

California State University, San Bernardino

## CSUSB ScholarWorks

---

Bridges that Carried Us Over Digital Archive

Special Collections & University Archives

---

11-29-2008

### Frances Grice

Wilmer Amina Carter Foundation

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/bridges>

---

#### Recommended Citation

Wilmer Amina Carter Foundation, "Frances Grice" (2008). *Bridges that Carried Us Over Digital Archive*. 12. <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/bridges/12>

This Oral History is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Collections & University Archives at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bridges that Carried Us Over Digital Archive by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@csusb.edu](mailto:scholarworks@csusb.edu).

# Bridges that Carried Us Over Project

## Interview Summary

**Interviewee:**

Frances Grice

**Interviewer:**

Carolyn Tillman

**Interview Date:**

November 29, 2008

**Location:**

San Bernardino, California

**Interview Summary completed by:**

Jennifer Tilton, 2021

---

**Description:**

Frances Grice discusses her move to San Bernardino in 1961 to join her aunt Valerie Pope, and how her hopes for the California dream were challenged as she encountered housing and schools that were more segregated than in her hometown of Detroit. She described the tight community network that she forged, and how this community helped her raise her kids as a single-working mother and community activist. She describes how the League of Community Mothers began initially out of frustration with cuts to busing that impacted black and Mexican kids on the westside more than white kids, and how she drew on her experience with the civil rights movement in Detroit to inform her campaign to desegregate the public schools in San Bernardino. Frances Grice provides important details about how the League of Community Mothers and their allies organized to put pressure on the school board, through protest and lobbying state and federal leaders for support. She describes collaborations with CORE, NAACP and the Precinct Reporter, as well as tensions over political strategy within the Black community and white racist responses to Black civil rights protests in San Bernardino. Frances Grice explains how she built Operation Second Chance, worked with the Community Action Groups during the War on Poverty, and collaborated closely with Mayor Holcomb and other city leaders to get San Bernardino declared an All-American City in 1977. She shares her losses dealing with the death of her children as well as her hope on the election of President Barack Obama.

**Keywords:**

- Housing Segregation
- School Desegregation
- Freedom Schools
- League of Community Mothers
- Franklin Junior High
- War on Poverty
- Community Action Agencies
- Mayor Bob Holcomb
- Art Townsend
- Bob Parker
- Richard & Bobby Coles
- Norris Gregory
- Operation Second Chance
- Barack Obama election
- Community organizing
- San Bernardino (Calif.)

**Key Events:**

- School Boycott
- Freedom Schools
- State School Board meeting
- Meeting with Vice President Humbert Humphries
- NAACP Lawsuit against SBUSD
- Founding Operation Second Chance
- War on Poverty
- San Bernardino All-American City 1977

**Key Organizations:**

- St. Bernardine's Hospital
- League of Community Mothers
- Operation Second Chance
- NAACP
- CORE
- Dependency Prevention Commission
- Community Action Groups
- Precinct Reporter
- New Hope Baptist Church
- The Deacons
- Black Fathers
- Westside Action Group

**Spatial Coverage:**

Name of Site (if relevant)	General Location/Address
Beverly Apartments	1196 17th St.
Franklin Junior High	1250 Medical Center Dr.
Evans St Home 1965	1585 W. Evans St
Muscupabe Neighborhood	N/A
West Side Drop in Center	1700 W. Highland
Public Enterprise Center Operation Second Chance	1505 W. Highland

**Temporal Coverage:**

- 1961-2008

**Comments:**

The video of this interview has been lost and all that remains is this transcript.

**Full interview transcript can be found below.**

## Interview Transcript

### Start of Interview

**Carolyn:** This is an interview on November, the 29th with **Frances** Grice, an oral history....

**Frances:** I was twenty-nine years old when I came....

**Carolyn:** I want you to tell me a little bit about your journey from Detroit to San Bernardino. When you got to San Bernardino what did you observe, what did you see and how did you get involved in community organizing in San Bernardino? Just tell me your story. When you came to San Bernardino, what was it like and how did you get oriented to the community? Who did you get to know at first; who were the people and places you got to know and when did the issues start?

**Frances:** I came to San Bernardino with my two children, and I never will forget, it was December 19 `961 about 1962. I remember driving from Detroit and there was a snowstorm. I went from Detroit to Chicago. In Chicago, I had a relative there that met me. I stayed with them and the next day, I went on to... They put me on the freeway going to St. Louis. My father had arranged that I... the AAA, to have me routed from here to San Bernardino. One of the reasons I came here, was two reasons: One, was my Aunt Valerie Pope had not too long came and stopped in San Bernardino and was working at Patton. When I decided to come to California, the Mother Superior, at Providence Hospital, which is the same order of nuns, The Daughters of Charity, owned St. Bernardine's, Healthcare West. The Mother Superior at Providence Hospital, didn't want to see me go and she said, "If you gotta to go, don't go to L.A. with the two children. We have a hospital in San Bernardino." Valerie was there and I said, "Oh"... I said, " Well" ... she says, " I will call and get you a job." She called the Mother Superior and wrote me a letter of introduction. I had just finished my, Inhalation Therapist, but the license didn't qualify here. I left there and started on the journey, which was the biggest journey of my life and basically, it was like my second chance. Everybody always say, " Frances Grice, why did you name that Second Chance?" Because I had a second chance in life.

I didn't know it then but as I drove in the storm and I got to St Louis and it was storming and it was like ten below zero and cars was freezing and I just got in my car an drove on. I had never seen a mountain in my life and all of a sudden, after I had left out of St Louis, these great, big, ugly things appeared. One of them was the Ozarks and I'm driving and Anthony' s twelve years old and Darlene is four or something like that and there we are driving... the storm... and then when we got to the Ozarks... I asked the man... First of all I kept going around in St. Louis' s bridge. I says, "God, if you don't make that right turn, you '11 end up going back around the bridge again!" ... "all this morning" an so, when I got to the hotel, finally where I was supposed to be... the man said... I called

and told him that I would be late and then the man says, "Well"... I says, " What is that water that you keep going around this bridge... you know, it was at five o'clock in the daytime, you know, I says, " I kept goin' around this bridge getting caught in traffic. The man said, "That's the Mississippi River." I said, "Well, what is it doing in St. Louis?" (laugh). The man says, " Lady, you're gonna drive to where and don't know your geography no better than that?!"

Then I drove on and... the Lord just blessed me because I got to the Ozarks and it was snowing and the man said, You don't have no chains?" I said, " What is chains?" you know... I come from Michigan... but I never drove that much in Michigan. There's me and Anthony... and then the trucks...I had a little Falcon station wagon and here come these trucks just zooming down and every time they passed my little car, they would just shake. Anthony would sit in the back and say, " Ma, here comes a truck!" I'd pull over to the side, wait till the truck go by. It took me twelve days to get to California. Finally...and I never got lost...I never had a flat tire, I never had...it was like God carried me through. I never got lost, I never had a flat, I never ran into the incident. I'd make it to a hotel or call AAA and they'd get me another hotel closer by... ' cause I was always late where I was supposed to be ' cause I wasn't driving... well, I found out, 250 miles a day. Finally, when I came... I'll never forget... when I got to Cajon Pass and I came down that mountain and I seen that valley, it was just... it came like a kinship. That this is the valley that I come to, and somehow I knew that was San Bernardino. I came here with all the desires..."Oh, if I can't make it here, I could just be asleep in the park and grab an orange!" I very idealistic about California and all the golden things it could do. The city of milk and honey and plenty! There I had all these perceptions about California only to get down that hill and come to realization.

Every time I tried to find a place to stay, when I got here... I stayed with Val a little while, and then I said I need to get on my own and get my life started with my children and get them settled and things 'cause she had a house full of kids herself. So I says,

"Well, Lord..." and I kept driving and every time I'd go to a real estate office, they'd send me back across the bridge. I said, " I don't want to live over there, I want to be able to go over here." It was bright, new and. .. over there on the other side of the freeway, you know? They kept sending me back to Helen James and to Talmadge Hughes and said, "Oh, we got some good real estate people that can help you!" I says, " How come you can't help me?" That was my first feeling that there was something wrong in this community. This beautiful valley that I'd seen, something was wrong. Then I noticed that all of the black people lived on the other side of the freeway and all of the white people lived on the other side of the freeway. I became concerned about that and kind of looked at it and I finally was able to... and God just was in the plan, he just had decided that, you know, he took my life and he just was working with me. I guess like Obama, you know, all doors are open...

I'm looking for a place and was driving down Terrell and they had just built the Beverly Apartments. Brand new, beautiful apartments and I just happened to drive

by there and say, " Oh, some apartments!" The owners was there , the developers and I says, "Oh, when are these apartments gonna open?" The man said ... obviously he seen the little two kids there... and he say's "Well, we haven't hired a manager yet, the manager won't be coming for a couple of days." I says , "Oh", I says, Well I need to get an apartment and you know, I don' t have references here but you know, I'm gonna be working at the hospital and I gotta get straightened out before I start my job." He says, " When do you start your job?" and I says, "Monday" and it was around Wednesday, so he says, " Well, the manager ' s gonna come in maybe tomorrow and I'm gonna talk them and here's my number, call me."

I called him the next day and..., "Here' s, you got the apartment". So I said, "Can I see it?" He said, " Yes." So he came over...' cause the managers wasn't there... and he showed me the apai1ment. I had my worldly things in my station wagon. There was a refrigerator, there was a counter and there was a stove, built in, so it meant that I didn't have to worry about that. All I had to get was a kitchen table, and I got two twin beds and I went to Westerfelt, remember Wester felt, and I went to Westerfelt and got these twin beds and they had a couch and the man threw in a lamp.

