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2015

Tracy Giles

Amber N. Brooks

Longwood University, amber.brooks@live.longwood.edu

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Recommended Citation

Brooks, Amber N., "Tracy Giles" (2015). *The Silenced Generation - Growing up after massive resistance and the civil rights movement*. Paper 9.

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Amanda Topping, Jason Hendricks, Kenny Schultz, Dylan Campbell, Jacob Carney

[Start]

Amanda Topping: Okay, I, okay, so what did you major in at Longwood?

Tracy Giles: Psychology

AT: Psychology, oh

TG: Yep

AT: That's cool, so it's very similar to sociology

Tracy: Yes, when I was here it was the four years that they were transitioning from elementary education to liberal studies or liberal arts for our education so you either had to pick something else to major in; you had about 700 psych majors there

AT: Oh, wow. That's really interesting. When was that? I was unfamiliar that that was even a time

Tracy: Um, I graduated in December of '93.

AT: That's really cool. So with a psych major, what made you want to get into crossfit?

Tracy: (laughs) Well, crossfit just came a few years ago. I um, crossfit came many years later. I actually taught school for thirteen years and I um had a city of richmond fire fighter that started training me to lose weight and just to get healthier and that's how crossfit started.

AT: That's really cool. What did you teach in school?

Tracy: Everything. Third grade through high school. I taught at a private school. So you teach whatever they give you. (laughs) So I've taught-

AT: What private school?

Tracy: New Life.

AT: Oh, okay, cool, cool. So you grew up in Cumberland, correct?

Tracy: About six miles out of Farmville, yes. It was considered - our address was Farmville but it was Cumberland County.

AT: Oh okay that's cool. So how did, like, growing up in Cumberland, how did the school like closings affect your childhood or adulthood?

Tracy: So, they really didn't affect my childhood. We didn't know a lot about it. My parents did not say a lot about it but it's a little different for me. You all have read the book?

AT: Yes

Tracy: So, I read the book, and it's a little different for me because I did not grow up, uh, like she did. Not any flack to her, her father was actually my dentist. (Laughs) But um, they grew up, um, more affluent, I grew up from a home; my mother was born in, um, Los Angeles, California. Her last name was Mendez, she was catholic so when she moved to Cumberland county, she was treated differently as a child. Um, and she had darker skin. Um, my father, um, grew up he was born in Buena Vista, Virginia, if you're familiar with that area. Very poor area. He moved here as a child and has a fourth grade education, and he cannot read and write. He had to quit school because his father passed away and he had to go to work. So, we were taught very differently, than, um, a lot of, than some people were, especially affluent people went to Prince Edward Academy. It was different for us here. We didn't talk about it, other than, um, I remember my mother saying "you treat everyone the same" because when she moved here from LA as a child, she was, um, teased. Because of her last name, and she was catholic, and she had darker skin, and my grandmother on my father's side was full-blown Monacan Indian.

AT: Oh that's really really cool.

Tracy: So, there was a lot of things that said like that you don't discriminate, you know. So, we really know other than that. We didn't talk about it. It was almost like we didn't have to.

AT: Yep

Tracy: We knew better

AT: How did you feel reading the book?

Tracy: It was hard, it was hard, I um, had a few friends at Prince Edward Academy, but not a lot. But I, uh, I learned a lot from that, from the book; that there were people that grew up differently than I did. I guessed that I grew up in just an average home where she just had more and I think that she, um, she may have had the same thinking that I did, but thinking that everybody was like her. Or everyone in white families were like her. My family was not like that, that's kinda what I got from the book. It was very hard to read.

AT: Yeah, those books are very hard to read. Yeah, I completely understand because, the Green book, I enjoyed that. We had to read another book that was hard to read like for freshman seminar, and that was very hard to read for me.

Tracy: Was that Wes Moore?

AT: It was Wes Moore, yeah.

Tracy: I've read that book also, and I loved that book

AT: Did you?

