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CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF HISTORY AND MEMORY

HERMAN HUDSON

Interviewed by Elisabeth Marsh
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INTRODUCTION

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INDIANA UNIVERSITY
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INTERVIEWEE: Herman Hudson
INTERVIEWER: Elisabeth Marsh
SUBJECTS: teaching, experiences at IU, formation of Department of Afro-American Studies
DATE: April, 10, 2001
TRANSCRIBER: Barbara Beeker

Hudson: ...don't apply to me but that's okay.

Marsh: OK. Today is April 10th and I am here with Professor Herman Hudson at the Indiana Memorial Union conducting a life history interview. I'd like to start with your early life if you don't mind telling us when you were born and where you were raised.

H: I was born February 16th, 1923, in Birmingham, Alabama, and I lived there with my family which consisted at that point of my father, mother, three older siblings: two brothers and a sister, and one younger sister. We lived together as a family until about 1929. Then my mother and the five children moved to Detroit. Subsequently there was a dissolution of that marriage, and my mother and the five children stayed in Detroit during my childhood...well, and some of them until today.

M: OK. Could you tell me a little bit about your family background, like your parents background, where they came from?

H: Yes. My mother came from Talladega, Alabama and my father from Birmingham, Alabama. Both of them attended Talladega College and graduated around 1910 and I think were married shortly thereafter and moved to Birmingham which was my father's home. In a way, that was kind of an unusual circumstance for that time, because many blacks in Alabama and throughout the states for that matter did not have much education, and to have two parents who graduated from college was somewhat unusual. My mother was a school teacher part time in and around Birmingham, Alabama and ultimately my father was in education as well, becoming principle of a major black high school there. And there we lived for the first five years of my life, or six years, and I don't remember very much about Birmingham because we left and went to Detroit, and I've never been back.

M: OK. And did your parents, you said they both graduated from college, did they go to get their degrees in education, which they then went on to do, or did they get the degrees in something else?

H: I have never really heard them say much about what they majored in, but I do know that they both were teachers.

M: And do you think that that was what led you on to get your degrees? You taught in education as well, correct?

H: Well, I worked in...I was a teacher at one time, but first of all I might say that... I, though the breakup of that family was unfortunate in some respects, it was very fortunate for me because at the age of five while still in Birmingham, I had spinal meningitis which resulted in pupic atrophy and partial blindness. There were no facilities in that town at that time for people with impaired vision and especially nothing for black people. However, when we moved to Detroit there was a sight-saving division as a part of the public school system and that's where I received my primary education and even secondary education. When I graduated from high school, I was fortunate enough to have received a scholarship to go to the University of Michigan. I attended the University of Michigan from 1941 to 1946 by which time I had completed the bachelor of arts degree and master of arts degree in Spanish, English, and History, and I did start teaching, my first job being at Florida A&M College in Tallahassee, Florida.

M: OK. So, what do you think drew you to, to go on to higher, to go on to college then to pursue an advanced degree?

H: Well, I...I was a good student in high school and though my mother was unable to afford sending me to college, and by that time, as I indicated my mother and father had separated, I was fortunate enough to get financial support and I went on to college. There was even the possibility that I might have studied law since the principal backer of my education was a blind lawyer, blind judge in Detroit, Judge Ned Smith. He and the Lions Club paid for my undergraduate and first graduate degree and so I went on, and how I happened to get into those subjects...I...my first job as a teacher was a teacher of English and Spanish. That came about because I was pretty good in both of those subjects and followed the tradition of teaching which was what my family had done.

M: And when was it that you were at Florida A&M?

H: I was at Florida A&M from 1946 when I got my masters degree to 1951.

M: OK.

H: And so I taught there for five years. I also got married at the time that I received my master's degree, even though I didn't have a job in June of that year (laughs). I did receive an appointment to Florida A&M for that fall. My wife was a nurse and our plan was that we would work one or two years, and I would go back to Michigan and start my Ph.D. work. As it turned out, as I said we were married in 1946, in 1947 my first child was born and then in 1948 my second child was born, so you can imagine there was very little money being saved at that time for future education. I probably would have still been there except for the fact that I got a

Rockefeller Fellowship to go and do doctoral studies in 1951, and that enabled us to leave Tallahassee, Florida and go back to Ann Arbor to the University of Michigan for that doctoral study.

M: And how long did it take you to get your doctorate?

H: Well, a long time. It was sort of stretched out. I was there from 1951 to 1957, at which time I had finished most of the work but I had not written my dissertation. I took a job at that point teaching at the University of Puerto Rico, and taught there for two years. We returned to Ann Arbor in 1960, and, again on fellowships and I finished my degree in '61 and accepted a job with Columbia University for teaching actually, and directing a program in Kabul, Afghanistan. A program of English as a second language that...by that time the government had decided to make English the second language of the country. English was being taught in grades seven through twelve, and thirteen through sixteen at Kabul University, but the whole instructional apparatus was at a very primitive stage. There were very few textbooks and very few Afghans trained to teach English, so, the project that I headed for six years involved the writing of textbooks for all those grades, training Afghan teachers to teach English, and setting up English departments in various high schools in the capitol of Kabul, and regional English language centers in the provinces. All of which was done with the assistance of a number of teachers from Columbia University and a number of Peace Corps volunteers. As I said, I was there for six years.

M: And did you do any teaching yourself or was it mostly the overseeing of the development of the program?

