

Bill Logan and Gene Bell SF

Q: Starting. All right, this is August 29, 2006, at the home of Gene Bell, interviewing Gene Bell and Bill Logan on the Fellowship of African American Men. Gentlemen, thank you for having me today. Briefly, I'm going to ask, we'll start with you, Mr. Bell, if you give me your full name and a little bit of background about yourself.

GENE BELL: OK, my name is Gene Bell. I came to Evanston in 1944 from Oklahoma. I came here with my grandmother, Ms. Leora Bell Griffin. We went to Ebenezer; we've been there at Ebenezer all those years. I was playing sports at high school, basketball and baseball. Then I played basketball and baseball in Evanston at the centers and stuff like that type of thing. And basically, I've been involved in a lot of different organizations to help kids and senior citizens. That's basically what I'm interested in. And so I've been doing that now for, I started about 50 years ago in volunteering and I'm still doing that.

Q: OK. Mr. Logan?

BILL LOGAN: OK, you going to tell them where you went to college?

GB: I went to Upper Iowa. (laughter)

BL: On a scholarship?

GB: Yeah, on a scholarship.

BL: Back in the days when it wasn't easy for us to get them.

GB: That's right.

BL: Yeah, that's right. OK, my name is Bill Logan and I'm a lifelong member of the city of Evanston, born and raised here. My mom and dad were here, they were from -- he was from South Carolina and my mom was from Muscatine, Iowa. And I went to the high school district here, the old foster school and then Haven and then the high school and, like Gene, I was a three-sport athlete: football, basketball, and baseball at Evanston High School. I was the first black captain of the football team at Evanston High School. And I was also the first black to win the Myerson Award for Excellence in Football at Evanston High School. First black homeroom president, back in the days when we had a couple hundred homeroom presidents. I was also the first black senior class vice president at Evanston High School. And I went on, I received a football scholarship to Western Illinois University. I was there for a couple years and then I had to go into the military during the Korean War. I was in Japan and Korea during the Korean War. I served over there for two years. And I had Top Secret military

clearance and I was a supervisor in charge of the communications squadron there for the Far East Headquarters, Air Force Far East Headquarters, and saw some scary things in the top-secret thing and holding telecommunications conferences with the Pentagon and with the White House, so it was quite an experience for me. After being discharged from the military, I came back to Evanston and, after going into a couple different odd jobs, I ended up joining the Evanston Police Department. And I progressed through the ranks, first modern-day black sergeant and the first black lieutenant, the first black captain, the first deputy chief, and the first chief of police in Evanston. I started the concept of community policing because I believe very strongly in everybody being involved in the community and started various community organizations on the police department community relations programs. And I've been involved in the community, I've served on numerous boards in the community, including the Y, the health center, Family Focus, and I've served on numerous, numerous boards throughout that time. I also am the founding member -- one of the founding members of the Chessmen Club of the North Shore. We founded that in 1958. A friend of mine, Andy Rodez were the founders and we've

given college scholarships to African American students all these years, and food for the needy on every Christmas throughout the city of Evanston. We help them. So, a lot of community organizations I've been involved in. I'm retiring now from the high school director of safety and my goals are to continue on and doing more with the community than what I was able to do. I'll have more time to do that, and probably serve on more boards and donate my time to help out, particularly young people and anybody else in need, so I'm looking forward to that.

Q: Great.

GB: You forgot being with Martin Luther King.

BL: Oh, yeah, I always forget that one, too. Yeah, I had the honor and the privilege when I was a young police officer of being assigned as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s [05:00] police bodyguard when he came to Evanston. That was very rare for a police department to do that throughout the country, but I received that privilege to do that and it was quite a major thing for me in my lifetime because he had a major impact upon my life because, just briefly, I was thinking about quitting the police department because no blacks had been promoted and where we worked at were very limited and I spoke with him about that and he told me

that I needed to hold on to my dreams and that I could be anything in life that I wanted to be, but I had to be prepared because nobody was going to give me anything. And I took that very seriously and I went back and started going to all the police-related schools that the city was paying for, the police department paid all around, the University of Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan State. I took all those courses. And then I also went back to school at Northeastern, got my degree. And, which is interesting because when I was a candidate for the chief for the first time ever they said that to be a chief you have to have a college degree and I was prepared. So he had a major impact upon my life.

