EDITORIAL NOTICE

This is a transcript of a video-recorded interview conducted for the African American Educational Experience in Dallas Archives and History Program. The transcript follows as closely as possible the recorded interview, including the usual starts, stops, and other rough spots in a typical conversation. The reader should remember that this is essentially a transcript of the spoken, rather than the written, word. Stylistic matters, such as punctuation and capitalization, follow the Chicago Manual of Style, 15th edition.

Cassandra Bennett transcribed this interview in July and August 2009. Perky Beisel reviewed the draft of this transcription. Her corrections were incorporated into this final transcript by Cassandra Bennett in August 2009. The Center for Regional Heritage Research and the Department of History of Stephen F. Austin State University funded the transcription and final editing of this interview. Ms. Bobbie Lang’s edits of this transcript were added in Spring 2010.

RESTRICTION

Researchers may read, quote from, cite, and photocopy this transcript without permission for the purposes of research only. Publication and duplication for distribution are prohibited, however, without permission from the African American Education Archives and History Program.
ABSTRACT

This video recording includes interviews with African Americans formerly or currently active in the Dallas area school system. The majority of the interviewees detail their own educational backgrounds, ranging from elementary to doctoral schools. Between the early-twentieth century and 1985, the individuals on this recording served as school board members, administrators, principals, teachers, and reformers. It is important to note that the interviews have been edited in such a way that questions are omitted and only responses remain. In addition, the interviewees appear to have rehearsed answers pertaining to their backgrounds, families, and experiences in education.


Cities / Towns / States / Countries Mentioned: Austin, Dallas, Pleasant Grove, Ennis, Marshall, Gilmer, Tyler, Denton, San Antonio, Richardson, Port Arthur, Houston, Ferris, Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, Mount Pleasant, Mount Vernon, Carthage, Sabine, Lufkin, Terrell, Corsicana, Texas; Little Rock, Arkansas; New Orleans, Louisiana; Asheville, Warrenton, North Carolina; Detroit, Michigan; Sacramento, California; Nashville, Tennessee; Oberlin, Ohio; Ann Arbor, Michigan; Atlanta, Georgia; Saudi Arabia; Washington, D.C.; St. Louis, Missouri; Indianapolis, Indiana; and Kansas City, Kansas.

Counties Mentioned: Waller County, Dallas County, and Cash County, Texas.
Regions Mentioned: Fair Park, Victory District, East Oak Cliff Subdistrict, West Dallas, Dallas, Texas; and Elysian Fields, Marshall, Texas.

Streets Mentioned: Oakland St., Sonata Lane, Ervay Street, Eighth Street, Macon Street, and Hall Street Dallas, Texas.


Colleges / Universities Mentioned: Sam Houston, Prairie View A&M College, University of Michigan, Wiley College, University of Oklahoma, Prairie View, University of Denver, East Texas State, Bishop College, Texas College, Columbia University, Southern Methodist University (SMU), Texas Women University, Tuskegee University, North Texas State University, Wayne University, University of California at Berkeley, El Centro Community College, Saints Philips Junior College, Our Lady of the Lake University, East Texas State University, Fisk University, Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Texas Southern University, Butler College, Atlanta School, UTA (University of Texas at Arlington), Morehouse College, University of Chicago, Texas College, Philip Business School, Kansas Junior College, Dillard University, New York University, Tillotson College, University of Texas, and University of Iowa.

Organizations / Associations Mentioned: Maria Morgan, YMCA Metropolitan YWCA, Church Women United in Dallas, Church Women United in Texas, Greater Dallas
Community of Churches, Armed Forces, Parent Teacher Association (PTA), Negro Principal Association, Regional Elementary School Principal, Tejas Council of the Girl Scouts of America, Big Brothers, Boy Scouts of America, University Interscholastic League, Dallas Chapter of the National, Alliance of Black School Educators, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, [Lowell] Fellowship (Ann Arbor, Michigan), Ford Foundation Fellow, United States Army, Visiting Teacher, Voter’s League, Dallas Teacher’s Alliance, Optimist Club, Community Chest, United Way, Dunbar Teacher Education Center, and United States Navy.

Churches Mentioned: Mountain High Baptist Church, Church of Christ, and Concord Missionary Baptist Church.

Businesses / Offices Mentioned: Republic Bank, Black Chamber of Commerce, and Dallas Post Tribune.

Miscellaneous Mentioned: Christmas, Mother’s Day, No Pass No Play, Texas Examination of Current Administrators and Teachers (TECAT), The Great Depression, Cotton Bowl, and World War II.
UNKNOWN SPEAKER: What if you knew this announcement was being brought to you by the...

INTRODUCTION SLIDES: “Lincoln Live! Channel 7, Community Access”

ELLA M. BAILEY: I grew up in a home in Austin, Texas where my father was principal, that was Anderson High School. So in 1933, after I graduated, I knew that I needed to train to be a teacher, somewhere. I started out in Sam Houston, which no longer exists now and then after two and a half years went to Prairie View. In 1936 when I graduated there, I started working at the training school there. It was a combination, school for Waller County and the campus where, students came to do their practice teaching. That was a wonderful experience. I taught math at that time and sometimes taught freshman English to freshman at Prairie View. I felt just about as, well I guess I was about as young as some of them. After seven years there at Prairie View, I married and when I came back from that experience as a widow with two children I moved back to Austin and started out in the Austin Independent School District where I began teaching in elementary school subjects. Uh, Rosewood Elementary, and then finally was transferred over to junior high where I retrained to do some reading because that was the big thing then and, left math for a while. I
enjoyed er, teaching the reading. It was such a need for it and that was the
time it was being stressed quite a bit all over.

After uh, years there, about the time, by 1936 I moved to Dallas
because I remarried James T. Bailey. In Dallas, I was lucky to get on. I was, I
appreciated the experience of getting on. I taught at Fannie C. Harris, out near
Fair Park and this was interesting for me. There with the, with fifth graders
and for most of the, most of the while and then later, changing over to
math classes. After integration that came along, I moved out to the Pleasant
Grove area, and had the experience of teaching at a mostly white school
and that’s always interesting, kind of scary experience if you’ve never had
that experience [chuckles] before. But, it was enjoyable. After awhile, I taught
math subjects there.

