

**Louis Moseley**

LOUIS MOSELEY: Louis Moseley. I'm 71 years old, and I came to Evanston in 1937.

Q: OK, let's get started. Why did you come from Evanston?

LM: My parents moved from Chicago, and we had moved to Glencoe for about six months, and came from Glencoe to Evanston.

Q: What was your first impression of Evanston?

LM: As a kid, I loved it. It was very, coming from Chicago, it was very rural to me. It was like my feeling about a country town. When we first came to Evanston, in this block where I live at 2033 Darrow, we slept with our front and back doors open all night. There was no gang problem and no criminal problem that I knew of. And, for years, we slept with the doors open. So I thought it was a very wonderful place to grow up. I went to start at the YMCA, and there were many activities I was able to start here that I wasn't able to start in Chicago. Because it was a matter of concern even back in those days, although Chicago was pretty calm. But going different places and my mother and father didn't let us go alone, where we came to Evanston, my sister and I got in the community and we went every place by ourselves. So that was the main difference. You had a sense of freedom.

Q: OK. Did you go to any of the schools here in Evanston?

LM: I went what used to be Foster School, then I skipped from sixth to eighth grade. And I joined my sister in the eighth grade class, and I went to Evanston Township High School. I graduated in 1943. And I attended Northwestern University from '43 to '44. And then I came back to Roosevelt and Northwestern, and finished pre-med at Northwestern in 1950. And then I went one year to Meharry Medical School and decided I didn't want to be a doctor. And then I, let's see, well then I went into the service. In June 1944 I went to Tuskegee, flight school in Tuskegee, Alabama. And I graduated, not from Tuskegee, but I graduated from Selfridge Air Force Base. They had begun to transfer all the Tuskegee Airmen out of Tuskegee in '45, and to Selfridge, and Texas, and Godman Field, Kentucky. So I graduated from Selfridge Air Force Base as a fighter pilot in 1945. Then the war ended in Europe and I would've been a replacement pilot for the Tuskegee Airmen, who were combat pilots in North Africa and Italy. But the war ended in Europe, so they sent me to Japan. And, from there, to the South Pacific. And then, when I got to the South Pacific, I was a commanding officer of a military police training command.

Q: What was your experience like at Evanston Township?

LM: Well, it was my first knowledge of discrimination because, in the home rooms, all classes were mixed. But, in the home rooms, they had seat partners. And the seat partners were always black. And I was a pretty good tennis player. In fact, a Dr. Fred Crockett who lives in, I can't remember the town, East St. Louis, Illinois, wherever. He and I won the doubles championship in Evanston. And, when I went to sign up for the high school team, because I was under the tutelage of some excellent tennis players, and I played at Northwestern and some other places. I couldn't play at Evanston Township High School because they told me that some of the schools that I would be going to would not accept, back in those days they called it a Negro, a Negro on the tennis team. So that was my first time. [00:05:00] They let you run track, but no other phases.

And my wife encountered the same thing. She graduated in '48, and she was denied, she and another young lady were denied the opportunity to join the horse riding club. And she had been riding outside. And one episode she told me about, they were all dressed up with their habits on, and bus left, but left them standing there.

Because the riding stable they were going to wouldn't

permit black. So, when I got to Tuskegee, I was kind of glad to be away from Evanston. Although it was an all-black and all our instructors were white, but whatever. So basically that was my first encounter, and then I started at an early age, probably about twelve years old, swimming at the old Emerson Street Y, which was predominantly black. But that's all we had, because we weren't allowed to go the Grover Street Y, which was white. But we made the best of it, and I enjoyed every minute that I spend there. Later on I became the physical director and the night director of the Emerson Street Y, until they closed.

So I would say that my experience at Evanston Township High School, we had our 50<sup>th</sup> reunion, because of the negativism and the experience that I had, the prejudice there, I really didn't want to go. But there were some blacks who came from out of town to the 50<sup>th</sup> reunion, and I went mainly because of that. Not because I had any desire to see any of my white friends, which I hadn't seen since the whole 50 years. But so I really have, was very thankful when I got out of Evanston. Because it was just was, there wasn't an avenue for me to do the things that I would like to have done in life.

Q: Were the teachers there trying to discourage you from taking class or coming to school at all?

LM: No, that part I had no problem with. The teachers were very nice. I had a one occasion there with a German teacher, a lady, who was something. She quoted something about "catch a nigger by his toe," in German. And she translated that, and I was the only black in the class. And that was quite, that kind of magnified my experience with there, because it was very embarrassing, although she apologized later. But, back in those days, there was no avenue where you could grieve or have some complaint about anybody, because everybody was experiencing the same thing. We had no power, so you just had to take it. But, although she personally apologized, but I thought it was in poor taste and a person, a professional person should've recognized that that was not the thing to do. So that just deepened my feeling about wanting to get out of Evanston Township High School.

But some, most of the people I knew there were very friendly. And I had no teachers who tried to, who I personally felt were trying to hold me back. But they didn't encourage you either. You either sank or swim. They didn't have the counseling that you have today. But I

did very well because I just wanted to achieve something myself. And so did my sister. She got a scholarship and so forth. And so I did very well when I took my entrance exam for Northwestern but, when I got to Northwestern, it was a similar situation. You were on your own, but it was just a growing up experience because either you sank or swim. But there was really nobody there to even care. You were just there. And then, when I went there in 1943, I doubt if it was 15 blacks in the whole university. And everybody was under pressure, so most of the blacks that they had there was trying to survive and go forth. So you didn't really have any type of fellowship that you would probably desire.

It wasn't until I went to grad school some years later. And my experience there was totally different. And I was at the University of Indiana in Bloomington, and I was there. Then the following year, I took a grad course. During this time I was working for the Navy as a personnel director [00:10:00] of the Naval hospital. And the commanding officer of the hospital wanted to enhance my education skill. So the Navy sent me to grad school. And the following year I went to New York State University in Buffalo. And that experience was good for me, although I

was homesick for my family. But it was good for me because, at this point, when I went to school, I felt no prejudice. I was welcome, and had all the help I could get from the university, and everything. So it was a big change to me, which I welcomed. And it was just like being born again.

