

Willow Hill Teacher's Appreciation Luncheon

Part 1

This recording is of a Teacher's Appreciation Luncheon held at the Willow Hill School on September 1, 1996.

Wilose Jackson: Today is Sunday, September the 1st, 1996, and we are in Portal, Georgia. Today they're having the awards day honoring former teachers of Willow Hill at the elementary school today.

(break in audio)

BUTLER: (inaudible) this afternoon. Thank God for one more day. I'm glad you could come. I want to thank each of you. Today we are going to honor someone we love, (inaudible) the Willow Hill (inaudible) school, to our program office, and to all of our visiting friends. (long pause) We are going to begin our program. We are a little late, sorry about that. Next time we'll try to be on time. (inaudible) selection from the Johnsonville Choir. Are they here?

F2: We are here.

BUTLER: While they're getting ready, I would like to say here that we thought it was fitting that we do this now, while we are yet alive, and we don't ever know when our dear old Willow Hill is going to be destroyed. And we do want our children and our grandchildren and children's children to know where we came from. The old saying is that if you don't know where you came from, you don't know where you're going. So when we are gone, our children can remember their old Willow Hill. We wish that all of the children in the community, they could be here today. Of course, a lot of them are grown and gone far, and some are here, but we wish that they were here today. Johnsonville, are we ready?

(many people respond at once; inaudible)

F3: (inaudible). (inaudible) we done so good (inaudible) be here, only by the love and mercy of God Almighty. I thought I had got over my nerves. (laughter) But my music teacher's sitting out there, Mr. Jerome Steven. So I know he'll pick up on all the mistakes. (laughter) Our piano player is not here, and the song that we were going to sing we can't sing without it, so we're going to do the best we can.

(Choir sings "Lord, I'm Grateful") [00:05:00]

(applause)

BUTLER: We thank God for that wonderful selection, and now is the time, my friends, that we need to thank God for his blessing. We see every day what we need to do. Look at our children.

F: Amen.

BUTLER: And I think about it, and that selection just did it. We're going to follow this program here, we're going to have a welcome by Mr. Gordon Mincey, (inaudible), Ms. Mary Parish, and another selection, Johnsonville Choir.

F: Reverend Pike Wallace, I'm sorry. I did only (inaudible).

(chatter; inaudible)

Reverend Pike Wallace: Let us pray. (inaudible) come down? in our presence, we come with our heads (inaudible). (inaudible) thank you now for giving us this privilege and giving us this opportunity. We pray, Our Father, that thou will look down upon our hearts and upon this audience. Be in our heart and in our minds, be all about us. We realize, Our

Father, (inaudible). And we call upon you because you are our Almighty God. Now, Lord, we ask a special blessing now upon these, your people, as we assemble and as we celebrate (inaudible), that you will share with us your spirit (inaudible) these blessings, and we ask according to Jesus's name, amen.

ALL: Amen.

Wallace: (inaudible) our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (inaudible) all our honorees who we're so very proud to have today. (inaudible) a lot of good singing (inaudible). But I'm just going to say to all our visitors, we thank you so much for coming and sharing with us in this program today, and you're welcome. Thank you.

ALL: Amen. (applause)

(break in audio)

F4: Good afternoon.

MULTIPLE: Good afternoon.

F4: It's good to be here, and I think this is certainly a beautiful occasion. We have looked forward to this occasion with great anticipation and expectation. [00:10:00] For many years, these teachers have stood for a lighthouse, directing men, women, boys, and girls to a better of life through education. Webster defines "teacher" in this way: "one who imparts knowledge or skills, who calls to learn by example or experience." These teachers have dedicated themselves to the task of helping others through their ability to impart knowledge, not only through many hours, months, years of preparation and study, but through the example they have set as mentors to their students. The school is simply an extension of the home, an arm of support, and instructs and helps prepare your children for a better life and vocation. It is certainly fitting that our community has provided this opportunity to give special tribute to these special individuals. It is sometimes surprising to know just what others think of us. So many times we fail to give words of thanks, encouragement, and we put off flowers and expressing thanks and appreciation. This is a wonderful opportunity to express these feelings of appreciation and encouragement. Now is the time. We thank you for your untiring efforts in helping and encouraging my child to give his or her best in whatever they are capable of and pursuing, and a good education. We shall reflect back on this occasion with pleasure and become -- it should become a cherished memory. The love and the friendship going on here today will be a monument which time cannot destroy. We appreciate you and we thank God for each of you. (applause)

(break in audio)

BUTLER: (inaudible) for that wonderful prayer. And Brother Mincey, thank you for your welcome. You know, we feel welcome all the time (inaudible), but we like to hear the words of welcome sometimes. It makes us feel more relaxed (inaudible). Mrs. Parish, that occasion was wonderful. (inaudible) occasion (inaudible) you have (inaudible) people (inaudible) our children, as far as I am -- I have three generations coming here: myself, my children, and grandchildren. So, you see, I have a lot to be grateful for, and I'm not the only one; I'm told there are others out there that had two or three generations. So the occasion is very fitting. Now we're going to have another selection from the Johnsonville Choir.

(break in audio)

M2: Good evening.

ALL: Good evening.

M2: We're going to have to do another song that I hope y'all are going to enjoy. This song's "Glory, Glory Hallelujah." That's an old song, and it's good for way back. And I hope y'all enjoy.

