Interview with Ms. Eva Lindsey
Date: May 29, 2001
Interviewed by Dr. Rosalee Martin

RM: Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. Would you tell us your name and a statement about who you are?

EL: My name, I'm Eva June Lindsey, and I guess the most significant thing about me relative to this interview is that I am a fourth-generation native Austinite and proud of it.

RM: In our interviews we're actually talking to people about the crossover in terms of segregation to integration and the kind of experiences that you may have had in the segregated schools, [L.C.] Anderson High [School] specifically at the time, and/or Anderson High and whatever crossover school you may have gone to, or anything related to that. So I just wanted to begin by asking you, tell us a little about your educational experience here in Austin, in that you're fourth generation here.

EL: I'm a graduate of L.C. Anderson High School, and, of course, I grew up in what is known as the Blackshear Prospect neighborhood. In fact, it's the Blackshear Prospect Neighborhood Association now, one of the oldest neighborhood associations, and right in the center part of East Austin, right at, awfully close to the school campus, right below Huston-Tillotson campus at the corner of East Eighth Street and Concho.

That was also the site of my father's growing-up days as well as my grandparents' home, was on the corner of Eighth and Concho. I tell people that I grew up in a compound, which was a great experience because my aunt lived next door and my cousins lived next to her. My entire family, immediate family, lived right on the same property.

That sort of leads us into what you describe as a time of crossover. I attended Blackshear Elementary School, Kealing [Junior High], and Anderson, and just about everyone that lived in that particular neighborhood went to Blackshear or Kealing. Up until about 1973, I believe, I had no experience in any educational institution with white students, Anglo students, or any students of any other ethnic background. My experience was almost totally black. I say almost because I had a brief experience in seventh grade, seventh or eighth, I can't remember, when University Junior High School was built. It no longer exists. I think it was an experimental junior high school at the University of Texas. But at any rate, there were several of us that were considered bright students, so they sent us to a summer program, and I didn't like it, and I refused to stay. I don't think I went two days. So that was the sum total of my experience in an integrated situation. Only until I was in graduate studies did I encounter being in a mixed setting.

I attended Fisk University in Nashville, which is in the Deep South, of course, and now I believe it's called a predominantly black school. It was all black when I was there. So that's basically my educational background.

RM: In what ways have you been connected to the integrated experience?

EL: Very directly, strangely enough, even with that background. When I say very directly, I was hired by AISD [Austin Independent School District] in 1971, I believe it was, 1970, the year that the schools were integrated. I was a member of the initial team [Human Relations Team] that was hired to aid desegregation in Austin public schools.

I also worked as a consultant with SEPSES [phonetic]. Actually it was called TEDTAC. There are probably about four other people in the entire world that remember TEDTAC, but it was the Texas Educational Desegregation Technical Assistance Center. It was housed on what was once called the little campus at UT. They hired probably 100 consultants to go out into small school districts in Texas and aid desegregation.

That was quite a time. It was a very interesting time. It was a very angry time. It was a very confused time, and it created a period of very unsettled and distressed young people, I believe. The schools were ordered by the Fifth Circuit Court to desegregate, and that was the language: to desegregate. Not to integrate, but to desegregate. And that's exactly what we did. And I say we did it because I believe that had we, as African-Americans, collectively voiced our opinion about it in a very different way we may have been able to shape it differently. I don't know. That's in retrospect. You know things better in hindsight.

At any rate, I went to work for the district, and our goal was to desegregate the schools, and that was done with busing. My role as a staff person was to ease the tension, help to ease the tension. It was probably one of the most difficult and one of the most enlightening jobs that I ever had in my life. I did it for five years, and I basically just burned right out because it was extremely sensitive work.

RM: Could you give me an example of how you eased the tension?

EL: Yes. I actually did something that was--there was a principal by the name of W.R. Robbins [phonetic], who one of the schools is named for. I would consider him a mentor to me. Very frankly, I didn't even like him when I first met him, because he was a big, robust, kind of grumpy, gruff, somewhat crass Anglo man. And I was a young, as my mother would say, whippersnapper of a young woman with a big Afro. So it was like oil and water, I thought.

