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Black Women Oral History Project

Interview with

Zelma George

August 20 and 21, 1978

Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College



Radcliffe College, 1978

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The interviews in the Black Women Oral History Project
are dedicated to the memory of

Letitia Woods Brown

whose enthusiastic encouragement and wise council
made the project possible

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The Rockefeller Foundation
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The National Institute on Aging
The Mary McCants Stewart Foundation
The Links Incorporated
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INTRODUCTION

Since July 1976 the Schlesinger Library of Radcliffe College, with support from The Rockefeller Foundation, supplemented in 1980 by grants from The Blanchard Foundation of Boston and the National Institute on Aging, has been conducting a project to record and transcribe the autobiographical memoirs of a group of black American women 70 years of age or older. The purpose of the project is to develop a body of resources on the lives of black women in the twentieth century, especially in the years prior to the Civil Rights Movement, and to make this material available to researchers and students interested in the struggles of women and racial minorities in the United States. Many interviewees have had professional careers in such fields as education, government, the arts, business, medicine, law, and social work. Others have combined care for their families with voluntary service to their communities. All have made significant contributions toward the improvement of the lives of black people and to the development of American society.

In the past, the black woman often has not created a written record of her experiences, and when such a record has been created, it is not usually found in libraries or archives, the traditional repositories for historical documents. One means of attempting to capture and preserve such lives is the oral interview, which explores the influences and events that have shaped each woman's experience and gives her an opportunity to reflect on the past and to present her point of view on historical events. The interviews of the Black Women Oral History Project offer fresh source material that can add an important dimension to the study of the history of the United States. They supplement and comment on other sources as they examine the active participation of a group whose members were previously overlooked as being only shaped by and not shapers of historical events.

Dr. Zelma Watson George's life work and career have encompassed many fields of interest and activities. She is a distinguished scholar, especially in the area of Negro music, a lecturer, and humanitarian. A member of the United States delegation to the 15th General Assembly of the United Nations in 1960, she thinks in international terms, and has special concern for the so-called Third World. She is also a sociologist and social worker, who headed the Cleveland Job Corps Center from 1966 to 1974; and she is an accomplished actress and singer.

Zelma Watson was born in Hearne, Texas, on December 8, 1903, the first of six children of Lena Thomas and Samuel Elbert Watson. They had met while students at Bishop College, training to be teachers; he later received his divinity training at Virginia Union University. Both parents were also trained musicians. After marriage they worked together at Hearne Academy, he as principal and she as a teacher. The growth of his family and the inadequate salary at the Academy led Mr. Watson to turn to the Baptist ministry. This moved the family to Palestine, Texas; Hot Springs, Arkansas; and Dallas, Texas.

Zelma received home schooling from her parents through fourth grade. She played piano and organ, and wanted to be an opera singer, but realized that in her lifetime there probably would be little opportunity for Negroes at the level of the Metropolitan Opera. As a child she sang in her father's church and accompanied him to conventions and revival meetings. They often sang duets, and were known as "Reverend Watson and his daughter Zelma."

She describes her father as a "one-man NAACP." In 1918 because of his intense involvement on behalf of the Black community, the Ku Klux Klan gave the Watson family forty-eight hours to leave Dallas. Reverend Watson had on his desk an unanswered letter offering him a pastorate in Topeka, Kansas. He decided to accept. It was in Topeka that Zelma completed her last two years of high school. She continued singing and developed an interest in sports--learning to swim and to play tennis and basketball.

Although the school counselor encouraged her to attend nearby Washburn College, Zelma wished to matriculate at the University of Chicago. The University accepted her as a student, but refused to allow her to live in a dormitory. In 1920 Reverend Watson received a call to the Pilgrim Baptist Church in Chicago. He accepted, moving the whole family there so that Zelma could attend college while living at home. She found the University of Chicago the most exciting experience of her young life, studying under some of the luminaries in the field of sociology, and with fellow students E. Franklin Frazier, Sadie Gray, and Carter G. Woodson, among others. She came up against more racial discrimination within the university when she wanted to swim and to join the choir. She eventually became a member of the swimming team, but was never admitted to the choir. The chaplain, asked to break a tie vote, cast his vote against admission. She received the Ph.B. degree in sociology in 1924, and began graduate studies in the School of Social Service Administration, intending to work for the Ph.D. degree.

Immediately after graduation, she also enrolled in Northwestern University, studying pipe organ for two years. Following this she entered the American Conservatory of Music, receiving a certificate in 1927 after two years of voice study. In 1924 she also began full-time work as a case worker for the Associated Charities of Evanston, Illinois, and in 1925 became a probation officer in the Juvenile Court of Chicago. She served there until 1932.

Reverend Watson died suddenly in 1925. He had asked Zelma to help her mother educate the other children. Mrs. Watson herself was attending college at this time, and it was part of the family plan that all of the children should attend college. It was almost twenty years before Zelma's obligation to her four sisters and brother was completed.

In 1932 Miss Watson took a position at Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial State University in Nashville as director of personnel administration and dean of women. It gave her the opportunity to bring her mother and her two younger sisters to the campus to live. The two older sisters had already received a college education, but it was difficult maintaining a home in Chicago and providing for the education of her siblings. The two younger sisters completed their undergraduate education there, and in 1937 it was time for a new phase of Zelma Watson's life. A young man whom she had known in high school came back into her life. They married in 1937, in her father's former church in Chicago, and moved to Los Angeles to establish the Avalon Christian Church and a community center. Her job was as organizer and director of the Avalon Community Center in a multi-

ethnic area that was rapidly becoming predominantly black. She developed programs for all ages. The Community Center was very successful, but the church did not grow, and the marriage was failing.

While in Los Angeles Miss Watson completed one year of study toward the doctorate, in the School of Education at the University of Southern California. While struggling to make the marriage work, she received a two-year grant from the Rockefeller Foundation and in 1942 went to New York to continue her research in Negro music, a lifelong interest. She was planning at the same time to continue her graduate work, and in 1943 received the M.A. degree in Personnel Administration from New York University.

In 1942, for her research on Negro music, Miss Watson visited the special John G. White Collection at the Cleveland Public Library. In Cleveland she met Clayborne George, attorney-at-law, and president of the Cleveland Civil Service Commission (1934-1969). They married in 1944. Years later they discovered that they had actually met for the first time in 1927 when both Alpha Kappa Alpha (her sorority) and Alpha Phi Alpha (his fraternity) had held their national meetings in Cleveland.

After her marriage, Mrs. George became involved in Antioch Baptist Church, her husband's home church. She was active in the YWCA, the Girl Scouts, the Conference of Christians and Jews, the American Society for African Culture, the Council on Human Relations, the League of Women Voters, the Fund for Negro Students, the NAACP, Alpha Kappa Alpha, and many other organizations. With their common interests, Mr. and Mrs. George joined the Cleveland Council on World Affairs, and a study group on Dumbarton Oaks,

Yalta, and the evolution of the United Nations. In the interview, Mrs. George describes her relationship with her husband as being one of "partners, constantly communicating and sharing one with the other."

In 1948 at the suggestion of her husband, the new Karamu Theatre in Cleveland asked Mrs. George to sing the title role in Gian-Carlo Menotti's The Medium. Through the years she had continued to work to keep her voice in condition. She sang the role in 1949 and 1950 over a six-month period, and in 1950, under the direction of Menotti, sang the role on Broadway for thirteen weeks. The National Association of Negro Musicians gave her a Merit Award for her role in "The first Broadway musical with the leading role played by a Negro, not written for a Negro." She sang in Menotti's opera The Consul at the Cleveland Playhouse in 1952, and in The Three Penny Opera at Karamu in 1955. In 1949 she wrote Chariot's a Comin', a musical drama about Negro music.

Although Mrs. George had completed research for her doctorate by 1944, her busy life as a "professional volunteer" and hostess in Cleveland left her little time to work without interruption. In 1947 and 1948 she also took graduate courses in radio and television techniques at Western Reserve University. Doctoral work was completed in 1954, and she received the Ph.D. degree in Sociology/Intercultural Relations from New York University with a dissertation entitled "A Guide to Negro Music: Toward a Sociology of Negro Music."

In 1956 Dr. George was asked to join what became a two-year study by the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Armed Services in which she visited military installations all over the

United States. From 1958 to 1960 she served on the President's Committee to plan the 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth. Congresswoman Frances Bolton of Ohio's 22nd Congressional District for a long time had been observing Dr. George's service, commitment and influence. It was through her that in 1959 Dr. George received a State Department grant for a six-month lecture tour under the auspices of the Educational Exchange Program. She spoke to thousands of people in Africa, Southeast Asia, and western Europe, discussing especially the problems of Blacks and women in the United States. She received wide acclaim for her accomplishments, her warmth and understanding, and her very personal relationships with people. This did not go unnoticed by the United States government.

Shortly after her return in 1960, President Eisenhower appointed her an alternate member of the United States delegation to the 15th General Assembly of the United Nations. She was there at a time when new African and Asian nations were being admitted, changing the balance of power in the United Nations. She describes in her interview an incident when the United States delegation abstained from voting on a resolution recommending the "speedy and unconditional end of colonialism." The resolution passed 89 to 0, with nine abstentions. Dr. George spontaneously arose in the midst of the seated United States delegation to applaud the African nations and the success of the resolution. This fame and notoriety led to full-time lecturing from 1961 to 1966, under the auspices of the W. Colston Leigh Bureau and the Danforth Foundation. She spoke to high school, college and university students, service clubs, conventions, churches and

synagogues, civic and cultural groups, about the United Nations, the civil rights movement, the Third World, Black music, art in international relations, and other topics of interest to her.

In the fall of 1966, Dr. George accepted appointment as Executive Director of the Job Corps Center in Cleveland. Alpha Kappa Alpha was the sponsor for the program, begun in 1965, which offered vocational training to young women from the lower economic strata who had dropped out of school. Ebony magazine, writing in 1968, about the Cleveland Job Corps Center, called it "The Miracle on Ansel Road," for turning around the lives of so many Negro girls. Dr. George retired in 1974 with a gala reception attended by around 700 people. During her time at Job Corps, she served three years on the judges panel of the "Miss America Pageant."

Clayborne George had died on Christmas Eve in 1970. Since his death and her retirement from the Job Corps, Dr. George has continued lecture tours, research and writing, teaching, and consulting in all her areas of interest and expertise. For five years she worked with the Cleveland Links in developing a major folk art exhibition entitled "The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts." The exhibition was first shown at the Cleveland Museum of Art in 1978, and then toured to six other institutions, closing at the Smithsonian. Dr. George has taught at Cuyahoga Community College, and in 1986 was developing "Images of Excellence," an academic program focusing on human resources development. In 1983 she wrote "A Joyful Noise," a musical drama about the Negro spiritual. In 1985 she attended the United Nations Decade for Women Conference in Nairobi, Kenya. In spite

of a very busy life, she has found time for several hobbies, including collecting English versions (prose and poetry) of the Bible, slave narratives, Negro art songs, United Nations flags, and photographs of hands, many of which are of famous world figures.

Dr. George's life memberships include the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Council of Negro Women, Alpha Kappa Alpha, and the Cleveland YWCA. Through the years she has also been involved with the International Peace Academy, the United Nations Board, World Federalists, World Future Society, Corporation for Public Broadcasting, African Studies Association, the Urban League; and many local organizations and Cleveland branches, among them the American Red Cross, Council of Church Women, American Association of University Women, Great Lakes Festival Board, and the Public Relations Committee of the Musical Arts Association operating the Cleveland Orchestra. She has honorary membership in Delta Kappa Gamma Society, Phi Delta Gamma, Alpha Kappa Delta, Phi Delta Kappa Sorority, and the Federation of Women's Clubs in Ghana.

Dr. George has received numerous awards, recognition, and citations, and has been featured in articles in many national and international newspapers and magazines, and biographical reference works. She has received honorary degrees from several institutions, including Cleveland State University, Baldwin-Wallace College, and Heidelberg College. She was named Alumnus of the Year by both New York University (1973) and the University of Chicago (1969). In accepting the award from Chicago, she reminded them of her experiences as a Black student and of her

exclusion from some aspects of college life, and commended them for the tremendous growth which had taken place since she was a student there.

Among the most prestigious awards received by Dr. George are the Dag Hammarskjold Award (1961) for "distinguished service to the cause of world peace through world law"; the Dahlberg Peace Award (1969) from the American Baptist Church, for "imaginative, persistent leadership and courageous working for freedom; creative, generous use of artistic talents and for deep Christian faith"; the Mary Bethune Gold Medallion (1973) from Bethune-Cookman College; and the James Dodman Nobel Award (1985) from the Council on Human Relations. Also in 1985, the greater Cleveland Women's History Week Committee honored her as one of the "Women Who Shaped Cleveland." Perhaps the award that is closest to her heart is the "Big Sister Award," given by her siblings, expressing all that she meant to them as their "Big Sister."

In 1971, Rowena Woodham Jelliffe, the founder of Karamu Theatre, wrote of Dr. George: "Her competence has grown by the use of her considerable equipment. Never has it stood unused, to fade or tarnish. She has known and used the regenerative power of work. Never has she lost momentum through wastage of bitterness. Her inner illumination stays strongly with her even in these mature years. She has the capacity for great happiness. She is an individual grown strong through involvement with society, giving of herself and taking from it richness and learning."



Zelma George

Interview with Dr. Zelma Watson George

Marcia Greenlee: This is part one of an interview with Dr. Zelma Watson George. The interview is taking place in Dr. George's home at 13800 Shaker Boulevard, Apt. 308, Cleveland, Ohio 44120. The date is August 20, 1978. The interviewer is Marcia Greenlee. Dr. George, you have been a social worker, teacher, a school administrator, a "good-will ambassador" for the U.S. Department of State and later a member of the U.S. Delegation to the General Assembly of the United Nations; a wife, you are a writer, a speaker, a musician with Broadway experience and a community activist. Why have you pursued such a multitude of interests beyond a superficial level?

Zelma George: I suppose you have to get basically at my definition of the good life, the full life, the whole concept of fulfillment in order to understand it. I do not see these interests as separate entities. They are various aspects of my becoming a person, of my making use of my interests and concerns and maybe talents and opportunities that to me are essential for wholeness. The concept "wholth" is very important to me and it's one of the things I'm constantly seeking to achieve. I suppose I'll never achieve it, but basic to everything I do is a desire to explore--or at least identify--all of the alternatives in the various aspects of an experience. That searching has carried me into many fields of interest and activity. I do not see them as unrelated. They all are involvement with people. My business is communication and my challenge always has been to seek to better know me in my give-and-take relationships with people and to discern how best to use my opportunities so that each helps the other toward fulfillment of each specific mission. I do not only believe that you cannot give without receiving, I believe that one must seek to "receive" from relationships as well as to "give." The very nature of humankind requires a multifaceted conceptualization of him/her integrated into a "wholth."

MG: So you've had one career with several facets, not several careers. Is that right?

ZG: I would say Yes. Not "career" as it is usually defined, but "career" as it unfolds in a multi-faceted exploration and involvement with ideas, people and events. I sometimes use the term "infinitely plural" to describe my concerns and reachings-out. My appetite for life is enormous and I am sure that I gave my parents many anxious moments as I was growing up.

MG: So there is a kind of integration of all the aspects of endeavor.

ZG: Let me say this. When I was on Broadway somebody remarked, "You're a practicing sociologist. How did you get to Broadway? I mean how did it happen that your training professionally is as a sociologist, and here you are on Broadway singing in an opera?" My reply was that I just don't see any conflict there at all. I am interested in people, I'm interested in the conceptualization, the techniques and the practice of communication with people. I'm interested in music as a form of communicating. When you are on the stage, when you're singing, you are in a great dialogue with people! I just don't see it as a conflict at all. I don't see it as a variance, I see it as an enrichment, another communication skill I can work on perfecting.

MG: So communication with people then is the underlying unity of all of these expressions of your interests. This is communication--of ideas, of skills, of emotions, of goals, of values, of love.

ZG: Trying to be fulfilled; to grow, and to share; to give and to receive, in my involvement with people. This is communication--of ideas, of skills, of emotions, of goals, of values, of love.

MG: Well, let's briefly survey this career and its many facets. What we want to discuss today is general in nature and interpretive. What was the nature of your career as a social worker?

ZG: First, let me explain that because of my rich musical experience with my mother and father, from early childhood I wanted to be an opera singer. I thought I had the equipment for it, and I certainly had the interest, and I had had a lot of help from parents who were trained musicians. But there was no chance for me in opera when it came to the practicality of it in 1920. It was absolutely futile for me to look forward to Metropolitan Opera Company or anything worthwhile in the opera experience. My father preached and earnestly believed that no matter what you wanted to become in life you had to have basically a good classical education, you talk about vocations later. Now this was his philosophy of life and so he felt that I should go to a good college and get my bachelor's degree in the arts. And then, he said, we'll talk about vocation. Well, I went to the University of Chicago and that's a story I will want to tell you about after a while. But I went to the University of Chicago and got a Ph.B., a Bachelor of Philosophy degree. This was what he was talking about, and I'm very grateful for it.

I majored in sociology, but after two years I decided I wanted to be a lawyer, since I didn't see the music scene being practical. But my father didn't think it was a womanly kind of vocation, and he pointed to a few women who were in law that he thought had become masculine in their mannerisms and approaches to people in the courtroom. So he said, "Now if you want it badly enough you can get it when you are earning your own money, but I will not finance it." So I ended up going into legal social work. After the bachelor's degree I did graduate work in the School of Social Service Administration, looking toward the Juvenile Court, which at that time required social work training and a year's experience in an accredited agency. Soon the Great Depression challenged all this and when it happened, I resigned. Before I was out of school a year and while I was acquiring the professional experience needed for Juvenile Court Probation Officer of Cook County, my father died at age forty-seven.

MG: You went on your next facet of career, career interest, and worked as a teacher and a school administrator.

ZG: Yes, but I've really not told you the full thing. I ought to tell you about the social work because I started out then as a caseworker. And the University of Chicago's approach to casework was so narrow and specialized that I didn't choose to finish my master's there. I had to leave because I felt there was something else I needed, and I went to New York University which was at that time the opposing school and was specializing in Group Work. I had found out that it was not "either/or." It was "both/and." It was casework within the context of a group. This is so commonplace now but it wasn't then. And so, when I resigned from the Juvenile Court, I went to another kind of social work. I was called a Dean of Women but I didn't want to be called that because they were, in those days, glorified house mothers--"matrons." I was able to get my job description upgraded and during my second year there, I was Director of Personnel Administration, and I changed my professional national affiliations to the College Personnel and Guidance Association.

MG: This was at Tennessee A & I State University. And you went there in 1932.

ZG: Yes. In 1929 when the depression hit everybody, I had sisters still in school. Two had graduated but one was in Virginia Union University where my mother had been the Dean of Women but was no more; the other was with my mother in Chicago. It just didn't seem that we could make it with maintaining a home in Chicago and a sister in college with the prospect of the other yet to go to college. There had never been any question about whether each of us would go to

college. The only question was, where? I decided I would go to a college campus where I could bring them all together. So, I went to Tennessee State and brought both of my sisters and my mother to that campus. Both of these sisters were graduated from there.

MG: What was it that you taught while you were in Tennessee?

ZG: I taught several subjects but my prime responsibility was the orientation course for freshmen which consisted of "How to Study" courses; "Introduction to the Resources of the Nashville Community" available to them; and, on the campus, outside the classrooms. I worked with the entire student body and I thoroughly enjoyed my work the five years I was there. There were few available materials for this school population in the above areas and so, I had to create them. My baby sister Jewel was graduated in May 1937, and I went immediately into another facet of my life in Los Angeles, California.

MG: Will you tell us about that?

ZG: During the last month of my sister Jewel's last year there came into my life a young man I had known when I was in high school in Topeka, Kansas. He had finished high school and was attending Washburn College. His father was the minister of the Disciples of Christ Church there and the family lived around the corner from the Shiloh Baptist Church where my father was minister. I was not yet "in company" but he used to occasionally stop and join me on the porch swing in our home and we would talk about all kinds of things. There was never any discussion or actions to indicate a love interest.

We moved to Chicago and had no further contact even though he later moved to Chicago and worked at the YMCA as he continued his education, except, that during my last month in Chicago before I went to Tennessee State University, I got flowers and poetry from him on several occasions indicating an interest in visiting me. I was involved with another "boy friend" and paid little attention to these flowers and poems.

After almost five years at Tennessee State, he came to Nashville to see me and we had a very beautiful weekend. A few weeks later he came again with an offer he had from the National Missions Department of the Disciples of Christ Church to become the minister of the Avalon Christian Church in Los Angeles. He explained that the facility had room for a community center including a gymnasium and that he could not accept without a helpmate and he charmed me with his

description of his long, long interest in me and the belief that God had created this opportunity for both of us. It certainly did come at a time when I was seriously considering what I would do now that there would be no one in college.

We were married in my father's former church in Chicago within a matter of weeks (May of 1937) and went to Los Angeles, dedicating our lives to the establishment from "scratch" of a church and a community center. We received a minimum salary and had the responsibility of finding the money to fund the big program that the building and community wanted. The next five years represented some of the most important years of my life.

The wedding was unbelievably beautiful. The Fisk University sent the Jubilee Singers to Chicago to sing a half-hour pre-nuptial recital and the wedding march, in appreciation for what Fisk University President felt I had done to bring the two schools (Fisk and Tennessee State) into fellowship. There had been a long time estrangement of the two colleges (one elitist and the other children of farmers, rural communities and families that could not afford the tuition, etc., of a prestigious Fisk University).

There were twelve bridesmaids and ushers and the entire Chicago community was well represented in a packed big church. Two of my bridesmaids were white friends and coworkers at the University of Chicago. We worked together for the establishment of the first interracial YWCA on any college campus. This was Chicago's first "interracial wedding." The bridesmaids' and ushers' list is distinguished.

But Los Angeles is a long way from Chicago and none of these were available to help us with the big job of developing church and center. My job was as the organizer and Director of the Avalon Community Center located in a multi-ethnic community moving fast into becoming a dominantly Black community. This the National Disciples office knew and it was their desire to bring in Negro leadership to help direct the change. There were thirteen ethnic groups involved in the program from the beginning.

These were the WPA and NYA days when I had an opportunity to be selective in staffing. I had a staff of as many as 200 during this period covering a 15-18-hour day, and for many months, a 24-hour day; three shifts; 7 a.m.-3 p.m.; 3 p.m.-11 p.m.; 11 p.m.-7 a.m. This last period covered the cleaning team and the bakers who baked all

the bread and desserts and were sometimes other things. With "surplus commodities" and the night personnel, this was not difficult.

Our first service was an obvious need; we fed around 300 children a full breakfast before they went to school and at lunch time; the teachers would march the children to the Center for lunch and there were always more than for breakfast. For dinner we had about the same breakfast group.

During the day the Center was full of activities for adults. Our most famous activity was teaching power machine sewing. These women (and a few men) made clothing for their children from materials furnished by the Center. We hoped that this new skill might make employment easier, for the good ones, if the economy changed.

There were many kinds of youth programs and activities, athletics, crafts, scholastic, coaching, music (instrumental and voice), drama, a toy loan library and a nursery school. We were given an award by the Coordinating Councils Association of the Los Angeles area, credited with being the main agency responsible for an 80 percent cut in juvenile delinquency.

One of our larger ethnic groups was Japanese. Later I was a disturbed witness to the daily removal of these people from the area because we were at war with Japan. One of the ugliest chapters of American history was written by our government during this time. Because we knew so many of them, I went every morning to say, "Good Bye," and try to help them through this truly cruel and frightening experience.

MG: When were you there?

ZG: From 1937 to 1942. The Community Center was a huge success but the church did not grow as it should have. The marriage did not work out and when I was struggling with my attempts to stick with it, two things happened. First, the Community Chest decided to fund the Center, and I received a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation as a Research Fellow and was able to make a graceful exit to New York University and work on my doctorate. The research was a continuation of my lifetime interest in Negro music and I was being permitted to use that research for my dissertation in the area of the sociology of music.

For The Rockefeller Foundation I compiled a record catalog of Negro music: folk, popular and academic. There

are more than 12,000 titles with information I got from the music in my hand. The original card catalog is in the Moorland Collection at Howard University; a copy is in the Library of Congress Music Library; I have a copy in my private library. It was here that I got a chance to develop my administrative skills. I could be innovative, but this was a very big program to implement and keep functional for the community.

MG: Now how did your career as a musician finally come about? It was always there in the background, your interest was persistent, although it didn't always have an opportunity for expression.

ZG: Well, you see my father was a very good musician and my mother taught piano when I was very young. She was also a violinist. I learned how to sing from my father who had training in voice and the cornet. I took piano lessons from my mother until I was in high school when I studied with Portia Pittman, the daughter of Booker T. Washington, and the organist of my father's church in Dallas, Texas. But I didn't get formal training in voice until I was graduated from the University of Chicago. During my first job as caseworker for the Family Service Agency in Evanston, Illinois, I studied pipe organ with Stanley Martin at Northwestern University, and I was really ready for this formal training in the pipe organ. When I was employed by the Juvenile Court and back in Chicago, I was graduated in voice from the American Conservatory of Music.

Music was the thing that kept me going during those difficult years of earning a living and helping to support a family. I was always interested in my church and I continued to work there as organist. I taught some music at home on the side.

That's one of the ways I made extra money. I also taught swimming two nights a week for the YWCA. It took all these things to keep the family together and to contribute my share to the family financially. But music was the thing that kept me going, I just never could leave it alone. I did recitals, I was probably the first person who did lecture recitals of Negro folk and art music. Recently I came across a program which I did in the thirties, and for which Hall Johnson wrote the program notes. When I was doing nothing but music by Negro composers or music using lyrics by Negro poets, I would sometimes do a whole program of music with lyrics by Langston Hughes or Countee Cullen or others. Or, I might do a program of Negro composers, and lecture about each. That satisfied me for a long time.

Then in 1937 when I went to Los Angeles, I found music to be the one thing I could use to help children and adults discover common denominators of concern, skills and experiences. It provided a great way to understand another culture and I had many rewarding experiences there. The great thing that happened was my chance to combine my professions of Sociology and Music by using this research for my doctorate dissertation in the area of the sociology of Negro music. The desire to sing was still there and the voice had survived, too, as I continued to work with it, trying to keep it in condition.

In 1944 I was married to Clayborne George and came to Cleveland to live. In 1948 I was invited to sing the title role of Gian-Carlo Menotti's opera, The Medium at the Karamu Theater. The performance there over a period of six months drew national attention and I later had an opportunity to revive the opera on Broadway with the original cast and with the composer Gian-Carlo Menotti as director.

So, it has not been just music, it has been music as a part of the structure and process of my life that has enriched it and kept me busy in study and fulfillment in one way or another as a performer, teacher, student or in social work. This all helps to document my contention that music is an integrating factor in my interests around people. Even the study of audiences and the people who come backstage can engage you in the most unusual kinds of people-contact, all testifying to its effectiveness as a tool in communication.

MG: Now, you've also been very active in the community; you've mentioned the Avalon Center in Los Angeles which you were really responsible for founding, and then so many other activities, as the researcher will find from the vita that is included in your folder, such things as the Ethnic Heritage Studies Program, the World Future Development of Minorities' Potential, and on and on. Those are just two or three of a long list of community involvements. Why, with all the other commitments that you had, did you find time for all the community activities, most of which were volunteer?

ZG: Well, they were all learning experiences, too. You know you can't keep giving without receiving somewhere along the line, and I've always been seeking, stretching, looking for new ideas, new events, new experiences, and this has led me to these kinds of places. I've tried to do a good job whenever I've done anything, and then I get recommended for other things, you see, because somebody thinks that I will do a good job somewhere else. So that every time I've had

an opportunity to do something new, it's almost always been because somebody thought I could do it and recommended me for it, and I have accepted the challenge and gone in there. It's taken me into all kinds of situations. But each has been nurtured by some kind of a seeking on my part, I think, to know something else, to experience something different, to grow, and to give.

MG: In 1960 you were named an Alternate Delegate to the United Nations. Could you very briefly describe that experience?

ZG: Not very briefly, but let me say this. In the first place the State Department instructed me to say that I was a member of the United States Delegation to the XVth General Assembly of the United Nations. I had been on a six-month lecture tour around the world for the State Department the year before and the press was just very good to me everywhere I went. And of course, the State Department accumulated all of this press response. Later the Department said that they wanted me to go to the United Nations because I had done such a good job for the United States, in the countries to which I had gone. I suppose I would have to say that the United Nations was the pinnacle of all the things I've ever done in a way, because it did give me fellowship and a working relationship with the peoples of the world. And this is very fulfilling for me because my whole philosophy of life is based on the belief in the universality of man and working toward a Commonwealth of Man.

Even in my early days when we had experiences that were negatively related to the Ku Klux Klan and segregation, my father and my mother would constantly speak of it as being wrong because God meant for us to be one. They didn't talk about race nearly so much, although my father talked to "race people." In fact, he was minister for the largest Protestant church in the world when he was in Chicago and was so charismatic in his own personality that he attracted masses of people and was an outstanding leader. His concern was his responsibility to share what he had had with people who hadn't had these opportunities. He brought us out of the South to Topeka, Kansas--but not until we got to Chicago did he verbalize to me that he had done this because the school situation was not good for us and we were growing into an age where the family instruction had to be supplemented more, but he didn't want us to ever forget the fact that we owed people in the South a chance to share some of these experiences we were going to have. And before he died in 1925, he said to each of us that he hoped we would give at least five years of service back in the South. All of us have done that.

MG: So this family training then in part shaped your feelings and involvement once you were in the United Nations, is that right?

ZG: Well, it didn't seem to me to be anything except finally I'm getting where my father envisioned for me. I just wish he'd lived to see the United Nations. He didn't even know the term because it didn't exist, but that's what he was talking about all his life. He used the Bible as the charter for his relationships with people, and God's will that we be "one," "are made of one blood," "one mankind." Basically this is the same thing that the United Nations is trying to implement, in many different ways. I felt very much at home and comfortable with what the United Nations stands for.

To be a member of the United States Delegation to the XVth General Assembly of the United Nations was a tremendous experience--beyond adequate description. To begin with this was, in my view, the most dramatic year in the history of the United Nations. We had had fifteen years of the U.N. when I went there and I am looking back at it now, eighteen years later.

The year I was there, 1960, was so very important because we voted into membership seventeen new countries, sixteen from Africa, plus Cyprus. This is the largest number of new members ever voted into the U.N. at one time. This vote was to change the color of the U.N. from predominantly white to a good "high brown." It was to disturb the balance of power in the U.N. that had existed from its inception. The "First and Second World" had divided the rest of the world between them and each with its satellites and a veto could feel very comfortable in the existing balance of powers. In the meantime something was happening throughout the colonial world. The rising expectations of the people of this subjugated world were making them unhappy with their lot and they began making demands. The U.N. charter makes no provision for them in the U.N. organization except as colonies under the rule of members of the First and Second Worlds; the Charter is still in need of rewriting. Suddenly these colonies wrest their political independence from their former colonists and they immediately presented themselves for membership.

