

Dr. Gerald Gill  
March 5, 2002  
Lunch session at the David A. Portlock Black Cultural Center

TAPE ONE SIDE ONE

**Jacobi Cunningham**<sup>1</sup>: ... to ask questions and without further ado Mr. Gill.

**Gerald Gill**: Thank you and again I'm appreciative of the turn out...

**Carrie Spell**<sup>2</sup>: Dr. Gill... I said Dr. Gill...

**JC**: Oh, I'm sorry.

**GG**: It doesn't matter. It's a union card. I earned it. I earned it.

**CS**: That's why I said it... because you earned your title.

**GG**: But my sisters try to tell me, you know we remember when we still had to change your diapers, so don't get too caught up in this doctor thing. For those who were at my presentation last night<sup>3</sup>, I graduated from Lafayette in 1970, and my class was the last

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<sup>1</sup> Jacobi Cunningham, Class of 2003. B.S., Neuroscience. Vice-President of The Association of Black Collegians, 2001-2002.

<sup>2</sup> Carrie Spell, Dean of Intercultural Development, Assistant Dean of Students, and Director of The David A Portlock Black Cultural Center.

<sup>3</sup> Speech presented at Lafayette College on March 4, 2002. Gill's speech, "There Was a Time...An Alumnus Reflects on Black Student Life at Lafayette College, 1966-1970," was the

class to go through Lafayette during its four-year stay as an all male institution<sup>4</sup>. So much of what I have to say is based upon its experiences that are markedly different than anybody else's in this room. I never... I had one course from a female instructor my four years at Tufts. I never... I teach at Tufts so excuse me, in my four years at Lafayette, and I never had the opportunity to be in a classroom with a female student. The values of Lafayette were those at the particular time that stressed a certain form of behavior for male students in terms of what was acceptable, and what was not acceptable and that male behavior also translated in some actions towards women that were acceptable and not unacceptable, but I'm not gonna to talk about those. But if anyone has any questions about the nature of the presentation cause there are other things about which I can elaborate about my experiences that I didn't talk about last night. But I'd be more than happy to answer any questions or engage in a conversation about what's taking place at Lafayette now. Which is in many respects no different than what's taking place at my own institution. I teach African-American History and nineteenth and twentieth century American history at Tufts, and I've been at Tufts for the last twenty years.

**JC:** Does anybody have any questions?

**Jodi Frye<sup>5</sup>:** I do. What was the impact of Greek life...

**Gill:** Tremendous...

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kickoff event for the Lafayette College Archives Oral History Project. A copy and a tape transcript of this speech is housed in the College Archives.

<sup>4</sup> Lafayette College admitted its first class of women in 1970.

<sup>5</sup> Jodi Frye, Assistant Director of Students and Director of Recreational Services.

**Frye:** on your experience here at Lafayette?

**GG:** Tremendous. When I was a student at Lafayette there were nineteen fraternities on campus and two social dorms. I tell a joke that I learned how to read Greek by walking past fraternity houses. I walked past certain fraternity houses, which I thought was triangle t triangle. (*Laughter*) I later learned both in calculus and also from studying Greek that it was Delta Tau Delta. But eighty percent of male students - and Lafayette was all male - joined social living groups. Seventy percent joined fraternities because you couldn't have a social life otherwise. If you were independent either by choice or if you were independent because you were not accepted into fraternities you had no social life what so ever. So as some of you realized from my presentation yesterday I did join a fraternity. I later de-brotherized. But, I joined a fraternity because it was one that in which black students were members, but also because I wanted a social life. I had no dates my first semester my freshman year. No dates. Okay. I saw a few black women, but I had no dates. So I joined a fraternity because I wanted a social life. And that was the... The Greek system in some respects was more powerful than the student council when I was here. That, for example, the IFC<sup>6</sup> was more powerful than the student council. It was only during maybe my sophomore, junior and senior years that I also was elected member of the student council that the student council became more of a force on this campus particularly in terms of student issues.

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<sup>6</sup> Interfraternity Council.

