Julian Bond Oral History Project
"The Making of Julian Bond, 1960-68"

Interview with David Dennis

Special Collections Division
Bender University Library
American University
Washington, D.C.

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PREFACE

This interview is part of an oral history project entitled, "The Making of Julian Bond, 1960-1968." Unless otherwise indicated, the interviewer is Gregg Ivers, Professor of Government and Director, Julian Bond Oral History Project, American University.

The reader is encouraged to remember that this transcript is a near-verbatim transcription of a recorded interview. The transcript has been edited for minor changes in grammar, clarity and style. No alteration has been made to the conversation that took place.

Notes, where and when appropriate, have been added in [brackets] to clarify people, places, locations and context for the reader. Mr. Dennis reviewed the transcript for accuracy.

Biographical Note for David Dennis

David Dennis (b. 1940) entered the civil rights movement while a student at Dillard University in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1960. He joined the student movement there, participating in sit ins and other student-led protests, and then joined the local branch of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). In 1961, Mr. Dennis participated in the Freedom Rides and spent time in Parchman Penitentiary in Mississippi. He then moved to Mississippi to assist with voter registration work and became a key strategist, helping to form the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO). Mr. Dennis later became a key organizer of Freedom Summer in 1964. After leaving the day-to-day civil rights movement, Mr. Dennis attended law school and returned to Louisiana to practice law. In 1992, he joined with his Mississippi Summer mentor and friend Bob Moses to become the executive director of the Southern Initiative Algebra Project.

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David Dennis, Sr. Interview (02-JBOHP)
August 6th, 2018
Summerville, S.C.

Lead Interviewer: Gregg Ivers
Secondary Interviewer: Kevin Alexander Gray
Videographer: Gracie Brett
Production Assistants: Audra Gale, Colleen Vivaldi

Code: Gregg Ivers [GI] Kevin Alexander Gray [KG] David Dennis [DD]

GI: Today is Monday August 6th , 2018 and we are in the home of Mr. David Dennis in Summerville, South Carolina, a suburb just west of Charleston, to conduct an oral history interview for the Julian Bond Oral History Project, an undertaking sponsored in part by the School of Public Affairs at American University. My name is Gregg Ivers. I am a Professor of Government at American University and also the director of the Julian Bond Oral History Project. I am joined today by Kevin Alexander Gray, who will serve as our videographer and second interviewer for this afternoon's interview. This interview, as well as a written transcript, will be available through the Special Collections Division of the Bender Library at American University. Dating back to the early 1960, Mr. Dennis has had a long and distinguished career as a civil rights activist, community and political organizer, and more recently, working in the field of education reform. We are here today to learn more about Dave Dennis his legacy and his work and specifically his memories and impressions of Julian Bond. Mr. Dennis, it is an honor and a privilege to be here with you this afternoon. Thank you so much for having us into your home and taking the time to speak with us. We appreciate it. Why don't we begin at the beginning? Tell us a bit about your background and what led you into the Southern Freedom Movement.

PERSONAL AND FAMILY BACKGROUND

DD: Let's see now. I was born in Tallulah, Louisiana, actually in a place right outside of Tallulah called Omega, which was really a plantation. I'm really part of a sharecropper family.

I was born and raised on a plantation, and from Omega we moved to outside of Shreveport [Louisiana] to another plantation, the Miles plantation, and I was there I until I about nine years of age. Then I was suffering from tuberculosis – the spinal type, which was a rare type of tuberculosis. I had to go to the Shriner's Hospital. I got there through a relationship with the plantation owners and my aunt, who worked at the Shriner's Hospital. And the reason I remember that very well is because I was the only black kid there at the time at the Shriner's

Hospital and so I was segregated – I was segregated out – and later I was joined by another young black male at the Shriner's. We were together for a period of time. I was there for about a year and a half. When I came out my parents had moved to Shreveport, Louisiana – into the city part. It's called Cedar Grove. My grandparents were there, and I lived with them.

And so from there it was to Hollywood [Louisiana] and later then on to Blessed Sacrament Elementary School in Shreveport. And then we moved . . . I went to a boarding school called Rosary Institute in Lafayette. And then I went to the Southern University Lab School – I lived with my aunt – so I moved around a lot in my younger days. What was significant about this is that it was the beginning of the great turning point, I guess, in my life of moving toward the civil rights movement, which was more like for me, the way I put it, fate to a large extent. I didn't grow up with this burning desire to . . . a lot of people talk about freedom. To get to move from the plantation to the city, that was like, okay, I'm getting a little freedom [laughs].

When I grew up I we didn't have lights, electric lights, so my first experience living in a place with electric lights was when I went to the hospital. M y first home when I got to Shreveport we did have the electric lights but there was no sewage, stuff like that. So that my first experience with protests there, you might say, was with my grandmother, at her house on 79th Street. This was my first experience around protests. There was this dirt road, and they cut off where the sewage ran a few blocks away from where the white neighborhood ended and where the black neighborhood started. My grandmother wanted to know how to go down to try and see about getting sewage put it. And so she kept raising hell with the city.

Soon they came out and said. "Okay, we can do that here, but first you'll have to dig the ditches for the running water and for the sewage. And she was like, okay, there were some people on the street and around the neighborhood, so the idea was, how do you get them to organize to do this? So finally, she got the men and women together. The men worked during the day and when they came home they were tired. But they organized everyone to dig the ditches for the sewage. Well, I'll never forget that because the women cooked together. It was a community thing. When the men got off a work and they would dig some of the ditches, and the women, they would do the food. It was what we called communal, from house to house, one of those kinds of things.

When they finished, my grandmother went down and said, "We finished." The inspectors came down and, although they did exactly what they had told her because they had marked it off – how I'll never forget that because the guy who came down – and he was laughing – said, "Well, this is great. You did a great job but it's on the wrong side. You've got to do it over on the other side."

This was really my first great organizing piece. I watched my grandmother. Everybody in the neighborhood gave up. That was it. Her thing was, "No." And so she would get out there in her chair in front of this house by the ditch and she would sing. And in the evening when the men would get off of work she'd be out there singing. It was tough for me because the kids and everybody thought she was crazy, including me [laughs]. And she would sing. One day I remember a man I knew as Mr. Jack came down and said, "Miss Bessie – her name was Bessie, Bessie Perry and said, "Miss Bessie, if I help you start digging this ditch will you stop singing?" She said, "Sure, that's a deal. And I'll fix food." He started, and the other men saw him working, so they started and they re-did the ditch. And they went down, this time though she didn't go down

to go down to ask them to come down. She went down there but she took some of the other people with her. Most of the women went and they went back and said we finished the ditches. So that was my first experience about protests.

