

# ZEPHYRHILLS ORAL HISTORY

## INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Liz Geiger & Lance Smith

Recorded February 15, 2019

Steve [Spina]: Could you just introduce yourself and uh, tell us a little bit about where you came from.

Liz: Okay. My name is Elizabeth Geiger. I go by the nickname of Liz. I served on city council for 14 years. Started in 1992. I was originally from the state of Virginia. I came to this area in 1963 when I married my husband, John Geiger, who was a native of Dade City, Florida.

Steve: Thank you. So, in 2003, Mrs. [Irene] Dobson came to city council with a letter asking to rename Sixth Street after Martin Luther King, and you sat on the council then. What was your reaction to that letter and what did you think of her requests?

Liz: Okay. I remember Irene Dobson coming to the council with the request. Also, I remember before that, that the city manager, Steve Spina, called me and said, "Liz, I talked to Irene Dobson. She would like for us to name a street in Zephyrhills after Martin Luther King, Jr." And I said, "Oh, okay." And so we talked a little bit about it. And then it came up before the city council and she made the request, and I don't think we acted on it that night. I think it was the next one. I'm not sure. But we did talk about it, and then a motion was made and seconded that we wanted to do this. We wanted to to name Sixth Avenue after Martin Luther King, Jr., in honor of him. And the vote was taken and the vote was four to one. And I remember after that, [thinking], "Well, that wasn't as hard as I thought it was going to be." I mean, I thought that there would be a lot of discussion and a lot of opposition, but it seemed to be that the four members on the council didn't have any problem with it. I remember one person said, "Well, I never really thought about it, but I guess it's okay with me." And so, when the vote was taken, it was four to one.

### BREAK

Steve: So, as you mentioned, the vote was four to one, and it seemed to kind of be a non-issue at the time. Then, the next day, as word started getting around, you had some citizen reaction. It wasn't totally positive. What happened then?

Liz: Okay. I think the next day, what happened was: there was a group of citizens, they were circulating a petition to recall the four of us that had voted in favor of naming the street, and people that I'd known for several years were a part of it, these people that were circulating that petition. Some of the people were people from the downtown area—businesses downtown—and probably some people that lived on the street itself.

Steve: So, it came back to council at that point. And then there was a change of the vote.

Liz: Yes, yes. When it came back to council, I guess we re-voted—I don't know the procedure right now—but it became a three-two vote and three of us were still in favor of naming the street and two of us were now against it.

Steve: And then what happened? After that kind of quieted down for a little while? I think it picked back up in February. That was kind of October, [when the initial vote occurred] and then election time you started qualifying...

Liz: So we're still three to two. Yeah. Right. And then it became an issue that election.

Steve: Thanks. I think it kind of died out and Kathy brought it back up because she wanted to change your vote. And then it kind of went away. The three of you stayed, and then qualifying time it changed again. So, after the initial vote, then began some citizen concern and it ended up that the issue came back to city council—that was brought up by one of the council members.

Liz: Okay. The issue came back to city council and one of the council members wanted to revisit the vote and re-raise it. We revisited the vote, and now the vote was three to two: three people wanted to name the street Martin Luther King, Jr., and two people were against it. And then, somewhere along in there, there was a recall petition going around. And after that it kind of died down for a while and nothing came of the recall petition. But what did happen was, very soon, a couple of months later, we had to qualify to run for election again. And it became an issue during the election.

Steve: So you had two people who were up for reelection, you and Councilman Smith. And then you both drew opposition.

Liz: Yes. During that election, Lance Smith, who was on the city council and in favor of naming the street, and myself were up for election. We qualified to run. And lo and behold, we both had opposition, and that became an issue. The naming of the street became an issue.

Steve: So the other two candidates ran on that issue. What were their arguments?

