

Commons for Justice Project

Goombay Festival

Narrators: George Simpson, Gregory Simpson, Fredericka Simmons Brown, Clarice Cooper

Interviewers: Imani Warren and Aarti Mehta-Kroll

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[0:00:05] Imani Warren: Good morning, everyone, and thank you so much for joining us. This interview is being conducted for the FIU CFJ project. The interviewer is Imani Warren. The interview is taking place at LBW Home Quest Foundation and is in Miami, Florida, 6/11/22. So that's June 11, 2022. Thank you all so much for joining us today. So, we're going to get right to it. You all can please introduce yourself. Please tell me your name and where you're from.

[0:00:44] George Simpson: Oh, well, my name is George Simpson MD, I'm a general surgeon. I practice in Miami Dade County for the last—since 1958, and I've tried to be a good citizen and do whatever I can to advance the culture, the well-being, the general health of the community in which I live.

[0:01:11] Imani Warren: Thank you, sir.

[0:01:13] Gregory Simpson: My name is Gregory Simpson. I've been a real estate developer and real estate exchanger and I've spent about thirty years of my life creating affordable housing for individual and also for elderly people.

[0:01:35] Imani Warren: Thank you.

[0:01:37] Fredericka Simmons Brown: I'm Fredericka Simmons Brown. I was born and bred and Coconut Grove, Florida. I am a retired schoolteacher, having taught school for forty-eight years from Homestead to what we now call Liberty City, and I haven't lived all my life in Coconut Grove, [0:02:00] went on various vacations to other cities, but I came back to my old town.

[0:02:06] Imani Warren: Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

[0:02:08] Clarice Cooper: Good morning. My name is Clarice Cooper. I'm a lifelong resident of Coconut Grove. I love Coconut Grove to the bottom of my heart. I am a retiree from the advertising division in a major newspaper here locally and have been enjoying retirement. The pandemic has set my goals back a little, but I'm very hopeful that everything will be returned to normal, and I can proceed with everything else that I wanted to accomplish, but I am still active civically. Thank you.

[0:02:40] Imani Warren: Thank you all so much for that. The first question and you all can just go around and respond the way you did prior. What are some of the major disasters or crisis events that your community has experienced?

[0:02:58] Gregory Simpson: Economic blight—I was just speaking where the commercial portion of Grand Avenue was in Black hands, and that was like a three or four block space. It's now one block space for it's from the sixties—the end of the sixties on—getting financing and getting monies to keep up with the other developments in the City of Miami and Dade County was almost always lacking. And so, that was a struggle for individuals who wanted to actually be in Coconut Grove and create businesses because [0:04:00] of the same opportunities as across the street. And I would use the example of the difference between what the Grove folks related to—used to call it. Now we're looking to maybe calling it Little Bahamas, but Little Bahamas compared to the village of Merrick that I can see from this interview, where there are skyscrapers and million and two—two and three million condos and all the economic development in the world.

[0:04:35] Imani Warren: Right.

[0:04:38] Gregory Simpson: I can literally walk across the street to go to a Trader Joe's, but Coconut Grove is literally what's called a healthy food desert. There are only two or three—no, there are only two now—small grocery stores that you can come into to buy and that's always been the case—well, not always been the case. It was not the case earlier when it was a viable economic community, just to never have the same monies as because—past the sixties—before the sixties and before I was born, it was still a segregated society legally, but it was still a very functioning and economic society. We created business for—within the community, for the community.

[0:05:39] Imani Warren: Yes, sir.

[0:05:37] Gregory Simpson: That has been a bigger blight than Hurricane Andrew or the recession in 2008 or even the AIDS epidemic.

[0:05:50] Imani Warren: Wow.

[0:05:52] Clarice Cooper: Okay. I'd like to add that, uh—

[0:05:54] Fredericka Simmons Brown: So, I'm—oh, I thought we were going—

[0:05:56] Imani Warren: Go ahead. Jump in young lady, [0:06:00] wherever you see fit. Yes ma'am.

[0:06:01] Fredericka Simmons Brown: I think the question was what? Can you repeat it?

[0:06:06] Imani Warren: Yes, ma'am. What do you think would help to—oh, wait a minute. I'm sorry.

[0:06:10] Arrti Mehta-Kroll: The disaster.

[0:06:11] Imani Warren: I asked the wrong question. Oh, wait.

[0:06:15] Arrti Mehta-Kroll: What kind of disasters has your community faced?

