

Commons for Justice Project

Goombay Festival

Narrators: Clarice Cooper and Reynold Martin

Interviewers: Mikeya Brown, Alexa Ramos, Yasmine Northern, Jacob Mcgee

Date: 05/31/2022

[0:00:06] Mikeya Brown: Good afternoon. This interview is being conducted for the FIU CFJ project. The interviewer is me, Mikeya Brown. I am a resident of West Coconut Grove and I work for the company of Hope through Art, LLC. I've been doing activism in Coconut Grove, Liberty City and Overtown over the past five years or more. And I am just here sharing information and I'm delighted to do this interview.

[0:00:36] Alexa Ramos: My name is Alexa Baez Ramos. I'm an undergraduate student in the Green School of International and Public Affairs. I'm delighted to be here.

[0:00:44] Yasmine Northern: My name is Yasmine Northern. I'm a graduate student at Florida International University in the African and African Diaspora Studies Program. And I am happy to be here.

[00:00:56] Jacob Mcgee: I am Jacob McGee, an undergrad at Florida International University, majoring in Political Science, minoring in Psychology. And I also am happy to be here.

[0:01:09] Mikeya Brown: The narrator is:

[0:01:13] Reynold Martin: I'm Reynold Martin. I'm an activist here in West Coconut Grove. Been here most of my life. My family's from the Bahamas. Fortunately, unfortunately, I'm here. I'm happy to be involved in this project.

[0:01:29] Clarice Cooper: I'm Clarice Cooper. I'm a lifelong resident of Coconut Grove here in Miami, Florida. I'm really happy to be here because I always wanted something like this to take place, that we get to share our history, to pass on as a legacy.

[0:01:45] Mikeya Brown: The interview is taking place at Christ Episcopal Church in Coconut Grove, Florida, on May 31, 2022. So, tell me about your early life here in Coconut Grove.

[0:02:02] Reynold Martin: I am one of five boys born to Gus and Cherrie Martin, who are, like I said before, both from the Bahamas. My father was born on the island of Bimini, but he was raised on the island of Grand Bahama, where he met my mother. They grew up together. They've known each other all their lives, and they migrated here with—and ended up having five boys, of which I am the third. It's been a very interesting life, traveling back and forth to the Bahamas and growing up in the Grove with people from various places, including Nassau and some of the southern states, Georgia, Carolina, even Mississippi and Alabama. These guys from those areas—we all came together in the Grove as a melting pot. I've enjoyed my life here. I

returned here with my wife, and we raised three boys here in Coconut Grove and they're happy to have been part of the legacy of Coconut Grove.

[0:03:12] Mikeya Brown: And you?

[0:03:13] Clarice Cooper: Yes, I'm Clarice Cooper, as I stated, and I was born here and have lived here, and I still live here. You can't pull me away from Coconut Grove. I really love this place. And I've only gone away to go away to college and then I returned home. Of course, that was a big decision to make, but it was simple enough because everybody that I was close to was back here and my family is also Bahamian. My mother was actually born in Nassau, which is on the island of New Providence, and she came here as a teenager. My father was born here to Bahamian parents, and they met here and got married by Father Gibson, who was a pastor here at this church for so very long—a very long time. They raised five children here and my parents were very active in the community, and I've continued that tradition as well.

[0:04:01] Mikeya Brown: So, can you tell me about your community, West Coconut Grove?

[0:04:07] Clarice Cooper: We are a very close-knit group from back in the fifties because we had issues that were on the table as far as getting our civil rights, because most public facilities and schools were segregated. And these people who were very active in—including my parents, Mr. Martin's parents and other people at different churches and organizations and the PTAs—they were all about getting that to be changed, which was changed with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. And at that point, we went through a transition where school desegregation was just something that we hadn't experienced before, that we had to get adjusted to, they had to get acclimated to that. So, we really went through a whole lot in our childhoods, growing up because we were like fifties and sixties children as far as the time frame that we lived in. We saw the assassination of John F Kennedy, we saw the assassination of Martin Luther King, the assassination of Malcolm X. So, we went through different eras in our lifetimes. And, of course, we have gotten to see things now like apartheid eradicated in South Africa, a Black president who won two terms here in this country, things that we thought like were hopeless a long time ago, but we actually got to see that work and get that done through hard work and perseverance.

[0:05:23] Mikeya Brown: And you, Mr. Martin?

[0:05:26] Reynold Martin: I grew up in the Grove as an athlete. I played a lot of ball at the boys' club—Baseball, football, basketball—and the boys club was a kind of a melting pot for a lot of people. Hispanics had come to this community as well and many of us excelled in athletics. So, I came up in Coconut Grove as an athlete. I was not so involved politically. My parents, like she said, attended all the meetings. They were not an educated [0:06:00] group of people, but they were a concerned people about what's going to happen in the lives of their kids. So, they felt that the only way to really impact that was to come together and together try to solve the issues that they come to the attention of our community. And of course, something of that nature gravitates to all of us and we all become involved. I went to college and got involved in

all kinds of issues, and I think it was because my parents got involved in issues that impacted their lives. And I became an activist because my parents were activists because we had to do it. Somebody had to do it because if no one does it, then guess what? Our plight is left up for anything to happen. And God forbid, we allow that to occur without input from ourselves.

[0:06:50] Jacob Mcgee: And it seems that the history your parents could pass to you was extremely formative for you and being raised by this community, I imagine, was something that helped you eventually raise your kids here and something that—I'm not sure if you want to cut that out—but how was it to raise your kids here in the community that you were brought up in?

[0:07:22] Reynold Martin: You know, it was very interesting for me. I was fortunate when I went to college, I met a young lady from Florida. She was from Sarasota, a very bright lady. And fortunately, she's impacted my kids more than me. I'm not the academic—she was obviously—I am the athlete, all my kids were athletes, but they became scholars and I think they became scholars because of her involvement in their lives. Not because of me, because I'm the jock. I'm not I'm not the academian. But because of my exposure in education, because I did get involved in higher education, first in my family [0:08:00], I can encourage my kids to do the same. You know, work hard, stay in school, do the best you can and your outcome, you know, it will be enhanced, but thank God for a mom that that also can emphasize those kinds of things. And our kids have done well.

[0:08:21] Yasmine Northern: I was going to ask, how have you seen the community evolve from you growing up in this community and then you raising your kids in this community?

[0:08:32] Reynold Martin: Do that again?

