

An Interview with Gene Collins

An Oral History Conducted by Claytee D. White

The Boyer Early Las Vegas Oral History Project

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Preface

Mr. Gene Collins came to Las Vegas to stay around 1966. He discusses the job market here and delineates his work experience and career as culinary employee, operation engineer, and finally as electrician at the Nevada Test Site.

Gene first joined the NAACP at the age of 21 and credits his grandfather's example as motivation. Coaching Little League sports and interacting with those young people convinced him that he could make a difference by speaking up for them. He became a Nevada State Assemblyman to help bring diversification, jobs, and businesses to the black community.

Mr. Collins was voted in as president of the NAACP in Las Vegas from 1998 to 2001. He details the accomplishments of the NAACP during those years and discusses the means by which they were met, including marches and protests. He mentions the Most Improved commendation from the national association, meeting with Winnie Mandela, and kudos from Terry Lenny for the NAACP's part in being able to introduce gaming into Macau.

Mr. Collins' closing comments include thanks to past generations, his wish for future generations, and mention of Assembly Bill 99. He also refers to President Obama's address to the NAACP National Convention in 2009.

This is Claytee White. And I'm with Mr. Gene Collins in his office here in North Las Vegas.

Mr. Collins, how are you doing today?

Truly wonderful.

Wonderful. And today is July 16th, 2009.

Mr. Collins, can you tell me where you're from?

I'm originally from Lake Providence, Louisiana.

Okay. How far is that from New Orleans?

Oh, about four hours, four and a half hours.

And when were you born? And tell me a little about your family.

Well, my mother was one of the old-line guards here. She came here during the late 40s and early 50s. My grandparents raised me, but I came here during the summer months when school was out and everything and I needed vacation. I would come and spend time with my mother, and then when school started back in Louisiana, I would go back.

So when were you born?

April the 7th, 1943.

So this was during the war. So did your mother come for the jobs that were available here during the war?

No, not necessarily. My mother married. That's what brought her here.

And what did your -- was it your stepfather, then?

Yes.

What kind of work did he do here in Las Vegas?

He was a bartender.

So tell me, then, when you came to Las Vegas.

It was in 1960 I think it was when I first came. '59 or '60 I think it was. I think it was 1960.

And this is when you came to stay?

No, no, no. I came to visit I think in -- I only came to stay I think in the early 60s. I think it was 1966 or '67, something like that. That's when I came to stay.

Now, what made you decide? Was it because your family was already here?

Well, yeah. My mother was here, yes. You know, I had friends. And the conditions were great at

the time.

Explain that to me.

Well, the job market was very plentiful. It seemed at the time that there were opportunities for African-Americans to do better than where you were. And so like I say I decided that I would just come. Matter of fact, I really didn't like it when I came here. And I'm not one of the individuals who says there aren't any trees. No, I'm not that. I didn't like it because it was just so hot. It was really, really, really hot. But as I got older and decided to raise a family and everything, then the wages here and the job market here seemed to be better than it was anyplace else. And so that's what brought me back and I stayed.

So what was your career? What kinds of jobs did you work at here?

Well, as everybody when you're growing up, I was a culinary employee. That was in school and everything. But then after school and everything I became an operator's engineer, then electrical. My profession is -- I finally settled on something that I really liked, which is electrician. So I retired as an electrician among other things that I was able to do.

Were you in the union?

Yes.

So tell me, where did your experience start with the NAACP?

Well, my thing was -- the reason why that I got into politics in the first place -- all I had ever done was vote and support individuals who I thought were great leaders and great visionaries. I didn't have any idea of ever doing anything in this political arena except serving. I had no idea. And by coaching little league sports -- baseball, football, basketball and everything like that -- and seeing exactly what some of the things that our young people were going through and talking to some of our elders and everything, I thought that I could make a contribution on bringing about changes and at least addressing issues as they relate to our community. So that's primarily the reason why I got involved.

