

Dr. Norline Jenkins-DePeiza Interview Summary

Interviewee: Dr. Norline Jenkins DePieza

Interviewer: Dayman Parrish

Moderator: Christina Richardson

Interview Date: Wednesday, October 18th, 2023

Location: Virtual

Length: 1 audio file, MP3 format, 43:15

THE INTERVIEWEE. Dr. Norline Jenkins-DePeiza attended Carver High School before being bussed to Menchville High School to achieve integration in the 1970s. After graduating from Menchville High School in 1972, she continued her education at Christopher Newport College of the College of William and Mary (now Christopher Newport University). During her time at Christopher Newport, she met her husband and married. Upon graduation, she continued her education at George Washington University, obtaining a Masters degree in Human Resources Development. She later earned a Ph.D. in Education Technology from Walden University. Her career includes being a Senior Executive for the Department of Homeland Security before retiring.

THE INTERVIEWER. Dayman Parrish is a senior at Christopher Newport University. He has been working on the Hampton Roads Oral History Project, interviewing individuals who were involved with integration during the civil rights movement.

THE MODERATOR. Christina Richardson is a junior at Christopher Newport University. Christina has also been working on the Hampton Roads Oral History Project. Her role in the interview was setting up the technology required to make the interview run smoothly as well as ensuring that any issues with the technology throughout the interview were resolved discreetly.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVIEW. The interview was conducted virtually via Zencastr. Dr. Jenkins-DePeiza shared her experiences of growing up in Newport News, her memories of her community and church, and attending Carver High School before being bussed to Menchville. She expressed that much of her time at Menchville was quite negative and she and many other Black classmates felt unwelcome by the school's White teachers and students.

Dr. Jenkins-DePeiza also shared experiences pursuing undergraduate education at Christopher Newport College. She described her time there as much more positive, only having to deal with usual student stress that did not have to do with the color of her skin. Jenkins-DePeiza was willing and open throughout the entire interview, never being afraid to share her experiences or opinions.

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START OF INTERVIEW

Dayman Parrish: My name is Dayman Parrish, and today is October 18th and I am interviewing Dr. Jenkins-DePeiza. The interview is being carried out as a part of the Hampton Roads Oral History Project at Christopher Newport University. So, good afternoon, Dr. Jenkins-DePeiza. We are taking what is called a “life history approach” and would like to begin our interview with just a few questions about your childhood.

Norline Jenkins-DePeiza: Okay.

DP: So, where and when were you born?

NJ: I was born in Newport News, Virginia. And that was, I guess, the best way to describe it. Are you familiar with Newport News, Virginia at all?

DP: I'm fairly familiar.

NJ: Okay so, we had—. The way our area was set up, we had individuals who owned their homes. We had a place called Newsome Park, and then you had Copeland Park and those kinds [of places]. My parents owned their home. So I was raised in Newport News in a single-family home.

DP: Nice. [computer ding] And who did your family consist of growing up?

NJ: I had eight brothers and sisters, mother and father. And, we have an extremely large family because we're from North Carolina. My parents are originally from North Carolina. So you know, that's an agricultural environment. They moved to Newport News, my father to work in the shipyard.

DP: Got ya.

NJ: So, that was his occupation, working in the shipyard.

DP: Got ya. So your father worked—

NJ: And then my brothers also worked in the shipyard.

DP: Got ya. And so your father worked in the shipyard. What did your mother do for a living when you were growing up?

NJ: My mother did not work. My father didn't want her to work. So she didn't. She ran the home and she ran him. [laughter]

DP: [laughter] Got ya, got ya. So growing up, what do you remember about the area you lived in? Were you around, say predominantly Black residents, a mix of Black and White, or more of a mix of all different kinds of races?