H: I taught one course, but for the most part it was supervising the program and the teachers, and the materials development, and for that matter, the selection and development of Afghan teachers including sending some to the states for graduate study and others to somewhat more advanced countries than Afghanistan, such as; Iran or to Beirut, or to Manila in the Philippines and of course to the United States.

M: And did you take your family with you?

H: Yes, my family was with me. By that time I had three children, all girls.

M: And when was the third child born?

H: 1947 and the second one in 1948 and the third in 1952, and all three of them and my wife and I went everywhere together, including the two or three years that I was at the University of Puerto Rico and then the six years when I was in Afghanistan.

M: And did they attend a special school over there or were they doing more home schooling?

H: No, but that was an American run school in Kabul, Afghanistan and they attended that.

M: And what prompted you to come back after your six years there?

H: Because Columbia University said I had to come back (laughs).

M: OK.

H: Actually, people who went over on that project were supposed to stay two years. And, I did my first stint from '61 to '63 and I requested, as did the Afghans in charge of the program, requested that I should come back for another tour of duty, which I did from '63 to '65, and when that tour was over there was a request for me to stay another two years to 1967, but Columbia did not accept that and wanted me to come back and go to work in New York City, which I did not want to do.

Most of the faculty that I knew at Columbia, first of all didn't live around there, they lived in New Jersey or someplace, sent their kids to private schools and so forth, and all of that seemed undesirable to me so I resigned and went back to Ann Arbor, and for one year from '67 to '68, I tried to catch up on America for all the time that I was gone. And, many important events took place during those years, so I was re-acculturating myself for that year, and then in '68 I ran out of savings and had to go to work. I started looking for a job, and found one at Indiana University and came here in 1968.

M: Was it a difficult adjustment coming back to the United States after spending six years in Afghanistan?

H: Well, it was not difficult. It was just that many things were new or many things had happened which were not a part of my experience, as you may recall, 1963 for example, that was, well in August of '63 was the time when Martin Luther King made his famous "I Have a Dream" speech in Washington and there was a March on Washington of many thousands of people, and later that year Kennedy was assassinated. In 1965 Malcolm X was assassinated. The whole '60s movements, both for minorities and women, took place while I was gone. So, it was a different, different country than I had left in 1960 or '61.

M: Did you have a good sense when you were over in Afghanistan of what was going on in the United States? Did you get regular letters from home, news reports, that kind of thing?

H: Well, yes and no, but there's one thing hearing about it, and it's very different to experience it. I can remember one morning, I always listened to the morning news by shortwave radio, and I had turned on the radio for the usual newscast and there was no news. There was a lot of somber music being played and eventually the announcer came on and mentioned that President Kennedy had been assassinated, which was a great shock. And, most of the other events I learned about either through the American Embassy or through letters as you say, or through shortwave radio, and I should say also, that although I was in Afghanistan for six years, it was not continuous. There would always be a home leave, or month or two at the end of each of the two year tours of duty. So, I was back and forth at the end of a two year period.

M: So, what was your first contact with IU? You said came to work here in 1968?

H: I'm sorry...I don't quite understand what you mean by first contact?

M: How did you find out about the position, come to apply...

H: Oh, I had written around to various universities, and there was interest in my candidacy here and I was invited for an interview. I came for that interview and subsequently I was offered a job and accepted it. When I first came to IU in the fall of 1968 I was a member of the Department of Linguistics and I did that for one year. And, in '69 I became Chairman of a new department of Applied Linguistics, with emphasis on the teaching of English as a second language, and I did that for one year and I, in fact, I started that department. But, I was not there long enough really to develop it because in 1970, I was appointed vice chancellor for Afro-American Affairs and shifted into developing most of the minority programs and all of the African American ones that were on campus during the 70's 80's, and even 90's and even today.

M: And, when you took that appointment as the vice chancellor, did you cease to teach or did you still occasionally teach a class?

H: No, for the most part, I was not teaching because in 1970 there was nothing. There was no program of any sort. There was not a department, so, I was appointed in March of that year with a mandate to get an instructional program started by that fall.

M: Wow.

H: There was no curriculum, nothing. It was a total void. And, by March or April of each spring most academicians have signed up for the following year, so to find the faculty to develop a curriculum to get things in order so that instruction in a new discipline, Afro-American Studies, by the fall, a matter of some three or four months, was a full time operation. But, we succeeded in opening the doors of our program at the time that school started that fall with a skeletal staff and a modest curriculum. I was chair of that department, at that time, while also continuing my work as vice chancellor for Afro-American Affairs, and hired a few people, some of whom are still on the faculty.

M: And, how many faculty members did you start out with that first full-time...

[Simultaneously]

H: We had three, with a number of graduate assistants working, and a number of cross-listed courses from other departments, and developed the curriculum such that by the following April, April of '71, the board of trustees had granted the unit authority to offer an undergraduate major and we have grown ever since then.

M: And, how many faculty members are there now, do you know?

H: There are, I think, eight on the faculty now but there are a couple of vacancies for which recruiting is going forward, so hopefully by fall there would be ten or so on faculty.

M: I skipped over a question here. What was...when you first came to IU, what was your first impression of the campus and of the department that you were working in?

H: Well, it was an impression that most African Americans had, that you were sort of plumped down in a place where there were very few blacks, either at the university or in the city and many fewer then, then now (laughs). But, my wife and children were pretty accustomed to adjusting to that foreign...or different environments, so we got along.