But he was very patient and very kind and very insightful, and he taught me patience. He taught me the ability to sit and actually walk the talk. I was asking others to listen to me, and I had to learn how to listen also. And I did. And I learned to listen to him, and I learned to talk with him rather than just talk to him. His behavior beget that behavior in me, and actually it turned out to be a wonderful experience. He was quite supportive.

I decided--I had a brainchild with some other staff persons, that we really needed to get young people together in a neutral setting, not whether they were black or whether they were white or whether they were Hispanic and not in a setting where some had more advantages than others, some were financially more advantaged than others of whatever the experience was. So we took them to the wilderness. We got one of those wilderness outfits, [unclear] people, contracted with them, and we literally--that was my first experience with those groups. That was the early incarnation of those wilderness groups. They did a lot of in-depth training, and they were learning themselves. A lot of them were really young. We were all really young. I don't even think I was quite thirty years old at that time.

At any rate, I took about twenty-eight students of all persuasions and gender on a three-day camping trip. Well, somehow I don't think the parents really knew that it was a mixed group. They thought it was just a camping trip. It never occurred to parents that it was multi-ethnic, because why should it occur to them? Nothing else multi-ethnic occurred to them, and so it didn't really occur until it had happened. It came to my attention that there were some complaints to the school board, but I was protected in this endeavor by Mr. Robbins. I will always remember that, because he really did support me in doing this.

We took students out, and as I talk about it and remember it, by day two everybody smelled the same, because there were no showers, there were no porta-potties. We were literally in a rugged area of the wilderness, in the Pedernales area, and it turned out to be really wonderful because they had to lean on one another and learn from one another how to do things to make it for those three days.

It was one of the most incredible experiences. I imagine if we went back and interviewed some of those people, they're probably some of the better people that graduated from the district because of that experience. They were young, they were eager, and they were willing.

The biggest problem that we had with what you describe as the crossover were not necessarily the students, but their parents. So I spent a lot of one-on-one with students who were trying to understand it, were trying to understand their parents' point of views without being defiant, Anglo kids who wanted to develop relationships with other kids, who had never had that experience before, and vice versa. If we had let them alone and let them design the system, it probably would have been a much better system than exists today, actually. But we had adults who were ingrained in their beliefs that were designing systems, and they were designing to protect themselves, from what I'm not sure. But we all do that as a human instinct, I suppose. I can go on about that experience.

RM: So would you say that overall that was a successful experience? Did you reach a large number of young people in that position?

EL: Yes, I did. There were twelve of us. Four of us were black, four of us were white, and four of us were Hispanic. The students that we reached, we truly reached them, I believe, because we ourselves were thrust into relationships and spent a lot of time together in developing those relationships. We spent about six weeks of training, very in-depth. At that time it was called T-groups and sensitivity training, and you remember all that stuff. We, ourselves, went through that with one another, and that was a bang of an experience because we really—actually, I remember once we conducted this rating of who was the most racist, and I got the highest rating. They said I was the most racist.**[Laughter]** You know, I begged to differ, but—

RM: But you were raised in a—

EL: I was raised in somewhat of a closeted, cloistered, protected environment. I didn't know I was supposed to be unhappy.

RM: As you think about these experiences that you had during the desegregation era, what would you say were the most problems that were faced? You said parents were part of the problem.

EL: Parents probably were the people that were most ingrained, rules that were old rules, like old legislation, you know, things that have been on the books for years that were comfortable for certain groups of people, but were not accommodating or supportive of other groups of people. An example. I remember O. Henry Junior High School had a rule that in order to be a cheerleader and to be able to wear the little uniforms with the back cut out, your hair had to be long enough to cover your back. Well, that was a very discriminatory rule. During that time people weren't wearing much add-on hair. So it created a very natural isolation for – and anytime a rule like that is not only enacted but enforced, then it lowers the esteem of the group that it works against.

