

LB: I'm Lina Bowman and I'm here with Dorothy L. Chapman Brown and we're going to start the interview. Starting with education. Dorothy, where did you go to school?

DB: I was born in Tennessee, so I started my elementary years in Tennessee, Springfield as a matter of fact. But my family moved when I was in the fourth grade to Greencastle. And then I completed elementary school, junior high in Greencastle, Indiana.

LB: How was your experience throughout school and high school dealing with segregation or do you have any stories you'd like to share with us?

DB: That's kind of a general question. Can you narrow it down and make it more specific about what you're looking for?

LB: I think it's what I'm trying to figure out. Do you have any specific stories that stand out from high school that dealt with problems with segregation? Or did you have any problems or issues between being able to do certain things and perform certain things in school?

DB: Let me start back. Being from Tennessee, a southern state that was very segregated and very prejudiced when I was growing up. There were certain places we couldn't go. I remember the signs on the water fountains and the toilets, whites only. Or at that time they used the word colored. We could not, if we were able to go to the movie theater, we were not allowed to sit downstairs. We had to go upstairs. And then I moved to Greencastle, Indiana that I thought was very different because it's not a southern state.

I found it more difficult living and moving to Greencastle than I did in Tennessee because I knew where my place was in Tennessee. I come to Greencastle, Indiana and there are no signs so I think I'm welcome everywhere and that wasn't true at all. I was not welcomed everywhere. So I would find that out by getting my feelings hurt such as saying we cannot serve you which happened, I'm not going to use any names because a member of the family of this person is still living. But we had a grocery store, not a grocery store, a drug store, and at that time we had soda fountains where you could go and sit down and have a drink or whatever. And I used to, when I was in high school, I was probably a sophomore, I used to house clean for a lady on campus. Her husband was connected with DePauw and one day after I finished cleaning she said let's go downtown and have a soda. Well that just sounded really exciting to me because at that time I made 25 cents an hour. I worked all Saturday morning so I had a dollar. Now a dollar doesn't sound like anything to you but it could buy a lot back in those days.

But I never spent it on soda because I had other things that were more important than that. So for her to invite me to go and have a soda I thought was really exciting. So we go to this drug store and we sit down in a booth but it took a long time for anybody to come and serve us. And finally the owner came over and said to her I can serve you but I can't serve her. And the lady said "Then you can't serve either one of us." Well, I wear that scar until the day, I won't ever forget that. But it's real interesting. Now

remember I was in high school at the time that happened. And I'm jumping ahead after I went to school and became a teacher, became a principal. I went to Indianapolis where they had federally mandated busing so they could integrate the schools. And I was invited to come to Indianapolis to be a principal of one of those schools. And on the first day of school the Indianapolis Star sent out a reporter to my school and I was followed all around the school that morning because we had all these new kids coming to school.

So on the front page of the Star the next morning was this big picture of me on the front page hugging this little white kid who was in kindergarten because he was crying. And then there was this elaborate story about me. If you're interested one of these days I'll bring it and let you read it. But it was really because it was on the front page. So I lived in Indianapolis during the week but I came home on the weekends and I still did everything in Greencastle like I went to church and did all my medications. So I went to this same drug store and the same man on the drug store.

So I went in and got my medication and on the way out he said, "Oh Dorothy could I speak to you a minute?" And I'm shocked because you know he's never said anything to me before. And he said, "I want you to know how proud we are of you." I was shocked. I couldn't believe it. But you know the message that I got out of that? Back when I was in high school had he served me he would have lost business. So it told me somewhere along the line maybe he had a change of heart. I don't know. So I think that's a great story.

LB: Thank you for sharing that. Thank you for sharing that. Did you attend college anywhere?

Oh yes I did. I did not attend DePauw because my mom and dad both worked on campus. My mom a cook in different sororities and fraternities and my dad was a house man at the Beta House for like 39 years. But they did not know, I'm sure if they had known, if they had been working for the university, that we could have gone to school here. But that didn't happen so I went to Terre Haute which was a teacher's college, Indiana State Teacher's College. Back in those days you know if you're African American what are you going to do? So most of my friends and I became teachers.

