

Walter Calhoun

DINO ROBINSON: -- to create a documentation of what is happening in the [Shore?]--

WALTER CALHOUN: Oh, I'm a big believer in heredities and the oral history since then. You know that's, yeah, the way we do it, and that's why I kid you about it at class. I mean part of that is to preserve the memory of what my family was in Kenilworth. I'm very proud of it in so many ways because it was such turbulent time, and we've lived to be able to talk about it.

DR: Right.

WC: On the other hand, I have no illusions about the trauma that was inflicted on the family unit and then particularly my sisters, you know. My brother and I, I think less so primarily because we were male. Though I think he still developed in ways that I wouldn't call as openly as I may have. I think if you asked any of my brothers and sisters, they would've said I enjoyed a very -- much more positive experience in Kenilworth and even to my parents to a certain extent. My brothers and sisters always -- I don't know about my oldest brother and sister as much, but I think my younger brother -- my younger sister felt I was favored by my parents, and looking back on it, I know that

wasn't the case. I mean, I really think both my parents believed wholeheartedly that they loved each of their children uniquely and, now, no one better than the other. But because of money, you know my parents were very sensitive to me going out and being broke or not having money, so I never left the house until I was 18 without any money. I mean, my dad was constantly giving me money, and my -- he'd buy my older sister cigarettes, and he supported his older children, but they didn't go out as often. So here I was running around in the neighborhood, and I always had money, you know?

DR: Mm-hmm.

WC: To this day, I have kind of a warped view of money because of it. I remember when my son was acting out and I took him to the counselor and we were -- I was telling him some of this stuff, and he... I said the story about my dad never letting me leave the house without any money, and he said, "How cruel" because instead of teaching me to go work and get a job and the -- you know, those self-independence and self-sufficiency, he was basically creating this money monster. It was interesting because I had never -- my dad was a very kind, gentle, nice man. I mean he took great pleasure in being polite and accessible and he ne-- I can recall the number of times I saw him generally mad on one

hand. He just didn't have a temper, and he had such good anger management issues. But I remember when that therapist just said how cruel that was about my dad, and it was the first negative thought anybody had ever really articulated about my dad. So I've remembered it and thought of it and really tried to piece back what he was trying to tell me and say. And it's -- it really has made a difference in how I raise my kids. And my daughter to this day says I've made it so much harder on her as an adult by being generous as a father, you know? I mean, [00:05:00] so I know some of those things have been passed on, and it's like anything in life, it can be bad if to an extreme, so...

DR: Yeah, got you. I'm going stop -- pause you for a second and say today is April 19, 2013, at the Shorefront Legacy Center interviewing Walter Calhoun and his family legacy living in Kenilworth, Illinois. OK.

WC: Yeah.

DR: So thank you for that like overview. It was really good.

WC: And then I (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

DR: -- which is good.

WC: Yeah. (laughter)

DR: I want to -- well kind of, like, just more conversational at most, but I will ask some specific questions [about?] and just run with it -- with that.

WC: Right.

DR: But from your recollection with what your parents had talked to you about on the reason for moving to Kenilworth.

WC: My mother, Lillian Calhoun was a journalist, less prominent at the time of the move, then as her subsequent career developed, she had a column in the *Daily Defender* called *Confetti*, and she had done... She was the first black woman in the city room of the *Chicago Sun-Times*. She might have been the first black, but I know Mr. Moses was the city editor, and he was African American and so there might have been one or two other blacks in the city room before her, but there weren't, I mean, other women. I think my mother, though she never explicitly said directly, probably regretted the Kenilworth experience. My dad less so because, as I mentioned, he was a very kind, very outgoing, polite man, and people liked him. I mean he was a good neighbor, and he enjoyed the quiet of Kenilworth, the emphasis on family values, the -- it's a very picturesque suburb, and I think he really felt that he was doing his family a service by being there. My mother felt before the move that -- she was a very civil-rights-oriented woman,