Like I say, my background is civil rights. So I came out of that civil rights era and everything. When I first got here I don't know if McMillan was the president or whoever was the president. But I started coaching little league sports and everything and that added more fuel and stuff like this. And then I saw like I say a need that I thought I could do something because at the

time, even though that we were living here or even though the jobs were plentiful, it was different type of jobs. I worked at the Test Site for a while like so many more individuals that used to be at the Test Site. The opportunities for jobs were okay, but certain areas were constricted to people of color.

And I decided that -- I went and I talked to some of the old-line guards here and asked them whether they would support me if I ran and they said yes. I told them exactly what my vision was, what I was planning on doing after kind of growing up here, exactly seeing firsthand the disadvantages of how people of color were being treated. And so after getting permission from the old-line guards in the community, some of them who knew me had a license with other individuals, but they didn't go against me. They just voted for the other candidate. They didn't go against me. I was fortunate enough that we were able to win.

So which seat were you running?

Well, you were talking about the NAACP, but I was state assemblyman before then. I thought you were talking about --

Oh, so you were talking about running for president of the NAACP.

NAACP, yeah.

That wasn't clear.

But I did the same thing when I got ready to run for public office as well. I went to the powers that be in this community and told them exactly what I wanted to do. And I knew that -- even my kids were grown up -- it was incumbent upon people such as myself to try to bring diversification, jobs, businesses and everything into the community so that our children, once they became adults and gotten out of school and out of college and everything and who wanted to move back in the area, then there was something here for them.

Okay. So running for the president of the NAACP, was that your first involvement with the NAACP?

No. I joined the NAACP oh so long ago because I think I joined the NAACP about the same time I became eligible to vote. During that time you had to be 21 years old.

So back in Louisiana you joined?

No. I joined here after I got here. But, my grandfather was a member of the NAACP in the south.

I had gotten experience from listening to my grandfather because, you know, then it wasn't conducive for us to go to meetings and have open meetings. So you had to slip to meetings and everything to discuss exactly because then you didn't have the right to vote. You couldn't do certain things. So I was indoctrinated by the things that I saw my grandfather doing. When I came to Las Vegas and became of age to vote, those were the two things that I did; I registered to vote and then I joined the NAACP.

So you joined here?

Right.

So how did you participate in the branch prior to becoming president?

Well, going to meetings, demonstrations and everything, whatever that was there for me to do then we were doing it. Being kind of reared in the south and being a part of the Civil Rights Movement, it wasn't difficult to transcend from there to here because the issue was something to say. And so it wasn't --

Do you remember any of the demonstrations that you participated in, any of the issues?

Oh, boy. We're talking about the late 60s and early 70s because we brought Dr. Abernathy out here for some issues on redevelopment. I participated in the march on the Strip.

Now, are you talking about the one with --

With Ruby Duncan?

-- Ruby Duncan?

Oh, with the welfare rights mothers, we all were in that. But this was I think after.

So Abernathy came here more than once and participated in a march?

Yeah. Yeah, Reverend Abernathy came because I was in charge of his security. Matter of fact, I had pictures of -- we called him Ab. I have pictures of Ab and myself. I got him in a deal. So I was put in charge of Ab's security and everything. On several occasions he came to help support us on economic development and everything like that.

So once you became president do you remember any of the people who served in your cabinet? And which year were you president?

I think I was president from -- I think it was '98 or '99 up to 2001 or something like this.

1998 to 2001. Do you remember any of the people who served with you?

Yeah. There was Mr. Pete Carr. There was -- oh, boy. I think there was Mrs. Chaney. Yeah, Mrs. Chaney. Mr. Arthur Wright. I think Sheila, my daughter. I think my son was on the executive board.

Who was your first vice president or secretary or treasurer, any of those?

I think Tasha Crockett was the secretary. I don't know if Linda Howard was the first or second vice president. Oh, boy. It's so long ago. I think there's -- what's the name? Mrs. Rose -- oh, boy. I should have -- if I had known we were going to do that, I would have just brought -- at least I would have sat down and been more to the point on this.