Q: Wow, that's great. Two great men I'm sitting between here.
(laughter)

BG: You going to run out of tape? (laughter) (inaudible)

Q: All right now, most of the stuff I'm going to talk from here on out is about the Fellowship of African American Men, which you two are at least two of the founders. If you could, tell me, and you can jump in, you know, tag team if you want to, how you want to do this. What was the initial spark or sparks that lead to the formation of FAAM?

GB: Well, about '67, I think, that the district 65 cut back on

their programs for the kids. And our group of black men got together and said we wanted to be mentors to these black kids and start some programs to sort of help them out. It must have been about, what, 10 of us that started meeting. And we talked about sports to get them in, and sports, maybe you have football or baseball, that type of thing. And that's basically the reason that we started that type thing to help the kids out, particularly black kids, you that's what we started out with, black kids. And it developed from that into other things.

BL: Yeah, some of the founders are names that a lot of people are probably familiar with in Evanston: Andy Rodez and Howie Barksdale and Ray Sanders and Henry White and, of course, Gene and myself, were the founding members. But we really strongly felt that we needed to have some program to help our kids, our African American kids, and that's why we wanted to start this program. Because the money they cut back when 65 cut all of the activities out and we said, "Hey, we gotta get something going here to help the kids."

Q: So this was a major financial cut in the budget?

BL: Yup, they cut the budget for extra -- after school activities as I remember, after school activities they cut it. So there was no basketball program, no little football

program, there was nothing going on there, at all. And so we came together and we formed, said, "Hey, we're gonna do something about this." And that's what we did. We started out, as Gene said, with four teams and today we've got 20, 22.

GB: (laughter) Twenty-four with the cheer teams.

BL: Yea. And with four teams, it was just strictly African American males at the time, and the program has progressed down, you know, through the years, it's an interracial program now with the 24 teams and we have stressed very, very strongly that basketball is OK, it's good to learn that, the skills and everything, but education is the key. And that's the main emphasis that we've made in the program, with the programs that we have now, they help with the educational prospect for the kids. But we wanted to be good role models, too, for the kids, and I think was very, very important.

GB: Yeah, and then what happened -- basically, we started with boys and then the girls wanted to play. So we -- you'd have the girls who'd come out and play with the boys. And some girls did well, you know. In fact, some of them even started for -- on the boys' team. But there was other girls that came out and they said, "Hey, I can't handle

this." So we started talking about girl teams and we developed girl teams, which we've got now eight girl teams. Oh, about 80 volunteers. And so, what we do with that is to, with the two cheerleading teams, too, that girls, a lot of girls like to do the cheerleading. With the 14 boy teams, that we've got about, say, anywhere from 350 to 400 kids every year.

BL: We don't turn away any kids. We take all the kids that apply to get into the program. We take -- we take them and [10:00] sometimes we run into -- not sometimes but very often we run into a situation with financial need for kids and we have a program that they can participate in, you know, to cover the financial situation and we have some members, volunteers, who also will pay the money for kids to come into the program, they donate their funds on the -- to help them out. But I don't know if Gene mentioned, he's been the only commissioner that we've had all these years. And I coached for 15 years, the Sonics, and I think I won two or three championships.

GB: Oh, I knew you would do that! (laughter)

BL: But what's interesting, I just like to use a few examples of about some of the things we can do with kids. I had one kid, I guess the word is autistic, and with a learning

disorder, that people said he couldn't play basketball, and I took him on and coached him and he was as starter on my team. I had another kid who was deaf and people said he couldn't be an athlete. He played on my basketball team, was a starter, and went on to high school and he became a starting linebacker for the high school football team. Deaf. And he was the second African American or black to win the Myerson Award for Excellence in Football at the high school. And then I had another kid, and I know Gene can talk about some examples, too, one of my kids went on and went on into the pros. Went on through high school and went to University of Purdue, and then went on to play with the pros. And so that's just one example, there's other people that have had some (inaudible)...

GB: It's not always that they go and play basketball, but they've gone and played football, baseball, Kevin Foster was in baseball. Try to think of the names of other kids that have played football ok, but that's -- it's just good to see that type of thing and the amount of people that came through FAAM and come back and volunteered to help, it's a great thing to see them back. And they come back and they come up with new ideas, help out, do these types of things, volunteer to do these things. And that's one of

the things that we've grown. How -- why we've grown, because of the people that are willing to come back and say, "Hey, it was a good experience for me, let me make a good experience for other kids."

