

Transcript of Rosa Smith Stanback

CO: Ms. Rosa, we'll try to talk up a little bit. It should be okay in this room since it's enclosed, but it's really difficult for the students when they have to strain to hear us. So let me just say that it is March the 7th, 2012. It's a Wednesday afternoon, and Ms. Rosa Stanback – Rosa Smith-Stanback and I are at the Chattahoochee valley Public Library, a new building on Macon Road in Columbus, Georgia. And we may not have as much time as we'd like, so we're just gonna get started. And Ms. Rosa, I will ask questions to start with about your childhood and then we'll proceed on to your work. And then some questions about religion, and questions about southern identity and some questions about history, and then we'll go a little faster than probably we'd like, but we want to get as much done today as possible.

CO: So I start by asking people, what is the first memory they can strum up? What's the first thing you remember from childhood?

RS: I remember most of all growing up in a small town where neighbors were neighbors and friends were friends. I was born maybe just about 3/4ths of a mile from Main Street. And Main Street is where you begin to see all of the white families, but my family owned property. And it was just across the railroad track. My father was a railroad man, and my mother was a housewife, although she taught in her early years when teachers did not have to be certified as they are today. But my father worked for the Kansas City Southern Railroad. I was one of 3 children born to my family. I had a sister who was a first, my brother was a middle child, and I was the last one. Although the Depression years were very much a part of my life, I never felt the pressure of a Depression because my father was a railroad man.

CO: So he stayed employed throughout?

RS: He was employed throughout. I have never known him when he was not employed up until the time of his retirement. And railroad trains always had to move, and my father, before blacks were classified on the railroad, was classified as a Machinist Helper. In other words, you had a Machinist, and then you had the Machinist Helper. If you can picture the 1920's, my father was a Machinist Helper, but my father also – and I say this most of the times I'm talking to people – he was a person who did most of the mechanical work on the train engine. Although you had a white man who was the Machinist, and my father was the Machinist Helper.

CO: But your father was a skilled Machinist –

RS: He was very skilled, and to this day, if you go to Leesville, you will find that the street is named after my father. Oh yes, so I still own property because my brother and

my sister are both deceased, but the street there I was born on is called Smith Street.

CO: Named after your father –

RS: Named after my father.

CO: Now, you said that this was Main Street –

RS: No, I was born off of Main Street, it would take you maybe about 3/4 mile to get over to Main Street. And when I got on Main Street, of course everybody in Leesville knew you. And I was called “Baby Sister” because my brother, at age 7, when I was born, looked over in the crib and saw me and said “That’s my baby sister.” So here I am today, with the children being called Aunt Baby Sister or whatever the case may be.

CO: Okay Ms. Rosa, will you describe yourself as a child?

RS: Growing up as a child, I’m sure that I was very talkative. Everybody liked to talk to me and I’m still talkative. I think that’s maybe one of the reasons I was a social science educator, because we like to talk a lot in the classroom. But that’s what I was, and like I said, everyone along Main Street knew me. And when I crossed over Main Street, it was like I’m still right in my own community. Everyone is calling me and saying “Hi baby sister”, because they knew me. Mrs. Moore, Mrs. Caggins, everybody along the street – all of the people knew my father, my mother, but we also were well known not only for the work. Now my mother one time worked alongside another white lady whose sister owned a cafe and a rooming house. And to think that Mrs. Lola King and my mother worked side by side doing the kind of work that you would not expect a white sister of a sister who owns a hotel, that my mother and Mrs. Lola worked together. And until this day, when I go up Third Street and I look and see Mrs. Lola’s house, I’m still reminded a lot of my mother and the relationship that they had. Leesville was a small town, but the racial relationships were good.

CO: I’ve already told you that we’re very interested in race consciousness and race relations, so it’s important to me to kind of stop here and reflect here on how in the 1930’s when you recall these things, that in Leesville, Louisiana, that your family, a black family who lived just across the tracks apparently, from Main Street, was fairly integrated into this community?

RS: Right, and may I say this to you? Where we owned property, there is a white family who was right next door to us. In other words, we could talk across the fence if we had wanted to. And that was the Welches, so the Welch family also lived back across the railroad tracks, and I grew up getting out of Mrs. Welch’s household, and my mother did some work for her as I was growing up. But I never felt pressure or the feeling that I was less than a human. But I get that feeling when I go back to Leesville now.

Everybody in Leesville called me Baby sister, okay.

CO: Yeah, so that now – where was Mr. Stanback born?

RS: Born in Columbus, Georgia.

CO: He was born in Columbus, so that's why you're here?

RS: Right. I met him at Tuskegee University in 1946.

CO: Okay, so your earliest – I'll tell you what, let's just go ahead since we're talking about early memories. Because it sounds like you had an unusual childhood for a black family – for someone growing up in the 1930s. Probably different even from your husband's, I would expect.

RS: I'm sure.

CO: If he lived in Columbus. So this is a question I would ask if we get to that section, as we sort of broached this subject – One thing that scholars are trying to understand is that whatever our race consciousness is when we get grown, there's a time in our early lives, especially in the South, but anywhere you live where there are people who are different from you. It doesn't have to be a different color, but somebody different from you. There's all kinds of studies about how children discover what it means to be a boy or a girl.

RS: Or black or white.

CO: Or black or white, exactly. So I recall vividly – I don't have any problem with that question. Some people I ask don't know what I'm talking about, but I don't have any problem with it. Do you recall the time as a child that you became aware that it meant something different?

RS: I only knew that I was different when I went to first grade, and Nancy went one way and I went another way. That meant that she went to the white school and I went to the black school, and that was my first introduction to racism or consciousness of the relationship between black or white. Because Nancy was a white friend whose mother, Mrs. Lola King, worked alongside of my mother when my mother was helping to clean the Ruby Cafe and the Ruby Hotel. And the people who owned that hotel was Mrs. Lola's sister, but Mrs. Lola worked side by side. Making up beds, cleaning beds, and to this day I have nothing – but she's deceased now, but she had 2 girls. And Nancy and Luzell, their mother, worked right alongside my mother.

CO: Okay, tell us something about what that was like. Obviously at 5 or 6 you don't process that, but what did you think?

RS: But if you recall that I said that this is when I first realized that there is a real difference in people and the color of their skin is the day when I went one way to school, and Nancy went another way. I went over to Vernon Parish Training School, and I don't know why they called it the training school. It's now Vernon High, or Vernon Jr. High. But when I was growing up, I went to Vernon Parish Training School and until this day, I don't know why they called it the training school. It was as if it was something that maybe you sent black children to, and you had to give them that stigma, that feeling that you're just somewhat different and you're going here for maybe a special kind of training. But remember now, my father was a railroad man. He was a Machinist Helper on the Kansas City Southern Railroad, which ran from Kansas City, Missouri, to Port Arthur, Texas. He worked inside of the Rollin house. When the trains came through Leesville, if they had to be worked on or had to in any way be fixed, my Daddy was there doing it, but remember he was a Machinist Helper, who gets the credit for the job? It's a Machinist who is a white man.

CO: Now did your father ever become a Machinist?

RS: My father retired from the Kansas City Southern Railroad with the highest of respect, and to my knowledge, as far as classification is concerned, I don't know that he was ever classified, but he did the work, okay. And he retired from the Kansas City Southern Railroad. My life is probably a little bit different from some other blacks who lived in my neighborhood, because my – we could get on the train in Leesville, ride all the way to Kansas City, Missouri, because my father has a pass for us to do that. If you wanted to say that if I ever felt privileged, it was because of the occupation of my father.

CO: Now did you have to ride in a segregated car?

RS: We rode in a segregated car.

CO: But you could ride –

RS: Oh sure, we rode the train. It was a passenger train, and you had a section for whites and you had a section for blacks. So I became – I was introduced to, I guess, the real differences between blacks and whites when Nancy went to the white school and I went to the black school.

CO: Have you not had the experience of riding on the train before that?

RS: No. Transportation was limited at that time, we did not have a bus. In Leesville, later it became an Army town. Fort Polk was in Leesville, Louisiana. And when I saw the first soldiers of the troops come to Leesville, they came maybe within a fourth of a mile of property we owned then and we still own until this day, and they would camp up

right near our property. And that's when I knew again that maybe we were privileged, but maybe we were segregated against, but you have something you can hold onto. And that was the land that my father owned, and we're still on it to this day.

CO: How much land is it?

RS: Oh, it's quite a bit (laughs). And it's right off of Main Street.

CO: I was gonna say, that's fine property.

RS: Yeah. In other words, our land runs from Main Street almost back to Castol (???) Creek. So there's a creek that runs at the back of our property.

CO: That sounds like a lot of land.

RS: It's a lot of land.

CO: So okay, was there any pressure on you to sell it?

RS: No, but I doubt if anyone would have pressured my father. I want to clearly state that in Leesville, although there was a separation of blacks and whites in schools and in neighborhoods and so forth, there was also a respect for blacks who lived in Leesville, and I guess if you were property owners, that they own realty to this day, right, and is still there to this day.

CO: Well my next question is to describe yourself, but to describe your parents – your father and your mother. Could you talk about them?

RS: I'd be delighted to talk about them. My mother also taught at one time, but that was before you had to be certified. So right out of high school, she went into teaching, and she taught. My father was a railroad man, but my mother's father was also a railroad man. And as the sons married his daughters, all of them became railroad men. And that's how my father, my mother's sister, he was a railroad man, and he lived up in Shreveport, but they would fly out to California. But my uncle Emerson was a railroad man, and the one that I'm going to refer to as Big Annie; her real name is Viola Peyton, as my Aunt Mary, my Uncle, [?????] was a railroad man. So all the girls married railroad men. And we did not have a hard time. When I was growing up, and it was during the Depression, I would walk up with my grandmother up to what you would call the commodity house to pick up whatever they were going to give to you. We never had to accept things from the commodity house, but there were a lot of people that I know, and I had the deepest of respect for them. Because sometimes you can't help your circumstances. But my mother and my mother's sister all married railroad men. And as they married into their family, my grandfather saw to it that they became railroad men. So they worked for the Kansas City Southern Railroad.