GI: About how old were you at this time?

DD: I had to be . . . I'd come out of the hospital about this time, so I had to be about 9, 10, 11 maybe 12 years-old, or something like that. Somewhere between 10 and 12.

GI: 10, 11 or 12 is close enough.

DD: That's a long time ago. I'm going on 78 now [laughs], that's sixty years ago or so. So that's my first connection [to protests]. But I didn't connect. The next connection was – I do know this much – it was before Emmett Till was killed, because then my next move around this was an organized understanding of it, although when I was on the plantation I heard discussions of the people there about lynchings and about the killing of black people. But the people [on the plantation] protected children from this. These were the things you whispered about, You might overhear people talking because you didn't have thick walls in the houses at that time. And I remember where lived and all that growing up. But here was the Emmett Till case and that really hit home more because one of the things we had at that time, I recall, is that I didn't know father. I came up in a single parent home with my grandparents and my aunt and uncle and then moved from place to place. But growing up the children were the children of the community, so everybody looked out [for each other].

So I had a lot of fathers. If you did something wrong down the street, you know, so if you were up on the wrong corn row, everybody had the right to chastise the children for doing something wrong because they looked at it as being their children. This carries over to a question people always ask me: "Why did people [in Mississippi] so open up to accepting to the kids coming in for Freedom Summer during the civil rights movement?" It was that the concept of extended family was very strong in the black community. That was our way of survival and everything.

Going back to Emmett Till. What happened is the men, the black men, got all the black boys, all those young guys and we went through this whole thing – what to do and not to do to survive. You don't look a white woman in the face, you don't do stuff like this to white men. It was really about survival. You cross the street [when you see white people] to avoid them. It was a question of how to avoid trouble. It was really about survival. What I remember about those meetings is that the men would come to the churches where we would have the meetings and tell the boys what not to do. What I remember also very well is that they were very well-armed. That was another thing about all the homes like my grandparents and everybody is that they were very well armed. They had to protect themselves and other people. So that was my next kind of exposure in terms of more pieces [of how to organize]. I came up in a very segregated time. Going back and forth to school on the bus you had to sit in the back of the bus.

And the third experience of that piece around that time was one day I was on the bus and my grandmother, who was very light skinned, got on the bus. All the kids, the black kids, we stacked in the back and the front of the bus was about empty. She was coming home from work because a

lot of what she did was as a domestic – cooking in white kitchens, stuff like that. She gets on the bus and she sees me and says, "Sonny, what [are] you doing? Come on up here and sit." Because she sat right behind the bus driver. She says, [he motions with his arms] "come on up here. There are some seats up here." And I wouldn't go up. I was scared to death. I'm thinking, wait a minute, here goes my grandmother again. She goes, "Hey, boy, come on up here." I don't move. She doesn't say anything. The bus goes to the end of the line. We got off when the bus got to the end of the line. We had about eight blocks to walk to where we lived. So I when I got off the bus – it is really called a trolley in Shreveport, where we lived, my grandma was waiting for me and she smacked me – pow! – right upside the head. And she said, "Boy, don't you ever disobey me again." She never talked about protests or anything like that. She just said, "Boy, don't you ever disobey me again. I told you to come sit up next to me." That was a very powerful piece to me. I didn't understand what it all meant until much later in life. But that's the way she was.

I mean, she was not afraid about this whole thing, about surviving. But she did her own way of protest– different times and pieces that back then I did not understand. So back to the other pieces about getting into the movement . . . then I'm back in Baton Rouge and I go to this school, this high school in my senior year . . .

GI: This is a public high school?

DD: Right. Southern University Lab School. I'm playing basketball, and I'm on a team with the kids. And one of my best friends is there now. This was in 1960, when I'm graduating. I was a little bit behind because of going into the hospital. At the same time at Southern University the students are doing their second, no, I'm sorry, their first walkout. Part of that leadership was Ed Brown. He looks over and sees us because the guy I'm standing next to is his brother, Hubert. He tells us, "Hey y'all, come on over and join us." We would not go. We just went over to his house and played basketball. You know, we don't want to get involved with all this stuff. So that goes on by. Between then and later a lot of things happen. I graduate and get a scholarship to Dillard University. I get there and there are students who are in jail.

GI: And what year is this?

DD: This is in 1960.

ENTERING THE SOUTHERN FREEDOM MOVEMENT

DD: I graduated [high school] in May of 1960. I got there in August . . . September 1960. And so from Dillard University there's a guy in jail, Cecil Carter. From Xavier University there was Rudy Lombard. from Southern University in New Orleans was Oretha Castle. There was Sydney Goldfinch from Tulane. There's one other person in jail. When I got there was a big uproar, you know, about people being in jail and everything else. I'm like [waving his hands], I don't want to have anything to do with this. I want to be an electrical engineer because I'm the first kid in my family to even graduate from high school. I've got an opportunity and I'm going to be an electrical engineer based upon my experiences when I was in high school and I really wanted to do this. I didn't want to get involved in the movement. One day around October of 1960, I'm walking across campus and there was this crowd of kids around the flag pole and there was this young

lady who was there. She stepped up there to speak and I walked by because I didn't want to have anything to do with this. So I'm like, "Hmm, wait a minute," so I turn around and go back to talk to her.

I turn around to go back to talk to her. Her name was Doris Castle, who was the sister of Oretha Castle, who was an icon of the civil rights movement in New Orleans, Louisiana. There's a street named after her there, Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard. I wasn't interested in what she was talking about. She was a very attractive woman and so I wanted to go back and talk to her. I'm trying to get a date with her and she talks me into going to a CORE [Congress of Racial Equality] meeting. All right. I go to this CORE meeting and I'm thinking, I'm not going to get involved with this thing. But she wouldn't go out with me unless I did something. Now, they had some people doing the sit-ins and stuff like that, so she said, "If you want to date me you've got to go and sit-in and do something. Show me you're a man [laughs]." And they were doing a thing called "hit and runs." The hit and runs were like, you would go to a lunch counter and you would sit-in on Saturdays. They would try to do an effective boycott without getting arrested. And they would go sit-in, the police would all come – it's on a Saturday, a busy day, the cops are all downtown on Canal Street. They would come into these places and shut it down. They shut down the lunch counters. You'd have a disruption, but the cops would shut it down and tell you to move on.

