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INTERVIEWEE: G. Holmes Braddock

INTERVIEWER: Gary (Alexis?) Jr.

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Alexis: Okay. (We're?) at William H. Turner Technical Arts High School. Today is the twentieth of April, 2005 and my name is (Gary Alexis Jr.?) here with G. Holmes Braddock. Hi, Mr. Braddock. Could you spell your name for us, please?

Braddock: Of course, first initial G.; middle name is Holmes, H-O-L-M-E-S; Braddock is B-R-A-D-D-O-C-K.

A: Thank you. So, Mr. Braddock, can you tell me about your early life and where you were born?

B: Well, my life goes back a long time ago, you know, before you guys were born, you know. No, I was actually-- I'm a Florida cracker, but I was actually born in Georgia because my-- my granddad's granddad was born in Florida, that's how long my family's been in Florida. But my dad got polio just when I was born, so his parents took him up to Battle Creek, Michigan, which in those days was the only place that you could go for medical treatment for polio. Now you had Warm Springs Georgia where Roosevelt-- President Roosevelt went. But that was just the warm natural springs and no medical facilities there. So my dad had polio, so he was up there, so my mother went back to

Georgia where she was from and had me and then three weeks later I'm back in Florida (?) a little town of Sebastian which is fifteen miles north of Vero Beach. Maybe some of you have heard of Sebastian Inlet which is a great surfing place. When I was a kid there, there was no surfing, nobody knew about surfing those days, we just swam. But that's about 150 miles from here so that's where I'm from.

A: Could you tell me how your childhood was living in Georgia with your mom?

B: Well actually, I never lived in Georgia, I was just there three weeks and then I came -- three weeks and my mother came down back. She was a schoolteacher and I was born (towards?) the end of July and she was back in Florida-- (had to be back in Florida?). And in those days-- in those days, teachers and students had to be in the state two weeks before school started because of polio. You don't-- people don't know about polio now because it's pretty much eradicated, but polio was a horrible thing in those days and certain states had more outbreaks than others: the Carolinas had a lot of it, Virginia, across Tennessee, and those areas. So, people (that are out of state-- the state law says that?) a teacher or/and students- because I wasn't a student then, my mother was a teacher- had to be back in the state two weeks before (everyone?) started school so they could see (whether they?) had polio (when they started or not?) so they could get them, you know, put aside. So I lived in this little town of Sebastian and went to school there nine years. We had 110 kids in nine grades, so a total of 110 kids in nine grades, not a very big school; you have about a third of that right here in this classroom right now. And then I went to Vero Beach High School, I was bused to Vero Beach High School which was fifteen miles away for my tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades. And then from there, I went into World War II. Was in the Army, came back in 1946 and came down to

University of Miami, graduated there and stayed here. But growing up-- but I grew up in a small town, the town Sebastian had 400 people. And not much there, no hospitals, no dentist, no doctors, no nothing there. And if you wanted (to go to have?) a dentist or go to the hospital, you went fifteen miles away to Vero. So, what we did as kids, we fished and hunted. I never did care much for those, all I wanted to do was play ball, but I had to work all the time after school. I mean, most everybody in those days-- every kid worked somewhere. You worked and then, got up went to school the next day and in summertime, you try to find a job somewhere because there was no money. This was during the Depression when there was no money around. So, I was poor like every kid was and we didn't have television. A lot of people didn't have radios. We had a radio but we lived on what they call a 'transformer' and we-- up on a pole near the house and the radio was all static, I mean, you really couldn't hear it. So, although we had a radio, you couldn't use it much. But we did get a newspaper everyday and most people didn't get a newspaper in those days. So, most people were (?), by today's standards, were illiterate because they didn't read newspapers, they didn't have television, most of them didn't have a radio, so all they knew of what they heard from talking to people. So, I was fortunate because my mother was a schoolteacher and so she made me read. I had to read and read and read some more. And I think she was gonna make sure I didn't (embarrass?) her into it [laughs] with school. But, life was different in those days. School was different. I'll give an example, something you can't imagine today and I've used this and people really can't imagine it. As I said, my mother was a teacher, she taught (general?) first, second, and third grades because in those days at that school, all three grades were in the same room. And many a time, a father would come to school first day of school

and maybe he had no education or sixth or seventh grade education. He's tell my mama-- and in the south particularly and in those days, a woman was called by her first name, she was not called-- my mother's named Marie. They'd never call her Marie, she'd be Ms. Marie. And I've heard of many a parent come in and say, "Now Ms. Marie, if this boy or this girl of mine gives you any trouble, you let me know and that's the last time they'll give you any trouble." So my mama (never had to worry about discipline?) because she knew if any kid give her any problems, she'd tell the parent. That'd be the last time that kid give her any trouble because daddy would take the boy or the girl out to the wood shed and (air them out?) a few times and that would be the end of trouble. Nowadays, teachers don't have that privilege of having parents that will make kids be respectful, make kids be, you know, disciplined and so forth. And I remember a lot of times they'd say, "Now, you're giving homework, that homework will be done. Now, I won't be able to check and tell if it's done right because I don't know enough. You'll have to tell me if it's done right, but I'll make sure it's done. So if you send homework home and you don't get it back, you let me know. That'll be the last time that you don't get that homework back, because that kid will do that homework." Now, I've talked to teacher after teacher who don't have parents like that anymore that'll make sure the kids do the homework they're sent home and if they don't, they had to pay a price for it. But that was a different time then. There were different-- parents were different, the public was different. Everybody was a parent in town and if I did anything wrong, shoot, my mama knew about it in five minutes because everybody-- (they'd drag me off and?) spank me or they'd send me-- they'd call my mama, say, "Hey, we saw Holmes out there and he's doing something he shouldn't do." Mama would take care of it. But you look around