And in 1974, I, retired but -, have always, all through my life felt that
you don’t stay home. You keep busy. [background noise] So, during my
retirement years, I went with organizations that did civic work and who had
the community interest at heart, starting off at Moria Morgan. I was on the, e
school committee on administration there and served, as the chair, for a while.
Then I moved over to Metropolitan YWCA and uh, served there for six years.
Later I became interested in church work and, worked with Church Women
United in Dallas and served as president for one term with them. And now I’m
with Church Women United in Texas serving as their secretary. And also, I’m
on the board with the Greater Dallas Community of Churches working on
several committees they have, and you know that organization, that
organization is really heavily involved with the community. We work with education, all of them, all the others I have mentioned and this one, they’re interested in the good of the community. They work with, uh, the good of the schools as well as other areas of town. The jail [laughs], the aliens, all the areas where people need some kind of help or need some kind of direction.

I’ve had a very full life. I’ve enjoyed a family. My two daughters grew up and I have four grandchildren, three in college and one, junior in high school and so I feel like, life has been good to me and I’ve tried to do my best with the abilities that I had, and tried to serve the community as well.
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH

EDMOND C. ANDERSON

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #1986.02

TRANSITION SLIDE: “Testimony of an educator”

EDMOND C. ANDERSON: My career began in 1937 at the J. P. Starks School where I was selected to teach geography. I was teaching, more or less, what we call today social studies because in teaching geography at that time, I covered all the areas that, the social side, the people and how they lived, as well as the topography of the land and the number of people living in any particular locality. We talked about the political side also, and the general areas that are covered in the social studies area. I taught school there a total of eleven years, taking out two years that was uh, spent in the armed forces. When I returned, I was soon uh, appointed principal of what is now Fannie C. Harris, Elementary School. It was then the Pacific Avenue School.

I might say, while I was a teacher at J. P. Starks, one of the things that I thought was outstanding was although black children were not permitted to save at the Republic Bank, as white children were, I had us savings and I had a account of one out of every five students at J. P. Starks and I was the banker and I kept their money and they could get it twice a year, at, at Christmas time and at Mother’s Day. It was interesting to note that these kids often time had to bring notes from their parents stating that she had prescription but had no money and wanted to borrow three dollars or four, off the child account to get
medicine. Uh, likewise, since many of them were doing, hand laundry, that if it had rained all week they may not have money to get some the provision that they may needed and they’d write a note asking to get some money off the child’s account. So it serve, a very good purpose of providing money to help the family as well as teaching them thrift.

In 1948, I became principal of, the Pacific Avenue School which is now the Fannie C. Harris School. I was instrumental in helping them uh, helping the PTA (Parent Teacher Association) to get the kind of information they needed to present to the, board, to get the school. I gave them the information they carried to the Black Chamber of Commerce and they drew it up in petition and they carried to the uh, administration building in particu-, peculiarly enough they let these folks sit there till nearly twelve o’clock till they asked, before asking them what they wanted. They said they had a petition. They, were told to give it to the secretary and he really [indistinguishable] top not the bottom but they were literally smart enough to ask the president of the board to have them read it all. At this time, they read all the shortcomings of the school and the needs, and this was printed in the paper, just prior to the, , setting a bond issue to get schools at that time and then this is how Fannie C. Harris, happened to be built.

I left Fannie C. Harris and went to J. W. Ray, spent three years there, uh, at that time I saw that it was most difficult to use the playroom, , use the , lunchroom as the playroom. [background noise] So I used some training that I had done during the war time, engineering drawing, to draw the playroom and
they told me they didn’t have room enough to get, I drew and showed how they could get, attach it to, that back entrance. And, presented it to the, administration building. And they built this playroom there.

I left there and went to N. W. Harllee School. N. W. Harllee School was a school that didn’t have electrical outlets and the uh, various room which meant that even though you would get the visual aids from the Audio Visual Center, you couldn’t use them because you didn’t have outlets in the room to use them. So after getting outlets in the room and getting, soap dispensers and other things in the restroom uh, I also when they told me that they couldn’t get a gym at Sequoyah, and at N. W. Harllee, I drew this, gym to scale after having, studied what size of gym you would need for a school that size. And I measured the present building and the portable and I drew all this to scale then I superimposed another color over this showing that we could get the gym and I could give them back some room. Uh, once we built, the gym to take the places of the portable that we had out there.

I tried to also, improve the program. We increased the teachers there and we tried to, see that all the children had opportunities to get the classes they had and every teacher had a planning period, which hadn’t been done previously. And after I had been there two years, I was then sent to uh, to George Washington Carver, which was the largest elementary school in the southwest. We had, at its peak, had 2,100 elementary children there. I soon discovered I had, three schools in one, according to the, number of pupils I had but I only had provisions for one. That is, as far as the library, and, audio
visual room and the other, special areas that you need to operate effectively. Then I started and it was most difficult to get, portables put on the ground after you had a, a new building. But I succeeded in getting ten portables put out there and just as I thought I had worked out all the physical needs, was trying to get a good program going, I was going to settle down to try to refine the educational program, I was then transferred to Sequoyah, Junior High School. And there again, I ran into, , a shortage of space and I ended up getting an additional uh, set of portables that provided another home making unit and, and a wood shop so that we could provide room for , the children who wanted to take those courses. We still needed other room and I was, pushing for this additional space when they changed, Thomas Edison Elementary into a junior high school, which relieved the pressure that we had at the, in Sequoyah , Junior High School.