Q: So, when you eventually came back to Evanston, did you kind of regret it, or were you looking forward to coming back to Evanston? Because you did mention you were homesick at the same time --

LM: Well, I was homesick when I was in school, for my family. So I was going to have to come back, because I was still working for the government. The government sent me school. So, when I refer to being homesick, it was really related to me being away from my family at the University of Indiana. But right when I went to summer school for four weeks at New York State University the following year, my wife went with me. So that was wonderful because she was there, and she was able to participate in some of the classes and so forth. So that was great. But I was personnel director of the hospital for about 17 years. And, when I retired, I retired from the hospital as a personnel director.

Q: Yes, hospital. Which hospital was this?

LM: This was the Naval hospital at Great Lakes. I worked at Great Lakes for 30 years, from 1951 and retired in '81. But I was a personnel director for my last 17 years there. And it was a wonderful experience, because this was the type of job that I felt that I was most suited for. Working with people and helping people, and particularly in a medical environment, not as a doctor. Out here you would refer to the same position I had as a hospital administrator, in the civilian sector. But, in the Navy, they call it the civilian personnel director. And it was a great experience to me, because we had at least a thousand civilians. And I was responsible for the wellbeing, the promotions, and writing the job descriptions, and everything for all those thousand people, trying to get them promotions. And I worked very heavily with the Civil Service Commission in Washington and in Chicago. And so it was a wonderful experience for me.

Q: OK, you said that you went to Foster School?

LM: I went to Foster School in '37 and graduated in '39.

Q: How was your experience there?

LM: Well it was, I was kind of young at that time. The teachers were fantastic that I had. They were wonderful. It was all black, and all our teachers were white. Except we had one gym teacher, Mr. [Boulier?], who's dead now.

But he was responsible for teaching me how to swim. I was a short person, so I never would have had an opportunity to play basketball if it hadn't been for people like him. Because that, when they chose sides, that everybody got a chance to play. So I always will remember him. And he had been a captain in the service during World War II, so he was, understood prejudice. So I look upon him, he's dead now, but I look upon him as a person who had a very deep impact on my life. And I tried to kind of emulate him, because he showed me so much in life.

Q: You were involved heavily with the Emerson Street YMCA. What things did you do there?

LM: OK, I started, as I said before, as a youngster about twelve years old. And this Mr. Boulier was a lifeguard there, and so I went through the swimming program. And I continued doing it until I became a junior and a senior lifeguard. And then, during that same phase, I was studying martial arts in Chicago, and finally earned my black belt. And, when I earned that, the Grover Street Y permitted me to set up instructional classes in judo and jiu-jitsu. And that's when I, since I was lifeguard, I continued on until I became an aquatic leader examiner, and that person gives the exams to other people trying to be lifeguards.

So, with that background, and I had my martial arts school there, I was appointed the night physical director for a number of years. [00:15:00] And then, later on, I was also a counselor for high school people, and I did that for years. And then later I became the night executive secretary of the Y. And, during the interim phases of about a year and a half, I was the executive secretary because they were job searching for a new executive secretary, so they appointed me. All these were good experiences for me, as part of my community development. And we had a program that was sponsored by the Office of Economic Opportunity called Soul City. It's at the Y, and it was a federal grant, so I was the director of that. So was that kind of my avocation on the side, to work with young people. And so I still some today that was in that program who are doing very well. So that was the only place where, if you had any kind of talent at all, that was the one place where you could really develop yourself, at the old Emerson Y.

But with Northwestern's spearheading it, and the Grover Street Y determined that they couldn't support a segregated Y. Although, when they disbanded that Y, all the black

youngsters who were going there, none of them went to Grover Street Y when they had it. So the program was lost in its entirety. And all the advances and the things that we had done there was completely lost, because nobody went over to Grover Street. And there was no other facility there, swimming or whatever, that we had. So, in one way, losing the Grover Street Y was, to me, a very sad disadvantage to this community. And I understand that, on the other hand, they wanted integration. But it just doesn't happen that way. So the programs we had developed which were really working for our youngsters in the community, they were all lost. I don't think there was one person that went, when they closed it down, we had prior up to about two hundred young people. There was not one person that went from the Emerson Y over to the Grover Street Y. And maybe because, prior to this, you couldn't even go in the front door. So many of the youngsters had such a negative feeling about that Y that they just couldn't overcome it. So didn't want no parts of it, because they had been denied access to it for so many years. And this turnabout just didn't work with them.

So I went from there to Kendall College at Northwestern, and I removed, moved my martial arts school to Kendall

College, and I taught an accredited course there in the martial arts. They gave them like you have in gym, so they certified that. And then I taught at Patton Gym at Northwestern. Then, after that, I went back to the city and worked for the city until I retired from martial arts teaching. And I taught at practically all the recreation centers. I taught judo, jiu-jitsu, karate, and aikido. All forms of martial arts. I taught at Robert Crown Center. I taught at Haven School. I taught aikido at Nichols School, and I taught at Chandler. Sometime all during the week, so I was teaching six days a week. And then another fellow and I opened up our own martial arts school on [Arriba and Cussler?]. We were on Chicago Avenue for a year, professionally, had our own commercial school. And then, that lasted about four years. And then I decided to just teach for the city where I had no responsibility, other than just showing up for class.

Q: Did you enter any competitions?

LM: Yeah, I was in competition. I was on the American team. We had a team, Mexico, Canada, United States, and even had a team that came from Cuba. And so we were all black belts at that time. There were four of us fought at different weight levels, so I fought at 160-pound class. And so I had quite a few trophies for that. And that was a

wonderful experience, too. So I did that, I fought for years, with the United States team.

Q: OK, so you traveled around the country?

LM: Traveled around Canada, Mexico, all over the country, the west coast, the east coast, south coast. And then, after I stopped competing and we'd have these tournaments because I knew the major instructors. Then if we knew a turn was coming up at my school, we would get ready for it, and we would go ourselves. [00:20:00] We'd fly out to Long Beach, we'd fly to Dallas, Texas, we'd fly to New York. And I'm proud to say that I have two national champions, as a result of that. One of them is Keith Taylor, another one is Billy Matthews, who now operates the martial arts school at Robert Crown, seven days a week. But those two are my students that I'm most proud of, because they did become national champions.

Q: Great accomplishment. Well, growing up, what clubs did you, were you involved with, or did you know existed around the time in our 5<sup>th</sup> Ward?