**JC:** Last night you mentioned something that struck a chord with me. You mentioned that when people graduate - black students graduate from here - they get...they have a bitter sweet memory of Lafayette, and they don't really wanna come back and be interactive or a member of - or at least like you, - it took you a decade almost to get back here and do things. And, it worries me because I hear students now saying that, "When I get outta here I ain't never comin' back. I don't wanna come back here. I don't wanna see Lafayette. I don't want anything to do with the Lehigh Valley." So my question is what did it take for you to get over that whole stage, and how do we start doing that now?

**GG:** This process of chronological maturation. Again, for those of you who weren't at the presentation last night, you'd know that I... but for those of you who were there you heard me makes these comments - for those of you who weren't there - you didn't hear me make these comments. I was interviewed by the *Lafayette Alumnus* during my senior year, and I was asked would I consider being employed here, and I said, "No, I would never consider it." I didn't know at that time I was under consideration for a job in the admissions office, but I didn't get that job because of that comment. Lastly, I was asked what did I like best about Lafayette, and I said, "Nothing." And those... And I don't retreat from those views, but those were my views then. Those are not my views now, but those were my views then. I was very embittered in terms of my experiences here, but I was appreciative of the education. 'Cause if I didn't like Lafayette I could've maybe continued to transfer to another institution. So I was always appreciative of the education that I got here, but it's a question in terms of what I said, I said that I was very embittered when I left. I went to graduate school and as some of you know I went to

graduate school at Howard<sup>7</sup> and you can tell the differences in terms of going to Howard and being here. I was just telling someone, there was a joke that there was an exchange program between Lafayette and Howard because some of the people who had graduated in my class also went Howard Medical School, Howard Dental School, and Howard Law School. Okay. After I got married and after my... While I was in graduate school, for example, I had other concerns and Lafayette wasn't really related to my concerns. I was trying to go on with my degree. So there were fifteen years in which I never set foot on this campus. I would get mail from the institution. (*Hand gesture of tearing paper in half.*) I would get announcements from the institution. (*Hand gesture of tearing paper in half.*) And every time I moved Lafayette could find me. (*Laughter*) I didn't even forward my address, but somehow they could find me. Finally, it was in the early eighty's I got something from Lafayette pertaining to a forth-coming reunion. I opened it and read it and then...(*Hand gesture of tearing paper in half.*) But I read it. But, by eighty-seven there was talk about the formation of a black alumni association at Lafayette, so that's what brought me back in 1987. I was the only... I was one of the... There were maybe about fifteen or twenty people there, but there were only two of us who had attended Lafayette when Lafayette was all male and everybody else had graduated from Lafayette in the seventies and the eighties. Their experiences are markedly different than I, and I really couldn't connect with them in terms of the... I could connect with them on issues pertaining to the ABC<sup>8</sup> and the status of the ABC particularly since I was one of the founders of the ABC. We could... I could connect to them on that, but I couldn't connect with them on some of the other issues about their

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<sup>7</sup> Howard University, Washington, D.C.

<sup>8</sup> Association of Black Collegians.

experiences at Lafayette because for the males in the audience they had been recruited as athletes. We weren't... We weren't recruited as athletes. So they're talking about how athletics helped their experiences or impeded their experiences at Lafayette, but that wasn't an issue. So I couldn't really connect with some of their experiences. I was invited back in 1990 to give a speech to students who were graduating at the end of the year. I was invited back. I was very touched 'cause the school had actually reached out to me and to invite me back. I came back for my twentieth reunion in 1995. I was the only black... There were nine students of African descent who graduated in my class. Ten entered, nine graduated, so we had a ninety percent retention rate, which was higher than the white male population on campus. So I came back for my twenty-fifth reunion, and I was the only brother who came back, and I was somewhat disappointed because I had expected other people might have come back. But, it was at that particular time; being here for three days for my reunion I walked around this campus. Looked at buildings. Didn't cry. Didn't shed a nostalgic tear or anything like that, but inwardly I made my peace with Lafayette. Now I'll say something else, all the while that I was not paying attention to Lafayette or not coming back to Lafayette there was something else I was doing. I was giving money to this school. I graduated from this... I graduated... I was a recipient of financial aid for out my entire four years, and that's how I graduated from Lafayette. I came from a black working class family. My father was a tailor, and my mother was a domestic, and she was a maid, I remember before she died. So I came from a black working class family, and that was the only way I was able to get through this particular school because of the financial aid package. I had always believed in giving money back to the institution partly as an acknowledgement of how I was able to

get through the institution. But at the time of my twenty-fifth reunion that's when I because... I made my peace with Lafayette. It's an individual experience, but it's also part of... let's say, the maturation of my experiences over time. I never denied the fact I went to Lafayette. I was quite proud that I went to and attend Lafayette and it helped me get some jobs.

