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Oral History Interview of Dr. Mark Harvey

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Interview Summary

Dr. Mark Harvey, co-founder of the Jazz Coalition Magnet Arts Desegregation Program, reflects on his experiences working with Boston-area children before and after the 1974 Garrity decision, which required some students to be bused between Boston neighborhoods with the intention of creating racial balance in the public schools. He discusses the social climate in Boston during that time period; the importance of integration in both schools and communities; and the role of jazz music in bringing together people of different racial backgrounds.

Subject Headings

Boston (Mass.)

Busing for school integration

Harvey, Mark

Jazz Coalition

Morgan v. Hennigan (379 F. Supp. 410)

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This interview took place on March 3, 2005, in the John Joseph Moakley Law Library at Suffolk University Law School.

Interview Transcript

ANAMARIA HIDALGO: Okay, today is March 3, 2005. My name is AnaMaria Hidalgo and I have the pleasure of interviewing Dr. Mark Harvey from the Jazz Coalition Magnet Arts Desegregation Program. Dr. Harvey, thank you for coming here and letting me interview you.

DR. MARK HARVEY: Thank you for the invitation.

HIDALGO: So, why don't we start a little bit—telling me about your background.

HARVEY: Okay, I was born in upstate New York in a town called Binghamton, New York.

HIDALGO: Okay.

HARVEY: I grew up there, went to Syracuse University for my undergrad. Came here to Boston for graduate school. I'm also a minister, so I went to the Boston University School of Theology where I got my divinity degree, and then I stayed on for a PhD in Social Ethics. And, let's see, I'm also a musician, a professional jazz musician. I'm a composer and a band leader. I have a group called the Aardvark Jazz Orchestra. And I also teach at MIT [words redacted by narrator].

HIDALGO: Yup.

HARVEY: I teach jazz over there which always seems odd, but we have a music program with jazz. So I like to think that what I do is all related, all integrated. That's a little bit about my personal background. Is that enough? Would you like me to say more?

HIDALGO: Whatever you feel comfortable with.

HARVEY: I want to say a little bit about the Jazz Coalition and why that came about.

HIDALGO: Sure.

HARVEY: In the time period of the late sixties, early seventies, it was a very [fluid time]; a lot of things in the air. A lot of movement towards social change. Trying to make progressive politics, progressive cultural ideas a reality. So I was studying that in my program in social ethics, which is a program all about how you interrelate religious impulses for social change with action—social action in the wider community.

HIDALGO: Okay.

HARVEY: Being a musician, I happened to decide that the best way to do that was something that involved the arts in the larger sense. So the Jazz Coalition was formed loosely in 1970. It was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1971. It sort of had its heyday up until 1983. Or at least my heyday. I—we had all gotten burned out as often happened with people in the activist world in those days. It continued for a little bit but I ended my association. I had some other things going on. In any case we did things like try to make conditions better for musicians in town. We provided performance options, tried to increase funding for payment of that. We quickly found that doing big ticket events would gain attraction. So we used to do an all-night jazz concert.

HIDALGO: Nice.

HARVEY: [This] probably would have been impossible these days, but back then we didn't know any better, so we did it. We did about ten years of those. Then we decided we would put a big citywide festival on called Boston Jazz Week. The first year on a shoestring we had one hundred different events in a week's time; we repeated that the next year. [The] first year was '73, the second year was '74. In the second year one of our leading members, Arni Cheatham, who I hope you'll be able to interview at some point if you get the chance, had been interested in education. So we did a lot of community outreach as part of that. We would have big ticket

concerts in the Back Bay and downtown, and then we would try to go out to some of the neighborhoods. Quick side note—I and a number of people in our group had worked for Summerthing. I don't know if you've ever heard of this.

HIDALGO: No.

HARVEY: This was a program in the late 1960s early seventies in Boston. The mayor was Kevin White and very much on the model of what Mayor Lindsay had done in New York City, using the arts to try to help with a lot of problems that were going on in the social scene. So Summerthing was a summertime arts program where people would perform, do crafts all over the city of Boston. I and a couple of people in our group had already been exposed to literally the entire city of Boston. So here I am, I'm coming from upstate New York, I don't know much about it and within about two summers I got a real dose of reality about what was going on, what the differences in the neighborhoods were, differences of reception from different places, as well as driving the expressway.

HIDALGO: That's always fun, even now. (laughs)

HARVEY: Exactly. So that was sort of the background behind a lot of stuff we did in the Coalition. We just thought, Well this is a way—this is how you operate. You operate in the whole city; you don't do it just downtown, you do it all over the place. So Arni Cheatham began to think of these educational things and do little workshops.

