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Bridges that Carried Us Over Project

Interview Summary

Interviewee:

Virinecia Green-Jordan

Interviewer:

Kaelie Lee, University of Redlands
Kahalewai Wallace, NextGen United

Interview Date:

March 10, 2021

Interview Location:

Online via Zoom

Interview Summary completed by:

Kaelie Lee, 2022.

Description:

Virinecia Green-Jordan is a third generation educator. She was born in Chicago. Her and her family came to Los Angeles, then moved to Perris when she was 14 years old after the Watts riots. She shares her family history including the Coe family of Appalachia. She discusses early black community development in the Good Hope and Meade Valleys, the life and leadership of actor and lawyer Clarence Muse in the region, and the advocacy of Black homeowners who built the roads and community services in these rural areas of Riverside county. Green-Jordan discusses her career in special education and her leadership and advocacy for black students for 15 years on the board of education in Perris. She has helped build many schools in Perris, contributed her work to disabled students, Black students, STEM/STEAM students, and founded many organizations in Perris.

Subject Topic:

- Education
- Perris (Calif.)
- School board

- Coe family
- CSCA-70
- Clarence Muse
- Nan Sanders
- COVID-19
- Protests
- Black Lives Matter
- Election
- University
- Watts
- Dora Nelson Museum
- Corona-Norco
- Wilma Carter
- Mrs. Kearney
- Eartha Kitt

Spatial Coverage:

Name of Site (if relevant)	General Location/Address
N/A	Los Angeles, CA
N/A	Mead Valley, CA
N/A	Glenn Valley
N/A	University of California, Riverside
N/A	California State University, San Bernardino
N/A	Chicago, IL
N/A	Mississippi
N/A	Alabama
N/A	Pacoima, CA
N/A	Perris, CA

N/A	Kentucky
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Temporal Coverage:

- (1866) Her grandfather was born after the Emancipation Proclamation
- (1914) Her father was born in Mississippi
- (1968) MLK died, Virinecia moved to Perris when she was 14 years old.
- (1972) Her step son died
- (1976) Green-Jordan Graduated from UCR with a BA in Psychology
- (1979) Clarence Muse passed away
- (1980) Green-Jordan graduated from CSUSB for her MA in Special Education
- (1985) Green-Jordan joined the Perris School Board
- (1990) Green-Jordan’s mother passed away
- (1994-1996) Green-Jordan wrote the Special Ed curricular at UCR

Key Events:

- Watts Riot
- Los Angeles Riot
- Chicago Riot
- Riverside BLM Protest
- MLK death
- WWII
- Emancipation Proclamation

Key Organizations:

- Perris High School BSU
- AKA at UC Riverside
- African American Perris Valley African American committee
- Cal Arts
- Perris Valley Art

Interview Index:

Media Format	Time (hh:mm:ss)	Topic Discussed
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Digital Video	[00:00:54]:	Virinecia recounts her family history. Where she was born, where her family was born, and why they moved from Chicago to Los Angeles.
Digital Video	[00:03:56]:	Virinecia explains how their family moved to the Inland Empire in Perris.
Digital Video	[00:05:07]:	Her family created CSCA-70 and brought lights and roads to Perris.
Digital Video	[00:05:15]:	She briefly mentioned going to Eartha Kitt's house as if it was day care. She also introduces Clarence Muse and his importance.
Digital Video	[00:08:52]	Perris Valley Art was addressed that brought 50 art festivals and 54 Christmas hollows meaning given out over 1000 toys every year.
Digital Video	[00:09:31]	Virinecia explains how important education is to her and her family. She explains her and her brother were honor students and felt as though education was the only way out for them to be successful.
Digital Video	[00:11:13]	She introduces the Coe Family who were Appalachian African Americans. They were from her mom's side of the family.
Digital Video	[00:14:42]	She founded a lot of organizations in Perris The Perris Valley African American committee and the AKA sorority at UCR
Digital Video	[00:18:58]	She explains her education: 4 degrees
Digital Video	[00:22:39]	She gave a brief story with Nan Sanders that mentioned how she was treated for advocating for Black students on the School Board.
Digital Video	[00:28:17]	How the Pandemic affected her and disproportionately affected the Black community

Digital Video	[00:30:57]	The importance of education in her family/pushback/final words of advice
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Full interview transcript can be found below.