**Alvin Lyte**<sup>9</sup>: Are there any instances that like stand out in your mind of your experience here that made you, you know hate Lafayette like you did? Like are there any in particular?

**GG**: Some of them were in the classroom. I related one instance last night where I thought I was unfairly graded by an instructor who commented less upon let's say the content of the essay that I wrote for a history class, but more in terms of he thought that I should have studied Latin. There were unconscious experiences. There aren't any women. What were you gonna do Friday night? What were you gonna do on Saturday night? Okay? What are you gonna do Sunday? (*Laughter*) Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday you were at least suppose to be in the classroom. Okay. (*Laughter*) There wasn't anything... I think the most discouraging thing is, for example, on the party weekends you see white students with dates, and you're by yourself. You're in your room. What're you suppose to do? Diana Ross and the Supremes can't sing to you all night long or Aretha can't when she's singing "Respect" you know... You're in a room by yourself. I was devoid of that at least in terms of social contact and that was... I knew Lafayette was all male. I knew Lafayette was predominantly white. But knowing

it in terms of reading it in the brochure and actually coming here and living it and experiencing it were just two markedly different things, and that's what I found depressing, and that's what I found alienating. But the question is I didn't wallow in my alienation, 'cause then a group of us decided, "Well, hey we're going to do some things to make this place better," and that's when we decided to form the ABC. So that we could number one deal with our collective concerns rather than just wallow in individual self pity about our experiences here. I had negative experiences here, but once the ABC was established, and then I became active in the ABC in terms of social experiences, I had some very positive social experiences. We partied and this is before the women came. It was selectively. We didn't party every weekend, but when we partied, we partied and we partied all into the night. Okay. Early into the morning. And those are some of my best experiences and some of my best stories. Well, I can tell you the night that a friend of mine and I had to hitch back from Beaver College<sup>10</sup>. And we left that campus at 11 o'clock at night. We had big afros - trying to get back here because the next day was parents weekend and our parents were coming. Okay. (*Laughter*) So we had to be here. Now try to imagine two black males trying to hitch up Route 611 at 2 o'clock in the morning in November of... in October of 1968. George Wallace is running for president, and there are signs that say, "In your heart you know he's right", referring to George Wallace. We had to walk. We had to walk for a ... but it was fun in hindsight. It was cold and rainy that night, but it was fun in hindsight because that was one of the defining experiences that we had in terms of fun. A lot of negative... Some negatives things happened in the classroom. Positive things happened in the classroom.

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<sup>9</sup> Alvin Lyte, Class of 2003. A.B., Economics.



When I became a history major there was a... and we fought for the creation of the course, the black man in American civilization. I forget the title, but manhood just permeated this particular institution. Everything was defined in male terms. But when I started to do research for the particular topics, the professors didn't teach about the material, but they surely supported me in terms of what I was doing in terms of my research and these are people who wrote letters of recommendations on my behalf when I went to graduate school. So I had good individual relationships with the majority of my professors. Particularly which is what I would not have said thirty years ago, but in hindsight I did. I think some of you know one of my former roommates was here last night. It was a white male he was... He helped me get through this institution, and he also helped me pass a class as some of you heard too. Okay. We didn't cheat. Okay.

**Zakiyyah Haynesworth**<sup>11</sup>: I have a question. Last night you said that when you got here they told the international students and some of the African students not to you know hang out with you guys, and what do you think like... I think it still affects us now. Like what do you think about the separation of minorities on white campuses?

**GG**: On one hand I think that there should be an appreciation for differences whether they're cultural or national differences between people of African descent or people of other original ethnic groups. So, for example,... But I think in my heart I'm also to some degree, I'm not a racial essentialist, but I am also a pan-africanist in a political

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<sup>10</sup> Beaver College has been renamed to Arcadia University and is located in suburban Philadelphia in Glenside, Pennsylvania.