GI: So we're in New Orleans now?

DD: Right. We're in New Orleans. That's where Dillard University is . . . New Orleans.

I'm saying after a few meetings, I'm thinking, "This looks like it's pretty safe." Because I want this date and I'm still trying to deal with Doris. I decided, "Okay, I'm going to go." I said, "Are you going to go out with me?" And she says, "Yes, I'm going to go." All right. I put on my little shirt and tie and we go down there. We go to the lunch counter and we sit-in and then the cops come in and say, "All right, everybody's under arrest." And I'm, like, "Wait a minute . . . whoa. This is not the way this is supposed to go [laughs]. You're letting everybody else go in the weeks before." I begin to try to explain to the cops now that this is not the way to go. I don't want to go jail. I can't go to jail, blah, blah, blah. To make a long story short, everybody got charged with trespassing and I'm the only one who got charged with trespassing *and* resisting arrest. Granted, I'm the one telling them you can't arrest me and so on [laughs].

THE FREEDOM RIDES

So that's my first arrest and I go to jail. And I spent a whole week in jail. The significance is that now I'm getting hooked. First of all, I'm angry not because I was arrested, but because they treated me differently and were supposed to let me go like everybody else. It was crazy, an insane thing. So that was my first arrest and going to jail. While I was in jail, plans were being made by CORE to develop the Freedom Rides, to start those up in D.C. The New Orleans CORE chapter was supposed to be the host. The ride was supposed to begin in D.C. and end in New Orleans, Louisiana. The meetings were being held for CORE at Oretha Castle's house, which was only three blocks from Dooky Chase, which is the famous black restaurant in New Orleans. You may have heard of it.

GI: Mm-hm.

DD: Oretha Castle worked at Dooky Chase. Leah Chase – Dooky and Leah Chase – their contribution to the movement is that they would feed people. When we would have the meetings, they would send over food from Dooky Chase. So being on a campus the thing that attracted me to these meetings, besides Doris, was all this great food from Dooky Chase. They go into this thing about the Freedom Rides coming in, and the big question was what CORE would do in preparation for this. I'm going back to school. Because after my arrest I was in jail for a whole week and I was behind in my classes. The university didn't like that, so I was having problems there. And then what happens there is that we have buses burning Anniston, Alabama and everything else is in an uproar. I get a call from Oretha and them. They're having a special meeting because of the attacks [on the buses] and so I go to Oretha's house and all the members of CORE come in.

The big question to deal with was, "Do you want to move on?" So that was an issue there with Jim Farmer [the director of CORE] and them about continuing the rides. There was Diane Nash and others from Fisk University, which had put Freedom Riders on [the buses]. There was a whole other side to this which is left out of history and that was the New Orleans CORE group, which was very powerful group of young people. They had Rudy Lombard, Oretha and all those people. They were insistent that the rides had to continue and were having a battle with the national office – that the rides had to continue. They were trying to get a group of people to go join the rides. But at the same time, you had some of the people on that bus that burned over in Anniston and who were beaten up in Birmingham who were in very bad shape. They couldn't get medical attention there. They were trying to get them out there and into New Orleans.

In New Orleans you had a hospital – [Flint] Goodridge Hospital, which was connected to Dillard University. That's where most of the black doctors operated from because they couldn't operate from the white public hospital, Charity Hospital. They were at this hospital called Flint Goodridge. The idea there was how to get them [Freedom Riders] organized, getting the doctors ready and get them out of Birmingham and into New Orleans. At the same time there was a group being organized to go join the rides. Oretha and them wanted to continue the rides. Just as you had Diane Nash on one end, you had Oretha and the others on the other end doing the same thing.

So, when they came in I'm still sort of like, "Okay, I'm not going to go on this ride." They were trying to get me to go and I didn't want to go. I see this carnage when they're getting them off the plane and into New Orleans. We had Xavier University, which allowed us to house the people there and we've got doctors for them and anything else. Then they make a call and say it's time for us to move. I had made a decision that I was not going to go on this ride. So there was Doris, there's Jerome Smith, there's Alice Thompson, Julia [Aaron] Humbles and myself. I didn't want to go. They really challenged my manhood. Doris did again. I'm still trying to get this date. All right. We get on a train to go to Montgomery because the rides had stopped in Montgomery. They're trapped in the church in Montgomery. We're trying to get to Montgomery and so finally we get to Montgomery. There are all of these marshals around. It's chaos. Just a total riot. I'm right in the middle of all this and I'm thinking, "Oh, my God, why am I here?" My mom doesn't even know where I am.

Oretha informed Kennedy – there was a group that Diane Nash and them dealt with in the federal government on this end and Oretha and them over here – that we were coming [from New Orleans]. The end that was lost [in this story] was this powerful group of people [from the New Orleans CORE chapter]. You really had two groups that were trying to move this ride forward. They knew we were coming so they had U.S. Marshals at the train station, but that's another story. We got there, and this is where my change comes about getting into the movement. I'm telling this story long because this is where it hits at. We are at Dr. [Richard Henry] Harris's [Jr.] house the night before the ride to decide who is going to go. At this time, I'm not clear about what I want to do. But I knew that getting out of this house would be tough because the house is surrounded. We're just sitting there. There's Dr. King, Wyatt T. Walker, Abernathy, James Bevel, Diane Nash and a bunch of young people. There all there. A bunch of elders are going back and forth.

And this is where the stories get convoluted. One story that's out there is that Dr. King "cowarded out." That's not true. I was there. He did not do that. I'm not clear yet why people said that except for the ongoing conflict that they had with some people. But his thing was that he had been arrested in Montgomery on a traffic violation and he was out on parole. They know he's got six months automatic. I was torn between them. Abernathy and others were trying to tell King [he]'d do more good if [he] were out. I WAS O thought he should be out. Somebody's got to tell this story and he was a good storyteller. In my head, I was thinking, "I'm a pretty good storyteller, too. Maybe I ought to stay out." That was another excuse for me not to get on this bus [laughs]."

GI: Dr. King had been arrested in Atlanta in September 1960 for taking part in a sit-in. Do you think part of the reluctance to have him join the Freedom Rides was a concern of what might happen to him if he was arrested again?