[0:06:20] Fredericka Simmons Brown: Okay. I have seen Coconut Grove in the worst stages of its descent, and I live here all my life, and that is affordable housing for our younger generation. They are going other places to live because they cannot afford a—not even a one-bedroom apartment here in Coconut Grove. I've been a community resident for so many years. I hate to see this change coming; I hate to see that our young people have to go other places in the community or even out of the community in other states and cities to live because they cannot afford the prices for houses they are costing in this area. I never realized—I never dream that my little house that I live in on Franklin Avenue would be a million today. However, I told my children I would not sell, and I hope they don't sell. Affordable housing is one of the big crisis issues in the Grove today.

[0:07:39] Imani Warren: Yes, ma'am.

[0:07:40] Clarice Cooper: Well, this might sound controversial, but I think integration also had a big negative effect on our community because a lot of people were free to go to use other public facilities locally and otherwise. And also, housing was available in other parts of the county. So, we lost a large part of our population [0:08:00] here, and that affected the schools as well as the churches—most of our churches in this community—and we have about four that are over a hundred years old—a lot of their members, most of their members of congregations consist of people that do not live in this community. We have sort of lost our village effect that we had, everything was more close knit. Anything could happen at any of the schools or the churches or any community civic organization, events was attended by most of the people in the community, regardless of whether or not they were affiliated firsthand or not.

[0:08:33] Imani Warren: Yes, ma'am. And I think we have one more response, or would you like to respond to that? Dr.—

[0:08:43] George Simpson: You know, when I was a resident we used to be the physician for the clinic, for the neighboring, for the people in the neighborhood. One day, a lady came to the clinic with her child, who had a cold, developing pneumonia and we treated the child, found out she had pneumonia and prescribed, at that time, penicillin for her to take it for prescription and let her go, and the child came back about a week and a half, two weeks later, just as sick as she was when she came the first time, and it brought us to the realization, why was she having this pneumonia? Well, in her house there was a hole in the roof, and you can get all the penicillin in the world to that child, but she's not going to get better until you fix the hole in the roof to stop the rain from coming in and causing her to have pneumonia. So, if you, as we were concerned with good health in the community, you realize that there are more factors than just physical [0:10:00] or chemical or biological disease, that there are factors impinging on the health of the community and of the family which are political, and financial, and social, psychological, political. All of these factors impinge on the health of the community, and in order to have good

health of the community, you must address each and every one of these factors which impinge on the health of the community. And this is apparently was what my experience as a physician since 1958—and I came from New York, and this was my first real experience living in the South. Things came to you that had to be done, and although you were not specifically working in that area, you had to help and help lead in many instances. I myself found this to be true and I add it up. All of the affordable housing projects that I had been involved in, either as an owner or a builder, a developer, or a board member—and it came to 295—I was amazed—but these are the numbers of houses which I personally had been involved in. But this was not all. You have to be involved in the political aspect, you had to back political candidates, you had to to petition and fight for sewerage conditions, you had to fight for environmental changes, you had to fight for the very existence taxes—for lower taxes. And too [0:12:00] many of the people in Coconut Grove, which was a nice little village—

[0:12:06] Imani Warren: Yes.

[0:12:07] George Simpson: I think in terms of Hillary Clinton saying, “It takes a village to raise a child,” and I said very nice, very nice, except that this was a phrase taken from an African adage and the whole thing was this: “It takes a whole village”—

[0:12:28] Imani Warren: Yes, sir.

[0:12:29] George Simpson: —To raise properly a child. A child is going to get raised whether things are good, things are bad. But in order to raise that child properly, you have to involve the resources and help of the whole community, meaning the rich and the poor and the politically affluent. So, these are the things which in my life as a physician you come on to, but you don't necessarily aim at doing that as your profession, but you have to consider working in these areas in order to improve the general health of the community.

[0:13:11] Imani Warren: Thank you. That was a profound statement. Thank you so much. Okay.

[0:13:16] Artti Mehta-Kroll: All right. This is Aarti Meta Kroll, I'm a graduate student in the Department of Global Socio-Cultural Studies. So, my question is, considering the challenges the community is facing now, how is the community responding to it?

[0:13:33] George Simpson: I didn't hear that.

[0:13:36] Clarice Cooper: How we're responded to—

[0:13:38] Artti Mehta-Kroll: What you—the challenges that you just described.

