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### Dooley Walker

Wilmer Amina Carter Foundation

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# Bridges That Carried Us Over Project

## Interview Summary

**Interviewee:**

Dooley Walker

**Interviewer:**

Ariadna Barrientos

**Interview Date:**

March 9, 2021

**Interview Location:**

Remotely via Zoom

**Length:**

01:16:12

**Interview Summary completed by:**

Jordan Nelson, 2021.

Marissa Rodriguez, 2023.

Caroline Blanchard, 2024.

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**Description:**

Dooley Walker describes her life growing up in San Bernardino and moving to Delmann Heights. Her grandmother helped raise her and would take her to church, where her mother would often sing in the choir. Dooley shares how God helped her overcome her struggles; facing racism in the workplace and seeing her family members experience similar problems. While working at General Telephone and Electronics, she experienced both racial microaggressions and the diversity shift once Affirmative Action was passed; changing the workplace to be more inclusive. She explains how the Black Lives Matter movement exposed how people of color never stopped being discriminated against. In her last remarks, Walker advises the younger generation to work hard, save money, make friends with older people, and continue the fight against racism and advocate for equality.

**Subject Topic:**

- Inland Empire (Calif.)
- San Bernardino (Calif)
- Religion
- Racism
- Discrimination
- Music
- Youth Culture
- Social participation

**Spatial Coverage:**

Name of Site (if relevant)	General Location/Address
Riverside Community Hospital	4445 Magnolia Ave. Riverside, CA 92501
Walker's First Home	10th Street, next to Mount Vernon Elementary
Walker's Second Home	Delmon Heights (Muscoy Area)
California Elementary School	Delmon Heights, San Bernardino, CA
General Telephone and Electronics (G.T.E.)	Eighth and East street, San Bernardino, CA

**Temporal Coverage:**

1950s - 2020

**Key Events:**

- Affirmative Action
- Black Lives Matter Protests

**Key Organizations:**

- Methodist Church
- Pentecostal Church
- The Flamingos

**Interview Index:**

Media Format	Time (hh:mm:ss)	Topic Discussed
Digital Video	00:00:00 – 00:06:16	Early childhood memories, houses, and schools.
Digital Video	00:06:16 – 00:15:35	Relationship to the church in her and her family's life.
Digital Video	00:15:35 – 00:20:56	Her family dynamic, memories of her neighborhood, and a brief description of Downtown San Bernardino.
Digital Video	00:20:56 – 00:29:50	Early career at General Telephone and Electronics.

Digital Video	00:29:50 – 00:35:24	Social life: going to clubs to clubs in LA, romantic endeavors, and experiences in social organizations
Digital Video	00:35:24 – 00:43:30	Affirmative Action in the workplace and the impact of the documentary “Roots” on the community.
Digital Video	00:43:30 – 00:50:38	Personal experiences with racism, the importance of the Black Lives Matter movement, and the struggle for racial justice.
Digital Video	00:50:38 – 01:08:45	The importance of religion and how it has helped her overcome obstacles in her life. How she came to help her mother gain financial security, and how her father experienced economic racism.
Digital Video	01:08:45 – 1:16:12	Advice for the next generation.

**Related Materials:**

Additional oral history interviews are available from the Wilmer Amina Carter Foundation’s “Bridges that Carries Us Over Project” on CSUSB ScholarWorks, <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/bridges/>.

**Full interview transcript can be found below.**

## Interview Transcript

### Start of Interview:

[00:00:00]

[00:00:04]

#### **Ariadna Barrientos**

So, hello. Y'all already know me, my name is Ariadna Barrientos, but you can call me Ari. And this is Denise Spencer as y'all already know. It is the ninth of March 2021 on Zoom. Thank you for being a part of the Bridges that Carried Us Over Black Archive of the Inland Empire Project. So, today we just want to ask you some questions about your life, about the cities or neighborhoods you have lived in and your family's experiences. Would you please introduce yourself and spell out your full name?

[00:00:36]

#### **Dooley Walker**

My name is Dooley. D as in David, O-O, L as in Larry, E-Y. Last name is Walker. W as in William, A as in apple, L as in Larry, K as in king, E as in Edward, R as in rabbit.

[00:00:58]

#### **Ariadna Barrientos**

Thank you. And I know you told me yesterday but what year were you born and where were you born?.

[00:01:05]

#### **Dooley Walker**

I was born in 1951, at Riverside Community Hospital. So I am a California native, but I did bring some history! Can you see this?

*[Dooley holds up a framed picture of the Turner Family, Dooley's mother, and her grandmother.]*

[00:01:31]

#### **Ariadna Barrientos**

Could you put it a little bit closer to the camera?