town today, you don't see that- it's different times. But that's what life was back-- this is in the '30s, see? Back, well before World War II. In fact, I got out of high school in 1942, which was only six months after Pearl Harbor. And then that's when I went into World War II. But (everything was?) different then: times were different, people were different. There was no money around, really no money. My mother was teaching school then for $79 a month eight months out of the year and so her total yearly income was seventy-nine times eight and we had live off that because my dad was a cripple so he couldn't work. And later she got $90 a month nine months out of the year (?). That was (money?) from heaven. And finally when I got into the service, she was making $110 a month nine months out of the year when I went to war- but that's only $990 a year. And even though, things were less then, that still not much money to live on and raise a family. But, you know, I gardened- I had a garden all the time, I sold-- I gardened to sell. And I raised chickens, sold the eggs, sold chickens, too, but sold the eggs basically. Fished and hunted for meat, so-- and we had meat once a week in those days. And I remember on Thursdays, the meat market in Sebastian would get liver. In those days, everybody thought liver was good for you. That's before they found out liver is almost pure cholesterol and it's horrible for your health. But in those days, they thought it had a lot of iron. And I hated liver then, I hate now and I used wish I could go to bed on Wednesday night and just wake up Friday and skip Thursday altogether (just so I don't have to?) eat that liver. But, again, that was meat once a week. But we'd kill a chicken, eat a chicken and catch fish. Shoot squirrels, shoot rabbits, eat rabbits and squirrels, ducks, and so forth. So, it was a different life then.

A: So, in-- back in the days, I know you didn't have any television back in those days and you used to listen to the radio. Can you tell me any programs of entertainment you used to listen to?

B: Yeah, (although I'd say?) it was tough for us to hear. My favorite show in those days was a Saturday night show called the *Hit Parade*. It was a forty-five minute show on Saturday night and the guy (they had?) was Kay Kyser who was a big band leader and his program was called *Kay Kyser and his Kollege of Musical Knowledge*- that's what he called his show- and he played the ten hits of the week. There'd be a countdown, he'd start at number ten and he'd play-- it was big band then, and he'd play those ten songs. And he had-- Ish Kabibble was on there as one of his singers, and Harry Babbitt was another singer, Frances Langford at one time. That was probably my favorite show other than-- Lowell Thomas was a newscaster so we'd listen to Lowell Thomas every night. But the closer-- (there was not much radio then?) because that was 150 miles away. Miami had three stations, West Palm didn't have-- (a lot of them didn't have stations?), West Palm Beach had no stations. Miami had WIOD, WQAM, and WKAT. And those were the only stations down here. WIOD stood for 'Wonderful Isle of Dreams'. When they used to sign off of WIOD, "You're listening to WIOD, Wonderful Isle of Dreams." And WQAM was ('Winter Quarters at Miami'?), and that's what the WQAM stood for. WKAT was-- 'KAT' stood for Mr. Katzentine who owned WKAT, so he used his first three initials. But there was no station (?) in West Palm or Lauderdale. North of us Orlando had a station which was ninety miles away, Jacksonville, (210 mile away?) station, and Tampa, 150 mile (?) station. So you didn't have a lot of radio then. And at night time, you couldn't hear much because unless you had what was called- you

probably know this- a clear chan-- what was called a 'clear channel station' which was 50,000 watts. You couldn't get much. Now the daytime, they'd be 50,000 watts; at night, they would cut to five except the clear channel station which stayed 50,000. So at night time, the-- we got two clear channel stations: (WLW?) [WWL] out of New Orleans and WWL [WLW] out of Cincinnati. We couldn't pick up the Miami stations at night so I had to go to one of those stations to get the *Hit Parade* on Saturday night. So in other words, you didn't have a lot of radio then. (Now?) you had-- the Lone Ranger was a great radio program (in them days?). They had to make all the sounds of the horses clapping away, you know, and other things. It was all sound effects. Bob Hope had a show. Jack Benny was a great Sunday night show. And *Amos 'n' Andy* was another show, *Lum and Abner*, *Burns and Allen*, *Fibber McGee and Molly*- those were all comic shows but all done on just on radio. Charlie McCarthy-- Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy. Edgar Bergen was a guy who was a ventriloquist and he had a mannequin called Charlie McCarthy and of course, he'd throw his voice into Charlie's and of course, you couldn't see it, you could hear him, and of course, Charlie's talking. And then he finally got another mannequin called Mortimer Snerd and I remember one of the jokes. One time-- this sounds corny now, this was (-- got to remember this was?) sixty years ago and when things were clean- you couldn't say the things on radio and T.V. in those days that they do now. Mortimer (Snerd went out?) to get bicycle tires and the guy told him that he could get one for $16-- no, one for $8, or he could have two for $17. And he said, "So, I'll take that two for $17," he said, not realizing he paid a dollar more than what he would if he had bought two. But that was kind of corny but that was just dumb Mortimer Snerd who was the dummy-- the dumb dummy. He had Charlie McCarthy kind of the smart

dummy and Mortimer Snerd was the dumb dummy. And those were the kinds of programs you had then. And then a lot of mystery programs, I never was a mystery fan so I didn't listen to them much. But that's what you had on radio in those days, no talk shows like they have today and no garbage and no vulgarity like they have today. None of that-- none of that was allowed.