CO: Would you say their names again, your mother's sisters?

RS: Rosa –

CO: So you're named after that one?

RS: That is correct.

CO: So your mother was Mattie?

RS: Mattie, oh yes. And Viola, that's my mother's oldest sister.

CO: You called her “big Aunt?”

RS: I'll called her big Annie (laughs).

CO: Rosa, Viola, and was that Annie?

RS: No, now my mother's name is Mattie, okay, I want you to get that. And my aunt Rose, okay, I want you to put an “e” here, cause although I am named after her, I cannot assure you that everybody always called her Rose.

CO: I heard your husband call you Rosa.

RS: They do it all – that's the short thing. I'm going to look in my mother's Bible, because she has a lot of this recorded.

CO: So these were the 3 sisters, and all three sisters married railroad men.

RS: They all married railroad men. Also, their brothers were railroad men. My uncle Peter was a railroad man, yes. And of course Big Annie's husband, my Aunt Viola's husband was a railroad man. And so as they married, they went to work for the railroad if they were not already railroad men.

CO: And it sounds like there was prestige attached to being a railroad man.

RS: Oh, indeed. It was a prestige, but I can't remember another distinctive occupation for black men. It was a privilege to be a railroad man, okay.

CO: It sounds like it was maybe one of the best skilled labor jobs for black men. Because they weren't often times allowed –

RS: It gave you also opportunities to travel. Say for instance, I get on the train, ride into Kansas City, Missouri, and go on a pass; we did not have to pay for whatever we get.

CO: Okay, so your father was a – can you describe him as a person, besides his job?

RS: Yes, he was a family man. Sure he was. And whites in our city had respect for him. If they were trying to get the blacks out to vote, it was in my family, who was called a one to help to recruit blacks to go to the polls and to do whatever. And I don't want to sound – or be realistic, but I have never had a hard life – I guess you can tell that.

CO: So how did your father – I'm getting way ahead of myself – but how did he feel about Roosevelt?

RS: Everybody liked Roosevelt (laughs). My father – but I'll tell you this much – my family worked to get people to and from the polls. But they all liked Roosevelt.

CO: So the black folks wanted them to vote for Roosevelt?

RS: Oh sure. They not only wanted them to vote for him, they saw Mr. Roosevelt as a good man.

CO: What about his wife, Eleanor?

RS: Well, I'm not gonna say much about her, because woman's roles at the time Mrs. Roosevelt came along, was quite different, but I think they had utmost respect of her as the wife of a president.

CO: Okay, and now can you describe your mother?

RS: My mother was very active in the community. A lot more so than both her oldest sister or her baby sister. My mother was one of those who helped to get out the vote, to make sure people registered to vote, so they were very active in doing that.

CO: So Mattie was – what's the birth order of these sisters? Viola, Maddy and Rose?

RS: One, two, and three.

CO: Alright.

RS: And they had some brothers, but the brothers were not – they were half-brothers.

CO: So they had a different mother?

RS: They had a different mother.

CO: So brothers were half-brothers. Okay. If they become central to the story you can tell me about them. So what influence do you think each parent had on you?

RS: I had the utmost respect of my father as a man who took care of his family and made sure that his family – all of us who wanted to go to college within that family had an opportunity to go. I can still see him and my mother boarding the train with me in Leesville, moving down to [??????] where we changed trains. But to board the trains we came to Cheehaw over in Alabama, where Tuskegee was located and where you would first get off. But my mother and my father, they didn't send me to Tuskegee, they brought me to Tuskegee. They stayed one full week during orientation – they got to know my house advisor, and to this day if they would come out of the grave, they'd say “And [Marbasie” That was Mrs. Basie (22:45)?????], and they got a chance to know her. And they left that Friday evening to go back to Leesville. They said to me “now, you can stay if you want to, but I want you to always remember this: That you can go home whenever you want to.” So they wanted me to stay, and I would have never disappointed them by not staying, but they valued education. And they made very sure that those of us who wanted it – I have a brother and a sister. My sister chose not to go – she married. And then I have a brother, and he was a middle child, and I was a baby – but as far as taking up the opportunity of going to college or doing whatever, I was the only one who went to college out of the bunch.

CO: What about your parents, did they have any college?

RS: My mother did not have college education, and when they were coming along, I remember my mother was born at I think '03 or '02. So you didn't have a large number of people going to college. But she taught school upon completing her high school, and that's the way it rotated – you became a teacher if you had the ability to become a teacher. She had a principle – and I can recall his name because she always talked about him – Professor Booker is what they called him. So she taught in the school system, so she was a teacher, and even when she grew up in the church – and we were born – she was also still teaching because she was teaching Sunday school or she was doing something like that.

CO: So do you think you got that teaching spirit from her?

RS: I do.

CO: Did your father go to college at all?

RS: My father did not. College was not – I can't name anybody in my class of 1946 that left Leesville where their father's had been to college, but I can think of my best friend, Ned McCray, and all – most of those men became railroad men.

CO: So that was in some ways – the status of the prestige of the railroad was sort of compensated for not having the education –

RS: That's right. Not going to college – you're talking about 1946, so we didn't find many people going – we're just now beginning to emerge as a group of people who really attended college. And I can see the McCrays, and the Bushes, and so forth who went to college but none of their fathers were college men. We were probably the first generation or first college people.

CO: Right. What was the most memorable event of your life up to the age of 12? The most significant event in your life?

RS: It was my mother's desire to make sure that we were Church connected. My mother taught Sunday School, we all three walked with her from our house – and I'm sure that's about two miles or better – to the Church where we became members and she was a very active church member. My father was not the same, in terms of being at the church every time the doors opened. But do believe me, she made sure that all three of us, and my brother did not become the kind of church person that my sister was until the day she died. Or like me, but he had a deep respect for the church. And I think what happened in the case of my brother – we had a pastor who was named Rev. Criner. And he was just about 21 miles from our home. And when the church got ready to dismiss him for no reason, which none of us understand to this day, it kind of put a bitter taste in my brother's mouth as it related to the church.

CO: So you don't really necessarily recall a significant event, you just believe that your mother's commitment to the church and keeping you all in church was the most significant thing to happen in your childhood?

RS: Right, and her being a teacher. No, she taught in the school system, because she did not have to have the kind of certification that you have now. So she taught –

CO: Okay, alright. What were some of your struggles as a child? You've kind of described your childhood almost as idyllic if you were –

RS: You believe me, and when I'm telling you that, I'm telling you the truth.

CO: I do believe you.

RS: Right. We didn't have any struggles per say. If you were a railroad man and your father was a railroad man, and you grew up, number one you already had kind of a status. And so we didn't have to go to what they called the Commodity house to pick up food, or to do what other families we saw do. But we were not taught that you're different because you don't do that, you're still black, you're still a Negro. I didn't hear the words that I hear people using now – I didn't hear the words 'Nigger'. And like I said to you, if my house were no further than from here to where you see the board of education right down there, from Main Street, if it's that far.

CO: So are you telling me that your childhood was lived form relatively free of racial oppression?

RS: Indeed it was. I saw more racial harmony in that small town than what I saw conflict.

CO: That's very important, I want to come back to that. Well can we talk for a minute about your relationship with your mother? Because one thing that I'm interested in is – I'm interested in motherhood and the ways that mothers and daughters relate especially. How – what was your relationship like with your mother and then I'd like to ask what it was like as you became a teenager. Did anything change.

RS: No, I think that my mother is partially responsible for who I am today. My mother was quite a lady. She was a woman, yes, but she was also a lady, and all of those traits are endowed within me, do believe me and I'm one of the gracious ladies of the state of Georgia. And I doubt you that anyone in this city who knows me, and they really know me, and they are likely to tell you I still am. My mother made sure that we were appropriately dressed, and at that time there was a man that used to come through the neighborhood they called the ? (L.B Price ?????? Man) (29:56) I don't know what that meant but he was selling clothes - selling linen and I've never wanted, and I'm sincere with you that anything In my life that I did not really get.

CO: You never wanted for anything?

RS: Never, never.

CO: And now how Ms. Rosa - there aren't many people that can say that.

RS: I realize that, but you see when I went to Tuskegee, you paid \$90 a quarter to go to Tuskegee, and I'm talking about 1946. And I was not down there on scholarship, I was not out there where you fill out some papers or whatever. That's what my father paid, every quarter. Yes, but he made that – I think it was a privilege to be a railroad man.

CO: Right.

RS: I'm almost sure of that.

CO: Okay, so you didn't really have struggles?

RS: No, I didn't have struggles. When the first radio was – came to our neighborhood – it came to our house. And I can still remember the number of people who would crowd in our living room to hear “Amos 'n' Andy.” See what I'm saying to you?

CO: Your friends watched “Amos 'n' Andy?”

RS: Sure they did. Sure they did – Amos 'n' Andy – and you can quote that because that's what it was, but people came from in our neighborhood.

CO: So they could see it as condescending

RS: No, no, no. You grow to that point I think. But, even today I don't see it. I think that that was the **times in which you lived**

CO: Okay, alright. But now can we get back to your relationship with your mother . Was there ever any conflict as you became a teenager that you might have had?

RS: No, because number one, we were not exposed to what you see teenagers exposed to today. My mother got up on Sunday morning and made sure that all of us were dressed and we walked to a Church down the railroad track, it was a little Church by the railroad track. And I will assure you, we walked about 3-5 miles to get to Church. But, and she taught Sunday school and she did whatever. But she was a, I'm going to be frank with you, she is the crystal example of a finer womanhood. It passed on to me and to my sister.

CO: Well, did your mother. So your mother sounds like her chief aspiration in life was to be a lady and to make her daughters into ladies. What about that?