So I moved in the apartments, backdated the manager and guess who the manager was? Jay Reesby Clark (laugh). Her and her husband, he was in the military. It's us and later on it became... most of all the people that moved in there were from the military, at Norton... and one of ' em was, Georgia Morris, who lived across the...right across from me. Her and my son... her son and my son was the same age, so they became very good friends. I started to work and Peggy Holly... don't know whether you remember Vance and Peggy Holly? They lived down the court and JoAnne...I forget what her name is... She was head over the drill team. [JoAnne Parker]. That little court just had a group of people there that... we all became... So, I didn' t have to have a babysitter, 'cause I started to work and I'd work from three to eleven and I would get the kids ready, cook the dinner and get the kids ready and they could stay out on the porch and never leave out of the court and Georgia would watch 'em and Jay would watch 'em and everybody would watch the kids. Then Georgia would put 'em in the room ai1d lock the doors...you know... and I would come home at eleven o' clock. Then I started working at County Hospital. So I switched and start working from three to eleven at County Hospital and start working from... the morning shift at St. B's. Then I start working at Community Hospital... so I had three jobs. I was working on my off days, on call at Community. It took all that to live with two children, just starting off again. I worked there and then I became an Inhalation Therapist at the County Hospital, they really liked me a lot... so they sent me back to school to be retrained because of the license here. Everybody liked me at County and I was working in Contagious Disease and.... That's where I met your... your grandmother, me and her worked together at County Hospital. She worked in Pediatrics and I worked in Pediatrics and Contagious Disease and would go back and forth. So we became good friends and... You know... everybody would cover for me while I went home to lunch to check on the kids. So God just worked it out and I met right people and so then after I worked there for years.

All of the sudden, we moved on Evans Street at Carroll's house. It was a bigger house and it was... you know...it was a nice place... and Johnny Carroll. He leased his house out and he leased it to me; which was next door to Bonnie Johnson. When I moved over there and they got ready to go to school, well [her son?], had been going to... by Rio Vista, she was going to Arrowhead. They was sending him to Franklin. I said, "Franklin ain' t got no air condition, all them black kids over there fightin' each other and mean. The school and lookin' right!" I says, "I want my child to still go to Arrowview." They says, "He can't, he has to go over there in the neighborhood. " I says, " Well I think that... you know... he should be able to... you know... go over there." So I couldn't have no understanding. He was doing well, his grades was good... you know... everything was working out... you know. I didn't have to worry about him... you know... and things like that, so I says, "Well... "

Then they start busing, and all of the sudden they cut the bus transportation back so that the children would not be able... The black kids couldn't catch the bus or the Hispanic kids that lived on the West Side. It was only if you live up in... way up in Devonshire... I mean... you know... up in Devore... I mean, not Devore but over by Mount Muscoy and places and you'd see the kids drivin'. It had to be three miles. So all of the kids that lived in the San Berna... you know... in the West Side, was not eligible to ride the bus. They would be walking by and it would be pouring down rain and the white kids would be riding by, laughing at 'em... you know... people up there from 40th and all those places where everybody lived. They would be passin' by wavin' at our kids and we're struggling in the rain and you had to take 'em and some mothers was working or fathers was working and we said, "This ain' t right!".

Then I start knocking on doors. I start asking people, "Do you think this is right?" "Shouldn't we do something about this?" "Because it ' s not fair that busloads of white kids go by, our children is out there walking." " When it gets hot, there goin' to be out there in the hot sun walking." People start saying, " Yeah, you' re right". ... and then other people... I said,... you know... "Why should our kids have to go..." Because I came from Michigan where I had went to an integrated school. I said, "Why should our kids be caught up in going to an all black school?" "How come?" You know, I lived in a Czechoslovakian, Yugoslavian neighborhood; Italian, where... you know... where it was not about the color of your skin. Miss Barrel, Joe Louis' s sister, taught there. There were black teachers there and counselors and white teachers but there was children of all races going there. I just couldn't understand why we all had to be lumped on the West Side, which I ended up in there too. With the Beverly's, you outgrew 'em and then we all had to be put into segregated schools that I felt wasn't equal.

We started the League of Mothers. Didn't know anybody so we said, " Okay, Bonnie, you be president." What was Valerie? She was something like the... she liked to go to the newspaper all the time so we made her the media public relations and I was the...as they called...,"the sleazy, that little spokesman" (laugh). We started then this movement. As we started this movement , hundreds and hundreds of people started to join in our movement; of all colors , of all races. Then C.O.R.E. and Richard Cole and them was chairman of C.O.R.E. and Willie Wilburn, Sam Martin and they all came, we



all came together. God just kinda brought it together. C.O.R.E. had a little house that was right next to the Jeri Velvet Lounge. Richard Cole used to wear these umbrella lookin' like ' Lil Abner', with one string across... he was a contractor. Clyde Alexander and everybody... you know...and we started to protesting and Art Townsend was our mentor. He became very close to us and the Precinct Reporter had just started. Art and Sam was putting the paper together in Art's kitchen, on the kitchen table; it was two pieces of paper; you placed it together , one and you fold it and that was the Precinct Reporter. He started promoting us and the League of Mothers... me, Bonnie and Val and Miss Lawndry and all the people. Clabe Hangen and then...

I was very involved in Detroit, politically, just before I left. My daughter 's, godfather, who was very political, his brother was the \_\_\_ \_ \_ G. William' s administrative assistant and then...Congressman ... I'll think of his name in a minute. He was a cong... he just got elected congress. I had my mother, everybody workin' and I had my big, first luncheon that I organized and things and they all didn' t... Conyers... Congressman John Conyers and Mr. Brown and they said, " Oh well ... " I said, " I want to do somethin', you Guys have all these high muckety-mucks over here but I want to do something for the little people and I want to invite the churches. I got together and he gave me the permission to do it, and I organized this Women's Luncheon. They did think... They said, " She's not gonna have two hundred people there, she's not gonna have three hundred." I ended up with four hundred people; all the churches, all the First Ladies, all the choirs and my first speech and they were proud, it was very successful. I was very involved with Mr. Brown who was very political; his sister ran, " One America " and he was a very political man. He was my daughter 's, godfather and he was the one responsible for me to come. He says... I called Mr. Brown and I says, " Oh, Mr. Brown, this is happening and that's happening and this is horrible! " He says, " Frances, there 's something that they just passed called the 1964 Civil Rights Act and I'm gonna send it to you and I want you to take this to the school board and I want you to organize your group around the 1964 Civil Rights Act. They just passed it. It talks about equal opportunity in education. " He sent me that and then so we start talking about equality in education. Then we said, " There is no black principals but one and that was Betty Anderson. " We said, " There was no black officials in the school district; not one counselor, not one black superintendent, there was no blacks nowhere in the administration of the school district. " There was very few black teachers. Mrs. Holder was one, and you could count 'em on your one hand and we said, " We believe that even though we're talking about equal opportunity, we also want equal opportunity for teachers and for professionals and counselors and administrators and we want that equal too! " We start protesting.

Then the... one time we was on our thing, we created Freedom Schools. When we created Freedom Schools, all these people started to... the whites was very mean and they started to coming out. Very racist white people started to coming. One time we had the little speaker on my car and we went over by Muscupiabe and they caught us over there and the police had to escort us out. They claimed we had hit some little kid and we had not hit nobody and they was gonna lynch us right there. The Ku Klux Klan was

marchin' down E Street in full regalia. They' d get to the end of E Street where the... just above the Castaways there and put up their cross and burn it. We was in shock because all this stuff started coming out and we said, "Oh, my God, this is horrible!" ... you know... We had never seen nothing like that. We' d go to the school board and we went to the school board for three to four years.

Then they started to playing a game of divide and conquer. So they came to us and says, " Well, you know, we will support you but you will have to make certain people in charge; Bonnie can' t be in charge. Maybe Anne Shirells, somebody of character." It was horrible and we're sitting up there and they're calling me a sleazy little spokesman. They're calling Valerie all kind of names and we're sitting up there, and we can' t believe this is happening. We went to Art and we had this huge meeting. The power structure was there, and they said, "We want to change the leadership of the community League of Mothers. Art Townsend came and says, "No, The Mothers, cannot be changed, The Mothers stand as they are. They are mothers in this community, and everybody has a right to fight for their child. Regardless of what anybody thinks, we don't judge, we're there because they're concerned about their children. We will not tolerate anybody choosing a leader to fight for their children and then you will comment. If you can't work with us, fine!" These were blacks. Then we had the blacks over here, the white bigots over here, then we had the school board over here and that's when we understood the power of politics.

All of the sudden we seen that the school board had so much power and influence beyond the school district. Dr. Miller was there, he had brought all these babies into the world and we said, "Dr. Miller, you love black babies, you bring ' em in here, now you don't want 'em educated." We can't believe this...you know... and people respected him because he had brought all these children into the world. He was there and sometimes he would be fuming and everything so we couldn't get anywhere there. They went and found Chauncey Spencer, which, God bless him, was a security guard and then made him a spokesman for the school district. He became the spokesman. I said, " The security ... this was the... the janitor and the security guard; y'all done made him the head. Y' all can 't do no better than that?" The position that he held, y' all didn't even raise him up to position, y'all left him, y' all just let him speak as authority.

We then went to Sacramento and Max Rafferty, who was the State Superintendent, had applied for a job here. They said he wasn't qualified, so he always hated San Bernardino. When he found out that we was up there protesting San Bernardino, even though he did not believe in our cause, he supported us and the League of Mothers and he said, "They' re right, they should..." This man was just the opposite, he was the same as they were, but he had a chance to get even. He became our very dear friend. He supported us. While we were there, Dr. Riles, was the Assistant Superintendent of Schools, and he talked about the children. He was just so... just such a beautiful man. So we told him... he says, "Well, the State Board of Education is where you gotta go but you guys will never get on the agenda."

There was a man that was also over... I think he was over higher education, Dr. Paul Lawrence, black man. Dr. Paul Lawrence. We went to him, me, Valerie and Bonnie. We were the only ones up there. He says, "You can't... " We said, "They said we can't get before the board." He made a call. He said, "Y'all get on that plane and I'm not... Don't mention that I did anything or said anything. Y'all get there." So when we got to the State Board of Education meeting, they called us and this man that was on the board; he was a black fella, I forget his name now but he was a doctor and he says, "I believe that there are some women out there that has something to present to us that's not on the agenda. I'd like to defer the agenda... 'cause we were about almost finished with the agenda ... to hear these ladies' presentation." So we got up there and we started talkin'. We start telling the board about how our children, they were put into schools that had no air conditioning. That it was hot and that there was no... that they were not kept up and there was no black counselors or no black principals and no black administrators.

We start telling them about how they would... we could watch and the buses would go by and our children would be in the rain and the storm, trying to walk because very few people had cars; a lot of the poor people didn't have cars and they were walking in the rain and the kids would wave at 'em 'cause they didn't know any different, and they would wave at 'em and we saw how unfair this was and we just started and at the end, I says,... you know... , "We believe this to be true and if it is true, go find out for yourself. As members of the State Board of Education, you have the responsibility to find out if these kind of things is happening, and we're losing children every day. If we're wrong, we'll accept it but if we're right, for God's sake, help us!" I just broke down in tears and everybody's tears and those school board members was in tears and all of a sudden they got on the phone, they said, " We want the San Bernardino School Board here immediately!" We got back home, here was they had this called meeting. Dr. Miller was in his uniform with his scrub gown on and they was having these meeting. They said, "Them League of Mothers done went up there and lied to the Board of Education!" and " Awww this and that and that and that!" Oh, and they performed!