A: Could you tell me what your experience was like during World War-- the World War?

B: Well, I was in the Army. I had-- Pearl Harbor, you know, is December 7, 1941 and I was a senior in high school then. And that happened on a Sunday-- Pearl Harbor was on Sunday, you probably know. We heard about it by I guess late Sunday afternoon, we hadn't had the radio on. And heard about it and of course we were all shocked. We didn't know what was going on, again, because, you know, not much knowledge was known then. And so, I got out of high school June of '42. So December 7th of '42, a few of my buddies and I drove down to Miami to join the Marines. Well as it turned out, they passed the physical and I have a bum arm here, you can see it's kind of crooked- I had broken it playing sports a couple of times. And they wouldn't let me in so I got turned down. So I -- and I got turned down to the Army the first time later. But then there was a war going on and they needed more men and I was finally drafted into the Army. And I was put into medics and I actually was-- (through?) my training, I was a surgic-- (I ended up?) what they call a 'surgical male nurse' and I was supposed to be in a field hospital. You ever see that program *M*A*S*H* on T.V.? I was trained to be in a MASH unit. Somewhere between Texas and New Jersey- and I'm just a PFC, I don't know what's going on- the orders got changed and we're gonna become a Hospital Ship Complement. So we went to New Jersey and had to get retrained to function in the hospital ship as opposed to

functioning in tents and so forth. So I wound up on an Army hospital ship going between New York and France and England picking up the patients. So we picked up a lot of the kids who were on D-Day and-- of course, D-Day, if you've heard a bunch about that, that was a-- almost a slaughter, and then the Battle of the Bulge which came some six months later. Got-- picked up a lot of people out of the Battle of the Bulge and D-Day, but I wasn't in any of the fighting. In a hospital ship, in case you don't know (it?), anything connected with medicine in the service by the Geneva Convention are supposed to be protected. You're not supposed to shoot at a bomb or anything, hospitals, or medical personnel at all. And all of our tents, when we were training for the MASH unit, had a great big cross on the top of the tent so if a plane flew, they're not supposed to bomb it. And all the helmets, the medics in the field had a big cross on them. Now, as I'm gonna get aside here for a second. In 1940, as your teacher probably will tell you, only twenty-five percent of people in 1940 were high school graduates. So this was two, three years later so there were very few high school graduates, I happened to be one of them. So because I was a high school graduate, when I was taking my training, had I finished my sixteen weeks training, I would have been what they call a 'field medic', right out there on the front line, going out on the battle field, you know, trying to treat the guys and dragging the guys back . Those guys were basically the guys who hadn't finished high school. Those of us who had finished high school or had some college, were pulled out of basic training- we went to technician school and these went to medical technician, surgical technician, lab technician, X-ray technician. I was sent to surgical technician school, which I would work in a surgery ward and I'd work in the operating room. There were 400 and something of us out of about four battalions that went to (there?). The after

that-- after three months of that, they took ten of each of us- forty of us- to go to what they call ‘surgical medical male nurse training’. And again, probably I was picked because I was a high school graduate and maybe my grades were a little better than others, I don’t know. I went on (further than that?). All this time, I’m not liking it. I don’t like the medics, I don’t like that kind of stuff. But the Army didn’t ask me, they didn’t get my permission, see? And so then I went on and got that kind of training. So then, when I-- so if I would’ve gone into MASH unit, I would have been-- I still would have been a (noncom?), I wasn’t an officer or anything, it might have been a little higher in the chain. But we were on a hospital ship instead so then, we were on a hospital ship, I had a ward-- I supervised two wards, which in a ward in a hospital ship is big. And our ship had-- it was 1715-bed hospital ship- that’s a big hospital ship. That’s a big-- 1700 bed hospital is a huge hospital. I know that North Shore has over-- my youngest son was born here in North Shore Hospital and I think at that time, it had something like 200 beds or something. But we had 1715 beds on our hospital ship- huge. And so because-- again, because I more education than my peers had, I got better duty. And so when the war was over, I came back to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. And since I’d come into war a little later (?)-- we got out of service on a point basis- those who joined, let’s say in 1942, got out quicker than those who went in ’43- you built up points. So I didn’t have as many points. I didn’t get out-- when the war was over in August of 45, I didn’t get out until May of ’46. So I went back to a hospital in Camp Kilmer, New Jersey and then, of all places, venereal disease ward. (Practically all the patients?) came back with some kind of venereal disease and I had to run a ward for that. And I’ll tell you a quick funny-- what I think is a funny story: during that time, I got married. The war was over when I got