RS: Now, I wanna also say now remember, my mother's father was a railroad man. See, some people -

CO: She had the means to be a lady?

RS: There you go. So you see what I'm saying?

CO: But now how did she feel about most black woman who did not have the means?

RS: Uh I don't think you saw the bridge or the gap that you see today. And -

CO: You weren't aware.

RS: No, no. We were not. And we were not taught that you were better than this person or the other person. I think it's now that I look back over my years that I realize I was very fortunate, very privileged, to have the parents that I had, because I will also

say to you, that my mother did work for a white family and the building is still there on Main Street, the Ruby Cafe, but if you heard me, you heard what I said?

CO: Yes.

RS: Ms. Lola King also worked for Mrs. Bridges who was her sister, and she worked right beside my mother.

CO: So there was stigma attached to working for somebody because a white woman stood right beside her so it wasn't about race?

RS: No, and our property if you walked from this library out to where my car is, that's just how close we are to the neighbor – to white neighbors. And that's the way it's been all these years. The **Welches, the ??? (27:07)** And the Smith's (chuckle) okay?

CO: Okay. Alright but...

RS: I hope you got the right person to interview because

CO: There's no right or wrong.

RS: Okay, I just want to make sure because I will not, in other words, I think too much of the people who made sure that I had opportunities. Like I said, Ms. Lola King and she had a sister, Mrs. Bridges, but Ms. Lola work for her sister. You see what I'm saying?

CO: Ms. Rosa, there is no wrong. I am interested in your life.

RS: Okay, well that was my life (chuckles) and I have been blessed okay.

CO: You have been blessed.

RS: I want you to know I realize that.

CO: Yeah, but it sounds like a lot of that– is that whatever racial...

RS: Well you didn't find racial disharmony as you find it today. Different situation.

CO: Now, that's very interesting to me, because not every black or white, black family in Leesville, Louisiana worked on the railroad.

RS: Well, and all of them didn't work on the railroad, but I would have said the most privileged families, some of them worked in the houses and cafes and whatnot.

CO: But there was still racial harmony?

RS: There was racial harmony. And, although my father was a railroad man, I didn't think I was better than somebody else simply because he worked as a railroad man. I was still bright and

CO: Did you have pride or were you taught to have pride in your race?

RS: Always, always. But, I want to also say this, the white families that I visited their homes and my mother, like I said, worked at the Ruby Cafe, but I used to go and she bought my clothes from the little lady. The shop is still there for a fact, but my niece is saying that Ms. Wilson no longer lives, but the shop is there. I was talking about Ms. Wilson, and my mother used to buy my clothes out of Ms. Wilson's shop and she has a son, who now owns that shop that is right there going up Main Street and again maybe three fourths of a mile from my house.

CO: Still a little dress shop?

RS: Yeah but her son now owns the shop, and I just found that out last week.

CO: That's continuity though.

RS: I said to my niece, "well tell me" and I've always asked about other people and people that I knew. I said, "Well tell me, is Ms. Wilson still alive," but something said to me she can't be because you 83, and Ms. Wilson, but I didn't know and she said, "no, but the shop is still there." And she said, and I said "well who is in the shop?" and she said, "Her son has the shop". So he is still there over the shop. And, when I cross that railroad track from my house to Main Street, the first house I saw was something like a little shotgun house. But, the man who lived there, he too was a railroad man, a white fella. And you just live in a small town where people are people, and people respect each other for what they do. I have never heard anybody call my mother a maid. I have not.

CO: Well now, your mother taught you and your sister to be ladies. What was your brother's, the expectations of your brother?

RS: That he be a man, a gentleman, all the way. And right when my brother died in Leesville, and they brought the casket back to the Church, people filed before his casket for hours. And many of them white, okay? And he finally ended up working at Bird's Hospital but he was well liked, highly respected, and I know people have gone through the period of slavery. I have gone to a lady's house and often times I wonder where did they get this Smith name, and I'm not going to tell you we got the Smith

name from the Smith's where we were from, I don't know that. But I do know this much, my grandmother used to go to the Smith's on thanksgiving day, I would go with her, now my sister didn't go and my brother didn't go, but my grandmother was going to bake the turkey, to do the dressing for Mrs. Smith. Now, how we got our name, can't tell you that, but Mrs. Smith, and these were people that were just genuinely nice to us. My grandmother was a Foreman, Morgan Foreman, and she had a brother that they finally united, but he came from Texas. Now, how he got to Texas and my grandmother, I can't tell you that.

CO: Well, now you said your brother was a man and a gentleman. What did that mean? It sounds like to you your father modeled that? What does that mean?

RS: I will say my mother – my father modeled that. And my brother has about 8 children and maybe 4 of them are dead and 4 are living. But they were always taught to take care of your family. Be an example for your family, and work – they had work ethics. And I appreciate them – now I went to Louisiana about maybe 3 or 4 months back, and I had not been on what my nephew called the land in maybe about 10 years almost. But our property is still there. I'm the sole owner now, but I have a nephew that lives on that – as those boys grew up, I can't tell you that a single one of them have ever been in jail.

CO: So taking care of your family was really mandatory?

RS: Family was important. It was important.

CO: Now taking care of your family was a chief manhood trait, what to your mother would be the chief trait of a lady ?

RS: What the black women always are – to be a support system, and the children to respect their brothers.

CO: So mama was support, and –

RS: We still do. My daddy was a railroad man, and when he got off from work ---and he worked the 11-7 shift---he went to sleep. So that means at 7 oclock in the morning, he was going to be sleeping until about 3 oclock in the evening or still later, and all those times for him to go back to work. So my mother here is the person who we look to who's going to dicipline us, who's going to go to that peach tree switch, that plum tree, and she's the one who's going to say – 'and I told you not to do this'.

CO: Did you get spanked much?

RS: Well now let me say this, I'm going to tell you exactly what my sister said: My

sister said that “I didn’t get those kind of whippings like you and brother”, talking about my brother. She said “that’s because I didn’t do what you all did.” So yes we were mischievous. That is correct. And I’m not going to lie.

CO: Was your family conscious of what went on outside of the household? Like were they conscious of what was taking place elsewhere in the country?

RS: Yes, I want to give my mother credit for a lot. When it came down to registering to vote, and get out the black vote, my mother was always there. Driving people to the polls, driving them to get registered to vote. So she was active in that sense.

CO: Now was this even in the '40s?

RS: This was when I was growing up. My mother, before I finished high school, and I finished in 1946, my mother is getting people to the polls. Leesville is a small town, and that’s where Ft. Polk, LA is. But the people in that city are close knit. When I was growing up, –

CO: So the disenfranchisement laws didn't affect them –

RS: No, no no. We grew up, my mother was working to get people to the polls to vote. By this time, we’re talking about 1946, Ft. Polk was there – Polk came somewhere around 1941. And we have not had some of the problems that we see exist in cities and towns today.

CO: And when did your mom die?

RS: My mother died in 19-- Let me give you. It was in the '70s. In other words, we had come to Columbus, and I was working here in Columbus and I can remember her saying to me “now I don’t ever want you to go to Columbus State. Make it anywhere else other than that lady.” And that was my mother. And she always made sure that I was dressed well, but she certainly did not want me to go – when my mother died, I can still see Dr. Bob Sears of Columbus State, come into my house, and get on the bed – across the bed with me. So I have not had to face racism the way some people have.

CO: When you were growing up, did you want to be a teacher? Did you grow up wanting to do what you –

RS: I wanted to – I thought – become a home economics teacher. And the reason why is because, my home economics teacher, when she came into that classroom and she started teaching, it just looked like her words would just flow out of her mouth. So I wanted to be like her. I majored in Home Economics, but I never taught it.

CO: What did you teach?

RS: I taught social studies. And the words still do flow out of your mouth. But I knew that I was a misfit from the day I got a degree. I didn't really want to –

CO: You wanted to teach Home Economics.

RS: Well I really did not want – I majored in Home Economics, but I could have majored in Social Studies, or – you see what I'm saying? Same thing. And I was no misfit there, do believe me! (laughs)

CO: I'm sure. So you come from a place where there was a lot of racial harmony. Do you still have friends from back home who are still living in your area?

RS: Oh yes. By this time, 1946 to now, look how many years have passed. My classmates – I have one classmate that is still living – he's a young man. And the 3 of us like the 3 Musketeers. Bertha's dead, Margaret is dead. And when I was coming along, the number of people that graduated in a class was maybe about 16 or 17, so we didn't have the large classes then.

CO: Alright. So I wrote a little bit of it down, but I want you to reiterate about your education. You went to high school in Leesville, Louisiana. You went to college in Tuskegee, and then you came to Columbus after you married.

RS: I came to Columbus when I met my husband in 1946 at Tuskegee. He was a veteran, and veterans were older – my husband is about 5 or 6 years older than I am.

CO: Your husband's a veteran of World War II?

RS: Yes. They took him right out of high school. And we had the first veterans class in 1946, and they were ready for marriage – very mature. And so my husband says that when he saw me, he says 'she's for me'. And it must be so because here I am, from 1946 till death.

CO: And so you graduated from Tuskegee in '46?

RS: '50.

CO: '50. And then you came to Columbus, but then you went back to Tuskegee to get a Master's Degree?

RS: I got a Masters Degree.

CO: And did you go beyond that?

RS: I am comparable and equal to an earned PHD Degree. So I didn't go for that

degree because why would I go to pay for something that I'm recognized by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and the National Council of the Social Studies – if you ever pull up the statistical data, you will see that they have an appeal out there that you will be comparable and equal to an earned PhD Degree. So they recognized me as being comparable. I went to Columbus State as an assistant Professor, I rose to an associate Professor, full Professor, and now Professor Emeritus of the University System of Georgia. I, in other words, my work spoke for itself.

CO: Okay so you have an equivalent of an EdD?

RS: That is correct.

CO: Okay.