Interview Transcript

Start of Interview:

[00:00:00]

Kaelie Lee [00:00:09]: Alright, My name is Kaelie Lee.

Kahalewai Wallace [00:00:14]: My name is Kahalewai Wallace.

Kaelie Lee [00:00:17]: We are here today doing an interview for the Bridges That Carry Us Over Archive of the Black History in the Inland Empire. Today is March 10, 2021, we will be interviewing Virniecia Green Jordan, and could you please spell your name for us.

Virniecia Green-Jordan [00:00:33]: Yes. It is V as in Victor, I-R-N-I-E-C-I-A G-R-E-E-N hyphen J-O-R-D-A-N.

Kaelie Lee [00:00:46]: Alright, And for the first question: Can you tell me a little bit about some of your earliest childhood memories in the Inland Empire.

Virniecia Green-Jordan [00:00:54]: Yes. I was born in Chicago. And actually, my brother was born in Indianapolis cause my mother was born and raised in Indianapolis and my dad was in Chicago, but he was born in Mississippi.

Virniecia Green-Jordan And they migrated to Mississippi and as you know it was a lot of racial strife at that time. My grandfather was born in 1866.

Virniecia Green-Jordan Three years after the Emancipation Proclamation.

Virniecia Green-Jordan And my great aunts and uncles were slaves, some of them were slaves. So the migration from Chicago to Mississippi from Chicago was because of the racial strife, my grandfather taught 70 years in the state of Mississippi in the normals.

Virniecia Green-Jordan And actually, I'm going to be writing a book about my family. I'm a third generation educator.

Virniecia Green-Jordan So, at that time, the weather is so cold in between Indianapolis, and Chicago, my mother when my brother was born when he was six months she said no more.

Virniecia Green-Jordan And we moved to Los Angeles. At the time, a lot of people don't realize that at the time, the only place you could really live in Southern California was in **Watts**.

Virniecia Green-Jordan Even though you may have money. So, my mother, I found out in my research was what they consider it a computer, meaning that during World War II, she worked at Dayton Wright field, she was trained.

Virniecia Green-Jordan And then when she came out to California, she was able to work in computers with computers and but my dad came out here.

Virniecia Green-Jordan And he was trained to be an electrician, and he was promised a job, and when they found out he was black, African American, they called them negroes then. Okay, he wasn't able to get a job.

Virniecia Green-Jordan And so they decided that they didn't want to go back to cold weather, so they stayed in Watts, well, I live during the time when Kennedy was killed. I remember when Kennedy was killed. I was like, what, maybe but I don't know, first, second grade.

They actually came out here after Martin Luther King had was, killed in 1968, that's when we moved to Perris, and I was 14 years old at that time, I experienced the first Watts riot.

My mother could not come home for a whole week. And it was terrifying and where I lived, because the African American couldn't live to the move to the west side you didn't matter if you're in middle class or whatever, they did not allow that. They did not allow any African Americans to move out that area that you know the Watts of South - they call it central South LA now, but it was Watts in.

And so, my parents had bought property, and in Perris in 1959. So it was between moving to Pacoima in the Valley, or moving to Perris, where they own property because he had planned to retire here. So they decided that no more Chicago, no more city. Come out to the country. And I cried. I was absolute No, it was no streets no roads, no nothing here.

And coming from an urban area and my parents would go back every year sometimes twice a year so Chicago. I mean i never missed my cousins. And going back and forth. I was always like oh my god. And so a lot of the lot of the streets in the roads, especially

in the Mead Valley area, and the Glenn Valley area, and where I grew up the Good Hope area and the Meadowbrook area were owned by African Americans.

And they own acreage. I mean, we're talking about from, we had two and a half, two and a half acres to 10 acres or more.

05:07 And the streets and lights and roads were put in by African Americans, my parents help establish CSCA-70, that actually put the streets lights and roads in our area, because my parents said, you know, you know when you come to an area try to improve it. So, that's what you know I grew up with.

Also, I'm from a family of entertainers like with the Cotton Club. I grew up going to Eartha Kitt's house. And I thought that was normal at the time when you five or six years old you don't know, but, but my aunt that lived in New York. My dad had nine brothers and sisters and they, you know, one living in San Francisco one lived in New York.

