

Daryl Varnado. Born 1952.

TRANSCRIPT of OH 2067V

This interview was recorded on January 19, 2016, for the Maria Rogers Oral History Program. The interviewer and videographer is Sue Boorman. The interview was transcribed by Susan Becker.

ABSTRACT: This interview is part of a series about football games, collectively known as the Hairy Bacon Bowl, that were played during the first half of the 1970s at the University of Colorado, Boulder. The teams were made up of university students, many of whom identified with hippie culture and/or anti-war beliefs, on one team, and campus and City of Boulder police officers on the other team. The goal was to ameliorate tensions between the two groups. Daryl Varnado played on police team because of his job, during his student days, in security at the UMC. He played in the Hairy Bacon Bowl just because he thought the game sounded like fun. He remembers the games as being a time that people from both teams came together in a spirit of cooperation and fun. He reflects on how the Hairy Bacon Bowl aided police-community relations long term.

Although the original goal of the interview was to discuss the Hairy Bacon Bowl games, much of the interview focuses on his experiences as an African American, first in the south as desegregation was first being implemented in schools in Louisiana, and later as a student at the University of Colorado in Boulder. Beginning in the early 1970s, when there were only about 250 African American students out of 25,000 students at the University of Colorado and ten African American families living in Boulder overall, he experienced the mentorship of various members of Boulder's small, close-knit African American community. He particularly describes the influence of Dr. Joseph Johnson in shaping his life and values, first as a coach in high school and later as a mentor at the University of Colorado, Boulder. He reflects on the way CU-Boulder was a place that opened up many opportunities for him and yet also exhibited institutional racism from time to time.

KEYWORDS:

1970s (decade)

African American students at University of Colorado, Boulder

African Americans

African Americans in Boulder

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka

civil rights

desegregation of schools

football

freaks

Hairy Bacon Bowl

hippies

police officers

police-community relations

political protests

racism
University of Colorado, Boulder

KEY PEOPLE:

Bailey, Glen
Bauduit, Harold
Bauduit, Martie
Gerhardt, Fred, Sr.
Johnson, Joseph
Nilon, Charles
Nilon, Mildred
Toll, John

NOTE: The interviewer and narrator are identified by their initials when there is a change in speaker. Audible expressions appear in parentheses; added information, such as editorial clarifications, appear in brackets.

[00:00]

SB: Okay. I am Sue Boorman. I am interviewing Daryl Varnado. He is the narrator for a series on the Hairy Bacon Bowls. The interviews are being done for the Maria Rogers Oral History Program in Boulder, Colorado, Carnegie Branch Library. We are at the college branch library in Westminster at Front Range Community College, 3705 West 112th Street. It's January 19, 2016. And hello, Daryl Varnado.

DV: Hello there.

SB: Hi. I appreciate your coming. Thank you.

DV: I appreciate the invitation.

SB: You played in two Hairy Bacon Bowls, is that right?

DV: Yes. Seventy-one and '73, I believe.

SB: Okay. So just to get started about who you are—a little bit about who you are—tell me a little bit about where you grew up, where you were born, what your family was like.

DV: Well, I was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. Grew up in Hammond, Louisiana, about fifty miles north. One of six kids. I was second. Had four sisters and a brother. My brother was the youngest. We went to school—at that time, schools were segregated in Louisiana and remained that way until my senior year. For eleven years I walked to school—about, I'm going to say a half a mile. And we loved it. My senior year, I was bused about four or five miles away to an integrated school. It was different times. I remember Board of Education in Topeka, Kansas—that case was closed in 1964 [reference is to Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, a decision

that was handed down in 1954, that said that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal." A second Brown decision in 1955 ordered states to desegregate "with all deliberate speed"—which took years to implement, and many schools were only beginning to be desegregated in the mid-1960s.] Our schools integrated in 1969.

Prior to that, African American folk went to school in the summertime so we'd be out in the fall to pick strawberries. So I picked a lot of strawberries up until I was 13 years old. And then we went to school on a regular schedule after Brown v. Board of Education.

[02:40]

And then played a lot of sports. I remember, my senior year, because of integration—integration occurred—there was a lot of agitation, a lot of fighting and riots in school. But sports was that one place where it did not occur. It was an interesting dynamic, because I remember my mother—I was playing baseball as a catcher, and my mother didn't want me to play, because we were playing not the schools we played when we were an all-black school, we were playing the schools white folk played. And we were in different kinds of places. And my mother didn't want me to play.

And I remember when I was there once, and we ran into some trouble. You never know how your team is going to respond. Because I got hurt. And the same guys I played with during the school year I played with in the summer before I came to college. And I got hurt about a hundred miles out of town. And the guys who sponsored the team had already left and returned to our hometown a hundred miles away. And then they got word that I'd been hurt in the last few innings, and they turned around and came back and called my parents and said, "Don't worry about it. We're going to go back and check him out. And they going to bring him back to Hammond, and we'll meet you there."

[04:20]

When we got to the hospital, I was out cold. I didn't wake up until the next morning. The two guys, white guys, who sponsored the team were there in the morning when I woke up, along with my parents. My parents were relaying the story to me, saying that when they came in, the people said that only family could stay in the room. And the guys said, "We're family." And they stayed the whole night. And that's memorable, because all that time you never know what's going to happen. And it's just one of those things that just tell you that when people care, they truly care. And that's something that kind of stood out at me after having gone through an academic year of a lot of rioting and fighting—

SB: And was that academic year—were you in high school?

DV: In high school, yes.

SB: And interesting what you said about on the playing field that didn't seem to be a factor.

DV: It wasn't a factor in the sense that everybody got along. It was a factor in that our head coaches from the African American school were not head coaches, they were assistant coaches. I was a varsity quarterback coming out of high school, head quarterback as a starter for my sophomore and junior year. When I went to me senior year, they asked me could I do anything else. I said, "I don't know. I've only quarterbacked." And they said, "Well, you're not going to quarterback here." So they put me as a defensive back. It was just one of those things that—in that sense it was that you could see the racism and discrimination alive and well. But once all of those pieces were positioned, you didn't seem to run into a lot of the stuff, except I was playing second team, having started for two years at our old school. So that was real.

[06:26]

SB: You caught my attention when you said in the fall, the schedule for the African American kids was different before that—

DV: Before *Brown v. Board of Education*, we'd be out of school in the fall, which meant we were IN school in the summer. And the purpose of that was to facilitate us being available to pick strawberries.

SB: And who were you picking the strawberries for?

DV: For the field owners, and they were all white. They were all white.

SB: So, some carry-over from old times. Interesting. I never heard that before. And then that stopped.

DV: That stopped immediately after *Brown v. Board of Education*.

SB: You really have seen so much, the evolution and change in terms of that.

DV: Yeah, I've seen a lot. And as I think about Martin Luther King—I remember when we were in school our senior year, we wanted to be out for Martin Luther King's birthday. So there were about five of us—five African American males—speaking on behalf of black students. We confronted the administration, said we wanted to be out. And they said, "Well, we'll get back to you." And they kept putting us off, kept putting us off, until we went out on a Friday, and we couldn't relate to the kids, so we weren't going to be out officially. So we stayed out anyway. And I remember our social studies' teacher gave a semester exam. Flunked us all. And now that issue is with my parents, because, I mean, I was about 3.6, 3.7 student, and now I would flunk, because I'm not there to take the test, and she wouldn't give us a make-up. It was horrible.

SB: It says a lot too about the time.

DV: Yeah.

SB: And where the teacher was coming from.

[08:26]

DV: And then I remember I wanted to go to college, didn't really know what, and my teacher—counselor—told me I'd be well-served if I got a job with the city. And I said, "No, I'm going to college." And I actually was headed to Grambling State University. And she told me, well, my best bet was to get a job with the city, and all would be well. But it was a gentleman by the name of Dr. Joseph Johnson who had—his wife taught me in the third grade, she has since passed—and he coached me in high school from 9th grade until he left in January of '69. I mean, January of '70. And he left to go to the University of Colorado—he was working on a doctoral degree. And he kept reaching for me to come to Colorado. And I kept ignoring him, because I was going to Grambling, I just dreamed of playing baseball.

And two weeks before school started, he came home to visit, and I saw him at the post office. As I pulled into the post office parking lot, he was coming off the second floor, coming out, exiting the post office. And when I saw him, I backed up, because I didn't want to talk to him, because he was going to talk to me about why I hadn't been in touch with him. I'd been ignoring his calls. And he flagged me down—he saw me, flagged me down. And he was the kind of person that, if you talked to him, whatever he wanted you to do, that's what you were going to do.

SB: (chuckles) Persuasive.

DV: That's why I didn't want to talk to him. And I talked to him for about 20 minutes, and all of a sudden, I'm going to the University of Colorado. He said, "All I need is your word that you're going to come." I said, "Well, coach, I have no money." He said, "Don't worry about it." I said, "Well, coach, I haven't registered. I haven't applied or anything." He said, "Don't worry about it." I said, "Well, I have no place to stay." He said, "Don't WORRY about it. Look, all I need from you is your word that you're going to come." He said, "Come by the house. I've got an application for you." So he had brought them with him. He said, "Come by. I need you to fill them out. And you get them back to me within three days, and I'll take care of the rest. And that's what happened. Within twenty minutes, my whole life changed.

[10:55]

SB: And why do you think he was so keen to get you there?

DV: Well, he was just doing whatever he can to help African American folks.

SB: He was trying to help.