During these times, I also tried to get the youth, particularly in the elementary school, I tried to get all the…[video footage stops for 2 minutes]

…the principal. I started, at when I first became a principal, I attended the University of Michigan to, get my masters. I had gotten my Bachelors of Science degree, from Wiley College and after going there several summers, I received my, master of art, from the University of Michigan. And after coming back and working for a couple of years, I decided I needed to go back to school. And I looked for scholarship and I got a scholarship to the University of Oklahoma. And from this school, I received my doctorate of education. Along with the uh, school work and working with the professional
organization, I was president of the, Negro Principal Association, longer than anyone else at that time that it was still in the, the operation, before we joined the other uh, white organization. Uh, we tried to have unity and, I lead the, fight to get the blacks to attend the Regional Elementary School Principal. And the first time we were admitted was at uh, Little Rock, Arkansas. We weren’t allowed to stay in the hotel with the other folks but we had to stay in the black hotel but we did, attend the reception at the Governor’s Mansion and this was the beginning. And uh, in New Orleans, because uh, the hotels wouldn’t admit us, we had the meeting in the school room so that the black principals could attend these, regional conferences.

Uh, also, in the city during these times when I was principal, I was on the board of the Tejas Council of the Girl Scouts of America. I worked for them during a time when they were trying to integrate their facilities. I also served, on the board of directors of the, Big Brothers Organization. And, I moved up from secretary up through second vice-president to first vice-president and, I was supposed to of been the president but I had served the two consecutive term and uh, Mr. Toice Davis who came on the Board after I was able to be elected president as the first black to become president of the, board of the Big Brothers movement. During my work with the Boy Scouts, I started as a scout master and I went on up and I became District Commissioner. I, received the Silver Beaver, which is the highest, award that can be presented to a volunteer scouter in your local, council.
ANNE L. MCCLELLAN

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH

ANNE L. MCCLELLAN

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #1986.03

TRANSITION SLIDE: “Testimony of an educator”

ANNE L. MCCLELLAN: Anna L. McClellan, a native Dallas Countyian attended Wilmer Hutchins in Dallas public schools. I received my B.S. degree from Prairie View A&M College and did graduate study at Prairie View University, Denver and East Texas State.

I taught for seven years in the Wilmer Hutchins district and twenty-nine years in the Dallas Independent School District. I married the late Henry Elmer McClellan and have one son, Samuel L. McClellan, granddaughter, Rashanda [indistinguishable] McClellan and a daughter-in-law, Valinda Anne McClellan.

I am a member of the Mountain High Baptist Church. I taught for seven years in the Wilmer Hutchins District and then twenty-nine years in the Dallas Independent School District. I am a firm believer that the forces behind each child is the home, the church, the school, and the community. If these forces work together for the good of a child, I feel that we can produce better citizens for tomorrow.
PRECIOUS DAVIS: I’m Precious Davis. I was born and reared in Ennis, Texas. I graduated from the high school in Ennis, Texas and after, graduation I attended and graduated from [background noise] Bishop College in Marshall, Texas. At an early age, I knew that, I would be going to college and that I would be an educator. After leaving Bishop College, I taught in my home town for five years, but for the first of those two years, I taught in the rural. If you can imagine a rural [unclear], but there is such a thing. But I taught, self contained, one through fourth grades. After that then, they moved us into the City of Ennis for my last three years. During that time, I married, , Louis W. Davis Jr. and we have two children. And uh, since that time, we now have two grandchildren.

After leaving Ennis, I, served as a homemaker for four years. Uh, then I decided it was time for me to get back into the arena of education. I, joined, , the Dallas Independent School District as a fifth grade teacher at the Arlington Park Elementary School. I worked there for three years and then I moved on to K. B. Polk Elementary School for many, many years. And after serving at, K. B. Polk, I moved to the uh, Casa View Elementary School, and I think I served there for, two years.
Upon, my completion of working at, Casa View, I moved uh, to I was invited to uh, join the staff, at the Dunbar Teacher Center. At that time, it was call Ab, Abner Silbersteen Teacher Center. We worked with pre- and in-service education of teachers. I enjoyed, those years of working with those pre-in, uh, teachers. They were from the seven area colleges around uh, the Dallas area or in the Texas area.

My years as an elementary teacher were so rewarding. I’ve had, I’ve seen so many of my students, , successes and I did feel that I made a positive impact on their lives. After moving from the teacher center, I went in the field of, administration and I served two years as, the administrator at the David G. Burnet Elementary School. That was both rewarding and, quite an experience. After leaving Burnet, then I went back to the teacher center to serve in the area of staff development. There I remained, for four years. They combined the teacher center with the other administrative offices at the, Lincoln uh, Elementary School, Lincoln High School on uh, Oakland. And there I served in the capacity of a specialist and also in the area of staff development until my retirement in 1985.

I am continuing in the field of education as a part-time instructor in the community college area. Thank you so much for this time.
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH

BERNICE STEWART

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #1986.05

TRANSITION SLIDE: “Testimony of an educator”

BERNICE STUART: My name is Bernice Stuart and I was born in East Texas near Gilmer. My parents moved to Dallas, Texas when I was ten years old.

[Background noise] I finished my elementary education in Dallas, in the Victory District. Then I went to Texas College and finished high school and finished my college work and received a degree there. After I finished Texas College, I went back and taught in, in the Victory School that I had graduated from. I taught there for seven years and then I was hired by DISD and I taught at Fred Douglass Elementary School for twenty-two years and twelve weeks. When I left there, I went into, I was in the field of reading and I was reading clinician until I retired. I also [mumbles] attended Columbia University where I received a bac-, masters degree and I uh, was working with the reading, uh, reading, I was reading clinician for ten years until I retired. I retired in 1974 and I think that I was considered [unclear] educator. Uh, an educator, educator working with children will be one of the most gratifying, experiences you can have. I thank you.
YVONNE EWELL: I am Yvonne Ewell and I recently retired from the Dallas Independent School District after thirty exciting and challenging years. I came to the district in 1954 as a teacher in Phyllis Wheatley Elementary School. Moved from there to Lincoln High School and from there to the principalship in about 1961. After that, I went in to the central office in ’64 as an elementary consultant. Then I moved to many different levels of responsibility and finally was associate superintendent for East Oak Cliff subdistrict, a district of some 25,000 children but we had a court mandate to substantially improve the quality of education for black students.