Tracy: Yeah! I loved that book a lot. I think it says a lot, um, it makes great statements.

AT: It does.

Tracy: but the Kristen Green book was so personal for me. When I first heard about the book, um, Professor David Magill, um, I don't know if any of you have Dr. Magill in the English department.

Dylan Campbell: I have met him, he was at my table during the Moton event

Tracy: So, he's a crossfitter, and he is the one that introduced me to the book, and I said that I didn't know about it and he said "you're going to know people in the book." Which I did (laughs). Which was very interesting.

AT: Must have been very weird.

Tracy: Yeah, it was interesting. Growing up, knowing these people and then, so yeah, it was hard, it was tough.

AT: So growing up, in the sort of family that you did, what was your favorite memory in your family? Like what was your favorite time or whatever? Was that a weird way to word it?

Tracy: No, it's not weird. If I had to pick one thing, well, I have an older brother, he is two and a half years older, and I have a twin brother-

AT: Oh, I've a twin sister

Tracy: Really? That's awesome. So, that was a lot of fun, um, because we were very close. We had done everything together in most of our life and we had the same friends and even my older brother, We all had a lot of the same friends. And I think probably one of the coolest things that, I feel, is that my mom stayed at home. She was at every school function. She was at everything we did. She made of all the cupcakes, the cookies, everything for us in school, and she was always there. And then when, um, when my twin brother and I went to college, she went to college. She took her time to um-

AT: Did she come to Longwood?

Tracy: She actually, um, went to the community college, Southside Community College and got two associates degrees with a 4.0 in both, and showed us up really good (laughs). And then she went into the workforce, and she just retired from the workforce from Hampden Sydney College.

AT: Oh wow, what did she do at Hampden Sydney?

Tracy: She was a client services manager for the computer center. She just retired in May.

AT: What is that? (laughs) Sorry, I'm not good with a computer

Tracy: So, she had a lot of jobs. When you went in, and you had a computer problem, she would set up appointments for people to work on your computer, she would work on them as well. But they had people that did that. She dealt with parents, that um, needed help. Whatever was needed in the computer center. They had like networking people, people that actually worked on them, but she kinda managed, i guess, everyone coming in or whatever they needed. She also did um purchasing for the school. She did a lot of working on staff computers.

AT: That's really really cool. What does your brother do?

Tracy: He owns a sign business

AT: He owns a what?

Tracy: A sign business

AT: Oh that's so cool

Tracy: Um, he, um, has done that for years. He's very talented. He does signs for businesses, he does signs for Longwood.

AT: So is he artistic?

Tracy: He is very artistic. I did not get that

AT: Me neither. Nobody in my family is artistic. We have, like, theater-y people but no visual arty people

Tracy: My mother is artistic, so he got that from her. But my dad is a carpenter. He actually worked at Hampden Sydney as a carpenter. Hes very artistic in building, very smart man in that respect.

AT: Thats really cool. Sorry, where did you go to school? You went to school in Cumberland county?

Tracy: Yes, Cumberland county from Kindergarden through twelfth grade

AT: What was the name of the school? Was it just like-

Tracy: Cumberland county public schools, yep. And then I went to the community college, for two years. That was the least, inexpensive way to go and, we had, um, two going (laughs) so it was, um, really the only option. And then transferred into Longwood as a junior.

AT: So you and your mother, did you go to the same community college?

Tracy: Yes

AT: Did you have any classes together?

Tracy: No, (laughs) we tried to avoid that. I had a class, um, I had an ethics class. A retired attorney from

California taught the ethics class. My mother had the class the semester before I did, and so, I, the next semester I took it, I go in the class. He has roll call, it's community college, you can do that, so he sees my last name and he said "are you Sherri's daughter?" And I said yeah. He said "well, if you're half the student she is, you'll do fine." And I said "Well, guess what? probably not (laughs) so get that out of your mind." We had a couple of the same professors, and it was funny because we never liked the same professors. The ones she liked I did not.

