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Transcriber: Trystan Edwards

[Tape 1, Side A]

Mark Naison (MN): Hello everyone. This is the third interview for the Bronx African American History Project with founding members of the Eta Omega Omega chapter of the great African American sorority Alpha Kappa Alpha. And today we have Jacqueline Everette Brown with us who was a founding member of that chapter. Before we go into your involvement with the chapter, could you please tell us something about your experience and family history before you got involved with Alpha Kappa Alpha.

Jacqueline Everette Brown (JEB): Oh, I would be glad to. I'm a Brooklyn girl.

MN: Wow. Me too. I'm not a girl, but I'm a Brooklyn person.

JEB: [Smiling] Okay. Born and raised in Brooklyn at the time. It wasn't called Bedstuy at the time, but in later years it was called Bedstuy. I lived on Quincy Street – if I recall correctly. We had a happy childhood. Growing up in Brooklyn was very interesting because my parents were migrants, so to speak, because they had migrated from south Georgia to New York in the late thirties, as many African-Americans did. At the time, if you read Isabelle Wilkerson's book, *The Warmth of Other Suns*, you will know how important it was to get a job as an African American and to have a better way of life.

You had to move out of those Southern states into the Northern and Western states. And that was the case with my parents. And I enjoyed my childhood very much. I remember going to public schools in New York and having so many good friends. However, in 1951 my mother called me and my two sisters and said that she and my father were going to be separating and we will be moving from our house. We lived in a brownstone in Brooklyn on Jefferson Avenue then. She said we would be moving and my father didn't know that. She was just going to be moving when he left for work, and one morning we moved. In the same year, my dad's mother died in south Georgia and he had to go down and settle the estate and arrange her funeral. He decided that he would stay in Thomasville, Georgia. After three years, my parents were in constant communication because of the girls. My dad wanted us to come down and spend Christmas with him; Christmas of 53'. My mom said "Well, I'm not sending the girls down unless I come too because I don't want you to keep the girls. I want to be sure that they return." To make a long story short, they reconciled. And when we returned to New York after the holidays, they were writing to each other all the time. We knew something was going on. In March of that year – that was in 54' – she sat us down at the table and said that we were going to be leaving New York and we were going to be moving south.

MN: Wow.

JEB: My oldest sister was so upset. We had been to the south in the summers to visit our maternal and paternal grandparents. We liked going down south to visit, but to live there? Oh no. My youngest sister was excited because she could finally ride a bike. When school was out, we left New York and moved to Thomasville, Georgia.

MN: What grade were you in?

JEB: I was in the seventh, so I was going to be entering the eighth grade. So I'm in the throws of adolescence. I didn't want to leave my friends. It was heartbreaking for my oldest sister and I to be moving down south. When we got there we were very disappointed but, it didn't take long for us to adjust. We were all a family again. What I had left behind was absent in Thomasville, Georgia In 1954. In New York, we lived on a block on Madison Street with all nationalities. We could go to any restaurant that we wanted. We could ride the train. We could ride the bus. When we moved to Thomasville, it was an opposite experience. We had to sit in the back of the bus. We had to drink water from the colored fountains when we went downtown. Totally mind-blowing experience for us. Even when we were young and would go down in the summers, we didn't have that exposure. We were safe with our grandparents and had fun learning about the South. We quickly adjusted – at least my oldest sister and I did. It was a wonderful experience.

MN: Where is Thomasville located in Georgia?

JEB: It's south Georgia. It's only 30 miles from Tallahassee, Florida. It's close to the Florida state line. And as a matter of fact, a lot of people who are Thomasville residents would shop in Tallahassee because it was a bigger city. We learned to adjust to the segregation of the time. When I was a junior in high school, we had a new young minister come to Thomasville to accept the pastorship of the congregational church there. And that was Andy Young.

MN: Wow.

JEB: Yes.

MN: Andy Young!

JEB: Many people don't realize that Andy is an ordained minister. He was the minister of the congregational church. He was young and handsome and his wife was pretty. Both his older children – Andrew and Paula – were born in Thomasville. He would sponsor activities for the youth such as hay rides. He formed a youth club. Parents, you know, were very strict back then; however, they had no qualms about the children going along with Andy to all these things. So

Talladega College is a congregational-supported HBCU. One year, Andy Young had the Talladega College choir come to do a concert in Thomasville. Now a lot of people in Thomasville had not heard of Talladega College. We heard of Howard, Fisk, Spelman, Tuskegee, and Clark. But very few had heard of Talladega. The guidance counselor at my high school was steering students to college, and a lot of us went. That was just a given. Talladega was another school to add to the roster of potential colleges.

