

**THE ORAL HISTORY**

**OF**

**GEORGE NEVES LEIGHTON  
RETIRED DISTRICT COURT JUDGE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

**AS TOLD TO**

**COLLINS T. FITZPATRICK,  
CIRCUIT EXECUTIVE**

**2007**

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**CTF:** This is the Oral History of former District Judge George N. Leighton.

Today is Thursday, October 11, 2001, and we are in the Conference Room of the Judicial Council of the Seventh Circuit. I am Collins Fitzpatrick, the Circuit Executive of the Seventh Circuit.

Judge Leighton, why don't you tell us a little bit about where your ancestors came from.

**GNL:** All of my ancestors were natives of the Portuguese Cape Verde Islands, an archipelago that is located approximately 275 miles west of the African continent. My paternal grandfather was Theophilus Neves Leitao, who was born in Lisbon, Portugal. My paternal grandmother was Anna Silva Evora, who was born in Angola and was brought by her parents to Brava in the Cape Verde Islands. She had seven children, including my father, Antonio Neves Leitao by Theophilus Neves Leitao. My maternal grandfather was Christiano DeSilva Garcia, who was born in Brava. He was descended from a long line of ship owners in the Cape Verde Islands. My maternal grandmother was Livramento Garcia, who like my maternal grandfather, was born in Brava. My mother was one of six children of Christiano DeSilva Garcia and his wife, Livramento. So I am descended entirely from people who either were migrants to or natives of the archipelago of the Cape

Verde Islands, a place that is now a sovereign country, one of the United Nations.

The Portuguese Cape Verde archipelago was first discovered by Spanish mariners and adventurers who worked for the King of Portugal during the period 1420 A.D. and 1560 A.D. Portuguese explorers of the period had first discovered the Dakar Peninsula, the western most projection of the African continent into the Atlantic Ocean. Portuguese sailors and mariners named this peninsula "Cabo Verde." In Portuguese, this meant "The Green Place." When the archipelago was discovered, the Portuguese named it "Iles du Cabo Verde," after the point in the Dakar Peninsula. The archipelago remained a part of Portuguese African colonies until 1975, when it and several colonial Portuguese possessions gained their independence with many of them joining the United Nations.

My father, Antonio Neves Leitao, migrated from Brava to New Bedford, Massachusetts, where at the age of 21 he arrived on May 15, 1895. My mother, from all information we have in our family, migrated to New Bedford, Massachusetts, arriving there April 17, 1907. My mother and my father met in a town near Taunton, Massachusetts, where they married on November 25, 1909 and then, moved back to New Bedford. On October 22,

1912, in a three-story wooden framed building that was then 9 Howland Street in New Bedford, my twin sister Georgina and I were born.

The significance of where my ancestors came from is that I do not have slavery in my roots. No kin of mine were ever slaves. Slavery, as that institution evolved in this country, from 1629 until 1865, never existed in the Cape Verde Islands. There was a form of indentured servitude; but it was not slavery, as such. Also, an important fact about my ancestry is that I do not have any relatives who are African-Americans. All of my relatives are Portuguese Cape Verdeans. It is true that the Portuguese, British, and perhaps the Dutch, used the Cape Verde Islands as the place where captured Africans were kept for seasoning before they were transported to South America, the Carribean Islands, and parts of the United States like Virginia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Maryland. In August 1995, I visited the Cape Verde Islands with a number of Cape Verde Americans. I learned to my chagrin, that my maternal grandfather, his father and grandfather, were owners of ships that transported captive Africans from the Cape Verde Islands to the American continent into slavery. As a well-known civil libertarian, I was shocked by this revelation.

Now, my mother and my father grew up in Brava. To what extent my mother was formally educated I'm not sure, because she never spoke

about it with us. But I knew that my father was very well educated. He was highly literate in the Portuguese language. He read and spoke Portuguese fluently. He knew the Classics. He used to tell us stories from Shakespeare, the life of Julius Caesar, Solon, and other works from the Classics. He was an avid Bible reader. In fact, he told me that he read through the Bible at least once each year. However, neither my mother nor my father spoke enough English to carry on a conversation in the English language with any one of us. And only recently I checked this with my oldest sister now, Virginia, and she confirmed the fact that she had no recollection of my mother or my father speaking with any of us in the English language. We spoke a Creole dialect of the Portuguese language, now the official tongue of the Cape Verdean people. Creole is a mixture of Portuguese words and African expressions. That's the language we spoke. In fact, I don't remember speaking English, even outside of my home, until I left to go on my own and went to college at Howard University.

Now the background I have described has certain significance. For one thing, I have no slavery background. No ancestor of mine ever was a slave. In the Cape Verde Islands, slavery never existed as that institution existed in this country from 1619 until 1865. They did have what was approximate to indentured servitude, and usually, the Africans that were

brought from Angola, Senegal, and what is now known as Liberia, were indentured servants, but they weren't slaves.

**CTF:** Were they captured by the British, the French, and the Portuguese? Were they captured by other people of Africa and then sold them to them?

**GNL:** Well, let me tell you what I have concluded after doing a great deal of research and study. I've been on the Cape Verde Islands. I've seen the place that they've described as the proving grounds for captive Africans. I believe these Africans were captured by the British, the English, the Dutch, the French, the Italians, for the simple reason that Cape Verdeans themselves didn't have the means for doing it. They didn't have the money. For example, I have some figures that at one time there were as many as 150,000 captive Africans on the Cape Verde Islands being seasoned for transportation into slavery in South America, the East and West Indies, and North America and, from what I know of Cape Verde, they didn't have the means of capturing, feeding, clothing, whatever medicine or health care that they gave them for that number of people.

**CTF:** I understand that. I wasn't thinking of capture in terms of the Cape Verdean people, but on the continent. Whether or not one tribe would capture the people of another tribe and then sell them to the British.

**GNL:** Well, that is well known. See, I studied history at Howard University and one of the blessings that occurred to me was that I made a friendship with William Leo Hansbury, who was the uncle of Lorraine Hansbury and the brother of Carl Hansbury, who in the 1950's was the "kitchenette king" in Chicago. I don't know if you have heard this. He was the one who invented the idea of taking a six-room flat and turning it into kitchenettes and he was dubbed by the news media of Chicago when I got there in 1946 as the "kitchenette king." Before I got here I knew his brother, from an entirely different light. His brother was a wonderful human being. He was an intellectual of the purest form. He was an anthropologist, he was a historian, and also he was a wonderful teacher. He taught me the history of Africa in all of its glory. He told me about Timbuktu and all the great empires of Africa. He convinced me there was never a Dark Age in Africa as there was in Europe.

The intertribal wars that took place just across into the west coast of Africa is one of the most productive forces of the captive Africans who were taken to the Cape Verde Islands for seasoning. They were captured. They were fighters. They had to break them. They did it in this fashion in the Cape Verde Islands and then transported them into slavery.

Now I tell you this because of what it did for me, the background, my contact with my father with whom I worked very closely as a boy laborer in the cranberry bogs of Cape Cod and the strawberry patches and the blueberry bushes. We were itinerant agricultural workers. My mother and father knew only one place to live and that was New Bedford. That's because it was in New Bedford that they knew they could rent a tenement in which we hibernated after we worked on the cranberry farms all summer. I have said, Collins, that we never lived in New Bedford. We hibernated there and everyone who knows the English language knows the difference between "living" and "hibernating." We stayed in New Bedford as soon as the freezing weather came. Then, as soon as the water began to melt in the cranberry industries, the bogs are flooded around November 1st in order to preserve the vines from winter. Then in early March, as soon as the thaw comes and the water melts, the water is let out from the bogs and then you can go on and weed, sand, plant, nurture. Very soon when they ripen you pick them, beginning the week after Labor Day. That's what I did from the time I was born until the day that I was big enough to take a job elsewhere. This was 1929.

Now the other factor is this. The Cape Verdean people who migrated to this country are a self-isolating ethnic group. A good deal has been written about this group. Why that is I am not sure. I think it's

because of their nature. If you were to trace the history of the Cape Verde Islands, there never has been a revolt of any kind against any force by a Cape Verdean. Now there have been invasions by the British, French, Germans of the archipelago at various times, but the natives of the Cape Verde Islands themselves have never been involved in anything that you could call a revolt.

One of the best things that I recall about my father was that he always spoke well of the Portuguese government. He never told me once any anecdote or story about any oppression, any adverse contact with any power, or government or the police. He was a patriot, a Portuguese patriot. It was in this atmosphere that I grew up in the Cape Verdean community, isolated from everybody else. In fact, Collins, I had occasion to remember and reflect upon this only recently. It wasn't until 1934 – and I was born on October 22, 1912 – but it wasn't until 1934, that I first spoke with an African-American person in this isolated community of Cape Verdeans in New Bedford. Only recently, I talked with some Cape Verdeans in New Bedford, and in large measure, it's still the same way.

**CTF:** You went to Howard for college. When was that?

**GNL:** That was in 1936.

**CTF:** So you were an older student in college.

**GNL:** That's right. I was. I have here a letter that I received dated September 3, 1935, and it was this letter that told me that I wasn't qualified to enter Howard University as a regular student because I had never gone to high school. But in this letter written by the Registrar, F.D. Wilkinson, almost as an afterthought, he told me that "...persons 21 years of age and older and of good character may enter the University for the purpose of taking courses without becoming candidates for a degree. They must prove to their instructors their ability to pursue successfully the courses they take. Such students will be subject to the same fees, discipline and entrance regulations as regular students. If it is your intention to later classify and become a candidate for a degree, please let us know. We shall then go over your record and advise you how you might proceed toward classification." Now, with this letter I left New Bedford, Massachusetts, in August 1936, and I took Mr. Wilkinson's suggestion that I enter Howard, not as a candidate for a degree, they had what they called an "unclassified" status, and I was unclassified.

**CTF:** How did you know to write to Howard or that it was a historical black college? At that time there were a good number of historical black colleges,

although I don't know any of them being in New England or the Mid-Atlantic.

**GNL:** Collins, going back to my bringing up, my growing up working on the cranberry farms and in the strawberry patches, for reasons I can't explain I never lost sight of the desire to become educated. So I struggled with various works and books in libraries, and then around 1935, soon after the Depression, I began struggling with this idea of going to college. It was when I learned about Howard University. I became a walking encyclopedia of American universities and colleges. There is a big book. I think you can find one in the library, a book of American colleges and universities. In that book there is a summary of every American college and university, its location, its history, its composition, its faculty, what it specializes in, everything. Also, Collins, I was alert enough, intelligent enough to realize that I couldn't go to, say Harvard University, or Yale, or I couldn't go to Brown, or even to Fisk, or even to one of the other black colleges. I had to find one in which I could compete, and that I could struggle and make it. I looked up Howard University, its location, its history. You know, it was founded by Otis Howard, who was head of the first Freedmen's Bureau, soon after the Civil War. I read all this data, and I came to the conclusion, by instinct, that Howard was the place for me. So I wrote to Howard. I had the audacity to ask them for a scholarship.

**CTF:** Did you write to anybody else?

**GNL:** No, I only wrote to Howard University. In August 1936, I left New Bedford to go to Howard.

Now I'll digress a moment and tell you something else. I think it was 1932. The Steamship Olympic was crossing the Atlantic from London to New York City. It went off course at about Nantucket, Massachusetts, and it ran into a Coast Guard ship and it sank it. In the crew of that ship were six Cape Verdeans.

**CTF:** What is the connection? Cape Verdeans were sailors?

**GNL:** A lawyer by the name of Alfred Gomes thought of the idea of soliciting public funds and promoting an essay contest. Each winning contestant entering was awarded \$200 for use as tuition to enter a college of that winner's choice. I entered that contest. I think it was 1933 or so. Incidentally, my meeting with the first African-American that I told you about was in connection with my efforts to go to college. I was taking night courses, WPA courses, mathematics, geometry, algebra, history, all that.

**CTF:** So although you finished formal grammar school, you then continued courses?

**GNL** That's right. By the way, I didn't finish grammar school. What happened was, in April 1929 my mother, though she didn't speak English, I don't know where she learned this, but she learned that in Massachusetts, a boy who was 16 years old did not have to go to school. So my mother ordered the principal of the elementary school that I was attending to send me home because she had a job for me on an oil tanker. She had gotten her son-in-law to get me a job on the oil tanker and the principal sent me home. I have in my possession in my office right here in Chicago, a transcript of my record of education in the public schools of New Bedford, and the last entry was on April 20, 1929, "George sent home, mother has a job for him on tanker." That's the last entry about me on any public school record.

**CTF:** But you were in elementary school, but at that time you're about 17?

**GNL:** I was 16.

**CTF:** But you were still in elementary school?

**GNL:** Yes, because of what I told you earlier, this working on the cranberry farms until November. You know that school usually starts a few days after Labor Day. If you come into the city of New Bedford and go to school in November, you have missed a good deal of education. That was my experience. So when my mother ordered the principal to send me home, I only had a smattering of public school education. How did I get to Howard University? I went to night school, WPA classes because of my father's background, and his influence on me.

**CTF:** Was he a migrant worker also?

**GNL:** Yes, he was.

**CTF:** He was a very educated person, but he didn't, couldn't get a job?

**GNL:** No, he couldn't. He went right into the cranberry bogs as a laborer. He was a foreman for one of the biggest cranberry farms in southeastern Massachusetts and worked for LeBaron Russell Barker. I was Mr. Barker's child laborer with my mother's and father's consent, not only consent, but with their insistence.

Now when I heard about this scholarship contest – now mind you – here I am, I had never gone back to school, I had picked up a smattering of reading and history and everything else. I entered that essay contest, and remember I could get \$200 – that was a lot of money in 1936. It paid the tuition for one year at Howard University. So, I entered the essay contest, and when the winners were announced, I and another man – whose name was Henry Peters – were the two winners. I was invited to New Bedford to receive my prize! I was then working in restaurants in Boston trying to earn money to enter Howard in the fall of 1936.

**CTF:** How much was tuition at Howard?

**GNL:** I forgot what the tuition was. I know that the \$200 went far toward that end. So armed with that award and the monies that I had earned working in restaurants all over the State of Massachusetts, I left one hot August day for Washington, D.C. I had never been there before. I didn't know anyone in Washington. Other than the letter from Mr. Wilkinson, I had no contact with Howard University and notice that the letter doesn't say, "You're admitted." It doesn't say that. It says you can come, if you want to.

**CTF:** Pay us some money and we'll take you in.

**GNL:** That's right. So, Collins, I left New Bedford on one hot August day. I will never forget it. I went to Washington to find my way to Howard's campus – and the reason why I'm telling it this way is because I arrived at Union Station in Washington, D.C., you know that place don't you? They just refurbished it.

