

California State University, San Bernardino

CSUSB ScholarWorks

Bridges Digital Archive: Audio and Video
Recordings

Bridges That Carried Us Over Digital Archive

3-22-2021

Veatrice Jews

Wilmer Amina Carter Foundation

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

Recommended Citation

Wilmer Amina Carter Foundation, "Veatrice Jews" (2021). *Bridges Digital Archive: Audio and Video Recordings*. 25.

<https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/bridges/25>

This Oral History is brought to you for free and open access by the Bridges That Carried Us Over Digital Archive at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bridges Digital Archive: Audio and Video Recordings by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.

Bridges that Carried Us Over Project

Interview Summary

Interviewee:

Veatrice Jews

Interviewers:

Destiny Hernandez, University of Redlands

Devona Robertson, COPE

Interview Date:

March 22, 2021

Interview Location:

Remotely via Zoom

Interview Summary completed by:

Destiny Hernandez, 2021

Description:

Born in New Orleans, Louisiana, Veatrice Jews talks about her childhood and the memories growing up in New Orleans. Growing up, Veatrice strived for an equal education which led to her move from Louisiana to San Bernardino, California to complete an internship at a community hospital. The same hospital where she met her husband, the first Black Fire Department Captain in San Bernardino, Jimmy Jews. She talks about the hardships of her husband's journey and the racism that was displayed in San Bernardino.

Subject Topic:

- Childhood
- Education
- Work experience
- Marriage
- Parenting
- Racism
- Systematic Racism
- Personal Experiences

- Faith (Religion) and churches

Key Organizations:

- Greater New Jerusalem Church of God in Christ
- San Bernardino Fire Department
- Loma Linda Hospital

Interview Index:

Media Format	Time (hh:mm:ss)	Topic Discussed
Digital Audio	00:17:43	Career at Redlands hospital and breaking barriers as early Black administrator
Digital Audio	00:21:19	Meeting husband Jimmy Jews, and his experience desegregating fire department in 1970s and previous work as police officer.
Digital Audio	00:29:09	Jimmy Jews promotion to captain in fire department
Digital Audio	00:31:32	Raising daughter in San Bernardino, need to be involved in schools to be an agent of change
Digital Audio	00:33:45	Initial meeting of Jimmy Jews and their experiences returning home to visit the south and facing racism, sundown towns & white Christian councils in the south.
Digital Audio	00:44:11	Racism and the ongoing trauma and anxiety it causes today
Digital Audio	00:50:08	Membership in Greater New Jerusalem church of God in Christ & work with Inland Empire Concerned African American Churches including on vaccination campaigns during Covid

Full interview transcript can be found below.

Interview Transcript

Start of Interview:

[00:00:00]

Destiny: 00:00:25.000 --> 00:00:36.000

Okay so hi, I'm Destiny Hernandez and I'm here with Devona Robertson and today we will be interviewing Veatrice Jews for the bridges that carried us over archive. Hi Veatrice, how are you today?

Veatrice:

Just fine, Thank you.

Destiny: 00:00:38.000 --> 00:00:44.000

Yeah, nice to hear. Veatrice may you please say your full name and then spell it out for us.

Veatrice: 00:00:44.000 --> 00:00:47.000

Veatrice Jews.

That's V-E-A-T-V, the letter V. T-R-I-C-E. Like Beatrice but with a V.

Destiny: 00:01:04.000 --> 00:01:08.000

Okay.

Veatrice:

Okay so Veatrice or you can just call me V.

Destiny:

And how do you spell your last name?

Veatrice:

J-E-W-S

Destiny:

Perfect. Thank you.

Destiny:

So one of my first questions is Veatrice Where are you from?

Veatrice:

I'm from Louisiana, I was born in New Orleans my family's from New Orleans, Louisiana.

My parents moved from New Orleans to Lafayette, Louisiana where I grew up, went to school, and then that's where all of my growing up happened in Lafayette.

Destiny:

And what are your parents' name?

Veatrice:

My father is a Doctor Edward Ballard and my mother is Celestine Ballard.

