

# An Interview with Dr. Porter Troutman

An Oral History Conducted by Claytee D. White

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The UNLV @ Fifty Oral History Project

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## Preface

Dr. Porter Troutman grew up in Newellton, a small farming community in Louisiana. He graduated from Ruth Wood Elementary School and went on to a high school in St. Joseph, Louisiana. He then attended Southern University from 1961 to 1965 and earned his Bachelor's Degree there. His father held a multitude of jobs to support the family and was highly involved in the Civil Rights movement.

Porter was encouraged by his father to stay in school and work within the system rather than get involved in the '60s demonstrations. However, he was witness to the KKK pressures that were put on his father, which caused the family to have to leave town overnight. In college, he engaged in protests and marched with fellow students like H. Rap Brown. After graduation, he came out west to Las Vegas.

Porter briefly left Las Vegas and interviewed in Chicago for a teaching job. The interviewer impressed upon him what poor conditions existed in the Chicago school districts, so he decided against staying there. He came back to Las Vegas, worked for one year in the recreation department, then went to Northern Arizona University (NAU) and got his master's degree in elementary education. He followed that with an Education Specialist certification at UNLV.

Dr. Troutman taught for five years and then took the opportunity to become a team leader for Teacher Corps, a competency-based teacher education program. After five weeks, he was appointed Associate Director for Teacher Corps, and eventually ended up as Director. During the ten years he worked for Teacher Corps, he also became one of the first blacks to earn a doctorate in Education Administration at NAU.

Teacher Corps was designed to train teachers to work effectively and sympathetically with urban students from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds. Porter carried that commitment forward into his teaching, helping build multicultural education from one credit to three credits to a master's degree in education with emphasis on multicultural education.

Today Dr. Porter teaches two or three classes per semester. He teaches all graduate classes and the occasional undergraduate class. He has designed four classes that specifically address multicultural issues, and these courses specifically target teachers' knowledge base, give them strategies for dealing with students, and identify resources and materials for them to use in the classroom.

**It's November 20th, 2006. We're in the conference room in the education building with Dr. Troutman. And I'm with Emily [Powers] and I'm Claytee [D. White].**

**So how are you doing today?**

I'm good. Just a little tired but good.

You just got off a plane, right?

Just got off a plane from DC, flew all night. And I'm still functional.

**Okay, good. Were you able to sleep on the plane?**

I was. But I had a challenge to my right. But we negotiated that.

**I've gotten these earphones. Oh, they're great. They block out all the noise. Best way to fly.**

**We're here to talk about UNLV today. But before we talk about that, could you tell us just a little bit about your earlier life, where you grew up?**

Sure. My name is Porter Lee Troutman, Jr. And I grew up in a little town called Newellton, Louisiana, actually a farming town with a population of about 3,000 people. I went to a segregated school, Ruth Wood Elementary School. Graduated from there and then went on to high school. The high school was located in St. Joseph, Louisiana. And from there it was Southern University. My father was kind of a logger in the logging business. And he also owned a school bus, as well. He had a multitude of jobs aside from logging and the school bus. He was very much an activist in the civil rights movement back in that time. And actually we had to relocate from Newellton to another area, Saginaw, Michigan, and then eventually Salt Lake, Utah; Las Vegas, Nevada; Alexandria, Louisiana. During that time I attended Southern University from '61 to '65, obtained a BS degree. That was during the time of the civil rights movement.

I was recruited by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference -- SCLC I think it was during that time. They were recruiting in all of the historical black colleges. I had a conversation with my father and he encouraged me to stay in school and not go on the bus rides and that kind of thing. And I'm really happy I did. I can thank him today because he was an activist. He had to relocate because of the Klan activities and a lot of the activities that were going on in the town during that particular time.

And I guess once that happened to me, it kind of resonated in my mind that I'd like to carry the battle forward. And I have been an activist all my life and was one at Southern University.

One of my best friends -- needless to say I don't know where he is now -- was H. Rap Brown [<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USArapB.htm>.] And Rap I understand is incarcerated now. He was a real activist. My father encouraged me not to go that way. He said the best way is to get your education and work within the system.

**I guess your father was really smart. Give me your parents' names.**

My father's name is Porter Lee Troutman, Sr. My mother's name is Julia Mae Troutman. And she's still living. She just had a birthday a couple of days ago. I talk to her every day.

**Oh, wonderful. How close is your hometown to Talullah?**

Talullah is 23 -miles.

**And I guess you know why I'm asking that question? You know that we had a large population influx coming to Las Vegas from Talullah.**

Right.

**Now, which year did your family move to Las Vegas?**

My family moved to Las Vegas back in the 50s, early 50s, early, early 50s. They migrated from Alexandria, Louisiana, to Saginaw, Michigan, to Salt Lake City, Utah, and then Las Vegas, Nevada.

**Now, why Salt Lake City?**

My father was in the service during that time. So he spent some time there and my mother spent some time there.