No one knew how these new African Black countries would go and that is why so many heads of state were present for that session, including Khrushchev. Everyone was busy, including the United States, trying to persuade the new members to their side. They were smart. They voted to be

non-aligned and then played the First and Second Worlds against one another to their advantage for a long time.

Liberia and Ghana were the only Black countries in the U.N. up until this time. (Liberia from the beginning and Ghana later.) These new nations had fought for their independence and it was a truly great experience to see them come into this world body proud and determined to "make it." To see them reaching out from meager resources trying to define themselves, participating in the rituals of this big brand new world with others who had been doing it "forever," was exciting and heartening!

It was my high privilege to reach out to many of them with offers to help them get the information they needed, (they had no staff to research for them), to provide escorts to their wives as they purchased Western clothing, found food and other stores they needed to sustain their families. Most of the women did not speak any English or other Western language and had problems of communicating with the people with whom they had to deal. I had parties and other sorts of ways to get them in touch with women from Harlem--my sorority and others were brought to the U.N. and many were very helpful. Being Black and having been to several of their countries during my State Department lecture tour earlier that year made me a comfortable resource for many.

These new members joined with other non-white countries and formed what the press called the Afro-Asian bloc. Later they were given the title "Third World." I have been called by some of my African friends, "The Midwife of the Third World" because I was the only Black among the Western world delegations participating in their birth into the U.N.

This is also the year when Khrushchev took off his shoe and pounded it on the table in protest. I had the opportunity on several major occasions, when these new nations were being criticized because of their differences in looks, dress and other lifestyles, to recall that incident. I would remind them that if an African ambassador had done what Khrushchev did, many would have said, "I told you these Africans are not ready," or "You see they are barbarians." The people of the U.S.A. were critical of Khrushchev but nobody said he was not ready!

An unforgettable occasion was the early morning near the midlife of the session when the flags for these countries were raised in the circle with the others for the first time. Most of these ambassadors had come to the U.N. directly from their independence ceremonies and had no flag.

It is a complicated procedure to decide on a flag--colors and pattern. I was moved to tears as I saw ambassador after ambassador with head erect and tears streaming down their cheeks as they saw their flag join the ranks of the world powers, remembering the suffering and death that had made it possible--and the struggle ahead to fight a new colonialism! I talked with many of them after the ceremony and it was touching to know how much they appreciated my coming so early that morning for this first raising of the flags of these sixteen new members of the U.N. I am not an easy early riser but I would not have missed this one!

This Third World is still very important and more and more conscious of the interdependence of the world and the fact that we, the U.S.A., need them as much as they need us even if for very different reasons. They have had several generations of graduates from the most prestigious universities in the world, including those of the U.S.A. More of them speak our language, and share our academic, economic, political culture, and they will be reckoned with. They can, and do have their "Think Tanks" and are stretching their economic muscles to let us know they have discovered they have them and must be sure we know how it feels when the shoe is on the other foot.

I lecture a great deal about the United Nations as I am an active member of the U.N.A.-U.S.A. National Board. One of my most popular subjects in recent months has been: "The Third World--Third to What?" Most people have not explored the history and probable aftermath of this concept. Few people have seriously examined how the Third World has affected U.S.A. foreign policy. This is of special concern to me.

I think it is important to remember that Clayborne and I were married in 1944 and our very first joint intellectual endeavor was to join in with a group in the Council on World Affairs which was studying what was happening in Dumbarton Oaks and eventually the Charter of the U.N. and the role of Yalta and other conferences involving Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin, Chiang Kai-shek in the evolution of the U.N.

I don't know whether you know that I was a rebel in this session because I did something that was certainly without precedent. There were people on the delegation who were from the House, the Senate, the State Department; I was there, you know, as a representative of the people, and I never forgot that. Well, the whole session of the General Assembly was directed at the concerns of these new countries

who were concerned about imperialism, and the setting up of conditions in which they could operate as newly independent countries, developing countries--"underdeveloped," they were called. There was no Third World then, it was the Afro-Asian bloc, and I was in very close contact with that Afro-Asian bloc which later became the Third World. By the way one of the most popular topics today is "Third to What?" "The Third World--Third to What?" Because most people have never stopped to realize you had to have a first world and a second world in order to have a third one. And how do you define the first world and the second world? There are many definitions of it. There's really a disagreement, depending on who you are talking about. First world is the United States and the West if we're talking, and it's the East and Russia if they're talking, and we're second, you know what I mean? Then there's Mao Tse-tung who said that the first world was the two big powers, and the second world was the industrialized, but not so big powers, and the third world was the newly independent, unindustrialized countries, you see. So there are a lot of definitions of it, and you raise those questions, and you begin to make people think in ways they've never thought before.

Well anyway, the United Nations gave me a great platform, but I think what it did for me after I left there was more important than when I was there, because I was invited by W. Colston Leigh, the "Cadillac" of all the lecture bureaus in the world, to be one of their lecturers. They asked me to come on, because they knew I would be in demand because of the stand I took, which was--there had been twenty-some-odd resolutions before the U.N. that "we hadn't voted right on," that had to do with imperialism. And this one was coming up--twenty-fourth, I think it was--can't remember, I think it was the twenty-fourth one. The Afro-Asian bloc had worked very hard to pick words right out of our Declaration of Independence, and right out of the Preamble to the Constitution, and put those words right in this resolution so that we couldn't resist it. And I had been reporting all of this to our delegation, which instructed me to inform them that we were going to vote right on this one. I was given extra money for entertaining in my apartment, the Afro-Asians particularly, and some Latin Americans who were constantly there. I had a feeling we were going to vote right. Well, that last day came and we didn't vote right. We got instructions to abstain. But I found out before we did it, from an African ambassador that it was going to happen; I didn't believe it, and I went to the head of our delegation, Ambassador Wadsworth, and asked him, and he said, "Yes, we've just gotten instructions." "Well, why don't I know it?" "Well, I've been avoiding you because I knew how you'd feel about it; you've been working in another direction."

We went to vote, and only one person votes, you know, and that's the head, or the one sitting in the head of the delegation's seat. Wadsworth was sitting there, and all the rest of us were there. Wadsworth handed me the score to keep--I was the only one who could keep the score consecutively 1, 2, 3, 4 in three columns, so that when I wrote the last one I could tell what the count was, I didn't have to go back and count it. It was just a little trick I'd worked out. Well, while the Secretary of the General Assembly was counting the ballots--now they have an electronic device, but they didn't have it in 1960--while he was counting the votes, I found out that there were nine abstentions and only two negatives, and I'm looking back to see who the other eight abstentions were, and I don't like what I see, you know, the association! I handed the score sheet to Wadsworth and then I got angry. I just--uh, I got furious. Because they had told me to do something--I'd done what they'd told me to do, and here I was being made out a liar. And your personal integrity is all you've got, you know. Well, they announced the vote. And when they announced it, all of these little countries applauded themselves because they had won. And looked around at the big countries, the nine who had abstained. I stood up in the General Assembly, the only person that stood, and put my hands up over my head and joined them in applause, with all the people sitting around me in my delegation. Before I sat down I looked around to see if the seat was still there for me to sit in, and I saw Wayne Morse applauding me in the background. When the paper came out it said Wayne Morse joined me in applause, but he didn't, he was applauding me for having the guts to do it. He has told this story many a time since.

Well, then I sat there and I thought I was going to cry, so I got up and went out. Nobody spoke, they just let me by. And when I got to the door, there were, I guess, fifty or sixty people standing there with cameras and papers waiting for me to come out, because they couldn't come in, you know you don't allow pictures during a session. I found myself in the middle of these reporters from around the world. They carried me right on into the Delegate's Lounge, and I had this press conference, I couldn't get around it. "Why didn't you tell us you were going to do this?" and "Why did you do it?" and this, that, and the other. I told them I had not planned to do it. I looked over, and I saw my "FBI friend" and some others I knew, so I decided I would just make the interview so that he could hear it without any problems, you know. I just talked loud enough for him to hear everything I said. Then I went to my apartment to change to go to the series of cocktail parties that they had

assigned to me for that evening. One of them required formal dress. I went to these parties, and I was just accepted in all of them as if I were some great hero. And I hadn't thought of what I had done in those terms at all.

MG: It was just spontaneous.

ZG: It was just something that, to be honest, I had to do. Well, next morning I went to the daily delegates' meeting, my husband had called me early in the morning and said, "Congratulations!" And I said, "For what?" And he said, "You're all across The Plain Dealer," and I said "What are they saying?" "They told me what you did yesterday," and he said, "I just wanted to tell you, if you have any problems because of it, if you think you were right, just thumb your nose at them and come on home, because your husband and your bed and your table will be waiting for you." And then I knew, this is something bigger than I thought it was. So I decided, well, if I'd done something illegal, I'd resign. And I wrote a resignation and stuck it under the door of Wadsworth on my way to the delegates' meeting. I went in the meeting, nobody spoke to me. In a few minutes he came in and he said, "Well, I see one of our delegates was real high on the applause meter yesterday." And I said, "Oh, Lord, here it comes." And he said, "Well, now I want to tell you that one of the Soviet people come up to me afterwards and said, 'I see you have a rebel in your ranks.'" And I said, "Well, that's what you call her. And I suppose that if she were in your ranks she'd be dead by now." Well then, I knew he wasn't going to be too hard, the minute he said that. You could see the tension in my delegates. Well, he said, "I'm sure all of us wish we could have done what she did because none of us wanted that action." The telegrams had already started coming in from all over the world. I had a secretary and they added twelve more to answer the mail. I never even got to see most of the telegrams. They were the property of the State Department. This was near the end of the session, when Stevenson and Harlan Cleveland and the rest of them came into power. Harlan Cleveland later said at the next national convention of the World Federalists when he was the banquet speaker, and I was at the head table: "Zelma George left us the only handle we had to deal with the Afro-Asians when we came into power."

Ten years later I was at a special dinner in New York planned for the U.N.A.-U.S.A. Board, on which I serve. This was celebrating United Nations Day. The Cyrus Eatons were there, and, as we were chatting, Frances Wilcox joined the party. When I was a delegate he was the liaison person

between the Department of State and the U.S. delegation to the U.N. and later a teacher at Johns Hopkins Advanced School in International Studies. He remarked, "I am glad to know you people know each other." He said to the Eatons, "Do you know what she did for her country?" And they said, "What?" And he told the story. It took him ten years to get around to telling it, so that I would know how he felt about it because he was no longer with the State Department, he was with Brookings.

But I've had a number of things happen to me where people who were involved at that time officially, and couldn't express their feelings about it, have now been able to say what a significant thing it was. I know Harlan Cleveland said that every course training diplomats will have at least one day on which we are going to talk about Zelma George and whether her action was right or wrong. And there's great disagreement. I'm not supposed to have had any right to vary with the official decision of the State Department. Of course, I couldn't do anything about the vote, can't but one person vote. And he did vote. I think I would do it again. I may--I don't know, you know hindsight is different; I would have had to find some way to let the Afro-Asians know that I wasn't lying when I had talked to them before. And that what happened, somebody else was responsible for. And that I was not lying to them when I had seriously and earnestly tried to share with them the fact that the United States government was not really imperialistic, and was going to clear its record with them with this vote. There were some votes where we needed them that were coming up during that time, and it was important for them to know that we were going to do this in order to get them voting the way we wanted them to vote. It was a last-minute decision on the part of somebody in Great Britain who called the President of the United States, I am told, and asked him if he wouldn't change the vote from "yes" to "abstain," because it would hurt them later on when they got the question of Rhodesia or something like that.

One of the high points of my life regarding this experience was placed there by Angie Brooks, the Honorable Angie Brooks who was a long time member of, and for some time, head of the delegation from Liberia. She was the first African woman, and the second woman to be President of the General Assembly. Well, she was the speaker, during that year in which she was president, at the banquet testimonial that was given for me here in Cleveland. She spent a large part of her speech that night in eulogizing me on behalf of the African delegation to the United Nations, for the "shot in the arm" I gave them with that action at that General Assembly. She described it in detail, and the reactions

of all of Africa to it. A large number of the telegrams that came to me at the General Assembly after the action, were from African and Asian countries. The only negative letters I know of are the two sent me by the State Department: one from George Schuyler, a Negro writer and the other from the President [Samuel Belkin] of the Yeshiva University of New York City.

MG: So this process, then of a long experience as a lecturer, you mentioned the W. Colston Leigh Foundation and you went on to Danforth, I believe.

ZG: I left W. Colston Leigh because they priced me out of places I wanted to go, and moved to the Danforth Foundation as a visiting lectureship in colleges.

The Danforth Foundation supplemented the budgets of some of the smaller schools that couldn't afford W. Colston Leigh's price. They didn't want me to speak a lot of places. They wanted me to be a rarity, and they could get more money for me. And I enjoyed that really, but it's just that they wouldn't let you do anything on your own, I mean you had to come through them, and so they asked too much money. I'm still lecturing about the United Nations because I've still kept my interest and involvement in it. I go there every year and visit the sessions. I still have a special card from the U.S. Mission to the U.N. As a member of their staff I'm allowed to enter in the Delegates' Entrance, go back into the Delegates' Lounge, and to sit in on briefings and other kinds of things. I'm a member of the Advisory Committee in between.

Even when I was in Job Corps I maintained that activity because it was still important to me. I even saw Job Corps as a part of a struggle of people for fulfillment and opportunity. And I tried to have them see themselves as a part of the humanity of the world that was, as Harlan Cleveland said, and he was the inventor of the term, "of great expectations." The revolution of great expectations. And they're a part of the ferment. It was important that I keep my contact internationally, in order to properly focus here, with the girls at Job Corps. I see it all as part of the same thing.

MG: Tell me something about your writing.

ZG: I write speeches easily after research, but anytime I write for someone else to read, I get self-conscious and so analytical that I freeze. There is an old fable about the centipede. Somebody asked him to explain exactly in what order he moved his 100 legs as he walked. When the

centipede started to analyze the process he found he was so mixed up, he couldn't walk at all. That's how I feel when I know someone else will be examining my sentence structure and thought process. And yet I do have several things which you say will be listed in an appendix.

I have several things in process which I pledge myself to work on soon. I want to break my doctorate dissertation down into several brochures for popular use. I'd like to write about my family. There are some interesting personalities in it and some things of historical importance have happened to each of them.

MG: Did you consider being a wife a career?

ZG: I suppose the best way to answer that is to say that Clayborne and I discussed this question several times early in our marriage and we decided that being husband and wife for us meant doing whatever seemed right for us as partners. It meant each of us would play many roles, sometimes as the star, often not, but always supportive of one another; conscious of what each was about and making sure we were doing everything we could to help one another. The career was as a team, as partners, constantly communicating and sharing one with the other in every facet of our lives-- intellectual, spiritual, emotional, sexual, social, economic, political! We explored one another in each of these aspects of life, decided on priorities and roles and assigned ourselves projects which we thoroughly enjoyed doing together. Our lives were so integrated, there was no such thing as home and career. It was one and the same thing.

We very much wanted to have children even at our ages. I was over forty when we married. I can truly say that "Life Begins at Forty!" Clayborne was fifty-five. After three years of marriage and no children, we decided to seek counsel and were the first couple to register for a new fertility clinic in Cleveland. I will leave out the gruesome details and say only that because of some malpractice we lost an early pregnancy and I was very ill as a result. Clayborne decided God didn't intend for me to have children. He intended for me to continue to work with our people's children. He would under no circumstances consider my getting pregnant again. Whenever anyone asked us if we had any children he would quickly reply yes, and ask what other man could say his wife had given him 300-odd children--whatever was the number of young women in Job Corps at the time.

MG: Well, I want to come back a little later on and talk to you some more about your husband and what your life together was like. Have your career interests been developed in a linear or a cyclical manner? Are they always reoccurring and fading and then reoccurring or just one solid...?

ZG: You see, you forgot what I said. I don't think I've had careers. I've seen a many-faceted career and the circumstances of life in which I was involved would dictate the kind of involvement. It would be in music, or education, or diplomacy. I worked to get my skills straightened out for each one of these involvements and that's what kept me busy. I haven't had very much social life in the "social" sense most people mean--like bridge clubs and things like that. I have had to devise a way to have mini-vacations/micro-vacations; and I have developed certain skills in doing this which I have been able to pass on to others. I've integrated my leisure in with my work. So I don't see it as linear or--what was the other word?

MG: Cyclical.

ZG: Circuitous?

MG: Cyclical.

ZG: Cy-cli-cal. I see it as a picture with many different colors, shades--with continuity of subject matter.

MG: Well, is it conceivable to you that any single interest could ever grow so overpowering as to blot out involvement in anything else?

ZG: Oh yes. At the time when I was at the United Nations, that was my job and that's where I concentrated my concerns and my talents and my studies and my activities, my energy. I work hard at anything I do, I write a speech, I work hard at it; I don't make a speech unless I've prepared for it. I don't get up and talk. If I'm going to write something, I do research. My difficulty is I never feel I'm ready to write, there's something else I need to look up. Basically I am a research person, I think. And always, there's something else I need to review. Look around here and see all these books and then you see that I am concerned with trying to learn and I work on skills. So, when I'm doing a thing, I can blot out other things--there has to be concentration. When I was on Broadway, I was thinking about acting and my role, and all of the things that went along with that lifestyle were my consuming interest. There are times when you could mix many of them. There are some times when

you deal in bold reds or bold yellows or blues, and then there are other times when you mix those colors to get something else. There are even times when the colors are pastels!

MG: Well, I think that overall you really have answered what I was going to ask you next, which is "What is the purpose of work?" At least you certainly said what it is from your personal perspective. Do you have any general sort of feelings about the purpose that work should fulfill?

ZG: Well, I don't know how to verbalize my feelings about this. I don't know where work ends and pleasure begins--I enjoy what I do. I have a theory that if you don't really like what you're doing you ought to quit. If you can't get a kick out of your job, you're robbing somebody of something. You're not doing yourself any good and you're not doing the people you are working with any good. There's something else out there for you to do. Go and find it! I enjoy work. I get high on people, I get high on my work, I get high on preparation for it, and I concentrate an awful lot on the enjoyment aspect of it. If I feel that I need to relax and just enjoy music for a few days, I can put what I'm doing down, and I can put as much attention on my recordings or playing on the piano, playing for myself.

The main problem for me is that in an apartment I can't play when I want to, which is late at night. In my house I could play anytime of the night. When I have an urge to play is really when I shouldn't.

Back to your question about the purpose that work should fulfill. Most people define work as what they do for money and they also make a distinction between work and pleasure. The point I make is that for me work is pleasure and that is no reason why I shouldn't be paid for it. I have a tendency, however, to maximize the pleasure and minimize the pay. I left the W. Colston Leigh Lecture Bureau and went to the Danforth Foundation as a visiting lecturer in colleges and universities because the Leigh Agency (called the "Cadillac" of agencies) was pricing me out of places I felt needed me more and where I wanted to go--smaller, less affluent schools. My father, a minister, used to preach that everybody is "called"--not just the ministry--and that you should do the job you're "called" to do and God will take care of you. You will not suffer. I am sure that I have had jobs where the important thing to me was what I was doing and not the money. I retired at age seventy and ran smack into the fact that money is a reality of life and must be adequately programmed into your life plan. I had not done this as well as I might have. I suppose I see

work as the activity which I choose to implement the objectives and concerns of life and living which include the economic reality.

MG: I want to come back to some of the points you've made, particularly regarding race, and I have several questions later on I'd like to bring up. Let me ask now, what are your current projects?

ZG: Well, I'm trying to get acquainted with Zelma George who no longer has a regular place to which she reports with a specific plan of work. I have accepted responsibility as a member of many boards of directors, and committees on which I couldn't always be active before. I went to meetings when I could and I could get out of this, and that, and the other, because of my work at the Job Corps. Now I feel I have to accept responsibilities, because I don't have that excuse or reason any more; sometimes it was a reason, and sometimes it was an excuse. Now that I don't have either, I have been very active.

Recently I was named to the Board of the Music School Settlement, which is a very fine institution in Cleveland. I am on the Public Relations Committee of the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra. I am on a committee for accreditation of projects that are seeking funding through the Cleveland State University. I am still active with the United Nations Association National Board (U.N.A.-U.S.A.). I'm on the World Federalists. The latter is concerned with peace-keeping and in training smaller and newly developing nations in the techniques and procedures of peace-keeping.

I've been very active with the local chapter of The Links, Inc., that sponsored a major project which, after five years of hard work, and very intelligent strategy, was able to get our Cleveland Museum of Art involved. This is a very elitist museum but when we finally got them to accept a Black folk art project, they went "all out" with us for a very successful exhibition which traveled to six other museums of art for a period of two years, closing at The Smithsonian. I am the oldest member of the Links group and sort of knowledgeable in the area of the sociology of art, and so I was active in helping the group develop its own inservice training for the project. This was especially important when we found we were going to have a problem with the Museum. I furnished books that were out of print, that were duplicated for the whole group, and I presented papers on specific aspects of the project. I've given some leadership throughout the entire exhibition, attending openings at three of the other museums.

MG: You devised a whole museum education project for this event.

ZG: I didn't do it, no, the group did it. My part had been mostly an advisory, counseling relationship on committees and the young people have said, "You come to the meeting and give us ideas and help us. We'll do the legwork." And they did, a lot of it, most of it. I didn't do very much legwork. I did go to several regional meetings and other places to explain what we were looking for and to interpret the relevance and importance of the exhibition.

MG: What are your research and writing projects that you're interested in right now?

ZG: Well, I accept subjects for lectures in areas in which I want to do research but might not get to do it unless I have to, because I get involved in other things. I have a couple of subjects on which I have recently been asked to speak: Marian Anderson was scheduled for a National Music Teachers' Convention and they knew only a little while ahead of time that she wasn't going to be able to come. They asked me to take that. She was going to talk about problems artists have racially, or something like that. Well, I wasn't prepared to talk about that. So I asked permission to talk about the music of today's generation and why even music teachers and adults need to listen to it. And although I had not done that for about eight years, my basic interest was there. I had to listen to a lot of records and do research to see whether my theories were still right and could be documented with today's music. The youth are saying some important things in their music and "It's Time We Started Listening." (That's my subject for the Music Teachers' Convention.)

I'm going to talk at a college in September about the Third World. Historically I know a lot about it, but I'm trying to see where we are right now with the seventh Special Session of the General Assembly, which is extremely important but has not been properly evaluated. It took place about the same time as that resolution that equated Zionism with racism and just got lost in the media. But it is now being reviewed as an important official statement of Kissinger for our State Department. The Third World is forcing them to look at it again. And then there's been this recent conference on disarmament and several other conferences that have been held as an activity of the

Secretariat. This is not the General Assembly but a part of the United Nations, which we seem to forget.

When we were working on the Links project at the Museum I got involved in research about the craftsmanship of the slaves, and now I am anxious to write something about "That Other Slave." You see, we tend to think only of the slave as agricultural workers in the fields and in the big house as cook, maid, servant, washerwoman, caretaker of the children of the slave owners, and these things they did do, but, there was another slave, without which Colonial America could never have developed. And he was the artisan slave. My rediscovery of this fact and my new information about this artisan, motivated me to write about it in a paper for The Links as part of my effort to give them a new kind of perspective, at least to open the door to it.

MG: These are the Links that you're speaking of.

ZG: Yes, the local chapter of The Links. And I was constantly doing little supplementary papers, you know, like that during the Museum five-year period to challenge and inform. Now I am looking for an opportunity to develop this paper into a lecture that will force me to get all this material organized.

MG: Your formal education began with grade school in Texas and in Arkansas, and high school in Topeka, Kansas. It continued with study at the Chicago Business College, a Ph.B. degree in sociology from the University of Chicago in 1924; studies in pipe organ at Northwestern University; studies in voice at the American Conservatory of Music; study in the School of Education at the University of Southern California; and a M.A. degree in Personnel Administration from New York University in 1943. You took graduate courses in radio and television techniques at Western Reserve University, and in 1954 you received a Ph.D. in sociology, intercultural relations, from New York University. How would you characterize the value of your formal education?

ZG: Well, the thing I didn't tell is that my mother and father, both educated people, did not put me in public schools until I was in the fifth grade. My mother taught us at home. She organized classes for whatever grades her children were in. She would invite three or four other children in so we would have competition, and a classroom atmosphere. Wherever we lived, one room in our home was a classroom. My father would often join my mother as teacher, especially in history or math, but my mother taught all the courses, really. When I lived in Hot Springs, Arkansas, I

remember we used to go up on the side of the mountain and there was one spot that looked like a natural classroom. There were many rocks like desks with one big rock for the teacher, and we would have class outdoors up in the mountains right behind our house. When we moved to Dallas, Texas, and the schools were a little better than they had been anywhere we'd been before, my parents put us in public school. I was given tests and put in the fifth grade. So my basic education was really at home by two very capable people who had been professional teachers. When I was born my father was president of Hearne Academy, a boarding school for middle class Negro children whose parents were dissatisfied with segregated public schools for Negroes. Now when I went to public school in Dallas, my parents were not wholly satisfied with the schools and supplemented what I got, but they knew the teachers and had confidence in them. They thought that with the good start that I had, there were advantages I would be getting from learning in a public school to make it up to what we'd been getting with Mama. The advantages in that experience would outweigh the disadvantages.

I had two years of high school in Dallas and then we moved to Topeka. We were only in Topeka two years and I finished high school there. The elementary schools were segregated but the high school was not. The counselor sought to have me register for Washburn College in Topeka but I did not want to go to Washburn. I wanted to go to the University of Chicago. My father was graduated from Virginia Union University after he finished Bishop College. He did some graduate work at the University of Chicago, and for some reason I just wanted to go to that school. It may be because when I mentioned the University of Chicago to my counselor, she was strongly against it. She said I'd never make it in such a big complicated school. Washburn was close to home for me! Well, we applied to the University of Chicago and they accepted me as a student but would not take me into the dormitories. I mean, a Negro woman could not stay in the dormitories. I was not yet sixteen, so my father felt, since I had been very cloistered at home, he did not want me in the big city of Chicago, the big, bad city of Chicago, living in the city and going to school. He wanted me on the campus. So he moved to Chicago so that I could go to the University of Chicago. He took a church that was not up to his usual standard of churches because it was the only one available. And he built it into what he wanted--moved them into the big KAM Jewish temple after he was there a year.

But the University of Chicago was the most exciting experience I ever had. I learned everything I needed for

graduate work right there; it was primarily a graduate school when I went and undergraduates did graduate work. I mean when you did a term paper, you wrote a thesis. You had to document your sources just as you would in a thesis; you did your little cards and everything. It was a great experience. I studied under Park and Burgess and Ferris and some of the greats of the University of Chicago. I took Sociology 1 with Park as a teacher when it was in mimeograph form, before it was published. He was trying out the new textbook material. He didn't teach Soc. 1 regularly, but he taught it that particular year, and I was fortunate to be in that class with Park, who became a very good friend of mine. And in much later years when he came to Fisk University as an Emeritus Professor and I was at Tennessee State, he and Mrs. Park were part of a small group of faculty including Charles Johnson, E. Franklin Frazier, James Weldon Johnson and others. While I was an undergraduate at the University of Chicago, Dr. Park would select from his students those whom he thought had promise and he would have them at his home. The painting hanging here on my living room wall was done by Mrs. Park of me when I was eighteen. She gave it to me as a wedding present.

The only other comparable experience I had educationally was with a professor at New York University--Herman Harold Horne, the Department of Education. He had a course, "Character in Education" that was an extremely important milestone in my life. Now he was another who picked people who were in his graduate school course and he would take them to his home on weekends; he'd take you to lunch, and you got to know him as a person and he got to know you as a person with your strengths and your weaknesses. He was helpful with any problem you had in his classroom. I've never had a teacher like that but him. Now he taught another course in which we studied John Dewey. Horne had written a book where he placed Dewey's text in one column and his comments on it in the other column. He was an anti-Dewey person, and through him I got to know Dewey better, and could put him in better perspective. Dewey's book, Art As Experience, was an important milestone in my life. It set up whole new paths for me in my intellectual search, in my concerns and interests, in my whole orientation to art.

I considered my years on my doctorate wasted except for the experience of Dr. Horne and the opportunity to do the research and the opportunity to work under the chairmanship of Dr. Dan Dodson whose personal commitment to human relations and whose help in talking through certain research and curriculum problems helped me accomplish the Ph.D. Otherwise, I didn't learn much of anything. I'd already had statistics, I knew how to do research. I took the required

courses, and I feel that I could have taught some of them really. When I got my doctorate, when I took my examination and went before the committee, I had nine people because I crossed so many disciplines in my research; the usual committee of five wasn't enough. I had nine people who tried to kill me! And when I got to the end they said, "Would you please evaluate your experience?" And I said, "Have I passed?" And they said, "Why?" I said, "Because I don't know whether to tell the truth or not." And they laughed and they said, "You tell the truth." So I told them that I thought I had wasted my time, that the writing of the dissertation was the biggest waste, that there wasn't anything that could be done with it. I said, "I don't think there's anybody but the chairman of my committee, Dan Dodson, who has read it all. I think you've read chapters, because some of your questions have indicated to me that you haven't read the entire dissertation. Who else is going to read it if the committee doesn't? The form you required that we follow can't be used practically..." "Well," they asked, "what would you have done otherwise?" I said, "If I could have done it the way I wanted to, I would have written three or four different books. I'd like to have written something about the techniques of research and the definition of my subject and its delimitations, a technical, professional kind of thing. Then I'd like to have been forced to write part of it for a scholarly journal, another part of it for general consumption. I'd like to have been required to present it to the publishers so I'd know how to do it. I don't know yet how to put together for a publisher or how to present it to one."

MG: So what you were saying is that you wanted to do something more than an exercise.

ZG: Yes. And something that could be practical and used. I would like to have been forced to address different kinds of audiences with my material. Anyhow, you asked me what did all this mean, and that sort of summarizes what I would say about it. I considered the opportunity to go to New York University and compete with very good Jewish scholars a real experience. Now I enjoyed that. The classroom work and the competition and the opportunity to observe how smart Jewish students work. And that's what you have at New York University, at least when I was there. It was worth it. But not what I got from the teachers or courses, except Horne.

The most important personality or force in my life as a teacher was my mother and my father. I named my mother first in this instance because she was the teacher. But I'm not so sure that my father didn't teach me more than she

did--the informal education kind of thing that is so important, that often we don't recognize--I worshipped my Daddy almost. I worshipped his mind, worshipped his ability to communicate with people, worshipped the kinds of things he stood for, and his earthy kind of counsel and response to my own problems; even, in spite of his Baptist, fundamentalist kind of logic, he wasn't really fundamentalist in the traditional sense, but he was very conservative.

