

# Emma & Lawyer Dudley

November 15, 2021, 2 pm

Fulton County Schools Archives, Teaching Museum South, Hapeville, Georgia

*Emma Dudley is a native of College Park who taught Mathematics at Eva Thomas High School, where she also served as the head of her curriculum department. Prior to her position there, she worked as a teacher in Emanuel County, Georgia. Emma Dudley attended South Fulton High School (Class of 1950) and Clark College.*

*Lawyer Dudley taught Industrial Arts at Eva Thomas High School, beginning in 1965. He is a native of Eufaula, Alabama. Lawyer Dudley attended Tuskegee College (now Tuskegee Institute) and served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. He was among the first teachers in Fulton County to integrate.*

*The two met while teaching at Eva Thomas High School and were later married.*

## **Michael Santrock (MS):**

I'm Mike Santrock. I'm with the Fulton County Schools Archives. I'm here with Emma and Lawyer Dudley, former teachers at Eva Thomas High School. It is November 15, 2021. And we are talking from the archive right now. And we're actually going, looking through some of the Eva Thomas collection we have here. So, you've been able to look through the yearbook a little bit.

## **Emma Dudley (ED):**

Yeah.

## **MS:**

I'm assuming you found yourself in there?

## **ED:**

I found me in there.

## **MS:**

So, what did you all teach? Emma, what did you teach?

## **ED:**

Mathematics.

## **MS:**

You taught math?

## **ED:**

Yeah, I was the head of the mathematics department.

## **MS:**

Okay. How many teachers were there in the math?

**ED:**

At that time was probably three of four. And then when Mr. Dudley came, Mr. Gilbert thought he was going to put Mr. Dudley in the math department. And I didn't, we didn't know each other. We just met. And I said "No, Mr. Dudley has got to stay in his woodshop." [laughs] He did mechanical drawings and woodshop.

**MS:**

So, you were teaching woodshop?

**Lawyer Dudley (LD):**

Yes.

**ED:**

And doing mechanical drawings. Yeah.

**MS:**

Did you all, did you all teach somewhere else beforehand?

**ED:**

Yeah, I had, when I was in the first graduating class from East Point High School. Before my class, the kids went from... College Park Elementary School to Washington High School.<sup>1</sup>

**MS:**

They went to Washington in Atlanta.

**ED:**

...because it, Fulton County didn't have a high school for, you know, so I graduated when... I graduated from East Point High School in the first graduating class they had for Blacks. And so, then I graduated from Clark College in '54. And went to Emanuel County, Swainsboro, Georgia, and stayed 10 good years. I kind of like made it home, became a part of what was going on down there and I really enjoyed it. And then when Mr. Gilbert contacted me to say, he wanted me to come to Eva Thomas, they were opening a school, a high school in College Park for Black kids, and he wanted his former students... he wanted the people he knew.

**MS:**

So, you had, he was a former teacher of yours then?

**ED:**

Yeah. And he was at East Point High as my social studies teacher. And that was my worst class. I didn't, I like everything better than that...

**MS:**

You didn't like social studies...

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<sup>1</sup> Booker T. Washington High School, Atlanta Public School District.

**ED:**

I didn't like social studies. But uh, so then he became principal and when he became principal, he had all of us to come. Most, most of the teachers there were his former students.

**MS:**

Was that your case too, Lawyer?

**LD:**

No, I taught in Lumpkin, Georgia, in Richmond, Georgia, before coming to Atlanta.

**MS:**

And you taught shop there too?

**LD:**

Yes. I did.

**MS:**

Yeah. Well, so what I wanted to kind of start with, let me make sure that this is recording our audio... What I wanted to make sure what I started with was kind of maybe talk about your all's background, your childhood a little bit, each of you and you know... Well first let's, let's talk about your, when you were young, tell me about your family, Emma.

**ED:**

Okay. You know, they say that home is where the heart is. And College Park will always have a special place in my heart. My address was 720 West John Wesley Avenue, but I grew up in the one square mile... you hear them talking about that one square mile in College Park? That was the area that I grew up in. And that... is when you talk about that one square mile, if you stand on the corner of Virginia Avenue and College Avenue, you go south to Yale, and then you go around and make a... it makes a complete square. Well, that was College Park. But today it is a new College Park and you know that, right?

**MS:**

Right.

**ED:**

I lived on one side, three rooms of what they call a [inaudible] six-room house. Now in the 720 West John Wesley, I lived with my mom, my dad, and seven siblings: five sisters and two brothers, until my daddy left us when we were very young, and then there was mother and eight kids.

**MS:**

Where were you... In the kids? Were you one of the oldest or the youngest?

**ED:**

I was, I was fourth. I was... I was the fourth of eight. The house we lived in was on a dirt road. So, you know what happened when it rained: it was a great mud. And... had no running water, no electricity, no... gas, or anything. But we were happy. And I asked my sister the other night, I said, "With all of us in the house, where did we sleep?" She said, "I guess in the bed." [laughs]

**MS:**

Probably, a lot of you all slept in the same bed...

**ED:**

Right. Now that's where we ended up at night. Now during the day, we were everywhere in everybody's house. We went from house to house. And I lived on John Wesley and the Davis's, Emily Davis and her family, lived on Columbia. And Emily Davis's daddy was known as, you know, like the master and he just knew everything. He was smart man. So, we had homework, I would go to Emily Davis's house. And we would sit like in a circle and Mr. Davis would be there. And he would help us with our homework. Okay, so their house was like home, you know. And I remember all the different places where we played, how we ran in from one house to the other. And I think the community churches was like a key to what was happening with all of us. We had, we were different denominations, but we combined everything. One church... we were part of all of it. In other words, I was like a member of the Friendship. And a good example is when on Easter Sundays, when we had Easter, when we had the Easter programs, we would start at Friendship like at three and everybody would go. And then we would go from Friendship to Laster Chapel. That was my church. At four, then we would all go up the street to Mount Zion and... and Charles<sup>2</sup> was at my church. Charles's family was at my church. And we would go to Mount Zion like the next hour, and then go down the street to Shiloh. And we went in groves and, and sometimes, like if a child had a speech at Friendship, when they got Laster Chapel they'd say, "I want to speak again." And that was allowed. So that it was just like family. That's what it was, like...

**MS:**

Is Friendship still there?

**ED:**

No. All of that... that [inaudible] project got all of those churches.

**MS:**

Even Mount Zion too?

**ED:**

Even, even Mount Zion. Mount Zion is down the road on Rivertown...

**LD:**

Rivertown...

**ED:**

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<sup>2</sup> Charles Dill, alum of Eva Thomas High School, Class of 1970

Riverdale...

**LD:**

Riverdale.

**ED:**

That was a Ursel's<sup>3</sup> church, wasn't it?

**LD:**

Yes.

