

SK: Today is March 5th, 2005. This is Stacey Klingler interviewing DeWayne Norris. If you could tell me your full name and your date of birth and the place where you were born.

DN: DeWayne Norris, born and raised Greencastle, Indiana 1950. June 11th, 1950.

SK: Great.

SK: We're going to talk about a couple different things today. I actually have a couple questions for you about sort of growing up in Greencastle. But why don't we go ahead since you've been thinking about sort of the sports aspect of things. If you have, I want to start with what you've been compiling here.

DN: Okay, yeah.

SK: So if you were born in 1950 then you were at Greencastle High.

DN: I graduated in 1968.

SK: 1968, okay.

DN: Well, I was raised in the South End of Greencastle where most of the African Americans were raised. And I'm going to try to just cover some of the ones that did some outstanding things in Greencastle because you know I'm trying to cover all of them. I think 90% of the African Americans in the South End played sports. But these guys did some special things. The first one was Gilbert Gibb Brown. He graduated from Greencastle High School in 1959. He was All-State in football. First athlete to receive a Division I scholarship in any sport.

DN: And he was definitely the first African American athlete to receive a Division I scholarship in any sport. He received a Division I scholarship in football at Indiana University. He was the most athletic athlete at Greencastle High School which is an award that's given each year to the outstanding athlete in the senior class. He was the most valuable player in football and was captain of the football team. Steve Norris, Steven Norris. He graduated in 1962. He was the one and only state champion in track in high school. He was a high jump champion in 1962.

DN: He received a full scholarship to Ball State University. He was also voted most athletic his senior year in high school. He was the most valuable player in football and basketball and track while he was in high school.

DN: Let's see. I believe that's it on Steven. Like I said he received a scholarship to Ball State. He was also captain of the football and basketball team. I don't know if I mentioned it but Gilbert was captain of the football team also. Ray Churchill. He's a

high school All-American in football. He received a Division I scholarship to Iowa University. Graduated in 1967. Not only high school All-American in football, also All-State in football. Most valuable player in football and track. Still holds the track record for the 100 yard dash. Received a Division I scholarship to Iowa University. I may repeat but I'm just trying to cover it.

SK: And that was in football?

DN: Yes, football. He was captain of the football. He was the first of only three football players in Greencastle High School to play in the Indiana High School North-South football game in 1969.

SK: What is that game?

DN: High School football game. It's All-State North-South. It's the outstanding players in Northern Indiana and outstanding players in Southern Indiana played against each other at Indiana University. He was the first one. There's only three that's played in that game. That was the first year they had it. He played in that game also.

SK: That would have been in?

DN: He graduated in 1967.

DN: DeWayne Norris, All-State in football. All-State Honorable mention in basketball. Captain of the football team. Received a basketball scholarship to Eastern New Mexico University. Played on the National Championship team in AIA National Champions in 1969. Most valuable player in football, basketball and track. Most athletic senior year. I believe that's it. Captain of the football team. I believe that's it.

DN: John Edmonds graduated in 1968. He was All-State Honorable Mention in football. I believe those are the main ones. Like I said, those that kind of excelled. All except John received full athletic scholarships in sports their senior year.

SK: In terms of the community, do you think, and obviously these are amazing awards that you all earned, do you think that was really important for your community?

DN: I think that was the most important thing that happened in the South End community. I think that gave the South End community a real sense of pride because when you went as an athlete you played and I can remember distinctly that you could see a group of African American men that were always at the games. My dad took me to games when my uncle played, Gilbert Brown, when my brother played. That was what we did. We supported each other and I think that I know of all these four that's what really got them out of Greencastle and to be successful in life was that they started in the South End community. The thing about the South End community is that you hear that cliché that it takes community to raise a kid. In that time it was a community. It was family, it was friends, everybody knew everybody. You could walk

the streets, you could be certain places and people would tell you they saw you at the game that night and if they saw you somewhere where you weren't supposed to be at a younger age they'd tell you you needed to get home. I think that was probably the real source of pride for the community. Like I said these were the athletes that really excelled but you go back to the 1950s in the South End community all the athletes back in that time excelled except it was different because a lot of them went into the service.

DN: It was just a different situation back then but it was kind of an expectation if you were raised in the South End that you were going to participate in sports because you started out on the streets, on the corners, in the sand lots playing and it was just an expectation. I think 9 out of 10 African-Americans at that time participated in sports and when I say that the 10th one was probably only because something prevented him from playing, grades or injury or something like that but I can't remember anyone that I was raised with that didn't participate in at least one sport. It was an outlet there wasn't a whole lot to do in Greencastle at the time also so it was an outlet for all of us to have something to do.