[00:01:35]

#### **Dooley Walker**

It's a picture!

[00:01:39]

#### **Ariadna Barrientos**

It's a picture of what?

[00:01:42]

#### **Dooley Walker**

Of... my mother and grandmother is in this picture, and the other people were people they lived with when they first came to California. My mother is there.

*[Dooley points to the second person from the right]*

Did you see that?

[00:02:09]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

Mhmm.

[00:02:10]

**Dooley Walker**

My grandmother is here.

*[Dooley points to the second woman from the left.]*

And the man with the saw and like a violin bow.

*[Dooley points to the man in the middle on his knee]*

He actually played the saw. And it sounded like, if I can remember, I can't remember, but if I remember correctly, it sounded like maybe a cello or maybe a violin. But it was an actual cutting saw that he was playing.

[00:02:57]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

Do you know when that picture was taken?

[00:03:01]

**Dooley Walker**

Well, no. I don't think I was in... I don't think my mom had had me, so I think she was about fifteen or so. But anyway, that's my history. My mom and my grandmother was always in church. So for most, for all of my early life until I graduated from high school, that's where I was with them— in church.

[00:03:37]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

Yeah. Can you tell me some of your earliest childhood memories or family stories, now that we're talking about family?

[00:03:47]

**Dooley Walker**

Earliest childhood memory. No, not really. They were all in church. We lived on 10th Street [San Bernardino, CA] in the Projects at that time. My mother was working for Patton State Hospital, not Patton State Hospital. The one in Pomona. I can't remember what the name was. But she would always... My early memories were always with my grandmother, 'cause my mother was trying to work or looking for work over or whatever. And we lived on 10th Street, which was right next to Mount Vernon Elementary, was the first elementary school I went to. I went there through third grade. I only remember one of my teachers' names then, her name was Mrs. Siciliano.

And then we moved to... My father bought a home in Delmon Heights. It wasn't Delmon Heights, then; I guess you would just say it was the Muscoy area, because Delmon Heights wasn't a name they were giving that place. But the neighborhood mostly was all White when we moved in and eventually that changed to Black. I went to California Elementary School and I happily keep in touch with my fourth grade teacher. I think my fifth grade teacher is deceased. But my sixth grade teacher, every year I sent them Christmas cards and sometimes during the year, we converse!

[00:06:16]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

You mentioned a church. What role did church play in your life?

[00:06:26]

**Dooley Walker**

Oh, Wow. At that time it was everything, you know? That's all the people we knew, that's the children we played with. Sorry. You never really appreciated church or know what value that you got from it until you start having a hard time, you don't know what to do. So you always have that higher power to pray, to look to, and that, put it in the hands of God and not really worry about how you're feeling. That was, that is, that will always be my place to go to. When I'm bad or even when I'm here alone, you know? I don't have a church I attend often. So I'll put on some spiritual music and have my own church here!

And singing was a family thing, you know? My mother, that was... I didn't finish... Oh, I forgot to tell you the best part about that. They did have, they put out one record. I don't know what I did with it. 'Cause I did have a 78, but I didn't have nothing to play with it and I don't know where that 78 went. But they sang gospel and they sang live at the Casey Casey Video Station over there. Was it on Mill Street? It was on there years ago, but I don't know where it is now. But. So, music was my life. We sang for everything. In fact I have a CD, a cassette my sister made. Every Thanksgiving my mother sang the Lord's prayer. She is a mezzo soprano, my grandmother was contralto—voice wise I don't know if you're familiar with those terms.

[00:09:15]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

Soprano!

[00:09:18]

**Dooley Walker**

But every Thanksgiving my mother would sing the Lord's Prayer, and my sister, I didn't know she had done that, but she had played the piano. And she recorded my mom our last Thanksgiving together and I haven't played it yet because I don't want to go to there. But I have it. I'm gonna see if my other sister can make it into a CD or something digital that we all can keep.

[00:09:54]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

Do you remember the name of the church, and where it was located?

[00:09:58]

**Dooley Walker**

No, she. The first church was Methodist. They were Methodists when they first came, and that's the church they were at but eventually they... I forget what street it was on, cause I was so young. We were in Pentecostal, are my really earliest as far as church wise, but I know when they were with the Turner's, which is the name of the family in the photo, they were all in the Methodist Church.

[00:10:54]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

Yeah.

[00:10:56]

**Dooley Walker**

But then we went to Seventh Day Pentecostal.

[00:11:04]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

Did that differ at all, or were they kind of the same experiences?