**Tell me about his activities. Do you remember any of the activities? Were you old enough?**

I do remember his activities. He was a deacon in the church. And they had meetings at the lodge. He was attempting to organize an NAACP chapter. Of course, you always have people that will go out and reveal what was going on. He and Wydell -- the guy's name was Wydell -- he and Wydell were attempting to organize an NAACP chapter. And the Klan actually assaulted Wydell in terms of physical injuries. They attempted to get my father, but he was smart enough to exit the town and leave everything. He just left. They were real active during that time. And they just did not want I guess civil rights organizations involved in the movement. And he was a very highly outspoken man. And I'm not going to use the term that he was labeled. Oh, he's a bigoted you know what. So he was never afraid of anything like that. He was just a strong man, kind of a

driven man. I do remember those activities. And I guess during one of the lodge meetings they had -- I don't know if you call them traitors or what. But somebody went back and revealed to law enforcement what he was attempting to do. They got wind of it and they tried to put a lot of pressure on him.

**So how did he go about leaving town?**

We simply packed in the middle of the night. He had some people come in and take all the furniture and everything away. And we left.

**Was he a Mason?**

He was a Mason, right. He was a Mason and a deacon in the church.

**I'm from North Carolina, a little town in North Carolina. At one time the story used to be told that whenever men needed to get out of town, if they were a Mason, Masons always helped them.**

Sure. Now, that may have happened. All I know is some people assisted us in moving. And he was just determined to really make things right because he saw a lot of injustice and mistreatment and people just being passive in a sense. He was not a passive man.

**How did you decide to go back to Southern, go back to Louisiana to go to school?**

I was there when I graduated. So I just --

**So you did not move to Michigan with the family?**

I did not move. I just stayed in school. And then when I graduated I just came West. But I had two choices: Grambling or Southern. Grambling was a no-no. My father and I got in a big argument about that.

**Why?**

I don't know. I guess the perception.

**Too much partying?**

Well, I guess Grambling was kind of known as a country school in a sense. Southern was more urban, contemporary. I would say in my own opinion it has better programs, academic programs and so forth. So I wanted to go to Southern.

**Tell me what Southern was like. And tell us a little more about H. Rap Brown.**

H. Rap Brown and I had all of our sociology classes together. He was an extremely bright and

intelligent guy. He made all A's. And I still remember to this day we were in a sociology class with one of our instructors, Ms. Washington. And we would always have a lot of questions regarding the system and the history books. Why aren't black people exhibited in the history books? The only black person that I remember or recall seeing in a history book throughout my formal education was a native-looking guy who was black, turned a neat eye, Whitney's cotton gin. And that was the extent of that but not a lot of conversation regarding that. And I noticed that throughout my formal education all the way up through college.

Through college it was during the civil rights, '61 through '65 of the movement. There were a lot of activities that were going on. SCLC was on the campus. There were things on the news. We protested. We went downtown. We crossed the railroad tracks. Southern University is located in Scotlandville. I think Scotlandville was about seven miles from Baton Rouge, so we actually marched across the railroad tracks -- I think it was '65 -- all the way downtown. And we were met with a lot of resistance, tear gas, police dogs and all that kind of stuff.

**And which year was that approximately?**

I want to say '63, '65. That was kind of the education. What was the other question?

**About H. Rap.**

H. Rap. Yeah, more or less he was just an extremely bright, intelligent, young man who committed his life to the movement. He was more committed than I was in terms of he wanted to see change and he really didn't care how change occurred. He was kind of an extreme activist.

**Any means necessary.**

Any means necessary. That was kind of his philosophy when it came to that. And I remember when he left school. He left school I think during his junior year. Like I said before he was a straight A -- he was an extremely smart student. But he always challenged the system. And we always challenged this one instructor as I stated before, Ms. Washington. And then she would just kind of shoo us. Oh, you guys don't know what you're talking about. You know, she was saying that and I can understand because she probably did not want to be accused of, you know, assisting and being real active and that kind of stuff. You know how politics are in Louisiana.

**Oh, yes. My parents were in North Carolina. My mother was always frightened during that period that we would get involved.**

**Did you join a fraternity at Southern?**

I started out being a Kappa. Then I kind of ventured out, and eventually I became a Kappa. Most of my friends were Kappas. And eventually I did join a fraternity, Kappa Alpha Psi. That's the only fraternity in the world. All the other fraternities are for Boy Scouts.

**I won't let any Omega in the office hear this.**

But that's okay. We're all about the same issue. The mission is excellent.

**That's true. And you guys are doing some great things these days.****So once you finished Southern, tell me what kind of jobs you took.**

Once I finished Southern I came West. And when I got here, I was looking for a job. My first job was in the recreation department. I worked one solid year in the recreation department with Joe Haynes, the brother of Marcus Haynes. I don't know if you know Marcus Haynes, famous basketball player, magicians, just known all over the world. But anyway, that was my first job. Before I got here I went to Chicago and I interviewed for a job and was going to take a job as a teacher in Chicago. The lady in personnel asked, "Well, where are you from?" I said Las Vegas. She said, "And you want to come here to teach?" And I said yes. She said if you're from Las Vegas, I'd go back there. And then she began to tell me about how the school district was there during that time. There was just a tremendous turnover. The schools were really in poor, poor, poor shape, and she was telling me that teachers would go out at the drop of a hat. In other words, there were a lot of issues that they were grieving about and they just didn't stick around. They would go out like two and three times a month. And the kids were really just challenging. She said most of the time you were just responsible for taking the roll.

