physically challenged in terms of having, uh, laws that required, uh, elevators that people with wheelchairs curb cuts, you know, it went on and on and on, you know, from that perspective. So this panel as small as we are, you know, and we have the high powered Mr. Cox here. So, you know, it's gonna be good, you know, um, you know, it's going to sort of explore that and we can explore that with you, you know, not just to you. So, uh, you know, we're a small enough group, at least we are, you guys can, you know, engage us and engage each other. So with that, I'm gonna introduce Mr. Cox, you know, because he's to my right. You're right. You want me to that's

Speaker 2 (00:04:54):

Again?

Speaker 1 (00:04:54):

No,

Speaker 2 (00:04:55):

No,

Speaker 1 (00:04:55):

That's fine. And uh, he, my right, he doesn't need, he doesn't need a portfolio, I think with this group. And then, uh, Mr. Bond, who also doesn't need a portfolio with this group so they can take it as each one finishes,

Speaker 2 (00:05:08):

Um,

Speaker 1 (00:05:09):

Knows he hasn't talked, this is what you called. <laugh>

Speaker 2 (00:05:13):

Hey, this, this is show, it doesn't even work. <laugh> let me, let me just begin by saying that probably there is nobody in this country, uh, in terms of the time period, we are talking about 1964 to 1984, who's had a more profound political impact in terms of making sure that, uh, African American mayors and progressive, uh, politicians, uh, were put in office than Ivanhoe, Donaldson

Speaker 2 (00:05:53):

And Ivanhoe is the nuts and bolts, uh, person. I remember when, uh, Marion Barry was running for office, um, the first time and, um, Marion was clearly the underdog. He was the young person and the three person race. And, uh, everybody's tried to, um, tell him he shouldn't run. And we, we were involved in, I mean, most, this was basically a SNCC run to get Marion into office. Foreign state is, is in the audience with us and, and others were involved in the discussion. And one morning there was a, there was a, a pressure to ask Marion to pull out of the race. And Allison didn't feel any compunction about calling me at four o'clock in the morning to discuss the issue and wanted me to be intelligent about it. So, I mean, there's nobody as compelling as island. Holy, when he's involved in a political race, Julian can tell you that.

Speaker 2 (00:07:00):

Um, let me, I think I want to talk today about two, uh, areas one happened in the, in the sixties. And then I guess a bit about, um, the Barry administration, uh, since Mar is not here. I think many people look at L county and I worked in LS county, Alabama. I think there there's a lot of discussion that comes around it, that centers on romance. But I think when you look at the discussion of what happened in nos county, I think it's a very good case study and you know, how, how some things should go about it. One of the things that we look at in nos county is many people know the symbol for the Lowes county, uh, freedom organization happened to be the black Panther, and that was the symbol that was taken by the group in California to make it, you know, their symbol for the black Panther organization in the main, the other was that Stokley, uh, worked in, uh, Lowes county and, um, from Toray and, um, you know, that was the time of the issue of black power.

Speaker 2 (00:08:19):

And so that, there's a number of things that came around that discussion that people talked about, but Lowes county at its heart was, uh, trying to solve a particular issue and a particular problem. Lowes county, when we went to ed in 1965 was 80% black and had four registered voters. And the question was, had become then, you know, how do we now proceed? And how do we make a

difference in this situation? Up to that time, we had been engaged in registering people to vote. And, you know, I think the freedom, Mississippi freedom democratic party took it another step in terms of trying to organize that vote into political process in Laos county. What we tried to do and think about is how do we organize for regime change? That is to say there was police brutality or Sheriff's brutality in Las county. And we could have engaged in protesting and doing a number of things, or we could take over the government and elect our own sheriff.

Speaker 2 (00:09:42):

Um, there were a number of issues that people faced in the county that could happen, what would happen that they would complain about. But the question is how do we engage in putting our own people in there to establish our own, uh, way of, of thinking our own political processes? Fortunately, low count Alabama had a, um, a law that allowed you to form a political party on a county organiza at the county level. So therefore you could, as you, you did not have to have a party that was statewide. You could have a party that was local. So, and I remembered, um, people talked yesterday, if Julian talked about it, others talked about it, but we said that before we went anywhere, we did a lot of research and we had one of the best researchers in the world. I mean, bond Jack Menez. I mean, he was absolutely one of the best and Jack researched the laws of Alabama and what we did.

Speaker 2 (00:10:52):

We not only researched the laws in terms of looking at what the possibilities were in the county level, but we took the laws and responsibilities of each office tax assessor tax collector, uh, the county judge, the sheriff, I mean all up and down the line. And we decided that in fact, we would run people for those offices, but the problem was given the tax. I mean, given the information that you needed for those offices, how could you convince people who had not even the right to vote, uh, or to become the people who should be in charge? So what we decided was to create comic books, uh, what we did was take the complicated laws and thanks to Jennifer Lawson, who is here, uh, she's doing registration, who is a very good artist. We took all the laws and created comic books so that people who, who we wanted to run for office and people in the community could feel that in fact, they had the information and they had the bonafide days to think about themselves being in the positions of power.

Speaker 2 (00:12:14):

I think that, you know, so that was very helpful in order to create the sense that this is something that we can do to break it down in a way that people could understand. The next thing we did was that we knew that a lot of people could not read and write. And so therefore the reason we had the black Panther is that we, we, you know, the view was that if people didn't have to vote for the name, they could vote for the symbol. And that is basically what we decided to do. And that's, we had Ruth Howard who's also here who did the research to find, and basically we had what's the, uh, the college in Morris brown, Morris brown, that's basically the Morris brown, black Panther that we had. We used to put there and Jennifer Lawson, huh? You went to Morris brown. No Clark or Clark was

Speaker 3 (00:13:13):

Clark Clark. You sure it's the Clark Panther.

Speaker 2 (00:13:17):

Okay. Oh, Clark. Oh, Clark.

Speaker 3 (00:13:18):

I'm sorry. I apologize to, to the Clark people

Speaker 2 (00:13:24):

All so, so,

Speaker 2 (00:13:28):

So we use that. So, and, and so basically the, so basically what we went from, you know, somebody was 80%, the population four voters to saying you can, in fact, not just register to vote, but in fact, run this county from top to bottom and create a situation that allowed you to do what you wanted to do in terms of the political process. So we got the, the, uh, clock clock Panther, plant Panther, and we said to people who would, might be afraid, what you do is pull the lever for the black Panther and then go home. So basically very simple, very simple discussion, pull the lever for the black Panther because we had a number of offices. So, you know, it's not just, I vote for no, no, no. Pull the lever for the black Panther go home. It was very simple. So my sense is that one of the things that we tried to do in terms of Lowes county, in terms of beginning to change the political dynamic is to one say that it's not because one of the things that we said is, and we quoted from the Bible and I think it's the Bible.

Speaker 2 (00:14:47):

And I know I'm in a chapel and I'm not a preacher, but I know there are number of 'em in here, so they can help me. I said, what would it have for the man to gain the vote, but not control it? So we did. So we, we tried to establish a context that people would understand. So, I mean, it seems to me that one, you begin to look at some of the things that SNCC did beyond just, you know, registering people to vote some of the most creative and imaginative things were done on some of the things that we did, I think in Lowes county. That's what I'm talking about later on, I, I, I spent 10 minutes already, but later on, we can talk about Washington DC, which Ivanhoe was critical, waking people up at four o'clock in the morning, try to get it happen, Julian.

Speaker 3 (00:15:45):

Um, I spent a lot of time preparing the remarks I made on yesterday and almost no time preparing the remarks I'm not able to make right now, but will do my best. And some of the things that, uh, the two previous speakers have said prompted ideas in my mind. Uh, one I'm reminded that there's a great book about LOEs county called bloody lounges written by Hassan Jeffries, who was at the book pavilion on yesterday, but you can get it in your neighborhood, privately owned bookstore, as opposed to these big mega stores, uh, it's called bloody lounges. And I have to say for somebody who was in and out of lounges county sporadically during this period they're talking about and who knew of its reputation, that's why it's called bloody lounges. It wasn't until I read this book that I realized exactly how bloody it actually was.