[0:08:34] Yasmine Northern: How have you seen the community evolve from the time from you growing up to seeing your kids grow up in this community?

[0:08:44] Reynold Martin: You know, the community has not fared well and, unfortunately, many of the young people, unlike my kids, did not go to school. I mean, they did not go to college, they did not pursue higher education. And in the job market for folks that are not prepared lessons—and then, because things that are happening in Miami—and all over the world—you know, you can't find a place to stay if you can't afford it. And if you're only offering the world labor, you're making less and you're not able to stay in a community like Coconut Grove because Coconut Grove has turned out to be an elite community to live in and, unless you're making some good money, unless your parents pass something on to you, it becomes very difficult for you to afford to live in a community of this nature.

[0:09:40] Mikeya Brown: Ms. Cooper, for you, how has your community evolved here in West Coconut Grove?

[0:09:49] Clarice Cooper: Well, this is very different from when we started out here—in St Albans.

[0:09:55] Reynold Martin: Yes. Yes, that's where I met Clarice.

[0:09:57] Clarice Cooper: Yes.

[0:09:58] Reynold Martin: That's—yeah. It is.

[0:09:59] Clarice Cooper: Very different.

[0:10:00] Reynold Martin: Kindergarten, by the way.

[0:10:01] Clarice Cooper: It seems as though the kids at that time, when I guess it was because of our parents' influence, we had more seriousness of purpose. These kids now want the latest Iphone, they want their hair done. It's just like education has been put on the back burner. That was a big aspiration for us: what colleges we were going to go to, which branch of the military you go to, which trade you were going to pursue. And that's what I think we lost out with—especially when the schools became integrated. We were more of a community. You have fewer teachers, principals, Boy and Girl Scout leaders were involved in the community. They were friends with your parents. And so, it was like we—it was like takes a village—that's term that's used often that that was more applicable now—I mean then than it is now. And that's unfortunate because everything is just like dissipated. And then we have this gentrification issue and that is also making us less and less visible in this community and about holding on to what your family had acquired through property—real or personal, or whatever—that's going away. Take for instance, I get calls every day and emails and texts and whatever, whatever form of correspondence, about selling my house. Because all of a sudden this is hot property. Like Mr. Martin said, this is this is the place to be and everybody wants us, you know, everybody wants us to move so they can make it what they want to like, which I think is like Midtown Manhattan. I've gotten offers over a million dollars in my little house. So, when you see us here—

[0:11:30] Reynold Martin: What? Who offered you that?

[0:11:32] Clarice Cooper: 1.2 million, baby.

[0:11:32] Reynold Martin: Give me that number (everybody laughs).

[0:11:35] Clarice Cooper: A lot of us are getting offers like that, a lot of us are getting offers like that. So, it has changed a bit and I wish we got back into more emphasis on what it is we need to pass on to the youth to make them understand that you have to be prepared to excel in this society.

[0:11:53] Reynold Martin: Yeah, you know what's interesting? My three boys all want to come back. They love Coconut Grove [0:12:00], but there's no Grove to come back to. Fortunately or unfortunately, we—my folks—blood, sweat and tears, they bought a home, and we're trying to hold on to it so that there's a legacy for my kids to return to. I don't know what they'll do with that little plot, but, you know, a lot of folks are doing a lot with the little plots that they have. You know, the realtors are building up these townhomes and selling each of a million—a million each—which makes my little property worth a whole lot of money and gives my kids an opportunity to do something and to stay in this community and hopefully make a difference in terms of the legacy that have been established. Through our parents and our parents' parents, you know, here in Coconut Grove, because my folks came here in the late 1800s and we thrive. But the difference is that that we didn't have necessarily thrived in Coconut Grove. But Bahamian people are all over the world and they may have had a humble start here in Coconut Grove.

[0:13:05] Mikeya Brown: So, I did hear you mention saying that your sons want to come back to West Grove, but they just can't afford to come back. Now for the—

[0:13:17] Reynold Martin: I didn't say that.

[0:13:18] Mikeya Brown: I mean, it's nothing to come back to correct myself.

[0:13:20] Reynold Martin Ah, okay.

[0:13:21] Mikeya Brown: I'm sorry.

[0:13:23] Reynold Martin: Don't let my son hear you say that! (Everyone laughs).

[0:13:25] Mikeya Brown: Yes. I am sorry, I am sorry, but that it's nothing to come back to. Can you elaborate a little more on when you say, "There's nothing to come back to"?

[0:13:42:] Reynold Martin: Well, the home that they left no longer exist, so they can't return to the Grove as they knew it. There is something to come back to, but they want to return to a legacy that they remember. It's like when I go to the Bahamas [0:14:100]. Oh, man, that's so wonderful. You get to see your family. You know, they've not been uprooted there. When I go to Eight Mile Rock, Eight Mile Rock is still Eight Mile Rock. My family lives here from one end of the rock to the other.

[0:14:16] Clarice Cooper: Yeah. And it's like the socialization is missing. Like if somebody—and I know people who in my family and friends who left from the Grove and they say when they come back and they walk down Grand Avenue or Douglas Road, they don't see anybody that they recognize, cause the whole familiarity here is gone now—that's lost now. So, and that's the thing that we have, you know, this is gone away once people moved out to other outlying areas where there was new development and housing and job opportunities. We've lost it here in Coconut Grove. Yeah. And everybody's now almost like their own little cocoon, except for a

lot of the organizations that both he and I belong to, you know? And that's where we get to interact with other people for the common good of the community.

[0:15:00] Reynold Martin: And we talked about Goombay—Go ahead. You had a question? We talked about Goombay before we started the interview and Goombay would never be the same because the Goombay that that I grew up experiencing went down Grand Avenue. Grand Avenue was the center of Coconut Grove life. We had community centers like Three Chips and Tiki Club and Gil's Bar and Last Chance, all those are bars and social institutions that I think actually make Goombay an environment that we all cherish to come to because everybody you went into, you met people that you hadn't seen in a while. Now there's no bars, no social institutions of that nature. So, when Goombay, if Goombay shows up again—

[0:15:53] Clarice Cooper: On Grand Avenue.

[0:15:54] Reynold Martin: —That would be missing, that would be missing and, unfortunately, you know [0:16:00], it's a shame because I enjoyed that, not that you know, bars have social redeeming values, but it made a difference in the Goombay that I experienced.

[0:16:12] Clarice Cooper: And now we have to go to Key West to get that same flavor back.

[0:16:15] Reynold Martin: Spoke of that. Yes.