M: OK. And so, when you were appointed vice chancellor of African American Affairs, I think I remember reading somewhere that you tried...you had a minority student recruitment and retention program you started, and also a minority faculty awareness...

H: Most of those things came as we went along.

M: OK.

H: In the first year, the principal difficulty was to get the academic unit started and one of the persons that I hired at that time was Dr. William Wiggins, who was a doctoral student then in the folklore department. And, Bill has remained at IU from then to now and is currently the acting chair of the department. Phyllis Klotman, I also hired, who is a literature specialist. She had specialized in African American literature. She was teaching at Indiana State and we recruited her here and she remained until she retired last year. I might say that, that particular appointment caused me a lot of trouble, a lot of agitation on the part of students because she is white. There was the question of why did I hire a white woman to teach black literature. My answer, then and now, is that she was the most qualified person that I was able to find at that time, and she has been a true and loyal faculty member from 1970 until her retirement last year and in fact, this year she is still working in Afro-American Studies on a special grant from Washington in relation to black film studies.

Those two faculty members and one other person, Dr. Joseph Russell who was finishing up his doctorate in education that summer, so those were the three faculty members and myself plus various graduate students, associate instructors such as Bill Wiggins and others.

M: Could you maybe describe some of the evolution of the Afro-American Studies program to...it's currently a department, and perhaps some of the challenges that you faced as you were building the program; either from administration or, as you mentioned, from students.

H: Well, first of all, from the point of view of it's moving from a program to a department, that was one of the most urgent things that I had on my agenda because a program is something that you can create and abolish overnight. Whereas, a department is part of the integral structure of college administration, so we wanted to move from this quasi, temporary program status to

departmental status, which we did in the first academic year with the approval with the board of trustees.

That was an indication that Indiana University was serious about the program and little by little we added one or two faculty members. It was my intention to try and develop a structure within the department, and an atmosphere on campus so that people would come and stay and generally speaking that has been the case, that we did not have a turnover of faculty. And, I think that was one, that is one of the strengths of the department, people come and make this their academic home and are committed to teaching, research, and service in our field.

The curriculum which may have started with four or five courses now has a substantial number of courses. The students in the first year, or first years were primarily black students. Now, the overall enrollment in all of the courses is predominantly white students, although the number of black students on campus has greatly increased over the years.

M: Why do you think that shift has occurred, in enrollment in classes within the department?

H: You mean from the predominance of black students to white students?

M: Right.

H: I think it became clear that we had talented professors who were interested in students and taught well, and information that we were dispensing in our array of courses was something that people wanted to access and so the larger community became white students...

END OF SIDE ONE TAPE ONE

H: Because even now I should imagine there is maybe fifteen hundred or so black students on campus in comparison to thousands of white students so we had to tap into that larger audience in order to grow.

M: So when you said that there's fewer black students who are taking the courses, is it proportionately fewer compared to the number of African American students who were enrolled in the university when the program was begun?

H: I think it's proportionately lower...or...and the number of white students is proportionately higher because as I say, the people learn about what we're doing from their peers and they hear about, "a certain professor is really great," and so people enroll in it, in his or her courses.

M: Can you say, and maybe you've already touched on this a little bit, tell me about what the mission of the department was. Did you have, like a mission statement that you developed?

H: Well, (phone rings)....was a mission statement, which I[inaudible—phone rings]. But, the main point was to pass on to African American students or to any other students, information about the history and culture of African Americans from the earliest times to present and we do that in at least three different areas. One of them is the arts, and under arts we include music and

dance, and literature, and (pause). Then there's another subsection in social sciences and history, and what's the third one? Arts or literature may stand alone as one, and then the arts would be film studies and music and so forth that I had mentioned. And, then literature, and then the social science area.

M: And has your...has your mission changed at all? Has it evolved as the department has grown?

H: Well the department has grown by...in terms of new courses that have been added but usually they will fit under one of these categories and would depend upon the skills, talent, and interests of faculty that we recruited because as you may know, there are very few institutions that give a PhD in Afro-American Studies. So, Bill Wiggins, for example, received his doctorate in folklore but with an emphasis on African American folklore. Or, somebody else, Portia Maultsby, who was one of the first recruits, received her doctorate in musicology from the University of Wisconsin, but with a specialization on African American music. And, that's how we built the department, by recruiting people who had something to offer and an interest in working across narrow disciplines with others who are working in an area of Afro-American Studies.

M: You mentioned that there are very few institutions that grant PhD's in Afro-American Studies. Was IU one of the first to have an Afro-American studies program...sort of lead the way?

H: Well, it's one of the first that had a program. We do not offer a PhD, however.

M: Oh, OK.

H: We do offer a master's degree, a B.A. and an M.A.

M: Was it one of the first...was IU one of the first to offer degrees in that area?

H: Yes.

M: Across the nation?

H: Yes indeed. And, one of the strongest too, because as I said, one of the strengths of the department was the stability of faculty. We didn't have, we did not have people coming and going. They would stay here and develop a career on this ground.

M: And have other universities throughout the United States followed IU's lead in...?

[Simultaneously]

H: Well, they have followed it, I suppose to the extent that they could but they've suffered from difficulties, one of them being transitory faculty, and another is moving to the status of a department rather than a program, and there are not a lot of those who...schools who have actual departments that have the same status within the College of Arts and Sciences as say the English department, or any other department. The Department of Afro-American Studies reports to the dean of the College Arts and Sciences.