**ED:**

She's at a [inaudible], okay? We'd play it all over the place. And like I said, we went from house to house. Now, at my church, they allowed me to teach Sunday school as a teenager. And I felt really good about that. Because I was always the person who wanted to do the good stuff, you know. And I was Sunday School teacher as a teenager. I was a youth counselor. And I served on the home department committee with Mr. Homer C. Arnold and others. And this committee, we would meet at the church like a Wednesday evening. We would leave and decide what we were going to do and where we're going. And we would walk around into the neighborhoods. Most of it was like the sick and shut ins. And I remember I was, I was a teenager, and I would go with Mr. Homer C. and I would read the scriptures and he would do the prayer and we take a little donation. And I think when I started doing that, I kind of like, fell in love with a lot of the elder people there. So then when I didn't have anything else to do, I would walk up to like Miss Beavers. You heard him talking about the Beavers? The Mama Beavers, I used to go and just sit on the porch with her. And I was thinking about this other night. I would always scratch her head. She had dandruff and I would scratch it. And she used to love for me to do that. And then there was Miss McDowell. Remember Sophie McDowell's mama? I would go by there to see them. They were... Miss Beavers was at the Mount Zion Church. McDowell was at our church. And I would just go back to see the old folk, and just whatever they needed me to do that's what I would do, and I enjoyed doing that.

**MS:**

So, for those of you who are listening, this recording and don't know, Beavers... there was an elementary school, was part of the Fulton County System that was named after Jefferson Franklin Beavers, who was a member of College Park community, and very instrumental in bringing education for Black students.

**ED:**

Yeah, that was, it was first... it was College Park Elementary. Because that's where I went to elementary school. Then they changed the name to JF Beavers... Yes.

**MS:**

Am I right? to JF Beavers...

**ED:**

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<sup>3</sup> Ursel Brown, alum of Eva Thomas High School, Class of 1970

Yeah, that was the, the elementary school for Blacks in College Park.

**MS:**

So, you mentioned that you were a Sunday school teacher. Did... is that kind of what made you feel like you wanted to be a teacher one day and make that your profession?

**ED:**

I'm thinking that was part of it. I'm thinking that was part of... one thing it did when I was at college. It made me want to become a missionary. And all of these times I was planning to become a missionary worker and go to India and do all these good things. And, and then when I... I ended up going to Clark College... The reason I went to Clark College... Mr. Frank McClarin, you heard his name?

**MS:**

Yes.

**ED:**

...who was my principal when I was in high school, he had talked me into accepting a scholarship at Morris Brown College because that was his school. And he wanted some of his good students, of course, to go to his school. And so, when I went to summer camp... each summer, as a youth, I went to the youth summer camp. So, I went to summer camp. And there was this person that I remember, wish I could remember his name. But he said, "How many of you graduated from high school this year?" And I raised my hand. "Where are you going to school?" And everybody said, and I said, "Morris Brown." And he said, "Not Clark?" And I said, "Well, I don't have any money. And Morris Brown is going to give me a full scholarship." And he said, "We are going to get you a full scholarship. And only thing you're going to have to do is to keep a B average." Of course, I can do that. And that's how I ended up at Clark, because they wanted me to stay in the Methodist college since I was United Methodist... at that time was Methodist Episcopal. It wasn't United Methodist. All this has changed since my day, you know.

**MS:**

So, when you were growing up, your favorite subject was math then too, or you were just better at it?

**ED:**

Let me tell you why my favorite is math. When I went to high school, I was the fourth Schell to go... my, my sister Louise, Helen Lyerly had gone before me. And when I got to the ninth grade... they said first Mr. Hightower, he was the math teacher. I'd heard about him. And the first quiz I took, I think I missed one or two problems. And he came in the classroom and said, "Miss Schell. What's wrong with you? The Schells don't do this." And I was embarrassed. So, I had to prove to everybody that I could do better in math than everybody else. Isn't that strange?

**MS:**

No. [laughs]

**ED:**

[laughs] Isn't that strange? Not, not that I'm saying what I'm saying, it sounds like maybe they went from ninth grade. That was, that was the end of Fulton County at that time, ninth grade, because after that they went to Washington High School. As I said, I was the first in the first graduating class. That was in 1950. Okay? I remember all of the little businesses over in College Park and... and the little shops, they had a barber shop, beauty shops, almost on every corner... where the church was almost... it was full of churches. Churches were like on every corner, but all the other businesses were all together and people were part of all of it... And I was fortunate enough to be invited to go on the tour that I think your neighbor [inaudible] Jones, who is the economic development director... they did a tour.

**MS:**

Do you remember when that was?

**ED:**

So, it was May 22 2021. And I, and I went on that tour with him to show us what the new College Park was going to be like, you know. And now at that time, Charles Price... and the reason I thought about that, because that was the last business they were talking about. You probably heard somebody say that before. It was the barber shop that Charles Price had. He was there and his daddy was there before him. It was the College Park barber shop. And he was on that tour and it was interesting because Ms. Wilma Nichols who, who is my good friend... you probably heard her name before... she stayed in the house between Eva Thomas and JF Beavers. And I was talking to her the other night and I say, and I don't remember when it was but the last big Black History... we were invited to be on the Black History committee. Can't remember the ladies name, but anyway we had a function at the convention center. And at that time, remember, they had the educators and all the teachers come back. Wilma and I were... Dowdell, you heard Charles Dowdell, well he invited us to go to that committee meeting before they had that particular function. And when we got there, they were saying we are trying to do some research and stuff. We are trying to find out something about Miss Eva Thomas and JF Beavers and Wilma said "I stayed, I grew up in the house between theirs." So, you don't have to look anymore. Those are the kind of things that you know, becomes part of you.

**MS:**

Sure. Sure... Lawyer. Tell us where you grew up and about your family if you would real quick.

**LD:**

Oh, yes. I was born in Eufaula. Alabama, below Columbus, Georgia, which you may be familiar with.

**MS:**

I'm familiar. A little bit.

**LD:**

There were three kids in my family. One girl and two boys... which I am a twin. Okay. Ah, was educated in Eufaula at Van Buren High School, which we attended. My father, he worked in the textile mill for 32 years without taking a day off.

**MS:**

You don't see that anymore, do you?

**LD:**

No more. For 32 years, my mother was a housewife, she did not work. All dad wanted for her to do was to take care of his kids... Okay. After we finished high school, we three, he sent us to college, Tuskegee Institute at that time, which is now known as Tuskegee University. Before going to Tuskegee, he said that "I want all of my kids to finish college..." which he only went to the third grade. Okay. After that, we went to Tuskegee, the three of us. Dad was only making 50 cents a day...

**MS:**

a day...

**LD:**

...which I cannot understand, how he made it through. But he did. And his very first word to his kids was, "Save all you can, whatever you can, because you're going to see some rainy days," which I have seen.

**MS:**

I was going to say, I bet he was right.

**LD:**

Yes, he was correct and everything.

**ED:**

But you know, the thing, the key thing about College Park was everybody knew everybody. You felt safe. And you didn't have to make no effort to be a part of stuff. You know, you just... and just like I said about the shortcuts and stuff. We used to go through the [inaudible] and, you know, cross the field and that kind of thing. And, and let me say a little bit about my muddy street... when I got to college... no, no, when I was in.. when we had to go to high school. We didn't have... we had to go to East Point but there was no transportation provided. So, Mary Davis, you probably heard that name, they had a bus and if you get the money, you can ride the bus. And every once in a while, we may have it. My mama might have had the money, but most of the time, a lot of the times, we would walk from the house to the bus station and ride the bus and then walk to the school. Now a lot of days we had to walk from home to East Point...