Maybe when we talk about my father and my mother I could get into that, because it's something there that I don't yet understand. I think that I envied my mother; my mother was beautiful. She had the most beautiful body; she had these children but she was just beautiful. And she had these gorgeous clothes and looked so wonderful in them. When I had my "coming out party," my debutante party, she looked more like the debutante than I did. (Laughter) And I think I envied the time she spent with my father when they were doing things I wasn't involved in. They'd go horseback riding and sports shooting. My mother rode side saddle in her riding habit. They had a bicycle for two which they would take to the country in the back of our car and ride. When she was dressed up and he looked at her, it was so romantic. These were experiences which I felt I would never have because of my figure and size and clumsiness. They were very much in love. I remember that I came home one day and found him kissing her; he had her bent back and he was rubbing her "behind." I thought that was the most vulgar thing in my life. I just was so--oh, I was so upset about that, because I had never seen people kiss like that before. I hadn't got to the point where I really knew what sex was, in that sense. And, to me, it was vulgar! Later on I thought it was one of the most beautiful memories I have of my parents. But I think back in my mind somewhere or other, I don't give my mother as much credit as I should. I really never got to know her until my father died.

Another thing, my father wanted his first child to be a boy, and when I wasn't, and even the second one was a girl, I assure you that, by the time the third one came and reached the point where he could be a companion to my father, I had already cornered the field. My brother didn't have a chance, I thought. I was tomboyish, ugly, and my mother was delicate and beautiful. I was brown like my father. My mother looked "white." I just looked like my father! I looked like I belonged to him. I envied my mother--she could eat and never get fat, you know. (Laughter) Oh, now isn't that awful? The only thing I had that I could identify with Mother was my long, straight hair!

MG: That's interesting, though, I think maybe a psychological dimension to what's motivated you and spurred you on, that might be of interest.

ZG: I got to know my mother after my father died, really know her. Because she was either with child or had a little one. And her interests were in the children more, their needs and my needs. She just didn't have time for the kind of thing my father and I did together--talk and read and do things together. I learned how to shoot; my father and mother were both great marksmen. And I learned how to shoot with a sawed off .22 rifle. I used to put glass fingers on the ends of mine and stand with arms outstretched and my father would shoot them off while I'd stand there unafraid. I knew he wasn't going to hurt me. I never doubted him. They were about a foot long.

MG: Just a couple more questions about your education, and then I want to discuss your family in as much detail as we can. Are there any of your fellow classmates that stand out in your memory?

ZG: Well, class--you think about college--the University of Chicago was too big, you never met them as a class until graduation. I mean there wasn't a class. The University of Chicago didn't foster class spirit. There was the Class of '24 but it was too big and was made up of so many departments that you couldn't know them all.

MG: Well, I think I really meant fellow students.

ZG: But I would say there was great fellowship among the sociology students. At the time I was there there was Charles Johnson and E. Franklin Frazier and Carter G. Woodson and Charles Thompson at Howard, and oh, what's his name who was head of the dental school--David, who was head of German at Howard University--spoke German perfectly. Most of them were older than I in graduate school when I was an undergraduate. But, we were all Black and in sociology. We were thrown together a lot. And taking some of the same courses, because University of Chicago was a graduate school, mostly. Another classmate was Sadie Gray. She and Benjamin Mays (later the President of Morehouse College) married on the day of our graduation. She was in school, and I kept friendship with her until she died. Lorraine Green and her illustrious husband Attorney Wendell Green were very close friends of mine.

MG: Another one of the subjects in our interview collection is Alfreda Barnett Duster, do you know her?

ZG: Yes, she was in school with me; I heard from her recently.

MG: She graduated the same year.

ZG: Yes, that's right. And she was in the hospital recently. I was supposed to see her when I was in Chicago in July and I didn't because I was too busy. I talked to her on the phone. But she wrote me about her mother's biography and wanted me to have a copy. I lost her letter and didn't answer. And she sent the book to me.

Alfreda and I were the only Blacks active in the women's athletic program at that time, I was on the swimming team and she was on the hockey team. And both of us were members of the WAA (Women's Athletic Association). And I think we were the only two...I know we were at that time.

MG: She got her degree in philosophy in 1924.

ZG: Well then, we got the Ph.B. the same year.

MG: I think that by implication you have answered this, but maybe you should state it very specifically. How did your parents feel about the education of their daughters?

ZG: I think they would say they did the best they could with the circumstances that were present at the time. I was the only one who was graduated from college when my father died; he was only forty-seven. Daddy's death at forty-seven left us restricted financially. I am sure that some of my sisters might not have gone where they would have chosen to. One of my sisters, Cathryn, wanted to be a doctor but we couldn't manage that. I suggested that maybe she might finish in nursing or something and get a job maybe later. But she went into education. And I've always felt a little bit guilty about that, but we just couldn't do it. Cathryn has done very well in education. Her husband, Dr. Ras O. Johnson, she and their son spent several years in Laos and later in Thailand where he was involved in establishing the educational system in Laos and later in much of Africa as part of his job in the U.S. Department of State. She is now a principal of a big school in Annapolis, Maryland.

MG: But they didn't feel in any way that girls should be educated differently than boys, or did they?

ZG: Oh, yes. My father, in restricting me from taking law, didn't think it was a womanly vocation. But you see over the rest of the children he didn't have much influence, and

I think if he'd lived longer that he would have encouraged me to go into law. The climate for a woman was changed in the twenties. It was the late twenties before the change. You see, I was finished in '24. I just wish my father could have lived, because many things that happened to me, so many things that would have been different if he had been alive, because I would have been available to do them. I didn't get my masters' until late because I would take one course at a time. I'd go in summer school one year and then I couldn't go the next summer because I had to help get the tuition together for the Fall for my sisters and I just couldn't afford summer school. I didn't want to go to the Black schools in the South. At that time, you see, many of them weren't accredited like they are now. In Nashville I would have had to go to Fisk; I couldn't go to Vanderbilt, I had to go off to school with board and room and transportation in addition to tuition. They weren't doing graduate work at Fisk then, anyway.

MG: Well, let's talk some more about your family. They've come in and out of the conversation throughout, but let's really concentrate on them now. You were born on the eighth of December, 1903, in Hearne, Texas, the eldest of six children born to Samuel E.J. Watson and Lena B. Thomas Watson...Samuel E. J. Watson and Lena B. Thomas Watson. Your parents were born in Texas?

ZG: Yes. My father was born in Reinhardt, Texas (Dallas County) April 26, 1878 and he died in Mayo Clinic Hospital, July 16, 1925.

MG: Your mother was born 30 miles away in Ennis. Do you know the year your mother was born?

ZG: Yes. My mother, Lena Beatrice Thomas was christened Greeley Giddings, taking the name of her father. She was born January 15, 1879, in Ennis, Texas. She died at my brother's home in Bangor, Michigan, while I was in the hospital for my first total knee operation. Mother was living with me and I had sent her with her nurse to stay with my brother, Sam and his wife Blanche, on their farm while I recuperated. Mother developed pneumonia and died there. She was buried next to my father in our family plot in Chicago from the Pilgrim Baptist Church where he pastored until his death. I went from the hospital in a wheelchair to her funeral.

MG: What did you know of the family backgrounds of both your parents?

ZG: My father's grandparents were Sam Watson and Lucenda McKee Watson from Columbus Upitoy, Georgia. My father's father was one of their nine children. His name was Elbert Watson, his wife Cornelius Harris. He died August 4, 1921; she died after my father in 1934. My father Samuel Elbert James Watson known as S.E.J. Watson was one of eight children: J.B., Emmanuel M. (known as E.M.), Ida, Laura, Bertha, Comer and Bessie.

Aunt Bessie is the only one alive. She is the widow of a very successful physician, Dr. Nelson, who practiced medicine in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and at one time was connected with the famous veteran's hospital in Tuskegee, Alabama.

Grandfather Watson came to Texas from Georgia as a married couple. He was a minister, farmer and businessman. He raised fruits and specialized vegetables to sell, which Blacks didn't do in those days. He had the best orchard in that part of Texas and was known to have the best fruit, peaches, particularly, which he sold. I don't know where he went to school, it just never occurred to me to ask. I know he had some education and he was very intelligent and was a good business man. He had built a house that was better than most of the houses lived in by white people. A house with big white columns in the front, columns two stories high. And all of his children went to college. They went to Bishop and to Prairie View. They had riding horses and the women rode sidesaddle with riding habits. They would ride into town. They were constantly in trouble because the boys wouldn't take any insults. This plus their lifestyle and college training became too much for the community and the Ku Klux Klan gave them so many hours to get out of town. My grandfather had to take what they could get for the property. They'd been threatened before, but never really seriously threatened like this. Bricks were thrown into the windows with notes on them threatening all of them. They burned down some of the orchards and threatened to burn the house. And so, the family left.

MG: Do you know about what period of time this was? Was your father born yet?

ZG: Oh yes, he had finished college, married and was about to move to Hot Springs, Arkansas, to pastor. It was 1907, the year my brother was born.

My grandmother Watson was a very dynamic personality interested in Prohibition and women's suffrage. She gave speeches everywhere.

MG: What was her name?

ZG: Cornelius. She would have been a minister if she had been a man, you know. Or at least a leader of some kind. She lived to come to my father's funeral in Chicago. I mean she lived longer than he did. Remember, he was only forty-seven. And we always knew when she was coming that our house was going to be upset, because she was going to run it. She was a very outgoing personality who just took over whenever she came in a room or whenever she came in anything. And she was capable. My grandfather was not a weak man, and they made the marriage work, but we always wondered how. We visited the Watsons at least once a year, the family, all of us would go. And grandmother would have food cooked to feed an army! They lived a very abundant life. They were not poor.

My father told the story about how he felt disturbed that my mother, whose family didn't have a lot of money, worked for the Dean of Women at Bishop College. She washed her clothes and took care of her quarters in the building where she lived on campus. And the place that mother had to hang up her clothes was in a corner around below the boys' dormitory.

MG: Now this was all at Bishop College?

ZG: Yes. And my father said he wouldn't ever go out the room when she was doing this, because he didn't want to embarrass her. And he said he could have made the money she was making available to her easily, but he didn't dare do it. And it was embarrassing to him to see her doing that kind of work. He could not offer to help with college expenses, but he saw to it that she had the things that he could do for her, like take her to all the concerts and whatever cultural things there were. He made sure that she got there, and he could do that. Now he said he couldn't give her anything more personal than a parasol, in those days. But he gave her books and flowers, and one of the books he gave her was a novel in which there was one character they both liked. Her name was Zelma. They decided that their first daughter would be named Zelma. They got engaged the first year they met, and they were four years in college, after which Daddy went away for three to do graduate work and Mama taught school, so they were engaged for seven years. Seven years before they married, they decided their first daughter would be named Zelma. I have tried everywhere to find that book. Mother didn't remember the title of it and it was lost. I know it was a novel about that period. And I've had friends in libraries and others try to help me find the book. I'd

give anything to read the book to see what I was supposed to be like. I can't find it anywhere. If you ever hear tell of a book with the lead in it named Zelma I sure would like to get it. My parents didn't expect their first child to be a girl. What a disappointment I must have been!

My parents lived about thirty miles apart, but they never met until they went to Bishop College. Mama's travels took her in one direction and his around the Dallas area and they didn't meet till they went to college. My father says he knew that this was who he was going to marry the minute he saw her. She was very smart and very pretty and musical. After he finished his graduate work at Virginia Union, he was offered a job in a church-related school, Hearne Academy, Hearne, Texas, which was a boarding school for Black families that could afford to send their children away to school because they weren't satisfied with public school. This is a remarkable bit of Negro history; at the turn of the century there were enough Negro families with enough money to provide this kind of educational experience for their upper elementary and high school children. This is where I was born in 1903. So it was for children from better homes that could afford it--a boarding school for children, not a college, an academy. Soon Daddy decided he was not reaching the people he needed to reach. What was it he used to say? They were "too few and too privileged." So he went into the ministry and his first pastorate was in Palestine, Texas. In the meantime he had tried out his wings in a small church near Hearne where he would pastor on Sundays, and then come back to the school for the week-time. It was in Palestine that my friendship began with two lifelong friends, Etta Moten Barnett and Estelle Massey Osborne, I don't know whether you know them. Estelle's family lived across the street from us, Etta's father was a Presiding Elder in the Methodist church in that area and they lived in Palestine and later we were reunited in Kansas.

MG: Now before you get too far away from your grandparents, do you know where your paternal grandmother was born?

ZG: They came to Texas from Georgia. I presume she was born there.

MG: Do you know anything about your mother's family background?

ZG: Yes, I know a good deal about my mother's family background. By the way, my father's people were never slaves. My mother's people were never slaves until my mother's grandmother was stolen off the streets of Richmond, Virginia, and sold into slavery in Texas. They were

stealing Negroes then because the slave trade had been outlawed and they were stealing free Negroes in the North to take to the South. My great grandma's parents knew that and she had been warned not to come home from violin lesson until her brother came to pick her up. But you know how children are. She would meet him if he was late and that's what she did the day when she got stolen. She had her violin with her and when she got to the plantation of her new owner the other slaves heard her story and decided the violin might get her back home so they took it and buried it in a box that they sealed with tar. She was to use that violin to identify her when she got back to Richmond someday. My great grandmother was used as a companion/slave for the young woman in the family near her age.

MG: Do you have any idea about what time this might have been? 1860s maybe or earlier?

ZG: Well, my grandma Thomas (my mother's mother) was about four years old when slavery was abolished. She was eighteen when my mother was born. I am guessing about 1843.

MG: 1843, or thereabout?

ZG: You see, when slavery was abolished, my grandmother was about four years old and a twin, and her mother on her dying bed knowing that slavery was about over asked the owners not to let her girls "loose" to run amuck in the confusion of freedom. Keep them here and take them back to Virginia and find my parents. This violin should help. The family name is "Brown." By the way, my husband's family name is Brown; they were never slaves either and they came from some part of Virginia. Of course, she never did take them back. They had no way to get back on their own, so they remained in the house as free servants, not slaves. They could have left, but where were they going to go. They were young girls and their mother was now dead. Grandmother later decided she was going back to Virginia as soon as she could get the money. Her twin sister eloped in the night. They left on a horse. I have heard Grandma tell about that many time. It was very romantic how they let her down out the second floor window directly onto the horse. Some years later she came back sick. She had cancer of the breast and they operated on her on the kitchen table where she died. There was no place for Negroes to go to the hospital. She bled to death! I've heard that story many times!

Well, my mother's mother then stayed. I'd like to tell you what I am not privileged to tell you. The father of my mother. I know who he was and I know the circumstances but

I am not privileged to tell you that. I hope that somebody in the family will be willing to release names for the record but right now I can't do it. But he was an educated white man who had been prominent in educational circles. There are schools named for him. My grandmother lived until she died in a house that his family built for her. It was added to and they built two or three houses around it for the people who worked her farm for her. After many years it was right in the middle of a big girls' school that grew all around her. But she never would sell. She fell and broke her hip and after a long illness she died from gangrene. She'd looked forward to being a hundred. She was ninety-seven when she died. This was property that had come from this man she loved and who loved her and she wasn't going to leave it. They couldn't make her sell it. It was many years after her death and that of her two daughters who lived with her that it was sold to the school.

MG: I'd like to see that.

ZG: Grandma could read "reading" but she couldn't read "writing." She read the Bible and she'd read anything printed, but she couldn't read handwriting. There is a picture of her in the bed, reading her Bible--she had broken her hip at that time and had a big bandage on her thumb. It is in a supplement of the Encyclopedia Britannica as the oldest citizen in Texas. She was quite a person! She was quite a girl!

MG: Well, let's recap here for just a moment with your parents. They met at Bishop College, which is in Dallas, right?

ZG: It is now in Dallas, but at that time it was in Marshall, Texas.

MG: And they graduated in the same class...

ZG: Yes, that's correct.

MG: Your mother went back to Ennis to teach.

ZG: That's right.

MG: Your father went to study divinity at Virginia Union University in Richmond. And then upon his graduation they were married, moved to Hearne, Texas, worked in a boarding school, your father was the principal, and your mother was a teacher, then your father turned to the Baptist ministry and his pastorate began to move the family--Texas, Arkansas, back to Texas, Kansas, and finally Chicago.

ZG: That's correct. Now, one thing when you were talking came to mind. Oh! My mother had a beautiful wedding in her church. There was a Black man in Dallas who arranged white people's weddings, I mean he was a caterer and a florist. Mama said he specialized in weddings. He came to Ennis, Texas, and planned my mother's wedding and the big reception at my grandmother's house. My mother's stepfather had a restaurant so he had the facilities for catering, but this man wouldn't let him do it; he brought in his caterers. And it was a very, very beautiful wedding. I heard lots of talk about it. And some of the people who were bridesmaids were girls who went to college with her, the ushers were men who were friends of my father. It was very elegant. My mother says she took the three years she worked to make her trousseau. She was a very good seamstress, and those three years away from Bishop she spent making things for it. And all of her dresses, housedresses were long, and had trains on them! Her housedresses! (Laughter) So they were very elegant people! (Laughter) Her trousseau included bed and table linens with embroidery as well as her own clothes.

MG: Now during the various pastorates of your father, what was your mother's work during this time?

ZG: My mother was a wife, a mother. Most of the time she was either with child or had very young children. We came about two years apart. Mother was a gracious hostess not only for prominent speakers who came to Daddy's church but for us all. She kept an immaculate, beautiful home that was cheerful and comfortable and much lived in. And she worked in the church, in the Missions department and with the young people. In the B.Y.P.U. (the Baptist Young Peoples' Union), which she headed, we received excellent training. She organized spelling bees using facts from the Bible. We knew all the books of the Bible, the New Testament and Old, and Bible stories. There was much music and wand drills as part of youth activities. The music was of high quality, both vocal and instrumental, and encouraged youth talent. Mother also played the violin.

With the adults she worked with the Missions Department. She was a very active minister's wife and mother and lover. They set an excellent example in family life, a man and woman very much in love. I remember them as lovers. There was no public display but nobody had any doubts about it.

MG: Did your mother ever have any income-producing employment outside the home before your father's death?

ZG: No. Her work was in a home that always had help with household work, and in the church.

When her last child went to school, Mother went back to college and was on her way to getting her degree, when my father died. Mother had the normal college course at Bishop--a teacher-training education, two years college, the other two years there were high school work. After my father died and two children were in college, Mother went full-time to National Baptist Training School in Chicago. And then when the depression really hit, she felt she had to get a job. She became Dean of Women at Virginia Union University in Richmond, Virginia--the first dean after the school absorbed Hartshorn College for Women and became co-educational. In my early childhood in Palestine, my mother taught piano at home, but you cannot call that income-producing. It was more of a service for those she felt were gifted. Later on she didn't even do that. She taught for the first few months at the school in Hearne but as soon as she got pregnant with me, my father insisted that she stop teaching. They were married in September and I was born a year and three months later. So, she didn't teach very long.

MG: Now let me ask you about the atmosphere of the homes in which you grew up. You moved different places. What was the daily routine?

ZG: First, let me say that we always lived in a big, beautiful house which was strict and disciplined. We all got up early and went to our father's bed for prayer every morning. My father didn't get up early because he worked late at church and in community activities. Mother would get up and, often with her housecoat on, would sit with us for breakfast before school. I do not remember any time in my life when we did not have help in the home. We always had one "live-in" person. They took care of the babies so Mama could go places. And then we always had help in the kitchen. Now I say help because every one of us had to learn to do things. There's nothing in the house I can't do, and enjoy doing! And that's the reason I don't get many things done. If I don't have efficient help, I get in the kitchen and I cook or clean, or wash. I don't like to wash, but I love to iron pretty things like table napkins and handkerchiefs. I could sit and iron for hours, and I'm very critical about the ironing of sheets and table linen now, done by someone else.

Well anyway, we had a schedule. There has always been a blackboard in my life. A big one. My father would make it and each of us had a section. Each of us had assignments

that were posted for the week. And, then there was always a "Poem of the Week." Each week our assignments were checked to indicate whether we did it or not, and how well. My mother might be out at a missionary meeting or something, but there was always somebody there. For many years it was the same person. We called her "Miss Mary" or "Miss" whatever it was, but Mama would check and then we'd get stars by the task: gold stars, blue stars, green stars and red stars. They all meant different things, indicating whether you did your job well or not. The stars went up there every day, as regularly as stars were in the sky! (Laughter) If you didn't get enough gold stars, you know, in a month, or whatever time Mother decided to check, you were disciplined.

We always lived in a house with at least two floors, and many times three floors. One week I was assigned to the first floor, next week second floor, next week third floor, and the next week, kitchen. Assignments were made so that we rotated. On the day that we did real cleaning, which was Saturday, I never knew that you did anything on Saturday but clean and iron your clothes and get the washing or whatever your part of it was. The woman helper did the sheets and table linens and other things. We did our personal things and sometimes I did some of mother's housedresses.

Mama had white gloves that she put on as she went around to see if there was any dust. Of course my mother wore gloves everywhere, even to the market. She was the white glove lady, she always had an extra pair in her pocketbook. But that white glove that she took to see about dust was not the one she wore everyday. My father's study had many framed mottoes and wise sayings hanging up on the wall. There must have been thirty or forty of them up there and my job was to dust them. I used to wonder why because they didn't get that dusty in a week. But I think my father thought that by osmosis I'd learn some of these, just by handling them. And I did! I didn't realize it, but it was going in my eyes and getting in my brain and I didn't know it. I resented them sometimes. The only time we were allowed in Father's study was when we were invited. I was invited once a week to clean it. (Laughter) For a long time that was my job, because the others weren't old enough to do that kind of thing, to get up on a little ladder or stool and dust these things. Dust off his two roller-top desks. My father was the editor for seventeen years of the B.Y.P.U. Quarterly, and so he was always in the process of writing the next quarterly. And there was one desk he used just for that. The other desk was for his sermon preparation and that kind of thing. These desks were beautiful pieces of furniture that I enjoyed keeping polished. Up over them were these mottoes.

We always lived in elegant, good houses with good furniture and carpets, curtains, lace curtains which I helped to wash and stretch on stretchers. Books, books, books--when Daddy died at forty-seven, he wasn't economically viable, but had over five thousand books, six children and a good mortgage on a beautiful, beautiful home in Chicago's South Side. The insurance money didn't last too long and a part of it was improperly invested and was lost.

We lived well and I don't ever remember when we didn't have an abundant table. The table was always set with table cloth, silver, china, crystal. We were required to be home for dinner. That was the time the family reported to Daddy and Mama and to one another. It was a time for conversation; we were never reprimanded at the table. When you came home from school, you'd take off your clothes and put on your play clothes. And then when it came time for dinner, you would take a bath and put on your clothes for school next day. This was mother's way of making sure you had your clothes together for tomorrow. Then you'd go upstairs and pull those clothes off, find whatever was missing and put on your study clothes. We always had a family library and each of us had a desk in it. My mother would sit as the teacher. When we'd come home with good grades Father would say, "Well, whatever did you expect? You have all the reference books you need and you left home with a good grade." You see, we never got credit for it. There was always a "but" to every compliment! "But, what do you expect."

He was so anxious that we would never feel any superiority over others in our church who didn't have the same opportunities. We never got new clothes for Easter, ever. Mothers could say to their children, "Well, Reverend Watson's children won't have any things new either." We'd get new clothes, but not for Easter. Name-dropping was just absolutely prohibited. No matter who came to dinner, we were not allowed to talk about it. It handicapped me later on--I don't remember names and there have been times when I could drop a few names that would help me, as an adult, but I just cannot do it.

We were always the ones in the wrong when there was any problem involving other children. I know I never had but one fight in my life, and that was at a watermelon party on the grounds of my father's church in Dallas, Texas. This girl walked up behind me and washed my face with a watermelon rind. She was playing but it took me by surprise and I hit back with a reflex action. I didn't expect it, I really wasn't fighting, it was just an instinctive response. And then she--I often wore my hair in two plaits to school, and they were long plaits with a bow of ribbon here and a

little bow at the bottom sometimes because it would come unplaited. And she grabbed these two plaits and shook the living daylights out of me. I could not get a hold of her hair. It was too short. And so we had a little scuffle and she won. And all I did was grab her where I could. It was her dress and I did tear it. When my mother heard about it, she took me to that house that night and made me apologize. I never forgave my mother for that, because I didn't start it and I wasn't fighting, but, I was wrong. I was told that I should have found a way to manage it. "You're the minister's daughter and you're the oldest and you've got to set an example!" All my life I heard, "You've got sisters and a brother and you must set an example. And if they ever go wrong it will be because you didn't set a good example." It was overdone, overdone! After I got to the University of Chicago, I had my own bedroom and my own desk in my bedroom, for study. I was responsible for my own clothes, but the sheets and the bedding and the linen and things like that, the woman who worked for us took care of.

When I was young, growing up, I was responsible for ironing my mother's dresses, most of which were "Mother Hubbards" with fullness in front because they were her designer maternity dresses. They were beautiful things and they were long and you couldn't iron them all at once on the board, you'd have to iron the top half and then the bottom half. I learned to iron them well with starch in them. Maybe if there were too many I didn't have to do them at all. How much you had to do depended largely on how much work the helper-woman had to do. But we had responsibility, we always thought she was helping us, we weren't helping her, you know. If she did some ironing this week, you were grateful. It wasn't as if you expected it.

MG: Well, was your brother required to do the same sort of work that you were?

ZG: No, he worked in the yard. Father believed there was men's work and women's work. And the men worked in the yard and took care of the mechanical things in the house. My brother could do anything and to this day he can do anything with a hammer, a saw, and a pair of pliers. My father, when he was in Bishop College, as a student, taught a course on the side, in manual training because he was that good. He'd learned on his father's farm how to do things. He was very good. We as girls could do things with our hands, we were pretty good. We all did crocheting, embroidery, and sewing. Our sewing baskets were always nearby. In high school I had checked gingham dresses with elaborate cross-stitch patterns on the skirt, collars, and cuffs that I would make during the summer. They were very pretty and I was proud of them.

The men put the garbage out and took care of the yard and the grass and watering, although Mama liked to water the flowers. My mother was great with flowers. If she touched anything it would grow. I never learned to do it because my mother liked to do it, and she was so successful with it. Every spring Mother would put on our desks a bowl with little pebbles in it and lilies of the valley or some other spring flowers. We always had flowers in the house on special occasions. For Mama this was her hobby and she would see that some little bit of beauty was in your room, a single flower often. But I never learned how to garden and I don't know to this day how to do it. Mama didn't teach us; that was hers. That was her recreation and her pride and joy were her flowers. And it was her time for privacy.

Music was very important in our home. We had a grand piano and the family did much singing and playing around it. Whenever you had visitors often they brought their instruments or vocal music.

MG: Well, now it's here, but is there more you'd like to say in a specific sort of description of the personalities of your parents?

ZG: My father was the man, my mother was the female--the woman with femininity. She was a lady. She always did the proper thing, I mean she ate properly, she dressed properly; I never saw my mother slovenly dressed in my life, even if she had been working in the dirt. I never saw her with her feet in "run-down" shoes or hair not done well and attractively. My father thought she was beautiful and he enjoyed seeing her dressed up. He pampered her. He was a good provider. He was also a strict disciplinarian. My mother was a disciplinarian in the sense that she would grade you strictly and put the grades up there on the board. But the punishment part of it she wasn't very good at. Daddy was. She would whip, she had a strap that hung in a certain place, you would go get the strap and she would give you a few licks or something like that, but she talked more than anything else. Often you wished she'd just use the whip, get it over with--and let you go, because the talk would drive you crazy. It was mostly about how disappointed she was, and how you'd let her down, and she would cry, and say, "I can't believe my child would do this to me." It was that kind of thing that I think drove me to my father. He would get it over with and then he was ready to be friends again. But my mother would carry it over and she could cry again tomorrow. And she worried! It was her bounden duty to worry about you from the time you left the house until you got back. And then worry about what you did while you

were gone. All her life she was a worrier! And yet, she had very pleasant moments.

She was essentially very personal in her relationship with you and she was hurt by you, your behavior. She could be very happy too, you know what I mean, I don't mean that she was always disagreeable, I didn't mean that. But when she got disagreeable it lasted a while. My father could give you a whipping and then in a few minutes you'd be out playing or something together. But you knew he meant it. They supported one another 100 percent. They, I found out later, disagreed very often in their room, but we never knew that. They came out of that room agreeing and usually it was probably what Daddy wanted. She would pout with him maybe, but she didn't with us. We never knew there was any disagreement between them. As I said, Mama told me these things many years later.

Now what else? Oh! We had a lot of music in the house and we marched a lot. And because we always had a big house, we always had front steps and back steps. And we used wands--you don't know anything about that--yes, wands, and we could do exercises and all kinds of things with these wands. And we'd have a "follow-the-leader" thing and Daddy would come in sometimes with us and he'd do the leading. He was very athletic, and we'd march up the steps and around and over things and around things and out in the yard and in the garage. Mama was at the piano. And there were two or three marches that she played all the time. She was good at it. I can play one of them now. But Mama played the piano, so Daddy was the active one.

Let me talk a bit about my father as a minister. Daddy was a very good cornetist, I mean an extremely good cornetist. And we always had very good music in the church and in our home. William Boatner, a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music, a composer, director and music teacher was head of the music at the church when my father died. He had a string quartet, a very good one that played often in Sunday worship service. Daddy kept what he called "Baptist ragtime," and later was known as gospel music, out of our church. We were an elite church musically in the eyes of some people because he wouldn't let that "sinful music" in his church.

After he died, Rev. J.C. Austin took over. That's when Mahalia Jackson and other gospel singers came into the church. But Daddy wouldn't let them in when he was alive. We had spirituals and gospel songs such as "The Old Rugged Cross," and traditional hymns sung with fervor. I will always remember high moments when as the congregation sang a hymn, Daddy would reach under the podium and get his cornet

and improvise descants that were very moving. He had a very good, trained tenor voice and very often we sang duets. We went to conventions and we sang everywhere--"Rev. Watson and his daughter Zelma." And that's where I learned proper use of the voice before I ever had vocal lessons, because I imitated his tones, and he would tell me when I was wrong in my breathing and phrasing and that kind of thing.

MG: Did you sing the harmony part or did he? Or did you change over?

ZG: Well, we changed around. He was a tenor and I called myself a contralto. Later on my teachers told me I was a dramatic soprano with a wide range. But I sang alto a lot with him, there were times that he would take the harmony part. It was pretty good, the arrangement. Sometimes we'd switch in the same song. But there were several good hymns that whenever we'd sing them he would start it, look around at me and that meant to join him. I'd go on out and stand by the pulpit and join him in the chorus.