Then they called them down there and they told them, they said, " We're gonna find out, we're gonna send a investigator, we're gonna see!" Well, at that time, Riverside was just starting their program to desegregate the schools, the same time we did. They burnt down two schools and had instant integration. We took the League... so then we formed, Freedom Schools. When we formed them Freedom Schools, people from all races, all the white people came, and C.O.R.E. came down and they sent people from Dr. King 's movement and all the people...people from all over the country came to help us set up these Freedom Schools like they did in the South. We had Freedom Schools everywhere in people' s houses and storefronts and church basements and everything and we boycotted the school system. Thousands and thousands of mothers kept their children out of the school. Clabe Hangan was the principal of the Freedom School. We had teachers and... white teachers, brown teachers, black teachers; we had all these teachers.

Burt Corona and all the Hispanics from all the Civil Rights Movement. Everybody came to help, and this movement was so big. The system was just 'bout to go crazy... you know... so they start losing ADA money so then they came and said, "You must go back to school!" We did not and the kids was learning so much. Then they said, "If you don't go back to school, we're gonna cut off the welfare checks, and we're not gonna help." There the Mothers were, we had this meeting. Every day it was a crisis. If you go back and check the Sun Telegram back in the '60s, you will see, every day... If you go back to the Precinct Reporter, every day there was a crisis. Art would present... Oh, Art was there, and Sam was there talking and had editorials about the League of Mothers. We were front page in the Precinct Reporter so all the white people start to... running to get the Precinct Reporter before it got off the press!" What are they gonna do now? What are they saying about us?" Then Art would send the papers all over the country to all the officials and schools and everywhere all over the country and they did not need all this bad publicity you know. Then we started talkin' about their ESA, Title I money. It was federal funds and we wanted to stop the Title I money and all of that... you know... and Dr. Riles... so...after we started to getting involved with all that, everybody got afraid ... you know. They said, "Oh, we gotta do something about these mothers; they out of school and they got these Freedom Schools. These people could keep these schools for years." They threatened and then the mother' s cried, they literally cried. They said, " We don't want to leave you guys but we won't be able to take care of the family. We'll still come out and picket, we'll still do whatever you say." Every Thursday night, you could not get in the school board. There were people lined all around the corner. Bonnie has some pictures that Harry Carson took. She asked me could she have those pictures when Alice died and she says, "I will give you... I'll have copies made.

It shows me sitting in the school board, her sitting in the school board. When Brookins was there and all the big civil rights people came...you know... and all of that. We had Sweeney, Charles Sweeney there and we had our children sing, "For years of slavery: Yesterday denial and today's fight for equal rights." We had Bobby Kennedy hanging in the middle of that and Anthony was singing, "My buddy, your buddy misses you!" at the Masonic Auditorium. We were giving all these things... you know... to show the community the past and the history and my friend in Detroit, my... you know... my child' s godfather was telling me all the processes we should use to educate people, to make them aware... you know. Most of them came from the South and was aware but we had to remind them. So we had that about...

We had another forum called, The Negro Youth Speaks For Himself, and Dwayne Clark and Jim Sweeney all those young men was there with...Linda Sargent and all those young people was the Negro Youth... or the Black Youth Speak For Themselves. And the first Black History program, Mr. Slush had...he was a school teacher... he started the first Black... His wife... His sister...married Merv Dymally. In the meantime, Bradley was comin' down, Dymally was comin' down and then when we had our children sing, "For years of slavery, yesterday denied; For equal rights... ", Dr. King sent Abernathy to represent him, 'cause he was... had a conflict

in schedule and Abernathy came to the Masonic Auditorium and spoke. We had all these people that were coming in and then, Lou Smith from Operation Bootstrap, he came in and the head of C.O.R.E., McKissick came in and all of the people from all of the Civil Rights Movement. We was the premier of the Civil Rights Movement and many people don't realize that we had one of the greatest movements that ever happened. People didn't realize that all these things that we were doing.

So then, out of that was birthed many organizations because we came home one night from the school board and this car was chasing us. It was the Britton brothers that was very, very... segre... white supremacist that lived here. As we went over the bridge on Baseline, there... H Street... as we were going over, they start to shooting at us. I'm under the car doing like this and Bonnie and them and they "PowPow!" And they comin' and we finally got to Mt. Vernon and turned. Well, when we turned, that was the time that Art...I think Art and Sam had just broke up but they just was... you know...or maybe Art was there in the Mt Vernon Shopping Center. We drove up in there 'cause our headquarters was there too and when we drove up there, Sam Martin ran out ' cause we were blowing a horn, and when we... Sam always carried a gun. When we drove out and Sam came out with his gun like that, the people sped on out. They made that turn in front of the drugstore and left. And they tried to kill us.

Then what happened was they formed the Deacons. The Deacons was Harry Carson, Willie Garrett and Garrett had the barbershop; everyday they had a meeting and Ballard was up there talking ' cause he had put shotguns on fire trucks and there was no blacks. They're saying, "Shoot every black." They would throw a brick and we was out there on Baseline and Muscott trying to stop the riots and everything that they were having... you know. They formed the Deacons to protect the Mothers. They called the... so then they called the Deacon's, "Mother Boosters". That's what the bourgeois would say, "The Mother Boosters!"

They formed the Deacons and when they formed the Deacons who later turned into The Black Fathers and then from the Black Fathers, which they came to the Federal Black Investors and the Federal Black Investors...it may be the other way around... Anyway what happened was Bob Parker started the Federal Black Investors and the initials was F.B.I. The F.B.I. came there, but by then Second Chance had start up so this is kind of ahead of myself... But when he brought Federal Black Investors....and all... Richard and all of them and they had their cards and everything and the F.B.I. said, "Do you know this man?" I said, " Oh, yes, he' s down the street, Hudson Shoe Store there." So Bob came and he said...I said, " Bob, you better sit down." " I didn't sit down when they pulled my teeth." You know, Bob talked... I said, " Bob, this is the F.B.I." and he sat down, " Oh, Ohhh!" The man say, "Have you been impersonating the Federal...the F.B.I.?" Bob says, " No, no, no, no". He said, "Then what is this? F.B.I.?" He said, " Oh, that' s our organization, it' s called, Federal Black Investors." The man said, " Well, it looks like F.B.I. and I want you... give me the stationary." So Bob gave him all the stationary, all the cards the man confiscated, and he said, " Now is there any other cards left?" and now Bob says, "There's none" He says, "If I ever hear of anybody having a card with F.B.I. on it, were gonna come

get you and take you to jail." Guess who had a card? Richard Cole. He said, "Bob, you mean this?" Bob said, "Man, gimme that card!" He said, "Oh, no, no, no, no, I'm keepin' this!" He said, "Remember, always, when you talk to me, I got this card!" I think Richard died with that card. So... you know...

I guess it was so many things that grew out of the League of Mothers. And the... and Art Townsend, the paper just got big, and he was the mentor, he was the one that helped us and then we said we got to get politically involved. It was just one door open, this door open, that door opened.

So then we got involved with the poverty program and as we got involved with the poverty program, well that's when Holcomb was on it and all the people on it were white and very prominent but Bobby Cole worked for it, Rabbi... Alice worked for it, Hiram Diaz worked for it, Richard Gonzales worked for it and they had a thing called Community Action Agency. So we started to have... they had... In Fontana we had a Poor Folks Convention, for poor people with Minnie Tisby and them and they was all layin' out in front of the courthouse with... layin' out there, protesting. They say they had guns and it was called, "Burn, Baby, Burn". Minnie Tisby and them, and Mr. Ricker and them from North Fontana.

We all got together and we would go to the poverty program and Holcomb was trying to teach us parliamentary procedure. We felt, "Uh, oh, they ain' t going to stay." So we took care of everything on correspondence. Anything that happened came on correspondence and he said, " This ain't got nothing to do with correspondence. Y'all gotta wait till we get to the agenda and the business here!" and we said, " we took care of all business on correspondence." One o' clock in the morning, we still on correspondence. The woman, that's the matriarch for San Manuel? She was also on the board with us. We would give them water. They had no water, they were so poor, they had nothing. We had to give them water. Bryn Mawr didn't have anything and we would give them food and water. We was sitting up there... they done gave us the right to sit on the board, to give out things and to do things... and that' s when we realized how important it is at the community level... that things should be implemented at the community level. The void this day, is the implementation stage at county government and local government. They hire people that have not had the expertise or if the person has the expertise, the person has to make a decision whether they want... (END OF SIDE A)

They have to make that decision, the same as with the League of Mothers. We had black teachers and I'm sure Betty [Anderson] was one of those people, that consciously they believed in what we were doing but they had to make a decision about their own economic wellbeing. What could they do? They owed their school bills... they owed... they had developed a lifestyle that was a certain thing that they had to maintain. Then them people put them into positions, and they knew that, 'you're different from them now' so you can't be acting like them. 'Those people aren't doing it the right way, you're doing it the right way.'

(Interrupted by phone call)

I always ask the Lord to give me words 'cause I want do it right.

**Carolyn:** You're excellent, you're are doing... you're excellent, you are doing a wonderful job! Okay, so, people who have... We were talking about the compromises that people made in order to serve the poor.

**Frances:** In order to serve the poor... I think that...they were caught into this delusion that... You know... it wasn't about us, it was about... we thought... and we took it personal. "Oh, they just think they're better than us.Oh they just think they don't want to be a part of this. Oh, they done sold out to the system. Oh they're bourgeois". Now that I'm seventy-five, now that I look back, now I understand that they carried the same pain 'cause they had children. They carried that same pain but then they had to somehow satisfy two... you can't satisfy two masters. We were going one way and they were going another way. Then I realized that...if Jesse [Rev. Jesse Jackson] had of stayed on his tone, we would have been okay but he moved a little bit: He said, "There are tree shakers and there are jelly makers." And we were the tree shakers and they were the jelly makers. First you shake that tree, once you get that tree shaken, then you are to pull that together that it will represent what that tree shaker was all about. But they didn't understand that and we didn't understand it. Consequently, they used the divide and conquer and as a result of it, we lost several generations.