DV: He was that person. He was a basketball coach. And the year he left—he had a set of triplets on New Years Day the year before he left—and then he had just won the state basketball championship at Greenville Park High. And during my whole four years with him, I didn't play basketball, but he would let me travel with the team and keep the statistics. So I had an association with him all through high school. And like I said, his wife taught me in the third grade, so I had known him since I was eight. And, you know, he was saying, "We have some opportunities for you here." Grambling is a great place, but you've got an option to come to the

University of Colorado.” He said, “You need to do that.” And like I said, within 20 minutes, that's what I decided to do.

[11:58]

And my whole life changed. I remember arriving in Boulder on August 23, 1970, at about 4:30 p.m. He had picked me up from the airport, and we were coming up over the scenic overlook, and I thought, "Oh, my God, I have died and gone to heaven," because it was that dramatic for me. Then the experience, the overall experience was equally as, I'm going to say, exciting and rewarding at the same time. But it was different, significantly different from what I experienced in Louisiana. I had lots of opportunities. Dr. Johnson—and we call him doctor now, but I know him affectionately as Coach Johnson, because he had coached me in football when I was in high school, so we always called him Coach Johnson. A lot of people called him Coach Johnson because they played basketball for him. But he was known as Coach Johnson. But when he went to the University of Colorado, and ultimately became president of Grambling State University, everybody called him Dr. Johnson. But I still call him Coach Johnson.

SB: And which university is he president of?

DV: Grambling State University.

SB: How do you spell that?

DV: G-R-A-M-B-L-I-N-G. Up in Grambling, Louisiana. North Louisiana.

SB: Okay.

DV: And he was there, I think, for 14 years. And then went to Talladega College. And was the president there for five years.

[13:35]

SB: Okay. Interesting. So there you are in Boulder. And you said it was exciting?

DV: Yeah. I had never seen anything like it. Growing up, we didn't have any money to travel, and we had never been anywhere. Prior to my senior year I had spent the summer in San Francisco, and that was the only travel I had ever done outside of Louisiana. Well, Mississippi. We had relatives in Mississippi, which was about 35 miles from where we lived, because we were right on the border, the Louisiana-Mississippi border. And we'd go visit them, but it would be like ten, fifteen miles inside of Mississippi, and we were only 30 miles from home. So it wasn't really going anywhere. It was always we'd come back the same day.

So when I saw Boulder, it was different. And the first thing I realized was, a lot of the jobs—the Boulder population—there were ten black families in Boulder at the time. This is 1970. And that was in all of Boulder County. So if it's 2.2 kids per family, that's 42 people in Boulder County. And Coach Johnson, there was five in his family, because he had—no, there was six—he had the

triplets plus an older daughter, and there was him and his wife. And then there was Martie and Harold Bauduit who were—I think he was from New Orleans, but they lived in Boulder as well. So that's four people. So I knew nine people. I got to know nine. I knew Coach Johnson and his family. But the Bauduit's I met, and his wife sort of became a mother to me. Doctor and Mrs. Nilon [Charles and Mildred Nilon]—Dr. Nilon was a professor of English—

[15:33]

SB: How do you spell his name?

DV: N-I-L-O-N. It was Charles Nilon. He was from—they were from Montgomery, I think. And Mrs. Nilon was like a mother to me as well. She was a librarian at Norlin [Library], and there was two in her family, plus their son was going to college out of state. So now, I knew eleven. I got to know eleven African American folks right off the bat. And they became, in essence, the family for me. Mrs. Nilon is now 95 years old, and when this interview is over, I'm going to go visit her.

SB: Is she still in Boulder?

DV: She's still in Boulder at Frasier Meadows. Her husband passed away at 95. Dr. Nilon. But he was the only tenured professor at CU for a long time. But they were just caring people who were looking after students who I'm going to say were on foreign land, because coming out of Louisiana, seeing what I saw, it was foreign to me. There were about 250 African American students out of 25,000. And let's say 125 were from Denver, and then 125 of us were from out of state. Primarily, the Denver students would go back to Denver on Friday—you'd look across the street at The Country Store, they're waiting on RTD and they're headed back to Denver. So there's 125 of us on campus of, I want to say, 25,000 students. It was just us.

[17:15]

So we formed a bond. And Mrs. Nilon and Marie Bauduit and Dr. Johnson—Coach Johnson—just made life nice. They brought some familiarity back to us. Kept us focused on the stuff that we were supposed to be focused on. Boulder offered a lot of things, a lot of options, that you didn't necessarily have in Louisiana, and he would always say, "Don't forget why you are here." which is the idea with the academics. He kept us focused there. And Mrs. Nilon, she did the same thing. She would invite me over and cook. She cooked red beans, which is what I grew up on. She cooked red beans, down-home food, which I couldn't get in Boulder otherwise unless I got it at Coach Johnson's house.

And when I came here, I came with a guy I went to high school with—Mike Nunnery. Mike had come in the summer, and I didn't come until the fall. But we graduated high school together, and was sponsored by Coach Johnson. And he was here. So we had each other. We were roommates the first year.

SB: On campus?

DV: Yeah. I live in—

SB: Nunnery, like N-U-N-N-E-R-Y?

DV: Mm-hmm. Michael Nunnery. Yeah. And he was, I think, the freshman of the year our freshman year at CU. So—it was a lot of things—we were having a lot of fun. I kind of missed home, I remember the first semester, because where I grew up—it was a small town—I was always the big man on campus. But when I came to CU, that wasn't the case. CU was bigger than our town in terms of the population. And now I'm on this campus, I go to class in a lecture with 1500 people. And there weren't 1500 people in my senior class. And I'm in this classroom I went to three days a week, and then you do the recitation one day a week, maybe more. And that was foreign to me. So trying to learn in that environment, where everything was real close—you might have 25 students, 30 students, in your class, and now you have 1500, and I can't raise my hand and ask the teacher anything. You know, he's just standing up there talking. And then you had to take the notes, and that was an adjustment.

[19:57]

I think my first semester I made a 3.4, which gave me confidence about my abilities to be successful. Coach Johnson had always said, "It's different, but you guys have the skills to do what you need to do. You just need to do it." And he pushed us. And then, to keep an eye on us—I didn't realize it at the time—we worked for him. He was the social director of recreation at the Rec Center. They had just built that facility at five million dollars, and we worked for him doing intramural sports. So I'd see him every day, but at the time it didn't dawn on me that every day he saw me he'd be checking on me, making sure I'm doing what I'm supposed to do.

SB: Oh, sort of keep an eye on you too.

DV: And then as I got older, I'm in school, about my sophomore, junior year, then he could see, going off doing that stuff—I never did drugs, to this day; don't drink, never drank. So I didn't have those issues, but I had a lot of fun. And he'd always stop me and check in and make sure.

SB: A real mentor.

DV: He was. If I picked up the phone and called him right now, he would coach me about something. He'll tell me something about what I need to do.

[21:21]

SB: So what did you do for fun?

DV: Well, when I first came, I didn't have a lot of fun. I think I started out telling that story. So I was in love, and I missed my girlfriend, and I wasn't the big man on campus. I went home the first semester, and I had planned not to come back. I didn't talk to Coach Johnson about it, because if I did he'd talk me out of it. So I didn't talk to him. So I went back home, and I was out for 30 days, where schools in Louisiana were out for two weeks. So during the two weeks,

everything was great. Then everybody went back to school, and now I was just left there, where it was clear that I had outgrown the town. And I couldn't wait to get back.

And when I got back I ran into Glen Bailey. I had kind of known him, but we kind of hooked up, and he said, "Man, you not going to have a lot of fun if you trying to bring Louisiana with you." He said, "What you need to do is do the things that Boulder has to offer." And Coach Johnson had been telling me that too. So I started playing handball. Coach Johnson taught me to play handball. So I did that. I got a bicycle—started riding bicycles. I got some camping equipment, started camping. Doing the hiking kind of stuff. So, you know, I'm starting to branch out and stuff I wasn't doing in Louisiana. We'd ride bicycles, but we were going places—we weren't riding just to ride and go somewhere.

[22:58]

SB: That was the difference?

DV: That was a REAL difference!

SB: Where did you used to ride?

DV: Well, all over Boulder. Boulder to Longmont, that's the biggest ride. It's 35 miles round trip for us.

SB: Was it along where the Diagonal is today?

DV: Yeah.

SB: Was it called the Diagonal then?

DV: It was the Diagonal. So you could ride that and be pretty safe. But all over Boulder, from Table Mesa to north Boulder, and all around Boulder, you could ride. And I didn't have a car. I worked at CU and didn't buy a car until after my first year of working there, because I had a bicycle, and I lived pretty close to campus. I lived at Newton Court when I started working at CU, so I didn't need a car. I could just go to work. I lived at Spanish Towers for a while.

SB: Spanish Towns?

DV: Spanish Towers, which is off of 29th and Baseline.

SB And is that part of CU too?

DV: No. No. Newton Court was. Newton Court wasn't that old at the time. They had just built it. And so campus was pretty close. My world was really closely knit in Boulder. I didn't go to Denver at all. Getting a haircut was challenging then, but we had Afros so getting a haircut wasn't a big deal, because we didn't get one. At least I didn't. So I didn't go to Denver. I hated going to Denver. Everything I needed was in Boulder.

SB: How big was your hair back then?

DV: Oh, it was pretty big. I'm going to say about like this. I have a picture, I'll show you from when I—I was living at Newton Court at the time. So I had graduated, and I was in graduate school. So this would have been '76.

[24:48]

SB: Okay. And so you started to enjoy being there more, after the—

DV: Oh, yeah, I had a great time. People were really friendly. We lived in Willard. So when I came back—the thing that was exciting—and I remember Coach Johnson saying—he said, you know you've got this, you've got this, and he's saying, "And they have co-ed dorms." And I said, "You're kidding!" Because I'm there visiting my girlfriend, and they still had the house mother and you can't go past the lobby. And they shut the whole dorm down at 11:00.