[0:16:17] Alexa Ramos: You both keep mentioning a kind of decline of the social institutions in the Coconut Grove areas. And I kind of want to know more about that. When did it start? And did it happen gradually; did it happen exponentially. I'm interested in the logistics of how that change started to occur, because you mentioned, you know, community members being the principals of your schools, the scouts. So, when did that societal and demographic change start to occur?

[0:16:43] Clarice Cooper: Well, as people got older and they retired, and they died, and then their families—their children—didn't want to retain anything here and they were already people living away cause, see, there weren't that many job opportunities here during the segregation era. So usually if a person went away to school, chances are they weren't going to return because there were bigger fish to fry in New York, in Chicago and Atlanta, places like that. A lot of homes were sold that belonged to people who were prominent in this community. And so, that started happening across the board, even with just working-class people. You saw the organizations that we used to have, a lot of them just like abolished just because there was nobody there to fulfill those little spaces anymore. We still have the American Legion, we still have the Homeowners and Tenants Association, we still have the Community Advisory Committee, we still have the Negro Women's Club, but that's just a small number compared to what used to exist in this community. And as I say, segregation, the end of it did kind of destroy our community in a lot of ways. It was supposed to be helpful overall, but all of a sudden everybody wanted to get into the mainstream activities and organizations that existed, and they kind of—like what some people have said that—we abandoned our community.

[0:17:59] Reynold Martin: Integration [0:18:00] hadn't always achieved the things that we hoped that it would achieve. I think we fared better in our community when we had a segregated lifestyle in Coconut Grove. We had control of our school and in our school, the school was the biggest employer in the community. There are still a lot of jobs in the school, but now that the schools are integrated, we don't control those jobs anymore. So, segregation I think was a boon for us. Integration has caused an eradication, if you will, of those opportunities that we had when we had a segregated lifestyle here in Coconut Grove.

[0:18:48] Clarice Cooper: And everybody, like a somebody like myself, I don't have any kids, but there were a lot of people like me who were elderly or just single, didn't have any kids. They took an interest in what went on in the local schools, like if a graduation took place, everybody would attend the graduation cause you were happy about the achievements of your neighbors' children and that sort of thing. See, all of that's lost now. So, there's this kind of like that doesn't happen anymore.

[0:19:11] Reynold Martin: And something people don't realize is that when we had control of our school system, we had PTA presidents and all the skilled roles that people have to play belong to people from our community. So, we got training that allowed us to pass things on to our kids that we no longer get.

[0:19:32] Clarice Cooper: Yeah, because we had role models from those people too, right? In our community, they didn't have to look at the Michael Jordan's and the Magic Johnson's as such. You had people that you could look up to right here in this community who had done very well by our standards. You know.

[0:19:50] Yasmine Northern: What are some of the major crises or disasters that occurred in the community?

[0:19:58] Clarice Cooper: Well, [0:20:00] my biggest problem has to do with the arrival of the drug culture. That, I think affected the whole world, but especially in low income communities, Black and communities of color, because as much as that has been financially a boost to the people who bring it in here—I don't want to say too much about that, because I don't really know that much about that—but I know how it has affected us negatively and people who figured that they didn't have to work a minimum wage job anymore because they can make more money selling drugs. See, that kind of mindset has also helped to destroy our community and others like ours.

[0:20:41] Reynold Martin: Well, the school to prison pipeline is alive and well because folks feel like, "Hey, you know what, I don't need school." And without school, you have very few opportunities. And so, many of our kids even today look forward to being on the street, making money without having to work. They think that drugs is still the way out.

[0:21:10] Clarice Cooper: And it's not.

[0:21:11] Reynold Martin: And it's not. It's not, it gets you into a whole lot more trouble than you can imagine.

[0:21:16] Clarice Cooper: Yeah, it is just that we get as far as law enforcement, we—you know—that's they're doing as much as they can do but it's going to take a whole lot more, and then when a community is already depressed and blighted and people are leaving and whatever, it gets to be more and more a thing that people just kind of pushed to the side. That's why you have people like us who remain active in our organizations and try to get certain things pushed through.

[0:21:44] Reynold Martin: And a failure of government to realize that a community like ours has special needs. We need to be protected more. You know, they use things like eminent domain to develop things that we didn't need. Why not use it now to develop things that can enhance our existence here? So, government has failed us.

[0:22:09] Clarice Cooper: Yeah, government definitely has failed us. Yeah.

[0:22:11] Yasmine Northern: What would you say are some of those needs you just mentioned for the community?

[0:22:18] Clarice Cooper: Housing, number one. Jobs, you know; more social services available to us. Now, we do have those in within the community, but it's still a matter of getting the right people to even inform them about those services that are available and see the interests of a lot of young people. It's not like it was with us because we had our big thing—was what colleges we were going to go to a branch of the military. These kids now aren't interested in that. They want money fast and whatever, and that's the other thing we have a problem with, even at all our organizations. Everybody's like in our age group, we have very little young people who we're trying to get to carry these organizations into the future. So, jobs and affordable housing and services—social services—and also to get people interested in voting because, see, that's another thing. To be a part of a community, you need to also be engaged in the political process, you know, so we have a lot of young people now who are very apathetic about that, about voting because they think it doesn't make any difference. And, you know, it's not going to mean anything to them in the long run, and that kind of attitude we need to have changed, too.

[0:23:25] Reynold Martin: We've got a lot of work to do.

[0:23:27] Clarice Cooper: Yeah, we do.

[0:23:28] Reynold Martin: And we're not getting any younger.

[0:23:31] Clarice Cooper: No, we are not.



[0:23:31] Reynold Martin: We're looking for folks to help us do what we think is necessary in our community. And you know, I work with the 5000 Role Models and many of them are getting the message. Many are not, but many of them are getting the message. The problem is that the 5000 Role Models program operates in the school, not in the community. Once again, we still need to get people like ourselves involved in directing these kids while they are in the community [0:24:00], not just in the school system. And, you know, there is hope and we hope to keep it alive by being involved in activities like our organization.

[0:24:09] Clarice Cooper: Right. And even organizations like ours and through the churches and whatever, when you have a whole lot more people involved, then you get parents because, see, that's my problem also with youth, that if you don't have parental involvement, that's where you fail too, see. We have that overall. We did have that, but now that's like almost a thing of the past. Like you could get a child who you've identified that you could probably help. But if the parents are going to meet you halfway, a quarter of the way, that's still like a waste of time and a waste of resources. And I find that to be a big problem.