Speaker 3 (00:16:35):

Uh, he records a record of murder and terror and horror, uh, unlike anything I had previously imagined. So it's a good book. And, uh, if you want to know the history of, of Lowes county and the, and the so-called black Panther party, that's a good place to begin. Um, also the idea of the comic book struck a note with me. Uh, if you go on the web right now, Google Vietnam comic book, you'll find a comic book that I wrote the text for, but a man named TJ Lewis, whom we've never been able to find again, uh, drew drew the pictures, and this is just a fabulous, fabulous comic book. And we put this comic book together to explain to a semi-literate population, the people in my, uh, house district in, in Atlanta, what the Vietnam war was all about, what were the issues? Why was the war wrong?

Speaker 3 (00:17:34):

And the comic book format just turned out to be a wonderful way to educate them about it. And it's, uh, just a, a great idea. I urge you to go on the web and look at this comic book. Uh, I, as I say, I did the writing of the text, but, uh, TJ Lewis, whomever he is wherever he is or could be a, she is, uh, drew the pictures and the pictures are just magnificent. And it demonstrates, I think, SNS ability to use new ways to talk to people rather than the standard ways that had been done in politics all along when, when I saw the topic of the, of the panel here, I immediately thought about Jesse Jackson, because I thought Jesse Jackson had an effect on American politics, similar

to the effect that SNCC had in the years before Jackson is a slightly later phenomenon in this chronology than the student nonviolent coordinating committee.

Speaker 3 (00:18:25):

But I think my race in Georgia became so celebrated because I was expelled and then ran and won again, then expelled and ran and won again, then found a lawsuit and won that lawsuit and was sued because my race became so celebrated. I think a lot of other young people in other parts of the country, young black people particularly said, gee, I could be in the legislature too. If this young guy can do it, then I can do it too. And Jesse Jackson, I think had a similar kind of effect after both of his races for president, which of course, as we know were unsuccessful, but in terms of sponsoring others to do this in teaching other young black people, how to run a political campaign, the people who worked in the Jackson campaign themselves became candidates for public office. And I think SNCC had an effect of that sort earlier in the decade of the 1960s. Uh, and beyond that, I know you're just bursting with questions. So rather than go on I'll, uh, stop and yield to whomever wants to speak next.

Speaker 4 (00:19:24):

Great.

Speaker 1 (00:19:31):

You know, there is a story about the 1968 convention that Julian doesn't often tell, but the impact of SNCC provided energy to all kinds of activists and communities and groups in the sixties, across America. And the war became a really serious division in this country. And when SNCC came out against the war, you know, people were angry at us. They said we were dividing the civil rights movement that it had nothing to do with civil rights. It had all of this so forth and so on. And part of the reason, the Julian and the primary reason, actually outside of the fact that he was black got kicked out of the Georgia house or was never allowed to sit in the Georgia house to start off with. So when the 1968 convention came around, you had the Georgia challenge. There was also something else going on there, there was these demonstrators outside who were protesting the war and protesting all sorts of things that were going on in our country.

Speaker 1 (00:20:30):

And the, the delegates inside were really angry. And the guy named Richard Goodwin, who was a writer for the Kennedy, uh, administration, um, and a scholar. And I think he's married to Darris Kerns, you know, uh, Dick was in, in one of the delegations. And at the time I was doing some organizing for Eugene McCarthy. And, um, Dick said, look, we need to have people have an opportunity to express what they really were feeling. And Dick got one of the delegations to nominate Julian bond to be vice president in the United States. Now this began to sweep from delegation to delegation, to delegation. It actually got pretty serious and Julian eventually got up and told people that he wasn't old enough. He was 28 years old. <laugh>, you know, and, uh, you had to be 35, but I believe with all the things going on and the mood of that delegation, <laugh>, it's only not how you're right.

Speaker 1 (00:21:29):

You should be there. Well, it would be a difference. The, but I believe that, you know, if it were possible and the mood of that delegation rather than allow the president elect, uh, no, the democratic, uh, presidential nominee to carry that choice, the convention would've carried the choice and given it to Julian, because that's the way people felt, how they wanted to express themselves. And that was one of the beautiful things about SNCC was that it opened up the dialogue, the civil rights movement. In general, you might remember that we came through the fifties and the red dating and the fear and all the things that were going on in our society. And we sort of broke through that iceberg. You know, Bob Moses probably didn't intend this way when he wrote his letter from the Macomb jail, you know, talking about, um, the stone, that the, what, what was the line, the iceberg

Speaker 3 (00:22:25):

That the builders

Speaker 1 (00:22:25):

Rejected, the stone that the builders rejected and, you know, this really was who we were and what we were in terms of change agents, as well as the real work of helping people in their local communities find ways to, you know, govern themselves. So I just give that to you as food for thought that, you know, the roles we play were, you know, out there, even though we weren't really had those roles as our gender, it's just the way the country took us and the way the community took us. So anyway, we're open for discussion and questions and so forth. So I guess

Speaker 3 (00:23:04):

Say something else real quickly that, uh, uh, I, I can be heard that, uh, there you go, doesn't, isn't really germane to this whole conversation, but the story I want to tell you, and, uh, I asked LAN if I could and he's in charge and he said, I could, uh, and it's about, it's about president Bush and, uh, has to do with my, uh, nominations at the 68 convention for vice president. Um, I was nominated by a man from Wisconsin named, uh, I can't think of his name. He's retired. He lives in Tennessee. Now. He was a Genos pizza salesman.

Speaker 5 (00:23:45):

Mike,

Speaker 3 (00:23:46):

How are you? Anyway? I said, I was nominated at the convention in 68 by a man from Wisconsin who has since retired and moved to Pennsylvania. He was a Geno pizza salesman, Geno pizza

Speaker 5 (00:23:59):

Pucci,

Speaker 3 (00:24:00):

No, not PCI. Um, PCI owned the company. This was a salesman for the company and he's active in politics at any rate. Um, and I told him I was too young to run, but he said we don't care. And, uh, nominated me anyway. So fast forward many, many years, and I'm chairman of the NAACP. And we have had a, made a habit of having a meeting with every sitting president of the United States from Herbert Hoover to the present day. And George Bush had served one term as president and had not met with us and was in his second term and had no intention. He seemed to have met with us. And I went to the white house correspondence dinner and found myself at a reception with George Bush. And I'm standing next to president Bush and the master of ceremonies taps on the microphone and says, now we're gonna sing happy birthday to the president of the white house correspondent.

Speaker 3 (00:24:54):

So I'm standing there next to president Bush and we're singing happy birthday to you, uh, to whoever this woman was, who was president of the correspondence and what was over. He said to me, he said, Julian, because I'd never liked people call me by my first name, who don't know me that well, but you know, the president of the United States, he said, Julian, he said, how old are you? And I think I must have been 68 or 67 then. So whatever I was having 68. And I said to make a joke because I was nervous standing there with him. Carl Rove was right over here.

Speaker 5 (00:25:29):

<laugh> and uh,

Speaker 3 (00:25:32):

I said, I used to be too young to be vice president, but now I'm too old. He said, don't say that. He said John McCain is 70

Speaker 5 (00:25:43):

<laugh>.

Speaker 3 (00:25:44):

So again, try trying to make a lame joke. I said, well, maybe I'll ask John McCain if I can be his vice president

Speaker 5 (00:25:51):

<laugh>

Speaker 3 (00:25:52):

And to my great surprise, George Bush said, don't say that he said a confident man would ask John McCain to be his vice president.

Speaker 5 (00:26:01):

<laugh>. I said, whoa,

Speaker 3 (00:26:03):

I didn't think he could carry on a conversation.