(multiple people sing "Glory, Glory Hallelujah") [00:15:00]

(applause)

(break in audio)

BUTLER: Wonderful selection. Somebody (inaudible) can handle that very well. In fact, I'm speaking from experience now. That's how I feel. Now we are going to have the history of the Willow Hill School, and the teachers, Dr. Alvin Jackson. (applause)

JACKSON: Good afternoon.

ALL: Good afternoon.

Alvin Jackson: As I stand before you today proudly, a thousand memories flash through my mind, as I stand in this hallowed hall of learning, a school that I attended, my mother attended, my grandmother attended, my great-grandfather attended. For 122 years Willow Hill has been a beacon of education in Bulloch County, Georgia. It is the oldest continuous school in Bulloch County, black or white, predating Georgia Southern College, Statesboro High School, Marvin Pittman, bar none. It is the oldest institution in Bulloch County, Georgia. And I think that we all have something very proud -- have something to be very proud of as we stand here today celebrating the rich history of our teachers, those who have come before us and have been a very important example for us. We're so proud of you. This is a great occasion, and this is a history that all of Bulloch County should know. And it is my goal that this history should be documented. Currently I am working on a book on the history of the Willow Hill School, and at this time I will give you a brief synopsis of that history. In 1874, Willow Hill was started on Dan and Odile Parish Riggs's place in a turpentine shanty in Bulloch County, Georgia. Then it was called Willie Hill, in honor of Dan Riggs's eldest son, Willie Riggs. Willie Riggs was born in 1869 and was one of the first students of the Willow Hill School. In 1894 he was graduated from Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, with a certificate in education, and later taught at Willow Hill School. Willow Hill was located on a hill amongst briars and boat wood. The first school was very crudely built. It was a one-room structure with one door, one window, and a privy, which was located outside the building. The first book was a *Blue Back Speller*, a dictionary, and the Bible. The school year was not long, because the children was needed [00:20:00] to work on the farm. Originally the school went to the fifth grade, and the school year was three months. Georgiana Riggs, the daughter of Isaacs Riggs, Dan's brother, the first -- was the first teacher. She was born a slave in 1859 in Bulloch County, Georgia, and was a mere 15 years old when she began teaching at the Willow Hill School. In 1890, Willow Hill moved to a Handy and Agnes Parish Donaldson's place for five years. That building looked very similar to the first school. About 1895, Willow Hill moved to the spot over where Cousin Douglas Jones's house is, just below there, on land donated by Moses Parish. And as I stand here, that is the grandfather of you, Cousin Thelma. You were one of the early teachers at Willow Hill School, and I'm sure you know that history, and you must be very proud of it. Willow Hill School was started, essentially, by a few families: the Riggs, the Donaldsons, the Parishes. They all banded themselves together and boarded the teachers. The school grew very rapidly, and around 1904 an addition

was added to the school. Now, we must understand the context of Willow Hill in the context of what was happening in Bulloch County, Georgia at that time. We all heard the story of Reed and Cato around 1904, who were burned here in Bulloch County. Well, there was a whole flurry in the Willow Hill community at that time. The night riders were riding. They were harassing the people in the Willow Hill community, because Will and Cato had burned the Hodges family. But in spite of the harassment, the school continued to prosper. In 1914, because the school population grew so rapidly, a completely new building was constructed, would serve as the main building until 1942 when the Rosenwald -- when another Rosenwald building was built. Now, the first part of the history I told you involved a time period between 1874 and 1920. Only about nine years after slavery ended, these families banded together to start the Willow Hill School. Now, from between 1920 and 1954, this is another aspect of the history. On January the 3rd, 1920, the Willow Hill School and its property was sold to the Bulloch County Board of Education. Prior to 1920, Willow Hill was a private school, run by those families mentioned. The deed of sale is located in the Bulloch County Courthouse in Statesboro, Georgia, and we have a copy of that deed of sale where it was sold for \$18 in 1920 on the wall there, and I'd like for you to see that today. Now, once Willow Hill became part of the county system, there were many drastic changes made in the curriculum. It soon became a requirement that the teachers must have polished degrees. Prior to that time, a teacher could complete the seventh grade, go to Statesboro, get two additional years of education, and come back to Willow Hill and teach, and Cousin Thelma also know about that, because she taught in that tradition, as well. Now, also during this time period Willow Hill grew to include a high school. It had a girls' and boys' basketball team and did very well. The parents in the community were very involved in the school. They were very involved in the parents-teachers association. Also, in 1932 Julius Rosenwald, who died, left a large sum of money, that was used to construct the Rosenwald building here at the Willow Hill School. The Rosenwald building served as the main academic building until this current Willow Hill was built in 1954. Now, part of what was going on at that time was -- remember, in 1954 the Supreme Court decision *Brown v Board of Education* said that we should have integration in the public schools. Well, the schools of Bulloch County did not want to integrate at that time, and to appease the African American community they built several schools in Bulloch County, of which Willow Hill was one, to hold back [00:25:00] the tide of integration at that time. John Lawton was the principal when this current Willow Hill was built. Around 1946, when many citizens of the Willow Hill community was meeting in the old Rosenwald building to make plans to go to the poll to vote, the KKK burned a cross at this school, and we also have that picture, as well, in the exhibits. Garfield Hall, who was then chairman of the board of trustees, provided the leadership necessary to send many African Americans to the poll to vote, to vote, and they did vote. In 1896, with the *Plessy v Ferguson* decisions, which established the separate but equal doctrine, blacks in Bulloch County lost their right to vote, and would not vote again until 1946. The Klan were very upset, and they did not want African Americans in the Willow Hill community to vote. But our people have always organized. They've always been forerunners, and we did go to the polls and vote in 1946. In 1954, separate but equal learning facilities were ruled unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court. This reversed the 1896 *Plessy v Ferguson* decision. The new Willow Hill once again became an elementary school in 1954. However, in 1969,