SK: Would you say that's true for the African-American girls as well?

DN: Well I can tell you one story my sister Toni Norris was the first African-American cheerleader at the Greencastle High School and she was the most athletic. She received the Outstanding Athlete Award in the high school but see they didn't have girls sports back then. The girls only were able to either be cheerleaders or play basketball like in Phys Ed. Times have changed since then so I think that's the only thing that kept a lot of the African-American girls from participating in sports is that just you know the change of times.

SK: You talked a lot about sort of everybody going to or there being a group of African-American men who always attended the games and sort of that it being a community rallying point. People also talk a lot about the churches and that that was sort of a community event really a community place where people gathered. Do you think the sports events served the same kind of purpose or were they different?

DN: Well they were different because you know the sports was entertainment. You know it was something you do on Friday nights. It was a form of entertainment whereas the church and the religion was you know it was just part of your life. That was also an expectation and it was something that you were raised to be involved in in the church. We participated in a lot of activities, church activities like going to the state parks and going to you know different events and community picnics.

DN: So it was different in that the church was something that was you know that was you know it was something that you were taught and you were expected to do as part of your education growing up whereas the sports part was more focused on entertainment, extracurricular activities, having something to do. Really I think that sports kept all of us out of trouble because you know your down time is when you

usually get yourself in trouble so our down time was usually down on the sand locks playing sports.

SK: You also mentioned with the particular high achievers that you talked about that they all received scholarships then to go to college and that that was an important part about them getting sort of out of Greencastle and educated and being successful.

SK: Do you, what's your impression of people who weren't able to get those kinds of scholarships? Were they able to get to college?

DN: Well yes they did. You know that was another thing back in those days. Well I'll say in the late 60's early 70's probably 7 out of 10 African Americans from the south end went to college. Not all of them graduated but they went to college. You know because there were you know you could get financial aid and that type of stuff but the advantage to the ones that got the scholarships is not only that they went to college but they got an opportunity like myself I had never been out of the state of Indiana before I went to college and I went to New Mexico.

DN: So they got an opportunity to see things and do things that they would never have had the opportunity to do if they wouldn't have received the scholarship. So it pretty much opened up your horizons and you experienced a heck of a lot more than you would have before then. So for example 3 of us live in California and also I think the sports, the one thing that people kind of take for granted about sports is that you develop discipline and responsibility. You're responsible not only to yourself but you're also responsible to your teammates because you know you have to make your grades.

DN: So that's a responsibility that comes with making the grades to stay eligible. You have to be places on time and be there prepared. So you know especially in college you know in high school you're at home so you do you know you learn to do those things at home but when you go away to college there's nobody mom or dad to tell you that. So I think I can speak for myself got most of my self-discipline when I went to college because you know I was way away from home. I had to go to class. I had to be places on time. I had to be to practice and when you get to college whatever sport you're involved in that's a job. You know you look at it at the amount of money they're investing in you to participate and they're not understanding if you're late or if you're having trouble with your grades. If you're not having trouble with your grades you're expected to participate and study all that type of stuff.

DN: So you know going in you look at it like high school it's fun but the difference between those who make it for four years and stay eligible is that they develop that discipline and that's something that you carry with you the rest of your life. For example out of the four main ones that I mentioned, three have college degrees, two have masters, one is a CPA and an attorney. So you see what I'm saying here?

DN: And I know for a fact, if it wasn't for sports, I wouldn't have got out of Greencastle to do the things that I had the opportunity to do. So it's special. It really is.

SK: You keep sort of mentioning getting out of Greencastle. Why is that so important?

DN: Well, It wasn't so important to get out of Greencastle and I say this to kids now. It's not a big deal. It's not that you need to get out of Green Castle but wherever you go you have to be prepared and for us at that age there wasn't a whole lot offered in Greencastle and then when you go away to school you get a taste of a different lifestyle and much more opportunities. So, you know the chances of you coming back to Greencastle aren't that great simply because you're out there where you have more opportunities to do more and especially back in those days. It was pretty limiting what you could do in Greencastle in the 60s and 70s as far as opportunities to excel. You know I came back here and taught for a year. It was okay but it wasn't really what I wanted to do in Greencastle and so you get a taste of things and it's kind of hard to come back and settle for less I guess is the best way to put it and that's nothing to degrade Greencastle but you know we're talking about the 60s and 70s and it was just a different world back then.

SK: Can you give me some examples of how it was a different world?