[0:13:40] Clarice Cooper: Oh, well, we have stayed in touch, a lot of us, through local organizations and churches with elected officials at the city, state, and federal level, as well as county. And we have situations where we address our needs to them immediate and [0:14:00] long term, and we invite them to meetings and to have discussions with them—community

meetings—we've done that quite a bit and we seem to be getting a pretty good response. Usually, it takes a consideration of financial considerations as far as getting moneys appropriated for whatever we ask and for—whether it's improvements to the parks, affordable housing, which is very high on our list as the top priority in this community, as well as securing jobs for a lot of our jobless people. And we also have a mental health crisis that I think we need more of an address to at all levels, and that also affects people's ability to work or to be productive.

[0:14:46] Fredericka Simmons Brown: I think we depend a lot on our elected officials to help this community a lot, as Clarice has said. We do see the need for improvement, and we join the community organizations to try to present our feelings on a particular situation that develop. So, we go to the community meetings, we go to the meetings that they have at Dania Key, and we express our feelings. We want them to know how we feel as Coconut Grove residents, how we can keep and improve our neighborhood. We depend on them. They help us do this.

[00:15:44] Gregory Simpson: I was thinking about the last financial loss, and I think that was a lot more devastating than what's going on now, that the last recession in 2008, because at the very end of that [0:16:00] in 2006 to 2008, you know, the predatory loans.

[0:16:08] Imani Warren: Mm hmm.

[0:16:10] Gregory Simpson: And more Black—and more folks lost their properties in those predatory loans, taking equity out of their houses and then the rates changing right as the depression comes about. That's one and number—so, I thought that was actually a greater loss of property and wealth—Black wealth in this community. Currently, now we're a buyer's market. So, if you still were able to hold on to your homes, you have that opportunity to sell or to take equity out of it. But too often as a group, we—Black, this community and Black communities in general—don't operate in unison and especially economically in unison. I was speaking just a little while ago about when wealth row families collected to try to turn the blight of the commercial part of Grand Avenue and where we got control of property, that was powerful, but it was still thirty or forty years before any development happened there. And that was out of our control—and by the way, that ends up becoming a generational fight. And unfortunately, in terms of with money and wealth, we don't offer—too often Black people do not operate in generational ways. And so, I've always tried to educate folks as you were expressing about your million-dollar property and what you hope for your children to have. Look, if they have a trust or if you have a living will or if you can structure [0:18:00] your properties in a corporation and then to divide it among your family members at that time in these—giving them the opportunity, these are my wishes. But you have the control, these are the percentages, and it's a legal entity. Then you actually hold on to property and you actually build up your community. But that doesn't happen enough. But it should.

[0:18:28] Imani Warren: You kind of touch bases on the next aspect of the question, which was what do you think would help to protect your community from these threats? And you really

kind of segway into that. So, if you all don't mind elaborating more on what would kind of protect the community.

[0:18:55] Clarice Cooper: Well, one challenge that I think we have now is getting our young people involved because they seem to be less interested or less motivated. And I think that's not just for the families to be concerned about, but other organizations in the churches and also the schools to let these people, these young people, know that that everything is being passed on and left to them and they should be in a position to, you know, uphold the flame burning and be enlightened as far as economically, financially, and politically how they can keep things going, and that seems to be a really big challenge that I find even among some of my close associates and family members. Cause these kids now have a lot of distractions. And—

[0:19:41] Imani Warren: Yes.

[0:19:42] Clarice Cooper: And what's going to happen in the future really doesn't concern a lot of them. If they figure it out, I'll just be taking care of it as it goes along. So, it was our big responsibility as a bigger challenge than before. Because I can hear a lot of these kids, too, when I was young and the concerns that we had, and they don't seem to have the same kind of interests or motivation [0:20:00].

[0:20:01] Fredericka Simmons Brown: And I agree with her because I'm now talking to my children, my grandchildren, my great grandchildren, the value of our property, and it keeps going up and up and up. And I'll say, "One day you'll appreciate what you have." But like Clarice said, the younger people don't seem to understand anything about value and what would be beneficial to them later in life. So, I on that question, I really don't know what we can do to encourage them to hold on to what they have because it is of value.