**CTF:** It's a great building.

**GNL:** I walked out of that Union Station trying to find someone who could tell me how I could get to Howard's campus. Someone did, I don't know who it was. I got on a trolley. In those days there were trolleys. I made my way up the hill to Howard's campus. I got there and I got more information. The money for the award was on deposit at Howard University. I got there as an unclassified student. I was worried that they wouldn't even let me do that because all I had was this letter but God was with me. From the first day at Howard University, I was a success. I scored one of the highest grades on the entering orientation examination given to the incoming students. In my first semester, I made the Dean's Honor Roll. I had 3 A's and 2 B's in my classes. I remained on the Dean's Honor Roll for four years and then around March 1940, they published the list of graduates. Notice, when I arrived in Washington in 1936, I had to enter the Class of 1940 and on time, on June 7, 1940, I finished Howard University *magna cum laude*. I

had all the qualifications for admission to Phi Beta Kappa. I had a commission in the Reserve Officer's Training Corps and I had a scholarship to the Harvard Law School.

**CTF:** Let's go back, but I do have one question before we go back. You grew up in New Bedford, you lived your whole life in Massachusetts. Going to Washington, D.C. in the 1930's, it was clearly a deep south city.

**GNL:** Oh, yes. Yes. In fact, Collins, since you said that, in all the years that I lived in Massachusetts, as a child, grew up, until I was big enough to go to Howard University, no one ever said anything to me or did anything to me because I was black. It wasn't until I got to the nation's capital, this great democracy, that I went to a little restaurant right across the street from where the Washington Senators used to have their ballpark, at the corner of Florida and Georgia Avenue. I went in there in my naivete and I said to this fellow, "I want a piece of pie and a cup of coffee." He said to me, "You can't have it!" I said, "Why?" and he said, "We don't serve Niggers in this place!"

**CTF:** You know it's interesting that you should say that, George, because Jim Parsons's [Northern Illinois District Judge James B. Parsons] first experience with discrimination occurs when he leaves Decatur and goes

with his high school band to Springfield, the home of Abraham Lincoln and the capital of the State of Illinois.

**GNL:** Not only that, just before I got to Howard in 1936, there was a big to do about Peoples Drug Store not employing blacks. Now Peoples Drug Store had a lot of drug stores all over the black section of the District of Columbia and there were protests, and picketing, and marching, and so forth. N. Mordecai Wyatt Johnson, then president of Howard University, issued an order that was published and disseminated to all students telling them that if you ever get in any trouble about this race discrimination by Peoples Drug Store, you will be expelled. So when that man told me I couldn't have that cup of coffee and pie that I wanted, I simply looked at him and walked back to the campus.

**CTF:** Now, let's get back to your ancestors. We've talked about your mom and your dad and meeting in New Bedford but what about their parents? You had mentioned earlier that you had a grandfather on your paternal side who was born in Lisbon.

**GNL:** Oh, my paternal grandfather, Theophilus Neves Leitao, a handsome Caucasian man, had two wives. Now I don't think he recognized my paternal grandmother as his wife, but in the multi-racial culture that the

Portuguese bragged a great deal about and that they established in Africa and their possessions, a white man having a black woman was accepted practice. So Theophilus had two homes. One was on a hill. There he kept his white wife. Then he had a home in the valley. There he kept his black wife. Her name was Anna Evora. My father was the son of Theophilus Neves Leitao and Anna Evora and he had six other children by Anna. He had four children by the Caucasian wife that he kept on the hill. By the way, the significance of the fact that he had one on the hill and one in the valley is the difference between black and white but I heard wonderful things about Theophilus Neves Leitao. For one thing, I have been told by some kinfolk of mine that he was law-trained; to what extent, I don't know. He was a graduate of the University of Quimbra in Lisbon, or near Lisbon. He held an important civic office in Brava for the Portuguese government.

**CTF:** Is he the one that also got into trouble in Lisbon?

**GNL:** I had information that he had some run in with the Portuguese government in Lisbon, and that his ultimate arrival in Brava was as part of the program or policy of Portuguese government using the Cape Verde Islands for that purpose – banishment of people who had become unwelcome in Lisbon.

**CTF:** Now, there is nobody permanently living in the Cape Verde Islands prior to the Portuguese-Spanish mariners?

**GNL:** That's right. When the islands were discovered in 1420, they were unpopulated by human beings.

**CTF:** Is there any evidence of any earlier people that were visiting?

**GNL:** There were some. I've seen anthropological studies that suggest there might have been but whoever it was that lived there disappeared, so that by the fifteenth century when the archipelago was discovered, there was no human population. Now the Portuguese recognized the strategic value of the Cape Verde Islands. It was an ideal refueling station for ships that leave Lisbon, Milan, Brussels, various parts of England and travel down past the Iberian Peninsula along the west coast of Africa to go around the Cape, and into the Indian Ocean. It was an ideal refueling station and that's what it became.

Today it is functioning in that way because if you take an airplane in New York or Boston to go to Johannesburg, one of the places at which you would stop is Sal, one of the largest islands in the Cape Verde archipelago. Sal, a word which in Portuguese means salt, is in fact a huge block of salt right in the Atlantic Ocean. It's a very progressive island. It has this huge

international airport. It accommodates planes and jetliners from central Europe and England. Spanish, Italian and American planes crossing to the African continent, and going to Europe, stop in Sal. Planes leaving any part of Europe to go to South America stop over in Sal. In the shipping days, that's what ships did. They stopped at the Cape Verde Islands, refueled, and seamen went ashore for relaxation; boarded again, and continued their journey.

**CTF:** Where did the people of Cape Verde Islands come from? Some obviously are Portuguese. Some must have come, maybe from Angola?

**GNL:** That's right. Generally Angola, Senegal, and there are a number of other islands off the coast of Africa. There's Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, off the coast of Africa. You don't hear much about these places, but they are large islands and they are used by Europeans as vacation places. The Cape Verde Islands are used by Europeans as vacation places now.

**CTF:** You mentioned earlier that you have a picture of your paternal grandparents. Why don't you describe the picture of your grandmother and your grandfather?

**GNL:** I thought I had it with me. I do regret that I don't have that picture. I do have another picture of my paternal grandfather that shows a very handsome Caucasian man. The other picture that I told you about – I have looked for it and I have asked my kinfolk for it – and they say they don't have it but I remember it. It shows Anna Evora, my paternal grandmother who, from everything that I have heard, was a strong-willed matriarch – black, pure black, beady-eyed, stern of face, impressive. She is sitting on this chair, hands folded, looking straight ahead. On her right and slightly to the rear is a tall, Caucasian man with his hat in his left hand. You can tell by looking at that picture who was boss in that family. It wasn't the handsome Caucasian man. It was the strong-willed woman. She was an African, pure African. He was pure Caucasian.

**CTF:** Did you ever meet or know any of the descendants from the white wife up on the hill?

**GNL:** No, but I will tell you what I do know. They still live in Brava. In Brava my kinfolk are divided into two groups. The white Leitaos and the multi-colored. The white Leitaos don't like to talk with the multi-colored Leitaos.

**CTF:** Discrimination is alive and well.

**GNL:** I have a brother, Arthur, who passed away. He went to Brava, and he came back fuming mad about our white kinfolk who refused to have anything to do with him.

**CTF:** That's their loss.

**GNL:** The part that I have had occasion to reflect upon a number of times is the fact that we have no slave ancestry because slavery left a very deep mark on the descendants of slaves. That's why you will meet even today some African-Americans who will tell you candidly that they are uncomfortable with white people – fear, discomfort in contact. I believe that's a residue of the tension that slavery created.

**CTF:** Well the other thing it seems to me, George, is that your parents, your fellow Cape Verdeans who came to this country, were as I said earlier just like any other immigrant group, whether they came from Europe or Mexico or China. They came as an intact family with cultural institutions. Their family wasn't rendered apart.

**GNL:** That's right. Let me tell you something about that. There have been some studies made of Cape Verdean culture and Cape Verdean people and how they have become assimilated into American society. All these things have

come out; their self-isolation and so forth. In this study, I learned something I didn't know – that the Cape Verdean people in the period that began the slavery system in the United States, 1619 or thereabouts until 1865 – the people of the Cape Verde Islands were the only people of African descent who voluntarily came to the United States. They voluntarily migrated. They left Brava. They came to New Bedford. All other people of African descent who came during that period were brought here – brought in captivity for the purpose of enslavement. There is a big difference between coming here voluntarily and being brought here.

**CTF:** Actually, that's my point. I support affirmative action for those who came here in chains as they have a different situation than anybody who came here voluntarily. I also make an exception for the Native Americans who were here before the rest of us arrived. Everybody else, whether you liked it or not, came here to do something.

What about your maternal grandparents?

**GNL:** Ah, my maternal side. My mother's maiden name was Anna Silva Garcia. My maternal grandfather was Christiano DeSilva Garcia. His fathers before him were ship owners and they belonged to the so-called "elite" of the Cape Verdeans. In her family, she had educated members. I don't know the

extent of her formal education but her brother was a priest and, by the way, that was one of the highest things you could achieve. She had a brother who was a priest and her father, I said, was a ship owner.

I'll tell you this anecdote. Some time ago a lawyer friend I have in New York City, he's Cape Verdean also from New Bedford. He was Associate General Counsel for Reader's Digest Magazine. He specializes in entertainment litigation. He also has a hobby; he likes to pore over ship manifests, passenger lists. He called me from New York and he told me, he said, "George, I have found a passenger list listing you as a passenger on a sailing vessel that left Brava of the Cape Verde Islands in 1914, and arrived in New Bedford, Massachusetts, sometime early April 1915. You are listed on that passenger list and so is your twin sister and your older sister, Candida. Your mother is on this passenger list." I said, "Well, Jim, I don't understand it. I don't know. I have no recollection but let me call the historian of my household which is my twin sister." I did. I called Georgina. Georgina said, "Yes, I know all about that. In 1914, our mother and our father had a heart-to-heart talk, and my mother told my father that she had always been accustomed to good, sumptuous living and she wasn't getting that in New Bedford, Massachusetts. So she told him that she was taking me, Georgina, and Candida to Brava and that her father, in his wealth as a ship owner and so forth and so on, would give her all the things and

give us everything that we needed.” So she took us to Brava but when she got there, she found out to her chagrin that her father had suffered disastrous developments. About seven of his ships were sunk in a storm off the coast of Africa and he had lost everything. He was broke – bankrupt.

**CTF:** What did his ships carry in those days?

**GNL:** I suppose it was cargo, passengers from Brava to the African continent and so forth. So, she put us back on the ship and brought us to New Bedford. That was the explanation that my sister gave to me.

**CTF:** George, you just mentioned that the manifest shows your mother and two sisters on the ship manifest in 1914.

**GNL:** That’s right – on the ship manifest.

**CTF:** Now you also mentioned that at one point that they were involved in shipping.

**GNL:** Yes. My maternal grandfather and his father before him and his father before him were involved in transporting the seasoned African captives. Notice how I described them. They weren’t slaves. William Leo Hansberry

used to insist on our understanding that the Africans in Africa were not slaves, because slavery was not recognized in Africa like that. In fact, the Portuguese abolished slavery in Portugal I think before it was abolished in the United States but these captives who were captured by Africans themselves in their intertribal warfare were the prisoners of war in the intertribal warfare. They were handed over to the British, the Portuguese, the French, the Germans, the Dutch. It is my belief from what I have read, what I know of the subject, that they are the ones who transported them to the Cape Verde Islands for seasoning, for breaking, for making them fit for slavery. Because you remember in the history of slavery, this was one of the problems. Slavery has to have somebody adaptable to the oppressive state of slavery.

I was in Brava in 1995 with a large group of Cape Verdean Americans and I went to the place where they had the official records and I found the registration of my maternal grandfather, Christiano DeSilva Garcia. I found his name, where he was born, where he died and where he was buried and I found a list of the ships he owned. These are the ships that had belonged to his family and which had been used in the traffic until the slave trade became illegal in 1807 by an act of Congress. Now when that happened, of course, the slave trade ceased because, as you know, we have a record of cases where Americans who were engaged in that traffic after

1807 have actually been indicted. Now not too many of them were convicted, but they were indicted and prosecuted by the federal government. So that broke up that trade and as far as I know. The records that I was able to locate showed my maternal grandparents ceased being in that traffic.

**CTF:** But it wasn't your maternal grandparents, was it, I mean, it was their ancestors?

**GNL:** Yes, I guess that's more accurate, their ancestors brought them.

**CTF:** But what I'm thinking is that your maternal grandparents, your grandfather, was probably born in 1850. So it was his grandparents and great grandparents that would have been in the slave trade.

**GNL:** That's right.

**CTF:** He just changed cargo.

**GNL:** That's right. As I told you in the incident in which my name appears on the ship manifest, Christiano DeSilva Garcia was still living when my mother took us to Brava in 1914 and brought us back in 1915. At that time, he was relying upon or had been relying on the advantage of that ship ownership

and they were engaged in cargo traffic, because in 1915 there was no slave trading.

**CTF:** Other than your family members, do you have cousins that are here in America?

**GNL:** Yes. I have cousins. I have cousins in Brava now. I have said, Collins, that I am unusual in this respect. I can leave Chicago right now and it's only about a six hour flight to Sal. I've just been told that they now have a non-stop flight from Boston. It takes about seven hours flying time from Boston to Praia and by the time the sun sets, I'll be having dinner with some cousins and relatives. I don't have to go do what this guy in *Roots* had to do – go find his roots. I don't have to do that. In fact, when I went to Brava the last time, by the time I landed in Praia at the hotel in Praia, I had relatives waiting for me at the hotel.

**CTF:** You were born in 1912; you're seven by the time that World War I ended. Do you have any remembrance of World War I, does that have any impact at all?

**GNL:** No, no, not at all. Let me think for a moment. In 1918, Word War I ended? So it began in 1915?

**CTF:** 1914, I think.

**GNL:** 1914. Well, I was only two years old.

**CTF:** Well, I just meant if you were six, George, on Armistice Day.

**GNL:** It just came and went. What I remember most vividly living in New Bedford with my mother and father and the small Cape Verdean community and all speaking Creole and so forth, what I remember are all the untold problems of people coming by sailing ship from Brava and the storms. Some of them have never arrived and never got back – never reached New Bedford. The ship was sunk somewhere between New Bedford and Fogo which is, by the way, the port in Brava where the ships left. That's what I remember.

I had a feeling of a bleak, bleak existence. Because of my family's poverty, I never had the kinds of things that I hear about – toys, competition baseball, I never played any intramural sport, because I never went to a school, never played football, never had anything like that in my background.