And then I went to Gary, Indiana and taught for 10 years. And then I came to Greencastle and I was the first African American teacher in Greencastle, taught for 16 years. And while I was a teacher the superintendent called my school and had the secretary tell me he wanted to see me. I was scared to death.

LB: What school was this?

DB: This was in Greencastle, while I was teaching in Greencastle.

LB: Which school did you teach for?

DB: I was at Miller.

LB: Okay, okay.

DB: I was at Miller. I was there for 16 years. And the secretary came up and said Dr. Kuma wants to see you and it's like you're a kid.

I probably was thinking some bugger words too. But anyway I went over and I was really, really nervous. And the reason being I had had or I had a professor's son in my 5th grade class. And he was kind of naughty and his mom and I didn't always agree on. So I thought she had probably ratted on me. So I went really in fear and trepidation. But I went in and sat down and he started talking to me about you know we've been doing this administratively and blah, blah, blah. And I'm going yes and he's like why don't you hurry up and tell me what it is you want.

Then he said we're going to move some of the principals around and make some changes and I'd like for you to be one of those principals. I said "You're kidding." I said "I know you don't mean me. I'm black and I'm a woman." And he said "So?" Because there were no women principals here, no African Americans. And I said "How long do I have to think about it?" And he said about 3 days. And I thought oh mercy. I was probably thinking "Oh shit."

But I thought I went home and thought about it. I didn't say anything to anybody about it. I wanted to make the decision all by myself. So if it was a wrong decision I had nobody to blame but me. So I thought about it and I thought well how did he even know I had a license because all my papers were in the superintendent's office. So that's when I decided to do that. So you know at the time I was principal I was the only woman in the county and I was the only African American in the county. So when we had principles meeting there I sat you know. But I had no problems. I had no problems at all.

They were good.

LB: It's probably a little different than some other people experienced with jobs, do you think?

DB: I don't know. I mean you're talking about you know we were all professional and you know I had my degrees were just as good as theirs and I had lots of experience in the classroom. So I just didn't have any problems at all. It was a very good experience. Good. Very good.

LB: And then for how long were you a principal at Ridpath?

DB: Five years. And then I was asked to come to Indianapolis to be a principal. Now that really surprised me because that was when they had the federal judge mandated this integration. So they took all the city schools inside of Indianapolis and bused the black students out into the townships and they didn't have minority township principals. So I was asked to come to interview to be one of those. Now that was an easy interview for me because I already had a job. You know and in fact I was kind of smart. I was kind of smart ass.

So, the interview had been making a difference because I already had a job you know. But anyway they hired me so I was one of the few African American principals. But I only stayed there five years. That was a hard assignment because I was in an area that I didn't realize before I went over kind of excuse me for using this term redneck. And they resented, especially my staff, resented me being there was a woman before me, a white woman that had been principal. But here I come in, I'm an African American woman. So I had problems with my staff.

In fact I had the librarian came in one day and came in crying. It's like what's wrong? I said you want me to close the door? Yes. And she started crying. It's like what's wrong? And she kept talking it made no sense. And finally what she said was: you know, we're having trouble because you're African American. It's like you're kidding. I mean you think you have problems with the children. I told you something wrong. I was principal in Greencastle only three years. I was five years in Indianapolis. Let me resend that. Three years here and five over there.

And after five years, you know it was really kind of hard. I mean it was, the kids were good and I didn't, well I kind of had some trouble with parents too. And I finally decided one day why am I here? I don't have to put up with this crap. So I came, as I told you I still lived in Greencastle and I knew the president's secretary at that time. We went to the same church. And I just happened to say to her one day, "Watch the postings for me for job openings. I may be ready for a change." And she said, "Okay." And next thing I knew the chairperson of the education department whom I knew very well said when you come over this weekend come by and talk to me. I want to talk to you about a job.

LB: At DePauw.

DB: Yes, but she didn't say that. She said I want to talk to you about a job. Well I didn't know she meant a job for herself. I didn't know because we knew each other professionally and she had sent student teachers over to my school in Indianapolis. So I really didn't know what she was talking about. And next thing I knew I was interviewing for a job position in the education department.

And it finally dawned on me how that came about. The president's secretary that I talked to I think probably she told the president and maybe he told because I know him and he probably told the chairperson.