married and here I'm working this venereal disease ward and I'm scared to death I'm gonna get something, you know? And so, I've been in there about a month and I've been married about a month (and on?) my hands started breaking out, something awful. And after about a week of that, I'm scared and I go to a doctor thinking I got some kind of disease, you know, and I got one of these venereal diseases that these guys brought back because they had fifty guys in there all with some kind of venereal disease. And doctor took one look at me, he says, "Keep your hands out of the alcohol jar." Well what he knew was-- because every time I'd do som-- touch one of these guys, I'd stick my hand down-- we had a jar of alcohol, I'd stick my hand down in the alcohol jar, see? What that'd done, that alcohol, it dried my hands out and it cracked the skin and I was bleeding out both my hands. And I didn't realize that's what was happening, but I had to give these guys shots. They got eight, eleven, two, and five around the clock they got shots so we worked twelve hour shifts- seven to seven was our shifts. And so I'd be giving shots to these guys four times a day and there were fifty of them and I'm touching every one of them, see? And I said, "Oh God, I got some kind of disease," see? Well, he said, "Keep your hands out of the alcohol jar." So, of course, when I did that, then I got rid of my cracked hands. But anyway, I stayed there until-- I ran that ward until-- actually May 9, 1946 I was discharged.

A: Do you know if you lost any really good friends in the World War?

B: Oh, yeah. I had a kid I grew up with and graduated high school with. Well, actually, he didn't graduate, he was on of those-- he was not one of the ones who came down with me, but he was a senior and the war hit when we were seniors and he went ahead and joined the Marines right then. And he was killed in the Pacific- kid named James (?).

Then I had a-- he was a year older- his brother and I were in the same class, but he was a class ahead of us. He was killed in the Navy. But I mean, in those days, everybody knew somebody because there was something like, I think, two hundred and-- total 270,000 soldiers been killed in World War II. I mean, that's a ton of people, so you get that many killed, so-- I didn't have anybody in my family. I had several cousins that were in service as I was. One of them had his ship shot out from under him, in fact, his birthday's today, he's eighty-three today and this is also today is Hitler's birthday- April 20. But my (brother-in-law?) was a merchant seamen and he got killed. But, he lost two ships at sea, that was torpedoed. He survived although he was a cripple, he was able to get around aboard a merchant ship. But he came back into port in '45, he was in the Atlantic and they were headed to the Pacific because the war in Europe was over in May and the Pacific war was not over until August. He was on his way to the South Pacific. They'd gone through Panama Canal to go up to California to load up to take supplies to the South Pacific and he was in port in Stockton, California and got knocked over-board and drowned, but he was crippled and he couldn't swim, he was a big man, he 6'3, 230 pounds and he couldn't swim and so he drowned before anybody got to him, before anybody knew he was over-board, no one knew he was over-board. Somehow, he got knocked over-board when they were loading the ship. So he was killed in service and he's buried out in California. He was dead three months before I knew about it because I was over-seas and before I knew about it he was dead and buried him out there.

A: So, did you meet your wife during the war?

B: Yeah, she was a-- she was in the service- she was in the (?), she was a chaplain's assistant. And so she came down to all the wards in the hospital where I was at as a

chaplain's assistant, you know, ministering to the religious needs of (kids?)-- of a service personnel and she also sang and so forth, so that's where I met her. She'd only had two years of college and she-- but she had no money, either- nobody had any money then- so the G.I. Bill-- by that time, the G.I. Bill of Rights had been passed, although the war was still on. So, she joined the service and was able to get enough time in so she would finish her college degree on her G.I. Bill of Rights.

A: Okay. Did you have any vision of your future when you were in high school?

B: You mean, that's what I wanted to do, you mean?

A: Yeah.

B: Uh, yeah about doing it but I had visions. I wanted to be a sport's announcer or a sport's writer. And so when I finally got out of World War II, I went to the University of Miami, I majored in journalism and minored in radio announcing and speech because they didn't have a mass communications degree in those days, you'd major in one or the other. And I started sport's writing for several years but I got out of it and didn't-- and I had a couple of opportunities to go into radio- one up in Alabama and one in Massachusetts, but I didn't want to leave Miami, so I didn't pursue that. (It?) was probably a good thing I didn't do it because you had to do so much traveling and I'm not sure I would have liked to done the kind-- if--the kind of travel you have to do when you want to be successful. Because I would have liked to, say, been a major-league baseball announcer or something like that. If you get those jobs, you travel all the time, you travel like the team does, you're on the go. I'm not sure I would have liked that so I might have gotten it and ended up quitting anyway.

A: So, what led you to run for the-- to the run for the district in the school board?