and she felt very strongly that blacks had the right to live anywhere, and I think she felt that the family in Kenilworth would profit from integration. But I never believed that she felt that we would be the only family there for as long as we were there. We moved up in '63 or '62, '64, sometime in the early '60s, and I was about five years old when we did. And that was of great benefit because I was able to start first grade at Joseph Sears School with my classmates before anybody was really conscious of the significance of race. My older sister, however, Laura, was an eighth grader and very attractive but dealing with eighth-grade, teenage-girl issues, and my older brother, Harold was -- would've been a seventh -- sixth grader and he... Well, they were old enough where people knew black and white and the significance of what was happening, and being the only black family I think was terribly isolating for both of them. Laura started dating black men from Evanston as she went through high school, and that didn't always turn out as well as she probably hoped from the beginning. My brother never really dated [00:10:00] many girls in Kenilworth, and to this day, he's remained unmarried, and he lives in New York, and I couldn't see him getting married and having children for instance. Myself on the other hand, I feel since I started

at five before we were all race conscious, the one or two isolated, negative experiences were always met overwhelmingly with a profound, positive white response. I remember a sixth or seventh grader [Art Berwyn?] calling me a nigger and trying to provoke a fight. And one of my best friends, Billy Castino who still to this day is a great friend and whose brother was John Castino who was a great athlete in three sports in New Trier and Rookie of the Year in American League with the Minnesota Twins, ended up fighting Art. I remember Billy getting whipped with a chain, but he was not going to let me take it, be there, go through it alone, so... In eighth grade, I was the student council president. I won the [John Dorr?] award in football, which is generally a sportsmanship award even though I only played a [sportsman town?] award, one of those hustle good football player award, but it wasn't a [Mosay?] play award, and I certainly wasn't the best football player in town, so... So we -- well, there was always this push-pull and this constant concern over how things were affecting me. I will say dating was always a complicated subject because as I got older, people could like me individually and I think they generally did, but necessarily feel that I was the ideal candidate to be dating their daughter. And to a certain extent, I think

that reflected being black. I also think correctly, it reflected us not being as wealthy as other families in Kenilworth because there was huge wealth in Kenilworth. The misconception is the entire suburb is one percenters, and that's not true because both my parents worked. And we were middle class, maybe upper middle class, but I had friends who were less well off than I was, but still, there were -- more of my classmates were well to do than middle class. You always had that intersection between race and class when dealing with me and dating, and it was kind of tricky, but we got through it. I had a girl or two that I dated and who were -- who liked me and then I also had girls who were, I'm sure, told by the parents not to, so... But nobody died, and we've been able to move on. But I think it was also very hard for my older brother and sister who, like I said, moved in older and later. They had been at the University of Chicago Laboratory School, and the ironic fact was that my parents, one of the reasons they moved to Kenilworth from the South Side of Chicago was because four children at the University of Chicago would've been prohibitively expensive. And here we were moving to Kenilworth because it was more economical. But I remember my brother saying -- [00:15:00] when he got his books said he had had the same books two or three years earlier of U

of Chicago, so the education wasn't quite comparable for him as it was for the rest of us.

DR: Can you backtrack a little bit and tell me -- kind of give me like a biopic of both your father and your mother? You did a little bit of your mom already.

WC: Yeah. It's interesting because my dad was my greatest fan. I mean, he really loved me and, like I said before, was generous with money with me and really nurtured the outgoing aspects of my personality that I still rely on to this day. I wouldn't say my mother was less so, but it wasn't until my father passed frankly and she was by herself that I developed some of the closeness that I had with him. But I always felt my dad was my greatest fan and my biggest supporter, and there was nothing I couldn't do without him. In fact, when I got married -- engaged to be married, my dad was very happy, and my mother, on the other hand, having met my ex-wife wasn't very happy about it and recommended I not do it. But my mother didn't have a stature with me that I would really listen to what she said. My dad was -- I remember him saying, "Oh, come on, honey, he wants to marry. This is a great thing." And then when I wanted to get divorced, my dad was very supportive about that too. You know like, "It hasn't worked and come stay at home for a while and get your

bearings," and my mother was like, "No, you should remain married for your children." (laughs) It was just -- it was kind of comical when you look back at it that they had these reactions, but they were consistent reactions, I mean, you know, both. My mother was the strong adult in the family. My dad was a very deferential father. He would not -- they would present a united front and generally mean it, but my mom was really the decision maker in regard to family choices and things. I was OK with that because I usually was able to communicate what I wanted to my dad who was usually able to communicate it, in whatever way, communicate it with the wife. So that I don't know if I'd call myself spoiled, but I remember getting my way more often than not, you know?