DN: Yeah I can give you some.

DN: Well, there wasn't interracial dating, and that stuff. When we came up in Greencastle, we had best friends in high school. Black, you know white friends. But everything we did, we did in the South End, and our white friends, it was kind of an understanding. You did things in school together, you were good friends, but on Friday, it was, you know, you went back to your community.

DN: You know and you did things in your community and it wasn't any more than just that's just the way it was back then. That was just the way the times for example back in my senior year before that blacks couldn't get their hair cut in Greencastle. Blacks couldn't go into certain places like Moore's Bar and this is you know in the 60s and 70s. My senior year because of my dad and my uncles and other members of the South End community I was able to be able to go up to the barbershop when I was a senior to get my hair cut. You were able to go into certain places that you weren't allowed to then.

DN: It was just the way it was back then. The times, the segregation and everything and it's changed totally since then but you pretty much knew what your place was back then. I mean that's the honest truth and that's just the way the times were.

SK: And that's sort of the way a lot of people have put it was sort of that that was people didn't worry about it much. It was just you knew where you were supposed to be and where you weren't.

DN: We've been friends for life and it wasn't like they pushed one way and I pushed the other. It was just the way it was.

SK: You mentioned Moore's Bar as being a place that you wouldn't have been able to go until sort of things were changing as you were growing up in high school. Do you have a sense of how that change happened?

DN: You know what? I don't. I've heard bits and pieces. I think it was more of some of the people like my dad, my uncles, those that were the parents at that time kind of really had conversations and really pushed that this isn't right. I think there's other people that can tell you more that were truly involved in it. It was just hearsay for me. I don't even know how it happened that we could go to barbershop. It wasn't something that was talked to us but I know that those parents talked among themselves and worked it out with the Greencastle community. But it wasn't a burden that they put on us. What we got was now you can do it. That was what we would get. It wasn't so much that they would complain and talk to us about it. It was something that I think they did behind the scenes to be honest with you.

SK: Well let me ask you a couple sort of bigger background questions that we've been trying to ask most folks. So your parents are?

DN: Marie Norris and Fred Norris. My father's deceased.

SK: And your mother?

DN: Marie Norris Lawson.

SK: Yes. I've met her a couple times now. Helped me out at the community center. And what did your mother do growing up?

DN: You know mom actually worked three jobs when I was a kid. Especially when my parents divorced when I was fairly young. But mom worked three jobs. She cleaned the doctor's office. She worked in a factory, Mallory factory. And in her spare time she went and got her beautician license and was a beautician on the weekends. And that's the reason I said that it really, the community raised a lot of us because mom was working. You know she pretty much instilled in us how to act and between church and just her discipline we knew what was right and wrong. But we also knew that aunts, uncles, extended families were out there that would correct us and make sure we knew what was going on also. But she worked.

SK: And your father?

DN: My father worked at a Coca-Cola plant.

SK: And you said your parents divorced when you were fairly young and you stayed with your mother then?

Yeah. My mom raised five of us by herself pretty much. My dad was in Greencastle and he was there but my mom did, you know she did the work.

SK: And so was he in your life off and on or?

DN: Well dad, you know dad was supportive as far as he was one of those group of men that I'd always see at a football game, at a basketball game. But dad was real quiet. He didn't say a whole lot. And so, you know we didn't have a real strong relation. Plus I was the youngest. So you know they separated when I was younger than most. I'm trying to think back and I can't even really pinpoint maybe third or fourth grade maybe. So you know it was just the fact that I didn't spend a whole lot of time with him.

SK: Sure. And then your mother then married again?

DN: She married. Mom married after you know when we were grown. I was in California. I think I was in my 30s when mom married again.

SK: Alright. And what do you remember about sort of the stories of your family moving to the Greencastle area? Do you have a sense of why?

DN: Well I don't know why but I remember you know my mom, I know my dad was from Bloomington. Our family lives in Bloomington. And my mom was a cartwright. And they were from somewhere originally from the south. And I did know mom would tell me that all of our, all the cartwrights were big, you know big men. And I just don't know exactly what brought them to Greencastle.

DN: But you know we had a lot of family here. A lot of family. The Brown family. You know mom I think had eight brothers and sisters. And they were all here until I think two of my aunts, one lives in Terre Haute and one lives in Indianapolis. My uncle was in the service. One of my uncles who lives in Arizona now was in the service as long as I can remember. And then my other uncle, Charlie Brown, he opened a restaurant. He was the first black to open a restaurant here and he had it for about 35 years. And I did a lot of work with him. I learned a lot from him.