the courts ordered the integration of the schools in Bulloch County, and at that time Willow Hill did close for two years, against the protests of many of the citizens in the community. Many of you sitting in the audience today who know those stories. But the school was again opened in 1971, and continues to operate after many years. Now let me tell you a little bit about some of the highlights of the history. James Hall, who is Garfield Hall's grandfather, was the first chairman of the board of trustees of Willow Hill School. George Jones, who is Cousin Thelma's father, was the second chairman of the board of trustees at Willow Hill. And Garfield Hall was the third. Other trustees included Willie (inaudible), Johnny Green, but these were the trustees who came at a later time. The earliest trustees were Andy Parish, Benjamin Donaldson, Moses Parish, Randall Hall, George Jones. In later years there was Johnny Green, Cleve Hall, Garfield Hall, Troy Pope, Willie (inaudible) and Homer Daughtry, and as well as Eldridge Cone. And I might also say a little bit about the Cohn family. There were four daughters who came through Willow Hill as students and who later taught at this institution. And I'm also proud to say that my little mom here, whose grandfather, Benjamin Donaldson, was on the board of trustees, and she later came to Willow Hill to taught. As we look on this stage today, several of the teachers here are descendants of those early people. Ms. Lee Bertha Wilson is a descendant of the earliest founders. Mrs. Smith, who comes through - her mother-in-law would be related to descendants of the early founding. Cousin Thelma. Mrs. Maxine Royal, God rest her soul, was the teacher who had the longest tenure at Willow Hill School, teaching longer than any others, come in here in 1945, retiring in 1985. And we must continue to tell this story. It is an important story. This exhibit that you see on the wall is part of a permanent exhibit in Columbus, Ohio about the Willow Hill School. In 1988, my daughter, Nkenge Jackson, won a national award in Washington, D.C., coming in first in the nation, on the history of the Willow Hill School. Since that time, this exhibit has been shown at many places. We are continuing to expand [00:30:00] this exhibit. We are continuing to write this story. Any of you who have photographs, who know anything about the school, please get in touch with me so that we can document this history for all of the people of Bulloch County, Georgia. Thank you very much. (applause)

(break in audio)

BUTLER: We want to thank Dr. Jackson for that wonderful history. Now that is a history, the history, some history. I don't believe there's anyone much better than that with the history. I'm so proud of you. Yes, I am. Now we are going to (inaudible).

(break in audio)

BUTLER: -- reflection, more reflection, for our deceased teachers. Our Mrs. (inaudible).

(break in audio)

F5: (inaudible) because of the time that we read coming to. We know this is part of life and death. I'm going to call out the deceased members, and we're going to ask that any member, family member of the deceased ones, when I call their name we're going to ask that you please stand, and that you remain standing 'til I'm completed. Mrs. Stevie Jay Moore. Mrs. Ruth Hall. Mrs. Johnnie Daughtry. Elaine inaudible. Laura Bell Martin. Maxine Royal. Mr. James Middleton. Mr. Woodrow Wilson. These are our deceased members. And I don't know what you learned from them, but as they went to and fro they taught us something. And the question I want to ask: what did you learn? I hope that teaching was not in vain. I don't know what they taught you, but to me they taught

me how to live. (inaudible). She taught me how to smile when things just didn't go my way. And I learned through her teaching knowledge and wisdom was surely paid. She taught me that. Ms. Ruth Hall. From her I learned how to work, and to be grateful for who I am, and I hope to be promoted when I take that final exam. She taught me that. Then there's Mary Elaine (inaudible). She taught me how to listen. And as I travel along the way and to avoid foolish questions as I go from day to day. She taught me that. Ms. Laura Bell Martin. You see, Ms. Laura Bell taught me to stop and pause as time go by, and to learn how to yield and turn when I hear a child crying. You know, she taught me that. Mr. James Nelson, Mr. Woodrow Wilson, I was taught what to say and who to say it to. They taught me how to aim high and [00:35:00] one day my dream will come true. You see, they taught me that. Johnnie M. Daughtry. You see, she was a proud lady. You had to act like a lady. You had to dress like a lady. You had to act like a man and dress like a man. For a while (inaudible) she taught me how to even wear my dress, (laughter) not too short and not too tight. And I learned to tell the young men, you know, to put their pants on right. (laughter) You see, she taught me that. She taught me how to tell the young ladies, "Whatsoever will be will be, and one day, somehow, somewhere, someway, you must reach up and pull down dignity." She taught me that. Mrs. Maxine Royal. You know, she taught me what to (inaudible), and I learned what to give. All this I have achieved from their learning, when they taught me how to live. Thank you. (applause)