BL: And we receive a lot of support, we have a lot of support from the city of Evanston for the program. You know, we use Fleetwood-Jourdain Center and we also -- and School District 65 is very supportive for places to practice and for us to play our games on Saturdays down at Chute School, they've been very supportive of us. And Gene can tell you about something that's coming up for 2008.

GB: Yea, that -- 2008 will be our 40th year. And so we went to the city to ask them if we could have the city sticker with FAAM's logo on it. And we got a letter from them saying that we do -- that they are going to grant it to us. And so --

Q: Congratulations on that.

GB: -- Mm-hmm. And so we've got to get some material there and I guess that's all it will take.

Q: Wonderful.

BL: I'd just like to make a comment about that we have the awards program every year and including the academic awards that we give out. And I can remember, and Gene can surely

remember, when we didn't have very many African American students who were getting the academic awards, and we started really putting that pressure on for academic achievement for our African American students. And I think it's been successful in many ways, with the learning center now that we have the high school, that Janet runs there, that you know, if they're having problems with their classes, they have to go for two days at the learning center. But now when you look at the awards for academic achievement, you'll see a lot of African American students in there now that we didn't see that before. And I think that hitting on that academic achievement has really been very positive for a lot of the kids.

GB: And we've got some coaches that really stress that to the kids, "Hey, you've got to do it." Also, I was president, and then Rick Marsh was the next president, and now we've got Dudley Brown that's the president of FAAM.

BL: You know, I don't coach anymore because when I made chief, I didn't have time to coach, so, but I'm vice president--

GB: Emeritus.

BL: Emeritus, yeah.

Q: So, the initial core of FAAM is it a finite number of people who were the initial members, and then the rest are

volunteers; is that how it's structured? Tell me how it's structured. So, if that makes sense.

BG: Well -- (inaudible)

Q: Other than president, [you know you have a?] a vice president, a secretary, treasurer, and committees and that?

GB: Committees, right. What I may do is I think I've left out a sheet here that lets you see that.

Q: OK.

GB: So you'll know how we are structured.

Q: OK.

BL: They're all -- they're all volunteers, [15:00] you know, regardless of how long they've been in the program, they're there and they could hold those positions and titles. I think Gene and I are founders that are the only two--

GB: That are still...

BL: -- that are still involved in the program. Actively involving (inaudible). And you have a couple more that are deceased, two of them are deceased and --

GB: I remember Jim, he worked as a custodian out there. He was one of the...

BL: Yeah.

GB: I can't think of his last name.

BL: Jim, at the high school?

GB: No, at the police department.

BL: At the police department, oh yeah. What [was Jim's name?]

GB: His son is at the city hall.

BL: Yeah, I can't think of Jim's last name.

GB: I can't, either. (inaudible)

Q: So I have it down for the record, what was the exact year that FAAM was founded?

BL: 'Sixty-eight?

GB: 'Sixty-eight.

Q: So you are a not-for-profit?

BL: Mm-hmm.

Q: Chartered as a not-for-profit. It was chartered as not-for-profit in 1968?

BL: Mm-hmm.

GB: By-laws and all that other good-- all that.

Q: (laughter) And I know you talked about this in your conversation so far but I just want to make it very clear: will you tell me, as briefly as possible, what is the initial purpose of FAAM and what is your mission?

BL: Go ahead, Gene.

GB: The initial purpose was to be mentors for the black boys and to help kids as not only to be role models for them, but tell them some of the things that they will experience

in life, you know. And going into high school, things that they needed to do to be better. That was the initial thing. But then -- that's still the thing, but it's expanded to other things.

BL: To teach the African American youth today of good sportsmanship and team play and to teach them basketball skills and to teach African American students that athletes, though important in life, are secondary to getting their education. And that's really been the key, and, then again, as Gene just re-emphasized, to present positive and progressive African American men as role models for our youth in the Evanston community. So that's been very, very important.

Q: This I can get from both of you because I know this might be different from each person who was involved with this: what do you feel is the greatest accomplishment of FAAM?

GB: Longevity's one thing. (inaudible) and to be able to offer a program where people are willing to come and volunteer. Come over where some of them didn't come through FAAM, but they heard about FAAM, someone talked to them about FAAM, and they came and said, "Hey, I want to be a part of it." I think that's a couple of the things.