**MS:**

from College Park to East Point...

**ED:**

...from College Park to East Point to school. And when I got... and the interesting thing was, they would always put me on these little committees and stuff. They made me a school patrol. And then I got a job. My mama used to do a lot of work for the white folk across the railroad track. And we would go with her and so one of the ladies asked if I wanted to work at the schools. And I said, "I sure do. I need to make some money." And I would get off the bus. At that time, I could have bus fare, see. And I would get off the bus and

run across the railroad track and, and that's that... those are the kinds of things that we did, but didn't think anything about it, because that's the way it's supposed to be, you know. That's how you were doing it. But...

**MS:**

This was when you were in high school?

**ED:**

This was when I was in high school. This was, this was when I was in high school. But when it would rain... and I was in college and had to walk from that muddy downhill to the bus stop, I would put my shoes, my good shoes, in a bag and put some old shoes and stuff and walk through it... and go through the back door of one of the buildings on the college campus. I put my muddy shoes in the bag and go in there and look like I've come from downtown. [laughs] But you know, I did it. Yeah. I showed up and I got it done... I think I just think that... I guess that I should say its sad today to think about all the good things that were then; because when I come to College Park now, I feel like a visitor. You know, it just feels like somebody just came and took the stuff away from you.

**MS:**

It's changed?

**ED:**

You know, it's changed. Its changed and I'm not sure that it... it shouldn't be what it is. I'm not sure about that. But I do think that some way, somehow you kind of like need to know some things and be a part of this. And I listed some stuff, I was talking to somebody... well, anyway, this might not be the place to even talk about it. But there was a lot of things that happened in College Park that I don't want people to ever forget. And you probably weren't old enough to know about the time, I think it might have been in the '80s with murdered missing children with this Wayne Williams case?

**MS:**

So, I did not live here then. I moved here in the '90s. But I remember, I grew up in West Virginia and I remember watching the news...

**ED:**

But let me tell you what Laster Chapel did at that time. I always thought we ought to do something for children. Okay. So, when I came back from Emanuel County in '64; when I came to Eva Thomas in '64, I thought I had struck it rich. Boy, I am back home. I'm near my mama. I'm near my church and I'm near my bank. And the Eva Thomas building was located so I could walk to all three of those places... it was just... so I bought a house just up the street from the, from the school and put my mama in it. Anyway, with the murdered missing children, Laster Chapel was doing little summer camps and little different things for children over the years.

**MS:**

Could you spell that?

**ED:**

L-A-S-T-E-R C-H-A-P-E-L. It's not a United Methodist Church. And we were going to do summer camp anyway because well, we did like what Bible school was at that time. You know how you do the bible school for two weeks and... but this time we were going to do the bible school. The North Georgia conference came up with some kind of plan that they were going to help to finance any church that wanted to... do summer camp, get children off the street. And Laster Chapel, of course, I said, "Help us do what we want. We've been trying to do it anyway." We housed... and then I went to the Board of Education to ask that we could use Eva Thomas School as our site... It was granted. The only thing they said was don't go into the music department and don't go into the PE department you know, but you got access to the school, the cafeteria and everything.

**MS:**

This was the Fulton County Board.

**ED:**

This was the Fulton County Board and this was the Eva Thomas School. And we, for six weeks, we did summer camp for 240 kids. And I was like the supervisor. Judge Lou Honeycutt was the director. And, and they supplemented the money that I... and I had almost every youth that was active in our church. They were the counselors in this, and we had a good time. And at the close of that program, we have this superintendent... everybody came, because we had a combination program that you wouldn't ever believe. It just went real good. And when we continued the program, even after we didn't get supplemented the funds. And we didn't get back into the Eva Thomas building, but we used our church.

**MS:**

So, did you all raise your own money to do it, then if you weren't getting...?

**ED:**

We raised our own money. I was always fortunate. And that's the thing I liked about it. It was always that anytime we came up with a plan, there was always people who was willing and ready to help get it done.

**MS:**

It sounds to me like, and you can tell me if this is right. It sounds to me like the church, community and school were all kind of one. They operated together in your community.

**ED:**

Yes, it did. It did. And it made a difference. When you belong, you feel like you were part of... you belong to it. When, anything I do in College Park is all right, because you're one of us, you know.

**MS:**

Right.

**ED:**

Yeah. So those were the... those were the good old days.

**MS:**

I want to talk a lot about Eva Thomas, before we finish up. How did you, or your family or how did you specifically get to College Park, Lawyer?

**LD:**

How did I officially get to College Park?

**MS:**

What brought you to College Park?

**LD:**

Well, what brought me to College Park is uh... after... before I finished school...

**MS:**

At Tuskegee?

**LD:**

Tuskegee. I was called into the Army. And so, at that time, you had to register to go into the armed service. And so, I went home... Okay, I'm coming to that. But anyway, I went on into service during my sophomore year of college. And I spent two years in the service. And during my service in Korea, I was under the guidance of Captain [inaudible]. And I was stationed at Fort Arkansas at the time. And we had to take a test to see what was going on overseas. And so luckily, I was the only Black in the group.

**MS:**

You said you were the oldest?

**LD:**

The only Black in the group to pass the test. And they sent me to White Sands, New Mexico. And there I finished my career in the service. And I promised my family, mother and dad, that I would go back to school, which I did. And I finished college there. And from there, as I first said, I taught school in Lumpkin, Georgia and Richmond, Georgia. So, after that, I came to College Park. I was told by my brother-in-law to come to College Park. And by the way, not only he but a friend of mine at Tuskegee, he knew he was born here in Atlanta. And he asked me to come to College Park. And he got in touch with my principal. He said, I knew a good man that could teach industry. I'm sure you would like to have him on your staff. So, I came to Atlanta, and I was hired, and that's why I've met Mrs. Dudley. [all laugh]

**MS:**

What was your maiden name? Was it... I think you...

**ED:**

Schell. S-C-H-E-L-L.

**MS:**

So, so um, what year was that about? What year did you come to College Park then?

**LD:**

I came to College Park in '65.

**MS:**

So, you were probably what? 20, 30, 20 something? No, you were... how old were you?

**LD:**

I was. I think I was about 31. Yeah, 31.

**MS:**

Right. And this is where you all met?

**LD:**

Yes.

**MS:**

You were teaching. Now, I don't want to get too personal, but tell me about when you all met.

**ED:**

Well, see what happened now, Mr. Gilbert, we were doing schedules. And we needed, we needed someone to do one of the math classes and he said, "Well, we got Mr. Dudley in woodshop and stuff..." and so I said, "Let me go see if he knows enough math to teach..."

**LD:**

You were the head of the math department...

**ED:**

...at this school, I was the head of the math department, and I was determined that our kids were going to get what they needed. Because I know how important it was. And you might not remember this, but this was the beginning of the set theory...