**Carolyn:** Before I let you get too far this way, I want you to go back and talk about how subsequently you got rid of segregation the integration of San Bernardino School District.

**Frances:** The whole system of desegregation was rooted in San Bernardino and we didn't understand that it was rooted to the core... you know... we thought it was a school system, only the school system but it was not only the school system. Then we found out it was the county, then we found out it was the state. Then we found out that it was beyond the neighborhood, it was the city and it was the deep, ingrained ... a trail that was began before many of us was born...

**Carolyn:** But you have all these school board members in here and they were being investigated by the state board of education, what happened?

**Frances:** Once that happened, Jane Mercer, who was the UCR person...and they gave it to Jane to develop a plan to help what was going on. They burned down... she started off with Riverside but because Riverside burned down... UCR then Jane Mercer went... she was Intergroup Relations... something at UCR and she started working with the San Bernardino School District. And involving in San Bernardino School District and the school system and then Dr. Riles coming in, I mean when the State Board came in, they developed a plan. But before they developed that plan, the school district sort of petered out, very slow, people were just there.

We were still going on and before we could open one door, there was another door, the fire department. I mean no blacks in the fire department, shotguns on fire trucks, the riots came; everything on going on... you know.

So then we always kept the school district there but we didn't know what to do with the school district so then we had to turn around... When the school system and somebody says, "Well, you need to go to the federal government now." So, we started getting ready and didn't have enough money to go roundtrip for three people. So they decided that I should go... to Washington. And at that time, we had got involved with Community Relations Justice [Community Relations Service of the Department of Justice] and a lot of times when they come in, like Linda and them, they don't know how to work that system...and it's very peculiar(?) to work at. So when they came in, Senator Kuchel was in... and I don't know... and Congressman Dyal and uh...I think Marlin Thomas and then someone says, "As much as Dyal would want to help you, if he helps you, he will not get elected." So, he helped. He didn't get elected ... as a congressman...

So then, Roger Wilkins, Roy Wilkins' nephew, was over the U.S. Department of Justice, Community Relations Division. They had been down, everybody came. Many people don't know how many people came and met with us or talked with us and coached us. So, I called them and told him we were gonna come and he says, "I'll get a appointment with Kuchel to get you with... Humphrey' s office." So I met with Humphrey's assistant, Humphrey came in at the time the meeting was... and I, at that time... his assistants was saying, "There' s nothing we can do; the school board has local autonomy and we can't do anything." And I says, "I came here on a one-way ticket and I've been waiting three days to get this appointment." I says, "And now you tell me, that the country that is a democratic...country of the whole world...defending democracy." And the U.N. was just meeting and Thon was head. "You mean to tell me, that this country cannot guarantee equal rights in education for children in San Bernardino?" And then I just threw my suitcase up and... my briefcase and just started to crying and saying, "If you don' t do something, I'm not gonna leave here. I came on a one-way ticket. I gotta catch a train to New York to go to the United Nations and ask Mr. Thon, the head of the United Nations, "Can y'all do anything to help us have equal opportunity in education because Washington can't." And I'm just crying. Vice President, "What? Oh, she can't go out this office like this! Call somebody, call somebody!"

And they called a Mr. Keane... K-E-A-N-E... and said, "What in the world is going on there?" "What' s happening in San Bernardino?" And he was head of the Civil Rights Division, for Health, Education...HEW. And he called back, and he says, "It's worser than what we thought!" And they say, "You go back..."

Now I didn't have enough money to get back cause I done stayed an extra day, so I had to go to Michigan and then... I'm at St B's, no I'm . . . I'm at County and that's when I realized the power because all of the sudden, when I got ready to go, my



supervisor, who loved me dearly, she said, "Frances, I can't let you...give you that time off." I said, "You can't give me the time to go?" You know..."I need some personal days" They said, "No." I said, "Well, can I take vacation time or leave of absence?" She says, " No." And I says, " Well, I'm gonna go." She says, " Well, we're gonna give you five days...and if you don't be back... " cause after a long discussion ... "If you don't be back, you're gonna be fired!" And that's when I realized the power that the school board had. Cause my job was good to me and I would go home everyday and all that; all of the sudden, I couldn't go home no more. I mean I was going on my lunch hour. And you know.. I mean, if I say five minutes over or ten minutes over, they'd cover... you know. And all of the sudden, I couldn't go home anymore. "You can't go home anymore." And all of the things just changed and changed. So, I had to go to Detroit 'cause I had to be back by Monday. And my dad said, "What kind of group is this you involved in and they can't pay your way?" I said, "We baked cookies to get here!" And so he says, "Oh my God!" He sent me back. The League of Mothers... you know, Garrett, everybody, Sue had a baby and she was keeping my kids... and... Sue Self, and she said, "Frances, I hate to tell you this...I'm ... but I'm goin into labor!"

So anyway, when I got back... and after I got back, Mr. Choffey (?), who was from Washington, D.C., he would come at least once a month. And all the neighbors knew... he'd be...Fred Choffey, he'd be sittin' on my porch...white man, Italian. He'd be sittin' on my front...and the neighbors say, " Frances! Mr. Choffey's here!" Everybody knew him...and then he would tell us things and he'd say, "O.k., the school board is gonna set up a blue ribbon committee, and Juanita Scott is over it. ." And we said, "Oh no! She's the one that was against us and all like this..." They said... He said, "Now you cannot dictate who they chose to be on the blue-ribbon committee. None of y'all can be on it, it's supposed to be impartial. "I said... We said, "It ain't impartial" They said, "Well, then that's...they'll have to suffer that consequences." So with Jane Mercer, they set up the blue ribbon committee and the blue ribbon committee then decided what about the schools. So they opened up a partial open enrollment program, then that lasted for awhile, but it did nothing to desegregate the schools.

It was an open enrollment program that basically gave so... and basically, the funny part about it was when they opened that everybody was in cheers, all the people that was against us. So that day Mr. Choffey and them called me, "The buses is rollin' to pick y'all's kids up to take 'em across the town and all like that." Got there and there was no room for Anthony on the bus or Darlene. All the people that fought us, kids was on the bus and ours couldn't get on the bus. There was no room...for my kids on the bus. So that was the most...that...that was just...couldn't be believe it, I thought...it was hilarious. It was good...it was good because it said, "No room on the bus for them?"

You know...it was no room... all the other folks got their kids on there, they didn't fight, they didn't suffer, they didn't have to quit... cause I had to come back and quit my job. The biggest decision I ever made I said, "Well, I gotta quit." And they said, "What are you gonna do?"...my supervisor... you know... at that time I was working

county. "What are you gonna do?" Your mom..., "Oh"... your grandmother, "What are ... What... you can't... Girl, quit your job, you can't get involved like this" ... you know... "You gotta take care those kids!" I says, "I gotta quit because I've gotta do what I've got to do." And so I quit... so when I quit... well... Art Townsend hired me and he was just building the building that he's in now. He hadn't quite finished it, so I worked at home. He gave me little odd jobs to do at home and he hired me. Then he had me work for the Boys Club and... what's the man's name?... that started the Boys Club and he and I worked together in the Teen Center on Rialto. And... then after that...well... you know... we kept on with Operation... I mean... with the... with the... school suit and everything and then finally...

**Carolyn:** When did you formally file the lawsuit?

**Frances:** So we finally... these...so you see what we had to go through before which was years... years and years we went through before the lawsuit. We tried every route we went from the local school board, to... well, the county was only control of the budget then, but Roy Hill was always good to us. He never got involved against us and we always appreciated Roy Hill for that. And the county of San Bernardino, I forget the name of the CEO at that time but he...we would tell him off all the time. He was a county of San Bernardino... Chief Administrative Officer. So... but then what happened ...well there was so much happening. The Watts Riots came and then they brought Louie Lomax down and they were gonna do something with Mississippi, and they was trying to take all this food to Mississippi and everything...And we said, "How in the world are y' all gonna do Mississippi when y'all ain't treating the black kids right in San Bernardino? Y' all are nothing but hypocrites." And then they sent Louis Lomax down and we said, "Get out! This is not your community, you ain't in this fight and we don't want you here. Any money that's here, needs to stay here. We do not need you to take money to Mississippi when we sittin' up here with children in... in unequal, hot schools." And so...he left and we called the whole systems hypocritical.

You know... and Art used to say, "Full of Bullshit". And we called them all hypocritical... you...why you doing this? It wasn't the school system, but it was the whole system trying to act like... because they was getting all this bad publicity... you know... so they was trying to cover up for all this stuff and you know...it was just us out there. It was Richard Cole, it was Bobby Cole... I hear all these people talking about what they did, and I said, "Where were they?" You know...I hear all these people talking about..."Well, we did this." And I can name Harry Carson and Willie Garret and Richard Cole and Sam Martin and Art Townsend . . .and the people at the Elks... was always supporting... we could always go down to the Elks and get money. They always was supporting us at the Elks... you know... and people like that... it was just... it was just...and then common people. Mothers on welfare and people that was supporting us... you know.

We didn't have, quote, the "bourgeois" group behind us. So they never really accepted us, we were the outsiders that was fighting for things and I don't know

long... how long Bonnie and them had been here... you know but they was still outsiders. I said, "Well, when do you get to be an insider?" You know...I mean, you know... your kids are here, you want to make changes and you want to do the right thing... you know... and all we know is we got resistance. We had hundreds and hundreds of people at the school board yet they said we didn't represent nobody. And they could play that game and we... you couldn't get in the school board, lined up all the way around.

And then one time we was deciding that we was in the hot sun, we was out there marching up and down. And we thought all them secretaries is in the school board, 799 F... I remember it all ..and so we decided, we shouldn' t be out here in this hot sun passing out and all them secretaries sitting up there, wasn't no black ones in there. So we just went in there and took over the building. And they all ran out, then the police come, and they don' t know whether to arrest us or leave us alone. So then...even when we had our little horn going around, "Keep your kid out of school!" The microphone and everything, the Chief of Police can1e, Louie Fortuna and he brought us the rule book, " You cannot run that speaker this time and that time." We said, "Take this book and get out of here!" We put him out with the book. And they didn't know what to do, they didn't know how to fight us.