M: Did you have a number of people over the years coming to you as... 'cause you were, you started this department, correct?

H: Yes.

M: Did you have people coming to you to get ideas and to try to form departments at other universities, to get ideas from you on ways to, to do that?

H: Yes. There were a number that did, but I'm not sure that they were serious.

M: OK.

H: There were times when, when they were doing things just because they had to... a number of students they had would have demonstrations and require the administration to make some kind of move in all, all kinds of schools. And, I can recall going to some universities as a consultant but they didn't necessarily do what I recommended I do. In fact, it was a long period just putting out fires. If we can put out a fire by having six guest speakers, that's what they would do. If we could start something where we could hire a few faculty types, but not have them on a regular tenure track where they moved through the ranks of assistant, associate, and full professor to some permanent status with the university. There were not a lot of schools doing that, but IU did.

M: In...back in 1970, when you were appointed vice chancellor of African American Affairs, was that solely a push from the administration or was there a push within faculty and also students, to have that position and to create the department that you then created?

H: Well, that's another whole story. It was not the administration of the university who pushed that. There were students on this campus who were very active for two or three years or so prior to that, starting in say '67, and there were various demonstrations on campus and marches on the president's residence, and student meetings leading to demands to start something. And, what happened was, that the then president recommended that a committee be established and that the students should, instead of making certain demands, develop a document that would spell out and really detail what it was that they had in mind. And, that did happen with the leadership of some black graduate students and a few black faculty. And, that document was presented to the Faculty Council in January of 1969 and approved by the Faculty Council. The document called for a number of things: it called for an academic program and a research program, a recruitment

of minority students, and the hiring of faculty, not just faculty for, I mean black faculty for Afro-American Studies, but black faculty across the board, to include all the areas.

Finally, after this program was approved by the Faculty Council in the spring of 1969, nothing happened. It looked like the university had made a step forward, but nothing was being implemented and above all there was not a leader appointed to start the work. A number of people were interviewed, but for various reasons they were not hired, and it wasn't until a year later when my name was put forward and I was appointed. So, then the program had somebody whose responsibility it was to head the programs under way. That's when things began to happen.

M: And so, as the vice chancellor, you were appointed to that...you were then responsible, because you said the Faculty Council approved the document by the students requesting more minority faculty numbers in addition to this program...was there an increase of hiring of minority faculty members at that point, as well?

H: No.

M: No.

H: So far as I'm, there will always be one or two hired now and then but there was no systematic effort. In the first year or two, the thing that I worked on, even as vice chancellor was the establishment of this academic department, getting it started. Then the next step, which was also inside that big document, was to establish something like a, well which...what I call in 1973, a Black Culture Center and that was set up on 109 N. Jordan in what was then an old Greek house that was pretty dilapidated, but the university did fix it up some and we used that until 1980, '81 when I made a proposal for a new Black Culture Center building. And now, twenty years later, they're building it (laughs). Have you seen that structure?

M: I have. It looks like it's getting ready to be...it's nearing completion.

H: No.

M: No, is it still going to be quite a while before it's done?

H: Well at least one more year.

M: Oh, wow. 'Cause I've only been here for two years and it's been under construction, even three springs ago when I came to look at the University, it was under construction. So, where is it...?

H: It's still at the same location. They tore down...well, it's on Seventh and Jordan really.

M: OK.

H: And from the little stream up to Seventh Street on the west side of Jordan, they've torn down a number of old buildings including the old Black Culture Center building and some buildings that were used by the...that were used by the Theater Department. And, what is now being constructed is a, a building which is actually both that. I mean, part of it is, the southern part near the stream, is going to be the Black Culture Center part and the rest of it will be part of the, you know, the Theater and Drama Department.

M: And, you said that it was in 1980 that you first made this proposal for the new center to replace the old building.

H: Yes.

M: What was going on there, that there was that twenty year lag between the time of the initial proposal and, and actually breaking ground?

H: Oh, what was going on was lack of money, and lack of enthusiasm. I mean, how do you...it is true that the university approved the idea of having a new building, but that was not all together enthusiastically supported by everybody. I might say that President Tom Ehrlich was one of the main persons who pushed this along, in the sense that the Theater and Drama Department needed more space and new buildings, and here was this request also for a new Black Culture Center. All of this would have...both of these would have been stand alone, I mean free standing buildings. He pushed those two things together, that is President Ehrlich did, and had the combined idea of, I mean to develop a combined structure, and that's what is being built now.

M: And how do you feel about that because that's obviously different than your original proposal back in 1980?

H: It, it's a building, which we did not have before. We had a building, but the building was inadequate. Our, our function...the activities that we conducted in that building had grown, so that it was totally inadequate and we had to have more space and a better space, and I think that looking for a stand-alone building would have been longer in getting under way. So, I favor the combination here, the fact that he was able to put those two buildings together. In a fashion, it made it impossible for people to object, you know. I mean if, if the Drama Department or Theater Department which is a big department and an important department had to have facilities and in order to get that facility, we also had to build this Afro-American Culture Center as, as an adjacent portion of it and by putting the two together, it was approved. And yet, all of the funds for construction have not been raised so money is still being raised.

M: And is that why it's been taking so long?

H: Well...the construction only started a year or so ago, but you mean all those other years.

M: Exactly.

H: There wasn't enough money to start either the Drama department or the Black Culture Center.

M: OK. And we were talking about the mission statement of your department awhile ago, and one of the questions I want to ask about that is, do you feel that your department has been consistent and successful in accomplishing your mission?

