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### Jim King

Wilmer Amina Carter Foundation

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# Bridges That Carried Us Over Project

## Interview Summary

**Interviewee:**

Jim King

**Interviewer:**

Lea Michelle Cash

**Interview Date:**

May 18, 2016

**Interview Location:**

Rialto, CA

**Length:**

00:21:33

**Interview Summary completed by:**

M. Camacho Nuno, 2024

**Description:**

Lea Michelle Cash interviews Jim King, a man who has made important impacts in the Inland Empire. After small talk and introductions at the beginning of the footage, the conversation turns to King's history of being born in Houston then being raised in Los Angeles and later living in San Bernardino. King mentioned that he worked in the Youth Motivation Task Force, which was a program that helped students learn what they need for future careers. The interviewee also had joined Black Future Leaders. This was a program that took youth and allowed them to live on a college campus for two weeks to make connections, learn about college, and gain skills for the workplace. There were also mentions of two awards, The Black Rose Award and the Dr. Juanita Scott Humanitarian Award, that King created. After being asked who his mentor was, King says his mom is his hero and how her rules as well as background had helped him. For his most memorable moment, King mentions how he was able to successfully invite Rosa Parks to the San Bernardino Black Culture Foundation's history parade. He also mentioned how speaking with Parks personally was otherworldly. When asked about his advice for young people, King mentions how he loves the people around him and that youth need to get an education. The interview ends with King and Cash discussing the former's role in making the Southern California Gas Company more inclusive and diverse.

**Subject Topic:**

- Black Culture
- *Inland Empire Alive!*
- Low-Income Programs
- Inclusivity
- Dr. Juanita Scott Humanitarian Award
- Ball
- Gospel/Faith
- Awards
- Mentorship

- Rosa Parks
- Education
- Southern California Gas Company

#### Spatial Coverage:

Name of Site (if relevant)	General Location/Address
Texas Southern University for Negroes	3100 Cleburne St, Houston, TX 77004

#### Temporal Coverage:

1969 - 2016

#### Key Events:

- Small talk at the start of this video.
- Jim King doing *Inland Empire Live!* for ten years.
- King was born in Houston, raised in Los Angeles, then later moved to San Bernardino.
- Working in the Youth Motivation Task Force program to help students.
- Black Future Leaders, which creates a space for youth to meet mentors and learn both college knowledge and work skills.
- The Black Rose Award and the Dr. Juanita Scott Humanitarian Award as special awards created by King.
- King talks about his mom being a hero to him.
- His mother was biracial and had to prove she was Black to enter Texas Southern University.
- Rosa Parks visited San Bernardino and the influence she had on the city's history.
- King's advice is that he loves the people around him and his advice to youth to get an education.
- Southern California Gas Company and King helping to bring the company more inclusive and diverse.

#### Key Organizations:

- Black Future Leaders
- Youth Motivation Task Force
- San Bernardino Black History Committee
- San Bernardino Black Culture Foundation
- Southern California Gas Company
- Community Action

#### Interview Index:

Media Format	Time (hh:mm:ss)	Topic Discussed
Digital Video	00:03:46 - 00:06:18	Jim King talks about his childhood, arriving in the Inland Empire, and the Youth Motivation Task Force.

Digital Video	00:06:27 - 00:08:43	King and how the Black Future Leaders program helped children with college knowledge and work skills.
Digital Video	00:12:43 - 00:14:03	The mentors and influence that helped King when he was growing up.
Digital Video	00:14:05 - 00:15:55	Rosa Parks came to San Bernardino and King met her.
Digital Video	00:17:02 - 00:17:57	King's advice to the young people.

### **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]

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Now recording -- okay, is recording.

JIM KING: I was vice president, I mean, Lois Carson was the president, she probably still is president.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Yeah, we got her, and we got some of the previous Black Culture Founda-- not Black Culture Founda-- Black Future Leaders--

JIM KING: Leaders --

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Students that --

JIM KING: Oh, good.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: -- have gone through, that, you know, that are adults now. And they've come back to the community and --

JIM KING: That's very good.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: And of course we've got Jean Peacock, she was --

JIM KING: She was the chairman, I mean, for the -- not the chairman, the Cal State Coordinator.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Cal State Coordinator.

