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Sabrina Jefferson

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Bridges That Carried Us Over Project

Interview Summary

Interviewee:

Sabrina Jefferson

Interviewer:

Unknown

Interview Date:

February 24, 2023

Interview Location:

San Bernardino, CA

Length:

00:05:14

Interview Summary completed by:

M. Camacho Nuno, 2014

Description:

In this interview, Sabrina Jefferson is the guest and talks about her time in San Gorgonio High School. She went from 1979 to 1981 and has both bad and good experiences at the school. During one time in high school, members of the Ku Klux Klan showed up at the school. It was an attempt to start a KKK club at the high school, which led to riots for the entire week that it happened. Jefferson also talks about good memories, such as the time she campaigned to be the school vice president and running track. She also mentions how, eventually, some of her classmates ended up participating in the Olympics during the 1980s. The interview ends with Jefferson talking about the Day Trippers club and being in the Los Angeles studio audience for shows like *The Facts of Life* and *Diff'rent Strokes*.

Subject Topic:

- School
- Ku Klux Klan
- Riots
- Olympics
- Student Body Vice President
- Sports
- Letterman Jackets

Spatial Coverage:

Name of Site (if relevant)	General Location/Address
California State Univerisity, San Bernardino	5500 University Pkwy, San Bernardino, CA 92407
San Gorgonio High School	2299 Pacific St, San Bernardino, CA 92404

Norton Airforce Base	San Bernardino, CA (Defunct Location)
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Temporal Coverage:

1979 - 2023

Key Events:

- Jefferson went to San Geronio from 1979 to 1981.
- The Ku Klux Klan showed up at the high school.
- Jefferson ran in the school body presidential race.
- Ran in the track team.
- Some classmates eventually participated in the 1984 Olympics.
- Day Trippers club that allowed students to be in live studio audiences.

Key Organizations:

- BSU
- The Day Trippers

Interview Index:

Media Format	Time (hh:mm:ss)	Topic Discussed
Digital Video	00:00:28 - 00:02:37	Jefferson talks about the Ku Klux Klan wanting to have a club on campus.
Digital Video	00:02:37 - 00:03:24	Jefferson talks about how some classmates eventually went to the Olympics.
Digital Video	00:03:33 - 00:05:06	The good memories and events that Jefferson took place in.

Related Materials

Additional oral history interviews are available from the Bridges That Carried Us Over Project at CSUSB, <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/bridges/>

Full interview transcript can be found below.

Interview Transcript

Start of Interview:

[00:00:00]

Q: There we go, okay. We can go ahead and start. Your name is?

SABRINA JEFFERSON: Oh, I'm Sabrina Jefferson. In high school, I was Sabrina Watts.

Q: Oh, okay. That name sounds familiar. And what years did you go to high school?

SABRINA JEFFERSON: I went to San G 1979 through 1981.

Q: And San G. And, so you were in the BSU.

SABRINA JEFFERSON: Yes.

Q: And do you have any memories at all from, either the BSU, or any event in high school?

SABRINA JEFFERSON: Yes I do. I have several memories. One that stands out in my mind is that the BSU, we had -- the Klan had come up to the C -- come up to San G, they wanted to have a club on campus. And I remember, some of them had come up there in their hood, and was riding horses. And it was like a straight out riot that [00:01:00] took out that -- that took place that week.

Q: Wait a minute. Wait a minute, so on horses, in their gear?

SABRINA JEFFERSON: Yes.

Q: In 1979?

SABRINA JEFFERSON: I don't remember what year it was. It was either '79 through '81. Those were the three years I was there. All I remember was, it was a riot that whole week, was as -- folks were just fighting and rioting. It was awful, I remember. One of my other classmates, I just mentioned it to him, I said, and he graduated in '82. I said, do you remember -- his name was Keith Lester. I said,

Keith, do you remember when the Klan came up to San G? He goes, yup, I sure do. The Klan came up to San G and they wanted to -- and they was gonna do a --

Q: I was gonna ask, how did you know it was the Klan?