RM: So were you able to work with these schools in terms of changing policies?

EL: Some I was. Some schools I was able to work with; others I wasn't. Actually, I was removed from O. Henry Junior High School. They thought I was a little radical.

RM: Oh, because you had an Afro.

EL: And because I spoke out about the rules and some other things that I had seen that I thought were not pleasing and that did not enhance the intent.

RM: Would you say the administration, those in top positions, were they just really sincere about wanting integration to work?

EL: I don't think that they knew. I don' think there was a vision of what it could be like. I believe that it was mandated by the court and they were following the rules pretty much as best they could, and they really didn't, during that time—this is not a personal indictment on any one person or necessarily ethnic group. It was just such a strange time.

I know it was a strange time for me, even though it was late in the sixties and the beginning of the seventies, seemingly it wouldn't have been such a strange idea. We worked so hard for what we called civil rights, and then it kind of wadded itself down into this thing that was call desegregation, which was not, in my mind, the same thing. As a result of that, I'm not sure if it was an issue of sincerity or an issue of not buying into the dream and not having a mental picture of what that would be like. It was so scary to some people, even administrators. It was a scary thing.

RM: Were you involved in any violence that might have occurred during that period of time?

EL: Oh, yes. Yes. There was a lot of violence. There was a lot of anger. There was a lot of violence. All of the schools experienced some level of violence, particularly, for some reason, and as I think back, Martin Junior High School was just a bastion of violence. We did regular what we called "locker raids." I think that would be called an invasion of privacy now, but we did, and we'd find lots of weapons.

I remember I was very pregnant during that time. I was about eight months, one month from delivery, and I was sitting in the lunch room working with the lunch room monitors, and a food fight broke out. Once the food fight broke out, it incited—it only took one little thing to stir, it's like the calm before the storm, you knew something was going to happen, you didn't know what. But someone threw some food, and that was all it took for the entire cafeteria to go nuts. Chairs, tables, trays, just the whole thing, and you have to bring an entire SWAT force of people.

The neat thing that happened for me was that my co-workers came to get me because they wanted to protect me from the flying debris and trays. That was neat for me, because my co-workers were all of different persuasions, and they all came to look for me, and that was a nice experience.

I think that experience precipitated my desire to take kids into a different setting, such as the wilderness experience, somewhere that was neutral, because when the crisis comes, what are you going to do? Are you going to draw a line in the sand and say, "Well, all the blacks over here and all the whites over there"? Yes, we were. We were ready to do that unless you have a different experience that's very humbling, and then it brings you down to the human experience.

That's where we were trying to get with the students, is to the human experience, and not predicated on race or gender or ability or money, but just the human experience, and we were called a Human Relations Team. That was the nice thing about it. I'm not sure that administrators had the vision that we had, because we spent time garnering this vision, bringing it together, and talking about what it could be like. So it was different.

RM: How long did it take for students to accept the fact that this is going to happen, integration is here to stay and it's not a temporary time?

EL: I think probably about four years, and I say that because we had to move an entire class through that had started out another way. By the time that they graduated, it had been woven into the fabric of the school district to some degree, not completely, but to some degree.

I was there five years, and when I left, the district was still not in compliance. That doesn't mean that they were doing necessarily badly. I do want to make a distinction between those two things. I think there were some really good things that happened during the evolution of this experience with desegregation. That's basically what it was, it was an experiment. As we got into it, then we could take it and shape it and we could go to individual schools and work with individual groups of students and have them begin to shape it, because there was not a collective vision before then.

RM: Would you say that parents participated in the vision you had or did they have a vision at all?

EL: I don't think they had a vision. You know, parents were some of those adults that were stuck in some old beliefs. The fortunate, I guess, thing with myself and others that worked on the team is that we were young enough and we were all at a graduate level of education in varying degrees, but we were still young enough to be flexible and creative in our thinking and also, obviously, willing, very willing, to create something different and better. That was the idea, is to create something better, not only different, but better.