SB: This is in—

DV: In Louisiana. And there I'm standing in front of Coach Johnson, and he's telling me that we had co-ed dorms at CU, so I'm thinking, wow, this is pretty progressive, so maybe I need to go. Like I said, he convinced me in about 20 minutes.

So when I come back at springtime, and I had just made my 3.4, and I'm thinking I can be successful, so now I can kind of relax, have a little fun. I worked 35 hours a week, because I had a work/study. I worked at Uni-Hill Elementary across from the UMC, and I worked for Coach Johnson. I worked at Uni-Hill for 15 hours. I worked for Coach Johnson for 20. Working for Coach Johnson was like fun. Because we were doing sports, and I might be refereeing. I was in charge of the referees, or the umpires if it was baseball, and referees for football. And I was in charge of them. It was just fun. Everybody was just having fun.

SB: Yeah. It didn't feel like work.

DV: It didn't feel like work at all. And I remember, when I came back after the summer, my roommate—the guy next to me—had gone to Guam with ROTC. And he brought some speakers back that were about like this. And I had worked hard to get a stereo, because when I came to college I didn't have one. So I worked hard. And I had a little component set—Panasonic—speakers about this big. And I put them on the shelf in my dorm. And I had the receiver and stuff right in front of me. And he played his stereo on the other side, and vibrated my speakers off my shelf. And they broke. And I had worked for the summer—and I was so dejected about that. And I said, that will never happen to me again. Well, at Coach Johnson's house, Coach Johnson had a set of speakers—custom speakers—from this place called Crisman Speakers, where this guy built them. And they were beautiful.

[27:39]

SB: Was this in Boulder?

DV: In Boulder. Uh-huh. And they were about this tall, about that wide. Coach Johnson had a set, and they sounded great.

SB: And in case this ends up being audio, you're kind of—what is that?

DV: I'm going to say about three, three-and-a-half feet—

SB: Tall. Okay.

DV: I'm listening at Coach Johnson's. I'm thinking that I really want a set of those. But I didn't have any money. And Crisman every year had a sale: buy one, get one free. Buy one speaker, get one free. And they let you put it on layaway. And I bought a set. First put it on layaway. This is my second year.

Well, the lady that I ultimately married had come—she had money from working in the summer. And she loaned me \$50 to get my speakers out. And I thought I was on top of the world. And I got them out, but I had nothing to play them with. All I had was the speakers. But I'm on my way. Those speakers won't fall again. It took me another six months to get a receiver. So when I got the receiver, I could play the radio. I could play jazz stations. I didn't have a turntable to play any albums. That took about another six months. But I finally put the whole system together.

Today, I still have those speakers, and I had bought an extra set. So I have four of them. So they set up now six feet, seven feet. And in my bedroom are these four speakers, stacked on each other, and they are on the side of my TV, connected to my TV, in my bedroom. And I held on—

[29:31]

Now speakers come today, they're small, and you get the same sound. I refuse to take them down. Because it highlighted a couple of things: One—it's something I worked religiously to do. And as I said, I was working 35 hours a week while I was going to school full-time. And my wife—who's my wife now—gave me—loaned me the \$50 so I could get the speakers out. And that's all I had was the speakers. So I just said, it's just too much sentimental value.

SB: Yeah, symbolic of that whole time.

DV: So I still have them. So anyway, we were just having a lot of fun. I'd go home in the summer time, and then after, I'm going to say, summer of '73, I didn't go home again. Because now I could feel I'm transitioning away, and I could feel I'm becoming—I don't want to say progressive, but I'm becoming more educated, more aware of the world. Whereas before it was my town, and I didn't look beyond those boundaries. I met a lot of students, a lot of friends, who had been doing a lot of things that we never envisioned doing. And I think Coach Johnson wanted to give us the exposure. And that's what he did.

And then you could see when Chris McCandless, who married—um—he was the vice chancellor for administration at CU for a long time—

SB: Do you know how to spell the name?

DV: Kris's name is K-R-I-S, M-C-C-A-N-D-L-E-S-S. She was director of the budget for a long time. I was in graduate school with her.

[31:23]

SB: What were you majoring in?

DV: My undergraduate was in political science. And then I planned to go to law school from there, but I was working at CU in human resources so I went to graduate school in human resources, labor relations.

SB: Okay. Interesting. So you were getting exposed to all this different—you said you could feel yourself changing.

DV: Yes. Your whole interests change, and I have no interest to go to Louisiana and spend the whole summer there anymore. So I stayed and worked at IBM. Because Coach Johnson knew a guy who lived down the street from him that he introduced me to, and whenever I needed to work like in the summer or at Christmas time when we were here, this guy would get us a job at IBM.

SB: What did you do there?

DV: His name was Jim Green. I would pack his tape or something—you know work in production. And it was just an opportunity for us to earn some money real quick. And we could live—and then I earned money, and sometimes I would send money home, even though I was here in college, to help the family.

And then about—and I had graduated so, I'm in the graduate school, when my sister came to visit with me as well.

SB: And you were still at CU?

DV: Still at CU. I was at CU—I was in graduate school—I graduated in May of '74. And then I immediately was taking special courses—graduate courses—and got a masters in December of '76. So two-and-a-half years, I guess. And then I immediately went into a doctoral program right out of the masters program. And I did that until—I mean I took comps—comprehensive—exams and finished all of the course work. I didn't finish the writing. That's the piece I didn't do. Up until '81. And then I worked there up until '82. At Boulder, human resources.

[33:44]

SB: So you really applied yourself, and you were really someone who—it sounds like very focused on getting what you—goals—achieving your goals.

DV: Well, I want to say it was that way. I mean, Coach Johnson—I was having a lot of fun. And Coach Johnson, he just kept pushing us and pushing us and talking to us about responsibility. You know, I had a family, so that kind of drives some of it. I wasn't as focused as you'd see me today, obviously.

SB: And tell us what you do today.

DV: Oh, I'm executive vice president and chief people officer for Children's National Medical Center, Washington, D.C.

SB: And you've been there since—?

DV: Since August, 2012. Prior to that, I was vice president and chief human resources officer for the University of Colorado Hospital Authority in Aurora. I've been in human resources approaching forty-two years. And my first ten years were at CU-Boulder. And then I spent ten years at Coors Brewing Company—for five years, and Coors Aluminum for the other five. And then I went off to Knoxville, Tennessee, with the Tennessee Valley Authority as director of compensation. And then from there I went to Atlanta with Coca Cola as manager of U.S. compensation for Coca Cola. And I was there four years. And then from there I went to Washington, DC, with U.S. Airways as director of global HR strategy and design. And from there I went to the Nature Conservancy for three years as VP, chief human resources officer for three years, then to Commonwealth Telephone in Dallas, Pennsylvania, for 14 months until they were sold. And then from there I went to University of Colorado Hospital.

[36:06]

SB: Wow! That's a long way from where you started.

DV: it is. It is. And each time I was taking on progressively more responsibility. And its been rewarding. And I remember Dr. Johnson said to us, as he helped us, he asked nothing of us, other than help somebody else. And we try to do that. Each step of the way you try to help somebody else who otherwise may not have an opportunity or may not have the perspective that they need at the time, just as we didn't.

SB: Yeah, passing on his legacy, in a way, to you.

So back on the campus, other things—like I've heard—there was a lot going on politically. How much did that influence your time there, if at all? What do you remember about that?

DV: Well, it was difficult to be on campus and not be affected by it, because I remember—I want to say SDS—I can't remember what it was—

SB: Yeah, Students for a Democratic Society.

DV: Yes. Man, they had riots that had taken over 28th Street. And that was kind foreign to me, because in Louisiana that was not what was happening.

SB: Did you witness any of that?

DV: I witnessed some of it. What Coach Johnson would say to us: "Be aware of what's happening. Know and understand what the issues are and remember why you are here. Don't go to jail. Don't do all of that. You gotta go back to the classroom and do what you are supposed to do." Plus it was foreign to me to behave in that way. My senior year [of high school], we were pretty active, but we weren't violent. We protested, but we wouldn't fight and all of that stuff.

[38:08]

SB: And who is "we," when you are saying "we"?

DV: There were five students that led the black agenda in my high school. And we were speaking on behalf of African American students. And I remember we were trying to represent the students to the administration, because all of our principals and department heads, they became second-tier folk. So they were not principals, they were not department heads. So all of the decisions were made by white folk. And we were getting the short end.

And as we were trying to speak on behalf of African American students, they decided that they would allow us to come to school before school starts, meet in the auditorium, and all of the students who were going to participate could participate, and then we'd each stand there and speak. Well, we were bused in. You had to be there by 8:00 or something. But we're bused in. We're not controlling what time we get there. It's whatever time the bus gets us there. Well, we get there and they locked the doors. Because they say if you're not here by this time, they lock the doors. And they did.

SB: Mm-hmm. And you're talking about Louisiana.

DV: My high school, yeah. Hammond High School. And we get there, and we can't get in. So the people who represent the people who are on the inside, are on the outside. And they wouldn't let us in, because they said, "You're not here!" And so we saw, man, this sucks! So we just went down the hall and said, "Look, we're trying to represent you guys, but they won't let us in." And this whole mob of students came to the gym, and there was such an agitation, they were going to rip the doors off the hinges, literally. And we thought, "Oh my God, we have started this thing that could turn into a riot." Finally somebody came to their senses and said, "Let us open the doors, because this thing is going to get out of hand." That was about the extent of it for us.

[40:06]

And then I come to Boulder, and these students laying down their lives for this stuff—I mean, Kent State was happening and things around the world. The whole Vietnam vet thing was an issue. The police here—you know, you go up on the Hill, there were people who were sleeping

out on the streets and policemen—you know the whole drug culture, it seemed like everybody was affected by that for the most part. And just to see that whole lifestyle—I remember Coach Johnson say, "Just look around you, and you'll know what not to do."