RS: And I taught both undergraduate and graduate courses at Columbus State. And in other words, I had experience, and if you go and you look at the guidelines, comparable and equal to an earned PhD degree, why am I going to go?

CO: Right. But you told me that you were the first black woman hired by them, is that right?

RS: At Columbus State.

CO: At Columbus State?

RS: I was the first black hired at Columbus State.

CO: The first black period?

RS: Sure, at Columbus State.

CO: Wow. Now that we're talking about that, your husband also holds a first at something –

RS: My husband was the first physical education teacher in Muskogee County.

CO: First physical education teacher in Muskogee county? First black physical education teacher?

RS: Mmhm. Right. And he graduated from Spencer High School, and he –

CO: Here in Columbus –

RS: Here in Columbus. And he came to Tuskegee, and first black physical education

teacher in Muskogee County.

CO: Now when your husband graduated from Spencer it was a segregated –

RS: Segregated, sure. 1943. And I graduated in Louisiana in 1946. And had it not been for the army, I might not have met him – right.

CO: Okay, let me ask you a few things about marriage and childhood, and your own children and motherhood. When you were growing up, your mother – your parents it sounds like had a pretty much a traditional marriage. Father, mother, certain values – father's provide, mother's take care. So to some extent that's a romantic image, and is that –

RS: Right. Well my mother taught a little bit when she first got married, and that was without a degree. But you could very well do that during that time, but –

CO: I'm trying to get at where your images of romance came from. When you met your husband – and that's a very romantic thing that when he meets you and he said 'that one's gonna be mine', what were your – did you have notions of what romance would be like?

RS: May I say this? Again, being born in Leesville, I had never really – let's say dated young men in Leesville. I don't think I saw anybody in Leesville that –

CO: You didn't date before you went to Tuskegee?

RS: No, not a lot. No. But I didn't see anybody that I really –

CO: Were you smitten by your husband when you first met him?

RS: When I first saw him, I didn't think about marriage or anything else and did not know that he was looking at me. But he said he saw me, and said 'she's for me, and I do want you to say it.' He's a very handsome fella, my husband is a physical education major who later – first physical education teacher in Muskogee County. He then became a principal, and taught at a Rhodes [?????] school, and he retired as a principal. But he's just a really good guy. He really is.

CO: So it sounds like he was your first love?

RS: Oh yeah, no doubt about it.

CO: So it sounds kinda like whatever images you had of romance, your life fulfilled that image?

RS: Right. And when he came to Louisiana to see me, in 1948, and that was when we were getting ready to get married. My daddy would not even let me go to the train station and meet him. He went himself, but we were no farther from the train station than where it is right there to that library. But my father said when he got off the train and so everybody tells it to this day. He said my father said “Are you lookin’ for someone?” And he told him he was lookin’, he said “Well that’s my daughter.” So my daddy brought him to the house – they walked from the train station because it wasn’t that far. And he brought him to the house

CO: Did he like him?

RS: Oh they fell in love with him!! And to this day, my nieces, my nephews, all love Uncle Stanback. But you know you have that last name, when you get in the service, where people call you by your last name. So yes.

CO: So your Mama loved him too?

RS: Oh my daddy loved him too. And my brother, and my brother in law – my sister’s husband. And when you saw one of them, Law is with my brother in law called him, Law. And we would pull up in our car after driving to where Law was, and the children would be sitting on the porch just waiting on him. And he said “you know what Law? I said you’d be turning that corner about now.” But it was just a good family. And I said the minute he came into the family, they were accepted – my brother’s wife, she came from Texas and she was accepted by me and my sister. But my brother and I were very close.

CO: So it sounds like you weren’t marred by a lot of divorce or broken family.

RS: Oh no, we don’t know nothing about divorces in our family. We don’t. We really, truly don’t.

CO: Okay. When you and Mr. Stanback met, did you have ideas about what size family you wanted? Did you or he talk about that?

RS: Never thought about it. Never thought about it. And what we see now is probably what the children are doing. Now my daughter, who is a retired specialist with the Muskogee County School District, she was the specialist for language arts and social studies, and I trained her at Columbus State. But divorce isn’t a part of our family. I can’t name not a single person in my family. My daughter up in Cambridge, she has a daughter now who has a daughter about 12 or 14 years old, and she’s way up in her 40’s. And nobody has ever divorced – I can’t tell you a divorce period in my family.

CO: So were 3 children okay with you? Did you want more children?

RS: Well if I had 3, I'd have accepted 3, but I really only have but 2 (laughs).

CO: Oh you only have 2! Sorry, 2 daughters. There are 3 in your family, sorry you mentioned girls. Okay. So what was your – was your relationship with your daughters like your relationship with your mother?

RS: Yes. And my daughters are this way: they know that I would go the full mile for them, and they know – as some people would say we're just like sisters. No, we're not like sisters. "I'm your mother." You see what I'm saying? She's my child. They would never say that, they would just say 'oh that's my mama.'

CO: So you kept a sense of authority?

RS: Oh yes, they know who is the boss (laughs).

CO: And how many children do they have? How many grandchildren do you have?

RS: Oh I have – my daughter here has 1, and up in Cambridge, my daughter has 3. So we have 4 granddaughters and 4 great granddaughters. And no boys, all girls.

CO: All girls, oh my goodness. How do you feel about that?

RS: First of all, I tell you what I say: You take what God gives you. And that's what he gave me, and that's what we accept. I ask my husband every now and then 'do you miss having a boy?' He says 'you can't miss something you've never had.' And that's him. And I do want you to see – but he says 'you don't miss something you don't have. And I'm perfectly satisfied with these girls.' And that's what he says.

CO: Wow. Okay, when you – was there ever a time in your daughters' lives that you did not work outside the home? Did you stay home at any part of their lives?

RS: I was working from the time the baby girls was born –

CO: Who kept them?

RS: My mother. My mother did – when my father died, came down here – she kept our oldest daughter and there was always someone there as a mother figure as I went to work.

CO: So did she help you do other things in the house to relieve you –

RS: Yes, she did whatever – in other words, my mother would cook, she would do whatever. One thing that she said to me that stays with me to this day. She says, "I don't ever want you to go to that college looking any other way than a professional."

And she believed that, and most people who see me would tell you, “Oh Stanback, she dresses way off.’ I’m in my pants and all today, but nobody would tell you that. And I’m not on anybody’s best dressed list, I don’t dress for that purpose. But when I went to the school, I dressed correctly. Now my husband is one of the 10 best dressed men, but I don’t know that I’d be insulted.

CO: So you didn't really have – you weren't double burdened, because your mother lived with you and helped relieve you from that.

RS: She did, she did. And my mother stayed with me until she died. By this time my father was deceased, and my mother came to live with me, but my father also said to me. He said “if anything ever happens to me, I want Maddy to go stay with you.” That was my mother, and she did. And I think that although I knew my brother and my sister would be kind to my mother, that my father saw something in me that would make him want her to come stay with me.

CO: It sounds like it turned out to be good for all of you. So were your daughters close to her?

RS: Oh yes. All of them called her Mama Maddy. Every last one of the children, they called her Mama Maddy.

CO: Do you think it’s more difficult to mother today than it was back when you were mothering – like do your grandchildren have a harder time mothering their children? Is it harder today than it was?

RS: Let me say this to you: I don't think so. Because my daughter lives here, and who is a consultant, retired from the school district. She had 1 daughter, and her husband is a minister. And I taught her at Columbus State – I trained my daughter at Columbus State. We have children that number (1) respects the family values, and I'm grateful of that.

CO: That makes you emotional. That's alright.

RS: Well I think about – how first of all how good God has been to me because when I look at who I am, where I've been, how I pioneered Boards and Commissions and all of that, and served in one Governor and 3 Boards and Commissions at the same time – Busby. You can't help but be grateful, you know? And I am eventually going to give you one of my Vita if I have to send it to you so that you will have it. And in Columbus, you have the respect of the community. I'm a little late because a minister's wife had come to visit my neighbor next door, but my neighbor had been over to my house to tell me that her mother had died. And I had gone over there to sit with her for just a moment. And I had dressed, but then I had to run and get down here. Family is important to me,

and I guess you can see that in my – I don't know anybody in our family who has ever spent a night in jail. Whether they were boys or girls. And like I said, I have a little nephew, he goes up on Mainstreet, to the post office every day, and I'll call him and I'll say "Donna Ray, did you go up on Mainstreet today?" And he says "Yes." But he goes everyday. But he also has the respect of the city and the courthouse is right next to the post office. And the jailhouse is up there. And I've never known any one of them to go to jail, to be arrested for anything, so whatever we have done has just paid off.

CO: Yeah you've done it right.

CO: Can we talk specifically about your work? I know you're gonna get a Vitae for me that'll have it all spelled out. But could you – you don't have to remember dates and all that stuff. But can you just talk about your work life?

RS: Yes, I'd be happy to. First of all, I've never applied for a job in my life. Never. And I had a job offer when I got the job at – with my one and only principal, I taught 19 years in Muskogee County. And I always had the same principal.

CO: Muskogee County what, middle school, high school?

RS: I taught at Carver High school, but I started out at a Claflin Elementary school. And I want to say this to you – I had a call one day in 1950 to tell me – a lady by the name of Ms. Mary Bussy called me. She was a jean supervisor, and she called me and said "Mrs. Stanback, we want you to come down for an interview." And I was not living far from Claflin, maybe about as far as from here to down the road there. She said "We have a job that we want to offer you." I said "I can't come today." I said "I have a beauty parlor appointment." How stupid can you be?! (Laughs). If I'd have known how hard it was to get a job, I'd have been running to Claflin. But Mr. Charleston hired me, and we're now talking about 1950. I tell you, and when I stayed – I stayed at Claflin 2 years with him, and he was called to ????? to go set up the first black junior high school. And he took certain faculty members with him. I'm young, but Mr. Charleston took me with him to what was then Spencer Junior High School. This is 3 years now. Then he got a call to come to Carver High School, and Mr. Charleston again selected his faculty to go, and I was one of those who went with him to set up a second black high school. And this is right down the road – they built in a new (1:06:22?)