LM: Well, at the Y, we had, for the girls they had the Girls Reserve, and we had the High-Wire Club for the boys. And all through high school, I belonged to the High-Wire. And my sister belonged to the Girls Reserve. And then, at St. Andrews Church, back in those days, they had a wonderful

Boy Scout troop. So I joined that when I was about twelve years old. And all through high school, I was a member of a Boy Scout troop which was located at St. Andrews Episcopal Church. So, with the Boy Scout troop and my relationship, later on I became the counselor for the High-Wire Club at the Y. Another, Thomas Garnett, and myself. So I've went through it myself and then, later on, I came back and directed that program until they closed, as a youth director. So that was a good experience because it was a training board for young people, and the Y provided that.

Q: Where is St. Andrews located?

LM: St. Andrews is located at 1928 Darrow. I've been there since 1940, and I'm the, serve now as a license Eucharistic minister. And I assist the priests at St. Andrews just about every Sunday. I serve as a senior acolyte, and I serve as chalice bearer. And I serve at all weddings, I assist the priest at all weddings and all funerals. I take an active part in what I can do as a licensed priest, and I go with him every Sunday to give communion to the sick and the shut-in. So this is something that I've been doing for years. And, since my wife has passed, this is something that really fits into my religious program and I enjoy. And I feel that, by doing what I do, giving communion to

the sick and shut-in, that it's something, as a person, that I can do that I feel most helps the people who really need it. So, like I say, back in those days St. Andrews was active. Always had a wonderful program for young people. They had the Evanston Youth Alliance which met there, and it was all young adults, used to be maybe 50, 60, 70 would meet there once or twice a month on Sunday. And this was back in the '40s, before I went in the service. And also we had a program for young people that, in the Episcopal diocese called the Gamma Kappa Delta. And that was a program, and we had St. Edmunds in Chicago, St. Thomas, and we were organizing to a group. And we met twice a month, and we had chaperones, and had a wonderful program. And we had sleigh rides and hayrides after the midnight mass. In fact, I met my wife in 1946 at St. Andrews, and then we went together from '46, and we were in '53. So, at the time of her passing, we were married for 42 years.

So I look back with wonderful times that I had at St. Andrews. And, when you have those kinds of programs, you don't feel that you're being discriminated against, because you take pride in what you're doing. So, based upon the activities that I was involved in and helped to develop me,

I thank God that maybe I was segregated to an extent, because we were able to have these programs that really meant much to me. And I still think about, still happy that I was able to pass through. [00:25:00]

Q: Looking back at your life in Evanston, what would be probably what you would call your fondest memory? The one you will cherish throughout life?

LM: I think my opportunity to grow up in Evanston where I felt comfortable, I felt safe. And, like I say before, then a young person, even when I went to college, I did have an avenue to express myself. That, if it hadn't have been for some of the programs that I call exciting programs in Evanston, I don't know what I would've done. But it was definitely, they were definitely an instrument to me where I was able to really develop myself, and have fun, meet wonderful people. Because there was no drugs back in those days, there was no gangs. All the people who were trying to move forward, basically just about, I would say about 75, 80 percent of all of the people I knew would go away to college. And it was just a thing. And people carried themselves with pride, self-esteem. And so you didn't have any, you had relatively few people who had social problems or anything. It was just a wonderful place, and I could walk anywhere in Evanston, and everybody knew that I was

Mr. and Mrs. Moseley's son. And so, consequently keeping that in mind, I dared not do anything wrong, because I know that it would come back to my mother and father. And they didn't tolerate it.

So it gave me a sense of worth, value, and so forth, by keeping myself in this way. So I think that, just having the opportunity to grow up and everything, having visited other places, particularly when I was in the martial arts and I'd go to some of the other communities to tournaments and stuff, I was always so grateful when I got back to Evanston. It was such a, you felt comfortable. You felt that now you can relax, and you can deal with your friends, and people were very charitable to you. You didn't have the number of people that we have here today. But just about everybody knew who you were.

Q: When Dr. Martin Luther King came to Evanston in the '60s, were you involved with that, or anything to do with it?

LM: I was, when Dr. Martin Luther King to Evanston, he came to the Unitarian church. And they, the city, the chief of police from Evanston called me and asked me would I have my senior members of my martial arts school act as security officers and guards for him. And we were sitting in different spots in the office, and we had what would be

called press passes. And then I met Dr. Martin Luther King personally then, because he was a fraternity brother of mine. And, at the time, I told him I was head of the security patrol that was here from the martial arts school. So we had a, went to a private room, and he and I had a very interesting conversation.

Later on, he came and had a meeting up in a part up in Wilmette, and he asked to have me as security. So the Wilmette police department called me, and so my martial arts students went up there for that. So having the talk with him personally, and involved the way we were with security, it was a very wonderful experience. I still have my press pass that was issued to me for this. And we had at least, I had at least 14 of my top students at that time, some of them were Northwestern students, but they were high rank. And we were sitting in the audience so, in case anything happened to him, the police felt that we would be able to do a better job than our armed policemen, although they were there, too. So, fortunately, everything went off well. But I was so grateful I had the opportunity to personally deal with him.

Q: During this, also during the '60s, you had many demonstrations and sit-ins about housing discrimination.

LM: I participated in those. They were spearheaded by Northwestern University and my church, St. Andrews, and so forth. So we used to march on Sundays and so forth. And particularly it was spearheaded by a group of whites and blacks from Northwestern at that time. [00:30:00] And they also had marches dealing with breaking down discrimination. As I said before, Northwestern University and some of the churches, including me, put pressure on the Grover Street Y to eliminate the segregated Y, which they called the Emerson Y. Although I have some feelings about that.

And they marched about eliminating all types of segregation and opening all doors in Emerson. That included some back in the early days, there were some restaurants. Even back in my high school days, there was a restaurant on Chicago Avenue. And we would go from basketball, the basketball games, from Evanston Township High School. And this place was called Cooley's Cupboard. And you'd go there and they'd seat everybody except the blacks. And one time I did go there, and this was on the Committee on Racial Equality for Northwestern Corps. And I went there with a group of white people. They let the white people in, they followed at me, and a female student from Northwestern there. But they gave us, when we got our food, my

milkshake was loaded with salt. And my hamburger was loaded with salt, where it wasn't edible. There was some people there from the Food and Drug Administration, I guess that's the title they were, and they put, took the containers, and they closed Cooley's Cupboard down. Shut them down, based upon that. And some of the worst people that I had to deal with Cooley's Cupboard was our own blacks. Because they were working there, and they would have them do a lot of the dirty work. And I don't know where they were from, but they were just as bad. But they finally set them down.