**CTF:** You played chess?

**GNL:** Ah, now that is a story in itself. Collins, when I was about twelve years old, the house in which we lived is still standing in New Bedford. Every time I go to New Bedford, as I do with my sister, it's what we call our sentimental journey. When we get into New Bedford, we go down to the middle of the city which is a street called Union Street. On Union Street is the Seamen's Bethel sculpture that Herman Melville made famous in *Moby Dick*. That is the place that the whaling ship captain always took his crew after he formed a crew for the whaling ship and before they left port. The whaling ship captain would march his crew to the Seamen's Bethel and there they would hear what could well be their last sermon. Not far from this Bethel is the tenement on Acushnet Avenue where we lived, not very far. I go there, I go to 111 Acushnet Avenue. That's the house in which I lived.

One evening I saw or heard of some activity in the schoolhouse on the corner of South Street and Acushnet Avenue, directly across from the house we lived in, or hibernated in. So I went to this school, after school because it was at night – and there was a rotund, middle-aged Irish woman whose name was Mary A. Hayden. Mrs. Hayden apparently had what modern electronic evangelists called a “burden.” She had a burden for children from poor homes and she believed there had to be a place that they could go to after school to play basketball, wrestle – she had old mattresses all over the floor – boxing gloves, checker sets, and she had a chess set and

she sat down and taught me the rudiments of the game. She, herself, was not a chess player but she knew the ropes but all she did was introduce me to this game, now this was 1922 or 1923, or so.

Collins, ever since Mrs. Hayden taught me those rules, I have never been far away from a chess set and I play the game. I have gone to tournaments all over the country. I played chess in Europe, in France, in Italy, in England, in Moscow, and in fact, it's one of my principal recreational activities. I now have two computers that I play with and one of them is programmed to play the strength of a chess master and I play with that computer and in one out of twenty games, I might win. In fact, I was thinking seriously of going to a tournament next weekend but I decided not.

**CTF:** Anybody else in your family ever play chess? Did you ever try to get your Dad to play chess?

**GNL:** No, my father never had anything to do with it. My father never had any interest in chess, nor did any of my siblings, Arthur or John, none of them.

Also, I attribute a great deal of my good health to the fact that – you know because one of the things that happens to you as you get older, you start losing your memory – chess keeps me sharp. It helps my mental

agility. Now, I have said that in writing. I gave a contribution to the American Chess Foundation in memory of Mary A. Hayden. There is a place in the District of Columbia. It's a kind of Chess Hall of Fame. I contributed money and they prepared a nice plaque and I described how she taught me chess and I said then, and I've said it on other occasions, that with the possible exception of my mother and father, no one has ever given me something that has meant so much as teaching me how to play chess like Mary Hayden. She was a wonderful, wonderful human being.

**CTF:** Let's talk about your siblings. When was Arthur born? Is Arthur the oldest?

**GNL:** Arthur was the oldest brother.

**CTF:** Who's the oldest in the family?

**GNL:** Well, Candida was.

**CTF:** Okay.

**GNL:** She was the first child. She was born in 1911 and Georgina and I were born in 1912. Arthur was born in 1919 – I think 1918 or 1919 – then Virginia,

John, Tony. All have passed away except John, Virginia and I. My twin sister passed away a few years ago.

**CTF:** What did they do in their lives?

**GNL:** What did they do? My younger sister, Virginia, became an executive. She had an executive position with the New England Bell Telephone Company and she retired. My sister Georgina was a housewife. She had three children, one of whom was Ronald Teshara, who was the basketball great.

**CTF:** Which one, what team?

**GNL:** He played with California, Los Angeles, oh I forget the name. When Ronny came along, Ronny was – all of us are Catholics. Ronny attended a Catholic high school in Boston and was all-state in basketball and got a scholarship to Boston College, a basketball scholarship but unfortunately for Ronny's basketball career in Boston, he couldn't get along with the coach at Boston College and he left basketball but he stayed at Boston College; finished Boston College and then he got a scholarship to Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth. He went to Tuck, finished business school and then became employed by a very large company in Boston. He worked for them for

many years. He's now retired from that and he owns his own water purification company. That's what he does.

Now Georgina had two other children, Louise and Faith. Louise passed away. She developed diabetes and it affected her sight and she passed away before Georgina did. Then Georgina had another daughter, Faith, who now is married to a man who owns an automobile repair company on Cape Cod. John worked for the Quincy Shipyard for a long time and he's retired.

I visit New England. I have a home in Plymouth and I don't know whether you ever heard of or met a lawyer here in Chicago whose name is Lawrence Howe. He was General Counsel for Jewel Food Company and he is a graduate of Harvard College. One day while I was a district judge in this building, Lawrence Howe came to see me. He said that he and his fellow Harvard graduates, he didn't go to the law school, he went to the college, had been talking and they wanted someone from Chicago to be on the Board of Overseers of Harvard College and they thought I had the best chance of being elected. You see, it's an elected position by the alumni at Harvard College.

**CTF:** Right.

**GNL:** By the way, did you go to Harvard Law School?

**CTF:** Yes.

**GNL:** Then you know what I'm talking about.

**CTF:** Right.

**GNL:** Well that Board goes back, Collins, to 1636. So he asked me if I would be willing to go on the ticket to be elected to the Board of Overseers. I said all right. I sent my name in, I was nominated, put on the ticket and I was elected and that gave me the occasion, Collins, to learn about the origin of Harvard. I knew the story you know because I'd been at Harvard Law School. You know the story, about this gal from Alabama who came with her parents to Harvard when she saw John Harvard sitting there, she said to her parents, "Oh, my God, there's a black guy."

**CTF:** I never heard that one.

**GNL:** Well you know what I marveled about is the origin of Harvard University, how these people who came here in 1620, and by 1636 – and that's a very short period of time as things go, you know – it's only sixteen years. They

were in Plymouth, the General Court sat in Plymouth at that time. They were passing a resolution to found a college in Cambridge. Now they had no buses, they had no automobiles, there were no highways, and certainly there were no planes. Yet they were passing a resolution to authorize the founding of this college in Cambridge which is approximately 46 miles from Plymouth.

Well, I read all of that literature and enjoyed six years on the Board of Overseers and met some prestigious people including Al Gore. Al Gore was elected to the Board of Overseers just as I was finishing. He never came to any of the meetings. By the way, I saw Al Gore a few days ago making a speech in which he was extolling his President. I said to myself that's the guy who tried to keep us from voting this guy in.

**CTF:** Life is strange at times.

**GNL:** Yes, it's strange.

**CTF:** What about your other siblings? We talked about Georgina.

**GNL:** Georgina, Arthur, John, Virginia; Tony died almost in infancy. Candida died when she was 18.

**CTF:** What did she die from?

**GNL:** It was some complication concerning childbirth. She married soon before that – married the man who got me my first job other than that of a cranberry picker. Remember I told you my mother called the principal and had me sent home.

Well, it was her husband who was the steward on a ship, on a Shell oil tanker, that left Fall River, Massachusetts, to Aruba in the West Indies. So after my mother called the principal and he sent me home, my brother-in-law, Candida's husband, took me to Fall River which is 11 miles west of New Bedford and I went on this boat.

Now, I was still at that time thinking about education, so as I went past the New Bedford Public Library, I knew the people there very well and they knew me, I must have told them that I was going on a ship and I wanted a book to take with me. Exactly how this book happened to be the book that I got, I don't remember, but it turned out to be a copy of Cesare Lombroso's study of criminal types. Cesare Lombroso was an Italian criminologist who came up with a theory –

**CTF:** Size of the head?

**GNL:** That's right. That you can tell a criminally-inclined person by the shape of his cranium. That theory has been repudiated by every criminologist who has lived since Lombroso. At any rate, Collins, when I went on board that tanker, I had Lombroso. I remember the book. It was a big, heavy, thick one. I read that book from cover to cover and all about murder, robbery, robbers, murderers, rapists and so forth and about their craniums.

**CTF:** Did it make you worry about any of your shipmates?

**GNL:** No. I don't remember that part of it because I don't recall having too much contact with the shipmates. You see I was a messman and you know what a messman does, he cleans up the mess that everybody else makes on board. So that was my job.

**CTF:** What other ships did you go on?

**GNL:** Well, I stayed in the seafaring industry for about a year or two. My last experience with anything to do with seafaring was in New York City. I went to New York and I was able to get on board a ship that was going to Tampico, Mexico, and I became part of the crew of that freighter. I was anxious to go to Tampico, Mexico, some place that sounded exotic to me. However, my job was, among other things, every evening to serve the crew

their supper. Now the steward of that ship, who was my superior, was a man who took the nickname "Broadway Jones." He got that name because every time he was in New York he went to Broadway. On this particular day he went to Broadway, left me on the ship and I was to serve the food, the supper to this crew. When I looked around, there was no food. Nothing had been prepared and I had nothing to serve. That infuriated the crew and they set after me to take out their rage and their hunger on me. I ran off the boat and as I was running to escape these mad crewmen, a tug was passing by. I jumped off the ship into the tug and went ashore, leaving all my belongings behind me. I have never been back to New York City.

Well, that's the background about my growing up and I brought you up to the point of my going to Howard University.

**CTF:** Let's talk a little bit, George, about school. School, you were there from roughly November to March every year.

**GNL:** You mean grade school?

**CTF:** Grade school. So every time you come back, they are probably not sure what grade to put you in.

**GNL:** That's right. That's what it amounted to.

**CTF:** You meet Mary Fitzgerald at some point, who changes your name.

**GNL:** That's right. In the fourth grade.

**CTF:** In the fourth grade?

**GNL:** Yes. I got as far as the sixth grade. In 1929 – oddly enough it was the year that began the Depression –

**CTF:** So when your name is changed as far as Mary Fitzgerald is concerned, you are probably about 13, 14?

**GNL:** Just about, I would think, yes. And, of course, I was always behind in school because when we went to Cape Cod in March, early March, well that terminated my attending school. We went, we opened the bogs, began weeding, planting, nurturing the cranberries so that we could pick them after Labor Day, and then we would pick cranberries, and then we had to bed down the bogs and then it would be November, close to December. My mother and father would take us back to New Bedford and we were registered in school again but by that time they had been in school from

September. It would be November or early December and then I would attend school from that period until early March when I would leave.

**CTF:** Did you ever read when you were down working in the bogs or were you working mostly all day?

**GNL:** That's right, but I will tell you this. I remember going to a one-room school house in Plymouth, Massachusetts, and that school house is still standing right in that corner, I drive by there every day when I am in Plymouth. I did go to that one-room school house I think one period during spring. I think I went there once. I have bragged that I'm perhaps the oldest living alumnus of the one-room school house but that's the extent of my formal education. As I have told you, I never went to any school that had any baseball activities or football because I wasn't there long enough to have anything to do with what ordinarily contributes to the growing up. I never had that.

**CTF:** Well, we ought to quit now so you can make your lunch. We will come back and talk about Howard some more.

**GNL:** Yes. I think we can do that and I will tell you of my experience.

**CTF:** Today is May 9, 2002, and we are in the offices of the Circuit Executive at the Federal Courthouse and we are continuing the oral history of District Court Judge George N. Leighton, who served on the Northern District of Illinois. I am Collins Fitzpatrick, the Circuit Executive. George, when we last broke off, we had finished your education at Howard University, we had talked a little bit about your wanting to go to Harvard and applying for law school there. Maybe you could tell us a little bit more about that.

**GNL:** In the Spring of 1940, I learned from Howard University that I was going to be awarded a AB degree from the College of Liberal Arts at Howard University. I then began to think about the law school that I wanted to attend. I decided that the law school was Harvard Law School. However, I didn't have the money to pay tuition at Harvard Law School. But for some reason, which I cannot now explain, I decided to have a conversation with William H. Hastie who was then Dean of the Law School at Howard. I did not know at that time Dean Hastie was a graduate of Harvard Law School. Nor did I know that Dean Hastie was a classmate of the then Dean of Harvard Law School, James McCauley Landis. I don't remember now what Dean Hastie told me about my ambitions to attend Harvard Law School, but a few days after I spoke with him, I received a hand-written note on his personal stationery from Dean James McCauley Landis who said to me, "When you are in Cambridge, stop in and see me."

The following weekend I was in Cambridge. It was Saturday, April 20, 1940. From Harvard Square I called Dean Landis's office and his secretary, seeming to recognize my name, told me that Dean Landis would see me if I would come right over. I walked from Harvard Square to Langdell Hall and a few moments later I was in Dean Landis's office. I had never seen him before. I had never spoken to him before. I am sure that he had never seen or met me. However, he sat down and listened to me while I told him the reasons why I wanted to be a student at Harvard Law School. He didn't say a word to me. He didn't ask me any questions. I simply revealed to him my background: that I was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts of Cape Verdean Portuguese immigrants from Brava. I told him how I had worked on cranberry bogs, blueberry bushes and strawberry patches in Cape Cod and for that reason, I had not regularly attended public schools. I told him that despite the disadvantage of poverty and cultural differences, I had succeeded in overcoming most of them and I was going to graduate from Howard University in June of that year *magna cum laude*, I had the qualifications for admission to *Phi Beta Kappa*, I had a Commission in the Reserve Officers Training Corps, and I wanted to be a student at Harvard Law School.

After I had run out of words, he said to me very quietly, "When you finish Howard, come to Harvard Law School." He didn't tell me what I was

to do. He didn't tell me that I had a scholarship. He didn't tell me how I was to enter but I was so astounded by his remark that I thanked him, picked up my personal belongings and returned to Washington, D.C. and Howard. A few days after I arrived back at Howard, I received a letter from the secretary of the Harvard Law School telling me that James McCauley Landis, Dean of the Law School, had awarded me a scholarship to Harvard Law School. In September of that year, after I had spent the summer on a Lucy Moten Fellowship studying peonage in the southern states, I entered Harvard Law School and began my studies.

**CTF:** What's the Lucy Moten Fellowship that you had when you studied peonage in the southern states? Was that research in the library or were you traveling to the southern states?

**GNL:** It was traveling, actually visiting places where African-Americans were being held in conditions which were similar to slavery. Although they had been freed of course, they weren't actually free. They were slaves on plantations, cotton plantations, and the like in Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida. The Lucy Moten Fellowship was granted to students of Howard University, selected graduate students, and I was one of those selected. So I spent the time from June 7, 1940, to the day before Labor

Day in September 1940, studying conditions of living of African-Americans in Louisiana, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi.

**CTF:** Now, George, when you did that, people were not happy to have you studying when you are going around to these towns, I assume.