DR: Mm-hmm.

WC: It was funny because the only time I remember being grounded was for staying out too late two days in a row and not calling. We'd often have sleepovers, and I didn't. My parents were always very sensitive to how I was being perceived. They didn't like the fact that I'd be out two days in a row and staying over at somebody's house and them not knowing where I am and other families feeding me because they didn't want to be thought of as, here's Walter, he can't go home, or he doesn't have a family

that's taking care of him because they obviously wanted me to be home more than out. But I remember being grounded, and I was student council president at the time, and I really remember arguing all night to be able to go out, and my mom just saying, "No, you're not going anywhere."

(laughter) And then my friends, we used to sneak in Joseph Sears School and take candy from [Coach Kay?] who was the principal or associate principal at the time out of his candy bowl on his desk. [00:20:00] And that one night I didn't get -- I wasn't able to go out, they were caught by the police. [Tray Bono?] and [Charlie Benson?] had vandalized computers and created all this damage, and so it was a real scandal. I remember going to the church the next Monday, and the principals and the administration at Sears wanted me to talk to some of my students -- the students. (laughter) And we were kind of laughing at ourselves because they all knew that I would've been there had I not been grounded, so it was comical. But the damage that was done was very different from what we had -- we would've usually done. I mean, we would sneak into a window and run around the school, but we wouldn't damage anything. We were careful with like footprints, so... But that was one of the things that happened in eighth grade. I look back, I was a member of the Holy Comforter Church

because my mother was Episcopal and so we -- that was a very comforting thing growing up.

DR: What -- where was that church located?

WC: Outside in Kenilworth Avenue right across the street from the Kenilworth Union Church, who was been fantastic to Family Focus, even more so than the Holy Comforter. The funny thing was I was talking to the representative from the Garrett group at [Evanston yesterday?] because I had made a pledge in my pastor's name for when I die because I don't really want to give money when I'm living. But I told them when my estate comes, here's \$10,000, so he came up and thanked me. But I -- during -- I told him during my high school years, I moved away from the church and continued to move away from the church throughout my adult years until I got hit by the car in May of 2002 and was in a coma for a month and then when the church came back into my life, the Methodist Church in Glencoe but the church nevertheless. We marveled at that journey because that's very similar to what happens with a lot of white people who choose to be religious and then when you get through high school and college and, yeah, those years, you tend to move away from the church, so... But I found the church very comforting when I was younger. I wonder why it was so -- why I moved away as much as I did growing up but... And

the best I can explain it is an increasing ego because I always felt very aware of whatever accomplishments I was engaging in at -- through high school and college. I worked on the newspapers, I played two or three sports, I played four years of baseball New Trier, and so... I think -- and I hate to say it, but I think part of that [egoization?] moves Christ to the side more or at least with me. But looking back at it, I'm not so -- I feel very happy with who I am now especially after the accident because service work and mission outreach stuff is so much more important to me now, and that's really what I enjoy doing. I teach (inaudible) courses, I like to give time to Family Focus in Evanston, I run the soup kitchen on the last Wednesday of the month in Rogers Park, and I enjoy giving back. But I struggled professionally growing in my twenties and thirties in ways that I think people who knew me would've been more surprised [00:25:00] at, you know?

DR: Mm-hmm.