CO: Now this was in '50s?

RS: This was in 1950, '54, okay? And I went to Carver High School.

CO: You went to Carver High School in '54?

RS: To teach at Carver high school, okay.

CO: Now you know '54 is a historical date.

RS: Okay, yeah. (laughs).

CO: I'm sure you were well aware (laughs).

RS: Yeah. I went and Mr. Charleston hired me, and I taught at Carver High school till 1970. And then one day, I got a job offer at Auburn University by Dr. Lonnie Weaver. I have applied for not a single job yet. And Dr. Weaver offered me a job at Auburn University, and Columbus State offered me a job – and you know that they're looking for blacks now. And so Dr. Parker, this tall white man came down the halls at Carver High School, and he offered me a job. I went home and I said “Stanley, do you know one thing? If they don't start hiring blacks at Columbus, they don't think they could get a job. Or they were looking then, so I was the first black professor –

CO: But you could have gone to Auburn –

RS: I could have gone to Auburn. But I'll tell you the reason I didn't go to Auburn – Dr. Lonnie Weaver, and he'll tell you that – if he's still living – Dr. Weaver, I didn't want to stay at Auburn and I would have had to drive to Auburn everyday. And they did not have a 4 lane highway, and Auburn had not said to me, we'll start you as an Assistant Professor. They had not told me what my starting salary was, but I knew that Dr. Weaver had a lot of respect for me, because the superintendent of instruction, Dr. Fred Kirby, and I want you to know that I had the highest respect and the finest regards for Dr. Fred Kirby and Dr. Thelma Kirby – Dr. Phelma Kirby was a social science or social studies professor, and in Dr. Kirby thought I couldn't do no wrong. But I did a lot of research with my students and they would enter projects in the state fair. And they took every project you could find. I ended up going as far away as the University of Sydney in Sydney, Australia. Where I presented and did workshops, in Sydney.

CO: In Sydney, Australia?

RS: Sure, sure.

CO: What was that like?

RS: Oh, quite an experience. Just going to Australia, to know that you have reached the pinnacle in terms of your presentations and so forth, and you've written proposals – and you've never been turned down. By this time, I will be very honest with you, I began to realize that either I had a halo over my head, or I must be pretty good. And so I just went on and did whatever I needed to do. And so I –

CO: You feel like your trip to Australia was the pinnacle of your career?

RS: Oh, as far as presentations were concerned, I don't think I could have gone to any institution in the United States to present and I presented at the University of Alabama. They were 3rd in the National Council of the Social Studies. I have never been turned down on any proposal I've ever written.

CO: Now what kinds of papers did you present?

RS: Oh, you talk about papers like how to teach, or how to mesh language arts with social studies, or how to teach history. You get my meaning when you see some of this, okay? And you'll see all the political – I've done workshops at Georgia State, I had – in other words, you were also beginning to see blacks cross over and go to integrated school systems, but instead of me going to integration at the high school, the college people were beginning to seek me out, and so I was sought by Auburn University and Columbus State. And I took Columbus State because as I said to you, I didn't have to drive. I also knew that they were going to start me as an Assistant Professor, and I don't know what Dr. Weaver was going to start me with, but I knew that I didn't have to drive.

CO: But it was very important being a tenured track position.

RS: Oh yeah, and I moved from Assistant Professor – and you'll see I even went to Associate Professor, and then I went to Full Professor, and now I'm Professor Emeritus of the University System of Georgia. So you can't go any higher.

CO: No, you can't. Some of us are looking forward to the day we can call ourselves Professor Emeritus.

RS: And there are a lot of good people in the world, and when I say that I meant that there are probably some other people who had the same kind of credentials. And I don't want you to be too late because do remember, I have a little girl who calls me from Valdosta every day. And if I need to come down to Valdosta to keep you from coming back down here, do believe me, I'll do that.

CO: If I need to see you again, we'll find a way–

RS: But I'm going to also let you know about some of the awards that I have and so forth.

CO: That's on your Vitae, I hope.

RS: Yes, a lot of 'em are, but if you would see them – I served one governor on Boards and Commissions at one time. So I've had a good career, and I've had good people who saw whatever they saw – the merit of my work, and the merit of my work – so what else can I say but, "thank you." You see what I'm saying? And I know you see me

coming to tears –

CO: Well, it's a life for you. And if we can't get emotional about our lives –

RS: And then you'll see that I might've been the first black woman to visit, and I said, I served on this theatre, I've done some things. I can tell you a lot. But you'll have a Vitae.

CO: That'll be very helpful to me. So if your job was very clearly very rewarding, and –

RS: And Columbus State was the right place to be. I'm going to tell you this – I want you to know this. About two years ago, President Whitley, who was the first President of Columbus State – I've worked for all the presidents except this one that's there now. President Whitley looked up in the balcony at the auditorium where graduation was, and he saw me, and I wish you could have seen the smile on President Whitley's face when he saw me. But I had good years. And I probably brought more recognition to Columbus State in terms of research –

CO: Oh really?

RS: Oh on all these presentations and so forth.

CO: So what was it like to retire?

RS: You retire because you know it's time for you to retire.

CO: Now what year?

RS: I retired in 1970 I think it was – '99, I'm sorry, I think it was '99. But I always felt that was a time when you needed to move on and others come, and I had served – I served as a chair of the search for one of the presidents to come to Columbus State. I served as Chair of a Search Committee for the president of another college, on search committees in the College of Education, the Dean of the College of Education, professors who were coming. What else could you ask in life?

CO: You've done it all.

RS: Okay. And I didn't do it because the fact that I was black. I worked hard. The work ethics were good. So I don't, you know. And most of the people will tell you, and I don't just go out and I don't even seek to do a lot of stuff now. I think that you need to move on and sometime let some of the younger people who were there.

CO: So what is life like now that you have retired?

RS: Now that I have retired, I get a chance to do some of the reading I wanted to do.

CO: What do you read?

RS: Oh, I really like reading about my field: Social Studies. And what's new in the field of social studies, what kind of people are coming to Columbus State, you know, to see – I do that kind of stuff. And do I see patterns change at Columbus State? I don't go out there enough to see it, but I do know that they're growing. I'm glad to see the growth, I don't know that they have the space out there. It's so congested over by that area down there. And I'm perfectly welcome every time I go, when they see me, those who are still around. And I go by the Business Office every now and then and I'm going to make a trip out there one day to see how the new president is acting. Cause I want him to make sure that he knows, and I'm going to be talking to him about hiring practices and so forth.

CO: So they have a new president?

RS: They have a new president, and I have not met him. I didn't even go to graduation, especially when I normally go down. But so far as these students here at Columbus, like over at Columbus high, Bobby Howell is over there – he's one of my ex students. Bobby is the baseball coach, but Bobby has retired and he's still coaching over there. But I heard something the other day from a student, and I got to tell Bobby this. I knew that Bobby was a good baseball coach and a good coach, but I saw a student, and they said "He taught me, and he was a good teacher." That – I had not heard that before, that he was a good teacher. And I'm going to tell him, that he is a good teacher. Tell him that the young lady told me that. I am just so please that number one, he saw fit to want to – and I probably would also say snap pictures of some of the awards. I'm going to give you pictures –

CO: I need pictures of you –

RS: Okay I do have them. But I also want to just let you see some of the awards and so forth.

CO: But I assume those are named in your Vitae.

RS: Some of them are, and some of them not. And I'll check to make sure if I have to update the Vitae, okay? My daughter will do that. But on my walls –

CO: Now my email is on there, so if your daughter can send it to me electronically –

RS: I know, I'll get her to do that.

CO: SO that way you won't have to mail it. But I also need some pictures, and what I

can do is I'll be back down. Let's not take time right now for this, because I can do this as we leave. My next questions are about experiencing loss. Okay, retirement was in some sense – you were moving from one way of life to another way of life. So in some sense, that's a loss – your loss of professional identity.

RS: I haven't lost it though, and I'll talk to you about it, okay? Every now and then, I'll either go to the National Council of Social Studies meetings, and I'll stay abreast here by doing social science fairs and evaluating social science fairs. So I haven't lost anything, but I do welcome being out of the classroom. And going into – in other words, if I want to go up to Cambridge, Massachusetts and see my daughter and granddaughters, I can do that. But I could have done that while I was at Columbus State but I couldn't stay as long as I wanted to.

CO: Do you really enjoy retirement?

RS: I'm enjoying retirement. In other words, I think – and as a social science person, I guess I realize that life has its own. You teach about the different ages and stages, and I think that a time comes when every person needs to move off the stage of life and move onto the next stage of whatever it is and into retirement. And so no, I have regretted not one day of being retired.

CO: Well in terms of loss, what is the hardest loss you've suffered through death? What is the most difficult loss?

RS: Family members, and my mother and my father. My only sister, my only brother.

CO: So both your siblings have died?

RS: That is correct. But their children are still living. And one of my sisters – I never thought my sister would let her daughter come here to visit me. But my oldest daughter was down in Leesville, Louisiana, and that's where Ft. Polk is. She – when I brought Gwen home-- she had grew up with Pat. Here comes Pat, so I got Pat. And Pat finished high school. When Pat finished high school, she went to Tuskegee University and see what I said here? It was really something that I have not regretted at all. And I go home every now and then, and when I say every now and then it's every now and then.

CO: To Leesville.

RS: To Leesville, Louisiana. Saw a lady one day, she was talking to me by telephone and she said – I was trying to get some information. She said we have this that or another and I said “well ma'am, with all due respect to you, I was born in Leesville.” (laughs). And then when I told her I was born in Leesville, she came to realize who I

really was, and where all I had been and so forth. She was so proud, and she called up my niece, who is a retiree, to tell her that she had spoken with her aunt. And I'm a daughter of Leesville, Louisiana, and I treasure that – and I bet you didn't know that, but I treasure that. And I hope I've said something that has made sense to you.