So the Talladega choir came to our high school and they were wonderful. My oldest sister was only a year ahead of me. My parents said they would let her go to Talladega College, so she did. I was next. They wanted the two of us to be together. So it was a given I would go to Talladega. To say that it was a wonderful experience would be an understatement. Talladega College was small, but it was very supportive of the students. And mind you, this was in 1959. I graduated in '63. During my sophomore year, we were experiencing the Civil Rights Movement.

Martin Luther King came to campus. We had workshops to teach us about nonviolence and what not to do because Talladega students were intent on marching downtown. My parents said my oldest sister and I could not march. So we didn't. We did not defy them. We stayed on campus. However, we did participate in all of the workshops teaching us about nonviolence such as what to do with your spit on or physically attacked.

Authur Bacon was a professor at Talladega for many years, but he's retired now. One day, he was coming from home after the holidays. He was at a bus stop in Anniston, Alabama when he was brutally attacked and severely beaten, like John Lewis was in Selma. When the students marched downtown at Talladega, no one was actually hurt. However, they did have to endure the insults and the spitting. And some of the students were actually arrested. So to say that I witnessed the Civil Rights movement firsthand is valid. It was a wonderful experience.

I want to go back and say that in high school I had a very positive experience because I was a good student. There are rewards when you're a good student. For instance, I was homecoming queen two years in a row.

MN: Whoa!

JEB: Yeah, I was very popular with many students. I was class valedictorian. That had nothing to do with popularity because that was my grades. I had a good high school experience. Going to football games and having good fun. My parents had a rule. We can only start dating after we were 16. We couldn't go out with a boy. You had to see them at home. They called it "courting".

MN: Ah!

JEB: Anyway, it was a good high school experience. The same with Talladega. That was when I crossed the burning sands [referring to Eta Omega Omega]. My sophomore year of 1960 is when I went over. I had a wonderful experience. Crossing the burning sands was an eye-opener because it just endeared me to the sorority in ways I find hard to describe.

MN: Could you explain to the uninitiated what crossing the burning sands means?

JEB: When you're actually initiated you go through a pledge period. You have to prove to your big sisters that you are worthy and adhere to the principles and the tenants of the sorority. The night you crossover is a wonderful experience. The sisterhood and the camaraderie are indescribable. Although I'm not active with the chapter, AKA is in my blood and veins. I can't speak enough about AKA. I'll tell you how I connected with Eta Omega Omega later.

I'll never forget the day. [About to ask a question] Well, you're asking the questions so.

MN: Did somebody tap you on the shoulder and suggest you join? Did you seek them out?

JEB: We have a rush period on campus. The big sisters check out the population to see who they would like to be a part of the sorority. That's how it happens on campuses. And I don't think it's limited to HBCUs. Most college campuses check out the student body to see who would be good "Sorors".

MN: Right.

JEB: And so I was courted. My roommate, who was from Montgomery, Alabama, and I were courted. We wanted to be an AKA. We liked the way they carry themselves on campus. They were very studious. They were very community oriented. It was just something that attracted me personally. However, I came from a family of little means and I knew that it would be a strain on my parents to afford the fees and so forth. But my mother had relatives in New York who said they would gladly pay my fees. I would be able to join the sorority. So that was just a wonderful experience. I was selected to be on the line. You'll never forget your line sisters. It's just a bond that's enduring.

MN: In college, what career were you aspiring to?

JEB: I was a psychology major. When I think about my psychology major and then my career path subsequently, I can see how it all ties together with the principles of Alpha Kappa Alpha in terms of service, professionalism, and giving back to the community. When I graduated, I went to New York. They didn't have social work as a major in the fifties and the early sixties. Think about this: it's 1963, Thomasville was still segregated, and there were no jobs for college-educated African-American

women unless you were a teacher. So many of my classmates from high school and college went north to Chicago, New York, or California. Very few stayed in their hometowns in the South.

MN: Did you have friends living in New York who helped you get situated?