When the desegregation decision came down there was established this program called the Magnet Desegregation Arts Program. There were magnet desegregation programs and then there was a sub-class of arts, and what this meant was, the magnet was, how do you bring people together, can you do it in a way that is interesting, engaging, that's non-threatening? So particularly around the arts that's something a lot of people can get together with. It doesn't matter if you're black, white, whatever, you can come together with this.

HIDALGO: Right.

HARVEY: So building on Arni's earlier plans—he was really the architect of all this and I was a key collaborator because I was the president of the Coalition. Our group was the big support structure behind him and you have to understand we were basically a bunch of rag-tag rebels, sort of like when you read about the Revolutionary War. These guys were not sitting down in a board room. They're meeting in a tavern, they're meeting—we were meeting in people's houses, in a church where I had my office, whatever it was.

HIDALGO: And how many of you are—

HARVEY: Probably about fifteen on the board and on the working steering committee, and we had a membership of maybe a hundred at any one point, from which we drew a lot—it was all volunteer help; we drew a lot of volunteers. So when the deseg decision[1] came down they put out calls for proposals to do things. So we put ours in and we received funding and we were one of about a dozen—I've got some [things] here that actually I'll give to you if you'd like to have this as back up. (hands over paperwork) [attachment A]

HIDALGO: Yup, that'll be great, thank you.

HARVEY: One of the—what we felt, and I think other people realized once we got into it, one of the nice things—it's more than nice, it's one of the solemn things about jazz is that jazz is obviously an African-American music, but it's a music within which many people have come together: White, Portuguese, Spanish, whatever it is, Japanese these days. Go around the world. It's a world music and has been for a long time. So we thought this would be a perfect program, not to mention the fact that Arni's black, I'm white and were great friends. We play together. We were associated with the Coalition so it was a perfect vehicle. We team taught a lot of the

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[1] This refers to the June 21, 1974, opinion filed by Judge W. Arthur Garrity in the case of *Tallulah Morgan et al. v. James Hennigan et al.* (379 F. Supp. 410). This opinion is commonly referred to as the Garrity decision. Judge Garrity ruled that the Boston School Committee had "intentionally brought about and maintained racial segregation" in the Boston Public Schools. When the school committee did not submit a workable desegregation plan as the opinion had required, the court established a plan that called for some students to be bused from their own neighborhoods to attend schools in other neighborhoods, with the goal of creating racial balance in the Boston Public Schools. (See http://www.lib.umb.edu/archives/garrity2.html)

early courses. And so this is sort of how it all came about and what the context is. Now would you like me to go on a little bit more about this?

HIDALGO: Yes, please.

HARVEY: Okay.

HIDALGO: Take me to before the Garrity decision. What was the atmosphere like, what problems if any did you guys encounter before the decision actually came down?

HARVEY: Vis-à-vis the schools?

HIDALGO: Yup.

HARVEY: We had not really established this, what we called JazzEd. We had not really established that as a formal program. We really didn't have a big problem, however during the Summerthing experience, I had done some—had become the assistant coordinator—music coordinator of that program, and it was very tough just to get to talk to the public school music people. They just seem to have their own way of doing things, their own worldview. I'm not sure it even was anything about jazz. Sometimes people have attitudes about jazz being maybe not quite as good as classical music or something. I don't think it was even that. It was just the way the bureaucracy was set up at that point. So basically in the Summerthing experience we would go a certain amount and then we'd just say, Hey, I'm not going to knock my head against the wall; we'll just do our own thing. That was in terms of the formal way we knew things; that was what was happening.

I have to say that because of the Summerthing experience, because of the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs which sponsored that, we had a very good perception of how at least the arts were welcomed in the city. And another part of Summerthing [was that] each of the fifteen neighborhoods had their own neighborhood coordinator. So when we would go to perform there

you got to know the coordinator. There were always community people from wherever it was on hand to help smooth things over or what ever it was, what you might encounter.

Maybe I was naïve but I had this notion that, Oh, well, this is a nice city. There are some problems and I have to say the places we encountered the most problems were where they encountered problems with the whole deseg and busing: South Boston, Charlestown, and East Boston. The band that I had at that point was an eight-piece band. We had one black guy, one Filipino guy, the rest of us were hippies. We were made to feel very unwelcome in those three communities. And in fact, in South Boston the only place they could put us for our own safety was in nursing homes.

HIDALGO: Wow.

HARVEY: Every place else we would play on a street corner. Any of the black neighborhoods, Roxbury, Dorchester, it didn't matter, we were welcomed warmly. People got into what we were doing. Not a problem. When we went to these other places sometimes rocks and bottles would come across the stage. And as I say, when you're put into a nursing home you know that you're hitting a nerve someplace.