, I remember my career in the district with a great deal of appreciation and excitement and challenge. I suppose the first thing that I would say is that I did have a challenging career. Having served in many levels of responsibility, I found it always exciting that I had to do as much learning as the students and teachers for whom I had responsibility. Beyond the kind of challenge that was involved in the, inherent, curriculum area in which I was serving, was the challenge of, of relating to so many exciting professional people. So over the years, my life has essentially become the kinds of people, the kinds of experiences that I had while I had the opportunity to work in the
district. Beyond the professional people, I suppose I remember most keenly those parents who worked with me in trying to help establish whatever we call the benchmarks of quality education. And finally the students, and of course the students are an innumerable caravan, which we cannot count, we shall never know, the impact we’ve had on their lives. That is something only eternity can, can really record and accurately assess but I will say my, my effort always was to improve the quality of education for children in general and black children in particular. Because I believe it is the essential quality of education that makes us most human. If people are not educated, then there is no way that they can enjoy the good life for themselves nor can they pass it on to their children nor can our society be the kind of society and the city be the kind of city, of which it is capable of being. And finally, I suppose I remember my career, as being one of having achieved a great deal. I, do have the good fortune as a black woman of having many firsts and I do remember that in East Oak Cliff we made some quantum leaps for, excellence in education. Uh, finally I say though, no matter how exciting one’s career has been, , no matter how remarkable to some degree it has been, the final thing that I remember, and I know is that every generation has a challenge of providing what it needs for it’s own time. So many of the initiatives which were started in my day, over my thirty years, are not in place any longer and so it then becomes the task of this generation to make the kinds of adaptations that are essential to ensure the survival of our people, as did generations before me. It is in that
regard that I remember and I value all the days that I have had in the Dallas Independent School District.
IDA TIPTON: I was born in Mineola, Texas, Wood County, Texas. The daughter of William Mallery and Ellen Richard Mallery. I was the fifth child of a family of nine children. I learned at an early age to be sharing, loving, cooperative, work hard, a respect for money, and an education. I was inspired by my father to become an educator and also my first grade teacher, Mrs. Ella Flanory.

I finished my elementary grades there and my high school in Tyler, Texas, Emmett Scott. I received a B.S. degree and a M.A. degree in elementary education. I did some post-graduate study at SMU [Southern Methodist University] and Texas Woman’s University in Denton. I am a member of the Church of Christ, Waydell Nixon, my minister. I work with the Sunday School department there and also the educational department.

I taught in the Dallas Independent School District for twenty-three years. Thirty-eight years in all, fifteen years in East Texas and then received employment in the Dallas Independent School District, where I taught for twenty-three years and retired at the school, N. W. Harllee.
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH

GLENN MILLS

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #1986.08

TRANSITION SLIDE: “Testimony of an educator”

GLENN MILLS: Hi. My name is Glenn Mills. I currently serve as a board member of the Wilmer Hutchins School District. I am a student and product of the Texas Independent School Districts. I am a student at the Prairie View A&M University. I have been on the school board of Wilmer Hutchins for the past seven years. I’m a deacon at Concord Missionary Baptist Church and I serve in several other organizations in the community. It is indeed a pleasure for me to be in such a unique group and to be nominated for such prestigious award.

In the Wilmer Hutchins, over the last seven years, in my, in my tenure, we have been proud to come up with some results that we feel real proud of. I have a lot of concern for our youth of the country of tomorrow. Looking throughout our nation, we see that there’s lost generations that have gone by. It is my concern to do as much for students throughout this state, this city, and this nation as I possibly can. We have made some contributions, but I feel like there are so many more that can be made. We appreciate all that we have done with the citizens, the parents, the administrators in our district and with the state, in the state of Texas.
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH

LINDORF BLAKLEY

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #1986.09

TRANSITION SLIDE: “Testimony of an educator”

LINDORF BLAKLEY: I am Lindorf Blakley, a native of Asheville, North Carolina. I received my bachelors of science degree from Tuskegee University and a master of education degree from North Texas State University. I have also studied at Wayne University, Detroit and the University of California at Berkeley. At Tuskegee, I met and married my college sweetheart, Yvonne. We are the proud parents of one son, Lindorf S. I have a beautiful daughter-in-law, Shirley, and a grandson, Stephen.

My first teaching assignment was at the John R. Hawkins High School in Warrenton, North Carolina where I was a teacher of science and also director of athletics. At Warrenton, I was blessed with having won a state championship my first year as a coach, and it really was enjoyable.

In 1949, I accepted a teaching position with the Dallas Independent School District and I was assigned to Lincoln High School where I taught physical education and was also coach. I taught physical education in the Dallas, I mean Lincoln High School for two years, then I was assigned to the science department where I taught biology. While working at Lincoln, I was able to take basketball teams to old Prairie View University Interscholastic League team for five consecutive years. Although we never won a state...
championship, it was good to take the team to the state championship. I worked at Lincoln for twenty-two years. After leaving Lincoln, I was assigned as assistant principal to the E. B. Comstock Middle School. I remained there until I retired.

I might mention that teaching in Dallas was a rewarding experience. I’ve had the opportunity to see many of my students go into various fields; in fields of education, medicine, law, business, the ministry and some of the other professions. I’m proud of all the students that I had the opportunity to teach. And I might say, since my retirement from the Dallas Independent School District, I have found time to teach a course for El Centro College, I play with my dog, I also go to the golf course and try to break ninety, and a little honey-do for my wife.

Education was good to me [clears throat] and hopefully that I will continue to try to mold lives with my position at the El Centro Community College.
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH

ROBERT HESTER

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #1986.10

TRANSITION SLIDE: “Testimony of an educator”

ROBERT HESTER: My name is Robert Hester and I live at 5511 Sonata Lane in Dallas, Texas. I’m a product of the public school system of the state of Texas, a graduate of Prairie View A&M University, and presently retired after thirty years, seven months, and twenty-five days in the federal service, in a variety of positions with a number of different agencies. I am also president of the Dallas Independent School District board of trustees having been appointed to the board of education in November of 196-, 1980, on the sixty-fifth ballot. I think this is, a very significant turning point, in my career as a volunteer.