What are some of the events that you sponsored during that, what, three-year period that you were president?

Well, what we did -- we were able to -- the things that we did, we got the first gaming resolution that ever passed through the national from this branch.

So explain that.

Well, as you know gaming wasn't treating African-Americans or minorities with the same type of relationship that other individuals had with gaming. African-Americans and people of color didn't have that. So in order for us to be forceful, we got National to give us the authority to address the issues as we saw fit here with gaming because we live here. Gaming wasn't as prominent all across the country as it is now. I think they only had it in Las Vegas. They were thinking about getting it in New Jersey, but it wasn't spread out as it is now. So we went to National to get the okay for us to address the gaming, and we got the first gaming resolution passed through to the national office.

So what did the gaming resolution allow you to do?

It allowed us to address -- and, here again, like I say I would have dug through my records and found that resolution. It allowed us to sit down with gaming and address the, quote, unquote, glass-ceiling positions.

So it allowed you to negotiate with all the big companies on the Strip?

Yeah, to sit and talk with those individuals who would talk. And that brought us to the hundred million dollars.

So tell me about the hundred million dollars.

Well, like I say growing up here and understanding exactly what was going on and knowing that the conditions that we had to fight against, what we did was we put this hundred-million-dollar ten-point plan together and we presented it to the MGM. Like I say the table of contents, it states that, you know, Las Vegas was the "Mississippi of the West," black mark Strip desegregation, the long road to acceptance, NAACP examines business practice in '97, West Las Vegas area 2000, MGM African-American relationship spending, ten-point. This is what --

So may I have a copy of that? What was the outcome?

Well, one of the disturbing things -- we were able to -- after long drawn-out issues and everything like this, we were able to get them to talk to us about, quote, unquote glass-ceiling positions, not hiring contracts as it relates to people of color. I think in -- our points were from '96 up until 2000, the MGM did \$500 million worth of construction work. Only \$890,000 was spent with all of the black civil contractors and everything in Clark County, throughout the county.

So after addressing those issues they said that, well, we will give you a breakdown on the business that we have done with African-Americans. As you know we went through after they gave us their list. We went through and itemized the list. As we went through it, like I say it wasn't anything. That started us on the road of talking about bringing about changes in conditions which allowed people such as Alexis Harmon, who was on the corporate board, and Rose McKinney James -- all of those African-Americans that are in glass-ceiling positions. Even Nevada Partners, they got out their training facilities out of the march that we had on the MGM.

Now, tell me about the march.

Well, the march was due to the fact that --

When was it?

In 2000. The march was due to the fact that they didn't -- was it 2000? 2001, I think it was. It was due to the fact that they didn't want to talk to us about this. And so we had to go and march on the Strip -- and we did it twice -- in order for them to address what our concerns were. After that, after the march, we were able to sit down and to talk. And that brought about the minority purchasing council. That also brought about -- the MGM was saying that before any general contractor will do any work on any of their properties they must have minorities' participation. So we were able to like I said bring about all of those African-American contractors that you see now

that are doing work out there on the Strip. All of those individuals you see sitting down there behind desks and you see out there in the quote, unquote, glass-ceiling positions, it came out of the work that we did. I would like to think that was a positive aspect that came out of that. NMC and all those individuals were very instrumental in getting work.

What was that person's name?

No. It was NMC, that organization, National Minority Contractors, I think NMC. So they were able to do that. Like I said all of those African-Americans out there now -- Thrower, those brothers and sisters out there who are now working -- came out of what we were able to do as NAACP.

Do you remember any of the Freedom Fund dinners that you held during your presidency, any special ones?

Yes. Our guest speaker was -- wait a minute. Oh, my God. Who was our guest? I remember every one we had. We got individuals from outside. We had -- oh, boy. It was very successful, too. Yeah, they were -- wait a minute. Why don't you cut that off?

What we'll do is get you -- because the Lloyd George building down there on Las Vegas Boulevard, we marched on that building as well.

Why?