My father was very progressive and we have an institutional church in that he had the first baseball team and the first basketball, and he was severely criticized by other fellow Baptist ministers and deacons. Some of the deacons in the church were very disturbed when he put a basketball hoop in the Sunday School assembly room and marked the floor. They considered this to be desecrating, but he survived it. A couple of the deacons left the church. He made a tennis court right next door to the church and on that he was way ahead of his time. His pastorate in Chicago was during the great migration of Negroes from the South to the North and they came to Daddy's church for guidance and help, even for employment.

MG: Now was this in Chicago?

ZG: Chicago, yes. In Dallas he had forums... There was the traditional morning service and then he had big evening services because many of the people worked in private homes and couldn't come to the morning service. The evening service often took the form of a forum. He preached about civic matters in the evening. He tackled all sort of community and racial problems. He had a great following and he was in his prime, charismatic and effective--and handsome. Because of his following and outspoken attacks on the problems he addressed, he was constantly warned. There were schoolteachers who would report to him that they couldn't keep their jobs if they didn't go to bed with some superior white official, and other things like that. When they'd come and tell him he would preach about it and talk about it, go to see them. And the church was packed when

people from all the other churches came because he was a really good speaker, and dramatic with it. He would also bring Negro leaders to talk on various subjects. He really reached out.

MG: This was in the Red Summer of 1919.

ZG: Yes. We went there in 1920, you see. And the people were coming from the South because of the war. They had already heard of him in the South. So they went to his church. And he got them jobs, had an employment service at the church which was really way ahead of its time. He had classes in English, reading and writing for people who couldn't get jobs because they couldn't write their names. And he worked on diction. There was heavy southern dialect. People had to learn how to talk. There's nothing that has helped Black speech better than television and radio. But we didn't have radios. And they didn't hear anybody but themselves. When they came North you could hardly understand them sometimes. That's the way Karamu got started, helping Blacks to get their English, their spoken language to the point where they could get a job.

So, I was learning all the time about concern, about people and the real nitty gritty problems that Negroes were facing. Daddy was always doing something about it! He would encourage the members of his congregation to buy the books of the speakers. He would tell them to "go home and turn those pages even if you can't read. Let your child see you with a book in your hand!" He talked about that all the time!

In our social life, my parents encouraged us to have company when there would be more than one. I couldn't have a date with one fellow but two or three fellows could come, or girls and boys. Usually they brought their musical instruments, or they came prepared to participate in some kind of music. And if I had a male friend that I was entertaining and I'd be at the piano, you know, he was allowed to stand at the piano and look at me but... (Laughter)

MG: He couldn't sit on the bench. (Laughter) I know that rule! (Laughter)

ZG: Do you? (Laughter) And one time Daddy caught a fellow standing and he said, "Oh, you're going home so soon?" as if he was ready to go. (Laughter) Oh yes, and when you went out you had to be home by ten o'clock and if you weren't home by ten, he was at the door. When you got there, he was there. And it was that very strict kind of routine. But you could have company and you were encouraged to have it.

We didn't do visiting, because you couldn't visit all the children in your church and therefore you couldn't show favorites. So they came to see you. And we always had a playground, I mean we had a trapeze and swings, a little pool for wading that he built himself. And the children would come and play. We had a basketball hoop on the garage. Daddy would come and play with us. He liked to play jacks! He carried jacks around in his pocket and he'd join a bunch of kids playing. He could shoot marbles better than anybody you knew! And he'd carry his agate around and when he would see a bunch of boys playing he'd go look at them a while and then he'd challenge one of them. I've seen him have wrestling matches with adults in his study where they'd get on the floor and wrestle, you know, it wasn't wrestling as we know it today. Croquet, he and my mother played. He could challenge anybody on croquet; he was very good at whatever he did.

Daddy had been a baseball pitcher in college, at Bishop, and so he would play occasionally part of a game with the team at the church, which was just really carrying it too far for a lot of people, you know, for him to get out there and really pitch. Bad enough to have a team! There were no other churches to play with; the church team had to play with secular people if you wanted any competition, because there were no other churches that had teams. So he was very out front. And if he'd lived a little longer--five years in Chicago wasn't enough time to get going some of the things he started really going. I've seen him take into membership a hundred people in one service, he was that persuasive. And especially on New Year's Eve. When the church'd be packed and jammed. He had loud speakers and he'd have two services at once, you know, upstairs--nearly three hundred people in that second church.

MG: Where was it located?

ZG: 33rd and Indiana in Chicago.

MG: Is it still standing?

ZG: Oh yes, yes. And it's still Pilgrim Baptist Church, but Reverend Austin's son is there now, Reverend Austin, who succeeded my father, died, and his son is pastor. But you know, they went two years after my father died before they'd call anybody; they couldn't find anybody they thought could meet the qualifications. You know who they called? Mor-decai Johnson, who accepted. But before he got moved

from North Carolina where he was, I think it was North Carolina, he was called to Howard University to be President. He hadn't moved his family but he had accepted. The only person that the church ever thought really could take my Father's place was Mordecai Johnson.

MG: Well, let me ask you something about your siblings, you had five of them, Verta, Samuel, was he Samuel, Jr.?

ZG: Yes.

MG: Vivian, Cathryn and Jewel. Was that their birth order?

ZG: That's right.

MG: Tell me just a little about each one of them, something about their personalities and your relationships with each other.

ZG: Well, they've all made good, and all finished college. And all of them finished after Daddy died. My sister next to me is Verta. She is trained as a chemist. For more than thirty years, she has been a chemist with the Chicago Health Department and was honored on a special TV program by Phil Donahue for her volunteer work with "Golden Agers." She is the saint of the family. Now we'd go to visit the sick, and I'd be in there talking to the sick, and she'd be back there washing the dishes, you know. (Laughter) I'd say, "Call me if there's anything I can do." And she'd be doing it, you know, that's the kind of a person she is. She lives in Morgan Park now (out of Chicago). She has sheets, four or five sets of sheets that she only uses for sick people. And if she knows somebody's sick she'll go to the house, pick up the dirty ones and leave the clean ones. Or, she'd take a pot of soup and never say anything, just put it on the stove or somewhere. She was quiet. She wasn't very well as a child, she's just a year and ten months younger than I am. Well, Verta was not a very strong child when she was young; she was the sickly one and was quiet. She would curl up in a porch swing or a chair and read.

Well, Verta, because she didn't play a lot, learned to do those things with her hands better than any of us and so she knits dresses and suits. You hardly ever see her when she isn't knitting; she does beautiful work. She was four years behind me in school because she wasn't so well. Not because she wasn't smart, she's smart as she can be, she's a chemist. But she just was not so well. And then I was so aggressive and vocal that I think she took to more quiet ways just to give me a chance to grow up. But we are

different personalities. She is a delicate person. She doesn't make any fuss out of it, you don't have to call her, she's going to get there.

Also, she's raised two beautiful daughters and one of them is married to an atomic energy mathematician, Larry Sadler. He is now a research analyst for the Naval Ocean-Systems Center and Muriel is the administrative analyst for the Dean's Office of the School of Medicine at the University of California at San Diego. They have four children, two of whom have graduated from college. They met at Tennessee State.

Both of her daughters graduated from Tennessee State while I was there. The other one is a social worker and was a supervisor, but she's married to a young man, Jim Foree who was in public relations for the mayor of Chicago for a long time. They live around the corner from their mother in Morgan Park in Chicago. She raises and shows dogs as a hobby. She had no children. Her name is Jacqueline Jackson Foree. She raises these prize dogs and shows them, and has a house full of trophies. She's very attentive to her mother and she lives close, it's a good relationship there and we feel comfortable, because Verta's now retired and not too well and her husband has not been well at all. But Jacqueline takes care of them. They are very active in golden age things, neighborhood activities and travel.

MG: Uh huh.

ZG: But they have all the discount cards and they go on all these trips, to Hawaii and other places, where there are other golden agers. I am not old enough yet! I didn't even have a senior card to get into the theater down here at a discount until two weeks ago. Somebody sent me one from Columbus but I haven't used it yet. But my sister and husband get discounts on medicine and other things and they've got much more than I have, the two of them. But that's just a different kind of lifestyle. They live in a little home they built thirty years ago and they've added a room and another bath on it, but you know, I couldn't live in the same place that long. It's just different personalities and they're much more stable than I am.

Now my brother is next, Samuel Elbert James Watson, known as Sam, and he is a saint. He is a minister now, but he refused it for years. He wasn't going to be pushed into the ministry. Everybody was going to make him a minister because my father was one; he was the only boy. And he just resisted. He became a businessman and a mechanic; for a long time he had a little company that did all the brake

work for the Checker cabs in Chicago, that kind of thing. Then he got tired of that and decided he wanted a farm. So when his two daughters, Barbara Jean and Beverly Lynn, went to college he bought a farm in Bangor, Michigan. His wife, Blanche Jackson Watson, who is a perfectly wonderful woman, was the only girl he ever courted. They married when they were kids, you know, he had just finished school. She's a good mother and a good wife. She went with him, made the adjustment, and they were producing foods for Birds-Eye, and doing a very good job of it. Then he got the urge to pick up his father's life at the age his father was when he died. And he resisted it and resisted it, and when he got forty-seven, he still resisted it. He was raising pigs for the market and had this field that was planted. Birds-Eye would come and harvest it. And he raised blueberries and strawberries and other fruit. Well, he had gone into this business of raising hogs and he had this big modern barn or whatever you call it. The hogs didn't ever come out of it, they had light and they were fed all the time. Sam had bought a metal roof that was all in one piece. They rolled it and put it on a truck with a long trailer, put it on the barn in early spring.

He has a lovely place, a lot of yard, and some of his ground isn't used for farming, it's used for a park, it goes down to a little brook. They have trimmed it up and made it, really like a park. They put park tables and benches out there and everybody comes there when they want to have a picnic. They can cook outdoors and he had an outhouse so they don't have to come inside. He also has a gas station. The people come, get filled up with gas, and write on a pad that he had there "10 gallons" and their name. And they come and pay him once a month and he swears he never lost any money. On this Memorial holiday, beautiful day, all of a sudden there came up this terrible squall. And do you know? Now this is the truth and it's hard to believe: the wind lifted this roof that had just been put there, this metal roof, off in one piece. And the people standing there looking at it, not afraid. It hadn't rained yet. There had been lightning. Then this wind came. And this metal just waved like a ribbon and set right down on his field. And he said he looked up to the Lord and he said, "I hear you Lord."

The next day he went, with his wife, into Kalamazoo, to a school to see if he could register, because they had some Bible courses or something and he was going to get started whether it was what he wanted finally or not. He couldn't pass it without training, he said, so he went to school. And he took these courses and he finished and he got himself a church. He gave up this farm income, and serviced people with their mechanical equipment, tractors, etc.

Well, he pastored a church for migrants. And he spent his time going to Washington to get some help from the Washington bureau for migrant people, to put pressure on the people who were hiring these migrants to make them give the workers better living conditions and to provide them recreational facilities. And he turned his church into a recreational facility. His little church was a very "ritzy" church, small, very beautiful, and all the people in there were very light in color. During slavery it was settled by the children of white men by Negro women they loved.

MG: Where was he living?

ZG: This was in Bangor, Michigan.

MG: Yes.

ZG: So, he's still there, but he has retired from the church and is living on his farm. He has his social security and some savings. They have a trailer that is out of this world. People who know him believe in him, appreciate what he does for anybody who needs him. Somebody knew he wanted a trailer and heard about this man wanting to sell his trailer. When he met my brother he gave him a "good deal." He and Blanche are members of a trailer group of older people and they go places and fish and/or hunt. They go for fun. They also have a boat which is partly owned by their daughter and son-in-law, Ado Warren. They live in Chicago and are just very good to them. They go down for weekends and they keep in close touch. Beverly teaches in public schools in Chicago and Ado is a Captain in the Fire Department. They're really very good children and Ado treats Sam as if he were his father. Beverly and Ado have a daughter Lynn who is married. They have three children and the family lives in Carbondale, Illinois, where both are on the faculty of a branch of the University of Illinois there.

Sam is the kind of person who commands love and respect from anybody--his parishioners and the people in the neighborhood because he's been so good to them. He never charges them to use his place as a recreation park. Blanche was sick for a while and her father who was living with her was very ill. The people brought food and they came to do work, you know. It's just a beautiful life that they are living. There is another daughter, Barbara Jean, who is married to a farmer nearby. They have two sons.

The next child is Vivian, a graduate of Virginia Union where she was an outstanding leader and student. You know Howard Thurman's wife, Sue Bailey? Well, when Sue was in

the national YWCA office, Vivian was one of her chief leaders, you know, in student retreats and summer things. In fact, she was one of her bridesmaids when they got married up at King's Mountain, I think it was. Well, Vivian was the head of the largest housing project in Chicago in social work; I think she got her master's there. And was married to a young man, Theodore Tives, a graduate of the University of Chicago. They were married and divorced and remarried twice. And I played an important role in the first divorce, because I didn't think the marriage was going to work from the beginning, and when she came to me and was mad, I sent her to my lawyer and helped her get divorced. And then first thing I knew they were courting again and everything I had said, he knew and they married again; and it took me a little while to get to be friends again, but we made it. And then they divorced again and remarried. It wasn't working. She had a big program at a school involving the people at her housing project.

I don't know whether I should tell this or not on a tape. Well, I'm going to say it because it's really, I think, a beautiful story. His name is Edgar Edwards. His wife had died recently and he was on his way to Europe for a vacation. He'd stopped off in Chicago to see his brother, who was the principal of the school where the program was in progress. When he went by his brother's house, his wife told him he was at school. So he went there and it was my sister's program. He recognized her although they had not been in touch for twenty years. He walked down to the front where she was sitting and laid his wallet in her lap and there was her picture with some of her hair around it. They had courted in college and he had wanted to marry her. He didn't have a job, so my mother wouldn't give consent to it when they finished. They later got interested in other people and he married somebody else and she married somebody else. Now he had grown children. They had not seen each other or had any contact with each other for twenty years. He lived in California, she was in Chicago.

After this program was over, they went to dinner somewhere and she went home and announced to her husband that she had met this man that she had loved in college, they hadn't been together and she hadn't seen him, she had never been untrue to him, but she was announcing that she was leaving the next day to go to Reno to get divorced. And she left. She took the car and left him with everything that they had: the house and the furniture. She went and took what money she had in the bank and they left for Reno. The only way Ted could find out where she was was when she charged gas and the bill came in and he knew where they had been.

She got divorced and she and Edgar married. They went to California where he lived. And they both were so grateful that they were finally united that they went back to school and got master's degrees in Religious Education from the University of Southern California. He became the assistant pastor of a church and she was the Director of Religious Education. I mean they went to school and got a second master's and now he is minister of a church and she is the social worker. They are administering the church which has aimed its service to youth with drug-related problems.

MG: That's quite a story.

ZG: Isn't that something? So I don't really think it's a bad story to tell, although it's personal, you know what I really mean? And I don't know whether I should be telling it, but everybody knows it.

He had been in real estate and she was a social worker, and they had no religious training whatever. And they've done remarkable things in Watts with a Public Living Room where the young men would come in. Vivian and Edgar would be sitting there and the boys would come in and talk, and they considered it a home to go to. They didn't have any living room at home. They kept a sack of white potatoes and a device to make them into French fries size and small paper cups of tomato catsup. There was a deep fryer with cooking oil. They were welcome to cook a potato and eat it if they cleaned up after themselves. They would look at television, talk with the other boys or with Vivian and Edgar who sat in living room chairs and greeted them as they came and went. This simple place, regularly available, (with the potatoes), friendly, warm, no strings--it must have filled a great need during those months after the Watts riots.

As a result of the service to drug-oriented youth in the church, many of the members left and it was necessary for them to convert the church to a mission church to get supported. They've done really extraordinary things. Well, that's Vivian.

Cathryn is the real smart one in the family. She finished Tennessee State, met her husband there, and married. His name is Ras O. Johnson. His home was Tennessee and they taught in Dyersburg or Murfreesboro, not far from Nashville for a while. Then they went to Atlanta, well, they went to South Carolina first and he worked with the head of Negro Education in the U.S. Department of Health and Welfare and Education for many, many years. R.O. worked with him in the South, helping to upgrade schools and bringing federal

influence on school boards and others responsible for education among the Negroes. Well anyway, later he went to Atlanta, they went to Atlanta. And he taught at Morehouse. He was head of History, and she taught public school. Later she was made the principal of the Practice School at Atlanta University. Among her students was Martin Luther King, and the present mayor of Atlanta. Cathryn was an extremely good administrator and teacher.

Some time later, R.O. was sent to Laos by the State Department as chief of education, and he set up the first public school system in Laos. Cathryn was with him, and their son, Ed Lee Johnson. They had this lovely home in Atlanta which they closed up when they went away. In Laos she taught American children in a special school. In setting up the school system in Laos, he started with the university because he didn't want to bring in outside teachers. And he went around the country looking for people eligible for college, riding an elephant to the places he had to go. He started out trying to go out with helicopters but they created so much attention he couldn't get very far with what he'd come there to do. So he got an elephant and an elephant boy and traveled, and he found many of the privileged children who had been sent away to school by their parents. And he persuaded them to take some special education courses and help in establishing education for the people of Laos. So he got the educated people who were privileged and didn't have to be paid much, you know, and had them trained. He set up the University to train them so they could train others and become the first teachers. And they started at first grade and then second grade and so forth. Isn't that something? Well, before he could complete the job, Laos had political problems and they had to be evacuated into Thailand. They lived in Bangkok for a long time, in the Erawan Hotel. When I was on my trip around the world, I went to Laos to visit them and was very proud of what they were doing.

The State Department promoted him and he came back to the United States into Washington as head of AID, which was servicing Africa, Asia, and wherever we had AID programs in Europe. They lived in Washington. Cathryn was a very good hostess for the many guests from Africa and Asia especially. They lived in this lovely, lovely home. Well, an important part of his mission on this job was to help set up most of the big universities in Africa--in Ghana and Nigeria and other places in Africa. It was felt by many that he was being groomed to be the first Black ambassador to Nigeria. That's what they were grooming him for. Well, to make a long story short, and I'm not going to put on tape what we believe and what we have every reason to believe, because I don't know what my sister's yet going to do about it. On

one of his missions to Africa, he was scheduled to stop over in Bangkok for some State Department reason. He spent the day there and went for a swim in the Erawan pool before dinner. He was found dead on the bottom of this tiny pool. He was a good swimmer. He did not have cramps. His death is a mystery but everybody agrees there was something mysterious about it.

When this happened, Cathryn decided to build on a piece of property they had bought for a summer home, Arundel on the Bay, Annapolis, Maryland. She got involved in the community college, was president of its board. Recently they named a new building for her. The A. Cathryn Johnson Classroom Building. I was there for the dedication which was a great tribute to her.

She was principal of an elementary school near the Naval Academy where she was invited to take over during some racial strife in the school. They built a new school to her specifications and one of the things she did was to integrate handicapped children into the mainstream of the school. She was in an Amigo wheelchair by this time and she was able to get the Amigo company to make smaller versions of the chair so pupils would not have to wait for someone to push them to their next destination, they could get there "on their own."

She retired as a successful administrator and is still much loved by the community. She lives in a house she built to accommodate the things she brought from the East. She and her son took six months in traveling to get home from Laos. Her son, Ed Lee, teaches/supervises in the area of physical education with a master's degree in education. He was being groomed for a diplomatic career with his fluency in languages and experiences in living in Asia, but he wants no part of this, because of his father's mysterious death and the theories about it. His wife Jolita also teaches in the Annapolis schools. Their son is not yet in school.

Now my baby sister Jewel Evangeline Fisher lives in Detroit. She's an actuary. She did her apprenticeship at North Carolina State Insurance Company under C.C. Spalding, Jr. He was the first and only Black actuary for a long time. She worked for Golden State Life Insurance Company in Los Angeles. Then she married Ernest Fisher, an attorney, and moved to Detroit where she was an actuary for a while. Then she started teaching and when she got pregnant, her husband wanted her to stay home. Their son, Lee Fisher was ready to go to school, then he said that he was willing for her to work if she'd work in a school so she'd have the same vacations and the same summertime and all. So she became

head of one of the departments in the Commercial High School in Detroit which was later torn down to make way for a highway! She is now teaching in another high school.

Her son is in school studying engineering funded by one of the big engineering companies that had picked out ten outstanding young people from around the country. Two of them were Black, to be trained for their company.

Jewel's husband, a lawyer, managed mostly businesses; his job was with legal consulting firms, nursing homes and hospitals, I don't know exactly what his title was, but that's what he did. He died of cancer of the lung; he just smoked all the time. Nothing you could do about it. And he suffered for a good little while from cancer. He died the day before my mother died. So Jewel buried her husband one day then came out to Chicago for the funeral of my mother, the next day.

MG: When did your mother die? I don't have that date.

ZG: She died in September 1972. She was living with me, but at the time she died I was in the hospital for my first total knee operation, and I sent the nurse that had been with her for many months to my brother's place to help with Mother while I was in the hospital. She died while I was in the hospital, from a heart attack. We didn't know she had any heart problems.

MG: How old was she when she died?

ZG: Ninety-four. She taught at Tennessee State and was on the staff there until she was eighty. I should tell you that in 1957 they dedicated a building and named it after my mother at Tennessee State. There was a law in the state of Tennessee against naming any public building after a living person.

MG: It was in 1957. The Lena B. Watson Center...

ZG: Lena B. Watson Center for Men.

MG: For freshmen.

ZG: For freshmen. Well, that was the first wing and they've added two other wings; they have a quadrangle, and it's now for all men, you see. But at that time when it was dedicated, there was only one wing. The whole thing is the Lena B. Watson Center for Men. You remember I had gone to Tennessee State to try to set up an arrangement whereby I could bring my mother and two sisters, Cathryn and Jewel,

who had not finished college. I had a small but attractive two-bedroom cottage and we were settled with Cathryn in Tennessee State and Jewell in its high school department, and Mother keeping house, when President William Hale discovered that my mother had been Dean of Women at Virginia Union.

He asked her to serve as a substitute when one of the matrons in one of the boys' dormitories was sick. The woman was sick about three months. The students liked Mother so much, they didn't want to give her up. When the old matron returned they gave her another job, she was also a nurse, and kept Mother in this dormitory.

Now my mother was a lady and her very presence commanded a certain kind of behavior from everybody. And in that dormitory, it just changed when she was there. And that's the reason they wanted her to stay.

She would inspect rooms and she said all the fellows had a picture of some girl or their mother. If the room looked bad she'd just turn the picture around; she didn't want them to see it! And that's all she did. They'd come in and find the picture turned to the wall. They knew they hadn't passed that day. You know, it was that kind of thing she would do.

Another story. She had a living room and a bedroom and a little kitchenette in this dormitory. Every afternoon she would make tea and she'd have some cookies or crackers. This would be on the table and whether she was in there or not, the boys would go in and get a cup of tea. These boys would never have done that kind of thing otherwise. But it was just a matter of sitting in Mother's living room, and maybe being with her, or being there when she came back, or just getting away from the gang, you know.

Another story. Boys would need a dollar for any reason, mostly to get their laundry out, or even for spending change on a date. Some of them would borrow a dollar from Mother. They would come by, on their way out, and ask her comment on how they look. So she decided that she was going to put ten one-dollar bills in a container of some kind up on the shelf. And if she was busy and the fellows would come in and they'd bring an I.O.U. for one--they couldn't take but one--and the date and their name. They'd put it in the container and if each couldn't get one they would go (and she knew what they were doing and everybody else knew)--they would pick out the older I.O.U.'s and collect them. So she never lost a dollar. And we didn't know anything about this until they had the dedication of the building and many

graduates came to honor her and one of them told us all about this "bank." I have a statue of a young man stepping out. He's got one foot down and the other one out in front of him, and he's dressed up with a hat and a shirt and a tie and a briefcase. And it says, "Walking Away From Mama Watson." And the man who had this made is a judge in East St. Louis. He collected money from graduates from all over the country to do this. And had it especially made, because you couldn't buy anything like it already done and in the dedication--he came to the program and he told us about this money. We had never, she had never told us. And how they'd go collecting and all that. Oh, it was just beautiful, it was just absolutely beautiful.

So about the building. We wanted to plant a tree in front of the building. So they had to get the architect to tell them, knowing what the future building would be, where the best spot was. He decided the spot. Well, Mama didn't want any "little bitty tree" that maybe wasn't going to live; she wanted a tree. So I had somebody to survey and they found this beautiful magnolia tree. I persuaded the family to plant it and then I assumed responsibility for moving it. Well, when they went to plant the tree, they found out that the spot chosen was nothing but scale, and kind of limestone they have in Tennessee, solid. So, when the time to plant came and they brought the tree, with a huge ball of earth as big as half of this room. That meant the hole had to be deep. And even more so now that we'd found stone. We had to put enough earth around it. It cost me \$500 to plant that tree, but it's there and it's thriving, this beautiful magnolia tree for my mother. I've been back since several times and the whole quadrangle is very lovely.

MG: Now as children...

ZG: I didn't finish about Jewel.

MG: Oh, I'm sorry.

ZG: Jewel's husband died and their son was designing machinery for the manufacture of things; that's what his engineering was, to design machinery to produce certain products. And he had been doing something for Kellogg's cereal and he designed the machinery for--I think it's for those little round things that look like doughnuts, one of the cereals. This was part of his training. He'd do a job and they would tell him where his strengths were and his weaknesses were, and he'd go back to school. And this last job he got such a good evaluation, my sister decided that

since he wanted to go to Africa, she would send him to Africa on a trip.

So another young man, the son of a doctor there in town, and he left for Africa. After they got over there, they sent back all their dress clothes and kept their jeans because they were not going to be social, they were fed up on the diplomatic route which was set up for them because of some contacts I had and so forth. They were living with the "people." They bought themselves bicycles and they went everywhere. When he came back, he decided he had found his roots. He knew now what he was supposed to be. He'd found his heritage. And here he put on this Afro hairdo and he had the kind of hair that didn't Afro very well, but he went through all kinds of trouble to get it afro-ed and he got it afro-ed. And he decided that he was studying the wrong kind of engineering; that Africa needed people to build bridges, they didn't need people to make cereal. And he tried to get out of it. And this company had spent seven years on him and they were not about to release him. So he finally decided, he told them he was just going to quit--and he'd find the money somewhere to do it--they told him that he wouldn't get a job anywhere because they will see that he is boycotted. "It'll take us seven years to get a man to this point again." And they were looking at the public relations they were going to get out of it, you know.

Can you imagine what that boy did? Three days before school opened he committed suicide. And my poor sister is a hermit; she won't leave the house, she blames herself for sending him to Africa and her husband had died just a year before. She is devastated. We're worried to death about her. She says, "Nobody can do this but me, I'll do this for myself. You can't help me." We go and we feel unwelcome, we leave. And I feel worse than any of them because my attitude is paternalistic. She lived with me several of her tender years.

When my mother went to the dean of women at that school, she stayed with me and she lived with me and she's my child. And so I can't you know, I have a feeling and want to tell her what to do, "You know, you've got to get out of here." It's sad. It's sad, and she's young. She's resigned from school; she couldn't teach. I mean she just got to the point where she couldn't teach and she's in depression. Nobody can do anything. It worries us all to death.

MG: That's why I wanted to ask you about, you know, your relationship with the other siblings; now you've expressed it in terms of the youngest child in the family. As children, did you feel a little distance from them?

You see, I assumed the father's role, because my mother was not the disciplinarian. When I went to Tennessee State I had been a Girl Scout leader in Chicago; I had a very active troop. One of the things I did as a volunteer was to work with scouting. I wasn't a Scout as a child. And I had felt the need of another kind of relationship with my sisters. And I started a Scout troop; my sister Cathryn and Vivian were in my Chicago troop. I knew how to be a Scout, I knew what the job was and all, and I just got the group started. Then I went to get them invested and found that they wouldn't have a Black one; they had had no Negroes in the South. And they would not recognize us. And nothing I did could get them to do it. And so we just had a Girl Scout troop without uniforms and without being recognized. We didn't have the knife or any of the equipment, but we were Scouts. That was 1933-37.

And to show you what good Scouts we were, when I came to Cleveland in '44, various agencies wanted me on their boards and so forth, and one of the first ones was the Girl Scouts of Cleveland. And they sent a member of their staff out to talk to me about whether or not I wouldn't consider working with the Scouts. There was a lot of publicity about my getting married and coming to Cleveland and my background. Well, who did they send me but one of the girls that was in my Scout troop--Lolette Crutcher--in Nashville who had come to Western Reserve to do her master's in social work. And when she did her field work, she chose the Girl Scouts, because she had never really been one; she was a Scout but wasn't, you know, one of those things, and she was curious about it. She thought it was a good thing, and so she went to the Girl Scout organization here to do her field work; and they liked her so well they hired her. And she was sent to ask me to join the Girl Scout board. Isn't that an interesting cycle?

So what I'm saying is, I did everything I could to try to establish a relationship that wasn't normally there because of my role as older sister. I never felt like a sister to my younger one. I did to Verta, but after my father died and I changed my role, I had to work at it. My only problem of discipline was with Cathryn--a strong personality who did not easily adjust to rules and regulations from me. Our greatest problem was with clothes. Often I'd look toward our cottage from my office window and see her coming wearing the dress I'd planned to wear the next day. We just had all kinds of problems about clothes and shoes. One time I was really furious at her and I told her if she did this again, without asking me, what the discipline was going to be. And it came at a time when she was really getting ready for a sorority prom, and she needed some money to do something.

And I wouldn't give it to her because she had broken the rules. She was furious, and she had a temper and she gave it to me. I slapped her, and the minute I did it, I knew it was wrong. I had never done it before. I had to do my discipline of her some other way, but she had been impudent and I slapped her. And then I got scared to death, because she was more powerful than I; she knew how to fight, and I didn't. I didn't want to fight. She could really get mad, I mean she had a temper. Well, she looked at me as if she was going to hit me back. And then she turned around and walked away. And I said, "Thank you, Lord." We've talked about it since, you know, but we never talked about it at all then. The last time I saw her, we were talking about something and I said, "Cathryn, you know I had no business doing it, I had no right to slap you, but you earned it, you know." She said, "Well, that's the only reason I took it because I knew I had earned it. But I was mad." So we did have problems, you know, I wasn't that much older than they, but the adjustment, they made it.

MG: Well now, I know you've already said that one of the taboos was that you were not to drop names. But also as you've pointed out and written about, at least in part, there were a number of prominent men and woman who visited your home and your father's church while you were growing up. Such persons as Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, Marian Anderson, James Weldon Johnson, Walter H. White, Mary Church Terrell, Carter G. Woodson, A. Philip Randolph, and many others. Why did these people come to your home and what are your memories of some of them?