BL: I think the role modeling situation and being mentors has

been very, very important and I think during the times and particularly really at the height of the gang problem and the fact that we had a couple of people who were involved in-- kids in our program who had gotten killed and we had some gang members that were on teams but the impact that the coaches had on these kids to get them out of gangs and get them on a right track in their lives, I think that was a major accomplishment for FAAM, the FAAM program. Because of the number of kids we had, it was impossible to have no kids that were involved in a gang situation, and we did have some. And I know I had a couple on my team that were involved and I think that the coaches had a lot of impact upon turning some of their lives around and being there for them.

GB: I think one of the hardest things that I've ever had to do, this one kid, who was in the gangs, he came in and he coached a couple years and he was still involved, so we talked to him about that, said, "Hey, you've got to not do that." And he got caught doing something very bad and I had to talk to him and say, "Hey, we can't have you doing this with these kids around", something like that. He begged me, "Don't do this, don't -- let me stay." But I had to let him go because of the gang involvement. That

was hard.

Q: I can imagine so. I can imagine so. What do you find today has been the biggest obstacle for FAAM?

BL: Well, one of the big-- is the growth. (laughter)

BL: The way the program keeps growing and that brings a lot of pressure on where they going to practice at, and the number of games, and scheduling the people to work, you know, at the two sites that we have the games, and so that's been a, I wouldn't say obstacle, but it's been a real problem that we've had to face, you know, with the growth of the program. Which is not a negative thing, it's a positive thing, but it's an ongoing challenge for us to handle the situation.

GB: When you've got teams that have 20 kids on the team. That's one of the hard things, you know, trying to get time for [20:00] people to play, what we've had to do, recently, is start a sixth grade league, so if you've got that many kids on a team, you take the sixth graders and let them have little games of their own, sort of in a different league for them. And in the end, they still stay with the same team that drafted them, but they go and play in sixth grade and at the end of the year they come back with that same team that drafted them, they come through the banquet,

they get their awards just like all the others.

BL: We have a policy that all kids must play in a game. I mean, the coach can't just play five players and the other 10, 11, 12 kids just sit there and don't play. It's a rule that they all have to play.

Q: It's a good rule.

BL: It's not only good for the kids, but it's important for parents who come to games and see their kids and see their kids get in to play, even though maybe a sixth grader or seventh grader and doesn't have a lot of talent and skills, but know that their child's still going to play.

GB: And one of the things, let me say about this: we start the last of September and we finish in March. I mean, I'm talking about the playing, the draft, the banquet, the pancake day, you know, that type of thing. So, it's a -- and the amount of money they pay is very low for the amount of time that we give to the community.

Q: (inaudible) for each family member, for their child to participate, they pay a fee for participation?

BL: Yeah. Gene just mentioned community and I ought to mention the cooperation that we have from 65 and also from the recreation department of the city, but we also have cooperation from the high school, also, because they help

our coaches with the training program. They have some programs for them to come in with teams. They let us play the All-Star games at the high school. So that's all been very important. So it's all -- it just shows you how the community can come together. You know, when you're trying to serve 300, 400 kids, and just for us to be out there alone, we wouldn't be able to do it. And they've played a very major role for us, and the coaches have been very supportive of our program too, in the high school. I think would tell you, too, if you look for it, you look at the high school, probably the majority of players and the star players that go through the high school program have come through FAAM,

GB: They came through FAAM.

BL: And one other thing I wanted to mention, too, about our program, we talk about education: we have a scholarship, also, that we give to a high school student each year that played in the FAAM program that went through high school and going on to college, we have a scholarship for them.

Q: OK so it's like one scholarship?

GB: It's two now.

Q: Two now?

BL: Yeah, we increased it, yeah.

Q: It's for a coll-- for like four years? Or like a one-time award, or is it?

GB: No, it's the one time.

BL: It's a one-time award.

GB: It's the one time. If you came through FAAM for the three years, then you graduate from the high school, then you apply for the scholarship, and we give it to...

Q: OK. Is the FAAM scholarship process part of the Unity Scholarship process, or is it separate?

GB: It's separate.

BL: Separate, yeah.

Q: I'm hearing, with this large program, you're hearing a whole lot of dollar signs going, and I know family members do pay for each student involved, what other sources of revenue do you get? You also mentioned the pancake breakfast. But what other sources of revenue do you look to to help fund this program?

GB: Donations.

Q: Donations?

GB: Yeah, we do have a couple of groups that donate us money every year. And some of the parents give donations.