H: I believe that it has been successful in carrying out its mission. One of the difficulties that happened, in let's say the 70's and 80's, is the academic structure became aware of and including African American members on the faculty. Various departments would want a, a black that they may have hired to be on this committee and that committee to show that they were executing affirmative action and...they wanted a black on the committees.

There are many, many committees on a university campus so that if you've got only ten black faculty and hundreds of committees, these people are stretched out and that was happening. And, not only were they stretched out on the university committees of one sort or another, but students would gravitate towards the faculty, the black faculty that was here, as a place to go and get some kind of understanding and guidance which they felt they couldn't get from white faculty.

So, the teachers were also expected to teach well, research and publish, and yet be counselors and committee members, and do all of these other things in a graded proportion than say the average faculty member, so it was very tough on the faculty, to have all of those things to do.

But, they have done it and have broadened out too, because in the early days, say the decade of the 70's, service was rendered primarily to African American students, but from the 80's onward there was an increase in number of white students who took advantage of these opportunities. And, by the 90's the number of white students exceeded the number of black students in some areas, some courses, and with some teachers.

M: Do you think, you mentioned that almost every committee wanted to have an African American faculty member on their committee. Do you think that, that sort of high visibility actually may have hurt minority hiring during that time, or not so much?

H: How do you mean hurt?

M: Well, if every committee has an African American or another minority person on that committee, maybe there wouldn't be a need seen throughout the rest of the university community for increased minority hiring.

H: Well, that's possible, but at least...I'm saying the persons appointing the committees and running them wanted to have that membership to show that they were progressive. They were doing the right thing. We have a black on this committee, but I'm not sure that that black was there because they wanted to necessarily listen to what the blacks had to say, and to do things that were commensurate with the advancement of the black community, but it was a showpiece and, as I say, if you have only a few.... When I started in 1970, there were about ten black

faculty on this whole campus and that's really an inadequate representation of the number of blacks in this state, or number of black academicians that they could have had. Now, even after thirty years, there's about sixty or so black faculty on the campus, a faculty of well over a thousand, so they're still underrepresented.

M: Sort of appalling that that number is so low.

H: Pardon.

M: It's appalling that that number is so low.

H: Yep.

M: What do you think, is there anything, you think, the university, I mean...obviously they should be hiring more, I mean, are there concrete steps that you feel...

H: Well, one, there was no organized effort in this regard until about 1985, I think it was, when I proposed another program for the hiring, well I started out wanting to hire...to be a program for the hiring of black faculty across the board in different departments. Well, that was not acceptable. What...and the program got watered down in the sense that it had to include African American faculty, other minority faculty, and women, which is to say white women. And so when...the idea was that each year five persons from these groups would be hired, but obviously if you have included in there women, and they never said white women but that's what it meant, and other minorities, then the number of blacks was going to increase slowly. So, it might be two or three blacks, or sometimes less than that. And if you look at white women who could have been recruited under normal circumstances...many departments used this as a means of hiring them to satisfy a diversity need. But, white women would have more doctorates in more fields than African Americans would have, so they would fall back on the notion of the most qualified people.

If you were to say "we're going to hire the most qualified people," it isn't that blacks were not qualified, but where there might be two qualified blacks for a particular position, there might be twenty or thirty whites, so you have to do something beyond saying "the most qualified". And further, the question of faculty hiring on this campus is not done...is not a function of the president or the chancellor or the dean even. Deans appoint, and most often is the department heads do the appointing. And, even today, you know, if you take the College of Arts and Sciences, there are some, just say approximately sixty departments and programs that have faculty, and some of them to this day don't have a black faculty member, and never had a black faculty member. So, there is still a lot of work yet to be done.

M: And is that, that policy of hiring five minority...and with the minority considered very broadly, is that a current practice today by the University?

[simultaneously]

H: Well it's still going on, but it's still going on slowly and I don't know what the numbers are whether it's five or whatever. But, they have appointed a person whose name is Torchinsky. And, he is in charge of what is referred to as, "strategic hiring." Now, the way this program works, which is the one that I wrote back in the 80's, is that we, that program can't hire anybody. What the program can do is overcome another problem the department, departments would raise whenever you talk to them about having blacks or whatever. They would say they didn't have the money to hire them or somebody else they would hire had such outstanding credentials, that we had to go with that person.

Well this program would encourage department heads to seek out talented black people, and if they did not have the money in their regular budget to hire them, they could appeal to this program to get money to assist in the salary of that individual. So that what Torchinsky may do is keep in contact with various department heads, maybe making them aware of black talent here and there and whenever they came up with a possible candidate that they wanted, but did not have the money to hire, then funds could be drawn from this pot to help supplement the ordinary resources that the department might have. And, that has helped to increase the numbers, but gradually.

M: You mentioned that your initial proposal was found unacceptable. Was that by particular factions within the Faculty Council...

[simultaneously]

H: No. Unacceptable because of the fact that it was originally for just blacks. And, actually it started down in a committee on affirmative...

END OF SIDE TWO TAPE ONE

H: And there were, this Affirmative Action Committee had maybe eight or ten people on it.

M: OK.

H: Most of whom were white. And, as I can recall only two of us were African Americans on that committee and of course there were white women on there who kept saying, "well we've got to include women on this special program. It must include women." And as the discussion went on, finally the proposal included women and not African Americans, but minorities. So, it was for minorities and women, and that then was approved by the Faculty Council. Whereas, in the early stages we used to talk about numbers of people to be hired on it...in later years it became a matter of money.