JIM KING: Yeah, me and Lois Carson, her and Danny Tilman.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: And Danny Tilman, who's still president, they got Danny.

JIM KING: Oh Danny, he's president of the Black Future Leaders now?

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Yeah.

JIM KING: Well it took a long time, because Lois keep that job. She kept that job for a long time.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: A long time.

JIM KING: Lois, this is my turn. Lois, (inaudible) one more time.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Did you [00:01:00] become president for Black Culture --

JIM KING: No, Black -- (inaudible) forever.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: You invite friends who --

JIM KING: Until Danny got into -- once she had her heart attack probably what took her out.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Okay, so you were vice president.

JIM KING: Yeah, vice president forever.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Did you hear that, [Olina?]? Olina? She can't hear.

JIM KING: (inaudible)

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Yeah, okay, and look into the camera, cause you're gonna, you know.

JIM KING: You know, you know, I used to do *Inland Empire Alive!* a for 10 years. *Inland Empire Alive!* "Hi, I'm Jim King. Welcome to *Inland Empire Alive!*" [This is Diane Abbott?], Manzie Booker. We did for over ten years, ten years.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Ten years!

JIM KING: Our show. We did every two weeks.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: There's never been another one like it.

JIM KING: Yeah. Yeah, we used to have, [Shero?] Brown used to be, they used to have Shero and [00:02:00] another guy, I forgot his name, doing it for one week, and we did the next week, you know, we rotated. Then they got tired, and they left. Me and Diane just took it over, yeah so.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: They need another *Inland Empire Alive!*

JIM KING: Yeah, *Inland Empire Alive!* All right, you ready?

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Yeah, I'm just waiting for Flo. And she's waiting for us.

JIM KING: She's ready.

F1: It's rolling.

JIM KING: Oh, it's rolling already.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: No it's not.

JIM KING: Yeah it is. Yeah she is, she's just --

F1: I told her it's rolling.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Okay, we need to start, Flo.

JIM KING: Oh, she (inaudible) [start over?]??

LEA MICHELLE CASH: You got to stop it, yeah.

F1: I'm (inaudible), they can cut that out (inaudible).

JIM KING: Okay, okay.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Flo.

JIM KING: Excuse me.

F1: I don't know how to stop it. She'll edit it out.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Who will edit out?

F1: Whoever that's going (inaudible).

LEA MICHELLE CASH: What do you mean, do --

F1: I don't know how to do that part. I kept telling you it was ready.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: I didn't -- okay, you know what, I didn't hear you.

Because then when you -- [00:03:00] when you hear me say, "Today's date."

F1: Okay.

JIM KING: Go.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Today's date is 5/18/2016. My name is Lea Michelle Cash. And I'm interviewing Jim King for the Archiving Black History in the Inland Empire Project. Your name is spelled?

JIM KING: Jim King, J-I-M, K-I-N-G, like the Lion King.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Okay. We are interviewing here at the home of Wilmer Amina Carter. Thank you, Mr. Jim King --

JIM KING: Thank you for having me.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: -- for taking the time to conduct this interview with us.

JIM KING: Thank you, I'm glad to be here.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: So, Mr. Jim King. Tell us a little bit about your childhood, and how you grew up, and you arrived at the Inland Empire.