Well, because of the -- there was a hundred million-dollar project. And they had set aside 20 percent for minorities. Six percent was set aside for women. And that left 14 percent set aside for minorities and others. Well, out of that, the person who got the contract was John Wesley. He got an 800-and-something-thousand-dollar contract out of that. So that left about another \$13 million on the table that nobody else -- no African-American or anybody else got any of the work. So we called a press conference then and said that wasn't fair; that here we have tax dollars, and people of color, African-Americans, were not able to participate on the project. So what we did was we just demonstrated in front of the building because it was totally, totally -- it was wrong for us to do that.

Also, we were awarded Most Improved out of the 2200 branches. We'll compile a list of all of the things. Off the top of my head I don't know. But we have all the documentation on what I'm saying and everything. And I don't think I have another copy. If I had a copy -- hold on a

minute. Let me get you a copy of this stuff. So I'm going to let you go ahead -- you can go ahead and keep that one.

Are you sure? You can just make a copy of it and fax it to me.

No. Go ahead and keep it. When I see you I'll probably get it back. But go ahead and keep a copy of that. But that was some of the stuff that we did and why we asked for the hundred million dollars because like I say --

So you actually requested a hundred million dollars plus the jobs?

Yes. Yes, because, see, before 9/11 blacks spent \$2 billion a year on the properties, on the Strip and downtown in Las Vegas. Let's say in Las Vegas blacks spent \$2 billion a year. And so out of the \$2 billion, not one nickel of that \$2 billion was spent to help assist the black businessman and black businesswoman. So knowing what we had brought to the table and knowing the condition of the African-American businessman and woman, it was incumbent upon us to address those issues once I became president of the NAACP. Those were some of the things that led us to do what we did because we didn't think that it was fair for blacks to bring 2 billion a year into the Las Vegas economy and not one nickel is spent to help assist a black businessman and businesswoman. So we didn't think that was fair. So, therefore, that's what we did. We put together this hundred million investment plan.

And what we wanted to do -- see, what they wanted to do -- the MGM went to Detroit for the gaming license. They said, well, look, we will give Detroit's infrastructure \$50 million, Mayor Archie and everything. So they said okay. This is what they agreed to do for the city of Detroit. Well, we looked at it at that time that Las Vegas was the gaming Mecca of the world. So if you're going to go to Detroit and say that we're going to invest \$50 million in their infrastructure, well then, it's no more than right that you invest something in Las Vegas because this is the gaming Mecca of the world. So we just said, well, look, what about putting a hundred million -- now, they were going to give Detroit a hundred million.

Fifty million. Fifty. A few minutes ago you said 50.

I mean 50 million. They were going to give Detroit 50 million. Thank you for the correction. We wanted to be their corporate partners. So we are saying, look, we want you to invest with us so that you are going to get your money back. We don't want you to give us anything, but we want to

become your corporate partner and invest with us. And then you will be able to receive your money back, the investment, as becoming a part of corporate structure with us. And that didn't pan out. So that's what that hundred-million ten-point plan was all about.

But out of this you see things like Nevada Partners.

Yeah.

So is that part of the hundred million?

No, no, no, no, no. I looked at it as I looked at what Curt Flood did for baseball. You know, baseball had that antislavery clause. And Curt Flood went all the way to the Supreme Court. And rather for the Supreme Court to rule and say that Curt Flood is the reason why that we're going to get rid of this antitrust thing, this antislavery thing, rather than us give Curt Flood the credit for doing away with that slavery thing, the following year -- they didn't rule. The Supreme Court didn't rule against baseball. But the following year all of those things that Curt Flood fought for came down. That's why players can now have all these big old contracts and they can do whatever they want. They didn't give Curt Flood the credit for doing it. But the following year, bingo, it all came down.

So we looked at the same thing that, okay, they didn't invest a hundred million dollars with the African businessman and businesswoman. But we began to see things come up in the community. We began to see African-Americans getting contracts. Until this day they are doing the same thing now. But as far as giving NAACP credit I guess for changing it, no, no, they weren't going to do that.