Virniecia Green-Jordan The rest of brothers and sisters lived in Chicago. So we. So, a Wong was a friend, where she, she actually was a housekeeper in New York. So, my aunt in New York, got my parents to help Eartha Kitt, you know, what do some of her house. I literally my brother almost drowned in their swimming pool. We used to go to Eartha Kitt's house almost every week.

Virniecia Green-Jordan So all that to say that come out here. Clarence Muse had bought I don't know, I don't know if it's 300 acres, 600 acres. Well, anyway, my parents befriended Clarence, and that was through my brother. Uh, well, first of all, we were honor students, my brother and I.

My brother is an astrophysicist and he has a master's degree from UCR in astrophysics. And so, he was impressed. Clarence was always impressed with honor students, it didn't matter if they were African Americans or not but he, you know, if you know anything about Clarence but he played in the second talk a picture ever made.

And all these new actors and directors and all that came through, pretty much Clarence, you know, opened the door for that. And he was in the Harlem Renaissance.

So anyway, all that to say when my dad lived in Chicago, he knew Clarence, and that kind of rekindled the relationships.

Virniecia Green-Jordan And so, until almost the day he died. Those that don't know Clarence, the last movie he played in was the Black Stallion. Most people know him as a shoeshine man and a carwash.

Virniecia Green-Jordan So, at that time, and I was a teenager and I didn't think all that stuff was important. A teenager, Clarence I mean he just the regular person. Okay it's like Eartha Kitt, you know, they would my parents would literally go and take care of Eartha's dog, even when they moved to Perris they would go up there to Beverly Hills where she stayed cause she had a house there. I know she had a house in New York. But anyway, all that to say is that

So from there. my parents would go a lot of places like with Clarence Muse and his uh his wife would go to award ceremonies, they, they continued to do the art festival. And then my parents when Clarence when he died in 1979. And my parents continued to do the Perris Valley Arts and Activity committee. That was a grassroots community organization, under the Chamber of Commerce.

Virniecia Green-Jordan So, my brother, and my parents, not me. But but I supported this since then, made it a nonprofit in 1990.

[time stamp] **08:52**

And then my mother died at the end of 1990, you know after it was established and then. From there as it is still in existence, Perris Valley arts and activity committee, and we have had 50 art festivals and 54 Christmas hollows -- meaning given out over 1000 toys every year. So, but all that to say that in Perris. Basically, it was like nothing here. There was nothing here. I, as I said, I was an honor's student. I did go to a black college in Mississippi because that's my family's school.

[time stamp] **09:31**

Virniecia Green-Jordan My brother didn't, my brother, aced the SAT so he went straight to UCR and majored in physics. But I, my parents felt that I was a little bit. I don't want to say, I would say active, because I've always been active, I was a mascot, ASB, anything you could think of. That was, was, was a active, young teenager would do, I did. Now for me. And that was doing time of racial strife. It was a lot of prejudice, I did not understand that at that time.

Virniecia Green-Jordan Because, like, they never gave scholarships to African American, even my brother, even though my brother was an honor student, I was an

honor student. We got no scholarship. And my parents didn't... encourage education. And that was something like I said I'm a third generation educator. I've had doctors in my family, my cousin married Booker T Washington's niece.

Okay, so. So that was something you had no choice. You know, it's like you're going to school. And we knew that as as young folks I was like Clarence's mother said, you better get a good education. He went to a Dickerson's School of Law. You probably don't know he was a lawyer, and his mama said, you better go to school, or I'll kill you.

Virniecia Green-Jordan Okay, so it was like it was like a no choice with us but but we wasn't like as far as the honor student. It wasn't that they forced us to be honor students. It was like it was encouraged for us to learn and ask questions.

So an education, as you know, right after slavery. That was the door. That was the key.

[time stamp] 11:13

Virniecia Green-Jordan Now my mom's side of the family, there's a book that's already written about the Coe's. They were Appalachian African Americans that owned 300 acres in the Appalachian, they still own it.

Virniecia Green-Jordan We are, my mother's family's been recognized by the state of Kentucky. Being one of the oldest cemeteries in Kentucky. And it's over 150 years and it's a plaque and, and I'm rewriting my uncle's book, so that's getting ready to come out soon.

And so, with those Kentucky hillbillies. And, and the we call the Mississippi, the society of African Americans from Mississippi. So this is what you have me, Virniecia Green Jordan.