<sup>11</sup> Zakiyyah Haynesworth, Class of 2002. A.B., Art. President of The Association of Black Collegians, 2001-2002.

sense that people of African descent have certain cultural values and certain cultural traits that transcend where people were born. I mean you play the music and for example where ever people of African descent will respond to the beat. Okay. And it might not be a dance that's indigenous to your country, but there's a response in terms of rhythms and cultural retentions. But at the same time I think there should be an appreciation. So, for example, if students from wanted to set up a particular group - a cultural club. Let's say a Caribbean club or let's say an organization for African student organizations. I see no problems with that organization existing as a cultural organization. But, for example, I think it was unfair, and I read something in an alumni publication about ten years ago that read students were starting to say that the ABC did not represent black students on campus, but the ABC only represented black North American students. And I resented that partly because I was a founder of the organization, but also I resented it at least in terms because the ABC was always inclusive, particularly when we started to organize brothers and brothers and sisters from where ever their national origins would have been. I saw... Certainly there could be a need for a Caribbean student organization. Certainly there could be a need for an African students organization, but that does not diminish or take away from those organizations also being part of the ABC.

**Leslie Saint**<sup>12</sup>: I guess following that question what do you think we could do as ABC to bring those other groups so that they do feel included? And my second question is, as far as divisions within our own community is concerned how would you address that

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<sup>12</sup> Leslie Saint, Class of 2004. A.B., Psychology. Member of The Association of Black Collegians, 2001-2002.

problem, because I think we are facing the division within ourselves, but also within the Lafayette community?

**GG:** Okay. Can I address the latter and then the former? The divisions that you're talking about on this campus are no different than the divisions that are on my particular campus, and there are no divisions... and they're no difference in the divisions that are taking place at any predominantly white college and institution. One of them is in terms of numbers and then within the numbers is gender ratio. I've been having conversations with some of you ... and it was one of the questions that came up last night: why is it there are more and more black women going to colleges and universities and comparatively few black man coming in to college? That goes to any institution. If you are going to go to a historical black school, if you go to Howard there are many more women in Howard than there are men. If you were to go to any other historically black institution you will see many more women than men. But it says something at least in terms of education and socialization through K through 12 in terms of what's happening to black men as they progress through the school systems. Where for example many of them are not getting the grades in high school or not seeing anything in terms of college attendance after graduation. But then for those students who come on campus, for example, there are skewed gender dynamics which lead to tensions between men and women, and I am only going to reference it to my institution, but for example it might resonate here. There are some brothers at my institution who feels it is there mission to sleep with every woman on campus. Okay. And then to flaunt it to every other woman on campus. Okay. That's irresponsible, and it's also not respectful of your partners.

**June Thompson**<sup>13</sup>: Or yourself.

**GG**: Exactly. But there are people who engage in that type of behavior. Therefore, often times in some instances where there's more black women than black men you often times might see competition between black women for the small number of black men. That's also not healthy for women, and it's not healthy for men. This is a division I school, so therefore as it appears as if now that most of the men who are being recruited are being recruited for athletics. And not necessarily for other... Athletics being one part of their total profile as students. But they are being centrally recruited particularly by input for cultures to play on varsity teams. Similarly, at least in terms for black women, black women may not necessarily be recruited to be athletes, but to be recruited as students. So, therefore, you start to see two groups who have different targeted aims and goals from day one of their expected arrival on campus. The brothers are supposed to deal with the athletic teams. Sisters are supposed to engage in everything else in terms of the totality of their experiences. But it leads to tensions because often times brothers and sisters might have different goals in terms of what they're looking at or what they might talk about. Also, it raises questions, and I am basing this on my experiences at Tufts, that, for example, there are some, and I've seen sisters do much better academically than brothers. And sisters will come to talk to you in terms of about their academic performance. But also in terms... And I'm not engaging in gross stereotypes, but for example just in terms of some averages.

