



long time, Mr. John Reuter and for the unusual aspect of it he was a ... [?] later on and there were several other ones that I came in contact with, but no one that would jump out to me.

*Okay. What was a typical day like here on campus back then?*

I was in a fraternity in my freshman year that got thrown off campus for socially overindulgence. And so my typical day was a bit unusual, I had lived in the dorms as a freshman and it's my freshman year. To answer your question first just get up go to class still had that idealism that wasn't smart enough not to have 8:00 classes and also we had ROTC. Which was mandatory when I came to school to male students and that was very interesting because it cost you money. Cost you a lot of time and that was just Wednesday afternoons, but that had to be dealt with and thought about. But typically go to class. The cafeteria was a bit of a social center I would say, and leave class, usually had an afternoon class, go back to the dorms and look for someone to either indulge in intramurals or hang out with.

*Okay cool. As a freshman did you, I know back then we heard stories of, or like freshman be like not harassed but kind of like just put on that they were freshman. They had to wear like caps and like ...*

I wasn't part of, in that I think I missed out on a lot of things, but I don't remember that so much. I remember my first experience at Florida Southern specifically in, was in, August of 1967 and I was walking with a buddy from the dorms that I had just met and we were walking back down from the dorms on the sidewalk, and I grew up on the north shore of Long Island, and I remember walking down the path from Wesley dorm and there were two fellows walking up the sidewalk and between them were two black housekeepers and it was very interesting, these fellows did nothing, they, but as they were approaching me and these two ladies were walking in front of me, and both of them stepped off of the sidewalk and off the curb and the fellows walked through that struck me as a bit unusual.

I was always taught manners as a kid and hopefully I did that with my own daughters, but at the time it was really pretty thought-provoking to me, but later on I learned these two fellows were very nice guys who happened to be surfers from the east coast of Florida doing what they normally did. The two ladies were doing what they normally did, and it was really socially a very impressive moment to me in the sense that I hadn't expected to see anything like that and it was so uninfluenced by anybody else or any other things, it was just an observation.

*That's interesting.*

It was to me. Still is. Back then I believe we also had a separate sink or the restrooms hadn't been gone that long. Little things that I was not use to as a New Yorker and I am not making anything about that as much as it was interesting.

*That i*





*Lakeland at the time, was it smaller than it is now or because downtown is just a mile that way. Did you visit downtown a lot?*

Yes. Lakeland seems to be distinctively smaller and to answer you honestly with minimal transportation and not an extraordinary amount of interest in going around we really inhabited the same areas and didn't really explore as much about the city. We did go a couple times and got to know about where not to go. Our first real movement off campus was to find alcohol. And one of the things that was interesting to me when I left, I was one of the first fellows to leave New York so they had a little party at the bar where we hung out. New York it was legal to drink at 18, why that's very important because during Vietnam, and you always as a young woman of your age, with respect, people could go fight for their country and that wasn't very popular war at the time yet they still couldn't consume an alcoholic beverage, and we found that to be very contradictory. So as we sought out to maybe find a six pack it got us a little bit to answer your question to move to different sections and we find the most successful not knowing any of the adults at the time, was to find individuals outside an establishment that sold beverages and might be receptive to sharing the beverages with us if they went in to purchase more. And along those lines one of my, I got into the restaurant business a few times afterwards and one of my greatest pleasures in being in Lakeland was I got involved in a barbeque restaurant and we were doing okay. In the corner there was a gentleman I recognized and he smiled at me, we were just open at the time I guess about two weeks and I remembered his name which Elbert Tabenon [?].

*Can you spell that?*

No I can't. Elbert was the manager of the Seven Eleven which is now across the Polk Museum. It is no longer there. Elbert allowed us to purchase Busch beer in long neck bottles for 99 cents on Sunday. And he was very under the idea that we would not tell anybody except my roommate, I and another fellow. And we went and got it and we weren't being selfish but we did not want to compromise Elbert. And he came in that evening and I had not seen him in 25 to 30 years and recognized him, remembered his name and did something I never do, I think I might have purchased something for him that night. It was a great Florida Southern memory and also the kindness that people do to students in somewhat of a primitive and not primitive, excuse me, and he was a good man.

A little memory of how we explored the city. Those are the things I kind of find and I didn't stumble across the museum, I think we could have found Polk Theater, but we were one of the few people who found out about the happy hour at the Holiday Inn South, so. In addition to that it was our first entrance into the black community There was a gentleman named Ellis who had a barbeque and some of the students went down to get the barbeque on Saturday nights, sometimes it might have been a little later after they had maybe come from a party or a date. It was really on northwest Florida, the same street where the Boys C

School named Jazz Jones, the second one was a basketball player named Kenny Carr, and Joshua Hoff who was very articulate nice young man. He might be on the Board of Trustees, his wife who was his girlfriend at the time was Miss Southern. They are both class acts as people and I think he wanted to distinguish himself as did she in their own separate careers, collectively and individually and they are just first class people. It was really at my initial experience in Southern one of my best friends in high school was black, and there were a lot of things that were occurring here. Your parents may be able to share that with you, but I can't speak for Florida except for when I came here. That there was a lot of things changing and going on and Florida Southern was not the most progressive in that matter, and I think the powers of ... might of recognized an argument to be raised about how quickly that has come about, I think quite frankly, it hasn't been until the last really, and I'm reading newspapers in Lakeland, I have no other information and that's been a decade or two. I think that's been a real effort to diversify I think the international students and stuff where the idea of which didn't seem to be extraordinary high in any numbers that was the interest of quote diversification. But, that's my recollection of that.

*That's quite; it's hard to find information about that within the school's history, student interviews help.*

Well I'll share a story with you. We, when I moved back in the dorms with my college roommate fraternity brother we got to know a gentleman by the name of Bossman. I can't recall his name but he had a protégé. Who was the antithesis, Bossman was about five foot two, this is his picture, and I'll tell you more, and he had a gentleman who was just retired from Florida Southern. He was known as Cornelius, worked at Florida Southern for close to forty years, and I would see him when I would show up to some sporting events, very tall African looking gentleman. He had left I think last year or the year

getting television which most rooms some had and some didn't, and there was, as we talk about black issues it's not integration, segregating or anything like that, and we're there, and he's looking almost like a gentleman or lady you'd seen in a coffin. His wife was there and they were quite a contrast, as the pettiness that he had just the tininess. She was a rather large woman, and she was sitting next to his bed and I said, "Boss lady" which I would refer to her I gave her a paper bag with literally singles, fives, and tens in it. That we raised it was a fair amount, several hundred dollars, and he was once again sitting there, it was really sad to see him like this, and we went to give her the money to tell her turn on the TV, and said this is for you, I would please consider maybe turn the TV on for Bossman a couple things to make his life easier. As you are now, because I'm sure you're very idealistic and all that stuff.

As soon as we, right before she took the bag Bossman woke up like he had just been stuck with a seven inch nail in the buttocks. He says, "Don't you give that woman that money." It's a very memorable moment for us, because we were thinking here he was literally with his hand extended towards St. Peter, and that was not the case at all. We take some credit back then I think this is some time of economic as opposed to an electro shock treatment, when he saw the dollars going in a direction he didn't think would be worth. We then placed it upon his stomach, and what he did with it that I don't know. I took the li.

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have worked here forty years. We called him Cornelius I had a friend of mine that's in ministries here and