JIM KING: Well you know, I was born in Houston. I was raised in LA. I was born in Houston, raised in [00:04:00] LA. And then I started working for the gas company in 1969. A few days after my son was born. So I worked my way through manage-- worked my way through the non-managed role, got my career as the management employee in 1980. So I got more involved with the community. I was also involved with a program called YMTF, Youth Motivation Task Force. We go out to all the schools. I have two schools to go to, with other volunteers, to go to classroom and tell them what your experience is, how you got your job, how (inaudible) job you have, or what kind of experiences you need for working world, called Youth Motivation Task Force. So then I got my job as a low-income program coordinator. We used to work (inaudible) homes for low-income folks throughout the system. [00:05:00] Then got my job as district manager, came out to San Bernardino. And then that part on in, my enthusiasm grew, because being a public affairs -- district manager at the time was, do everything the gas company in the field. Being a -- getting involved with all the nonprofit organizations, getting involved with elected officials, getting involved with the business community. Trying to make the gas company be a good solid citizen for the community. So that's what we did. So, what they did was gave me a -- San Bernardino, Rialto, Fontana, (inaudible), tell me, go out there and do your thing. So let me do what I want to do, based on accomplished goals, providing good service to the communities, and being good corporate citizens, (inaudible), what should I do? And so anything you want to do,



is like a dream, because anything you can think of, you know, get involved in the [00:06:00] community and do some good for the community, also (inaudible) for the gas company the same time. So I loved that job, really loved that job.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: That was an excellent job, I guess, to really get to know all diversity --

JIM KING: Oh yes.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: -- a the people that are in Inland Empire. But being an African American, there was -- there were organizations that you joined.

JIM KING: Yes.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: So tell me, or tell us, regarding the organizations that you decided to join.

JIM KING: Okay. Well, I'm talking about the Black Future Leaders first, because that's kind of, get that (inaudible), the other one's (inaudible). Black Future Leaders, we wanted to do something, for the kids to get theirself ready, get ready for college, ready for the working world. And we need to separate them from real life and put on a college campus for two weeks, and go through social exercises, leadership training, [00:07:00] having good speakers, a lawyer or a doctor, or a gas company employee. Anything like that to make them more involved, see what's going on with life. And so that program, I was really happy about that program. I was vice president for I think five or six years or so. And then we got, from the Reagan Administration, that's how far this program goes back, "We can, we care," flag. And one -- went to San Bernardino, and one to the gas company, said, "We can, we care." It was a public non-profit group, put together, do something good for the Black community (inaudible). So then the Black -- Riverside -- I mean San Bernardino Black History Committee called me, Black History Committee called me. And they got me involved with that, and then we got more involved with that. Then I

took the program over, because they were [00:08:00] in a lot of debt, where -- like, 27 -- \$25,000 in debt from previous years. So we had to make that debt up. So I had to come up with some rationale. First of all, the name, Black History Committee, well that was on one month, February, they had a Miss Black History also, one month. But the group us, does Easter things, Christmas things, and other activities throughout the year. So what their main (inaudible) only one month for February. So we changed the name to San Bernardino Black Culture Foundation. More inclusive.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Encompass, yeah.

JIM KING: More inclusive. So, and I was really happy about that. And, I talked to Wilbur Brown who was in charge of Miss Black History, and told him my idea, and changed the name from Miss Black History, to Miss Black San Bernardino. [00:09:00] And he said, "Hmm, that's a good idea." Well you know, all these ideas, you had to run 'em past folks. I can't just make them happen. You have to talk to Amina Carter, Juanita Scott, Margaret Hill.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Margie Hill.

JIM KING: -- (inaudible) all involved. And they weren't involved with the Black Culture Foundation at the time. So I got Juanita Scott involved first. Then I got Margaret Hill involved later on. But she was involved with her sorority. But, that (inaudible), got involved with the Black Culture Foundation. So we did a lot of things. And, to raise money, I came up with this award called the Black Rose Award. Because you know, they -- everything's always, Black is always, bad guy, put the black cow on a black horse, black hat, black everything, was the bad guy. So we wanted to make the Black Rose [00:10:00] a beautiful thing, being so -- like it was. I wanted to make it something beautiful, something we could always appreciate. So, and I couldn't believe we got that going, and it's been 26 years the

Black Rose has been in existence. And people really appreciate it, because they feel like it's Academy Award for Black Folks.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Yes it is. I am a recipient of the Black Rose Award.

JIM KING: Well congratulations. (laughter)

LEA MICHELLE CASH: I was going to, that was one of my questions to ask you in regards to what inspired you to originate the Black Rose, and also the Dr. Juanita Scott Humanitarian Award.