[00:11:08]

**Dooley Walker**

Well no, because Seventh Day, at that time, I remember my mother, they were making her work Saturdays. And by this time my mother, she was really, really deep into religion. So she quit her job because they wouldn't give her the Sabbath off. They probably... That's when struggles began, you know? I'm not gonna go into my family thing with my mom and dad, but how that may have contributed to a lot of things. But anyway. But we were in church every Saturday, Monday: Bible study, Wednesday: prayer meeting. For a while, I sang in the choir. But that's about it.

[00:12:28]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

Did you like singing in the choir?

[00:12:31]

**Dooley Walker**

I did, I did, we had a wonderful piano player. Her name was Roberta Olives. She passed a couple years ago, but she was amazing pianist and an amazing soloist. So yeah, that was good, and I enjoyed singing in the choir, and I didn't do that for very long. And I still love singing. Except now a couple of years ago I had a goiter taken out of my throat and it's kind of affected what notes I can and cannot hit. So, but I do it around the house. I do it in the shower. I sing along all the time.

[00:13:31]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

Don't we all! Can you tell me what congregation was like, and if your church was active in the community?

[00:13:50]

**Dooley Walker**



The congregation was mostly women. You know, it was always. They were, besides the pastor and a couple of husbands, mostly it was women and children. And it was a small church. In fact, when... My earliest memory is a pastor actually started the church in his home. And he owned the land around his home and eventually, built a church building behind his home. And that's where anytime we had, what do you call them, where everybody brings food. It would always be either at his house or at the church but mostly at his house. And his children were always older than us, so like they taught us. We were in Sabbath School with his children and that's it.

[00:15:35]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

Do you want to talk more about your family? And growing up, what was that like?

[00:15:45]

**Dooley Walker**

I was the oldest of seven and there's an eight year span between the first four and the last three. So it's like my mom had two families! But I don't know what to say about that. We live together. And my mom would always have, she'd invite the neighbors with kids over and have game. She would never let us win any prizes. She would always make sure that if we want anything, we had to put it back for someone else to win. So I don't know why she thought we were rich but, anyway she did so we could never get no anything. We can never win anything. We always had a dog. Always had a dog and they were always royalty: King and Queen and Prince!

[00:17:23]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

Cute. Can you describe what your town or your neighborhood looked like?

[00:17:35]

**Dooley Walker**

Every house looked the same. Because it was, I don't know what you call them. Anyway, all the houses look the same too, two story. Neighborhood— people next door I'm still on Facebook with them, the children, and ones who are living. I've attended a couple of their families' funerals in the last few years. I'm still in contact with a lot of the, a couple of the children I grew up with, others I've lost contact with. Besides seeing them at school, we really were home. Most of the time when we weren't in church, we weren't in school, we were home playing, watching T.V., playing jacks with my grandmother.

[00:19:11]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

Can you describe the downtown center, what that looked like?

[00:19:17]

**Dooley Walker**

Downtown? Who had money to go downtown? My mom would... I know my mom would pay bills down there. Probably downtown. Downtown really didn't change much as far as I can remember. I don't know what it looks like now. But I know we would go with her to pay bills, but I can't tell you what downtown was at all. I can tell you that when I was, now when I was young, you know? And I had a job, I was in purchasing at Harris company. And there was this other store in the Carousel Mall. I used to buy, purchase things that can buy that... And when both of those stores went out of business I came back... I've been living in Ontario since 1982. So I actually left San Bernardino in 1980 to go to a job in Covina.

[00:20:54]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

Do you want to talk more about your job?

[00:20:59]

**Dooley Walker**

My job that I worked... I started at G.T.E. right out of high school, October 1969, on a corner of Eighth and East Street. There was a used car. Oh it's right across the street, there's Sturges [Center for the Fine Arts] right across. Is Sturges still there? Does anybody know?

[00:21:27]

**Denise Spencer**

What was the name of the company? And what type?

[00:21:30]

**Dooley Walker**

G.T.E. General Telephone.

[00:21:33]

**Denise Spencer**

And what type?

[00:21:34]

**Dooley Walker**

G.T.E. General Telephone. I'm sorry. General Telephone and Electronics. And I left, I did every job there. I was a clerk, I was a representative or resident, and then I went to, I was a dispatch clerk.

[00:22:09]

**Denise Spencer**

About how old were [you]?