**MS:**

Set theory?

**ED:**

S-E-T theory, you know, when this is... when mathematics was a set theory. And no... what had happened was that the time I was in Swainsboro in Emanuel County, that the National Science Foundation was offering scholarships to teachers in the state of Georgia who wanted to learn the set theory, of course. And so, I came every summer I went to Atlanta University for nine weeks, taking these classes to get ready for this set theory. And what... they paid... and I was head of the household at my house, and they gave you... so much for dependents. And everybody in my house was dependent on me, so I got a lot of money. [laughs]...

**LD:**

It was like a stipend...

**ED:**

...a lot of knowledge and a lot of money. And I was having a good time. Well, what I did each summer, when I went back to Emanuel County, I taught those kids what I had learned. And those kids were going... most of them went to Savannah State. But it was something at that time, it was a big deal at Savannah State what they did school plays, and they would do... like, the plays, the events then were something like basketball and football, you know. And so, this one, one particular year, it was at the Emanuel County gym, and they were coming from all over the region to have a place. And they came that particular Friday. And my principal, called Mr. Williams. He said, "Ms. Dudley, they need you in the gym," and I said, "No, I'm not... not the play person. I'm not in that." He said, "But somebody needs to see you." So, when I got over there, this director, this person in charge of this event, he said, "I just wanted to see you. And thank you for all of those students that you're sending to Savannah State that already know the set theory."

**MS:**

[laughs]

**ED:**

He said that in the big auditorium. And most of our kids and John Larson, they'll tell you that right now, won't they, Dudley? Most of them went to college and served as teaching assistants. Because it was new for the teachers. And if the teachers hadn't done the workshops... but anyway, that's not what you asked. You asked about Mr. Dudley. I'm acting like him now, I'm jumping all over...

**MS:**

That's okay. That's okay.

**ED:**

So, so when I went to see Mr. Dudley, I wanted to know if he knew the set theory, because this is the new math. And so, he said, "No, I didn't do that yet." [laughs] And I said, "Well, I'm just sorry, sir. You can't do that." So then. So, Mr. Gilbert said, "What are you going to do?" At that time department heads were doing full classes. I said, "I'll take six classes. I'll teach all day long if it takes that." "No, we can't let you do that. That's against the policy and all that." I said, "Well, Mr. Dudley can't do it, sir." And I remember different times when Mr. Dudley would go to his workshops with all of his folk and, and the man from Headland, in particular, would tell him, "Man, your wife doesn't know what's going on in this county." And he would tell them, say, "Your wife is down there teaching those remedial classes and the other departments are teaching college bound classes." Well, I was teaching some of that too, but I wanted those kids. You understand what I'm saying? Who, who needed it the most... that I know I wanted to give it to them. And I think I was the only department head and the – well I was really the only Black one anyway – in the Fulton County School System, that taught remedial classes. You get them you know, a teacher...all they want to do is be a teacher. They want those kids who already know it. But I get right now... I got a phone call like last week there was one telling me, "I don't know what I would have done if you had not been my teacher." And

I got some kids in Fairburn, because when they, when they closed Eva Thomas School that time, I went to Campbell High School in Fairburn and they became my kids. You know, everywhere I go, those were my kids. Those was my children. And one little girl, I remember they put her in the remedial class. Little white girl. And she said... and I said... I would always get: "How much do you already know?" I came up with that myself. And I tell you what they said, "Oh, Ms. Dudley is the best disciplinarian ever, because when they walked through the door, I'd hand them a sheet. "Do (this) now. Get this done in five minutes, you get five points." You know, that means you got to be quiet while I'm standing in this door. I'm not saying I'm the best in the world, but I was almost. [all laugh]... but, but almost... but anyway... So, I said, "We're going to take you out of remedial class, because you need to do this and that. College bound students, you won't be able to get to college with these classes, right?" And so, her mom and dad came over there and we did this little interview and... And I said, "I'm sure she can do it if she wants to do it." The little girl now, she became like some president of a bank down in Fairburn, Georgia.

**MS:**

No kidding.

**ED:**

You know and when they would do stuff like that... and I had a... from Palmetto, my grandson is a Union City policeman. Now, what happened... we got a child when we were old folk, okay? We adopted a great-great grandson... nephew, when we were old folk. So now we got young grandchildren. We're having a good time with them. [laughs]

**LD:**

I think one of your, one of your students on the same set that you are speaking of... One of your students is working for Chick fil A.

**ED:**

Oh, yeah.... Well, he knows. He knows that. He knows about the Chik-fil-A Truett.

**MS:**

Yeah, sure.

**ED:**

And... Andrew, Andrew who was recently... he recently became the CEO for his daddy...

**MS:**

Truett Cathy...

**ED:**

Cathy. Well, and I... what was the daddy's name?

**LD:**

I can't recall...

**ED:**

Andrew, Andrew. Anyway... that was after I retired, I was at Landmark. I went to Landmark...

**MS:**

Landmark Christian?

**ED:**

Landmark Christian. I went there. Mr. Presley, who had been my principal, at one time became headmaster down at Landmark and he called me to see if I could come in there part time. And I met Andrew and, and a lot of other kids and... But what was interesting about that, when I got to Landmark, all of the kids sitting there looked like the kids that were there when I was at Campbell High School. And I, and I could go around and tell them who their parents were. [laughs] It was interesting. So, I've done a lot of crazy strange, like things, you know, but it's always been fun.

**MS:**

So, you obviously, were very dedicated with... to your students.

**ED:**

Oh yes.

**LD:**

She sure is.

**MS:**

I would imagine...

**ED:**

I still do tutorial stuff.

**MS:**

Do you?

**ED:**

...and getting and getting a call or an email from somebody even now that says thank you. That means a lot.

**LD:**

It does.

**MS:**

I believe it.

**ED:**

On my birthday, it would be about 240... they called me from Florida, from New York from all over. ...from Emanuel County... And I had this company call from Palmetto the other night because they saw my son, my grandson. And they said, "When are we going to lunch?" I say, "Real soon, real soon, real soon." I don't, I really don't go any place now. I don't want to go anyplace. I want to just stay there, stay at home. And when they say I need to see you, I stick my head out the back door.

**MS:**

Here I am.

**LD:**

And to answer you on that, which she's forgot to mention... Creflo Dollar.

**MS:**

Yes.

**ED:**

Would you believe Creflo Dollar gives me... Creflo gives me credit for him being in the ministry today? And would you believe he has two sermons with my name in it?

**MS:**

Well, I believe it.

**ED:**

How do like that? [laughs]

**MS:**

I believe it. It's a legacy.

**ED:**

We would do... and that goes back to the church. We had each second Sunday, we had a special program for the kids, not lots of type of kids, but the community kids and they came from all the churches. We had; we call it the anniversary every second Sunday. And we had asked Creflo to like be the emcee in the afternoons. And I think I must have given him like \$25. And that was a lot of money. And... he said, he'll tell you today when I tell you it was in some of his sermons. And he'll call me. I get a call from somebody connected with him and he wanted to know about. Just before... I just keep cutting stuff out... just before we went in, I had a luncheon date with him. And he was going to send to pick me up and I was to tell him what I wanted for lunch and, and we were going to sit... we're just going to sit and talk. "And anytime you have some time, Ms. Dudley, come and see me." Yes, I just feel so... I'm just having a good time.