AT: What kind of professors did you like?

Tracy: Shes very artsy, she loved, um we had a professor that would come in, and his hair was always messed up, he had these dirty, what I thought were dirty, clothes. And this is going to sound horrible but he wore what we called Jesus that were horrible and she loved him. He was so artistic and dramatic. He taught literature and she loved him. She said that I would love him when I got there. Not so much (laughs).

AT: Did you like more of the straightforward, put together-

Tracy: yes, Im very organized and structured. I plan, and I like having things neat and orderly. I did not grow up that way, my parents also owned an antique shop and they called it a lot of stuff.

AT: Whats the name of the antique shop?

Tracy: Jack's Junk Shop. It's still here

AT: Thats so cool

Tracy: It wasnt cool growing up

AT: I like that stuff

Tracy: You would love it then! It's still there

AT: That's so awesome. I'm sorry, so your parents, your father was from Buena Vista, did I pronounce that right?

Tracy: Buena Vista

AT: So, did they know at all about the school closings? Since they came from different areas, like I didnt

know until I got here.

Tracy: I don't know, I'm sure they did, because, I mean my dad grew up here, he came here as a small child. So I'm sure that he did but because he had to quit school at fourth grade, and go to work, I don't think it impacted him like it did a lot of people because he had to go to work, he didn't have a choice but to work so school wasn't an option. There were fourteen children in his family, so he had to go to work.

AT: Did any of them get to finish high school?

Tracy: Yes, my dad, of course, didn't finish, he was fourth grade. But my mother of course finished high school. She actually got married at sixteen, my father was twenty six, and she was actually discriminated against when she graduated. She graduated with honors, but if you were married you were not allowed to have that distinction.

AT: Why?

Tracy: I don't know. I have no idea

AT: That doesn't make a lot of sense to me

Tracy: But yeah, she has told that story several times. That she did not get that distinction, for being married.

AT: Can I ask a weird question? I don't know if this question is going to make a lot of sense. Okay, given that your father only had a fourth grade education, do you necessarily, like, feel as bad for people who didn't get to go to schools as like Kristen Green did? Because she had so much, she was like so shocked by it. But being that you've seen how people can like go on in the world and have a less, not really a less, alike, really, like well paying careers, and without an education, do you feel, like, as strongly about it as she did?

TG: I don't know if I'm going to answer this exactly as you're asking. So, I, um, there is a special place in my heart for people who have had to work for what they have. And not to demean anyone that did not. But my father has worked from fourth grade on and you all can probably imagine what that'd be like that you have to get up and go to work every day and he will be 76 on the twenty first of this month so, and he's retired and he still works every day of his life, selling junk and that sort of thing. And carpenter work, still climbing the ladder. It's hard for me to see sometimes people that are handed everything, for young people that don't work and never had to work. And I taught school and I have seen that. And even I would have

parents that would come and their kid was always like it was my fault if they got a bad grade, you know, that kind of thing, and so to see that their children are not held accountable is hard and that people grow up like that and I'm sure they did then and I think it's worse now than it was before. I'm not sure if that answers your question-

AT: No, no, I understand-

TG: but I also worked with a gentleman for a few years when I was in college, I worked at a local business, that was going through that time of the schools. And he was a very good friend of mine and is still a friend of mine and to hear some of his stories and I wouldn't tell any of those without his permission of course-

AT: No, absolutely

TG: but um, I was very fond of him just one of the smartest people I have ever met. He could do- he could add, subtract, multiply, divide in his head and add tax onto anything in his head and never pick up a pen or a calculator, before I could do it on a computer. You know just one of the smartest people I ever knew.

AT: Yeah, I tend to find- I mean this is just me- I tend to find that education doesn't always like judge knowledge. My father also didn't get to finish all of school and he's a very successful salesman. So I completely get what you are saying.

TG: I don't believe that school is for everyone, um I went to college because I had a guidance counselor tell me I was average and college wasn't for me.