F6: (inaudible). They taught us all our culture, living (inaudible) and how to live and how to get along (inaudible) love. You know, if you have love (inaudible) all kind of (inaudible) and if you don't have no love (inaudible). Plus you need to have love in your heart (inaudible). So these are the teachers that taught us this. I think all these teachers taught us how to live and how to get along in life. And we thank God for (inaudible). You know, sometimes (inaudible) life you don't leave anything behind, but they left something for us to go by. They was our role models. (inaudible) for that, (inaudible). (inaudible) my brother (inaudible), and I believe (inaudible). He's the one that taught me that. I got my name (inaudible). One thing (inaudible) if a tree falls and no one heard was it really silent. (laughter) I never (inaudible). Ms. Mills, I'll never forget her as long as I live. She always (inaudible) and I thank everyone for teaching me the things I related today, because you taught me way back when. I don't think I'd have been where I am today if it hadn't been for you all. (inaudible) everybody could teach children something. So nowadays (inaudible), so I thank you for that. (sings spiritual) [00:40:00] (applause)

(break in audio)

BUTLER: (inaudible) how much (inaudible). Now (inaudible).

M3: (inaudible) spirit (inaudible) today. When I said yes to this humongous task, I was sort of reluctant about doing this. I told Merceil, well, all these educators and little me with a high school education. I got to complaining like Moses did. But Merciel assured me you do the best you can, and you'll be all right. I'm here to introduce and to present to many... This man that I'm going to introduce and present to you, he was born in (inaudible), Georgia. Of course, he is an African American. His education status (inaudible) from Campbell Street High, from Daytona Beach, Florida, a BS degree in music, of education from Savannah State College, Savannah, Georgia, a BMA degree in music from North Central University, from Durham, North Carolina, an MA degree in guidance and consulting: Central University, Durham, North Carolina; this church

affiliation, a Presbyterian; (inaudible) Savannah State College in Savannah, Georgia; Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia; South Carolina State College, Orangeburg, South Carolina; North Carolina Central University, Durham, North Carolina; the University of Georgia, of Athens, Georgia; the University of Illinois in Champions, Illinois; the University of Iowa, [00:45:00] in Iowa City. Teaching experience: he taught at Williams James High School in Statesboro, Georgia; Lincolnton University, Lincolnton University; A&E Beach High School, Savannah, Georgia; S&C Johnson High in Savannah, Georgia; Scott Middle School in Sa-... (break in audio) - Region Eight Georgia's Teachers and Education Association. He founded the Statesboro/Bulloch County branch of the NAACP. His organization affiliations, a life member of several national organizations: National Education Association; America Course and Director Association; Music Educator of National (inaudible); (inaudible) Sapphire attorney fraternity; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Savannah State National Alumni Association; North Carolina Central University, National Alumni. Family life: he was married to the former Ms. Dorothy Williams. Childrens: one son, Levitt Fed Stevenson; one granddaughter, Lashonda Marquette Stevenson. Presently he is a retired teacher and a world traveler. His traveling experiences: he has made 21 tours, including the North Pole and the South Pole, 69 countries, and all seven continents of the world. And for all these accolades, for all these acknowledgements, the one thing I remember about Faran Stevenson: he would sit in front of class, and we was at kids used to shoot spitballs at one another, and I would hear him say today, "Child! Cleanliness is next to godliness!" Those words rang deep in my ear. (laughter) I present to you, and introduce to some of you, none other than brother Faran Stevenson. Would you give him a hand? (applause)

STEVENSON: Thank you for that introduction. I really appreciate it. And before I begin my speech, I just have to say a few things. First, I'd like to thank my wife (inaudible). (laughter and applause) (inaudible) from Africa in my speech, and first I just started (inaudible) wrote a speech, they tell me I (inaudible), so we have copies in case you'd like to get one before you leave. Also, I'll include in my speech information about reparation, and here's an address about reparation. My wife will deal with you in case you'd like the address on reparation. I also spoke about a month ago for a class reunion in Statesboro, and I didn't have much to speak, but after I got through everybody wanted a copy of the speech, and they asked me to make copies of the speech talking about the student from Africa, because she thought it was really important. They wanted to know. (inaudible) reparation. So I made a copy of that speech, and I have a few (inaudible) over here, and then I was at (inaudible) high school for 19 years. I went to (inaudible) that I have (inaudible) 19 years we had a clinical program, and we had an annual training program, and would you believe that I have copies from every one of those programs for 19 years. (laughter) [00:50:00] And I included (inaudible) the history black, and I'm here for this history, because I wrote the history of the William James high school choir for the 19 years I was there, and I have all of the programs, and every time I had a program all of the students who participated and sang their names appeared on the program, and all of them are in this history for 19 years, history of (inaudible) gospel choir. We have a few (inaudible) that I wrote (inaudible). I guess if you don't -- if you are not in the choir, you might know someone who was in the choir (inaudible). But (inaudible) before I started so (inaudible). And I would like to thank you very much for inviting me to speak

to you. It's always good to be back in Statesboro and Bulloch County, Georgia. This is home (inaudible). You know, I spent the best years of my life in Statesboro. I was young when I (inaudible). (laughter) Best years of my life were spent here in Statesboro. So it's always good to be back home. I would like to commend you for this program. This program is very, very important, and it's so important (inaudible) phrase I'd like you to repeat after me, and the phrase is this: you can only receive what you are aware of. Say it.