So Northwestern, my experience there working with the Northwestern and being a part of that, is something that I'll always remember too. And this took place while I was in high school. And then, in my freshman year at Northwestern, I got involved very heavily in that. That was '43 to '44. So Northwestern has been kind of in the forefront of helping to eliminate discrimination at Northwestern as far back as early '40s, as far as I can remember, before I went in the service. When I was even in high school. So I have to give them credit for doing a lot. And a majority of the people who did this were white. Because, at the time I went to Northwestern, like I said

before, you could almost count the blacks on your hand.

So, most all the work in the Corps and everything, was all spearheaded by white people who felt that there was a need to address the discrimination policies and so forth. And they did it.

Q: When you were growing up, were there a lot of black businesses that you used to frequent or shop in?

LM: Black businesses? In fact, when I first came to Evanston, Marshall Fields was one of the prominent stores downtown. The black couldn't even go in the door. And other places, they had revokes in other places, if you went in as a black person, they'd put a security officer to follow you all over the store. And a lot of the security officers were detectives and policemen who worked on the Evanston Police Department. But they worked part-time as security officers and everything in these stores. And just about every store you went in, you felt very uncomfortable. Because, the minute you would get it, you'd look up, these people would start trailing you around.

Q: Did that kind of discourage you from going to those stores?

LM: I didn't, because it was very embarrassing and so forth. So I didn't do any shopping at any of those places. And it wasn't until probably after I came back from Meharry that they would begin. In fact, when I first came to Evanston,

we had a theater called the Varsity Theater. And Alderman [Jordene?] at the time was one of the main people who stopped that, but all blacks had to sit in the balcony. That's the only place you could sit when you went in the theater, the balcony. So he worked very hard and got that eliminated. But I remember I used to go there as a kid, about 11, 12, 13 years old, and all blacks would be in the balcony. That's where you sit.

So there have been some people here who've done a lot to make it more pleasant for blacks. [00:35:00] But I just happen to be unfortunate, as you might want to call that, to be a participant in those kind of things. And they were very disheartening a lot of times. As I grew older and wanted to develop myself and express myself, the doors were closed. I couldn't do anything. And I guess it wasn't until I really came back from the service where the, I came back and finished Northwestern on the GI Bill. And it appeared, at that time, particularly I pledged a fraternity for a while.

But, at that time, there was a no nonsense approach. People just were not going to take it. So many people at Northwestern and other places demanded that they have

things. Many people made a lot of sacrifices for us. So my early years, I reflect on those sometimes, and they weren't happy years for me. I went through them, like most blacks did, but even my experience at Tuskegee, when I got to Tuskegee, I was only 18 years old when I went to Tuskegee in '44. All of our pilot instructors were white. There were no black pilot instructors. And not having really been involved in discrimination because, in Evanston, although in most cases I was the only black in my class, but the social opportunities and other things you just couldn't do. So, when I look back at my years at Tuskegee when I was so busy learning how to fly that I really didn't think so much about it. And then you learn to get a lot of pride in what you do.

So, when I look at Tuskegee, I see the discrimination side, but I also see the wonderful opportunity that I had and other people had to learn how to fly. Although it might have been under adverse conditions, but still so many blacks lived under adverse conditions, but you persevere. So, my experience there was that way but, as I've gotten older and I reflect back on it, I say, well, if they hadn't opened us to Tuskegee, you weren't going in to learn to fly in a white squadron. So it was the only place to learn.

So, if they hadn't had a Tuskegee, look at all the people. And the Tuskegee Airmen did so well in combat, they could never have had the opportunity. So I still have a great deal of pride. And, even today, I'm a member of the Chicago chapter.

I really have a lot of pride in what, I didn't go in combat, but I was a replacement pilot for those in combat. And I didn't have to go because the war ended in Europe. So they sent us to Japan, as I said before. But I have so much respect for the fellows who did go in combat. And maybe I can thank God that the war ended so I didn't have to go to be a replacement pilot. But anyway I had the opportunity. And so I belong to a wonderful group of men in Chicago. There's about 32 of us, and they call it the Chicago [DoJo?] Chapter. And I participate, well, I'm affiliated with them. And, like I say, the last five or six years, I've been very active with them. And we're getting, they're getting a lot of recognition. And so, at least, again, I'm a part of that history. A part of history of the formative years, and now I'm getting part of the history of the recognition that the Tuskegee Airmen are getting. Which is wonderful to me, because I've been to some wonderful things, it's kind of nice to be remembered

and receive the accolades that we are receiving today that we never had before. Although it's many years.

It's been 53 years since I was in flight school. But I don't remember, getting old, I don't remember flying. But a lot of the experiences, I have to sit back and try to reflect about, because I passed through them. And, as I said, being young, I didn't have the experience of really knowing what was happening to me, like a person more mature would have. Because I was still quite a youngster when I went to Tuskegee, [00:40:00] but I realize certain things did happen and, like I said before, it was developed as a segregated outfit because we couldn't fly in a white outfit. But, on the other hand, if we didn't have it, we wouldn't have learned to fly. So I look at it both ways.

And my martial arts I started, my instructor in Chicago was the president of the Judo Black Belt Federation. I got my black belt in jiu-jitsu in Japan in 1945, because I had studied. Since 1939 I had studied in Chicago at the Jiu-Jitsu Institute under Masato Tamura. And I was the only American in this school. And we used to have to clean, we'd call it the dojo, that's the Japanese word for school, every Saturday. I went down there on Mondays, Thursdays,

and Saturdays, and my father worked in the area for Fannie May candy company, so it was a Buddhist priest who was also the head instructor there. And he invited me, as a youngster, to come. And it was the most rewarding experience I had, because I was learning the disciplines that the kids did there.

It was so different from anything I had ever experienced that I'll never forget it. And my instructor was so adamant about developing you in the right way. I even feel that, even though I was very active in church, but I feel that my martial arts background and teaching gave me far more discipline and knowledge than anything I ever learned in the church. Because I remember going to martial arts school as a youngster, and you couldn't even talk. That was my first experience with that. And, when the instructor wanted to work with you, they'd come and bow to you. And you'd be in class three or four hours, you wouldn't utter a word. And that was a change for me. I'd never been through anything like that. And everything I went through there, it was just, I never forgot it. I never have forgot it to this day. I always was thankful, thanked God that I had the opportunity to be in the right place at the right time.