NJ: It was mostly Blacks. It was segregated. We had a strong church background. My father was a singer in the choir, in the first and second senior choir. And so we went to church every Sunday, Sunday school, and then church all day. God help us if they had funerals and other things. So, that meant we were there all day, came home for a little bit, and then came back home, went back to church, and [stayed] there until maybe nine o'clock at night. And then on Tuesdays, because my brother and I, too, were in the choir, we would go to rehearsal. So, our lifestyle and structure [were] focused around the church. That's where we got our education: in the schools and then also in the churches.

And our teachers, mostly because of the kind of community it was, some of our teachers were also members of our church.

DP: Wow.

NJ: In elementary as well as in high school.

DP: Wow. So what elementary school did you attend growing up?

NJ: Newsome Park Elementary. I went to Newsome Park Elementary School.

DP: (Did you enjoy it?; 3:28)

NJ: Yeah, yeah, I went to Newsome Park Elementary. And then, I didn't go to middle school. We went from elementary school to high school. And high school was George Washington Carver High School. And so, I've always been an egghead. So I hung around with eggheads, and we had fun. You know, academics was our thing. [We all had high GPAs and without question knew we were going to college]. And then we got letters saying we were gonna be bussed. And that kind of shattered our world in 1972 [*sic* 1971].

DP: So before you all received those letters about being bussed, what was your experiences like when you attended Carver? Were there—. I'm sure there probably—

NJ: At Carver High School, we had a few White teachers. We had a lot of teachers who were interested in going the extra mile for us to make sure we got what we needed. For example, when I was in like the fifth grade, I would get bored in class so I let people cheat off of my papers and stuff like that. And I remember Mrs. McCallum talking to Ms. Williams and saying, "We need to get this child out of here and get her into a class where she's challenged." So I went into Ms. Williams' class. And Ms. Williams, during the summer, worked at Penn State administering the SAT test. So because she did that, she taught us a lot of how to study, how to prepare for the test. She taught us critical thinking.

For example, we were required to read two or three newspapers if we could get our hands on them. And then we would always have to ask the question, “Who, what, when, why and how?” And, it was never to just take a story at face value. Her favorite line was, “There's always more to the story.” So we were taught critical thinking, we were taught how to write. She would say, “How dare you bastardize the English language?” So you had to read the dictionary, and you had to write, and you couldn't, you know, just use twenty words and use them over and over again. You had to write with authority. And that started in the fifth grade.

DP: Wow.

NJ: So, by the time I got to college, I really didn't have to take English. I did, but I didn't have to, because I could place out of it.

DP: Wow. That's amazing. Wow. And do you have any teachers specifically from Carver that you felt left a really special impact on you?

NJ: Oh, yeah. Clara Hines was a guidance counselor. Mrs. Crittenden. I think she was a guidance counselor. Coach Hines, he was okay. But mostly, Mrs. Williams, Blanche [Rigsby] Williams, and Mrs. [Fannie] Brown. All of them—all females—were very influential in how to carry yourself as a young lady, how to comport yourself in situations and conversations. We weren't allowed to be, as she called us, “[be] guttersnipes,” meaning you just didn't go out and do everything that everybody else did, just ‘cause they did it. Because the goal and the focus was to be better. And in order to be better, you had to do better.

DP: Got ya. Got ya. Thank you for sharing that with us for sure. We'd love to hear more about now your experiences with integration. You said how when you all received those

letters, that your world was kind of shattered. What was that process like? And could you explain that?