ZG: Well, my father was the pastor of the most active church. He had more influence over his members as it related to civic matters than anybody I knew. The people respected him and he really had race pride, you know, I mean he was proud of our music. He used to say when we'd sing spirituals, "If this song doesn't make you sit three inches taller, leave it alone. We'll sing it." And people, when they'd get started singing spirituals, you'd see them sit up, you know, physically. And he believed in history and taught Black history, Negro history, we called it then. That's the reason I have not been prepared for this "Black" thing. I say a "Black" is a Negro who just found out he had a history and didn't know it. And he wants to learn it right quick. Well, I've been through that. Now I want to help anybody who needs to go through that. But don't make me have to go through it again. Let me be a person. I've earned it. I've worked for it. I've been through that. And I have all kinds of race pride, but I think I go a little beyond it. Not neglecting it, but a little beyond it.

But anyway, my father talked it. He talked universalism; he spoke Greek fluently. And he read Hebrew and Greek; and the first thing he did when we moved to a town was find a Greek meat dealer, because they were the ones who handled meat in my childhood, they had the markets. He would buy all the meat for the family; it would give him a chance to carry on a conversation with the butcher in Greek! That was the only way he could do it. He reached out for people who were different and he felt a camaraderie with them.

He was a classicist. He insisted that I take Greek at the University of Chicago. The only "D" I ever made was in Greek, because I didn't want to take it. But this was his concept of what education was. Well, I had to work hard to make up that average from that "D."

So anyway, these people who came to this church came because of him as a person and as a friend and because he got them an audience. And whatever it was they were selling, whether it was NAACP membership, books, ideas, he helped them sell it. Now they came to our home because he invited them. He wanted us, his family, to meet these people on an intimate, family basis. They came to eat. My mother was an excellent cook and the table was bountiful. We never set a table without an extra place. Whoever set the table always set it up for another person who might come in. Every now and then he would observe our table manners and he would say, "Mama, it's time to have company." That would be a signal for us to brush up on our manners.

My personal impressions were that I was awed, because I knew who these people were, my father had told us who they were. And to be in the presence of Booker T. Washington or Moton or Clarence Cameron White or Azalia Walker! And then there was Nannie Burroughs, who had a school out from Washington, D.C., who taught me to say, "Look up, not down! Look out, not in!" There also was Richard Harrison who did De Lawd in Green Pastures. He used to have programs in my father's church. Marian Anderson would come and sing with the Umbrian glee club in Chicago in concert in my father's church. Fifty dollars is what she got paid. The Black musicians, not only the statesmen, but the musicians, who needed an audience, could get it, because my father was interested in music. There were R. Nathaniel Dett, Hall Johnson, and N. Clark Smith. I met them in my father's church. The organist of my father's church in Dallas, Texas, was Portia Pittman, the daughter of Booker T. Washington who had studied piano in Europe. Later on I was able to continue my friendships with them. There was various Negro college choirs and other singing groups that gave concerts in the church.

My impressions then at first were of awe. And then later on I was fascinated and motivated to want to become myself somebody who could do something people would come to hear. I always knew I would have to have something to say. When I started making speeches in the church and around at other churches, my father said to me: "Remember that no matter who you talk to there's at least one person in that audience that knows more about what you are talking about than you do, or at least some aspect of it. Keep your language so a third grader can understand it. But keep your ideas so that college people can be challenged by them. But your language, keep it simple." And this was always a challenge to me and this is what he did. Let me share one bitter experience. I had a Sunday School class in my father's church in Chicago at the same time I was taking a course at the University on "The Life of Jesus" under Goodspeed. This was before his translation of the Bible was published. Well, at the time, I was teaching the Sunday School class, teaching what was in the Baptist Sunday School lesson book. I was teaching what I was getting at the University of Chicago which was slightly irregular in terms of standard Baptist Bible classes. There was so much interest in my class that we didn't close it off in time. The attendance was so good that my father decided to visit one day and see what was going on.

He dropped in on my class while I was in the middle of it and I really never forgave my father for what he did. At the end of the class he came down and he said, "Beginning next Sunday I will be relieving my daughter of this class. She is studying what's she's teaching you, but she hasn't been at it long enough for it to soak in and for her to know what she's doing, and I am displeased with what I have heard this morning. I will be teaching the class for the next few weeks." Now that was harsh. And he later admitted to mother but not to me that he should have done it at home. But it taught me something. It was a hard way to learn it, but he taught me.

Now I was trying at that time to get him to let an atheist come to church. I knew he was an atheist and I knew what he was going to say. But I felt that intellectually we ought to be able to listen to any opinion. And my father said, "All right, I'll make a deal with you. He can come as soon as you and this group that wants it will take a course with me about your own belief. Because you don't really know what you believe, you're just taking it for granted and you're not prepared intellectually to defend it. You don't even know what it is. He'll come in here knowing. And he'll upset you so you won't know where you are. First you learn what it is your church stands for. And then he can

come." And we never got around to taking that course, so he didn't get there. But he was right. You know, an atheist can shake the living daylights out of your beliefs. And most of us don't really know what the basic tenets of our church really are. We've taken it for granted. Our parents were that, or we know it's good and we know some of it. So you see, I had some real hard things to happen to me as a kid, but they never ever shook my faith in my father's intellect, his honesty, his fairness. I think what he thought, and his desire to help me, kept me from becoming a cocky, overconfident, bigoted Black who moves too far away from her people.

MG: Now were there any other of these greats that you came in contact with by the time, let's say, you were a teenager, starting college, that really made an impression on you?

ZG: Oh yes. Harrison worked with me with my elocution, you know. I know one time I was working on an oration, one of Frederick Douglass's orations I was to do somewhere, and he helped me with it, phrasing, projection, voice, and all. And I was very impressed with him from the point of public speaking. Booker T. Washington, of course, was a great impression on me because I studied with his daughter and I felt close to him. He was just such a homey kind of person, he'd come to the house for dinner. The children all liked him and he was not the austere kind of person like DuBois was, I never felt I could get close to him. Alain Locke you couldn't touch with a ten-foot pole, and yet you admired his intellect. Walter White was another person who impressed me because I could never understand why he insisted on being a Negro as light as he was. And I was impressed with the fact that he must really be sincere, because he didn't have to be, you know. At that time there were a lot of lynchings going on and he'd go and do investigating. He really intrigued me and fascinated me as a person and as an inspiration. There was a man whose name I can't think of who worked with young people in the Baptist church. I knew him very well. He used to come and he always wanted to stay at our house, and he would sleep on the floor, you know, because he would just want to be there and he liked to sleep on the floor. He'd make a pallet and he'd sleep in the living room or one of the rooms. "I don't want to be any trouble." He'd get up in the morning and insist on cooking a big breakfast for everyone. He was so much fun to talk to and had such camaraderie with young people. I can't think of his name, but he impressed me a lot at that time.

Oh, have I said some of the musicians like Clarence Cameron White, who played the violin and wrote music? Azalia... Azalia Walker? She came out of Wilberforce and she... Hackley! Hackley! Madame Hackley, that was her

name. Madame Hackley. She would teach you to sing scales, enunciate, breathe correctly, sing softly as well as loudly and she would demonstrate all this! She was, oh, she was great for me at that time. And I was really young then. I learned a lot from Nannie Burroughs, who always had something homely to teach me, you know, some little poem or some little something, quotation worth remembering. She would take time with me personally, you know. That personal interest and involvement with me gave me a confidence I needed.

Now in school there was a Mrs. A.V. West, W-E-S-T, who was my first teacher in public school. And she was hard on me and would tattle to Mama, 'cause I was quite a tomboy. But Mrs. West was a very important person to me because she was the first teacher I ever had out of the house, of the home. And she was bound and determined to be able to justify the fact that she had helped to decide that I was ready for the fifth grade; she was the fifth-grade teacher. And she was harder on me, you know, with my lessons, because she wanted to be sure that I really did have it. And they knew that our parents helped us at home and they weren't so sure all the time whether we were doing it. So they were very hard on us in school. I can't think of anybody else right now.

MG: What was the impact of your father's death? I think we know pretty well what it was in a material sense, but go 23

ZG: Well, nothing has ever hit me like that, except my husband's death. My father didn't know what was wrong with him. And he went to Hot Springs and he came back, having lost a lot of weight taking the baths. We had lived in Hot Springs, he went there for rest, to take the baths. The worst thing in the world for him with what was wrong with him. He came home on a Sunday morning, waited until church had started and came into his study and sent for my mother. Then he came out on the pulpit and I saw him. He'd lost so much weight and he looked so bad. He never went to that church again except in his casket. He lived several months, but he never got better. And so when he came to the pulpit, he asked me to play a song and he'd try to sing it, but he didn't have his voice. And I got up and left the piano, let somebody else take it and went out to try to bolster him up and I couldn't make it, I cried.

MG: This was his last service.

ZG: Yes. Then he went home and he was in the bed. They didn't know what was wrong with him, so we put him in an

ambulance and took him to the railway station. They had to take the window out so they could use it to put him into the drawing room to take him to Mayo Clinic in Rochester. My mother went with him and I wanted to go so badly but I had to stay and take care of the children. And I never saw him again! When he was very sick and they knew he was going to die, I wanted to go to Mayo's, but I couldn't leave the family. My brother went and he and my mother were staying in a hotel not far from the Clinic. She wanted to know what was wrong so she asked for a post-mortem. She had these children, they thought it was his kidneys and they thought it was his liver. They didn't know how to diagnose cancer at that time. They said it was cancer of his transverse colon, which could have been cut out, oh, so easily if they had gotten it in time.

My mother called us and told us he had passed; we knew he wasn't going to live but, you know, it was something. I went off to a room somewhere and they didn't know where I was. Then all of a sudden I realized I'd left my family. The house was full of people, you couldn't cry, you couldn't do anything; camphor in your nose the minute you started to cry. It was just painful.

Daddy laid in state at the church two days. At the funeral there were so many people on the streets and on top of houses that couldn't get in. They had pictures in the papers. His funeral procession was five miles long. And Julian, who was the only Black aviator we knew at the time...

MG: Colonel Julian.

ZG: Yes, Colonel Julian. My father had helped him get his first plane some kind of way, I don't know whether he helped him get a loan or what. But he flew over the grave and dropped roses during the ceremony.

MG: Where was your father interred?

ZG: In the family area of Mt. Glenwood Cemetery near Chicago. There was a grave plot for each child. My mother is there. I gave space to my brother and his wife; I expected to be buried next to my husband. His first wife is on one side and I have a stone for three graves. I expect to be on his other side.

After all these years, I still miss my father. More for his fellowship, seeing him in action. My father could draw very well. He was a very good artist and in his church service he always had a sermon for the children. He wanted people to come as families. They had a children's church,

but he wanted them to sit with their families first, if they had them. And he always preached a short sermon for them. Then they'd be dismissed to go to the children's church in another part of the building and the latecomers would take their seats. But he had a blackboard up always and when he'd finished with them, somebody would take it off. He used colored crayons and he'd write things or he'd draw as he preached to the children. And I remember one time he put up the word "habit" and he said, "A habit is hard to get rid of. You must be sure you make good habits so you don't have to change them." He would put the word "habit" on the board and then he would wipe the "h" away and you still had "abit." Take the "a" away, you had "bit." Take the "b" away and you still got "it." You know, as a child that was fascinating to me.

Then he delivered a sermon he had prepared using chemicals and test tubes. It was for young people. He would do it once a year in the afternoon. People would come to hear him from everywhere. He used school equipment with test tubes and beakers. One test tube represented a girl and another a boy. He'd start out with clean drinkable water in each and he'd add chemicals, a bit at a time that would change the color of the water. Each tiny addition of chemical represented undesirable behavior, disobedience, impudence, laziness, little lies, then big ones, stealing, etc. Finally the water in the test tubes would become vivid colors and sometimes they would appear to boil. Then, you have a big job trying to get rid of this pollution and you put a few good deeds in, you put church attendance and participation in good programs, you put the Grace of God, you pray, you change your behavior and attitude--and as he added other chemicals a bit at a time, the liquid became paler and paler until finally it looked like good clean water! And he'd drink a little out of each one to show them it was good water.

He was a great teacher and I miss him for that kind of thing, and for his singing and his preaching and his conversations, and as a father and you know, at the dinner table, sharing time with us and bringing guests in. We didn't have them anymore after he left. My mother didn't do it because they came primarily because of my father and the church and we didn't have that anymore. So the whole family became less rich, not just financially but as a family. Something happened to all of that when he left. Even though we tried to keep it going, it wasn't the same. It was a big void in all of our lives, and I got so I wouldn't make the effort to come home for dinner; I was always busy.

Really I was busy. I was teaching swimming after hours for the YWCA, and I was teaching voice and I was still the organist of Pilgrim Baptist Church and we'd have rehearsals. I didn't have any time to court or do anything. If a fellow wanted to court me, he'd have to come and pick me up at choir rehearsal or pick me up after the swimming class or come to church on Sunday and stay, because I played for morning service and there was usually a big meeting in the afternoon and in the evening. And we ate at church, the family did. Whoever was courting me had to come to church.

As I look back at it, I don't really know how I did it. Do you know I was eighteen, a junior in the University of Chicago, before I had my first date? I had never been to the theater or movie. When I got to be eighteen I was supposed to be overnight able to handle situations that I couldn't handle the day before. My family had this big debutante party. Afternoon, Mama's friends and Father's friends came, in the evening my friends came. And it was formal. The dressmaker was in our home for two months making clothes for us all for this debutante party. And then I felt like my mama should have been the debutante, she was so graceful and so light and so young and little, and I was big! Mother's train was in her skirt and mine was from the shoulder, you know, and I couldn't flip it around like she could with her feet. (Laughs) I walked around with a towel pinned to my nightgown for weeks trying to learn how to do that. But you know, nobody else in the family had such a "coming out." It was only my great love and respect for my parents and the fact that I knew this was what they wanted me to do. I was right out there at the University, near the Tivoli Theater, and could have slipped many a time and gone. But I didn't.

The first time I ever went in the theater I went to the Tivoli. I had a date with the son of one of my mother's friends. And I had on my mother's fur jacket which fitted me kind of tight, but I was dressed up! And I went to the Tivoli Theater, which was one of the most beautiful theaters; it was a Balban & Katz, and they had one downtown and this one out near the University of Chicago. I walked in, and here was this chandelier in the middle of that floor the likes of which I had never seen in my life. It was just a great big beautiful thing. It was really fantastic! It was famous! I mean it was really unusual. As I was walking, looking at it, I fell flat on my face in the lobby. I mean I was so embarrassed! I could fall easily anyhow but I always bounced right back! I was looking at the chandelier and excited anyhow on my first date with this man in his mama's car. He wasn't much older than I was, a fellow I wanted to date, a sophisticated guy that I did later go with

and was engaged to marry when my father died. He was graduated from Northwestern University cum laude in business, the first Black ever to graduate in business from Northwestern with a major in banking. My father had the bank in the neighborhood, you know, that had mostly Black patronage to hire him as the first Black cashier. And he just couldn't make it. He didn't have the ability to work with people and my father knew that. He didn't really want me to marry him, but since I was so hell-bent on doing it and I had gone with him for two years, he helped him. And when he died, then I knew I couldn't marry right away, anyhow. I felt sure I'd have babies galore immediately, and then I couldn't help my family. I just knew I'd get pregnant the minute I married. And so as it turned out, I didn't have any. I might have at that age, I don't know.

Anyway, I didn't marry him. I decided to postpone it and it just was one of those things that didn't weather postponement because he wasn't responding--I was finding out more and more that my father was right. He never said anything except, "Do you think he's got it? Do you think he's going to make it?" You know, he never did. He sang in the choir, he was a nice guy. People tease me about him even yet, because we were George Rozier and Zelma Watson. But we didn't make it.

There was a conference held in Atlanta, Georgia, a few weeks ago entitled, "Public Policy and the Black Masses: Our Mutual Responsibility," and it asked the question, "Are we the permanent underclass?" It was sponsored by the National Black United Fund. Now when I got the announcement in the program I was really fascinated by the way it was structured and the intelligent way I thought they had organized the workshops, and the people who were going to be there. And among the people who were involved was one of my proteges, Jan Douglas, who was head of the seminar development. I had lost track of Jan for the last few years, and I was anxious to know what she was doing. And so at my own expense I went. And you know when you go to conferences like that, you spend \$500 or more before you know it. And I really couldn't afford it, but I went. And I couldn't understand why I was urged from inside to go. Well, after I got there, somebody asked me, "What organization are you representing?" and I said, "None." "What do you mean? Are you here on your own?" I said, "Yes, I'm here on my own at my own expense." And this fascinated people because everybody who was there represented some organization. One of my friends asked me, "Why did you come?" I said, "I don't know. I came to find out why." And a few days later somebody asked me, "Did you find out why you'd come?" And I said, "Yes, I think I did." I said, "I've been absolutely fascinated with the new young talent, highly educated,

Ph.D.'s and all, that is here. And I've learned a lot. But I think maybe I'm here to bring a sense of history to the occasion that I don't get the feeling that the younger people have."

At one of the meetings, one of the workshops, I said, "I'm worried about the rhetoric that's been here and I am asking for you to give me a minute or two to make a statement. I have literally scratched my way up to wherever I am on this road to wherever it is you're going. We're on the road to the same place. Without a movement to back me and without anything, I've literally scratched my way here, and I'm at a point where you can only get after having lived so many years. I mean there's no way to get here just overnight. And all I ask you to do is to let me tell you what I see from where I am. Now I am just as anxious, to find out what you see from where you are. I have been there. But I don't expect you to see what I saw. You've got much more complicated and efficient instruments to look with. Some of the instruments that existed when I was there, they wouldn't let me use them. And some of them weren't even invented. So you must be seeing something different than I saw, even though I was there. And you can't make the final decision by what it is we're looking at anymore than I can. We need to work together. Now I don't profess that I have wisdom, but I do know that wisdom is something I think you only get with age. Age doesn't automatically give it to you, but you can't get it without age. And part of it is a matter of history.

"I think some of you have not 'read the minutes of the last meeting.' And you really are making motions that have already been made, you know, and I think that you need to feel the need for somebody who is a little bit further up on the road, who gets a different view of it, to tell you what they see, not tell you what to do. But I have a right to speak. I am a citizen, I've paid my dues. And I have as much stake in what's going on as you do. And I have as much right to speak. Because I'm old doesn't tell you that I don't have the same rights you have. And I'm here to try to find out what it is you're thinking about and to try to assess what my role is." Well, they were very polite and even on one occasion somebody said in another group, "I wonder what Dr. George would think of that? What is her reaction to it?" which I thought was very gracious and I appreciated it.

Now there was a young man, I wish I knew his name; I have it somewhere because he gave me his card. But he teaches at one of the major universities, he teaches political science. A bearded, very handsome young man with a kind of an

adapted African dress, but it wasn't completely. And he came up to me in the lobby. I scooted around in my Amigo all during the evening trying to meet people and trying to see, just to be there and see what was going on and to be involved. If there was a group that wanted to come and talk to me, I'd talk.

So this man came up and he said, "I don't know whether you fully appreciate what you've done for this conference. I think your presence has meant a lot. Just the fact that you were interested enough to come. And that you haven't imposed your will on anybody, I mean you have taken your turn or you've asked for it and when you did, you did it with deference to other people. And most people when they get your age think they know the answer and they don't want to even listen." He said, "But I do want to make my point clear on one thing. I think you think these people are 'anti-history.' I don't think they are. They are 'a-history.'" And that was a really new idea for me; I mean I have thought about it a lot. I'm not so sure I know how to define "amoral," but I know what it is and I know what he means by "a-history." Now he said, "I teach in a college where I have maybe 120 young people that I am involved with in depth. And I would judge that maybe only eight or ten at the most of those have a feeling or a sense of history. But they're not anti-history."

I know that most of the people when they get to seventy-four as I am, are not even concerned about it; they just don't want to be bothered, some of them. And some of the others don't want to be bothered because they know the young are not going to pay any attention to them; they think they know the answer, they're not going to listen. I suppose none of us has the answer. But there's got to be a partnership of some kind and this generation gap we're talking about is contributed to as much by the older ones as the younger ones, because the compromise must be made in both directions. Now I think age in itself doesn't mean anything. In the first place, there are many people older than I am that have a younger chronological age. I mean their attitudes and their approach to a subject, their willingness to investigate and so forth. So I don't think age really says very much about a person. And even if you've lived so many chronological years, it doesn't mean that you've really lived or that you have been involved enough in enough things to have any legitimate feelings about it.

MG: So you don't necessarily become wiser nor more experienced although you certainly can become so.

ZG: Yes. I don't think you can have wisdom without age, but I don't think age automatically makes a person wise.

MG: Does age expand your intellectual world or does it contract it?

ZG: It depends on what you have done with the years before, the kinds of ways you've made use of that time. I think that for me, because of my varied interests and involvements, I have been forced to look at things from many points of view, evaluate, and look for alternatives. I have been forced to recognize the difference between aspiration and attainable reality. And yet I don't feel the need to limit my aspiration, but I don't think I get as discouraged when I don't make it in one activity. There are always other ways to get at the same problem. Or, to enrich the experience.

MG: Does age result in the conscious reordering of one's priorities?

ZG: I don't find the term "age" very satisfactory. Many people reach a certain age, just by living a certain number of years. I don't think just being on this earth a certain number of years means that you are adding that many years of insight and wisdom. Take experience: a lot of people don't even involve themselves psychiatrically in things they do enough to have a legitimate experience with it. They've been through the motions without involving their "souls."

MG: Well, let's make this personal. What's most important to you now?

ZG: The best use I can make of whatever dreams I have left will be an opportunity to share whatever experiences I've had that others didn't have. There are experiences which I had as a "Negro" during these years that need to be heard in order to give proper perspective to many things happening today. See, I remember when you couldn't even get inside a hotel. There are people living today that have never seen a segregation sign, you know, "for colored" or "for white." I have been turned away from many places that I felt I belonged in, and now I see quite a change. It's not where it ought to be, but it isn't where it was. And I know what it took to get where we are. I therefore think I should know better what it's going to take to get where they want to go yet; too many times inexperienced youth expect things to happen today.

I used to talk about people who advocated "gradualism." I was never one who could subscribe to gradualism. I used

to use as an illustration the fact that when a football team goes out on the field, the coach doesn't say, "Now I just want you to get me four yards every time you get the ball, in four downs you will get me ten yards. That's all I ask." He doesn't say that. Every time you get the ball, you aim for the goalpost on the other end. Now you really don't make it very often; it's a rarity that you make it to the other end in one effort. But you try! You know that the circumstances are going to gradual you down, but you don't start out gradualing yourself down. You know the circumstances are going to do it, and you're not going to be too upset when it happens. But that doesn't mean you're not going to hit that line just as hard as you aim at the goalpost on the other end. When you are ready to hit that line for a job, you have got to be ready, prepared and I think that so many young people have got to realize what it takes to get from here to there. They've got to get themselves better prepared for the specific kinds of jobs and functions and skills that are essential.

MG: Well now, tell me this. Has it come to your knowledge and have you encountered in your experience people who are prepared and who have not been able to break the barriers? Or is it your feeling that if you're prepared, that's the only thing that you require?

ZG: No. I don't think preparation is the only thing you need. I think you've got to find some way of communicating to people that you have it. You have to be persistent and disciplined and in control all the time. I know plenty of young people who are prepared for jobs and haven't been accepted.

MG: But you don't recognize, then, racism?

ZG: Oh yes. Yes, I do. Many, many jobs are not available to Blacks no matter how prepared they are. Preparation alone will not be enough, but I am trying to say that without preparation and determination one has no right to expect to be hired, just because he is Black.

MG: But you can make the preparation and not get it as well.

ZG: Oh yes, yes, because of racism. But I think that there are many young people who are talking about their rights and making demands who do not have, are not ready for the job they're demanding. Now I've hired many a person at Job Corps, I had a staff, at one time, of 250 and never less than 150. I interviewed all those that were on a professional skill level myself, I mean after they had been

screened. I've talked to many a one who wanted a job they really didn't have the skills for. They had a right, they'd had some little smattering of a thing, but they really didn't have the discipline for the job. I've had them come to my home for jobs as maids, demanding \$3.50 to \$5.00 an hour, who don't know how to make a bed, really don't know how to make a bed.

MG: Well, while we're onto race, I've got a lot of other questions in this area. Shall we just go with that?

ZG: Yes, if you've got the tape for it. But let's finish that tape out.

MG: A few years ago you gave an interview to Frank L. Keegan which is included in his book titled, Blacktown, U.S.A., published in 1971. One of the things you were asked to explain was your use of the term of "Negro" rather than "Black." And in response you've said, this is a direct quotation, "I am working for the day when nobody needs to use either term in referring to me or people like me." And then you went on to say, "But if you must use a term I prefer 'Negro' with a capital N." And again quoting, "I define Black as a Negro who has just recently discovered his history and that he doesn't know it. He's ashamed of this and he wants to learn about it off by himself right away, quick. I've been through that stage." And you go on to talk about your experiences at Tennessee State and teaching Negro history and what you learned from the experience, and then you conclude the section by saying, "And I arrived where I am without having to swing the pendulum too far to the other extreme. Nevertheless I know that the present 'All Black is Beautiful' slogan is an extremely useful myth and I'm anxious to help anyone I can to get through it. It is a means, not an end. The important concept we have to deal with is the individual, the infinite uniqueness, the dignity and the worth of the one. This is at the crux of Christianity and democracy." Does this response still reflect your thinking on the subject?

ZG: Yup, pretty well. I would say that I would like to see us join the human race and not just be always Black. Now I know this is something you go through and there are times when I've had to fight hard because I was Black. I've had problems not only being Black, but being a woman, and being fat. And all these have been stereotypes that I've had to fight. I think I've moved out of the confines of just having to see everything Black all the time. And I think that this is the goal we ought to have. We ought to be persons. See, when people modify Black, they have a special category for you: "Black delegate," "Black doctor," "Black

mayor," "Black musician," for example, and I don't want a special category. I am the delegate, the doctor, etc., who happens to be Black. It's like being the crippled doctor instead of being the doctor who happens to be crippled.

I never wanted to be "the first Black," I've been the first Black. I didn't want to be, I got another one in there as quick as I could. I felt my responsibility when I was the first Black, I felt it keenly. But because of my obligations to others, I didn't want to misuse the opportunity, I wanted to make it the best I could.

MG: Do you want to explain your feelings about being "fat?"

ZG: Yes, being fat is a handicap and it can keep you from being considered for things. I just refuse to always be thought of as "fat." I've worked hard to do the things that fat people don't usually do. My father helped me with that a long time ago. He found I had a medical problem about being fat. And the doctor said, "We know so little about ductless glands now and I would rather not disturb them. I'm afraid Zelma's got to learn to live with this." And we decided, "All right, we'll go out and learn to do all the things that fat girls are not supposed to do. And get some qualifications and qualities that will make you attractive." I was about ready to start dating and I was worried whether I was going to have dates. And I'm then telling you, you don't know the snickers that I have gotten at times when I go on the stage to speak.

I used to be on the diving team at the University of Chicago and there'd be times when I would want to go swimming. And I'd buy a good suit and I'd try to look good in it as best I can. I have a philosophy learned early. I preach it all the time: "Do the best you can with what you've got. You're in competition with yourself, not somebody else." All right. I learned how to let them snicker and then make that dive and from then on I didn't have any snickering. But I let them snicker first. I've gone up on the stage in a junior high school, the worst place in the world to speak. And just walking on the stage big, you know, they gotta laugh at it. I know what they're laughing at, and I'm the first one to say something about it. But then I have to lose that; I've got to be a person, I can't be a fat person.

MG: This is being yourself, you're talking about.

ZG: Yes. And I don't want to be defined by anybody else.

MG: But can you change other people's perceptions? Other people's limitations?

ZG: Yes, I have done it. Well, I've changed their perception of me by performing something that wasn't in this definition of what fat meant to them, and I was doing something they didn't think fat people could do. And I've done the same thing with "Black." I've done the same thing with "woman."

MG: Well, is there a solution to racism in this?

ZG: Yes. I don't think there is any simple or immediate solution to racism. I do think you've got to work to change individual concepts and prejudgments, that's a very difficult thing to do. When the concept becomes institutionalized, you've got another problem. But you've got to work through people, the people who are making the decisions, the decision makers, and the people in those institutions on functional lower levels. I can tell you about many times when I have been really baffled. Just getting them to listen is a very real problem.

I think another aspect of the problem is getting to know one another and to not prejudge without the facts, but getting the facts to people calls for creative skills and persistence after all is said and done, institutions are people whose ideas have been structured and fortified by custom, laws, practice, and acceptance by the general public. If there is going to be a change, however, it will be implemented by individuals who have been changed. And if I didn't believe people could be changed I'd quit!

MG: Do you see the root of the problem, then, as a lack of education? People don't know better and that's why situations are as they are?

ZG: No, they can know it intellectually and still not know it the way they have to know it, to make a change. People do not change until their emotions have been touched. I don't believe anybody ever changes anything in themselves until they are emotionally involved with it. I don't think you change it only with your head. You've got to show them where they're involved and have them feel some kind of an emotional relationship to this thing before they're going to change. That's the reason wars are so successful in changing things. People get overwhelmed with patriotism. You can dramatize war but we don't yet know how to dramatize peace.

MG: How would you bring them to this awareness when institutional racism works to their advantage? What would be the motivation on their part for making any changes?

ZG: Well, I don't think there's any simple answer to that. I certainly don't have one. I'm not saying that there is any... One of the things you can do is to get people to adequately define the problem, to see it in a perspective that includes them personally.

I am a firm believer--an advocate--of the interdependence of humankind on a personal basis as well as globally. It is not easy, but one can find ways to show how racism is as bad for the racist as it is for the obvious victims of it, if in no other way than higher taxes to help take care of the "victims." Everybody needs others even if for very different sets of reasons. But these reasons are more important to us as individuals than we even know about. Somehow we have got to find better ways to communicate this need we have for one another and show how racism negates it all.

Sometimes you have to experience dramatic things just to get the attention of the ones you want to reach. For example, the Third World had brought petitions for years and years and years to the United Nations for a new economic order and to revise the charter to consider them, because when it was written they weren't even in existence. And so they're not included, I mean, their needs are not even addressed in it, and they weren't even intended to be.

Now, the U.S.A. is one of the Western powers that paid little attention to them until the oil embargo, and prices went up and hit them personally. All of a sudden we could see that we really needed these people as much as these people needed us. It wasn't until the oil embargo that the State Department, through Henry Kissinger, decided to make a policy about Africa. Up until that time the only policy we had for Africa was to not have a policy. It was ad hoc. We treated each situation differently when it came because we didn't have a policy. We did this this way because it fitted our needs, and it's the way we wanted it.