DD: Exactly. Right. He's got these things out there. They were right in a sense. But it wasn't that he didn't want to go. I mean, he was on the side of the fact that we might need to call a moratorium. But he didn't want anybody to get hurt . . . because people were trying to kill us. I mean there wasn't anything fake about this, you know. It was dangerous. That was the one concern you had with the elderly people. King was in between. But King had decided, "okay, if you're going to go, I'm going to go." That was the controversy there. They were finally convinced that King should not go. The CORE [leaders] decided to continue the ride. During this discussion I am personally, sort of thinking, "Do I go, do I not go?" I was not committed yet. And so out of the blue, somebody made this statement, I don't when the day was, whenever I asked about everyone says, "I don't remember hearing that." I said, "I do." And someone said, "There is not enough space in this room for both God and fear. So make your choice, all right?"

At that time, I was rather a religious guy. Boom! It was like lightning hit. So that was it.

I volunteered for being on the first bus. Going out there there's no turning back. So that's what really got me into the movement. Now I've got this long trip ahead of me. To give you an idea of how things moved, the guy I talked about earlier, this guy who was with me at Southern Lab, Hubert Brown. That was H. Rap Brown. That was my classmate. Later on, at class reunions, we were both voted the most unlikely to do what we did because we weren't born into activism or anything like that. We just played together. I just wanted to give you an idea of how fate sort of

moved me into this whole movement. It's not like my parents were civil rights workers. My grandmother did her thing the way she did and my grandfather had his stances that he could talk about. But my grandfather's concerns had to do with being human. Mine was like, this is what you were meant to do. Things kept getting in the way to make sure you keep doing what you are meant to do.

GI: You get arrested in Jackson. Is that right?

DD: Yes, that's right.

RETURNING TO COLLEGE

GI: Now, you have to make the decision of what's next. And that led you to stay in Mississippi? Leave Mississippi? Leave and then come back to Mississippi?

DD: No, no. That was the end of that piece. When I got out of jail – we got out a little bit early because CORE wanted us to raise money and recruit more volunteers to go on the rides. I had pretty much made of my mind. I went back to Dillard because it was about test time and when I got there they politely asked me, no, told me, that I should move on [laughs]. I guess to them it was, "look, you've made a choice" Well, they'd made clear to me that I didn't know enough to pass these tests [laughs].

GI: Were you concerned about suspension or expulsion when you returned to college?

DD: Well, it was there. I knew what had happened to everybody else before me. The difference could have been is that Dillard was a private school. I don't think Xaiver did [expel students]. Rudy [Lombard] was there and he wasn't thrown out, and he was very active in the movement and he wasn't thrown out. But in other places you're right. But I learned later on what the psychology around that was all about. That's another story. My work now is with a lot of HBCUs, so I have a much better understanding of how this sort of culture was developed among state-run institutions, the HBCUs. And that had to do with the fact that the pathway to freedom for black people has always been the right to vote, citizenship and education – reading and writing.

Because in order to have the right to vote you have to be able to read and write. The first public schools in this country were created by ex-slaves. Many of the first schools had their beginning in this area [the "low country" in S.C. and coastal Georgia] especially those around Savannah, Orangeburg, places like that. Key areas in terms of public education coming into to New Orleans. Public education in this country was really started by slaves, ex-slaves. What happened here is that when HBCUs started all the presidents of those schools were really working for the state, and the whole thing was you needed to get an education. The whole Booker T. Washington-W.E.B. DuBois argument. Getting an education here was primary. In order to protect that – because they knew that whites could take it away at any time – they're just interested in getting our people to learn how to read and write and do arithmetic. The culture that began to exist there is, how do you preserve and protect their education? It was similar to the black men getting the black boys and saying, "Okay, this is how you survive [in the white world]." Here's how you survive that particular piece for your education.

But the culture didn't change when the students wanted to start to do something. The leadership did not change their culture. These are like the folks coming the same mold, out of places like Clark [University in Atlanta] and other places like that. I think a part of that had to do with that history. So that's changing now. I know a lot of young energetic visionaries are now heading up these institutions, like Ron Mason at UDC. Cleve Sellers was at Voorhees College. Walter Kimbrough at Dillard University. You have people like that now in the area.

I stayed in New Orleans and then I went back to Shreveport and began to organize there. In Shreveport there was a mentor there by the name of Dr. C.O. Simpkins [Sr.], who was a dentist and was one of the leaders in the 50s for voter registration. He's still alive. 93 years old and in Shreveport. He and Reverend Blake and some other people in that area there. They were part of that whole group, working with Reverend Jamison Jemison in that first bus boycott in Baton Rouge, before the Montgomery boycott, in the early 50s. And they were among the original founders of the SCLC, this group of people from New Orleans. Getting organized there was rough. Shreveport was [a] tough, tough, tough, tough [place]. I got my feet really wet there. Churches being bombed, that kind of thing.

And that was the beginning of taking up arms for protection of their people, the Deacons for Defense, down in Bogalusa, Louisiana. We were all in this whole thing with CORE. And then the students walked out in 1961 – the end of 1961 – in Baton Rouge. We were part of that. We organized that. I went to jail in December and stayed through until middle of January, so my Christmas and New Year were in there [jail]. We had students some students kicked out [of school] so we ended up at the Lincoln Hotel. Right after that in January we got out and that's how this whole thing with SNCC began to cross into this whole connection with Mississippi.

Bob Moses and others were in McComb [County], Mississippi, doing some demonstrations and also voter registration work as Bob had really gone into this thing. What I did not know, in the meantime, is before he did that, Bob Moses had passed through Shreveport because Ella Baker had given his name to leaders around Louisiana and Mississippi to talk to. One of them was C.O. Simpkins, so he [Bob] was right here in Shreveport. Bob and I didn't know each other then. We found that out later just by talking to each other. Bob [Moses] and Dion Diamond and Chuck McDew and some of the other SNCC people came into Baton Rouge to try to recruit some of the students we had. So that's my first introduction to Bob. And we began to talk about what was going on in Mississippi.

GI: And this is early 1962?

DD: Yes, this would have been January 1962.

FROM DIRECT ACTION TO VOTER REGISTRATION: MISSISSIPPI

DD: In February of 1962 [Bob] came back and so I began to really look at the direct-action sit-ins as, you know, this isn't gonna do it. We're on the wrong track.