AT: I would have gone to college to.

TG: So that's why I went and I actually just finished my Master's Degree in 2014.

AT: Was the Master's in psychology?

TG: No, safety security and emergency management at Eastern Kentucky University.

AT: That's awesome, now what exactly is that?

TG: Um, Emergency Management? So managing disaster managing anything that has to do with natural or manmade disaster, safety security, Homeland Security. I'm actually gonna talk to Dr. Pederson's social problems class next week, I'm teaching two units on terrorism.

AT: That is so cool, what kind of job are you looking for in that field.

TG: Anything with Emergency Management or Homeland Security, but I co-own the CrossFit business, so it's kind of hard to focus on both right now. But anything Emergency Management it's hard to find something around here so I'm having to look elsewhere but I don't wanna go too far I wanna be able to get home to my parents of course They're still here. My father is like 70 so I don't wanna go too far and that's hard, not to do that.

AT: Are you close with Dr. Pederson or is she just like someone who you are an acquaintance?

TG: She's a good friend, she's a good friend. She's a very good friend.

AT: I was just curious.

TG: is she a good professor?

AT: Yes, she's awesome.

TG: She's an awesome person I learned a lot from her.

AT: I learned a lot too. I came in thinking a lot differently than I'm thinking now so-

TG: she has that effect on people, she's had that effect on me and I'm in my 40s and she really makes you think and that's awesome. These projects that she's doing are amazing she's doing our, um, volunteer fire EMS and she's doing the project um, through them- oral history as well- I don't know if you're familiar with that.

AT: yeah, she told us about that. So you volunteer at the fire, like, station here?

TG: in Prospect, where I live, about 20 minutes west.

AT: I know a few volunteer fire fighters here I was going to ask if you knew them?

TG: Well one I know Tyler.

AT: that's who I was gonna-

TG: He does CrossFit.

AT: He seems like the type.

TG: Yes, yes. You guys all know Tyler?

Dylan Campbell: He's cool.

TG: He's very strong.

AT: Very strong, do you guys have any questions at all?

DC: Um, yes, actually. After reading the book how did your perspective on education change? If at all?

TG: So, I guess my perspective on education did not change from the book my perspective of education changed when I became a teacher. I taught in a private school and I found a lot of children did not know about the school closings in Prince Edward County and many of the students that I taught were from surrounding counties and so my history book that I taught out of was a Christian book, 'cause I taught at a Christian school. We used a few secular books but the history book was a Christian book. And I'm not sure if it was because of that or if it was all history books in general, I'm finding that most in general will leave things out and make things, you know, nice. And so my history book did literally one paragraph about the school closings and so when I first started teaching, we have the Moton Museum right here. This is ridiculous! So I started talking to my students, and at this time it was fifth and sixth graders, they had no idea, no idea that people weren't allowed in school and I had, um, a very small class. And I had an African American male student in there that was friends with of course all of the white students, and when I brought them to the museum I said we've got to go, they've got to learn the history of where they live. And so we went and one of the gentleman that was, uh, that was- did not get to go to school because of the closing-

was giving them a talk. And he pointed to the little boy and he says “you two would not be able to sit beside each other in class” when they did- when they were in school, or they couldn’t be friends on the street. He says you couldn’t have done that, and those kids were just like “why? I don’t understand.” These are middle school kids. So for me it changed when I taught, way before- um – I will tell you that I did ask my mother when Dr. Pederson was talking about this project and asked me if I would do it because We’re kinda like the silent generation, and so I asked my mother, “why didn’t we talk about it?” Is there anything that, that- any reason we didn’t talk, and she said, you know, “we taught you guys to treat everyone the same, nobody is a pure race of any kind. And everyone, just because of the color of your skin, it doesn’t make you different than anyone else.” We never had to talk about it, and she said, “It just didn’t, we just didn’t have to in that respect. We didn’t raise you guys to think, you know, any differently so I do remember- I hope I’m not going over your time.

