

Dinner Keynote - Danny Glover  
SNCC 50th Anniversary Conference  
Shaw University, Raleigh NC, April 2010  
Transcript Video Recording #35  
(Raw, unedited, no annotation)

Speaker 1

(00:17):

Thank you, sir. First of all, let me just say that we've had a very rich week. We wanna thank you for your patience. If you've enjoyed the past three days by the executive team, who's planned to show your love with the round of applause for them. We realize that some of us have been kind of forceful and I hope you can appreciate why we had to be. So I love you. Nevertheless. Now let me bring on to the podium. One of the persons who's responsible for pulling us together this evening, he's done a phenomenal job with his planning committee to make this happen. As all of you are aware, he is the second. Uh, He's also now residing in sink, Paul, Minnesota, by way of M Ohio show your love stick for the honorable Chuck MACDU. Thank you very much. I wanna first thank, uh, the volunteers and the help that has, uh, for the past several days been preparing these magnificent dentists. Thank you. They were saying they can't hear me. Can you hear me now? Tough NUS. Uh, Now the speaker for this evening Was, uh, the star of, of, of, uh, a movie first Nick movie, that Phil Robinson, who many of you met last night directed. And, uh, um,

Speaker 1 (02:21):

And Danny was the star of that movie. I remember when, uh, he flew in from Africa. We filmed in North Carolina at Wilmington, and I remember when we greeted each other and I, you know, said, hi, good to meet you. He said, I know who you are. He said, how do you mean know who I am? And, uh, he said he used to be one of the officers in the San Francisco Friends of SNIC groups. One of our up south groups when he was in college. I said, well, go ahead. One of a natural QD, natural brother here among, and, and we had taken many, we had taken 10 years nearly from the time we started trying to get freedom song. Um, the, the script was finished and trying to get it Shown and screened. And, uh, we, uh, just couldn't get it done. And the final push was by Danny pushing the people who has made other movies for saying he wanted to work on this movie on freedom song. And he would not be all that willing to work on other stuff unless they did freedom song. And we got it done there quickly.

Speaker 1 (04:05):

And the, the other thing that I'm, I, when I see him, I'm reminded in fact of this, of the legacy of struggle that we have been part and that he is a part of. I remember when years ago, when we first asked Valon to work with us, he said he had a, a duty to do that. Cause he had been mentored by Paul Rose And he did mentor Danny Gloveman. And, and so it was important that the people in the arts Stood up and identified and involved themselves in the struggle and Danny came and he very deeply involved himself in the struggle. Uh, you, you may have seen him embracing several of the people from the young people's project, uh, Tyler, Moses, uh, And Bob and, and Janet Moses. Uh, because right after that, after shortly after freedom song, he has been a, a, a constant involvement with the young people's project and with the algebra project know, and in, in, in using his name, his title, his, his, uh, fame to push things

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that programs that are helpful to the black and Hispanic community, uh, a true warrior and a brother in the struggle. Ladies and gentlemen, I give you Danny,

Speaker 1 (06:31): Let

me, uh,

(06:34):

First get these butterflies out of my, on back here. <laugh> and, and know, in certain terms, there had a lot of butterflies flying around in my stomach right now, and I'm not gonna use the excuse that I've been fighting. Some kind of cough over the last couple of weeks, but let me say the be here and to be here with you at this heroic, this historic heroic moment is, is beyond, beyond anything that I can express in words. In fact, I, I, I got my, my tablet for my own autographs, severe my own autograph book right here for people to autograph. Give me their autographs, cuz here, I'm here standing with of course the lack of Chuck MC do the tracks, Bob and Janice Moses Julian bond here and Bob Zelner and Vincent Vincent Harding, Margaret

Speaker 1 (07:48):

Prescot and others. And so many others to begin to name a few. You know, I came over, I, I know I came on the plane this morning with Dick Gravery and if you ever been on the plane with Dick Gregory, <laugh> give him 40 minutes and he makes it seem like you've been with him all day and, and, and it, but the ride was an extraordinary, as Dick has always had some sort of view in which he's able to orchestrate what he believes is going to happen in the future. And certainly it, it, it certainly didn't inspire my, my comments today with you, but it certainly like my heart in, in a, in a great way, 50 years of celebration. And now I'm going to, to take my notes. I realized that when I wrote the notes, I had my glasses on <laugh> and I didn't have my now. So I may kind of like try to figure out, well, don't go get these glasses. I'll be blind. Then if you try to get some other glasses, but then 50 years in celebration, A half century As we <affirmative> Convene here, we've already a decade into the 21st century

Speaker 1 (09:23):