[00:22:10]

**Dooley Walker**

I was 18. At the time I think I was probably the fourth Black in the office. There were only... When I went to dispatch, I was talking to all the repairmen and the installers. We took care of San Bernardino, Crestline, Lake Arrowhead. Out of all the installers outside, and I talked to them all every day when I worked dispatch, there were only about three Blacks there outside. They all had a lot of seniority. A couple of Hispanics. One I remember, Ralph Costello, he would always say "That's not my name, it's Costelo." I say, "Yeah, okay." Oh, but it was a lot of fun!

When I started I had a little natural, I didn't know how to really take care of my hair. I had a little natural, I wore a natural, and I still talk about this today. One of the ladies, she comes and pats my head like it's a little pet chia, or something. But for the most part, there was no. I guess I can't say that. All I can say now, knowing what I know, is the bigotry was hidden well. So. But I never had any problem. I made a lot of friends that I'm friends with today. We've went out together, we ate together, we laughed together. We did things. We helped each other.

[00:24:49]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

Did you ever feel like the racial diversity impacted opportunities for you and your work? Or throughout your life? You can answer that one as well.

[00:25:00]

**Dooley Walker**

You know, I always knew going in that I was gonna have to do better than everybody else. So that's what I went in. Every job I did, everyone was asking me questions at the end; but that was my way of making myself invaluable so, to make sure I'd stayed. But that was impossible, because that was when you work for a union, it's called seniority. No matter what your color, if you're not performing, you're gonna go. But as long as you're performing well and they have nothing to say about that, whether I stay or go close goes by the seniority I already have. So that's what I really liked about the job, is staying there long enough to have enough seniority that I got all the vacation times that I wanted, which most of the time. Whenever they asked for anyone to work over time, that was me. I didn't have a family, I was living at home until I was 25. But only Christmas wasn't important because we didn't really, the only holiday we really celebrated was Thanksgiving. We didn't celebrate Christmas. So, most of the holidays if anyone, if they asked for overtime, I was the one who was working it. Gladly. I started out making \$2.22 an hour. And that was more than the minimum wage at that time was \$1.85. So, I thought I was making big money.

[00:27:31]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

I found it interesting you didn't celebrate Christmas or anything, how did that impact your social life growing up, or how was that like?

[00:27:44]

**Dooley Walker**

Afterwards, my mom would... That affected me a lot. But after the holidays, and they have spiritual things at church for the... I'm saying 'um' a lot!. They had spiritual things, plays, Christmas-themed activities at the church. But it wasn't all the bells and whistles, gifts, and all this. You know, they'd have candy and stuff for the kids. But it wasn't celebrated, in the way as it was without Jesus in it. Like, my cousin once had a... They were all together for Christmas and she got Jesus a Christmas cake. And one of her nieces says, "Well why did we get any of the cake for?" So it's like Christmas, no one knows when he was born. So we did acknowledge that Jesus was born in the church, but there was no elaborate gifts and trees and we didn't do that. Now, I said all that to say what, Ari. I lost my...

[00:29:50]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

Yeah, like moving into your social life as a child, as a young adult. Yesterday you mentioned, you were a bit of a party girl so, do you want to elaborate?

[00:30:05]

**Dooley Walker**

Most of the time, then that was what allowed me to live at home for long, you know? I never went out and stayed all night and came back in. My mom and dad's home at all hours of the night. If I was going to know I was going to be out, I stayed out. So most of the weekends I went to LA. I had a good girlfriend there, I'd stay with her and we'd go out to the clubs then party. There was one particular club, it was called the... What was it called? Anyway, it was at Hollywood, on the corner of Hollywood and Vine: the Haunted House. It was called the Haunted House! And we'd go there all the time and it was a place where you can party. And the next minute you'd see a movie star walked in, or a singer walked in. But I really enjoyed that place.

The... When I was about... The man that was in my life, for most of my life, I met him at the Orange Show. He was doing a show there. His name was John Carter and he was a founding member of the Flamingos. He's the founding member of the Flamingos, and then he went in the service, and when he got out of the service he joined the Devils. A group called the Devils. And that's where I met him. Actually I was saying, I don't want to go into all that. I'm not going through all that! Anyway, he passed, we were good friends until 19...I mean, 2009. He passed in 2009 and now I am very close to his daughter.

And in fact she... She worked in China. She was over in Shanghai when the [COVID] Pandemic hit. She was over there and she came back last year 'bout January. When supposedly they had everything blocked off, which we know they didn't. She came back in January, she left Shanghai, flew to Tokyo, and Tokyo she came back into the States. She left a fully furnished apartment and a bank account she had no way of knowing how to get her money out. She has since got it out. I don't know how she did that, I haven't asked her. And I looked at Facebook this morning, she's in Myrtle Beach now. She likes traveling. But she never... She wants to go back to Shanghai but I doubt if she will. She has two children, grown children here now. So.