M: OK.

H: So, they would say, "OK, the budget will support..." let's say we'll have \$500,000.00 or usually less than that, let's say \$300,000.00. If you hired one white scholar of outstanding reputation and salary at some other institution, say, a woman, she might take up \$100,000.00, so

you've got only \$200,000.00 left for all the other groups you're trying to serve. And, that became a problem because if, so long as you had women included, white women included, their salary levels were so high that a disproportionate amount of the money set aside for this activity would go in that direction. That has been curtailed to some extent and more emphasis placed back on the original emphasis of African Americans and Latinos. By the way, to fill out the details of this, you might get a list from Dean Torchinsky, because he has a list of all of the people who've been hired on this program since we started in 1986. The proposal was discussed during the '85-'86 academic year and hiring for 1986-87 began. And he's got a list of how many, and who they were, and what disciplines, and so forth, from that time till this time.

M: OK. Thank you. Looking back over your years here at IU, what would you say was the highest point? Your best accomplishment or, along those lines...

H: Well, let's say I started the Department of Afro-American Studies. I began the Black Culture Center project. I started another unit inside the Center called the Afro-American Arts Institute. I started this minority and women faculty recruitment program (pause).

I started another program in 1987 for the recruitment and financial support of minority students called the Minority Achievers Program. All of these activities served minority groups in one way or another but, I would say, perhaps the strongest thing was the starting of the department, which is placing the field of Afro-American Studies at the fundamental structural point of the University, which is the department and as long as that department stands and continues to do the work that it has been doing, I think we have an important contribution to the intellectual environment of the university.

And, secondly, I would say the Black Culture Center, which besides being a building, is a symbolic structure indicating that blacks are a part of this institution, and a kind of home away from home for them to conduct both academic and social activities. So, I would say those things, but then other things are important too.

M: OK. You mentioned the minority achievement program and I read some newspaper clippings about different work that you've done here. And one of them mentions something called Group 69 and Group 70, which was... Could you talk about that a little bit?

H: Yeah. Now, I did not start those.

M: Oh, OK.

H: (laughs) Group 69, well even _____ back up, I think in 1968 they had a pilot project of forty-three minority students that they recruited. Students who might not meet the ordinary admissions criteria of the university in terms of grade point averages, or SAT scores, but somebody in that community; a teacher, a social worker, a minister, or what have you knew that student well enough and had enough confidence in that student's potential to recommend that that student have a chance at getting in higher education, even though their SAT scores were low.

In '68 they had a pilot project of forty-three students and that apparently was successful enough, so that in 1969 they began a regular program and every...each recruiting year became the name of the group. So, there's the '69 and '70 and '71 and '72, and so forth. Each year they would recruit about three hundred students and they would come for a transitional summer of work here, and of that three hundred a certain number would follow on the following fall semester and enter the regular university. The program was a good way to get a lot of minority students here, but it had some problems, and has been reorganized in recent years and, I think, is working much more effectively than in the past. Effectively, in the sense of the kinds of students that were recruited and those students carrying on after that transitional summer and even after the first year towards graduation. The program is now headed by Mrs. Janice Wiggins and the reforms that I'm talking about have happened under her administration in the last, well however long she's been there, which may be three or four years.

M: And, did you head that program then in '69 and '70 when I saw your name in conjunction with that or did you just work...

[simultaneously]

H: '69. Well in '69, I...One of the things that they were doing was improving English and writing for those students and I worked with that aspect of it.

M: OK

H: And prepared some materials and supervised some English teachers for those students.

M: And did you continue to work with that program? Or, was it just for those couple of years?

H: No. Just for a couple of years. No, I was not working with that program on a continuous basis.

M: OK. I asked you what your highest point was here at IU. What would you say was your lowest? Was there, is there any incident that sticks out as being fairly disappointing or anything along those lines?

H: (sighs) Well, one of the lowest ones was before I became vice chancellor and this was in 1969, around that year. But anyway, the situation was this, that, I guess in '68 the IU Football team went to the Rose Bowl and the coach at that time was John Pont and was dearly loved by everybody because he took IU to the Rose Bowl. There were a number of black students on that football team who were dissatisfied. They had a number of complaints; one of them was that, you know the publicity that gets out about the team is really controlled a lot by the coaches, and they felt that they did not get enough print for what they did. They also felt that there was a lot of "stacking" going on. Do you know what stacking means?

M: I don't, no.

H: OK, well, let's say if you have a need for a right end, you recruit four black players who are good football players and could play in various positions but you put them all on one position.

M: OK.

H: So there could never be a lot of blacks on the field. You'd only have two ends out there (laughs). And the other guys were sitting on the bench. And, so this was a complaint that players would be recruited and stacked one against another, rather than given a broad opportunity to play any position they could play successfully on the team. And, a number of complaints they had, so they boycotted practice a couple of times.

M: In preparation to play at the Rose Bowl?

H: No, this was after the Rose Bowl.

M: Oh, OK.

H: And, so the coach instead of listening to anything they had to say, kicked them all of the team. They lost their football scholarships and they could not play anymore. And, I can recall a meeting that the athletes had, I mean, I guess there were, let's say eight or nine football players met with Coach Pont in his office. And, I was asked to go along with them as a faculty representative. And we were sitting around a long table which was in the coach's office and he was at one end of the table, the head of the table, and I was sitting first on one side of the table and behind me and all around the table were these athletes. And as we talked to him, I and the athletes, and tried to explain their position and tried to get some concession, tried to get some opportunity for them to rejoin the team and so on...and this man was absolutely immobile. What do I want to say? He would not be moved.