WC: I attribute part of that to maybe some feelings of entitlement, or I resist very hierarchical organizations. I never worked as hard as the hardest workers in my law firm, yet I still expected the same rewards. I look back on it and I go, "You're a moron. (laughter) "You don't work as hard as the top 10 percent, why do you think you're

going to get the rewards of that 10 percent?" And I think part of that was just my experiences in Kenilworth. I mean, in that sense, I was treated very fairly as a lawyer growing up professionally at [Williams & Montgomery?]. In fact, Williams actually moved into Kenilworth and he -- I think to this day, he would tell you that Walter Calhoun was treated very fairly at his law firm, and that Walter Calhoun did a lot of things that other people wouldn't have done. And they would agree with all that, so... It's funny how it works out and plays out, you know. Now, Montgomery, he liked me in a way but you could -- the feeling was he didn't like me in a lot of other ways. He liked the people that worked very hard and made him money, and the fact that I was on the low end of that really meant I was not redeemable. But Williams -- I mean they even... I didn't make partner originally after seven years, and I felt in my -- they changed the partnership criteria after 10 or 11 years that I was there to accommodate me, you know, and some of the things that I brought to the table. Because I think Williams always felt I was very good for the firm, and I was very good for morale, and I was a good person to practice law there. But, again, the people that succeeded were the bigger billers and the big billers, and here's Walter consistently in the bottom 10 percent of

billing. So even though I'd occasionally bring in business, which was very important towards the end, I wasn't always working as hard as the people that were successful, so...

DR: OK, got you. So your family stayed in Kenilworth from -- moved there in the early '60s and moved away from Kenilworth when?

WC: Well, let's see. In 1976, I graduated New Trier, and I went to Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, in 1977. At that period, my mother got a promotion in Jimmy Carter's labor department to publish a labor periodical, so she ended up moving to Bethesda. It was a very difficult time for the family because here, my mother was going to be in Bethesda with my little sister, and my dad was very unhappy that she was choosing to do this because his wife was now in the East Coast and so I kind of -- I was a jerk about it. Because I remember being hard on my mom saying, "Dad didn't really deserve this. You're married and this is kind of -- why are you doing this?" And I really didn't appreciate the call to [professionals?] and that my -- that was running through my mom. Because even though she had changed jobs before in Chicago, I never really looked at it as that significant a thing because we always stayed together. I mean after she left the *Sun-Times* city room,

she started her [00:30:00] -- with John McDermott, she started the Chicago Reporter, which is a very influential black statistical [gatherer?]. She did that for a number of years and then she started a public relations firm with my Uncle Louis Martin who was liaison to the black community in the Kennedy and Johnson and Jimmy Carter administrations. And so they had this PR firm, which the family would help in various ways. I mean, I was an account executive for a lot of years, did whatever I could to help the thing. But I never looked -- it wasn't until she went to Bethesda that I really looked at what she did professionally in a negative way. And so for two years, she stayed in Bethesda, and I was really mean, and unfairly so, because as you know, at 18 or 19, you don't really have any say in your parents' decision-making, what they're doing for themselves. But I will call -- like I called her like I said and... So my Dad ended up moving out of Kenilworth. They sold the house. He moved down to Malibu East at 6033 North Sheridan Road and stayed there for a couple of years. My mom moved back from Bethesda at some point in the late '70s or early '80s and then they moved to Thorndale Beach South, which is 5901 North Sheridan, which was a three-bedroom, three-bath condominium on the lake. It was a much better building than Malibu East and that's

where they grew together till my father passed, and that was in the early '90s, so...

DR: OK.

WC: But it was interesting how all of that played out. And --

DR: When you decided to stay -- oh, you primarily lived in the North Shore pretty much or did you --?