CO: It all makes sense – it's perfect, it's perfect. You're 8-

RS: 3.

CO: You're 83, ok. And you're still in good health?

RS: I'm in good health –

CO: You still drive around, you drove yourself here –

RS: I didn't drive myself here, but my husband –

CO: Your husband drove you?

RS: Yeah, but I can drive, okay. But my husband and I, if you see one of us, you see the other one. And that's just been how it's been since the days in Tuskegee. If I went out there to the mall, and if I see someone, they'll say "Where's Mr. Stanback?" And I says "Well, he's down under." She says "I thought so, because I've never seen you without Mr. Stanback." That's just the way we are.

CO: SO are you both aging kind of –

RS: My husband is going to be 88 on his birthday, but let me say this to you. And that's May 18th. But if you would see him, and you're going to see him before all of this is over, I can assure you. My husband's family – how can I put this? My husband's grandmother was a Cherokee Indian. And his hair is very curly like yours is, he has brown skin. And he's beginning to gray some now, and we have those 2 daughters, 4 granddaughters and 4 great granddaughters. And I ask him sometimes, do you miss the boys? And he said "No. You can't miss something you never had." That's what he tells me, so that makes me feel sort of satisfied that he has not been short changed at all.

CO: Well it wouldn't have been your fault anyway (laughs).

RS: But I just ask him every now and then. He's a very striking fella, he retired. He was the first black physical education teacher in Muskogee County. And then he became the first black person to graduate from Spencer. And now he just – he still loves his high school, and I know that.

CO: But it sounds like you both enjoy retirement.

RS: Well we enjoy each other. See, that's the whole thing. And I think that I wanted to retire so that I could be with him. I don't have to retire.

CO: So what age do you look back at most nostalgically? What part of your life – what life stage –

RS: Well I miss Leesville, and I miss my classmates, but I also miss Columbus State during the days of President Whitley.

CO: When would that have been?

RS: Back in 1970's, yeah. I miss President Whitley. But I also miss the faculty that we had, because you can believe me, we were a close knit faculty. And I say College of Education is what that faculty made it to be, you know. But I don't go out there that often, but Jim Brubaker was still out there – I doubt if anybody is out there now that was there when I was there. But Columbus State is a good school. College of Education is exceptional – it really was, but we worked hard to make that College of Education up to grade, we really did. And I see students now that I have trained, and they are working in key positions and like I said, Bobby Howell is over there and I went out there one day, and I just told those students I said when they were getting ready for practice “When you get upstairs, tell coach Howell that I said I'm downstairs, and I'm just going to watch him practice today.” That boy came down those steps, (laughs). He came down those steps with no shoes on to see me. And that's the kind of relationship that I have. But I also trained another one – she became a consultant for social studies, and she also married a superintendent. Judy Dell[?????]- Dr. Dell's wife. And my daughter became the quarter leader for social studies also. So many of my students have gone on to make a mark in this county.

CO: Do you mind if we shift a little bit and talk about southern identity?

RS: My southern identity? That's alright. I'm a southern girl. And I appreciate the South, and I certainly – and I guess one reason why I'm so able to talk about it and able to respect it and like it, is because in Louisiana, where I was born, they made that easy for me. Everybody called me Baby Sister, but they also had respect for my father like I told you – he was a railroad man, and we never had to go to the Commodity House to pick up food or nothing like that. I'm highly independent, I guess you could tell that. So I – we just start talking about the south, what I like about the south. See I don't see what other people see in the south. I see some good people. Genuinely good people in the south, and they're not all black and they're not all white. But I see – and in Columbus, what I see is a unity. And to accept me and to include me, is a part of that first – out of the first. I'm very grateful, but I know that Dr. Thelma Kirby, Dr. Fred Kirby would never

have seen it any other way. Because I have been identified as – and I knew that – as the best social studies teacher in Muskogee County. And that's whether you were black or white.

CO: So you didn't have any lessons in racial etiquette? You just acted like –

RS: Well let's say that maybe the time in which I was born in, the life experiences that gave me the best lessons in life. And how to mold myself, as I moved into other areas.

CO: But it was not marked by any racial –

RS: No ma'am. No ma'am.

CO: Prescriptions. You didn't have to act a certain way because you were black?

RS: No.

CO: So in Leesville was there no particular black people who had to go in white people's back doors if you were a trilobite woman, was that not the case?

RS: I didn't get close enough to that kind of experience. Remember my father is a railroad man –

CO: I do, I remember all that.

RS: That's the reason why. Because I didn't have to go to their back doors, you see what I'm saying?

CO: But are you telling me that that didn't happen to other black people in Leesville?

RS: I'm going to say this to you, and I'm just going to talk to some people. I won't say why I'm talking to them, but knowing that my father was born in Leesville, my mother – you see what I'm saying? I can't recount any of that. And remember when I told you that my mother worked at Kansas City Southern?

CO: Sure.

RS: And remember whose sister I told you was working beside her? So yeah. In other words, Leesville is always going to be home to me. And I wouldn't mind going back to stay.

CO: Is that a possibility?

RS: Oh no. No no. Cause I went down there (laughs), I'll tell you maybe about a month

and a half ago, and my little nephew still stays on what we call the land. And everybody else has moved off around him, you know, except one little fellow who has a little barbeque place. And I don't know what I would do at nighttime, for when night came. I would probably throw all kinds of fits, because I'd want to see some lights. And there's some lights down there, but he's right down near the creek bank. But no ma'am.

CO: But you're happy in Columbus?

RS: Oh I'm happy. When you come here to live in 1950---we've lived here longer than which we lived in Leesville.

CO: That's right. Over half your life you've spent in Georgia.

RS: Yeah it's been right here.

CO: What is the most important historical event that either you participated in or lived through, do you think?

RS: Um, I'm going to say something that I really am proud of. Rozelle, who was a TV personality. And I guess when I was selected to be one of the gracious ladies of Georgia, and to look at Mrs. Swoville, who owned the store, sit there and just gleamed with pride as they saw me come out, you know.

CO: And when was that?

RS: I'll have to look and see what year it was.

CO: But you don't know what decade it was?

RS: Oh it was back in the 1970s I'm sure. Yeah, as I went to Columbus State.

CO: So that there was for you a historical event.

RS: Yeah, it was. To see people that you recognize, the Smiths and the McCowls [?????], the main people in Columbus, Georgia. That they have also accepted you as a part of a group of women you call the Gracious Ladies of Georgia.

CO: How many black women were in that group?

RS: I doubt if there's 10 in there now. But I was the first I think to go in, and I'm going to do a little research myself for you. Cause there was never a large number, okay. I know you can imagine it, you know. The induction was at the Springer Opera house, you know. So I –

CO: So what do you recall about the '40s, during the war?

RS: During the war? I can still see when I was still in high school. I can see the first soldiers come to Leesville, and also do bivouac or whatever they call it. They used to set up little tents not far from our property. Our property is prime property in Leesville, cause it's right near main street. I had an opportunity to see that, and that's what brought the real change to Leesville is when those first troops began to arrive. And Leesville just kind of changed overnight – we grew up. And the city had to begin to accept I'm sure some things that they never had to accept before. Which might have been the integration or –

CO: Okay. So what about the '50s? The '50s were your early married years.

RS: Yeah those were my early married years but see I'd gone to Tuskegee now in 1946. And I thought I was a first young person from Leesville to go to Tuskegee, but when I got there, my principal's daughter was also there during Spring Rush, and she's out in California now. And I didn't know she was applying, and I don't know whether she knew I was applying. But I was grateful to see a home town face, because I'd never been away. But what impressed me most of all at Tuskegee was the camaraderie of the campus, and I still like to feel that that's Booker T. Washington's school. George Washington Carver's school. And to know that I had the opportunity of walking, and being able to look out across the campus where Booker T. Washington was founded in 1881. You have no idea how good that made me feel. I –

CO: Did you have any opinion on a historic debate between Washington and DuBois?

RS: Well, I see Dr. DuBois as being who he is. And Booker T. Washington is totally different from him, as you well know. But I – and I know that DuBois had a lot of – what do I want to say about him. If you had to give me the 2 of them, I'd take Booker T. Washington any day. Cause I think that Booker T. Washington identified with our people more. And was able to gain the confidence of them, and move a little school from maybe just a meager building to the major giant that is today. I'd take Booker T. Washington any day.

CO: So how do you reflect on the civil rights movement as a movement? How do you see it? It sounds like it almost bypassed you.

RS: Well it was a long time coming. But see I'm still relatively young and I'm coming to Tuskegee, just had my 17th birthday in February at Tuskegee and in the fall of the year, remember my life was a little bit different from a lot of the people whose families were not railroad men. So when I look back now, I'm seeing a man who carved a way for his son in laws, and made sure that his daughters were well established and connected and married someone. And every last one of 'em, do believe me there's three of them,

and all of three of them married. And one ended up out in Los Angeles, but he's deceased now. My Uncle Eddy is deceased, but they were all railroad men. That's highly important to me, when a man can walk out and be a man, and take care of his family.

CO: That's right, and I can see why that would be very important to you. But that's not the reality of most black people.

RS: But I hope that would mean that they have something that they can strive for. When they read whatever you're going to say about me, there is a hope and a possibility that they can become. But I do see a lot of different – you haven't asked me – I'm a little disappointed maybe, to some extent, that maybe we haven't made as much progress as we have. And some of that I think is innate.

CO: Ms. Rosa, you can't mean that.

RS: I do. I do. I believe that some of that – do you think that I just walked out there and somebody handed me something? I had to work for it.

CO: So it's not innate! You overcame it!

RS: It's within is what I'm trying to say. See what I'm saying?