DN: He was more of my father figure than probably my dad because I would, you know he played barnstorm, basketball, baseball. So you know he'd take me with him. I'd follow him around to different games. And then he was a handyman so he did a lot of work. Like he would, you know he could do anything. And he would take me with

him to work. I'd work with him out at the lakes, private lakes. And you know I helped him with his first restaurant. I was helping him build it and stuff.

DN: So you know to be honest with you he was more of my father figure as far as somebody that I really spent a lot of time with and really I looked up to my dad. Don't get me wrong. But it was fun hanging out with my uncle because like I said he played in these basketball teams that traveled around, baseball teams.

SK: So how did he get involved with that? I don't know much about barnstorming, basketball. Was it like a local county type team?

DN: There was guys from all over that were good enough to travel around mostly in Indiana and play games. And then they played in a baseball league down in Cloverdale where teams would come. And then they played in softball leagues here in Greencastle. All the black men at one time started playing in softball leagues. So they played in these local fast-paced softball leagues for a lot of years. But I think once my uncle got out of the service because he was a boxing champ in the service and he was real active and he was young. So he continued to play basketball. He continued to play football. There was some of the guys he played with like one Dale Harris coaches in the National Basketball Association. It was interesting I owned a barbecue restaurant in Sacramento for a few years and I called him and my uncle said, let me know.

DN: He couldn't get over to the restaurant quick enough to talk about the old times where they traveled around and stuff. And a couple other guys were outstanding college coaches and they all just traveled around and played basketball together. And so that was what was available to them then.

SK: So he would go and play and you would tag along and watch?

DN: Yeah, I'd go to baseball games, be the bat boy. Basketball games, you know, it was a chance for me to be around. I love sports so it was a chance for me to be around sports. And I'd be over there on the side shooting while they were playing or just hanging out with them. I enjoyed it.

SK: And this would have been an all African American team that he played in?

DN: No, no, no. The softball team was mostly, it started out as an all African American team but as most of them got older they kind of filtered into different teams and a lot of them retired.

SK: So the barnstorming, basketball, that was something he was just at a level of being able to play basketball that he would, he joined some sort of team. And so that was, do you remember if he was one of many African Americans on the team or one of a couple?

DN: One of a couple. One of a couple. One of a couple.

SK: And did that ever, did race ever seem to be an issue?

DN: Where I went with him, no. But I'm sure it did because there was a couple of times when I was in high school race was an issue, high school and college. We went, traveled one place and stopped at a restaurant and they told, you know, there was only myself and my cousin, there was only two blacks on the team. And they said, you know, you guys can eat but they can't eat here. And in college that happened to us, there was four of us on the team. So I'm sure, I'm positive that race was an issue some of the places he went.

DN: And there was one time when I was in high school where I played down in Martinsville and I was called everything, monkeys, everything while I was down there. And it was the worst experience I ever had. But it was an experience that I learned from, you know, because that was my first experience of really dealing with something like that. You know, we played a lot of teams around in this area. Clinton, Linton, Spencer. But that was the first experience I had with something like that. So, you know, I'm sure they dealt with it much more than I did.

DN: But like I said, I don't know if it was pride or whatever, but, and like I said, that was the way it was back then. So I think more than anything, they weren't whiners, they weren't complainers, they were men, you know, and they dealt with it. You know, and they didn't tell us about it, they just dealt with it.

SK: But within the team, either the teams you played on or the teams that you observed, do you think that was ever an issue? It's probably not fair to ask that for him.

DN: Well, I can't answer for him, but not for me. A lot of the, some of my, some of the guys, you know, it's interesting. We, you know, the group I kind of graduated with, we came up together. You know, we, you know, there was, I started out at kindergarten here at Jones. But we came up together, there was Miller, Redpath, and Jones. And there were two or three of them that I went to Redpath with. There were some that went to Miller, some that went to Jones. And there was only one junior high. And so once we got to junior high, we competed against each other in elementary.

DN: But once we got to junior high, we played together. So we started out playing together from sixth grade all the way up. And so never amongst my teammates, amongst the guys that I played with coming up, was race ever an issue as far as some of the comments that were made and that type of stuff. That never happened. The one thing that I did learn early in age, and this was just a sign of the times too, is that you couldn't be as good as somebody, a white kid that you were competing against to start. You had to be better, I mean, far and above better. And I learned that my sophomore year.