Liz: Well, I don't remember so much the arguments that they made during the election, but there were several different arguments that were made. The two most common ones were, if you named a street Martin Luther King, Jr., that name alone would cause the property values of the houses and the property there to decrease. And that was one issue that was used over and over again. Another issue was the fact that we had streets and avenues laid out as a grid. And they were numbered one, two, three, four. We had these numbers for the streets and we had these numbers for the avenues. And if we moved Sixth Avenue, it would just tear up the grid. Nobody would know how to get from Fifth Avenue to Seventh Avenue if we didn't have a Sixth Avenue in there. And a lot of times when people came before city council in opposition to this, they brought this up, that historically this had been Sixth Avenue. You could not take Sixth Avenue away. And very soon this concept, we called it "the Holy Grid." We had to maintain "the Holy Grid," because we could not take away Sixth Avenue.

Steve: Yeah. The reason Mrs. Dobson had selected Sixth Avenue was because it led into the historically black area that we had talked about earlier that had been kept outside the city limits and was a segregated area of town.

Liz: Yes. The reason that Sixth Avenue was chosen was because Sixth Avenue connected what had traditionally been known as the black community, which was across the railroad tracks, to the downtown area, running parallel to Fifth Avenue. And, basically, the black community was not inside the city limits. They had never been inside the city limits. I think at one time it was considered, but the black community was never annexed into the city.

Steve: What were your reasons for supporting the street name?

Liz: Well, I supported naming the street Martin Luther King, Jr. because other cities had done this. And I think it's important for black children and young people to also have heroes and people that they can see and look up to. And this was a visible way. If they walked down that street or if you travel down that street, you see a name of a person that is their hero.

Steve: What happened in the election?

Liz: [Laughs] Oh, the election was something else. We had several places that we visited making speeches, and it was on election night. Election day was very heated and there were people that came down to the polls to vote that I had never seen before. This was probably about my fourth or fifth election, and there were people that showed up that I'd never seen before. And I began to suspect that the election would not turn out the way I thought it was going to turn out. And so, that night, I had a party in a restaurant downtown, and I think Lance Smith had one, probably over at his club house. I don't know where his was, but I remember getting a call that said, "You won, but you won by only one vote."

Steve: And they had to have a recount, didn't they?

Liz: Yes. And a part of that, then there was a second call that said that I had to go somewhere the next day to the Supervisor of Elections office, and there was going to be a recount.

Steve: And Lance was defeated in that.

Liz: Yes, he was defeated.

Steve: So, the next council meeting after the election, the street name was back on the agenda, is that right?

Liz: Well, the street name came back on the agenda. I don't know whether it was at the next city council meeting or not. But what had happened is: somebody had discovered an ordinance, that outlined some procedure for naming a street. And, basically, it said that the city council could name a street, but one way to get a street name was that a person who lived in that area or lived on that street could circulate a petition to get the street name change. And the point was that Mrs. Irene Dobson lived outside the city limits—didn't live on the street—and, therefore, we could not honor her petition. I kind of argued and said, "That's one way you could name a street. Not the only way." That city council still retained the right to name a street.

Steve: Right. So eventually it came back down to vote, and with the new councilperson, what happened then?

Liz: Well, with the new council person, the vote was going to be (I believe) three to two, just the other way around. And I guess we took a vote, and it was three to two, and of course then I was on the losing side. It seems like somewhere along the way after that, there was a committee formed to look at different ways that we could honor Martin Luther King, Jr. It seemed like I was on a committee with four other people, but I don't remember their names. I'm sure it was members of the black community, and some of the things that we considered was naming a room in the public library after Martin Luther King, Jr., but I think, at that point, the black community would see something like that as less than naming a street after Martin Luther King, Jr. They would see it as something less than what they wanted, something less than what other cities had done.

Steve: So, the final result was that you took to the council and you agreed to name the street an honorary name.

Liz: Yes. What was finally the end result of it all? When we went to vote on the issue, the motion was to keep the name Sixth Avenue and I moved to amend that motion to say yes, we keep the name Sixth Avenue, but we'd also put on the street sign, "In honor of Martin Luther King." We'd put a sign with his name on it, so the street signs would have two names on it: Sixth Avenue and Martin Luther King, Jr. Of course, that was a compromise. Didn't make either group really happy.