Here to share our experiences, our stories and memories while preparing our sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters. If it's some of us great-grandchildren for the next stage, in the struggle, In the cases, The Events that they will encounter, certainly as citizens Will position them in a different way than those of us. Those of you were positioned in myself position in the 20th century. Let me say, first of all, that that is a young high school student. There are various reasons why I'm here, standing here today,

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Speaker 1

Speaker 1 (10:17):

But there's a young high school student watching and following the movement of the student nonviolent coordinating committee, as they not only expressed the desires of future, their generation, future generation, they articulated my own Rebell. So I'm not here essentially, even though in 1960, I was 13 years old. I'm not here essentially from the standpoint of someone who experienced those things directly, but lived them vicariously through your actions over that. So I want to thank you, first of all, cuz I'm not standing here. Had I, not in some way ingratiated and immersed myself in the stories that I saw in the events that I saw. And in fact, when I came to San Francisco state in the fall of 1966 ringer, 67, it was member of the student nonviolent coordinating committee who had migrated back to school after B on the various move, in the movement who were my inspiration and also taught us the techniques of organizing perhaps the best organizers ever created where student nonviolent court committee.

(11:46):

So as we organized the strike of 1968 for an ethnic studies program, and as we mobilized the community behind, behind those efforts, it was the lessons that were brought to us from SCC members that allowed that success. The success of that strike the formation of the ethnic studies program at San Francisco state university to 40 years ago. It was that effort, those lessons that were brought to us, how to organize on campus, how to bring that to the community and mobilize community by effort. So there's so much to so much to think and think about as I make my remarks. And however, the level of emotionality of it, those remarks are theses. They're true. So when Chuck said that I was, I was, uh, uh, instrumental in getting freedom song done. It was a number of people instrumental, but I saw that if I had the opportunity, once I read that script, if I had the opportunity to do that's story, I don't care hella high water. I was gonna do that story. And certainly, you know, with, with, with, with the work, the work itself, in some sense is a testimony to the impact that the student non violent coordinator committee had on and on me.

Speaker 1 (13:13):

So as we, the position we counted as citizens and I, I used the framework of citizens, especially as we think about citizens, trees, the idea of the citizen from the Greek and the Roman and empires on through the periods of the enlighting period and the, the three revolutions that transformed the world and put us in the condition in the state. We are now the American revolution, 76, 76, the French revolution, 1789 and the Haitian revolution, 1791, those three revolution. It's at the groundwork in establishing the present conditions, which we, the present systems, which govern our world governing what has happened to the planet. In fact, just a note that in 1800 was the first year, there were one

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Speaker 1

thing recorded population of 1 billion people on the planet. Now we have 210 years later, six over 6 billion people.

That's not to say anything about population growth, et cetera, et cetera.

Speaker 1 (14:29):

And the impact that has on resources and everything else, but is to note that in extraordinary period happened in the last hundred years that brought and reinforced power in the empires of that time in it quest for expansion in his quest to acquire resources, et cetera, all of those things have happened in a short period of time, in a short period of time, given the history of humankind, a very, very short period of time. So as we look at this idea of citizen at this particular point in time, it certainly it has has various meetings at, at, at it wasn't this period of time in history, but it takes on the different significance now because as we usher these new generation into the struggles of the past, knowing that they're, they are part of a continuum, that it is important to understand the role that they play, not simply as citizens of a particular nation, but citizens who are world citizens as well.

Speaker 1 (15:34):

There's another understanding that they have to embrace that the struggles and the techniques and the ways in which we went about the course of action may be reside. But while we understand the history and see the perceived history to be is going to be quite different than what we've experienced quite down, we put our hands down for that and understand that very clearly. So this conf this idea of 50 years, this idea of taking on now, the new posture of how we approach this situation is uniquely

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important in reading, in reading Dr. King's last book, where do we go from here community at chaos written more than 43 years ago. He states in not quote. He says with Selma and the voting rights act 19 65, 1 phase of development in the civil rights revolution had come to an end, a new phase open for new, uh, for, for new observers, Fu fuel. The new phase opened fuel servers realized it or were prepared for its implications.

Speaker 1 (17:05):

The practical caution I go on to, to quote him of change for the nation up to that point had been cheap. Yeah, the limited reforms have been obtained at bargain prices. There are no expenses, no taxes are required for Negroes to share lunch counters, libraries, parks, hotels, and other facilities, even new significant changes involved in voter registration required neither large monetary nor psychological sacrifices, spectacular. And tural events that the dramatized, the demand created an erroneous impression that a heavy burden had been involved, quote the real cause lie ahead. And I would think, and what to point out that the real cost for us and those young people that we mentor lies ahead of us right now, where do we go community a chaos at this time? How do they play in a central role as citizens as they now become the architect of the rescue?