In the Dallas Independent School District, we have 132,388 students with an excess of 14,000 employees. Uh, we are charged with administering a budget of $431 million dollars. We have a viable construction program and process that, we also oversee and we are vitally interested in, the participation of minority and woman contractors in this program. We are also deeply concerned with the achievement gap, bridging the achievement gap between the Afro-American youth and the other groups in the district. Uh, we feel that having the opportunity to meet with this group and having been honored to receive an honorary membership I would, therefore, would like to express our
sincere appreciation to the national, and the Dallas Chapter of the National [Alliance] Association of Black Educators.
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH
WILLIE ANN EDWARDS

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #1986.11

TRANSITION SLIDE:  “Testimony of an educator”

WILLIE ANN EDWARDS:  I am Willie Ann Edwards, a product of the San Antonio public schools. My high school diploma was received from Phyllis Wheatley High School. I am a graduate of Saint Philips Junior College, Prairie View A&M University where I received my B.S. degree in elementary education, and Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio where I received my masters of education in administration and supervision. I have completed additional studies at Texas Women and East Texas State Universities.

During my thirty-years career as a public school educator, I have taught in the San Antonio, Richardson, Sacramento, California, and Dallas Independent School Districts. My motto has always been to give to the world the best that I have and the best will come back to me. I have found this to be true as an educator. I am still involved in community work, volunteer work, and a teaching job. I plan to continue this because I know that I have a contribution to make to the students and to persons within my community.

At the time of my retirement, I was serving as dean of instruction at the Zumwalt Middle School, Dallas. I’d like to say thank you to the Alliance of Black Educators for selecting me for this great honor and I hope to make a contribution to this organization as well as to the community. Last but not
least, I’d like to say I’m proud to be the mother of two fine daughters and one grandson. Thank you.
DR. BOBBIE FRANKLIN WELLS: I am Bobbie Franklin Wells, career educator, product of the Dallas public schools, third generation Dallasite, and fifth generation Texan. A graduate from J. P. Starks Elementary School, Booker T. Washington High School, B.A. from Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee with a major in French and music, graduate study in piano and organ, Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Oberlin, Ohio. M.A. degree, Texas Southern University, major in secondary teaching. Ph.D. degree, North Texas State University, French and college teaching.

Teaching experience over thirty-five years includes two years as a French and English instructor at Lincoln High School in Port Arthur, Texas. Fifteen years as French and Spanish instructor at Jack Yates High School in Houston, Texas. Three years as French and Spanish instructor at Kimball High School and [W. W.] Samuell High School in Dallas, Texas. Four years as an administrator in East Oak Cliff subdistrict, Dallas, Texas. Five years as French and Spanish, teacher, assistant professor of foreign languages, Bishop College.

Honors include the first French teacher in public schools in Texas beginning in 1947, received a [unclear] from the French government in 1962
as a career French teacher, I’m a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, the Lowell Fellowship in Ann Arbor, Michigan. I am a Ford Foundation Fellow 1972-1973.

It has been an intrinsic reward to see my former students in the mainstream of our society as contributing citizens, teachers, attorneys, physicians, parents. In another life, I would again be a teacher, perhaps for not so long for I have learned that one might encounter more than one all engaging career in life.

I thank you very much.
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH

LUCY MAE MCDONALD

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #1986.13

TRANSITION SLIDE: “Testimony of an educator”

LUCY MAE MCDONALD: [missing previous] from the end of the cotton rule to the computer age. When I first started school, I attended the elementary school at Ferris. At that time it was called the colored school. My first year at Ferris I changed that from colored to Dunbar School. It has been beautiful working there. At present, even though I am retired, I am working part-time as a consultant of the Ferris Independent School District.
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH

BESSIE LEE TANKSLEY

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #1986.14

TRANSITION SLIDE: “Testimony of an educator”

BESSIE LEE TANKSLEY: I am Bessie Grady Tanksley. I was born in Tyler, Texas. I finished high school in Ferris, Texas. Got my BS degree from Butler College in Tyler, Texas. My masters degree from Prairie View A&M University.

My first job was Wilmer Hutchins. I taught school when there was a one-room school. When it became a larger school, then I went into the third grade. I was a third grade teacher and then I moved to a reading specialist and I was promoted to a counselor and after the counseling position, I went to Prairie View and received my masters degree in counseling.

I set up a counseling program at Wilmer Hutchin that was implemented in 1969. I came to Dallas in 1970 as a math teacher at Joseph J. Rhoads Elementary School. I was transferred from there to Runyon Elementary School for six years. After being there six years, I was moved to N. W. Harllee as a Chapter One teacher. I remained there until I retired in 1985.

I am currently doing volunteer work at, I’m currently doing volunteer work at N. W. Harllee School and the Health Specialist School on Ervay Street. I do feel that during my tenure as an educator that I have touched the
lives of many boys and girls. And I do know that I have touched the lives of my children, who are now in education.
LUCIOUS WAGNER: Hello, my name is Lucious Wagner. I’m the vice-president of the Wilmer Hutchins School District, District. I am married to Katie Spears Wagner. We have five boys and one girl.

I’m a little different than the other people that you’ve heard or you’ve seen. I’m not exactly in education, but I’ve got, I got concerned and involved in education as far back as when I retired. I am retired from the Army, I spent twenty-two years in the service. After retirement, I started to work at Bishop College. [unclear] I’ve been involved with children all my life, even when I was in the service. I worked with youngsters. In the financial aid department, I worked with youngsters. So this gave me an interest to get on the school board.

I saw something last year, I know, I don’t know exactly what time it was. It was the administrators, the black administrators. I, went to a luncheon and while at this luncheon I saw something that really moved me. I said at that time “This is kinda like the gathering of the eagles.” You know, this was an old army picture. Now we, we don’t have to be teachers. We don’t have to be teachers just to be, involved in education. This is why I got on the school board. I saw some things happening there that I was really concerned about.
And one of the main things I’m concerned about, we talk about No Pass No Play, we talk about, teachers taking, getting a TECAT [Texas Examination of Current Administrators and Teachers] test. I’ll agree that was not the way to go about changing education but we needed reform We needed it somehow.