So they turn around... they tried to shoot us and you know... they didn't want that out. And then Ballard had put the shotguns on fire trucks and then you know...we were talking about children; all we were talking about was our kids. And hiring people that was of races...of different races to work with different children of all races, you know... so that there wouldn't be the prejudice, we wanted to break that down. We wanted people of all groups to be able to see people of all races teaching them and counseling them because that was the only thing that was going to change attitudes of the young people. So we were looking at it in many ways other than just, what's happening now but how can we change the attitude of the young people? And so finally, you know, we had the open enrollment program and when we got to...to San Gorgonio, they... you know... all those people would fight the people so bad, that, you know... the only school...the high school was integrated, we was only dealing with the Jr. high and the elementary because the high school...we didn't have but one... two and that was Pacific and San Bernardino High School and they were integrated cause they didn't have no choice. You know... But we did get the buses to start picking our kids up cause they had to go you know... a longer way... you know. But those were the only two high schools so we just had the Jr. high schools and the high schools...to deal with... you know. So then, when we started to working with the high schools...

I mean when we started to working with the... the Federal Government, who says, "Okay, you don't have enough people so you gotta pass a bond issue." We said, "We don't want to help the school district pass no bond issue!" He said, "Then how they gonna integrate the schools?" "There has to be more schools. You got people in portable structures." And we found out that he told us, every school on the Westside was a portable structure. Every school from Roosevelt to Mt. Vernon to all of

the schools... were portable structures. He says, "And if you want air conditioning, if you want to upgrade the school. You gotta help pass a bond issue." So we had to help pass the bond issue to get more schools. We said, "Now, providing that they integrate the schools and that they provide these things." And they swore that they would do them... and that they would bring kids both ways, that it wouldn't be a one-way trip but we would bring the white kids over too because the schools would be better and then we could bring all over so it would be a two way busing program. They agreed. So then, once we got them to agree, and we helped them pass a bond issue, they forgot all about it.

So then, all of a sudden... you know... we... that the NAACP... Wesley became... well, we started working with the NAACP. And all of a sudden, all these people joined the NAACP and maybe Wesley told you this story about when they investigated and we they called for an investigation, they was all living...there was all... all their addresses was in these businesses up on Baseline and E Street. We said, "What was all these white people?"... all these addresses...members of the NAACP. They were trying to take it over because then there was housing. And Amos Colley was involved with the President. So we challenged them. So when we challenged them and went to the NAACP, and the NAACP came down and they said, " Well, okay, ... you know... we'll...you know, we'll look at it." So we says, ... you know... " What do you mean, you'll look at it?" So anyway, we had an election and Wesley won the election. So when he went up to see, Linda Carter, who was a Regional Director of the NAACP, she wasn't very nice and she was more supportive of the branch and the quote, "middle-class" folks that had been in control of the NAACP for years. So, when he was in control of that, we came back and we said, "Well we gotta do something." So then we decided to sue the NAACP. So the San Bernardino Branch of the NAACP, we got Norm Hanover, and we sued the NAACP. Wow! That hit all over, everywhere: "NAACP ... By Local Branch!" And...I mean... and oh!.. It was something!... you know. And... you know...so when we had the trial, it was me, and Garrett and... Wesley and Bobby and just a few people... you know. And we down there, we done sued the NAACP and Bobby' s kids and all of us... you know... we all sued the NAACP. So when we sued the NAACP... So we was sitting in trial that day and we said, "Aw, they ain't gonna show up"... you know... Girl, here come nine or ten NAACP attorneys with briefs! Norm Hanover liked to died! The court was packed for all the white attorneys and everything. The judge liked to died! Girl, here they come in there with they brief... and 'bout nine or ten of them... from the National office.

Oh when the judge seen that he said, " Y' all go out and negotiate, y' all go out and negotiate!" So we went... they gave us a room upstairs and we went to negotiate. So when we went to negotiate, well they says, "We will send down an impartial body to investigate this."

That' s what we agreed on. So they went back to court and said that they would send down some of their... an impartial body of NAACP national officers to come and investigate. So the judge from...I'm trying to think of his name... from Seattle came down and three more people came down... two more people came down and

investigated our charges. When they came back, they told Linda Carter, "The only legitimate down there is them. All them other folks is done sold out to the system cause they work for the system!" And so, then, that's when the... we made the deal... They said, "What can we do?" We said, "Sue the school district!" We've been fighting this battle for years and what we will do if you help us... We want you all to sue the school district." So, the deal was cut that we would forget everything and drop the charges if they would sue the school district. So Linda Carter came in... I mean...so Nathaniel Colley came in... Nathaniel Colley came in and he was the National Attorney for the NAACP. He was the top legal over all of the NAACP attorneys. And he came and sued the school district.

But before that happened, Project Concern came involved and the school district because they had dealt with the open enrollment and all like that, Project Concern then went out to run against all the school board members to remove the school board members. And I think at that time, they had already appointed John Woods, who was the first school board member on there. And they ran against the school board... they was running against the school board mem... So they threatened the school board, "If you implement this plan, we're gonna recall you!" So Project Concern...so the first thing the NAACP did was sue Project Concern for threatening the school board to do it's legal and lawful duty. And then they won that suit.

So then... well, then Judge Egley, who was the judge, came in and they sent him because every other judge had to declare conflict of interest in this county... you know. And Judge Egley came in...and this was before Crawford, now [Los Angeles desegregation case]. He came in, and when he came in he thought he would be here only a little while... you know... this...knock this out right quick. He was telling everybody, "Oh I'll run down to Palm Springs." He got in here to this cag of worms and he was a fair judge and he would sit up and hear all this stuff. And so, we would go to sleep at night and we would wake up in the morning...

So the next thing that happened after Project Concern, he made the ruling on that... the next thing that happened was... we looked up at Muscott and the schools kept getting littler and the playground got bigger, all these slabs. While we were sleep at night, they were moving classrooms; remember I told you everything was portable. So then, Nathaniel Colley had to cease and desist to stop them from moving the class or there wasn't no school. So what they did was they'd move the schools to the point where... they would close enough where it would be infeasible for them to operate, it wouldn't be cost effective, so they kept moving and moving and moving and moving at night. And so we didn't know...classroom...all we'd know was the playgrounds was getting bigger. So they'd moved a part of Franklin, they'd moved part of. . .California School. They had moved just about all of Muscott before we caught it. So then the judge had to put a cease and desist order on that.

Only then we found out that there was not only segregation by race, but there was economic segregation because the kids from Park Hi...Elementary couldn't go to

the school where the poor white kids go, so they had an economic segregation where the kids that live in the County Club and everything was in Park Elementary and the other kids were at the other school. So it was so much stuff. . .going on, just like Keane said, "It's far worse than that girl thought it was." And they didn't tell us all the things that we found out.

You know... and then... you know...they put orange... they built Serrano in the middle of orange groves, next to Patton and it didn't have no roads so the kids couldn't get to school unless you took them; and if you didn't have a car, you know... you was in trouble as far as trying to get the kids...cause there wasn't no roads. They built schools, which I understand now, where there was no communities and put them in the middle of orange groves and places, you know... and places like that. And they built San Geronimo... there... and there was houses there, you know... the base and everything but it was mostly a military school, you know... but it was a lot of racists there so all of our kids got caught up in fighting. We had a thing called, Operation Survival, so when the kids and the parents be out there throwing bricks and everything, the kids was taught, Operation Survival, and you'd go into the classroom, and we picked a classroom and " Y'all don't come out that classroom until somebody's parents come. You don't get out of the... don't go... don't go nowhere, don't even get on the bus. If the teacher try to... stay in there, lock yourself up in the classroom; it's called, Operation Survival." And everywhere around there, "Operation Survival!" Then the kids would go to their room. " Operation Survival!" And that's how our kids had to go until we could get teams of parents to come over there.

You know...so then people says, "Well, integration is wrong!"...You know, To take people out of their communities, their culture and everything and move them places where they wasn't prepared. And we didn't understand that they had to be prepared. My kids was prepared only because I came from an integrated society. So, they knew how... but the kids that was born and raised in San Bernardino, they were totally unprepared . . .to handle it and they... they let them feel bad. Then...then, so, we got black teachers in there but once we got black teachers in there they were shamed of our children; so they end up being, nicer to the other kids to prove they wasn't prejudice but not nice to our children that needed the love and the cuddling and the assurance that they needed there in order to be able to survive in that school system there on the other side of town, you know...

And so, they moved one classroom over there, which was the magnet school concept... which was not effective because it was just a token program, you know... and everybody thought it was so good. I never thought... I never said anything about it because I never really thought it was good, you know... And then people opted for their children to go to the...it wasn't a mandatory ... there was nothing mandatory about it. And they would opt to go over there and then some parents, "My children, I have my children over at Muscott!" You know...like... you know... so what? My children, I don't want them over there until it's cleaned up and it's decent and a lot of blacks felt it

was a decent school.

Well, if you'd been around an undecent school all your life, I guess it was decent. You know... but when you went over to Northpark and you seen a school and you seen the way the people acted and you seen what education was taking place and you seen how those children were acting and things like that. And then when you went to San G. and you know...Perry Holcolmb became Chairman of the Human Relations Commission and she started inviting Anthony and them all up to her house. You know... they'd hold meetings up there and everything and started to getting to know each other and everything.

You know... when I really realized that integration was working was one day, my daughter, 'cause we moved over on Sterling, and when I realized across the street from the complex we lived in, was a little white girl and her and Darlene became very good friends. And I'll call her Alice for the sake of the name. And so one day Darlene came home and said, " Oh, Ma, you have to come to school tomorrow." I said, "Why?" She says, "Because they're gonna have a riot." And she says, "I don't want to hit Alice, she' s my friend. And I don't want them to hit her either, Mama. Please come up and help us." You know... so I went up...you know and helped stop the riot. But then I realized, "Hey, this is working because Darlene cared about her friend. It wasn't about her color. It was because she was Darlene 's friend." That she was concerned about her, you know... I says, "Hey, integration is working." You know...and so... that's when I realized that it just takes time. My children never had a chance for it to get ingrained in them.

**Carolyn:** Now, after they sued the Project Concern, when did the formal lawsuit. ..

**Frances:** When they proved that...I told you when they did Project Concern, then they went to... sued for the school to make sure that they don't move anymore of the portable school structures. Then, after they did that, then they would simultaneously filed a suit under the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendment, for equal education.

**Carolyn:** And that was about 19...?

**Frances:** You got a copy of that thing I gave you?

**Carolyn:** I can get a copy... look it up. I can get it.

**Frances:** Yeah, cause I remem...I don't remember exactly...I got a copy somewhere...but...

**Carolyn:** Okay, I can go get a history and find it. ..

**Frances:** And then they filed the suit. But there's a Writ of Mandate, that Judge Egley did that still kept the school district under court order here. And to this day, I think the school district is still under court order. And he left it open, he's blind now.