ALL: You can only receive what you are aware of.

STEVENSON: Now, that's what we need to really -- we need to get that in our minds, because we must know our history. If you don't know where you came from, you won't have an idea of where you are going. And we think that everything is OK, but it wasn't always OK, and to a certain extent it still isn't OK right now. But the young people should know how we got to where we are, and that's what this program is doing, and I commend you for this program. We must write our history, because if we don't write it, nobody else will. We were deprived for so many years of our history. It wasn't written. We were deprived educationally, culturally, religiously. But now we're at the point that we don't have an excuse. What's our excuse now? So I'm glad to see this display over here. Write your history. Tell your children. Tell your grandchildren. And tell me the history here for the children that are yet unborn to read. It is very important that we do this. Dr. Mary McCarthy (inaudible) one time, "I wonder why white people have so much and we have so little." I wonder about the same thing. That's a good question. (laughter) Why do they have so much and we have so little? I've started thinking about that, and I know that we came from Africa, our mother country. So I set out to try to find out some answers, said I would like to go back to our motherland, find out what's there. Where did we come from? What were our ancestors like? So as a result I have made five tours to the continent of Africa. The first tour was northeast Africa, which included Egypt. I was expecting to see people that look like we look, but I was surprised. The people do not look like we look in the Egypt area. They have brown, smooth skin with long, black hair. The second trip was northwest Africa, which included Morocco. I was, again, expecting to see people who look like we look, but again I was disappointed. The people in North Africa, the Morocco area, do not look like we look. They are the brown, smooth skin with the long, black hair. They said, "If you want to see the people who look like you look and where you came from, you go to West Africa." And then I finally took a tour to West Africa, that included Abuja, Cote D'Ivoire, (inaudible), and the (inaudible) synagogue, and there I found my people looking just like we look. (laughter) I said, "My goodness, that person looks like my brother. (laughter) That person -- that looks like my sister. That person, that looks like my aunt." My goodness, they were all there, people who look just like we look in West Africa. I was so much (inaudible) I decided on taking another tour. I went from there to Ghana and to Gambia, and there again were people just like we look, in West Africa. My last tour, which was just about a [00:55:00] couple of months ago, was in Cameroon and Freetown, Sierra Leone. It was in West Africa, and again, they looked just like we look. And one good thing about Freetown, Sierra Leone: the people there speak English, so I was very much at home. I could communicate. Any others I had to have a private translator. I had to have a private guide. I had to have a private chauffeur. But in Freetown, Sierra Leone they spoke English, so I could communicate, and I asked 101 questions. (laughter) I recorded what

they said. I recorded the music. And then the questions came to me. But let me tell you what the situation is. There in West Africa, it is very, very sad. The people in Africa are very, very sad. I read it in books and magazines and newspapers. I had seen it on television. I had seen it in radio. I had heard it on the radio. But then I went there and saw it for myself. Some of them don't know what a television looks like. Some of them don't know what a VCR looks like. Some have never seen a movie. They don't know what a mall looks like. They don't know what escalators look like. Everything there is so depressing, until the whole situation is very, very sad. And I said, why is it this way? What is the reason? Why is it these people are in this condition? And then I found out. I went to a convention in Chicago, Illinois, and the title of the convention was Reparation. Pronounce that word, please.

ALL: Reparation.

STEVENSON: Reparation again.

ALL: Reparation.

STEVENSON: What is reparation? It means paying back what you have stolen. Paying back what you took. Making amends for what you have done wrong. A person steals something and he goes to God and says, "Oh Lord, please forgive me," but he didn't return it. Is the Lord going to forgive him before he returns it? No. If you want forgiveness, you must return it first, and then you will get forgiveness. They have not returned it. So when I walked in this hall in Chicago for this reparation convention, I started looking around -- that's the way I do, looking around. I can learn a lot from the walls, from posters, from plaques on the wall, from citations. And I looked on the wall, and there it was: "Stolen from Africa, millions of dollars, millions of people." And from this plaque, it would tell of countries who stole it, particularly the United States of America. It tells what was stolen, and if you were to total it up, they said the amount would come in excess of \$4 trillion. And then it said, well, for \$4 trillion, how much would I get? They said, if they were to figure it up, each black person in America today would get over \$99,000. All right? But what happened is we say, "Well, they brought us over here in slavery. In addition to this, they brought us over here in slavery and they worked us for 246 years, and then they freed us." They said they freed us, but then they promised us 40 acres and a mule, and have you gotten yours yet? (laughter) Anybody here got 40 acres and a mule? I haven't gotten my 40 acres, nor a mule! But I still plan to get it! I still want to collect! They brought us over here to work, and worked us and worked us, work us like cattle, like oxen. And I was thinking about that. I said, you know what? They did us worse than oxen, because when you work an ox all day long and just beat him and work him (inaudible) beat him all day long, after, when it becomes night you let the oxen go in the stable, and he rests. But (inaudible) work for them all day long, they didn't let us go and rest. They brought all our women in and used our women for their sexual pleasure. It's really sad. It's really sad. (inaudible). (laughter) Over? No, it's not over! Unh-uh, it's not over. (inaudible) was passed. Then they said, "All right, everything is hunky dory. We shall now live happily ever after." Happily ever after? And someone -- [01:00:00] one person over here living in a project house, another person over on the hill living in a mansion? One black person over here has a few acres of land, (inaudible), and another man over there got a big plantation with acres and acres and acres of land? How he get so much? Well, they said, "Well, look, you can't blame the white man for that now, because they're not the ones who did it." All

right, let's see about that. If you steal something and give it to the person right beside you, which one of you is guilty? Come on.