SB: What did you think of that, seeing that, you know, the people on the street and the drug scene? What was your—

DV: What was instilled in me was these are—the people we saw were white kids. I remember seeing one or two African American folk here and there. One of them was from my hometown that I grew up with. I saw him there. So you could run into anybody. Anyway, it was always communicated that these kids aren't poor kids, they just were _____—they're going to clean up and go back home. And that's exactly what happened. They just cut their hair, took a bath, put on some regular clothes, and walked into corporate American. Because they came from families that were positioned to—to facilitate that.

And they were saying, an African American person sitting out there, that's not the case necessarily—may truly be a person without anything. And dealing with that was rough. You're looking at a person—you don't know that that's the person. You just drew a blanket conclusion about all these white kids out there, but all of them weren't situated that way.

[42:08]

And it was a free-for-all. The pill had just been—hadn't been around long, and there was a whole sexual freedom—Boulder had to be one of the number one places for it. And it's amazing that we survived, let me say it that way. But everything was about love and caring, yet at the same time, it was about destruction. It was about violence. But then everybody's hugging and kissing. It was a struggle. So what I tried to do, as Coach Johnson says, stay focused and understand why you're there.

We developed friends, like Kris McCandless, as I said, I went to graduate school with her, and she's still a friend. Paul—Paul—Paul—oh, man, I just thought of his name—the vice chancellor for administration—

SB: Okay, I bet you'll get the rest of it.

DV: My sister worked for him, that's how I—but I can't—Tabot, something like that.

SB: What is it—?

DV: Talbot—Paul Tabot. Something like that.

SB: Tabot, like T-A-B-O-T?

DV: Yes. But I'll confirm that. Through my sister, I know Paul. He was vice chancellor of administration.

[43:35]

Ironically enough, there was a gentleman here, when I was working at CU, and I was going to graduate school, his name was Rich Harpel.

SB: Harper?

DV: Harpel. H-A-R-P-E-L, I think. And I don't know where he is now, but he taught me a lot of stuff. A lot of stuff about higher education. Because my PhD studies was in higher education finance, and Rich was heavy into that. And he wrote questions on my comprehensive exam, along with a gentleman by the name of Joseph Geiger.

SB: How do you spell that one? Do you know?

DV: G-E-I-G-E-R. And Rich and Joe were tight, and Joe taught me a lot because he worked for Dr. Bolsky [?]. And he really understood that stuff. And I remember—I went to work on the Denver campus, and Joe was the vice chancellor for administration. And he was also my thesis advisor. And when I get down there, they don't give me a raise—they give me like a \$1,000 raise. I say, "You've got to be kidding." So I say, "You know, I'll take the job because I want a change, but I'm going to keep looking." That's what I say. And he says, "That's fair."

And three days after I started, Coors offered me a job. This is after I'd been at the university for ten years. And Coors paid me more than the university paid me after ten years. And Joe was disturbed that I would leave the university, particularly after three days. And I said, "Well, that was my deal with the chancellor."

And so now I'm coming back, and it was really a time where Joe told me a lot of stuff about higher education finance and about university administration, but he was disturbed that I was leaving. And then he said, "You blacks don't understand." He said, "I busted my ass to get you this job." And that came at me out of left field, because I'm just wheeling through my program, and everybody's very supportive. And all of a sudden this hint of racism surfaces.

[46:09]

And I said, "Oh, what I have to do is not say the wrong thing." So, I said, okay, maybe because he was instrumental in helping me academically, maybe he feels what he just said, so just dismiss it. So I appealed to him, to—let me speak to him, I said, because that interaction that we just had is troubling to me. So I said, "If I could just have five minutes of your time." I remember, he looked at his watch, and he said, "You've got five minutes." And I said, "Okay." So we go in his office, and I said, "Joe, look, I'm sorry. I had a deal with the chancellor. Because he didn't give me a raise, he and I agreed that I would keep looking." And I said, "I haven't had a chance to look. Coors made me this offer about an interview I had three months ago. And they want me to come work for them. And they are going to pay me more than you guys pay me after ten years." And then he got worse. And finally, I wound up just saying, "Thank you for everything you've ever done."

SB: He got worse—

DV: In terms of the racial display—behavioral display. And his expressions. And I'm in there, just the two of us, and I'm cautious not to do or say the wrong thing, because he's my thesis advisor, too. So I'm looking at him and I'm saying, hmm, this isn't good. So I tried to end the conversation, and I said, "Thank you for everything you've ever done for me, and I appreciate that. And I'm sorry you feel the way you do." And then I left. And I haven't seen him since.

[48:02]

SB: Prior to that, like in the early '70s, were you feeling any racism towards you at CU or in Boulder?

DV: I didn't feel racism—I ran into a guy once who asked me did I use Woolite on my hair. And I remember stopping, and I looked at him and I said, "I don't know if you are just ignorant, or if you are just trying to fire me up, but I'm not going to let your behavior dictate what my response is. You have a nice day." And I went on.

SB: So you had that one incident?

DV: I had that incident. The institution, as an institution, had institutional racism built in to it. It's a funny thing about how it worked. All of that rioting and all of that protesting was about that very thing. And when you look at just the sheer numbers, how would you have an institution with 25,000 students and you've got 250 African Americans? Something's wrong with that picture. Now today, if you look at CU, the question is, are the numbers much different? Now, I've been gone as an undergraduate, since '74. And nobody talks to me about—you're the first person who's talked to me about my experience at Boulder. I just saw—and here's how it works, so I'll answer your question, but I'm going to do it by an example. I saw a flier that invited African Americans back to the campus for Homecoming. The flier didn't have a single African American person on it.

SB: There were pictures of people on the flier.

DV: Yeah, but no African Americans. Now, you could say that's a benign neglect or an unconscious bias. Either way, it serves to have the same effect. So I picked up the phone, and I talked to people who I went to school with. They were offended by it.

[50:24]

SB: When did you see that flier?

DV: Well, it would have been October of this year that the game that they invited you too would have occurred.

SB: And are you talking some time in the '70s?

DV: No, I'm talking about right now.

SB: This year.

DV: So the flier would have come out six months earlier. I called people to see what their reaction was. They said that they would go, but they're not now. They said it hadn't changed. And it was a lot of that.

I remember—I got laid off from Boulder. I worked there from November '74 until, I'm going to say, June of '84. I mean June '82. Something like that. I'm going to say ten years. And I remember, I could keep working if I accepted a demotion two levels down. And I remember saying—I was in graduate school, in a doctoral program—and I remember saying, "No, that's not right, that's not fair. I've been educated here, I got this, clearly somebody can use something that I have."

Well, I remember going—I was working on a PhD in higher education finance, and I remember going to the budget office to say I want to come work over here, and they said, "Well, we don't have anything for you to work on." At the time, people had been embezzling money from the university like clockwork. So clearly you got something for me to work on. But nobody would assist you. And I remember one of the prominent CU administrators came and said to me, "What you need is another job." And I said, "Clearly I do." Because I accepted the demotion—I was making \$35,000 at the time—and now I'm cut \$10,000. And I'm two levels below. And I've been here eight years. Nobody stepped up to assist me. Not a single person. And as I proactively went out, nobody assisted me. And I said, "Well, I think my time has come. It's time to go." And it was like I was leaving family. I was leaving home.

[52:53]

And all of a sudden I get the offer to go to Denver as the director of the affirmative action programs, which was the job I had been demoted from. Well, as I said, when I went to Denver, I didn't get a raise. I'm still at \$25,000. They gave me \$26[000], because it cost me money to commute. And I said, "_____." Is that institutionalized? I'd say, yes, it is. Because there are a lot of people with a lot of raises. They want black folk. But I've been in this system for ten years now, and you going to put me back at the level I was, and I'm going to get a thousand dollar raise. Something is wrong with that. But I said, "I'm not in charge here, so I'll accept that, but I'm going to keep looking."

And when Coors made the offer, I knew it was time to go, because during that two-year time frame, I kept trying to do something on the Boulder campus. Sometimes you have to know. And Dr. Johnson say, "You got to know when it's time to move on." And I think the institution said to me it was time to move on. When I look back on it, I smile, because had that not occurred, I would have stayed there. I would have stayed in there. So it was learnings that were coming at you from all directions.

And I go back—my sister worked there, had a 27-year career, had a full retirement at age 50. And so, there's a whole lot of love, and I learned a whole lot of things through the good and the

bad. And I remember the City of Boulder did an article. And the title of the article was "Blacks in Boulder."

[54:44]

SB: And what time period are we talking about for that?

DV: It had to be '76—'75, '76. And they were doing it, and they wanted to interview me, because I worked in affirmative action. And I remember they asked me the question: "How do you find life in Boulder?" And I said, "Look, my experience has been when I was in Louisiana, I remember I'd always work, so I'd walk up in the white folk neighborhood, and I'd ring the doorbell, and I'd say, "Good morning, ma'm, would you like your lawn mowed?" And the lady called me a nigger, and told me to go around the back and ask for work, and I knew better than asking in the front. And then I went around the back and I asked her. And she said, "Hell, no!" And called me nigger again.

And I remember you can't—just as I said to the guy who asked me about my hair, I couldn't let her actions dictate what my response is, because I've got to go ring the doorbell at the next place. Now, if I go ring the doorbell at the next place and I've got carry-over from my reaction there, that person, even if they wanted me to do it, wouldn't be receptive. So I go; I ring the next door, and that person say, "Yes, how much do you charge?" And we conduct the business and everybody's happy.