LB: Who knows?

DB: I mean who knows? But anyway, so I took a leave of absence from Indianapolis. They did not want to give it to me because they usually don't give leave of absences to public school people. It didn't matter to me anyway because I wasn't planning on coming back anyway.

Not a way. So that's how I happened to be here. So I came here and worked in

LB: To DePauw?

DB: To DePauw. I worked in, taught in the education department for let's see, I think I taught for three years maybe. And then no, after the first, during the first year is when the president President Bottoms called me in because I had this one year leave, and he called me in after the first semester and talked about his initiative for getting more minority students on campus and wanted me to be a part of that. And I said I would. And then that's when I started my second year.

I worked part time in the education department. I worked part time in student affairs. And then the third year I went back to Bottoms and said I can't do two part time jobs. I don't know how to do that, I have to do just one or the other. So I was given a choice as to which one I wanted to do and I decided student affairs. So I stayed in student affairs six years. And then I retired from DePauw. And then I went to St. Mary's and went and volunteered for a year.

LB: That's very nice.

DB: It is. And then after that year, because they gave me, when I volunteered I was really doing the same thing I was doing at DePauw. But I was getting \$100 a month.

LB: For volunteering?

DB: Yes. With the taxes out. So I decided I wanted to do something different. So I came back on campus and talked to some of my friends at student affairs. And I said I'm not going to go back next year but I don't know what I'm going to do. And the Greek affairs person said we're going to need some house mothers next year.

LB: Aww.

DB: I said that really sounds, that's different. I really want to do something different. So that's what happened.

So I've been a house mother for 13 years.

LB: Oh wow. Fraternity?

DB: Phi Kappa Psi. Have you been over there?

LB: Mhm. I've been over there before.

DB: So who do you know over there? Who's your friend? Well you can tell me now, or I'll find out.

LB: We'll find out later. I'll tell you later. Well moving on. Would you like to talk about some other organizations you've been involved with?

DB: Organizations? Okay, currently I'm president of **Kiwanis**. (12:40) I've been at Kiwanis probably 10, 12 years, I don't know. I'm a member of Greencastle Putnam County Foundation. I'm an honorary member there. And I work on the grants committee. I'm a member of the United Way. I work on the allocations committee. I'm a member of the Mental Health Association. I'm on the board of NAACP.
I'm an organist at church.

LB: You are a busy woman. You have a list. Is there anyone that you would like to elaborate on? Or that you're more, do you have a favorite at all? What things you do with them.

DB: Well for the Putnam County Foundation and United Way, you know we go out and solicit monies and then we have to decide how we're going to distribute those monies. So I'm on those two committees that do that. For the foundation it's called the grants committee. For United Way it's called the allocations committee. So I've probably been on the grants committee 12, 15 years maybe. And United Way, I don't know how many years I've been on that.

Kiwanis, I'm in my second year as president. Usually they just do a one year term. But I had vehemently said I would not be president of Kiwanis. But then I broke down and said yes. And then after half the year was always like well I might as well do it two years. You know there's not that much to it. But anyway we do different things to raise monies. And all of our monies go toward things for children. We support Riley Hospital. And when kids in town comment like if you want to go on a trip or something you can come to us and ask for money. But we focus on children.

So in May when we have our pancake breakfast downtown at the fire station you come down, all that money. And the monies that we raise we cannot use for administrative costs at all. It all has to go for children. And our administrative costs are from our dues and fees. So I think that's all I do.

LB: What about the NAACP?

DB: I'm not an officer. I'm on the board of the NAACP. It's had its ups and downs depending on what's happening in the world and who the president is. But it's active. It's active. We have people in town who, and especially members who feel that the president should always be a black person. And I don't agree with that at all. And last year our president was white and this year our president is white. We've had two white women. Because I think it's for the cause of everybody and not just for black people.

LB: Is there anything else you'd like to say?

DB: You almost have to ask me questions because I didn't think about, I didn't know which way you wanted to go with this.

LB: No, everything you said was awesome. It was perfect. All right, well, thank you very much. I'm going to hand it over to Lizzie so you can talk about some of the other stuff.

DB: Okay. Okay.