And I never ever thought that I knew who I was in the school. I thought I was Japanese all those years when I was a kid, because I was welcome, I was treated as such, and I knew I was black and everything. But, when I went to martial arts school, that's all I could think about was being with all the Japanese people. They were so wonderful to me. So that was my, and I tried to transfer that into things that I did in my private life. I tried to use that experience of discipline and knowledge that I gained there. And it seems to have worked pretty well for me.

Q: What was your first paying job?

LM: First paying job I had was at Aetna Insurance Company, and that was a revelation, too. I was assistant supervisor of the mailroom. I got this job through Northwestern University placement service. Somebody on the faculty there knew the vice president of Aetna Insurance Company. It was at 400 North Michigan Avenue in the Wrigley Building. I went there and worked there a year. And I was the only, well, they had one other man and myself, were the only two black people there. And, while I was there, the vice president called me in the office and said that now was the time to give blacks an opportunity. And, since I was there, he wanted to send me to underwriters' school,

which I did. I went to underwriters' school at 175 West Jackson. When I graduated, they put me in the claims department there. Then they proceeded to tell me that they're going to start sending me out to the south side of Chicago, because they were having difficulty with their white people not being treated with courtesy and respect in the black community, because they recognize them as claim adjusters and they want to run them out of the neighborhood. So I went out to my first case and this lady told me, "Get away from here or we'll shoot you."

[00:45:00] So I went back and told them, I said, "Hey, I don't need no job like that." So he said, "Well, you've got to go out there now because we can't send any more white out there." So then I quit the next day. Well, I said, "Aetna Insurance Company doesn't care anything about me. They just want a black person to go out where a white person wasn't received." And I would've been received the same way, because it wasn't because of the color, as it was because you were a claims adjuster. They had the claims, and they didn't want to be bothered with you, if you had some claims, and other claims, too. So that was my first job, and I worked there for over a year. And then I went to Great Lakes. I started at Great Lakes in '51.

Q: You mentioned before Mr. Boulier. Was he the one person that really influenced your, influence in your life?

LM: Definitely. Yeah, definitely. He was the greatest man I knew. In between he and my martial arts instructor in Chicago, those two [forge?] me anything. But Mr. Boulier was the type of person who'd sit down. And, those who knew him in Evanston, will remember that all the black youngsters in those days, he took a personal interest there. Not only did he encourage you in the physical activities, but he also would talk to you about getting good grades in school, and ask you what you're taking, and tell you, "Well, you're just wasting your time. I want you to study this," and everything. So he was like a father to everyone, all the young people. And he was so well thought of. So I would say, when I took over as director of the Y later on in my life, I used many of the principles that I learned from Mr. Boulier to try to be the best that I could be as a night director of that Y. I think about what he did for people. And so, I would say that his influence was, aided me greatly. And I still think about him.

Q: When Foster Center was first built, did you mean to get involved with Foster Center?

LM: Yeah, I used to go over to Foster before they built this new one, I used to skate over there. And Homer Friedman

was there, so I got to be very close with him. I was a skate guard, I used to teach skating. At one time, they used to use the gym floor, and they had a skating program on Mondays and Thursdays. And Monday night I was, at that time, I was the only skate instructor for the beginners' class, because everybody else would go up to [Zion?]. And then I was skate guard for like four or five years. And then, so I got involved in the program there.

Q: Were there any organized boards that made a lot of accomplishments? I've heard there was a tennis club there in Evanston at one point.

LM: Yeah, and also, well I'd say back in the '40s, late '30s and '40s, they had a baseball team called the Flashes. And Millie, I used to go watch them. And then, later on, I played a little baseball for about one summer. And, in the training program for this team. It was league ball, and they had a regular league. And all the good athletes really came up for that. And Melvin Smith in Evanston was one of the people who spearheaded that program. And then we had a restaurant here called Fannie's, and I can't remember. She's dead now, but all, every year she would equip the baseball team with new, fresh uniforms, pay all the fees and everything. So, although it was the Evanston Flashes, she did that for the community. And it was on

Ashland and Simpson, called Fannie's Restaurant, for years. And the YMCA used to have their annual banquets. And, at this banquet, they would give awards to youngsters for their participating in certain programs. And we always had it at Fannie's. She reserved the whole evening for the Emerson Y. And so she was a big contributor, not only to the people who played Foster Field, but also the Emerson Y, too.

And we had some other benefactors here, too. Because, when I first went to the Emerson Y back in '39, [00:50:00] I was given a scholarship by a man who's a barber here in Evanston. And most of the youngsters who came there, we had these Bachelors and Benedicts, and everything. And all the years when I was a youngster, all through high school, I never ever had to pay for my membership, because somebody would give me a scholarship. So that was one of the things that was very helpful in the community, because all you had to do was contact one of the clubs, the Bachelors and Benedicts, the Alphas, the Kappas, and tell them that we've got two or three youngsters who need some financial assistance. And next time you get a check, their fee was paid. So I went through all the years that I was at the Y, until I got on the staff, was paid by Mr. Dowdy, who was a

barber here, and a couple other people, and everything. So I tried to do that, when I became the night director. I particularly would be able to have youngsters that just financially couldn't do it. So sometimes personally I would pay for them. Sometimes I would get money from other sources, the church. I'd just know who the people were, and these were youngsters that I had screen, and I know who should be there. But the parents, for some reason or another, just couldn't afford the fee. So we got so involved in that program that we have no youngsters that couldn't come to the Y. No matter what, when they said they couldn't, they got it. They had a scholarship by the next week.

And I did that with all the community, and same thing with the Deltas, the AKAs. Back in those days, if you tell them, "Well, I've got some girls here that need a scholarship," you had it. And that was one of the wonderful things that I found about the people of Evanston was their generosity and at least working to make sure that the young people had an opportunity, who financially couldn't do this. So that's something I'll always remember, too. And I never, when I was seeking this assistance, I never was ever turned down by anybody. They

were very generous. And come back the next year wanting to know, "What about that youngster? Do you need anything from us, to help them in that?" Right there. So that was very good. So it made my job better, because I was able to provide an opportunity for more people. So that was one thing that I was able to, it was something that I worked at, but it wasn't me who did it. It was the other people in Evanston who supported the program.