[56:18]

Well, as I was sharing with the reporter in Boulder, I said, "In Louisiana, being racist is cool, so people are openly racist. And there are people who are not, but it's not cool for them to display. But they do the very best they can." I say, "In Boulder, it's not cool to be racist. So the racists do the very best they can to be racist without being discovered." I say, "So, to a large extent, I find people to be the same." I said, "I have friends who are white in Louisiana, just as I have friends here."

And I remember coming to work the next day, and the gentleman, the social director of personnel at the time, was offended. And he approached me about it and said, "I didn't know you felt that way." And he like attacked me. And I said, "Do you have some deep-rooted feelings? Because there's nothing offensive about that. I said I have friends here who are very, very supportive who are white, just as I have friends there. But I have racist folks there, just as I run into racism here. Now you decide what side you're on."

[57:37]

SB: The culture was different in terms of the split in terms of what was cool and what was cool to show—

DV: Yes. And that's that benign—people like to talk about it as unconscious bias these days. I'm not sure all that stuff is so unconscious. And when he attacked me about it, I said, "Well, you

have to decide what side you're on. I'm not going to decide for you." I said, "But there are things I've tried to do in this institution that I can't do."

But when I left the institution, it was a different story. I remember the guy I was telling you about, my thesis advisor, he told me, "You better be successful at Coors, because you'll never come back here." And he was really nasty about it.

I remember going to Coors, and I thought, oh my God, I hope I didn't burn a bridge, but maybe I have. So I went to Coors, and just as I was focused academically that I got to be successful, now I've got to be successful when I go to Coors, because I'd never worked in the private sector. All of the stuff I learned at CU, I couldn't apply at CU, because CU was teaching a lot of stuff that we weren't applying ourselves. And I thought, well, I've got to get into the private sector so I could try some of this stuff. And the very stuff I believed in—the very stuff that made me successful as I moved forward. And ironically enough, I learned a lot of stuff at Coors, just as I did at the university. And at Coors, what I learned there, served as a foundation that allows me to be executive vice president today.

SB: Right. Right. So it ended up being a good move.

DV: A very, very good move for me. But like I say, when I look back, when I got laid off—at the time, it's difficult to embrace it, because you want to keep going. But it's the best thing that ever happened to me, because otherwise, as I said, I'd still be here.

[59:45]

SB: Interesting. So, did you ever participate—changing the subject a little bit back to something you talked about earlier—all the protests that were going on—did you ever participate in any of that?

DV: We participated—yes. All you had to do in the African American community at CU is say that they're cutting our funding. If they were cutting our funding, we ran immediately and marched on the administration.

SB: Mm-hmm. And that happened?

DV: That happened. It happened more often than I hate to think about it. Sometimes you weren't sure if it was true, you'd just hear it said.

SB And people were on it.

DV: And people were ready, because we couldn't afford to go to CU otherwise.

SB: And was it just the African American community that was—

DV: Native Americans—

SB: Okay. Were you protesting together or—?

DV: A lot of times we were protesting together.

SB: And cutting the funding in what way?

DV: They had minority programs. Like they had the Black Education Program, the Mexican American Education Program, Native American, Asian American. All of them were funded separately. But if they were cutting African Americans, they were probably cutting the rest of them. But what we were dealing with was we'd just hear "they're cutting our funding." And everybody knew, if you don't have the support, you're not going to be here next year. Because you couldn't afford it.

SB: Yeah. It's a real threat. So that was very often—

DV: That was—it seemed like it was more than I cared—there was a chancellor by the name of Crow. Can't remember his first name. I want to say _____ Crow, but probably not.

SB: Like Crow, C-R-O-W?

DV: Yeah. He was a chancellor at the time. And it would come up all the time under his administration. We readied a march on the regents. And I remember we were marching, and then we'd get over there, and then something would happen, and what was said that got us there wasn't true. I remember that happened a couple of times. And I remember saying, "Just as you can't let white folk do stuff to you and you just react, you've got to apply that same thing in our community." Because you get all riled up, and somebody tell you something, and that's when I really learned and understood that you think for yourself. And no one understands the facts at all times, because you could be led down a dark alleyway quickly around that emotional response.

[1:02:20]

SB: And when you remember being in these marches, what was the biggest—how many people were in the biggest one?

DV: Well, we only had 250 students if we had any, and not all of them were marching. So you might have a hundred people.

SB: Okay. And that includes all the so-called minorities?

DV: No, the other groups—it could get bigger with other groups. Yeah, we had support from white folk too, so it wasn't just us.

SB: Sometimes it got pretty big with other people joining in—

DV: Yeah, it got pretty big. People were just ready to march, you know? [asks for a temporary stop in recording to take a break]

[1:03:01]

SB: Okay, we're back. And I didn't ask you your date of birth.

DV: 5/29/52.

SB: Okay. So, lots of protesting, people ready to jump in on campus.

DV: Yeah, yeah. But see a lot of it was about love and caring. See, that's the irony of it. The violence that occurred, it was few and far between. We'd see the riots and stuff, and you didn't have a lot of that except when the SDS got into it with the police. But for the most part, I don't recall violence during our time. Just a lot of protesting. And it was protesting because people cared. And everybody had a perspective on the issue, and everybody had a counter-perspective. And everybody just protested. And it was mostly peaceful, that I recall.

[1:03:58]

SB: Okay. And it was interesting that you brought up earlier there was that love—that philosophy of love—that people were talking about.

DV: Love and caring.

SB: Yeah. And it was kind of juxtaposed with—I forget how you put it.

DV: Like people would love the environment, but then they'd throw trash on the ground. You know, they'd lay out on the ground and wouldn't bathe. It was the oddest thing (chuckles). You know, they wanted to share everything with you, in the side of love and caring, but without the understanding that some of the stuff you share is going to result in a bad situation. And that realization just wasn't there.

SB: It was kind of an experimentation of that—applying those philosophies—

DV: Yes, yes.

SB: —of love and caring, and yet the consequences—it sounds like what you're describing is a naïveté of what the consequences might be.

DV: WE weren't even thinking about the consequences at the time. People were busy living. And living freely. Yeah, they were living freely.

SB: And did you have a way you were living freely? I know you were very focused and doing the work.

DV: No, I was trying to get through school, and I'm going to say, do the right thing. I didn't drink. Don't drink today. I didn't do drugs, and don't do drugs today. So that wasn't part of what it

was for me. Now you can imagine coming through Boulder and not doing those things. And I said, I'm not going to knock it for you, it's just not for me. That's what I'd say today. But I always knew and understood who I am and what I'm about, so I'm not and wasn't influenced by surroundings in all the things that I do.

So when I'm struggling through it, if I could help a person, I'd do that. That's what Coach Johnson say we need to do. And a lot of white folk helped me do a lot of things. When I talk about Rich Harpel, when I talk about Joe Geiger—those guys taught me stuff that I would not have known otherwise. You know, I could have gone to school, but they happened to be my professor. And they happened to be the people who were testing me. It was just a lot of good folk.

[1:06:38]

I had a friend I worked with by the name of Rich Luce [?]
— this is after I'm a student, and I'm working in affirmative action. Rich and I were pretty much on the same level, but he was older. And he had an understanding about statistics and applications of statistics that helped me in graduate school. Ken Tagowa [?], who was a person working in academic affairs when I was in the master's program, he helped me with statistics. And I remember I was so excited because when I took statistics on the masters level, I made two courses in eight, and it was because these guys were helping me. And people were willing to just step up and help you. And because it was learning, you could get a study group like nothing, where I never—growing up in Louisiana, a study group wasn't something I was accustomed to. I'd do it on my own. In this environment, everybody studies together. And that kind of motivated you—it kept you in the school spirit. You couldn't go offline, because my whole world was the campus, for the most part. And people around campus helped me. Helped me a lot.

[1:07:55]

SB: So you were part of the campus police?

DV: I was not.

SB: Oh, okay. You were involved in the Hairy Bacon Bowl—two of them—

DV: And they allowed me to be, because I worked security for the food service—UMC food service. But not security associated with the police department. And because I had quarterbacked in high school—you know, when we were out there funning [?] around, I wanted to play, and I told them I could quarterback. And they needed a quarterback.

SB: How did you hear about it?

DV: It had happened before, I think.

SB: 1970 was the first one.

DV: So when they told me about it, I said, "Well, you know, I want to play."

SB: Who told you about it?

DV: Oh, I can't remember.

SB: But somebody from, like was it campus police?

DV: I could have heard them talking about it in the UMC. I can't remember how I knew. But I was all excited. And then I asked Glen Bailey if he wanted to play. Yeah, I was just pretty excited. Bubba Bridges—

SB: Yeah, that was one player.

DV: Harold Bubba Bridges. He played.

SB: Harold was his first name?

DV: Yeah. He worked in the UMC with—he was on CU's football team—from Houston. But he was always academically ineligible—but a super guy. Big guy. And he played in the game because of the security at the UMC.

SB: He was security as well?

DV: Yeah.

SB: Aha!

DV: So that's how we got in, because we weren't with the police department at all.

SB: But you played on the police side.

DV: I played on the police side.

SB: Yeah. And what sounded exciting to you about it?

DV: Well, I hadn't played football since I left high school. And I could quarterback again. And it just sounded like fun. I mean, just think about it—the police and the freaks going to come together and have a game. And everybody, the way they talked about the game, was just like I'm talking about it now. They talked about—"Last year, here's what we did." And I'm thinking, well, wow, I want to do that.

[1:10:05]

See, any time there was an organized game—see the thing about college was—and I guess it's the same way today—but we're living on campus, and on Farrand Field you could just go out any

day and somebody would pick up a game. And if you're sitting around, you're going to get up, be active, and play. Well, now, we're going to play in the stadium. That was just exciting. It's an extension of the way you live every day. It was fun. And if we could win, you know, that would be even better.