So for the first time in the history of the United Nations, at the Seventh Special Session, Kissinger said, "We are listening. We have heard what you've had to say. And we are paying attention to it. We will join you in trying to find a solution." Before we had never even said that much. Now they weren't able to implement it, because the resolution about equating Zionism with racism came up at the same time and the Jews in this country were so disturbed

about that, they tried to prohibit the United Nations from doing anything else. Certainly the new "Africa policy" got lost in the other discussion.

Racism is a very complex thing and it's not easy to get rid of. But I think as we get individuals converted, influenced by it, then they will in turn influence the institutions. What is the alternative? Violence? People have been made conscious of the better life and their rights and have a "greater expectation."

MG: Well, I have some ideas, but I don't think anybody wants to hear those.

ZG: Well, I do.

MG: Under what world conditions can you imagine that human beings would not be distinguished by race?

ZG: I certainly do not see that coming in my lifetime and there are times when things look even worse than before in certain spots. But I see signs of change, changes I would not have even dreamed of twenty years ago. Somehow I think that it is on the way. The homogenization of our cultures is progressing fast. We're going to find people accepting one another on levels of sex and other criteria that we're seeing evidence of more and more. We're going to find race, I think, meaning less and less. I was looking at the discotheques last night on television. And they were showing one dance with nothing but mixed couples. Now that's unheard of. Mixed couples. Black men and white women, and white men and black women. And it was labeled, "Mixed Couples." A discotheque thing. Well, now the dance and the arts are probably going to be the ones that are going to lead the way and athletics, maybe. But the dance and the arts, they're doing things now that nobody would've dreamed could have been done before, and they're doing it on a level of respect for one another.

MG: Do you feel that that's progressive?

ZG: Well, it isn't the solution, but the arts have led the way in other social changes if only by showing it can be done.

MG: No, no. I mean the interracial mixing as a way that race could ultimately be extinguished.

ZG: I think it's one of the ways it's going to happen. I don't think it's the only way.

MG: No, but I am saying do you feel that is progressive?

ZG: And I think there are a lot of people who want to keep their integrity and be forever whatever their racial group is and I think they should have that right. But I think that people more and more will see that they can get by with that on television... It's like living in a drug culture and not being a drug addict. But I think we make them become users and addicts more often because we're living in a drug culture, the whole culture is drugged. We use drugs, all of us do, more than maybe sometimes we should, for headaches and this and that and the other. For most of our ills we've got a drug answer, a chemical answer. But the cost of all this is that young people are coming up in a drug culture and it's easier for them to accept these drugs that are not good for them, the misuse of good drugs much more easily because the whole country has been drug oriented. And I think that the television and radio in all of its ways is preparing people more to accept the fact that racism is wrong. People see intelligent Blacks on quiz shows, in an occasional good play, in commercials--a new kind of Black they have not seen before. Its cumulative effect can't be anything but good--not a solution, just a tiny step forward.

MG: Is there any value in preserving or seeking to preserve all-Black institutions?

ZG: Well, I have a problem with that. I think Black colleges should remain, but I don't think they should be called Black; I think they should be people's colleges and be open to anybody. They should maintain their Black integrity of leadership and so forth, but make them good enough so that people would want to come in there. But I don't think that that means that people shouldn't also go to the colleges they call white, and that they should become colleges, just colleges, for all people who qualify. There are many kinds of colleges and I have been to all of them. There are colleges that are middle-class and lower-class and upper-class, and colleges that are nothing more than training schools, and universities that are nothing more than research centers. There are all kinds of colleges and I think that a college run by Blacks is one of those many institutions that anybody should have a right to go to.

MG: Well, I don't think Black schools have ever prohibited entrance from students of any race.

ZG: Oh, they have. They have done it for various reasons, sometimes legal. But now, of course, I don't know of anywhere they can't go. In some of them there are more white than Blacks in traditionally Black colleges.

MG: Which is what I'm talking about. Is there any value in trying to preserve all-Black institutions? Schools? Churches? Families?

ZG: I don't see the need for consciously preserving them as all-Black. I'm really very people-oriented and not too racially oriented. I think that I'm not nationally integrated either. I don't see the point, I think all of our problems internationally stem from the fact that the same idea of keeping the integrity of the races is extended to the nation and people feel that their nation is right, and that they have to defend and protect it under all circumstances. Nations are built on very artificial boundaries, and they are, none of them, independent. All of us are dependent on somebody else, and we need one another and each has a different something, maybe, to contribute. But nationalism is to me a synonym, almost, in a different context, for racism, which can be Black as well as white. And I think when Blacks want to keep a thing all the way Black, that's racism, definitely in my book just as much as for whites to keep it all white. It is Black racism and I can't subscribe to it. I don't think racism is any good in one place any more than the other and I don't think calling it something else is going to make it anything else.

MG: Let me ask you this. In your response to Keegan in the section that I just read, could you explain further your statement, "I define a 'Black' as a Negro who has just recently discovered his history and that he doesn't know it. He's ashamed of this and so he wants to learn about it off by himself, right away, quick. I've been through that stage."

ZG: Well, you can date the time when people started calling themselves Black. I asked a man one time, "How long have you been Black?" And he said, "Six years." This was several years ago when I asked him in connection with something else. Before that if you had called him Black he'd have resented it strongly. His concept of Black was different because society was discovering our African heritage and the positives in it. Now I think when he found he had a history that he could be proud of, he was willing to be Black, no matter what people had meant by Black before that. Then someone came along with the slogan that "Black is Beautiful;" "I'm Black and I'm Proud." Most Blacks that I know have only discovered what some of us were brought up on: the reasons to have pride in being Black. And so, they called themselves Black.

MG: But you make a clear preference for the term "Negro" rather than Black.

ZG: Yes, because I was a Negro a long time, and I don't see any reason to change to be Black.

MG: But it sounds as though there's some evolutionary process implied here. "I define a 'Black' as a Negro who has just recently discovered his history."

ZG: Well, he was a Negro until he got involved in the Black Movement, and he was willing to be called a Negro. We have struggled with many names and our literature is full of debate and comment on each term. Among them are: Colored, Afro-American, American Negro.

MG: Right. And then you say you've "been through that stage."

ZG: Yes. Throughout my childhood and as a young adult in the teen years, twenties and thirties, I was constantly being educated about Negro history. With Booker T. Washington and all these people in my house, I went through this business of building pride and knowing that there was reason for pride and meeting the people who were making the history, not just teaching it. I met the people when they were making the history, many others didn't learn about it until recently. The public school textbooks were even negative. And so I've been through that. I have my pride. And I'm just as proud to be a woman as I am to be Black. And I'm not ashamed to be fat. And these conditions were challenges to me because basically, I knew who I was.

MG: So your preference, then, for the term is simply one of familiarity and it has no other connotations, in other words your preference for the term Negro.

ZG: Now I've had some very unpleasant experiences with the word Black as a child. And I react negatively to it. I use it, and I've learned to live with it, but at the time I made the statement, the time when it was in its prime, I was still having some problems with it.

When I was at the Job Corps here, a young woman came to me one day with a sweater that had printed on it: "I'm Black and I'm Proud," and she asked, "May I wear this?" And I said, "Sit down, let's talk about it." Because I knew there was some reason why she came in to ask me, because otherwise she'd just put it on. And I said, "Why do you want to wear it?" "Because I'm Black and proud." And I said, "Well, that's great. But now why are you proud?" "I'm proud because I'm Black!" And I said, "Well, is there any other way you can express it besides putting it on your sweater?" I happened to know she wasn't doing too well in

her classes. And I said, "Do you think maybe if you did a little better in school, in your classes and worked a little harder at that, and on your behavior on your floor, that you could be expressing pride in being Black just as well as putting it on your dress?" And she said, "No, I want to tell the world about it."

I said, "Well, you listen, let's change seats. You sit over here where I'm sitting and let me sit over there." I said, "Imagine you are Dr. George and I come in here and I'm a little Indian girl and I have a sweater that says, 'I'm brown and proud.'" And we had all these racial groups in that thing. "I'm an Indian who says, 'I'm red and proud.' I'm a Puerto Rican and I say, 'I'm brown and proud,' and may I wear this? Would you let them? Do you think that would be the thing to do?"

"When I tell you yes, I've got to be able to tell everybody yes who comes to me with the same circumstances. If a white girl comes in here with a sweater, 'I'm white and proud,' do you think she should wear it?" "Oh no, that's just flaunting it at my face. No, I don't think she should wear it." "But if she's white and proud, why shouldn't she say so? Some of these Appalachians who come here are not proud to be white and maybe they've got to be proud to be Appalachians and they're white. Sitting in that seat, I've got to be prepared to handle this question for every group that comes in here and that's pretty divisive, if you're going to have people wearing slogans: 'I'm red and proud' and 'I'm Black and proud' and 'I'm green and proud' or whatever it is, or 'white and proud.' Why do we need to divide ourselves up like that? Can't we show it in some other way?"

Then I said, "I'll tell you what I'll do." The sweater was a part of the issue of clothing given each new girl. I said, "I'm going to give you an order for another sweater and I'll ask you to think about this five days. And at the end of that time, if you still want to wear this sweater you can have it, because it's freedom of speech. I don't see any reason why you can't say you're proud if you want to. I just want you to think about the consequence and whether you think you're willing to live with the possibility of somebody else coming in and wanting to wear something else." And so at the end of that time she didn't come and I sent for her. She said, "Oh, I changed my mind." And I said, "Have you changed your pride? I mean have you lost any of your pride?" "No, I just thought it through and I think, I know some kids up on the floor that would be offended by it, some white kids, if I did it, and I've already had some arguments with some of the Puerto Ricans about

'Black.' They don't want to be Black and they don't like what we're saying." Well, this was during the sixties when we were having riots in the Hough area--Hough is a Black area in Cleveland where riots took place in the late sixties--and the corpswomen were having a difficult time racially.

Well, now I've thought about that a lot since and I don't know whether I did it right or not. But in my basic feeling about this whole thing, I think I was right. I had the responsibility for a Center which at that time was very much mixed in its ethnic groups. And we had this very unhappy group from Appalachia that had to learn to live with Blacks and others, even other whites. We had more of a schism between urban Blacks and rural Blacks, Northern urban Blacks and Southern Blacks than between Blacks and whites.

The girl from the Northern Black ghetto was used to working in gangs and she knew how to get her people together to help her. The little rural girls were used to being alone and the others intimidated them, they did all kinds of things to them, made fun of them and called them names. And we had, sometimes, real problems between the urban ghetto Black and the Southern Black. In most cases Southern Blacks lined themselves up more with the Appalachians than they did the urban Blacks. The urban Blacks' whole attitude toward the problems, toward authority, toward discipline, from the ghetto schools, their skills and techniques and strategies were so different. If you permit them to pursue this business of pride, you will soon find that it isn't that they are proud. For the Northern Black it was mostly rhetoric, and it was something they could fight with. They're not all that proud to be Black.

And yet, for some people it was a very important concept. They had never thought anything Black was any good. One girl came to me one time. Well, when Cleveland State University started some remedial classes for Blacks, they asked me if I had some girls that would like to take these courses; of course, my answer was, "Yes, I have some girls that I'd like to send to the courses in remedial reading and other subjects." When I sent them, there were two whites from Appalachia in the group and one Puerto Rican and seven Blacks. That made ten. They wouldn't take the two white or the Puerto Ricans because this was designed for Blacks. So I called and told them that I couldn't make that kind of distinction. These girls from Appalachia needed it just as badly as the Blacks and so did this Puerto Rican.

Well, one of the Black girls came to me later and said, "I don't ever want to be in a segregated situation again."

When I came to Job Corps, I thought that what was wrong with me was because I was Black. Then I found white girls that were dumber than I was. White girls. White girls who couldn't read either. Then I found out it wasn't just because I was Black. And you don't know what it's done to me to make me feel I can do something about it. I thought it was because I was Black. There wasn't anything I could do about that; I was Black.

And they haven't met enough Blacks that have made it; they never heard of Jackie Robinson and never heard of some of the people that you think you could talk to them about. And recently there was a poll here in one of the schools and the kids don't really know who Martin Luther King was. They knew that he was a Negro but they had no idea what Martin Luther King did. Because they've come up since the movement, since Birmingham; they didn't know who he was because nobody had taught them, and they came from predominantly Black schools in the ghetto of our city. I just don't think that's the answer.

I guess the story is in there about them taking me down for an interview at the U.N., with the man who was making tapes to take back to Germany. And I didn't want to go that day, it was the first day of the U.N. and Khrushchev and Castro were there and all this dramatics of opening day, and I wanted to be upstairs. But I went and the interviewer had this elaborate introduction that he read into the tape, and then he said, "So you are the Negro delegate to the United Nations." We weren't Black then in the early sixties. I said, "No, I'm not." He said, "Well, excuse me. I thought you were a Negro." I said, "I am. Now would you like to apologize for one quick fraction of a second, thinking that maybe I might be something else?" He didn't get what I meant. I said, "You apologized for thinking that I was a Negro. Now do you want to apologize for thinking I might not have been." And he said, "Well, I don't get it. You are a Negro and you're a delegate, now what's wrong with that?" I said, "Everything. I'm a member of the United States Delegation to the United Nations XVth General Assembly. I'm a woman. You didn't call me a woman delegate. I'm fat, you didn't call me the fat delegate. And I refuse to be a Negro delegate. I'm a delegate and I happen to be a Negro, I happen to be fat, and I happen to be a woman, and I'm proud of all of these. Not a one of them has stood in my way. They've made me work harder. But I'm not going to let you classify me because I know what you mean when you say I'm the Negro delegate. I'd know what you'd mean if you said I was a woman delegate. You don't mean the same thing you mean when it's a male delegate. You don't mean the same thing with Negro and you don't mean the same thing if you called me fat."

I was the first Negro who happened to be a judge of Miss America, and they wanted to know did I have some different concept about beauty. Did I have some idea about Black beauty? And I said, "Black Beauty, that's a horse." And they said, "Oh, you know what we mean. Why did they choose you? Was it because you are a Negro? What are you bringing to this contest?" I said, "Now let me tell this to you very quickly. I'm the first size 44 they have ever had as judge, and you'd be much closer to the truth if you thought I might show some special consideration to those who had a few curves. Just think of me as a judge. I'm not denying that I am Negro. I'm proud of it. I can toss my head up higher than anybody you see, but I don't want the limitations that people carry in their own minds when they use those terms. I don't want that limitation."

MG: Do you think that by not using the label, by not saying them, somehow something's altered?

ZG: Yes, I want to get them out of their vocabulary. That's a start.

MG: To what extent were you in close contact while you were growing up?

ZG: Not at all. As a child, I lived in Texas in a Black community, and the only whites I met were those that occasionally my father would have some business dealings with in his effort to push for some kind of interracial church activity, usually some minister. He was exchanging pulpits at least once a year way before that became a national practice. He'd have a white minister come to his church and he'd go to their church. I didn't have any teachers that were white until I got to high school in Topeka, Kansas. I didn't have any contact with whites in school because the schools were segregated in Texas. My mother's school was segregated because she only had children of friends that were our ages and grades. So I didn't have any contact with whites as a child and I was brought up on Negro history and white history.

MG: Were you aware of how whites regarded Blacks?

ZG: Oh yes.

MG: Did their viewpoints in any way affect your racial consciousness?

ZG: Of course. It made me more racially conscious, but my father helped us to feel sorry for whites who had serious

problems with race. We were taught that these people were ignorant and that if we could manage to understand why they were as they were and not allow ourselves to hate them, we would be proving ourselves superior to them.

MG: This is part II of an interview with Dr. Zelma Watson George. The interview is continuing in Dr. George's home. The date is August 21, 1978. Marcia M. Greenlee is the interviewer. Dr. George, when we last spoke, you were telling me about your father's debate on racial matters when you were in Topeka, Kansas. You had said that he was addressing a public forum in front of the state house, state capitol. Would you finish that story?

ZG: Well, I don't know exactly where I left off, but I will say this: after the exchange of letters and the challenge from this other gentleman, whose name I don't remember, the debate was set up on the steps of the Capitol in Topeka, Kansas. And after the gentleman who was debating with him made the point about ancestry and that he could trace it and did, all the way to the Mayflower and challenged him to do the same, he got up in his rebuttal and said, "Zelma, stand up. Verta, stand up. Samuel Jr., stand up. Vivian, stand up. Cathryn, stand up. And will my wife stand up with my baby Jewel in her arms." And we all stood. Now he said, "I am an ancestor. Look at my progeny. And it's much more important in the history of the United States if we talk about who we are now and who we are influencing than what our background is." And he proceeded from there. It was a very moving experience for me and I was proud of him. By the way, I have a picture of that crowd on the steps. We're in the crowd; you can hardly see us, but we can recognize ourselves. Let me say that the reason I mentioned this was that this was in 1919. We were only in Topeka two years. And my father had been sent to greet, representing the state of Kansas, by the governor, to greet Jim Europe and his band, the great band conductor who was returning with his band from World War I. And he represented the Governor and was taken on a barge out to the ship and came in with the band, because they were from Kansas. So he was in the public eye and I was made conscious of race, was proud. I am trying to say that I went through these kinds of experiences a long time ago. So, I've been through it and I'm on the other side now and anxious to have other people go through it. But I don't see the need to go through it again. It's been a wonderful experience.

MG: You mentioned an incident with the Ku Klux Klan in Dallas. Could you give us the details of what occurred at that time?

ZG: As I remember it, my father was a crusader and his church services in the morning were worship services, but in the evening they were forums. The church was packed both times, but in the evening people came from other churches as well, because of the nature of the material he was presenting. He would address himself to local problems; he would have people bring their statements of local problems; he brought in speakers such as Booker T. Washington and people like that. Very often there were problems regarding Black women teachers who were finding it necessary to make concessions they didn't want to make to officials on the board of education or other school administrators in order to get promotions. They were being asked to do things that had nothing to do with their jobs. And they would come and tell my father about it and he would make it public.

MG: These were Black or white officials?

ZG: Black teachers and white officials. Of course, there were no Black officials in school administration in Dallas, Texas, at that time. And he had done this kind of thing often enough to be considered an enemy of the system, somebody to be constantly at war with. But in addition to that, he was allowed to go into the prison, to the jail, and pray with the prisoners. And very often he was convinced that they were not guilty, and were being mistreated and he would come out and attempt to do something about it. He was sort of a one-man NAACP. One such man was being accused of murdering a white woman that he claimed he didn't do. He was an aide and she was a nurse in a hospital. Her fiance was doing his internship in the same hospital. He was from a very prominent family in Dallas and they were planning to get married when he finished. In the meantime she became interested in the Black aide and was reported to have even gone to his home to visit him. She was murdered at the hospital and the circumstantial evidence was against the aide who was arrested and found guilty. My father in his visits to the jail got information which led him to believe the aide was innocent. My father was following through in investigating several aspects of the case. The Ku Klux Klan became very interested in my father's investigation. This plus his other civic involvement and his Sunday Evening Forums made him unwelcome in Dallas and so we were visited at our home by a group of hooded Ku Klux Klansmen and given forty-eight hours to leave town. One of them threw the sheet back off his face and exposed a heavily pocked face.

I don't know whether you know what that is--a face that was full of pocks from small pox. It was just really grotesque. He looked me straight in the eye and said to my father, "If you don't leave, something will happen to her." And so my father put us on the train to go to Ennis, thirty miles away, to my maternal grandmother's the next day. Then he packed the household things and took the only job offer he had on his desk, which was in Topeka, Kansas. They'd asked him to come to preach and he accepted it and we moved to Topeka, the smallest church he ever pastored.

MG: You were about thirteen or fourteen at this time?

ZG: Yes, that's right. I was fourteen. Well anyway, we left from my grandmother's to go to Topeka where my father had moved all the things into the parsonage. We stayed with Grandma a couple of months and moved to Topeka in time to go to school that fall. But that's what happened in Dallas, Texas.

MG: At the University of Chicago you had experienced racial incidents upon enrolling in your swimming class and attempting to join the choir. What was your motivation in seeking entry into these two previously all-white groups?

ZG: I had a remarkable father; I've told you that a million times and I have to repeat it because he was a very important person, and force in my life. And you know my parents moved to Chicago so that I could go to the University of Chicago because they would not let me stay in the dormitory. My father, in preparing me for the University of Chicago, after great family sacrifice in moving to Chicago so I could go there, took me to school early the first day and we sat in the car for half an hour talking. That was our favorite place for conversation. And he said to me, "You're sure this is where you want to go?" Now we had paid the tuition. And I said, "Yes, Daddy, I'm very sure." He said, "Well, all right. Then you are entitled to anything that goes on in that university. Now I'm asking you to walk in there like a bulldog. Don't go in there like some little 'fice' with your head down and ears dragging and your tail between your legs. Walk in there like a bulldog. A bulldog doesn't have to bark, it doesn't have to do anything. It just walks like it knows where it is going and nobody ever kicks a bulldog." Now, not only that, but time and time again, from day to day when we'd discuss problems he would say, "Well, you know, that's your school." It was mine and anything that went on there that I wanted to do, I went out to do it.

Now there had been an incident, I understand, many years before when a black girl wanted to swim and she had some kind of skin rash. I know who she is and she still has it. It is alleged that she went in the pool and people objected to it. Now they should have screened her out with a test beforehand but they evidently didn't. And so from then on, no Negroes ever went anymore. Now it was required for graduation that you swim the length of the swimming pool. All the Negroes just went to the Y.W.C.A. who knew this was a game; and so they let the Negro students sign something saying they could do it and that's the way they got by. Well, I had been a basketball player in high school and I was good but I had problems with basketball in the University of Chicago. I was seriously hurt on the basketball floor with my knee out of socket. Swimming was recommended to me as therapy for my knee. I call this my "inter-racial knee." I, therefore, went to take swimming as a beginner. A Miss Burns was in charge that first day because the teacher was ill. As we came in she instructed us to get into the pool at the shallow end and she would take charge as soon as she finished taking registration cards. I came in after there were about ten girls in the pool. When I got in you'd have thought that I splashed the others out because everyone got out. One of them went up to Miss Burns and said, "I don't swim with niggers." Miss Burns just hardly stopped what she was doing and looked up to her and said, "Swimming is an elective." And after that the girl couldn't go back to the pool. She left. And the others started sliding back into the pool, one at a time like little seals, because they saw she wasn't going to do anything about it.

Now I use that. I therefore took swimming very seriously from then on. Not only because it was good therapy, but also because I felt very pleased with the way Miss Burns had handled this. She solved that problem for the University of Chicago from then on, just by those very simple words, "Swimming is an elective." By the way, after the girl who did that had become one of my good friends through the Y.W.C.A.--we had the first interracial Y.W.C.A. on my campus of the University of Chicago and she confessed to me that she was the one who got out of the pool. Because I didn't know who she was. I was new, and we were in swimming suits, you know. But she came to me three years later and told me, we were both members of the Women's Athletic Association (W.A.A.). We were initiated at the same time. Well, I went on swimming and became a member of the swimming team and was a diver of some distinction for a long time.

I wanted to join the University Choir primarily because I didn't want to have to go to my father's church every Sunday. It didn't seem like I was in college. I was staying at home and then on Sundays I went to church just like I had been doing all my life, and I wanted to go out to the University of Chicago to church, and I knew my father would let me go if I was in the choir. That was the only way I would get to go. And so I went to try to get in the choir. And the choirmaster said that my voice was too good for the choir; it would be like putting Galli-Curci in the choir. Galli-Curci was a very famous singer at the time. And I knew that was a big lie and I didn't accept it. But I didn't get in that quarter. The next quarter I tried again. I insisted that I knew some people in the choir who have better voices than I have and that's just not your reason. And I wanted to get in the choir. So the choir director put it up to the choir to vote on it and there were nine in favor and nine against. And he cast the deciding vote against it.

I took the matter all the way to the chaplain of the University who later became world-famous. His considered answer after a couple of weeks was that he thought maybe the choir director was right. The service was a worship service and putting me in the choir would be like putting a lame person in the choir. That I would disturb the worship spirit. I didn't get in the choir, but it was more, I think, just the fact that I persisted and had by now built a reputation as someone who would fight for these things that they weren't going to give to me. The year that I graduated, Mary Jones, whose father was Bishop Jones, was taken into the choir. They just weren't going to take me after I had made all this fuss.

Just like the year after I graduated they let the first Black in the dormitory. You see, every quarter my father and I would go and have our confrontation with the University of Chicago to reapply for admission to the dormitory knowing full well that we would be refused. There were times when if they had taken me, we wouldn't have had the money. We didn't expect them to, but we made this confrontation every quarter. But I think my fights were worth it. It didn't help me except that it made me know that I didn't take it lying down. There was great consolation in that fact. Many Black students thought I was stirring up the waters. They were willing to settle for classes, lectures and the great library as well as the fellowship we had developed among the Negro students in the University of Chicago, Northwestern University, and the other nearby colleges.

MG: Do you want to put the names of the choirmaster or the chaplain in the record?

ZG: I really don't remember the name of the choirmaster but the name of the chaplain I will send to you later. I am terrible with remembering names.

MG: What are your views on racial integration and what is its purpose as you see it?

ZG: Well, I don't know how you define integration. I make a very strong differentiation between desegregation and integration. Desegregation is opening the door and making integration available. Availability is the word, I guess, that goes with desegregation. Desegregation does not necessarily mean integration, though. But integration can't happen without desegregation. I am very much in favor of integration. Of course, my goal in the world is the Commonwealth of Man; that people get to know one another, and that we begin to think of them as human beings, as individuals without labels. I just don't see the point in separating people into categories because the people who do that mean something different for you than you mean for yourself. I look forward to the day when we are familiar enough with other cultures and can make choices from a rich cultural menu.

I enjoy all kinds of foods. I don't just like Black food or white food or Indian food. In Singapore I had a great deal of fun making decisions. I knew the difference between Malay curry, Chinese curry, and Indian curry. I had to learn to eat artichokes; I didn't used to like them. I do now. I like to be able to pick my menu from many cultures. I like trying some Chinese food, some Japanese food, some Italian food, some Thai food, some Indian food. I don't like all of any of them. I don't like all of the Black foods. But I like to be able to make a menu using any of them. That's what I call integration. Not only the availability of it, but the cultivation of a taste that would allow me to integrate into my eating habits any kind of food I want. And you can't get that if you're going to segregate yourself off and even if you have access, you don't use it. I believe in using it. I don't know that you can have desegregation without integration to some extent, because the minute people get barriers down, they're going to be curious about one another and when they do, they're going to like this one and dislike that one and make friends, and some of that friendship's going to develop into things that result in a different kind of looking at human beings. If this is fulfillment for them, I think they should have the right.

MG: So you'd say then that integration is inevitable for desegregation?

ZG: No, I don't think it is inevitable but a certain amount of it is bound to happen. Complete integration will have to be planned and programmed more and there is much education and personal contact needed. But there's going to be some kind of integration with desegregation, I feel sure.

MG: Is integration, in your mind, a personal preference, or do you feel there's some necessity about it for Black people as a whole in the United States?

ZG: I see no alternative for the people in times of the increasingly interdependent world we now live in. We're either going to develop some preliminary integrated activities and commitments to a wider integration or we are going to be unprepared to keep our country from "blowing up" with unhappy, disillusioned people, and from this can come a violence we have not had the likes of to date.

MG: What's the racial situation in the United States today, as you see it?

ZG: Well, "we've come a long way, baby," but we've got a long way to go. I have lived long enough to see some tremendous changes. (That's one of the advantages of living so long.) And I think some of the turmoil and some of the tensions that we have in the world and in the United States, is because people are not any longer asleep, and it's a sign of progress to me. My father had on his wall a sign that said, "Morning comes when I awake." And we are awake now and morning is here but it's only morning. We've got a long way to go. But just waking up is something that's important. I think that the moral climate of the United States is low for everything and the racial situation is not a separate thing, it's part of the total ethics and morals of the whole country, and because of racism, it is worse. So I don't think it's as far as it ought to be, but we've come a long, long way.

I can see what the 1960s have done. I had a special experience with the sixties at the United Nations. It was a world-wide upheaval of human beings. And I don't think we can separate what's happening here from what's happening in the world. I don't know how to describe what the moral climate is today, what the racial situation is. We have the machinery, we have a lot more awake, intelligent, educated, and committed young people than we had. The Martin Luther King age, it seems to me, was the time when the people woke

up, slapping them in the face and making them think, getting involved emotionally. And I think we're now into an age where young people like you and many others are involved. I shall forever be grateful I went to Atlanta to that conference on Black leadership and the Black masses. I met a lot of young people I had never known before. There were many with Ph.D.'s, Master's, and beyond Ph.D. study, in areas that they are relating to the problem. Political science, the arts, sociology, psychology, communication skills, television and radio and others. They have learned skills and insights and information in specific areas and they're relating it to this problem. And I think things are happening and they're going to continue to happen. I'm encouraged by it.

MG: So you characterize, then, racial history in the United States as progressive.

ZG: Yes.

MG: Do you see any differences over a period of time that you have observed, in Blacks' relationship to power in the United States? Or do you see material changes that don't really reflect any difference in relationship to power?

ZG: I don't know what power is, really. I've tried to define it many times. It depends on if you're talking about power in terms of money, or power in terms of position, power in terms of whether you're in the decision-making positions, in a position to influence decision-making, power in terms of how many people you can influence with your personality. I don't know what power is. I recognize it when I see it, but I don't know how to define it. I think that certainly there are more Blacks in positions of power in each of these categories than there used to be. There are not enough. The problem is the gap between them and the masses of unemployed youth, untrained youth, poorly-trained youth and adults. It's that gap that bothers me, that fraction of Blacks who have achieved both position and money and moved into the upper middle-class. Power in one form or another is important. But you have to at the same time look at the increasing numbers, increasing proportions of Blacks who are not achieving at all because of unemployment, poor schools and poor motivation. I don't know. What was your question?

MG: I'm asking you about the relative positions between Blacks and whites in terms of power in this country. Do you see that gap between Blacks and whites has narrowed over a period of time? Or proportionally, is the separation between them the same?

ZG: Well, I think what I've said... Let me see if I can summarize; I think I've answered it. I think that there are many more Blacks in positions of power, no matter how you define it, than there were. The gap has narrowed with the increase in middle-class Blacks. Not enough, but it has narrowed, but of course, with whites in the positions of authority and controlling the money. The gap has widened, however, in the lower class. I don't like that word "class" but it's a reality economically. The poverty or near-poverty group, particularly among Black youth, who are unemployed, unprepared, unmotivated in many cases, miseducated, who have sought chemical answers to their problems and have gotten themselves involved in all kinds of problems. I think that gap is bigger.

MG: What solutions can those Blacks in the more privileged group, as you describe it, offer these large masses of working class people? Can they offer them employment? Can they change their situation in any material way?