Speaker 5 (00:26:05):

<laugh> so, so, so,

Speaker 3 (00:26:11):

So I thought, I thought I would strike while the iron was hot. <laugh> I said, president Bush, I said, we've invited you to come to our convention every year, since you've been president and you didn't come, you came when you were candidate Bush and we treated you well, we're having our convention in Washington, DC, just a few blocks from where we're standing right now. And we want you to come. And if you come, we'll treat you right. And he said, and to me, he was either saying, I'll think about it or not while you're alive. <laugh> but, uh, as it turned out, he did come and we did treat him right. <laugh>

Speaker 4 (00:26:49):

Hold it up

Speaker 6 (00:26:49):

To you. Thank you. I would like for Julian to speak a little bit more about, uh, bloody, uh, about bloody lounges and about who wrote it and so

Speaker 3 (00:26:59):

Forth is the author here? Yeah. Is that the author speak? Okay. Passan come to a microphone. You look so young. That's cause he is that's cause he is

Speaker 7 (00:27:19):

Young mayor. Yeah. Cause I am here. Right. I mean, I mean, I, I think brother Cox, I mean the title of the book is bloody lounges. And as, uh, uh, professor bond mentioned, um, you know, it wasn't a title that either I chose or even SNIC organizers chose. I mean, that's what, what people called it. I mean, people in the region because of this long history of racial terrorism, uh, that existed in the county, uh, sometimes we, we, we tend to think that, uh, the violence of slavery ended with emancipation. Uh, but in fact it carried over. And so when SNCC organizers go into Lowes county and 1965 as well, Cox mentioned, but it's a county that's 80% African American. Uh, and yet at that time only four registered black voters who had only become registered, uh, at

the beginning of March. Uh, and part of the reason for, uh, the almost absolute exclusion of African Americans from the ballot box from the political process, uh, was because of the use of terror and intimidation.

Speaker 7 (00:28:20):

It was very real. I mean, the fear that people felt in Mississippi, in Alabama and elsewhere was a logical fear based on lived experience. And so part of that organizing process was not only, uh, to get people, to challenge the fear, but to give them a real option. And I'll just say this. I, I remember asking, I had, uh, the opportunity to interview many of the local folks, well as the organizers, but many of the local folk who participated in the movement, uh, there in Lowes county. And I had a chance to talk to John Hewlett, uh, who, uh, many, many single organizers obviously remember, uh, he, he was, he eventually becomes sheriff of the county under the, uh, Laos county freedom organization, national democratic party of Alabama. Uh, but I asked him, he was one of the first people to attempt to register, to vote, uh, in 1965, leading a group of local folk down the, even before SNCC organizers, get there a few weeks before.

Speaker 7 (00:29:11):

Uh, and I asked them a group of 39 when they go down to the courthouse on March 1st, 1965, and they're turned away. I said, well, what was it? Uh, that was so different. I was just trying to write, wrap my mind around this event. What was it that was so different on March 1st, 1965 before, uh, bloody Sunday and the like that led this group to go down there and he sort of sat back in his chair and he said, well, we understood, uh, that by that time, uh, if we attempted to register to vote, uh, we wouldn't, uh, be killed immediately. He said, we had a, he said before 1965 in the fifties and the early sixties, he said, if we attempted to register to vote, uh, we would've been dead by nightfall. That's very real. Uh, but he said by 1965, because of the different types of activism and organizing that was going on the changing context, he said, we knew we had at least a week before they would come after us. Now, I don't know about child, but ain't much difference between, uh, that evening and a week. But the point was there was a change, but the change wasn't enough to, uh, completely ameliorate, uh, the conditions of violence and intimidation. And obviously that continues on. So part of that transition from community organizing, uh, to electoral politics organizing, uh, is still done in this context of fear and intimidation and violence, which speaks to, uh, really what was a remarkable story of transition that was there. So thank

Speaker 2 (00:30:40):

You. Let me just, I might mention two things. Lowes county is where UL LA Lazo was killed. And the reason SNCC went into Lowes county in 65 was a reverent. Um, what's his name? Jonathan, Jonathan Daniels. He was killed. And he, he was killed because he pushed, well, at least this way story goes Ruby sales, who is also here at this conference, you know, could have also been killed. So we went in there, you know, not only to register people to vote, but also to deal with the terrorism that was existent in that, at that time

Speaker 8 (00:31:19):

Cut, I, I wanted, is that right? I wanted you to talk about in 1963, foreman brought me in as a photographer. I've learned that he brought you in much earlier, cuz he knew you were a journalism student and, and you were often at a typewriter in the office. I recently spoken Berkeley and someone introduced me and said that at that moment, SNCC created a position staff photographer that had never existed. The ne a C P didn't have a staff photographer. The red cross didn't have a staff photographer. No non-governmental organizations had their own staff photographer and, and foreman. In fact created something that is now standard everywhere across the globe. Immediately with Dotty, you made the Danville pamphlet, the posters, the cover of this brochure was made by a guy whose name is not mentioned anywhere. He printed him in the basement. Mark suckle. Would you talk about that and impact this S Nick and what you all were doing?

Speaker 3 (00:32:25):

Well, mark, stand up, mark. Mark suckle is here. Mark came, mark. Mark came all the way from London to be here and we're happy to see him. He, uh,

Speaker 3 (00:32:44):

Dotty's ner myself. Uh, mark were the initial snake communications department. Uh, we had, uh, these, uh, what they weren't Gestetner, uh, machines. They were IBM machines. I think the Xerox machines and you know, my students, I have to tell my students what Xerox machines were and every now and then I'll meet a student who went to a school that was so decrepit. They still had those instead of the copying machines. And if I could summon up the smell oh yes. Of the fluid, they say, oh yes. <laugh> because for some people, for some people that was an attraction <laugh> uh, but anyway, and Mary King and Mary King was, uh, an important member of that group. And, and Mary has written about eloquently written about it in her memoir, uh, freedom song. So if you want to get a look at the snake communication department, you read Mary King's memoir.

Speaker 3 (00:33:43):

But, uh, we determined very early on that if we wanted to have credibility with journalists and our job, really, and it was several things. One was to distinguish SNCC from other organizations because the journalist who flew in kind of helicoptered in to them, it was all Martin Luther king. And we had to say, no, Martin Luther king is a great person, but he's over here, we're over here and we're doing something entirely different. And so our task was to distinguish what we were doing and distinguish ourselves from, uh, SCLC and core and the NAACP. And it was hard sometimes because they, they wanted simplicity and they wanted some kind of clarity and we had to fight hard to make these distinctions, but we determined early on that we had to be absolutely truthful with, uh, journalists when we spoke to them. If we said, uh, a hundred people were arrested here, it had to be a hundred people. They had to be arrested. We had to have everything right. And over time, I think they grew to trust us and to, to believe in us, but it was a wonderful, wonderful period. And it's so great to see mark because, uh, I hadn't seen mark in a long time and he looks just like, he looked there <laugh> we all do. We all do? Yes, we all do. We all do?

Speaker 9 (00:35:01):

Um, speaker has, thank you. Um, I was a 17 year old student in gene Wiley's communications 101 class in 65, 66. And, uh, when Stokley Carmichael came to speak to our class, I was one of those students who raised her hand to join the black power movement. And I just wanna say thank you to Corland and to Julian for low county and all the things that we were able to learn and to have the opportunity to come back into Atlanta, my hometown, and to have John Lewis set me up as a volunteer in the SNCC office in Atlanta, and to see all of that powerful research. And I mean, people don't understand how much powerful research there was in that office, in the Atlanta office and to be able to work on the nitty gritty in vine city. Thank you. Do thank you. Um, and I just wanna focus in on this political impact period, 64 to 84, which is what we are kind of gonna talk about a little bit, I think, um, and I think it's important to, um, acknowledge that thousands of people, individuals were affected, but in terms of the lasting political impact, I think back to the tribute Kwame tour, 1998, and if those of you who were there remembered how cogent come just begged and begged and begged to build a black United front.