[0:24:46] Jacob Mcgee: And in this concern for rejuvenating the presence of a youth, particularly, would you say native youth to the West Grove has the impending presence of climate change as a factor, especially affecting Miami. Has that created any kind of sense of discouragement towards the future of having an established consistent population here?

[0:25:21] Reynold Martin: I don't think anyone's paying attention to it.

[0:25:25] Clarice Cooper: Well, we have two organizations that've gotten city and county and even some national involvement as far as people giving us information. And we've had speakers at our meetings that tell us about climate change or global warming or whatever—

[0:25:41] Reynold Martin: But as it impacts our kids and our lives—

[0:25:43] Clarice Cooper: Has that impacted us, like as far as we go to sleep and say, "Oh my God, I wonder what's going to happen on the climate change calendar tomorrow." No, that's not really a concern. I would say a big concern in a community like ours, even though our proximity to the water in the bay and the ocean, you think that would be a concern because [0:26:00] of the erosion and everything. And I don't really think that like the people on the street, I don't think they're concerned about that.

[0:26:09] Alexa Ramos: It seems to me that when you guys speak about specifically comparing the past to the present and we return to this question of, you know, eroding of the public institutions when you speak of the problems faced—that the youth of West Grove are facing today, it seems that maybe a lack of this kind of community guidance that you guys received from, you know, elders and mentors in your community, that maybe at times even compensated for support you maybe weren't getting from your parents or from family

members that directly. So, do you think that that specific change in mentorship has pulled young people away from?

[0:26:54] Reynold Martin: There's not enough folks like Clarice and I to go around, you know, and we do what we can, and we try to impact as many kids as we possibly can. I've been involved in Boy Scouting for years and years. I'm a former Boy Scout leader. And you know, it's kind of hard to get parents involved and kids have other interests now. And it's difficult. And sometimes you feel like giving up because you're not getting the response that you're hoping to get. But we persevere hoping that something will happen. To turn things around. Like maybe a Mikeya would show up and guide us out of this thing.

[0:27:39] Clarice Cooper: Yeah, yeah, because this is a good example here of people who grew up here—

[0:27:42] Reynold Martin: And you just—you just never know.

[0:27:44] Clarice Cooper: You never know. (talking at the same time) You just can't give up on everybody. You know, it's easy enough to look at the kids and say, "Ah, God, they're not going to be anything", but then you shouldn't take that kind of attitude cause, in that group, there may be one or two that may turn out to be a diamond in the rough.

[0:27:57] Reynold Martin: So, someone told me that [0:28:00] the court's going to give the West Grove the property that they caused the contamination, and they're going to force the city to clean it up and develop it and create affordable housing so that the community can be reestablished. And Coconut Grove to thrive again. Wouldn't it be great if the court did that? Why give up? There's hope.

[0:28:24] Mikeya Brown: Not to cut you off. But what exactly is that that you're talking about when you say clean up?

[0:28:32] Reynold Martin: Old Smokey is an incinerator that was built in the twenties, and they just stopped that with the sixties. So, it thrived for a long time and create a lot of contamination that impacted the lives of so many—many people have lost their lives—and have had lives that were not as abundant as it could have been had they not been exposed to the contamination caused by the incinerator.

[0:29:00] Clarice Cooper: Incinerator, because people are still suffering from respiratory and upper—you know—

[0:29:06] Reynold Martin: Contamination that exists today.

[0:29:07] Clarice Cooper: Yeah.

[0:29:09] Reynold Martin: Then maybe that's what's happening in Coconut Grove. We're being affected by the contamination that this started so long ago that was not managed properly by the city or the county for that matter.

[0:29:21] Clarice Cooper: Because there was city-owned-property. And so, we have to keep focus and ours—because it wasn't like an independent person came rebuild, that was the City of Miami that did that to its own residents, most of whom were property owners and taxpayers and money and voters, you know, and it was just like nobody cared. And of course, that was doing the segregation era. So, it wasn't going to make much of an impact. The fact that Black people in this neighborhood were going to complain about it because you really didn't buck society, or buck the government, like whenever you did see people back then were more obedient, if you will, or receptive to what they were told by government higher ups. And now you see all these protests and everything [0:30:00] like what we saw in the sixties when we were college age. And you wished that some of that could have happened in the past and we got results because we probably will be further ahead if that it happened.

[0:30:09] Reynold Martin: Ain't it interesting that Old Smokey was—the environment there was not thought to be bad until white kids start going to Carver.

[0:30:18] Clarice Cooper: Or when the incinerator was rebuilt and the fumes from the incinerator went out into Coral Gables because they would have people out there who actually filed a suit.

[0:30:27] Reynold Martin: Yes.

[0:30:28] Clarice Cooper: Yeah. And then it was shut down because they complain. We complain, too. But you know—

[0:30:32] Reynold Martin: We complain too! Which is the point.

[0:30:35] Clarice Cooper: Yeah, I know.

[0:30:36] Reynold Martin: Only until it affects them. Doesn't matter that we're complaining, we're having this problem, but it affects us now and it's bad when it affects us, but it's not bad when it affects you guys. We had to go to school in that environment.

[0:30:49] Clarice Cooper: Oh, my God. Yeah.

[0:30:51] Reynold Martin: Could you imagine the stench?

[0:30:52] Clarice Cooper: Oh, the stench. Oh, yeah. Terrible.

[0:30:54] Alexa Ramos: Has the city or any local government acknowledged this issue? And is there any plan to do something with that space or work against the contamination, or has it just been forgotten?

[0:31:06] Reynold Martin: The city just recently filed a motion to dismiss—

[0:31:13] Clarice Cooper: The class action lawsuit.

[0:31:13] Reynold Martin: —the class action lawsuit involving Old Smokey. I mean, it's business as usual. Our current commissioner, Ken Russell, had talked about utilizing that property over there to do affordable housing because it does belong to the city. It's a fire college now. And they're thinking that maybe the fire college ought to be moved someplace else and we can use that property to do something good for a change in this community.

[0:31:52] Jacob Mcgee: With the local authorities that have jurisdiction over the West Grove, outside of the community members who reside in it, has the general attitude they've shown towards your concerns over the use, can it be summed up as dismissive? Whether it relates to Old Smoky or are there other examples?

[0:32:18] Reynold Martin: The attitude has been dismissive, yes. We've not seen anything innovative coming from the city as it regards to uplifting and improving the circumstance of the humble community established here in the West Grove.