NJ: Our parents got the letters. And they told us that we were going to be going to another school. We didn't really process what that meant. We just thought, "Okay, we'll be going to another school." But what it meant—. When you were at Carver High School, you were a community. We were students, we had our own social clubs. We had our own academic standards, and they were very high standards. And so when we got the letter, and me in particular going to Menchville High School, I was probably like number ten out of [ninety-two students in my senior class]. They were small classes. My graduating class might have been ninety students. But out of that ninety, I may have been number ten. Or I may have been higher. I don't know what my ranking was. But it went from that to zero because when I went to Menchville, everything ended. Nothing that we had accomplished transferred. Nothing that we did mattered because during that summer—. See what happened, Menchville—. When Newport News established new schools, the school started out at the 11th grade, okay? And then they had their senior class the next year. We were the senior class coming in. We went from ninety to 300 and something in a class. We went from having our own clubs. We went from having our own football team that was winning and all of that. We lost all of that. The boys couldn't play football because you had to compete during the summer, which was not told to us, was not shared [with] us. If you wanted to enroll in clubs, you had to enroll in the clubs during the month of May, year prior. So we're coming in in September, and we had nothing. Plus, the teachers were angry with us. The White teachers were angry with us because they didn't want us there. And they made that very clear that they really didn't want us there. And my

best friend, Vanessa and I, we went into what we thought was going to be regular AP English. And Miss Loomis, wherever she may be right now, she told us, we might as well get on out of it now, because we were not going to pass her class. And she proceeded to show that. We got F's. We got—. Every paper that we did, if it was objective, we could pass it because, you know, objective tests are just ABCD. We could pass those. But if it was subjective, we got big Fs, and they were always in big red. And she really loved to do that. So I'd go home at night and cry, because I'm saying, "I'm not going to be able to get into college. I'm not gonna be able to do anything, because they're not gonna let us." And so Mrs. Williams called home and she called my house and asked my daddy how was I doing. He said, "She cries every night." She said, "I'm gonna fix that." So, Mr. Hicks, at the time, I think he had been promoted to assistant principal. And she said, "Get my child out of that class, get both of them out of that class. They got enough credits to go to college. Get them out. Put them in anything, in general." And so, we went from all college prep courses to general courses to just get out of the school. We had people to call us names. We have people to say, "You people, you and your kind," and call us out in the auditorium. He got his face busted, though, when he said that because somebody hit him in his face. We didn't do prom, we didn't do dances. We didn't do anything. We just got through, we just got through. And then we graduated. So I have no desire whatsoever to participate in anything that's alumni or anything that's associated with Menchville. Menchville didn't do it for me. But I'll tell you, Christopher Newport did. Because I went to William and Mary, I graduated, and was one of the 10 people who were a part of the great experiment where the federal government gave funding to William and Mary to allow Black students. And once again, they made it clear, we'll let you in but we're not

letting you out. Well, you know, nobody tells me what I can and cannot do. So I got out. I graduated. I didn't graduate from William and Mary proper. At the time, Christopher Newport was a part of William and Mary. So I just transferred to the Christopher Newport campus. And I started hanging out with these White women. They were all retired military officer wives. And they knew how to talk to the professors and find out what was needed to get As. I got As in every class that I was in with them because they knew how to talk about you know, "What are the tests? What are your testing criteria? What are your criteria?" And one of them, Dr. Lopater, I don't know if he's still there, but he would say, you know, "I just want your words. I want your [own] words." She said, "Don't believe that mess, he wants every word that he says. Everything that he says, write it on the answer. Don't just give him your words." And so I graduated with honors.

DP: That's amazing. Wow. I can only imagine just, you know, I can kind of envision the story of you going through different things when it came to Menchville to your time to coming to CNU. And, you know, how you said, you know, it was a very tough experience and you would cry at night. Was there ever a point where it just felt the fight for integration was just too much for you to handle as a teenager?

NJ: No, it was never that. And the reason it was never that was because at home, at church, and any social situations that I was exposed to, we were always talking about fighting the power. We were always talking about doing what was necessary to get better, and bring it back to the community. So it could be better. It wasn't—. We had people who would leave the area and go off to school. But then they were expected to come back home, and feed the seed of change and improvement, and lift our brothers and sisters up. And so that was the kind of environment I was exposed to. I wasn't exposed to what my