How does the paperwork flow between a local office like the Las Vegas branch and the regional office and the national office? Do you have to send any kinds of reports to any of these other offices?

Well, see, Las Vegas operated differently until 2001. Yes. We reported directly to National. We have a regional office. If there were problems like in San Francisco, you went to the regional. Vonna Cancer at the time was our regional representative. If you had an issue, you would contact your regional rep, which was Vonna. Then she would come down and address it. We had the opportunity to go directly to National and everything, which made us different from just about any other branch that we have because we had our own 501(c)(3).

Most branches don't?

Most branches didn't. And most branches have a 501(c)(4). But Las Vegas had its own attorney. We had our own 501(c)(3) and everything, so we could mostly address issues as it relates to our community and without -- I mean as long as the executive board gave you permission to do this, you could inform National on what you were doing, but your hands weren't restricted as I think they are today. And so we were allowed to -- that's why we were allowed to go and do things and get things done. And I think all of that came out of that resolution that we passed.

Where was your branch located at the time?

Here.

Right here at this location?

Yeah. A few doors down, Suite 217 and Suite 218.

So we're on Martin Luther King Boulevard.

Right.

Were there any active non-blacks in your administration?

What do you mean active non-blacks?

Did you have any members who were very, very active who were not black?

Oh, yes. Yes. Yes, there were. Okay. Yes. Yeah, there were some that supported us and even addressing the issues that we addressed about quote, unquote, no blacks in glass-ceiling positions, no contracts being let to people of color or I would say to African-Americans or anything like that. And so, yes, we had some other than African-Americans that were participants and very supportive of the branch.

Do you remember who the president was before you became president?

Yes. I think it was Reverend Rogers. I think it was Reverend Rogers, Reverend James Rogers.

And who became president after you? We're trying to do a time line and we're having problems trying to do the time line.

Well, I think it was the minister from the African Methodist church.

Ishman?

No, no, no. See, Ishman took over after the minister left. Dean was his vice president. I can see his face. But I can give you like I said a structure. He came in after. Then Ishman was his vice

president. He leaves. Ishman becomes the president. See, that's how it was. And you can follow the pattern on down from there to where it is now.

Are you still active in any capacity today with the local branch?

No. I'm a lifetime member. But, no, I'm not active.

Are there any other NAACP memories that you'd like to share?

Well, the NAACP, if it is run right, next to the federal government, it is the most powerful organization in this United States.

Why do you say that?

Because the NAACP is a private civil rights organization, which is affordable all -- we have the rights, which is afforded under the Constitution. So the NAACP can address issues that normally organizations cannot and will not address. Had it not been for the NAACP, we would not have been able to -- (phone call).

Being a private civil rights organization we're afforded the rights under the Constitution. But it is the most -- like I say if it is run right because we're the only ones up until -- at the time we were the only one that addressed human rights, civil rights and racial discrimination at that time. And we did a lot of great things by addressing this and getting people's jobs back, like I say sitting down with the powers that be. I mean I got calls from D.C. I don't care who I put a call into, I got a response. And it was the credibility that the organization had established.

Like I said earlier I was walking on those individuals who wore the iron shoes before I became president of the branch and individuals who not only wore the iron shoes but individuals who died for the sake of us and then --

You are about to answer another question I think. There are three questions that we wanted all of the ex-presidents to answer. So let me ask those questions. What would you say to our ancestors today if you could?

Well, at the time when I was the president I tried to carry on the legacy, which was bestowed upon me by those individuals who wore the iron shoes and on whose backs I was walking. Individuals like my grandfather, who had to slip to go to the NAACP meetings in order for us to have an opportunity to go to school, to get a decent place to stay, to have a decent job, because when we went to school the books that they gave us were three years and five years behind. They were

books that the Caucasians had that were five years behind. And so with those individuals who went before us who changed that, I would say that I tried to carry on the legacy.

I used those same books.

What message would you send to future generations?