Destiny:

And did you say that they were both from Louisiana?

Veatrice:

Yes, they both are from New Orleans.

Destiny:

And do you remember when, where they. I'm sorry, or besides you how many children did they have?

Veatrice:

We are seven.

Destiny:

Seven, wow.

Veatrice:

Yes.

Destiny:

And you know growing up in Louisiana especially with your siblings, how was your childhood like in Louisiana?

Veatrice:

My childhood, I think, was, because of the times that I grew up in.

Well I was born in 41, so in the 40s and the 50s was very heavily segregated, so I grew up in a segregated town. The schools elementary High School was all totally segregated. And when I went to college. The university was just integrated a couple of years before I graduated.

Destiny:

Were the, so you said that the schools were segregated until you went to college, but how were the neighborhoods? were they the same way?

Veatrice:

The neighborhood was totally segregated, there was certain parts of town that just was dedicated - where for the, the black population. And that day, it was on the other side of the tracks. And so we grew up in that, in those neighborhoods. In New Orleans, it was a little different because I kind of went from New Orleans to Lafayette.

So in New Orleans wasn't as pronounced that this is a black neighborhood, but it was mostly blacks in the area where my grandparents lived and where I would be when I was in New Orleans. But it was definitely that divide that you were on this side of the tracks and at night, you weren't allowed to be on the other side of town and so it was quite, you know, quite. It was reality.

Destiny:

Growing up with segregation, did you ever question like when you were a child, you know why things ran the way they were or did your parents have to tell you what was going on?

Veatrice:

Yes I did question, because as I said in New Orleans when we would ride the city bus, you know, we had to move the sign that says black only so that was always a issue for me. And then also, of course, the fountains the drinking fountains and all of that. And we if we would go to downtown it was an issue for me because if you're buying something, and you were being a service and white person would walk up, then they were stop with you.

So I would have trouble and I would tell my dad all the time I'm not going downtown anymore. But he was a minister, and he would say that we had to learn we couldn't hate. We hate the action of the people, but we couldn't grow up with hate in our hearts so he worked with me a lot in that area.

Destiny:

And you said once you went to college. You saw that there was a little bit of integration. So did you finish college at Louisiana?

Veatrice:

Yes, yes I did I finished at the University at Lafayette. And I was in medical technology, and so we had to do a year of internship. Before you could get your license, and although the college was integrated where we had to do our internship in the hospitals, it was not integrated, unfortunately, and I thought maybe by the time I was graduating, it would be integrated but unfortunately it wasn't.

So I had to start writing to hospitals in other states and that's how I got to California. I wrote to here in San Bernardino, and in San Francisco, LA, and different hospitals.

So I ended up taking San Bernardino, because I could go straight from my year, year from graduating college to my internship, and not wait a year be on the waiting list because some of the hospitals was already full with the intern so I took San Bernardino.

Devona:

I have a question, Mrs. Jews.

Veatrice:

Oh, hi.

Devona:

Hi. If you were, if you didn't come to. I'm sorry, what was your plan when you were applying? Did you think you will come and do internship and start working or come to internship and go back home and work at a hospital but what was your plan?

Veatrice:

Well when I came I wasn't quite sure. You know, it was wasn't planned for me to come out here so once I got you know once I had to do this I thought, well, I had relatives that was in Oakland, and I thought well maybe I'll go to Oakland and work, you know, work there well once I was through with my internship here, and then. So I think once I got here. Probably decided that I would, you know, stay up here in one of the city's either here in San Bernardino, stay here or I'll go to Oakland in that area.

Destiny:

And while you were making your decisions, were you upset at the fact that you had to leave Louisiana? Like did you always envision yourself, always living there?

Veatrice:

I had envisioned myself always living there he is there in New Orleans, or Baton Rouge. And so, as I was growing up I never had, you know, thought oh I want to come to California.

Go, you know, because I had relatives and like I said in New Orleans and I was there all the time so that sort of, it's like, I thought promise it'll be New Orleans more than Baton Rouge.