Later on I found out that the Chicago school system was in turmoil, in a lot of turmoil. So I returned here, worked one year in the recreation department and then came out here and got a master's degree in elementary education.

**Here at UNLV?**

At UNLV, right. Taught for five years in the district. I became very disenchanting because, again, I wanted to see change and change wasn't really where I was in the classroom. I figured I would do better if I got to the university level and started working on some things. From working one year in the recreation department and then teaching five years, the university had a program. They

had what they called a Teacher Corps program. This was collaboration between the Clark County School District, the community and the university. And they hired I think it was 16 leaders for six teams of people. These teams were responsible for a pre-service program for interns. The interns were people that had 60 hours. And they were recruited from all across the country. The university, the school district and the community were all involved in this collaborative process. A special program was set up for those interns to acquire an elementary education degree in elementary education to address the urban needs of students. In other words, it was kind of an Urban Ed degree where those interns that were in the program -- we had as many as 25 or 30 interns from all around the country. There were like five recruitment centers at least that we drew these people from, and they would come in with 60 hours. I worked as a team leader for five weeks and I was kicked upstairs to associate director and eventually to director.

But what the university did was design a 60-hour program for the interns. And the interns had three obligations. They had to do ten hours of community service so they would have a perception of what was going on in the community. Then they had to do what we call the schoolwork. They had to demonstrate the skills that the university was responsible for developing. The program was actually a competency-based teacher education program where the university instructors or professors created modules and these were learning modules. And then the students were held accountable for demonstrating those skills under the supervision of a team leader in a classroom of students. Okay. And then the university instructor would also come out and observe the interns as they demonstrated those skills and all the coursework that we designed here.

So I was kind of a broker. We had like a million dollars about every year to kind of make changes. Teacher Corps program was a change program. And that was where my head was during that time. We needed to really look at the education system. We needed to really prepare students to be effective educators in the urban school districts. And that was kind of a national mission all across the country. We were just fortunate that we had that kind of program here. So I was real excited about that. I did that for ten years here from being associate director and finally I became director.

We worked here at the university for ten years. But we also worked not only here in Clark

County with the urban district, but we also went out in the surrounding counties. We had a program in Nye County that served Pahrump, Beatty, Amargosa -- I can't think of the other little town. But we offered an in-service program for that particular area, as well. And what that really equated to -- for those teachers that were out in the rural kind of areas we designed an in-service program based on the same kind of arrangement, instructor- designed learning modules, so those teachers could demonstrate those skills with a set of kids in a classroom. And, of course, you had the community component as a part of that because the interns would have to be a part of the intern component. They still had ten hours of community service in a rural area. They had the university work at the university, which was working on their master's degree. Then they had the classroom experience. So, again, you were taking courses at the university, demonstrating ten hours a week in a community component and working in the classroom to demonstrate those modules and skills that were identified by the instructor. We called them competencies. Those competencies were agreed upon by the school district, the principal, the team leader and the university. It was kind of a collaborative process.

I think that particular model is a solid model. It is certainly a model that they're looking at today. I think it went away, but it went away because of the Reagan Administration. It was really an effective program that made a difference. And I think anytime you have a competency-based teacher education program where you're going to design those courses and require students to demonstrate skills in an urban setting with a group of urban students and at the same time spend some time in the community, I think you're better prepared to be an effective teacher.

I would go so far as to say that's one of the district's problems right now. A lot of the teachers that they hire have never had any experience working with urban students. And as a result of that they're frustrated and they leave. Those are just facts. And they leave in high numbers.

**But we need so many teachers and we need them so rapidly. How can we get that number?**

You know, a lot of pressure was placed on our college, teacher education program, to produce a lot of teachers. I think what you're looking at -- I think you minimize your quality with accelerated programs. There are all kinds of accelerated programs that are out there. But looking at research they don't stay long. There are programs out there -- people would come in that have a

BS degree. They can almost qualify in a year or three months or whatever. I call them accelerated programs that don't last too long. Those people that go through those programs and are placed in the district, they may last a year, three years, two or three years and they're out.

So my bias is I'd rather have a quality program where students are prepared, are given responsibility to deal with specific kinds of competencies that are going to make the difference in the lives of students that are out there. I think the only way you can do that is have what I call a culturally responsive curriculum whereby those students are prepared to really look at the culture of your students and kind of tweak the curriculum to reflect those experiences. Otherwise, we miss the boat. Although we have the No Child Left Behind and all those kinds of things, I think culture is paramount. I don't see how you can effectively teach anything without knowing the culture of your students. And I think that's the challenge to Clark County School District.