CO: Well right, but just because somebody else doesn't have a work ethic doesn't mean they're less of a person.

RS: Oh I didn't intend to say that at all. See I don't see anybody who hasn't reached the status that I have, so I don't ever want to even convey that. And if I have, then this interview here needs to stop right now. Because you see, I know what a struggle it is. But I also realize this: some people have not struggled as Rosa Stanback has struggled, but I also believe what Booker T. Washington says – you pull a man up by the bootstraps. I haven't forgotten who I am, and I still live in a little, small neighborhood – you saw where I live. And I could have moved a long time ago, but I am in the same little house that we bought in 1955. And we talked about it today sitting on the porch, and these people – I watched their children – two fellows passed by yesterday evening. They were basketball players – they were coming from basketball. We stopped them and talked to them. See, that's the kind of things we do. And I told them, I said “Well I see you all everyday, and I want to commend you.” I said “You got your pants pulled up on you; they're not down below your butt.” And I said “And the next thing, I want to make sure that your parents, and I want to see you all again.” But those two boys, they looked so good. So well kept. But then there are some others coming by with their pants down below their butts, and that disturbs me. But I still think that there should be a group of us who can serve as mentors for you. And I don't know

whether we're doing enough of that.

CO: Oh, I know plenty of black mentors who are doing a fine job.

RS: Well, now listen. I didn't say they're not, and there are some exceptions to that. I see we're surely off on the wrong course now. You can name some, but do we have enough?

CO: No.

RS: See what I'm saying to you?

CO: But I don't think it's their fault.

RS: Express yourself. Speak up and express yourself.

CO: You think it *is* their fault?

RS: No, I don't think it's their fault! I just think that we got to step up to the plate. That's what I'm saying.

CO: That's right, and you have. And I think many other people are as well.

RS: But see, and I really know who I am. I could tell you more about myself, but I really know who I am. But every day, I think I could possibly do more. I sit on my porch and I stop those kids in the neighborhood and I talk to them. If there is no more than to say . . . And I hope that I can relay to them I care. I care.

CO: Don't you think you do?

RS: I know I do! That's the reason why I stopped them last night. It was just about dark, but they were coming from over – they may have practiced basketball, one of them goes to Spencer High School. But I guarantee they will never forget, that here's this lady here who stopped to talk to us and to encourage us.

CO: And on a one to one basis, I am sure that that makes a difference.

RS: And I don't want you to feel – there's a lot more that all of us can do. Whether these kids are black or white. Okay? But I am telling you that I feel that I can do more, and I promise you on this day, now that I've told you a little bit about myself, that I'll still do more. At 83.

CO: I don't doubt that a bit. So how did you feel about the – once the movement became – I mean it went through several stages, and in the mid to late '60s it became

pretty militant. Pretty radical. How did you and your family react to that?

RS: First of all, to those who became very radical, I don't always agree with that you see? And there is always a place where I hope we are able to come to the table and talk about things and see where we need to go. And see I'm not just regional. If I tell you what I've done in New York City, and I've served as international president of a women's group called Continental Societies Incorporated. My job was to work with chapters that worked with children – disadvantaged and underprivileged. So I'm talking about Baltimore, I'm talking about Washington D.C., North Jersey, South Jersey, New York City, on the island of [?????]. You see what I'm saying? I've been, and I think that I've proved to people that I care. And I care about these children. And there isn't one that could almost pass by the neighborhood and tell you that I don't stop and talk to em. If it aint nothin but a kind word. So I don't want you to think that I feel that they're all wrong.

CO: Oh I don't think that at all.

RS: But I just think that if we keep our hands on these children – I keep looking at these boys (laughs).

CO: Teenagers?

RS: Yeah. And you're such a fine person to have come in contact with me.

CO: Well, I feel like I've hit the jackpot with this project, and I love it. I love hearing about people's lives and how they make sense of their lives –

RS: And I think that I can still do more. That's the reason why I sit on my porch, and as these boys pass by – and I commended them, I said to the boys last night. And I said “just wait a minute, let me get my husband out here for just a moment.” But they were coming from one of the playgrounds where they had been practicing basketball. But I know that those boys are going to remember, you know, that lady over there cares.

CO: Do you have any feelings about the women's movement that you certainly lived through?

RS: I sat on the status of women, the President's Commission on the Status of Women. I worked for three committees at one time for one governor. I don't do things, first of all, that I'm not serious about. And I'm going to – next time I'm going to have some things that you'll be able to take with you and you can review and so forth. And Mary Jane Galer is a good person that you just interviewed.

CO: She lived for that cause.

RS: I know, I know Mary Jane well! And there are others in Columbus, though. But I know Mary Jane well. She will tell you that I'm outspoken. And I probably would not have stayed at Columbus State if I had not been. But when I was out there, I'm sure that there was a different group, and I don't want – I might drop by there just to say hello, but everybody I know is gone.

CO: That happens after you retire.

RS: I know that, but see – most of us had been there since, you know, we started the College of Education.

CO: Can we move to religion? Can we talk about religion?

RS: Sure.

CO: You've talked a lot about your values, your family of origin's values. Could you identify a core value that has shaped and driven you throughout your life?

RS: Yeah. The value of the belief in God. And first of all, my mother always made sure that we were in the Willow Baptist Church. Cause Sunday school, church services. And back in the evening for BTU. So I grew up with those kind of values.

CO: Can you tell me what they are? What your spiritual, religious beliefs are?

RS: Well first of all, I believe in God. And I believe in – I guess I might even believe in a separation between State and Religion. But I also feel very, very keenly that – and as whoever the candidates end up, I'm hoping that I will see some of those values – and you ask me what are some of those values? First of all, I believe in humankind. Okay? And although there may be those who feel that they are superior to me because of color, I've worked long enough and I've lived long enough not to degrade myself in terms of what someone else may think. Just let me continue to live in such a way that I can be like the person on the side of the road. A friend to man. Okay?

CO: So in some senses, that's a pretty humanistic philosophy. To befriend humankind.

RS: Right. And although you might know where you've been and what you've done and how people have honored you and done whatever, don't ever have them to believe that they are less because they have not been. And to align yourself with people and be kind to them. I just couldn't sleep at night if I thought that I had hurt somebody, and from the time I walk in that door out there, I say there's somebody out there who knows me. And who I am almost sure respects me a great deal. But I also – and I do a lot of things you don't have to do. But I have learned to also embrace and hug. I really do. I do. And yesterday when I was in this library, there was a young girl – and I don't know whether Juanita is in here today, but I have not seen her in years, but I had not

forgotten her you know. That's the first thing I do. The one thing I don't ever want anyone to feel is that I think that I have risen to the pinnacle whereby I am above or beyond. And I also want to be a friend to man. Out by the side of the road.

CO: So have you had – have you experienced what you would consider a miracle? Experienced what you would classify a miracle?

RS: Yes. Today (laughs). Your being here and making me face the realities of where I've been and what I've done, and perhaps now you've also made me feel I haven't done enough. I need to do something else. See you don't know – I could talk about you I'm sure till midnight tonight. You've motivated me –

CO: Why do you feel like you haven't done enough? Your life –

RS: Oh I don't think any person – I don't care who they are. Okay? I don't rest on past laurels. No ma'am. I don't rest on past laurels. And as long as I'm able to help someone else, I hope that the Lord will let me live to do that right. And I tell em, you know, I do a lot of things people don't know about. There may be a child over at Tuskegee, and they don't have to be in Columbus, Georgia. But I'll say to them, I said “I'm going to make sure that you have this and you have the other, you know.” So I do a lot of stuff like that.

CO: What about spiritual experiences?

RS: I'm the member of the Fourth Street Baptist Church, and I was brought up in the Baptist Church in Leesville. But I also want you to know I've done my fair share there also. I've served as the president of the women's auxiliary for the 4th district. My life has not been – my religious beliefs have not been forsaken at all.

CO: So you've got your – your work is an extension of your religious beliefs?

RS: That is correct, and that Fourth Street District Baptist Church, I've done some of everything that you could imagine at the state level. I've even served at the state level, I've served on the commission for the status of women. I've tried to go wherever I thought I could help women.

CO: But with regard to your religious beliefs, can you say what those are? I know for you that means doing –

RS: Right. But I do believe that there is a high spirit than, okay? So I believe in God. I also believe that my spiritual life is – although I'm an educated woman, I can also relate to a lot of the people in my Church who are not. Okay? And my beautician is a woman that I go to on Mondays, and I enjoy going to a beauty parlor. She is a beautician, but she is also – see I'm talking about people who really know me, and they know me, but I

don't ever let people feel uncomfortable with who I am or where I have been. Not at all. I can still see myself walking on the streets of Sydney, Australia, and just looking up and saying "Well Thank you." See I do a lot of that. "Thank you God. Had it not been for you, I wouldn't be here today." Cause I'm a Baptist person, okay? And –

CO: Do you believe in an afterlife?

RS: I'm going to say yes (laughs).

CO: What do you think it'll be like?

RS: I hope that it'll be whereby I will be able to see my mother, my father, and some others. And a lot of other people – I hope that it'll be just a happy gathering of all these people who are God's people. Regardless of race, creed or color. Okay? And go on (laughs).

CO: Are you certain of anything?

RS: Yes I am. And you'll probably be shocked – yes I'm certain that there is death. And I can hear a pastor once, getting up. And I was on what you call a mourner's bench, and the pastor said "I don't want to frighten you but I rest a clear: you gotta die to become in any, won't be long. I don't want to frighten you but I." And this is a Baptist preacher, I've must have been only about seven years old. I told people, I said I was frightened to death! But I believe in the spiritual afterlife, you know. And I hope that I can be in that number, okay.

CO: That's the most popular answer of all, when I ask that question. The most popular answer is death.