So there was a staunch belief in what we called at that time multiculturalism. I was probably one of the slower ones to buy in completely. But some of it was, as with all of us, it was based on our prior experiences.

I was perfectly happy with being who I was, and I didn't know that it needed to be different until I was age twelve and I won a contest on the radio. My mom probably doesn't even remember this, but I was at my aunt's house, and I entered a contest and I was the winner. The prize for the winner was a dinner for four at an Italian restaurant. Well, I was just utterly excited, because I had never been to a restaurant except in the neighborhood, a little place, but not a real restaurant where you get dressed up in your Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes and put your patent leather shoes on and go out to dinner. I had only seen that in books and on TV.

My father was a interesting character. He taught me a lot by allowing me to experience and being gently somewhere in the close distance to make sure that I don't hurt myself or something of the sort. But anyway, he decided that he would take me to this restaurant. I was so overwhelmed, and I would not have believed him had he told me that I could not go, because I won it. The letter came in the mail, and we had the validation, and I was the winner.

Of course, back then there was no zip codes for them to know where you lived. So we went to the restaurant, and we were not allowed in. I was able to get my dinner from the back door. Even now, when I think of that--so it tainted me. It took that little girl who lived in this kind of

Pollyanna world where Mommy and Daddy and my two sisters, and we just had a nice, happy family, you know. My aunt lived next door and my cousins, and they played the blues, and my dad played jazz, and we all sang gospel on Sundays. That was kind of it. And went to school, and I was involved in school activities. When my uncle asked me to dance, I'd get in the yard and dance for him. It was happy times.

This made me feel very strange inside, like someone hadn't told me something I needed to know. So for many years I carried that. So when I went to work for the school district, I wasn't sure whether I wanted to be desegregated or not, but I had the skills and I had the background, I had the educational background and, I suppose, the personality to do this job. I believe I probably benefited more than anyone.

RM: As schools were going through the process of desegregation, was education occurring?

EL: In the traditional sense, I suppose at some level. In a nontraditional sense, yes, very much so. Stereotypes were being dismantled. Youngsters would literally come to you and say, "Well, I thought your hair couldn't grow long. I thought all black people had very short hair." One lady asked me, "Why do black mothers keep their children's hair cut short?" Just all kinds of things that I thought were just bizarre questions. Recognizing that, stereotypes take us into some painful myths about other people and some belief systems that are very harmful and hurtful.

So the learning occurred when the stereotypes began to be dismantled, because if you can remove some of the stereotypes, then some of the prejudices began to dissipate to some degree. That's where the roots are, is in the prejudices that guide our behavior or direct our behavior toward others. "I don't like you because you're tall, and I don't know why I don't like tall people. It's because my mother says she doesn't like tall people." That's really how simplistic that is, but as simplistic as it is, it's also as devastating to others.

So some of that began to erode slowly, but I saw the erosion because I had youngsters—I had one young lady. I shall never forget her. She came to me, this little Anglo girl, and she was a product of Tarrytown, and she was ready to run away from home, literally. She was ready to leave. She didn't know where she was going, but she knew that she was not going to live in that situation anymore because her parents forbade her to have phone conversations. "You may have to go to school with them, but you will not talk to them on my phone and you will not visit with them. And no, they cannot come to this house, and, no, you may not go to their house." And her best friend was a black girl. They had just developed this wonderful little friendship, and it was a real friendship. She was at a crossroads and didn't know what to do, and she was literally ready to just pack it up and go. Where she had no idea, but she was ready to go. So we spent some time together and softened things. I can't remember exactly what I did. Just instinctively I—

RM: What you're doing is giving us the human elements in terms of human reaction. I think a lot of times studies do not have that.

EL: Those anecdotes, yes. Those anecdotes of actually the things that happened, the behavior that occurred. What do you do when a student who's fourteen years old, whose parents are staunchly against desegregation, but they cannot afford the luxury of sending them to a private school? That was a regular occurrence. That was the human element that was embedded throughout.