momma would call “project mentality.” “Project mentality,” I don't know if you've heard of it—. There's a study called, “The Culture of Poverty”—you should get the article—and the culture of poverty is that individuals grow up in an impoverished environment and they develop adaptation skills, mindsets. And that's all that they perpetuate. It's like, you know, if you were to watch the old movie, *Superfly*, and the guy comes in selling CDs, and all that kind of stuff. And there's trash, they don't take care of their own environment, they never get ahead. That's the culture of poverty. My mama called it “project mindset.” And so it was never about that. It was always, “You can do better, because God gave you a brain and Jenkins [her family name] are geniuses.” So when, you know, you have people telling you in your ear, you're a smart girl, you know you're a smart girl. You may have White people telling you that you may be Stepin Fetchit and you're not good enough. But you got all these Black people telling you how great you are. And you believe it.

DP: That's amazing. That is amazing. I love that you did not let that deter you. And you really just had that support system to remind you of the power that you will hold. That's just amazing.

NJ: Oh, yes. And I've had those kinds of conversations with our grandchildren, with our sons, with my nieces and nephews. The story I used to tell them was, “One of the things that integration has done for Black people is make them confused and think that they really are equal.” When in actuality, you may have some of the same qualities and equalities, but you're not. For example, I would tell our boys—. Because of course, after you get your degree and everything, you're gonna move into an environment where you want your children to be able to get the same exposures and you know, and do better and,

and all of that. So we moved to the Village Green. And I told our boys, I said, “Okay, let me tell you something. You go out there in public, you go into the grocery store, you get a grape and you eat it, you stole it. The White boy get a grape and he eat it, he’s just tasting it.” That’s what equality is not. You drive in your car, you’re doing thirty-five miles per hour, in a 30 mile an hour speed limit, you’re speeding, and it could be reckless driving. That White boy is driving [and he may get a warning to slow down]—. The world is set up for White people to succeed. If they don’t, it is by their choice and not ours. So you can choose to succeed. You can choose to get out there with them, and get crazy and think you can do some of the foolishness that they do, and get your feelings hurt. So those are the types of [talks we as Black parents have to have with our Black boys]. And that’s what I think parents need to do now, is to continue to tell our children how great they are, how good they can do, and it’s okay. It’s okay to think critically. It’s okay to ask questions. It’s okay to thrive. But do what you’re gonna to do. And do it in excellence. –

DP: Wow. That’s a strong statement. That’s a very strong statement. Thank you for sharing that. Wow. Just one more question in regards to your high school experience. Now we understand that Carver is, or was, turned into a more intermediate school. How did your friends, family, and local community kind of respond to that back then, like, what was that transition?

NJ: I don’t think they [were happy]. They were glad that it didn’t get torn down. They were glad that it didn’t get torn down. And another thing that happened with the busing and all to achieve integration is we had a number of Black young people who decided [it was a great cultural destroyer]. We had this thing called “freedom of choice” before busing. And freedom of choice meant you could go to the like, say, for example, if you

lived in and in Newport News, and you wanted to go to [historically all-White schools like] Warwick High School, or you wanted to go to Newport News High School, you could. And we had a set of young people who did that. And they came back to Carver crawling because they got over there to Newport News High School, and they realized that they were not welcome. And the other thing that we had at Carver, we never had new books. Well, let me back up. They would be new books [to us], but they were old [used] books. It was against the law for them to purchase new books for us. So all of our books came from Warwick, Denbigh, and Newport News High School. No, we didn't have new books. It would be like say, for example, if Newport News [High School] ordered a surplus of sociology books, and they didn't use them all [the Black schools would get them]. Some of them might be new, but they were dated. And others got them where they all had the stamps and somebody's name in them and they were written all in. We didn't get new books.

DP: Wow, wow, wow I don't really know what to say that's a very—.

NJ: [Laughter]

DP: I'm just taken aback with that. That's just like, I knew these things happen. It's just hearing it actually personified is kind of different. So that's just really interesting.