HIDALGO: Why do you think you guys weren't welcomed?

HARVEY: Because we had a mixed band for one thing—mixed racially. Those of us who were—had long hair, that was not something that those neighborhoods went for in a big way typically. I'm not saying the whole neighborhood was against that but in a larger general sense. And jazz is an often misunderstood music. And so it just wasn't what a lot of these people probably wanted, so it was probably both on [the] musical and on social and cultural factors.

HIDALGO: The resistance you found from the music department, let's say at the schools, do you think it was more of a political background or was it that the teachers just didn't want to get too involved?

HARVEY: We never got to the teachers. We were only dealing with the superintendent's office.

HIDALGO: Oh, okay.

HARVEY: That's why I say I think it was totally a bureaucratic situation. And the reason I say that is because a few years later a friend of mine happened to be teaching in the schools and he was able to make some inroads and then gradually a couple of other instructors, African-American instructors as it happens, got hired and they were able to make some inroads. Same superintendent. So I have to feel that it was a gradual wearing him down or something. The time that we did it—it just wasn't the [right time]. I put that down to just the bureaucratic situation.

HIDALGO: So before the Garrity decision where was the Jazz Coalition? What was it that you guys were doing within that year, let's say?

HARVEY: We were doing—as I mentioned, we had done an all-night jazz concert. We had done two Boston Jazz Weeks that year and the year before. We were increasingly trying to network with community places, just on our own impulses, just to bring jazz to a wider audience and to provide employment for musicians and because we all had this understanding that the more you do that, you're not just creating audiences for jazz, you're bringing people together around it.

HIDALGO: Okay.

HARVEY: So we already had that sort of consciousness going before the Garrity decision.

HIDALGO: So now the Garrity decision happens. When did you first find out about it?

HARVEY: Well, I personally found out about it just in general flow of the news cycle and watching things. I was very tuned into this and wanted to be—I was reading the papers daily and keeping on top [of things]. So I heard of it in that particular forum.

And the other thing I want to interject here was that there was a very famous early case to try to go for integration. This was the famous Roberts case back in 1849.[2] It happens that Charles Sumner, who was one of the litigants along with Robert Morris[3]—Charles Sumner later became the United States senator for Massachusetts—is an ancestor of mine. And so—in fact, it's my middle name. So it wasn't as if that was a big part of my activism but I knew that that was part of my family history and so knowing that he had been a part of the first legal team to challenge the whole racist structure, segregated structure just helped me give a little more impetus to what I was doing. So I was very pleased when these calls for proposals came around, to think that our organization these many years later could maybe do something and that I personally could maybe do something to sort of follow in those footsteps.

HIDALGO: So you guys get invited to do the proposals. You send out the proposal. When do you get notified that your coalition is going to be a coalition that they're going to accept?

HARVEY: It was a very fast turn around. I have the documentation; let me just take a quick look at this—because everything—right—they sent out our approval letter on March fifth of 1975, and we began our program in April. [appendix B]

HIDALGO: That's fast.

HARVEY: So it's one of those things that everything was hurried up. The same way Garrity himself had to hurry up his first stage of his plan to make it work. Fortunately we had been thinking about this and we had a plan and we knew what we were doing and basically we were

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[2] The "Roberts Case" refers to *Sarah C. Roberts v. The City of Boston* (59 Mass. 198 [5 Cush.]), an 1848 case in the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court in which Benjamin Roberts, an African American, brought suit against the City of Boston on behalf of his five-year daughter Sarah, who was required to enroll in an all-black public elementary school.

[3] Robert Morris (1823-1882), an African American, was a prominent attorney in Boston who represented Sarah Roberts

improvisers. So we were going to be able to pull this off no matter what. But it was a very quick turnaround, and I've reviewed some of our internal documents in preparation for this and it was very interesting. One of the evaluators, I don't know if it was a parent or teacher or somebody evaluating, mentioned something about, "Well, it's the end of the school year." But what we had found out was that normally you think the kids might not be receptive to something new, but in fact they seem to be particularly receptive. Maybe just because it was at the end of the year and they were tired of reading, writing, arithmetic and they really wanted to do something with music. I don't know. But we had a very good initial run of this.

HIDALGO: Okay, and what was it that you proposal consisted of?