AT: No I’m sure you’re not.

TG: as, um- when I was a child, my father worked as a carpenter and I remember that he had an African American male that he worked with and it was a good friend of his and I remember sitting down for dinner one evening and we all sat together as a family and I remember the gentleman coming to the back door which everybody came to the back door. He knocked on the door and my dad sitting at the head of the table leaning back and he’s like, “Hey! Come on in!” And he stepped in the door but he would never come any further. This is in the- I was born in the 70s so probably, um, late 70s. And so my dad’s like “come on in, have some dinner with us.” And he’s like, “Sherry give him a plate, you know, come on in sit down.” And he’s like, “no I can’t I can’t.” And my dad kept insisting but he never would sit with us. And so my mom fixed him a plate for him to take so he did. So years later- for some reason it was in the back of my mind for all of these years- so years later I, um, I asked my mom I said, “Mom why would he not eat with us? Was there something wrong with us?” Well then she did explain to me then that, um, in the county even Virginia, Cumberland County and surrounding counties that African American people were not allowed to sit with, with um, white people- affluent white people I guess. Well we didn’t know any different because my parents didn’t treat anybody any differently-

AT: Even during that time?

TG: So the gentleman, from what I understand, he grew up like that so his mindset did not change he still felt like he was not- not like he wasn’t welcome but like it wasn’t his place. And I never, I didn’t understand that at the time, and as much as my parents welcomed him, he, he did not feel like he could do that. I still know a gentleman that I volunteer with, Dr. Pederson knows him very well and he is, um, an African American male in our fire department. And when he got on the fire department almost 40 years ago, people did not want him to come on ‘cause he was an African American on the department. And he and I are very close, and even now- so we have uh a couple African Americans on the department now. We should be greater diversity than that but we have very few women as well. But um, we have an African American male that is very outspoken he’s, you know, my age so he’s very different than the older gentleman. And when they’re in a meeting, I have not seen it, but um the other gentleman- the younger one- will tell me that if they are sitting in a meeting beside each other and they’re talking about something and the younger African American male will speak up, and it’s maybe contradictory of what the department wants to do, even if it’s something really dumb and he’s trying to say “Hey guys we shouldn’t do this.” The older African American male will kick him in the leg or like do this (reached out and touched Amanda’s

hand) because in his mindset it was hard for him to get on as an African American male and he thinks that he doesn't have a voice and the younger male will tell him, "We have a voice, I've got this, don't- you can't live like that. You don't have to live like that any longer." But at 60 years old he doesn't see any different than what he knew 40 years ago, when he first got on, which is really sad.

AT: That's awful. I think that's really awful that people still think that way. I mean obviously all people feel oppressed in some manner, not everyone is treated equally.

TG: And he loves everybody and he's one of our hardest workers on our department, but he still feels like he is not as important I guess. And I have a problem with it because he's one of our hardest workers but he's never been fire fighter of the year. You know, he's done so many things for our department and ok why isn't he recognized? And I'm not saying that he is not because of the color of his skin, but sometimes in the back of my mind- I've been on fire calls with him and we've ridden together in my personal vehicle and we get looks like what are you two doing together? I even had a gentleman call me from our department after we went on a call together one night and it was after 11 o'clock and we had been hanging out so we just went to the call together. And we were in my personal vehicle when we got to the fire house. I got a call the next day saying, "Where were you guys? What were you doing?" Like what business is it of yours, you know? But because he is African American- so we still see that even now sometimes.

AT: You talked about how he gets- he doesn't feel as if his voice is heard? Do you feel as if your voice isn't heard as a woman on the fire department?

TG: Um, that is very interesting-

AT: you don't have to answer that-

TG: No, I, I would love to if you guys have the time. I understand if you don't.

AT: Okay, yeah.