JEB: Yes. I still had family living in New York. In the fifties, my mother's sister moved there with her husband when we were still young girls. My grandmother also left Thomasville and moved to New York.

Plus, my mother already had many cousins in New York because of the Great Migration. So there were so many relatives and friends from Thomasville in New York.

MN: [Joking] So it's like a Thomasville colony in New York City?

JEB: Yes!

MN: Which Borough did you move to first?

JEB: I went to live with my cousin in the Bronx.

MN: What was the address? The street in the Bronx.

JEB: Leggett Avenue.

MN: What were the big streets near there?

JEB: I can't remember. I can tell you more about where I live as an adult in the Bronx. My cousin lived at 941 Leggett Avenue. I can't remember where it was near.

MN: Was it an apartment building or property?

JEB: Apartment. I lived with my mother's cousin. It was actually my grandmother's first cousin. She was just wonderful. She never had children so just took me under her wings like I was the daughter she never had. And I lived with her for two years until I got established in New York.

MN: What profession did you pursue when you got to New York?

JEB: I did as so many of my classmates had done: we applied for the Department of Welfare. That was the magnet. They were hiring. The salary was decent. I'll never forget when I started. Mind you, I'm 22 years old. I graduated at the age of 21 in 1963. When I started working, I was still 21. When I joined the chapter Eta Omega Omega in 1964, I was only 22 years old. I tell everybody I was the baby of the chapter. That's why I think I'm one of the few surviving because most of them were in their forties, fifties, and even older. I admire Aura Marietta because she's 93 and still just as vibrant.

MN: Oh yes. And she's written two books in the last five years.

JEB: Can you imagine? And she just got married last year.

MN: Oh my God!

JEB: That's right.

MN: [Joking] This is a scary group of people. You're re-inventing.

JEB: We're awesome!

MN: So did you seek out the chapter or did the people?

JEB: I want you all to just try and picture this. When I went to work for the Department of Welfare, I was very young. It was my first job. When I started working, it wasn't long before I ran into this young lady and I recognized her from Talladega. Her name was Dolores Thea. She was a senior when I was a freshman. I said "Dolores!" You know Talladegians. When you meet each other, you hug. When we would go on holiday and come back to campus, we hugged each other like we haven't seen each other in all of our lives. So Dolores and I hugged and she says, "You know, another Talladegian is working here? Charles Carol." I didn't know him. Then she mentions another Talladegian by the name of Joan Drain. I didn't know her either because she had graduated in the spring of 1959 and I was a freshman in the fall of 1959. So I just missed her. She introduced me to Joan and we became very close friends. After about a year, the home economist, Oliver Garrett, approached everybody she knew was an AKA. She shared with us her dream of starting a Bronx chapter.

MN: Wow.

JEB: She was also from an HBCU. Oliver was the impetus for us recruiting other Bronxites to work with us because we wanted to pursue starting a Bronx chapter. That was fine for me. I was young and sorority life was still fresh for me. As we approached people, we found out that there were 11 of us.

I didn't know of the others, but I did meet Dora Dudley. I had never met her before. She graduated from Talladega in 1955. She had gone through college and life and a career blind. She was wonderful. She was also a part of this original group.

Anyway, we went through all the necessary actions to obtain our charter such as our articles of incorporation. In 1964, it was official. I'll never forget it. There was so much going on in the country in 1964 regarding the Civil Rights movement and sit-ins at colleges and universities. However, it wasn't just civil rights. It was just a lot going on countrywide. There was segregation. You name it. Although those were not necessarily the reason for us starting the Bronx chapter, it became something we

could pick up in terms of carrying through with Alpha Kappa Alpha's principles, motto, and mission. We wanted to create something to give back to the community and foster social change.

Plus Toa May Village, which was the Manhattan chapter, was huge. And most of us were accustomed to smaller chapters with more of a feeling of sisterhood and knowing each other.

[Zoom Glitch]

MN: What were some of the chapters in the years after it started?

JEB: The initial years were focused more on fundraising so that we could become established. As I've shared with Sorors April and Donna, I don't remember us having a whole lot of major issues initially. We were involved in some political activities such as supporting candidates who supported our mission, the African American community, and women. We were looking for politicians whose beliefs coincided with our beliefs.

But we did some fundraising. That was very important to get established. I wasn't active with the chapter for that long because I had decided I wanted to pursue graduate studies and kind of stepped back for a little bit. I didn't get that much involved after about three years.