[0:32:45] Mikeya Brown: With that, we talk about Old Smokey and, forgive me, I just know a little more knowledge. And I'm just—I just have to bring this up because, Mrs. Cooper, you fought against the trolley that they brought in, which was also a threat to our community. And can you elaborate and just, you know, start from the beginning about that a little bit? Well, I mean, a synopsis of the beginning of that trolley that they thought would be wonderful. And who thought it would be wonderful in West Coconut Grove?

[0:33:22] Clarice Cooper: Okay. Back in 2011, which is some time ago, I received a letter from the City of Miami and also my neighbors did—that they were going to have some sort of development at that corner there on Douglas Road, Southwest Thirty-Seventh Avenue, between Frow Avenue and Oak Avenue—I live on Oak. And I called the attorney, and he says, "Oh, they are going to put a trolley car there." I said, "A trolley? What kind of a trolley?" And he says, "From the City of Coral Gables." Well, first of all, we're in the city of Miami, so they did build it and we did have several rallies. But then I filed the administrative complaint [0:34:00] to the Department of Transportation, and they found against that project. So that was quelled. But the building is still there and it's still just sitting there.

[0:34:10] Mikeya Brown: And just to clarify, again, this was the trolley for?

[0:34:15] Clarice Cooper: The City of Coral Gables.

[0:34:18] Mikeya Brown: In West Coconut Grove?

[0:34:19] Clarice Cooper: Yeah, West Coconut Grove, which is in the City of Miami.

[0:34:21] Mikeya Brown: And what was there previously before they bought that?

[0:34:25] Clarice Cooper: There were three—three properties there. One was the Blue Hip, another was a fast-food restaurant, and then another piece of land was privately owned.

[0:34:36] Reynold Martin: Residential.

[0:34:37] Clarice Cooper: Yeah, residential. Oh, but that's from a long time ago. But I do know the person who owned it.

[0:34:41] Reynold Martin: (inaudible)

[0:34:41] Clarice Cooper: Yeah, yeah.

[0:34:42] Reynold Martin: (inaudible)

[0:34:43] Clarice Cooper: Oh, no, no; that was—was nothing there at that point when that came about that; was just an empty piece of land. Vacant piece of land. Yeah.

[0:34:53] Reynold Martin: Okay. You know, the interesting thing about this struggle against the trolley garage, we had some students from the law school investigating and trying to help with—

[0:35:09] Mikeya Brown: Which one?

[0:35:10] Reynold Martin: University of Miami Law School. And that's where they discovered the contamination that the city was trying to hide from everybody over at Old Smoky, they said, "Look what we found," and tried to find some remedies to the trolley board. Because one of the issues about the trolley garage was that it was going to cause contamination as well. So, since they were looking at the issue of contamination, "Hey, we talked about contamination that the trolley garage would cause, look what we found that's still active in our community and the city hadn't said a word."

[0:35:47] Mikeya Brown: And just to elaborate on that a little more, that is one of the reasons why that trolley garage where they fixed up on trolleys that are needed to be repaired or broken [0:36:00] came to West Grove which is considered the Black West Grove, not East, Black West Grove because the residents of Coral Gables didn't want the contamination over there. They didn't want that over there in their area.

[0:36:13] Clarice Cooper: Yeah, well, what had happened was a gentleman wanted to swap out the land that was used to maintain the trolleys over in the Gables, across the street from Gables High School on Lejune Road, and they were looking for an easy piece of property to work on. And so, they said, "Oh, here is something in West Grove." And so, they bought that. And that was going to really put a big drain on us because it was the traffic. The trolleys were going to have to come through on the hour and they were going to be maintained. They had like eight bays there and that was supposed to go happen every day on the hour. And they were supposed to come in on my street and go out on—which is Oak Avenue—and go out on Frow Avenue. And we did have people there who, well, who had health problems that were going to be compromised because of that, and they were all concerned about that. So that was one reason why we fought it, because of the environmental impact of it, along with the traffic.

[0:37:09] Mikeya Brown: And I just want to ask, what was there when they decided, "Hey, you know, let's move the trolley from here over at that property across from Coral Gables Senior High School." What is there currently now?

[0:37:23] Clarice Cooper: Mr. Torres has a big Merrick Manor. I think it's going to call that—it is called that, because it is open, and they have condos there and on the lower floor they have retail like—I think there's a beauty salon and a restaurant, that sort of thing. And the usual multi-use building and cropping up all over Miami-Dade County and everywhere else. Yeah.

[0:37:42] Mikeya Brown: So, they threatened your community and compromised even more health issues to build luxury condos once—

[0:37:52] Reynold Martin: For gain, yeah.

[0:37:53] Mikeya Brown: —and all of that in Coral Gables.

[0:37:57] Clarice Cooper: Yes.

[0:37:54] Reynold Martin: So, somebody saw a good opportunity to make some money [0:38:00]. "Hey, you know what? This land is worth a whole lot more than the land over there. If we can switch uses, we can build something here and make a whole lot of money" and they did, but it didn't quite happen the way they wanted it to happen. They didn't anticipate—

[0:38:14] Clarice Cooper: The public outcry. Because we protested against it. But if we had not said anything, that would have been the outlook over there every day. I just think I would have seen trolleys go in and out of here all day long.

[0:38:24] Reynold Martin: It was a done deal as far as they were concerned.

[0:38:28] Mikeya Brown: That never would have serviced Coconut Grove. The trolleys would have not come through to pick up the people that are the residents that either lived in Coconut

Grove, used to live in Coconut Grove, or workers that worked in West Coconut Grove. They would have never serviced them.

[0:38:43] Reynold Martin: That was not the plan. We were not in the plan.

[0:38:45] Clarice Cooper: Yeah, but what ultimately happened, it is in truth, it is true today. We do have some service that goes through that area because that was like one—

[0:38:54] Reynold Martin: Because of it.

[0:38:55] Clarice Cooper: Yeah. Because of it, yeah. Because we said that wasn't legal services.

[0:38:58] Reynold Martin: One of the resolutions.

[0:38:59] Clarice Cooper: Exactly. So that's, that's one thing we got out of it. Yeah.