WC: Well, I went from Wesleyan to the University of Michigan Law School, and I graduated in the University of Michigan Law School in 1983 and then I came back. In the summer of '82, I came back to work at Williams & Montgomery where I accepted a position. That was owned by Williams who was from Kenilworth then. [Seber?] Montgomery who was living on Wisconsin in the high-rent district downtown. Too, I came back for the summer and lived with Bob Delaney and [Kent Leonard?] at 3639 Sheffield, which is one of the apartments outside of Wrigley Field, so we were able to watch the ballgames from our room, and that was a lot of great stuff. And these guys -- Kent Leonard was Roy Leonard's son and a very good soccer player had moved here, and Bob Delaney has always been one of my good friends and he's my biggest financial backer at Family Focus. So they have remained -- we have all remained close. But for that year, I lived at 3639. I came back after I graduated, I lived on the north side for a while. And I was married in

'85 -- or '84 on April fourteenth and then July of '85, I had a baby daughter and then August of '87, I had a son, and I had literally the worst marriage I could possibly imagine. I mean, for the first time in my life, I was unhappy on a daily basis just being me and so -- you know? I don't completely blame my ex-wife for that, but I think my mother saw things that I didn't and... So we had the two children, and [00:35:00] we're living on the Near North Side on Burling, and we bumped around a lot and we were -- and we eventually divorced after four years, five years. So by 1990, I was divorced, and by 1992, I decided I wanted to live on the North Shore. So that if I ever got custody of the children because we had joint custody, but if I ever got possession, I wanted to be able to send them to public schools cheaply and easily without having to worry about anything. So I contacted Pat O'Rourke who's my son's godfather, and he runs Coldwell Banker in Glencoe now. But he was, you know, [O'Rourke?] real estate in Glencoe, and we found the house that I'm living right now 279 Lindon, and I bought that in '92, and it's been a great house for the family and for me. I even rented that house to my ex-wife and kids for a couple of years because she couldn't -- she was getting [pressed?] out of the Chicago real estate market. So I had told her, "You know, if you ever have

problems with the real estate and you have the kids, tell me, and we'll work out something with the house," and we did that, you know?

DR: Mm-hmm.

WC: So I've always been a very -- I've always been very attached to the various communities on North Shore. I love Glencoe because it's just so much more diverse than Kenilworth, and it's just so much of a well-rounded community. Because I really think -- we'll come back at -- Kenilworth was far too isolating for blacks, one black family. And they -- that -- you know, can I point two things that were that ugly because of it?

DR: Mm-hmm.

WC: Well, yeah. I mean we had a cross burned in our yard. I remember my mother having to go to sit on her hands and knees and -- because they had written nigger about my little sister on a sidewalk. And she was the determined to just clean it off and not really being able to do that. But I think Glencoe is obviously -- having more blacks is a much more normal environment, and I think the kids did well there.

DR: OK, OK, nice. You know doing some of my research on Kenilworth, I saw there like a -- well, I'll paraphrase the -- again, it's the founding charter of Kenilworth. Are you

familiar with that? Like (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

--

WC: No. I mean, I'm sure I'm familiar with part of it.

DR: Yeah, it was advertised as -- and this is from -- there was actually a group that is researching some downtowns, and one of their focus was on Kenilworth. Because I think what they said in there -- and I'm paraphrasing from the original founding charter -- was that it advertised big lots, big houses, no alleys, and Caucasians only.

WC: That makes sense. And that's why I've always had just generational forgiveness towards not only the elderly but whites in Kenilworth who were not very enlightened really like racially. Because we did kind of upset the applecart by moving there. And face it, when you're lower middleclass white without the big bucks, your house is primarily your biggest investment and your biggest way to get ahead and so I always understood where people were coming economically as well, so...

DR: This is actually the quote, upsetting the balance.

WC: Yeah. (laughter) Well, and -- you know, I think all that has helped make me the human that I am, the man I am because I -- [00:40:00] having been -- lived through a coma for a month and recovered from that, yeah, I mean there are... I really don't not like anybody, and I've told

this, a man from Garrett Seminary yesterday. I said, "I really like everyone, and when I don't like somebody, the first question I ask myself is, why, what's wrong with you, why are you not liking him?" Because I respect people that are occasionally loud, I [expect?] people that are -- respect people that are smart, I respect people who are trying -- you know. So even if there's something that turns me off, I usually don't hold it against that person. I think that it's a temporary episode because my feeling is most people are generally good and most people do generally do the right thing except the 10 percent who are sociopathic or just mean people that everybody can see that's how they are, so, and they don't make any bones about it. They don't try to hide it, so... That's helped me as an adult because I'm a very live-and-let-live person, and I don't really... I celebrate people's individuality. Like, I love your braids, though you're never going to see me wear them, you know what I mean? (laughter) And I think your relationship with me is like thousands of my relationship with other people, you know?