BL: Yeah, no, we've had some previous people who were involved in the program who have donated some money, also. Then we

got the grant.

GB: The grant from the Evanston foundation. The community foundation. That's recently that we got that.

Q: OK.

BL: Pancake day is our big fundraiser. Other than the regular fees that they pay.

Q: So as that process seems to work, do you see that working for like, the next 10, 20, 30, 40 years, or do you think it's something that might have to change in that time period?

GB: We are looking at other stuff.

BL: Yeah.

GB: Yeah, we're looking at other stuff to say, "Hey, we want to expand and do something else," and we'll have to have more than just the pancake day and the few donations that we get.

BL: I think that we've got, you know, here again, some of the younger people who are coming forward now who have come up with different ideas and suggestions on how we can increase our income, you know, look, they come up with some thoughts and things that are being examined now and how we can increase our income. You know, versus, what, just staying with the pancake day and not doing anything else. So

that's been very important because we have a lot of talent in the organization, not just coaching basketball, [25:00] but a lot of talent and skills in other areas of whatever business or whatever and they come up with some nice ideas.

Q: OK. Is that membership limited for the initial core group that does the work? That are-- I'm trying to better understand the structure of FAAM. There's, I know you have a big pool of volunteers, but you have a core group of, I guess, the fiscal responsibility comes down on.

GB: We have executives, yes.

Q: Like an executive board?

GB: Uh-huh.

BL: Mm-hmm.

Q: Gotcha. So is the membership to the executive board (inaudible) something that's invitation or somebody applies for that, or how does one be involved in FAAM in that way?

GB: We elect officers every year. And so we have people that are volunteers, you know. Originally, what, we had five, I think. Now I think we've gone up to, what's it, nine or eight, something like that?

Q: OK. So you kind of pull from the pool of volunteers that you have to eventually become officers?

GB: They don't have to come out of our volunteers now. If

there's someone that's out in the community that would like to become involved in and out in the community they come in and do stuff and have some ideas, that's possible, too.

BL: And I think an example is the kitchen at Fleetwood: we've got volunteers who are not coaches. People come in on the days with the kitchen, run the kitchen, help the kitchen, and they're volunteers, too. But they don't do any coaching or anything like that. So there's volunteers who are not all just coaches, that really help out. I mean, Denise Martin is an example that comes over all the time and helps out and there's other people that [donate their time?].

GB: On draft day. We have people that come and help us on draft day.

Q: For the basketball teams that are formed, are they formed by lottery, or how is that done? I know there's an application process there, but it fills in? And once you get all those applications, do you kind of make up the team from that, or do you do tryouts in a-- (inaudible)
(laughter)

GB: We do it almost like the NBA.

BL: You draft.

Q: Oh, really?

GB: Yeah. What we do is the team that finished last the year before get the first pick, and go down to the last, and repeat that, all the way down. One of the things that we have to do, though, is sometimes a team only has seven ball players and another team's got 10 ball players coming back, then after the first three rounds -- two? three rounds -- then the team that has not picked, I mean, that's got the less [seven?], they continue to pick until they get up to the -- so we make them all even. We try to come out all even.

BL: Then on draft day, I mean, there's workouts. All the kids are there, they sign up, and then they're out there and the coaches are watching them. And they go through the drills and exercises, and that way the co-- they have numbers on them. And that way the coaches can determine who they want to draft. You know, because they get to see some of the abilities that are out there.

Q: (inaudible) pretty competitive out there! (laughter)

BL: Yes, indeed. Everybody gets on a team, like I said, nobody's turned away. Even though we may end up with some teams with, like Gene said, with 20 kids on it, you know. But we take them all.

Q: That's something. What do you see as the future of FAAM,

like what do you see yourself expanding into doing? I know you mentioned vaguely that you've been expanding from the initial core purpose and you've expanded from there, but what do you see yourself expanding to, let's say 10 years from now? What kind of things do you see happening? You might look into?

GB: Well, you know Bill mentioned one thing about expanding so much that we don't have places to practice and play, so we have to sort of watch what we do there. What we're going through a thing now where, since we've been there for almost 40 years, and we may not -- we won't be there all the time, so what we are doing is having other people come in. We've got some young people that are on the executive committee now that's learning things to be able to continue to help grow and understand how far we can grow and how far we can go.