**Now, when you were working with that program and you became the director of it, were you employed by UNLV by that time?**

I was employed by UNLV. In fact, this is a funny story. Charles Sylvestri was the personnel director during that time. And we used to laugh about it. I think I had one of the longest leave of absences of anyone because I was away from the district ten years. And every year -- are you going to come back this year? Are you going to come back this year? How about this year? Give me one more year. So I did that for ten years. Finally, after the program ended in '83, I decided that -- you know, I really liked this atmosphere. And I think if we're talking change, then this is a place where change -- because I think institutions are created to resolve social and academic issues. So I saw this as a possibility for doing those kinds of things. That's one of the reasons why my content areas are multicultural education, teacher education. Those are really paramount to me.

**So where did you go back to school to get your --**

I came here for a year and then I went to Northern Arizona University. Let me reverse. What did I do? I went to Northern Arizona University and got my master's. Then I came here and I got an education specialist. Finally I went back to Northern Arizona University and got my doctorate. I think I was probably -- this is insignificant -- one of the first blacks to get a degree in Ed administration from Northern Arizona University. And that happened in -- I want to say '77, but

I'm not really sure. After that time the Teacher Corps program had a special program. They called it the Teacher Corps Associates. And, again, it was all involved in multicultural education. There were 12 Teacher Corps associates that were selected from around the country. I was one of the 12. And Dr. Carl Grant out of the university of Wisconsin -- this is like post-doc work, after I got my doctorate. Our focus was just on multicultural education. We had about four years of intense -- was it four years? Two years of intense training in multicultural education, diverse kinds of issues. We met primarily at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. So I spent a lot of time at University of Wisconsin, Madison. And then we would meet in different places around the country.

**Now, you were here starting about the early 70s?**

I was here in '71, June of '71.

**What was this city like at that time? What was the campus like? It was about '75 before you came to work on this campus, right?**

'71.

**So tell me about the city, the Westside, as well as UNLV.**

Okay. The Westside was a challenge. I think the Westside was known as the "Mississippi of the West" of because you still have a lot of people -- majority culture people migrating from the South here that held the same kind of views that they held in the South. It was my understanding sometimes in the 60s most of the black entertainers could come to town and they could perform, but they could not stay on the Strip [This happened in the 1940s and 1950s.]. And I'm told that Sammy Davis, Jr., I guess took the privilege of jumping in the pool at the Sands and they drained the pool [Sammy Davis does not address this in his books but the story is also attributed to Dorothy Dandridge]. And those kinds of attitudes and so forth. All the black entertainers would come in and they'd perform and then they'd stay in the Moulin Rouge. But then I think Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis, Jr., got together and they really made a difference in terms of entertainers performing here and being able to stay on the Strip.

There were a lot of people back in the 60s that were involved -- I was involved to a certain extent. Jim Anderson, Helen Anderson's husband, was over the Civil Rights Commission and did a lot of work in that area. I want to say Reid, Charles Keller, these were lawyers. I think Charles

Keller filed the integration plan.

**Consent decree.**

Consent decree, right, it was back in the 70s I think it was. So the town basically was a segregated, racist town. That's what it was. There was a lot of racism that black people confronted. Blacks were more or less confined in a so-called, quote, Westside area. There was a perception regarding that; that that's a bad area and all of the crime occurs in that particular area. And then I distinctly remember there was a group of women that did a report. I can't think of the name of the report right now. But they alleged that most of the crime was not committed on the Westside. It was committed in Paradise Valley and other surrounding areas. And I think you still find the same thing today. You'll see one or two crimes and it's highlighted as, oh, it's a bad area when, in fact, that is not true. When you look at the statistics, the statistics will tell the true story of where most of your crime was.

But I say in all Las Vegas is a challenging city when it comes to race relationships and so forth. When I look at the school district, look at the demographics of the school district, I think I was just reading the other day that the Hispanic population is now the majority-minority population here. It just makes a lot of sense to me if the district would employ what I call a culturally diverse curriculum -- and when I say that I mean you would have policies in place. You would have a curriculum in place. And, again, I think the culture is at the heart of this whole thing.

**Tell me about UNLV at that point in history.**

UNLV is also a challenging institution. I think there are diversity issues that should have been addressed years ago that were not addressed years ago. And even today we have goals and objectives that are there. I think one outstanding thing of the incoming president is Dr. Ashley has stated that there will be a Vice President of Diversity at the cabinet level. And I think that's a major, major, major step to take. I think you have to have, again, someone in charge of that. You have to have policies and procedures in place. And you have to have some kind of benchmarks, as well as an accountability process, in place to really deal with those issues that affect the diversity of the campus.

I was kind of moved by the recent decision. And I'm not really sure where that decision is.

**(End Tape 1, Side A.)**

-- which I think is great. I don't think it means that we're going to be a part. I think the center is kind of a bridge to have all ethnic groups meet and communicate with each and every one. But I think there's the perception out there that if you have a multicultural center, then it's only for those students that are diverse when, in fact, it's an all-inclusive process. So I see that as important. I see that not only as important for race relations, but when we look at economic development we look at the global economy, that's just the right thing to do. I think that although administrators in the past have attempted to put those policies and practices in place, Dr. Ashley has really a great opportunity to move forward and he's taken a really major, major step to do that.