ALL: Both.

STEVENSON: Both of you. All right. Let's just take another scenario. If you steal something from somebody, and before you die you done will it to your children, now who is guilty? (various responses from audience; inaudible)

STEVENSON: Both, the ones who stole it and the ones who is now in possession of it. In other words, they're in possession of stolen property, of stolen goods. They brought millions of people over here. While I was in Africa, I went to three different slave castles -- they call them slave castles -- and they take you through these castles and showed you how they treated these people, and how the men were over here, just slapped in like sardines, couldn't move. They showed you how the women were over here, just stacked so close together until they couldn't even go to the bathroom. They showed you how (inaudible) bring them in, and then they would take you on an island -- and (inaudible) synagogue, there was an island called Mori Island. And they said this island was the island of no return. Once you got to this island, you were not going back. You were going to the United States to work as a slave. And in this island, they infested it with alligators all around the whole island, and even if you tried to escape, the alligators would get you before you got back to the shore. Mori Island, the island of no return. All these black people just crowded on these ships and crowded on these ships, just like sardines in a can, and brought back here to work for nothing. But you shouldn't mention that now, that's not done. Yeah, but I haven't been paid! (laughter) I'll be done when I get paid. So they say reparations. This is a highly... The organizations that work for this are represented in Congress, Representative John Congress from Michigan is working on reparation now, and there are organizations working. So I brought information over here for you to see in case you want to write to get some more information on reparation, to find out what is being done about this situation. Are we satisfied? Should we be satisfied? Should our children know what has happened? Should we tell them what has happened? We can only receive what we are aware of, and if we are not aware of it we will not receive it. They brought us over here, and we worked, and we worked, and we worked. Then after 200 years they said, "Now we're going to pass the Civil Rights Bill." And during all this time there was segregation and discrimination, and they just treated us any kind of way. And (inaudible). You can have all this wherever (inaudible) Jesus. (laughter) You may have all this -- (inaudible) Jesus, but they're not going to let me have all this world. I own Jesus, but I am not going to give them all this world, and they are not going to have it all. I'm going to have some of it. (laughter) So it's... The story goes about this fellow who wanted some gas and went up to a white gas station and said, "I want some gas, mister." Looked at him and said, "We don't serve niggers here." Man said, "I want some gas!" "Look, I told you we don't serve niggers here." Man said the second time -- stood right there, tall -- "I want some gas." Man said to his wife, "Susie, go ahead and bring me that shotgun." Susie went in and got the shotgun, gave it to him, and he (inaudible) and get one of those apples and throw it up in the air. Susie got -- reached down there and got an apple and threw it up in the air, and he aimed -- bap! bap-bap-bap-bap-bap! -- shot that apple in the sky before it hit the ground. And the black man said, "Susan, get another one of those apples." (laughter) Susie got another one of those apples. "Now Susie, throw it up in the air." And he reached in his pocket and pulled out

a switchblade knife, mashed a button, and the blade came out this long, glimmering in the sun. He said, [01:05:00] "Throw that apple up, Susie." Susie threw that apple up, and by the time within his arm reach he did something like this. (laughter) And when he got through that apple was only rind and so many small pieces you could make applesauce out of it. (laughter) That white man looked down there at that apple and looked at that black man, whose knife glimmering in the sun, and said, "What kind do you want, (inaudible) or regular?" (laughter) So we're going to take it. We have to focus on our history. We have to write our history. We have to tell our children, tell them to tell their children, tell them to tell their children's children, and then write the history, so that we here for our children that are yet unborn to read. And when it's time for us to get paid... I thought about the story that Colonel told about this man who bought a brand new car. Bought a brand new car, and he was so rejoiced, and so glad of this new car, until he drove up to the gas station and told the man, "Fill it up!" The man filled his car, brand new car. He got in it, drove, drove, and he went to the bar, (inaudible). Sat down at the counter. Said, "Man, you see a glass there? I want you to fill it up." Man filled up his glass. He started drinking, having a good time. After a while it was empty. (inaudible) the man said, "Fill it up," a second time, (laughter) and filled it up the second time. He drank and laughed and had a good time, rejoicing with his friends (inaudible). After it got empty he slid it, and he couldn't slide it as fast that time. He slid it as much as he could, and he said, "Fill it up." (laughter) The man filled it up again. He sat there and drank, and he drank, and he drank. After he got through, he got in his brand new car and started driving, but he didn't make it. The next thing he showed, they had lowered his body down in the cemetery. There was a man on one side with a shovel, a man on another side with a shovel, and they said to each other, "Fill it up." (laughter) So when I think about reparation and all the people, all they owe us, I'm gonna go home and get the biggest suitcase I can find and go to the bank. I'm gonna open the suitcase. I'm gonna say to the banker, "Fill it up." (laughter) And when they start putting money in there and filling it up and filling it up, after it's full I'm going to say, "Put some more in it." They say, "Mr. Stevenson, it's already full." "That's all right, put some more in there anyway." It's about time somebody said something about this. It's about time we focus on our history. In 1965, they passed a Civil Rights Bill. Go ahead and pass that bill, and put it the same place where you have laid all the other bills. Go ahead, pass that bill, and put it where all the other bills have been laid. But you must remember, the black man has not been paid. Later on, they passed the housing bill. Go ahead and pass the housing bill. Put it in the same place where all the other bills have been laid, but don't you forget: the black man has not been paid. Later on they went on and passed some other bills, bills after bills. Go ahead and pass your bills and put them in the same place that other bills have been laid, but don't you forget, white man, the black man has not been paid, and we will not be satisfied until we are paid. When we came over here they decided -- after (inaudible) they would give us what you call alternative action to help us out, to help us get on our feet, and now they're (inaudible) about that. Know what I have to say about that? Go ahead. Take your affirmative action, but just pay what you owe me and I won't need your affirmative action. Then they gave us welfare. Now they're talking about taking that away. So go on and take your welfare. I won't need your welfare if you pay me what I need. Pay me what you owe me and then I won't need your welfare. (applause) Pay me! On the sheet Mrs. Smith just sent me, it said something about