ZG: Well, that's what this conference in Atlanta was all about. They were talking about a Black United Fund. People are not going to do these things for us, the foundations are reducing their support for certain things and the Blacks are going to have to give more and more of themselves for their own programs. We cannot expect others to do it for us. These young people who were there and the Black masses have a mutual responsibility in the matter. And they addressed themselves pretty well to it. Yes, I think that more can be done and more will be done involving this upper middle-class Black group in the destiny of the Black masses. It's going to be slow. They must take more interest and responsibility in our public schools and in the Black family.

MG: But again that specific point relating to economics. If every middle-class Black in the country wanted to offer employment, what resources are available for them to do that, since most of them are employees themselves?

ZG: Yes, I think we have to move more into the field of business and employment. We've got to find ways to increase Black business. I'm not going to be pessimistic enough to say that I don't think it can be solved, if that's what you're trying to back me into the corner to say. I will not say that.

MG: No, I mean we had Booker T. Washington.

ZG: I think there is a solution and I think we're working on it. We're going to be very slow in getting any results. But I'm eternally the optimist about it or I would have quit

a long time ago; I'm old enough to be excused if I quit. I've paid my dues, I'm not quitting, because I have a feeling that these things are happening and that there's something I can help still to do about it and I believe that we can make more progress. It's not going as fast as I'd hoped it to go. A lot of the so-called liberals that I thought we were going to depend on to help proved not to be. A lot of the Black leadership I thought we could depend on has not fully met the challenge, but I think there are enough out there yet for us to still have hope that it can be done. I believe that we are moving in that direction much more slowly than I'd like to see it. But I don't think we are moving backwards.

MG: Booker T. Washington's philosophy centered around an economic sort of self-help program. To what extent do you think he was successful in engendering the kinds of change he wanted to bring about?

ZG: I think it was in 1900 that he set up a businessmen's league. It did an awful lot in its early days to generate Black business. The leadership, I think, dropped off when we started going into professions and we thought that was where our future was, being doctors and lawyers and people like that, and this business was neglected. I think we're going back in that direction again and there is a revival of interest in business. I think he was right but I don't think DuBois was wrong. I think they were both right; I have listened to both of them in my early years and I think it was not "either/or," it was "both/and." I hope we will get more Black business. I think we need to get publicity for some of it that is already doing pretty good that we don't know about. I read in this month's Ebony about a business I had never heard of before.

MG: To what extent has race been a factor in shaping the direction of your life?

ZG: I can't think of my life without it. It's been in everything I've done. My interest in Negro history, in Black people, Black artists, Black performers, my aspiration to be of help in any way I could to Black youth and other underprivileged youth. I don't know how to answer the question because I can't conceive of me without the race ingredient in it as a motivation, an incentive, a handicap that I had to overcome. It becomes a motivation as I make stepping stones out of stumbling blocks. In my adult life I've been involved with many other kinds of people but I've never, ever lost my pride of identity as a Negro. I've even used the word Black in an effort to communicate to others who do not like the word Negro.

MG: Do you think that race has in any way affected the public response to your work?

ZG: Oh yes. I've been able to go places where I never could have gone without Black music and Black courses. I've opened doors for other kinds of considerations just because I was Black, just because I knew something about the Black culture that they didn't know and I was able to share it. Is that what you mean? I have tried to do this without bitterness or antagonism. My interest in Negro spirituals and my study of its sociology which I presented in lecture recitals often to predominantly white colleges and other audiences. This is racial material and I am sure it has influenced favorable public response. I had the same kind of response to my lectures about other aspects of Negro culture. My interest, research and contact with the Third World gave me another area of discussion involving the United Nations. Is that what you mean?

MG: Well, yes, in part. Has it ever been a negative effect? Has it only been a tool to advance your work?

ZG: You mean being Black has been in my way?

MG: In terms of public reception or reaction, acceptance of your work.

ZG: Well, yes. I've given you some illustrations of it at the University of Chicago. And I have been refused basic services I had every right to expect. For example, the first time I ever went to Orlando, my cousin Lilah Hankins, whom I had been visiting, went with me to the airport and the plane was late; so we went into the dining room to get a cup of coffee and they made us leave. Before I permitted the police officer to escort me out, I made a statement to everybody in the dining room. I told them that I had just come back from a trip around the world for the U.S. State Department as a goodwill ambassador and I considered this experience very disheartening. Yes, I've had plenty of things happen to me because I was Black.

MG: That's kind of what I wanted to see--to what extent do you see race as a factor in the way the public has received you, and the way that you've been able to advance in your own fields.

ZG: I told you about the objections to moving the Job Corps to where it is because there were so many Blacks in Job Corps. I told you about the fight I made to get them there and the challenge and the threat I made to sue them. I can't think of any time in my life when I haven't been

conscious of race and when I haven't thought about it. But I'm trying to get to the point where I don't have to think about that. I don't want to forever be "Black," a "Black" this or that. I just don't forever want to be that. I want to be a person who happens to be Black and proud.

MG: Let me ask you something about women and the women's movement. What's "women's work?"

ZG: The work of the world, whatever she feels she is fitted to do, has the talent to and the energy to do, and the will to do. I have great ambivalence about this thing because I enjoy being a girl, and I like all the differences that are there biologically. I've enjoyed them. I had a great husband and he was of the old school in his regards to me as a person in our very personal relationship, and yet he felt I should do with my life what I wanted to do and he helped me to do it. I enjoyed it. I believe that people should have the right to be what they want to be. If they want to be a masculine woman and if they want to be a homosexual, I think they ought to be that: if that's what they really want to be. I know that being a woman has been a real problem for me. I've had to work under men who couldn't stand women who were aggressive and confident, positive. I worked at the Juvenile Court in Chicago as a probation officer with the same duties, the same hours but with a differential scale of salaries. The men got more than the women because the men were supposed to be heads of families that they had to support. I had a family, supporting it as the oldest child, but it didn't make any difference. So I've experienced that and I know what it means and I'm against it. I think that equal work should get equal pay and I think a woman should be allowed to do whatever she thinks she can do, whether it's a mechanic, driving a bulldozer, or whatever it is she wants to do. If she feels she can do it, she ought to be allowed to try to do it. I just personally hope--and here's where the ambivalence is--that she doesn't lose her femininity as she's doing it. How you can keep it and still be allowed to do all the things that many women want to do is the big problem.

I was on the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) twenty years ago, I guess it was, I don't remember the date now. You've got it.

MG: 1956.

ZG: '56, right. I went to the twentieth anniversary in '76, and of the speeches that were made, there was a "fight for the right to be in active combat." And they had women there who were going through the first part of military

training. And they told how they had to take bayonets and stab a dummy. They showed pictures of them going under wire fences yelling, "Kill! Kill! Kill!" just like men. Now you know, when I was there, we fought for all of the vocations to be opened up to them and we got a lot of them opened up. They'd only been clerks and nurses and so forth. And we got Weather Bureau jobs and all kinds of things opened up to women when I was there. But it never dawned on me that we would get to the point where they would be wanting to fight on the same level as men in active combat. And that's where they are now. Now, that I'm not prepared for, I swear I'm not. If that is what you call "women's work," I have to beg off. I think there are biological differences that put some limits on women's work.

MG: You don't regard that as feminine?

ZG: No, I do not. I'm not quite prepared personally to say that if the woman wants to do that, let her do it. That's one thing I just can't see women doing, fighting actively, killing people on the battlefield and fighting along with men. I can't accept that. My husband used to say, "You make concessions and concessions and concessions and finally you get to the point where you can't make another one. And then it's time for you to die." I think women should be able to do what they want to do except kill! But you see, I don't think men should either!

MG: So it's not a sexual distinction you're making.

ZG: Yes. But I do have a little different feeling when I see a woman crawling on the ground with a bayonet and going under a barbed wire fence and saying, "Kill!" I have a little bit more negative feeling and nausea at that than I do at the men, as badly as I hate to see men do it.

MG: But let me move back for just one point. You said you enjoy being a girl. What do you mean by that?

ZG: I enjoy having the door opened for me and my husband pull my chair back when I sit down at the table. I enjoy some of the deferences that are paid to me just as a woman by a man, courtesies. I enjoy his taking the lead in a dance; I don't want to be the leader in the dance when I'm waltzing. That's femininity to me. I enjoy the kind of clothes, some of the clothes I enjoy the most wearing are the things my husband bought me because he likes laces and silks and he'd buy negligees that I'd hesitate to buy--very feminine in fabric, color and style. I enjoy wearing them now as I enjoyed it when he lived. That's femininity that makes me enjoy being a girl.

MG: Is that in conflict with being a feminist?

ZG: Oh yes. The term feminist has been associated closely with the women's liberation movement and to me, it means a woman out there fighting for the right to kill if she wants to, to do anything a man can do the way the man does it. To me, that's the popular conception of the feminist. Maybe I'm wrong. The extreme I can't take, and yet, when you start putting a limit on it, you find yourself questioning your honesty about it. I question my own honesty about saying that I think women should be equal. But you see, they are different human beings. Equality is not always the same. Remember the old fable: you feed an ostrich and you feed a fox. And if you put the food in a flat bowl that the fox can get to, then the ostrich can't get it. That's not equality. It's the same, but it's not equality. And I think that because the ostrich with a long beak can't get to that food in that flat bowl, it is inequality even if it's the same. I see the parallel as it relates to men and women.

MG: And to whether or not they are equal?

ZG: I see them as equal with some different qualifications that make them have some different functions and capabilities; some of it because they have different glands.

MG: You've said that you enjoy courtesies, traditional courtesies men offer women. Are there any particular ways that you feel women should behave in response or reaction to men?

ZG: No, I do not think there are any particular ways women should respond to men. You respond to them as individuals, you've got to be yourself. You can't be anything else. I was married to a man who didn't want an aggressive woman and I didn't want to be aggressive, as it relates to sex. I enjoyed having the male as the aggressor. But if the woman wants to be the aggressor, I think she should be. Well, it's the new freedom that women have. What did you ask me?

MG: I'm asking you whether or not women should treat men in any specific way, offer them any particular deference, social courtesies, whatever it might be.

ZG: No, I don't think men should get "particular deference, social courtesies." In a special relationship between a man and a woman I think both should have the privilege of giving special courtesies and deference to one another if they choose to do that but not as a pattern for relationships with all men or men in general, and vice versa.

- MG: So you don't think then that there are any general sort of ways that women should behave in response to men.
- ZG: You are right. If I want to humor my husband and give him certain deferences I think I have a right to do it. But I don't want to think that that kind of deference is due all men.
- MG: Dr. George, what do you think about the term "Ms."?
- ZG: Well, personally I don't like it. I know we need some new words for these new concepts and relationships and I hope somebody will be smart enough to find them; maybe Ms. is the word. But I'm Mrs. and I enjoy being so labeled. I like marriage. I like the concept and I like the things that identify me with family and marriage. You know, I object to the way women are pushing this business about "mankind." And I understand someplace in the South they wanted to get back at some women who'd been so active about changing some of the names and pushing asexual concepts, so they notified them that it isn't a "manhole" any more, it's a "personhole." We do need some new words. Personally, I just don't like the word Ms. I don't like the way it sounds and I don't like what I think is going on in the minds of the people when they say it. But I recognize the need for a new woman status and attitude. The people who use it are the people who don't want to be Miss or Mrs., isn't that it? They want a title without reference to a man?
- MG: And people don't feel that women should have to announce their marital status as an introduction to themselves. Men don't, with their courtesy title, indicate their marital status.
- ZG: That is something to think about. Maybe men should get an additional title for those who are married.
- MG: So then you would argue that there should be an additional term.
- ZG: I just think, like in India the women wear a little dot up on the forehead saying "I'm not available" or, "I am available." I don't know what it is, but it has to do with status. And I think it's good to know that a man is married and not have to find out through some mishap. If you want to walk on in there anyhow, okay, but at least know what you're walking into.
- MG: So what we need then is an additional term for men.

ZG: Yes. That's right. I don't want to take the one away from me. I like being Mrs.

MG: What's the women's movement as you see it?

ZG: The same as the freedom movement for Blacks and Chicanos. I have a book called Deviant Minority. It's a good book--The Emergence of Deviant Minorities--and all the minorities--pornography and drugs and all that are listed here. And being Black is just among a lot of other minorities. And I think that the women's movement is another minority struggle, just like the gay struggle is. I just hate to see us have so many; why can't we just work for the acceptance of human beings as individuals on the basis of their worth, without regard to whether they are gay or homosexual or whatever they are, Black or white or Chicano or female. I just am against labels. But, as with all deviant minorities, the real problem is one of education--having people know one another, their need for understanding, and empathy, and justice, and the opportunity for personal fulfillment. When any minority is abused, mistreated, discriminated against, prohibited from participation as a first class citizen, then very special efforts have to be planned and implemented to change that. This means involvement of many individuals from both that particular minority group and from the majority, into some sort of group action which may become a movement. I think that is what has happened in the women's movement, whose first job has been to make women themselves aware, concerned, and involved.

MG: Now you've had a lot of woman-related experience, professional experience. We mentioned the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS), and you were the United States representative at the Pan-Pacific and Southeast Asia Women's Assembly (PPSEAWA) in Singapore. You're given several addresses and lectures on women. You've also served as a judge for the Miss America contest. Do you see any conflict between the aspects here, that is judging in a beauty contest and the other two activities mentioned?

ZG: In my general philosophy? You function where you are. You can't function in a world that doesn't exist that you hope will come. And I function in a world where there is this division, where there were at the time great inequities in the treatment of women in the armed services. And there were great opportunities for women to get vocational training they didn't have to pay for, and get experience. There were many kinds of jobs in the Weather Bureau, for instance. There are a lot of openings, opportunities to get

experience, in the armed services around the world in weather bureaus. And there were a number of others that were opened up. But you had to function in the structure that society presented you, even if you wanted it to be different. You couldn't function anywhere but where you were. And I functioned there.

Now the Miss America contest represents the biggest scholarship fund in the world for women. On the morning after that big presentation which is for the television, done in order to get the money from Revlon, its sponsor. I wrote a dissertation about it after my three years there as a judge. The TV show on that last night doesn't at all represent what the Miss America contest is all about, and they ought to find a way to let the world know what they're doing. \$75,000 worth of additional scholarships were awarded at the breakfast the next morning to non-winners that were in this contest who didn't have a chance to win but who deserved it, maybe because of their talents did not make for good television entertainment.

At the Pan-Pacific and Southeast Asian Women's Conference there were people from Vietnam who had just gotten their recognition as individuals in Vietnam, in 1959. And they were, for the first time, asserting themselves as legitimate citizens who could own themselves and own property. There were women from India and Burma. I was so impressed with the women from there. This was a great experience for me. I represented the U.S.A. I gave a major address on "The Economic Status of Women in the U.S.A." and I chaired a workshop.

Although this conference was in Singapore and the Malay women were anxiously a part of it, and although there was translation into two Chinese dialects, no provision was made for Malay translation. My contribution to the conference, for which I am proud, was to insist that I would not speak unless the Malay women were provided an interpreter. This was done and the Malay women prepared a "Thank you" coffee hour honoring me for a morning soon after. The entire delegation went in buses to their community house for the affair as a sort of apology. In that country the Chinese were the businessmen and government officials, the Indians were the school teachers, the clerks and minor officials and the Malays were treated much as Negroes in this country. The women at this conference were determined to change that and were attending the meetings even before the interpreter was provided.

MG: What would you say in response to those who say that beauty contests are sexist and exploit women?

ZG: Well, I think the part that was publicized on television could easily be so interpreted. But you see, as judges we were looking for something else. We were looking for stamina, and they walked down that aisle every night; that night on Saturday is just the last of five nights doing the same thing. And when you'd see their ankles start to quiver when they walked, you'd know they're not going to have what it takes to make 100,000 miles a year of travel as Miss America. When you talked to them in individual interviews, and we interviewed each one of them for an hour, you ask all kinds of questions and you can tell pretty soon whether or not she's going to be qualified to handle any situation in television or radio interviews and all the places that they are to go. And, the score that we gave for the gowns was where we put the personality score. We didn't grade those evening dresses, that was for the show on the television. Our score there was a personality score that we had been accumulating over the week. That's the reason that I thought that that program was unfair to the whole purpose of the contest.

We had women who came there the last time I was there determined to disrupt the program and they made a very bad mistake. They put on nuns' dresses because they could put all kinds of circulars down in those pockets in the nuns' dresses. They planned to get into the place as sisters, nuns. Somebody who was a Catholic saw that one of them wasn't wearing something right, at the gate, and stopped them and they kept them from getting in there. But they were prepared to really bombast the place as feminists. I think there is room for criticism of the contest, but I don't think that it is right to attack the entire event. There is too much that is good in it. Each young woman was in college making good grades and active in some sort of community service. All of this was documented for each judge in a folder from each contestant.

MG: Is there any analogous situation in which men are evaluated on the basis of physical appearance?

ZG: Yeah. We do it every day. You do it and I do it and everybody else does it.

MG: For which they win recognition and a prize?

ZG: There is a male contest for muscular body, a sort of beauty contest with prizes. I have seen it on television. Also there are clubs where men practically undress on a viewing platform for women only and the women make fools of themselves as the men prance and try to be sexy. The women have paid to see this and these men are paid to do it. This is worse than any women's beauty contest I've ever seen.

MG: We don't have a pageant though yet (for men) on television.

ZG: Yeah, but that doesn't mean you have to have a pageant in order to prove that you're doing a thing. You can exploit sexism in a lot of ways and the advertisers do it all the time. We are exploiting sexism every day of our lives in advertising all kinds of things.

MG: But as it relates to men or as it relates to women?

ZG: Men and women. Men have shampoos and the ads show women going crazy over it, and there's some kind of cologne that women can't resist. That's the same thing in my mind. We're a sexist country, we're a sexist culture and we exploit it all the time. In the movies, on television, in the paperbacks... Why just hit on Miss America?

MG: So men and women are equally exploited in that sense.

ZG: No, I would not say that it is equal.

MG: But you think that men are exploited in many things today.

ZG: I think men are exploited and I don't think exploited as much, because I think women are more. It's more obvious in terms of dress. But now they're making jeans that show the genitals and all kinds of things that show the muscles and shirts that show the hair on the chest. They've got a T-shirt now that's cut out all the way down to the belly button for men, to show the hair on their chest. What's the difference? That's sexism...exploitation of it.

MG: What effect has sex had on your career, your being a woman?

ZG: Well, it kept me from being a lawyer by my father who didn't think it was feminine. I've often wondered, you know, what I would have been doing if I had been a man because of my friendship with my father and my worship of him as a person. I would have probably been aspiring differently. There have been times when I have had to alter my strategies for the sake of the institution because I was a woman, and I knew that if I did it this way, the way I felt, you know, it would be negative in the sight of the men that were jurors about it. Yeah, it's affected my career, the expression of it. As often as I could, I tried not to let it handicap me, but it was there.

MG: Has it affected the public response to your work, do you think?

ZG: Oh, I think sometimes they think that I'm pretty good as a woman, you know. "As a woman, that's pretty good." I don't like that, but I think that's happened. In fact, they've said, in so many words sometimes, "You think like a man. You don't think like a woman." And I just resent that like the devil. Yeah, I think the public response has been affected by it and you know, it's just like it is for a Black. "I didn't know Black women could do that" and so forth. And they said to me one time when I became the director of Job Corps, we had a subcontractor, the Federal Electric Company, that handled all the money and Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority only handled the program. And I knew immediately that I could not work in that institution and have to go beg for the money that had already been allocated to Job Corps, and I'd have to go beg Federal Electric Company to give me the use of that money. So with the help of one of my mentors, Ralph Besse, we were able to get Booz and Allen, a management consultant firm, to come in there and make a study. This was an agency that the national Job Corps office had used and had paid \$40-50,000 for the same service. They didn't believe that we got it for nothing--a public service. They made a six-week study and wrote it up. It was a thick volume full of details. They recommended that I be given the responsibility for the operation of the entire institution; that the Federal Electric Company be eliminated; that I was capable of managing it all. The national Job Corps headquarters felt compelled to take their recommendations. They had been taking their recommendations in other matters.

But they said to me, "Women haven't had a chance to learn how to do these things." Every Job Corps Center in the country was headed by a white man put there by the corporation that was the contractor. I was the only woman heading a woman's Job Corps Center. And they said, "Well, women haven't had an opportunity and Black women have had less opportunity." And I said, "I've been here for a year and a half and ever since I've been here I've been studying. When I got my Ph.D., they told me I was ready for independent study, and that's what I've been doing." I got the job and the next evaluation put us way ahead of the one when there was a subcontractor. So, you see, I haven't had an easy time and I've had to fight as a woman and as a Black. And I have enjoyed most of it!

MG: Let's go back and talk about your husband. On September 2, 1944, you married Clayborne George. Mr. George, who died on Christmas eve in 1970, was an attorney and president of the Cleveland Civil Service Commission from 1934 to 1969. Could you tell me something about your husband? What was his background?

ZG: Clayborne was born in Surry, Virginia. Clayborne was one of several children. He had several sisters and one brother. The sisters all died of tuberculosis, and he slept with his sisters when he was a baby and a boy. His mother died when he was very young, I guess he was a baby and his stepmother raised him. He never would let anybody say anything bad about stepmothers because his stepmother was so good to him. But he never understood why he didn't get tuberculosis. They didn't know what it was at that time. They called it consumption, but they didn't know that it was contagious and this stimulated his interest in tuberculosis and he started in the city of Cleveland the first mobile clinic for tuberculosis. He practically erased it from the Negro community, the Black community here. It started in the Central Area. He was president of the Central Area Community Council at that time. He had heard about this mobile unit and he got the city to buy it, the first one, because of his experience with tuberculosis in his family.

Now his family had the reputation of never having been slaves, and they also bragged that none of the women ever worked for white people. They worked at home; they worked, but they didn't work for whites. And the men didn't work for white people either, they worked on their farms. And they talked about this a lot, they made their living there. Well, his brother, a graduate of Howard University, was a minister and pastored in Washington, D.C.

MG: What was his name?

ZG: Um... Oh, what's his first name? His son is named Theodore, Dr. Theodore George; he's an optometrist in Washington, D.C. His brother's son. But I can't remember the name of his brother. I knew him. He was pastor of a Baptist church in Washington then. My husband always said the Lord called him and his brother answered. He always said he should have been a preacher, "The Lord called me, but my brother answered." Well anyway, that just about summarized how he felt about it. His brother went to Howard University Divinity School and he wanted Clayborne to go there, but the family didn't have any money to give, cash. They lived well but they didn't have cash money to finance an education. Before he went there, he sponsored the first Black fair in Virginia. He went over to Hampton and told the story about how he took the ferry and he went over there and he found out how to do it and he had the first Black fair, which was such a success that he was determined to go to Howard. He made a little money from selling peanuts his father permitted him to raise. He was in Howard twelve years and his friends used to tease him, and say, "You know,

it took this guy twelve years to get through college." and before he could say anything, one would ask: "Tell me, were you there twelve years? When did you go there and when did you leave?" It got to be a real joke. Clayborne started in grade school at Howard, in the basement of the chapel, then high school, college and law school. Charlie Garvin was one of a group that was at Howard at the same time, stayed in the Alpha Phi Alpha house together. They were good friends for years. Five or six of them came to Cleveland to set up practice after they graduated. All were professional men, doctors and lawyers. They were members of the first Black officers' group that went to Des Moines, Iowa, to train in 1918.

MG: The first separate officers training group.

ZG: Yes. He was in that first group with this bunch.

MG: This is your husband.

ZG: Yes. He went to France and then they came back. When he came back, he went to Boston University and got his Master's in law to refresh himself and he took the bar and came to Cleveland. He decided on Cleveland to practice. And when he first came here, he worked in a foundry, Warner and Swasey, on the corner of 55th and Cedar.

MG: Warner and Swasey.

ZG: Warner and Swasey, as a furnace man to get money to start his office. Later he was made the Alumnus of the Year at Howard University. He was very proud of Howard, and really had a lot of things to talk about when Howard was mentioned.

My husband was a little older than some of the others when he finished college because he had to work his way all the way through. He was very active in athletics as a football player and he had many medals he won as high-jumper at Howard. He never learned how to play bridge or do anything like that because he said he didn't have time when he was in school; he was working every hour that he wasn't in classes, and then when he first finished, he had years to make up in his practice. He didn't have any help in getting his office set up and his friends were already started in business because their families could help them. So he was pretty much of a self-made man, I think, in a lot of ways. He was quite a guy, quite a guy. I envy the first years that his first wife had with him; I wish I had been married to him then. But I'm very grateful to her for what she contributed to his life because when I got him he was all right.

MG: How did you meet?

ZG: Well, we found out after many years that we had met in 1927 when the national boule of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority met in Cleveland. The AKA's and the Alpha Phi Alphas both met here at the same time. He was a member of Alpha Phi Alpha when Alpha Kappa Alpha was organized on the Howard University campus. I was elected here in Cleveland as the National Anti-Basileus that year. It was my second boule. And Bobbie Scott in Washington, D.C., was elected the Basileus. Clayborne's wife was president of the host chapter. I was assigned to the Georges who made themselves responsible for my dates, and getting us to the parties. So I met him then. We figured that out since and had some interesting remembrances about it.

I came here as part of my research for my doctorate in 1943, in the John D. White collection at the Cleveland Public Library. And I was staying with my cousin, Mrs. Lylah Jones, she was then; her husband has since died and she's living in Orlando, married to another doctor. But I stayed with her during that time and there was a party that Christmas to which she wanted me to go. To make a long story short, she got me an escort and I went. After the party a group of us went to a place called "The Chicken Shack" down on 55th Street. The others left but we stayed until six or seven o'clock in the morning, just sitting there talking. I left town in a couple of days, but I heard from him every day, a letter, flowers, a card or telephone calls, from that day until I married him a year later.

MG: How did your husband view your work?

ZG: Oh, he wanted me to do the things that I wanted to do. He enjoyed seeing me do things. We discussed what I was doing a lot. My husband was fifteen years older than I, and he was in excellent health. He had had a chance to accomplish what he wanted to pretty well, and he always used to say, "Nobody carries the ball all the time. It's your turn to carry the ball." This was his attitude about it.

Now of course, we wanted a family very badly. I just thought it was terrible for him not to have any children, because I thought he'd be a wonderful father. But you see, I was forty when I married him; and it was a couple of years before we decided that we weren't going to have a child. Then we went to a clinic. In fact, we were the first couple to register for a fertility clinic at Maternal Health. And well, to make a long story short and one that I wouldn't really want to try to tell, I got pregnant while on a six-week vacation and didn't know it. Some way or other I was

aborted when I was about three months pregnant and I nearly died. I had all kinds of complications. The child was dead in utero and we didn't know it. So my husband decided that I wasn't supposed to have any children, that we had interfered with God's plan for us, and that therefore he would not even permit me to get pregnant again. He concluded that I belonged to the children of the world. And he released me to work. I had worked with people and children before marriage and he thought that was my mission. And that's the way he felt about it. He wanted to help me do it.

MG: Are there any advantages or disadvantages, in your view, to late marriages?

ZG: I think it depends entirely on who you get. I think it was an advantage in my late marriage because I had matured in a lot of ways. I had a great appreciation for a man of the quality he was. I had reached the point where I knew pretty well what I want to do, and I appreciated finding a man who'd let me do it. Maybe if we had married much earlier--you know, his first wife never worked after marriage. She was active in the community, but she never worked. They had no children. I can see all the advantages of an early marriage, and having a family, because I would have liked to have had a family. I would have liked to have had a family early and then have had the later life to do the things I wanted to do. I didn't. And yet, I was helpful to my sisters in college and I look upon them in a way as children. But they're not my flesh and blood and there's a lot of difference. I couldn't ask for any more from a marriage than I had, so I don't know whether it was because I was older or not.

MG: What are your views on the institution of marriage, not specifically your experience alone, but in general as well?

ZG: I believe in marriage, in the family. I think it's a basic institution that we must find some way to keep alive and healthy. I like the relationship of intimacy between two people, where you know each other in all kinds of ways, psychologically, spiritually, physically, and in every other way. I like the whole concept. I know there are times when it cannot work, you know, and it can be terrible when it doesn't. I know that. But I think when people work at it, they have the potential for success. Now I think many times the potential isn't there, and there's nothing you can do about it. But if the potential is there, I don't think there's anything more perfect than the union of two people, two personalities, with common commitments and supplementary interests and skills where each can give to the other different things.

My husband was always interested in what I did and he would ask questions. For instance, when I was at the Job Corps, "What happened to Alice?" What happened to Eleanor, or Mary or Stephany, etc. And his counsel was very important to me and if there's anything I miss more than anything else today it's having him to talk to and know that when he responds he is giving me the best he has and that I can count on it. He was also so judicious in his mind and he was a good listener. He could ask you almost psychiatric questions, that would almost "put you on the couch," to make you think and talk and analyze. And whenever I was going to do a new subject matter for my speeches, when I was traveling for the Danforth Foundation, for instance, and speaking to sixty-five or seventy colleges a year, and when I was working on new material, I would go through it with him and then he would come up with the kinds of questions he thought the students might throw at me. And it was very helpful because most of the time he was right and would make me know I wasn't quite ready with that; I needed to get some more facts of another kind. We worked together as a team. When we were married in '44, it was just at the time the United Nations was in its early formative stages and this was our first project together. He had a good mind and he read a lot and was a very stimulating person to me. He was big and tall and he had arms just the right length! And we enjoyed each other in all kinds of situations.

I was going to tell you, we had two or three projects that we started together. That with the United Nations was the first one. Then we started collecting Bibles. My husband taught a Sunday School class of adult men at Antioch Baptist Church for forty years. And I always wanted him to teach young people. He resisted, saying old people needed it just as much. They came to him with family problems, and marriage problems, children problems and all kinds of problems, and he felt he was helpful and I know he was. I taught a Sunday School class of high school seniors. We collected Bibles and I have over there on those shelves about thirty-seven different versions of the Bible, in basic English and all the traditional and accepted translations and then the Bible organized according to poetry, narrative, etc. And we really used them. That was another common interest we had.

Then we studied ants, the society of ants, as one of our early projects. We built quite a library about ants. So we had a good time.

Oh, let me tell you about the first thing I bought when I moved into his house. It was a double desk that had drawers on both sides, twice the size of an ordinary desk.

This was where we did our work. Across this desk, we talked and were silent and communicated in many ways to each other. It was a functional piece of furniture and it contributed a lot to our marriage, I believe, because it was where we sat and talked and we built all kinds of memories of things we discussed and read there together. Clayborne would read one book and I'd read another and he would mark in his book what he thought I'd be interested in and I'd mark in my book what I thought he'd be interested in, and then maybe I'd only look at what he'd marked sometimes, and he'd tell me what else I wanted to know about the book. Whenever I went away and attended conventions or conferences or workshops, I took notes for him. That's what was in my mind all the time because I was going to go home and share that with him. I have many very warm and beautiful memories of that man!