B: Well, when I got out of college- out of University of Miami- I went to work there? which was in education. I traveled for one year recruiting students, traveled the state of Florida and across the country recruiting students. And then I spent three years managing the student union. I was also assistant director of student activities. And from there, I went out and managed Miami Shores Country Club for a year. But all during the time-- from the time I was a little boy until this day, I love politics. I just love politics- I love the competition of it. As I've said many times- my wife says I shouldn't say it, it sounds wrong- but I always really loved to beat somebody. To this day, I love beat somebody; I don't care what, if you're playing cards or playing tennis, you're playing-- whatever you're playing, if you're playing ping-pong, I'd really love to beat somebody. Or if I'm working for you, I'd really love to help you beat somebody. So I got involved in politics as a kid. Find somebody (where I'd?) pass out (handbills?), I'd be one of the (?) because (?) trying to help this guy beat somebody. So then because of my education background- my mother being a schoolteacher, she was still teaching then and my wife at the time was a schoolteacher. I had an aunt that taught forty-four years here- she taught thirty-six years at the same school here in Citrus Grove. For thirty-six years she taught there. And I had a master's degree by that time in education, so a couple friends suggested I run for the school board. And I kicked it around- this was 1962- so I decided to run and there was an incumbent there, she had-- I thought she was beatable. And so I beat her and so then I ran nine more times and won, so-- but it was education is what I liked, I always liked education. I had, you know, a connection to education (?) education. Didn't want to go to Tallahassee, so consequently, school board enabled me to be in politics, but to be in an area which I liked. I could still stay in town here. I could be with my family. I coach

baseball. From 1959 all the way through '79, I coached a baseball team every year of various ages. And so, I could still do that, but if I had gone to Tallahassee (or something?), I couldn't have done that. So, I was able to do all the things I wanted to do in my personal life and still be involved in politics and have -- and education was my avocation, so I was able to do all of it. And so, that's (what?) I've been.

A: Can you tell me about the civil rights in your time?

B: Well, that's kind of broad. I don't know how far back you want me go back and how far forward to go, but the-- as I'm sure you know, we were a segregated society, (legally?) segregated society. In fact, all the South was legally segregated and (certainly?) because our schools were segregated. But then, the 1954 Civil Rights Act- Brown vs. Board of Education, you've probably heard about that- came about in 1954. So things began to change, albeit very, very slowly. And state laws began to change somewhat, although most times they were changed, in such a way to try to do as little integration as possible and maintain as much segregation as possible. They tried to (deal with?) the laws but-- so over a period from, say, '54 to early '60s, until really to '64, there was some progress in all this but not much. So then, the law started changing more dramatically and more quickly to bring about integration of the school districts and society. So consequently, the first schools that were integrated here were Orchard Villa and Air Base Elementary and they weren't integrated very much. But the Air Base-- because it was down by the air base and the air base itself was integrated. And so, the school board- and I wasn't on it at that time, it was a couple of years before I got on the board- decided that the air base was a good school to have the first integration because the service men were already integrated. And the kids were-- and the parents were integrated anyway so that

would be probably easier place to integrate. As it turned out, it was. Orchard Villa was picked on the north side of town because it was kind-of in between a black community and a white community- they figured that would be one that could be easily integrated. And then from then on, the integration came more dramatically. In 1969 is when we had-- the HEW came with this first order to integrate the school system; we had to draft a plan. And then in 1970-- well, actually in December of ’69, Judge (Atkins?), who was a Federal Judge, ordered the integration of the school system and ordered the whole thing to (?) the balance of the system. And for that to take place, actually, right after Christmas. They were going to do it first by integrating the faculty- in other words, bring-- (although the faculty was already?) somewhat integrated, but not very much. Every school starting after Christmas would have to have each faculty be based on the percentage in the school district. So at that time, the white percentage across the district (varied—it was?) seventy-five percent. And he broke it down to elementary, junior high, and senior high. (But you could say out of?) all the faculties then had to be white and twenty-five percent of all them had to be black no matter where the schools existed in the county. But then we went back to the-- [clears throat] --to the judge asking if we can delay that to the end of the semester- which would be end of January- because we felt it would be unfair to teachers and students if you change teachers on these students with a month to go in the semester. It just didn’t make sense and he agreed, so no problems. So he-- and we told him we weren’t trying to dodge the bullet so to speak, we just felt it would be better and it also gave us a bit more time to do it. So he agreed, so we integrated then the staff beginning the second semester. But to make it as easy as possible, it also gave us time to put out a call that said that any teacher- black or white- who volunteered to go to pick the school.

So if you were a black teacher, you wanted to go to Coral Gables, you could pick Coral Gables. Or if you're a white teacher and (you were at Palmetto?) and you wanted to go to Northwestern, you could pick Northwestern. We gave them, like, two or three weeks, something like that, for the volunteer program (to fit?). Once-- but once that date passed, then we would just assign them. So we had several hundred who volunteered to do it and (at the end of that time?) then the personnel assign-- of course, that was not an easy job, because you had ten or 12,000 teachers to move, you know, and that was not easy. But we moved them. They just were assigned so they left one school on Friday and reported to another school on Monday; new school, new location, and everything. So that's how the staffs got-- then the following year is when we really got the integration of the student bodies more involved and the-- even then, the court order never said every school had to be integrated. In fact, after the court order took place and after the (Fifth Circuit?), as we were then (ruled on it?), we still had twenty-eight schools that either were all-white or all-black because they were just so far away from other schools. The black schools were so far away from white communities or the white schools were so far away from the black communities, integrating would have been difficult and the judge didn't order that so consequently, when we (declared unitary?), we still had some either all-white or all-black schools. But all of this was over a long period of time from the first (level?) of integration started in the early '60s until-- until really into the-- well into the late '70s where we were really kind-of completed with it because there was always some changes going on during that time. (?), we (grouped schools?), we crossed-bused, we did all these kinds of things to, you know, to get the student body ratios changed, but that was over a long period of time.

Teacher: Gary?

A: Yes?