And, the thing that bothered me the most, is that I was sitting facing him, sort of as I'm facing you but I was up closer because I was the first one on that side of the table, and behind me and all around me were the football players. Big guys, big as I am. And, I could hear those guys crying behind me, (pounds table) pleading with that man to give them a chance. And by the way, John Pont was a little guy (laughs), short. But he stood firm on his position and would make no concession whatsoever. And I was truly hurt by those men, crying for another opportunity. Because I thought they had a case anyway, but to say, "No, you're off. You're out of it and you're never going to play at IU again."

And, I made up my mind then that I would *never* again be in that position where I would be begging, along with those other folks, a white man to make some concession. And he never did make a concession. So that was a low point for me. By the way, I might say that Pont never had much success after that either. About a year of two afterwards, IU let him go and he went to Northwestern University and coached a few years and had trouble with black students there and got fired from that job.

M: (laughs)

H: (laughs) And I can remember a quote from him in the paper at that time was that, "he never thought that kind of problem would confront him twice in his career." Well, it did and he didn't change.

M: So what happened with those twelve, was it twelve students?

H: They were out of it.

M: Did they have to leave the university then?

H: Well some of them did. And, what was another problem too, with players, when you're a senior and you graduate, you know the big thing is to get to play pro ball. Well he didn't recommend any of them for pro ball. Now, some of them I know went to Canada and played pro ball up there but they couldn't get in American pro ball.

M: Was it fairly common then for African American students, if they were having some type of problem like that, with an administrator or a faculty member on campus, to come to you as the dean?

H: Well, this was before I was dean.

M: Oh, OK.

H: The...the way I got into it, there was a kind of faculty...a black faculty and staff organization and the students came to the black faculty and staff organization and wanted support. And the black faculty and staff organization wanted to send somebody in that meeting with them and they asked me, "Would I go?" And I said, "Yes, I would go." But in my first, see at that time I was still in linguistics.

M: OK.

H: But, in my first endeavor to assist blacks, I failed. (pause) But I think it was good that those students did what they did because I think it made a difference, ultimately. Not so much for them but for other blacks that came along. And, it also put a stamp on Mr. Pont, too.

M: Did the university change their policies after that incident? I mean, did...

[Simultaneously]

H: No, they changed coaches (laughs).

M: OK, so it was just the change in the coach.

H: Yeah. But I mean, I don't think the university would say that that's why they changed him. You know, there were some other reasons, I suppose.

M: Was...did students continue to come to you after that incident, if they needed somebody to act as an intermediary?

H: Well yes I think so, and I think also that was one of the points that raised my name as a name of someone who could be a spokesman for blacks but it was maybe a year and a half after that that I was appointed vice chancellor for Afro-American Affairs.

M: Was there anything else that happened in that year and a half period between this incidence with the football coach and your being appointed vice chancellor, that you think may have helped bring your name up when they were looking to appoint someone to that position?

H: Well, what I'm telling you that the university...they say they were looking, but they aren't looking very hard. And they didn't bring my name up either. Again, it was a group of black...that same organization, that black faculty and staff organization that brought my name up as a possible candidate for this vacant position. And, they asked me, "Would I be interested in it?" and I said , "Yes, but, first, we've got to have a meeting of students, and see what the students say." And that's what was done. There was a meeting of the students and someone introduced me and I spoke to the students and they seemed to OK my candidacy. And so then, this black faculty and staff organization put forward my name to Chancellor Byrum Carter, who was chancellor at that time, and that's how I got appointed.

M: OK. So the university in that year and a half interim, they were supposedly searching but there wasn't really much...it took the prodding of this black faculty and student organization...

H: Yes, they did...I told you, they invited a couple of people down for interviews, but, for various reasons the people didn't succeed in those interviews, and so the position was vacant, and none of the elements under the proposal, that had been approved, were being implemented.

M: And did this organization, this faculty and staff organization that gave your name to the administration, were they instrumental in helping create the Afro-American Studies program here on campus, with you, once you had appointed to the vice chancellor position?

H: Well, I guess they were helpful in an advisoral way, but once I was appointed, I went to work and did it with the help of a few people, who actually were those that were hired. For example, as I've told you, we started in the fall of that year, but by...it was April 24th of 1971, the Board of Trustees inaugurated, I mean, approved of the program as a department and authorized it to offer an undergraduate major. And some of the people who were very helpful from September to April were people who were teaching in Afro-American Studies, such as Dr. Phyllis Klotman, the white lady that I mentioned, she was helpful. Joe Russell was helpful, Bill Wiggins, as a graduate student, was helpful. There were a lot of people who were supporters. Again, there were some who were not supporters. That was also a disappointment.

Much of the, this African American influence came about because of student agitation. And, some of that student agitation was pretty revolutionary. Those students wanted to use Afro-American Studies as a means of bringing about their concept of revolution and they wanted people to come in and teach who were urban leaders of various kinds. People who had no academic credentials, and who could have never survived in an institution like this one. And I kept explaining to them that if we're going to hire people, we want to hire people who can stay here, people who had the background and the training and the ability to go through the academic requirements from one level to the next level to the next level, and acquire tenure at the university. Well, they were not for that.