Destiny:

So were you little upset at the fact that you were leaving home?

Veatrice:

Well, because of the way it happened, it had to be done in such a hurry, that I was, yeah I was irritated because I hear people talk about oh well now you know segregation is over.

But the reality was, it was not and it was very... it interrupts your your life, you're thinking, your plans, and so it was irritating, and my parents you know they, it was irritating to them that they had to deal with that. And you're thinking, it was in the city I graduated from college 63 you're thinking 63 things was would have been better. And so it was frustrating.

Destiny:

That's when you moved to California in 1963.

Veatrice:

Yes. Uh huh.

Destiny:

And how was the transition moving to San Bernardino? or just moving to California, in general, how was that for you?

Veatrice:

Well it was because uh well I didn't know anybody here in San Bernardino so I was set to come and live at county hospital with the interns quarters. And so I just came by train, the lab director met me at the train station, and I went to the hospital and, you know, got situated in the rooms with the where the interns stay. So I lived that on the grounds of county hospital for a year.

And of course, I started meeting people, you know eventually, but my home was the county hospital when I first came.

Devona:

Is that property still up? The building?

Veatrice:

Yeah you know the Tay for DBH where the Tay center is now that's where that part of the hospital is where I lived. And the intern quarters was that was part of a that area of the hospital, and then I don't know if you remember the old Ward B. That was that count on the county hospital grounds, and I think that's close to now where the counseling center is. But anyhow, right across from Ward B was where the intern quarters. So I live there for a little while, then they moved us to the other quarters. And so, and then we ate lunch we ate all of our foods in the cafeteria. So, you know, like I said, County Hospital was my home.

Destiny:

And how was it like working there?

Veatrice:

Well there, it was a wasn't a problem there it was a, you know, I was accepted and, and I thought it went real, real well. I learned the a lot and of course it was a lot of because it was a training facility, there was a lot of interns and Doctor interns and X ray and the lab.

So, being a teaching hospital, it felt comfortable because we all kind of in the same situation learning and living in there. And so I think that made it a little more comfortable for me, in that kind of situation. And then I started meeting people here in. In, you know, in the city.

Finding a church to go to and, and just meeting the other people at the hospital who would introduce me to some of their family members, and on Sunday's sometimes they would come and pick me up and take it to their house. So, so that year I didn't have it, you know, I thought that was a good year for me.

Destiny:

And how was it like building the social relationships? Is there any clear, good memories you have a, you know, going out on town hanging out with your friends.

Veatrice: 00:14:00.000 --> 00:14:04.000

Oh once. I think just meeting that people because it was a whole different kind of concept. Growing up as I said I grew up in totally segregated kind of situation and coming in here and meeting the people in the communities and, and learning that there was still some problems here that you don't hear about when you live in a different state California, you hear everything is so great and wonderful. But as I met people who lived in the west side part of San Bernardino and start finding out that things needed to change that was a lot of segregation going on here.

Maybe not, where people really could tell, but in housing and trying to rent apartments. That was an issue. And just in the schools were an issue and this year and I know that the west side the parent there was a parent group that started working. In fact the year that I was here, Valerie Pope and that group of parents started working on trying to, you know just working on the segregation issues, the racism issue here on the west side in San Bernardino.

Destiny:

Did you ever face any racial discrimination while you were living in San Bernardino?

Veatrice:

Now, it was kind of overt, you knew it was there, but it wasn't like what I was used to in Louisiana. But you knew that it was here, and, and as I said, in the housing and renting apartments you knew that you couldn't just go anyplace to rent an apartment that was, you know, told when I got ready to rent an apartment that that you just wasn't free to go. You thought you could but they wouldn't allow you to, they would say it was already rented or somebody else was coming to look at for it. So I knew it was there, but I hadn't gotten it just in my face.

Destiny:

And so when you did your internship at the county hospital, and once it was over what did you do after?

Veatrice:

Well, at the end of the year, of course you have to move off the off the premises since, of course, by that time as, as I said I had friends and I knew people and so I had a place to move to.