SB: And you didn't have any particular animosity against the freaks it sounds like.

DV: Oh, not at all. Not at all. Or the police.

SB: Or the police.

DV: I was just going to play and have some fun. Yeah.

SB: And something about the idea of it struck you as—

DV: It was exciting. And they made it exciting from the year before. I think it was the first time, I'm going to say—

SB: You're right. 1970.

DV: And it was—just the idea. In my high school, my senior year, they had—I want to say, the Bloomer Bowl—it was something that I equated it. In this case, we were going to go out—we run into these—I'm going to say the hippies, or the freaks—we run into them every day. And I'm in the UMC. Just because you're a freak and you're hungry, you can't steal. So my issue was theft. It's not you as the person who says that you're hungry and you have no money. If I had money, I'd buy you some food. But it still doesn't give you the right to steal the food.

[1:11:54]

SB: Right. So that's the kind of thing you were dealing with at UMC.

DV: Yeah. They just steal food, that's all.

SB: Were there other issues you had to stay on top of in the UMC?

DV: No. They were just stealing food.

SB: Was it students or other people coming—

DV: Everybody.

SB: Some of the people that were on the street were coming in?

DV: Yeah. They'd come in. And see, the way it was set up, in between classes it got really crowded. So all the students converged. Hippies come in there and converge. Nobody's

watching. They were losing money like crazy. And I actually came up with the idea of having security. Not with security clothes, but just regular people.

SB: Yeah. And then what did you do if you caught somebody?

DV: I just tell them don't do it. I see you, don't do it.

SB: And so you weren't _____ campus police.

DV: Yeah, we weren't arresting them kind of thing. Or we'd catch them out if they already got it, and I step outside, I say, "You know, man, you got that stuff. You got to bring it back." It was that kind of stuff.

SB: Yeah. And did people usually comply?

DV: Yeah they did. And once they realized—because it didn't take long for the word to get out about security.

SB: No more free food. Yeah.

DV: We had students clocking in and leave. That kind of stuff.

SB: Clocking in to—

DV: Times. Because they'd be on work study. And then they'd clock in but they don't work.

SB: Oh! For UMC, you mean?

DV: Yeah.

SB: So that was another thing you were keeping tabs on.

DV: Yeah. The food service. I was just working with food service.

SB: Huh. So you were kind of undercover.

DV: Yeah. But people kind of knew. Once the word got out, people knew. And then it started to subside.

SB: And how many of you were there at a time—working there—was it just you?

DV: Maybe one or two—about two people, I think, mostly.

SB: How long did you do that for?

DV: I couldn't have done it more than a year or so. Because I worked for Dr. Johnson, primarily.

[1:13:55]

SB: So you heard word that there was this game. It sounded exciting, and the idea of the freaks versus the pigs. And you didn't care about being on the—quotation—"pig team."

DV: I would have played with the freaks if they had—I needed an alignment to get in it. And since I was working security, they—see the freaks had a quarterback. These guys, like they had like people who had been playing. Where the cops—you know, people were overweight, hadn't worked out, that kind of stuff. I'm thinking, well, if I can play and help them out—at least make the game challenging.

SB: Yeah, yeah. And do you remember specific things about each game, now, looking back?

DV: No. Well, I remember two things. I remember the score—we were down about three points in the first game. And we go to the huddle and Glen Bailey, he said, "Man, if you could get the ball to me over there—I'm going to go about fifteen yards, break it off in the middle. If you can get the ball to me, I'll be there." He said, "I can beat that guy." And I said, "Okay, okay. That's what we're going to play." And then you have a safety guy go out here, just in case he's not open. We coming to the end of the game. We got a chance to win this if I can get that ball to him. And because it's flag football, they're not blocking hard. So these guys are kind of coming in. And then I'm wondering if he goes too far, am I strong enough to get it down.

So I drop back, and then they're kind of running after me. And I see him, and I'm wondering if he's too far. But I throw it anyway. Right into his hands. And he dropped it. He dropped it. That I remember. That I remember. We lost it—we actually lost the game.

SB: And was this the—second—?

DV: First one, this is the first one.

SB: This was the first one you were in.

[1:15:58]

DV: This is the first one. And I just remember that—we got a shot at this game. The other time, I remember thinking we need to give up a safety so that we don't give them the ball back with time left. Let's just burn it up back here. Be less time on the game. And that's not the way it ended. The team will do something else, so that's what we did. And I don't think we won that game either.

SB: No. I think the freaks won all the games.

DV: But we had that victory if Bailey would have caught that ball.

SB: Wow. And were there many—I think the first game you were in was both the city and campus police.

DV: Yes.

SB: Okay. And you were saying that generally the police guys were older, heavier—

DV: They were older. Yeah. (chuckles) I don't want to say they were eating donuts and getting bellies, but they just generally weren't working out. Like these were students who just run all day long doing something. And our team just wasn't—we had the older guys, and they were out working. The freaks went—I just remember laughing all the time. You know, we were running and playing, and we messed a play up. And then somebody would come back, and they would get on you.

But it was—ultimately we were laughing. I was looking at the picture that I sent you. I think I may be laughing trying to get a way from the guy. It was just fun. The freedom of fun, where the differences didn't matter. And it was synonymous to me with New Orleans, French Quarters. The poorest people hit the French Quarters, interact with rich folk all night long, with no issues. That's the way it used to be; I think they've got a lot of battles down there now. But it's the rich, the black, the white, the poor—everybody come together in the French Quarters and just have a good time. And that's what you saw on Bourbon Street. That's what the Hairy Bacon Bowl represented to me.

[1:18:17]

And for the most part, when you go up on the Hill—and they had a police substation up there—and you'd see cops walking around undercover, but no violence, no nothing. It was like a mutual respect for each other's world. And there was a respect for the policeman. He had a job to do. They'd call him a pig and all of that. But that's not it. I mean, what are you going to say if a person calls you a pig? So what. You just keep going. The police knew that that was the culture and they just keep going. So unless it was something really blatant, they were just letting people be.

SB: Some kind of tolerance, there.

DV: Yeah.

SB: And the game felt some similar way to you?

DV: Yeah. It's like these two cultures come together and everybody's laughing, having fun. Nobody took crack shots at each other—because you could have, you could have popped somebody in the back or hit them in the head because you don't like them. None of that happened that I remember. People just played literally and had fun.

And then when they finished, we'd have some kind of refreshment-type stuff. But that was about it.

SB: Yeah. And did people mingle at the refreshment time?

DV: My recollection is people just kind of were doing what they do on the Hill. You had the interaction, they were all mixed up. They were laughing about the plays. It was like nothing—none or the rioting and stuff—it wasn't about that. It was literally about fun.

[1:20:00]

And then the Colorado Daily folk who covered it, made it fun. They reported it that way. If you read the statements in what I sent you, the way they talk about it, made it fun. There's nothing in there—you know, they talk about the freaks going to hide their stash before they make the touchdown kind of thing. And policemen still did their jobs, they didn't look at them and search nobody—some people come to the game stoned, but they were cheerleaders, and they weren't arrested. They were just part of what made it fun.

SB: So it was kind of like people putting aside their roles—or at least the police side—putting aside their usual role?

DV: Yeah, the game represented what it was, which was an opportunity for them to come together and interact in the spirit of—I don't want to say collaboration—but a spirit of cooperation and fun.

SB: Yeah. And you really remember it holding up that way.

DV: Yeah.

SB: And do you remember, were there many people in the stands?

DV: There were a lot of people in the stands, just drinking and having a good time. They'd be laughing—like I said—if I had a video camera, and I showed it to you now, it was just a fun day. They could have called it that—a fun bowl, or something—because people who were even in the stands had fun. I just remember all the laughter—things we couldn't do—like if you think you got the play down right and the person went the wrong way—what are you going to say? All you could do is laugh and hope you get it right the next time.

[1:21:51]

SB: So that was really the spirit that you remember. It was pretty lighthearted.

DV: Mm-hmm. I think one of the hardest things was me getting on Glen Bailey, and we were laughing. I said, "Man, you asked for it, I got it down there to you!" That's about as hard as you were going to get—we were even laughing with that. He said, "Man, do it again! Do it again!" "But no, I don't know if I can do it again." (Laughter)

SB: Yeah. You were quarterback—

DV: Both times.

SB: —both times that you played.

DV: I see they listed me as 6' 2", 190 pounds. (Laughs) That lets you know they were joking.

SB: (laughs) Other people have said that. "I don't know if those weights and heights are right." Do you remember there being any halftime show or festivities of any kind?

DV: I want to say it was, but I could be mixing it up with what happened in Louisiana. It had to be like a 15-minutes deal, and people went back to their drinks and whatever they were getting, but I could be mixing it up.

SB: Could you smell—were people smoking pot and—

DV: You could smell stuff, yeah.

SB: In the stands?

DV: On the Hill, and you walked down the Hill, you could smell pot all day long. So a policeman knows that. But they weren't arresting people, that I recall. No if there was a person who was getting intoxicated and going to get a little violent, they arrest that person. And everybody else, just let it happen. And they'd stay stoned.

SB: And at the game, were people in the stands—do you remember smelling pot?

DV: I can't remember that.

SB: You can't remember that. Do you remember—

DV: Pot was always around.

SB: It was always around. And how about—there was a mascot of a razorback pig that they let loose on the field, to run around.

DV: I can't remember.

[1:23:50]

SB: Okay. And was it a serious—you were laughing, it was lighthearted—but were people playing—

DV: To win?

SB: Yeah.