There's Bob and the others doing this work in Mississippi around the other political issues. Then

CORE had this elderly guy by the name of Jim McCain. Jim McCain and his wife were from right here in Sumpter, South Carolina. He was one of the organizers . . . [cross-talk] there was also Septima Clark and her crowd. Jim had actually worked with the NAACP. He was at one time the principal of Branch High School up there in Sumpter. Jim was talking to me as well. He was one of the coordinators of CORE. In fact, he was one of the first CORE people to talk to me down in New Orleans. He was there at that first meeting as an organizer with CORE. He had been doing this stuff with the unions and other education issues. And his whole thing was, if you want to see something happen you have to get into the political scene. You want to see some direct action, you get into that. White folks ain't gonna let you do that.

KG: My question is why CORE instead of SNCC?

DD: Well, if Doris [Castle] had been a member of the Ku Klux Klan, I probably would have been a member of the Ku Klux Klan [laughs]. I mean I didn't know the difference between SNCC or CORE or any of those groups back then. I didn't think of it that way.

GI: Were you aware of any of the more visible SNCC people in Georgia, Nashville or North Carolina?

DD: I became aware of those people when I started going to meetings. A lot of people in the CORE group had some relationship with the people in Nashville and now Atlanta and other places. So I'd hear names. My first meeting with a lot of those people was when I end up at a meeting at Dr. Harris's house for the Freedom Rides meetings.

I've heard of people like James Bevel. Diane Nash I'd heard about. But here I am at this meeting and I'm just, first of all, overwhelmed. But at the same I thought they were all crazy [laughs] because they're talking about dying. I was not ready to die at that time, okay? I was waiting for that voice that came out of that [first] meeting that got me going. At the same time CORE was still pushing the Freedom Rides and continuing the Freedom Rides. And most of the Freedom Riders are being trained by the CORE group. The New Orleans CORE group begins to spread out through Louisiana and some parts of Alabama. They'd been to Alabama but they're not going into Mississippi yet, except for Tom Gaither, who had been put there by CORE to monitor and coordinate the Freedom Rides and to deal with what happened when people would get arrested.

By then Tom and Bob [Moses] had become close friends. Meanwhile, Tom Gaither gets drafted [to Vietnam] around April of 1962. I'd said to CORE that I'm ready to move on to Mississippi. And I'd gotten attached to Bob by that point and watched what was going on. I made a deal with CORE – they said, okay, if you want to go take Tom's place the Freedom Rides stuff is his. You can do that. I really told them a lie [laughs]. I told them, "Sure." I had no interest in the Freedom Rides anymore. I just wanted to get into Mississippi.

I was there for a couple of weeks or so and they had sent another bus load of kids in who, of course, would go to jail there. I'd forgotten about that. I was up in the [Mississippi] Delta. People are looking for me and I'm like, "Oh, sorry" [laughs]. They finally had the sense to send someone else to do that work. So that's how I got caught up in Mississippi in April [1962]. And from there by May or June, I think it was, I'd forgotten whether it was in 1962 or '63, I'm not sure, I'd gotten

into the whole COFO [Council of Federated Organizations]. COFO had already been organized before I got there. COFO was organized in 1961 by Amzie Moore, Dr. Aaron Henry, Medgar [Evers] and some others. It was put together there to help support the Freedom Rides.

Bob and Tom Gaither had a couple of meetings to figure out what to do to move these organizations towards a voter registration campaign. A voter education project had come together. There was money being put together from the Ford Foundation to support a voter registration drive in Mississippi. Not too many people were for that because they didn't think we were going to get that much for the buck because of the difficulty in getting [voters] registered. Bob and I got there for a meeting as that conversation was going on, and Aaron Henry and some others wanted to know if we could meet again to set up a political arm of COFO. A lot of stuff you see written up says that Bob and I were the directors of COFO. That's just not true. We were directors of this political arm of COFO. COFO had already been there.

GI: Can you tell us what COFO stands for?

DD: Oh, yes, sure. Council of Federated Organizations.

It was really where they brought together all of the civil rights groups and local groups in the city and state – the NAACP, SCLC, all of them – to work together to support the Freedom Rides at that time – provide clothing, foods, parents come in, helping them, supporting them, raising money for bond. You had the black lawyers there – Carsie A. Hall, Jack Young – they were part of the legal aspect of it. We expanded that by putting this committee together. And that's when we began to map out this plan of work to have this massive attack on Mississippi.

MEETING JULIAN BOND

GI: Now I want to steer this a little bit towards some of the SNCC people in Georgia, Nashville but specifically I want to talk about how you first came to meet Julian Bond. You have the seeds in place for the beginning of the Mississippi Project. SNCC people are coming from different places – or are they coming from different places to get involved. Do you see people coming over from Atlanta, the Carolinas, Tennessee or were people still primarily coming out from Louisiana and Mississippi and places like that? Were the regional differences starting to break down at that point?

DD: No, SNCC people were coming from all over the place. And we had the connection between the two organizations. CORE had a PR person, a group working under Marvin Rich there in the national office in New York and SNCC had that communications piece out of Atlanta that was spearheaded by Julian. So that was my contact there. Before I had met Julian, I had heard of Julian.

GI: How did you hear of Julian Bond?

DD: SNCC people had talked about Julian because he was their person. We were doing field reports and things of that nature. He had to do these articles and write-ups and whatever you had. The way COFO was set up was – we got in trouble with the national office [of CORE] for this,

Bob and all of us did – was that SNCC and CORE just sort of went out the window, organization-wise. I know myself and all the CORE people went COFO. Although we were in CORE we got a lot of flak from the national office – I speak more about CORE – because they thought we were losing our national identity. They felt that we weren't getting enough credit for the work that was being done there. That's how this decision was made. It was, okay, let's get everybody off our back.

We had a lot of the CORE people that had come from New Orleans CORE. There was Ed Hollander, who worked with Marvin Rich and did a lot of PR stuff. He came out of D.C. You had some people from other places but most of them came out of Louisiana – from the CORE group. The first piece that they began to focus on came in early 1963 and it was the 4th Congressional District in Mississippi. It was Canton, Mississippi, the Philadelphia area. And what Bob and I decided to do was to tell CORE they've got the 4th congressional district. That's cool. And the rest stayed around. For us it was just paper because we had far more CORE people all over the place than the history books say because all of us got folded into COFO.