Speaker 9 (00:36:29):

I mean, just seeing that, having him beg us to build a black United front and to see all of the fragments of the black liberation movement that were there at that event in April of 1998, and to think about where we are and where we were in that period, especially going into the Reagan years, 80 to 84 and the labor movement in crisis and, uh, no political impact that we could say in terms of the black liberation movement. And I'd like to know, are we gonna answer the call of

KME tur to build that black United front? That's the question? And how can we pull all the fragments together to do that? That's the question,

Speaker 2 (00:37:17):

Julian? And I would say, oh yeah, that's you Colin? Uh, you know, let me, let me say that. Um, in SNCC, one of the things about in SNCC, people got confused about whether between Stokley and myself, they always got us confused. I was the good looking one. I don't say the why they got us confused. <laugh> no, I'm just joking. Um, you say what now? I think, you know, I, I think that, um, coming out of, of SNCC and coming out of the, um, in the 19 65, 66, 67 and so forth, you know, Kwame Toray felt that the discussion not only needed to center on the question of the, the black community organizing itself, but ultimately also on the question of pan Africanism. Um, and as you know, he not, he, he, he not, he did not stay in the country much after that. He, he, uh, he traveled a lot in Africa and spent a lot time in Africa and opened up the discussion, a great deal, uh, in terms of how we needed to relate to the African community.

Speaker 2 (00:38:48):

I think for Stokley, uh, Kwame tore, that was not a, um, just a political statement. That was who he was in terms of, um, when he was in college. I mean, as you know, he was born in Trinidad, uh, not nothing, no tribalism here, just, but he was born in Trinidad and, you know, at Howard university, he city, he spent a lot of time with what was characterized as foreign students from Africa and the Caribbean. So, I mean, so he was very familiar and very, you know, very comfortable with, uh, people from across the world. But I think for him, you know, that he thought that we needed to build a kind of coalition that not only was in the, the, you know, the, the African American community, but the pan African community, you know, I'm not sure at this point, you know, where we are gonna be going with his call and, and his discussion, um, you know, Bob brown and others are here, uh, and they have some view of that.

Speaker 2 (00:39:59):

You know, I'm not sure about that. Um, you know, I, I think that, um, you know, at the end of the day, uh, the, the issues, uh, are very big, uh, and a lot of them sent to on economics. Um, and you know, how we begin to peel that onion back and how we begin to look at that is something that we need to discuss and what kind of coalitions and what kind of relationships we need to build to deal with that issue, which simply is a zero sum gain. The more for you, the less for me, therefore, the more for me, uh, is something that we're gonna have to think about. And I'm not sure whether that will be a Panafric African base or an African or African, uh, situation. Uh, but that's something that I guess Bob and others would have to answer

Speaker 1 (00:40:58):

The, um, you know, there are legacies around the country from what we call the United black fronts. And, uh, that was definitely, you know, a continuation or at that point in time, a creation, uh, that came out of SNCC and then came outta local based communities. Uh, when, uh, Marion Barry got to Washington DC, there was ju there was, um, Julius Hobson and, uh, marina ran. And, uh, um, the Doug Moore actually, Doug Moore was at the founding conference of SNCC, you know, um, and you know, these, these people, they just formed the United front and move forward to define themselves. So, you know, whether these fronts will have a relevance as we go forward, you know, uh, remains to be seen. One of the interesting things about SNCC talking about economics was SNCC was not only just independent and didn't really believe in hierarchy and didn't like structure.

Speaker 1 (00:41:51):

And, you know, uh, basically everybody sort of had a sense of equity. The leadership was more for the external world and for the internal management of SNCC itself, but SNCC believed in without articulating self sufficiency, you know, uh, we've sort of, you know, maybe, um, you know, it got raised by the previous questionnaire, but we did have our own Photoshop. We had

our own print shop, we had our own building. Um, we bought our paper from a side car by the box carloads. Um, it's good for economics. We had our own motor fleet. So during the motor fleet, which I was probably, you know, I was president of <laugh>, you know, uh, the, um, you know, it, the freedom singers went around America, you know, marketing the, the, the stories of the south and of the political struggles of America. And it created a personality and identity for SNCC.

Speaker 1 (00:42:50):

And, uh, the friends of SNCC became a resource base, uh, around the country to, to, to have money flowing in so that there was this kind of recognition. And, you know, it had a lot to do with Jim foreman and his style. We talk about foreman a lot. We actually can't say enough about foreman. You know, foreman's the kind of guy that give you \$10 and tell you to go to Louisville and organize, you know, uh, and <laugh> right. But, uh, you know, that's where he, that's where he, where his mindset was. And when you think about the people who influence you, you know, politically, and, you know, I think about forming a lot. I mean, I've had maybe three people in my life who had a major influence on me and one that clearly was James Foreman, you know? Um, and I think half the people in the SNCC would have to, you know, sort of agree with that.

Speaker 1 (00:43:37):

I'm gonna introduce someone a little later on, but I wanna acknowledge that he's here, ed brown, you know, uh, who wouldn't stay at home in Atlanta, drove all night to get here. He's in a wheelchair, can't walk, you know, um, had a few strokes, but, you know, as you know, his brother rap is, uh, you know, as a political prisoner and, um, you know, we'll have to see how these voices deal with this as we go forward into the future. But I'm sorry, next question. You know, I need someone to sort of watch whose hands go up, cuz I can't remember the order, but I'm gonna go with this person there. And then, uh, you, you're gonna watch the

Speaker 10 (00:44:13):

Hands Julian, you mentioned, or someone mentioned that when you ran for opposite inspired, some other people who run for office in Gary Indiana, you might also add to that Newark New Jersey, uh, with mayor Gibson. Talk about those other connections. I know that when Jesse ran in 1984, there was a major reg voter registration drive that he did. And because of that in 19 86, 5 Senate candidates won races. And each of those got less than 40% of the white vote, Alan Cranston, California, but there was a lot of Hispanic votes there. Uh, white file in Georgia, somewhere around 38%, Richard Shelby, who's not a Republican got about 36% of the white vote. Terry Sanford of North Carolina got about 41. And John bro in Louisiana was somewhere around 36 to 38% of the white vote. And they still won because of what Jesse had done the two years before that in terms of registration. And I'm sure there are other connections like that around the country where you do something and it has an impact on a lot of other things.

Speaker 3 (00:45:19):

I I'm sure that so, and, and I'm maybe someone has done so, but I don't think anybody's yet measured the Jackson phenomenon, uh, not in terms of the candidate himself, but in terms of this ripple that just spread from the activity of running for president twice of getting all of these younger black people, cuz most of 'em were younger people. This is like a second coming of SNCC, younger people to work in this campaign. People who believed he could run for president may, maybe wouldn't be elected, maybe wouldn't win, but at least he could put on a good showing. Um, and I don't think anybody's ever measured the effect of that. And, and thank you for that. I didn't, I didn't know about that.

Speaker 11 (00:46:01):

You that right there.

Speaker 12 (00:46:06):

Good morning everybody. Uh, my name is David Young and I'm actually a student from Virginia state university. Um, I'm a Washington DC resident. So my question will be about the former Snickers in Washington, DC. How has SNCC impacted the, um, the philosophies of Eleanor Holmes, Norton and Marion Barry's leadership in Washington DC?

Speaker 1 (00:46:34):

This will reach, um, that's an interesting question.

Speaker 1 (00:46:41):

Well obviously, you know, they both believe in a grassroots space and they're both very popular within the grassroots space of the community of Washington DC. You know, Marion, when he got elected mayor sort of was continued his role as a, you know, SNCC field secretary. In some ways, of course he had organized pride incorporated, which was the largest, um, job program in the country involving young black guys. You know, at that time they called them dudes and there were over a thousand in that program and only four professionals, you know, Marion was one of the professionals. Um, Mary tr was one, the professionals, a guy named Carol Harvey was one professionals and a brother named catfish. I fish Mayfield, catfish Mayfield, you know, and they ran that whole program used to stand at the door and disarm everybody when they came in, they used to collect about 60, 70 knives a day, you know, four or five guns.