We talk about No Pass No Play, I know I feel that the one that brought it about they were, they were possibly getting rid of, get out of the system, I, I, I hate to say it, but I’m talking about they wanted to get out of the system (the black kids out of it). That’s the way I saw it. But believe me, we black parents, I as a parent have been practicing No Pass No Play all of my kids’ life. When I say education, I don’t want to, you know really start talking about my kids but all of my kids have finished college except one boy. And well I hope he doesn’t see this, my, my son, he’s a junior in college and talking to him, I, I can feel, I can relate to him.

Uh, uh, some of the things I want to do on the school board, I want to, some of the things I’ve done. I’ve initiated programs where we can get our kids really involved in education. No drug program, things like this. I mean, I wouldn’t want to go into details of it but its something really see. This next generation is just about lost. And I just feel this No Pass No Play and this TECAT and these things would be beneficial for us on down the line. Thank you.
JOHN PHELPS:

Mrs. Phelps attended Dallas public schools. Mrs. Phelps graduated from Howard University. She got her masters degree in social work from Atlanta School in Atlanta, Georgia. Mrs. Phelps was the first female visiting teacher in the state of Texas. Mrs. Phelps chaired the book of visiting teachers, the first book written for the visiting teachers in the state for Texas. Mrs. Phelps worked as a visiting teacher in charge of visiting teachers in Dallas, Texas. Mrs. Phelps, during her lifetime did a beautiful job of work, working and training people to work with students and with their schools. Mrs. Phelps worked with the School of Social Work in, at UTA [University of Texas at Arlington] as a professor. She retired from UTA as a, a, uh, professor in social work at UTA.

We, we have been married fifty-seven years come the seventeenth of next month. And for during that time, we have educated two daughters, Lucy Patterson, Norma Baric. Lucy Patterson’s teaching at Bishop College. Norma Baric is teaching at a medical school in Saudi Arabia. We have a granddaughter that is the assistant city attorney in Corpus Christi, Texas. A grandson who is working for [New] Eastern Airlines, fourteen years out of
Atlanta, Georgia. We have a grandson that will graduate from Roosevelt High School come May next year. That is our family.

Mrs. Phelps’s father was in, the first person in Dallas, Texas that was alive when a school was named in honor of him, N. W. Harllee School on Eighth Street. Mr. Harllee taught, graduated from college in June in 1879. We have his class ring, his diploma, and a bible that was given to him at that time. Mr. Harllee was a great worker and a great man for the city of Dallas.

My wife has been with the city of Dallas. I am the man that caused the black people being able to vote in the Democratic primaries. From 1923 to 1944, blacks could not vote in the Democratic primaries. I’m one of the persons to cause you being able vote, you folks who vote now in the Democratic primaries. I was one of the fellows that raised the first monies for the , Dallas Black Chamber of Commerce and the Vote, Voter’s League. So then friends, then again I was a part of getting the first black postmen in Dallas, Texas. We sent Leonard Jackson Sr. to Washington, D.C. to be certain that we would get black postmen in Dallas, Texas.

So this is what Mrs. Phelps and I have done all the years, we have worked with all of the things in Dallas that was necessary to, for us. Mrs. Phelps chaired and lead the group that got us for our wives and women could buy clothes downtown without having go back into the [unclear] cleaning unit to try on their clothes. She lead that, she had three hundred women that worked with her in that area back during those days.
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH

CHARLIE E. KIRKPATRICK

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #1986.17

TRANSITION SLIDE: “Testimony of an educator”

CHARLIE E. KIRKPATRICK: [Background noise] I’m a native Texan, however, I did
my elementary school work in St. Louis, Missouri and Indianapolis, Indiana. I
returned to Texas at the death of my father when I was getting ready to go to
high school and attended I. M. Terrell High School in Fort Worth, graduating
from I. M. Terrell. I attended Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia. And uh,
upon finishing [background noise] that little tour, I ended up in the army
where I served as first sergeant for three and a half years. Upon coming out of
the Army, I went to the University of Chicago. An interlude however occurred
right after I finished at Morehouse College ’cause that’s when I married
[background noise] my wife, Hazel Kirkpatrick. She was a Brown at that time.

My professional career began in Dallas and ended in Dallas. I worked
for the Dallas Independent School District for thirty-eight years. I served as a
teacher of math for seventh and eighth graders at the Julia C. Frazier School. I
left there for one year, went to J. W. Ray as a principal and then returned to
Frazier School as principal. Was there for umpteen years and then ended up
at Boude Storey Middle School then a junior high school. For five years there
and I went to the East Oak Cliff subdistrict as an administrator. From that
assignment, I went in to personnel this is a personnel director and it was from that assignment that I retired in 1985.

I have served as a member of the Dallas Teacher’s Alliance. As a matter of fact, I served as president for that organization. I was the [background noise] executive director secretary for the Dallas Metropolitan Teachers’ Credit Union, which went out of [unclear] business in ’71 when it merged with the Dallas Teacher’s Credit Union. I also worked with Dallas Big Brothers and now am very active in the Optimist Club of Oak Cliff.

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH

WILENE DADE

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #1986.18

TRANSITION SLIDE: “Testimony of an educator”

WILENE DADE: I am Wilene Dade, the wife of Dr. B. E. Dade. I’ve had forty years, enjoyable years working in education. All of these years have been with early childhood education. I’m a graduate of Bishop College, an elementary degree. I am also a graduate of Texas Women’s University in early child-, a masters in early childhood education. I worked for what was first called Dallas Day Nurseries. That’s an agency sponsored by, at that time, Community Chest, later United Way. And the name changed to Child Care, Dallas in the late ’60s.