NJ: But you know, the thing of it is systematic. And the individuals who were in charge—because I am older, I know that they had to have some incentives. And they had jobs and they had families to feed. So our people in positions of leadership also, it wasn't necessarily fair to them, [and many] of them didn't have any other choices.

DP: And with all of these experiences, you know, with Carver and with Menchville, and just your experiences with your education before going into college and higher

education—. Just reflecting back on your experiences, do you think there's a better way that the state could have gone about possibly integrating schools or anything of that nature? To possibly –

NJ: I think the only thing that the state could have done better was transition and acceptance. And that's not going to happen because White people don't think what we have is good. They think what they have is better. And it's unrealistic to think that they're going to try and do something different. They saw what we had as broken and bad. And that by us coming to Menchville, it was going to be so much better. So whatever we had was not good enough. The students and all that we had were just, they were coming there and they were gonna be messing up their tapestry.

DP: Wow.

NJ: I don't see them considering making any changes. And then also you have to remember the teachers were displaced, too. The teachers that were at Carver High School were displaced.

DP: So, are you aware if they were either given different jobs at different schools?

NJ: They were given jobs at different schools, and they were given jobs with lesser pay [even though they might have been better qualified or more educated for the position].

DP: Wow.

NJ: So they were penalized too.

DP: Just as much as you all were.

NJ: Some of them went to Menchville. Some of them went to Carver, because—. You had Huntington High School [another Black school in Newport News that was also turned

into an intermediate school]. And then you also had Carver High School. And they had to, they had to place all of those Black teachers.

DP: Wow. That is just a lot to process for sure. In that respect of things, it's just, I can only imagine what it was like going through that back then. So it's just a lot. But to kind of transition into more of your experiences after graduating Menchville and coming to, what you said, where you enrolled at William and Mary, but then you eventually enrolled at Christopher Newport. What was your experience like, more specifically here, and was currently at the time—

NJ: Well, at Christopher Newport, I remember taking a biology class. And I remember the teacher, she was saying—the most interesting thing she said was, “If you wanted to eat cereal, you're better off eating the box” because it was more nutritious than the cereal. She was our biology teacher. Okay? And so, I got a C on her biology exam because I didn't know all of the nursery rhymes. Can you imagine taking a test and saying, “Jack and Jill went up a hill,” but you gotta replace “Jack and Jill” with “herbivores and carnivores” and all of that kind of stuff? And so I couldn't remember all of that stuff. But, that was her. And then in the other classes, it was just, you know, you got the syllabus, you figured it out. And then you know, they always encouraged you to get in study groups. And once I got into those study groups, it was fun. We had fools in our class. I mean, we had the streaking. Yeah, we had the kids there who came in and they did the streaking across the campus. I met my husband by then. And because I was hanging— [cough], excuse me—hanging with the older women, we got invited to faculty parties. And I can remember going to a faculty party and my husband saying, “These people are crazy.

Why are you doing this?" I mean it's no fun to see your professor get drunk and streak in the pool, you know? [laughter]

DP: I can only imagine!

NJ: And then they're smoking weed, and then going to Fort Monroe to see the sun rise. [laughter] He's saying, "I ain't going! I'm not doing that! They'd get arrested!" It was a live experience. It was all the way live. We had one professor—because my major was psychology. Okay. So we had this one professor who was teaching testing and measurement. He came in, he was all disheveled and everything. He said that they never made their bed because they did transcendental meditation in the morning. They gave you all the info I mean, you know they tell you all their business, right? And so he said his wife looked at him and said, "You know I really don't like you. I want a divorce." [laughter] So that summer, my group consoled him during the summer, taking classes, because he was so distraught. We went over to his house, that's where they were smoking the weed and they were going to see the sunrise. Yeah. So, Christopher Newport was rich with those—. My experience there was different because of the individuals that I was with. And taking my classes I had [the opportunity to know the expectations of the professors and this definitely helped with my good grades]. The only really bad experience I had was with the head of the psych department. Ruth Mulliken, may she rot in Hell, 'cause she is dead. She was the head of the psych department. And so she told me that, she, one, didn't understand why I wanted to major in psychology because I "came from a deprived environment" and how could I ever talk to or understand [or empathize with] an individual who came from an upper middle-class environment. And that, that kind of thing. And so in her stat class, I didn't do too great. And she is the reason that I did not go

to graduate school at William and Mary, because when I walked into the admissions office, and I was going to apply to grad school, and I saw her I said, "I can't do it." So I went to George Washington University instead, and got my graduate degree. But, she was a evil woman. She was a evil woman.