And, when we had banquets and so forth, we'd work with the churches. In fact, I used to, I was involved in the Ministers Alliance and, at one time, they would have a prayer breakfast once a month on Saturday. And we would have ladies, volunteers, come in and cook the breakfast and so forth. And the ministers would have that. And this was all the churches in Evanston, all the black churches went there, and my Episcopal church and so forth. And so I thought that was wonderful. So I can say that the Y served many needs.

Plus, we had a nursery school where my kids went to. And I can't remember the people's names -- Payne, Mr. and Mrs. Payne. I'll never forget them. They ran that nursery school. And that was the one only place that blacks could

come where they weren't being dogged, and leave their children. And Mr. Payne would come and pick them up. Pick you up and take you to the Y. And they had everything that the kids needed for a nursery school. They might have maybe 50, 60, 70 kids, but there was no other place in Evanston at that time, other than that program that the Paynes had. It was that personal gain for them, but they provided a service. And they got food and everything. And like some of the programs we would have in the High-Wire and so forth, little fundraising programs, we would give that money, donate that money for buying food for the kids in the nursery school. Although they paid a nominal fee, because my wife and I had both of my kids, two oldest kids there. And they would, Mr. Payne would come and pick them up, Mrs. Payne would be there. And you could go and do what you had to do, because you knew your kids were in good hands. And the environment was good. Not only would they just have them there, but they tried to teach the kids, [00:55:00] the staff that they had. So that program went on for years in Evanston. And it was the only place that I know that had a daycare type program. So it served some very valuable needs.

Anytime, back in the '40s, and the '30s when I graduated

from Evanston Township High School, they had two proms. They had a white prom which we were not invited to and could not go to, and then we had the black prom. And that was always held at the Emerson Y, and we'd dress up in the formals and so forth. But we had it because we, although we were graduating from the class of Evanston Township High School, but you couldn't go to the formal.

Q: Was commencement held together though?

LM: Commencement was held together, right. That was held together. But the social activities like the swimming team. They had a swimming team at the Evanston High School before they put the swimming pool at Evanston, and they swam out of the Grover Street YMCA pool. But no blacks could because no blacks were even allowed in the door. They'd stop you right at the door and tell you to go over to Emerson Y.

So, I went to my graduation prom was at, they didn't have it there, they had it at Nichols School. It was considered the black prom. But you had no place else to go. You couldn't go to anything. So it wasn't until many years after that they had, they opened the prom up. But, by that time, you get used to being segregated and you kind of feel that you don't even want to go anyway. And I used to talk

to a lot of youngsters, I said, "Well, are you going to your prom?" They said, "No, I don't like, I don't want to go there because they don't want you there." You had the people develop those attitudes, and they're probably justified in having them. So I can see what was done as far as integration was concerned was done slowly over a period of years.

Q: Were there any, right now there is the Fleetwood Community Theatre group, I guess. Were there are any other theater groups?

LM: Yeah, we had a theater group at St. Andrews, and we had a girl named Ann. She died many years ago, but very talented person. And she had developed people from the community and gave them drama. First name was Ann, I can't remember her last name. And, right here where Family Focus is, they had an auditorium there. And she used to train youngsters and put on plays. That was my first experience, and that had to have been in the late '40s or '50s. Of course, she's been dead many years. But, after she died, that kind of died. But she was very active in the program.

And there was several other groups that was spearheaded by whites. In fact, I belonged to one for a short time. And then we decided we didn't like what was going on, and it

was one of the music teachers from Emerson Township High School organized a black male choir, chorus. It was about 10 or 15 of us in there. But then what he wanted to do was spearhead this movement and say well, and advertise and everything as all black chorus. So, back in those days, we got together as a group and said, "We don't need to be exploited like this." Because all he was doing was really exploiting, all black. So that didn't last long. And that was kind of the forerunner of us thinking and demanding things for ourselves.

So I went through that, but I was very, I was very unhappy with that because I could see the direction it was going. We were going to be exploited. We were going to go around and put on this show, and advertise as a black male chorus and everything. And this man was going to profit for it. So I got out because I didn't like it. I just didn't like the whole, the way the whole thing was set up, you know. And then so, we met secretly and decided we were going to disband. We were not going to participate in that any longer.

Q: Actually what I'd like to talk about now, I do remember last year when you came to me and talked to me about the

passing of your wife. And I would like you to talk about your wife, if you don't mind.

LM: Right, like I said, I met her at St. Andrews Church.

Q: I've got to change tapes, because I'm just about out.

LM: Oh, OK. You've got enough light? [01:00:00]

END OF AUDIO FILE

Q: Tape two for Louis Moseley.

LM: Yeah, I met my wife in 1946. I was still in the Air Force, and I was, just came home on leave. And she was a member of St. Andrews Church, and I had been a member there since 1946. And it was kind of love at first sight, when I first saw her. I knew her cousins, but I didn't know her. And I was up at Selfridge Air Force Base, and I flew home to the old military side of O'Hare field for about two or three weekends straight. And each time she would be at church, and we got to knowing each other. And, like I said, that was the beginning of our romance and then we got married. We went together off and on, but we always like each other from 1946, and we got married in '53. And then we were married for, we had five children. Our oldest child is, lives in New Mexico, Louis, and he's 42. Then my daughter, Shawna, is 40. Then I have a son, Matthew, who is 36.

Then I have a son, Paul, who is 32. And then my youngest child, who lives with me, Heather, she's 30. And then we have nine grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

And so I was very fortunate that I had what I would consider to be a beautiful marriage and a beautiful relationship with my wife. And I miss her very much, but I'm thankful to God that I had the opportunity to marry her. And we had a wonderful life together. Some things you can't change, you have to live with. But my wife was very active in the church. Like I said, she was a Sunday school teacher at St. Andrews. And she supported 100 percent, and many years I was active in the martial arts. Sometimes it took money away when I'd go to Dallas or Long Beach, California and places like that. But she supported me 100 percent, no matter what happened. And sometimes I'd say, "Well, this is going to cost some money, so I don't want to go." And she would insist, she'd say, "No, I want you to go. You're good at what you do, and I want you to go. So we'll make it." So I had that kind of support.