DN: And that was something that was hard for the kids after me to understand because I'll never forget when I came back from college after my freshman year. And these were kids that I kind of mentored, you know, as a little older than them. They played basketball, I knew they were good and I knew they could play at that level and I knew they could excel. But I'd say, you're still playing basketball. And nah man, I quit, coach is prejudiced. And I'm like, hey, that comes with the territory. You have to understand that that comes with the territory. You have to remove all the doubt of who's better.

DN: Because if it's even, then the white kid's going to get the benefit of the doubt. So it's up to you to make sure that you take away that doubt. I think they thought they were telling me something that they were the only ones that dealt with, that only you know, came up. But that's the way of the world here. You don't think because you're on an even playing field with the white kid that you're going to get the benefit of doubt. That's not going to happen, you know, so understand that.

DN: And I learned, you know, and I just learned this probably in the last 10 or maybe five or 10 years, you know, that some of the white kids got a lot more support from the white coaches than I realized, because, you know, we would talk and able to say, yeah, coach would because you know, when I was I would I got a lot of scholarship offers, probably about 30 of them, and coach would tell me, you going to get offers, blah, blah, blah, and I'll make sure you get them. And so he would just give me the letters when they came.

DN: But after he died and I talked to some of the guys that I played with that were pretty good, and they said, "Coach used to bring me down to the gym every day and we'd work out, and he took me to his dad was a famous coach in Indiana university at Branch McCracken. And he took me down to talk to Coach McCracken and gave me advice on what school I should go to." And to be honest with you, when I heard it, it kind of hurt me because I looked up to him at that time. You know, but I guess that was just the way it was back then. I didn't know that that was going on at the time, but, yeah, "We'd work out, you know, he'd open the gym and we'd work out a couple of hours."

DN: All my practice was up at Ridpath School outside, you know. And, you know, like I said, it shocked me and it hurt me, but you know, that was the way it was back then.

SK: Do you get a sense from either kids you get to talk to now around Greencastle that there are still issues of race like that?

DN: No, but I'll be honest with you. I'm disappointed in the direction that the kids have gone in Greencastle and that's one of the reasons why I've come back here and started this program, because, you know, when I come home, I'd ask mom. Ask my uncles, any kids playing sports? No, they don't play sports, you know. It bothered me. It bothered me. And like I said, nine out of 10 of us played sports

when I was coming up and in this day and age in the last 10 years, maybe if we get a couple, two, three out of 10 to play. They're not as motivated. And I think that's pretty much a sign of the times today also is, you know, kids have a different mentality now. You know, they kind of it's almost like you owe me. I was born or you owe me. And I don't see a lot of kids trying to excel. But you've got to take into consideration that a lot of us that, a lot of us that did well left Greencastle. And so, you know, it kind of left a void, I guess, is the best way to put it.

DN: And, you know, we were involved in sports coming up out on the streets and stuff, and there's so many other things for young people to do nowadays, not just black kids, but period, that I don't think they realize what doors sports can open for 'em, and the fact that, again, you know, you downtime is when you get in trouble, and the mind starts wandering on doing stuff that may not be okay, but my day, when I was coming up was go to school, play sports after school, come home, do my school work, go to bed. I don't recall watching too much TV unless it was on Saturday, maybe sports then, but this day and age, a kid can play the video games. And you know, there's everything on TV. They ain't got the videos. So it's a different world.

DN: And I don't think it's important for me the kids to play sports, but, you know, living in California and working in the field that I work with, where I work with a lot of disadvantaged at risk kids, I don't think they understand how important it is. Like a lot of them are say, yeah, I'm getting out of Greencastle once I graduate. But I don't care where you go. You got to have the tools and be ready or you're not going to make it. I mean, you know, there's, my daughter is a director of a homeless teen program, and I'm talking about 11, 12, 13, 14, up to 18 years old old, Homeless. Those are kids that just, you know, and some of them, not because of some of them as reasons out of their control parents with issues, but some of them is because they weren't ready when they turned 18 and they weren't ready at 23 or 24 to deal with the realities of life.

DN: And life and the world is tough nowadays and and so that's why it's so important for me to do this here in Greencastle is to really help them get the tools that they're going to need, whether they're in Greencastle, whether they're anywhere to succeed and survive. It's a challenge.

SK: Why don't we go ahead and talk a little bit about that community center.

DN: Okay.

SK: When did you start thinking about, or maybe you can tell me a little bit about sort of the idea and how it started?