RS: And I'd agree to that. And I want to live though, in such a way. Now what really caught me – my neighbor had just come to my door. I was getting dressed, and I said something to her. She says "my mother just died." And I went to Ed. That same young woman doesn't know what her mother said to me one day. Her mother's dead now. But she said "Mrs. Stanback" – and she was living on the other street around from me then, her mother was. She said "you know one thing? I wish May had grown up and been more like you." She doesn't know that's what her mother told me.

CO: Did you tell her that?

RS: No, I didn't tell her. I would never do that. In other words, her mother saw a different person. My neighbor married a man whose wife had died, and he lived next door to me with his first wife. So when I left, May's mother had just died and I was sitting on the porch along with another minister's wife, and trying to extend my condolences to her. In my neighborhood, I have the respect, you know, of the

neighbors. But I don't ever talk about education around them, or where I've been or – that's not me.

CO: Well before we leave religion and spiritual values, what experience has given or gives you the greatest joy?

RS: First of all, I believe that I'm serving a living God. But also, my – I will always want to be like the poem, by the side of the road. I want to always be able to lift a fellow human being up from the status to where they are. And my husband and I have done a lot of that. If we knew children wouldn't have shoes, very quietly, we've done that. Whatever they needed, and I just saw the letter of a young man calling to ask me – cause I taught him when he was in the 7th grade – But Glover Jones, I could tell he's not here – he's up in New Jersey. He went to Tuskegee, and I'm worried about him right now because he's been just like a son. But I have a deep feeling for human kind, and a lot of respect for all human beings. And what I want to do is, if I can, and if they need me, be the vehicle for change for them if that –

CO: Sure, okay. What period of time in your life was the happiest?

RS: (Laughs). I want to say that I'm happy now, but when I was growing up and my brother and I were like Siamese twins (laughs), and it was always me and my brother –

CO: So childhood?

RS: Childhood was good. It was good. And I have special memories, fond memories at Tuskegee. Don't ask me how, but I was gonna miss Tuskegee's attendance. So even at Tuskegee, my life was still unfolding, you know. And so I was part of a clean ship at Tuskegee.

CO: So your childhood and early adult years were happy, untroubled years –

RS: Yes. Now, may I say this to you? I am just as pleased now that I'm 83 and my husband will be 88 in May. And at night, I'm always (13:36) and I said “Are you alright?” And he said “yes, before you woke me up.” (laughs). Before you woke me up!

CO: So he's enjoying retirement?

RS: He is, he is. But he retired I think with maybe about 30 years. But Stanback had been in the military, and like I said to you – we called the first [?????] in the class, so they were ready for marriage. And I'm grateful that I really have a good husband.

CO: That makes the difference, doesn't it?

RS: Oh it does. Right now, if I'm on the bed, he's sitting in the chair right next to the

bed beside me. And I can't give him enough credit. Although we have no sons – two daughters, four granddaughters and four great granddaughters, again, I'm satisfied because that's what God saw fit to give to me so I'm going to accept it with all kinds of grace.

CO: Okay, it doesn't sound like you've had much unhappiness in your life. But was there a time that which you would regard as less happy than the other times? What was maybe the most difficult time?

RS: I guess the most difficult time I've had is maybe trying to deal with the loss of family members. My first of all, my brother, had only one brother. My mother said that when I was born, he looked over in the crib and said “That's my baby sister.” And that's what all of them called me, baby sister. And so that, and we were two partners in crime if that's what you want to call it (laughs). But the two of us were very, very close, and then –

CO: Now how much older than you was he?

RS: Almost three years. And then my sister. My sister died, my mother, my father – so each death has taken just a little bit away from me in terms of – but I'm grateful that I have a husband that has been by my side since I was 17 years old. And he's a good fella.

CO: Well, could you identify the three most significant turning points in life for you? You can name more than three, or if you just want to name one – but what is something that happened that was –

RS: The day my father and my brother got on that train with me and took me to Tuskegee University. And then, the second one is when I met my husband. And then to give birth to the children that we had – two daughters, and watch the granddaughters and great granddaughters come along. But I've also left a mark in all of these youngsters that I know. They know me, so they know I've given my all to this community. And at the church, they know that I've done my best, and I served at the national level with the Missionary Baptist Convention, and I've taught and I've never asked for no paychecks and if they give them to me I give them right back to them. So just being of service to humankind has been one of the greatest joys of my life.

CO: Do you have any regrets at all?

RS: I don't really have any regrets. And I want to clarify that maybe just a little bit. Nothing has happened to me that is out of the ordinary. Death is a cycle of life, so I'm not going to say that. I know that surely, man or woman born of a woman is going to die. And so I look at death as something that's going to take place as a reality of life. I

would not want to see either one of my daughter's die before me. Nor the grandchildren, and the Lord has been good to me to allow me to be able to be 83 and my husband to be 88 so. He'll be 88 in May.

CO: So if you could live your life over again, is there anything you'd do differently?

RS: Anything that I would do differently... I certainly would want to be born in Louisiana so I wouldn't do that differently. I was baptized in Castro [?????] Creek, and I wouldn't want to be in the pool if I didn't have that same experience. And going to Tuskegee would be a natural for me; I wouldn't want to go to any other place, and grateful that Auburn offered me a job, but grateful to Columbus State that I went to Columbus State. I think Auburn is a little too large for me.

CO: And that drive –

RS: Yes, I would have been driving every day. The thing about it is, I realize that I would be happy and I'm a golden tiger and all my other tigers, but hey. I'm perfectly satisfied that – I'm grateful that they asked me.

CO: Right. What do you consider the most valuable lesson you learned in life?

RS: How to be humble and to appreciate what people do for me. In other words, to enhance my life – I couldn't have done all I've done, okay? And would not have had the recollections that I had, you know.

CO: Okay. Who is the single individual who's had the most influence on you? Could you name anyone?

RS: Yes, but it's going to be a family member.

CO: That's okay.

RS: My mother. She was quite a lady.

CO: Yeah, absolutely. What now, today, gives your life most meaning and unity, and purpose?

RS: My husband, the children, and the grandchildren. And then to still be able to see students come by my house and say "Just wanted to say hello to you." And "Thank you for what you did for me." And they do that most often.

CO: How would you like to be remembered? What would you want your legacy to be?

RS: That number one, I did my best. I just want to always be remembered that my love

for humankind. And that I want to say, and that I did my best. Any job that anybody has ever given me, I always try to do my best.

CO: And is there anything that your children or grandchildren, or just anybody in the community doesn't know about you that you would like them to know?

RS: They don't know I'm a crybaby. (laughs).

CO: So you don't cry in public?

RS: I don't cry much – but I'm emotional, you know. And I love people, and I wear it where you can see it. And I appreciate it about me, but say for instance now – when you came looking for me, my neighbor that just came to my door, and somehow or another the doorbell ringer has fallen off the door. But she was knocking, and I went to the door and she said “My mother just died.” See what I'm saying? And she didn't have to do that, but I'm sure that I'm the first and only person on the block that she came to say that. So I hurriedly slipped on something and ran to her house, that's where I was sitting. People – humankind is very special to me. I like dogs, and I've had a little Pekinese and a little Cocker Spaniel, and I can remember just getting down on my knees crying.

CO: With the dogs?

RS: Yeah, when they died, you know. So I'm a crybaby. And I hope you can see that. I'm a crybaby.

CO: Is there anything that we've left out or not covered adequately that you'd like to?

RS: Well I want to say that – there are some special people in my life, and it's in the work area. All of the students and the teachers that I've worked with in the public school system, as well as the leadership, and of course Columbus State University and the faculty out there. They, I can recall when I went out there, how they would – we just had to go eat almost every Friday night. What they tried to do is to make me feel comfortable in what was their world. And not to feel that I was coming into a hostile environment. So the special care that all of the faculty, staff, leadership, faculty, presidents, faculty staff, as well as the student body at Columbus State University and at the public schools that I worked for. I could not have asked for a better Superintendent than Dr. William Henry Shaw. He was a superintendent when all of the good things were happening to me. I just can't imagine, really, how everybody took to me. And I was a toughy in the classroom – I was very stern. But the students knew that I loved them somehow. And I taught seniors. And discipline was not a problem – I was always the in charge person, you know. And I just believe that any person who teaches should have the command of their classroom.

CO: Well now the last question I ask, most people despise it. They don't like it at all.

RS: What is it?

CO: And you don't have to answer it. Or you could think about it and get back to me.

RS: Remember family is important to me, and Oscar Stanback, my husband, and those two children and four grandchildren –

CO: Yes, I hear that, I hear that. What would you title the story of your life? What would be the title of it?

RS: That's kind of hard.

CO: It is hard, it's hard to think about.

RS: Now see, what's coming to me – because I've done this. “She gave her all.”

CO: Well that's a title.

RS: Yeah. “She gave her all.” That's it.

CO: “Rosa Smith Stanback: She gave her all.”

RS: That's right. That's it, and people who know me would know I'm not lying. I gave my full devotion to that classroom when I was at the high school level. I did the same thing at Columbus State. And as a family member, I've given my all –

CO: I see you came up with the title quicker than most people.

RS: “She gave her all.” And you see, what I tried to do – if my brother didn't have something, and if I had it – cause my brother had eight children, okay. Then my brother got what he needed. And the same thing with my sister. And at one time, my little small house had my sister's only child in it. She came here, went to school, she did enough to get to Tuskegee and the first year graduated from Tuskegee. So I've always helped my family. And I've done the same thing – helped his family, you know. We have an aunt that when we moved to our neighborhood, she moved from where she was and I can see her house right from mine. It isn't any further than the library right there. When they died, then we inherited the house, you see what I'm saying? We've been good people. And I like being a good person. And so I live in the house by the side of the road, and try to be a friend to everybody.

CO: I had not heard of that before, so –

RS: That's a poem. *House by the side of the Road*.

CO: And that's what – metaphorically, you want to be that house.

RS: That house by the side of the road, and be a friend to man.

CO: Okay.

RS: Or to humankind, let's put it like that.

CO: I like that better.