JIM KING: It just came. Things like this, just comes, you know? And (inaudible) always tell me, if it's gonna be successful, it -- remains successful, and what you get out of it. If it's good, it will remain good. So the Black Rose is still in existence; I'm very happy about that. I got the first award even [00:11:00] though I didn't want the first award. And (inaudible) Juanita Scott was doing so much good in the community. And we wanted a Humanitarian of the Year award. And so we put Juanita Scott's name on -- it was me and Jeff Hill, put an award. He's passed away now, but Jeff Hill was a sergeant for the police -- no, the service department, and a very nice guy. So we put Juanita Scott, the Humanitarian of the Year award, and then Black Rose.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: So now, for the Black Culture Foundation, you were the president for five years?

JIM KING: Five years, yeah.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: So, why do you think your role as president was so valuable, and why the Black Culture Foundation was so valuable to the community?

JIM KING: Well, we had (inaudible) because they had been in existence for a long, long time, the parade was in existence. We had a three-day event, you know, the (inaudible) reception on Friday night, the parade on Saturday, [00:12:00] (inaudible) my house in the afternoon, and the ball Saturday night, and then the

gospel (inaudible) would start on Sunday. Big weekend. That made so much good to me, because it was, included everybody, everybody, everybody out to the Black Rose -- I mean to the Black History parade, to the ball, the gospel concert. It means so much to me to have that happen. Because people -- some people in San Bernardino don't leave San Bernardino too often. So we had to bring some stuff out to them so they can see, Rosa Parks, or see Muhammad Ali. You know, and we got a chance to do that through the parade, and through our Black History Month (inaudible).

LEA MICHELLE CASH: So, Mr. King, you have received -- I mean who can number the honors and awards and all the proclamations, the 10 who make different, the 12 most influential Inland Empire. Tell me, [00:13:00] who's been your mentor, who's been your heroes, and what has inspired you?

JIM KING: My mom. My mom was my hero, because my mom -- and my father separated from, when I was like, 19. And she had to raise four kids herself. And she kept us very strong, and she had rules and regulations, you know, pay those bill on time. You know, on the 31<sup>st</sup>, not the 1<sup>st</sup>, you know. So she was my hero. And also, she came -- she was half-white. And she went to Texas Southern University for Negroes. She had to prove she was Black to get in that school, first of all. But she went there, Texas Southern University for Negroes. It was called Texas Southern University for Negroes. Now it's cut to Texas Southern University, by itself, in Houston, Texas. And she had to prove she was Black to go to that school. And she worked there. When she graduated, she was pregnant with me. So my mom just kept going with her education, kept her career [00:14:00] up. And I'm very impressed with her dynamics.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Okay. You've stated in many occasions that your most memorable moment, and your most honoring moment that you will absolutely never forget is having Miss Rosa Parks --

JIM KING: Yes.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: -- come to San Bernardino as the San Bernardino Black Culture Foundation, History parade, and for the ball, and to come to your home and be interviewed. Tell us a little bit about that experience, and why it was so memorable for you.

JIM KING: First of all, I was so impressed I got her here. Took me a long time on the phone, talk to her (inaudible). She was in LA to celebrate her 77<sup>th</sup> birthday. (inaudible) I didn't mention on my interview, I should have mentioned, for her 77<sup>th</sup> birthday, February 4, right, that time was Black history. So I talked to her months, you know, a couple weeks and trying to get 'em to come out here. Finally I said okay. So [00:15:00] I said, one of you's got, take a limousine over out to LA, brought her here, brought her to San Bernardino, was very impressed by that. And me and Booker, Manzie Booker, got a chance to interview her in my bedroom. She sat down there, and I asked those questions. What made you do that? What made you -- now we're talking about history, it's history for us, you know. And she went -- her own voice just told her story just like, like that. I just sat and watched, time stopped for me, me and Booker. Time just stopped. We were just overwhelmed by her grace and her majesty and her dynamic behavior. She was just a fantastic person. And I really -- that's (inaudible) for a lifetime experience, lifetime experience. I never did anything like that. Unless I got to interview Barack, maybe. (laughter)

LEA MICHELLE CASH: So, [00:16:00] what impact do you think that had on our community in San Bernardino?