Steve: Were you surprised by the community reaction to this? The election turnout and just some of the comments?

Liz: Yeah, I was surprised. I guess the thing that surprised me the most is how well they couched their opposition to the name of the street. It was never about race. It was just these other issues: that we'd get lost from going from Fifth Avenue to Seventh Avenue or, oh, just that by having the name there, it would mean that my property value was going down. I was surprised that people were not more accommodating and wanting to make the black community a part of our city. I do remember that one person spoke at city council and forgot the rules. It's as if everybody in opposition had been coached to say everything except, you know, "We don't want the street named after a black person." And this one woman said, "Well, if I'd wanted to move into an integrated area, I would have, but I chose to live on Sixth Avenue, where I would have white residents beside me." And it's almost like there was a GASP. "What is she saying? We're not supposed to be talking about race issues. This is about the name of a street." And I also remember that somebody brought up the fact that, over in the black community, there was a street already named King, and so they already had a street named, King, so we didn't need to name another street after Mr. King.

Steve: So they're kind of grasping at straws, or any excuse, other than race, to oppose the street.

Liz: Yeah. There wasn't really any legitimate issue that could not be refuted by facts, because I think that there was no information or facts [brought to city council] that supported the idea that just because a street had the name of a black person that would automatically lower property values. But, of course, that was one thing they wanted to cling to.

Production: One question I want to ask each of you individually: If you encountered the same issue today, would you do anything differently?

Liz: Well, if this issue came up today, I think it would be a whole different ballgame, because, like I said, back in that time, there was a political correctness about not mentioning that this was an issue that had to do with race. Today, I would think it would be quite different, because it seems like we have more people that are identifying as white supremacists and there's no shame to that. So I think it would be a much more difficult situation than it was even then. Would I do anything different? No. I think it was a good idea. I think there was nothing wrong with it. I think we should have a street named Martin Luther King, Jr. And the only thing I would do different is I'd just be more vocal. I would call some of these people out. I was also a part of the group that tried to be politically correct and not say, you know, "You're prejudiced!" But in my mind, that's what I thought. The only other thing that I would do is, maybe along at the end when we had that committee and we did the compromise with the naming of the street, we probably should have recommended more. We should probably have done that and also recommended that a room the library be named after Martin Luther King, Jr., because, if I think back on it, especially with our new library today, if we had something like that, it could be probably more meaningful than just naming the street Martin Luther King, Jr. We could have an area of black history. We could have a bust of Martin Luther King, Jr. We could have photos of the black community in Zephyrhills, and it would be a part of a city building in Zephyrhills.

### **BREAK**

Steve: We're just talking about the naming of the street after Martin Luther King. What was your initial thought when Irene Dobson came to city council and asked to have Sixth Avenue renamed Martin Luther King?

Lance: When Mrs. Dobson came and asked about Sixth Avenue, I was like, "Sure. That's a great idea."

Steve: Tell me your name and where you were born.

Lance: I'm Lance Smith. I was born at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Dade City, Florida. Slaughterhouse. I lived here my whole life. Except for four years—well, four and a half years—in Gainesville.

Steve: All right. What was your first reaction when Mrs. Dobson asked about naming the street?

Lance: Well, when she came to us—I mean, I grew up here. I played baseball with a lot of the folks that live over there, and I was more than happy to go ahead and bring it forward, and I thought it was a good idea. The Giles, I know tons of them, and they live off of Sixth Avenue. I thought it was a great idea and Mrs. Dobson bringing it forward gave it more credibility to me.

Steve: Were you surprised after the initial vote that the reaction around town turned out to be pretty negative?

Lance: Yes. Disappointed is what I would say because I kept rolling it over and they had the excuses of "we want to keep the grid intact" and they asked me, "How would you like to live on Martin Luther King Street?" I said, "It wouldn't bother me a bit," and it wouldn't bother me a bit. I thought about it and I liked to have thought that we were above that, but the only thing I could boil it down to be was that people who were against it were racist. Pretty simple.

Steve: It started in 2003 but it came back up with the qualifying and election time in 2004. So how did you campaign, or how did the street impact what your re-election campaign was?