TG: Um, so I work, um, with the auxiliary. I'm also an EMT with a neighboring department. So we do not have an auxiliary in Prospect. Uh, I was married at the time, my husband was on the department, and so I wanted to help but I'm scared of fire. So I, I don't wanna do that, but I can do things other than that. I can, I can do EMS things, I can do whatever else, so fundraising is a big thing because our county is all volunteer, I don't know if you guys know that.

AT: Yeah.

TG: I'll volunteer so uh we uh established an auxiliary. But before we were voted in, because the department had to vote that we are kind of like a subsection of the department, uh there were men that didn't want women doing things at the firehouse.

AT: That's stupid.

TG: Yeah. So we've raised a lot of money for them since '97, a lot of money. We paid for half of their new brush truck they got several years ago-

AT: That's awesome.

TG: ya know, from money that we raised, so, but we do see that. We still see that a lot in departments. Um, and the neighboring department that I run EMS with, um, has, I don't think he's still on it, but they had one African- African-American male, no women on the fire department. Only women in the EMS side.

AT: Wow...

TG: They don't say that that's why, but they, we actually had a woman join our department that was not let on that department. And they couldn't say it was because you were a woman, but-

AT: That's. That's why.

TG: Yeah. We know. So. So we still see a lot of discrimination in a lot of ways in the county....

AT: Mhm. Absolutely.

TG: Or in several counties. Yeah.

DC: Would you say that that discrimination is in part because of the school closings?

TG: I think so. Um, I don't know if you guys are familiar, um, with a lot of things that still go on in the county, but there's still a lot of hard feelings, both sides. And we still see a lot of that in the county.

AT: Mhm.

TG: Uh, even in the school system, there's a lot of hard feelings. Which is understood, greatly understood. But uh, because so many of those people are still living, that have been through it. So, it's very hard. And I know when I was in high school, and hanging out with... Everyone. I was president of my uhh, senior class and a cheerleader, we hung out with everyone, however-

[Intercom interrupts]

TG: Oh good. I was hearing the noise.

DG: [Mumbling]

TG: Um, that I remember being called names if I was hanging out with a black guy. And the n word was used, and I specifically remember that. And that's the late eighties. So.

AT: Yeah.

TG: I remember, those, those things.

AT: What names did they call you?

TG: I, I don't say the n word.

AT: Oh. That's fine.

TG: So, but it was the n word with lover behind it.

AT: Oh.

TG: Uh, I was, I was in the cafeteria with a good friend of mine in high school and we were walking together and that's what I was called, by a friend of mine's sister. The friend of mine was never like that, but her

younger sister, was 14 at the time and I'll never forget it.

AT: That's absolutely ridiculous.

TG: I'll never forget her saying that. Yeah. And I don't say that word. I, I just don't. I don't say that word at all.

AT: I feel like it's offensive, I've never found any use to say it.

TG: Right, exactly. Exactly.

AT: Do you guys, Dylan, any?

DC: I'm sorry, I'm pretty vocal for being someone who's not the interviewer.

AT: Dude, no, go.

DC: But um, what was your first time like at the Moton? Did you go on your own accord, did you go with your class?

TG: With my class.

DC: How'd you enjoy it?

TG: I, I liked it.

DC: Like your first time at the Moton, how'd it make you feel?

TG: Yeah. So when I was growing up, that was actually a middle school for Prince Edward County. So I had been there, you know I had friends-

AT: Mhm.

TG: So I had been there. But um, the first time I went wi- an adult, I was teaching. Um. I enjoyed it. I hope that they do more, I hope that they get more things there. I hope it becomes more publicized, all over the country not just in Prince Edward County, because I think when you, when you go back and read um, the, the cases, it didn't just start with just Prince Edward County. Prince Edward County had a huge impact, but it happened in so many other counties and other states, and of course, Kristen Green's book does go into that.

AT: Mhm.

TG: So I think that more people, um, should know about it, and should know that it's here. I think it's a shame that the schools here, and I don't know if you guys know this, but, um, a lot of the schools do not take field trips to the Moton Museum. I've been asking.