**GNL:** That is true.

**CTF:** You had to be about as popular as Caesar Chavez on the farm.

**GNL:** I had to keep it as quiet as I could. I learned a lot about things as they were in that period and they were terrible. That was the time when it was not uncommon to read in the daily press of the lynchings of African-Americans. Sikeston, Missouri, became a famous place in the 1940's until the 1950's where, on a number of occasions, an African-American who had fallen out of favor for some small reason would be lynched, his body tied to a Ford truck, burned and dragged through the black community in order to indicate to them what would happen to an African-American who hadn't lived up to the cultural requirements of his time.

**CTF:** George, was this done by the Klan or by other organizations like the Klan?

**GNL:** It was maybe the work of Ku Klux Klan groups. There were others who weren't Klansmen who also did the same thing. So when you ask me about my being popular, no, I was not popular. As I recall it, I was given instructions not to make it known that I was going through these communities picking up information. Now one of the requirements of that Fellowship was, and I discharged that requirement, I had to write a report of what I had seen in these various parts of the deep South that I visited.

**CTF:** Do you still have that report?

**GNL:** I do not, but it can be obtained. It's at Howard University in the Moorland Spingarn Library.

**CTF:** Okay. Let me ask you a little bit more about that. When you say peonage, I assume that what we have in effect is what sometimes was referred to as "company towns" where in effect your room, board, everything, depends on your employer and you have no spending money other than what the employer gives you for food and housing.

**GNL:** Well, the employers, in some of the cases I have studied, have the policy of paying a wage, but the wage was so small and then, the employer also owned the company stores so that the person who worked for the plantation

owner in the cotton field was paid, but the money he owed the company store which was owned by the plantation was more than he received in his pay, so that's why it was called peonage. The person was always held down by this arrangement and they were limited as to where they could go. They did not have means of transportation of their own. That is custom, usage, prevented ownership by them of cars, such as they could go buy even at that time, say a Ford. They were not allowed to do that and they were kept in this condition which was just slavery watered down a little bit in that they were legally free but not actually so.

**CTF:** You mentioned that the press covered the lynchings. Was that the black press or the national press that covered it?

**GNL:** Oh no, Collins. I think any person interested, I would invite that person, just go to the library, right here in Chicago, get the *New York Times* for the period, carve out a period of 1936 to 1940, and 1940 to 1950, and you will find the number of lynchings not only in Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, Louisiana, Texas, and Missouri. By the way, these were the states that gave rise to the incidents that gave the NAACP the cases to work on.

One of the burning issues at that time, and by that time I mean the time that I entered Howard in 1936 and several years after I finished in 1940, there were lynchings. Attempts were made to pass laws in the state governments and in the federal government, but they were never successful. Lynching of blacks was one of the burning issues of that period of time. This is how I became interested in the civil rights movement because I majored in history at Howard University and I had professors who reviewed the whole history of the African-American in this country from the time the first blacks arrived in America off the coast of Virginia until the time that I was reading about these events in newspapers. During that time, there wasn't any Civil Rights Act, there wasn't anything during that time like the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

**CTF:** Actually there was a Civil Rights Act of 1871 but nobody knew or used it. It wasn't enforced until the 1960's.

**GNL:** It wasn't enforced. Well, in fact right now, Collins, there is a great deal of news media attention I noticed in the *New York Times* in the book review section – last Sunday's book review section of the *New York Times* – it had a picture of President Johnson who according to his biography was the person mainly responsible for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and more importantly, of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Blacks used to be

lynched in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Missouri, and Texas for daring to go to a polling place to get the right to vote. Blacks used to be lynched for daring to go to a hotel and seek a room. When I had a case in Mississippi in 1957, 1958 and 1959, that required me to go from Chicago to Vaiden, Mississippi, which is about 80 miles from Jackson, the capital of the State of Mississippi, I couldn't get a room in a motel or hotel. I was warned by Thurgood Marshall and the staff that if I went and attempted to get a room in a hotel or motel, I would most likely be lynched, and this was 1957-1958, before the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which changed everything.

Now it was in this climate and in this kind of thinking that after four years at Howard University in which I had some of the finest teachers in what we call without being ashamed or hesitant, the history of the American Negro. Most of the courses were called Negro History. I had all of that. I studied under William Leo Hansbury, the uncle of Lorraine Hansbury and the brother of Carl Hansbury, who was the "Kitchenette King" in Chicago in the 1950's and 1960's. I studied under Ralph Bunche before he became General Secretary of the United Nations. He taught at Howard University in 1936, 1937. I studied under Alain LeRoy Locke, one of the great philosophers in American history. I studied under Charles Wesley, historian, intellectual, a graduate, I think, of Princeton University. So it was

in this background that I went to Harvard Law School in 1940 because I knew the history, I knew the story, I knew the factors.

The race-restrictive covenants, one of the most ingenious concepts invented by American lawyers to keep blacks in their place, was enforced right here in Chicago until *Shelley v. Kramer* was decided in 1947 by the United States Supreme Court. In fact, Collins, I began my studies at Harvard Law School in this kind of climate. I don't mind telling you that I was lost in that place. I came as I have said from a poverty-stricken background. Neither my mother, father, nor my kinfolk spoke any English with me. We spoke a dialect of the Portuguese language, Creole. I sat in the classroom knowing that I was there and every single student in that classroom was from some well-off family. I was the only black face in the room. We had six African-American students at Harvard Law School in 1940 besides me. Then World War II interrupted my studies at Harvard Law School.

**CTF:** Was Judge Hastie the first or had there been others?

**GNL:** No, there have been others. I'll leave it alone. There have been others but Judge Hastie was a member of the *Harvard Law Review* and you know what that meant.

**CTF:** Right.

**GNL:** Oh, I just remembered the name of the man who preceded him – Charles Houston. He was famous to the civil rights movement. Like Hastie, he was formerly Dean of the Howard University Law School and also a member of the *Harvard Law Review* at Harvard. So right in the middle of all this confusion, feeling lost at Harvard Law School, I was washing dishes on Sunday, December 7, 1941, when the radio on the shelf came on with the announcement that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. Now all of us who have followed the history of the time had anticipated something like this but not quite as dramatic as that. Well, that event led the authorities at Harvard Law School to notify all the students in the Law School that those students who had begun their second year, and I was one of them, and had to go to the military service, Navy, Army, Air Force, and so forth, he would have that second year wiped off his records completely. Notice I said he because there weren't any she's at Harvard Law School at that time.

Now as I told you earlier, one of the things that I accomplished at Howard University was not only that I earned a degree from the College of Liberal Arts, *magna cum laude*, with qualifications for *Phi Beta Kappa*, I also had my commission in the Reserve Officers Training Corps. I was a Second Lieutenant. So after Pearl Harbor was bombed on December 7,

1941, I received notice to report to Fort Benning, Georgia, for an officer training course, orientation, and so my studies at Harvard Law School terminated right there.

**CTF:** Where did you live when you lived in Cambridge?

**GNL:** Ah, you need me to tell you something, Collins, which perhaps you know, and that is no matter how large a scholarship is, no matter how prestigious it may be, it isn't edible. You have to find money and some way to live and eat. Well as I told you, I didn't have any money but I was blessed. I had two sisters and I don't remember ever asking them or telling them or suggesting to them, but any rate, they rented a little three or four room apartment. Now where that was, I don't know now. I don't remember. My sister, Virginia, was still living and Georgina, the older sister, passed away. They located this little place and they rented this room and they worked themselves. My younger sister, Virginia, worked as a telephone operator or something like that and they paid the rent and provided the food and I lived in the apartment studying at Harvard Law School. They befriended several other people who have become famous since then. One is Judge Jefferson from Los Angeles, California. He stayed in my apartment when he began his master's degree studies at Harvard Law School. So that's how I lived.

**CTF:** Boston, like Chicago, was a very racially segregated city.

**GNL:** Yes. Much more subtle than in Chicago, I might add. Now don't ask me to explain because that will require a regular cultural analysis. But you know Boston is a city in which the culture and history is deeply rooted in ethnic characteristics and family. Even Irish Catholics can't get into some places.

**CTF:** Right, there were the Brahmins, the Italians, etc.

**GNL:** So I knew all of this. All of this time I didn't spend sleeping. I lived in New Bedford, Cape Cod. I don't complain about being mistreated because I was black. As a matter of fact, Collins, the first time in my life when I was denied something because I was black, was in Washington, D.C.

**CTF:** I remember you mentioned that. You were going to get something to eat.

**GNL:** Within the shadow of the nation's capital, I was told that I couldn't buy a cup of coffee and piece of pie because I was black. The first time. It shocked me.

**CTF:** But in Cambridge you didn't have overt discrimination. It was there but it wasn't.

**GNL:** That's right. It was subtle and quieter and not much fanfare about it. Now to answer your question. That enabled me to withstand as I told you the day that the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. I was working in the private home of the secretary of David Walsh, who was then a United States Senator from Massachusetts. I was working washing dishes, serving the family their lunch or dinner, whatever it was, when the news came through. Now, the relevance of that is this. I then went into the military, went to Fort Benning, Georgia, and, Collins, every day of my life thereafter was concentrated on how to get back to Harvard Law School.

**CTF:** Now, let me just go back to Harvard Law School. When you start, you are in with all these swimmers and you don't know if you can swim.

**GNL:** That's right.

**CTF:** But you do swim and you do well enough that you are still there into your second year.

**GNL:** Yes, and I had some tough teachers too. What was the name of the man who was a terror, you might have heard of him when you got there. I think of the man who was portrayed in —.

**CTF:** Jim Casner?

**GNL:** Casner, no. Casner was a marvelous guy in comparison. The man who taught property. It has slipped my mind. It was tough and the other thing I learned, I didn't realize that when I went from Howard University to Harvard what a jump it was. See I was a wizard of a student at Howard University but you see studying in college involved a lot of memorizing but studying law you have to memorize it, but you also have to apply it. I didn't know. If someone had taken me aside, anyone, and explained to me that I was jumping from a puddle into a pond, I think I would have jumped but you know I was fortunate. The other thing was even though I got the scholarship, no one came to me – no one – not even Dean James McCauley Landis. No one looked me up and said, "Look Leighton, how are you getting along – what are you doing? Here's how to do it in order to pass." No one did that. You talk about being a swimmer; I had to swim it alone you see, but I succeeded.

**CTF:** What did you do after your first year in law school?

**GNL:** I went to work in a restaurant in Rhode Island owned by a cousin of mine. I learned, Collins, a lot about the culinary arts. I became a specialist in cooking steaks and beef. I was a special steak chef in this restaurant all of

the summer of 1941, and then I came back and began my second year, and by that time I felt adjusted to the rigors of studying law.

**CTF:** Did you have a study group?

**GNL:** No.

**GNL:** You asked me if I had a study group. The answer is no. You see, I didn't live on the campus. That was a handicap. Study groups are usually with students who get to know each other, you know, get together and go to a room in the dormitory or meet in somebody's room. I didn't have that. I didn't that first year and I didn't in the second year.

Now, when I was ordered to Fort Benning, Georgia, of course I went. This was March 1942, to be exact about it, I think it was March 6th that I went to Fort Benning.

**CTF:** So what did you do in the three months? Did you stay in the Law School?

**GNL:** Yes, I stayed in the law school. It wasn't counting, I could go to class – it was kept open, but it wasn't recorded in my record. Now, I went to Fort Benning, wondering when I could be released to go back to law school. I

did my duties as an Army officer. I went from Fort Benning, Georgia, to Fort Huachuca, Arizona. Then I went on maneuvers in Louisiana, then continued maneuvers in the California desert. Unknown to me, they were conditioning us for duty in tropical areas. Then one day, out of the blue almost, I was put on a transport ship in San Francisco – I and about 7,000 other soldiers.

**CTF:** The Army is segregated at this time?

**GNL:** Oh, highly so.

**CTF:** Were you in a segregated unit?

**GNL:** Oh, yes. The 93rd Division was one of them and I was assigned to the 93rd Division. The other segregated unit was the 92nd Division. The 92nd Division served in the European Theater. The 93rd Division served in the Pacific Theater. So I went from San Francisco to Guadalcanal and things got worse as we went along because you get there into combat in the jungles, tropical areas of Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Green Island, Finschhafen, but I did well. I was decorated for military service. I became a logistics officer in charge of supplies for combat units. I arranged the transfer, for which I was awarded the Bronze Star, of 7,500 soldiers from

Finschhafen by air, sea and land to Morotai in the East Indies. Well, by that time I had been in the Pacific Theater around 3 years. I had never gone back to the States. I had never been given a vacation – no rest and recreation leave.

**CTF:** What about the men who served under you, did they get it?

**GNL:** Some did and some didn't. It depended upon their commanding officer of the unit to which they belonged. By that time, I became a staff officer in the combat team made up of several battalions and arterial units, medical units. I ended up in Morotai and they made me commander of the prison camp. That was the place in where they kept Japanese who were captured in Finschhafen, Morotai, Guadalcanal, Bougainville, and so forth. I became the commander there. Then a break came.

**CTF:** How many inmates were in that camp?

**GNL:** About 2,000

**CTF:** How many soldiers did you have?

**GNL:** I had a company of about 200 men under me running the camp. I used to sit down and talk to the Japanese prisoners – nice guys. Some talked English and I became familiar with them. So then a break came. Remember I told you that everyday I lived, I was thinking only of one thing – how to get back to the States – how to get back to Harvard Law School. Then in the Spring of 1945, in Morotai, in the jungle, a directive came from the Secretary of the Army to all the commanding officers of units in the Pacific Theater telling them that it was the policy of the United States Army that if they had under their command a person, an enlisted man or woman, or officer, whose continuance in the military service would result in injury to that person, because you know a lot of people were uprooted and sent into the military, drafted, family left behind, businesses were left to be depended upon by other persons, you know that kind of thing. Well, in my case I used my interest to go to Harvard Law School and I wrote a letter under that directive to the Secretary of the Army spelling out to him all that I had done that had brought me to the point that I was in when the bombs fell on Pearl Harbor and I told the Secretary of the Army that if I was kept in the military service, time would erode all the things that I had accomplished, the studies and all that. I never heard about my letter but it went up the echelon of command and every once in a while I would receive an endorsement from somebody denying or disapproving of my request to be relieved from active duty and be allowed to return to Harvard Law School.

**CTF:** Did you then have to appeal that or did it appeal automatically?

**GNL:** No, under the regulation you didn't do anything.

**CTF:** It just kept going up?

**GNL:** Yes, it just kept going up. I remember the directive required that the letter of the soldier, sailor or Air Force officer had to go to the Secretary of the Army in Washington, D.C. In the case of an officer, it had to go to the Officer's Section. Incidentally, Collins, I have tried very hard to get a copy of that letter and the reason I'll tell you in a minute. Then the Secretary of the Army, or somebody else, issued another directive. This was about the month of September 1945, I will still in Morotai.