**MS:**

That's great.

**ED:**

I'm enjoying it... As of now I am 90 years old. And I've been to so many of my students' funerals. you know?

**MS:**

Yeah.

**ED:**

And I just feel... and the lady called me the other day. She said, "How are you doing?" I said, "I'm scared. I'm doing better than I think I ought to be."

**MS:**

Right.

**LD:**

And sometimes, you know, I know she forgets some things. She forgets... which I will bring to her attention, Monica. She is a sponsor for Monica.

**ED:**

He doesn't know about that R&B stuff. We're talking about education. Monica...

**MS:**

That's okay. Tell me who Monica is.

**ED:**

Monica is an R&B... What would you call it, Dudley... all of these singers... you know?

**LD:**

She's one of the top singers.

**MS:**

Yeah. Singer, performer. R&B.

**ED:**

Yeah, she was the one who was married to Shannon Brown, the basketball person...

**LD:**

...played with the Lakers...

**ED:**

But anyway, she... her stepdaddy... that's back to the church. Her stepdaddy he was our pastor. He came, and at that time he was dating her mama. And Monica... and Monica didn't want her mama to get married. So, he said, "Ms. Dudley, Monica likes you so much." And each summer, they would live [inaudible]. Oh, I had a CMSP program that came from New York.

**MS:**

And you said: CMSP?

**ED:**

Comprehensive Math and Science Project.

**MS:**

I see.

**ED:**

New York implemented it for the Fulton County Schools. And they needed a coordinator for the Fulton High School. And the interviews were on the day that Campbell High School had homecoming. And I was one of the ones they wanted to interview. [laughs] But that particular day we had homecoming at Campbell. And all these kids had sent me flowers, and I had flowers. I just did it, you know? So, when it was time for me to go to the interview, I said I'm just going to have to go as I am and see how they accept me. So, I went for my interview with this homecoming, all these homecoming flowers, and all these homecoming colors, ribbons and stuff. So, when I walked out, I had some of the head of the departments from other schools and they said, "You come for that interview?" I said, "I had to come as I am. I got to go back. I got work." So, when I went in [inaudible], bless his heart from New York. He said, "Come in Miss Cheerleader." So, I came in and to make a long story short, he said, "Why do you think you need to coordinate this?" I said, "Because you wrote my program." When I read what that person was going to do, it was exactly what I wanted to do. And I became the coordinator for that particular program for the Fulton County School System. So, they supplemented my salary. And, like, on Wednesday, they would fly me to New York and... and I had to write the curriculum for it. And at that time, it was in three schools in Fulton County. It was at Campbell High School. It was at Lakeshore; it was Lakeshore then. and... what was that... Banneker.

**LD:**

Banneker.

**MS:**

So, this was this was after Eva Thomas. You were at Campbell. So, this would have been the 1970s?

**LD:**

I think it was because so that was the time that she was...

**ED:**

Uh oh, that was something else. That was at Clark College that reminded me I was doing on Saturdays. And I... it had to be because I was actually at Campbell...

**LD:**

That was in the '70s.

**ED:**

Yeah.

**MS:**

Lawyer, where did you go after Eva Thomas?

**LD:**

After Eva Thomas?

**MS:**

Uh huh. Once it was no longer a high school.

**ED:**

Headland.

**LD:**

After the school became integrated...

**ED:**

You went to Headland, didn't you?

**LD:**

I went to Headland High.

**MS:**

And taught shop there?

**LD:**

Uh huh, which is known now as Paul D. West Middle School.

**ED:**

And then you went from there to Riverwood.

**LD:**

No, I went from there to South Fulton. South Fulton, where you finished high school.

**ED:**

Oh, sure and then to Riverwood.

**LD:**

And then I went to north county to Riverwood.

**ED:**

That's right. I forgot about that. Yeah.

**MS:**

When you all were teaching, and this is... I'm speaking before, before the schools integrated, were... How much did you all know or participate with the GT and EA? The Georgia Teachers and Education Association... Were you all members? Or was that a...

**LD:**

Yes.

**ED:**

Yes.

**MS:**

How a part of your profession... How would you describe that to somebody who's never heard of that before? Or what kind of support it provided or how that... what you did?

**ED:**

You know...

**MS:**

I know, I didn't say I was going to ask you about that.

**ED:**

That's fine. But I went to the conventions, and they were talking good stuff, but it's like they weren't getting anything done. You know how you how you go and you... I think they meant well but their hands were tied. You know what I'm trying to say?

**MS:**

I do.

**ED:**

But it was sounding good and now... you went too, because you were talking about it the other day. But they tried... but something always seemed like in the way to get to go on to where you want to be. And then when they started: they knew this and changing this and changing that. My big concern and my interest was in: what is this going to do for the student?

**MS:**

I see.

**ED:**

My focus was always there. I didn't ever bother too much with the other stuff. I said, "Y'all take care of that and let me see what I can do with what y'all hand down to help the kids so they can make it." You won't believe this, but when we were at Eva Thomas School, if a kid graduated and got a good job, I would say, "If

you get a good job and you need a cosigner for a car, then I'll cosign." And at one time... and at one time I was on 21 car loans. I cosigned for 21 cars. And every student except one came through. And the one that didn't come through was a nephew. [all laugh]

**LD:**

Now our biggest interest was in trying to help the underprivileged kid.

**ED:**

But did you hear what i said? I was just going to be the parent for everybody. Now...

**MS:**

...in a day and age when you could be in...

**ED:**

And when... right now when you hear... I get calls all the time. I got one just like yesterday. They're telling me you're doing too much for folk. Because right now I have... I have under my carport... I got out some coolers and some boxes and stuff. And like some fella called me just yesterday and said, "Mrs. Dudley, when are we going to get some turkeys?" And I said, "You're going to have a turkey by next Sunday." He was a former student. He's an old man now. So, a lady called me, and she said, "Are you going to need some turkeys this year?" And I said, "Yeah, I said. I told her, I said, "Anthony called yesterday and he wants to know if he can get one and as I told him to call me back next Sunday. She said, "Well I got some. So, I call him back. Each week, people call me and like they tell me Monday needs... whatever they need then... I mean, it's not me spending my money. I'm just coordinating it. I call somebody who has the money, who has the goods, and tell them I need them, and they come, and I put them under my carport. They don't come in my house. I put in my... Dudley had this fella call him last week and he talked about going to homecoming in Tuskegee. And he said, "Mr. Dudley, we're coming... I'm coming by there... me and my lady are going to come by and sit and talk to you a little while. And Dudley said, "Good." And I said "No. Dudley, don't tell him it's good because you know we're not going to let him in the house. I mean, and they'd laugh at me like that. That's how they do..."

**LD:**

In all our life, we two as a couple, we're not, not interested in money. We're trying to help the underprivileged kids and everything. That's our life. Because we too believe in, whatever you do for people, that underprivileged and everything, God will give it back to you.