When we did the 50th anniversary [2014 reunion for Freedom Summer] what was a surprise to me was counting the people that you could really identify as being with CORE and it was, oh, about sixty – and that's not counting the people who were volunteers. These are just people who identified with CORE, who were what we called CORE field workers. And then you had the same group like with SNCC. SNCC people were coming in from all over the place, too. But you also had a lot of people like Hollis Watkins and others who were right there from Mississippi. There was a large contingency from Mississippi. A lot of them came from other places. Frank Smith and others. Charlie Cobb was there.[1]

Julian's part in this was that we would write up these reports for the newspapers. I had conversations with Julian on the phone and with Marvin Rich and others because we were trying to get these stories out. I first met Julian . . . I can't tell you exactly what day it was when I first met Julian, but it was when he came to Mississippi in . . .

GI: Was this '62 or '63?

DD: It had to be in '62. And I'm sure as to exactly where it was because we were being arrested. I mean, people like Jim Forman, he was in there a lot, people like that from SNCC. SNCC meetings were being held in Mississippi then, coming into '62, coming into '63, '64 . . . '64 definitely.

GI: Did you develop a relationship with him or was it strictly professional at that point?

DD: It was strictly – at the very beginning – strictly professional. Most of the people who, except for the people who lived in Mississippi, for people outside of those places it was more on a professional level. People like Jim Forman and others. I knew Jim, but we didn't actually socialize a lot. We didn't have cohorts of people, you know, the SNCC people stuck together, the CORE people stuck together. We were all just one big family.

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[1]. Hollis Watkins (JBOHP-11), Frank Smith (JBOHP-14) and Charlie Cobb (JBOHP-15) were all interviewed for this project.

And so the family concept was more connected to what we had on a local level. My first wife was actually a SNCC field secretary. Mattie Bivins, she was with the Bivins from out of Hattiesburg [Mississippi]. That's how I met her. In fact, the meeting that we had in Clarksdale [Mississippi] around COFO was my first meeting with her because she came up with Bob Moses and them. I met her at that meeting. They picked me up in Jackson and we went up.

KG: Thank God Doris wasn't there.

DD: Who? Oh, Doris. No, no [laughs].

GI: You've got Doris out of your system at this point? She got you into this and now there's nothing to show for it [crosstalk, laughter].

DD: Yeah, yeah [laughs]. We actually became very good friends and we became almost like sister-brother, you know, at the end. Yeah, it's out of my system but we became very, very close in fact. In fact, I never did date her. You know, we just hung out, stuff like that.

GI: I think we all have a Doris at some point in our life.

CORE AND SNCC

DD: People ask me all the time, "Why CORE and not SNCC? And I tell them the same thing. If I didn't go to the meeting . . . I wasn't drawn by the organization. I wanted to talk to Doris [laughs]. We'd have these discussions about SNCC, CORE, SCLC, and I'd take the position that my relationship in the movement goes to connections with CORE. But CORE didn't make me. SNCC didn't make Bob or Julian or anybody else.

I mean they *made* [emphasis by DD] the organizations so it was all about the human beings that are in these groups. It was not difficult for me to shed off the CORE people because I knew so many other people from other groups. There's was a lot of pressure on me and a couple of other people, "Why don't we tell the CORE story?" Because there's not a CORE legacy group or anything like that. And the reason why is you can't them to talk. I mean, like Matt Suarez and others who did so much in the movement. Rudy [Lombard], he died a few years ago. He never got his story out. You talk to these people and they'll tell you right out, "Hey, man, I did my thing. That's it. I don't know what you want me to talk about." For a lot of people, it is very painful to talk about. It's not easy to talk about it. We didn't live by the organization; we were all hooked together as individuals. Because of the work that I did back then, every conference that SNCC has and has always had, I'm there. They always invite me. Or ask me, can you help us put this together? I work very closely with the SNCC legacy group they have at Duke [University], with Charlie [Cobb] and all them.

You know, with the Algebra Project we're all still very close, we still work together, and no one looks at me as CORE . . .

GI: These are the people that led me to you. You have them to thank. Or to blame . . . [laughs]

DD: I'll do the latter [laughs].

GI: Okay [laughs]. That's fair enough.

DD: Just kidding [laughter].

GI: Maybe you are; maybe you're not. It's your house [crosstalk; laughter].

GI: Julian once said something to me and he also said this in an interview that I've read that he did in an oral history many years ago where he's making exactly the point that you're talking about. He said "the movements and the organizations that came out of them were a product of the communities from which they sprung. Specifically, the African-American communities from which they sprung. So, the national movement they wanted to love everybody to death . . . that they wanted to bring the world redemptive nonviolent suffering and convert everyone. In the Atlanta movement, we wanted to nickel and dime everyone to death. Our approach was economic pressure." And he said the reason was because that was Lonnie King. He's the one that started this and that's what he wanted to do. Attack the downtown businesses, put pressure on them, do whatever they had to do to move forward. I think he obviously was very proud of the work he did with SNCC, but he also never really drew boundaries.

DD: Right.

GI: It was this person, that person, this group at this time. But the goal was always the same – to move towards a new concept of freedom.

IMPRESSIONS OF JULIAN BOND

DD: But one thing I want to say is that Julian and I didn't really become close until really after the movement.

GI: What was your initial impression of him?

DD: You know, he was always very impressive. He was the intellectual person; in the movement that was his place. He was this writer. He's the person that carried the message. You know, I didn't expect Julian – we had people in those places – to be part of this direct action. He didn't see that as his job. He didn't see that as where he can make his greatest contribution. So, he didn't try. You know, he was going to get the story. His job [was] to get the story out. I remember him being at some of the rallies or a demonstration and he would be in and out. And so after the movement – when I say "after the movement" – I meant, when I got out of the movement and left Mississippi, my communication with Julian was on a different level. We began to hang, and talked to each other from time to time. And so we talked a lot and did things together. But during the movement he was actually the PR person and I would see him at events and meetings and such. And that's what it was like. There just wasn't time. Even though you had these deep relationships you didn't have time for much more.

I don't remember from 1961 up to 1965 ever taking of a vacation. My first vacation after that was

in 1965. Rudy Lombard stole his brother's car [laughs] and we took off and went to New York and D.C. We stayed about three weeks in his brother's car [laughs]. That was about the first vacation that we had during that period of time. We just hung. We just took off and did crazy stuff all over the place. Yeah, that was in 1965.

GI: You mentioned that Julian was an intellectual. And a lot of his contemporaries have said the same thing. And there's a phrase that I keep coming back to [in speaking with people] and that was his pen was his sword, like his voice later became his sword. Is that to you is a fair assessment?