DN: Well, I'll be honest with you. I really think it's kind of like I got a message from God, and I'm not just saying that. You know, I do work, like I said, in Sacramento, I've worked with that risk, kids, I work kids that live in group home, residential treatment facilities. I've been principles of non-public schools were kids that couldn't make it in public schools for whatever reason. And like I said, I'd come home and just ask about the kids because I'd come up, I'd want to go out to the high school and see them play,

like, you know, support them and they weren't doing that.

DN: And, you know, and Mom lives here and Mom, you know, you know, she said, well, I saw some of those kids out there on the corner and doing some things they shouldn't have been doing. I said, "Well, why didn't you say something to them Mom?"

DN: She said, "I'm not going to say anything to those kids", you know ?

DN: And when I was coming up, that didn't happen. If I wasn't doing or somebody wasn't doing, somebody said something to you. So it kept gnawing at me. It really did. It kept gnawing at me. I'd said in the evening time, you know, and just kept thinking about it, something that needs to be done or something.

DN: And it came to the point, it's like, you know, you do this work out in California and if you can't help your own, and I really, I honestly thought about the fact that, okay, you're born and raised in Greencastle. The senior citizens were the ones that were raised you, and I'm, you're still a Dufane DeWayne when you were walking the streets of Greencastle today.

DN: I've still had the same respect for them. A lot of the guys that were my age that are still here that aren't doing so well, they're still my friends, you know. So it's like, you're in a unique position here.

SK: Yeah... Yes. It's okay

(Interruption) Some lady is here from the teachers. Retired teachers association and she wants to make an appointment to bring somebody in here.

SK: If you could get her her name and number and phone number and I'll give her a call in about a half an hour or so if that would work.

DN: Thank you. Where was I?

SK: So you had to kind of look through and saw that kids weren't doing what they used to be doing.

DN: And I really thought about it and I said, you're in a kind of a position where, you know, you still have the respect. You've always respected the senior, so they know who I am. You have the experience with this stuff. The guys your age, they're still your friends, they respect you, you always respected them. So maybe you're the one that needs to do this. And it just, and I just talked to my wife and I prayed about it, and my wife said, you know, whatever you want to do, I'll support you. And so I said, well, I might as well just find out.

DN: So I told Mom what I was thinking about doing, and she said, you know, they need it. And I think you should go for it. And so I said, I'll tell you what, let's just set up a meeting at the church. I'll send out letters, tell them I want to do something, and let's see, you know, let's see what kind of response we get.

DN: And it was overwhelming. I mean, everybody knew it was needed, but nobody was in the position to do it. I mean, the church was packed, and I'm not just talking about it was seniors. It was all the ones my age. They made sure the kids were there and I just threw it out there. This is what I'd like to do.

DN: "I'd like to start a community program, get us a center in the South End." I did a little homework, talk to Mom, because anything I do, I talk to her first. And she said, well, President Bottom's a good man, he's always supported race support. And so and I did a little homework and I said, well, one of the issues with DePauw, because when I was coming up at DePauw, you know, there was a lot of the African Americans, we all hung out together. We played, hung out, and all that stuff. They said, well, one of his issues, one of the issues with Dr. Bottoms is that at DePauw a lot of their faculty members, African American faculty members that work here don't live in Greencastle. And that's something that he wants to change. And mom said, talk to him, he'd be a good person to talk to him, because I knew the Greencastle community couldn't support it on its own. I knew it had to be something that a partnership with DePauw.

DN: So I've set up meetings in one weekend, I set up meetings with the community. I set up meetings with Dr. Bottoms, uh and, uh Mayor Michaels. And uh, the community meeting was, I mean, it was packed. I mean, everybody was there.

SK: Was it Mount Zion?

DN: Yes, it was at Mount Zion.

DN: And I told them what I was thinking about doing, and the seniors said, we definitely need it. And I said, "All I need is your support." I mean, I'm in California, I'm not, no consideration of moving to California, but I think if I know I can count on you, and I actually met with the men, the men my age that were parents, I had a meeting with them earlier, that we met at Mount Zion on Sunday, and I met with the men on Saturday, said, "Look, you guys are I need your support."

DN: I said, "I got to know that if I need you to do something, you'll do it."

DN: And they said, "You don't worry about it, we'll do it."

DN: But some of them have kids here, and that thing about it, some of them that haven't been so successful that may have gotten into alcohol or that type of stuff, and they weren't, you know, you kind of learned how to be a parent and they weren't that good at being parents, but it also gave them an opportunity to step up and be a parent. And so they said they would. And the meeting was overwhelming.

DN: I have some friends in Indianapolis that were raised here. One of them's deputy chief police, he came back, one of my friends that I kind I was a couple of years older, he lives in Sacramento also. He flew back here.