Well, I was asked that question in Silicone Valley years ago when I met Monfumi. And the question asked of me was if I had one thing to give to young people, what would that be? And I said the gift of exposure. Our young people have to be exposed to different things in order for them to continue the legacy and in order for them to grow. So the gift of exposure is what I have to give to future individuals. If I had to say what I'm going to do for my grandson, I'm going to expose him to as much of America and the world as I can, starting with education, starting with going places and doing things, starting with historical sites and even telling him what we have done and those individuals who have gone in front of us who laid down their lives for us to be where we are today. So the gift of exposure is what I would have to give to our young people.

And my last question is: What are you the most proud of in your term as NAACP president?

Well, I don't know. You know, there are so many. Being able to address the issue of blacks having the opportunity to participate in economics. Young people having an opportunity to believe in themselves. Blacks having an opportunity to celebrate Dr. King's birthday -- these are some of the things that we did. Now, mind you, I didn't get credit for it. But those who often paved the way -- and I didn't do it because it had to do with Gene Collins. I did it because God put me in the position at the time. And it's incumbent upon us to do what we can while we can to make sure that the legacy is passed from one to another. I introduced AB 99, which was Dr. King's birthday bill. And I introduced it as AB 99 simply because James Earl Ray got 99 years for killing Dr. King and the Tuskegee Airmen were the 99th squadron before they moved to 332nd. So if we're going to commemorate somebody, then it has to be in line with some significance of what those individuals did.

We have so many things that we are proud of with this NAACP. And most of all it is just having the opportunity to serve.

You said a few minutes ago, a little while ago, that while you were president your branch

was voted the most improved.

Out of the 2200 branches in the country.

Tell me why that was done.

Well, when we took over, when we came in the membership -- we had 400 members. It was ten dollars a year. During that time I think -- that first year of my first tenure -- we raised the membership dues to \$30. And when we left office we had 2200 members at triple the price, at \$30. So those were some of the things that like I say --

So did the membership go up across the country?

I don't know about across. I only know about our branch. We went from 400 members for ten dollars to 2200 members for \$30. And that's why that they gave us that commemorative that out of the 2200 branches we were the most improved branch because of where we had started from and where we were when I left. So they gave us that. And I have that tucked around someplace. I got that packed around someplace.

Well, wonderful. Thank you so much for all this information.

Is there anything else that you want to add about your administration?

I was just proud to serve in the capacity of being the president of the branch. And, you know, as you may have noticed, I refused to say anything derogatory about the NAACP. Now, I'm a lifetime member and even though I'm not a participant, I refuse to cast any disparity upon this organization. I refuse to do that.

Is there any reason that you would have to do that?

Yes. Yes, yes, yes.

Okay. Nationally?

Yes. But I refuse.

Well, good.

Those individuals are no longer a part of it.

Okay, good.

So if I'm going to say anything about the NAACP, it has to come in the way of we must move forward. Even though I'm over here with Reverend Sharpton doing the same thing, I refuse to have sour grapes about an organization that has given so much to so many, including me.

Wonderful. I really appreciate this.

And we will try to give you -- like I say they wrote articles. Let me show you. They wrote these articles about --

Who is this when you're saying they?

This magazine.

Oh, the magazine wrote articles.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. NAACP local branch proved them wrong.

And we're looking at the Las Vegas --

That's the national magazine. Yeah, that's a national world magazine.

Oh, okay. This magazine has national circulation?

Yes.

It's called the Las Vegas. And this article is by Trish Duran. And it is entitled, "NAACP Las Vegas Branch Proved Them Wrong."

Oh, yes. And this one here...Mrs. Mandela came from South Africa and she had heard about the work that we were doing. She was in Los Angeles and wanted to come over and meet us. She flew over and said that I want to meet the individual who was not afraid to address the issues as they relate to black folks. And she said a dealer in South Africa works seven days a week, ten or 12 hours a day, and makes about 500 a month. And so she wanted to come over -- oh, I had this thing in here. Here it is right here.