And so that led me to run for the school board in 1985. It was Mrs Kearney, a Mrs Kearney was my, my mother's best friend she created the African American Dora Nelson Museum, my mother. Actually, it was a thought then, and they decided that I should go into politics. At that time, I just had my son and I was in 1980 and that's how I ended up. And I never thought, I didn't even think I moved. to Chicago for at least a year and a half, but it was about, I don't know, it's snowed really bad and I said oh no. Uh uhn.

So I came back it was in '78 so I came back to California. But all that to say is being on that board I got about nine schools that I helped build. And I have right now I'm though I

was, well, you know I'm not elected but was the longest elected, African American, in The Inland Empire. I mean think about it 1985.

And I just lost my election. So, so a lot of the infrastructure, it, and a lot of things. Right now we have a city councilman that I know benefited, he went to all my schools, David Rabb, and Malcolm Corona, they all went to the schools where their policies. Because when I first got on the board I was teaching at Corona Norco and Corona Norco at that time, the expectation was different. It was higher.

And then I got on the school board, and it's like they didn't expect the books were 20 years old and they didn't expect the kids to learn anything.

Virniecia Green-Jordan And I'm like, No, no, no, no, no. So that's sort of how I became a rebel, because I said no. No, you gotta have high expectations, and the schools that I helped build literally like the last one was a virtual school right before the, the corona virus, which I'm glad you know that that happened that was like two years ago.

Virniecia Green-Jordan But I've helped build a charter school, stem school, a steam school, refurbish schools. And so, and I think that that's important for the next generation – education. And that's why I'm glad that you guys are documenting the history.

But, like I said, What I've done is pretty in depth.

And I have helped founded a lot of organizations like here in Perris I have founded the African American Perris Valley African American committee. The AKA sorority at UCR, I'm a founding member of that.

I know that Wilmer Carter is aka but Kappa Theta. I'm a founding member, okay. But the second line. A lot of the check things that TV like I said my son he had his own radio show when he was 16, he's 40 now.

Virniecia Green-Jordan So a lot of the audio-visual things that are going on in Perris that I helped start, because that's one of the things before multimedia came out. That's one of the things I felt that it was important because in California, the third largest industry here is entertainment.

And we only like two hours away from Burbank. And right now, that was one of the last things I tried to do is try to get Cal Arts, cause that you know we got schools here that are art schools.

Virniecia Green-Jordan Yeah Disneyland and Cal Arts. They said we live too far away, we, Paris. They are too far away for them to even integrate with us.

Now that didn't make me too happy because normally when I get to someone being, what do you call, not feeling that we're important.

Then I start getting on my soapbox, I'll say that in a positive way.

And so that's, you know, because I'm known as Green Jordan. And that's why, because of the high expectation that I have.

Virniecia Green-Jordan But basically, I will say that the African Americans, and I don't want that forgotten in the Perris area, put the infrastructure, we talked about streets, lights, roads. Sewage was too expensive so they did. They did. What do they call— septic tanks, but a lot of the things that are in especially like I said I will, I will summarize again,

The Glen Valley, now the Glen Valley area and the Mead Valley area were taken over by Riverside. And that was Valley Verde school district. And that's what they did when they build all that housing tracks that they would take the things that people did in the area that African Americans, like, you know, like it's no history there.

And so I'm just documented that was African American property out there, I mean we talked about people that own two and a half to 10 acres. Okay, and now it's Orange Crest, But that was African American property at that time. And I grew up in Good Hope, and then you got a Meadowbrook.

But basically, at this time, I am supporting and I have supported African American history.

Virniecia Green-Jordan I am the past president of the, of the coalition of black school board members for the state of California, as well. So, I know that's a lot of information.

But I don't know specifically what you want to ask me. But, but I've experienced a lot. And it has not been positive.

Okay, I think San Bernardino there was more African Americans over there. And they have more support, but at Riverside, the support was not there.

But it just what, I'm telling you, it just was not there. And so, it pretty much politically. I literally had to fight. Politically, or when I go to meetings. And as you can tell I'm not, I'm not afraid to speak. And I'm not afraid to tell the truth. And I have.

[time stamp] **18:58**

Virniecia Green-Jordan I have—say almost four masters degrees. Because I graduated from UCR in psychology 1976. I graduated from Cal State San Bernardino so like I said I helped start this— their severely handicapped class, and that was like in 1980, but I didn't get my masters till '87, because I got pregnant, had may son.