**JC:** Keep it real.

**GG:** That, for example, somebody wants you write a letter of recommendation. Many sisters will come to you three weeks in advance: “This is my packet. Here is my transcript. These are the applications. These are the letters. These are the stamps. Would you please do this for me?” Okay. In comparison, brothers will (*hand gestures*) “Yo, Professor Gill, I’m tryin’ to apply for this program, and it’s due tomorrow. Could you do this for me?” (*Laughter*) Okay. Again, I’m not saying this is universal, but there are certain patterns that one sees... that one sometimes observes in terms of behavior. Sisters will then write thank you notes. “Thank you for writing this letter of recommendation to me” and you don’t know what happened to the brothers. You do the letter of recommendation. Get mad at the fact that you get to the fax machine, because that’s right fax machines were made for academics or you got to go to the express mail to try to get the application in on time, and they don’t give you the \$12.95. (*Laughter*) But you do that. But it’s some of those experiences that take place which create tensions between and among black student. And in response to your second question: How do you over come it? There is a black men’s group on campus. I’ve read about some of their activities in terms of some of in alumni publications. Basically, they are engaged in very positive programming. I don’t know how many men are fully participating within the black men’s group, but, for example, I’m impressed with some of their programming and also in term of how they are reaching out to black women in terms of programming, more responsible programming to promote communication, dialogue and an appreciation of each other within the Lafayette community. That’s a very healthy sign. Build upon

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<sup>13</sup> June Thompson, Administrative Assistant , Pre-professional Office.

that. Individual men, for example, you may want to reassess your relationships with individual women. Build upon that. Individual women you may want to seek to... about your relationships with individual men and also individual women. Don't fight over the men. Don't fight... Don't fight over the men. Okay. 'Cause its... Again, talking about my experiences we've seen too many sisters who've had to go through counseling not necessarily to deal with how they are functioning in the classroom, but how they are functioning with the fact well, "He told me that." (*Laughter*) Don't fight over the men. Now in terms of the... Also, another thing for the sisters, look at the brothers. There are some brothers on this particular campus who are very smooth very suave, very sophisticated.

**From the audience:** Where are they? (*Laughter*)

**GG:** They're here. They're here. The Brothers of Lafayette. The Brothers of Lafayette. Angie Stone<sup>14</sup> talks about them. Angie Stone talks about them. (*Laughter*) See that's one of the things, for example, because I teach at a college, I am fifty-three years old, but I engage with a population between eighteen and twenty-two so I know who Angie Stone is. I know who Alicia Keys<sup>15</sup> is, and we were just talking about your project (referring to Jadrien Ellison<sup>16</sup>), we were just talking about rap I could've been on your committee. They're also some brothers here who are socially slow - who might not be your choice of partner while you're here, they may be. I'll confess. When I was an undergrad I was somewhat socially slow. I partied, but I was somewhat socially slow in comparison to

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<sup>14</sup> Angie Stone, R&B vocalist.

<sup>15</sup> Alicia Keys, R&B vocalist. Keys won five Grammy Awards in 2002.

some of the other brothers on this campus. But don't judge those brothers between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two because they might be grinds<sup>17</sup> because those are the type of brothers you're gonna find appealing in terms of their personal traits and their personal characteristics when you're looking for a potential mate after you finish graduate and professional schools. (*Laughter*)

**JT:** That is very true. It is. I will definitely endorse that.

**GG:** Now getting back to the first question. In terms... If there is a group of students of Caribbean descent who have founded a club or organization that they feel that speaks to their needs and don't want to engage with students of the ABC because they feel that the ABC is for students from North America. You can have a conversation in terms of... To look at the totality of the experiences and the commonalities and then say, "Yes have your own organization, but at the same time don't look at us as also not being representative or interested in terms of your issues." Why do Caribbean students come together? It's largely for cultural and ethnic reasons. They share the same frustrations in terms of the classroom. Okay And when an instructor looks at that particular student well, "She's of Jamaican descent. He's of Trinidadian descent. I like them better because I think they work hard than for example that individual who's from Philly." They don't make that discussion. They look at you as if you as being black. They look at you as being black. So yes, an appreciation of cultural and ethnic and national issues in terms of cultural sense, but in terms of trying to change issues and change conditions,

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<sup>16</sup> Jadrien Ellison, Class of 2002: A.B., Africana Studies.

<sup>17</sup> An individual who usually has his nose to the academic grind stone.

for example, they're not recruiting a student because she or he is Trinidadian. They might be accepting a student who might be indicate that an individual... I haven't seen that accepting a student who might be identify as this on a Lafayette applications. But if a student is asked to...