And I started working at county hospital for about three months and then I left and went to Redlands community hospital laboratory and that's where I stayed with all my career the 35 years that I worked. I worked at Redlands Community Hospital. And it was a small, very small community hospital hundred bed, like 100 beds and so it's very like family oriented when I went there so it was a good fit for me.

Destiny:

And how was it like working at Redlands community hospital?

Veatrice:

I think it was a good fit for me, it was a small hospital. At that time, now it's a 300 bed hospital but it was just 100 bed at originally, a small laboratory staff and all. And so I was able to get there and able to move up, move up pretty quickly from just the lab tech

to supervisor and then then an assistant administrator and then administrator. So, as I say it was a good fit for me. And there were not a lot of African American lab directors at that time in California - that was only one in Northern California in another one in the LA area, and then myself so it was kind of still breaking that mold of getting African American to be seen in more of an administrative level.

Destiny:

And how did the hospital treat you? How was the staff, how are they towards you?

Veatrice:

The staff, the administrators were great, the staff and the staff in the laboratory, and the nurses and all, as I say, because it was a small community family like atmosphere, we all just kind of worked together. So, I thought that was, that was good for me to be there.

Destiny:

During this time, that you're working at the Redlands Community Hospital, are you still living with a few friends in your apartment?

Veatrice:

The first couple of years. I got married in 67 so I lived in apartments until then, so I started working at Redlands probably because I graduated, ohh, in early 65. So I guess for a few years I still was in apartments, until I got married in 67.

Destiny:

And where did you meet your husband?

Veatrice:

At the hospital, he was at the Redlands.. not Redlands at San Bernardino the County Hospital. He had just finished the military he was in the Navy and stationed at 29 Palms when he finished.

And he came to San Bernardino and he was a corpsman, so he ended up in the X ray department at Redlands, at San Bernardino County. And so that's why I met him, because he was there my year of internship. He had just started working there as a x ray... dark tech training. And so, when he was training in the doc room, and the X ray department.

Destiny:

And what is your husband's name?

Veatrice:

His name was, is, Jimmy Jews, Jimmy, and of course unfortunately he passed in November of last year.

Destiny:

I'm sorry.

Veatrice:

We were married 52 years so that was a long time.

Destiny:

Beautiful. And so, you said you met your husband at the county hospital Correct,

Veatrice:

Yes. Uh huh.

Destiny:

Was he born, or was he born in California, or where was he from?

Veatrice:

He is from Birmingham. And he grew up in Birmingham with the same sort of situation that I was in. In Louisiana where it was segregated you went to all segregated school throughout his schooling, and then of course he went into the Navy. When he graduated from high school he went right into the Navy.

Destiny:

And what was his profession?

Veatrice:

His profession, was he was a, in fact, he was the first black by fighter in San Bernardino he integrated the fire department here in San Bernardino in '71. So his background was in administration, and that's what he had his degree in. And so he... and then he was also the first black Fire Captain here in San Bernardino so he did a lot in in that area.

Devona:

The both of you were breaking molds.

Veatrice:

(laughing) Yes.

Destiny:

That's amazing to hear.

Veatrice:

He and he had more, it was more of a problem for him in breaking molds in the fire department, so that was a lot of struggle for those years.

Destiny:

And do you recall any experiences he faced while being in the department?

Veatrice:

Yes, a lot of direct racism, directly where telling him that he, they didn't want him sleeping where, with the other fire guys and they want him to sleep in the trucks and somewhere. And they yeah, they gave him a lot of a lot of trouble, a lot of trouble. And so, but he was able to his philosophy, philosophy was, "Act like a duck and let it run off your back." And so he knew that, you know, he just had to go through it in order for the better good. And so, but he told them you know he was there to stay so it didn't matter what they said, you know, they weren't gonna run him away. He was there. And they just would have to deal with it,

Destiny:

Did you marry him before he became the first black firefighter?

Veatrice:

Yes, yes

Destiny:

And so how did you feel knowing that you know like Devona, that he was breaking boundaries being the first one, How did you feel when all that was going on?