**Would you apply for that vice presidency?**

I enjoy teaching. I enjoy my students. I enjoy teaching classes in multicultural education.

**That should be a yes or no.**

No. No, I'm not interested. Most of my energies right now are going toward NAME, National Association of Multicultural Education, which I'm a founder of. This is our 16th anniversary. NAME is the only professional organization that is entirely devoted to multicultural education.

**Tell me more about it now.**

NAME, National Association of Multicultural Education. What is it? It's an organization that's dedicated to pre-K through 16, multicultural education programs from elementary all the way through the university. In other words, we're all about inclusion and diversity. Basically, I think there are six areas that we focus on. I don't have those areas in my mind now. But there are six points. We call them six points of consensus -- respect, developing a curriculum, having a responsive pedagogy. I can't think of all the six points, but I'll share those with you when I get back to my office. But the bottom line is we believe that respecting culture or responding to cultural issues when it comes to curriculum should be present from pre-K through 16. And that's elementary, intermediate high school and college. Those classes that you take all have a diversity strand. The curriculum ought to be culturally responsive, reflect the historical and sociological contributions of ethnic groups and that there ought to be more than one perception when it comes to history because you've heard the old story about "His-story." I think you've got a different perspective from an ethnic group as opposed to other people writing about the historical

contributions. So bottom line is NAME is an all-inclusive organization devoted entirely to respect, responsibility and addressing the needs of a multicultural society.

**When you started working here, '71, early 70s, school desegregation was one of the -- there were two big areas of concern at that time, school desegregation and the welfare rights movement.**

Right.

**First I want you to tell me about school desegregation. How did you see it? What did you see happening here in this city? Some of the leaders. Those kinds of things.**

Sure. In terms of school desegregation I was involved in an exchange program initially prior to the sixth grade center program being implemented. And what that equated to -- I was paired with a teacher from across town. It was kind of like an experiment. I would take my class over to his class for two or three days. And then he would bring his class over to my school for two or three days. And it was just kind of an exchange kind of program prior to the implementation of the sixth grade center. And I think the sixth grade center plan was implemented back in 71 when --

**Explain that.**

Okay. It was when Charles Keller filed a suit on behalf of a teacher. What that really equated to was that there were six Westside schools that were predominantly black schools where kids were segregated. There was a perception that if these schools were integrated then the achievement level will go up. So Dr. Keller filed a complaint with the courts. Judge Thomas rendered a decision that the Clark County School District was mandated to implement some kind of desegregation program, integration program. So they reviewed I guess over 600 different plans. You know and I know that all integration plans are unfair. One group will always bear the burden. The situation here was the black kids were being bussed seven out of 12 years.

So when they came out with the Sedway Senate plan, what they did was they paired the six predominately black schools with some satellite schools, white satellite schools. And all the sixth graders from that satellite schools were bussed into one of the so-called sixth grade centers. Prior to that, they built a tall fence around the building because there was a perception and fear that the kids would be assaulted by black people. There was just a whole bunch of craziness that ran wild in the community.

A lot of times that year, that transition year where the satellite school students were being bussed in, there was a perception that it was a totally wasted year because teachers were not prepared to deal with those students. When I say that they weren't prepared to deal with the students, I mean they weren't prepared to deal with the black students because the black students were bussed out to the other schools. So a lot of times those students would just end up there in the classroom. I mean the treatment -- as far as I was concerned the treatment level went down, down, down. Teachers could not relate in a lot of cases.

**Now, I was under the impression that those sixth grade centers were integrated.**

They were integrated for one year.

**Oh, just for one year.**

Just one year. The sixth grade center plan meant that all of these centers were paired with so many schools, six or seven schools. And all of the sixth graders from these satellite schools were bussed right there for that one year.

**So where did the black kids go that were in the --**

The black kids all but -- I think the only time the black kids stayed was kindergarten and sixth grade. All the rest of the time they were bussed out to other schools, you see, because these became sixth grade centers.

**So that didn't work.**

That didn't work.

**So what happened?**

Then I think they went to -- what did they call them? I forget the name of the schools. But they were labeled as special schools. I can't recall the name. But they came up with a choice I think it was. So students -- I can't think of the name of the schools in that situation. That's not the situation now. Those students can attend schools in their community because for 20 years they looked at all the data. And the district didn't really keep a record that I know of to show that there was some academic progress in terms of the integration, the sixth grade integration plan. As a result of that I think it was abandoned and they went back to the traditional schools but in another configuration. So I think really what I'm attempting to say is neighborhood schools or specialized schools.

**Neighborhood schools came back.**

Came back, right. And there is some advantage to that because a lot of the people that were living on the Westside did not have transportation to go out and meet the teachers. If they had a problem of some kind, they really couldn't deal with that.

When you look at any integration plan, I think you have to in-service your teachers prior to that time. There was no in-service. I think it was like a one or two-day in-service for those students that were being bussed across town. I think a lot of the students suffered because of that because teachers were not prepared to deal with those populations. Even today you'll find that same thing, where teachers are not prepared to deal with those populations of students.