[0:39:04] Alexa Ramos: So, it's clear to me that when they said of this unfavorable development projects in Coconut Grove, specifically in the West and Black side of Coconut Grove, that they don't expect the people of Coconut Grove to have the resources to be able to fight back these unfavorable development deals, but clearly you do, and you have been making it work with the resources that you have. So, I want to know what are some channels through which you get help to accrue, for example, these legal responsibilities. You mentioned UM Law students. I want to kind of know what actors are helping Coconut Grove through these processes.

[0:39:43] Clarice Cooper: Well, the UM Law School, the Center for Ethics and Public Service, they have been active in the community—in this community for maybe about twenty years or more and they've done different projects with the Black churches and then with Old Smokey, with the Trolley Board, and they've worked a lot of different things and their civic engagement [0:40:00] arm has too. What we try to do here is people who left to go away to school and came back—we figure civic engagement and involvement is very important and enlightening our fellow residents about things. And that's how we have established very good ties with our elected officials at the City of Miami level, the county level. And also, we deal with our state representatives, the representatives and also the state senators, and we also deal with the people on the federal level as well.

[0:40:33] Reynold Martin: You know that Center for Ethics and Public Service have allowed us to engage with pro bono attorneys, and they have been instrumental in us being able to challenge the trolley barn, challenge Old Smokey, and other issues that come up in the community like a civil rights issue, as it as it pertains to affordable housing, and resegregating Blacks in the community outside of Coconut Grove, when they are displaced in this community, which violates the civil rights law as well. And that's an issue that's up and coming. And we're hoping that more attention is paid to that so that we can address these issues that impact housing—affordable housing in our community.

[0:41:17] Clarice Cooper: Well, what's on the table now is the community redevelopment agency—C.R.A.—here, and it has been well established for the West Grove that's on the table that the City of Miami has approved. But it still has yet to go before the county because there's an end to local agreement. They have to both the county and the city has to agree. That's what we hope it's going to be like, our saving grace as far as getting jobs and affordable housing put on the table and then bring more interest in our community that could help us financially and, otherwise, economically and otherwise.

[0:41:56:] Mikeya Brown: So, let me ask you, we talked [0:42:00] and talked about so many things that the residents of West Grove have asked for. Have you guys seen anything that you have asked for come to fruition here in West Grove?

[0:42:16] Reynold Martin: Yes. I've seen construction come and housing come, but it has not come for us, you know, and that's a problem. It's come, it would be a savior if these things were available or more available to people of color. Affordability is the key. And I guess that's part of the problem. When you build these things, they have to be sustained, and with the kind of incomes that our people have, you can't—look for low-income people to sustain, you know, high end facilities.

[0:42:55] Clarice Cooper: Yeah, well, that's the message that we have to continue to get across there. You want to do things, you want to help, but look around, these people are not equipped to be helped in the way that you think that they can go and buy a three-quarters of a million townhouse or, you know, condo something. And that's when we run into a problem with that too, which also leads me back to how most people in the community, whether what level they're on, you know, financially should be more involved in what goes on in the community and try to stay aware of what's coming down the pipe. Like if you hear they're going to build houses and you want to get a house, will you prepare yourself to be able to get a house or an apartment. Because we do have a big project that's being constructed right now on the corner of the southwest corner of Thirty-Seventh Avenue and US-One, Platform 3750. And they're going to be 192 units in that residential units and seventy-nine have been earmarked for affordable housing. And we'll see, because that's federal funds, there can't be any local preferences there. So what we are trying to do is to get our people in place [0:44:00] to be able to fill out the applications and whatever, because once you have that kind of lack of knowledge, then, you know, we will be back that nobody from this community of very little people from this community will be able to take advantage of what's going to be available as far as affordable units.

[0:44:18] Reynold Martin: The interesting thing there is affordability in their plan, but only at the workforce level. And that that kind of bothers me because at one time they were talking about, ELI—

[0:44:30] Clarice Cooper: ELI, yeah, that's Extremely Low Income, yeah.



[0:44:32] Reynold Martin: —but the only affordability that's being provided in these seventy-nine units is workforce housing. For teachers and police officers—

[0:44:42] Clarice Cooper: Yeah, teachers and police officers.

[0:44:44] Reynold Martin: But not for folks that make salaries, you know, below that, which tend to characterize the people in our community.

[0:44:51] Mikeya Brown: And what was there before this development on Thirty-Seventh, Douglas Road and US-1? What occupied that space before they decided to approve this new development?

[0:45:07] Clarice Cooper: It was a county-owned building, the Human Resource Center, which had the—had a myriad of services there. And now they're temporarily placed on the southeast corner of Grand and Douglas, where Helen McGill is—she's the center director there. Yeah. And they're supposed to be going back into that building but occupied a very small space.

[0:45:30] Reynold Martin: And it was a grocery store, too.

[0:45:31] Clarice Cooper: It was a grocery store, yeah. That was back in the late sixties.

[0:45:33] Reynold Martin: Back in the day.

[0:45:35] Clarice Cooper: It was a grocery store. Yeah. But it did—

[0:45:37] Reynold Martin: A service center, the grocery store didn't work. But it's been a community service center.

[0:45:41] Mikeya Brown: So, now what do you feel is a serious threat to West Coconut Grove?

[0:45:52] Clarice Cooper: I would say the apathy among its residents.

[0:45:53] Reynold Martin: We are our own worst enemy.

[0:45:54] Clarice Cooper: Yeah, exactly. Yeah.

[0:45:48] Reynold Martin: Yeah. But unfortunately, we're our own worst enemies.

[0:46:00] Clarice Cooper: Like we try to get people engaged in the organizations that we're involved in—it used to have like standing room only at the meetings—and now that's like pulling teeth or whatever. And I know we've gone through, oh, still in the pandemic, but even before that we had difficulty.

[0:46:15] Reynold Martin: And you can't say they don't care because they always ask me, "Well, what are you all doing? What you all doing?" Wait a minute. You all are us! We're in this together.

[0:46:26] Clarice Cooper: But if we have more people involved it would be less taxing for us too, you know, just saying, we aren't getting any older—I mean younger. And then that's not good.

[0:46:36] Reynold Martin: It's like find the ballot, everybody's there, you know cheering you on. You say, "Let's go!" and you turn around and there's nobody there.

[0:46:43] Clarice Cooper: Nobody's there, yeah.

[0:46:44] Reynold Martin: "We got your back Reynold!" But ain't nobody there! Wow!

[0:46:46] Yasmine Northern: I know you mentioned earlier the involvement of the Black church. How has that relationship evolved in terms of the Black church getting the community together and doing community work?