[0:20:46] George Simpson: You know, one of the things that is necessary in community building is to involve all of the people, but more importantly, to involve people who previously did not feel that they had any effect or any real weight in determining what was going to happen in the community. I think in terms of one of my heroes, of course, of many others is Martin Luther King, who often said, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." Now, again, as with Hillary, that was part of it, but the whole thing was this, this was the phrase which was put forth by a pastor in the seventeenth century, a Protestant pastor. And what he said was, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but I believe it bends towards justice." There is no such thing as saying that it would bend toward justice on its own. It has to be helped to be bent that way [0:22:00] and that involves the participation of all of the people who previously might not have believed that they had any real weight. So, to involve people who previously did not take part in building that community and holding on to what they have is a great function of people who would improve the community. This is one of the features rich community groups such as those which many of us represent has to do. People will fight harder to hold on to what they have, then other people will fight to get what they need; and we have to fight as hard as those who have so that we can also be one of those who have.

[0:22:56] Arrti Mehta-Kroll: So, my question is, considering all the changes that have happened in the community intergenerationally over time with the financial crisis, what do you see as some of the continuing strength of the community now? What do you see as those points of solidarity that are still there that can be built upon?

[0:23:21] Imani Warren: Not all at once.

[0:23:23] Clarice Cooper: Well, I look at a group of us like ourselves who are continually involved in civic and our churches and fraternal organizations that are preaching the same thing about community building and community cohesion, and that's what I think is very important as far as us improving what we have and what could be lost, because we have that concern within us that we refuse to let go and, as I say, it is still the part that on our young people and neighbors and other family members and friends that that's very important.

[0:23:56] Fredericka Simmons Brown: As I look around, I see a big change in [0:24:00] the development of our community. It really isn't what we might call a community, it is just a place to live now because a community consists of a group of people living and coming together as one. I don't see that anymore. And so, I was telling the young lady during an earlier interview, I don't even know my neighbors and when I was growing up, we knew everybody in front, behind, on the side, down the street, all around us. They were all neighbors concerned about each other. And as Dr. Simpson said, it takes a village to raise a child. This community, this community is not a village anymore. We used to call it "The Village" because everybody was concerned about children growing up. Their concern was about us. But how can you be concerned about people who you don't even know as your neighbor? So, the neighborhood atmosphere has gone away. We don't have no community. We're just living together in a place. That's what I would call it.

[0:25:22] Gregory Simpson: Well, two things. First out, I'll speak about—I've been a youth sponsor for a lot of years. And I think of these two examples that I pass on whenever I speak to kids. One, when the kids in North Miami walk out when Trayvon Martin walked out of their classrooms, you know, at the risk of being expelled or locked, but they had such a visceral feeling that the entire school walked out. Black radio got that locally, and then it got to [0:26:00] Black radio statewide and then about—if my recollection\_\_\_\_\_??—maybe about five or six weeks later, Rachel Maddow gets it—and also the congresswoman that helped with that as well—but the actual initiating spark was those children. If Trayvon Martin had been a child from Stuart, Florida, where it happened—from that community and his fellow students didn't even act it up—but the children in Miami said, "This is wrong." An even better example—and even though the outcome wasn't what we wanted in these, it sparked Black Lives Matter. I mean, his death and its motivation—and that was done by high school kids in north—in Miami Gardens, in that area. And at Stoneman Douglas High School, kids who now are in their twenties or young twenties changed the laws for guns in Florida, and that was high school kids. These are the people I believe in. But a lot of times the economics, if they—and you were saying about distractions, children, what they—it's not distractions. They have a minute attention span because that's the way the culture is now. But if you can focus all of their

Internet savvy and their and their social media to moral social media, you can accomplish anything. I mean, but those are two examples of children inflow—of young people, teenagers, high school students in Florida that have changed their worlds. Black Lives Matter, just because of those kids walked out of that high school. They were so upset, and our gun laws got changed and got [0:28:00] signed by a Republican governor because high school kids said, “No more” and they got their parents to say, “No more.” So, if we if we can get our children to be as concerned about what's going on with the Kardashians or as other for the moment, social effects, that's change. That would be change. It would be quick because they would keep a generation, at least the ones who are committed to it.

[0:28:36] Imani Warren: What anyone else like to respond to that question before we move to the next one?

[0:28:41] George Simpson: You mentioned?

[0:28:43] Imani Warren: Can you repeat the question?

[0:28:46] Artti Mehta-Kroll: Well, my question was that considering all of the challenges the community is facing now, I still see there is so much strength. And so, I wanted you all to speak to events that you see in the community.

[0:28:55] Gregory Simpson: Let me repeat. You are saying—currently, where it's the strength for future progress for our community economic level. Where does that kind of come from or where do you see that coming from?

