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### Jennifer Weathersby-Williams

Wilmer Amina Carter Foundation

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# Bridges That Carried Us Over Project

## Interview Summary

**Interviewee:**

Jennifer Weathersby-Williams

**Interviewer:**

Unknown

**Interview Date:**

February 24, 2023

**Interview Location:**

San Bernardino, CA

**Length:**

00:06:30

**Interview Summary completed by:**

M. Camacho Nuno, 2024

**Description:**

In this interview, Jennifer Weathersby-Williams is the guest. She speaks about how her involvement in San Gorgonio High School's clubs led to future success. Being in the school's Black Student Union, Weathersby-Williams said how it helped her see the need to give back to her community. She continues to do this by volunteering as an income tax assistant. One notable figure, Mr. Wilber Brown, helped her succeed in college. Especially as a student with a large family who needed funds, she needed all the support she could get. She was able to get encouragement from Brown and her parents to prosper. The interview ends with Weathersby-Williams explaining how she has a mentee and that she wants to give more encouragement to people like her.

**Subject Topic:**

- High School
- Cubs
- Black Student Union
- College
- Academic Support
- Volunteerism
- Career
- Military Service
- Large Family
- Encouragement/Success

**Spatial Coverage:**

Name of Site (if relevant)	General Location/Address
California State University, San	5500 University Pkwy, San Bernardino,

Bernardino	CA 92407
San Gorgonio High School	2299 Pacific St, San Bernardino, CA 92404
Ohio State University	281 W Lane Ave, Columbus, OH 43210

### Temporal Coverage:

1973 - 2023

### Key Events:

- Weathersby-Williams went to San Gorgonio High School from 1973 to 1976.
- She participated in clubs that then led to her success.
- In college, she was able to get advice and help from Mr. Brown.
- Participating in the Black Student Union, she gives back to her community through volunteerism.
- The bookkeeping class led to accounting.
- Her father, being in the military service, led her family to San Bernardino.
- Having a large family and needing funds led to the guest to get a job during college.
- She recognizes the importance of giving back and it started while in San Gorgonio High School.

### Key Organizations:

- Black Student Union
- The Internal Revenue Service
- The Association for the Improvement of Minorities of the Internal Revenue Service

### Interview Index:

Media Format	Time (hh:mm:ss)	Topic Discussed
Digital Video	00:00:16 - 00:02:25	The effect that participating in clubs, like the Black Student Union, had on Weathersby-Williams.
Digital Video	00:02:29 - 00:03:12	Weathersby-Williams taking a bookkeeping class in San Gorgonio and how it led to her future career.
Digital Video	00:04:19 - 00:06:26	How work affects studying and how encouragement helps people like Weathersby-Williams.

### 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: Your name is?

JENNIFER WEATHERSBY-WILLIAMS: Hi, my name is Jennifer Weathersy-Williams.

Q: Okay, and you went to high school during what time period?

JENNIFER WEATHERSBY-WILLIAMS: I went to San Gorgonio High School from 1973 to 1976.

Q: Okay, and do you have a particular memory from high school that you'd like to share?

JENNIFER WEATHERSBY-WILLIAMS: Oh, my. (laughter) Yes. So I was a member of several clubs. One was the Black Student Union. And because of my affiliation with that club, I had an opportunity to meet other people, like Mr. [Wilber Brown?]. Mr. Wilber Brown was instrumental in my life, and also Ms. [Lewis?] -- some of the teachers -- Ms. [Dolby?]. They poured into my life, and gave me what I believe caused me to be successful in life.

Q: Yes. What are some of those things, like, that Mr. Brown and the other teachers [00:01:00] did that really impacted you?

JENNIFER WEATHERSBY-WILLIAMS: So Mr. Brown helped me with respect to -- I went to the Ohio State University, and in my freshman year it was a struggle, but Mr. Brown would write letters to me, and he would encourage me. First of all, he told me how to go and find support and resources for some of the classes I was taking. He helped me to understand that there were resources available at the university. And without him, I would not have known what to do in my struggle.

And so I owe Mr. Brown a lot. I wish he were here today to see the success that I've become.

Q: Yes. Thank... And the BSU, do you have any -- why did you join the BSU?