Of course, you can take the corollary to that for black kids, because they go back home and they say, "Now, don't you let them white people run over you just because you have to go to school over there," and all kinds of—so we bring all that baggage to school, and we have students who

are trying to sort all of this out, because these are their parents and their relatives and their neighborhood and their community values and their church values sometimes even, you know. They bring that baggage to school, and I think that we may be finding some of that is finally eroding, has eroded in some places, but it certainly has not eroded, and we still have some very deep-seated thoughts about who we are in relation to the rest of the world.

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

EL: ...when the crossover will be, when you—the word "crossover," because we really, it's been—

RM: It's a process.

EL: It's been a process and it's been a journey, and it's been time-sensitive.

RM: At times people want to retreat back.

EL: Oh, yes, because of the comfort. You know, I think about my grandmother. My grandmother was 104, and she died in 1982 at age 104. Her mother was a slave, so I'm technically two generations from slavery. Well, you can imagine some of the things that my grandmother taught even us, even me. You know how you have to prune those parts that are not working, don't work anymore? Even small things in conversation, and those are the things that impact more than some conceptual, philosophical way of thinking about things. It's the small things.

My grandmother used to say, "Don't walk on them white people's grass." We didn't have grass, we had dirt, because you drove up in the yard. There were no curbs, there were no paved streets in the part where she lived, only where white people lived was there grass and were there curbs. I still didn't think about it, because my grandmother made me so happy, she was so sweet, it just—as a six- and a seven- and an eight-year-old, you just--at least, I don't remember embracing, "Oh, we don't have any grass. We need some grass," you know, because it was much more fun to have all fifteen of my cousins show up in the dirt than to have grass you couldn't walk on, if that makes any sense to you. So it's funny how those little things stay with you forever, and you can reroute them, but they never leave you.

RM: You said you're fourth generation here. What kind of businesses did blacks have, let's say even prior to segregation or integration? What was life like? What was life like for blacks in Austin, let's say, through the forties and fifties?

EL: Well, you know, my memory only goes back—actually it goes back pretty far, but I can vividly talk about the fifties, the early fifties, because I spent a lot of time—I grew up, as I said, at Eighth and Concho, which is between Huston-Tillotson and the state cemetery, just for a frame of reference.

I'm a member of Metropolitan A.M.E. Church, which is at Tenth. My grandfather was a trustee and a steward, and literally the name Lindsey is on the cornerstone of the church. So my father was superintendent of the Sunday school my entire childhood. My entire childhood, I think maybe about twenty years he was superintendent of the Sunday school, literally, so we used to walk to all of the church activities and through the cemetery, which was a shortcut.

But I was also really familiar with East Eleventh and East Twelfth Street because I had relatives on Twelfth Street, and proprietors of all the businesses lived in the area. They were my parents'

friends and my aunts' friends, you know, one or the other. So many of them I knew very personally, so it was easy for me to go in and out of businesses. It was a strange thing about a time when a community was contained that way, because even the kids could go in and out of businesses, and they were welcome and respected.

I don't have any really negative or traumatic thoughts about—people weren't doing bad things. If they were, they didn't do it around where we could see. In fact, what is known as Shorty's Bar, which is being renovated now, restored rather not renovated, and is a landmark, was once a sitting place. I often think of a painting that I've seen, a piece of visual art, with old black men, and it's entitled "Just Sittin'," because that's what they would do. They would just sit in front of that place. There was a bench, and Reverend Alexander and some other preachers, along with people from the street and the community, would all sit there together and chat. It'd be hot, but they were up under the eaves of the building, and they'd sit there. You could most often find the preacher there any time of day. He was part of their community, out and about, right there.

So the church, the people that ran the schools, and the business community was all very integrated, integrated because they were the same families that were the business people, were the church people. Their wives taught school. Johnny Holmes opened the Victory Grill in 1945, and he opened it at the end of the war, thus the name "Victory." In fact, that was one of those "just sitting" moments, and he asked a friend, "What should I name it?," and he said, "Name it Victory," and he said, "Okay." It was just that simple.