Speaker 1 (00:47:36):

So there was a, there was a sense in the community that these people cared about them, you know, um, they, they, they were not, you know, preparing them for the pride, had a gas station, you know, where guys got trained, they'd go work in the gas station. They had other little industries like that. Um, and you know, their value system was always from the bottom up, which I think is important. You know, um, Marion used to use rhetoric, you know, well, if this doesn't happen and they want to build something out in the Southeast and somebody else owned it, he said, we'll just seize the land. And I would say, well, no, you don't do that now it's your mayor. <laugh>, you know, you can get the council to basically acquire the land for you. He says, okay, we'll do that. So, but there was a, you know, a, a view and, um, you know, that legacy wasn't just with SNCC people, by the way, you know, when you look at the, the mayors, um, from Maynard Jackson to Coleman young Harold Washington, um, um, Marion Barry, you know, they had very strong grassroots orientations and a, and a commitment to help the minority business community, primarily black in most of those cities, you know, to grow and evolve, you know, uh, to be competitive, to sheer in the economics of the community.

Speaker 1 (00:49:00):

Um, you know, they would pass laws that it had to be a resident in the city to do business with the government. You know, as opposed to doing business with somebody in Coleman was absolutely single minded about it. If you wanted to do business with Detroit, you had to have a Detroit address and you had to live in Detroit and you had to pay Detroit taxes. You know, he wasn't for you coming in there, even if you were a friend of his, you know, coming in from Texas as a bond counselor and think you're gonna get business and no, they had their own, they had a black minority first black minority bonding firm was in Detroit. And the bonding means that you were in the red book, this little secret book that wall street keeps and allows you to do this, that, and the next thing. So, I mean, it doesn't directly answer your question, but it does say that that, you know, it was a bottom up view of life, um, and still is as they fight for the right to vote. Even now,

Speaker 2 (00:49:51):

Let me, I think, I think SNCC had a profound effect on the politics of Washington. Uh, and you can include Johnny Wilson, who was a member of S snake, who also became chairman of the city council and Frank Smith, who was also a member of the city council here, who he was. He's also here, Marion. Let's just look at today in the situation with Marion in particular. <laugh>, you

know, if you ask the people in the Washington post Marion and, and that, that ilk Marion is the most low life person in the world. If you go into the African American community, Marion is the best person in the world. Now let's ask, let's ask why let's ask why. When Marion had, was in, in power, Ivanhoe mentioned the business community and how we opened that up and I'll come back to that in a minute. But Marion worked with the seniors to make sure that they had those things late in life that made them comfortable.

Speaker 2 (00:51:05):

He also worked with the youth, he established the mayor's youth leadership conference. I mean, um, organization, he, he, he created the summer jobs, summer jobs program. He, he created space and I think, uh, somebody Frank Smith said he created space for, for a number of people in the African American community. He had a leadership. I mean, Ivanhoe was the, the, the, what was your title again? He were, he was the general, he was the person that ran every, he was the hatchet person. But I mean, so if you didn't wanna give me the title, I'd just the mayor. Yeah, yeah, he was. But then he brought in, uh, Elijah Rogers. We, we had, I mean, everybody admitted and we had a number of African Americans in, in all positions up and down. And everybody admitted that you had a very competent and efficient organization so that it also allowed Marion to do a number of things.

Speaker 2 (00:52:07):

Marion created a problem with the establishment there because he started saying, he started saying two or three things. One, he said, as Ivan hope said, you know, he told the wall street firms, if you're gonna send me, sell me bonds, and this city bonds, you need to send me people who look like me. And therefore, if you, I mean, so he created both he and Maynard and, and Cole created space for, for, uh, for people who, who from the African American community and the Hispanic community and women. The other thing that Marion did was all the boards and C all the boards and commissions, they had to have diversity. You had to have women. They had to have blacks. They had to have Hispanics. They had to, I mean, everybody had to participate in the, in the, in the boards and commissions and in the discussion.

Speaker 2 (00:53:06):

But where Marion started getting into trouble, I believe is when he started saying 25% equity in all development downtown had to go to the African American community that it said, now, now we're talking serious business, and now you messing with my money. And that, let me tell you from that time, the, the Washington post, and then eventually the prosecutor started saying, because they started accusing people of stealing money and he's doing this for, for his friends and so forth. And everybody who knows Marion money is not something he's interested in. He's interested in other things, but money is not, it

Speaker 4 (00:53:52):

<laugh>.

Speaker 2 (00:53:56):

So, so, so I'm saying to you, but that, but when they couldn't get him on the money issue, they started going, because let me, let me say, as he started opening up opportunities, especially when you're talking about downtown development, no, that you've now crossed the line. Now you've now crossed the line. So right now, you know, the, the, the, the discussion about Marion, I mean, besides his own personal issues, I mean, it really has camouflaged. It really is an economic discussion about who is gonna own what, and, you know, it started that way and it's mal morphed into something else, but that is the discussion that young people are gonna have to face who is gonna own what, in this country,

Speaker 13 (00:54:58):

Uh, good morning. My name's Stan Boyd. I'm also from the Washington DC area. And, but I'm glad, I'm glad that the question on Marion Barry has been answered. Um, I wanted to ask, uh, professor bond, if, um, you found a distinction in being the head of NAACP from working with SNCC, was there some transition there in your mind and how, how did that work out? It seemed like there were two very different organizations.

Speaker 3 (00:55:25):

They are two radically different organizations, but, uh, it's interesting to me, I don't know if you've been following conversations here. And some of these panels of people who said Hollis Watkins the other day said I was active, the NAACP, and then this, somebody else said, well, I'd go. These sit-ins with the NAACP. And then this and somebody else said, well, I was in the NAACP. And then this, the NAACP is the greatest incubator of civil rights, talent that the country has ever known it has, did. And does today, uh, just turn out dozens upon dozens upon hundreds and hundreds of people with some civil rights consciousness and civil rights commitment, but they are two very different organizations. The NAACP is hierarchal. It is bureaucratic, uh, in its defense. It is democratic with a small D all of the NAACP leadership is elected by the membership.

Speaker 3 (00:56:22):

Uh, we are the only civil rights organization, the NAACP, the only civil rights organization that sets aside seats on this board of directors for young people during the 11 years, when I was chairman of the NAACP, I had high school students on my board of directors and no other civil rights organization could say that, say that. And so in many ways, it's an admirable admirable organization, and there's gotta be some reason it's been around for 101 years, cuz had staying power and it had staying power cuz it has this grassroot base now in SNCC, I think we, and I include myself among the, we at times tend to denigrate the NAACP as being too slow, moving too bureaucratic, too cautious to everything. But if it hadn't been for them, it wouldn't have been any of us, uh, when we need to get outta jail. And of course they complained about this all the time.

Speaker 3 (00:57:13):

<laugh> they, they would pay the fine, they provided the lawyers. Uh, they did necessary work. So say works. So I think just the diversity of, of the African American community demanded that there'd be these multiplicity of organizations. Um, it's, it's this long dream, uh, Kwame tore, not the first to have it of this United front, but the fact that it's so difficult to get it should show us why we have these various organizations, various brands. So these are different groups and uh, you know, the human personality is infinitely adjustable. And so we can all adjust to this. And I, uh, thought I fitted into SNCC very well and had the happiest days of my life during the period I was with the student nonviolent coordinating committee and loved being with the NAACP. I'm still on the board of the NAACP and I'm proud of the service I've I've given the NAACP and hope to give more and think all of you should be members of the NAACP, naacp.org. We're modern. We can sign you up online. We do Twitter and Facebook and all those other things too.

Speaker 11 (00:58:36):

All those other things. Yeah.