SABRINA JEFFERSON: Because they had on their hoods. (laughs) So, they wanted to do -- they wanted to actually have a club, and it just went -- the Black people just went ballistic. We said, look, this is not our grandparents, this is night -- back then, we're like, these are the '80s, this is not back in our parents' day, yeah. So, or grandparents day.

Q: So these were students that wanted to have the club on campus.

SABRINA JEFFERSON: But it was adults that -- they were [00:02:00] looking like adults that came up there, that wanted to, I guess, help them get a club on campus. But we weren't having it, and it was like, I think that whole week was just rioting. It was terrible, I remember.

Q: So the school shut down during the week, or did they stay open-- tried to --

SABRINA JEFFERSON: The school stayed open, but I just remember, fights were breaking out between Black and white students because of that, yeah.

Q: Okay, that is like (inaudible) --

SABRINA JEFFERSON: That was very memorable. That was over 42 years ago now. I graduated in 1981, and I still remember that as a significant event that stood out in my mind.

Q: Oh my gosh.

SABRINA JEFFERSON: Yes, and then -- we had classmates too I felt was pretty cool that went to the Olympics. But because of the -- what was it, because of the -- they had qualified to go to the Olympics, but because the president had -- at the time, I think it was Jimmy Carter, we didn't go to the -- we didn't do it the year it was with the Soviet Union, and there was a program [00:03:00] called -- they were

putting together called "On the Road to Moscow." And so they went to the school, and they recorded one of our classmates, in the classroom. They were recording them in the cafeteria, they were recording them, out on the track and field working out. But yeah, it was the Howard Sisters.

Q: That's (inaudible).

SABRINA JEFFERSON: But they ended up going to the '84 Olympics though. They didn't do the '80 Olympics.

Q: That is -- so you got two wonderful -- yes.

SABRINA JEFFERSON: I still remember that very strong thing that just stood out in my mind. But yeah, my dad was in the -- he was stationed at Norton Air Force Base, and, um, that's how I got to San Bernardino, was my dad being stationed at Norton Air Force Base, and just having great memories of running track. I was in Tall Flags. I was a student body vice president for Class of '81. So I was involved, had my little campaign running for -- (laughter), so --

Q: Do you still remember the slogan? (laughs)

SABRINA JEFFERSON: I can't remember now, but I had a little slogan. And then, you know, back then, one of the things that was pretty cool too was everybody wearing a letterman jacket. So I had [00:04:00] on the back of my letterman jacket, "Watts does it with style." That was on the back of my jacket. (laughter) And I did get three -- two letters, so I got two letters. And, running track, and so yeah, it was pretty cool. I had some good memories of high school. Cheerleading, track, lots of friends, clubs. We had club called the "day trippers." And the day trippers brought a bus to the school, and then they took us down to LA, and then we got to watch the recordings of sitcoms.

Q: Ooh nice! That's, yeah that's (inaudible) --

SABRINA JEFFERSON: We're part of the studio audience.

Q: -- called *Sanford and Son*, okay.

SABRINA JEFFERSON: Yes, we -- I remember seeing, what was that one, *The Facts of Life*, and then also the one with Louis, Louis and --

Q: Oh, *Diff'rent Strokes*?

SABRINA JEFFERSON: *Diff'rent Strokes*, yes, so I remember seeing those two sitcoms. And we were part of the studio audience. And I'm thinking, what school would give you permission to take the kids out and go down to LA and watch a studio recording? San G did. (laughter)

Q: Wonderful!

SABRINA JEFFERSON: So [00:05:00] we had a club called the day trippers, and we just took trips down, and being a part of the studio audience.

Q: Thank you so, so much. And we have permission to use this video in --

SABRINA JEFFERSON: Yes.

Q: Thank you.

End of Interview:

[00:05:14]