AT: Is there any reason why they don't?

TG: I'm not sure, I'm not sure. Most elementary schools here do not, that is not a field trip that they have done. And when, when I was teaching, I asked that specific question when I took my class, about other schools coming and I was told that, that they do not, um, participate like that.

AT: It's such an interesting piece of history that I wasn't even aware of until I got here.

TG: Right. Where are you all from?

AT: I'm from Chesapeake Virginia.

Kenny Schultz: I'm from Nokesville.

TG: Okay.

KS: Northern Virginia.

Jacob Carney: I'm from right outside Charlottesville.

TG: Okay.

Jason Hendricks: Yeah, I'm right outside of uh, Lynchburg.

TG: Oh, you're not far.

DC: Uh, Staunton Virginia.

TG: Oh okay, so you guys are still all in, in Virginia. So.

AT: Yeah.

TG: And, and you don't even know, before you came? I'm asking you guys questions now.

AT: No, I didn't.

TG: So you didn't know about the history? Which being so close, you would think that the, especially the Virginia schools would teach that... Would teach that.

AT: Even since being here, I've been to the Moton twice and like- I just- It shocks me that I never learned about that because we've learned about every- I've taken like courses in Virginia history and we've still never learned about it.

TG: Right. Yes, I took African-American Literature and nothing talked about- About these types of things when I took that years ago, so. It's kinda shocking.

AT: Mhm.

TG: But um. I think more and more people becoming aware of you guys doing this is really gonna help, um, get things out there. I will tell you, too, I do know people that have read Kristen Green's book and I've talked to different people of different um, generations. There are a lot of different feelings and you guys interviewing- All of you interviewing different people, different groups, I think you're gonna find that, you're gonna find some different feelings of... Um. Some people that like it and some that don't and some that don't like that she did it. I'm glad that she did it.

AT: Mhm.

TG: Um, even though it's, it was hard for me to read. At least it's bringing some awareness.

AT: Yeah, absolutely. Is there anything-

TG: I'm sorry, I feel like I'm talking but I feel like, just-

AT: No you're totally fine. No that's why your chair is directioned. Dylan? Jacob? Kenny? Do you have anything else that you want to tell us? Just, about anything?

TG: I appreciate you guys doing this. I'm really excited-

AT: Thank you so much.

TG: -that you guys are, are, that are doing this in the class, and I hope you that you learn so much from it and that you'll take it back and use it wherever you are and inform other people of what's going on here. Um, I own a CrossFit business and I co-own it, but I co-own it with an African-American male and it's still hard in this county when people see that or when people come in. So. It's amazing sometimes.

AT: It's very different from where I'm from.

TG: Yes, yeah. An- And the other places I've been, it's the same way. You know, how you grow up, it's so different.

AT: What are other places that you've been?

TG: Um. Just travelling throughout, you know um. Even in Virginia. If you go to Richmond, it's so different. It's such a diverse culture there. Charlottesville, um Greensboro, Raleigh, um Florida, you know, any places are so different than here. If you've never had the chance to go to um, Greensboro to the Civil Rights Museum, go. It is a very um, cool place to go. It's th- where the sit-in was.

AT: Oh wow.

TG: Um, civil rights movement. Have you, are you familiar with that?

JC: I have not been, but-

TG: Yeah, you should go. It's um. The basement or the- the lower level has pictures that- that will just really um... umm... Tug at your heartstrings when you see the pictures of things that were done. Slavery times. Um, I will tell you another thing, teaching. When we were covering, um the, um with my students, we were covering um, civil rights movement, we talked about voting and African-Americans were um, discriminated against in the voting process. And are you guys familiar with the test?

AT: Yes.

TG: So um, I printed the test for my students in middle school.

AT: Could they pass it?

