

Back in the early fifties, some black students staged a sit-in at the lunch counter at McCrory's, a five-and-ten-cent store. First, they had done it at Woolworth's. Jack Nelson, now a retired member of our faculty, had always been very, very much involved in interracial activities in the city. When they were charged with malicious mischief, they asked Jack to represent them. He phoned our dean and said, "I would like a faculty member or a senior student to help me draft a memorandum in support of my motion to quash the indictment." I had finished the law degree and volunteered. It was very little pay. He wasn't paid at all. Months passed, and I heard nothing about it, except what I read in the newspaper, that he had lost in the criminal district court and lost again in the Louisiana Supreme Court. I happened to run into him downtown one day, and he said, "Janet, I need you again. I'm now applying for writs to the U.S. Supreme Court in that same case. Will you help me? But there's no money." And I said, "Yeah, I'd be glad to." And then I found out he had used my memorandum with very few changes before the Louisiana Supreme Court, and now was going to the U.S. Supreme Court, still using my memorandum almost as it was. Writs were granted, and he argued the case before the U.S. Supreme Court and won in the landmark case of

LOMBARD VS. LOUISIANA.



"I Found it Very Difficult to Be Heard"
from Generations: A Century of Women Speak About their Lives