#### TAPE ONE SIDE TWO

**Buffie Longmire**<sup>18</sup>: When you were here did you find that the College had healthy or unhealthy competition amongst, you know, the students of color here? And I don't know if you can talk about it from your experiences being at Tufts. Kind of like that issue that they're always looking on these committees to have students of color representation, and there's almost a sense of like competition brewing you know which student are you going to pick or things like that.

**GG**: I think I understand the question. First of all, anyone ever heard the name of Ronald Bushrod Brooks<sup>19</sup>? Ronald Bushrod Brooks won the Pepper Prize<sup>20</sup> in 1965 - the first black male student to win the Pepper Prize in the history of the institution. Throughout all of our years here, "Why can't you be like Bushrod?" The white students are telling me this, and 'cause "He did this. He did this. He did this. He did this." And the rest of us were supposed to follow in the shadow of Bushrod. I could have named my

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<sup>18</sup> Buffie Longmire, Class of 2002. B.S., Psychology. History of The Association of Black Collegians.

<sup>19</sup> Class of 1965, B.S., Electrical Engineering.

<sup>20</sup> The George Wharton Pepper Prize was established by George Wharton Pepper in 1923. The award honors the Lafayette College senior who "most closely represents the Lafayette ideal." The recipient is chosen by Lafayette students and faculty.



presentation last night “In the shadow of Bushrod.” I never met the man, but I felt as if I...he was shaping what I was suppose to be. There were nine black males when we were here from my freshman year, but no matter what in terms of numbers there are still people who thought that we shouldn’t have been here because we were “unqualified.” There were only nine of us. But there were people here who thought we shouldn’t have been here because we were unqualified. And certainly we had to go through that type of stereotype thinking that probably still continues unfortunately in too many parts of higher education, that your only here because... you’re black. If that’s the case this school should be criticized to the nth degree if they could only come up with eighty people because they’re here because they’re black. I can go to Philadelphia and come back with three hundred people by five o’clock, if I just wanted black bodies between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two. You’re here because you worked to be here! You’re here because... People will say, “Well You’re here or from high school...” Then they will cast dispersions upon you. But then forgetting at least in terms of how much work you expended in terms of high school. Or at least in terms of how much effort that your parents expended on your behalf in high school to make sure that you’re here. But somehow somebody’s going to say you’re not fully deserving to be here. That’s nonsense. It was nonsense then, and it’s nonsense now. ‘Cause the admissions office has done a very good job in saying in terms of saying that students who are admitted to Lafayette are students that we think can graduate in four years. There are reasons why people don’t graduate in four years. But it’s less in terms of dealing with academic ability and more in terms of the frustrations and the sense of isolationism and the fear that people experience. The worst thing you could be is to be the only student of color in a

class, and you always, and that's one of the points I assumed why we needed a house; 'cause we're tired of going into spaces where we were only people where we had to uphold the entire history of the race. To show that black people could compete, black people were intellectually competent, that black people could speak English correctly, could write English correctly. We were tired and frustrated and again that's another one of the points. There's a lot of stuff I suppressed. (*Laughter*) But we always faced those challenges, and that's the major reason why people probably don't graduate from this institution. It's because of their frustration and their alienation from the institution. It's also one of the reasons why people who graduate oftentimes who feel not fully comfortable once they return. The second part of your question. Colleges and universities want to be inclusive, and in terms of being inclusive it's almost as if they feel now that we have to have representation by people of color on committees. What it means for those people who are faculty and staff it means another two or three or four levels have been added to your job beyond those in the job description. It means you have to go to more meetings than you ever intended to when you first took on this particular position. As I said before, I am tired of being on task force on race, oversight panels on race, ad hoc committees on race, interim committees on race, specially appointed commissions on race. Whatever the title, I am tired of it. They don't ask white members from my department to serve on those committees, and they have a racial identity. They're white! But every time there's question pertaining to race it's assumed that race only applies to people of color. And I am tired of being on those committees, and it's frustrating. They want to see students. They're certain types of students that also are only selected for those types of committees. Fortunately or unfortunately I fit into

that camp, because even though in my senior year while I might have been “militant.” There were other people in the freshman class they were afraid of. So therefore I was the student that was seen to be somewhat acceptable, and I could go on to the committees and talk to people on particular committees. But I got tired of doing that, and then other people were saying they got tired of my being on that committee, and that’s why they voted me out as coordinator of the ABC because they said I was representing all black people on this campus. I was only one of forty-three, but they said too many people looked at you as being the only black person who’s on this campus who has an opinion.