[00:34:29]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

Going back to social, did you know of any Black social organizations or anyone involved in them?

[00:34:41]

**Dooley Walker**

Yes, I did. A lady I worked with, but I don't know exactly what she did, what they did. Nothing. You know, when she'd invite me, I'd go to some of their functions. But other than that, I was a party girl! I didn't do nothing but sleep, and work, and party.

[00:35:24]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

You said that your work got more racially diverse as the years went by, do you want to talk about going through that, experiencing more diversity?

[00:35:43]

**Dooley Walker**

That was probably in the: '76, '77, '78. There was a lot of hiring, both Latina and Black both. And I still can't remember... What's the word? I was trying to when I was talking to you yesterday. I was trying to remember the word that they call that. But it wasn't... I've since found out that California didn't do that very much.

[00:36:34]

**Denise Spencer**

Is that Affirmative Action?

[00:36:35]

**Dooley Walker**

Thank you! Thank you, thank you, thank you! Affirmative Action. So I always thought that was the reason why I was hired since there was, you know, like no Blacks there. It was Affirmative Action, but I think there was no Affirmative Action in California. And it was just voted down again this past election. So I'm thinking that there was other measures or something that came into play, where they actually had to report to somebody the number of Black and Latino, people of color that they were hiring, because all the sudden there was a surge. And there was at one point too we had a few of, a lot of, a few more Blacks than Latinas come in the office.

But there was one point where, when the series Roots came out. Oh my goodness! You could drop a dime. It was... They were tiptoeing around us like, "We never knew! We never knew." But, you know, in, and then you look at now and it's like, well, you saw Roots and you never knew, but you did then. But what did you do? Here we are again going through the same thing, hatred, and you didn't care. So, anyway, at that point they knew when that series came out, 'cause everybody watched it. Everybody watched it.

[00:39:09]

**Denise Spencer**

So are you saying that that was the first time people at many levels, many races were close to the history of African heritage people in this country, in their community? You think that was the first time they may have been faced with the knowledge and understanding of our experiences in America?

[00:39:36]

**Dooley Walker**

Exactly. Exactly. They didn't. They didn't... And still, they didn't associate with the different races. So why would they know anything? They... As far as the school books here in California, they weren't taught those lies like they were back in the South. So, and, like, people today I tell them you know, just because you got one or two Blacks there on your Facebook that doesn't mean you know anything. Are you talking to them? Why don't you know anything? I had a couple of my friends' children; they are white and actually, one was Mexican, but they called me, they said during when all this stuff came out about June 19th, "They didn't know."

I said, "Well, how come? Don't have any black friends?"

"Yeah, but they don't know either."

[00:40:58]

**Denise Spencer**

How would that impact the work environment in that particular company? I mean, did you notice race relations changing and becoming more open over through the years?

[00:41:16]

**Dooley Walker**

No. Well what they start happening was.. Not get togethers. We would have something like Black. That's when you know, during that time, that's when everything was awakening. And they would have things for Black History. They would have... And everybody before that, all the Blacks in the office celebrate June 19th. So, we have...

[00:42:01]

**Denise Spencer**

Potlucks?

[00:42:02]

**Dooley Walker**

I'm sorry, my memory. Potlucks and singing spiritual, bringing black culture into the workplace when we were able to do that.

[00:42:22]

**Denise Spencer**

And was the company accepting or did they embrace the diversity? Or did you just do it anyway?

[00:42:33]

**Dooley Walker**

They wanted it done.

[00:42:34]

**Denise Spencer**

Good.

[00:42:35]

**Dooley Walker**

They wanted it done. They wanted it done 'cause they wanted to be more in tune. What's the word I'm looking for? Not in tune, but yeah. Sensitive!

[00:43:00]

**Denise Spencer**

Yeah.

[00:43:01]

**Dooley Walker**

They wanted to be more sensitive to the reality, the history, so they could learn too. How long are we going for this, y'all?

[00:43:27]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

I have one more question. On this topic of race, did you see any acts of racism growing up, in the workplace, or your life?

[00:43:44]

**Dooley Walker**

No. No. I didn't. I think in California, prior to this last president we had, whatever racism there was, was hidden. It was especially the people my age, we had our grandmothers and mothers telling us how it was, how it is, or even my boyfriend. When he played in the south, he had played with either all White in the audience, or all Blacks. There couldn't be a mixed race. There was still, even when I went down there I think probably through the '70s, '60s or '70s, there was still Black water fountains marked "Black" and those marked "White."