**CTF:** But the war was over?

**GNL:** Yes, the war was over.

**CTF:** So you started in the spring of 1945 when the war is about to be over in Europe.

**GNL:** Now, in September here's what happened. They issued a directive that stated to the commanding officers that any officer or enlisted man who had not had a leave of absence, rest or recreation, could apply for temporary duty in the States. So I went to my colonel with whom I was in good standing because I used to play chess with him all the time and I used to allow him to beat me a few games and he always appreciated that. So I went to the colonel and I said, "Now, colonel, I want to go back to the States. Would you approve my request?" He said, "I'll do it but I want to tell you though, you will go to the States and we are going to go on from here to Manila and I'm going to provide in my approval that you are to return to join me in Manila, like a dutiful captain (by then I was a captain)." I said, "Yes colonel, I will report to you in Manila." Well the truth is, in my mind, Collins —

**CTF:** I could just see it. "The hell I am."

**GNL:** He approved it and lo and behold I got my orders and I left Morotai. I had to go to Manila and I went by plane to Manila, hoping to get to the United States and hoping, now mind you this was late in September, classes begin at Harvard Law School around September – sometime after Labor Day. I set out and reached Manila. Mind you I had not heard of my letter that I had written under the first directive. When I got to Manila, the commanding

officer of the camp to which I was to report under my orders told me "Leighton, I can't tell you when you can leave Manila." He said, "We have officers here in Manila who have been here for 6 to 8 months because of the transportation problem." I said, "Oh, my God, what can I do?" He said to me, "Do you see that tent over there." I said, "Yes." He said, "Well in that tent is a man who commands all of the transportation facilities in Manila. Talk with him. Convince him you want to get to the States right away and he might put you on a plane and you can go to the States." So I went to the tent and I banged on the tent door. Someone inside said, "Come on in! Come on in!" So I stooped over and got into the tent and there, Collins, standing in the tent was Rick Woodson, Lester Rick Woodson, who I knew at Howard University and who finished Howard, went to Germany and studied the German language and then the war broke out and he, like me, was ordered to active duty. He rose to the rank of Major and he was in charge of all transportation facilities in Manila. When I saw him and recognized him and he recognized me, of course we had a little reunion and he asked me, "What are you doing here?" and I told him, "Look, Rick, I am here with orders to go to the States. I want to get there as soon as possible." He said, "You know, just a minute." He had a crank telephone. He cranked the telephone and he talked with someone. He said, "When is the next plane - 7:00 this evening? Yes, okay. I have a man I'm going to send to you. Put him on that plane." He then asked me, "Where are your things"

and I told him "Outside." He called the orderly, put me back on the jeep and about an hour later I was at the runway and at 7:00 or so, Manila time, I was in one of these four-engine transport planes – huge things in which they transported troops. I was in that plane off to Guam, Guadalcanal, Johnson, Honolulu, San Francisco and two days later I was in San Francisco. Now I had promised myself that if I ever set foot on terra firma USA, I was not going to get on a plane again. I had so many near calls on planes in the Pacific Theater that I decided I was not going to be on a plane.

So I went by train to Washington where my wife and my first daughter were there. Now here's the other miraculous thing that happened. Remember the letter that I wrote from Morotai, asking to be separated from the service from which I hadn't heard from the Secretary of the Army?

**CTF:** Yes.

**GNL:** I arrived in Washington, D.C. on a Friday night, the next day was Saturday. This might have been early October by now maybe October 15 or something. Still in my mind was how do I get to Harvard Law School, I decided to call the Pentagon. Then I remembered the directive which I didn't have with me but I remembered that it said that the letter has to go to the Officer's Section of the Secretary of the Army. I found that Section in

the telephone book of the District of Columbia. It was about 9:00 or 10:00 on Saturday morning, I dialed that number and a woman's voice answered and I told her who I was – I was Captain George N. Leighton, 0389053. She said to me, "Where are you?" I said, "I'm in the District of Columbia." "What are you doing here?" Well, I said, "I'm on orders for temporary duty in the States." She said to me, "We have been looking for you for several days and nobody knows where you are." Well, I said, "I'm here, I have my orders." She said, "All right." I read the number of my orders and she checked. She said, "Well, the Secretary of the Army issued an order two days or a week ago, directing that you be discharged from the military service in order to return to the Harvard Law School." Collins, I turned to my wife and I told her and she turned to her father who was a serviceman from World War I – Dr. Quivers. He said to her, "Well, he's going nowhere. The people in the Army always say something like that."

She told me to go to Fort Devans, outside of Cambridge, and report for discharge so that I could return to Harvard Law School. My wife began complaining that I had been overseas for a long time. I had never seen my daughter, who was then 2 years old, and she said now I'm going away. So her father assured her that, "He'll come back, don't worry, don't worry." Well, the next day, Sunday, I was on a train to Cambridge and then I went from Cambridge by bus I think it was to Fort Devans, Massachusetts. That

evening I was out of the Army. Remember what I told you that when the bombs fell on Pearl Harbor, I was washing dishes in the home of the secretary of David Walsh. Well, this time I had my discharge from the service. I had all of my accumulated leave pay. I remember it amounted to something like three thousand and some odd hundred dollars. In 1945, three thousand something dollars was a lot of money. I had a check coming to me because, while I was discharged, I was released from active duty as of that day. I was paid as an officer I think until February of 1946. I had that check and another check for something else. I was well off and instead of going to live in some room in Cambridge, I went immediately to Cambridge, registered for Harvard Law School, and obtained a room in Conant Hall – the hall that was named after the President of Harvard University – James B. Conant. So I lived in Conant Hall and you know who was almost my roommate – Richard Schwartz. You know John Schwartz of the Bankruptcy Court?

**CTF:** Sure.

**GNL:** Do you know Ulysses Schwartz?

**CTF:** Sure.

**GNL:** Well, Ulysses Schwartz was the father of John Schwartz and Richard Schwartz. I made friends with Richard because he had a room next to mine and this is where I learned all about Chicago. What Chicago was like, you see. So I returned in October of 1945 and then the Harvard Law School people did what they promised – that each returning veteran would be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and courses would be fashioned to that returning veteran, depending upon how he returned. You know some returned wounded. Fortunately for me even though I was in combat; shot at by the Japanese, bayoneted at, bombs thrown at me, and I survived several potential crashes on airplanes from Biak to Guadalcanal and back and forth.

**CTF:** What is Biak?

**GNL:** Biak is an island in the East Indies. Even though all those things happened to me, Collins, none of them touched me. I never was wounded in combat, I never was hurt. The only thing that happened was that for a short time I developed dysentery that hospitalized me for about a week or two. Other than that, when I came back I was in as good health.

The Law School arranged my program so that I could do, from October 1945 in one year, two years of study. No breaks, no summer vacation and I fell into that. I studied beginning October 1945 and then in

May 1946, I heard or found out that the Massachusetts Bar was conducting an examination for admission to the bar. However, I had not finished Harvard Law School because I had this year to finish and this was May.

**CTF:** You still had to go to October 1946?

**GNL:** That's right. I had to go until October 1946. So I went to my advisor who happened to be the same professor I had when I left, Warren Seavey. Does that name sound familiar?

**CTF:** Yes.

**GNL:** He taught agency. Warren Seavey was my advisor. So I went to Professor Seavey more out of respect than anything else and I told him that I was going to take the Massachusetts Bar and he said, "Leighton, you are crazy. You shouldn't take it. Look, you have just come from war. You've been shot at, bombed at, you are still under shell shock. If you try to take the bar – you are taking a concentrated period of study in the law school, you are going to fail your examinations here, you will flunk the bar, and you will be through. Don't take the bar." Well, because I had gone to him, I said, "You know, Professor Seavey, I really appreciate the good advice you have given

me and I like the way you have my best interest in mind and I thank you very much sir.” I went back and took the bar and passed it.

**CTF:** No review course?

**GNL:** Oh, yes. I took a concentrated bar course. I took that.

**CTF:** So in addition to the law school courses, you took the bar course and at that time you didn't have to have graduated in order to take the bar?

**GNL:** Ah, let me tell you a story about that. That's another story. Well, I passed it. At that time, they had a two-step process. You first passed the written exam. Then you had to pass an examination before a Character and Fitness Committee. I went before that committee and a few days later I received a glowing letter telling me that I had passed and that on October 2, 1946, I was to appear at the State House in Boston to be sworn into the bar. What happened is this, as I remember it. I was prepared to go to the ceremony for admission to the bar on October 2, 1946, when, I think it was about the last week of September, I received a letter from the Secretary of the Bar of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts asking me to come to see him. He told me that although I had passed the examination and I had passed the Character and Fitness Committee, I couldn't be admitted to the bar because

I didn't have a degree from Harvard Law School. I wasn't to get my degree until November 27, 1946. I said, "Let me look into this." I went back and read the rules and I went to talk to Dean Griswold about the courses that I had completed and he gave me a list of the courses I had completed at Harvard Law School and it happened to be all the courses that the rules of the Massachusetts Bar required the admittee to have taken and passed. It didn't require a degree.

So I went back to this stiff-necked Bostonian, you know he was the typical caricature of the proper Bostonian. He is sitting there with his stiff collar and I told him, "Mister so and so," I forget his name now, "I read your letter carefully and I have gone and talked with the Dean of the Harvard Law School who by the way gave me a certificate (I had the presence of mind to ask him to give me a certificate of the classes I had taken). Here's a certificate from the Dean of Harvard Law School certifying that I have taken, successfully passed these courses, Criminal Law, Corporations, Estates, Trusts, Civil Procedure." I said, "I have read your rules. The rules do not require a degree. They require passage of these courses" and he said, "Well, Mr. Leighton, just a minute." Well, with me sitting across his desk looking at him, he dialed the number and I heard him talking. "Uh, Joe, an applicant of the bar here, his name is George N. Leighton, and he has passed the bar, he has passed the Character Committee

and he has taken the courses that we require. He says he doesn't have to have a degree because he won't get that until November." As he is writing something down, he says "uh, uh." He then made another phone call. Apparently he called all the members of the Committee and they all agreed with me. He turned to me very politely and he said, "Mr. Leighton, you are right. You don't have to have a degree from Harvard Law School to be admitted to the Commonwealth Bar. You come here tomorrow and you will be sworn in." I think it was the day before the admission date.

If you go to my office now, Collins, you will see two documents. One is the Certificate of Admission to the Massachusetts Bar dated October 2, 1946 in the typical language they use, hear ye, hear ye, and so forth and if you look at the next document, there is my degree, LL.B. degree from Harvard Law School. My Certificate of Admission to the Massachusetts Bar is dated October 2, 1946. My degree is dated November 27, 1946.

So I was admitted to the bar before I had my degree and then I came to Chicago.

**CTF:** Because of Richard Schwartz, because of his talking to you about Chicago?

**GNL:** Not so much that. I had other reasons, too. A lot of people have asked me and it always gets a little laugh. I don't know if you know this, Collins, but in 1946, Chicago was the only place in America that had an African-American member of Congress.

**CTF:** Yes.

**GNL:** At that time it was Arthur Mitchell, then it later became another man, Oscar DePriest, then it became William Dawson. I had talked with William R. Ming, Jr. in late 1930's, early 1940's when he was on the faculty at Howard University and he told me all about the Chicago community and I had learned that Chicago had the second largest African-American population in the United States, next to New York. New York was number one. However, despite the fact that African-Americans in New York outnumbered African-Americans in Chicago, as yet New York did not have a member of Congress at that time.

So, adding all these things together, and using some just ordinary wisdom; that here in this community is where I should be and it worked like that. It gave me a chance to practice law as soon as I got here because I had taken the precaution of reading the rules of admission in Illinois and at that time those rules provided that if you belonged to a jurisdiction having the

same common law traditions, you could be admitted on motion. So having been admitted to the Bar of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on October 2, 1946, I came here and about a month or so later, maybe less than a month, I made a motion. I found somebody who sponsored my motion for admission and I was admitted without taking the bar on January 27, 1947.

**CTF:** How many veterans were with you when you went through Harvard? Do you have any idea what the percentage of returning veterans were at Harvard?

**GNL:** I don't know but there were quite a lot of them because that's when I first met Julian Wilkins. I don't know if you know Julian Wilkins. He was at Jenner & Block for awhile. Well, Julian Wilkins was the son of Jay Ernest Wilkins. I don't know if you remember this but Jay Ernest Wilkins was the first African-American ever to hold a cabinet position in the United States. He was an Assistant Secretary of Labor in the Eisenhower administration. He was a lawyer here in Chicago. He had two sons at Harvard Law School when I came back from the military in 1945. One of them was Julian; the other was John. John was on the *Harvard Law Review*. Julian was on that Student Advisory Board that runs the moot court Ames Competition. Julian was on the Student Advisory Board, his brother was on the *Harvard Law Review*. Now, the other person that came back from the military at that time was William Coleman. You have heard of him?

**CTF:** Sure.

**GNL:** Well, Bill Coleman is now, I think, a retired partner in one of those big law firms headquartered in the District of Columbia, New York, Philadelphia, California, and so forth, I met several others. Again the number was small because in the first place there weren't many African-Americans in the student body and, of course, there were no women. I have said, Collins, facetiously—I think I can say without seeming immodest that I have earned the reputation of being a civil libertarian. I've had civil rights cases from the trial courts to the Supreme Court of the United States. However, I sat through all of my days at Harvard Law School and it never occurred to me that there never were any women any time that I was a student there and I never bothered to ask why or even tried to find out why. It was during the time of Dean Griswold that I am told, when he and several other prominent members of the faculty in the late 1950's, began to take steps to increase minority enrollment at Harvard Law School and they have done so. I was told when I was at Harvard just a short time ago that the student population at Harvard Law School is now about 20 to 25% minority.

**CTF:** You know that's one of those statistics, George, that I don't buy because the minority that I am most concerned with is literally the African-Americans and the Native Americans. Everybody else is just another immigrant group,

as we talked about the Cape Verde Islands, most of whom are just like the European immigrants.