JIM KING: I think that, I think that, I was very disappointed about the Sun. The Sun was not there yet. They were (inaudible), you know, they put a little tiny photo of her. I was kind of get them more, interject about that. But I think they did come around, later on. We had a little press conference, they were there too, so they (inaudible). But it's very important to have a historic figure in San Bernardino. We have some historic figures from right now, like Wilmer Amina Carter. I mean, have a high school named after her, fantastic. So, I think, (inaudible), all these good things, help the community a lot better. And you know, one of my nephews, I got a certificate from his school, because he was so impressed with all the activities (inaudible) involved with, and he (inaudible) by the school, and I helped him out.

[00:17:00]

LEA MICHELLE CASH: So now, what would you say is your legacy and what would you -- advice would you give young people today?

JIM KING: Well, I know what my legacy should be. One, the cares, I love folks. You know, I love folks. You know, I, like I told people that got here, I want a hug. (laughter) Hug goes a way, a long way. You know, especially when you have a stroke like I did, and you had to relearn to talk, walk, the ABCs, 1-2-3s, days of the week, months of the year. Hugs were very important these days, so I actually, I love folks. I love folks (inaudible). And then, (inaudible) tell young folk, education. Education is the key. The more education you have, you're better, your life is gonna be. You have to look for more education. So that's (inaudible).

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Now, in your 30, is it 35 [00:18:00] or 36 years?

JIM KING: Thirty-five, thirty-five, yeah.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Thirty-five years of being with the Southern California Gas Company.

JIM KING: I started when I was 19.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: You started when you were 19.

JIM KING: And when I got 55, (laughter) that's full retirement, you got to retire or pay to stay. So I retired.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: So, in your 35 years of staying with the gas company, what do you think was your greatest accomplishment?

JIM KING: Hmm, my greatest accomplishment with the gas company, probably weatherization of 600,000 homes throughout our community. I work with Lois Carson for (inaudible) and also, Pat Nichols.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Nichols, Community Action.

JIM KING: Action, and also, we used to have a contract with the -- (inaudible), I can't think, name -- [00:19:00] [felly pope luckland?] organization, Second Chance, Second Chance. We have a contract with them too. But, Pat Nichols, and Lois Carson, are two key people out here.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Do you think that you bridged a gap between introducing diversity to the gas company from San Bernardino and Riverside County, two different worlds?

JIM KING: Yes, I think so. I think so, because I was diversity manager for the gas company, first diversity manager we have. Well, they thought there was some other vice president (inaudible) was (inaudible) holidays. But no, I think so. So, I left that job kind of soon, because I didn't want to -- I want to have more dynamic, more dynamics, more job opportunities for folks at the bottom, more job opportunities for folks at the top. You know, so that's [00:20:00] one thing I did, try to bring the gas company more and more in diversity, (inaudible).

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Do you go back and talk to some of the young folks that are now public affairs officers and try to inspire them?

JIM KING: I do.

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Because when you left, there's not been anyone quite like you. (laughter) That could bridge both worlds, in diversity like that.

JIM KING: I (inaudible), especially talking to Blacks and --

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Hispanic?

JIM KING: -- Hispanic, and women, because women went through same kind of challenges I went through, because the, most of the district managers were all white guys. And they wasn't diverse enough. But they started getting there; they started to get there. When I took over the chairman of the district manager's counsel, so we have more involvement. That's when they started calling me "Lion King" [00:21:00] in 1985, because I had to give off some strong instructions about what's gonna happen, so they (inaudible) Lion King. (laughs)

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Okay, so that is a wrap, and we want to thank you, Mr. Jim King, for the interview.

JIM KING: I was happy to be here. I was -- this made my day. (laughs)

LEA MICHELLE CASH: Thank you.

JIM KING: All right, thank you for having me, I appreciate it.

**End of Interview:**  
[00:21:33]