For forty-one years, I worked for the same organization serving as director of a school called Waddle Childcare Center. Later becoming a coordinator and in that responsibility, I had to supervise two other schools. One was the Rhoads Terrace Nursery School and the other, the Landair School. And until 1985, I served in that capacity and retired early in September of 1985. At that time, they named the school for me and the school changed to a training center for workers of children. And it is now located at 2427 Macam Street, the Wilene Dade Training Center. I have later served as consultant to train teachers in the city that work with uh, with early childhood people. Thank you.
B. E. DADE: I am B. E. Dade. I was born in deep East Texas. Went to school at Mount Pleasant, Mount Vernon, coming to Dallas and I attended [Phylis] Wheatley Elementary School finishing from the Booker T. Washington High School in Dallas many years ago. [Coughs]

My first ambition was to be a physician but having been born in the Depression years, there was no money for me to go to school from any source that I could find. So I went down to East Texas, took an examination in fourteen subjects and passed it, fortunately. And I received a second class certificate which entitled me to teach in graded schools, un-classified schools. My first school was a one-teacher school where I received the tremendous sum of $44 a month for six months. Later, I went into adult education because that one teacher school played out. And from then, I went to Marshall, Texas where I was doing adult education and in the meantime, I would go to Texas College in the summer until I had two years of college work. Then I transferred to Bishop College, which was, had been my ambition all the while, being a Baptist, and having been, among the lovers of Baptist school. I finished from Bishop College, Summa Cum Laude. And I got a masters degree from Prairie View A&M in elementary ed. and another masters from the University of Chicago in school administration and my
doctorate was, obtained from North Texas State University. Most of them, most of those degrees in uh, early, I mean school administration.

Now my career teaching, after leaving Bishop College, I was principal of a high school, Marshall, Texas out there at Elysian Fields for one year. Then I came back home to Dallas where my mother had lived for forty years or longer. And taught in the Julia, Julia C. Frazier School for only one semester then I was transferred to Booker T. Washington High School where I taught seven years and from which school I, went out as principal of Fred Douglass, the first principal of Dunbar because Dunbar had been a white school and they gave it to us. They changed the name to T. G. Terry, I mean they changed the name from T. G. Terry to Dunbar. Then I went to John Henry Brown where I had a middle school. I was the first principal of Pearl C. Anderson Junior High where I had 2,300 students, 100 teachers, and only one assistant principal. I stayed there six years and when I received a doctorate there, uh, Dr. Estes asked me to come downtown. I went downtown, stayed there for six years. I was director or consultant in mathematics for the whole school district in the elementary schools, on the elementary level. I stayed there until I got ready to retire and I asked to go back and they sent me to C. F. Carr School where I stayed for six years, retiring from there in 1982. Immediately I went over to Holmes Middle School. Mr. Lee had me teaching Latin and Greek to his students. I stayed there for nearly a year, then I went back to my dearly beloved, Bishop College where I teach mathematics today.
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH

LEE J. DAVIS

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #1986.20

TRANSITION SLIDE: “Testimony of an educator”

LEE J. DAVIS: My name [background noise] is Lee, Lee J. Davis. I finished Harlem high school, High, Carthage, Texas. I came to Dallas after I discharged from the Army. Attended uh, Philip Business School and left for Prairie View. I finished Prairie View with a B.A. degree in business education. My first teaching experience was at Loral High School, Sabine, Texas. And from there, I spent two years in Lufkin, one year in Terrell and I came to Dallas as a classroom teacher at Madison High School. I taught business and history. I had got my masters degree in education administration. Two years later I was, served as assistant principal for the Booker T. Washington High School. The year later, I promoted to principal and assigned to J. P. Starks. I moved from J. P. Starks to Fred Douglass and from Fred Douglass to R. L. Thornton, from R. L. Thornton to T. C. Hassell. I retired from Wheatley, from, from Wheatley Elementary School. I’ve enjoyed my experience as a teacher and as a principal. I am now with the Dallas Post Tribune, a weekly publication, and I see that as a challenge.
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH

VONCEIL FOWLER MUSE

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #1986.21

TRANSITION SLIDE: “Testimony of an educator”

VONCEIL FOWLER MUSE: I’ve never been accused of being afraid to talk but I’m about speechless this morning. This is a new experience but, hopefully, I have a lot of things to say about black education.

I’m a product of Texas College, Tyler, Texas, a small church related black college. I was born on campus because that was the only position that my father had ever held. I had the primary school, the high school, and college.
CARRIE M. RIDGE: My name is Carrie Ridge. I’ve lived in the Dallas Independent School District and Dallas itself for several years. I was born in Dallas and grew up in Corsicana, Texas, graduated high school there. I lived in the home of educators and I felt the likeness for people, educating children, working with older adults from a very early age.

After graduating from high school, I attended Kansas City, Kansas Junior College with an associate’s degree followed by a degree at Bishop College. I have worked in Dallas thirty-two years before my retirement in 1982. I loved working with children. I worked at Fred Douglass Elementary School and my last years were at Lorenzo de Zavala.

After integration, back in the early years, we learned to love all the children. We worked with them and have always been concerned about children’s education, the environment in which they lived, and how we, as educators, can help extend that family experience and educate the children of the city.

This likeness for education has always been with me because it seemed a natural environment in which I grew up, an extension of that environment. Today, I am volunteering, still in somewhat of an educational
media out at Bishop College working in the, in uh, development, development office. I love people, I love working with people, and I think that all of my years from now will be with people and find some pleasure in helping mankind.
MARGUERITE S. FOSTER

I am a native of Dallas. I attended Bishop College and got a bachelor degree, North Texas College and got a master’s degree, Southern Methodist University and received counseling certification. I have been in the field of education for thirty-five years. I retired in 1985. To me, there is nothing more exciting than working with children and people. That is one of my loves.

I was a principal at Charles Rice and Fannie C. Harris Schools. I was an assistant principal at Bushman and at John Ireland School. I was a counselor at Charles Rice School. And I worked at the Dunbar Teacher Education Center. I was a classroom teacher at Charles Rice School. For seventeen years, I worked in the Wilmer Hutchins Independent School District as a high school math and history teacher.