MN: Now, where did you apply for graduate school

JEB: Hunter College.

MN: In social work?

JEB: Yes.

MN: That's a great school. A lot of my students aspire to go there and several have.

JEB: Right! I graduated in 1969.

MN: Did you stay in the Bronx after getting your hunter degree?

JEB: I did. From 1969 until 1973. I moved to Atlanta in January of 1974. I had been visiting my sister and her family during the holidays. As I came down each year, I became increasingly attracted to the South. Not that I wasn't happy in New York, but I think once you get the South in your blood you yearn to come back. I enjoy being with my sister and her family in New York. Mind you, my mother, aunt, grandmother, and friends were in New York. But I thought it was time to test something new.

I came down in November of 1973 to job hunt. I had a social work colleague who was active with the National Association of Black Social Workers and he gave me

some names of people that could connect me and set up interviews. I had one interview and it went so well that I didn't pursue any of the other contacts. I think I partied the rest of the time. The week I was there, I connected with my high school friends who lived in Atlanta and returned to New York. I got a call about a week later offering me the position of Clinical Director for a drug treatment program.

MN: Wow.

JEB: I called three moving companies, turned in my letter of resignation, and in January I was on the train moving south to Atlanta.

MN: Did you stay in the South?

JEB: I have been here ever since.

MN: Oh so you're in Atlanta now.

JEB: Oh yes! (Laughter) I've been here ever since 1974.

MN: Now was there a chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha in Atlanta?

JEB: We have about three or four chapters if not more. Now, Atlanta Metro is very big. You also have Atlanta Proper, Decater, and other college parts. So we have several chapters here. When I was relocating and trying to get situated, I went to some meetings. Before you knew it, I was getting married. I had a child a year later. I was focused on that and being a mom. I had never did become active after that other than supporting the chapter through events, fundraising, and recruiting members.

MN: Were most of the members of the chapters from HBCUs or were there other chapters being created at other universities which were predominantly white?

JEB: Where? Here in Metro Atlanta?

MN: Or in New York. Are chapters being started at places like the University of Michigan or Albany?

JEB: I'm sure. I'm not sure if the majority were from HBCUs or not.

MN: That's what I was curious about because what you're describing in your experiences is that there were these chapters at most of the HBCUs. I was wondering if after the sixties when more and more African-American students went to non-HBCUs, the sorority went to those places.

ETA MEMBER (Unknown): So Jackie came through undergraduate as did all of us on the call. Jackie went to school in the South and Sada and April went to school in New York City. I went to school in upstate New York. Those chapters did start, but

they started much later. Well, not really. Lambda was started earlier on, but my chapter in Rochester was started in 1981. The Albany chapter started in 1990. April, tell me when the chapter started.

APRIL: Lambda undergraduate chapter was established in 1922. It was a metropolitan chapter. It encompassed young women from colleges within the New York City area. So it was Hunter, City College, Columbia, NYU, and Baruch. I attended Baruch.

MN: I teach at Fordham University and my students of color, especially black students, feel that the university doesn't always make them feel welcome. I'm very interested in your thoughts about what this organization can do for young people at Fordham, SUNY Albany, or an HBCU.

ETA Member: New York City is a major city, so Lambda was able to have an undergraduate chapter earlier than some other places. We have an undergraduate chapter at Lehman, but the CUNY system is also part of Lambda. I was a graduate advisor about 10 years ago at Lehman and Fordham has some rules that have been passed down from generation to generation, so it tends to be a little more difficult to charter a chapter at Fordham. Previously, some members from Fordham could join the sorority through the Lambda chapter.

MN: If you send me information about the Lambda chapter, I can share it with some of the students I work with. I think it might provide an alternative source of community and solidarity, which they are looking for. One of the things I want to do now is take a famous picture.

[Zoom issues]

MN: So everybody smile!

[Zoom Issues]

[Jackie reconnects to Zoom]

JEB: Yes. I missed everything you said. And I missed everything that April said.

ETA MEMBER: I was answering Professor Naison's question about undergraduates. I was just saying that major cities across the country that are highly populated tend to have chapters that were started years ago. So April told us that the Lambda chapter was started. I know Lambda's the oldest undergraduate chapter that I know.

JEB: I have so many friends that were initiated in Lambda who are native New Yorkers.