DP: And that's really your only negative experience that you had.

NJ: That's really my only negative experience. I will say, I had one other that wasn't—it wasn't negative. What happened is, the professors would say one thing, and then they would do another but you knew that, you know. In the network, you realize it. So we went to Twin Oaks—we read Walden too—and that was about communes. And so we went to this place called Twin Oaks. And then all of a sudden, the professors—the professors have psych issues. He decided that he was adopted. Who cared? I mean, who really cared that he was adopted? And so he would say, "You need to express yourself more." And then when I wrote on it that it was a bunch of bull hockey, he gave me a C. So I went in and I said, "No, no, no, no, no you told me 'to express yourself.' And this is what I did. And here are the rubrics. And this is what you said in the curriculum. And I answered it exactly." So he changed my grade back to a B. But, they were open. And they were caring. Yeah, I enjoyed it. I will say this: my last 16 hours were—. I attended the University of Hawaii because, at the time, I got married and my husband got stationed in Hawaii. Christopher Newport is by far, a much more rigorous, much more rigorous academic environment. I skated those 16 hours. I mean, my experimental [psychology class, which is a senior level course, was going to be terrifying at CNC]. I was terrified that I was gonna have to do my experimental psychology at Christopher Newport since you put it like a doctoral program. At University of Hawaii, I volunteered for an

experiment. And all I had to do was sit and watch videos and I got an A. That was my level four college, senior, class. And then I had this other professor, [Dr. Goodenough world renowned anthropologist], who, his most exciting thing was to watch tsetse flies mate. It was sick. And he would share that in the class. So I will say by far, William and Mary [and CNC were excellent academic institutions warts and all]. And see the thing about it, even though I was at Christopher Newport, all of the professors came from William and Mary, at that time, and taught on campus.

DP: Gotcha. At the time, was Christopher Newport, a predominantly White institution?

NJ: Oh, yeah. I was [in most cases the only Black student]. There were maybe three or four of us that were Black.

DP: Wow.

NJ: Yeah. Yeah.

DP: So with that, were you ever nervous that you would get a similar experience?

NJ: No. Not at all. I [wasn't there to make friends. I had a social network at other HBCUs. I was focused and there to get an education]. I didn't. I didn't care.

DP: I love the honesty.

NJ: I did not experience the racial prejudice in there. And it's because we had more people who commuted there than—. We didn't have dorms at the time. We just had the buildings. So most of the people there commuted to school.

DP: Gotcha. Wow. All right. Well, we are going to transition. Oh, one more question actually about Christopher Newport. Recently, there has been an article that came out in regards to the controversy around where it was built. Were you ever aware of the controversy about the decision?

NJ: Yes. Yes. I mentioned Mrs. Brown. I mentioned Mrs. Williams. I didn't mention the Downings. And the Schaefers. They're all four Black families. They wanted to take their land to build Christopher Newport. But they're brilliant people. Mr. Brown was an engineer with NASA. And they got the right lawyers and beat them. They beat them. They tried to take their land from them.

DP: Wow.

NJ: And they tried to declare eminent domain. So they could—. You know, they give you a little bit of money. They lost. And those homes are still there.

DP: That's amazing. Wow.

NJ: It was major controversy. And the big pride was the fact that those Black people kicked their asses and won. [laughter]

DP: Wow. All right. Well, moving on to more of a question that's more personal to you, in a sense. Of course, it was stated in your interviewee profile, that you're a thirty-year member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated.