Now that I’ve retired, for two years I have worked in West Dallas as a volunteer with the Head Start Program and the Mary Crowley Academy. Now that I do that, I also do volunteer work at Bishop in the museum department. Its one thing in life that I have learned, that life is real, life is earnest, you cannot let anyone knock you down, and you must be ready to help others up.
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH

EDWARD L. COWENS

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #1986.24

EDWARD L. COWENS: I am Edward Cowens. I’m a native Dallasite. I was, I attended the B. F. Darrell Elementary School. I, in Dallas of course, I was graduated from Booker T. Washington High School, also in Dallas. After a tour of duty in the armed forces, I came back to the community and I attended Dillard University in New Orleans where I received the bachelor’s degree. I later attended New York University, where I received a master’s degree and of course I did additional study at Bishop College and at Southern Methodist University.

I’ve been in education for a period of thirty-five years. My first teaching assignment was an, as an English teacher at Booker T. Washington High School, the school from which I was graduated. I taught there for a period of nine years and I wish to say nine of the most enjoyable years that I can recall. In 1959, I was appointed principal of B. F. Darrell School, the elementary school from which I was graduated. Now I thought I would never get out of the neighborhood. [Chuckle] From 1959 to 1967, I served as principal at B. F. Darrell School and from there I went to the principalship of Joseph J. Rhoads Elementary School. In 1969, I was appointed to the principalship of J.N. Ervin High School. I stayed there until 1971. In 1971, I
was appointed coordinator personnel services, which was an administration, central administrative position. I remained a coordinator for personnel services until 1973 where I became, when I was appointed deputy superintendent, for the personnel department. In 1976 I was promoted to deputy associate superintendent, for the personnel department, also in the Dallas Independent School District. In 1982, the title of deputy associate superintendent was deleted from the roster completely and my title then became administrator, personnel services. I was administrator of personnel services also the affirmative action officer from 1976 through 1985.

I have served the district in many capacities. I enjoyed the, my teaching experiences most of all. And that is not to diminish the services that I think, I hope rather, that I have rendered to the boys and girls throughout this district through the selection of capable teachers.
MABLE CHANDLER:

My name is Mable Chandler. I was born in Northeast Texas in Cash County and was known as a Cash County kid. I came to Dallas when I was nine years of age but I suppose my education, really as a teacher began when I was in the third grade in Mount Pleasant. For I was in the third grade and a sixteen year old girl who had never been to school was placed in the desk beside me. And my teacher, Mrs. Francis Carbrous said, “While I am teaching the first and second grade, I want you to help me to teach this young lady.” When the first grade recited, she said it would be too embarrassing for this young lady to recite and so she was to quietly say it to me. And the only time that we would have to pay attention would be only when the first grade was reciting, otherwise I was to work with her continuously. And so it began, my adventure with education.

In Dallas, I went to Pacific Avenue, which is now known as Fannie C. Harris and from there to Julia C. Frazier in the first class that graduated from Frazier. On to Booker Washington, and there, I had the experience of being there during the days when we were the first high school to play under lights because all of our games were played in the Cotton Bowl. We were the first high school to have a pep squad that was known throughout the state. And Dr.
Patton, our principal said, “Brag about it, because as a Booker T. Washingtonite, you’re somebody.”

When I graduated from Booker Washington in mid-term, there was no money set aside for teachers to have a substitute when the choir or the band or the football team had to go out of town. And so, I was called back and I became a teacher again. Thrilled to do it because I had just graduated, but I was really substituting for Mrs. Leola King who had to go with the ambassadors. And sometimes I substituted for one of the coaches because part of that time there were not enough high schools for us to play. And so Booker Washington played the freshman teams at Bishop and at Wiley. This gave me another view of what college would be like.

After graduating for Booker Washington, I received a scholarship and I went to Tillotson College and at Tillotson, I was an assistant to the head of the history department. It so happened that I graduated at the time that George Allen had enrolled at the University of Texas in, at Austin and opened the way because they did not know, they said, that he was black or Negro. And so, because Mr. Allen had enrolled there and opened the doors for us, when I graduated from college, it meant that here was an opportunity because the state of Texas said they would pay immediately for us to attend school out of state. Getting a BA degree from Tillotson College and going immediately to the University of Iowa that fall, I was fortunate enough to get a master’s degree in nine months. And so, at the University of Iowa, I was a graduate assistant, so teaching has been a part of my life.
I returned from there and back to my alma mater and worked in summer school. For about four years, I worked in Tillotson College in the summer; but, in the meantime, my beginning adventure was really at B. F., B. F. Darrell School in Dallas. There I had the fifth grade and I think it was Amy Richards who was next door to me and who said, “Young people always teach too loud. Be careful, they’ll hear you on Hall Street.” And this was an incentive to me, to learn to be a master teacher like Mrs. Richards who was there. And from there, when World War II began, I was moved to Lincoln High School and for twenty-three years, Lincoln became home for me.
I am Theodore Wallace. I’m a native of Fort Worth. I attended school in the public schools of Fort Worth, having graduated from I. M. Terrell High School. After high school, I served in the United States Navy during the Second World War. After separation from the Navy, I enrolled at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee where I received my bachelor’s degree in mathematics and chemistry. Upon graduation from Fisk, I moved to Dallas and began working at the Booker T. Washington High School in 1950. During my tenure at Booker T., which spanned fourteen years, I taught mathematics and also was director of the evening school during my later years at Booker T.

In 1964, I was assigned as the assistant principal of J.N. Ervin High School, which had just opened up. I began a, an evening school at J.N. Ervin, similar to the one that was at Booker T., for those adults who lived in the Oak Cliff area and did not have an opportunity to go back to North Dallas to Booker T. Washington. I served as the assistant principal of J.N. Ervin from 1964 until 1970. In 1970, I was assigned the principal of the T. C. Hassell Elementary School in South Dallas. After one year at Hassell, I was

My educational tenure spanned thirty-five years. I would like to say that teaching has always been an, a rewarding experience for me and I have always tried to do the best I can.

TRANSITION SLIDE: “Testimony of an educator”

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