**MS:**

Was that your message to your students?

**LD:**

That's always been our message.

**ED:**

My thing was that I couldn't have made it without the people. My mama and eight of us. And like I said we was in three rooms. And now when we had homework, if I didn't go up to the Davis's house, we had to share a lamp. And the people, the neighborhood folk, I remember one, one day when I... I don't remember what grade I was. But Miss Viola Sims, who was the insurance person. She was... you know how they used go up to houses and collect insurance premiums. But anyway, she said, "Why are you at home?" I didn't have no shoes. She said, "You stay right here, what size you want?" And I told her. She came back with me a pair of shoes and took me to school. Okay, when I got ready... I had Timothy Nichol's mama, who was a beautician in the neighborhood. And when I got ready to go to college, she said, "I'm not going to let you go to college looking any kind of way." She said, "I'm going to make you an appointment every two weeks, and you come like everybody else, and they don't know you're not paying." And when I got finally graduated from college, and Miss Sims, the same lady who bought the shoes... I went by to see her, and she was sick. And she said, "You got some money?" I said, "Not yet. I hadn't got paid. I just got a job." She took me to the Bank of College Park... Bank of College Park. And she sat me down with this Mr. [inaudible] and she said, "She's on the way out to college. I mean to work; she got a job. And I want you to give her a checking account. And she... I bet she put like \$100, whatever there. And she said, "And I want her to have your number. And when she needs anything, she can call you." And if they hadn't done that for me, you understand? So, I want to give back. And I... I want somebody else to feel like I feel like. That's why I keep saying that was family. Those were the people who took care of us. And my mama had these sisters and stuff and some of them were doing very well. And I remember there was three of them that lived in College Park. And the ones from, that would live in Jonesborough and other places they would come to College Park. They would visit with them. But they didn't visit us. And sometimes we would go by and see them and, and they would wave at us. You know, but we needed something, you know what I'm saying? But every time one of them got sick, it was my mama who took care of them. And I was thinking about it the other day when my cousin, who is really sick now, that her mom... her mama... when we were children and her mama had had a baby, my mama had gone down there to take care of her. And she told me that money...she said, "Now when you, when you leave school, don't... don't go home, you come down to [inaudible] house. And that's what I did. And when I got to [inaudible] house, she said, "When you get there, go to the back porch. And I did. And my cousin Eddie May came to the one and waved at me. And I'm outside... But at that time, it didn't matter. When I think about those little things about how [inaudible] used to come to College Park and they never come to see us. And but, when I got a teaching position, you would've thought I was Miss America. Roberta's got a child that's teaching. She finished college and she's teaching. [laughs] My mama was one of 17...

**MS:**

17?

**ED:**

...and she had eight of us. We got... a whole lot got more than that, but anyway... those are the kinds of things, you know. I mean, I'm alright with it. You know what I'm saying? But I'm just saying it made me who I am, and it helped me to know that other people need that help. You need to do something for somebody.

**MS:**

So, I wanted to talk specifically now about the Eva Thomas experience.... your all's experience there. It was the kind of... school... it wasn't there very long, a brand new building. Right? Lawyer, you mentioned you came in 1965?

**ED:**

Right.

**LD:**

'66.

**MS:**

'66? So, you wouldn't remember...

**LD:**

I'm sorry. '65.

**MS:**

So, you won't remember the school being built.

**LD:**

No.

**MS:**

I know, just from our records, that it was part of an urban renewal project... you mentioned this before as was we were introducing ourselves to each other, how College Park has kind of changed and churches have been... Do you remember the construction?

**ED:**

I remember, I remember that urban renewal. It was just like, tear down and relocate. And there were a lot of little houses over there. They used to call them shotgun houses. They tore all those houses down. I remember that they went like... seemed like to me they went from Princeton to Virginia Avenue because they had started building houses and stuff on Virginia Avenue at that time. They went up there and it stopped. And it seemed like they went on the other side up to John Wesley, because we were on a lower part of John Wesley, but there was some white folk on the upper part of John Wesley. And that was... on Princeton, there was a little hole in this church. And... and I remember hearing somebody say it... that they didn't want to say. So, whatever they used to condemn it.

**MS:**

Right.

**ED:**

And they tore it down. I remember all of that. All that was gone, you know?

**MS:**

Do you remember... were there any? Do you remember people specifically that may have had to leave because of that? And you know, the circumstances surrounding that?

**ED:**

I remember, yeah, I remember. I remember some people that lived there. I think it was Ken French and the folks who live there that moved... that they had to move. And they went... maybe John Wesley or somewhere with the relatives or something. And some of them left town. Some actually left College Park.

**MS:**

Sure. I would imagine so.

**ED:**

But I remember that. It seemed like they came in to do... what they come to do? They tear it down. And all they didn't tear down, they relocate. It was a lot of stuff that went on.

**MS:**

Yeah, I know that in the 1960s. Just from studying the, you know, when I went to school, that urban renewal, kind of nationwide was... It affected a lot of people in good ways and in bad ways. And it's interesting to hear, I was just curious. So, Eva Thomas High School... here you are, you're... you all are pretty young, you're teaching there. It's a brand-new school. I mean, did they have, you know, do they have all the sports? Tell me a little bit about the school itself, in general. Do they have activities besides academics? How many students you know, just kind of a general...

**ED:**

They had... you know, it was like a regular normal high school. And, and I think the good thing about it was that... I think all the teachers were just like I was. They were at home. They were with Mr. Gilbert, who was the person who wanted them there. And we took the kids to be like ours. We're going to make them the best that we can do. And I don't have to tell you about Mr. Dollar and that basketball team...

**MS:**

The basketball team, yeah.

**ED:**

And... and he would... if they weren't there on the day they were supposed to be there, or something was coming up... he would call. He would go pick them up. Go get them out of bed. Go... go pick them up and stuff.

**MS:**

Remember how many students were there about? In the 60s?

**ED:**

I can't remember how many students. I really don't know.

**LD:**

I have no idea.

**MS:**

That's okay. It's not something that you...

**ED:**

But... we had all kind of activities. We had the yearbook... ..and music. Mrs. Moore was something else with that music. And Mrs. Moore had been my music teacher in high school.

**MS:**

Music? No kidding.

**ED:**

And now she was my coworker.

**MS:**

There you go.

**ED:**

Yeah. But... yeah. The thing that we had really going for us was, just like I said, a lot of my students were... most of my students... were like their parents were my friends.

**MS:**

Sure.

**ED:**

You know, we kind of... their parents, you know, these were our kids.

**MS:**

I got the impression from Ursel and Charles that as a kid, if you acted it up, you know... there was always a pair of eyes that knew your parents. There was a relative everywhere you were.