DV: Yeah. Yeah. I wanted to win badly. I'm not kidding. I wanted to win badly. Because they had lost the first game, and then I'm saying—I'm the quarterback, so I'm thinking we going to win this thing. And Bailey had played football, so he knows what he's doing. And we had guys who knew kind of what they were doing. If they had just played in high school, like me, we kind of knew what we were doing. And we had a shot at winning. Like I said, if Bailey just would have—he was on the left side. And I remember thinking, that's better for me than being on the right side, because he's going away from me. This way, he's going in to me. So I'm thinking I can get it there. And he beat the guy and missed the ball.

SB: Those are the things you remember—

DV: I remember, because it would have represented a win. But we didn't win.

SB: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. One of the articles I read about the third game, which was your second, you're saying, was that there were tempers flaring and there was a call—a couple of calls right at the end of the game that people questioned that were in favor of the pigs.

DV: I don't remember.

SB: Yeah. You remember it being fun.

DV: Yeah, it was fun. If we had some agitation, it would be no different than somebody bump you and then for a moment you get mad. But the overall thing was about fun. It was about fun. And I can't remember no issues.

[1:25:38]

SB: Do you see it as something that was helpful, that kind of fulfilled, in its way, the mission?

DV: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. You don't have the dynamics that you have now of—it would be similar to bringing a policeman and gang members together in today's world. It was something that the community embraced too. There was a lot of spinoff from it—things that you could do. It was literally the policemen reaching out to the community as well—to do it differently. Being part of the community, like regular people. I think that went a long ways. A long ways.

SB: And what do you think about, looking back at your experience and then what is going on today with tensions—do you think it could be something that, in your mind, could help with that? Not maybe fix it all, but—

DV: I think it could help, no doubt. Because these were times when drugs were the big deal. Now we got a lot of crime—and violent crimes. If people came with the same spirit that was there, it would be great. Nobody was arrested that I recall. There were no issues. None. Just fun.

SB: And that's the spirit you're describing. Almost like—“leave your issues.”

DV: Yeah, pretty much. See, the game itself would lend the opportunity, if you have a beef with somebody, to clip him from behind, break a leg. But that's not what was happening. Everybody had a mutual respect. You could block somebody on the line, elbow them in the face. None of that stuff was happening.

[1:27:39]

And some of the freaks—these guys might not have even known—just like they would not have known, necessarily, all of the policemen. They'd know me, maybe, because they would see me in the UMC. They wouldn't see me in a uniform. And same was with Bailey. Of course, Bailey had been around a while and a lot of people knew him. But you could be playing total strangers, maybe seeing them for the first time. And we didn't know where these people came from. Like I wasn't a policeman, and I'm playing. The freaks could get anybody. So they'd come to the game, and they'd be organized, and they'd have plays. We practiced, and we had plays, but they were more organized to me.

SB: Were they?

DV: Yeah, they seemed that way.

SB: Do you remember practicing much?

DV: Not much. But we practiced.

SB: Like a few times?

DV: A couple of times, yeah.

SB: A couple of times. Okay.

DV: Because they didn't take it that way. I think I just wanted to win. Everybody was competitive, that I recall. But when we didn't win, it wasn't no big deal. Like you didn't walk off the field dejected like we had lost the Super Bowl. (laughter) You said, "Hell. Next year we'll get them" kind of attitude. It was a lot of fun. It was a lot of fun. I could have done that every year. For me. I don't know about the rest of the people.

SB: Yeah, well this is your perspective.

DV: It was a lot of fun.

[1:29:17]

SB: Do you think that could happen today? Do you think that people could—people that are really angry at the police could—I don't know what it would be—would be open to—

DV: Well, can it happen today? Yes. The question is what would it take for it to happen. Because, see, at the time, go back to my description of what was happening on the Hill—they already had a mutual respect for one another—just acted out differently. Gang members don't live with the cops amongst them all day long, visibly, in which they interact. And if they are, it may be one or two people in a community, but the gang controls the community. On the Hill, hippies didn't control it—the police controlled it. The hippies were allowed to do whatever they did as long as they didn't whack out. And in today's world, I don't know that we tolerate that kind of culture there. But then they did. And I remember thinking how different it is—Boulder, as progressive as it is, allowed this, with people just laying out on the street—and this is high value land—property. But now that I think back about it, what else would you do? You'd have violence all day long if you didn't look at it that way.

At the time I was looking at it, I thought it would never go away. People were so committed to that lifestyle. And now that I look back, how many hippies do you see today? Of course, I was just in the restroom, I ran into somebody who looked like a hippie. (Laughter) As a matter of fact, for a minute I thought I was in the wrong bathroom! Anyway—

[1:31:28]

But yeah, I think it could happen. To get it started would require some serious community action kind of stuff where people just come together, just let it down, we both have an agenda—don't bring that agenda here. Let's just play what we hope it will be.

And I think Chief—was it Chief Toll—was the chief at the time?

SB: Yeah, John Toll.

DV: He had a good spirit about it. He wanted his employees to be part of the community. To have that sense of community spirit. So he had the right attitude.

SB: How did you know him?

DV: Like every student at some point—in '72 I brought back—no, fall of my junior year—I brought a Volkswagen back with me. A '61 Volkswagen. It was so raggedy, it would snow in the car. And I'd have to scrape—when I'm driving, I had to scrape the inside of the windshield so I could see. Well, my girlfriend, who's my wife today, lived in one of the dormitories that—it was like—what do you call it? It was for one person, and I can't think of the name of it—but she lived there—

SB: Like they had single—

DV: Yeah, it was a single place for her with a stove and all that. And there was a parking space for permits right outside of her door. And I would go see her and park there. And I would get a ticket. Well, I got \$180 worth of tickets.

[1:33:18]

SB: Which, at the time—even now it's—

DV: (chuckles) It was a lot! And like a student, you used to get the ticket, you'd throw it away, you'd get the next one. Well now, my senior year, I'm about four months from graduating. My parents planned to come out. I'm the first in my family to graduate. And they towed my car. So I call the police to tell them my car's towed [stolen]. They said, "It hadn't been stolen. We towed it." And they towed it because I had \$180 worth of tickets. Now I had \$180 worth of tickets, plus I've got to go pay for the tow, plus if they keep it, I've got to pay for the storage.

So I go to the police, and I sign a waiver—an IOU—that I'm going to pay. No, this is about a year before that they towed it, and then I sign an IOU, and then I get some more tickets. So not only to I not have the money for the IOU, I don't have the money for the additional tickets. So when it's graduation time, I can't graduate, because I owe this money. And they said all I could do is appeal to the chief, because regent finance people weren't releasing it. They're not releasing my permit to graduate.

So Chief Toll was the chief. So I walked in to him, and I'm appealing to him, and I said, "You cannot not let me graduate. My mom and my dad is coming. I'm the first to graduate." I said, "You can't do this." He said, "But you've got 18 tickets!" And I said, "I know. And I know it wasn't right. But I said I was going to pay." "But," he said, "you didn't!" And I said, "That's because I don't have any money. If I had the money, I'd pay." And I just—I know he looked at me, he just felt sorry for me, and he waived it for me.

SB: Awww.

DV: So I could graduate. So that's how I met him. And then when I started working on campus, just the relationship from that.

[1:35:30]

SB: I see. And then you also—that was one of the first things you said on the phone to me was what a great guy John Toll was.

DV: Yeah.

SB: And Fred Gerhardt, I think you—

DV: Yes, both of them. And my brother worked for them as a staff person, when he came to CU.

SB: Was he a campus police person?

DV: No, he was a security guard that did the parking stuff.

SB: Yeah. And you knew Fred Gerhardt from—

DV: From that same time period.

SB: That same time period. Yeah. Anything particular about him?

DV: He was just a straight-up guy who—I want to say a no-nonsense guy. But just straight up. Him and Chief Toll paired together just was the right combination. And see I knew Chief Toll partly when I was on the team working at the UMC. So I knew him from that. So when I walked in and talked to him about my ticket, I'm thinking, well, I know him, maybe he's going to give me a break. But I had no money, and I was not going to get any by the time graduation came. And if he did not do that, I wasn't graduating. And I said, "My parents coming, and I can't tell them. Just please." And I owed the money. I said I was going to pay it. And I didn't, because I didn't have the money. I was trying to pay tuition. And he cut me some slack.

SB: He did! Yeah. Good story.

DV: He said, "Don't get any more tickets." "I got it. I got it. I got it."

SB: "Learned my lesson."

DV: Yeah. I'm not going to get any more.

[1:37:15]

SB: Okay. Oh, I had something for you to take a look at. This is a [shows him a Hairy Bacon Bowl program]—

DV: Oh, man!

SB: I don't know if it looks familiar.

DV: It does. This is what resonated with me.

SB: Do you mind if I take a picture? I like taking a picture of people looking at it.

DV: Yeah. Man, that's crazy.

SB: That's your complimentary copy.

DV: All right. Thank you.

SB: That's one that you—this is the second one.

DV: I did the one in '71. I missed '72. And I did '73, I think.

SB: Well, I saw your pictures—anyway, I don't see your name in this one. And this was the—but you could still— you probably recognize some—

DV: I see my name!

SB: Oh, there! Last night I was looking at—I went too quickly.

DV: They have me 6' 1", 190 pounds.

(Laughter)

SB: You are there!

DV: Ah, that's crazy. Gary Swoboda [?].

SB: Say that again.

DV: Gary Swoboda [?]. He worked in the UMC.

SB: Yeah. I haven't been able to find him, but his name is there a lot. Yeah. I have some more pictures from this year that I didn't send you that I'll send along.

DV: Russ Ferris [?], I remember him. Tony Smith. Tony Smith. Tony Smith—I think he was an African American guy who stole some money or something.