Veatrice:

Well, I knew you know it was going to be a rough time for him because he was on the police department for two years. And when politically they asked him if he would, you know, do this. And so when they talked to me and him. And you know I knew it was going to be a rough road for him. But, you know, for the better good, you just have just to deal with some, some uncomfortable things. And so, you know, I was in, you know, I was right there with him, pushing, pushing him and hopefully, helping him when, when he was really going through.

Devona:

Do you feel like I'm sorry Destiny. Go ahead.

Destiny:

Oh no, I just said I'm glad he had her support.

Devona:

Yeah, so my question was going to be did you feel like being a black woman in your work in your field of expertise and growing, and, you know, breaking molds, did you feel like he was also able to carry you? Or do you feel like your levels of, like you said you know was more like a small family at the Redlands Community Hospital. Do you feel like you had that same level of pushback resistance? As you moved up that he faced.

Veatrice:

If I did, it wasn't obvious, you know, it wasn't I didn't feel it or hear it like he did, it was in his face. At Redlands, I, you know, as I said if it was happening. I didn't know it, because the staff and all, um, you know were right, supporting me, as, as they were supporting all the other administrators in the meetings and all. So I didn't feel like I was having any problems.

But in, like I said, it was in his face, they would tell him and they will call it him all kinds of names and things. So they were not trying to hide. If you know, they just wanted to push him out.

Destiny:

And you said he was a police officer before?

Veatrice:

Yes. Mm hmm.

Destiny:

Is there a specific reason that he transitioned from being a police officer to being a firefighter?

Veatrice:

Well, when he was approached to do that because you can transfer from the police department to the fire department, and because all of his, you know he had a good record on the police department. So, that would have been no reason why the fire department would have denied him, because they had denied so many all the other African Americans that had tried to get on before. That they didn't couldn't pass the test so they couldn't do this and they couldn't do that. So this was okay since you guys are not going to allow any of us to get on by taking the test and all let's just do a transfer.

And so he, you know, he was ready for that. He said, let's do it.

Destiny:

And you said also that he had the position of being a fire captain.

Veatrice:

Yes, he was the first by black black captain, and of course that was a struggle for him to, to have them to promote him, he had done so much he was a fire investigator. He was a public information officer, but he had done all these things. But each time it was time for the captain position that was some reason why they said he couldn't have it, but he was acting captain.

So it was a group that said okay, if he doesn't, you know, we'll sue the city. And so all of a sudden he became promoted him.

Devona:

I'm curious as he was in position as the acting Captain he was still getting the pay of regular firefighter.

Veatrice:

I know he was getting to pay a captain, it was just that for some reason they didn't want to actually give him that promotion. And so, you know, if he was doing the duties and everything was fine by me it was time for promotion. He should have been able to know. They should have been willing to give him that promotion. But it had to go, and that's the unfortunate thing, so much of promotions for the African American race has to be pushed with some sort of legal threat, and that shouldn't be it should just go, just like everybody else. And it adds that extra anxiety to us as a race.

Destiny:

Did you two have kids?

Veatrice:

Yes, we have one daughter, Nicole.

Destiny:

Is she in San Bernardino?

Veatrice:

Yes, yes. in fact she yeah she's here in San Bernardino, and we have two grandchildren.

Natalie and Austin.

Destiny:

And how was it like raising your daughter in San Bernardino?

Veatrice:

I think, she probably thought at the time she was growing up I was pushing her too much, out to meetings out. I got on different committees at the school so I was on campus a lot and, you know, the young people don't like their parents on campus. So, so I did a lot, because I felt that, you know, in order to, to change you have to understand and you have to be where policies and decisions are made. And so, and that's why I would volunteer for a lot of the committees and and things just so I'll know what's going on on the campuses and all.

And I did a lot of volunteer and I worked on the Option House for domestic violence on their board, and did the big sister program. So I was doing a lot and I was, you know, so she probably thought I was just doing too much, where. But now she she understood. Understood. understand that you have to be involved with the community to know and to be an agent of change.