[0:47:02] Clarice Cooper: Well, what's happened in this neighborhood has happened like in other areas—Overtown, Liberty City, Miami Gardens, Goulds, Richmond Heights—most of the churches, including this very one where we're sitting—and we have several churches here in this neighborhood that over a hundred years old, Saint James, Christ Episcopal Church, Greater Saint Paul, Macedonia—all those churches are over one hundred years old. So that speaks volumes. But most of their members do not reside in West Coconut Grove. These people come to services, and they may come to Bible study, and then choir rehearsal and then they leave. These people are involved in other communities where they live and work and play, you know, they worship here. And so that's the other thing. Before, everybody lived here for the most part, but as Miami Dade County became larger and there was more housing development, people started moving out because they wanted better living conditions and whatever. So as far as church youth groups [0:48:00], do you have one at your church?

[0:48:02] Reynold Martin: No.

[0:48:03] Clarice Cooper: Yeah, you see, those were like bedrocks on the community and now a lot of that doesn't exist or, if it exists, it's like through a summer program, something that's very temporary when before it was a mainstay. And so, that that's kind of messed us up too. And like Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, they were plentiful one time here. They don't pretty much exist anymore. But you do have like through athletics, like, you know, the club that you work with, the optimist and stuff. Yeah, yeah. They have programs like that. So, they're trying to reach kids at that level, but it's still not where they could be.

[0:48:35] Reynold Martin: Pooling our resources and try to reach out to the kids that are still here and enhance the opportunities.

[0:48:42:] Jacob Mcgee: For these institutions, these churches that have been here for several decades, a hundred years even, what's happened is the denominations are now regionally removed from the actual locations of the churches. When—I want to know if originally they were local members of the Grove that would attend church and now it's is it their descendants who are now living outside of the community?

[0:49:18] Reynold Martin: My son in Chicago, he's actively involved in his church. And unfortunately, the field that he's in—finance—you know, you can't find the kind of job in this area where he's found in the Chicago area. But I do know that if he was here, he'd be actively involved in the church. So, these folks that came up in churches in this community and involved lifestyles in this community, they take that knowledge and experience and exposure where they now live and apply it there. Unfortunately for us, we're left with those that [0:50:00] tend to offer a little less than what we expect from our brightest and our best.

[0:50:08] Mikeya Brown: We talked a lot about threats, and you know what West Grove needed. But let's move to threats of disaster, whether it be hurricanes or health disasters in West Grove. Have you guys ever faced any that have caused West Grove to slowly deteriorate?

[0:50:35] Clarice Cooper: Well, we had Hurricane Andrew back in 1992 and then we had Katrina in 2005. We had Irma a few years ago. The community seems to have come together to help each other. Like I saw a lot of neighbors helping neighbors that you would hear like on the TV news shows and stuff—we had a lot of that, and we did get a lot of cooperation from our social service agencies and also from our elected officials. The other thing is when you're out of power and water and telephone services, that can be annoying; as we all know, those amenities that we kind of like take for granted, even though we pay for that, we do take it for granted. We've had some services slow to be restored, but of course we stayed on top of that as well. You have any problems with what we've had? And that we had to wait like a long time for Andrew. That was one that we hadn't gotten in a very long time, like a big catastrophe because that was a Cat four—category four or five or whatever.

[0:51:43] Reynold Martin: You know, we also have a group called CERT—Community Emergency Response Team—which she chairs. We get community members to be trained to assist in the problems that the community may have. My experience had been in the fire service [0:52:00], so I said, "You know, I'm certainly going to be a part of CERT because I think I've got a lot to offer." Not only do I have some skills that I got through training, I'm an active young guy that can still do some things and offer some things. And maybe I can encourage someone who see me herding to come out and help out as well. But I enjoyed CERT. The pandemic has brought us together to do some things, to reach out and help one another. You know, when you have these kinds of calamities, it make a people come together.

[0:52:35] Clarice Cooper: And just for the record, CERT stands for Community Emergency Response Team. And our team here in West Grove got started back in 2014 and we've been active ever since. And that was thinking about we got to get to work because June first is tomorrow and that starts the hurricane season. Yeah, and we work very closely with the

response people, emergency and disaster people, with the county and the city. Yeah. And so, we should be having a meeting soon. I mean, real soon because we have like about fourteen, fifteen members. We were trying to build up our membership to thirty people. But then, you know, we've had some people moved away. We had a few members who died. So, you know, that kind of stuff, the natural attrition. So yeah.

[0:53:20] Alexa Ramos: Specific to the COVID-19 pandemic, what are things that the community did to kind of help each other and pull through this difficult time? And then what was the governmental response in the West Grove to the COVID-19 pandemic? Did you guys receive any support?

[0:53:35] Clarice Cooper: Yeah, well, we did have social service agencies did offer the testing and also testing for COVID itself and then for the antibodies, and then we also had services available to receive the vaccine and the boosters and referrals were made if it wasn't available here. We also get, you know, referrals to other parts of the community—other parts of the county or city. Yeah [0:54:00]. And then also, as far as food and housing, I remember when Cynthia was with the commissioner's office that they did establish a program for people to have meals delivered to them every day and that went on for a period of time. That was in the initial phase—continued to work for several months. And that did help a lot of people out because, you know, a lot of the stores and public places were closed, and people didn't have access to. So, the response was pretty good. It was just the wearing of the mask, and the observation of the CDC guidelines was a problem that you would have, you know, when you would encounter people who in the street and elsewhere who wouldn't adhere to those rules. And we figured the sooner we get people to—the more we got people to adhere to those guidelines—the quicker we'd be out of the situation, which I don't know if we'll ever be, I don't know.

[0:54:53] Reynold Martin: Public education, I think, yeah, it was lacking. I think a lot of our people don't understand what's going on with COVID. I think they could do a whole lot more with public education.

[0:55:04] Clarice Cooper: And especially in a community like this, because I actually hear people on the street say, "They don't care about Black people." You know, "They don't care about us." You know, "They don't care if we get it." And a lot of people thought it was a racial thing anyway. The way that that came from, I don't know. But that's when people are not aware of what's going on and then they formulate their own opinions about things.

[0:55:23] Reynold Martin: Unfortunately, yes.

[0:55:24] Clarice Cooper: Unfortunately and fortunately.