DN: So they came back and really, it was a meeting where I'd say 90% of the African Americans came. And they said, they would do it. I said, "I'll do the late work, I'll do the work. I just got to know that I can count on you. Do you think this is what what's

needed?"

DN: They said yes. And I met with Dr. Bottoms, and you know, I thought I was going to have to do a lot of convincing, but Dr. Bottoms, ten minutes into the conversation said, "The only thing is, I wish I'd have thought of it. Tell me what you need."

DN: And, he said, "We'll support you."

SK: About how long ago was this?

DN: That was this is 2005, I think it was March of 2003. It's almost two years ago.

DN: And so I just started working and getting some commitment from Dr. Bottoms. He gave us some financial support to get us a part time coordinator here. He assigned someone, one of his assistants, Kevin Brown, to work with us to help develop the program. He assigned a grant writer to help us, we needed grants, and he gave us some financial support. And he agreed, Kelsey Kaufman, who was head of the NAACP at that time, said, you know, they have all these, you know, DePauw, you know, they do a lot of tearing down houses and building you know, and to do other things. And she said, I think we could get them to agree to give us to donate a house.

DN: And so I negotiated with Mount Zion Church, who had some land on the side of the church. If we get the house, can we put it there? And we went through a lot of meetings, there were some pushing and pulling. You know, I'll be honest with you, but the seniors had the heels dug in and they were going to make it happen.

DN: So they finally agreed. Then and Dr. Bottoms agreed, and we're talking about a lot of money, not only were they going to donate the house, they were going to move it and put it on the foundation. We're talking \$40,000 or \$50,000 just for that.

DN: So they had to get to approval of the city council. They said, well, what we want to do is we want to, you know, we had a choice of three houses. We saw which one we wanted, and DePauw wanted that property to build a parking lot, you know, because they built a new residential facility for the students.

DN: So, I went through the city council, and the city council voted against them having a parking lot. And a lot of the people got a little disappointed, but Dr. Bottoms told my mom, you know, he just told her to point blank, "Look, we're gonna get you something. We're gonna help you. Don't give up yet."

DN: And so, you know, as time went on, they had a daycare center. DePauw owned the daycare center up here at 605 Crown. And Dr. Bottoms, they gave us that daycare center, and it's perfect. I mean, you've seen it, it's got the upstairs, got the basement where we can set up the activities for the youth and the big field out there. And so we did some fundraisers and started getting a little money. And we're working on some grants. We got a long way to go. You know, we need a lot more support.

DN: I have a couple of my friends that I was raised with, One of them, Kirk Hammond, who's a real good friend, gave us a \$5,000 donation. He lives out in San

San Diego. I just happened to go see him and told him about it. He said, "We want to help."

DN: And I have other friends, Jay Fry that's stepped up. You know, we've had some of my friends got a couple of the board members went up and we put a board together. Dr. Green met with him, the superintendent of the school.

DN: He said, "I would love to be involved." So he's on our board.

DN: Ray Churchill, who's also was born and raised in Greencastle. He's an attorney out in California, he's on our board. We've got a couple of DePauw folks on our board. So you know, people have stepped up, I've gotten Mom totally involved.

DN: And the one thing that's really made it special is that I've seen what it's done for Mom, you know, before she kind of was just sitting in the house, look out the window, like a lot of the seniors. But now they have things to do. We've had senior activities when we've had one have been a bake sale barbecue out at Walmart, and all the seniors did all the baking. We put committees together and they took care of everything on the baked goods.

DN: We had our jazz concert, the seniors did the baked goods, and what we were able to do as our way of appreciation for the seniors is having a special night. We took them out to dinner at the Dixie Chopper. We took them all out, sit down dinner, and they enjoyed that, and then we took them to sit down dinner after the jazz festival, we had a sit down dinner at the Walden Inn. And you, we've had a Thanksgiving dinner at the center for seniors that had no one to be with and then some of the families that wanted the nice dinner and some of the students at DePauw, who wanted a nice a dinner down there.

DN: Mom coordinated everything and that turned out real nice. And at the end of the evening, they were kind of sitting around playing cards and laughing and talking. We had a movie. And they said, "We'd like to do this more often." So now we have a senior monthly activity. And tonight is the first one we're going to have movies, we'll play cards and we kind of set the program up where it's got different components, mentoring and tutoring for the kids. We have the tutoring program, which is started, but you know, it's not where close to where we want to get it.

DN: I mean relationship with DePauw, we're having, the students at DePauw are actually the tutors and Dr. Green was able to set it up, where they get paid through the school.