HARVEY: Our proposal was what we called, "The Story and Sound of Jazz," and we proposed eight weeks, one meeting a week. And part of the notion of these magnet ideas was also to be literally a magnet, to attract people, to draw them together at a neutral site. Not to go to a school and then try to bring other students into a school that they may not have known, because there were so many boundary and other issues. And the ideal thing here was—what they wanted to do was to take—pair schools, typically one that was majority white and one that was majority black and bring them together in a neutral site to try something through the arts that would enable the different groups to start understanding each other. Just a very first step at breaking down some of the problems and the barriers.

Our neutral site was the Church of the Covenant, which is in the Back Bay on the corner of Berkeley and Newbury Street. I was working with them at the time. I was also working part-time at a suburban school which was almost entirely white out in Acton, Massachusetts, called the McCarthy Towne School. So they made some provision where you could use some suburban/urban pairings as well within the city of Boston per se, so we used the Acton school as the majority white school and we went to the Martin Luther King Middle School in Roxbury as the predominantly black school.

And what we did was—of course busing was the name of the game, so each group took their own buses into this neutral site and then were able to have their encounters through a learning

experience for eight weeks in a row, where they could, you know, begin, as I say, begin to get to know each other. And the program consisted of things like making music in a very sort of low key way, clapping together, that kind of thing, gradually progressing to actually making up little compositions. Arni had a great idea of taking your name and putting a note to each letter of your name. Even if it got into z you could figure out a note, and then the kids could right away with their name make a composition. He could play it and we could do other things. We had other musicians—

HIDALGO: Nice.

HARVEY: —where they did all this kind of thing. So it really got to them right away. And it was designed to be hands-on, participatory, none of this, "I'm going to lecture you and you're going to figure it out." No, it was—make it a nice interrelation. Then we would show—we showed a movie on Louis Armstrong. We would show slides of and talk about people like Charlie Parker and Duke Ellington. So here right away you have black and white kids, many of whom have never heard of jazz, and they're getting black role models being presented. They're getting a whole slice of their American history told from a different perspective. The whole effect was to break down barriers on a lot of different levels as well as make this positive experience based around music. Arni also had the really wonderful idea to say, "You don't necessarily have to play music to be in the music world." So we took them to a recording studio to show them that might be a career possibility.

HIDALGO: Okay.

HARVEY: You know, you plant the seeds for a fifth and sixth grader. But you never know. [We] took them to a radio station, WBUR, which at the time was a big jazz station. We had a lot of friends up there. We had a lot of contacts over there, so we just called in a lot of our cards. And so the kids got to see what a radio thing was all about. And, you know, say two words over the air. At the recording studio they got to test out a microphone or whatever it was.

And then there were a couple times that we actually were able to take them to performances because we had some outdoor performances being programmed in the springtime. And then the final thing was that we were going to do another Boston Jazz Week in the spring in 1975, but for various reasons that didn't work out. So at that time I had an eighteen piece band, a jazz big band. And Arni was [words redacted by narrator] in it and a whole host of other people. We had an international host of characters. We had people from Brazil, many Latin American countries, South American countries, we had a guy from Israel, we had a guy from Japan. We had—

HIDALGO: That's quite the group.

HARVEY: Sort of the international group.

HIDALGO: Yup.

HARVEY: And so what we did was we got part of the funding and we said, Okay, this is what we want to do for our final thing. We're going to take our band and we're going to put our band on a bus, which is traditional with bands. But with everybody else taking a bus, why shouldn't we take a bus? We put a concert on at the King School; about three hundred kids came to that. So this is now expanding. We had about sixty kids in the initial program, thirty from each school roughly.

HIDALGO: Mm-hmm.

HARVEY: So now we take our band, and we get those kids plus more of their classmates, then later in the afternoon we drove out to Acton, [and] played the same show for Acton. And so it was a very nice way to sort of tie everything together and give them a performance. They could see all of the people who had been their teachers now playing and really in a professional setup. And it was great, I mean, it was well-received. One of the interesting things was the band, who were basically all living in the Back Bay of Boston or Jamaica Plain or someplace, all, you know—we were black, white, Brazilian, whatever it was—

HIDALGO: Mm-hmm.

HARVEY: —we were a true United Nations mix. I could not believe the King School. I mean, it was like a fortress back in those days. One of the things you can't imagine is these were like—you thought it was a prison. The doors were all on a buzzer lock, there were guards at every single door and when you walked down the hallway. I mean *guards* guards, not school kid guards. And it was a very heavy atmosphere. A decrepit building. I hope it's been improved by now. But it was un—paint peeling off, just the worst kind of situation.

When we went on to Acton, of course, it just happened to be that we got to use the high school auditorium. Beautiful, almost brand new, and the people in the band were literally shell-shocked. All off a sudden they realized, even if they hadn't thought about this before, what was going on in the wider society around them. It was unbelievable.