And, but I did drive, I literally I drove. I drove from Perris to Los Angeles to try to get my vocational rehab counseling. I actually am fluent in sign language. So when I was at UCR, I used to intern at a California School for the Deaf. And I wanted to be a rehab counselor for the deaf, but Northridge which was just too far.

Virniecia Green-Jordan So I went to Cal State San Bernardino, and then from there, you know, I just got to all the other credentials because I taught for about almost 40 years in special ed, you know everything that's related to teaching severely handicapped. RSP.

I have, you know, my administrator credential as well. And I felt like I needed. I didn't need to be an administrator if I was a school board member, because that's, that's the highest level administration.

So, but basically, I will say no more, because, because really it was a struggle. And like I said, it started in high school, when I first and I will say this, when I first moved out here.

It was like, they almost trying to expel me for having a coat, putting a coat down a toilet. And I was an honor student, I mean, which is A minus. I mean, okay.

And then they changed the rules, like when here when I moved to Perris. It was like if you're an honor student and get out of class early. They was changing the rules.

I guess they didn't want me to get out early. But anyway, be that here to say, but that didn't stop me because you know, growing up in Watts being in the Watts riot.

Matter of fact, I was in a Watts Riot to Chicago Riot and the Detroit Riot because my parents, literally, that's where my family so we would go back, So you know doing that area.

It was like burn baby burn. I'm black and I'm proud. And, and I helped start to be a BSU in Perris. Perris High School. So you know it's like, okay, you know, it's time to recognize I'm coming from my rich, educated environment, and family, I had a lot to be proud of because them Kentucky, Kentucky hillbillies.

Virniecia Green-Jordan Oh, yeah. Nobody mess with them in that 300 acres, and you can look up the book as Coe, there is three books written about my family.

I'm a Coe C-O-E. So the it I will say this, so a lot of the people at high position will say, Why do you act like that. I said one of you go research my family C-O-E's, the Coe's, Then you will understand a little bit, the Greens. Yeah, they fight, but not like them Coe's, The Coe's had to protect, you think about the Appalachian, it wasn't that many African Americans in the Appalachian Mountains.

And so they had they had to protect the property. Otherwise they would, they would have not had existed and honestly, they did. And I will say no more. So that's the background I come from.

[time stamp] **22:39**

Kaelie Lee Just to backtrack really quick. I'm very curious about your experiences on the board.

After being the first African American elected in Perris and eight— sorry, 1985, what did that feel like? Do you have like— vivid experiences of your co workers treating you a little bit different, or.

Virniecia Green-Jordan Oh yeah. Oh, yes, Nan Sanders got a school named after her right now. Okay. And I knew Nan Sanders. And she's like, bit she was elected like 50 years, almost like she left. Paris elementary and then she went to Perris High School District.

Virniecia Green-Jordan And so, we had riots growing up in Perris. You know racial riots.

And so, you know, Nan would come there and they will try to get the peace and, you know, this is when I was a teenager.

And so, you know, she would say, "But why, why do you act like that?" You know why, you know, as far as being verbal. And I always, in all my board meetings I make them pull statistics, you know, what are you doing for the African American which we always the test scores are lower, you know some excuse.

So all that to say is, it was like for me to stand up for African Americans. It was like put as a negative. You know why do you do this, you know, you don't have to do this.

Virniecia Green-Jordan And I'm like, Yes, I do have to do this because I want that in the forefront. I believe if I was a different color.

And I told Nan Sanders. I said Nan Sanders. I was an honor student. Okay. I was a mascot.

I was on, I was a sports, I played tennis, I was on varsity basketball. Okay.

I, uh, helped create like organizations like the BSU. If I was a white person, a white person. Would I be treated the same way? Would you be asking me, Why do I do the things I do?

So she didn't have too much to say.

Because just alone being an honor student and graduating from UCR. Okay, I didn't go to a JC. You know, my brother did not go to a JC. And my second, my, my junior year, I was the highest social studies student then, and didn't get a scholarship, nor did my brother, when he graduated.

And you know, being a Christian, you could say, Oh, well that's horrible. But I think that I tried to make my mark by pushing what's best, and not having low expectation.