**JC:** We have time for about one more question. It’s getting close to one o’clock, so if anybody has a last question...

**GG:** Or we can stay a little bit later for those people...

**JC:** Yeah, but if you have to go to class you can excuse yourself.

**GG:** Go to class. Go to class. (*Laughter*)

**BL:** I have one last question. Something that I’ve always struggled with, like being in environments like this. Do you think that... I know that we always talk about it being a black community as almost a sense of family. Do you think in your experiences looking back that you know... it’s a different experience for the white student because they are not walking into this like white community with like white family or unless it’s not put

out in front of them on the platter for them do you think that it's almost a beneficial thing? Like we're gonna look back and say the fact that, you know, we came through this environment and people, you know, associated this as a family or a community or do you think that in times it can hinder us?

**GG:** It's beneficial in terms of community. Community does not mean uniformity and opinion. Community means full appreciation for people for who they are and respect them for who they are and what they do. There are some people who perhaps aren't as affiliated with the ABC right now, but maybe a first year student, but maybe over the course of two or three years might become affiliated with the ABC. Don't reject people, and don't hold people to artificial standards of what is "blackness." In terms of... Each person is an individual in terms of who she or he is on matters of identity. Race and the construction of race is only part of that identity. For example, matters of ethnicity as we were talking about. There's also matters' perhaps pertaining to someone's religion. Someone might be let's say someone might go to church. Someone might not go to church. Someone might be a Protestant. Someone might be Orthodox Islam. But, for example, race. Class is a difference right now. There are some people on this particular campus who might be the first generation to go to college. There might be other people who might be the third or fourth generation in terms of black college attendees. Also in terms of socio-economic divisions, for example, there might be some black students on this campus whose parents are paying the full ride. And there are other people who are recipients of financial aid. All these individuals are people of color or people of African descent, even though there are differences in terms of their backgrounds. There are

people who come from prep schools. There are people who come from public schools. I grew up in a black working class community, but I had black teachers when I was in school. I've had people tell me, "You're the first black teacher I've ever had." But, that's one of the changes in terms of class realities. There are more and more opportunities now for African-American women and African-American men. So, therefore, there isn't a ceiling saying that you're going to be a schoolteacher, where now, for example, you can go to law school or you can go to other careers. So obviously there are differences. There are also differences at least in terms of sexuality. For example, there may be some students who are gay, lesbian and bisexual. But, for example, don't reject students if your sexual orientation and sexual identity is different. One of the things to affirm members of community is to respect every one as an individual for what she or he has to offer to Lafayette and also to the ABC. Yes, in terms of benefits of community. One of the things, I've noticed, for example, and I find it disturbing, and this is one of the comments I made last night, and it might be my final comment. It does not hurt anybody if you're walking across campus to speak. It does not hurt anybody if you walk across campus to speak. I tell... There's a story that's told about two black students at Harvard. One black student was walking across Harvard yard and another black... One black person was walking across Harvard yard. Another black person was walking across Harvard yard. The first person spoke to the second person. The second person returned the greeting. It was obvious that neither of them went to Harvard. *(Laughter)* But for example... speak to each other. Be civil to each other. I'm sure there are some people in this room that don't even know each other. But speak to each other. "How are you?" "Good Morning." And that's the point I was making last night,

whatever our ethnic backgrounds, we come from cultures where people greet each other. What ever our cultures origins, we come from a culture where people respect elders. I walk across Tufts right now and people look at me... One situation a brother and sister are walking. The brother was rapping to the sister. I'm walking by. I speak to the two of them. Sister gets upset with me because I've interrupted the rap. (*Laughter*) She gives me this look, and then the brother looks at me like, "Yo, who are you?" They were freshmen. They didn't know me at that particular time, but two years from now they might ask me to write letters of recommendations on their behalf. But it doesn't hurt to speak to people. Thank You. (*Applause*)