It's been very difficult for me, because I did have such a wonderful relationship with my wife. So I've tried to carry on in the tradition of, like I say, I'm active in the

church, and my Tuskegee Airmen group, and my fraternity. And it gives me some positive things to do. And, like I say, I really enjoy my visiting the sick and shut-in. I don't know what good I do, but at least I feel that it's part of what I should be doing at this stage in my life. So, whatever happens, I'm going to continue doing it. I'm going to stay in the church, and whatever I can do for people. Because this is what I think I'm here for.

Q: What did she do while you two were married? What was her career?

LM: Well, she went to National College of Education and got a certificate. And she worked at old Skiles Middle School as a special education teacher for a number of years. She used to work with youngsters, and she worked as what you call a, I can't remember the title of it, but it's like a teacher's assistant, but they had a special name for it. And the Department of Education gave her a scholarship, and she completed 30 hours of that, 60 hours of that up in the old National College, which now I think is St. Louis University, St. National, Louis National, at the university. And then she was out at Skiles before it became the lab school for about 8, 9, or 10 years. And she worked with, she was a teacher aide type thing. And she worked with the eighth grade teacher, two eighth grade

teachers. And she wasn't allowed to have any class any more than six students, but her job was to pull these people out, give them special training, and then try to get them back up to the level of the class. And she enjoyed that. And then they had a funding cut, [01:05:00] and she was hired as a teacher's aide, and so then they let her go.

And then she worked for a number of years at Scherer Brothers, many, many years ago. And then she also worked as a, in a doctor's office with all the radiologists and stuff, called Emerson Radiologists. All the radiologists in St. Francis Hospital, it was like a billing office. So she worked there for a number of years. And she also worked in the office of Active Service for a number of years. And, like I say, she was very active in the church. And, when she passed, she was the, at St. Andrews Church she was the high school teacher for high school ministry.

And so, but basically we did everything together. We, she used to go to tournaments with me, and she was my biggest fan. In fact, when I used to referee, when I used to fight, I fought better. I used to look at my wife's eyes, and I knew I had her support. And then I'd act up then. I'd get out there, and win, and do a lot of things. So I

was in, everything we did together. We were in the library, and everything. So we had a special, a special understanding. So I'm just grateful that we had it for all these years. And she'll always be a part of me.

Q: She went to National Louis. Did she go to Evanston Township as well?

LM: She graduated from Evanston Township High School in 1948.

Q: Did you know her then?

LM: Yeah, I met her in 1946. I was going with her then. So we started going together in '46. I was still in the military. Yeah, I was an officer in the Air Force at the time.

Q: And she was in high school?

LM: She was a sophomore in high school when I met her. And she graduated in '48. So I kind of had to, I went back to Northwestern, so we dated and everything, but I understood that she was still in high school. So it was, but we had a wonderful relationship, and her parents and everybody seemed to like me. So they, I respected her and she was a wonderful person. So, and then later on, when she finished high school, she went to University of Illinois and to Roosevelt for about maybe one or two years. And then, so she was getting her education, and I was trying to finish mine. And then she worked at Great Lakes before I did.

So, when our first child was born, she just said, left Great Lakes. She'd been up at Great Lakes since 1950. And our child, first child, was born December 7, 1954. So we had an excellent relationship. It was just a special understanding, I'd say.

Q: Was she involved a lot with the YMCA?

LM: Oh yeah, yeah. In fact, at one time, I organized a husband and wife group. And I reserved one evening a week for the husbands and wives to play volleyball, badminton, and that was a good thing. And then we had a place called the Orbit Room where youngsters had, and they had rotisserie for hot dogs, and I'd go buy diet pop for. And it was a wonderful group. And she got, I taught her how to swim. She was in my swim program. And, when I was first into martial arts competing, my wife never missed anything. My father and my wife used to come together, before he passed. And they would cheer me on. Sometimes I'd win, sometimes I'd lose, but they were there.

So, like I say, I call her an exceptional person because I don't think too many wives would've put up with all the time that I spent in the martial arts, during the developing years. Because I really wasn't here with the children like I should've been. I recognize that, but my

wife supported me 100 percent. She said she was proud of what I achieved, so I'm thankful for that. And she used to go to Tuskegee Airmen with me, and went to all my fraternity affairs. We had formals and whatever. So we did everything together. [01:10:00]

Q: How about your parents? You said your mother was from Frankfort, Kentucky?

LM: Yeah, my mother died in '67. And my father died in '57, ten years before her. They met, my mother and father went to Kentucky State University, and they met as freshmen, and they got married that summer. He was from Alabama, and my mother, everybody in my mother's family went to Kentucky State University. They were all graduates, everybody was a graduate. She had three brothers and a sister. So everybody graduated from there except her. And, at the end of their freshman year, her freshman year, they got married.

Q: What did your mother do, before she came to Evanston?

LM: She was just a student. Yeah, she never worked, she never worked at any time. My father was able to provide, and she was a homemaker.

Q: Where did your father work?

LM: My father was a chauffeur for the postmaster for about, until he died. From the time he was an early age, he was

always a postmaster chauffeur. He was a postmaster chauffeur at the time of his death. So I guess he was postmaster chauffeur for about 23 or 24 years. So he worked in the post office.

Q: Were they involved in, heavily involved in the church and community organizations?

LM: My father was a member of Second Baptist Church. And my mother had been a Catholic at an early age, but she wasn't active in the Catholic church. That was when she was in Kentucky. My father was buried from the Second Baptist, he was a member there.

Q: OK. Was he really active with that?

LM: Well, he used to go to church when he could, when he wasn't, sometimes he had to chauffeur the postmaster. And they had banquets and other things. And that was his main function, so sometime it was nights, and he'd go out there during the day. So he was very active with that, and he'd go to parties, and wherever the postmaster had to go. He was the chauffeur. And every time they would change postmasters, they inherited my father, because he had been accepted for years as the postmaster's chauffeur. And these were all, most of the postmasters in those days were Germans. [Cricken?] and all that. There was no blacks like today.

Q: So did you always live in this area, growing up?

LM: I've been here all my life. Only time I left here is when I went in the service.

Q: OK, so this has been your home all your life.

LM: Yeah, and my wife and I, when I got married we lived with her folks for about six months. And then, the second-floor apartment, people upstairs bought a place on Greenleaf, and my wife and I moved in here. And then, when my mother died in '67, I bought this house in '68. So I've owned the house, my wife and I have owned this house since 1968. We've made some improvements and so forth, but it's been our, my family home.