**Carolyn:** Yeah, I remember we...

**Frances:** But see, no... Did you hear him that time? Could the man give the speech and tell you about every street and everything here. And I would think one of the things that would really be nice, if, for black history, we could deal with our own history and maybe the County School District could take leadership with [ ] in bringing Judge Egley back and talking about... because there's so many new people and maybe it would be good for teachers to hear it, principals to hear it, you know what I'm saying? And then from that...and bring... see if Dr. Jane Mercer is still living. And have her come and I'll think of the other people's names that we could bring in that we could really have a black history program here. One that would be meaningful, that we could show, this is where we are, this is how we are and this is where we got to.

**Carolyn:** Yeah, this is beautiful. The way this is outlined here, this is beautiful.

**Frances:** Because it would be able to tell you where we came with the struggle that went to Dr. King. That he sent his top man out and that our children participated when they participated in the, Negro Youth Speaks For Himself, and that was Jim Sweeney and them and then they participated with Dwayne Clark and Anthony and them said... our children sang... "For years of slavery, yesterday denial and today's fight for equal rights." And they sang that at the Municipal Auditorium. And they had our children speak at Franklin and they had a long line of tables and they had it full and it said, "Our Negro children, we speak for ourselves." And have James Sweeney come too as one of the children and then have... we'll get... get another recipient of the plight.

And then the school system, we don't have to bring all those kids but I forget the names of the kids that filed the suit. Because what we filed...then when we got ready to file that suit, it had to be a class action suit and the day he came down to have people sign it, everybody was afraid ... to sign the suit. And they had to take the children to sign it. So my daughter signed it, Bobby Biven's daughter signed it, Wesley Jefferson's daughter signed it. Miss Wakefield's daughter signed it, Greenwood, do you know Greenwood that does... he had a ... maintenance, I'll get his name from Bobby. His daughter signed it... he signed it. . .I mean, his child signed it and one more... One or two more but that 's all it was. Couldn't get anybody else to sign it and Nathaniel Colley said, "Then we'll go for them." And we had to go to the schools and take the suit and our kids had to sign. That we were suing the San Bernardino Unified School District.

But, many people do not realize that the San Bernardino School District, and you heard Judge Egley say this, it was a prelude to Crawford. So even though Crawford gets all this attention, Crawford the Board of Education, many people don't know that the NAACP vs the Board of Education was the first suit that was filed and it was a prelude...he went on from San Bernardino and went to Crawford but he used San Bernardino to test everything out before he went to Crawford. And every time he'd get to Crawford to something, if he wanted to test it out, we were still under court order; he would come back here and test it out. So we were the basis for Crawford and many



people don't realize that. And that's critically important also, you know... and then from there, what had happened, was that many things evolved around that and then because I became on the... the school district. . .

I mean, we did a lot of things under the Community Action Program, before the Green Amendment, we were the board, we were the ones that decided, you know...so we made decisions about education and different things and created tutorial programs. Well, we had tutorial programs on Mt. Vernon, where children would learn. Years and years before, all of this happened, you know...and so as I look back and I hear everybody taking credit for all this stuff that they did, I think to myself, "Where was I at? Where was I at?" I'm not saying, because it was thousands of people and I knew everyone of them, I can see their faces, you know... I can see them... one of the mothers was Jewell Shelton, and she became the second person, I think, after John Woods, that was involved in it... but...her and her children. The girl that's the...for Superintendent of Schools? What's her name?

**Carolyn:** Brenda? Was it Brenda?

**Frances:** No, San Bernardino Unified School District?

**Carolyn:** Oh, Judy White.

**Frances:** Her mother was involved. And I was surprised at Judy because I thought because her mother was involved in it, she would be more sensitive. But then we go back to, she's the Superintendent. This is now... I see... I see these principals, that are over these schools, and I look at them, but they don't know. They think they're there cause they're qualified. They are there because people in the '60s sacrificed and struggled. Some of them left there and went down to Selma and got killed. Some of them left there and went to different places and became community organizers. That's why I'm so excited about Dr. Obama, Dr. Obama... and I should say...

**Carolyn:** President Elect Barack Obama.

**Frances:** President Elect Obama. Because he was a community organizer and there is nobody that is as sensitive to the community needs, then a community...when they said, "He's only a community organizer." That gave him the foundation to organize this whole thing because he organized it community by community. He used whoever he had to: whites, browns, whoever he had to because he knew how to organize a community and that is one of the greatest things there is. Is to be able to have that skill. So as they called him a community organizer, I laughed. I said, "Hey, they don't know." This man not only is he a... but he went to Harvard, so he had a degree; he understood . . . he understood both sides of the picture but we only understood one. He understood both of them. So, then... What he was...was able to orchestrate **(END OF TAPE)**

**Carolyn:** Tape number two, interview...Carolyn Tillman and **Frances** Grice. We were talking about Barak Obama, his...

**Frances:** Yes...Why? Because he's an expert; out of all those people that he got...There's an expert in economic counsel and different other things. He's an expert in community organization. Nobody can tell him what works at the neighborhood level. He knows what works, he knows what don't work. When he says, "I can go through this budget." It means that he can go through that budget and he understands what works at the neighborhood level. He understands that the WIA and what people have... the problems they have when they go through workforce and....and that it can't stand as it is, it has to go back to the community. About neighborhood revitalization... He knows if he wants to talk about the pride of a community, that those people have to participate in the rebuilding of their own community in order to show it....

And Public Enterprise is a perfect example. When I built the Public Enterprise Center, I was a community organizer, so naturally, when we chose that spot, I said, " We gotta make sure that the community participates. So, Mr. Clark, remember him?...On 16<sup>th</sup> Street, he made the drapes. George Cornelius was the painter, Mr....George Cornelius was the painter ... the plumber... was a...I'll think of his name in a moment; he did the plumbing on it, we had a black electrician. Clyde Alexander was the Project Manager that did the projects. We had, there was a Hispanic that put the lawn in for the school, you know...the whole thing...Then the furniture that was in there, even the seal in the library, was a black furniture company from Golden Oaks... and then the workers were all from the local community. So, what happened ... was that... that building, as it stands today, both buildings... have never been... tagged. The etchings is still in the glass...which... the original etchings of the glass is still there. That's because those children's parents or their godparents or their cousin...somebody in their family had something to do with that school ... either graduated from it, either help build that school, so there's pride in that school, there's a silent pride that people know when they walk in there. They talk a little different, they don't get loud. You ain't heard nobody getting beat up in there and things like that. That's because the community had a part in it.

And Barak Obama knows how the community will take care of things if you give them the opportunity to build it. If you give them the opportunity to participate in the decision and the design and the implementation of things. So, I'm excited about it because he's got all these experts and then he's got, who are going to be the community builders? And it's gonna be people like you, and other young people like you that he will know will be out there responsible. And then, it becomes a passion, not a job. You know, it becomes a passion, not a job. Job becomes incidental, it's secondary to what you what you want to accomplish, you know. And so... you know... we are at a very critical time in our life, the full circle. I've had a time in my lifetime to see full circle. To see full circle... you know... because, and you know, he understands the trials and tribulations, the disappointments and the aches when people could trust in people, and they let them down. So he's gonna make sure but he's already told them, there's tough times, there's hard times but it is time where we have to depend on you to help yourself. Help yourself...you know... you've got to

rise up and you've got to take a part in it and that's what's so exciting about it. He's gonna give us leadership for all over the world and when you can catch somebody that God and somebody say, "The chosen one." And God chose this man at the time when the whole world was falling apart.

When the whole nation, the whole democracy was at stake and He brought somebody in that represents the stronghold that we had here in the Civil Rights Movement. Because when I looked up and I seen white people, tears of joy. When I looked up and seen brown people with tears of joy. When I looked up and seen black people with tears of joy. When I looked up and seen rich people and little people together. When I looked up and seen all those folks, I said, "My God, this is the movement." "This is the movement." This what King said, that 'a man will not be judged by the color of his skin but by the contents of his character and his heart.' And that is where he is and how he can smile when people are talking about him because he knows he is somebody. He don't have to prove nothing, all he's got to do is do God's will because God has chosen him. Doors opened in Des Moines, where there wasn't but a few black folk... I mean in all those places, doors opened even though there was a lot against him. There was more for him because they realized ... and white people are different... and I hate to use the word even "white"...because when they realized they'd rather save their community and their children, they don't want them sacrificed but they'd rather save those kids, they will take anybody that is of good and work with them and help them, you know. And then there's always God creates the Herb Fischer's and the Vern Potters and the Holcomb's and the Bill Leonard's and I don't know...

And I. . . you know...sometimes I get disgusted when I hear that girl in Fontana making accusations because I think to myself, "No, you don't have to do that." You don't have... I know Republicans that are good Republicans, that never questioned whether I was a Democrat or Republican, but they were there, you know. Bill Leonard and them, I mean, my daughter worked for him every time he ran; she addressed all his envelopes. Shirley Pettis and Jerry Pettis; everybody knew that, that school was built because of Jerry Pettis and he died in the middle of... just before it started. And Bill Leonard, that many people think is conservative, was the one that called me up and said, "Shirley wants to meet with you because she wants to take you to Washington because she wants to make sure that the Public Enterprise Center and Operation Second Chance gets built." Shirley Pettis. And... you know, when you look at people like that and you think about it, you know, you don't think about whether they're Republicans...I mean...I worked with as many Republicans as...

**Carolyn:** But that's what you said community organization was all about.

**Frances:** Right, right... as you do Democrats, I don't... I don't... say, "Oh, I don't want to deal with that because he's a Republican." I... Bob Dutton, I just... we just went to him on something. It's not who he is, it's the man that he is, you know what I'm saying?

And, I mean, when we get to the point... She reminds me of those people again

when she's starts allowing... she raised more sand with Joe Baca than she did with the woman that put Obama on the food stamp. You know... and I told her... before... about the food stamp. I said, " You shouldn't even be a part of an organization." You know... because the Republican Party that I knew, I would never be a part of. One time, Bill Leonard appointed me to a committee and he was on the inside working with the committee and I was on the outside with the NAACP fighting against the committee; and I was involved in it. And he came up... he say, "Frances!" And he never questioned it... you see what I'm saying? I'm out there with Virna Canson, we're out... were fighting against the law to the papers and he's in there holding a hearing for the law.