BL: Yeah, I see the future, you know, coming up with, as talked about earlier, about more sources of financial income for the organization, and, you know, down the years, I'd like to see, and I think we're on the verge of that, in doing more with the educational prospect, also for the kids and the program. Particularly we look at some of the African Americans, kids that are still struggling. And, you know,

getting parents involved as much as possible, because, as we know that parenting has a lot to do with the [30:00] success of bringing up? kids, and if we can do something more with the parents, also, in addition to that, and we do have a lot of them who are volunteers, you know, and their kids are playing. But I'd like to see us progress even a bit more with that, the reaching out. You know what scares me, I was at my chiefs conference, my black chiefs conference in Cincinnati, and one of the school districts in, it was in Boston, they did a survey on kids and they found that all the kids in the fourth grade who did not -- who were failing didn't graduate from high school those years later. And it shows you the problems that these kids are having at that age, you know, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth grade, before they get into the high school and we know that they're talking about now that why should these kids get into the high school when they're really not doing well? But we need to do more, and I think a lot more needs to be done for these kids early on and if we're dealing with sixth, seventh, and eighth grade, I think we can even do more, you know, for the future, than what we're doing now for the educational situation. Because a lot of kids are struggling. Yeah, really struggling.

GB: You know, I really feel that, you know, we, and the kids when they're young in junior hi-- in grade school, we talk about, you know, the writing, the arithmetic, and the things that they learn, but I also really feel that we need to teach them, "Hey, when you grow up, you're going to be a parent, so you need to be able to do some of the things that will make your kids better, help your kids later on." And I really feel strongly about that.

Q: When you guys first formed, did you take a group photograph of yourselves?

BL: No.

Q: Or some founding members?

GB: I don't remember. (laughter)

BL: I don't remember, either. Yup, that's one of the things, I mean, it's like people asking me about Dr. Martin Luther King: did you get a picture taken with him? I said, "I was just doing my job! (laughter) I didn't think about saying, 'Uh, Dr. King, will you pose for a picture with me?'" (laughter)

BL: And the same thing with us back then: we put the organization together, we didn't think about, "Oh yea, we're starting this thing now, let's get a picture!" You know? So we don't have it. (laughter) Yeah.

Q: I know I've seen some photographs in the past of like some team shots --

BL: Yeah, like --

Q: (inaudible)

BL: Yeah they have, for the pancake thing?

Q: Mm-hmm.

BL: Yeah, there's pictures of teams in there, various teams in there.

GB: I'm going to give you this.

BL: Yeah, he can give you that with the pictures, it's got the different teams, there's posters and everything in there, yeah. They're all in there. It's got the FAAM story. You ever seen one of these books before?

Q: I haven't seen one of these books.

BL: You're going to give him that one, yeah?

GB: Yeah. There's all of them here, I think there's one team that did not take their picture last year, but there's all the pictures here except for one team. We have an essay contest where the kids will write essays what FAAM had meant to them. And they have first, second, and third place out of sixth, seventh, and eighth grade.

Q: OK.

GB: So I'm going to give -- you can have this.

BL: Yeah, it's got our mission in there and it's got the FAAM story in there, too.

Q: Wonderful.

BL: So that will help you there.

Q: How often does your executive committee, your executive board, how often do you guys meet? Do you meet, like, on a regular schedule, or as needed?

GB: Once a month. We start in September, except sometimes we call meetings, but we start in September and we go through April. So we do summertime to recoup.

Q: So September coming up on you guys --

BL: Yeah, we were just talking about the meeting now.

GB: Next week.

BL: For us next week.

Q: I was wondering if I can come to the meeting, just briefly, to do a group shot of you guys.

BL: Mm-hmm. To the executive meeting?

Q: Yeah.

BL: I'm sure they would be OK with that, yeah.

GB: I won't be there..

BL: How soon would you need to get a picture?

Q: Well, sooner the better, but you know, I'd like to try and get everybody, so if we have to wait until you get back, I

want to get everybody involved and who's there. And unfortunately don't have an early shot of the original founders of FAAM together, that would have been great.

BL: Yeah that would have been. I don't think we have any pictures.

GB: I didn't see any. (inaudible)

BL: Yeah and the only ones around here now is, let's see, you and I and Sanders --

GB: Ray Sanders.

BL: And Henry, Henry White.

GB: Henry White, yeah.

BL: And, so there's only four of us.