Q: During World War II, shortly afterwards, they built up a World War II housing --

LM: On the canal banks, right. That was during World War II. That was our first exposure to what they call low income housing. And I guess, at one point, after World War II, they started deteriorating so that the city wanted them torn down. And a lot of people were living there practically for nothing. But I remember it, so and it was right on Dewey, all along the canal bank on Dewey. They were really were military type small places. And a lot of families were able to save money when living in. When they

tore those down, they were able to buy homes, like the man next door. He's dead now, but he lived in one of those.

Q: And there was a lot of kids playing in the streets while you were growing up --

LM: No, most of the kids would play over at Foster Field. They had a good program over there. You hardly saw anybody. In fact, we had a block club in this block for a number of years. Everybody's dead now but, for example, the lady named Mrs. Saunders across the street, before she passed, she became an invalid. So, during the block club, we would have a schedule of who was going to cut her grass, and if there was snow. And I was young at that time, so I was on the schedule. And so I'd go, I had my lawnmower, [01:15:00] it was my week to cut the grass, and I'd do that for her. Because she was bedridden, living by herself. So they had those kinds of programs that any time anybody got sick, in this block club they would schedule the young people, whoever would take care of cutting the grass. So it was, it made it kind of nice. And anything that went wrong in the neighborhood, they'd meet every other week. And they had a man named Mr. Lindsay who spearheaded that, so I was a part of that, too. So it gave you some sense of feeling in the community. Although this was owned by mother and father but, if one of them had gotten sick, the

block club would take care of our grass and everything. So I think that was my early time of working to try to do. And I've always had a sense of, in particular with older people, and trying to do something to make life, the final days of their life as pleasant as possible for them. So I had no feeling at all about going and cutting somebody's grass when I know, and I'd go visit. And, as a youngster, I'd do that. So probably what I'm doing now in the church was probably developed during those formative years of my life, where we had a sense of people. And, like I say, we knew everybody in the block. Just about everybody's gone now, including my parents. But it was really rewarding, because what everybody did, everybody on this block knew me. And, like I say, back in those years, we used to leave our front door open when it's summertime, and let the air blow through, front and back door open, and just lock the screen door. Never had any problem.

Q: Were you active in any of the Emerson politics?

LM: I kind of shy away from politics because I've never really seen, in Emerson, the positive results that would warrant my time. I've seen things develop, but so much of politics in the days that I was involved was a lot of rhetoric. But I never really saw the positive end. So I kind of always

lean, if I couldn't see the end result of something that I was working in, then I kind of shied away from it.

Q: OK, so you didn't really follow the careers of Mr. Jordene or Mr. --

LM: Well, he was a fraternity brother. I knew him, the family and I, we were very close and still are. I'm very close with the kids. But it was back in those days, I don't go to city council meetings and things like that, because I had other things that I was interested in. And I had more of a direct approach of doing what I was doing at the Y and other places. And so I left the politics and stuff alone. I didn't want to be involved in politics, period. It just was something I didn't feel comfortable with, and I just couldn't see too much positive things coming out of it.

Q: And it's pretty much the same feeling today, too?

LM: Yeah, I still have the same feeling. I kind of look at my own destiny. But I realize that, if there's something that, now I just told you I just served with the mayor, and appointed me to a blue ribbon panel for the wages and salaries of all the men, and her salary and all that. Now, that was a rewarding committee, and I appreciate her thoughtfulness in having me put on that. Because I've also served on the diocese, the Episcopal diocese in Chicago, and they have a committee for clergy. And this committee

does the same thing. We're in the process of determining what priest, the minimum salary for our priests, is a stipend for us, a living allowance, and travel allowance, and all that. And I enjoyed that, because I'm kind of geared toward that anyway. I'm also the treasurer of St. Andrews Church, so I work quite heavily with the budgeting. And I'm also the chairman of the finance and budget committee of St. Andrews. So that, in addition to being a licensed minister, I also function as the treasurer. So I get involved in politics anyway, so that's why I was appointed by the bishop, too.

And I got really heavily involved in management and budgets and stuff, when I was personnel director at Great Lakes. Because, like I said before, I was responsible for over a thousand people. So I would go to Washington on trips and whatever we did to work for their salary increases, and work for other budget requirements that you need in a hospital. [01:20:00] So I got involved in that anyway, so I like that kind of work. In fact, I practically do some type of treasury work every day here in the house, for the church. I pay all the bills and everything, but it's something I enjoy. Keeps me busy.

Q: Did you ever have to use Community Hospital at all?

LM: Community? My wife had an ectopic pregnancy before any of our children was born, in the emergency. And Dr. Elizabeth Hill performed the emergency surgery however.

Q: Did you go there at all for any other --

LM: My son was born there. My oldest boy was born there. Dr. Hill was our family physician, until she died. With my mother, my father, all of them. An excellent doctor. But, and like I say, I had an emergency situation. My wife had a, first pregnancy was what they call ectopic pregnancy, and Dr. Hill performed the surgery. And I've had relatives, my grandmother, in that hospital. And I was, at one time, the Alpha fraternity, we had members of the fraternity who was on the board. I was on the board there. And kind of financial board of the hospital for two or three years. And we kind of worked in the budget and so forth there. And I could see the demise of the hospital because. And also Evanston Hospital was involved in trying to get rid of the hospital, and have the patients come there. And that was the first I guess inception of having black patients come to St. Francis in Evanston. Prior to that time, none of the black doctors here were on the staff of St. Francis, or Evanston, or anyplace else. So the only place they could practice in a hospital environment was at Community Hospital. And, later on, Dr. Spencer, Dr.

Gatlin, and Dr. Gatlin went down to West Memorial Hospital, which is [Passifin?] Hospital. And Dr. Spencer was involved with St. Francis. So they were involved in doing that, and had my son there. But it was rewarding. Let me see what time. I may have to call downtown. I'm on the bishop's committee, I'm the financial advisor for St. Andrews. So, but these things are wonderful now, since I lost Joan, because it gives me a way of kind of occupying my time. Otherwise, I'd probably go crazy. So, that's scary. So I enjoy it. It's a lot of hard work, but it's what I need. I need to be kept busy, so to speak, so I do that.

Q: Well, I thank you very much for your time.

LM: OK, so whenever you want to finish.

END OF AUDIO FILE