ETA Member: Although Rochester is a major city in New York, they didn't have enough people to start a chapter. The Rochester undergraduate chapter started in 1981 at the University of Rochester and they still couldn't keep enough members to keep the chapter. So it later expanded to a city chapter: RIT, St. John Fisher, and Nazareth.

ETA Member: And can I say one thing as well? You asked about Fordham University. April and I are line sisters and three of our line sisters were from Fordham. Two were from the Bronx, and one was at Lincoln Center. So Lambda has always taken students from Fordham University.

MN: That's good. That's good to know. Many young people are out there trying to change how we deal with race and our history. Are there any things you would like to say to young people in the Black Lives Matter Movement that you have learned from your experience?

JEB: Right. When I look back to the sixties, I think we've come a long way. There's no question about it. But there's just so much still to be done. And John Lewis certainly preached that loud and clear. The young people were so brave and determined. They had such tenacity. They knew that the right thing to do to bring about social change was to be out there and fight for what you deserve.

And I would say to young people today, this is no different now. And I am encouraged when I see more support for young people today. Young people need to be determined and tenacious in terms of keeping social justice at the forefront of equality, education, and health care. We're not there yet. We've got a lot of work to do. I was telling some people that when the Black Lives Matter movement started, and we saw police brutality occurring, I said, "I'm tired." I went through this in the sixties. I thought that we would go beyond this. I said, I'm 78 years old and I'm tired. When is social change going to come? We've got to look at the morals involved. People know what's morally right. I don't want people to give up. I wish they learn something from the icons who are no longer with us. There's something to be said about a nonviolent approach. It did work. We did get the civil rights act passed. We did get the voting rights act passed.

[Zoom Issues]

We've come a long way in 55 years, but we've got a long way to go. Like John Lewis and Martin Luther King Jr. once said, we've got to hold on. We deserve it.

MN: I want to thank you for those inspiring words. The more contact I have with this organization, the more I see the depth of its influence in virtually every part of the United States. There's quite a story here. I have a slight anecdote. I have a 16-year-old granddaughter who is a leader in this social justice movement in her school and community. I'm so excited that she will be joining the interview tomorrow because

she's one of those people who has the fire inside her. I work with students every day who have a fire inside them. They're not letting them off the hook. They are relentless. But they're also considerate in the way they express themselves and give people the opportunity to learn and grow, which is also very important.

Is there anything else you'd like to say to the world since the world will be viewing this? Just to let you know, we have a digital site in Fordham libraries where all the interviews will be posted and people from all over the world will consult these. In probably 50 different countries. So you've got a chance to preach to a large audience. Is there anything else you'd like to say to the world?

JEB: I know that it was Alpha Kappa Alpha that was the impetus for you taking on this project. I want to end with that being at the forefront. It's a wonderful organization. I have been inspired since meeting Darla, Donna, and April last year. For them to come to my home and hear what the chapter continues to do validates our goal and our purpose of 56 years ago. So keep up the good work Soros. Keep up the good work. I think Greek organizations have much to contribute to our communities and Alpha Kappa Alpha has never short-shot their mission.

MN: Now is Kamala Harris a Soror?

JEB: I hear that she is, yes.

MN: I have this feeling about what's going to happen. She's been my pick for over a year. I even went on a trip to Cuba and made a wager about it. That's gonna be exciting for you and the country. Okay. So thank you so much. It's an honor to listen to your story. To be continued.

JEB: All right. Thank you so much.

ETA Member: So we have some questions if Professor Naison wants to stay.

MN: Do you have some questions for me?

JEB: I have some questions for soror Jackie.

MN: Oh, please. I'm not going anywhere

April: Jackie, welcome again. I just want to thank Sorda and April for being so diligent. I know you talked about undergraduate when you became a member and when you were initiated. From when you graduated in 1963 to chartering the chapter in 1964, what have been your fondest memories?