Destiny:

And how was the school system like while she was attending was it still segregated or was there some integration going on?

Veatrice:

Well, she went to and well have first years of school she was at, at a private school because I needed babysitting and before school and after school and so she went to, yeah, to a private school and then she went to high school, at Rialto High.

And, but on the campus as I said here, by that time because it was totally. In Rialto, it was integrated so that wasn't the segregation but on campus, I'm sure you know that was always some discord going on with the races, but she you know she was active in some of the clubs.

Devona:

And I had a question I'm gonna take this. I apologize go ahead Mrs. Jews

Veatrice:

Oh no I'm through.

Devona:

Okay, there's a little bit of a delay on my end so I didn't mean to interrupt you if you're still talking, I wanted to, I wanted to go back just a little bit and just get a good sense of when you met Mr. Jimmy Jew, like did you was there something right away or did he grow on you or... I'm always curious to know like what, what was it was he look the way you admired him like as a fire man or what I mean, I know he wasn't a fire man yet right But did he. I mean, what was it initially

Veatrice:

Well because okay I lived at the hospital. And so, and of course, there are few people like us on anywhere in a working environment. So you tend to, to talk and get together. And so there, that's how that's how we started talking, you know, And it just kind of happened but every day of course he was an x-ray and I was in the laboratory and so going to the cafeteria, you cross paths are going on but floors for the patient, you cross paths so during the day, it was, you know, you would cross paths, our cross paths a lot and see, you know, we'll see each other a lot just kind of in our daily work. And so that's kind of you know how we started talking and getting together.

Devona:

Yeah, so at any point with both of you guys being from down south. I know the plan was, if you did stay in California, you would, you know, probably go to Oakland possibly where you have family but once you guys got together and you both have, you know, Southern in your blood. At any point did you guys, discuss like, how long do we want to stay here. Do we want to go back and down south when we retire?

Because it's interesting to me that, that you guys stayed and not interested in your bad way but I'm always just curious to know like, you know, did you feel like going home and visiting was enough or, and then I'll carry on the rest of the question I'm just curious. I'm always curious about the love. Always love to know how people connected and put in 50, plus years. I know we can't capture that, you no in one hour interview. I know it was a special connection.

But anyway, so the at any point, did the either of you have discussed about settling back in the south?

Veatrice: 00:37:28.000 --> 00:37:46.000

Actually if I would have had my way, we probably gone back to Atlanta, because I wanted to go live in Atlanta. But every time I say, let's see let's think about moving, let's move to Atlanta. He would say oh no I'm here I'm a stay up here. So, well I do want to go. He didn't want to go into where my folks were. And then I say well, I'm not going to go to Birmingham. We go visit every couple of years, we would, every two years we were on the road for a month back there as saying. I want to live in Atlanta, but he kept

saying, Oh no, oh no.

So, and why I wanted to go in Atlanta. I don't know I just thought 'Lanta was the place.

Destiny: 00:38:31.000 --> 00:38:42.000

At times when you would go back to visit home, was it still the same? You know, segregation wise or how was it over the past years?

Veatrice:

Yeah, a lot of that was the same, you would forget a little when you're not living day to day there. So, you have to have to still in fact, a few years ago, maybe about four years ago when I was back with my sister in Louisiana and we were traveling from Louisiana to Houston, and she was going to drive and we were passing I say, "Oh I gotta go to the bathroom". And she said, "Uh - uh, we can't stop here this is not a place to stop". And it was a known place that if you were black and you driving through you didn't stop, and this was like four years ago. So there was still, it was always you had to remember, you were in the south. And there is a difference, which it would be frustrating because you know you think oh, everything is changed.

But there's that bias that it's just, for some reason, it just, I don't know hopefully eventually they'll recognize that there's this bias that's there, then it has they have to systematically change all of this, but you still have to think, when you going back into the south, that your movements, you have to be thinking that you are in the south, you cannot do this.