DD: Yes. Yeah, he was a deep thinker. I mean his ability to translate what was really going on in the movement and what the movement is all about was on a different level [raises his hands above his head]. You know, you had those people who could talk from a point of view the [Martin Luther] Kings and the [Ralph] Abernathys. But to translate to the people . . . you know, those with no college background . . . the day-to-day grit and grime of the movement . . . to be able to translate that in a way that caught the imagination of the country. I mean, Julian had that ability to do that. He had the ability to translate and bring the movement to the country in a way that the country could really see it, understand it and feel it. You didn't really have many people who could do that around the movement.

But Julian and his little group, Mary King and some others [in the SNCC communications office], they had the ability to that kind of thing.[2] I think his ability to do that came from the ability to trust Julian. So you sat and talked to Julian and didn't have to worry about the fact that he's going to take it out of context or put information out there that you don't want out there, shouldn't be out there. But also, at the same time, express what you tried to say when you spoke with him about whatever it was that was going on.

GI: I spoke recently with Lonnie King about Julian and you are reinforcing so much of what he said. One of the things he said about Julian was your last point. He was a man of "impeccable integrity . . ."

DD: Mm-hmm.

GI: . . . whatever you said to him would never get lost in translation.

DD: That's right.

GI: And he attributed that to just his natural gifts, his education and his willingness to be disciplined to do what he needed to do. And the other thing he mentioned – the first thing he mentioned – was that Julian could sit in an alley and talk with people and be perfectly comfortable and they comfortable with him. Then he could be in the White House and be totally comfortable there. People could talk to him wherever he was, and he could be what people needed him to be as far as communicating a message and then gaining their trust to communicate whatever they wanted to say to him. Do you agree with that?

[2]. Mary King, who worked closely in the national office with Julian Bond, was interviewed for this project (10-JBOHP).

DD: I agree with that totally. I mean that's the goal. It made no difference who the audience was. I mean you could be in a room with the highest level of authority and then be with this mass grassroots … they could all be in the same room be the person who could really manage a conversation whereby everybody had a part in that conversation. Maybe he could facilitate different points of view and then at the same time, be able to bring together these different voices. That's unique. We didn't have anybody that was able to do that. He was able to do that until the day he died. That's the reason why he was so popular with people doing documentaries because of the ability he had, like you said earlier, that his voice became a sword.

KG: A lot of people used to say that Julian was kind of patrician. I knew Julian well. My first recollection of Julian was a poem that he wrote that had to be from the 60s. "Look at that girl shake that thing/we can't all be Martin Luther King." Pretty much expresses being able to talk to people in the street and being able to talk to people in the suites.

DD: Right, right. Exactly right. We spent a lot of time together. When I was in law school I would see Julian. I'd go down to Atlanta, and we would also meet in New York.

GI: And now we're in what year, 1966?

DD: Let's see. I went back to Dillard in '65 to finish up my degree. And then in '68 I went to law school at the University of Michigan and finished there in '71. All during that time and even afterwards … we talked on the phone a lot. We may not have seen each other in person a lot but, yeah, we talked a lot. We remained pretty close. We would run into each other all the time in airports, or one place or the other, like crazy. Yeah, he was that type of an individual. Just very personal.

GI: When Kevin said he thought that he was a patrician . . .

KG: I meant that was just the imagery of a serving patrician, very educated, urbane. But I came up as a newspaper editor and Julian was a storyteller for all of us, so that kind of cut through that.

GI: Did you [to KG] read *The Student Voice* when you were coming up?

KG: Oh, yeah. Absolutely.

GI: I want to ask about this. Julian came from a very different background than a lot of folks. His father was a nationally renowned educator, a college president, and his mother came from a prominent family in Nashville. Did it surprise you that somebody with Julian's background decided to come into the movement?

DD: No, not really. You had [people coming into the movement] that were a little bit different but yet there's only one Julian Bond. You know the background pieces but you have people like Charlie Cobb with a similar type background. He had a similar type background, and he's still out there. He and Julian were pretty close, too. There's Rudy Lombard and others, with that type of background. All being African American. I wouldn't say I was surprised at that. But you have to

say, in one sense, when you talk about in that context, you have to always separate Julian. Julian was special. there's no comparison to Julian. He just stands out. You can say there are other journalists, other people with a similar type of background. But he just took it to another level. You have the other people, the Charlie Cobbs and other people, but now it's just Charlie Cobb. But Julian was special. He had his own space.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BLACK COMMUNITIES AS AN ACTIVIST BASE

KG: When you say that, although at that point in time in the black community there were maybe skin distinctions and perhaps some types of class distinctions, but the community at large was more together than it is now. You had the leadership all in one place. Not being over here and over there in different communities. The community was a little bit . . .

DD: Then you had communities where black people lived. Now, you have places where black people live. You don't have what I would call real communities where black people live. You talk about how it takes a village to raise a child; but you don't really have those anymore. So that's one of our major problems. I mean, then, you had the teachers lived down the street, the businessmen, the doctors, the lawyers. You could see them, and you got to know them. These days you don't have that anymore. They're all over the place, scattered around. And where you have groups of black people living together, it is just a place. I mean you have food deserts and there is just nothing there. And they're forced to look at each other as enemies, which is really just a reflection of how they feel about themselves.

So that's what we're trying to change now. How do you bring back the concept of community? So when Julian and them grew up, even with his parents and other people like that, it was another type of community. Even after we moved on [after the movement] you had these communities of movement people that continued. You have what you would call the SNCC people, some CORE people, what you would call the movement community people. So, when we met later in Mississippi we put together a veterans' group – we didn't want to call them CORE, didn't want to call them SNCC. Just wanted to put together what we called veterans because everybody participated. A lot of the local community people that Julian met with didn't give a darn what organization you were from. In fact, I don't care which organization you were from. If you were out there in Mississippi trying to do some work in those days you were called a Freedom Rider. That was their relationship [to the movement] – the Freedom Riders are coming in. They didn't call us SNCC or anything like that. They didn't care.

If you really want to talk about a civil rights organization that paved the way, it really was the NAACP. I mean, that's where your real heroes came from. I mean they were in there doing battle with everyone and had no publicity. When we got to Mississippi there was no such thing as the fact that SNCC starts the movement, that CORE started the movement. Medgar Evers and them – Amzie Moore, C.C. Bryant, others like them, doing things undercover. They paved the way. We just jumped in there and they protected us. If it wasn't for the Deacons of Defense we would have been wiped out of Louisiana. They saved us. They don't get any credit for it. You know, we came out waving this flag. Julian understood that. He was a PR person for SNCC. But Julian understood the dynamics of the movement – that the movement was about people and not the organization.