**ED:**

And when you say that I thought about when Otis Moore did something. And we would visit... we go to the houses, because you didn't have phones and all that other stuff. And I remember I said, "I'd be by your house this afternoon." So, when I drove up to his yard, a big dog was sitting on the porch, and I blew the horn, and his mama came to the door. And she said, "What is this?" And I said, "I told him I was coming by here." And she said, "That's why he's got that dog out there." But those kinds of things. And... we had people like Anthony [inaudible], who was working nights. And he would come to school and go to sleep. So, I went by his house and his mom said, "Well Miss Dudley, I'm sorry, we need the money." I said, "Ma'am, please," you know, so I said, "We need to work with this a little bit." Those are the kinds of things we did. But let's

see, I can't... When we closed the Eva Thomas High School, one, one thing happened. I think I sponsored the prom. I think, I think I was sponsoring prom, and we had monies in the treasurers. And they allowed me to take a bus and take them too Lake Winnepesaukah to spend the money.

**MS:**

Wow.

**ED:**

So, this is a free trip. Yeah. You know, um, we did all those kind of things.

**MS:**

Lawyer, was there any student that stuck out to you from your time at Eva Thomas? Or anybody who left an impression on you more than anyone...?

**LD:**

Quite a few.

**MS:**

Any one or two that you'd care to...

**LD:**

Yeah...

**ED:**

He has someone right now who called him. What'd they call... what'd they call you?

**LD:**

Bird.

**ED:**

Bird. But when Mr. Dudley came, he had a little thing in his head, and they started calling him Bird. The kids called him Bird. Well, he didn't like it. I told, I told him the best way to deal with it is to laugh with them, you know? And so now they want to make him mad. They say, "Hey, Bird." [laughs]

**LD:**

Some of my students are...

**MS:**

B-I-R-D, bird?

**ED:**

Bird. Some of my students saw it... I remember a game I attended. The Braves game. And one of my white students attended Georgia Tech. You know the students always remember the teacher.

**MS:**

Sure. Yeah, we do.

**LD:**

But the, but the teachers don't remember. The kid is... and he spotted me from a distance. He ran up to me. "Mr. Dudley! Mr. Dudley! How are you?" I said, "I'm fine. Who are you?" He said, "I was one of your students at Paul D. West." He says, "I'm so proud of you." He said, "I never will forget you." He said, "You taught me all the theory around... architect."

**ED:**

But you know... back to Eva Thomas...

**LD:**

Because I was teaching the mechanical... He said, "I think about you all the time."

**ED:**

But back to the Eva Thomas part of it. And now... a lot of those kids wanted to do... And, and a lot of... and a lot of them was... See, when it comes to me back to my day... that if we didn't want to go to school, we didn't have to. My mama wasn't into that. You understand what I'm trying to say? And I think that's the reason why I wanted, I was the first to do what I did, because I wanted to. But if I didn't want to, I didn't have to. And we had a lot of that at Eva Thomas High School. And we knew that. And that's why we had to kind of like go to the houses and go talk to the mamas and because we know them by first names and stuff. We'd say, "Now you know, we got to get this boy out of here. We got to do this." And we did a lot of that... a lot of that.

**MS:**

So, you all are talking about this community of College Park and I know a lot of the people who are going to be researching and listening to your all's interview are going to be interested to know... you know, before the schools integrated, obviously, we have schools for Black students and schools for white students in Fulton County. Obviously, by high school, you know, students are quite aware that they're in a segregated school system, right? Was there any kind of message you as teachers had for them? I mean, you know what I'm asking? It's, I'm sure it's hard when you're urging students to succeed, for them to be in a world where there are things that are stacked against them. And how did, how do they overcome that? How did you help them overcome that? Or was that part of what you did? Or was that a community effort?

**LD:**

Well, my part about that is, as I recall, when she and I were at Eva Thomas... at that time, before I went to Paul D. West, the thing came was that husband and wife could not teach together. Okay? Although whites could teach together.

**MS:**

Oh, okay.

**LD:**

But Blacks could not.

**MS:**

I see.

**LD:**

Therefore, I was transferred. And my first day at Paul D. West, I was the only Black teacher there. The only one there. And my students there seemed like they had never seen a (Black) person. Okay. First class period, in my room, I could stand and look out the window and see the view from that side. The bell sounded for everybody to go to their first class. The students would not leave the window to go to class. And so, I walked over to them... and I simply said, "Did you all hear the bell ring? It's time for you all to go."

**MS:**

The only one...

**ED:**

We don't want him to put us out of here.

**LD:**

Okay.

**MS:**

No, no, no. You go ahead.

**ED:**

We're all right? Okay.

**MS:**

You all are fine.

**ED:**

...because he was talking about what you did for those kids at Eva Thomas

**MS:**

That's okay. That's fine.

**ED:**

The integration and stuff...

**MS:**

Yeah, no problem.

**ED:**

Okay. Okay,

**LD:**

So, you want me to continue?

**MS:**

Oh, yes, please.

**LD:**

Oh, yeah. And I said, "Did you hear the bell ring? It's time for you all to go to class." And so... I said, "You may as well go to class, because I'm here to stay." And believe it or not, as of today, some of those kids, I still remember. I'm still invited to the class reunion and everything. They just fell in love with me, and everything...

**ED:**

But you had a lot of kids... the kids were aware of a lot of this. And they knew...

**LD:**

They knew.

**ED:**

And they knew... and especially after the reopening of Eva Thomas, there was a lot of bitter stuff, because of some things that was written up about the kids and stuff. And I had a permanent place when it came in, and all that kind of thing. But my thing to them was: concentrate on what you want to do. Keep focused on what you want to do. And go forward, you know, because you can't win all these battles, you can't win and some... you know, you don't even want to fight, you know what I'm saying? And so, and so... and when they went to College Park High, and some of them went... was coming back saying stuff like, "They don't want us up there." That's fine. Do what you got to do and get out as quick as you can. [laughs] Know what I'm saying? What do you say, you can't fight?

**MS:**

Sure. There's what you control... what you can control.

**ED:**

Control what you can and focus on... keep your focus on what you love.

**MS**

Do you remember how you all found out? And when you found out that Eva Thomas, as the high school, was going to be closed? You all probably know the story about H.E.W...<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> US Department of Health, Education and Welfare (H.E.W.) was the federal agency charged with enforcing integration in public schools after the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

**ED:**  
Yeah.

**MS:**  
...Paul D. West<sup>5</sup> and the Board...

**ED:**  
Yeah.

**MS:**  
You know...

**ED:**  
They had told us that we would no longer be at Eva Thomas and they would let us know our assignment.

**MS:**  
So, they were going to give you a new assignment?

**LD:**  
I wasn't there then.

**MS:**  
You weren't there?

**LD:**  
No.

**MS:**  
So, you'd already gone.

**ED:**  
You were already gone.

**MS:**  
Because of the rule that you all couldn't be...?

**LD:**  
Yes, yes.

**MS:**  
Okay, so did you find out that summer that the school was going to be closed?

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<sup>5</sup> Superintendent Paul Douglass West, Fulton County Schools.

**ED:**

I think we find out like the end of '69? Whatever it was, anyway...

**MS:**

Yeah, it was going to be, they were going to close it before it started the fall of '69.

**ED:**

Yeah. Yeah. And it's and... we were given our assignments... I believe at that time, I went to Lakeshore. Seemed like to me it was Lakeshore. Wherever it was, I knew about the protests and all that kind of thing. And I would drive by to see some stuff. And I remember... and I saw some things that I wouldn't ever believe that I could have seen.