Speaker 9 (00:58:40):

Yes sir. I'm Lena Jones from Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Mr. Cox, you actually started to, to touch on a question that I have in 2006, I spent a little bit of time in South Africa and I think there's some interesting parallels between there and the United States, particularly with significant political changes, you know, uh, political institutions going from majority white to majority black, but at the same time, some significant poli uh, economic inequalities remaining. And, um, I guess my question is one, you know, to what extent does electing African Americans to office matter when those significant economic, uh, disparities remain and, and also too, you

know, I often think of political officials, not as people who we elect to solve our problems, but partners in the process of political change. So what needs to be happening at the grass roots so that those who are in office, uh, who want to make some changes can actually make them without being driven out.

Speaker 2 (00:59:57):

I think for, for elected officials, one of the things that I notice in terms of the African American community, and I think that's to be them with elected officials, we tend to view elected officials as leaders, as opposed to viewing them as servants. And until we take the view that they are going to, they are instruments of our will. We are gonna have a D time difficult time because it's very, you know, when you get into office, there are a lot of cross currents that you have to deal with. And until the African American community understands that it has to go beyond just electing somebody, but also it has to go to imposing its will. Uh, then we are gonna have a difficult time. Now let me talk a bit about having, we, we, it is not a discussion of, I mean, it's important to have people in positions of power.

Speaker 2 (01:01:11):

I mean, I've come to view that power is more, I mean, I've been in both protests and power and I think power's a better position. I mean, that's my, that's my view. I mean, you know, you know, so, you know, I, you know, I'm not as opposed to one of the things and you know, one of the things that, you know, starting way back in, you know, the, the Howard crew, you know, it, it was important. We came to the realization that in, in the question of protests, you're asking those who oppress you to deal with the nature of your oppression. And that is an untenable position, unless you are prepared to move to the discussion, that makes a difference. And so I, I think that, that's why it seems to me that the discussion of power is something that we need to start grappling with and begin to talk about how we G begin to deal with it now in small ways, you know, I see when we de when I, and I I've done, I do a lot of stuff presently in business.

Speaker 2 (01:02:26):

And when I am coming to the table, as the owner of the project, it is much different than when I'm coming from any other position. People tend to listen to you. They tend to deal with you, what you, how you want to deal with issues. So I, I do think that the, the electoral position, the electoral political position does give you some modicum of being able to come to the table from a position of power and a position of ownership. We now need to figure out what it is we want to do with it. When we get it as the, the third world, what's that name of that song from a third world? What are we gonna do with love now that we found it? Okay, there we go. All right.

Speaker 1 (01:03:15):

Um, I just wanted to add a little point, you know, about Marion Barry, the lots of Marion Barry stories, Marion was in office the second year, and about a group of, uh, 300 people came to protest outside his office in the hallway, and they were upset about something. And Marion heard them singing and stuff and raising hell. And he came out of his office and sat in with them. He said, we need to do something about that mayor <laugh> you know, so, you know, there there's a, I think movement, people just have an automatic identity with protests and, you know, they feel like, no, you're right. We really need to have change here. So, uh, it, it happens. I'm sorry, my brother,

Speaker 14 (01:04:05):

Uh, yes. Thank you. That like I like called Julian to, um, to speak a little bit, you know, people talk about you not being able to take your seat, but I think it's important to talk about the issue that resulted in you being, um, challenged on your right to take your seat in, in the context of, um, African Americans, right. To speak on more than just their own immediate plate, but the whole international arena, Dubois votes and et cetera.

Speaker 3 (01:04:37):

Well, as, as you heard earlier, I was elected to a one year term in the Georgia house of representatives in election created by a legal decision that created new districts in urban Atlanta, Columbus, and maybe Savannah, but brand new districts in, in these cities and newly elected house members would serve one term one year. And then if we wanted to, we'd have to run for a two year term. So, um, and so I was to take office in January and in December Sam young, who worked for SNCC, a Tuskegee student had, was walking home from a, in downtown Tuskegee. And Sammy had been in the Navy and had lost his kidney while in the Navy. So he had to go to the bathroom more than most people do. And he tried to go to the bathroom at this white only gas station. The gas station owner shot him in the back and killed him.

Speaker 3 (01:05:32):

And the irony of this guy, who's given up his kidney and service to his country, being unable to go to the bathroom in his hometown was just too much. And a lot of latent anti-war sentiment in the NAACP burst into the open. We issued a statement, which, uh, if you heard it today, would, uh, not at all be radical or extreme, but at the time appeared to be radical and extreme the SNCC. Yeah. SNCC issued a statement. What did I say? Okay, see how easy it is, how easy it is. NAACP issued a statement against the Iraqi war or earlier on than most other organizations. And we're proud to say it was the young people in the NAACP who did it, uh, anyway, back to the main narrative. Um, so SNCC issued this anti-war statement and my colleagues to be in the legislature, objected strongly to the statement and began to make noises about my being, uh, not allowed to sit.

Speaker 3 (01:06:39):

So when I presented myself to take the oath of office with a group of other newly elected legislators, um, a challenge was issued to my seating. They convened a committee of the whole in the house and by a vote of, I think 185 to 12, uh, voted to deny me my seat to declare my seat vacant, to throw me out and to call a new election. And I ran in that new election and I won this seat again and they threw me out again. Uh, by that time, um, I had made up a mind to file a lawsuit and, um, I filed a suit in federal court and because we invoked these constitutional issues, we, uh, convened a three judge, uh, court. And the two judges appointed by president Kennedy voted against me and the one appointed by president Eisenhower voted for me <laugh> and, uh, we appealed that to the United States Supreme court, uh, where I'd never been before, but I went to see this argument and I was defended by Howard Moore, who I don't think is here in the room is Howard here. Uh, but he's here at the, at the conference, uh, who became my brother-in-law and by Victor Reitz and Leonard boudin, who had two wonderful lawyers. And I was sitting in the front row of the spectator section with the barn front of us, and then the lawyers are here and, um, sitting next to Victor Reitz who is representing, uh, his firm is representing me. And, um, I live and breathe Bernard Ette. <laugh>

Speaker 3 (01:08:18):

So glad to see you brother. Anyway, uh, the, uh, I was listening to the lawyers and the J and the justices talked to each other and Arthur Bolton, the attorney general of Georgia was making the argument that I should be thrown out. And he was making some argument that I should be thrown out the legislature and Byron white justice, white wizard, white said to him, he said, is this all you have? <laugh> he said, he said, you've come all this way. And that's all you have. And I hunched Robert Benowitz. I said, we're winning. Are we <laugh>? He said, yes, you are. And a few weeks later, by nine to nothing, they, uh, ruled that Georgia was wrong. And I was right. And I took my seat. Now, Mike is right. This is an important free speech question because, uh, you know, I was an elected official. I had a right to, uh, say what I wanted to say about any these populations. In fact, I had a compulsion to say these kinds of things. So my constituents would be better informed. And, um, it was a, an important victory for free speech rights. And I think an important shot in the arm for anti-war people because, uh, it, I think it helped push the needle a great deal. I was happy to be a part of it. Thank you for asking the question. <laugh>

Speaker 1 (01:09:48):

We're coming, we're coming. Lauren, Lauren, you know, we love you.

Speaker 15 (01:09:55):

<laugh>

Speaker 16 (01:09:58):

Thank you. I'm Lauren CRE love, and I am a founder of the Pacifica station in Washington, DC. I wanted to say how important Mary and Barry was to the saving of that radio station, which I think was, and maybe still is one of the most important radio stations in the country maybe. And, uh, we were, we were, uh, about to die. We had absolutely no money. We had put that station on the air by ourselves, basically with little help from the Pacifica foundation. And Marion Barry gave us a \$250,000 Cedar grant, which I organized myself and hounded him for.