So the Victory Grill was one of those places, and there was always somewhere to eat, always. Regardless of what kind of business it was, there was somewhere to eat either in the same building or next door. You could either get a hamburger at Mr. Lawson's ice cream parlor. You could get the best hamburgers and ice cream cones and ice cream, this old-style with the barstools and the bar.

Of course, the Deluxe Hotel, it was the hotel. It was the colored hotel. This was pre-motel. It was the true essence of a hotel. In the bottom was an entertainment area and a restaurant, and the restaurant was open daily for lunch, breakfast and lunch as well as the evening fare. So people from the community went there for lunch because it was the restaurant. It was the only restaurant. We couldn't go, obviously, anywhere else. I just wanted to grow up and get big enough where I could go and sit in the restaurant on my own and have a meal and pay for my own meal. I think I looked forward to that, and I did finally make it to the Deluxe before it was demolished.

Of course, there was the famous Victory Grill and Charlie's Playhouse, which came later. Every corner hosted some sort of place to eat. I think eating, for black folk, is communal. I think eating for all folk is communal, but I know for us it is communal. There's just something that you have to have a piece of this or a piece of something.

Then there were the liquor stores. There was the liquor store. Miss Mays [phonetic] ran the liquor store. Well, Miss Mays gave me money every week for my college. So I guess what I'm saying is that even those things that are considered somewhat--no one wants a liquor store in their neighborhood now, but at that time it was okay because the liquor store owner also contributed in so many other ways. She contributed to the church tea and to this kid going to college. So it wasn't seen in a negative perspective.

Business was thriving. We serviced one another through our businesses and provided entertainment and enjoyment, and with that there was so much fun involved that other people came, too. I know Mr. Thomas talks about that. He said people would come from all around, all

of the military installations and all of the counties that were dry, surrounding counties that were dry, they would come into East Austin because we had so much fun, and they would come to hear the horns and the music. That's the part that's lost, is that communal, this blending of commercial and communal. It's a very interesting blend.

RM: Why do you think we lost so many of our businesses? I understand Sixth Street also had a lot of black businesses, too.

EL: Yes, Sixth Street. Well, Sixth Street was the center of commerce for African-Americans, and it was also the center of commercial land ownership, and we lost every bit of that to urban renewal and to the movement of downtown Austin gathering all of that property. The churches that were situated downtown, including Metropolitan, as my aunt told me the story, was moved. Where the Austin Public Library is currently sited, there were two black churches, the first two original black churches. One was Metropolitan and then one was, I believe, First Baptist Church, which is now on Heflin Lane. But those were the original sites of those churches in that downtown area.

They were moved as a result of the 1927-'28—some people say 1928, 1927 plan, and the plan was, the City of Austin hired consultants from the Dallas area, as I understand it, to put together one of the first strategic plans for the city, and that plan was to move all the Negroes east of what was--I guess East Avenue then, before I-35, was cut, and this was when Samuel Huston [College] still owned what we would know now as that frontage road of I-35 and East Twelfth. Samuel Huston owned everything over to where the Marriott is [701 E 11th], and across [I-]35 Samuel Huston owned. All of that was Samuel Huston campus.

Once Rosewood Park was built and once the 1927 ordinance moving the Negroes—the coloreds—across into one spot, then Eleventh Street was deemed—you know, people began to rebuild. It brings to mind this article I was recently reading about the accumulation of wealth and why we have not been able to accumulate related to the movement and the official movement of us from one site to another. This is a pattern that is recognizable.

Now, when we come to the sixties, once the civil rights legislation is crafted, and we're so focused on trying to build in some equity so that those things don't happen anymore, we lost sight of the fact that the downside of the movement caused us to lose all of our inner-city businesses because it opened up the arenas for all of those entertainers that we once nurtured and brought forward to be picked up by larger producers, managers with bigger, deeper pockets. So when B.B. King was picked up and put on a national circuit, Johnny Holmes could no longer be his promoter in Texas because his pockets weren't deep enough. He couldn't pay him. And, of course, who is going to deny your brother a greater opportunity, financially and just in terms of exposure?