TG: No. They were, they were, they were... Dumbfounded. They were like this is so not fair. Yes you're exactly right. So, but um. And I did not do it but students, another uh teacher, their high school government class, they studied it and they um, they studied civil rights movement and they actually separated the class into I think, maybe orange and purple.

AT: Mhm.

TG: And the orange group had to go across the school to the water fountain and to the bathroom, for, they did it for like a week or so. And uh, it was a very, um, impactful for those high school students then, that they, they really learn first hand what it's like, 'cause they would- they would have to separate and they

couldn't sit at the lunch table with their friends that they sat with so, it was a very good project that they did so they could learn, you know, a lot of uh ways that- that people were discriminated against, just the water fountain or the bathroom or sitting in a cafeteria together.

AT: Yeah.

TG: So it was pretty interesting to see that even though I- I wasn't a part of that- that class. But- But it was very interesting so.

AT: I'm glad that civil rights is becoming more of a part of education. I really am.

TG: Yes, I hope- I hope it is. I- I think it's gonna depend on teachers to do that-

AT: Absolutely.

TG: -because the curriculums do not- do not do that. But you know- Yeah.

AT: But that's-

TG: So.

DC: Um, after learning about the uh school closings and such, did your uh perspective of the Civil Rights Movement change at all? Did you- Did it feel more close to home or-

TG: It did. It did. Um. I um, I was embarrassed for the county. Uh, and I grew up just six miles out of this county but y- understand that that carried over throughout um, throughout the surrounding counties, so I was embarrassed. I mean, how could people do this? And then- and now I think you know, sometimes if people look at me, you know, do they think my parents part of this or my grandparents were part of this? An- And I don't want people to think that. You know? And especially after the book came out because I did not grow up like she did, in an affluent home. So, um, I was embarrassed and it- it made me um, think a lot more about a lot of things. My students that I taught and where they come from and um, all- all diversity and backgrounds and I- I think it really helped me to- to work with everybody. Not that I didn't before, it just gives you a whole new perspective of people that come in and out of your life, even if it's just for a second. People that come in and out of your life, you can make a difference and you don't know what they've been through before you talk to them. I had a um, administrator tell me, uh for my children that I taught. She says you don't know what a child went through before they walked in that school in the morning. You never know. And I think about that a lot now. Um. Even in today's society what- what people go through and what they've been through or what their family has been through so I think it- I think it definitely changed a lot, for me. Made me much more aware um, of what is going on and much more, um, I guess empathetic, for all people. And- and as much as we like to say that we are, it's hard sometimes, and you had to step- take a step back and say I haven't walked a mile in their shoes.

AT: I learned that from Dr. Pederson's class. She's teaching me to think more like that.

TG: Yes. Creative and critical thinking. That's awesome that's she's doing that.

AT: Yes. Dylan, anything else, like? Jacob? Kenny?

TG: Thank you guys so much for doing this.

AT: Thank you so much.

JC: Thank you.

AT: Can I shake your hand?

TG: Yes. If you missed anything or need anything else, you have my number- just-

AT: I do.

TG: Text or whatever. I'm sorry about the not getting back to you and then I delete it and then I don't have it-

AT: It's fine, it's absolutely fine. It's not a big deal at all.

[The interview was had ended. We shook hands but then Amanda and Tracy kept talking so we tried to record what was left.]

AT: Gonna transcribe it first and then we're gonna like work on like maybe a powerpoint or a something.

DC: Some form of presentation.

AT: I wanted to do a rap video but I don't anyone else is really on board for that.

DC: I told you I'd film it but I'm not gonna be in it.

TG: It's creative.

AT: I thought it was fun.

TG: It's very creative. Um. A lot of the students in- in the one last year helped her with the oral history for the fire department. They had some really, really cool things, so. Um. And, everything was different, so whatever you guys do will be- will be great, so. Thank you all. Sorry I was late.

AT: Thank you so much. It's totally fine.

DC: Not a problem. Appreciate it.

AT: Really appreciate it.

[End]