**If we look at that period, can we see that more money was put in different schools, more than -- were the school equally funded?**

During that time they sank a lot of money into the sixth grade center plan. But I don't think money resolves everything. I think you've got to have people that are compassionate and caring and effective teachers. I think that makes a difference. I think money and effective teachers make a difference especially when it comes to caring. I think schools have always been funded at the same level in the Clark County School District in spite of the lower achievement at a lot of your schools. They're still funded at the same level. I think some schools are fortunate in that they have strong PTAs. So they can get the additional resources that they need at their respective schools. And I think there have been situations whereby those schools that have strong PTAs and strong budgets have shared with some of the lower-performing schools. So there is some parity there. But I think that's more or less an administrative decision.

**Do you remember anything about the Welfare Rights Movement?**

I do.

**Could you share some of that?**

Sure. I remember Ruby Duncan. Ruby was a really strong visionary woman who made a difference. She was a true activist. She was dedicated. I think a lot of people misunderstood and labeled her wrong. But she made a big difference in the welfare rights of poor women today. In fact, I worked with Ruby on some projects -- Dr. Sullivan and I -- back during that time. She helped a lot of people. It's just unfortunate that she didn't get the kind of support that she really

needed. But what she did, did make a difference in the lives of a lot of people. I have the most utmost respect for her. If I can help her in any way, my arms are always open to her. I just admired her dedication. I admired what she did. And I admired her commitment to improving conditions of welfare mothers.

**I will be interviewing her within the next few weeks.**

Well, you give her my best regards.

**I will. We're about to do a history of the 1970s. We're going to do a collaborative effort with UNR. And we're going to look at the 70s. They will look in Reno. We will look here in Las Vegas. So I really appreciate this because now we'll use part of this for that project, as well.**

Sure. One of the things that we did during the time of the Teacher Corps project to be honest with you -- Brenda Mason, you probably don't know her. Brenda was one of the first black Board of Regent members here. Brenda worked with me in the Teacher Corps project. She handled the community component part of the program. We actually started the library. The library came out of Teacher Corps, the movement that Brenda -- the community component. And, eventually, it just kind of accelerated from that.

**Now, are you talking about the library that was over in what was The Cove hotel?**

The Cove hotel, right. That was started by Teacher Corps, Brenda Mason, myself and the university because we went out and got all the books and everything in it. And it's just kind of funny how you lose the contributions. But that didn't really matter to me. The only thing I wanted to do was to see it move forward, which brings me back to another point.

During that time I was working at the Doolittle Center. They did not have a senior citizen club for blacks during that time. And I was one of the -- I started the senior citizens club for blacks at Doolittle Center. And I think now it's still going. But it wasn't really that important to me. I just saw it as a thing that needed to go forward.

**Well, that is important.**

And it's important, right. And then my wife, Bobbie, and I saw a need for history here, recognizing the contributions of black teachers. So we created what we call the after-Roe American culture services. It's a nonprofit organization. We would have events for teachers,

cultural kind of events. We would recognize teachers that had 10, 15, 25 years of services in Clark County, which to me was extremely important. We did that for about five or six years because we thought that that was extremely important. And what we did is we simply went to the school district and asked Charles Sylvestri for a list of black teachers and the number of years that they had taught in the district. And he gave that to us. We had four or five different cultural events. We also had a black women's display from the Smithsonian Institute that we would also take around. But my wife would be in a better position to tell you about that.

**Now, what is your wife's name?**

Bobbie Jean Troutman. She was the host of KCEP for a total of 16 years. And she can really give you some --

**Oh, so she's probably interviewed in the community.**

Right. And she can accentuate what I'm saying. But you know how you just don't really think about it, you just do it and move it? She did a lot of I would call humanitarian work.

**That's wonderful. We've started a Las Vegas Black Historical Society. We'll have to invite you and Bobbie Jean to that.**

Sure.

**Okay, good. Could you tell me a little more about Brenda Mason? Is she still in the city?**

Brenda Mason was as I recall one of the first black regents here in Clark County. Brenda went away to law school and got a law degree. She worked for the Justice Department in San Diego. She's retired now. But she lives in San Diego. She played an important part in the Teacher Corps program and establishing the library I would say.

**Well, what we would like to do for this history of the 1970s is to interview people who haven't been interviewed.**

Sure.

**Now, are you aware also that there's a book about Ruby and her movement now?**

No, I'm not.

**It's called "Storming Caesars Palace."**

No, I haven't.

**We'll have to get you a copy of that. You would be really impressed with the book.**

Sure.

**Now, to get back to the reason for this interview, UNLV...After your ten years with that program that we've talked about for a bit, you came back here.**

Right. I was here already.

**Now, did you have the doctorate at the end of that ten-year period?**

At the end of the ten-year period I had the doctorate, right. During that time Tony Saville was one of the first deans, and we had a conversation. He was a wonderful dean. One of the things that he said to me was, "Well now, you know if you want to stay here you've got to have your doctorate." So I got my doctorate and I stayed here. During that time we were offering one credit in multicultural education, which was really, really bad. That was kind of a challenge for me because, again, following my commitment to justice, inclusion, I saw a need for that, a tremendous need for that. And that became a challenge to me. It moved from one credit to three credits and then finally a master's degree in elementary education with emphasis on multicultural education. And I was kind of responsible for that.