[0:29:23] George Simpson: Well, you have to, I guess, instill in people who would change a belief that change is possible. Many examples have shown that change is possible. But, you know, I think of slavery. Slavery has been a part of human existence since Adam and Eve, almost. It's always been a part that those who have power will seek to use that power to subjugate and use people of lesser power. But throughout the years, slavery has always been used to advance the health [0:30:00] and welfare of the power group, and they used the intellect and the attitude, the skills of the slaves to improve their condition. All through the years there have never been an attempt to obliterate the history, to create history, culture, and language of slaves except in this country. This was the first country—and this is always gnawing at my end—this is the first country that deliberately sought to obliterate the history, the culture, the language, the skills and the self-esteem of a group of people to further subjugate them.

[0:30:59] Imani Warren: Yes, sir.

[0:31:00] George Simpson: That is one of the things that we have to recognize. This—and it comes down to white supremacy is deep, deep in the soul of America—and we are still working hard to obliterate this scourge, this smear on our character. We would be great people, we would be people who value freedom, but until we face the reality that there is this deep



cultural scar, which must be erased, we cannot and will not be able to change the situation and we'll further, degrade, and make worse the conditions for the majority of people who live in an autocracy or a dictatorship type of government. This country is closer to that than we'd like to think, and we need to think in terms right now [0:32:00] of changing the political structure so that we can get through the symbolism. Why would an eighteen-year-old be able to carry an A-45 mass massacre gun around?

[0:32:15] Imani Warren: Yes, sir.

[0:32:16] George Simpson: And we can't even do that in the last fifty years.

[0:32:18] Imani Warren: Right.

[0:32:20] George Simpson: This country's in trouble and we have to realize that, unless we have this change in our attitude toward our history, that we will want to change it, we will not be able to change it.

[0:32:33] Imani Warren: Yes, that was, especially speaking on today's topics, when you give a sixteen-year-old a firearm, when most children are getting cake and shoes and video games, it does kind of negate differences. You all have led profound lives. So, this question is basically talking about—tell me about your earlier lives. And doc can we start with you?

[0:33:01] George Simpson: You want to start with me? (Everyone laughs). Well, I'm ninety-six-years-old now, and that gives me a panoramic view, if you will, of what is happening in my lifetime. And I have seen, like Martin, and I have seen the changes which have had. We have made profound changes, but we cannot be satisfied with what has been done, because unless we continue to obliterate the causes of the degradation of our society, we will lose it all and be even more degraded, especially in the lives of those on the bottom—the minorities, the less educated, the less advantaged. I grew up—I was born in New York City, which at that time was not as deeply segregated as many parts of the South [0:34:00], but still had many of the conditions which would lead to segregation. Fortunately, at that time, I was able, because of the laws in the city and the custom, to get an education free of charge and I was able to get a good education. But still, in all, I had to live in a partially segregated, discriminatory society. I had never lived in the South before. My first experience in the South was when I went to medical school in Nashville, Tennessee, which was not part of the deep, deep South, but which still had its great element of segregation and discrimination. My first real experience with the Deep South was in Fort Lauderdale when I was an extern as a senior medical student with Dr. James Sistrunk, who was a general practitioner in Fort Lauderdale and, to me, the quintessential model of a general practitioner working in the community on adverse circumstances. And I watched what he was doing and what he was trying to do, and it impressed me. And then I happened to have married a young lady from Miami, from Coconut Grove, if you will. Her name was \_\_\_\_\_?? Simpson. And that's truly impressed me with what is possible out of the South.

[0:35:39] Imani Warren: Yes, sir.

[0:35:40] George Simpson: And she—we were determined to go to California, where there was at that time less discrimination, when we finished medical school—she was my college medical school classmate. But having lived with Dr. Sistrunk and having visited Miami at that time [0:36:00] and having met her grandfather, E.W.F. Stirrup who was a real pioneer in this area, I began to see maybe there is some promise with hard work to work some changes in the society. But until she—we had only started, when she started our practice, we bought the house here and once you set roots down, that kind of changes your mind. I think that probably swung me to the realization that there is promise, there is possibility, and there is room for change with hard work, even in a place which was not, you know—Miami was not the deep, deep, segregated South. There were a lot of people from other areas who mediated, if you will, the deep segregation attitudes. So, I saw possibilities here, and we decided that we continue to live here and build a community. So that was my experience. Had I not externed with Dr. Sistrunk, I probably never would have come to the South and had I had not married a resident who grew up in Coconut Grove. I never thought, well, I would be here sitting today.