So a lot of... When this racial explosion, Black Lives Matter, there was a lot of young people who had no clue. No clue. People of all colors, children of all colors, they had no clue that there are Black people, Brown people who are still being treated this way. It was a surprise to them. My nephew is one of those.

He's half White. He grew up in Orange County. All his friends are White. His girlfriend is White. It was a shock— he voted for Trump. That broke my heart. But I just thank God, he's a smart young man, and he opened his eyes. He had no clue. He could, when he went to... We talk more now about things now that he's older. He told me that the first time he knew that people were being treated different, he was in court for some kind of ticket that he received. And there was a Black guy... People, when I show people pictures of him, they think he's White. And I was shocked, that because, but to me he looks black. Look at him, you look like you got some Black in you. But he told me that all the tickets that he's gotten, the race that the police put on his ticket, is White. He said he was in court one day and he was there and there was another Black guy there who was in court for the same reason he was. My nephew got off. They stuck it to the Black guy. And ever since that day, he's been aware. He's been learning. He's been interested. And I get texts from him all the time; "Aunt Dooley did you see that?"

"Yes, I saw that."

But it was a real eye opening, and thank God he has a girlfriend. She's blonde, blue eyed, but she's interested, too, so they've been talking and learning together. So I thank God for that. Is that enough?

[00:48:41]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

And what would you want to tell younger generations about the current struggles for racial justice?

[00:48:57]

**Dooley Walker**

I would tell them that the fight *is* real. I mean, it's not going away. It's...stay on your P's and Q's. If you know what that means, that's an old saying! It's gonna be that way. I don't see an end to it. We want an end to it, but do we really want them going back into hiding? I don't think. I think we want the big love, I think most of us know who they are. They're out, but I don't think we want them going back into hiding again; which means the work, it still has to be done to make things equal for everybody. To have jobs for everybody. Everybody to be welcome. It's not over, never will be over. We have to fight every day. We have to. I don't know what... The fight, we have to be vocal. We have to be vocal every day to teach.

[00:50:38]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

Yeah. I think one last question which would be good is, looking back over your own life, what do you think helped you thrive and overcome obstacles that you have faced?

[00:50:56]

**Dooley Walker**

God. I always... Since I do believe in a higher power, I always took the, and knowing that God is going to take care of me, I always took those situations and he has something better for me. I'll get over this. I don't know why it's happening, but I know that until it's my time to go, He's going to take care of me. So, those things were... And that's what he did. When I thought I was going to lose my job or be laid off for a couple of times, or be sent to here, be sent to there. Okay, must be what God wants me to do. So, and it all worked out. It all worked out.

I retired in 2011, with 41 years of service. And it was a journey. I met a whole lot of people, learned a lot, had people I took under my wing as far as what they should do as far as investments with the company. And a couple of them thank me today. Because, for taking the time to do that, even though I did that as a, mostly as a supervisor. I was in management for 14 years. So, I made a lot of... People thought that having a 401k, they couldn't afford it and let them know they could not afford to sign up for it. So I made sure anybody reporting to me, they were getting that money taken out for their retirement or whatever they chose to do with it. I had another close friend. She did work with me, but she refused to do it. She refused to do it. I said, "Okay, you take it out." She finally did it, and what did she do? She turned right around, and took a loan out against it. So I talked to her, I said, "Don't do that again. If you need anything, come to me. I'll give you a loan, but don't take a loan against that money." And she never did. She never did.



So, little things, little things. But I like my job. I like my job. When I left management, it was like I was working in, I think I was working in Monrovia at the time, but being there and having to go where they tell you to, and I wanted back in my night life. I wanted to do more of what I wanted to do. I wasn't getting paid overtime anymore. I mean I was spending weekends in that office, doing paperwork. I wanted my life again. So I went back to look back to per diem, and I was a manager from 1980 to 1994. Yeah. And then I went back to per diem and went to Rancho Cucamonga. Tired of that drive. And that was probably the most difficult because a lot of the per diem thought, you know, why is she get to come back, you know? But I put in my transfer just like anybody else, you know? And they knew I had a lot of the seniority, too, so that was another reason why they didn't want me there. But anyway, I needed a job just like they did. And the other one wasn't working for me so I put in my transfer. Eventually they did stop that, though they stopped management from being unable to transfer back to per diem.

[00:56:41]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

Yeah. Thank you. Mrs. Spencer, do you have any last questions for her?

[00:56:46]

**Denise Spencer**

No, I thought that was really interesting. I just wonder looking back, given your life in San Bernardino and your youth, was race or race relations ever impactful in your life, or the direction of your life?