[01:10:00] the rising sun, and I looked at it and I said, "I know (inaudible)." The famous pen of James William Johnson, who said, "Lift every voice and sing, 'til Earth and heaven ring, ring with the harmonies of liberty. Let our rejoicing rise high as the listening skies. Let it resound, loud as the rolling sea. Sing a song, full of the faith that the dark past has taught us. Sing a song, full of the hope that the present has brought us. Facing the rising sun," and then on the next page he said, "We are the rising sun," and I like that. On one page you said, "The rising sun," on the next page said, "We are the rising sun." Facing the rising sun of our new day begun, let us sing on. Let us pray on. Let us fight on. Let us march on, until victory is won." (applause)

Wilose Jackson: Wonderful! Wonderful!

(chatter around room; inaudible)

(break in audio)

Butler: I'd like to thank Mr. Stevenson. I knew he had all the answers. And I figured something: we better try to heal. It's time now that we heal. You know what I'm saying? And you see it in there, back where he started from. But you want to go back? Let's rise with the rising sun. We thank him very much. Presentation and commemoration, we'll hear from Mr. (inaudible).

M4: Thank you, Ms. Butler, and good evening to all of you. I'm delighted to be here, and let me say thanks for inviting me to be a part of this program. Last Sunday, Ms. Mincey asked if I would be willing to be a part of this program, and I'm delighted now that I said I was delighted to be a part of this program. I want to say thanks to Dr. Alvin Jackson, who brought me up to date on the history of Willow Hill, and I've been living in Bulloch County for about 25 years now. I knew some of the things that went on in Bulloch County and in Portal and in this community. I did not know all of those things that went on. I'm delighted to be here at Willow Hill School with all of the residents who live in this locale. Again, I'm delighted to be a part of this program. The purpose for me being here today is to make the presentations from the community group, the Rising Sun community group of this locale, and I was sitting there thinking two groups today need recognition: the honorees who are sitting here on the stage this afternoon, and the community group who thought worthy enough to recognize these groups of individuals. (applause) From the Bulloch County Board of Commissioners and from my brother there, Anthony Simmons, who joins me in this honor that you are receiving this afternoon, and the other members of Bulloch County Board of Commissioners, Raymond Anderson as chairman. As a coincidence, all during the week we decided to give some other type of recognition from Bulloch County government and the recognition that I have is a certificate from Bulloch County government, and I will read one of those and one of the presentations from this book. [01:15:00] I have been asked to make these presentations, and to the... I have been asked to make these presentations, and those who are being honored are asked to give a brief response. And I know all of you are sitting there wondering how long each of their responses will be, but I'd like to ask your patience so that they can respond to the certificates being presented. Mrs. Mincey has asked that I make as the first presentation an appreciation award being presented to Mr. Trayvon Stevens for being the speaker for this program today, receiving the Portal (inaudible) Award (inaudible), Mr. Trayvon Stevens. (applause) The city of Portal Willow Hill Awards Committee (inaudible) Ms. Agnes A. Young has devoted many hours of valuable service to Willow Hill School and the surrounding communities in Atlanta, described as a

labor of love where Ms. Agnes Young has diligently volunteered unselfishly, rendered service, tax, and (inaudible) for the furtherance of the education process without remuneration, and in no other way compensated for time and energy, whereas Ms. Agnes Young has, in her tireless efforts, made it possible for the Willow Hill School and surrounding communities to experience a higher level of education (inaudible) and a better quality of life (inaudible) citizens of these communities. And whereas the surrounding communities of Willow Hill have indeed been fortunate and blessed by God by having such a dedicated individual as Ms. Agnes Jones, now therefore (inaudible) Willow Hill Awards Committee of Portal, Georgia do hereby issue this commendations to Ms. Agnes Young and the City of Portal, this first day of September, 1996. I have also an award that I'd like to read one of these also, and lets -- let me read this. It's from the State of Georgia, County of Bulloch, (inaudible) County, Ms. Agnes Young (inaudible) prudence, integrity, and ability, I do by virtue of the common authority in me vested as Sheriff of Bulloch County hereby commission you as an Honorary Deputy Sheriff of Bulloch County. I know (inaudible) earlier during the time whenever those (inaudible) Ms. Agnes A. Young. (applause)