[0:37:17] Imani Warren: Yes, sir. Thank you so much for that.

[0:37:22] Gregory Simpson: I grew up in the sixties, you know, and Coconut Grove was this type of community. First, my grandmother and her sisters at 3242 Charles would sit on the porch on Sundays after church. Church was still not only their church Christ Episcopal, but the other four traditional long-term churches were the center of the community and that's how you got to really know everybody, even more so than being in school. It's that you had so many connections in your church [0:38:00] and there was a sense of raising. I think the best example of raising a village. All right. If I were to get in trouble—

[0:38:13] George Simpson: I keep saying, “whole village.”

[0:38:14] Gregory Simpson: Whole village. All right. This is how a whole village operates. This is in the sixties—but no, it didn't happen in the seventies and then going on. If I were to get in trouble now—I'm going to have a disclaimer that I was a good kid or a smart one—we would go to South Miami to get in trouble, but if I were to get into trouble, I could be stopped, chastised, hand if a close friend of my mother's or my grandmother's whooped then. And then the grapevine. By the time I got home, another whooping from my mother and then the extreme intimidation of “Wait till your father gets home.” That's whole other story, which I don't need to get into, but the community was involved in my rear end.

[0:38:59] Imani Warren: Sir.

[0:39:00] Gregory Simpson: But as I said, I was a smart kid. It didn't happen to me as much. My older brother and his—my cousin Malcolm—a lot more. I used to get a bike and ride someplace else, not Coconut Grove, that is a part of who I am today, right, under the influence of my parents and my family. And I was raised in the Catholic Church, but Christ Episcopal was a big

part of my life and church was a big part of my life—and it still is now. I think if young people hadn't moved from the community and still had those same roots with what their source of their religious nourishment—in fact, I like to use that term. We're spiritually, we're malnourished.

[0:39:55] Imani Warren: Absolutely.

[0:39:56] Gregory Simpson: And that's why we don't have the strength to fight [0:40:00] when you have an economic giant literally across the street—that I'm looking at Merrick—Little Bahamas doesn't have the same economic power, but it could if it had the spiritual nourishment. How about that?

[0:40:18] Imani Warren: Thank you.

[0:40:23] Fredericka Simmons Brown: Well, as I said before, it seems that we are so separated—it does seem like we're back to integration to me, and I was telling the young lady that this morning—we don't have the family feeling for one another as did before. We are not concerned and, as Greg in his day, he experienced the same thing I did in my day. If someone's saw us doing something out of the way—and they had no telephones, no connect, just no cell phones—but do you know, when you got home, our parents knew what we did wrong because someone had notified them that we did something wrong out of the ordinary. It was like a family, and I just cannot say the word bonding together that help us grew up as young women and young men in our community because we had a concern of everyone in the community and everyone knew each other. Like I said before, we were concerned about each other, but who cares nowadays? And that's why these young people are getting over because no one is concerned about them. No one cares about them. They just doing things their way.

[0:41:52] Imani Warren: Thank you, ma'am. Mrs. Clarice?

[0:41:54] Clarice Cooper: Yes. I can echo with the other three panelists have said. We have lost that sense of community here. We were more [0:42:00] cohesive as far as your neighbors, friends, family, your churches, your organizations, fraternal groups, and we have lost that. I saw that happen after integration kicked in for primarily. The other thing that distresses me most is that the young people have no respect for older people, less and less. Before if the person was the town's drunk or the town's peeping Tom or whatever, you still have respect for those people if they were older than you, because that's what the age thing did to you. But now these kids don't have that and get that re-instilled or instilled into them as is kind of like a lost art, I would think, because that has to come from the family and other groups and schools and whatever. And now the kids don't get paddled in school—not that I was ever favor of that—but I think the fear of being paddled help kids go on the right path. So, there's a lot of things that they have working for them, but it's also working against them.

[0:43:03] Artti Mehta-Kroll: So, this will be our last question and it's what advice do you have for the next generation for these young people who you want to, you know, take the helm and

confront this change? What do you have to say to them in terms of what they need to do to support the community?