HIDALGO: And how were the students the first day that they got bused in? What was that first day like?

HARVEY: I wish I could remember more clearly. I'm sure there was a lot of, you know, just antsy stuff, moving around. I think there was a little—probably a quite a bit of wariness at the beginning. I think, as I recall, they tended to stay in their own groups. Very typical human behavior; you tend to stay with your little clan or tribe or whatever it is. Gradually we were able to—by just coming up with exercises where one kid had to go with a kid from the other school to do something. We began to break that down.

One of the things I found in our internal notes was when we would take these tours to the music business places, the radios station or the studio—I hadn't remembered this—that we had to do it with each separate group just because of the logistics of getting their bus schedules together, so that we had to take the King School kids in one group and then another day go with [the others] just because of the nature of transportation and bureaucracy and whatever it was. So there were these interesting sort of ironies along the way.

HIDALGO: And at this point I'm sure that you're aware of the media.

HARVEY: Right.

HIDALGO: Do you think that their depiction of the whole situation was accurate or do you think that it was somewhat blown out of proportion?

HARVEY: You know it's really hard to know. Our little end of the world, we never got covered by anybody. I mean I don't think any of these arts programs got [attention]; maybe there was a mention in a news story or something. Maybe there was—I can't remember. Maybe there was even a news story about them, I don't know. There should have been. But I think the media have a tendency to overplay the dramatic and to overplay the confrontation stuff.

So what I remember seeing on the nightly news was all the clashes with the police. It became ritualized; the police would go out with the tactical squad, the people—the poor kids, they were the real victims in all this. They would have to get into buses in a gauntlet of yells and stones or whatever it was, and the parents didn't equip themselves very well, particularly in some neighborhoods. And you had people riding the buses: clergymen, teachers, other people from the community who were also at great risk doing that. We were not so much at risk personally, particularly in that setting, although we did a subsequent program—we did subsequent programs in the neighborhoods, and I'll never forget we did one at Columbia Point, a school called the Dever School. And so when we would get to—I don't know if you know that part of the world but Columbia Road comes in and there's a traffic circle down there—

HIDALGO: Mm-hmm.

HARVEY: You go south and essentially you're sort of in South Boston, but then you go out to Columbia Point which at the time was at the time was basically an African American ghetto, not to put too fine a point on it.

HIDALGO: Yup.

HARVEY: It was a bad situation. So when we would go through the part that was in South Boston, Arni and I would drive—he had a little sports car—he would just gun it. Once we got to Columbia Point we were fine, because for whatever reason a black and white duo was usually fine in a black area but in the Southie area it was very dicey. And so he would—we'd be going like eighty miles per hour and hoping the cops weren't on our tail, but we didn't care because we want to get there safely. But that was about the extent of where we had any real sense of that.

But to get back to your question about the media, I would say that the confrontational stuff was a part of it. And so I think as far as they could portray it—it was a piece that needed to be portrayed, that needed to be shown. Now, was it over-blown? It's entirely possible that it might have been. On the other hand the hostility was very high; it was very intense. It was a very intense period to be in the city of Boston. If you were downtown you didn't sense it quite so much. But if you went to a school committee meeting, which we went to some to see our proposals with the larger packaging proposals, it was unbelievable. I mean real outright racist statements being made, attitudes being so thick you could cut them with a knife. It was very scary.

HIDALGO: And what was that like for you? Because you seem to have this passion for jazz and your core seems to be that this is what will bring these children together. What was that like going into a situation like that where you're hearing and you're feeling this tension?

HARVEY: It was pretty discouraging because you realize that many of these people probably wouldn't have known a jazz tune if they heard it. Probably if you had told them about Charlie Parker or Duke Ellington or Louis Armstrong, they probably would not have known who that was, or they would have put that person in a certain safe place within the entertainment world and not understood the ramifications of then teaching your kids about such a person as a role model for what they could have shown. So it was discouraging; it was pathetic in a lot of ways.

HIDALGO: How did you stay so positive? How did you go back—

HARVEY: I guess part of me is just that optimist, I think largely because we didn't have to brush up against that all that much. That we could really sort of focus on doing the work. Again, I'm sure there are things that I'm just not remembering, but I'm sure there were probably some things with parental feelings or maybe teachers' feelings that maybe weren't quite as positive as we would have liked. Although most of the time, I have to say, there was a lot of good will on the part of the—the kids were usually self-selected for these programs, which meant of course the parents were involved, so the parents usually had a more progressive outlet. They wouldn't have sent their kid into this without thinking this was a good idea. The teachers by and large tended to be very much with the program.