Speaker 1 (18:27):

They become the architect as finding our history. As Paul Robson said, each generation makes his own history. They will make our words history, the next stage of history. And it's happening right here among us. As I see many young faces in the, in the crown, I see common Perez here who just assumed the responsibility as the chairman of president ahead of the gathering for justice. I see Moses. I see, I see over Moses with young people's young people's project and so on and so on. So we see these faces here among us today, who will now articulate the response to the work that we need you to do in this year, the 21st century and the 21st century for us is a century right now in turmoil. Not only do we understand that we've exists now in a failed paradigm, a system that has only failed us, but has also failed the mother earth that planted, which we depend upon so much in order to regenerate and to maintain human life and other species about it has only failed us.

Speaker 1 (19:49):

So the question become in this situation, what do we do? What do we do is those veterans of the struggle? What do we do as those who are now become an assumed amount of leadership? What do we do now in the course of this period of time? Certainly as we look at these situations from climate change, as we look at the situations with, with respect to food security, and we look at the situations with respect to poverty in this, when I was born 63 years ago, there were 2.5 billion people on the entire planet. Now there's 2.5 billion people living on less than \$2 a day, 1 billion people near star. They lemme know one, what do, how do we assume our role as world citizens within that context is a very, very important for us to understand how do we now usher this new generation into the use of their

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imagination in the extraordinary ways beyond perhaps we knew at that time, that becomes part of our, our, our responsibility as we stand here, as we sit here and celebrate this moment, as I said, we have the challenges that ahead of us.

Speaker 1 (21:08):

And of course the cast, the cast of players will change again and again, the changes will happen in respect to what do we do about the issues around women and the furthering of the rights of women in this society. And then in the world, I have to say that the work of Margaret, of, of, of Margaret Prescott and others who have been a part of the women's global strikes force have been essential in identifying on the ground, the kind of needs of women. What do we do about an economy? As I said, that that has failed us, that one, that in which we now talk about not only job creation, but also we are talking about sustainability in terms of the right to exist. Yes. The idea of the rights to exist, come along with the history of the Magna Carta in this enlightening period.

Speaker 1 (22:08):

But this idea, the right to exist exists itself is in question right now, what do we, how do we handle and how do we progress in a way in which we address those particularly issues. As we look at now, look at a situation where the job market itself, we've had a recovery with the job market. That's not of it from this quote, unquote recession, capital has recorded from this has assumes. It has now recovered from this recession. Now, where do we, where do we begin to look at the institutions that now that, uh, the, the fixtures which have caused the issue caused problem, and now find their way of now even, and not even mitigating the most basic needs for people here. When I had was in,

Speaker 1 (23:02):

When I had the opportunity to visit workers in Brooklyn, Ohio, come on, men and women, mainly immigrant womens, 400 of them who were with the scene, the closure of their factory, yes, their factory, which made Google was suits higher suits, \$8,800 a suit. This felt that its profit profit margin wasn't sufficient enough that it had to find now to close that shop, lay off these 400 people who not only provided resources for their family in the, in the community, which extended, but the extended family, because most of these women and men sent back back money to their whole country. So here we are in a situation where a company itself hasn't set a mass profit. It plans to expand its presence, marketing presence in the us. But at the same time, they want to pay, take jobs, which they pay \$12 an hour, but you're not going to Rob the bank with \$12 an hour.

Speaker 1 (24:21):

You're not gonna buy the things that you really need with \$12 an take those jobs now export those jobs to cheaper markets, to cheaper wages for cheaper wages. And now deny these people, the right simply to exist simply to put food on their table, simply to grow and to have, and continue to have a prosper

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community where we at, as we signal out these, these issues where we at it turns if we watch on campuses after campuses, many campuses in this country where mayor young, young students, young students are organizing anti sweatshop campaigns, organizing those campaigns on the basis around justice, organizing those campaigns in the same spirit that you organized the campaign 50 years ago to stop and end desegregation a segregation. So where are we at in supporting those efforts? Where are we at? Also, as we look at the issue issues around climate change and immigration for the immigration African Americans need to be at the front line on the front, front on the front is just adjusting immigration.

Speaker 1 (25:40):

They need to be there. They need to have their voices heard all along de generational spectrum. They need to, their voice is heard in Bolivia next week. There's a conference, a climate conference. The people summit the people side climate conference. And this is in order to, to look at climate change and the effect that it has on people, not the fact that it has on large industrial, industrial, uh, uh, multinational corporations. And not the fact, not in some way to have some sort of debt, some sort of other ranger, what is the climate debt to those developing countries? What is the climate debt to those countries who are now at the ver some of them of not being existing. In fact, right now, as we sit here, there are countries and islands in certain places in the world when they're not simply simply looking at and looking at the situation about how do we reverse the trend.