**GNL:** Yes. This is what they told me because I asked just recently and I ask frequently and that's the answer I get.

**CTF:** Well, the question you want to ask is what is the percentage of African-Americans and Native Americans?

**GNL:** And that's much smaller.

**CTF:** Right. And that's the one you want to know.

**GNL:** Of course. One thing happened, there's a state senator now whose name is Barack Obama.

**CTF:** From the Hyde Park area.

**GNL:** He became president of the law review at Harvard Law School.

**CTF:** When did you get married?

**GNL:** I married the summer of the year that I went to active duty. Now you asked me a question which I would like to answer this way. I was at Howard University and among the great things that happened to me that made it possible for me to finish Howard was this same Lester Rick Woodson that I found in that tent in Manila in 1945. He was Assistant to the Dean of Men at Howard University when I entered in 1936. One of the duties of the Assistant to the Dean of Men at Howard was running the Campus Employment Bureau. That's the place you went to when you wanted to go wait tables, wash dishes, scrub floors, make a few dollars. Well, I befriended Lester Rick Woodson when he was in that capacity and he used to send me out on jobs waiting tables, washing dishes in restaurants and so forth. Then a year after I entered Howard, I think in 1937, he resigned that position and recommended me to the Dean of Men, whose name was William Benton West and Dean West approved that. Now the advantage of that was that when I went to Howard in 1936, I had very few dollars in my pocket. I had to rent a room, I rented a room somewhere off campus. I don't remember where. Being an Assistant to the Dean of Men at Howard carried with it fully paid tuition and a room in the men's dormitory. As a result of this recommendation, all I had to do was earn enough money for my food because I had my tuition, I had my room, and my food and clothing I was capable of earning very easily which I did.

Now while I was at work one day as Assistant to the Dean of Men, a man named – I can't think of his name right this moment – but he later became the first native of the American Virgin Islands to be elected Governor of the Virgin Islands. He was in the office of the Dean of Men and we became quite friendly and he said to me, "You know, George, I have a girl I want you to meet." "Okay." He said "Just a minute." He went to the telephone, dialed a number and handed it to me and said, "Here, meet Virginia." So I met Virginia. Now I might tell you a little something about ethnicity in the nation's capital. There is great deal of miscegenation among African-Americans in the District of Columbia, neighboring Virginia and neighboring Maryland, and some of them get so that you can't tell them from Caucasians. Well, Virginia was that type. She was from a very well-respected family. Her mother was a school principal and her father was a Library of Congress employee and a pharmacist, Dr. Harold B.B. Quivers, and after this telephone conversation, I met Virginia. I said or she said, come over and see me. They lived not very far from the campus. So I went.

**CTF:** Did she attend Howard?

**GNL:** No, she went to the Teachers College across the street from Howard. She was a student in this Teachers College. So I went and met Virginia at her home and struck it very well with her mother and father. I was blessed,

Collins, with having two of the finest in-laws that a person could have. They liked me. They respected me and in the first place, see I was a stranger to them, I was from Massachusetts. A lot of people thought I was a Brazilian. The rumor around Howard's campus was that I was the heir to a Brazilian coffee plantation. That's what they said.

**CTF:** And that's why you were washing dishes and waiting tables?

**GNL:** Right. Mixed rumors. At any rate, I met Dr. and Mrs. Quivers. So Virginia and I kept company. She's the one who taught me how to drink rum and Coca-Cola. When I took her out for the first time – once, I was being careful of course because she was from a good family. We went to this place in Baltimore, Maryland, and I sat down and thinking that she wouldn't touch anything alcoholic but she literally said, "I want a rum and Coca-Cola." I said, "Oh, my God, what?"

**CTF:** Where are we going here!

**GNL:** So at any rate, this is how we met and then when I went to Fort Benning, Georgia, in 1942. I wrote to her and when we were released from active duty after the Louisiana station, I was then assigned to Fort Huachuca, Arizona, as a Second Lieutenant. I was still a Second Lieutenant and I

proposed to Virginia and then stopped in Washington in June. On June 21, as I remember it, 1942 and we got married and in almost express violation of the Army orders that I had received; everyone was doing this, circumventing the orders, the order was that you couldn't take a spouse to Fort Huachuca. Fort Huachuca was about 40 miles from Tucson, Arizona. They didn't say you couldn't take your spouse to Tucson. So, Virginia and I went to Tucson and I rented her a home in Tucson and then traveled by car to Fort Huachuca. When word came that we were going to the Louisiana maneuvers, I then had to get her back home to her mother and father. She went back and that is when our oldest daughter was born, Anne, born in the same house as Virginia was born in Washington, D.C.

**CTF:** When you were at Howard were there any Caucasian students, or anybody other than African-Americans?

**GNL:** Yes.

**CTF:** Is the same true of the faculty?

**GNL:** Yes. A number of prominent people who taught me were Caucasians. My French teacher was a Caucasian woman and the Department of Psychology was headed by a Caucasian and there were a number of Caucasians. Now

one of the disappointments that I had about Howard University was during a time that I went there for a commencement. There was a good deal of uprising on the campus – the typical student protests, sit-ins in the building, taking over the President’s office, and so forth. That has happened at Howard several times. On this particular occasion when I went with Virginia to a commencement at Howard, I was sorely disappointed as I listened to young black students at Howard University at an almost public meeting urging alumni of Howard to join in the effort to remove all Caucasians from the faculty and to prevent Caucasians from registering as students at Howard University. Well, I asked this young man – at that time I was a judge and this was 1970, maybe 1971 or 1972 – I was a Justice of the Illinois Appellate Court. I had practiced law and I knew of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and how it applies so I asked this young man, “Well, how do you propose to circumvent the Civil Rights Act of 1964? Because if the university prevents a Caucasian from having a job on the faculty, the university will be facing lawsuits.” Well, he didn’t have an answer to my question. Then I asked another question, “Do you know where Howard University stands on the national budget of the federal government?” He didn’t know. Well, I said, “Did you know that Howard University is the only university in America that is a line item in the national budget that has to be approved by members of Congress who are from Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Missouri, South Carolina, and North Carolina? What do you think those

representatives in the Congress are going to do with the United States budget and the Howard University line item? Howard University is, I think, approved in the hundreds of millions of dollars every year; a subsidy from the federal government.” I said, “If that subsidy was denied to Howard University, you would have to pay three times the tuition you now pay.” Well, he didn’t have an answer to that question either. Well, they grumbled and grumbled and I left. I was disappointed with that and I’ve seen signs since then of that kind of invert racism.

**CTF:** As has been demonstrated around the world, no race has a monopoly on racism.

**GNL:** That’s right. You lead me to tell you the story of my conversation with Dimitrios Goravich, who is an international grand master of chess. If all the strongest chess players in the world were listed, it would list about 250 to 500 men and women, a few are women. Dimitrios Goravich is one of them. Well, I had a conversation with him about a Russian Cossack whose name is Katzky. He and his father came to New York to participate in an international chess tournament in New York and they then sought asylum in the United States. He gave a press conference the day before I was speaking to Dimitrios about this, and Katzky complained that he and his father, because they were Russian Cossacks were subject to race discrimination by

the Russian government. So Dimitrios said to me, "What is he complaining about? Everybody suffers from racism. There are a hundred nations and a hundred nationalities in Russia, one discriminates against the other, so what is he complaining about?" We laughed about that. It's what you said.

**CTF:** Exactly. Talking about racism, what signs other than the segregated division did you see in the Army. Your colonel for example, was he Caucasian?

**GNL:** Yes. Every officer we had above the rank of captain was Caucasian.

**CTF:** No one could rise above the rank of captain.

**GNL:** No, I think there were African-American officers above the rank of captain, there were majors, particularly those in the Medical Corps, because they were doctors, etc. There were majors above the rank of captain. That's as far as I got. My background, of course, was well-known. In fact, I did a lot of my service also in the Adjutant General Corps as a court marshal officer because they knew of my legal background.

I was a first year student at Harvard Law School. Now my military experience however, I will say, because I have said this to a number of people who have asked me, because of the way my military career went, I

didn't encounter overt racism. For example, a lot of African-Americans will tell you, those who have been officers in the service, they will recount, they will tell you horror stories of being denied admission to officers' clubs because that was taboo. In other words, if you were an officer in the Army or the Navy or the Air Corps, you couldn't belong to the officers' clubs and there were officers' clubs at all the different establishments – Fort Benning, Fort Edwards.

**CTF:** Is that true for the enlisted men too?

**GNL:** They had post exchange facilities. The enlisted men were a little different. Officers were a little bit more structured. Just because I didn't encounter – for example, when we went on maneuvers in Louisiana – we didn't have a camp and an established officers' club and I don't remember a single place with the possible exception of Fort Huachuca where there was an officer's club and, at Fort Huachuca, I didn't try to be a member. Maybe it was because I was told somewhere that I couldn't and didn't bother.

**CTF:** You also had Virginia in Tucson.

**GNL:** That's right. Virginia was there and then when I sent her back, we went to Louisiana, then the California desert and then, of course, overseas. I don't

remember there being an officer's club in Guadalcanal, Green Island, Bougainville, Finschhafen, or Morotai. Of course, maybe it was because I was so concentrated on this obsession of getting back to Harvard.

**CTF:** You came to Chicago in probably November of 1946?

**GNL:** To be exact, Collins, I have said this a number of times, I arrived in Chicago on October 14, 1946 at 9:47 a.m. and I came to Chicago not looking for a job. I didn't come to Chicago as so many African-American graduates of law schools, I didn't come looking for a place in some law firm, a big law firm, I didn't. One of the reasons why I didn't is because of a conversation I had with Bill Coleman at Langdell Hall in the library of Harvard Law School and this was the spring of 1946. Bill Coleman was then, and is now, kind of a pudgy fellow and he was seated at the table in Langdell Hall library with his feet on the table and I asked Bill, "How are your interviews going?" Now, Bill Coleman was a member of the *Harvard Law Review*. He was a protege of Paul Freund and one of the bright students in the Law School. He was being interviewed by law firms in New York, Philadelphia and other places and he told me, "George, I'm having a hard time. I had an interview with a law firm in New York who told me that they would give me a job with the understanding that I would never come in contact with their clients." And I said, "Bill, that's a hell of a way to practice law."

That killed me as far as seeking an interview with a law firm, a Caucasian law firm. So when I came to Chicago, I never went anywhere looking for a job at any of the big firms. Instead, I wanted to get into a place, a small place where I could go to court, represent people. I had been told by William Armein, Jr. that African-Americans as a whole are always in some kind of trouble. They don't have money and, on many occasions, they don't have the defense, but there is a need for a lawyer. So that was my mental state when I arrived, when that train slowed down at State and 63rd Street.

**CTF:** Englewood.

**GNL:** In those days the train slowed down and you jumped off with your suitcase in hand. I came to the Wabash Avenue YMCA at 37th and Wabash Avenue. I went to the YMCA building and I found a room there and I went directly to Supreme Liberty Life Insurance Company at 35th and then South Parkway, now King Drive, and I met Earl B. Dickerson. My only entrée to Chicago was a letter that I had from Sadie V. Alexander, who was then secretary of the National Bar Association, introducing me to Earl Dickerson. Now I had taken the precaution of getting that letter, just as I had taken the precaution of stopping in New York City. I think it was October 4, 1946 and I met Walter White who was then General Secretary of the NAACP and I told him that I had finished Harvard Law School. I was then a member of the

Massachusetts Bar and I wanted to volunteer to work with and for the NAACP. Walter White was appreciative about that and then he said to me, "Look there is a meeting going on right now that you may like to sit in on." I said, "Yes." So he took me to a large room and when he opened the door, there was William H. Hastie, Spottswood Robinson, William Armein, Jr., and Loren Miller of Los Angeles. I knew of all these people, all these lawyers. They were then working on the race restrictive covenant issue of the constitutionality of state courts enforcing racial restrictive covenants. That was the burning issue of the time and while I was there greeting William Armein from Chicago, Dean Hastie – who I later learned had called Dean James McCauley Landis when I talked with him at Howard and that's how McCauley Landis wrote me the letter. So after greeting all these people, in walked a big boisterous guy. I think it was Walter White who said to me, "This is Thurgood Marshall" and that is how I first met Thurgood Marshall.

**CTF:** Did you know who these people were before you came to that meeting?

**GNL:** Oh, yes, I knew Spottswood Robinson.

**CTF:** You knew Hastie obviously.

**GNL:** Yes. I knew Hastie. I knew William Armein, Jr. I knew Loren Miller from Los Angeles, but I didn't know Thurgood Marshall. I knew of him and when we met, from that day on until the day he died, we remained friends. I worked with Thurgood Marshall on cases in Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia. In Chicago I later became President of the Chicago branch of the NAACP twice and I represented Harvey Clark against the town of Cicero and I got an injunction against the town of Cicero barring them from preventing him from moving into his apartment when there was the race riot in Cicero. Thurgood and Walter White always kept in touch with me about these matters.

Now, I was born and raised in New Bedford, Massachusetts, Cape Cod, but I never went back to practice law, anywhere near where I was born, because I knew that I wouldn't have a chance in that community or those communities.

**CTF:** Because you would always be perceived as a cranberry bog worker?

**GNL:** Well, as I said earlier, Boston and Massachusetts in general are an ethnic and family-oriented culture. Now, if you belong to a well-established family and, of course, if you were Caucasian, you might make it. At least I figured for myself and I don't mind telling you something else, my community of New Bedford, Cape Verdeans, they hold it against me that I didn't go back to New

another direction, but he said to me, "Wait a minute, Temple and Wimbish at 35th and State Street in the Binga Bank Building, that's what it was, had a lawyer working in their office who mysteriously disappeared. No one knows where he went. No one knows what he has done and I saw Christopher Wimbish, and he was complaining that they needed some help. Go over there and meet Christopher Wimbish." And, Collins, I went there. I called and went to Christopher Wimbish's office and we hit it off as if we had known each other all of our lives. Christopher Wimbish is one of the most simple but outgoing persons. He was then a State Senator of Illinois and he was the Committeeman at the 3rd Ward Regular Democratic Organization. He was, I don't know, maybe an understudy of William L. Dawson. William L. Dawson was the kingpin of southside politics.

**GNL:** So I went to 35th and State and met C.C. Wimbish. At the end of that conversation he said, "Yes, you can come into my office." They had about two or three lawyers in there. Temple was an old African-American lawyer, well respected, one of these able fellows, very well respected as a lawyer. He handled estates, chancery proceedings, and that type. They didn't have a desk for me to sit in. There was a corner of the office filled with junk. So Wimbish said to me, "Clean that out there, clean that desk and sit there." So I did. I cleaned that corner off and that was my first desk, and that's how I began practicing law in Chicago.

C.C. Wimbish was a politician. He also was a lawyer, but he was a politician; had a lot of political influence. If you mentioned C.C. Wimbish's name anywhere, doors would be opened. So I began with C.C. Wimbish and he taught me. He told me, "Come into the office in the morning about 8:00, and he says most likely there are people coming up from both sides of State Street." It used to be slum, there was a row of slum buildings on both sides of State Street from 35th Street north. About a block or so from that address was a building called the Mecca. It was a den, it was the place where African-Americans coming in from the South would live. The place was filthy dirty, petty criminals and more serious criminals roamed all around there. From both sides of State Street, there were dives, bars and everything; there were knifings, assaults, rape, robbery, burglary, murder, all along that street, and in the early morning hours of the day, there would be all numbers of these people coming to see C.C. Wimbish about getting help for some problem like someone being arrested for murder, assault, or aggravated battery, robbery, theft, mugging, rape, and so forth. Whenever someone walked in and I would be in the office, C.C. would say, "Come in, Mr. Leighton," and I would come and he would introduce me. "This is Mr. Leighton, a graduate of Harvard Law School, one of the finest lawyers in Chicago." And that's how my practice in law began and, as I said, a week or so after I saw C.C. Wimbish for the first time, I was in the Criminal Court of

Cook County defending people charged with serious crimes without experience but alert enough to know what to do.