Lance: I had a lot of friends who didn't like the renaming, too, which, again, surprised me when we talked about the re-election coming up. It was a definitely a campaign issue, and I think the people that ran against Liz and I were one-issue candidates. That's the only thing they really cared about: we don't want that street named Martin Luther King Street. So really, when you think about it, all the good that we had done on council and they boil their decision down to the naming of a street. It's kind of disappointing.

Steve: You were defeated in that campaign and kind of sidelined, I guess, for some of the initial reactions of this—leaving the street or actually naming it back to Sixth Avenue. What was your thoughts at that time?

Lance: Actually, we did have some of the controversy come down when I was still on the council and I was council president. I can remember the packed house. We had reporters from *The New York Times*, and, actually, they interviewed my dad. He was interviewed by *The New York Times* asking about this. So I got a lot of that. And, again, it was all negative. It just didn't portray Zephyrhills as the town I grew up in. But, you know, maybe I was a little naive as well. Afterwards, in the campaign itself, it was definitely a big issue. Once that was over with, I lost. I got defeated pretty soundly. I felt bad for a day, but I went on, you know.

Steve: You decided to run for council again several years later and you were re-elected. You've been re-elected subsequently. So, obviously, there's been no lingering effect. How do you look at that in terms of, maybe, some growths in the community, or changing?

Lance: Well, I am on council now, and I've been re-elected several terms. I appreciate that. It means that the community has some faith in my decision making, but I'm not so sure that if the same thing was raised again, it wouldn't be the same results. I don't know that for a fact, because I was so naive before, thinking, "This is going to be a good thing. Everybody will embrace it." And in fact, it was not embraced at all.

Steve: How would would you do it over again?

Lance: I'd do the same thing. I think I would be a little more vocal about my reason that somebody would be against it, you know? I'd campaign a little differently, too, because since that time my campaigns have been contentious, which has kind of battle tested me, and I think I'd run a much better campaign.

Steve: You mentioned before, in times that we've talked, that you've noticed the segregation of Zephyrhills in the older days. It occurred to you during this time that the black community really hadn't asked for much. That was some of your thought process.

Lance: You know, that's it. Just because they're outside the city...they go to our schools, they play on our Little League teams. The people that surround the city are from Zephyrhills, too, in my opinion. They might not live right in the city limits, but they're still from Zephyrhills. So they are Zephyrhillians, and it's very common, even now, that somebody outside the city comes and asks for something. We certainly listen to them and we listen to what they say. The black community had never asked for very much that I had known of, and this little gesture was the least we can do for them. I would do the same thing, but I think I would be a little smarter about it. I think I would try and do more education about just what we said. They're our neighbors. They're from Zephyrhills. We've grown up with the people that are making the request. And I don't think it's too much to do for them. I think we need to do as much as we

can for all of our neighbors, black or white or Hispanic, whatever they are. I don't really look at people classified by that. I never have. I've told you before, when I was going to University of Florida, somebody made a comment about a kid that was on our floor and said, "Well, he's Jewish." And I was like, "Really? I didn't even know." I don't know. It just never dawned on me to think about trying to segregate people into their race or their religion or anything like that. I grew up on the farm and we had black work hands, white work hands, Hispanic work hands. And I played with all of them, their kids. I went to school with all their kids and I went over to their house for birthday parties and they spent the night at my house. I grew up differently, I think, than maybe some people did.

Steve: One final thing and we'll put you together [with Liz]. We've witnessed changes in Zephyrhills in terms of less division, I think, but also, talk about Reggie a little bit, and some of the changes you've seen with staffing and promotions and how that's worked.

Lance: You know, I'm real happy that Zephyrhills has progressed as we have. One thing I will say is that I had a son 10 years after my youngest daughter, so I was taking my kids to elementary school for say 15, 20 years, and in that time, the demographics in Zephyrhills have changed dramatically. And I'm glad that our city work force has changed the same way. Reggie Roberts, as you mentioned, is a captain at the police department. The black people that are in our workforce are great people and I grew up with a lot of them. And we're working towards more Spanish-speaking people. So the demographics have changed and the city's got to change with it. And, I'll be honest with you: you still look up on council and there's a bunch of white faces. At some point that's probably going to need to change, too.