Speaker 1 (26:45):

They're trying to find ways about how they evacuate, trying to find evacuate, because it's almost a dumb deal that those islands won't be there. Some countries will benefit by climate change. Some of those countries that benefit by climate change us, some of the countries that are the climate change deniers at the same time. So we, where do we stand in that, in that new relationship to there, the president oblivious called the conference and had called on people to discuss these issues, discuss how we men mean. What do we mean by this whole idea of dealing with, uh, understanding the dynamics of the climate change? We look at our beloved Haiti, Haiti, which has been the source and inspiration for liberation, for people of African descent, since it, and supposedly unachievable more than 10, 200 years ago, it was the inspiration for the changes that happened in the struggles that happened in Latin America, providing them on Boulevard with resources in 1811. It was the inspiration for so many. It was inspiration. Frederick Douglas said at the 19 18 90 threes world in Chicago, we owe so much to the Haitian people. We still have a debt to the Haitian people.

Speaker 1 (28:16):

We still have a debt to the Haitian people. It's not simply in the form of giving donations. It's also simp play in the form of how do we become citizens and who will be able to keep our watch for eye on the distribution of resources and what the Haiti, the new Haiti will look like as it moves on, we have a role

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SNCC 50th Anniversary Conference  
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we must play that is essential for us to play in that action, to make sure that the Haitian people retain their sovereignty that gave themselves us at the table. When decisions are being made about what that country's going, look at those important besides us having to do the things that we have to do here, we have to do here. We have to be involved as citizens continually, not only for the election of the dog catch up, but the election of the next president, the election of those who represent us, we have to be involved as citizen in the same situation.

Speaker 1 (29:16):

We have to apply that to how we see our relationship in this world, Dr. King talked about a world house. We are a part of that world house. It went inseparable from that world house. It becomes our responsibility to teach our children, to teach those leaders that they have to sit down at the table. If capital has gone global, then labor has to go global. If capital is gone global, then we have to have, we have to have global, right for workers around here so that we do not find ourselves in a situation of low as is that we need to do this only a bridge, a bridge to the work that you've done thus far. This is a bridge is part of this continuum. It part of this extraordinary theme that has happened. We are the moral center. African-American have been the moral center of what is happening in this country.

Speaker 1 (30:18):

The mere of fact, that slavery has been the acceptable moment, inseparable issue from this country's history. So we have to find our ways to insert ourselves the discussion. Now more than ever, we have to be there. We have to be there because the world depends on that. As we sit here among us, I understand that there will, clothes are only spoils expect about 700 people and 15 people, 1500 people showing showed up. So that's a Testament that we are still in have in my mind, in our hearts, that the work that we've done should not be done in Maine. The work that's been done, the work that is done, the continuation of the work with education, the algebra project gathering the work around internationalism building coalition building that still has to happen. It has to happen now more than ever.

And I'm sure I'm sure that Mr.

Speaker 1 (31:14):

Bellon, I don't know. He had probably told you the story about a Philip. Blando going to the white house to meet frankly, Delaware Roosevelt and Frank Deborah Roosevelt telling him that my wife tells me Eleanor Roosevelt, pat, the greatest first lady ever telling, telling me that you have these great ideas, how we can change this country. And the president says, well, you gonna have to find to way to make me do it. We gotta find a way to make our president do it. We gotta find a way to make America do it. We gotta build the, kinda do the kinda work, the necessary work



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Speaker 1 (31:58):

To understand the part of our history that is so much continuous. We know that the, the funny, the funny thing, Jeremy Rifkin wrote a book called the in the work. And he looks at the situation of black labor and he makes this profound of this, this profound statement in his book. He said that it was not the ation proclamation that freed African Americans. He was the invent, you know, the cotton picking machine in 1944, they freed African American because 5 million over the next generation, 5 million in African Americans left the land were freed from the land for the first time. And now we're moving into the urban areas that had become the SES pool in our country. That if you look at it that a hundred percent of cotton in 1944 was picked by hair. By 19 seven, the a hundred percent of cotton was picked by machine displacing African Americans.

Speaker 1 (32:57):

So in that sense, in this journey, which brought us to our situation that has bothered us to the place where we are in this journey, there must be more, we have to extract more from ourselves. We have to find ways to, to link those inter generating those intergenerational links to link those generations. As I was linked to the movement through stick is obviously we have to find ways we have to continue our work. If we leave here, we leave here with the commitment to do that work. When we stand up and we leave here, we know that we continue to be the breed and must be the bridge for this struggle and understanding that this struggle is of service of citizenship and service of citizenship and service. Thank you. I was, I was The, uh,

Speaker 2 (34:50):

I

Speaker 1 (34:50):

Was looking for Alice.

Speaker 2 (35:02):

Oh,

Speaker 1 (35:04):

Freedom.

Speaker 2 (35:07):

Oh, freedom. Oh, And.