T: Could you ask if Mr. Braddock remembers the name of the person who was over personnel at that time who helped the teachers make the decision in that first shift?

B: Well, okay. (?) Jimmy. Jimmy Rice was the person but I can't think who took Jimmy Rice's place.

T: Did a guy named Garner come out?

B: Well, Ted. Yes, he was much later.

T: Okay.

B: Yeah.

T: So it was in between Rice and Garner?

B: Well, yes. I don't-- are you holding the camera now and not--?

T: I think we're still filming.

B: Oh, you're still on camera? Okay. Well, Jimmy Rice was the person in personnel at that time and then we had a number of different people. As you said, Teddy Garner was one of them but he came much later. I can't remember the ones along the way. A guy named Bob Thomas-- many different people that were involved during that time were (?). And of course, we had to work very closely with the union. And the union, I must say, the union supported us in this, see? They felt it had to be done, it was the right thing to do in their mind, and they incorporated the school board and were able to get the transition probably as smooth as it could possibly be because we-- we had some problems, but they were minor in nature compared to what it could have been.

A: Okay. Could you tell me how you're-- how it was being over a unified district and then being head of the school in a single district.

B: Well, actually, (I must add?)-- I must say this, our integration went really smooth, much smoother than people expected. So at the board level-- obviously you got a lot of flack. I mean, I had my life threatened and state attorney had to take care of me a couple of times. My mailbox was blown up and those-- (warnings?) those kinds of things. And people came out to my house threatening things. But at the board level, (things went?) pretty smoothly, but we had some (fiery?) meetings with parents down there screaming and so forth. But that never bothered me and I think part of that maybe because of the connection I'd had with sports all my life, I didn't never worry about someone hollering at me, you know, because somebody's gonna holler at you all the time, you know? So hollering never bothered me, and I always feel I had more patience than anybody else, I could out-wait anybody and as it turned out, I was able to out-wait anybody. The-- so the-- but the unified district went quite smoothly. We-- we were able to move the staffs around and move the kids around without, you know, too much problem. Then much later is when the-- (it wasn't?) until 1996, it would be single-member district issue. So we were well past the days of integration when the single-member districts came along, but the issue of single-member districts had been writhing its head for some period of time. But (?) we got sued and then the board compromised on the lawsuit and accepted single-member districts. Personally, I think it's the worst thing that ever happened to us but there are those who disagree with me, but I think it's the worst thing that ever happened to the school district because-- in fact, I'll give an example: when we-- when single-member districts first-- the suitors first filed, Athalie Range- you've heard of Ms. Athalie

Range, I'm sure- and Carrie Meek, congress woman Carrie Meek were both on the side of the lawsuit. But after we met with them, they both changed because they realized then that prior to single-member districts, every community could reach every board member. There were seven of us and we had to campaign over a whole county, everybody voted for us, you know. No matter what your nationality was or your geographical area, everybody voted for us so every citizen had access to every board member. Once you get single-member districts, you only have access to one board member. Now that doesn't mean you can't call the others but you don't get a response from others because you can't-- if you don't live in this person's district, you can't do anything to hurt—you can't vote them in office and you can't vote them out of office, so they just ignore you, whereas prior to that, all seven board members had to be tuned in to the needs of the black community, for example, because you needed their votes. (Even if it was the right thing to do?) (?) you couldn't get elected if you didn't have the votes of everybody. All of a sudden, Carrie and Athalie realized that once you (hand that away?), the black community won't have entrée to the black board member because the white board members wouldn't have to pay any attention to them, see? So they pull out a lawsuit, but the lawsuit was settled anyways so now the board is racially and ethnically balanced by court order, but the people in the north end of the county don't have to worry at all about people south in the county. They worry about their own little slice of the pie and they're not worried about south end. Or conversely, the south end don't worry about north end. Neither one of them worry about any Overtown, see, because Overtown doesn't affect them. If you live in Miami Beach, you're not worried about Hialeah because Hialeah's on its own, see? So it's made the whole make-up of the board and the whole politics of the

board-- in fact, the board's more political, it never was political before. Very political board now because of people fighting for their slice of the pie because I remember worrying about if we build a school in the north-end of the county over the south-end because the north-end of the county voted for me, too, so I needed to serve them, and so if it looked like the north end needed it more than the south then I voted for a school in the north-end. Well, it's not that way now, see? You got to start trading and so forth, so it's a different ball game.

A: What was it like to work with Lieutenant Colonel Eldridge Williams?

B: Well, Eldridge was very good, to start out I'll say very good. And now he's now very good friends. In fact, we had breakfast just a couple of weeks ago together. Eldridge had been a, as you said, a lieutenant colonel in the service came into the school system. So when we set up the desegregation office- when I say 'we': the superintendent set it up, a guy named Don (Bowes?) who had been principle at Miami Jackson and had been a region superintendent. And Eldridge set up (around the?) deseg center because-- desegregation center. And all the plans that we had then went through them-- or maybe I should re-phrase it: they drafted all the plans- their office, they were in charge- drafted all the deseg plans, and then we presented them to the (?) board which we then would either pass on (?) pass on to the court for court's approval. (Eldridge was fine, he was a class act?) and knew how to work with people because in a deseg (?), you gotta have people who work with both sides. If you have somebody-- you certainly couldn't put a white racist and a black separatist in that office and expect anything constructive to come out; you would've had nothing but fights all the time. You had to get people who knew how to work and Eldridge was (superintendent's pick?) because he had been lieutenant