So the arenas start being built around that time, the Palmer Auditoriums of the world, so to speak, the coliseums, and bigger venues were built. So they moved them from out of the clubs and out of what were called juke joints and off of the chittling circuit and into the big arenas.

Of course, if you travel with me through the sixties and come to the late sixties and the early seventies, then we see the advent of the festival. Woodstock brought us the festival, the outdoor festival. We can crowd thousands of people and bring those same people to a stage and just put bigger sound. Just the amount of money we can make now, it's exponential.

So that's what happened. When people ask me about what happened to that business district, it was literally decimated. There was no plan to sustain it through segregation, nowhere in the country. So we lost.

RM: As you're thinking about this whole experience of the segregated era, you thought yourself as being happy, things were going well for you, and now they integrated. What were the benefits to integration for African-Americans?

EL: The perceived benefits were access to the same materials and access to the same information and equity for you as you presented yourself to educators. If you are of the same system, there was a notion that it was a benefit to be of the same system because then you could access the same system. It could no longer be said, "Well, you don't have the experience to qualify, to be able to make the next step over here." That can no longer be said. I think we really bought that and we really believed in that, and I don't think we were astute enough to recognize that even within systems there's discriminatory behavior, that they haven't solved the problem in and of itself, let alone to add this next variable to it, add these new people to it. So men and women weren't—there was no equity in the same race between gender or between ability or any of that sort of thing.

So I believe it was a larger issue than we processed, because we were fixed on doing better. The advantage was that, I believe, at some level we did do better, I believe. You know, I'm not sure. Given all things, I'm not sure if I'd be any better—

RM: Off now.

EL: Yes, I'm not sure. Yes. I'm really not, Rosalee. I'm just not sure.

RM: How do you perceive schools now? What's going on in our schools, from your perspective? What's going on for our kids?

EL: Well, you know, I teach, and I teach at the junior college level, so I kind of get them when they've come out of the system and they've been flitting around in society and discovered that they needed to do something different and to expand themselves or else they will not fare well. I see a better generation in a lot of ways. I see a better generation in terms of their tolerance of one another, and there's some true integration that has occurred. I may not ever know what that's like, true integration in terms of physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual integration.

It's akin to having been raised by both parents and having been raised in a nuclear family. Now my girls are a product of a divorce situation, my girls and my son. I watch my girls and I realize that they don't know what it feels like to have been raised in a nuclear family. They have me and then they have their dad over there and then they have somebody else in Detroit and somebody else in Dallas. I was nuclear in every sense, not only my parents, but my grandparents and my aunts. So I may not know what it feels like to be totally integrated. That's the analogy that I can make to that. But I see it happening. That's one thing I believe is good.

RM: The final question I want to ask you is, if you were to give advice to persons about how to truly integrate and how to truly respect differences, what would it be?

EL: I really don't know about how to. I know that it's important to respect and respond to your intuition. Your intuition should tell you when things are good and when things are not, as relates to human nature and not without respect to color or class or texture of hair or persuasion or

orientation, sexual orientation. Your intuition just gives you good insight, at least mine does, into whether something is a good fit. And just make sure that your relations are a good fit. I think it goes into some biblical terminology that talks about being yoked equally, and I think we really need to think on that and what that really means, because I think we defined it in some very limited terms.

But in terms of my spiritual, mental, emotional, and psychological development, I would hope that those that are closest to me and those that I respond to most readily have that sensitivity, level of sensitivity, to be able to tap into that where I am and I, vice versa, can tap them, and we can gain strength from that.

RM: Thank you so much.

EL: You're welcome.

RM: I really appreciate your taking time out for the interview.

EL: Thank you. I always kind of evolve into my political underpinning, but I can't help it.

RM: I appreciate that.

[End of interview]