**MS:**

Care to share?

**ED:**

You know what I discovered when I was researching... because I've known about this for a while just working here long before I met you all. I had; I knew some... some of the elder people who was really supposed to have been at home sick. I saw one particular lady that I didn't even know she could walk. But she had a big... she was walking down the street just limping with a big box. And I say, "what?" I said, "What do you have?" And then she said, "I baked some cookies." You think about that. Then I had... but I could never go down. I'm teaching still. I want to see what's going on. But I don't want to be there, you know. Then I saw some people that I hadn't seen in years and years and years, that didn't go nowhere, and didn't do nothing that was walking with... I think hamburgers and feeding them. And, and I couldn't talk to them, you know, but... who was that? Somebody came to say, "Hey, Ms. Dudley."... But I will go by, I don't know... it didn't last but a few days. But anyway, whatever it was, it let you know that in spite of how people felt, they came up with enough energy to support this thing that I think needs to happen. Because when you really think about it, and right now, presently you when you think about it, you say why did it build that school. You know?

**MS:**

That's what makes it such an honor and privilege for you all to be here. The school construction on the school... or ... the school opened two months after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which would have made it illegal to build, right?

**LD:**

Right.

**MS:**

But at the same time, your community in College Park was getting this wonderful new building facility. So, it's hard to argue, am I right?

**ED:**

That's right.

**MS:**

And you can tell me if I'm not.

**ED:**

Those are the things I'm talking about.

**MS:**

It's very complicated, right? It's very complicated because you can... you can have a pride in your community school at the same time that that school is, you know, a segregated school. So, it's a fascinating story. And I think it's very interesting that... well, I didn't know about the teacher rule that put you somewhere else...

**LD:**

There's one thing that I'm concerned about...

**MS:**

Yes, sir.

**LD:**

...which I said that I still have left, and I'm still concerned about it. I know you are here to interview us, but there's one question which probably in your mind, and probably another people's mind that... which you just mentioned that: it is a beautiful school as a... but why was the name taken away from Eva Thomas, when she was a very great educator? And that's that is one thing I'm concerned about.

**MS:**

Yes, sir.

**ED:**

Well, there is a lot of stuff you could, you could think about and ask him about and stuff. Like he said, but you're, and you were right. Some people were so proud to have a school. You know, so you're saying why don't we fight this? You could just, you know... it was a lot of things to think about, really.

**LD:**

There's another issue that I would like to mention, I know you have interviewed quite a few people... and the people that I knew in College Park, like I say, I met my wife there. There's a lot of people that probably have come to you, which you have interviewed in the past before our coming here, that even wasn't born in College Park and does not know anything about College Park like she does.

**MS:**

Right, right. Yeah, there's going to be a lot of that.

**LD:**

Yeah. Yeah, and it's going to continue to be. It won't ever stop. Some of the stuff, some of the things that we think need to won't ever stop but you know, we do what we need to do.

**MS:**

And I'm glad you brought those up, because those are on record now, those questions. And, and I couldn't agree more why's, why did Eva Thomas, the name, disappear off a Fulton County school building? Well, so that really kind of, you know, that kind of concludes the questions that I had for you, but I'll leave another minute or two open if there's a message you have...

**ED:**

Well, what I wanted... and I'm not saying this because I'm involved... but the... in 2003 a group of young adults... and back to Laster Chapel again... formed a scholarship. Emma Elsa Schell Dudley Scholarship Foundation for any 12th grade graduating student in the state of Georgia. And as of today, they have given over \$250,000... since it was Laster Chapel in College Park, I like the kids to remember that. I want that to be a part of something. Then the other thing when I talked about the murdered and missing children...

**MS:**

Yes.

**ED:**

...over 60 years now, each summer, up until like 20.... last time I think it was 1903... maybe two years ago. But anyway, each summer, we took a group of kids for... after that second Sunday event... it would be the second Sunday in July, either that Friday or Saturday, we would load the buses and take all the kids in the College Park community to Florida to Myrtle Beach or somewhere. At one summer we took six bus loads. And when I see some of them, they say, "When are we going to do another trip? We need to do a reunion trip." If we had not done that, some of those kids would have never left College Park... would've been to another state other than College Park. Another thing I wanted to talk about was Julie Crawford, who was one of the ones who was from College Park. She did... this is Laster Chapel again... we had a revival about four years ago. And one... the Monday night we named it College Park night. And we decided that we were going to try to bring the people from College Park back into the church. And each pew in the church had a street name. And we put it out there: "Come and get on your street." You couldn't get all the folk in the church. Think about that. You remember that, Dudley? And we had somebody make the sign, you come in as a person, that's Columbia that decision and you go to your street... Oh, you've never seen anything like it before. Now...

**LD:**

I think... cutting you off, if you and I are on the same subject, is that the time that we had the people come back that had moved out of the community?

**ED:**

Yeah...

**LD:**

We had 62 to join... rejoin that Sunday.

**ED:**

No, no, no, no... This is when we did this thing with [inaudible].

**LD:**

Oh yes.

**ED:**

Since then, she's wanted to, she's been asking for some way, somehow that we get the people together again, in the form of sharing. And we were about to ask for that when all this stuff happened. But anyway, she was thinking that we could just take them like to maybe [inaudible] and do a big thing and get one from each family's street or something and just share some stuff. Just talk about it. And so, I thought, I don't know how to do it or what to do. But I'm saying it everywhere I go. [laughs] Maybe it'll catch on somewhere, you know.

**MS:**

I have... You've kind of sparked an idea, which I'll, I'll talk to you after I stop the recording. But there is one thing I've failed to ask. And I guess... so part of, part of our doing these oral history interviews is to kind of... one day we're hoping to put together an exhibit, which might go... you know, like a traveling exhibit, like panels that we break down and we put up in each area high school.

**ED:**

Oh, wow.

**MS:**

And so, they would see these panels, you know, like you were in a museum. And it would be great to have a little quote from everybody who went to Eva Thomas. And so, I'm going to ask each one of you individually, maybe 30 seconds to a minute. What was... What's your greatest memory, what's the best thing about your experience at Eva Thomas high school when you were there? and I'll start with you.

**ED:**

The best thing about Eva Thomas when I was there was the relationship that I had with the students and the parents and that coordination... the support at that from home. And the appreciation that the students seem to have now for what they get why they were there.

**MS:**

Great. Lawyer, what would you say?

**LD:**

My greatest experience at Eva Thomas, as you notice when we... I walked into this building, and I noticed the cleanliness of this building and everything... Eva Thomas was a school with our principal, Mr. Gilbert. there was no writing on the wall. Nowhere. Even the bathroom. And they weren't monitored. Well, those are the types of students we had. And they were respectable to the teachers. That is my greatest memory.

**MS:**

Well, that's wonderful. And now I actually want to you know, while we're on recording, say thank you all very much for coming...

**LD:**

Thank you so much for having us...

**MS:**

...and spending time with us. I'm going to stop the recording now.