[00:57:12]

**Dooley Walker**

You know what, no, but I will...I thought about something today. My father was very proud, even though he only had a fifth grade education. He would never discuss money with my mom. My mom wasn't working for most of my life so he would give her, and she would complain about to the kids why we can't get none with your daddy, "Your daddy doesn't give me enough money."

When my father passed I couldn't believe what he was making, he wasn't *making* anything. He didn't have any money to give to my mother. But what astonished me was the last car that he purchased, they saw my daddy coming, the interest on that car was 22%. And I just... I still today get teary eyed because they saw it coming. And I didn't know he never talked to us about finances or anything. But just to think that he was taken advantage of all his life and when he did, I'm thinking, I think he thought he was making a lot of money. He didn't know what a lot of money was, but I think he thought that. But anyway, onto the next subject!

[00:59:30]

**Denise Spencer**

And do you think that was because he was black, that he was...?

[00:59:34]

**Dooley Walker**

I know that it was because he was Black. He didn't know during that time, well just before he passed not just before he passed. And neither did my mother. I tried to teach her. I bought her a stock, because I was able to buy stock from the company through payroll deduction. I would figure out what, how many shares I could buy during the year and how much was able to come out of my check, so that would be the number of shares. So one year I decided to buy my mother those shares and I put it in both of our names. Well, that was the only way I would be able to do it. When I eventually at the end of the year when I paid for, they would send inclusive paperwork with both our names was on it. And for most of the years, I paid the...I gave her the paperwork. And I told her. Before I gave it to her, I had had it for a couple of years, because I wanted to show her on paper to be able to explain to her, "Look to see how the dividends are reinvested, and you see how much more money and everything you make." And she was excited about it for a minute, and she was eventually adding more money to it. And then I stopped and said "Okay mom, I have to pay taxes on this stuff so you get more money and here. I'm not gonna pay the taxes no more."

So she got it. They put it in, she was able to put it in her name. And I don't know what happened, I didn't even ask her, but one day she said to me, "Dooley I'm gonna sell the stock is that okay?"

I said, "It's yours, you do what you want to."

You know? I've done all I could, you know? So she felt she had to sell it. I wish she could have held on to it, you know. But at that time, whatever she needed it for I wouldn't have...I couldn't have helped her 'cause that was in debt too.

[01:02:21]

**Denise Spencer**

Well, it sounds like, you know, it's an observation. If I heard you correctly that while racism, particularly for people of color in the Inland Empire wasn't obvious, wasn't visible, whether it be work or the community or business or finance, but it existed.

[01:02:45]

**Dooley Walker**

Exactly. Exactly.

[01:02:47]

**Denise Spencer**

We all lived with it sometimes without knowing. Is that what I heard you say?

[01:02:55]

**Dooley Walker**

Yes. That's what you heard me say. Yes, it's there. You know it's there. You know from the looks. You know from the smart remarks, or whatever.

[01:03:12]

**Denise Spencer**

Patting on the hair?

[01:03:14]

**Dooley Walker**

You know patting on the hair. Yes. You know it's there. And, you know that... That's why I gotta be, that's what you had to be on your best. Because anything...you had to outshine the others. You had to make sure they saw you outside your color as an equal to your mind, the way you carry yourself, the way you talk to them, the way you interact with them. So, yeah, it was there, but...

[01:04:17]

**Denise Spencer**

Since quality came through working, giving 110% when they gave 100%, is that what you're saying?

[01:04:26]

**Dooley Walker**

Exactly. Exactly. Always had to do more. I felt I did. I don't know if I really did, but I felt I did, and I think I got more respect for that. Like when... During that time, we had a residence department and a business department in San Bernardino, and there was no difference in pay for the business department, but you had to know more, and the business reps were hand-picked. I was in business, I mean residence maybe two months. When they tapped me on the shoulder and said, "You're going to business."

Eventually, we did get a little more and pay. They call this differential. We got a differential and eventually they changed the class of service. So we were given more pay, but back when I was chosen to go to business, there was no money involved. It was just, you know, you're smart, you're doing good, you're going to business. It was the prestige, the crowning glory position! To be well, it was where everyone's... We'd rather talk to business customers than residence customers anyway. But it was definitely more work, and more. Because we had the switchboards, we took care of Norton, all the Norton Air Force Base. And my father worked in Norton Air Force Base! Charlie was 65 as a civilian.

[01:06:58]

**Denise Spencer**

Well, we see a lot of changes, we're still struggling. But there are a lot of changes in the struggles for today. When you look at what's going on. And when you look at what you've come through. How do you sum it all up?