HIDALGO: That was going to be my next question. These were all children that were voluntarily sent by their parents to—

HARVEY: Yeah, the school—each school would figure out a different way. They called it a self-selection process or something like that, where the kids could—you were told about a [program]—evidently it was something like this: you were told about a program that you could say, "Yes, I'd like to go to that," and of course they'd have to get parental sign off. The parents would want to know more about it. And very often what would happen is that—I was involved with Arni in the initial two or three programs then he took over and he had other musicians. But as I understand it, what they would do is they would go out to the school and talk with people and there would be like a community meeting type thing. And he's a great guy. And they would say, Okay, this looks like a person that I would trust my kids with. Plus, as I say, there's all these chaperones, there's always teachers, there's always school personnel on hand, and parents. So it was never the case where you're just turning your kids over to a jazz musician. God forbid—that doesn't sound like a very good thing. (laughter) They might actually play some notes at you or something. But the overall reception we had through many many—there's a list—there's just a partial list on the front of that—very positive, very positive. [attachments B, C and D]

HIDALGO: And how involved were the parents? Were they constantly going to the school, were they—how involved where they?

HARVEY: I don't know if they were constantly at the school. In fact I'm thinking of a couple programs, once we—it's like the initial phase is one thing and I know we had parents on hand for that. I think after we got into it a year or two it wasn't so much—people didn't feel the need for it. The schools began to adjust to some extent to what was happening. They were very welcoming of us coming in because by and large, at least in that period, there were not a lot of formal music and arts classes in the Boston Public Schools. There were some, but [there were] the usual budget constraints and all of that kind of thing. Things have gotten better over the years, although you always tend to hear it going up and down. So I think they were appreciative that we were coming in to bring this particular approach.

HIDALGO: Do you wish that the media would have covered you guys more?

HARVEY: Well—

HIDALGO: Because it sounds like it was such a good program and it sounds like that the parents were so into it and the children seem to receive it so well that it almost seems too bad that the media didn't pick up on that instead and try to focus on that.

HARVEY: Yeah, that probably would've been something—I do think—now you're jogging my memory, thank you. I think that as we went along maybe the next two or three years there was a bit more coverage. And I should also give credit to a group called the Metropolitan Cultural Alliance, which later became known as the Massachusetts Cultural Alliance, which was an umbrella group for a lot of the arts organizations. A lot of the arts organizations in these magnet programs were members of the Metropolitan Cultural Alliance and I believe, now that I'm remembering this, that the Cultural Alliance later on would stage some events where people could come together and see the various programs.

I know we had almost like a trade show type of thing. I know we had a couple of exhibitions there, [and] people came. And I'm sure those were covered. I just—I tended not to be as aware of all of that at the time because we had so many projects going, and we were sort of more

concerned just to get the next thing underway and do the next funding proposal, plus the evaluation for that one. I'm sure there was some press coverage, but I think it happened a little bit later.

HIDALGO: Where were the concerts held? Were they right in the middle of downtown Boston or at like the Boston Common? Where was it that they were?

HARVEY: We used in this period primarily the Church of the Covenant and Emmanuel Church, which was where my office was, which was where the Jazz Coalition office was. That's right next to the Ritz, but we were as far away from the Ritz in terms of tone, attitude and monetary success [as possible].

HIDALGO: (laughs) I was going to say, that's a nice location.

HARVEY: It was a nice location, but it was because the church had a very progressive outlook. The senior minister, Al Kershaw, was a great guy. He'd been involved in civil rights things and was a great jazz enthusiast himself. So he was very supportive, and the church was a wonderful place to be able to support us and give us a home. So a lot of the concerts were there.

We also would do them on the Boston Common, more so at City Hall Plaza or Copley Square Plaza. We used to do outdoor concerts, and we would take, again, concerts into the neighborhoods. We would find neighborhood houses; we would go to sometimes the jails, prisons, mental health centers, community centers. Places where—what we were trying to do with that was to bring the music to the people without a lot of formality. And usually we did this—try to get them funded by some other source, then no one had to pay. So you could come and enjoy the music and have it be part of your community.

HIDALGO: Where does your passion for jazz come from?

HARVEY: That's a good question. My upbringing was—I had—a lot of the family members were classically trained musicians. And a number of them were in the ministry. I'm a United

Methodist. And I don't think they ever expected someone would turn out to be a United Methodist minister and was doing jazz. That just didn't quite fit the bill.

HIDALGO: You took the best of both worlds.