DN: We're having a senior mentoring of DePauw students. So tonight, some of DePauw students and the seniors will be there for the senior night. They have movies, they have potluck. They've all figured out what they're going to have, and they got it all set up.

DN: So, you know, I can give you a description really of the whole program because it would take too long for me to tell, but, you know, the main focus is on supporting the seniors, supporting families in the community, and supporting the youth.

DN: So with the seniors just mentors like connect them to a mentor, to a DePauw

student where they know, like Mom's 82, she can't go out in the snow and take her trash out or clean her shovels, and all that stuff.

DN: So having that partnership where they do that type of stuff and then the students can go over and have dinner with the senior on Sunday when they don't have anything to do or go to church with them. And we've had outings for the families. We had a Greencastle night. We sponsored, where they all went to see the Indiana Pacers.

DN: We've had a couple outings for the youth, where they got to go up to the Circle City Classic, which is an, it's when African American black colleges play against each other. They have a parade. It's a big event.

DN: None, hardly any of the kids have ever been, hardly any of the kids have ever been to a Pacer game. The family. So we did that. That was a new experience. Hardly any kids ever been to the Circle City Classic. So just giving them new experience, we want to have cultural activities for the young kids.

DN: We're sponsoring a couple of the seniors that want to go to college to go spend the weekend at black college so they can see what it's about. In the process that DePauw is, they got a program that's going to help us.

DN: They have a program that we'll set up computers, teach anybody that wants to learn how to operate a computer. They also want to train anybody that wants to learn how to repair computers.

DN: We got a catering, we're setting up a catering business, all this is going to be run by the seniors. We're going to have some summer activities. We're going to have some summer lunch eating program. We're going to have a summer program for the youth that we're going to have the ones that can't be involved, the younger kids go to Gobin Church and there's a summer program and then other kids are going to have job training, job fair and get them all employed, but the ones in between were going to have a day program at the center.

DN: So we're just trying to support the seniors, the youth, and the families, and getting to DePauw involved where, you know, the faculty members at DePauw have kids. Now they see that there's something for their kids in the community. So, you know, it's been a long haul but if somebody told me two years ago that we were going to be where we are now and have what we have now, I would have, I'd had trouble believing it.

DN: And I think it's just been the support of the community, the strong support of my family. And you know, and a lot of people don't realize, but it's really an opportunity for me more than anything. It's a blessing that I've received, and I've agreed I'll do the work for free as long as, you know, we keep moving forward, we'll get staff on there. I don't need the money. I'm doing fine in California, and my pay is seeing what it does not only for the community, but more than that, just Mom, you know, I see her every month or my daughter sees her every month. And I think it's adding years to her life, to be honest with you. And that's what it's all about. You know, you get an opportunity to do something special, and not everybody gets that opportunity and it's just taking advantage of it.

SK: When did the building actually open up? Do you remember?

DN: Oh! You know what? I have an article in my, I can give you the exact date and everything. I have an article in my luggage, so I can give you that.

SK: Okay.

DN: We've been open almost, I think it's pretty close to a year.

SK: Okay.

DN: Alright.

SK: If you end up getting, hopefully you'll get your luggage today. If you want to drop that by or.

DN: How long are you'll be here?

SK: I'll be here till 4:30 or 5 o'clock.

DN: They said I should get it by noon. And also, I want to bring that picture, because I think that would be fun.

SK: Yes, that would be wonderful.

DN: It's an amazing picture, because that was the first team that ever won a conference championship in any sport in Greencastle.

SK: That would be wonderful.

DN: So it's something I remembered I had, and I. The coach gave it to me before he left. So it's jewel. So I'll bring it up. And I'll stop yeah, I'll bring that up.

DN: And like I said, I have to get to this meeting about that. Anything else, I'll be happy to help you with. I hope I didn't shortchange you too much.

SK: I think, no, I think this is great. This is kind of what we're looking for. And actually, that's really what you've talked about has touched on most of the issues we were looking at in terms of work and organizations in the community that have an impact. And we actually haven't talked a lot about current organizations. So that's been really good to hear about the Community Center.

DN: Go back to the old days.

SK: Well, yeah, you kind of have to, it's funny how you have to sort of remake, you have to have an organization to create what just happened naturally, we just don't do things that way because we've got...

DN: That's our whole society. It's not just good.

SK: Yeah. Oh, yes. It's true

DN: How long you been here?

SK: I've been here, I've been in Crawfordsville for two years and I've been working.
Yeah, that's actually where I live right now.