So I'm real happy that that's in place now and I think it will remain in place because that part of the program we require for certification is justified when you look at the demographics. I think the majority culture right now is about 45 percent whereas the minority -- I call it the minority. They're not the minority but the diverse population is close to 60 percent right now. So you can see a tremendous need for teachers to have competencies in terms of working with students that are different from them. And when you look at the profession, the teaching profession it's about 85, 90 percent white female. And they're not coming from the so-called urban areas. They're coming from middle class neighborhoods and that kind of thing. And the populations that they're teaching are a bit different. So they need to have courses, a curriculum in those kinds of issues.

**Could you tell me about Roosevelt Fitzgerald?**

Fitzgerald was a wonderful guy. He wrote a column in *The Voice* newspaper every week regarding diversity and multicultural education. In fact, he was also one of the pathfinders when it comes to ethnic studies. I think he was responsible for the Ethnic Studies Department here on campus. And we worked closely together.

My counterpart, Dr. Tom Wilson, he was the only black -- I think there was Dr. Wilson and Dr. Agnes Lockett. Dr. Agnes Lockett taught courses in -- I think she was in the early childhood education. Tom Wilson was one of my best friends, bless his soul. In fact, he was my mentor. He came from I think it was Arizona State or University of Arizona. And even today we have a Tom Wilson scholarship award that I initiated once he passed. But he was one of two instructors that worked here. Helen Thompson way back in the 60s funded a chair for him to be here. That's how he got here. He taught courses in reading and multicultural education.

**Now, who funded the chair?**

Helen Thompson.

**Who is Helen Thompson?**

She was a Board of Regents member.

**I'll have to remember that name.**

He was a wonderful man. And like Fitzgerald he also wrote a column in *The Voice* newspaper, which is a predominately black newspaper, on how to teach your children how to read and multicultural issues. Roosevelt Fitzgerald's weekly column was on diverse issues, diversity, long, long, long time ago. I've got a lot of respect and love for both of them. They made a lot of contributions to this institution. I don't think it would where it is today had not it been for their visions. And I think I was a part of that in that I just kind of carried it forward. Even though they're gone I think the spirit of their intent is still in existence because you still see the ethnic studies department going. You still see multicultural courses being taught here, as well as a degree in -- a master's in elementary education with an emphasis on multicultural education. So I'm excited about that. But they were pathfinders when it comes to diverse issues.

**I agree. There are a couple of events that I think you might be partly responsible for. There is an event every year where black students are honored.**

Right.

**What is that called and how is that done?**

Gee, I'm so...what is that called? Anyway, it comes out of Dr. Sullivan's office. And what happens is we honor all of the black students, undergraduate and graduate students, with exceptional GPAs. And they are awarded -- they're recognized for their academic achievement.

Then we recognize four students for the Roosevelt Fitzgerald Academic Award. And those students are two undergraduates and two graduate students, two females, two males. So, you see, we have a parity there for Fitzgerald. And we also recognize Dr. Tom Wilson, community service award. I look at them as both academic and community service awards. It's just that these two great guys made some really great contributions when it came to moving the agenda forward toward diversity and multicultural education. But those outstanding students are recognized for their GPAs. I think it's three point zero for both the undergraduate, two female -- no -- one female, one black -- no -- one female, one male student, and then one female and one male student for the graduate program. There are a total of four students that are recognized. And they get book awards. The book awards vary from two to \$400 a year. And I think we've been doing that for quite sometime. But it is an annual event for diverse or black students. And it's well attended.

**I'd like to know a little about some of the classes that you taught. Have you designed some classes for this department?**

Absolutely.

**Tell me about some of those classes.**

Sure. My content areas are teacher Ed and multicultural education. As far as my teacher Ed course I was responsible for the introduction to elementary education, which is the introductory course to all of our teacher education majors. The way I have that course designed is they get their theory from me. They have to do a total of 30 hours of observation in a classroom with a teacher. They have specific kinds of activities that they engage in, in order to give them kind of a perception of what teaching really is. They do clerical kinds of things. They do one-on-one tutoring. They do other things that teachers feel that will make them better teachers. They assist the teachers in paperwork or instruction. They have kind of a three-prong responsibility. Those 30 hours are divided among the clerical, the instructional kinds of activities and one-on-one working with students in the classroom. And the teachers are responsible for evaluating them at the end of the semester. And this is just an introduction class.

At the end of the semester they get feedback from the teacher, as well as me, regarding do I want to be a teacher or do I want to look at another profession? At least they're in the field and they don't have to wait until their senior year before they get out and find that they don't really like students. They're given an opportunity to really work one-on-one with the students, interact with

the students and interact with the entire school population so they get a perception on where they want to be. And that's the introduction to elementary education course.