SB: Hmm. From, you mean—

DV: From California.

SB: This is after he was in school?

DV: Yeah. I think he was working. That might not be him.

SB: Okay. We won't plagiarize. We won't—

DV: Clint [?]. Know him. [pause] (laughter)

[1:39:34]

We had a pretty big team!

SB: It looks like it from that list. Did it seem smaller?

DV: Well, I don't remember all of these people, but this is—that's a lot of people! [pause] That's a lot of people. This is the police team?

SB: This one's the hippie team. And this—

DV: Okay, so 33. Thirty-three people—that's a lot. Yeah, it was about communication, crossover.

SB: In case this ever is just an audio, he's looking at a copy of the Hairy Bacon Bowl program from 1971.

DV: I think it did that—serving as a better relationship between the groups. You know, I truly thing they did—because long after the game was over, you go up on the Hill and people still talking about it.

SB: Really? Really? You heard people talking about it.

DV: That's what I thought was the freakiest thing—the Hill was transient, but they had a lot of people who were just from Boulder, and they'd be down there.

[1:41:11]

SB: I have not heard anyone else say that sort of thing—you remember people talking about it?

DV: I remember that. I remember thinking how crazy that was—at the same time they'd been arrested.

SB: And what kind of thing were they saying?

DV: That's long ago—I can't remember that.

SB: But it was something that people had heard about?

DV: Yeah. Oh, man, they beat us 39 to 12!

SB: That was the first one.

DV: Oh, I was going to say, that can't be that bad.

SB: Yeah, given the history there. Yeah.

DV: (laughs) Yeah, that's crazy. And this is the kind of stuff that Coach Johnson would encourage us to participate with. And I remember there was a house on the Hill where they had mentally challenged folk, and he encouraged us to get involved. So I got involved, helped teaching the clients how to swim. And I remember this guy—I had two people—a man and a woman. And I'm in shallow waters. But he got away from me and went up on the diving board. And jumped off the deep end and couldn't swim. And I'm not a lifeguard, so I can't go in there and help him get out. And oh, man—it turned out okay, because somebody else got him, but I remember thinking, oh, man, I either have to be more attentive or I have to not do this. Because if the other person didn't jump off and get him, he wouldn't have made it.

SB: Yeah, this is—

DV: It was serious. So I told coach, I have to find a way to help another way. I can't do the swim thing.

SB: (laughs) Learned my lesson.

DV: Yeah.

[1:43:09]

SB: Anything else you want to say about the games or Boulder at the time?

DV: You know, for me, as I said when I started, Boulder transformed my life. And even the things that happened that at the time you didn't think were good were things that were part of the learning process. I had a lot of people who helped. A lot of people. A lot of people were very, very supportive. And a lot of white folk. I know I spent a lot of time talking about Coach Johnson. That's because he's been in my life since I was eight. But there were a lot of people—and too many to name—because I'm going to leave some of them out. I've named people, because they've related to the stories I've told. But there have been a lot of people who stepped up to help me.

I remember specifically there was a woman from the Denver campus—I mean, Health Sciences, Olga Thalley, who—

SB: How do you spell her name?

DV: T-H-A-L-L-E-Y. [starts talking about Olga Thalley, then there is a break in the recording and he restarts] She was an African American woman from New Orleans who had the same kind of mindset as Dr. Johnson. But she helped me professionally as I worked through CU. She just kind of kept me grounded. But Sherry Robinson, who was my first professional supervisor, gave me a lot of confidence about my ability to work professionally. And this was after I graduated and went to work at CU. She was very supportive and tolerant, and I'd be derelict if I did not at least acknowledge the contribution that she made.

[1:44:58]

And as I said, when I go through, and I think back about how I got to where I am—I got to where I am because of my experiences at Boulder. There's no doubt about it. Educationally, it could not have been better. And not just the education in the classroom. I was educated about life outside the classroom—living in Boulder, I learned a lot about myself. As I said, Boulder was foreign land to me compared to where I was in Louisiana. And when I survived the first semester I felt, you know, I have the ability, I think, that Coach Johnson was talking about to do whatever it is I wanted to do.

It wasn't a lot of pressure. It was about being mature, doing what you were supposed to do. And if you were serious about it, there was always somebody that would help you. They weren't always black folk, necessarily. But there was somebody. They could have been white, they could have been Asian—but somebody was going to help you.

And if you didn't know where that help was, there was somebody that knew where the help was. And there was somebody who knew where the help was who had access to get you the help that you needed. So there was no reason why, at least from my perspective, that you weren't going to make it. You'd have to make a conscious choice on circumstances dictated otherwise.

And I found that to be true particularly in my undergraduate years. And when I think back, even what I experienced when I got laid off, I remember thinking it was about me, and I remember Olga Thalley telling me, "It's not about you. It's about the institution. And that's what they needed to do. You just happened to be the person in the job." And so she immediately turned a mindset where I could have been saying it was done to me, and she said it wasn't, you just happened to be the person, and here's what you need to do and get focused.

[1:47:07]

So the whole thing, everything that happened, taught you to be stronger, how to survive. It taught you some kind of lesson that helped you later in life.

SB: Yeah. It really shaped, molded—

DV: Yeah.

SB: —kind of how you approached life.

DV: Pretty much. Now I have a niece who—I had been talking about coming to CU since she was seven. And by the time she was 18, she didn't want to talk to me anymore. And certainly wasn't coming to CU. Well, ultimately she did. And she hated it. Just like what my experience was. Then she learned to love it, and she graduated. And then I thought she would return to Louisiana. She went and got a masters degree down at CU-Denver. And I thought she'd return to Louisiana. She didn't. She has since relocated to Boston and lived there a couple of years. Now she's back in Colorado. And again, her life changed. My sister is Anita Jons, who worked as Director of Human Resources at Boulder—

SB: At CU?

DV: At CU.

SB: Jons, J-O-N-S?

DV: Mm-hmm. Her life changed as a result. So it wasn't just that Coach Johnson helped me. He said, "Help everybody else." We attribute that long linkage to him. And you heard me talking about Mike Nunnery. Mike was a guy, I said, that came that summer before me. Every person

that I know who came to Boulder and had that experience, their quality of life improved significantly.

[1:48:56]

SB: Hmm. Wow. Thank you so much. You know, just as an aside, as a human being, talking to people, what kind of interests do you have in your personal—you know, what kind of hobbies do you do?

DV: I ride my bicycle. I camp and I hike, still. I do some photography. Which all of this stuff I picked up in Boulder. And then, I try to play a saxophone, preparing for when I'm older. And if I don't have any money, I can at least play on the streets. (Laughter) But I can't play a note, but I just do it for fun.

I have two grandkids, seven and eleven, Darren [?] Chase Carrington and Warren Patrick Carrington, and they kind of keep you going. A lot of the stuff that my father and my mother taught me, and that Coach Johnson instilled, I spend a lot of time trying to get them to see like that.

SB: Yeah, really important values that you want to pass on. And what kind of music did you listen to then? I know you said jazz.

DV: Well, the irony of it is, we listened to soul music, that's all. Until I came to Boulder—I listened to everything—I listened to country, I listened to—I even listened to some bluegrass. If the music sounds good to me, I listen to it. There's a song called "Tennessee Whiskey" by Chris Stapleton. My daughter turned me on to this song, because I played all kind of music as she was growing up, and she called me and said, "Dad, I think you're going to like this song. It's a country song by Chris Stapleton." Not only do I like it, I shave by it every morning. (Laughs) Just repeatedly. And when I flew here this time, I had it on repeat, I listened to it for three-and-a-half hours, over and over.

SB: That's a good song!

DV: Yeah. It's just beautiful. A country song. If you ever have the opportunity to listen to it, listen to it. Chris Stapleton, "Tennessee Whiskey." It's pretty nice. So I listened to a little bit of everything. My father—I grew up listening to blues with my father, and I hated it, because it wasn't rock and roll. And soul music. But today, I listen to the blues too. If the music sounds good, I listen to it.

[1:51:25]

SB: Yeah. And that sort of started when you got influenced by Boulder.

DV: That's right. Boulder just opened up the whole thought process. Where I was, everything was in my African American community. But when I came to Boulder, now, I become sensitive to the world. I've travelled internationally with the Nature Conservancy and with Coke. And one

of the things I realized is that, I don't care where you go, everybody understands a smile. I've been back eight hours outside of the urban setting in China, where they had not seen any African American folk. And there I show up. I'm the biggest thing in the area. And people responded to me. First of all, I was different. But they responded—_____ they kept looking at me, but they weren't so afraid—they'd come up, but they were afraid, they didn't say much to me. We had a language barrier, so we communicated through an interpreter. But I've never felt so welcome. And whereas before, I'm not sure I would have had such an appreciation for something like that.

SB: Before—?

DV: Before I was educated in Boulder.

SB: At a place like Boulder.

DV: It just taught me to be tolerant of everybody, if it's not illegal, if it's not violent, I can almost have an appreciation for it.

SB: Wow. That's a big influence.

DV: Yeah. So, it was for me—I told my sister that if I die today, don't feel sorry for me, because I've had my fun. And when I go back to my college days, I couldn't have lived better.

SB: Wow. I've so enjoyed hearing about it. A really different perspective for me to hear about, and I really appreciate your doing the interview.

DV: Well, I've had a lot of fun thinking about it. Now Mike's going to hit me up!

SB: Now you're going to talk about it with Mike. (Laughs)

DV: Yeah, Mike's going to hit me up.

SB: A couple of other people have said, "I started thinking and I was calling up my old college friends." Anyway, thanks again.

DV: This is good. What's your timing going to be on getting something out?

[recording ends]

[1:54:00]