colonel in the military and had to work with all kinds of people. And so he knew (?) one who could represent the black community so to speak. And Don (Bowes?) had the personality of one who could represent the, say, the white interests in the deseg office. (Now there were other?) people in there but we knew politically speaking that if we would-- either side, so to speak, got left out of the process, that nothing that came out of there would ever be acceptable. And (I'll also?) say this, back in those days, we didn't have the sunshine law and we could meet privately. I don't know-- I'd hate to have to go through-- or let me reverse that: I would have hate to have gone through the desegregation process in a sunshine because man, I mean, the stuff we had to go through and be-- because we met with the black leaders all the time (white leaders) but we met privately and they would tell us where they thought we could do things and things they thought we could do because they all-- one of them was Reverend Gibson, you might have heard of Reverend Gibson, Reverend Graham, Dr. Ed (Shirley?), Dr. John Brown, there were a number, Bob Simms, oh, probably about a half a dozen (?) all knew that the desegregation had to come but also knew that there were certain ways that you had to do-- to operate to get it to go as smoothly as possible. And I don't think it could have been -- it could have come off as well as it did had we had to have the meetings all in public because there had been nothing but fights and both sides in private-- [school loudspeaker comes on] --had to take some-- (they had to?) take some sides and make some statements and some decisions, (might not have been?) popular with their own people, be they black or white. [loudspeaker continues] [pause] So anyway, so we went through those kinds of discussions in private. In fact, when we picked the first white school to have a black principle over it, that was done in private because we had-- we-- the board met with the

staff and with the black leadership, you know, and found out who they thought would be the best person that could go into a-- a best qualified, and (?) qualified black person to go into a-- by qualified, you qualify to get along with people to go into a white school and the same thing going the reverse. In fact, the first white principle in a black school, (?), and he was sent away to school about a year for sensitivity training and so forth to make sure that when he went into the first black school which had-- no one had ever been in a situation like that, that he'd be able to handle it. (A lot of things went on then that couldn't be?) done in the sunshine, I just don't think we could have pulled it off. But we (sat there and worked?) together and we were able to do it.

A: Do you recall any specific stories from schools as they were integrated?

B: Yeah, I mean, (we had?) some schools had some real problems. Central High School over here had a (?) had a real riot there, I mean, about as bad as you can get. I mean, chairs thrown, tables turned over, I mean, just a real riot over there and at that time, we could still meet in private with the-- all the various parties. South Dade Senior High had real problems down there. And-- but by the time South Dade came along though, we had the sunshine law and I know if we get-- under state statute, the superintendent can close schools for one day without board approval, but he can't go beyond one day. After one day, he has to open the schools unless the board meets and closes them. And South Dade-- he had to close South Dade because we had a real riot down in South Dade. And he closed the school and I was chairman of the board at that time so he and I met on the phone-- talked on the phone, I mean, practically seemed like every hour the whole weekend trying to decide whether we could open South Dade Senior High back up on Monday morning. We met with the sheriff to see how many people we could have and

whether or not he thought he could make the school safe for all the kids. So finally, (?) (we figured?) we got to bring the board in on this because I couldn't talk to board members because that's against the sunshine law. And so, I called a meeting for Sunday night (before the?) board and asked the sheriff to come down and make his presentation to the board. And so he came down, they gave (them all the?) background, the superintendent gives a background of everything to the board and so forth and then I asked the sheriff a question I knew he couldn't answer, but I wanted his answer to be out in public. I asked him, I said, "Can you tell the board how many officers you will have in South Dade if we-- if we vote to open the school tomorrow morning, how many officers will you have there to make sure nothing happens?" He said, "Mr. Chairman, I can't tell you that," he said, "because every thief and thug in South Dade knows how many police are down there. If I tell them I'm gonna have this many here, they know how many people are not elsewhere," he said so the answer is I'm going to be well protected. Well, I knew he was going to say that because he had told us, "I can't tell you in public," he said, "because I only have so many resources, so many people." But he said, "But I can assure you you'll have enough to make sure it's safe." And he told the board that, [clears throat] which means that then that the board had to open schools the next morning on faith. They had-- (in other words they had?) no numbers to go on because he couldn't give us numbers. He legally could, but he wasn't going to do it in public, see? He wasn't gonna tell us in public and he couldn't meet with us in private to tell us, see? He could tell me because-- as the chair of the board but I wasn't allowed to tell other board members and the superintendent wasn't allowed to tell them. So we opened the school the next day (?) on a wind and a prayer but nothing happened, everything went smoothly. But those were