So which magazine is that one?

This is the Black Meetings and Tourisms. This is another national magazine. That's me there and there's Mrs. Winnie Mandela. That's Mrs. Winnie Mandela.

So this is in the April 2001 edition of Black Meetings and Tourism. And there's a photograph here with Winnie Mandela.

Yeah. So she came and we had a meeting because she was going to run for president of the country before Mr. Mabuki came in. She was going to be the next president until they framed her, but she ended up beating the rap and everything. But she wanted to -- and I spent a couple of hours with her to tell her about gaming and how profitable gaming was.

And we have all kinds of -- like I say I have to be sorry. But we have all kinds of news

reports that they did on us when we were fighting these battles. At one time the press really did us justice by reporting quite nicely in their final report by writing all of the stories and everything.

Positive stories?

Yeah, yeah, yeah. He was the one that brought out all of the things that we were doing.

You're talking about the Review-Journal newspaper?

Yes. Yes. Yeah, I think some of them. This is some of the MGM and NAACP.

And if this is too much to fax when you get the things together, I will run over and pick these up.

Yeah. See, all of this -- I mean like I say this is -- I mean there is so much that we did when with the -- and that's the reason why I refuse to badmouth because the people who did something to this branch are no longer a part of the NAACP. So that's the reason why that -- see, it was bad people, not bad organization, see. The people who were at the top were bad. The organization has served black people really, really, really tremendously. If it weren't for an organization like the NAACP... like I said, we have articles and things that we did, positive things that we did. And like I say I didn't even have a clue where all the --

But anything that you can put together, I would really appreciate it.

Yes. I mean we didn't throw them away.

Yes. I would love to have copies of any of those that you'd like to share.

You understand what I'm saying? And since you are doing a documentary --

Well, it's not a documentary.

I mean since you're doing -- see, all of this I'll give you. I'll provide you a booklet with --

That's wonderful. And you don't even have to put it in a booklet.

See, this is Terry Lenny.

If you just make copies of those articles, I will pick them up.

And another thing that -- one of the things that Terry Lenny said -- and I wasn't at the meeting. They called me one day and said that in front of seven or 800 people, Mr. Lenny got up and said thanks to you and NAACP. If it weren't for you, he would not have been able to go into Macau, Japan. When they went into Japan with gaming, they thought that because they owned gaming, they could go in and do whatever they chose to do. But when they got to Macau, Japan, it wasn't

so. And he got up in a meeting. The guy says he was up in a meeting with 800 people and says thanks to what we made them do they were able to go into Macau, Japan to diversify with no problem. Had it not been for what we made them do here, they would not have been able to go into Macau, Japan.

Okay, great. Wonderful.

And that's the reason why that I refuse to badmouth the organization because it has done so much good. And the people that -- the bad people will ruin any good thing. That's what happens. But, no, I will not badmouth the organization that has done so much.

And I wouldn't want you to. So please don't.

Oh, no, no, no, no, because like I said there are no sour grapes here. And there ain't no way in the world I would damage like I say those who wore the iron shoes, whose backs that I still appreciate walking on and who have done so much and everything. The president is speaking -- will be speaking -- and I'm grateful and thankful --

President?

President Obama will be speaking at the NAACP, at their banquet.

This year? At the Freedom Fund Banquet?

Yeah. In New York, yeah.

Oh, no. You're talking about the National Convention.

I mean at the National Convention, yeah. Yeah, the convention. Yes, the president's going to be speaking there. And I thank God that I've had the privilege of having lunch with him even though he's young. I've had lunch with him and everything. And like I say I've been very, very blessed and very fortunate. And as you noticed it, here are some of the pictures and stuff around the walls with Dr. King and his kids. I don't know what half of this stuff is that we had here at these summits. You know, we had pictures of stuff up on the walls.

Well, I really appreciate this. Thank you so much for the time.

Well, like I said let me commend you for what you're doing. I think it's great.

Yep. Trying to help out. This is my contribution. Thank you.