GB: Yeah, most of us have passed, the ones that are (inaudible)

BL: Yeah, Andrew Rodez, Howie-- Bill Long, Howie Barksdale, they passed on, yeah. (inaudible) we could get four or five, [if that?] will help you. Small group together of what we have-- do have.

Q: Yeah, that would be pretty good. We'll have to do that, too.

BL: Yeah, we can get it. Talk to Hank and Ray.

GB: [I think?] Hank. We can get Ray. Ray's going to come to one of the things, for sure. (laughter)

BL: I think we can get Hank, even if I have to go out there and

pick him up, you know. (inaudible) routine, now. So
[35:00] we can work on that, too.

Q: Do you might have any older vers-- older pictures of the
team shots?

GB: I've got '68, '69, '70. I've got some books.

BL: He's got the history here.

GB: I've got some books. All of them may not be here, I had to
move so I may have had to put some over in the storage.

Let me go downstairs, see -- when you get through, I'll go
downstairs and see if I've got books.

Q: And that's the last thing-- the last question I had for you
is with these books, do you have a complete collection that
Shorefront can acquire for its collection?

GB: I'll have to see.

Q: Whatever you have duplicates or triplicates of.

GB: Yeah, because what happens was that I tried to save some,
but then people come down and say, "We need a book for
this, need a book for that." You know.

Q: I understand.

BL: Think Janet might have anything? Janet Wills? I'll
probably see her today. I can ask her. (inaudible)

GB: -- remember that. But I've got quite a few.

Q: I think I have some photographs, myself. We just acquired

a collection of negatives from a photography studio. It was a photographic studio and they basically donated anything that had African American relevance in their collection. The business has been around since 1935 and if there's anything relevant there, it'll go into archive at Shorefront. So, we acquired more than 900 negatives.

GB: Wow.

Q: Yeah, so we should (inaudible) (laughter)

Q: And I think a few of them, I remember looking through them, I think a few of them was some basketball team shots at Fleetwood-Jourdain and I think it's of FAAM, but I'm not quite sure. But everybody's posed and I think it was a mixed group. So I don't know how early the basketball teams were integrated or, you know, mixed then, or...

GB: Oh, that started, I'd say, let's see, in the early '70s.

BL: '70s, I would say.

Q: OK, and after that, another black and white shot, but they're large format. But I'm going to look at those again. (inaudible)

GB: Do you want a copy of this?

Q: Oh, if I can, yes.

GB: I'll take this downstairs and make a copy and I'll go down there and see what books I've got.

Q: Any last [words?] you want to say before we stop this recording?

BL: Well, I guess down through the years I'm just grateful and thankful for all the people that have contributed to the success of this program and all the parents and the kids that have been involved in it. It's a community program and I think to show the volunteers, and the players, and the racial mix, and the support from the schools and the city and all that, it shows how important a community thing is and how important it can be successful when you have all that cooperation there. I think that's really so important for us to see that in this day and time. We never had a dream like that when we started back in '58 that we'd have this growth and that we'd have this kind of cooperation that we have in the community and support that we've had in this community.

Q: You said '58, is it '58 or '68?

BL: 'Fifty-eight. 'Sixty-eight, I'm sorry, '68. (laughter)

Q: Trying to make it clear. (laughter)

Q: Started in '68 with four teams?

GB: Four teams and about 30 kids and 10 volunteers.

Q: You're now over-- close to 400 on average.

BL: Mm-hmm.

GB: [It doesn't have to be?] just Evanston kids. We've kids from Chicago, out west, Glenbrook, the top player in the state last year came through FAAM. (inaudible) We've had kids from Highland Park, just all this whole area. I guess they heard about FAAM and they thought the competition was good and the program was good, so they tell all the people and they come in.

BL: We've had as far as Waukegan, too, right?

GB: Mm-hmm, Waukegan.

BL: And they come down here and they practice twice a week. Down here and then play on Saturday. They're making those trips down here to play with FAAM. (laughter)

Q: Are there any other organizations in the area that you know that do something like this? Like a basketball clinic or camp or anything like that, that you know of?

GB: Not in Evanston, but they've got other cities have got programs for their kids. I don't think it's quite as large as ours, you know, they have in-house, but it's not as many kids. And they're sure not as old as we are. (laughter)

Q: Thank you so much, gentlemen, for your time on this.

OK, well thank you, we appreciate it. [40:00] Thank you very much.

M: Yeah. Be right back.

END OF AUDIO FILE