the kinds of things we went through. Now another time, we had-- we had also had a (?)- not all the schools. The schools that gave us problems, we had undercover people in there-- we didn't have them, the sheriff's department did. They put undercover officers in there posing as students. We'd have an undercover officer who might be twenty-three, twenty-four, looked like he was seventeen or eighteen, see? They had these and all these schools to report to them. Well, we had gotten word that there was going to be a big mess on Palmetto's campus because Palmetto was-- had-- by that time, they'd involved in part of a race riot. And (that?) school-- kids from about four different schools were planning on gathering at the Palmetto site on this particular day for a big rally and so forth. So again, the superintendent and I met with the chief-- with the sheriff, Chief Purdy- who was the sheriff in Dade County at the time- and got reports from all these undercover people, what they'd picked up. But either the information was (in error?) or the word got out that they were going to be there that the riot-- the rally never (came off?) But the one thing that Chief Purdy told us though, he said, "Now don't expect us to arrest everybody." He said, "Because I don't have the man-power to arrest a couple of thousand people." Because first of all, you arrest them, where are you going to put them? He said "I don't have any place to put them." He said so-- we said, "What are you going to do?" He said, "Well we have ways of controlling it," but said, "suffice to say that if a couple thousand kids come down here, we'll do the best we can to make sure nothing gets out of hand, but I can't tell you exactly what it's going to be." So we had those kinds of things. And at graduations, we had some-- we had some events at graduations. I got a call from the superintendent one day, he said, "Holmes,--" because I was going to graduation to pass out diplomas. He said, "Holmes, we've got a message--" well, let me go back a little

further. I was one of the ones that was promoting desegregation although the whole board supported-- all seven boards supported it-- all seven board members. But I-- being the chair, I was the important person so I was the one who was the most visible. He said, "We've got word that one of the kids is going to have a pie inside of his thing, when he comes by you, he'll hit you in the face with a pie." He said, "So, now-- one--" He said, "If you don't want to come, that fine." He said, "We'll just say that something happened to you, you couldn't be there." He said, "But we'll also clear out the first maybe ten or fifteen rows of seats. It'd be a no-man's land there. That person can't get through there, we'll try to shake everybody down." Well, I went on anyway, although I must admit I was (kind of?) careful. I didn't wear my best suit that day. [laughs] Didn't wear my best suit of clothes. I didn't want to get a pie all over my suit. But nothing happened and whether or not, again, the person got cold feet or what. But those were some of the kinds of things that went on. Like I said, when I had my-- my mailbox was blown up as a warning I guess or something. And one afternoon I called my wife, I was leaving my office in Coral Gables and I called her to tell her- always did- to say I was on my way home. And it would normally be about twenty or thirty minutes. And just as I was walking out, the phone rang and I got a phone call, took me probably twenty, thirty minutes on that phone call. Anyway, I don't call her again so I go home and as I pull in the garage, she comes out of the house into the garage and man, I mean, she looked scared to death and she wondered if I was alright. I said, "Yeah." Well, she said just after I had called that she'd gotten a call from somebody saying I was (not going to arrive home alive?). And when all of a sudden now I'm thirty minutes late, she say she thought for sure somebody got me. She didn't know anything about the phone call and I didn't

think to call her a second time to say I'm on my way. But, I mean, those were the things that went on then and it's hard to imagine today, see, that those things happened. That's thirty years ago, thirty-five years ago (but most of that was?) and it's hard to think now that those things went on because all this happened before ya'll were ever born, maybe before some of your parents were born, at least they were little kids when it was happening. So, thank goodness times have changed. They're not right yet, but they're better.

A: Well, Killian- the school- opened up as an integrated school. Did you plan that integration?

B: Well, you say that I, not I alone, we did that. That was an effortless-- staff on the board. I mean, the board obviously had to approve it, the staff got together. That was in '65. We thought that Killian was a school that we could open as a new school since Richmond Heights was not too far away, but in-- (we had some calls?), had some problems. I had some-- a couple at my church who didn't like in particular (when it was done?) first year (then about the second year?) of school, I'm not sure what year it was, they had a play in the lead of a play, I'm not sure which play it was. The two leads- a boy and a girl- one was black and one was white and the play had-- they were all upset about that. But those things passed. I mean, that caused some problems but in the big scheme of things as you think back, that wasn't a problem, that was just a matter of getting to know people. And then we had kids that were fighting and we had (to just tell people?) "Listen, most times when kids fight, it's kids fighting, it's not white fighting black or black fighting white because you can be in the white schools and find kids fighting, you can go to black schools and find kids fighting, so kids fight, you know?" So it's not always a

racial situation at all, it's just that kids are being kids. And once we got away from a lot of that, it wasn't bad. And-- the kids never gave us problems really, it was parents. The kids might have done some of the stuff, most of the time kids were (egged on?). And I had gone to a meeting in south-- way down in Homestead (?) Florida City and it was a very fiery meeting with the communities over desegregation and on the way back up at Naranja, I stopped by a friend of mines house and he actually was a friend of my cousin and I knocked on his front door and he lived in (one of those little framed?) houses, old-time Florida houses where he had a screened in front porch and you walk up the steps and you open the door, there's no landing or anything. I knocked on the screen door about 10:30 at night. As he opens the door, he sticks a gun in my stomach, has a revolver on my stomach. Well, he was scared. He said he was scared maybe I-- I'm sure he was scared I was maybe some black guy there at the door, see? And-- no, he was just scared because this was a terrible time. And I said, "Hey, Frank, take that gun away and don't shoot me," you know? Well, he was just scared so he had that gun and he stuck it-- he opened the door, he got that gun right there on me- first time I ever had a gun pointed at me, I don't like that. [laughs]

END OF INTERVIEW