DR: Exactly, exactly. I agree with some of the same things that you were talking about -- not prejudging people or and judge on their individual merits and not as a class, a culture, a race.

WC: Right.

DR: Forgiveness of the past. There's -- that's open -- that's always open for some type of discussion.

WC: Well, yeah, because you --

DR: -- but it has to be a good discussion though. I mean I'm open to the good discussion that goes behind that.

WC: Right. Well, and you don't want anybody to take advantage of you or your goodness. I mean -- you know?

DR: Exactly.

WC: And that's important. I remember my mother telling me before I went to school at a young age, "Be nice to everybody, and if somebody upsets you really, don't react angrily. Try to treat the problem with kindness." I've done that, and that's why it's not surprising that I was student council president in the eighth grade because most people would say, "He tried to be nice and polite to most everybody he met." And my mom said, "They don't know black people. You're going to be their first experience with a black person, and you're going to have to -- you're going to shape people's -- some people's views about what black people are like." So I've always had that in the back of my mind when dealing with people, especially people that I don't like because if you like them, then it's great, and you're not going to think about it.

DR: (laughs) Wow. Do you want to show me some of the stuff that brought? It looks like you brought a bunch of newspapers here.

WC: Oh, these are just my newspapers

DR: Oh, these are your papers?

WC: Yeah.

DR: Oh, OK.

WC: I get --

DR: I thought it was something else.

WC: My mother's a journalist and I want -- we're all closet hoarders, and I get three newspapers a day. This is how I read them. But I actually have that obituary in my house.

DR: OK. I think we might have the obituary here as well. We may have a copy of it. I'll have to double-check.

WC: Well, Family Focus was always very sensitive when she died. I know she knew Bernice. And giving back was always something very important to my mom and dad, and they'd be very proud of my continued effort on behalf of Family Focus and the families of Family Focus. I -- there's very little that I do that I'm not very proud about here. Like I was telling you Bob Delaney, Bob is a good friend of mine, and he gives about \$15,000 now every year. I remember one year he didn't give, and I called him and I said -- you know Bob and I always have very difficult conversations about money

(laughter) because usually he's giving and [I maybe not?]. But I said, [00:45:00] "Is there something we've done wrong? Are you mad at me?" Because 70 percent of the families we serve live under the poverty line so that money matters. It's funny that when his giving is done, I'm -- I really need to know why because it's not --

DR: (inaudible)

WC: -- going to go to me, but I mean [Dorothy?] has 10,000 less dollars to work with, so...

DR: Wow, wow. So you had a chance to look through some of these? I found this --

WC: Yeah, I have seen that too. That's Confetti that was in (inaudible).

DR: Right. I always like looking through this. I had a good time reading through a lot of this and then, well, she started -- it looked she started writing articles about changing neighborhoods and (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

WC: Well, I think she felt that we -- I think if they -- if they had asked -- she was sitting over there now, she would've said she was happy about what I tried to do in Kenilworth. I don't think she felt Kenilworth was particularly nice to my two sisters. And nobody -- you never know what it's going to be like till you live it.

DR: It's always different from everybody.

WC: Yeah. And I think if three or four other families had lived there, that would've been very different, you know?

DR: Mm-hmm.

WC: But to be the only one for so long, you know?

DR: Yeah. I can -- I -- I've lived that.

WC: You did?

DR: I lived in Glenview. It was kind of a similar situation in the '70s, and me integrating my school and some of it. You know we started --

WC: See, so you know.

DR: -- (overlapping dialogue; inaudible), so I can identify with a lot of the stuff that's there, you know?

WC: Yeah.

DR: I think there was the birth of like a new structure for us that we had Jack and Jill, and we're involved with [Matt?].