HARVEY: [Words redacted by narrator.] I took the best of both worlds. I think probably because when I was a kid, maybe thirteen, fourteen years old, there happened to be a local cultural center in Binghamton, and a guy came down every Sunday from Ithaca, New York, Ithaca College, to teach a little jazz band, and I got involved in that. I don't know how I even got involved. The first record I ever had was Dizzy Gillespie. How a kid growing up in upstate New York finds out about Dizzy Gillespie I can't even remember. (laughter) I was thirteen. That's my first record; I still have it. I was just gone from there. And so I would go along, and I would play classical music too, but jazz was just—it just grabbed me. For what ever reason it just grabbed me, and it's still holding me up.

HIDALGO: What was that like at thirteen to have your record?

HARVEY: It was great. It was great. Of course, you know, if you're a kid in the early teenage [years], it's something different. So right away you can think, Oh, I'm different, I'm cool. Of course I didn't realize how weird I was because, you know, liking jazz, when everyone was liking rock and roll, I sort of had to come over to rock and roll because I was already into jazz.

HIDALGO: So where is the Jazz Coalition now?

HARVEY: As far as I know—I haven't really stayed in touch with some of the people that continued, that took it over. As far as I know it—it's basically defunct. It was, as I say, a non-profit corporation, so when I essentially retired in 1983 because I was burned out and I needed to do some other things, some people took it over and kept it together and, as I say, as far as I know it is just not going—which is too bad, but on the other hand it's one of those things I think had a very useful purpose during its heyday. And it was very much part and parcel part of that era.

I'm not sure—you could probably do something similarly fashioned today but it would have to be different. In fact a number of us in the jazz community are always talking about, Well, what could you do? I went to a big forum about a month ago and people were talking about this, and it's so interesting because a part of me wants to say, "I've been there and I've done that," but [another] part of me wants to say, "This is great, let me know if you need some [advice], or I'll just sit back and give you the benefit of my [word redacted by narrator] wisdom." Now I'm not going to get out there and run an all-night concert. But there are always needs—all the arts in our society, particularly jazz I think, it's very hard to get institutional support on an institutional basis.

The one difference is Lincoln Center. Everybody knows about Wynton Marsalis and Lincoln Center. God bless 'em—that's the one place that's a great place. But everybody else, every other place, you're constantly having to do your own thing, make your own support structure, as well as then put on the program, and that was exactly what we were doing in the Jazz Coalition days. It was just that we were all young and foolish and had a lot of energy; we didn't need to sleep much evidently and we didn't have a lot of common sense. (laughter) We just kept doing them. We seemed to make it work.

HIDALGO: And what did all of that teach you?

HARVEY: Well, it taught me that you can make a real difference both with individual passion and with a collective activity. That you don't need a lot of money if you really set your mind to it. It also taught me that you really do need to collaborate widely. So if we had just stayed with a bunch of other jazz musicians, we would've gotten nowhere. But we reached out to people in the churches, in the schools and the community centers. All kinds of places. We had different personal associations here and there, [with] different structures of government or private sectors. So then you pull on all those threads and you knit together a kind of a tapestry that can help to make a real difference.

HIDALGO: So you would definitely do it all over again?

HARVEY: Oh yeah, not a question.

HIDALGO: Would you change anything or—

HARVEY: No, I wish—you wish you would have been maybe a little smarter about some things. One of the big problems with our group and one of the big problems with the JazzEd thing was the financial structure, because we were not a major institution. And the way that the state did business in those days—I don't know what it is now—was that if you were a non-profit corporation you had to—you could only get your money [on a] reimbursement basis. You had to spend the money, and then they would reimburse you for what you had spent. It's a nice way to [have a] safeguard and make sure there's no malfeasance. But it's a heck of a way if you're operating on a shoestring, and these proposals were maybe five thousand, seven thousand dollars, maybe even a little more.

We generated—I think I counted up one time the proposals that I wrote and/or that we got funded, and it was like—about 100,000 dollars worth of usually government money, federal or state or some private. That's a lot. But we didn't have the structure to back it up so that when Arni would be doing a proposal he would be laying money out of his pocket and then waiting six to eight months for the reimbursement cycle to come around and give it back to him. And of course what would happen is then you get the same way with your personal finances, you get strung out, you can't do it. The time he should of been giving to developing other programs he had to worry about where his next meal [was] coming from and that kind of thing. What's remarkable is that we did as much as we did. That's what's really remarkable. Because by the law of sane business practices we shouldn't have been able to have done any of this.

HIDALGO: Why do you think you guys managed to do so much with so little money?

HARVEY: Sheer willpower. We figured out ways to get around it. We figured out ways to get loans to cover this kind of thing until the reimbursement came in. You just figure it out; you get into this kind of thing and you do it. But you have to be committed to it. If you're just doing it

as a hobby, or, "I'm just going to put my little two hours a week into social consciousness," that's not going to happen.