Julian had the ability to connect with people. He could move from level to the next. They're looking at Julian as . . . I guess the journalists looked at him as a journalist who had insight, connections to and the respect of people in the movement. He brought the truth of that piece of it. But he was a journalist, you know? And then the civil rights people looked at him as not just as a journalist but looked at him as part of the movement. And his ability to relate to people in the community, so when he was here he was part of the community, that he was among family there.

So, when you talk about this whole community idea, what we had then – the strength of the movement – was really concept of extended family. The extended family piece is that we looked out for the children growing up, we were the children of the community. Right. So in the civil rights movement you had all these young people out there. I got involved with the movement I was 20 years old. At 21, I'm telling people to go places and do things, and that might have meant going to jail. By the time I'm 25, 26 years old I'd been arrested over 30 times. I mean, I'm young but we were protected. We still looked at ourselves as having a bond not matter where we were as children of the community.

In Mississippi they [African American families] housed everyone, and they always said, "Oh, we're gonna' take care of the children. When those Freedom Riders come in, those crazy children, we're gonna' find a place for them to sleep and find something to feed them." We would walk around and knock on doors, and we might not be able to get them to go down to register to vote – we might be lucky to get five or six a month in some areas. But you had the relationship. We'd be hungry, so we had a plan to go knocking on doors at five o'clock because we knew somebody would be cooking some fried chicken and some biscuits, so we said, "hey, let's get some of that [laughs]!" And they'd say, "Hey, honey, hey child, you look hungry, come on in – because we all weighed 130, 140 pounds [laughs]. But you're right [looks at KG]. There's a difference in terms of where we were then and where we are now.

COMMUNICATING THE MOVEMENT

But in terms of what it helped us in the movement was to have a person, a unique person like a Julian Bond, who was able to translate and move the story to the country in a way that they could see it and feel it.

GI: And move it out of the South.

DD: Exactly right. People listened to him and he had the connections so he could get on the phone say something is happening and they would believe him. And the press would move.

GI: And they had the WATS line. Oh, that was a big deal.

DD: Yes, it was. [laughter]

GI: Now, everybody has a phone and can call anybody anywhere in the world. It's like, "oh, I'm texting from 7000 miles away. I mean back then it was, you called collect. They hung up.

DD: Exactly right.

GI: And then somebody will call you back.

DD: Exactly right.

JULIAN BOND'S CAMPAIGN FOR THE GEORGIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

GI: I want to talk a bit about Julian's 1965 run for the Georgia legislature. Did it surprise you that he ran for office?

DD: No. The whole idea of what we'd been doing in the movement was, at that time, pushing for black people to run for office and then being organized politically for how you support that. We weren't just looking at political positions, but also like moving into the Democratic Party to get delegates and all this stuff. So, we're getting very heavy and we're pushing now. People like R.A.T. Smith in Mississippi. We knew we couldn't win. People like [the Rev.] R.L.T. Smith in Mississippi . . . we're doing that in places across the South. We were using the idea of running as an organizing tool. It wasn't a surprise that Julian ran. Running black people was part of this. I think it was a surprise that Julian won [laughs]. And so, no, him running for office, not a big surprise.

GI: From what I understand that was Ivanhoe Donaldson's decision to kind of draft him and that the next phase of SNCC was to say, "We want to run somebody for the Georgia state house and Julian, you're going to be that guy." Were you following that when you were back in school?

DD: Yeah, I followed it. I wasn't involved in it, but I followed it. But I was not surprised. He was an effective journalist because the fact is, a lot of the time, he did a lot of backroom stuff. And so he knew how politicians operated. Julian could get into that. Personally, no, I wasn't surprised about him running. I was watching from afar. I knew that was going on, I was in discussion with other people about that. But, none of that surprised me. I mean, Julian, I always felt that, in one sense, was a very effective politician. He was a journalist, he was a mover. He knew how to get things done. That's the arena he operated in . . . he knew how to get the stories out. He could not come out being this "Black Power" image. His image was to be the person involved in the movement on the side to tell the story. That's the way I looked at it in my relationship with him.

THE LEGACY OF JULIAN BOND

GI: A few years later, Julian achieves some notoriety at the 1968 Democratic Convention. Did his rise to national prominence surprise you?

DD: I wasn't surprised at all. If anybody was going to do it, get on that political ladder, to me, in my head, was Julian. Julian was not the person who was going to be out there sitting in or carrying that picket sign. I mean, I could see him playing this role. It fit him perfectly. His voice kept him in a good position where he could be heard and listened to. And that's key. A lot of people have a lot to say, but it's the way you say it that determines whether or not you're going to be heard. So you can talk all you want but if people aren't listening to you . . .

KG: Don't you think that his fame or people's regard for him was more connected to Julian Bond going after the man with the ax handle than all the other civil rights bills being passed and his involvement in the struggle? Just on the street level people understood the representation between the pick ax and Lester Maddox and Julian Bond.

DD: I don't know. Maybe so. I have to speak personally [laughs]. I can see that a bit. Because when you got outside the movement people on the street didn't know Julian Bond.

KG: I'm from Spartanburg [S.C.] and as a young kid growing up there was that symbolism in my brain coming out and seeing Julian in the street next to me.

DD: Okay, gotcha. But the names that were recognized on the streets were Stokely [Carmichael], H. Rap [Brown], Malcolm [X]. I can't say no to it. Yes, he did that. But I don't think that's what stood out in the country. That might be, at the time, I'm not sure. I couldn't say. What made Julian, you talk about his voice and his pen. And there were these other things that he was into and he did. But it was really his voice and his pen, and his ability to communicate in different circles and bring it together. You've got the action. The action is there. But his great ability was to take the action and move it across the country where people could hear it, understand it and get the meaning of it. That's what really made the difference in the movement. To me, that's what people knew. To a large extent that's what Julian's reputation was across the country. That's why when you pick up some of the more important documentaries done in the country it's Julian Bond that's translating them. You don't see the ax handle. You see . . .

GI: But he never backed down from anything.

DD: Right.

GI: Did you ever see him lose his cool in public or private? Do you ever remember him being uninformed about important topics of the day?

DD: No, never. That was his thing. It doesn't mean you have to talk all the time. It means when you do talk people will listen to you. That's what he brought to the table. He was able to move the movement from the action and the activity where it was across the country and to different people and different groups.