WC: Right.

DR: you know I integrated my school until my brother came along, and there's two of us. And then he was transferred -- the school district changed, and he was transferred to another school, but I still stayed at my school because I was the older one, and I was leaving that school soon anyway, so they just left me there. Then, going to

Springman Junior High, and then all of sudden, it was like five of us.

WC: Right. (laughs)

DR: And the immediate look was, "Who are you? We don't know who you are." I'm like, "Well, I've always been here. I went to Pleasant Ridge School," blah, blah, blah, and they're like, "Well, we never heard of that school. We all went to this school, and where do you live on the base?" I'm like, "Oh, no, I don't live on a base," and they're like, "What? You don't live in a base?"

WC: There you go.

DR: I'm like, "No, actually, we -- my parents have a house here." "Really, you have a house here? I don't know that blacks lived in Glenview." That was --

WC: There you go.

DR: -- that was the question.

WC: Well, I'm sure they don't have many --

DR: No, they did, --

WC: -- you know even --

DR: -- they did.

WC: -- to this day.

DR: Yeah, I think even to this day, it's very few and far between. It's funny that I ran across my old principal from school, and he lives here in Evanston now and with a

nice... I have to just -- you know I had a good chance to thank him as an adult of the things I was going through at Glen-- in the Glenview schools and the kids doing some of the same race baiting, picking fights. And he knew my personality that I would never be in a fight unless someone used -- you know called me a nigger.

WC: Right.

DR: That's the only time I would ever, ever fight because I figured that you're damned if you do, you're damned if you don't. But I will be resolved and stand my ground, and that's what I maintained. He was a very good buffer because the other students' parents would come in mad, my mom would come in mad, and he'd be the good buffer of saying, "Your son was wrong. Dino was minding his own business. (laughs) You go back to class." Then, you could see the arguments still ensuing afterwards of those he-said-she-said stuff. But he was very supportive and understood. He had understanding of what I might have been going through. And I think that was the saving grace for me at that school because there are some teachers that were not too happy there was a black student in class, and there were some students just had some ill will. I understood that they were learning it from their parents, and

unfortunately, those kids were to suffer the consequences, you know?

WC: Right, right. That's right.

DR: But, at the same time, like we would have a fight, and the very next day, it's like it would never happen -- it never happened because I'm not going to try and hold that against you. But just know that if you go that route, I will defend myself and stand my ground.

WC: Well, it's interesting, you made me think of when I was in sixth grade, they brought a southern woman in during the dancing school and -- no, it must have been seventh grade because I was in sixth grade [00:50:00] dancing school. And then the seventh grade, she didn't believe blacks and whites should dance together and so she didn't invite me, and this just upset so many families of parents who didn't even -- their children didn't even want to dance, so... They said, "If Walter is not invited," --

DR: Then we're not --

WC: -- "we're not coming and our families aren't involved."

Then, I'd get this invitation the next day: Please join our group, so... And then Gus Giordano ran it the eighth grade year, and I've since become great friends with the Giordano family, so, you know --

DR: That's great.

WC: -- go figure.

DR: I really appreciate your time with Shorefront, and I know that it's been a long time coming, so we're working on this article --

WC: Well, I --

DR: -- (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

WC: -- appreciate what you do. I mean [just throwing in?] by degree in college, and I really appreciate how you try to memorialize what things have been happening now so that people have a record in the future of people that were here and -- you know.

DR: Right, right.

WC: I'm tickled pink that you have my mom's very nice picture, you know?

DR: Yeah, yeah, I had started reading her articles online and seeing. If you go back and read what she was writing about and what (inaudible) was, and how she went up in her career, and then learning about your dad too and not finding a lot on your dad right now.

WC: He kind of just stayed in the background, but he was the rock behind my mom. They couldn't have done all that they did without that chemistry and the way they worked --

DR: Great.

WC: -- you know so...

DR: Well, I really do appreciate this. I'm going to stop the recording now.

WC: OK.

DR: And so we can just talk at random.

END OF AUDIO FILE