**CTF:** Other than the deputy clerks of the court, who did you have helping you to learn how to try criminal cases because you didn't learn that at Harvard Law School?

**GNL:** That's right. Actually I got to know Joe Clayton. I got to be a good friend of Joe Clayton; the other one was Euclid Taylor. They were the names among African-American lawyers in the southside of Chicago. Euclid Taylor was one of the best criminal trial lawyers in Chicago when I got here. He had a very bad reputation, however. He had the reputation of being a fixer and the rumors were that he did a lot of corrupt things. In fact, I learned a great deal about him by having cases in which he represented the opposing party, particularly in divorce cases. He had two areas of the law: criminal law and divorce and the rumor was that if you had a case in which Euclid Taylor represented the opposite party, usually he represented women against men, all manner of corrupt things would happen. But that was his reputation and he actually tried it in a case in which I represented a woman and he represented the man. Remember Cornelius Harrington – Judge Cornelius Harrington?

**CTF:** Yes.

**GNL:** By that time, Collins, I had become a member of the Board of Managers of the Chicago Bar Association, the first time that any African-American had ever sat on that board. One of the functions of that board was to review candidates for judgeships and I was a member of the board.

**CTF:** Is this because the formation of the Cook County Bar Association was a direct result of the fact that the Chicago Bar, as I understand it, wouldn't allow African-Americans in it?

**GNL:** Yes, you are right. That was the force that led to the founding of the Cook County Bar Association.

**CTF:** But by the time you are here and when you joined the Cook County Bar Association, that's not an issue?

**GNL:** No. I'll correct you, I'll give you the history in a minute. So to finish about Euclid Taylor, I was sitting on the Board of Managers of the Chicago Bar Association and his name came up for either appointment or election to the Circuit Court of Cook County. We had an unwritten rule that any member of that board who had personal knowledge of some incident that disqualified a

person from consideration as a judge, we had a duty to reveal to the Board.

Now what happened to me was I went to court one morning representing this woman and the judge was Cornelius Harrington, who later became Chief Judge of the Chancery Division. When the case was called, Judge Harrington looked and saw Euclid Taylor coming up and I was walking up with the plaintiff – the woman. He said, “This case will be adjourned and the hearing will be in chambers.” I said, “All right.” I and my client went into the chambers and so did Euclid Taylor and his client. When everything was settled in the chambers of Judge Harrington, Judge Harrington spoke to Euclid Taylor and said to him, “Euclid, yesterday you attempted through my bailiff to bribe me. You offered my bailiff \$10,000 to give to me if I would rule in favor of your client in this divorce case. Mr. Bailiff, would you stand up.” The bailiff was right there standing up, he was sworn in, and Judge Harrington made a record. “You tell the state for the record what Mr. Taylor said to you yesterday about \$10,000 to be paid to me.” In the meantime, I’m sitting there saying nothing because if I was Euclid Taylor, I would have fallen underneath the floor but to that man’s credit, when the bailiff finished describing what Taylor did, he rose up and went up to the bailiff. Now mind you this all taking place in this small room which is the chambers of Judge Cornelius Harrington. Taylor says to the bailiff, “You know you are lying.” At that point Judge Harrington got up and said, “Look Euclid, just a minute, you are not before a jury, you don’t have to

cross-examine him. He has told me. I'll take his word against yours." So Euclid Taylor sat down. Then Judge Harrington said, "I'll tell you what, in view of the fact that you made this effort but you didn't succeed, I'm going to send this case back to the chief judge and have it reassigned to someone else. In the meantime, I'm going to write this up and have a transcript made of this hearing and I'm going to keep it for future reference." So on that day when I was sitting at the Board of Managers, I think Morris Wetzler was President of the Chicago Bar Association. At any rate, I then said, "Mr. Chairman, I do have information about the applicant to the judiciary that I must reveal to this Board under my obligation as a member of the Board." I told them what I told you. I said "Now, as I recall it, Judge Cornelius Harrington stated for the record that he was going to have that transcript written up and he was going to keep it for future reference. I move that the investigator of this Board be sent to Judge Cornelius Harrington and inquire to him if he has that transcript." That motion was passed. The investigator was sent and the meeting was adjourned. Another meeting was called about a week later and I was there and the investigator had the transcript. That was the end of Euclid Taylor's judicial career.

Now you asked me a question about the Chicago Bar Association. Collins. When I arrived in Chicago on October 14, 1946 at 9:47 a.m., I couldn't be a member of the Chicago Bar Association because the Bar

Association had a policy of excluding African-American lawyers. One of the first civil rights activities that I engaged in after I arrived in Chicago was to join Earl B. Dickerson, Loren Moore, Nelson Willis, Oscar Brown, Sr., and Sidney Brown in protesting the policy of the Chicago Bar Association. Because they wouldn't admit me to membership, I joined the National Lawyers Guild which as you know was later branded as the legal arm of the Communist Party. So time went on after 1946.

**CTF:** But Arthur Goldberg and Luther Swygert were all members of the National Lawyers Guild, as was Dean Clarence Manion.

**GNL:** Is that right?

**CTF:** Yes.

**GNL:** Well, let me tell you what happened to me. As I told you, I became a member of the Illinois bar on motion soon after I got here because of this carefully plotted plan that I had engaged in. What I didn't know and I don't think Bill B. Dixon knew this but there were a lot of people in the Chicago Bar Association – like Elmer Gertz, Ulysses Schwartz, for example, I was later told, Rothchild, the Alderman of the 5th Ward, Leon Despres – they were all working to get the Chicago Bar Association changed and they

succeeded around 1947 or 1948. I received a phone call asking me if I would apply for membership and I did. I said sure, I'd join anything. So I applied for membership and I went before the Membership Committee and the Chairman of the Committee berated me, "Well, you are a member of the National Lawyers Guild, a Communist." I said, "Now wait a minute, Sir. I joined the National Lawyers Guild because I couldn't join the Chicago Bar Association. I'll tell you what I will do. I'll make a bargain with you. You admit me to the Chicago Bar Association today and I'll resign from the National Lawyers Guild tomorrow." I also told him, "I've never been to a meeting of the National Lawyers Guild" but they admitted me. And sure enough two days later I received a phone call telling me that I was admitted to the Chicago Bar Association. Now to the credit of that organization, I was a member a short time when I was asked to be a member of the Board of Managers. They put me on the ticket and I was elected. I served my two years and then they asked me if I would be, you know at that time, the librarian. By that time – I mean 1948 or 1949 – the librarian was elected by the membership. Today he is appointed. But I ran for librarian and I was elected three times. I have a beautiful certificate on my honor wall that I keep in my apartment reciting all the different offices I held in the Chicago Bar Association. And as you know, the Bar has changed so that they have elected African-Americans as president. So they have changed and I'm sure

every time someone like me recites this history, there are members of that Association that cringe a little bit.

**CTF:** You said that you were shortly in the Criminal Courts after hanging up your hat here. You also said that within a month of your coming to Chicago, you were arguing in the Illinois Supreme Court. Why don't you tell me about that case.

**GNL:** Well, it was a murder case. I didn't try the case. Someone else had tried the case and someone asked me or some family member retained me to handle the writ. At that time there wasn't an appeal, it was a writ of error. But because it was not a death sentence, a writ of error issued as a matter of course. I had never handled a case in Springfield, Illinois, but what I did, as soon as I got to Chicago, I enrolled in Harry Fins' course. It was one of those walking libraries that you need sometimes. In fact, it is Harry Fins who is responsible for the recodification of Illinois law now. He worked on it until he died. Harry Fins, in addition to that, taught a course in appeals and writs of error and I took the course and I still had the benefits of the G.I. Bill of Rights and my Bill of Rights coverage paid for Harry Fins' course.

**CTF:** You took that here?

**GNL:** Yes, here. It was like a course in civil procedure.

**CTF:** Was that right away, right before you argued the case?

**GNL:** Right away. Because by January 1947, I had this case in the Supreme Court of Illinois. I had gone through this course, I had learned the rules and writs of errors. There were no appeals then in criminal cases. There might have been an exception when you got into misdemeanors, I think misdemeanors were reviewed automatically by the Appellate Court. So I argued the murder case and wrote the brief. There was a time when I had a copy of that brief. I no longer have it because when I went on the bench, my old law firm discarded all of my bound briefs. I had 75 to 100 volumes of briefs that I had written in the Supreme Court of Illinois, Illinois Appellate Court, United States Court of Appeals, Supreme Court of the United States. I had them all bound once. All of that was destroyed when they discarded that library but I argued the case and incidentally, my progress in the bar in Illinois in large part I owe to the fact that I was active in this way because that's how I met Walter B. Schaefer, who was a Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court. I met him because of going to 26th and California and representing poor people. Often I had to run to the Supreme Court to get a stay of execution or to get emergency bail or something like that. I would appear before Justice Walter

Schaefer in his chambers here in Chicago and we formed a very nice friendship.

No sooner than I was allowed to enter the Chicago Bar Association, or just before that I think, Justice Walter Schaefer was responsible for my being appointed to the Committee on Character and Fitness of this judicial district. See I sat on the *Anastaplo* case as a member of the Character and Fitness Committee. I and Ed Rothchild and several others were in the minority. We were in favor of admitting George Anastaplo even though he had refused to declare whether he was or was not a Communist. That's why they wouldn't admit him. So, that contact with Justice Walter Schaefer led him to put me on the Character and Fitness Committee and I became known to members of the Chicago Bar Association.

**CTF:** When was that, George, when you went on the Character and Fitness Committee?

**GNL:** 1949.

**CTF:** You were on there as a young lawyer?

**GNL:** Yes, as a new lawyer. Because I became a lawyer in 1946 and I was born in 1912, I was 34 years old when I became a member of the bar of the Commonwealth.

**CTF:** Did Virginia and Anne come with you right away or did they stay in Washington?

**GNL:** They stayed in Washington. By that time, I had two daughters – Anne and Barbara. I called them Miss A and Miss B. This very lovely couple, my in-laws Dr. Harold and Virginia Quivers, did something which I often I think of. I have no independent recollection of ever sitting down with Mrs. Quivers and Dr. Quivers and asking them would you take care of Virginia, Anne, and Barbara while I struggle with trying to get started. I have no recollection of this nor did I ever receive any suggestion, any request for me to pay them or compensate them in any way. They took care of Virginia throughout the time that I was in the military and Anne was born in their home and so was Barbara born in their home. So Virginia, Anne, and Barbara remained in Washington, D.C., when on October 14, 1946 I arrived here. So right away, of course, I began working to find a way to get a place for them to come. You see in 1946, 1947 and 1948, it was almost impossible for an African-American person to find a place either to rent or buy. The race covenants were being enforced in 1946 and it remained in force until

late in 1947, early 1948, when the Supreme Court of the United States decided *Shelley v. Kraemer* (*Shelley v. Kraemer*, 334 U.S. 1, 68 S.Ct. 836, 92 L.Ed. 1161, 3 ALR2d 441 (U.S. Mo. 1948)).

So I struggled with this beginning to practice. To show you how well I did financially – although when I came to Chicago I had a few dollars in my pocket – but by May 1947, I had made enough money to buy a two-flat building at 1615 South St. Louis Avenue. That's because it was impossible to find anything on the southside of Chicago. So I bought this two-flat building at 1615 South St. Louis and I immediately brought Virginia, Anne and Barbara to that flat and about 1-1/2 years later, I sold that two-flat at a substantial profit. Then I bought a three-story building which is still standing there at the entrance of Washington Park at 5044 St. Lawrence Avenue. That's where we lived until we moved to 84th and South Prairie, which I just sold a short time ago. My two daughters grew up and went to private school.

**CTF:** Where did they go to school?

**GNL:** Anne and Barbara both went to St. Edmunds, I think on 61st and South Michigan Avenue. One of their fellow classmates was Sophia Hall, who is now a judge in the Chancery Division. She was a first grader or so or maybe

in kindergarten at St. Edmunds parochial school, her father was well known.

He was a doctor – Dr. Hall – a very well-known southsider.

**CTF:** Where did they go to high school?

**GNL:** When we moved to 8400 South Prairie, they went to Hirsch. Anne went to Hirsch first. The reason that I bought the house at 8400 was because of the good high school, Hirsch High School, that existed then. Then Barbara went to Hirsch High School; then she went to the University of Illinois and then she went to another school.

**CTF:** The University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign?

**GNL:** That's right. That's where she went. Anne my older daughter, who is now a holder of a Doctorate of Philosophy degree from the University of Iowa in business administration and holds a master's degree from the same school and has an A.B. degree from Roosevelt, she was kind of a rebel. She went to Howard and I was glad when Virginia told me that Anne was going to Howard. That was fine. So when Anne came home after one year at Howard, we sat at dinner and she told me, "I'm not going back to Howard." I said, "Well, why?" She said, "Well, I'm not going back to Howard because the people who run Howard University don't consult with the students. They didn't ask me and

won't ask me what I think about certain things." So I said, "Anne, the people who run Howard University haven't changed since I went there because they never consulted me and I'm a whole lot smarter than you are." Virginia later told me, "You should have never said that." And I said, "Well, I just want to be frank with the girl." So I told Anne, "Look you can go to any school you want to. I put aside a certain amount of money for your liberal arts education. You can go here, there, when the money runs out, your education runs out." So the next day I learned, Anne had decided to go to Roosevelt. Virginia told me that. I said, "good."

She went to Roosevelt; finished Roosevelt, then she told Virginia and me that she was going to go around to the West Indies looking for a husband. Well, I said, "I don't know, I never had that job. I never thought that. She told me she was going to Aruba. She heard that Aruba had a lot of English men who make good husbands." Well, I said, "If you want to go all that distance to find a husband..." Well, she went except that I learned from Virginia that Anne didn't find a husband. She ended up in the Virgin Islands, St. Croix, and she married a man from St. Lucia, whose name was Beyln, B-E-Y-L-N, and she had three children by him. Then she divorced him never telling us why and I have said time and again, I don't ever intrude in private matters. Then she was married again and she had a child by her second husband -- a man named Reynolds.