JEB: Wow. The camaraderie. We were just so determined that this was going to

happen. You know what I'm saying? When you have a goal and you know how important it is to achieve that goal, you'll do all that it takes to make it happen. We all came from some disparate. When I say that, I mean we didn't know each other, except for the three Taladegians. We became so close. I remember we would meet in each other's homes. We didn't have a meeting site per se but Soror Bland, Glen Bland, did have a daycare center. That was pretty much the place that we usually ended up meeting. It was just the determination to succeed and having a Bronx chapter. And we did it. You are a living example of that success. We had some fundraisers which were all amazing. [Glen] was just a real role model. Her tenacity and her perseverance to make this happen. And we did. A small group. But we knew that when we had fundraisers, we needed people to come and write checks. One year we honored Soror Melba Moore at one of our luncheons. And that was a draw because we packed the house. She was a hit on Broadway at the time. And so I think she was at Purley. It was a good turnout.

Those were the kinds of things that have good memories for me. As the chapter grew in recruiting new ones, I remember Carolyn Bowman, who you will be interviewing tomorrow. When she found out that I was pursuing the MSW at Hunter College, she had already graduated. She was so sweet. She gave me some papers and things like that very, it was like sisters helping one another. We help each other but we know there's no other. That was a testament to how important it is that we help support each other in any way. Good memories.

ETA Member: You took me down memory lane. When I graduated from college, I joined Alpha Eta Omega Omega. I was 21 turning on 22. We used to meet at the NAACP and the elders would be in the front row. So I had an opportunity to meet Soror Thora. So when you mentioned her name earlier, I said "Oh my goodness!" So you got me Jackie. I wrote here that today is the 55th anniversary of the voting rights act. You mentioned the Civil Rights movement when you were initiated and then chartering the chapter. What do you think is the most pressing issue today? I know we spoke about Black Lives Matter. Do you think there are any other movements or areas that you would like to see the chapter focus on?

JEB: Public education. That bothers me. Low-income, African-American, and other students of color are just getting shortchanged and not getting a quality education. People who can make a difference don't seem to care. Not all of them. It's very troubling. I'm so glad that the democratic party does have education on its list of priorities on its platform. That troubles me so much. I can't even begin to tell you. Public education is taking a back seat to private and charter schools. They all have their place, of course. But I'm troubled by it. I would like to see the sorority work with those movers and shakers who could make a difference in making sure that public education gets the attention that it warrants.

ETA Member: Absolutely. Every time you mentioned the 12 charter members, but the

chapter is now almost 11 times larger.

JEB: Right, right.

ETA Member: What advice would you give? We range from ages 24 through 100 currently. What advice would you turnkey to us in terms of any suggestions as a charter member? Is there anything that you would have foreseen us doing or not doing something that you might want to see us doing?

JEB: Well, I've just been so impressed now that I'm a Facebook friend and with all the chapter is doing with the teams and service to the community. You really are shining stars. And if all the other 11 members could see where the chapter is now, they would burst with pride. You're on the right track. I'm just, I'm inspired.

MN: In terms of public education, I want to tell you something very exciting. A great Bronx principal was just elected to the U S Congress, Shamal Pohlman. He is a fierce advocate of public education. He is going to shake things up in Washington. I worked very closely with him at the school. He founded Cornerstone Academy for Social Action and several of my students worked for his campaign. So I think there's a lot of energy in the direction you're talking about among the younger, more progressive people getting elected to the democratic party. Public education is absolutely something that must be supported.

JEB: Exactly. Exactly. I hope that answered your question.

ETA Member: Yes, I think you did answer it. I appreciate that. And I will definitely turn key that to the chapter in September. I'm not sure if Sorda or April have any questions. I did want to talk about when you were initiated in 1960. Because we're in a pandemic, we can't honor your golden year, but as soon as 2021 comes, I would love for you to come home so that we can honor you in the chapter.

JEB: Absolutely. Yeah. I've got to come up to New York. I've got babies up there. My nephew and his family live in New Rochelle. My niece and her family live in Manhattan. I'm not going to see them this year. So yeah. As soon as I get there, we're going to connect.

ETA Member: Yes. That would be lovely. We had an opportunity to honor our first diamond. Carolyn Bowman is a golden, but we only have one. So it would be amazing to honor you in January 2021.

JEB: Well, that sounds good to me. Thank you. Thank you so much.

MN: I also want to tell you that your beautiful faces are already on my Facebook page.

JEB: Oh, wow. That's amazing. You're unaware of this, but I just retired in 75 from

my full-time job as a nonprofit agency executive, but I continued to teach part-time at Georgia State University until three years ago. I'm 75. This is it. I'm throwing in the towel. I know how important it is for your students to know that their professors are working and doing things other than standing up in front of them in the classroom.