Production: All of the negative feelings that have been kind of sitting in the black community since this issue: Do you think those feelings are justified?

Lance: Well, I think there should be some resentment. I do. If all you're coming to ask for is the renaming of a street and it causes such an uproar...I mean, just imagine if it would have been something substantive, you know. It makes me think. You know, we're doing a project over in the area of doing sewer and water. We're extending sewer and water [across the tracks to unincorporated Pasco County]. So, of course, that's different. That's different than changing the name of the street I live on. It makes it a little more personal when it's that. I think the black community was definitely justified. I hope we've made some strides. But I don't know. I really am not sure. I scratch my head. I know that, for one thing, my children would have a different reaction than my generation had. I do know that, which is a good thing. I think that the younger black people would have a different reaction. I think it's less of an issue now, but, again, it would be interesting to see, if it came up again, what happened.

## **BREAK**

Steve: Lance, You had touched on *The New York Times* being here, and national TV crews, when you had alt-Right people coming in and protesting and the African-American community picketing City Hall when they were going to talk about changing the name again. What was that like, to be a council member and have people picketing City Hall and national TV crews here?

Lance: Of course, it's a little overwhelming at first when you go out there and you see all the people. But I had walked over there, actually, and talked to some of the black people that were picketing there, and it was more like a social event there. When you went out into it, it wasn't

contentious. It was just like they were supporting their cause, but now you see on the TV where it's very contentious between the two parties. It was overwhelming, for sure, when we went out there and saw so many people.

Liz: But it wasn't just black people out there. They had some support from the white community also. And so it was kind of like a little rally out there. You know, they were standing around and talking to each other, and it was nothing like walking through a picket line or anything like that. It's nothing like you'd be afraid to be there or anything. It was a nice little quiet rally.

Lance: Right. Yeah.

Steve: Now, the other council woman who voted in favor of the street was Celia Graham. Her 16-year-old son picketed on behalf of the street naming, too. Remember that?

Liz: Yeah. Yeah. Nick Graham would stand out there with them. I think also Jerry Pritcher: he was always a radical, too. He was for what was right. He didn't care, you know, who it offended. He had a value system.

Steve: You've mentioned that you were a high school teacher, [Liz].

Liz: Yeah. I started teaching in Dade City, and shortly after I started teaching in Dade City, they allowed black students that petitioned to come to the school. They could come to the school. And so there were some parents, black parents, that were teachers in the black school that encouraged and wanted their children to come to the white schools, because they knew that the white schools were better. So I had three or four [black] children in my class the second or third year I taught. And then, of course, later, they integrated the schools. We had black teachers along with white teachers. And to me, I didn't see any difference. We'd have parties after school on Friday afternoon. Black teachers would be there if they wanted to be there. I went to conventions and partied with everybody and went to all the sessions together. So I just never really saw things the way some of the people here in Zephyrhills saw it.

Steve: How hard was the integration on the black students when they started coming in? Did you see any difference in how they were either treated or how they caught up?

Liz: The first ones were assimilated fairly well. One of the students was a black boy that was on the basketball team. So he was accepted with open arms. The other two students I had, they got along well. There was no problem with behavior or anything like that, or anything between the white and the black students. I did notice that, two or three years later, I'm in class, and here's this white girl combing this black girls' hair. I mean, kids get along with kids. It's the parents that cause the problems. It didn't take long for them to assimilate and be a part of the group and just a bunch of kids, a bunch of students.

Steve: Lance, do you remember that?

Lance: When I was going to school here, there was always a segregation of sorts. It was more of: the rednecks are over here, the blacks are over here—in the commons area—the jocks are over here. So, it was segregated, not necessarily by race, but by your social status at the high school.

Steve: By the time you went to high school it was already integrated.



Lance: We had a very small population of minorities. I mean, very few Hispanics, you know, maybe 5% black. And I think we had two or three Asian students there. It was mainly white.