I told them, You teach them, they'all learn, you have that high expectation. That's why I helped built all those schools, the stem schools, the steam school, the virtual schools, I'm talking about nine schools, and made them, And I'm telling you the books were 20 years old, I'm in Corona Norco and you have substandard study here in Perris Oh no, they had to change that. And Matter of fact, I helped changed the board, a couple of times too.

But I won't talk about that because you know that got to be controversy, but you know I didn't try to do that in my, cause you know it takes three to get things done on the, on the school board.

So, believe me, I'm politically savvy.

Virniecia Green-Jordan So, you know, I had to support to get the board changed because you can't do stuff by yourself.

But basically, it's, it's the expectation of African Americans. You know, it's just like with my grandson. You know I've been fighting for this and fighting for this, you know, he was born in jail. Well, we got to enrich his environment, why you haven't you know I won't go into all that but it's not you know, The system is not expecting our kids. No matter what, where they came from, to excel.

And that's where I am. So right that's why I was into the technology. Perris high school I bought a TV station over there, and and and and you know, multimedia. That's important. That's why have a steam school.

Virniecia Green-Jordan One of our schools. Now, Palms that was built has a stage, it's like a stage inside and a stage outside. You know the way that the architect of the schools are important.

Virniecia Green-Jordan So, and I think that, you know, that's one of the things is that having that high expectation. And I did.

And a lot of people know they said oh you still fighting. You still fighting those people. And you know, go into public meetings. We're going to, you know, making sure policies. and I am I had this thing about my staff. If you don't put money behind it. I don't care what your policy says. A policy and no money, no no that's not acceptable. You do a policy, put some money behind it.

Okay. Yeah, that's what we do you set up a program, put some money behind it, because otherwise it will not get done.

28:17

Virniecia Green-Jordan You know, seriously, it won't get done so. So that's for the 33 years. You know, that's pretty much what I have done is to make sure the money.

The last thing I was doing it I started when I was a coalition of black school board member president is to get a legislative policy about African Americans' language, because I really believe you know what with the Latinos did? They make sure they got ELL. And got money behind it. We missed the boat as African Americans.

Okay? Why are you apologizing. We should not have to apologize. When the Emancipation proclamation was passed in 1863, the stats are there I'm a special ed teacher 50-60 years the same statistics the same things going on.

There's no excuse, put some money behind it. Put the priority behind it. Okay. And if we don't have legislation like that, like the, like the Latinos. I don't really see us doing any movement.

Virniecia Green-Jordan And I really looking at what's going on with my grandchild. Looking at you know I'm a psychologist too. I really believe it does have to do with language, that the African American language is, is not respected before they get to kindergarten.

We have a different way, even art, you know, we're kinetic learners, most of us, not all of us, musical. And you know that's not respected in the school system.

So, but anyway, I'm not going to go into all that because that's another. That's another conversation for another day. but it is, it was not easy.

And I'm talking about. I'm talking about that you know, me talking at all levels, we're not talking about just the school board. At the county level, at the state level. You know I was involved at all levels. One of the things that I did do is write the standards for special ed in 1994 to '96.

So, you know, that's how involved I was in. In the policy, but policy without money behind it. I'm telling you this is what's been difficult. And I really am tired of it. I'm tired of the excuses. I really am. This has been going on too long. So if people really want to do things for African Americans, they need to put the money behind it and just do it.

30:57

Kahalewai Wallace Yeah, I completely agree with you on that. I'm part of a small organization called Next Gen United, we like passed some policies at the RUSD, just like making racism a public health crisis and stuff. And I mean it's just a policy never really got moved into much like when racial instances would happen, administration didn't want to do anything about it really, even though that they passed that and it was just like, whatever.

But besides the point, bringing the conversation back into present times. How do you think that, or what is it like for you, living through Covid, and what do you think it's like

for other African Americans and other African Americans and yourself disadvantaged due to this pandemic because of their race?

Virniecia Green-Jordan Well, for me, I'm taking care of my grandchild, like I said that was born in jail. The mom did something very serious I want to go there because this is like things that will be played. And so during this Covid time. You know, I've been taking care of him. Now, I was 66, and he was six.

And because like I said, you know, limited family. It was difficult because I didn't want him to infect me. I wasn't worried about him being affected because he was six years, six years old, he can recover. So I really have tried to isolate myself, personally, you know being a senior because I thought that put me in a very vulnerable position.