MG: Do you agree with those who say today that the institution of marriage is dying out?

ZG: I think it's sick, but I don't think it's dying. I think it's going to change in many important ways, some of the changes will eventually be legal but I am sure that it won't be defined as my parents--or even I have defined it. But I think for the essential development of a personality, into a kind of "wholth," people are going to find marriage the answer. Modified, maybe, but two people, I think, are going to want to be one. And they're going to find different ways to achieve it. It is sick right now, very sick, but I don't think it's dying.

MG: Dr. George, who are your closest friends and what has friendship meant in your life?

ZG: Well, you've asked me a sensitive question because I don't know how to answer that. I've never had any very close women friends. I've had some very close male friends. And I guess maybe it was a kind of substitute for marriage for a long time, because I felt I couldn't get married and somehow or other I had the good sense to decide that to make my friendships with men a sexual thing would ruin it, and would prevent me from having many men friends. I decided that early enough to--I'm not saying I'm a prude; I'm just saying that I had better judgment than I knew I had at that time, because some of the friendships that could have easily become something else, I didn't allow them to, even though there was temptation often to do it. I maintained those friendships a long, long time. Some of them I still have.

I used to go hunting with a group of fellows because I was pretty good with a gun. My father had taught me; he was

a great marksman, so was my mother. And I had a .22 rifle that was cut off at the butt when I was a child learning how to shoot. And by the way, when I was on Broadway, my mother used to entertain herself during the day when I was sleeping by going up on Broadway and shooting in the shooting gallery. They let her shoot for nothing because she attracted such a crowd, you know! But I have gone fishing, no, hunting, not fishing, I never was a fisher. My father fished and I'd go and sit with my back to a tree near him and read while he fished, because he didn't want anybody to talk to him. I could climb the fences, they didn't have to help me, be responsible for me as a woman; I was as good at it as they were. And then I could cook afterwards. My Girl Scout experience had taught me how to make a fire and to cook.

I have told this story to the girls at the Job Corps many times and I said, "Now you go to bed at night and you have a fire and you're in the middle, and with the men sleeping all around you to protect you from one another. That's Sex with a capital S! And if you have never had that kind of experience, you don't know what sex is. You haven't been in the bed with any of them, but that's sex." And I had that kind of experience. And the thing that was so interesting to me was that some of these men were married and their wives hated my guts, because they were sure that we were doing things we weren't doing and it was really very, very exciting to me. I knew nothing wrong was going on and the men knew it, and they knew it about one another and it was something. When I married, this group of men had a party for me and their wives were there. And I was at the table with the men and my husband-to-be was at the table with the wives. And these were all the men that I had dated at one time or another or had been friends with. And all of a sudden, I looked around the table at these twelve men who gave me this party and I realized there wasn't a single one of them there that could say that I had ever been to bed with him. Now I wasn't that good; I'm not trying to say I was a saint; I'm just trying to say that I did have some discipline about it, and it paid off to me in friendships.

I didn't have many women friends because of this. Now I would say my closest friend is named Mrs. Marjorie Turner. She is a soror, she is a fellow member of my church, I got to meet her when I taught Sunday School. I taught the senior high boys and girls and she had them in the junior class, and I got her graduates. We got to know each other at that time. And she is the kind of person you don't find often. She may call me every day now because I'm having trouble with my knee. But I mainly hear from her once or twice a week. She's a vice principal of one of the

big high schools here in town, John Adams. We don't do too many things together, but when I am in a hospital she comes to see me every day. She keeps my family informed about my condition. When my husband was ill for so long, she visited him regularly at home.

I have another group of friends who call me "Mamazee." They are children who have been added to my life for one reason or another. Some I've helped with their graduate study or dissertation by keeping them in mind as I read and putting aside materials on a special table in my library where they could come often or occasionally to see what's there. I have tried to provide eager, listening ears to whatever they wanted to discuss to provide them someone to try out their ideas on with no fear of its being spilled to someone before it's "ready." Some, Clayborne and I helped financially; some are carryovers from jobs we did together. I've been happy when I could introduce them to someone they wanted or needed to know, or give them sound advice about how to get funding for a project, etc. They do all sorts of things for me in addition to keeping in touch by telephone regularly. They are a great source of joy and security.

MG: Dr. George, why would you say in general that friendships with men have been more rewarding than friendships with women?

ZG: Well, I think that part of it was sort of a sublimation of the fact that I was not married and I enjoyed the masculine body and presence and voice and all, plus the fact that the kinds of things they talked about in those days were of more concern to me. I had always been stout and sensitive in a group of women who were small, or talking about diets all the time, or children which I didn't have, problems with their children, problems with their family and marriage, or problems with recipes. The men were talking about something else.

MG: Do you think that the women's movement may affect that?

ZG: Oh, I'm sure it has. I'm sure it has already. I just haven't had a chance to develop women friends here. I did it in a different way. When I first married and had projects, I got together a group of young people that I called my children. I deliberately picked them according to talents. One of them was good in public relations and another one was good in this or that or the other, the kinds of skills I needed to implement any of the projects I was doing. And we had a little group we called Citizens for Individual Responsibility. If I got a project, all I did was call them together and they did it. We discussed it and

it gave them experience. They got a chance to meet people, the superintendent of schools and other people who later became important in their lives, and they were mostly young women. There was one man in the group, no two. And I had an affiliation with them that was rewarding and feminine, but I guess I maybe thought of them more as my children than I did as peers. It did give me a group of women that became involved in important facets of my life.

MG: Are you more of a group person or an independent?

ZG: Well, I think I'm a pretty good mixture of the two. I can be alone in this apartment for days and not be the least bit bored. I've never been bored in my life, because I always have too many things I wanted to do. I've got music and I enjoy it and I've got books and I enjoy them and I can live with my own thoughts pretty well, and about a lot of things I feel I want and need to do. I'm thinking about this all the time. I am alone often, but I am never bored. I've been lonesome for my husband an awful lot.

MG: You can work with groups if you...

ZG: Oh yes, I do work with many groups as a part of my vocation, because I love people. And one of my strengths has been the ability to get various groups organized and effectively working together for a common cause. In the Job Corps one of my first major problems was to find ways to get communication started, and to bring together several groups in our neighborhood and beyond who had been bitter enemies of the Job Corps. They were writing letters daily to our Congressmen who, within weeks, recognized publicly that people were communicating with one another as groups and were completely changed in their expectations and feelings of relevance to the Job Corps. The letters had stopped. The job became larger and larger as we attempted to involve more and more kinds of community groups in the implementation of our program. We brought, by one method or another, scores of organizations or groups to see what Job Corps was like physically; to visit classes; to attend programs by the Corpswomen; to invite individual Corpswomen or small groups of them to share their homes, to visit their businesses, to go to church with them, to introduce most of them to a different lifestyle, and have them see what they needed to achieve in order to get even a "piece" of it, and to feel that it was possible--within their reach!

At one time we were able to get Chisholm Halle to fund a luncheon at the Halle Bros. for the president or other top representatives of businesses and other offices which had

given our Corpswomen a chance to get work experience in the skill they were working on at Job Corps. Ralph Besse, the president of the Illuminating Company, and John Bustamante, attorney, were the cochairmen and there was a Corpswoman for each executive who shared the meal and made the presentation of any award to each. This gave a Corpswoman visibility to groups that might not otherwise have had a personal contact with them. I could tell you many stories to illustrate the networking of groups that made Job Corps effective.

MG: Apart from any attitudes that your husband may have had, did you personally ever feel any conflict between the demands of a public and private life? And how did you resolve such conflict or prevent it from occurring?

ZG: I worked very hard at trying to prevent a conflict between my public and private life. I was always conscious of it. I took my responsibility as homemaker very seriously. We had help but there still are meals to be planned, and a few to be cooked by me, marketing, entertaining in the home, a general oversight of housekeeping, laundry, flowers to be arranged for several important spots in the home and some personal time to be with your husband.

One extreme example but a real experience trying to solve this problem had to do with my going on the six-month lecture tour around the world for the U.S. Department of State. My husband was affirmative about the idea from the beginning. He did promise to meet me in Italy after my Southeast Asian section of the tour--after three months, but he didn't and I found out later that he had not intended to do so but felt I might not go if I thought we would be separated for six months.

I was concerned that he would miss my cooking of some of his favorite dishes. We had a wonderful housekeeper, a good cook, devoted and faithful so I did not worry about his care. She had been his housekeeper during his widower years. Nevertheless, so that he would have one item at each dinner meal which I had cooked, I spent many weeks making tiny pies, frying about fifty chickens, cooking lima beans which he wanted every Saturday, making breads and freezing them and packaging them in small quantities so that he would have just a bit of me there every day. It worked!

It was a matter of not having enough hours in the day. That's where my conflict came, mostly. I would set too ambitious goals for myself, both in the home and with my job or whatever I was doing in public. I'd get obligated to too

many groups, too many meetings, and then feel a sincere sense of responsibility in my home. I just didn't have enough hours in the day. That was my main conflict. I have always said that the four walls of the house no longer house the home. The woman's responsibility is wherever there are any forces at work that affect that home, whether it is the legislature or the Congress, a member of the School Board, or one of a myriad of related functions; certainly working on policy-making boards in one's community and in one's local politics. That's your home! I mean most of it is outside the house. That I sincerely believe, so, I don't have any conflict with that.

MG: So you didn't see any clear-cut dichotomy between public and private life?

ZG: No. No. Not anymore than I do between formal and informal education.

MG: Dr. George, you've had numerous and do have numerous memberships, offices, in various organizations which the researcher will find outlined in the vitae included in your file. You've also received a great number of awards and honors. What have all these things meant to you?

ZG: Wow! I suppose memberships have been just ways to implement my interests and activities because I think you have to find ways to implement your goals and study. You know, deciding what needs to be done isn't enough. You've got to do it. And you have to do it through agencies and membership in places where you can be a part of the decision-making process. Now that's what made me do a lot of things. I could have volunteered on another level, but my levels have been mostly boards because I wanted to be in on the decision-making and policy-making and program-making. So that explains my memberships, I guess, more than anything else. And they've been local, my church and other institutions, and national, civic, artistic, religious, political and all. And it looks like a lot of organizations because my interests are in many fields. Like I told you, when I had my doctoral oral examination, I had nine people because I had crossed so many disciplines in my research and thesis, and they brought in other people too. Well, those same disciplines would function in my memberships and I've tried not to make them superficial. They rotated in a way, you know what I mean, but there have been many.

Now when it comes to awards, I had trouble with them. It was contrary to all of my training from my father to hang a thing on the wall. But my husband helped me with that. He said that young people, and we had a lot of young people in our home, need to have some role models. They need to

know that it pays to do certain things, that people will recognize that you have made a contribution and that you don't always get paid with money. The esteem of people is important, not only in recognition to you personally, but as a credential in preparation for another job in establishing your credibility for it. Clayborne was very helpful to me about that, so that I didn't have a conscience for all these awards on the wall! I started hanging them while he was alive and those are hanging now but most of the ones I get are not hanging. The new ones are on the floor and about the only ones that are framed when I get them get hung. All those that come unframed are still in a box somewhere. But I am proud of them. I'm more proud now as I'm older than I was then. I was embarrassed then. And if it hadn't been for my husband saying that you owe this to young people, you owe it to other people to know that people really do appreciate what you're trying to do, they would not be there. I have lived long enough and have had such a large number of youth (and adults) view them with questions and awe, that I feel Clayborne was right.

MG: Now you may not want to do this, but are there any of the memberships or offices that you single out in your own mind as being particularly important? And similarly for awards and honors?

ZG: Well, I'm a proud member of the Antioch Baptist Church in Cleveland. I don't go as much as I used to, but I am a practicing Christian and I maintain my dues and I maintain a working relationship with my minister. I am proud to give whatever there is, whatever my membership means, to such organizations as life membership in the N.A.A.C.P., the Urban League's Whitney Young Fellowship, life membership in the National Council of Negro Women and in the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. Whatever this is saying about the organization in the way of endorsing it, whatever my name can mean, if it can enhance the appeal of that organization, I am proud to have them use it.

About the awards I don't know which ones stand out the most, if any. Whenever I get one, no matter who it's from, it warms me and I feel very sentimental about it for a few days. And then it's gone because I'm still out there doing what I was doing before the award.

MG: Of course, not everybody has the problem of getting so many to worry about that kind of thing.

ZG: I guess maybe my honorary doctorate meant a lot to me, because John Carroll University gave me my first one. The ceremony itself and what they said about me as a reason for

doing it was very humbling. No, John Carroll was second; the first one was Heidelberg College. And that was a great surprise, because I didn't even know the college at that time, and when they read the citation it just was unbelievable. At the base of it all were two members of the faculty from entirely different schools who had witnessed my lecturing in their colleges as undergraduates and had been affected and influenced by it, and they were the ones that started the move toward the award at Heidelberg. The Notre Dame College here gave me a most prestigious award recently. They discussed an honorary degree and they decided that this award was more important to them because they don't give it every year; they give it about every five years and they give honorary degrees every year.

I suppose maybe the most outstanding honor I ever had was to have been designated as the Alumnus of the Year at the University of Chicago, and second to that, to get the same designation at the New York University, neither of which I expected. After all the problems I had at the University of Chicago, I certainly was surprised when it came. The letter giving the reasons for choosing me as Alumnus of the Year and asking if I would accept it came, and I didn't answer it right away because I really didn't know what to say. I knew I was going to say yes, but I was tempted to say something I thought I needed to think about before I said it. And I ended up going to Seattle to get the Dahlberg Peace Award at the International Convention so I was in Seattle when the chairman of the University of Chicago Awards Committee called to find out what was happening. My husband referred them to me in Seattle and they called me there. So I said, "I really am embarrassed not to have answered, because of course I am going to say yes, but I haven't got around to writing the letter." So they said, "Well, you can still write the letter. In the meantime we will record your answer as Yes."

Well, when I wrote the letter, I decided to tell them that I really felt I should be giving the University of Chicago this award because they had grown so since I was at the university and that I felt I had to tell them why this was so precious to me. And so, I told them about the swimming pool incident, the choir incident, and the dormitory refusals. I added that after these experiences, to have them offer me this award made it important that I tell them these things so that they could better appreciate how precious this award was to me.

Well, somebody wrote me and said they'd seen the letter and wanted to know if they could publish it in the University of Chicago alumni magazine, which is quite a journal. So I said, "Well, I didn't write it for the paper, but it's the truth, and if the people to whom I sent it are willing for you to print it, it's all right with me." So they printed it and I got letters from people who were in school when I was there who swore that they didn't know this sort of thing was going on at the University of Chicago. It never occurred to them that I could have been denied. Why didn't I let them know! But I don't think back in those days they would have done anything about it, and I don't know why they didn't know about it because I talked about it enough.

Now about New York University, well, I just was surprised, you know. It's such a big school and these were very outstanding honors to me.

I have another award that is precious to me, and that's the Dag Hammarskjold Award for Peace. And I suppose maybe I must say that the appointment to the XVth General Assembly of the United Nations (1960) was a great honor and that I appreciated this opportunity to represent my country. I was chosen to be the U.S. representative on Committee II, which is not the place they usually put women. It's the Economic and Financial Committee and I asked them why they put me there as a sociologist. I told them I don't even know the language and jargon and vocabulary of economics. But they said they wanted somebody on there that would remind its other members that no matter what the rhetoric, they are really talking about people all the time. They felt that this could be my contribution. I did appreciate not being put in the stereotyped place they put most women! Committee Four. It's a great, important committee, the humanitarian committee, but it's a stereotype for women who are delegates: "women delegates." I think maybe those are the awards that stand out.

The award from Fisk University is very important to me because I didn't teach at Fisk, I taught at Tennessee State. But when I went there the relationships between those two schools were completely frozen. They just didn't have anything to do with each other--staff, faculty, or student body. All of my personal friends were at Fisk and I maintained my friendship with them. I invited them to Tennessee State and they invited me to Fisk and we broke the barrier. So that when I married, Fisk University sent their Jubilee Singers to sing a pre-nuptial recital and my wedding march, in appreciation of what had done to bring the two schools together. So I could take each one of them and burst with pride as I think about them!

Maybe another one I'd like to mention is the "Big Sister Award" that was given to me by my family with a beautiful speech made by my sister Cathryn. The plaque is out on my wall. I'm very proud of it! It's in appreciation for what they thought I meant to them as their "Big Sister." There are others that are precious; all of them are precious to me, every single one of them, really. But I mention those. The one from the women at Job Corps, and from the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority when I retired; the one from the Department of Labor, a Distinguished Citizen Award which they had not been doing for Job Corps directors. They are all very precious to me.

MG: We talked a little bit about your hobbies; you mentioned your Bibles and I think I read that you have had a collection of African flags.

ZG: Well, I had a collection of all United Nations flags.

MG: And I see that you have several photographs on hands.

ZG: Yes. That is one of my first hobbies. My father used his hands so effectively, not only with a blackboard, but just in gesturing. His hands were very special to me and fascinated me as a child. And that's when I think I started noticing hands. Then, oh, when I was in California, I came across one of the major magazines, I think it was Harper's, in which the center spread of two pages was the picture of the hands of a slave on the music for the spiritual, "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen," on the hand was a slave ring made out of a nail, a highly polished nail head becomes the jewel. I was fascinated with those hands. I hadn't collected any picture of hands at that time but I kept this picture for many years and finally when I went to New York University to work on my Master's one summer, I looked up the photographer, whose name was at the bottom of this picture. I had torn the magazine all apart to take it out. I took it to the Carnegie Hall office building where her offices were and I asked her if she had the original of it. She was so flattered that I had this picture after the years, she said, "I will find it. I don't know where it is." But she did find it and autographed it but it doesn't show because it's on the back of the picture in the frame. I should have asked her to do it in the front but I didn't. So that was my first item in my collection.

When I went on Broadway, one of the photographers for the newspaper took a picture of my hands on a deck of cards, telling fortunes in this opera, Gian Carlo Menotti's The Medium. So I have it too. Then I collected the hands of Marian Anderson and that's a nice story. Some friends of

mine, Dr. and Mrs. Charles Garvin, were traveling around the world and they were just behind Marian Anderson when she was on that famous goodwill tour. When they got to Hong Kong the morning paper had a picture of her holding a sculpture of her hands, life size, the way she held them when she sang, clasped in front of her. And they just sent me this photograph from the newspaper, knowing that I was interested in hands. I offered to pay for it. The photographer sent it to me, and said he was happy to have me have it. He didn't charge me for it.

Well, many years later when I went to Hong Kong the first time, on a mission for the State Department, they had a V.I.P. conference for me at the airport, the photographer who came to cover it identified himself afterwards as the one who had sent me the Marian Anderson photograph. I didn't remember his name but he had remembered mine. So it came full circle, you know, and I got to meet the man who really took the picture in Hong Kong.

MG: What do you feel you get from your hobbies? Why have you made time for them?

ZG: Well, they are important in my life. I mean, hands have been important. I am interested in the social role of hands, I mean like the worker's hands, old people's hands, children's hands; I have one picture of an old man's hand taking a child's hand and with his index finger pointing to the passage in the Bible that says, "And he grew in stature and favor with God and man." The frayed edges of the adult's cuff would make you think maybe he was some old minister. To me that says an awful lot. It's showing adults... And I've looked for pictures of adults' and children's hands together indicating care, concern, affection, and they're very difficult to find.

The Bibles, we use. I have used them to try to stimulate interest in senior high school kids in the Bible. By looking it up in various translations, just to see how many ways there were to say it. Then I have Bibles for young people that are contemporary. One is "Our Way," and I have two or three of them up here that I used to give to young couples when they'd get married. With it I'd give them a list of passages that have been helpful to me for different kinds of occasions. Because the whole Bible is not helpful to me and you can turn to the Bible and look all night for something and not find anything inspirational to you if you don't know where to look. I've made my wedding present a Bible with a list of passages that have been helpful to me at certain times.

I collect art songs by early Black composers at the turn of the century, when they wrote most of the popular music for Broadway and a lot of it had nothing to do with race at all; it was just Black people writing music. Now that was functional to me because I was interested in music and I was doing this bibliography of music written by and about Negroes. I have everything Harry T. Burleigh wrote. He gave them to me in bits over a period of several years.

What other hobbies? Those are my main ones. I haven't spent a lot of time just collecting, but in the process of living I've accumulated them. Except the hands! I went to UNESCO headquarters in Paris and spent half of my day going over their collection of hands. On that trip I had only one day in Paris, and I went from Orly straight to the UNESCO headquarters and stayed all day. Went right back to Orly airport for the evening flight to the United States. I didn't go into Paris at all. That shows you how much I think of Paris. But half of that day I spent going through their collection of hands of people around the world. I haven't hung them; I don't have any place for them, but I do have them in a file and when I have a bunch of young people over, sometimes I get them out. They are the only things I think I would say I worked to collect. The others, like the Bibles, were things we were interested in and we just bought them as we needed them and soon they were a collection.

Oh, another collection that we worked at is made up of slave narratives. We only got to maybe around thirty. They're not easy to get and I just stopped making special trips to bookstores looking for them. But it used to be that I never would go to New York without looking through the second-hand stores that used to be on Third Avenue, and down in Greenwich Village at the University Place bookstore that had probably one of the best collections of literature by and about Negroes that I know of anywhere in the world. I haven't been there for years. So, it was a part of any trip to New York City that I would go look for these slave narratives. It's been some years now since I did that.

MG: What have your travels meant to you?

ZG: Well, I have never done any traveling just for travel's sake until since I was retired. I traveled a lot, but it was always functional; I was going to make a speech, or going to a conference, or going on some mission. My husband and I took vacation in the summers. We went to Martha's Vineyard a lot and places like that, but we went to a place for vacation and spent most of our time there. My husband did not like to change beds and water and food too often. I don't call that travel. When I traveled around the world,

it was for the State Department. Other times I went, I went as the guest of the Ghana government or for some special conference like the one in Dakar, Senegal, where I attended the First World Festival of Negro Art. I traveled while I was over there, visited other places because it would have seemed a shame to spend that fare to go to one place.

When I retired, my staff gave me \$1700.00 to go toward a cruise, and the farewell party which the students gave me was built around the cruise. I was there eight years and never had a vacation the whole time I was there. I really never felt the need for a vacation, because I think I know how to relax and make little mini-vacations out of routine occasions. It's something that I have worked at. When I retired, the Corpswomen brought all kinds of gifts which they put into a canoe marked "SS Zelma" for my vacation. By the way, probably the most precious thing was from the girls who played basketball and baseball. They washed cars in the parking lot next to Job Corps for several Saturdays and earned fifty dollars. They gave me a fifty-dollar bill for spending change. Isn't that something?

I didn't use it for nearly three years, because I wanted to be sure, that when I did it was something I would remember forever. And then the right cause came along. I have spent that fifty dollars at least four times but the original fifty-dollar bill is still in my safe! So I went on this music festival on a ship to the Caribbean which included the English Chamber Orchestra and many soloists including my first hearing of Jessye Norman! I had a ball. So those two cruises have been travel just for travel's sake, and I had wanted very much to leave the 28th of this month to go on a second Mediterranean cruise, which will go to Israel and spend several days there. One of the concerts, it's a series of concerts, is by the Israeli Symphony. These are fantastic stops in Greece. On the other cruise we made only one stop in Greece and two in Yugoslavia, but this time they have several in Greece and Yugoslavia. I would like to have gone, but I cannot afford another trip so soon and maybe never again.

But you ask, what does it mean to me? Meeting new people, getting acquainted with other lifestyles, seeing other people's music function in their lives, not just listening to recordings. It meant going to a Thai opera with Thai people and experiencing the belief I have talked about many times and that is: "Music is not an international language." Anybody who says that has never heard a Chinese opera that doesn't say anything to them until they get to know it. What they really are saying is:

"My music I find everywhere I go." But music is not an international language. It could be and many musics speak to many people, but it is not an international language. That's the big lie. I wish it were true, believe me. I have documented that many times in my travels. I would go just to see what the music said to me.

I remember when I went to my first Thai opera, I went early with this Thai family, the mother (a Britisher) spoke English very well and was my interpreter. I didn't see an instrument I have ever seen anywhere except in Curt Sachs's book on primitive music. And when they tuned up, I didn't hear a sound that I was familiar with. I mean it wasn't the kind of sound that I knew. And when they sang, and they had some of their best singers in this opera, it was not the quality of vocal production that we consider beautiful. So it really is not an international language, and you've got to work hard for it to say anything to you except something negative, and that's to say, you know, "They're off-pitch," and the music is ugly and strange and primitive, always judging it by our own standards. It was a very wonderful experience for me.

Travel to me meant getting to know other people. I had the great privilege of living in homes and sleeping in the way they slept, in Chinese and other Southeast Asian homes, including Philippine homes. I lived in indigenous hotels throughout every country to which I went. I'd only go to the big European hotels when I was just too tired, you know, because I couldn't adjust always to sleeping on a hard board or whatever it was. And I ate their foods. My biggest regret is that I didn't speak their languages. And I always felt apologetic about being in their country and not speaking any of their language, I really did. What did it do to me? I don't know. I hope it made me more capable of empathy and understanding and appreciation. That's a social skill that I think we need today more than any other. We don't have anything that teaches us that: how to empathize. Not sympathy, but empathy. I think it's an extremely valuable tool for human relations and I think this travel helped me sharpen mine.

At Job Corps I found the need for the ability to empathize. It's so easy to be critical, it's so easy to want to correct, to reform, and change. And you can't do it effectively unless you understand how it got to be the way it is, and why you think it's deviant. I think you have to have the capacity to ask yourself every now and then. "Is it deviant? Whose deviance? And what is the norm?" And I think travel has helped me to do that.

I get calls from girls every now and then. Week before last a young white girl who graduated from Job Corps called me and said, "I must come by. I'm on my way to Michigan." She works out from Washington and she said, "You've got to see what Job Corps did for me." Six years ago she graduated. Now she owns her car, she has an apartment, she has a good job. She's very disturbed about her family because she isn't comfortable there at all when she visits and yet she doesn't seem to be able to do anything about the home situation. She tried trying to help one of her sisters and it just didn't work. It is rewarding and I don't think I could have done whatever it was I did if I hadn't developed some skills in empathy which came to me, I think, largely... Well, they were sharpened, they weren't created by travel, but they were sharpened by travel. My father and mother, I think, helped me start to develop them in my early years.

MG: Now one last question. What gives you the most pleasure and satisfaction, in retrospect?

ZG: Hmmm. What gives me the most pleasure and satisfaction in retrospect? I don't know, because my life has been absolutely chock-full of rich and rewarding and exciting and beautiful experiences. Even through suffering and struggle. I am very pleased with the way my family developed and the relationship we have had and still have, even though we are separated geographically. The concerns that are still there and the awareness of doing what each is doing. I get a great satisfaction out of thinking that I have made a little contribution to that. I don't take the credit for it, but I do think I helped. I get great satisfaction out of the girls that come back to me to report progress and from other people who have been touched in one way or another by me through the years. They come and tell me so. I'm always surprised and very pleased to hear about it. I guess maybe when you get a certain age, that is as important to you as money.

I went to speak for a Rotary Club in New Jersey about two years ago, and the wife of one of the Rotary members came up to me afterwards and said, "I wish you could go by my house. I would like to show you my family bulletin board. You told us at Bradford Junior College when you came to speak there one time and I was a student, about how your mother used a bulletin board in your family and how you used it with your husband and I would like you to see it, because you would know that I didn't put it up there just for you. I'd like you to know that across the top it has a permanent written slogan that says, 'Go as far as you see and then see how far you can go!' That I got from you." Now that was

really lovely because by now she's married and her children are in high school and she was a student when she got the above.

I went down to Community College recently (Cuyahoga Community College in Cleveland) at the Metropolitan branch. I was asked to come up to the head table. It was a workshop and I knew they had a new provost, but I hadn't met him. A gentleman came to escort me to the table. He introduced himself to me and I did not recognize that this was the new provost. And I asked him, "What do you do here?" He told me and then he said, "I want to tell you that you came to my college when I was an undergraduate many years ago." He quoted something I had said. And I know I said it, because it's me, you know what I mean? To think he had remembered this through all these years!

I suppose maybe there are many satisfactions that come out of working with human beings. You have no way of measuring your effectiveness, hardly at all in some places. In fact, the measurement you would get, would probably be untrue in most cases because kids that have left Job Corps sometimes have been so negative about it especially if I had to send them home or if I had to discipline them for something. I got a telephone call not so many weeks ago from a girl who said, "I just want you to know I've made it." She had just been given a promotion and she wanted me to know. "But I never would have made it if you hadn't sent me home. The talk you gave to me when you told me I had to go home really slapped me in the face and I came home and sat down and looked at myself for the first time. You tried it over and over again there and it didn't work until you sent me home." I can't think of any better reason for living so long because it takes years, sometimes, for people to recognize what has happened to them, and when you haven't made a lot of money out of it, you know, it's the best pay in the world.

But for my personal self, I think the thing I'm proudest of is the fact that I still have the desire to improve and to be relevant and creative and contributing. My grandmother, my father's mother, whom I told you would have been a preacher if she had been a man, and who preached every time she prayed, always ended her prayer with thanks to the Lord for "the desire to suit and to serve Thee." "The desire to suit and to serve Thee." Now I could use that term because I do have the desire to suit and to serve God, and man, and myself. Because I don't think you can do any of those things without getting more out of it yourself than you give. When I went to Atlanta I was seeking. I hoped I could give, but I really meant to try to find out who

our young people are today and what they're thinking and where they're going. I guess I've answered that as best I can, maybe if I thought about it more, I would have a better answer but is that what you wanted?

MG: Oh yes. Well, that's the end of the questions that I have prepared for you and I want to thank you for a most interesting and informative interview and I'm sure that this is going to be a great addition to the collection and to the public record. Thank you.

ZG: How nice! I expect you say that to all the girls!
(Laughter)

END OF INTERVIEW

ZELMA GEORGE

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Marcia McAdoo Greenlee was from 1976 to 1978 Letitia Woods Brown Memorial Fellow on the Black Women Oral History Project. During that period, and thereafter as a freelance interviewer, Ms. Greenlee has conducted more than twenty interviews for the project. A graduate of Willamette University, with a master's degree from Howard University, she is working for her doctorate at The George Washington University in American Civilization. Ms. Greenlee has been a teacher for the Peace Corps in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and in the public schools of the District of Columbia; a docent at The Smithsonian Institution's National Portrait Gallery, 1971-72; supervising consultant and historical projects director, The Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation, 1972-75; and Assistant Professorial Lecturer at The George Washington University, 1975-1977. Since that time she has worked as a project consultant in the fields of Afro-American history, historic preservation, and museum education.