Destiny:

You said this whole restroom incident with your sister, this happened four years ago so, yeah. Oh my

Veatrice:

That's it. And that little area we would drive it through she says, Oh, this is, you still know these people are still, they'll get you. And I know that was one thing that my dad always had a problem with, even though as a minister is that as you travel on the roads to stop at or to go to a restroom or something and you just didn't do it if you were African American. And you had to know which one that you could maybe get by with it, and which ones that no you just know if you stop that will be a lot of trouble.

Devona:

And Destiny, you are so much younger than myself and Mrs. Jews, but I don't know if you're familiar there was a book that was used by blacks to know which hotels they can stop at, which restaurants, which cities. And that is, that's what got some folks through.

Some people just know because they're from the place right so they know where that invisible line is, but if you're traveling because you're a minister who did, they did a lot of traveling from state to state in other black churches, conferences, you had to know what where you couldn't where you couldn't stop, and they still in 2021 have places that you don't want to be caught there in the daylight, you bet not be caught there when the sun goes down.

Veatrice:

That's true.

Devona:

They still exist.

Veatrice:

Sad to say but it's so true. And you, you do have to know and if you don't know, it's unfortunate. You get in a lot of trouble.

Destiny:

Yeah, I agree there's so many things that I've learned like, for example, like the Devona said, I didn't, I believe it's called a sun-down town where you're not there past sundown. And I couldn't believe how many cities, to this day, still participate in that I could only imagine, like you know, imagine that's how it is right now I could just only imagine how it was back then.

Veatrice:

Oh yeah, it was not good. And so many people got hurt, and it's just, yeah, growing up and in a certain time. And, and then you never knew, like in our neighborhood there, there was the white, it was called a white Christian group. But they were bad very Christianly in their endeavors. And we had the president of that group was had a grocery store. And he, that person would report a lot of stuff about our neighborhood and to this group and that was repercussions for things that he would say. And in the beginning, nobody knew how these people will come in and finding stuff out until we found out that that's you know that's who was doing it that he was president of this group.

Destiny:

You realize, not much has changed in Louisiana. How would you say, have things changed for you in San Bernardino?

Veatrice:

I think things have changed but it's still, that racism that's there, that a lot of people won't admit that they have it. And the profiling is still a problem. The poor the African American males, they're still having problems. So it's still so much that needs to, to change that still needs to change, because it causes a lot of... I'm a DBH Commissioner. And so I hear a lot about, of course about mental health. So, the trauma that this causes our young men, and of course it trickles down to the families, to the women that's involved with the men, the trauma that it causes, the anxiety. It's not necessary. And until all of this intrinsic systematic racism change. It's going to continue to have this a trauma and for our African American males.

Devona:

I have a question.

Veatrice:

Devona?

Devona:

Yes, did you ever try to convince any of your siblings to move to San Bernardino?

Veatrice:

Well actually, I have one sister that's here now and one brother. He passed a year ago, and he was here when he got out of the Navy. He, he stayed in fact he stayed with me in apartments before I got married, and then. So, and then another sister came and she got married and her husband's in the military, and not at the base here in San Bernardino and then they went to England. And so, but, but she went back to Louisiana when she came from. After they got out. So, but so, yeah, they saw them came and came up here with me, which was which was good.

Destiny:

Let's see if we can squeeze in a couple more questions before our time is up. So, let's see.

How would you describe, you know, not just the south, or San Bernardino's but, you know, America's progression of racism, you know. Are you pleased with how much it has grown? Or do you still believe, yes, like there's so much that needs to change a lot of things still need to be done.

Veatrice:

I think a lot, a lot has changed, but a lot still needs to be done, because whenever as I said I have a hard time when I think about law enforcement and the African American males and profiling. So it's just, and it's just a lot still needs to change.

Destiny:

And you know, grow, living in San Bernardino and raising your daughter, how was parenthood like for you and your husband? Was it scary? How did you guys feel?