The other courses that I'm responsible for -- there's a multicultural education course for teachers. There's a theory and research course and there is a topics and multicultural course. So there are at least three or four graduate courses that I'm responsible for designing. The multicultural education course, which is CIG750, deals with case studies, 14 different case studies regarding different ethnic students in various contexts. I require the students to really analyze those case studies. I've developed a rubric for them to analyze the case study. What that does is kind of give them the insight into case studies regarding a host of students and then looking at one student in a case study context. I don't think there's any one prescriptive situation to handle diversity. I think there is a multitude of socio and political issues that are out there that really affect a student. And I think teachers need to be just cognizant of those issues.

One of the things that I do is that I look at the student as a pivotal person and then I look at agents. These are institution schools and things that really impact the culture of those students. And also I look at the attributes of culture -- the sex, the gender, the age, the disability. All of those things are attributes. And I think when you look at the attributes, the agents that influence all these attributes, as well as the behavior of the students, I think you can really, really do an effective job of teaching students. But unless you're not aware of that, unless you're --

**(End Tape 1, Side B.)**

So basically the graduate courses that I designed are designed for three things -- increase the student's knowledge base, give them some strategies for dealing with the students and then identify some resources and materials for students. And then the three courses are multicultural education where we deal with those case studies. We use The Theory and Research of Multicultural Education, which is based on James's Handbook of Multicultural Education, a handbook of research in multicultural education because, again, there is a perception out there that multicultural education is food, fun and festival kinds of things. And when you do that, that's it. But it's more than that. So the second course really deals with a lot of theory and research and what's really relevant. Bottom line: culturally responsive pedagogy.

The third book -- the third course is topics. Again, we're just looking at the various issues

that exist in multicultural -- culturally relevant pedagogy. What is the other one? Culture capital. Culture competencies. Those specific kinds of issues that really affect the learning of -- well, affect learning of diverse learners in the classroom. But the bottom line is to hopefully provide a forum for teachers to understand the culture of the students that they're dealing with. That's kind of bottom line of everything.

**Now, don't tell me that you're still teaching all of those classes. You're just -- are you teaching any of them?**

I teach all of them, right. We offer two of those courses every semester.

**So you teach two classes per semester.**

Two to three classes every semester, right. I do all the graduate class. And then occasionally I'll pick up an undergraduate class. We also have the EDU280 classes, which is valuing culture diversity. So there are a total of four classes that I designed for the multicultural educational component.

**Those are exciting. They sound exciting even if I weren't a teacher in the classroom.**

Sure. And I think it's just the right thing to do. Again, my stance is how do you teach students effectively without knowing what their cultures are? How can you design a curriculum that's not reflective of their experiences and so forth? They don't really buy into it because I'd like to see some curriculum about me especially when it comes to history. You're not going to find a lot of the historical and social contributions of ethnic groups in history books. So if it's not there the other option is to give teachers the resources to make sure it's there because the Internet is out there and so forth.

**You are aware, though, that now we do have some of those books even about history of the west.**

Sure. I realize that.

**Okay, good.**

But you know what I found out most of the textbooks --

**Oh, textbooks.**

They reflect history. I think noted authors like Howard Zinn really report history from the ethnic group perspective as opposed to someone else's perspective.

**In our history textbooks are not that great. But there are some history books that I have seen in some graduate classes. But they're not textbooks.**

Right. Well, the thing that really irritates me is I'm thinking about a textbook that is presently used in Clark County School District. And I don't know about here at the university. "Huck Finn." I think it is used here at the university. It's a beautiful piece of literary work. But it's an offensive piece because Huck Finn has the N word in it over 200 times. Now, you can't even teach that. To me it would be offensive to take that book and take it to a classroom where you have diverse learners and try to teach about Huck Finn. I think you can teach about it in a different context but never with a group of students. It's a beautiful piece of literature. And that book is still presently being used. In Clark County (*School District*) and probably here at the university I've seen some reviews about that. To me that's offensive. There is nothing good about that book other than the literary portion of it. But the content of the book is highly offensive.

**And I'm sure that we could find another book that we could substitute for that.**

Of course. And I think that's why our courses are all about why don't you look at our ethnic literature as opposed to the kind that's demeaning and demoralizing? That dismantles the attitudes and feelings of your students. You know and I know that there's a lot of research around that when people feel good about themselves they learn. If your counterpart here, Emily, if Emily feels good about herself, she's going to continue going to interviews with you. And she'll continue to operate the recorder.

**But Emily now is at the point where she's going to be doing her own interviews. She's just listening to me today. But she's ready. She's already conducted one with me in the room.**

**So she's ready.**

So she's been in the field. That's the advantage: taking the theory to the field and really implementing it.

**That's wonderful. I really appreciate all of the information that you've shared with us. This has just been wonderful.**

Sure.

**If you will get your wife's permission, I would love to call her because we're going to do something about the 1970s and I would love to include her in that. And we want to find**

**people who have not been overly interviewed.**

Sure. She'd be a good one. If you give me your card, I'll make sure she gets it. In fact, I think she told me she met you, but she doesn't know where.

**Oh, this is great.**

**(End Tape 2, Side A.)**