HIDALGO: And you did this full time—this is all you did?

HARVEY: Pretty much. I was ostensibly in graduate school but I wasn't showing up a lot. (laughs) I shouldn't say that in an educational situation, although I did get my degree. But I was ostensibly doing that, and then, yeah, this was pretty much a full time commitment. [And it was part of my ministerial work, as well.]

HIDALGO: How did you make a living on the side?

HARVEY: That's a good question too. I don't really remember. I had some scholarship money, so that helped. And I would play performances and I would do some guest stints in churches, either giving a sermon or bringing a group in or that kind of thing. Just by hook or by crook, really, you—again, you look back at it and you say, "My God, how did this happen?"

Plus that was a time period—this must sound completely weird, but I don't think you could do that in this current situation. The way Boston or any big city is, the economic climate, the cost of living increases. I'm just not sure you could do it. I'm not sure you could put a group together like our group, the Jazz Coalition, and make it happen in the current scene. They're just—everything has changed so much, and back in those days—not to say there isn't good will, but we did an awful lot with good will, and in-kind contributions, and I'm sure that exists still to this day but I think the whole tenor has changed to some extent.

HIDALGO: Do you think it has to do more now with the economics, or the politics, or just the social climate?

HARVEY: I'm not as entwined with the politics of city government or state government as I was in the old days, so I really don't know. Certainly I think Mayor [Thomas M.] Menino is a very good force for the City of Boston, generally. I know he's got an office of arts, and I think

it's now tourism and development or something. I'm sure they're doing good things. I would say it has to do more with the general economic and social climate.

HIDALGO: Looking back on everything that's happened thirty years since the Garrity decision, what do you see now in retrospect that you didn't see then?

HARVEY: Boy, that's a good question. I guess—I guess how hard it is to really affect social change. I would say that would be the bottom line. I mean, a lot of us in that time period who were on the side of moving for desegregation were progressive in our politics, in our cultural outlook; we were idealist to a certain extent. You had to be to think that anything could happen. A lot of that got shaken in the violent stuff, in the confrontational stuff that came along.

But I think looking back you realize, Was it a Pyrrhic victory? Because now we're back to essentially almost the same situation, except you had a lot of white flight in between. So the real ideal of really balancing racial things is sort of gone. And you just hope that the schools are at least upgrading the quality. Because that was one of the main things anyway, from even way back to the Roberts case, was the inferior conditions. So now it's almost like everybody gets to have inferior conditions, but we hope that that's not true. We hope that things will keep progressing and building.

HIDALGO: Do you feel that it was worth the fight?

HARVEY: I do. I do. Because I don't see how you could not have done that. And it was part of —I think the thing that people sometimes lose sight of is, it gets all broken down to the code word busing and then it's the whole thing about, Well, you were destroying communities, you were destroying community schools. Well, you had to look at the larger picture. This was segregation. Segregation is a social evil. Some people would call it a sin. You go back to the things that happened, the Roberts decision I mention again, but also things throughout the nineteenth century, the legal decisions, what happened in the twentieth century, the whole history of that. You have to keep working for integration, you have to keep working for a positive social climate, I feel.

And see, if you get into jazz—the more you get into jazz, the more I've gotten into jazz—I teach it now in a variety of ways. It's a part of the whole history of the music. You'll find that Louis Armstrong made political statements, not so much well-known in the press but behind the scene. Charles Mingus was very strong supporter of civil rights, wrote pieces about this. You begin to find the more you get into this that the world of jazz—because it's all about black music and then black music as it welcomes other people into it. That's what we're talking about.

HIDALGO: So their stories are basically told through their music.

HARVEY: Through their music, but also what they did, the stances they took. Sometimes the public statements they made.

HIDALGO: And that's what you teach now at MIT?

HARVEY: It weaves itself into what I talk about, sure.

HIDALGO: Excellent. That pretty much brings me to the end of our interview. Do you have anything else that you'd like to add or that you'd like to go over that we didn't cover?

HARVEY: No, I don't think so. I think we covered a lot. Thank you.

HIDALGO: Well, Dr. Harvey, thank you. It's been a pleasure.

END OF INTERVIEW

OH-045 Attachments

Attachment A	March 5, 1975, list of approved magnet project proposals with cover letter from William J. Leary, superintendent of the Boston Public Schools, to Gregory R. Anrig, commissioner of the Massachusetts State Department of Education
Attachment B	Photocopy of a JazzEd informational brochure
Attachment C	May 1975, JazzEd lesson plans
Attachment D	Excerpt from a funding proposal for JazzEd by the Jazz Coalition