And, they thought street wisdom was better than a Ph.D. I think that is true if you're going to live on the street. I think PhD's wouldn't, couldn't survive in certain environments and neither could those people survive in this environment. So, I didn't hire them. And students were very mad about that, plus the fact that I say they were mad because I hired that white lady. And, one time, three of those rebels came into my office and said, "Pick up that phone and call your secretary in here and resign."

I told them, "No, I didn't think I was going to do that," and they made certain other demands right then and there. And, I said, "I'm not going to do any of those things."

And then they said, "Well, you just better watch out for hour house and what not...and for you to get out of town."

I said, "I'm not going to leave." And, they finally left that office and I conferred with the chancellor and he put special police surveillance around my house. Oh, one of the things they wanted me to do was...I had bought a house in a white neighborhood, you know, here in Bloomington and they said, well, you know...that what they wanted me to do was to put up some money for one of their friends who was in jail. And I said, "this office does not have money to bail out students. That is not a function of this office. The university doesn't do that."

And they said, "Well you do it."

I said, "I don't have the money."

They said, "Well you got a new house."

I said, "That's true" and...

"That new house, we helped you get it, cause if you hadn't had this job, you couldn't buy that house."

I said, "That is not true. I bought that house with money that I had from working for Columbia University, long before I came to IU."

So anyway, the chancellor had people, police surveilling [sic] the house and I...oh was very sad about that, but you know, another thing that I was sad about, the way in which they treated my principle assistant at that time, this man Joe Russell I mentioned. And these students, they have a little newspaper that they printed, rebel rag...whatever it was. *Black Shadows*, I think they called it. But anyway they referred to this faculty member as my seeing eye dog because whenever I went around, Joe would be with me and he'd be sort of leading me along as you were doing.... But they wrote this and put it in, which was an insult to me, an insult to him. It was just cruelty. And, I use to tell my wife that if I could just hold on to this program long enough for it to show some success, I think we won't have to worry about those students, the rabble rousers.

M: You were talking about different programs that you had started earlier. Were you involved in the creation of the Black Film Center archive?

H: Indirectly.

M: OK.

H: The Black Film Center was started by Phyllis Klotman, that same white lady (laughs) and then we fit into it, people out of the Department of Afro-American Studies including graduate assistants, and other staff.

M: So is it affiliated with the Department of Afro-American Studies then?

H: It is. It is sort of under the Afro-American Studies department.

M: (paper rustling)...questions here. Do you feel that...you know we were talking about students who had a bit of a problem with your department in the very beginning...do you feel that, that your department is able to foster a sense of community among students on campus...?

[simultaneously]

H: Oh, I think that this was, this was a small vociferous, militant group. It was not the majority of students.

M: OK.

H: They were, as I say, the rabble rousers, and the majority of students, I think, supported what we were doing.

M: OK. And I know that you were dean of this, I mean chair of this department for, what was it –ten years and then you stepped down...

H: Well no that's not...let me get that straight for you. There are two things and they are very separate and different. One is the thing called Afro-American Affairs, well even that they've reorganized. But, anyway, there's something called Afro-American Affairs and that deals with a lot of things but not many that are academic per se. And then, there is something called Afro-American Studies which is an academic department very similar to, say, English or Sociology or any other department. Now...and I was really involved in initiating both. When I started the department of Afro-American Studies, which was in 1970, for the first two years, I was also chair. Then, for a period of time, from then '82, say, to...I'm sorry, '72 to 1980 or '81, Dr. Russell was chairman of Afro-American Studies. All that time, I was still dean for Afro-American Affairs. But at that time, I resigned from that job and went back to the department as chair-person because it was felt by members of the department that some things were not going as well as they should go and that I could strengthen it if I came back there and helped for some

M: OK. Well we're almost to the end. I just have sort of a few wrap-up questions about...I guess your retirement and if you still remained committed but we can...I'll try to wrap it up so by 4:25, would that be OK?

H: Yes, yes.

M: OK. So you retired in 1997, right? Is that correct?

H: Let's see...I've retired a lot of times but I think I officially got off the university payroll in December of 1998.

M: OK. And what prompted your retirement?

H: Well (pause), a combination of factors. One of them, I was...I felt that I had made the contribution that I could make to the university in the concerns in which I had an interest. Secondly, there was a question of age. I had worked well beyond the time when most administrative types have an official job and I was ready to quit...and everybody wanted to say, "What are you doing to do?"

And I would say, "Nothing" and people couldn't believe that and that I shouldn't take that point of view. I said, "I have not worked all these years, to continue working up until the day I die." I wanted to have some respite on this end of life. And, the time had come. I'd done all I could do.

M: So, do you still keep in touch with your department then? Or, have you sort of broken...

H: Well, I did for awhile last year until I moved out of town to Detroit...back to Detroit in August. And from that time until now, I've kept very low profile with staff and so on because people feel that, you know, even though you're out of office, you still want to run things, which is true. One does still have a feeling (laughs) or I would do it this way or you ought to do it that way and I don't think that the people who are in office want to hear that. I think they want to go their own route and that's fine. I know I was...I wanted to do what I thought was best when I held the position. But, I'm in another city and have deep interests in Indiana University but not of a nature that will call me to be involved on a regular basis with what's going on.

M: Do you mind my asking what some of those interests are?

H: Hmm?

M: What are some of those interests?

H: That I have in the university?

M: Uh-huh?