AGNES YOUNG: I must say that I am extremely happy about this. When I first started to think about what was being done up here, I couldn't hold it to myself. I just went around telling everybody that I met in the Willow Hill community. I certainly would like to say that I got my start here. My first year teaching was in this little building under John Lawton, and at the end of the first month of school, I got my first check, which was just \$192, I thought I was really blessed. I'd like to say to all of you who are my family up here that I appreciate this, [01:20:00] and it certainly has put joy in my heart. Thank you. (applause)

M4: (inaudible) Bertha L. Wilson. (applause)

BERTHA WILSON: Well, I feel at home. (laughter) Being in this school for 30 years, and see all the faces of the girls and boys I've met and I taught, they are my family too?. And my fine children, I'm blessed to have them all here today to be a part of me. They have supported me so much, and they got their education (inaudible). And I don't feel ashamed of them where they are, out in the field, doing the way I taught them, and also I feel like (inaudible) from my home (inaudible) school (inaudible). (applause)

M4: Mrs. Constance M. Jones. (applause)

CONSTANCE JONES: A wise man said, "You will not deserve happiness unless you give happiness to others." And this meeting this afternoon has certainly given happiness to all of us. I want to thank (inaudible) since I started out, but I started here, not in this building, in the old building, so you know -- some of you probably weren't born yet. (laughter) But (inaudible) shaking their head. But it has been a long time. And I have grown to love these folks and this community. (inaudible) I taught some of them, and the McRaes and all of them, and I loved every minute of it. Of course, I was not here very long, but it helped me to go into a field that I had not anticipated, because it was not my desired field. But after having had been here for several months, I thought that I would go back and get training (inaudible) education, and I am, indeed, proud, and I'm happy (inaudible) of all of the persons whose lives I touched are here. And I'm, indeed, grateful for being honored today. Thank you. (applause)

M4: Mes. Thelma Craig. (applause)

THELMA CRAIG: I'm happy to be here, because at his request, Jackson said, I (inaudible) all of it. I'm growing older now, and I need y'all to pray for me that I may keep on going. Thank you. (applause)

M4: Cousin Betty Holmes. (applause)

BETTY HOLMES: I never (inaudible), but appreciate (inaudible) another person, and (inaudible) overwhelming. (applause)

M4: Mrs. Hazel Allen. (applause)

HAZEL ALLEN: My hat goes off to Mrs. Mincey and all of her workers for doing such an outstanding job. You know, teachers lay the foundation for every occupation. Whatever the occupation is, you had to go through a teacher. She was the first foundation. And you don't see too many people that treat teachers like they should be treated. We are overworked and we are underpaid. And I see some of the children that I taught [01:25:00] -- this is my third teaching year here under John Lawton. And my next principal was Mr. Abraham, and Mr. Abraham -- on Sunday afternoons (inaudible), and I had to see you in the morning. (laughter) And he was just (inaudible) bulletin board. He (inaudible). And I am just so proud of my son, Dr. Jackson, and so proud to be (inaudible) of the people (inaudible) who gave land and money to Willow Hill School. Ms. Mincey, I thank your committee and you. Thank you for a job well done. (applause)

M4: (inaudible). Mrs. Sarah Lee. (applause)

SARAH LEE: I can truly say, (inaudible), I have been here since day one. I was here -- my first teacher was Ms. Ruth Hall. And my principal, my last principal in the school was Mr. Abraham, and Mr. Wilson. And I certainly appreciate the Award Committee for honoring the past teachers today. It certainly has uplifted me. I'm sure it has uplifted the teachers who are still around this table. Again, I say thank you award, (inaudible) celebration. Thank you. (applause)

M4: Mrs. Roberta Commons. (applause) Mrs. Roberta Commons.

ROBERTA COMMONS: Good evening. I stand here today as a colored of Willow Hill community. I am Willow Hill (inaudible), because, you see, I know about (inaudible), because I (inaudible). And he was here (inaudible) all this time. He had (inaudible) over there, (inaudible) right here on. So I have lived the life here at Willow Hill community, and I know what it's all about. Since finishing Willow Hill, I have gone to other parts of the world, (inaudible). (laughter) I have had the opportunity to look back, to visit, and come back. And I haven't found a place (inaudible). People who have such strong wills to (inaudible) and to be taught. And I am proud to teach (inaudible). I want to thank the committee. I want to tell you, (inaudible). (inaudible) getting up to some. I said, "Mercy, what is this all about? Tell me! Is that (inaudible)? We can't just be honoring ourselves for nothing, you know, just the teachers." You know why? Teachers (inaudible) and the hardest working people in this world, and that's (inaudible). So I was thinking that, look, we must have to do something, you know, maybe make a cake or something. She said, "Just come on." Thank you for being such wonderful (inaudible), [01:30:00] because you know not what you have done to the parts of me that have worked tirelessly (inaudible). And I speak for them today, those that cannot speak. I had the best teachers here at Willow Hill that laid the foundation for my future life than any other place in the world. I am proud to call this place my home. Thank you very much, and may God bless you. (applause)

END OF AUDIO FILE