Steve: That was one of the things Marcus McCants talked to us about. Sometimes being the only black student in the class.

Liz: Yes.

Steve: And that was a little—not unnerving, but you were different.

Lance: Sure.

Steve: You know, *Huckleberry Finn* would be read, and then he would kind of feel a little awkward.

Lance: Right.

Steve: So there was, I guess, some cultural assimilation, too.

Lance: Sure. I mean it would be the same for anybody, no matter where. We had gone on a trip to Japan. Being the only white person in a sea of Japanese people...it's just...you're a little lost. I can understand him feeling that way. Not to mention he's at [home]. We were just there on a visit.

Liz: I can remember one example of where I was in the minority. I had a teacher friend, and she and I signed up to take this course at the community college. It was a course that was based on the book *Roots*. You remember that?

Lance: Sure.

Liz: So it turned out we were the only two white people in the course. The rest of the students were black and the instructor was black. That was a little bit of a different situation.

Lance: Right. And you kind of felt like an outsider because you were on the outside looking in.

Production: Going back to the Martin Luther King thing from a city council point of view: Were there ever any conversations between the council members—kind of outside of the meetings—about it, or was just kind of—Oh, you're not allowed [due to the “sunshine laws”]. Okay.

Liz: Yeah. But I can talk about what happened.

Steve: Now, Liz had mentioned being on a committee that was put together to talk about kind of calming things down and finding some solutions, but because of the “sunshine laws,” you weren't able to sit on the same committee or even talk about the issue. You had to wait until you got to a public meeting. What was that like?

Liz: Well, I can tell you, being on the city council during this time, I was one of the three [in favor of the renaming] and I was just afraid that somebody else would go to the other side. And we couldn't talk to each other. We would see each other out and be at Rotary and all of this, and you couldn't talk. So it's very difficult, because you didn't know. I just trusted that Lance was

going to hang in there and that Celia was going to hang in there and we were going to just stick it out. It was difficult even going to Rotary because, you know, people didn't talk about it at Rotary. You don't talk about things like that, but you know that some people were with you and some people were not, so it was kind of difficult to even go out socially during that time.

Lance: Right. And you knew. You just kind of felt it. It wasn't necessarily something they would say, but you just knew, of course, and you'd have somebody come up and say, "Hey, why did you do that? Why'd you vote that way?" And you would explain it to them, but they already had a preconceived notion. In their own mind, they knew it was either right or wrong. It's interesting: I told you I was in real estate. I had an agent who had a listing on Sixth Avenue the day I voted for that. The next day, the listing was pulled, and the people would tell me in real estate, "Well, you know, it's going to affect our property values." And I told him, "I've never seen an appraiser value a property based on the name of the street. Not once." You know, they don't do that. So the name of the street has no effect on the property value. No, it just doesn't. Now, you can argue that some of the depressed areas in some cities are along Martin Luther King, but individually the name of the street does not affect the property value.

Production: That's such a strange dynamic. It's almost like a "prisoner's dilemma" kind of thing, where you don't know what the other people who are on your side are being told, and you're risking being the only one standing up for something. What's that like? Like how does that make you feel?

Lance: With the "sunshine laws," we can't speak to each other outside of public meeting about anything to come before the council—which, this was before the council, renaming Sixth to Martin Luther King. I honestly—and I think that [it was the same for] Celia and Liz—it didn't matter to me. It really didn't matter. I mean, you want them to be with you, you want everybody to be with you. But the way we were at the time, even the rest of the council people, they would vote, and then you move on to the next thing. You don't hold anything against anybody for the next meeting. But in my own mind, I knew that the three that voted, we're going to just stick in there. I was sure of it, even though they didn't say anything.

Liz: And I remember the next day, when they started that recall petition, I thought, "Just let them recall me. I can't think of a better reason for being recalled." But that didn't go anywhere.

Lance: No, it didn't.