[0:43:21] Gregory Simpson: Oh, the thing I mentioned earlier, spiritual nourishment. Spiritual nourishment in my life and experience has come from a spiritual community. And also something that my father was speaking about this country and the racism that was formed in this country. In this country, you—racism was based on a complete, overarching dehumanizing of people because of color [0:44:00], but once you start going down, that that is the actual epitome of a slippery slope, because once you can dehumanize people because of color, you can dehumanize women and their value because of their sex. You can dehumanize—so you can be the—if you're the person in power, then you have all the privileges and everybody else is a lower tier. There are class struggles, there are caste struggles, but the one based on racism and sexism, those are ceilings that you have to find a jackhammer and kick it and knock a ceiling upside down, I mean, above your head to get through. But that has been done. But the other thing that's people need to always be reminded of, fortunately, being a student of history and we fought the Civil War and for about five years there was, at least in the South, the beginning, a political equity and then, for the next ninety years, that ended. And it was struggling again in the sixties, during a time when my father here was locally head of the NAACP and was one of the people who you—even once the laws are put on the books, somebody had to be the first to sit at the lunch counters before and after to send their kids to school to integrate it and the risk that that entails. And that takes commitment and courage and belief in your community and a social core. Our young people have that, but [0:46:00] they also have phones in their hands all the time, you know, and so if they can find a way to connect as a social community—that we're not only a social community, but we're a spiritually connected community, and I won't dehumanize anybody because that dehumanizes me. You see, if we have that, you can change not just this community, but this state, this country. You could change this world. You have that and you don't have one large country invading small country. You don't have women losing their rights that they thought they had to the integrity of their own bodies. And also, you don't have a community which stays under an economic blight for generations. You have the belief that I'm the change agent and I'm not alone.

[0:46:58] Imani Warren: Thank you. Is there anyone else who wants to respond to that last question?

[0:47:05] Clarice Cooper: Oh, well, as far as what to tell young people, I think a lot of them don't realize how important education is, and that's why a series such as this one with FIU and other local institutions of higher learning is important, that we stress upon the kids how important education is and knowledge, and to pursue education doesn't necessarily mean it has to be in the academia. It can also be a trade. It's just that you should also just build up something that you can prosper in, and then also couple that with your spiritual nourishment and your community spirit, you can get a whole lot accomplished within your community.

[0:47:48] Imani Warren: Okay. Doc, would you like to add anything so we could kind of—anything that young people should take in to move forward for the next generation? [0:48:00]

[0:48:02] Gregory Simpson: Yes. What do you think young people should do? They should take in and to strengthen them for the challenges in the future. What can the next generation do to share itself up?

[0:48:18] George Simpson: Well, one thing that they should do is, you know, they must do is to internalize the changes which have been made to believe in the possibility of permanent change. They have to realize the importance and significance of the history, of their own history, of their own past generation, their parents and their grandparents, and believe that they can grow further on that line of approach. You have to instill in them the belief that—to let them instill on themselves the belief that change is possible, but that it is not possible without that individual and personal participation. So, to get them involved, to get them knowledgeable of the power, for instance, of their single vote; a lot of them believe that they—with the power of the vote is essential in building a foundation for political and social advance of their group. So, you have to, in your own belief, transmit to them, in our own beliefs, transmit to our children—this coming generation—the possibility, the probability, and the inevitability of change if their participation is strong enough [0:50:00].

[0:50:02] Imani Warren: Okay. Thank you all so much. I wish we had some more time, but maybe we can make some more time in the future. Because, of course, what you're saying is imperative. But wait a minute. Did we forget you? Oh, we can't forget you, Mrs. Brown!

[0:50:11] Fredericka Simmons Brown: Oh, no, you didn't forget me. My only last comment is that we were all created by God and if we can think that we are all brothers and sisters created by God and have a feeling of love for each other regardless of color, I think it will be a better place to live.

[0:50:40] Imani Warren: All right. Any last comments that you all have before we wrap up? Any last comments? All right. Well, yes.

[0:50:49] Gregory Simpson: No, I was going to say, "Amen, sister." You know, to Mrs. Brown. I said it to her, but that's my last comment.

[0:50:55] Imani Warren: Well, thank you all so much, because this is like a really—it's really important for our young people to see how we can engage our communities together. So, we thank you so much for your time, and we hope that we can kind of speak more in depth about, you know, what we need to do and how we can bridge that gap between our young people and—just hearing story. I thank you very much. Thank you so much.

[0:51:15] Fredericka Simmons Brown: Thank you for having us.

*end of interview*