NJ: Mmm-hmm.

DJ: Did you become a grad chapter member?

NJ: Yeah, graduate member.

DP: Gotcha. And what prompted you to choose this organization specifically?

NJ: Well, because Alpha Kappa Alpha was always in the background my entire life. They did mentoring for high school, they did mentoring through college. They showed up and they set examples. I got a little scholarship from them when I went to Christopher Newport. So yeah.

DP: Wow. Nice. Just before we wrap up, we're getting down to our last few questions. So first one would be how do you feel about your involvement in the fight for integration and equal rights during the civil rights movement looking back now?

NJ: My involvement was, I was a person who just needed to survive and get through. Did I march with Martin Luther King? Yeah. Did we go across the 36th Street Bridge with him? Yeah. But, what I learned about the civil rights movement was organization and system. An organization was [getting together in church basements to fight for a cause or to help out one another]. We did education in the background. We had conversations at church, we had classes at church. We did stuff like that. I mean, my parents got together. They'd have to do those stupid things like how many jelly beans in a jar. They'd have to memorize all these stupid ass questions, they'd write them down. And then they would get together in the church. And they would share them with everybody and they'd memorize it, they'd memorize everything. So as far as my contribution was concerned, it's to just set the example as a leader of what a Black woman should do. What an educated Black woman should do, and give back to the community.

DP: Absolutely.

NJ: And don't take stupidity. Stupidity is not [on my agenda, beat them with my smartness]. It's just not something that we should accept. Mediocrity is not us.

DP: Absolutely. So with all of that, with the current state of the country, and everything that goes on in regards to African Americans, do you feel a movement amongst African Americans that is similar to the civil rights movement is achievable, but specifically in terms of unity, discipline, and getting things done progressively?

NJ: I don't know. I don't know. I know that there are pockets of people who are doing things. But, the difficulty that we have is complacency. The difficulty that we have is that some people don't see this as a problem. I was having a conversation with one of my colleagues yesterday and her favorite line is, "The world's on fire, and there's not enough water to put it out. And we are destroying the country. We're doing this." And my question to her is, "But what are you doing to make it better?" So the way that we do that is the same way that happened when I was a child. We're doing it through our youth leadership program where we bring the kids together, we set the examples, we expose them to all kinds of different types of learnings and leaderships and things like that so that they will have an opportunity to make the decision as to what's gonna—how they're going to contribute and grow.

DP: Thank you for sharing that. And is there anything else that you feel you would like to contribute? Or something that you feel like you'd like to say that we might have missed in our conversation?

NJ: No, education was very important to me. I am grateful that God placed in my life-path individuals who gave me an opportunity, and my key to success was follow-up. For example, when I worked for the government, I retired as a senior executive, which is the highest rank that you can get, you know. And my boss, when I went to work for her, she said, "What do you want to do?" I said, "Oh, I think I want to get my doctorate." I only said that because I knew she valued doctorates. Okay? So I said it to get the job. Then I get in there, and she says, "So when are you gonna start working?" I said, "Okay, I'll start tomorrow." So I was stuck. [laughter] I had to do it, right? But, I followed up. It wasn't where I said I was going to do something and I didn't do it. The same as for the

SES. A young lady sent me the application. She said, “Well, did you apply?” Yes, I did. [She said,] “Did you go on the interview?” Yes, I did. [She said,] “Did you get the job?” Yes, I did. So it's following up. Procrastinating doesn't do anybody any good. It just doesn't. It's an irritant. And it's a drug. Procrastination is a drug.

DP: Absolutely. Well, that concludes the questions that we have. So I just want to take a moment and say thank you again for participating in this. Dr. Jenkins-DePeiza and just taking the time to really just give some open dialogue to us and we really appreciate you.

NJ: Oh, absolutely.

END OF INTERVIEW

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