JENNIFER WEATHERSBY-WILLIAMS: So with the Black Student Union, my involvement was I was a member, and we did -- I remember we participated -- now, [00:02:00] I don't remember the exact parade, but we did participate in a parade, and I remember just the camaraderie, the encouragement, just working with others in the community. And because of that, I still volunteer. I'm a volunteer income tax assistant, through IRS, and I give back to the community in that way.

Q: So it impacted you --

JENNIFER WEATHERSBY-WILLIAMS: I'm sweating.

Q: -- as a volunteer (laughter) --

JENNIFER WEATHERSBY-WILLIAMS: I'm sorry.

Q: No, that's fine. Is there anything else you'd like to share?

JENNIFER WEATHERSBY-WILLIAMS: Yes, yes. So -- and when I talk about being successful, I'm talking about in my profession. I majored in accounting, and because of -- when I went to San G, I took a bookkeeping class, and because of taking that bookkeeping class, that opened my eyes and my opportunities to major in accounting. I did not always like accounting, but I found other opportunities to work with accounting through income tax, and so [00:03:00] I worked for Internal Revenue Service for 31 years. I became a senior manager. I had Wisconsin, Iowa. I was responsible for over 120 employees.

Q: Wonderful. Beautiful. Thanks. (laughs) Thank you so much --

JENNIFER WEATHERSBY-WILLIAMS: Yes.

Q: -- for this beautiful interview.

JENNIFER WEATHERSBY-WILLIAMS: Thank you. (break in video) Was diligent. Mr. Brown would push me. And, you know, I'm just so sorry that he didn't get an opportunity to see, you know, where I ended up. I'm sorry, I'm sweating.

Q: That's okay.

JENNIFER WEATHERSBY-WILLIAMS: And because I'm full of emotion. But Mr. Brown, I wish I were here to tell him thank you, thank you, thank you. Thank you. And not only that, but I owe it to my parents. Both my mother and father came from Mississippi. They did not come from plenty, but my father was in the military. That's what brought us here to San Bernardino.

Q: [00:04:00] Yes.

JENNIFER WEATHERSBY-WILLIAMS: And my father was instrumental in the success of my siblings. So there are seven children. I didn't know -- we didn't always have the money to do things. I know I called my mother. I didn't have money to wash clothes. She told me she would try to send me \$5 a month. She was unable to do that with five children still at home, me and my sister in college. My sister went to Michigan State.

Q: Wow.

JENNIFER WEATHERSBY-WILLIAMS: So I got a job so that I could help pay the bills. Now, of course, having a job, you know that affects your study --

Q: Yes.

JENNIFER WEATHERSBY-WILLIAMS: -- and you don't realize how it affects your studies. So I worked 30 hours. I was unable to get internships, but it was okay. Mr. Brown was -- helped me with respect to understanding the value of education, not giving up. My mom and my dad, all seven of my -- of their children have degrees. Three have master's. [00:05:00] Two have PhDs. I'm a CPA. My sister's an attorney. And so they also taught us to give back to the community. I have a

mentee. I was involved in a high school program for first-time college -- people who wanted to go to college, three years in high school, and she is in her last year of college. And I've been there for almost seven years, encouraging her. Because of Mr. Brown, I understand the importance of giving back, and not only me but my siblings. We all volunteer. And so I say that because it's a legacy, and that legacy started with San G, because we didn't always have people who would push you. But if you see a Black person, you know you're going to pull them aside, and you're going to encourage them. And even with working, I'm involved in Association for the Improvement [00:06:00] of Minorities at Internal Revenue Service. I became a manager because someone pulled me aside and said, "You have -- you have something that would help you move up in the organization." And because of that, I was able to hire other African Americans. I had opportunities for developing people. So I'm just excited.

Q: Yes.

JENNIFER WEATHERSBY-WILLIAMS: I am 65, but it's still giving.

Q: Yes.

JENNIFER WEATHERSBY-WILLIAMS: Do you understand what I'm saying?

Q: Yes, I do.

JENNIFER WEATHERSBY-WILLIAMS: (claps) I'm excited. (laughter) Thank you.

**End of Interview:**

[00:06:30]