[01:07:21]

**Dooley Walker**

God is good. Work hard. School never was for me, it's for a lot of people. I think I was lucky, blessed to the telephone company, was the only job I ever even applied for. I applied right after I got out of high school, and I... The party person I am, I went to Los Angeles State with my cousins, for a few months. I came back in October, went down to Eighth and E, to see if they had any jobs open since I already applied. They said, "Yeah. Can you come to work, Monday?"

"What?"

So, yeah. See I go on little tangents and I forget what we're talking about! What were we talking about?

[01:08:38]

**Denise Spencer**

Ari, did you have a last question?

[01:08:45]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

I think you kind of covered, giving some advice to the next generation. Like, what would you want to say?

[01:08:54]

**Dooley Walker**

Work hard. Save your money. If history hasn't taught you anything, this pandemic should have. Save your money, you don't always need a new car. I haven't had a new car since 1976. I buy used. Oh, and work overtime. That could help your...I never knew it until I, but it helped me leave earlier, because I had worked so much overtime when I was younger, that my Social Security checks were larger than the average Social Security check. So that overtime that you work now is going to go into your Social Security, towards your Social Security, when you're older. So save money. Work hard. Don't pass up any of that money your bosses offering to make. somebody can watch the kids for those couple hours or whatever while you're making money. But... 'Cause it is hard now.

I would really like to meet older people, older than me... I was telling Denise about my sixth grade teacher. And I have another friend too, her husband was a principal. And I don't know what exactly happened, but they ended up not getting what they thought they were going to get when they retired, which is really sad to know that. But anyway I sent, one of my Christmas cards came back to my sixth grade teacher this year. So I called him to see why it came back, if it moved or if he moved or whatever because I had been worried about him. I misplaced his telephone number for a minute and because of the fires that were out in the Calimesa-Yucaipa area. I was concerned about him. But they had moved, so I told him I'd resend the Christmas card. So I said... I forget things now. But anyway, it took me a while to think about how I was supposed to send that Christmas card because he wanted my address. 'Cause I told him, "I just wait, I'm not gonna give it to you now just wait till you get the Christmas card, and then you'll have the address on there."

So, anyway, I decided not to send them the Christmas card, I sent him an envelope full of masks. And especially I sent him two more of the KN95. And when I called him to see if he had received them, his wife answered and I said "Margaret, did you get the packages that I sent you?"

She says, "I don't know, what did you send?"

I said, "The masks."

She said, "Oh, yes, Dooley! Thank you so much! I am so tired of washing these masks."

I couldn't believe it, I felt so bad that this lady and my sixth grade teacher he's in his 80s. He said he's going to be 87 I think this year and she's in her 80s. And they don't have the funds to buy masks, so she has those cloth things which aren't safe now. We know we should be wearing something else besides that cloth. But anyway, that's going to be a follow up to see what mask she likes the best because I sent her all types for her and colors. So, I'm gonna follow up with her and see if she wants anything, but I would love to help some older people driving somewhere, to see what they need, because they're the ones who are needing now.

[01:14:08]

**Denise Spencer**

Thank you so much for your time and thank you for our masks that you sent us. So I just want to jump in here before Ari closes it out. It's been fascinating to hear about your life in San Bernardino and particularly working with G.T.E. And so I just like to thank you for this opportunity to be present. Ari?

[01:14:44]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

Yeah, it was very interesting. I liked hearing all of it. And I appreciate that you took the time to do this interview with us.

[01:14:57]

**Dooley Walker**

You're welcome. Thank you for asking me, although if Denise had told me it was going to be all this then...and I just recently, I didn't know, I just got my ring light yesterday and I was putting it together last night. Oh, no, I don't want to do this thing.

[01:15:19]

**Denise Spencer**

It looks fine. Well thank you so much again. We just so appreciate your taking the time to do this and remember that you're sharing with us, will be available for generations, and they'll learn about you and about your life in San Bernardino and your work life, so we thank you for them. And we're just grateful to you.

[01:15:48]

**Dooley Walker**

You're welcome. Thank you.

[01:15:50]

**Denise Spencer**

Alright.

[01:15:51]

**Dooley Walker**

Have a good day, both of you. I'm going to eat some breakfast.

[01:15:58]

**Denise Spencer**

Talk to you soon.

[01:16:00]

**Dooley Walker**

Bye. Bye, Ari.

[01:16:03]

**Ariadna Barrientos**

Bye, it was a pleasure meeting you.

[01:06:06]

**Dooley Walker**

Same here, have a good day.

**End of Interview**

[1:16:12]