MN: Yeah. I'm starting my 50th year at Fordham this fall. I started teaching here in 1970.

JEB: Oh my goodness.

MN: Yeah. I'm 74. If you love what you do, it keeps you young.

JEB: Yes, that's right. That's what I told everybody.

MN: You're just beginning clearly.

ETA Member: Sorda, did you have a question?

ETA Member: Yes. You really brought to life soror Olga. Soror Marietta brought her to life for us. We've gotten through your oral memories. I have to say this is the right time to surprise Madame Vasciles because we connected with her granddaughter. We got a copy of the plaque that the chapter gave to her as well as a picture of her in her later years. So we connected with her granddaughter. Her daughter is a soror. Soror Jones Spy also gave us a lot of updated information and pictures. So we'll have them on our website.

ETA Member: Sorda is the hardest working. Silent in the background.

ETA Member: April too. Honestly, the whole archive committee. This is something we believe in. So I thank you as well.

JEB: Well, thank goodness for Facebook because I would not have found you folks.

MN: Oh facebook!

JEB: On Facebook, sometimes you'll get this pop-up that says "people you may know." One day last year around springtime it said "ETA Omega Omega." I said it can't be two. I immediately clicked on add friend. And I put in there, "My name is Jacqueline Everette Brown. I am a charter member. I am just blown away. I can't believe that I have reconnected with ETA Omega Omega." Was it you April who immediately responded or someone else?

ETA Member: Yes, yes.

JEB: I can't remember. The rest is history. They started courting me Dr. Naison. (imitating) "Oh, we want to hear this, send us pictures, let us know this, and tell us about Joan." They didn't know where Joan was. I told them she had just passed.

Social media has its merits.

ETA Member: Absolutely. Absolutely. And it is refreshing when we have an event and I see your comment or you like it because you want to carry the torch of the charter members.

JEB: Thank you. Thank you. It means a lot.

ETA Member: So April, do you have any questions?

ETA Member: Um, no. I just want to thank you Jackie and Professor Naison. And also thank you for just working with our chapter and putting this together. It's definitely something that we are very passionate about. I am the historian of our chapter and on the archives committee. So it's something that we are committed and passionate about. (Referring to connecting on Facebook). The timing was impeccable because we've been working hard to document the chapter's history. It's almost like finding your relative who has been lost and now you're putting the pieces together. It feels just like that.

ETA Member: I also thank you Professor Naison. I know I'm younger, but I remember when I was in college and it came time to do research, you would go to the library and get the microfiche. Do you guys remember that? You pull up the different articles and print them in black and white. And to think that maybe 50 years from now, somebody will be able to pull up an actual video and see you and hear you talk about fundraisers, Melba Moore, the Civil Rights movement, and connecting it to things of today. Thank you for this opportunity. I think we get creative in a pandemic because we wanted it face-to-face.

MN: Right. I'll just give you an example. My students created this Bronx COVID-19 oral history project. They've done 18 interviews. There were 4,000 views of their site. When this goes up on Fordham's digital site, lots of people are going to see these interviews.

MN: Lots of things in the digital age

JEB: Well, absolutely.

ETA Member: You never know the impact. Absolutely. The first interview we did with Professor Nasion, he posted on Facebook. I kept on asking, "How does he know that person?" We had friends in common and didn't even know. It's great. I'm glad that you are tech-savvy and can call in. And Sorda and April were able to make this happen. Thank you Professor Naison.

MN: These are very powerful interviews because of the range of history they cover. The South in the fifties and sixties is a mythical experience they read about

in textbooks, which often doesn't capture that you had communities, mentors, and great schools that serviced African-American communities. Before he became a national figure in the representatives of the United Nations, Andy Young was a young minister in a small town in Southern Georgia. Doing great things then. These are important stories for the next generation. This is very impressive and very vital.

JEB: Well, thank you. Good to have met you

MN: Likewise. If you want to be my Facebook friend, email me so I can eliminate somebody. I'm at the 5,000-person limit. So I have to get rid of somebody inactive.

JEB: [Laughing] Give me your email address.

MN: It's Naison@fordham.edu. I will get rid of somebody.

JEB: All right. Thank you. Okay.

MN: Take care, everybody. We'll see you tomorrow for the fourth of these interviews. Everybody stay safe.

JEB: Absolutely.

[End of Tape]