Steve: Well, I remember, too, you know, from the staff point of view, we're supposed to support council decisions. So, initially, when Mrs. Dobson brought it and we told you and recommended it from the staff, and then the vote was for it. We were kind of on the right side. When the vote changed, it was very difficult for staff to all of a sudden say, "Well, we've recommended this for nine months and now we're going to recommend the other side." We were kind of in a council-manager dilemma of: how do you support your council? Then the new council flipped on us. So it was kind of a tricky situation.

Lance: Well, you know, when you say that about the council flipping and the decisions we make, most of the other decisions I ever make, nothing's personal. Nothing. I don't take anything very personally. If you and I disagree about a vote, we just move on to the next. But for some reason, this one was a little more personal to me, and I think it's because it just opened my eyes to my own hometown [being] more racist than I thought. And it just hurt, you know? So I don't know if that one was a little more personal for you or not, [Liz], you know?

Liz: Well, yeah. I think the vote was personal and it hurt me. It hurt me that we would have a community like this. And at the same time, I was a member of the church, and some Hispanic people had petitioned to use our church for an hour a week. And I thought, "Well, that's great because it sits unused a lot of time." And I thought that was gonna pass. And then my church members turned and said, "No, we're not going to let Hispanics in our church." So you had people in the community of Zephyrhills doing this with the naming of Martin Luther King, and then you have people in my church. And I think, where is Christianity? Where are our beliefs and why don't we love one another? And what is so wrong about this? It did hurt. It hurt. It hurt that people that I knew would take that position. I just thought I knew people better, but that was an eye opener.

Lance: It was. And you're right. The church was strangely silent about the whole renaming. They didn't say anything.

Liz: Yup.

Production: Let's end on a positive note. Where do you think that Zephyrhills has come since then? Has there been any progress made towards kind of further uniting the community?

Steve: Yeah. Different positions in the city [staff]. There's one main thing.

Lance: Well, I'm just going to say this: I think the politics nationally show me that it's not got that much further than we are now. You know, it's so divided, and everybody is either extremely to the right or extremely to the left. Nobody's willing to negotiate. It makes me think we've still got a long way to go. There's been certain gains made, but there's still a large gap between [where we are and] where we need to go.

Liz: Yeah. I think today everything is very divided. And that also hurts me to see people labeled. In fact, I'm one of the ones that are labeled today. I don't like the labeling. I think we're all just people. We have different opinions. We have different ways of getting to our objective, but at the end, we're a member of the human race and we've got to remember that. I can say—not particularly here in Zephyrhills, but I know—my daughter and my granddaughter and my son and his children, there's less prejudice there. They don't see black and white. For example, my granddaughter at Stetson [University] now, she talks about her roommate. It wasn't until I went over to visit her that I realized that her roommate was black. That wasn't an issue with her. She was never described that way: "My roommate, yeah. She has a brother and we have a lot in common and you know..." Yeah. I think, if we could just leave the children alone and the parents did not indoctrinate them to hate, if they were led along the lines of love and acceptance, I think it would work out. But too bad, I think.

Lance: Yeah. I would just feel fortunate that my parents didn't ever think anything like that. Our thing was, if a person was made good decisions and was a good person, I didn't matter what color they were. They were good. They were either sorry or good. That was always my grandpa's thing. "That's a sorry individual" or "That's pretty good guy." That's the way it was. They could be black or white or Hispanic. They're either sorry or okay. I'm encouraged by the young generation. I mean, one of my girls has had a black boyfriend, which is fine with me. As long as he's a good person, I'm fine. Makes you happy. So I think we're making progress, but it's still disappointing to see what's going on today. But here in Zephyrhills, I think we're working at it. We keep working hard at it.

Production: You got anything else you want to add that we didn't cover?

Liz: Maybe we will let her do something in the library. You want to?

Lance: Maybe, I don't know. Yeah.

Steve: Maybe we could name a room after Mrs. Dobson?

Liz: Yeah, that would be nice.

Lance: Yeah. She was a great lady—Is still, but I haven't seen her in awhile.

Production: We interviewed her.

Lance: Oh, I bet that was good. She's good. Good person. Okay.

**END**