**Carolyn:** Virna Who?

**Frances:** Virna Canson, she was the Regional Director of the NAACP. So I think that we've got to put our own in line and I think that the only way we can get them in line, is that we got to hear the past. See, she came; she wasn't there when Jessie Turner and them had, Burn, Baby Burn. When they were fighting and laying on the ground and everything. You know... like I told her, hey, you standing on my shoulders, Honey. And you know, she' s standing on Jessie's shoulders out there... you know. And when she moved that place out there and put it in a building, in one room, then we talking about...they should of... she had a... Turner...it should be Turner Colonies or something; The whole thing! They had one little thing out there and the only thing that was represented was a recreation center for Turner. Then when she moved it into the thing, all of the people were gone. And yeah, it might have been beautiful, but it's only one room.

When they told me to move Public Enterprise Center across the way, on the other side of the freeway and they could give me whatever. .. I laughed. I said, " No, we want to have it here... in the black community. Ain't nothing been built over here." They had to discover to see if it was an Indian burial ground ... and I said, "We're gonna have it here. And it ' s got to stay here and it has got to be the finest, cleanest, best building in town." And when they went through there and I know you, maybe you used to go, you could see that you could eat off the floors. You know... the lobby... remember we had the lobby there; all those things that as I look at New Hope, you know,

I've often told that girl, which she never did anything. I would help her to program that building. Because it ' s going; we tried to have several programs in there and she didn't even call me back and all... you know Pastor, I love so much and he was on a sabbatical and when he came back, I would never tell him because he don't need that pain. And I thought to myself and then this other man... Larson or somebody? What... from the church called up and we wanted to hold a meeting there to help New Hope because Edison asked me, "What's the largest church?" They just gave Ecclesia \$10,000.00 I said, New Hope has a WI program for young people all the time and they pay themselves. "I'd like to see." I said, "But first... "

Did you realize, and I'm not supposed ... if you put this in there, New Hope, when we started the civil rights movement, we went to New Hope for our first community meeting. Reverend Campbell was the minister and we had this big community meeting and we're on the pulpit and the League of Mother' s hold this meeting talking about the situation. And Lou Smith, who was with C.O.R.E., he was the Regional Director of C.O.R.E., at the time and we thought C.O.R.E. was radical, he was scared of him, so we had the meeting and we had to vote whether we would let Lou speak or not. He has always reminded me; I have a picture in there of Dr. Smith...he would always remind me and I'll show you a book one time, of Lou, that .. when he said, "When the elephants of hunger is at it's highest, the python of ignorance is busy, locked in battle, even the..." And that's talking about us fighting each other. I'll have to show you that poem... when he died but. .. He died on the freeway coming here from Kingman. But the first church, the first public meeting that we had, was held at New Hope, for the civil rights movement. It was our Ebenezer. So, the feeling of New Hope to me is very special, you know and every minister that's been there, I've always respected, they've always been there, they've always supported us, you know... every time and then Beverly...I don't know what her personality is and even when Pastor and them bought it, I was proud. And I said, "God, I should have thought of that."

Because... but the kids had died, I was so crazy, I didn't know what... to give this to a nonprofit, you know... But when they bought it, I was so happy that it stayed under the realms of black people. You know... and... what I would like to see is it become the centerpiece of activity for the black community. That things are happening there, you know... recently this man... and I know that you don't want it but the NAACP is a powerful organization. The president is not running; if you became the president of the NAACP, you'd be an awful strong lady.

**Carolyn:** I'd be really busy.

**Frances:** No, you wouldn't; you see, everybody thinks that. You get you a labor and industry person. The NAACP... (**Phone Interruption**).

**Frances:** How we got involved with some of the organizations was based on... We had five board members... were all black men, one of them was Bob Parker, the other one was Richard Cole, the other one was Bobby Cole... as you know, most of the organizations that is started at the grass roots level... Bob Parker was a genius with a vision and he started a lot of the black organizations. Richard Cole was very involved in C.O.R.E. He was... did you know Richard and Bobby were Republicans? Oh, been Republicans for years. And way back there and Richard was with the Carpenter's Union and very involved in building some of the first houses over there, if you heard me at the funeral talk about some of the things that he done. The other one was Bobby Cole, Bobby Cole started off with the Department. . . with the Poverty Program but he ended up with the Department of Labor under the... Contract Compliance.

So TRW and all those people were brought to us and they adopted us. And so Second Chance learned a lot of the stuff because TRW, the vice presidents and president, they adopted us. They adopted a group in L.A. called, Bootstraps, which was Baby Bootstrap and they adopted us in San Bernardino. And the vice president of energy, now that they talking about solar and all like that, I was involved with it years ago. And what happened was Carol Marshall filed a complaint so then Bobby Cole told them they had to come down and work with community based like our Operation Second Chance. They came down to work with us, started to training and they wanted to go on a retreat with us and I said, "Is the Vice President going?" and they said, "No". I said, "Then I ain't either." I said, "I'm the President of my organization and he's the Vice President, so I don't expect the President of TRW to come but he's the president of this division, if he don't come..." So he came. So me and him became best of friends and TRW became an intimate, collaborative partner with Second Chance. When I went to the White House and got an award, they sent people back, they sent me all over the world, they taught me things, they helped us compete, they wrote the proposals ... they did everything for us. They taught us so much, when we developed our school, they had people coming in there and taking us to TRW where scientists ... computers... Brian, when we had our youth program, we had summer youth programs at Cal State and UCR. We had eighty kids at UCR. Frank Quevedo started working for me when he was fourteen... that's right... and now he's Vice President of ... of Edison. And I'll be there only because of Frank... And his daddy was a big Republican, Manny Queveda, and he introduced us to Richard and all these big people that was with Reagan. And when Reagan was governor, we got all kinds of stuff with Bob Keys and Art... you know... was very close with Art but anyway. Each one of our board members... and then there was another person on the board... Jim Johnson and he was on Standard Oil. And he was one of the trainers of Standard Oil but he was high up in the organization and he was very involved. So there was Richard Cole, there was Bobby Cole, there was...Richard Cole, Bobby Cole, Bob Parker, Jim Johnson and Morris Antoine. And Morris Antoine was a Highway Patrolman but now works very, very high in the C... up there in the government so high, in Virginia that, you know...all of the... you don't even mention him sometimes but at that time he was a Highway Patrolman. And those five men were some of the strongest men that you ever seen. And they even went to the people and said, "Hey, if you eliminated Frances, we will let you continue Second Chance." They said, "Oh no, she's here for life." "And Beyond!", Bobby would lash in. Out of that, each one of those men made a contribution. Whatever they were involved in, we were involved in. We supported that.

So Bob Parker started a...the Kiwanis Club...which is now the down... the Kiwanis on... cause he went to the Kiwanis and they didn't want to have... do something, so he came back and started the Kiwanis which is now at Mitlas and Bob started that. From that club, Bob started the Westside Action that was an offshoot of the Federal Black Investors and the Kiwanis Club. And he started the Westside Action Group. So, we got involved with the Westside Action Group through Bob Parker. And we supported the Westside Action Group through Bob Parker. And then when Bob left...I don't remember but Wesley became President and then we always

supported Westside Action through Wesley. And... Wesley was very involved with... At first the Westside Action Group represented community issues and things like that. That's why it was called, "Westside ", because it was supposed to be for the Westside. It was supposed to be a part of this continuation of the civil rights movement. And that's why it was called " Westside" because where our problems was, was on the Westside of San Bernardino. A lack of economic growth, a lack of education and schools and quality education and all those things. And a lack of business opportunities and things like that so the Westside Action really was an offshoot of the civil rights movement also... up through Kiwanis and then Bob gave up the

Kiwanis and went to the Westside Action Group. And Westside Action Group and so my involvement with Westside Action was through Bob Parker and Wesley and always it was supposed to be a group of men that was able to facilitate for the community, issues that concerned equal opportunity and justice. And that's how my involvement with them was about.

They created, one time prior to that, a group, sometimes in the early 70s, Bill Leonard and them and the power structure, created a group called the "Salt and Pepper" group and that represented white men and black men. And they would meet to discuss the League of Mother' s issues and how they could resolve them but most...they were men and the Mothers was mothers, you know. So they didn't deal with us but we worked some with their wives but we didn't deal with them. Like Meredith Jordan was very involved and... Let's see, who else? Was Judge Morris. Morris, the woman Morris, was very involved. And there were other women that... I'm trying to think of... Vern Potter' s wife was very involved. Ann Botts was very involved ; even though she went...worked with everybody, some of them worked with us, you know. And there was other women that I. Oh, Miss Holcomb, we were very involved with him and Bob Holcomb, we were very involved with him, you know. And Ryland Thomas and people don' t like to mention him but he's the man that was on the hill... When he said something, he was like E.F. Hutton.

**Carolyn:** What was the name again?

**Frances:** Ryland

**Carolyn:** Ryland... Thomas

**Frances:** He was the man on the hill, he was like when E.F. Hutton speaks. He made all the judges, he made all the people. Rick Bresert (?) and them would come; he was one of the most brilliant men. Holcomb... was very calm...Holcomb was emotional, you know but with Ryland... Ryland kept him calmer, you know. And Warner was a very close friend of us because of his connections with Ryland too; everybody was connected with him. But there was two groups and they did the water fight; so the water fight divided the white community, you know, the power structure; so there were some people, even though Bill Leonard was on the other side, him and Holcomb knew each

other from kindergarten so they always remained friends, you know, after... Hal Willis was very involved, Margaret Chandler was one of the women that was a power... a very powerful woman and she was over the water... she was chairman of the Water Board for years and so we were very involved at that level, you know.

We... We... you know... they did a thing at Harvey Mudd because we used to have studies done all the time; with Harvey Mudd Engineering College, Cal Poly and all of those on, What Made San Bernardino Different. You know... than Upland and Montclair and we had five cities that we had did it and one of the things was... was pride. The most key ingredient because Upland had no employment base, you know. Montclair had no... They had the University, but they had no employment base. You know...so when we began to look at it, we seen that the difference was pride. The people had pride in their community and when Inland Action was in full bloom, there was pride in San Bernardino in the old days. I mean they funded us, you know, Second Chance got started, they funded us. They funded us, they had enough money to fund us. Now they don't even meet and talk with nobody. You know, they would... they would... they was very involved in the community, you know, and they all take sections of it and nowadays, they too lack leadership. They are just as bad as we are. They're fragmented and lack true leadership.