Veatrice:

Uh, well it was always trying to instill hope in her, the need to, of course, be a productive citizen, and all the traits and the things that, you know she needed to possess to do that, try to instill that into her. And of course, I had the Christian faith, too. But, so I think that that's what we tried to do and to bring her along when we were doing things, but she could see the need for it and the good that came out of it, the struggle the, you know, if you put yourself out, you may have to suffer a little but then for the greater good and you go ahead and do it so. So I think that that's where we were, that we should, you know, be able to instill in her those standards.

Destiny: 00:49:56.000 --> 00:50:08.000

I know previously, you said you love to do community work and you love to show your daughter how important it was to be involved in the community. Were there any local churches that you were a part of?

Veatrice:

Yeah, I might say, I was part of the Greater New Jerusalem Church of God in Christ, my church.

When I retired from the hospital, I became involved with the Inland Empire Concerned African American churches, which is the organization of about 22 churches of different denominations, and we work in the community, through education, community development, economic development, social justice, and those areas. And so I'm the Health chair person, and so are you know concerned about the churches setting up health ministries, etc. And now we working on mental health ministries in the church just so I'm still, you know, involved with, with a lot of community activities that has to do bringing the faith based.

And then recently with the COVID problem. A we know that the black and brown people have suffered more with the COVID and so in order to ensure that they get back the vaccine in a timely manner. We were to it. With the county hospital. Not the county hospital, the county, as well as Loma Linda and bringing in vaccination events to the actual churches on the churches campus where the seniors of the church as well as members won't have to stand in line, because I know you've seen these long lines at these various places where they given the vaccines are that tested.

So this way as a small setting. They can come at a certain time, you know, get out of the car get in, in the line, get their vacs, vaccination or the testing whichever one, and kind of ensure that that disadvantaged population is getting served and so we working on that at the various churches right now, to make sure that they can get that vaccination.

Destiny:

You said once you retired that's when you were heavily involved with your church, was your husband the same way?

Veatrice:

He was yeah, he was involved in the community. He was on the boards of different places like the Inland Health. Yeah. And the different others organization that would help in the community, help the youth with scholarships and different things like that so he was involved with a lot of community organizations as well as I was.

Destiny: 00:53:23.000 --> 00:53:44.000

And, living in San Bernardino How would you describe the racial or ethnic diversity in the neighborhood or town that you lived in?

Veatrice:

In San Bernardino, well I lived on the west end of San Bernardino, and we know that there's quite you know it's heavily black and brown population in that area, and 92411, zip code. And although I lived in Rialto or right right on the border. When you come out of San Bernardino baseline right on that border, so I'm kind of still in San Bernardino, and in this this area of Rialto that I live in is is a heavily black and brown too. So that's kind of the population that's around here.

Destiny:

So this is where I will end today's interview. I'm really looking forward to if possible if we could schedule a second interview because there is a lot more that I would like to ask and learn. So thank you so much Veatrice.

Veatrice:

Thank you as well.

Destiny:

So thank you so much Veatrice, right, because to me it's an honor to learn other people's stories, especially you know I was born and raised in San Bernardino, so learning how, you know, San Bernardino has grown or, you know, to know what has not

changed, it's you know it's a privilege to learn. So I'm really thankful for that. So thank you so much for coming. And hopefully we will be able to schedule a second interview.

Veatrice:

Okay thank both of you You guys have a great day.

Devona:

Thank you Mrs. Jews and I do want to share I'm also, it's an honor for me as well I'm also a San Bernardino native and I have the honor of being able to share spaces with you in the past but also some zoom spaces now. But I would say you're, it's very humbling to hear. So, so many great things from such a humble spirit, and so, you know, you guys were some change agents and you're not braggadocious at all. You just come, like it was just part of what we did and we knew it was going to be part of a bigger thing. And so I just also thank you for being obedient to what God called you all to do because you didn't have to accept the call. But you did it in so I hope we do get to do a second interview as well.

Veatrice:

Okay, thank you so much.

Destiny:

Thank you, to the both of you.

Veatrice:

Okay then, take care.

Destiny:

You too. Bye bye.

Veatrice:

Bye now.

End of Interview:

[00:56:29]