Speaker 16 (01:10:44):

I would go, I would find wherever Marion was. And I would go and say, Marion, we have to have that Cedar grant. We have to have it. And to the point that, well, when Marion was early on the mayor, he was not the greatest public speaker he gave at the, uh, his prayer first prayer breakfast. He gave a good speech. And so I said, well, I'm not gonna say anything to Marion about Cita today. I'm just gonna tell him how good his speech was. And so I walked up to shake his hand and he said, Lauren, I don't wanna hear anything about Cedar <laugh>, but I said, Marion, no, but we got that grant. And it really saved that radio station. I also wanna say that, um, SNCC people went to Chicago and helped Harold Washington get elected. There were all kind of SNCC people in Chicago coming from DC, helping Harold get elected. And then the final thing I wanna say is that everybody who was theirs li Inn's life was changed. I see Judy, I see Florence. I see all of you guys, our lives were totally changed by SNCC. We, we said SNCC was a state of mind. It was not an organization. And so all of our lives were totally changed. We have done different things. The big cats are up there, but all us little cats out here, we had our lives change too

Speaker 17 (01:12:27):

Guy right here.

Speaker 12 (01:12:30):

I'm Stu house. Um, happy to yield to you, Lauren <laugh>, uh, I just wanted to make the connection that, uh, was started up here about mayors and so on. After I left, uh, Alabama and Selma, I went up to, uh, back to my home in Detroit and, um, eventually worked for John Conyers, uh, working with Rosa parks in the same office. Um, and from there, uh, worked with, um, uh, some people who were, um, interested in new elections. I worked on the campaign of the first, um, black woman elected citywide in Detroit Irma Henderson as her assistant campaign manager under Bob miler, who was a genius from Alabama who had been a sharecropper and then a lawyer in Detroit. And he ran John Conner's first campaign. Um, and then, um, uh, after Irma's successful campaign, I worked on Coleman Young's campaign as one of the early organizers for him working with youth and helped him get elected.

Speaker 12 (01:13:41):

Um, did, um, and John also helped in the Chicago campaign for that, that campaign. I know you worked with Andy young and his mayoral campaign and subsequently a number of other elected offices in Michigan and, and elsewhere. But, um, I guess I want to echo that a lot of us who were organizers did go on did help elect a number of mayors and, and, uh, state, uh, representatives and state senators and so on. And I eventually actually worked for the state Senate in Michigan, but, um, we, we did make an impact that, that moved on into, toward 84, which is what the subject of this, uh, this session is. And thank you, LAN cause it seems to me, you were correct.

Speaker 4 (01:14:32):

<laugh>

Speaker 18 (01:14:43):

Good morning. My name is Charmaine McKissick Melton, the youngest of Floyd McKissick children. And I now live in soul city, North Carolina. I didn't expect that to get applause, but I would assume most people in this room actually remember my older sisters Joycelyn and Andre. Okay. At any rate, my question is really, I wanted you to speak specifically to the younger people in the room to talk about the difference in the organizations and the economic structure. Of course you can tell it must be Floyds door, black empowerment, uh, the economic structure of the various organizations and how that related to the internal politics of the organizations, as well as external political power.

Speaker 1 (01:15:23):

That's a lot of

Speaker 4 (01:15:24):

Question <inaudible> so I have no

Speaker 1 (01:15:27):

Question. Well, I don't know about that. That's a lot of question. Um, I think you've heard a lot about SNCC and this, you know, I was an employee of SNCC. Can I say that no, SNCC didn't really have employees <laugh>, you know, but I was a field secretary. I got, I was into the direct action group, which meant that I got paid when I wasn't in jail. When I was in jail, they thought that I didn't need money because the state was feeding me. SNCC had the audacity, I got paid \$10 a week and my take home pay was \$9 67 cents. You know, they had the audacity to take out with holdings for social security. I think it was, I mean, it was, it was amazing. And also in SNCC, um, if you were married and had children, you got paid more, you know, um, that was S Nick's view of things.

Speaker 1 (01:16:14):

And actually, um, Julie, um, Herman, um, Posan talked about it in her workshop, you know, what she got paid in New York office and because she had kids, they paid her a little bit more, you know? And, um, so the economics of SNCC really was about the views of the organizers because SNCC was an organized zero run organization, you know? Um, and our interests were more about our projects. I'm not sure, uh, that, you know, there was a period of time when I used to think that the Piper paid the tune or you had the gold rule. So if you got money, you know, from people who were very influential, they sometimes impacted on your policies. I know that when we came out with our statement about the Palestinians, you know, a lot of our Jewish supporters sort of went away from us because they thought that, you know, we shouldn't be doing that well, you know, that was what we believed in, you know? And, um, and in time I think that we've proven ourselves to be right about it, you know? Um, so there you go.

Speaker 1 (01:17:27):

When I think about core, I think about two organizations really. I mean, I think the Southern core, which is more like us and Northern core were totally different. Um, the flukey, Matt FARs and, uh, the Rudy Dunbar and the Dave Denniss, you know, um, James, you know, they were just like us, you know, they lived in the community, they cheered what they had with the community. Uh, they walked around with looking just like everybody else and they weren't making any money. I, in the New York core office, I think it was more structure, more bureaucracy, but core came from radical roots. I mean, so it was always there, but there was no doubt that the McKissick and, um, the farmers had a simpatico with us that we had with them, you know, king, you know, Martin king is, is a person that history, I think has yet to understand, you know, we had our criticisms, but the reality was king bought the cameras.

Speaker 1 (01:18:30):

He bought the attention, you know, and we could sometimes organize under that space, but we were organizers and not mobilizers, you know, and that was a unique difference that doesn't may not answer the question about economics, but I think what your mission is sort of defines how economics impacts you. If you have a big corporate organization with people making big corporate money with maybe not corporate money, but nonprofit money, you know, um, you have to support that. And SN that was an issue cause we weren't paying anybody any money anyway. So, uh, you know, and any money we had, you know, went into phone bills, cars, you know, food, you know, and whatnot. So I don't know if that answers your question in Julian, you know, Corland so I think that's the best we can do. I saw a hand, just a second to go there's

Speaker 8 (01:19:19):

Right here,

Speaker 1 (01:19:20):

Right here. Oh, I'm sorry. And then there's one in the back. Okay.

Speaker 19 (01:19:24):

Let me take us to a different level. I I've wondered how much the whole civil rights movement had on Johnson and the efforts of the war on poverty and the community organizing that went on in a lot of the projects of the war on poverty. Wonder if you talk about that connection?

Speaker 1 (01:19:42):

Well, Frank Smith should be here or Charlie Bannerman or someone, you know, Charlie crossing along with us, but, you know, I don't know. I mean, the reality is a lot of organizers from the movement went into the war on poverty because they saw it as an extension of what they were doing. Um, of course, once you get in it, there are bureaucracies and rules and all kinds of things, which drive people crazy, you know? Uh, CDGM, you know, is a great example in Mississippi, you know, of, uh, um, I don't even like the term, the war on poverty, cuz that's what it sounds like. You know, they're, they're beating up the poor folks, but um, you know, we, but you know, I just think that people saw it as an extension. I mean, some went moving into politics, you know, I believe that what keeps people going is that they have a community around them that reinforces their value systems and what their original mission was about. And therefore they can withstand things. I mean, Corland, you know, I thought made a great statement when he says that, you know, you're elected officials, aren't your leaders, but they're your servants. And I think that all of these programs are designed to provide, you know, resources to people and they need to be run by those people, you know, because then they have a hand in saying how these decisions get made and how they're impacted by it. I don't know if that answers your question.

Speaker 20 (01:21:05):

Did I just make talked about the family of SNCC and they

Speaker 18 (01:21:23):

Talked about the celebrities in SNCC. Um, somebody said, if you were significant in SNCC, you know, we wanna interview you. Well, SNCC was made up a lot of insignificant people. And let me just say, I worked in New York and people talk a lot of things about Jim foreman too, but what a teacher, what a man who loved us so much and treated us with respect. I was a 21 year old secretary and feather said, we can use you. And I typed the papers and the, the press releases. And we ran the mimeograph machine and we, and we did all those things. And because I had a job and SNCC people had no money, we had an underground railroad. So when Shay and people came to New York, broke from the south, there were those of us who they stayed in our houses. And when I talked to you about when people talked today about black men, those black men in SNCC took care of us, loved us.