And, and I'm quite sure the other seniors. It felt the same way. You know, because it and I, and dealing with this distance learning.

Oh my god, I mean, I am experienced a therapist, behavioral special ed teacher, and I look at the kids and the teachers. This is stress for everybody. And it's been stressful because it was so it was so what do you call it immediate.

Virniecia Green-Jordan You know, it just, it just all of a sudden because actually I had just came from Sacramento. We have had we got two teachers in my district that were teachers of the state you know teachers of the, of the California State, Teacher of the Year.

And I had just came back from a, I call it who-who dinner in Sacramento. And then LA Unified decided to shut down their schools. Well, of course, when when when LA Unified does that, what? Everybody else does.

And that was in March, and it was very very abrupt. And I don't think anybody have, you know, coming from a policy maker. Really, no one really had time to plan.

So for a school board member, it was like very very, like, like chaotic.

You know, we had to figure all this out because we're dealing with teachers union and classified union. And you know when shut School's out what do we do, what do we do with our staff? How do we keep our staff safe?

So school district is still out because they said that they don't want to infect the, the students and the staff right now. You know, because of the safety.

And we know that you had all the presidential confusion. And you still got confusion right now, so but as as a policy maker, this has been a very very difficult time, because it's very very unstable. And it's hard to predict.

Virniecia Green-Jordan So, and that's how I feel like what do you do, you know, I can only trust what I can see and observe and what's written. I think that this generation because I look at my grandchild, they're relying too much on YouTube and computer sources that that are not maybe accurate, and and I'm hoping that we don't lose a generation because like right now my grandchild is having difficulty. He can do the math, but he's having difficulty doing with the reading, because he you know kind of when he started was kindergarten, first grade.

So, I'm really concerned about this generation, right now. You know what's going to happen to them how, how are we going to, I don't want to say recover. I guess the word would be remediate. How are we going to remediate. This generation.

And, and honestly my next door neighbor, because where I live. I always say I stayed in the hood, where I live right now. And I know the neighbors kids, they're teenagers. I don't think they even been in school this whole time.

So I'm very concerned. I'm very— it's more than just the virus. I'm just concerned about the generation. You know, I really am. It's more than that.

But then that's why you need education, because you need to education so you can think, be able to make, you know, what do you call it, ask the right questions, and be able to to come to the best thing for, for you, because, to me it's not a fit all for everybody.

Kahalewai Wallace Yeah definitely being able to critically think, and stuff like that and analyze—sticking with more current times and 2020, as you've watched the growing protests for Black Lives Matter What is your thoughts on that?

Virniecia Green-Jordan I went to the protests in Riverside I was there. Okay, I have to shut up I'm old school, but they say, oh, gee, I'm the real OG. So, you know, to me that's the same thing. I mean, how long we're going to protest.

I was in the first Watts Riot and the Chicago riot. I was in the Detroit Riot, Come on now.

How long? Yeah for the young generation, yes. Okay that's historical for you guys. For me?

No, we need some legislation. You guys get serious, put some money behind it.

That's how things are done, just like they put now stimulus money. Okay, if the Latinos get can get the ELL and get some funding behind that, well, why can't we get it?

You know what I made you the timing for me is over for apologizing. I'm serious. I've been at this too long. I mean we talked about elected. 33 years. You know, it was two years I wasn't on here so it's almost 35 years.

So I don't I don't want to hear the excuses. I want to see some action at that time and honestly, so what I think about it, Same o'l same o'l. You know, get up—how many speeches you go?

Kahalewai Wallace No Yeah definitely.

Virniecia Green-Jordan You know, get up here, see how many speeches you gonna do? No yeah definitely don't get killed. Do you know that my uncle in Mississippi, as one of the reasons why they were moved to Chicago— was poisoned?

Okay, my dad was born in 1914, in Mississippi. My uncle owned a black Baseball League in Mississippi and had that boy being a white boy, he was Jewish. He accidentally hit him with the car. He would have been lynched

That's in early 1900s, how long we gonna do this?

And I won't talk about my family the Coe's , what they had to fight.

We talked about the Coe's Ridge was right after slavery, they bought that, but 1867. They bought that ridge 300 acres. And they had to fight folks for a property.

We're taking 1860 something 1870s.

So I guess coming from my perspective, my family. How long are we going to do that? I mean, you know, BSU I'm telling you that I did help start the AKA, I mean, This is what I've done in my lifetime.