[0:55:30] Yasmine Northern: I would ask, what would you say about, I guess, the mental health crisis? Would you say that there is one in this community? How has it how have you seen it evolve? I know earlier you mentioned drugs. And so, like, there's the one aspect of people who sell drugs, but then there's the aspect of people who take that. So, there could be things like

mental health issues, that sort of thing. What would you say is the status of mental health, the mental health crisis [0:56:00] in this community?

[0:56:03] Clarice Cooper: Oh, about the way it is on a national level—it is more than it used to be, you know, for it was even obvious to just the naked eye. Mental health crisis is something that I think is a global problem. I don't think enough money has been earmarked for it, allocated for it at all levels, local, national, state or whatever. I think that needs to be—we need more education about that, and more training should be done by our law enforcement agencies and I think of a lot of different things because I'm not—I'm just as guilty of anybody else if you want to call it guilt of thinking that that plays a role to the depending on what color you are. Because like the guy in Buffalo who went in to—where did he go? Into Tops Supermarket? If he were Black, he wouldn't be around to tell that story. He would have been killed, just like the guy in Uvalde, Texas. And so, that's why the law enforcement people need to be trained better about that, too, about the mental health problems.

[0:57:03] Reynold Martin: Mental health, the tip of the iceberg; there's so many things involving mental health that we don't know about. And it's an area that we need to pay more attention to our kids, you know, the labeling—we try to avoid labels when in fact—when you submit to labels, sometimes it's beneficial. So many folks go through school without knowing they had some learning disabilities. And if they had, you know, known more about it, they might enhance their educational opportunities. So, it all has to do with being exposed to mental health issues.

[0:57:47] Clarice Cooper: Yeah. And I'm a firm believer that the substance abuse crisis that we've gone through and still are going through, that that has created mental health problems, because, I mean, that puts people with a lot of altered states [0:58:00] that haven't been dealt with or treated or whatever. And see, we don't have mental health treatment as largely as we should have and that's why. And then the access to guns, like the gun control would be—gun control lobbies like the NRA and people like that—that I wish the two parties—because we do have a bicameral legislature —that they could get together and try to work out something on a national level because seems like the states and the local people are doing more to get that in line than the federal people are.

[0:58:28] Jacob Mcgee: And so, both in these situations of acute disaster, whether it be hurricanes or in situations of perpetual crises relating to substance abuse and under-housing, it seems that a lot of the main factor in success or curtailing the effects of these issues comes back to education and the education that people have going into facing these problems. And would you say that the education that people do have, do get here, public education, does it do enough to direct them towards the local resources already established, which are very much in a "use it or lose it" situation. The less people know about the CERT and other organizations, the less they're prioritized and the more dependent on people who are too tired to carry them by themselves.

[0:59:35] Reynold Martin: Education is a game changer. I think public education can accomplish a lot depending on the people utilizing it. I think my kids, because of the exposure that my wife

and I had, went to public education, and got a lot of it that other kids may not because of the lack of, I say, mentorship and support [1:00:00] systems provided to them, they're able to accomplish, but there's nothing wrong with public education per se. You can still accomplish a lot through public education, but we need a lot of support so that our kids can get more out of it than what they are getting.

[01:00:17] Clarice Cooper: And I believe the school dropout rate is still pretty high. It is at levels where it shouldn't be, and that's also a destructive force in the community because without knowledge and education, you know, you're bound to fail. Yeah, you're bound to fail.

[01:00:32] Mikeya Brown: To close it out—and this has been a wonderful podcast—and you know, you could go on and on because it's so much that we want to know. But just to close it out, my last question to you guys and excuse me for my voice is, what will protect or what do you feel will protect your community against these threats that you guys spoke about? And now that you have the power, you had the mic for millions to hear you, what would you like to say that will protect you against these threats and help West Coconut Grove thrive back to what it used to be?

[01:01:16] Clarice Cooper: Well, I still it's going to be like people like ourselves that we still try to draw on as many people who are still left here to get them civically involved and get their children involved and show them to try to explain to them how it was important that we keep this all going. Because right now we have the threat of gentrification, and everybody talks about us preserving our legacy here, but that can't be done if people are just going to sit home and not do anything. You have to get involved and you have to find out about as much of it as you can. And so, for as long as people like Reynold and myself and some of the colleagues are around and able to do things, I think we can make some little amount of progress, but I would like to see more made. So that's why our task is always ongoing and that's the way we [1:02:00] consider it because like today—we're retired people, you know, and we give of ourselves just about every day of the week, you know, our churches, our organizations, our families. And we do care about Coconut Grove. We do. This is a great community.

[01:02:16] Reynold Martin: God, God bless America and God bless Coconut Grove. It is going to be an act of God to get us out of the mess that we're in, not just Coconut Grove, but the whole country. We are slipping and slipping bad. Everyone is looking to America. Who is America looking to? Let's look, let's look to God. You know, God bless America and God bless Coconut Grove.

[01:02:39] Mikeya Brown: So, I would like to thank you guys for taking a time out today and being here with us and giving us so much knowledge and positivity and hope. And my closing remark is that hopefully we get that back and we restore what was once was here. And I will let everyone close out in closing remarks of whatever they would like to say.

[01:03:04] Clarice Cooper: Well, it was a pleasure for me. I enjoyed the session and I think we should have more like this. Yeah.

[01:03:10] Reynold Martin: Same here. I think we need to do more of this with our seniors because we're losing our history, and one way to preserve the history is through oral conversation of this nature, you know, that are a recorded and retained.

[01:03:28] Jacob Mcgee: I second your previous statement that civic engagement begins in rooms where people are communicating about the lack of civic engagement. And so, if we recognize that perhaps we could call the poverty of our situation, we're just that much closer to seeing what brings us out of that, what develops, not just [01:04:00] physical resilience, but cultural and spiritual resilience going forward.

[01:04:09] Yasmine Northern: Thank you so much for your wisdom and your candor and just being open to answering questions and sharing your story. I personally really appreciate it and I'm sure that the listeners will as well.

[01:04:25] Alexa Ramos: Yeah. Thank you so much. It's been a pleasure. As a Miami resident, I think it's so important to learn about the different parts of Miami and their history and want to preserve them for what they are. Not necessarily because they may apply to me or, you know, involve some part of my heritage, but because this is the city that I love and caring about its residents and caring for the well-being of all of its residents and ensuring that their interests are being looked after is just something very important that I think more people in the city that is rapidly changing should be willing to do. So, thank you so much. It's been a pleasure.

[01:05:05] Reynold Martin: Thanks for having me.

[01:05:06] Clarice Cooper: Thanks for having us.

*end of interview*