Speaker 18 (01:22:33):

And we were, we just wanted to do something to help. But what I loved about Jim and feather, it didn't matter whether you were important. They would say there was something for you to do. And they gave me something to do that changed my life. Cuz I wasn't in college. I wasn't a college girl. Then I came out of the projects, but I, they told me use my skill. And later when I was able to go to college and to graduate school, to become a journalist under journalist named Jim Aaronson, who was my professor, who was at the guardian, who liked my papers and said, you can be a journalist because nobody told us that we could do those things. But Jim said, I could. So as a journalist in quote, the mainstream press SNCC continues to influence me and how I write and how I think and how I teach. So to all of you, I give my thanks, but I come here today and I look at names on name tags, and maybe they're not the famous people, but I remember seeing those names. And I remember those people calling the office and, and I just wanted to say that SNCC saved a lot of our lives and kept us from being damn fools

Speaker 4 (01:23:44):

<laugh>

Speaker 18 (01:23:46):

And now they has turned us into all fools who don't know enough that we just don't accept that the struggle is over, that we all are doing different things, but I remember they would say here comes my little lumping proletariat.

Speaker 18 (01:24:04):

And so the influence continues and I just wanted to save Featherstone's name and just put it in the air and J Payne's name just to put it in the air. And that when these young people today, I hear a lot of them seem to be looking for somebody to tell 'em what to do, just do what you can do, where you can do it. When that sister got up and said that they needed septic tanks, they were in Alabama. I thought back in the day that would've been the call for somebody to say, okay, we going to Alabama, how many lawyers we got? How many people we got, how many, and that would be the struggle. So don't wait for somebody to tell you, you read it in the paper and it needs to happen. And I thank Ralph Featherstone and Jim foreman and may Jackson for changing my life and for giving me the depth to be a journalist, I think with some substance. Thank you.

Speaker 2 (01:25:06):

I, I wanna, I want to say two things about, um, part of what you just said, part of what Danny lines and, and, and, uh, Julian talked about Julian. Danny said that, you know, SNCC, uh, Jim foreman told him he should be the photographer. And then Julian got up and talked about the, the communications department. I smiled because I mean, that's something we made up and, and, but it's important. It's important because for young people, especially I tell 'em when they talk about what's to be done and all that, you know, you know, what the tools are, the tools are imagination, time and energy. I mean, and Jim foreman had the imagination to talk about. I mean, just in the small thing about, you know, yeah, oh, you are the photographer and the communications department. I mean, you know, 20 something, just making stuff up, but making it a reality in terms of where you wanted to go.

Speaker 2 (01:26:14):

The other point about Jim foreman, as we all know, is that when he called the meeting to Atlanta, you would see him in his overall sweeping the floor. He wanted to make a point to you that there was no role or responsibility that you should not be willing to do. And finally, Featherstone who was my roommate and, you know, worked in Lowes county and was, I mean, absolutely standup brother, you know, um, you know, I, I think that, as you said, putting his name in the air, there's not too much that can be done of that. Cause that brother was a very, very standup brother.

Speaker 7 (01:27:03):

You know? Uh, my name is Owen Brooks and I went to Mississippi 45 years ago and, uh, is the mic working and I still live in Mississippi. And you talk about sneaking having an impact on some of us. Well, it most certainly had a great impact on my life because I worked with SNCC and for Nick, for Nick in Boston, when we organized the friend and then with SNCC in the Mississippi Delta. And I want to, I, I think we need to remember where we have come when I went to the Delta, Mississippi was and continues to be unfortunately to lowest per capita income of any state in the United States. When I went there, there were no black elected officials except in a little community called Mount Bayou, Mississippi. And the reason there were black elected officials there because it was an all black town.

Speaker 7 (01:28:09):

Now it took a great deal of effort just to elect 34 black people to public office in 1967, the first, since reconstruction and I traveled across the country to raise money in Boston and New York and in Chicago. And I went to see Dick Hatcher and we raised money for black elected black candidates in 1967, which only resulted in 34. But you know, look at it today. You may not say we have made much progress and in some areas we have not, but we have more black elected officials in Mississippi today than they are in any other state in the United States. And I think who can you credit for that will most certainly sneak laid the base and everybody didn't leave. And we were able to move off of the base that SNCC created to where we are now. Now, to be very honest, we are still the poorest state in the United States.

Speaker 7 (01:29:16):

So what does that mean? That political power alone doesn't get it, does it even with the large numbers of elected officials, we have no economic power to match it. So there is much to do. And, uh, as I close, you know, I worked with ed for years, that's ground right there. We stayed in the Delta for a number of years. And I want to say to you, you know, that vision is important and it may not feed the hungry belly, but most certainly it lights the way. And SNCC had vision. SNCC had vision brought vision to the state of Mississippi that has resulted in its ability to move off of the bottom rung of the ladder in this country. There is much more to do and I won't take anymore of your time. Thank you

Speaker 11 (01:30:18):

To younger. What's Kathleen's a younger girl, the young woman behind the, the one behind the young lady, the young lady that for

Speaker 16 (01:30:31):

Thank you. Good morning. My name is Lauren VK and I'm, uh, from Atlanta. And I've been working with the young people's project on the quality education as a constitutional right initiative. And I was wondering one of my frustrations is that, um, I, I think we find ourselves in a, in a defensive posture a lot. And I was wondering if you guys can speak to, you know, how to move to a more offensive posture. So pushing an agenda forward as opposed to, you know, being against cuts or against this and that. Thank you.

Speaker 1 (01:31:03):

Well, I think you guys are doing a great job, you know, uh, the young people's project, you know, you got some great leadership in that organization. Um, you know, it's, it's what you decide, you know, I mean, I think that we can make all kinds of suggestions to you and stuff, but the reality is that when we were young, you know, we didn't pay a lot of attention to what the old senior adults had to say, because usually they told us we couldn't do it, you know, and it doesn't work, you know, it's been tried, you know, you're crazy, you know? And so we went up and did it anyway, you know, and said, oh, well, it worked, you know? So, um, you know, I think that you find your strength from within. And if you think that maybe you're too defensive about things, then you should just take on something that's more proactive, you know, uh, that you

wanna support. I mean, it may not sound like the right kind of answer, but I think that, you know, you guys are gonna lead us now. I've been waiting for someone to knock on my door and ask me if I'm a registered voter <laugh>, you know, uh, you know, cause, uh, you know, that's, that's, that's the heart of it. So anyway, we, we have about a minute to go as a wrap up. I see Larry Rubin

Speaker 21 (01:32:15):

Of Larry Rubin, as you said, uh, somebody was said before, when you see something that needs to be done, the answer is to do it. When the three civil rights workers who were killed, came from Oxford, uh, to check out the Mount Zion church. The first thing they did was they stopped at a family named steel in Nashoba county, that family owned land then, and now there's on their land, a building that was supposed to be a community center for Nashoba county youth. Uh, for one reason or another was never used. It's falling apart. John Steele, who owns that building wants to rebuild it as a community center for the youth of Nashoba county, Philadelphia and surrounding areas, MacArthur cotton. I don't know if he's here who was a, a trained carpenter.

Speaker 1 (01:33:15):

You need to move on. Larry,

Speaker 21 (01:33:18):

Uh, wants to work with youth to rebuild this building if anybody's interested. And I, and I work for the carpenter's union. If anybody's interested in working with the youth of Nashoba county to train him in a trade, rebuilding this building, turning this building into a vocational education center, see me.

Speaker 1 (01:33:39):

All right, there you go. Um, folks we're, we're sort of come to the end of our time. I want to thank Emily for being such a perfect host and passing the mic around to everybody. So we give her a hand.