With a vision of this whole city becoming a community of love, brother... like when we did the All-American City. It wasn't because the city was perfect, it was because the community recognized its problem and decided that it wanted to do something about those problems. And that's what made us win the All-American City. It's not picture perfect community, it's community that had problems and wanted to do them. And we went back to Williamsburg.. Now when we went back to Williamsburg, me and Anne Shirells... Wilcox and all, " Y' all can't speak. Y'all can't speak." Everybody's gonna speak... Wally Green, they had him up there, he was talking about our program and all of the sudden, well George Gallup start asking, "Des Moines, Iowa". And I asked them did they know my aunt, and they knew my aunt, she was head of the CETA program... but when they start asking them questions...about, you know, how many people...they had all the statistics and everything. " Well, what's happening? What are you doing about this problem? You had this problem." Wally could not answer those problems, you know, so Wally deferred to us, you know, and we wasn't supposed to speak.

**Carolyn:** And you ended up taking over the show.

**Frances:** Yes, and they... and we spoke and won. And then Holcomb came back after we won; and that's why I said it's so important for us to do a really Black History. It's okay to bring...from Detroit... what's her name?...out to be the speaker, you know, the Black history...you know, like they named the State building after her and things like that...that's fine... Rosa Parks...that's fine to have a Rosa Parks, you know, that's wonderful and I'm glad they did it. I'm glad when... Gertrude Wetzel was the one that made the Dr. King statue. It was her persistence, it was her selling them spaghetti dinners. It was her that got the school... that got the city to give her that plot of land; we



never could have got it, you know what I'm saying? And then all of the sudden she said, "I want a statue." And they got so tired and after things went so bad...after they became known as the most racist community, they said, " We better do something." So all of the sudden, Holcomb and all of them got together and all of a sudden they hired a person from down there in Mexico and it was from the top...you know... persons that make statues and sculptures. And they made it out to look kinda...in essence, it became a reality.

**Carolyn:** Yes, it' s a beautiful statue.

**Frances:** Uh huh, and it's been there. And I was so scared when Hardy and them was naming Martin Luther King..... I said, " Why do you want to make that dirty school [formerly Franklin junior high], Martin Luther King? That's not representative of that man! Suppose they move the statue down there in front him... the school? They're going to tear that statue down!" I said, "We need to find something to name that can" ... maybe Arroyo should have been named after him, brand new school. And make it something, you know... we don't know what Arroyo stands for but we do know... but y'all done took this little dirty school that started the whole civil rights movement and made it Martin Luther King, I thought that was terrible. You know but I hate to be that one that's out there negatively thinking but I said, " He's better than that." They done took all of it down, it's hot out...I don' t know whether they still have air conditioning or not but why would you name something that wasn't first class, after him? Does that make sense? You know when they got to name the Feldheim Library, they put it downtown and they keep making it better ... even though the bums hang around there, You know... they...they... they try to spruce it up, you know. The Historical Society, that building, I went by there, I said, "Look at that building!" It's beautiful, you know. In the middle of all that decay, there's that building that represents their history, you know. But we don' t have anything to represent ours, other than the civil rights movement. And, you know, with her...I doubt whether those people know enough about Rosa Parks to really understand how important she is but I think that it's important ... not... I don' t want nothing named after me, you know, I'm past that. But I do feel that Holcomb, and a lot of those white people that have played ... Dorothy Inghram, Shirley... I named the library after Dorothy Inghram because she was somebody, you know what I'm saying? First Superintendent... God knows and then she paid her price, you know because one is a lonely number and she gave that up, you know, that she would be able to do all those things, you know and to do... So, I know that's true and you know, Anne Shirell's Park, I think that's nice because she was in Parks and Rec but I'd like to see one of the finest recreation centers in the world... there as a world class recreation center for her. And until we start talking about doing those kinds of things for our people, we're only minimizing the work they've done and the people they are when we allow them to put their names on something that ain't of quality. Does that make sense, what I said?

And I think that you guys have to start... see, we're passing the baton and I'm planning...the tragedy is that there ain't nobody to pass it to; you know, that's my

dilemma. You know, when I lost Second Chance folks laughed. I had to go to L.A., most of my work comes out of L.A. I still... I had to pay a \$100,000, over \$100,000 to IRS; my house and things like that, you know, that's all I had left, you know. And I can't live off of Social Security and I gave up my retirement. I cashed my 401k a long time ago when Second Chance... so now I've got to keep working in order to maintain my livelihood but I still maintain... Sometimes I have to come here and make decisions... about...is it worth it to give up what you believe in all your life to get a job? That's how come I had to work for myself. You know, and so because I went through too much and I'm not an obedient kind of person. You know, I say that...

**Carolyn:** You want to be free enough to speak your mind

**Frances:** Right, and so... I under... but, you know, we got to pass that baton and nowadays it's different because you got a whole lot of things that's going for... like you're in the Superintendent's office, Margaret's in the Superintendent's office. You know, you got a lot of people, a lot of places, you know and you and Margaret are sensitive but there's so many people that are not sensitive. And I don't know how to make black people more sensitive. You know, maybe Barack Obama can make them more sensitive, you know, because the people that get in position has got to have

compassion for the people who don't. You know, they can't say, " Oh, well these are the rules!" You know... you know, there's people would never make it if you go to the rules. No, we had to create some new rules in order to get them where they were; even though the law was there. So then, all of the sudden, they got to pass the rules.

So I think that somehow we got to be able to pass the baton on but you guys have to now...and he said that you'll have to take a responsibility and when you get back, I'm sure that you will have a different feeling. And I'm sure that you'll have a different feeling and you don't have to be antagonistic. He held that to make a difference and to bring people together and to develop people and we are now...what we done, we won a war but we lost the battle...we lost three generations or four generations of children. So what we've got to do now is go back and discipline and develop those children. But...In the process of doing those, we still have those young people out there... some of them are ready like Jonathan and them. And we got to give them better...when I heard he was working at the Drop In Center... this smart, young man? You know that...I mean when I see him perform... you know, when I see those kids do the spoken word, do the things that they do and ??? and recite, I want to believe... I says, "What does the Drop In Center do now?" Because what we intended for it to do, it was the head of the Police Department.

**Carolyn:** Oh really?

**Frances:** Oh yeah, the Drop In Center was created... When Holcolmb got elected, we asked him for seventeen points. And one was the Drop In Center. And everybody else takes credit for it but we asked for it. We got throwed out of his

house. " Here's our demands! " And one of them was the Drop In Center and that we wanted a person in the Drop In Center that reported directly to the mayor. And people did not have to go to the Police Station or to City Hall for nothing; they had their Jr. City Hall there. It was a sub... it was a combination of a City Hall, sub Police Station and the whole bit.

**Carolyn:** It was an empowerment position.

**Frances:** It was empowerment... and that person that had it, went directly to the mayor. Nobody was over him but the mayor. The first person that had the job was Jeff Hewitt, the second person that had the job was then... What's his name from the NAACP?...lived in Rialto?...and he passed not too long ago? Wayne Clark...Clark...Clark; he was President of the NAACP. And then the third person that had it was Willie Garrett. Now Willie Garrett had the power; he went straight to the mayor. Anything that happened, straight to the mayor. You know, after he fell off the roof and broke his leg, then he took that job on and he went straight to the mayor and it had something. But what Willie didn't have, was the ability to move it along with change. So then, slowly the system started taking away and it started to being the Drop In Center with a post office and those kind of things and become a service rather than a power what it was suppose to be. So you know, we really need to look at it, you know...

If I...You didn't ask me for no recommendations, but I think that Hardy did a good job as the first person at Edison, he did what he thought was right when he was on the school board; he implemented the plan. And then, when he was at Kaiser... he... he did well and ... but what happened was he got caught up in the system, not allowing him to do the things he really know how to do; then the system turned on him. And then after it turned on him, he came out very weak and in poor health and then now, you know, you look at him and you have to really say that he had an era.

Like Norris Gregory had an era and people don't even realize that there was a Norris Gregory. So we have an obligation to talk about black history. You know, we don't... You know, Norris Gregory was the first black city council people, nobody knows that, you know and I think that has to be brought out, you know. And, you know, he's still alive, you know and you know the other man that ran, you know and John Hobbs is dead but boy was he tough. I mean he got those people...they were scared to come down there and act crazy. John would roar like a lion, you know. And we didn't realize how strong he really was...you know, but now we miss him. But there's so much history out there that these... all these new people moving in and they're the first persons there. So you got to bring the history out. See, because they say, " A community has no history what never had the development and growth that it should have."

You know... and that ' s the same thing with the Jews. See Jews say, "There will never be another holocaust. Never again!" You know... because they always make that every day, everybody understand that there was a holocaust and ten million Jews died and

they keep bringing those things up and they have created the State of Israel, you know and you know... You, well, going... If you've been there, I've been there, you know, you go in to the ? Center and Jews come from all over the world and I was shocked about the ? You go in as a Jew and come out as an Israeli. And as if there ' s much difference between a Jew and an Israeli is something else. You know, and when you learn the history, you know... and those people know the history and they stay strong. When you get to Israel, they start singing, you know, [hums, Hava Nagela] you know, and shalom ...I mean, you know, when you see the beauty and you walk through it and you know it had to be Jesus there. I cried all the way through the old city. You know, I said, "Oh My God, Lord, was you were here?" The donkeys are still there, the changers, ain' t nothing changed! The nomads is going through and here you go three blocks and you sitting up there with a hotel that ' s got three lobbies. You know, so, you know, when you look at it. .. you know, it was one of the first places I went and I represented the State of Israel; the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the State of Israel, it is now 60... and represented the 30 and I represented the council and the delegation....went to the President' s house and all of that... Yep, through the whole thing. I was in. .. and then I created a Sister City for Israel. .. I'm trying to think of it now...Hertzaleah. So I created a Sister City then we had it going for a long time, Hertzaleah. Yeah, it's still... they don' t never recognize it because Rabbi Cohn ? Hertzaleah but he did say going to get... but we never really... they... they were for awhile we were sending a couple of kids back and forth and everything... and they're very high tech, on the ocean, really something, you know... and Thelma was the one that said, "Oh, we should have Hertzaleah!" and I'd been back there and it was just something, you know that...I had never seen nothing like Israel before, you know. I still got water. .. when my house burned down and everything...I still got water from the River Jordon like this... and The Sea of Galilee, I don' t what happened to that but every time I get sick, I rub the River Jordan... and it will never go down, it has not evaporated, thirty years old. I gave so much away; I once had a wine bottle I got at one of the stores...did you eat the St. Peter' s fish? Was that not the best fish in the world?

**End of Interview**