Kahalewai Wallace Looking back over your life, what do you think helps you thrive and overcome obstacles we face.

Virniecia Green-Jordan My family background. I'm from a very tenacious family. Like I said go back and look at Coes C-O-E in Kentucky, you can find them online. Those people defended they property.

[time stamp] **41:08**

Virniecia Green-Jordan If you believe in something you go defend for it you can fight for it. Okay. And may dad side of the family they were highly educated, let me tell you about my grandma. My grandma. My grandma and grandfather were teachers, like I said, my grandfather, other, taught the normals in Mississippi for seventy years.

And he taught the teachers of teachers, literally, and my grandma could pass for white and couldn't teach black kids in Mississippi because she could pass for White. So she put— they called them Orientals then, now to call them asians. Okay, that's what they call them, and mulatto kids.

Okay, so when you come from that and that's our history given to you. Actually my other history that they taught about the Coe's in the University of Tennessee, but actually documented things in your lifespan. And then, as well as a, you know, like I said, my, you know, the depression.

Virniecia Green-Jordan I told you my family, you know, someone were in big bands in the in the arts. Okay, so you know that. And then I will tell you right after slavery education was the most important thing. That's what they believed, they believed that was the door.

That was the door, But look, you know, here I am highly educated. So, so what's the deal?

What's the deal? I think my opportunities, honestly, a lot of times I think I you know I said, this has really hurt me being in Perris, and having all these degrees.

I really think I would have did better, going back to Chicago, doing things, and made a lot more money. With my education.

Because of the fight is just being, you know, so for me it's not about money, it's about the struggle. It really is. Because if I can open the door to the next generation. I think that that's that's the legacy, I can actually say that that I have left, especially with the schools I helped build with the curriculum that I have approved and write, I wrote, like I

said, Special Ed when I wrote the standard, 1994 '96, Special Ed standards for the colleges.

Kahalewai Wallace One last question. If you could give some advice to the next generation, what would it be

Virniecia Green-Jordan Don't give up. Don't give up, no matter what. Because you know, I won't say money's not important cause you do have to live. You know, you have to live but I that I did, I did sacrifice and for go because to me, I felt that it was really important.

You know, and my son, I have one son, he was really was hurt because he would he would say, Mom, I don't know who's your foe, I don't know who's for you. And put him in a bad position.

That is hurt it really did hurt him. And you know sometimes when they can't go after you, then they go after your children, affect you know profiling and all that oh yeah that's real. And that's been going on for years because he was profiled in Perris.

And I didn't even tell you about my son that was killed, my stepson was killed at 1972. And they didn't do anything. You know said black on black crime was here I am loving and Washington DC and my son was killed, senior in high school, honor student.

So, you know, I have done. I have been through a lot, but I would say, you know, all that and I'm going through now with my grandchild. And I will say that it's, it's definitely, you know, worth just keeping in the fight.

But as a person that's older, you gotta pick your battles. Now I'm not getting into everybody's battle right now. So, you know, I think that's the advice.

Virniecia Green-Jordan My dad used to say Know, you're right, and proceed. Now, that was his saying Know you right. So you don't you don't want to get it I call them cat fights political cat fights you really don't want to get into a fight that's really not your fight.

You know, so and again you really want to make sure that you have the expertise. The, and I think that's what helped me, my education, because nobody could question, what I knew.

You know because of my education, you know I was educated, so they couldn't question anything, because I had I mean which am I, and I used, and that's what I told

Nan Sanders, what you're trying to say that UCR, Cal State San Bernardino, and Cal Baptist and Azusa Pacific and Cal State LA, you can't say those are credible schools. And sometimes I had to tell them that, you know, so that meant well I guess I can talk about something.

And I think that that's important to make sure that you do have the education enough to be able to give validity to the conversation, and to the fight. And what I mean fight. I don't mean just be out there rioting and all that. You know, yeah, I've done stuff. You know, I've you know I've got rooms stormed and you know. Like my dad said been there done that.

Virniecia Green-Jordan No I'm not talking about that I'm talking about the fight, but we do need to make sure, like right now the political fight needs to be at the legislative level. Seriously.

We don't need to be protesting no more. I'm 60, you know like I said I'll be 67. So how long we gonna protest?

End of Interview:

[00:48:00]