Then she told us that she was bringing her children to Iowa City, Iowa. Now mind you, here's four children born in the Virgin Islands, being transported, uprooted to Iowa City, Iowa. Well, it happened that I was serving on the Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admission to the Bar, that's the accrediting arm of American law schools, and on that board was Sandy Boyd, who was President of the University of Iowa. So he had a meeting here in Chicago and I told Virginia, "Look, Anne said she is going to the University of Iowa on an advance degree program, master's degree, doctor of philosophy, and she is going to take her four children. She is now a single parent. How is she going to do this?" Well, I said that I was going to talk with Sandy Boyd. So I went to a meeting with Sandy Boyd at the University of Chicago and I remember it like it was this morning. I asked Sandy to wait for me after the meeting. I wanted to talk with him. I sat him down and I said, "Look, Sandy, do you have any children." "Oh, I have two." "Well, let me tell you about one that I have." I gave him her name. "She tells my wife and I that she has a scholarship to study for a master's degree and a doctor of philosophy degree at the University of Iowa, and she's taking her four children to the University of Iowa. We are wondering what facilities there are?" Well, he said, "George, don't worry. I have children. I've gone through all of this. I'm going back tonight. I will call you Monday." On Monday, Sandy Boyd called me and he said, "We have Anne L. Reynolds of St. Croix, Virgin Islands, who is coming to the University of Iowa. She has four children." He named them.

“And we are going to accommodate her and because you spoke to me about them, I will see to it that they get housing on the ground floor of the student dormitory because those student dormitories are made so that children the ages of your grandchildren can go up there and they will break their heads and necks falling down the stairs.” He said, “Tell your wife that we’ll see to it that they are accommodated.” And so that’s how it worked out.

She took her four children to the University of Iowa, did her master’s degree, became a degree holder, a master's degree holder in business administration and then she stayed and obtained her doctorate. She is now on the staff of Ohio State University in Columbus and the two children she had with her, Lucilla and Julianna have both finished college. Julianna is the Visitor Director for Ohio State University. So if you want to go to Ohio State University, or your kid wants to visit Ohio State University to see how the place is, you have to go through my granddaughter, Julianna Beyln. Lucilla finished at Wright State College. Steven, the oldest boy, finished at the University of Iowa in accounting. Took and passed an examination for a certified public accountant; has worked for Arthur Anderson Company and for Ernst & Young. He is now employed by Price Waterhouse here in Chicago. David went to the University of Iowa – didn’t finish – but then went to the University of San Francisco and he is now employed as an Assignment Editor of the Hearst Argyle Corporation in Sacramento, California. The Assignment

Editor, I am told by David, is the person who sits in the office of the television news facility and all the reporters they send out on the streets to pick up stories will send the report, e-mail it in, fax it or call it in. Then he edits them and decides which of the items go on the evening news. Now she brought up those four children at the University of Iowa as a single parent. Of course, I helped financially and with scholarships and she is now on the staff of Ohio State University. All her children are employed and doing well.

**CTF:** In 1949, we have talked about your being on the Character and Fitness Committee, you started with Senator Wimbish but you shortly after that formed a firm with May?

**GNL:** Yes. Through Senator Wimbish and Congressman William L. Dawson, I was made an Assistant Illinois Attorney General in 1949 and that led me to move from 35th and State Street from Temple and Wimbish to downtown and I used to work in the State of Illinois building, the old State of Illinois building. Around 1951, I did something that was foolish and it deeply affected and influenced my career. I didn't know that I was doing it but I did it. I couldn't shake off my private clients so I struggled with the job of Assistant Illinois Attorney General and then one day I went to the Chief Assistant Illinois Attorney General and told him that I was going to resign my job as an Assistant Illinois Attorney General. What I failed to take into account was that

the job was a political job. I was given that job because Senator Wimbish was the Ward Committeeman for the 3rd Ward. It was a patronage job. That's what it was. What I didn't know or appreciate was that in patronage jobs, politicians attach a great importance to them. I resigned without talking to Senator Wimbish or without talking to Congressman Dawson. It wasn't that they would have denied me the opportunity to resign. They would have agreed to it but they would have selected someone to take my place. When I resigned the way I did, the job was filled by the Chief Assistant Illinois Attorney General and Wimbish and Dawson were deprived of this job. After things settled down, Wimbish came to me. By that time I was at 180 West Washington Street. Are you familiar with that address?

**CTF:** Yes.

**GNL:** That address was the only address in the Loop in the 1940's and 1950's where a black lawyer could rent office space. Euclid Taylor, Loren Moore, and Jay Ash Logins were all in that office building.

**CTF:** I remember later that when District Judge James Parsons came on the bench, he had some cases involving buildings that would not rent to African-Americans.

**GNL:** Now this leads me to tell you about how I formed the firm. After Wimbish scolded me about it and he did it in rather rough language. He was that kind of person. He said, "Dawson has written you off his books. You will never get a chance at anything." I apologized and I said, "Look first chance I get, I will go talk to Congressman Dawson and I'll tell him I didn't think about it, I'm sorry and so forth." Soon after that, Collins, I had an opportunity to form a firm and I did at 123 West Madison Street. The place used to be known as the Joel Hunter Building. It was owned by the United Charities of Chicago but they rented me this space because I went there and complained that I couldn't find a single place in the Loop except in that 180 West Washington building that black lawyers named Uncle Tom's Cabin. That's how it used to be referred to. I complained to the manager at 123 West Madison. He was a very fine man and he told me, "Look, Leighton, I'm going to do everything I can to rent you space in this building" – right across from St. Peter's Church. At that time St. Peter's Church had not been built. So when I got that floor, the whole floor, the third floor, they remodeled it to accommodate us and then I got Loren Moore and C.C. Wimbish to join me in forming the firm Moore, Wimbish and Leighton and that became the so-called integrated law firm – one of the largest in the country at the time because we increased to the point that we had about 25 or 30 lawyers in that building. I stayed there until 1964 when Mayor Richard J. Daley called me and asked me if I would accept a spot on the judicial ticket of the Democratic party for the November 1964 election. As I

have said – somewhat facetiously a number of times – that anybody who knew Chicago in 1964 knows that for a lawyer to receive a phone call from Richard J. Daley asking him to be a candidate for judge was like being elected by a landslide. I was elected by a landslide. I was elected to the Circuit Court of Cook County.

**CTF:** While you are in private practice, you develop a reputation as a criminal defense lawyer predominantly and you are handling a lot of different litigation. You are also going around the country on some civil rights cases?

**GNL:** Yes. Well, I got a lot of civil rights cases. For example, I don't know if I mentioned this to you, but early in my career and I think it was 1948, the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois became interested in a problem that existed in Alabama caused by the Boswell Amendment. That Amendment was adopted by the people of Alabama in a campaign instituted by an Alabama Senator named James Boswell and so it was named the Boswell Amendment. The purpose of that Amendment, and no one made any secret about it, was disenfranchising African-Americans in Alabama. The way it was done was to require under the Amendment that any applicant for registration to vote had to pass a test and that test was to read, write and explain a provision of the Constitution of the United States to the satisfaction of the voting commissioner. Well, no African-American in Alabama could do that because

they had recorded incidents where an African-American who memorized the Fourteenth Amendment, and if that was the amendment he was asked to explain, he would recite verbatim the Fourteenth Amendment and would explain why it was adopted. But the voting registrar would say to him when he finished the litany, "Well, I ain't satisfied." Well, I joined a lawyer here in Chicago at the request of the American Civil Liberties Union in Chicago and filed a lawsuit in the United States District Court for the Southern District of Alabama in Mobile to declare that Amendment unconstitutional under the Thirteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. A panel of United States district judges, a three-judge panel sitting in Mobile, after hearing me present the case – now mind you I had just been admitted to the bar, but I went down to Mobile, Alabama and I represented these ten African-Americans in a case called *Davis v. Schnell* (*Davis v. Schnell*, 81 F.Supp. 872 (S.D. Ala. 1949)) – and the three-judge court issued a judgment declaring the Alabama Boswell Amendment unconstitutional under the Thirteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. That ruling of the three-judge panel was affirmed by the Supreme Court of the United States and that tore down that bar to voting by African-Americans in Alabama. In addition to that, every once in awhile I would get a case. I had one in Mississippi – basically civil rights cases. I had the case of an African-American man who was driving his family to Canton, Mississippi, on Labor Day 1955. Thurgood Marshall called me about that case and asked me to go down to Mississippi and I went.

**CTF:** He at the time was the General Counsel of the NAACP in New York?

**GNL:** Yes. You see between the time that I had that meeting with Walter White and met Thurgood Marshall, I came to Chicago and became active in the NAACP and became President. I was Chairman of the NAACP Legal Committee for years and I was in constant touch with Thurgood Marshall. So he called me about the Boswell Amendment case as well as the *Goldsby v. Harpole* (*U.S. ex rel. Goldsby v Harpole*, 249 F2d 417 (5<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1957)) case. Goldsby got into a shootout with the husband of a white woman in a filling station. He had driven his car into the filling station and the white man didn't like the way he drove the car into the filling station. So he came out of the filling station and Goldsby, who was driving, saw him in his rearview mirror coming out of the filling station in the early morning hours sometime just before Labor Day in 1955 with a gun in his hand. So Goldsby reaches into his glove compartment of his car and pulled out his gun and the man came at him and a shootout occurred between Goldsby and Nellums who owned the filling station. The wife of Nellums was in the filling station and she heard the shooting and she came running out. By the time she came to where Nellums was, Goldsby had succeeded in wounding him. He was on the ground and she came running out. There was more shooting between Nellums and Goldsby and the woman was killed. Goldsby was tried and sentenced to death. I looked into the case and came to the conclusion, as did Thurgood Marshall and other lawyers, that there

was a question who killed this woman. She could have been shot by her husband who was shooting at Goldsby or she could have been shot by Goldsby who was shooting at the husband, but in either event it wouldn't have been murder. Yet they charged him with murder and tried him before a jury in which African-Americans were systematically excluded. I took up the case.

**CTF:** Did he have counsel?

**GNL:** He had a white lawyer who caused the problem. He never raised the issue of systematic exclusion of blacks on the grand and petit jury. He didn't raise it. Incidentally, Collins, that opinion is written. I think if you look, I believe it's 263 F.2d. 71, I think it is *Goldsby v. Harpole*. The white lawyer didn't raise the issue of systematic exclusion of blacks from grand and petit jury. I took the case from Chicago. I don't recall now to what extent the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People contributed to the expenses because Goldsby didn't have any money. I took it and it went to the Fifth Circuit after a denial of a petition for writ of habeas corpus. The Fifth Circuit reversed, granted the writ, agreed with the argument that I made that Goldsby was indicted by a grand jury from which his race was systematically excluded, and he was tried and convicted by a jury from which members of his race were systematically excluded. How I established it was – again in consort with Thurgood Marshall's office and the lawyers in Birmingham cooperated

with me – we had a rule that no lawyer from Chicago, a black lawyer, would go into the deep South without talking with Arthur Shores of Birmingham, Alabama. With Arthur Shores’s help and Thurgood Marshall’s staff help, I was able to establish and the opinion of Judge Reeves – remember Richard Reeves?

**CTF:** Sure, he sat in the Seventh Circuit a lot. He was one of the real stalwarts of the Fifth Circuit.

**GNL:** Richard Reeves wrote the opinion. One of the things that Judge Reeves did in that opinion was to append to his opinion the transcript of the examination and cross-examination I made of the officers, the officials of Carroll County who – as I said to myself in the courtroom when I saw them all sitting and I called them – who would know about the systematic exclusion other than the chancery clerk, the clerk of court, the judge, he was right there, and the district attorney. They were all in the courtroom and I questioned them and got from them, some of them would answer the question, “How long have you been Sheriff of Carroll County?” “Oh, 32 years I think.” “Now, Sir, in those 32 years have you had any part in the summoning and assembly of grand and petit jurors.” “Oh, yes.” “And what is it that you did?” “Oh, I served summons and I accommodated them.” “And you looked at the juror?” “Sir, in these 32 years did you ever see a black person on the grand jury?” “No, Sir.” “How

about a petit jury?" And then there's an interesting exchange I had with Judge Henry Lee Rogers, a lot of them liked Lee. I got to be quite friendly with Henry Lee Rogers while I was handling that case in Vaiden and he was there in the courtroom, so I called him. I said, "Now Judge Rogers, how long have you been a Circuit Judge in Carroll County?" "Oh, 30 some years." I said, "And you had something to do with the assembly of a grand jury." "Oh, yes." "Well, in those 30 somewhat years you have been a judge, did you ever see (I think I used the word Negro.)" He said, "Well, I don't know what you mean by Negro." "Well, all right, Judge." You see my client – Robert Goldsby was as black as a person could be – and I said, "Judge, without getting technical, I'm asking did you ever see anyone that looked like him." "No, I can't say I ever did." Well, Judge Reeves ruled and Judge Minor Wisdom was on that panel and Judge John R. Brown. Well, there was a unanimous panel reversing the denial of the writ of habeas corpus and as a result, Robert Goldsby wasn't executed.

**CTF:** Was he retried?

**GNL:** I think he was retried after I went on the bench but he was not sentenced to death.

**CTF:** Where did you stay when you were in Mississippi?

**GNL:** That's a good question, Collins. I think by the time I handled that case, this was in the late 1950's – 1956, 1957, 1958 – and I was told right away by Arthur Shores and by Thurgood Marshall that I couldn't stay in a hotel in Jackson. See Vaiden, Mississippi, is about 80 miles north of Jackson and to go to Vaiden, which is the seat of Carroll County, you should first go to Jackson, by any way you can and then by car go to Vaiden. Well, I found out that I couldn't go to a hotel in Jackson. They would lynch me. I stayed at the home of Medgar Evers – you know, the man who was assassinated. Before he was assassinated, Medgar Evers befriended me – he and his wife. I always stayed in their home in Jackson, Mississippi.

**CTF:** And then had to commute the 80 miles to Vaiden?

**GNL:** That's right. Now since you asked me that, let me tell you another interesting anecdote about Henry Lee Rogers, the judge. One day I went to Jackson and I had to go to Vaiden the next day and I didn't want to rent a car so a lawyer friend of mine, whose name I've forgotten right this moment, had just represented a fellow who was lynched not very far from Jackson and he drove me to Vaiden the next morning. Well, this lawyer was notorious for the fact that he represented this guy who was lynched and I didn't want too many people to know that I was associated with him. So when I got to Vaiden where I had a hearing on the *Goldsby* case – I forget what the nature of the hearing

was – I noticed that the courthouse was ringed with marked cars, police cars, state troopers, about 25 or 30 state trooper vehicles around the building. When I got to the door of the courtroom, Judge Henry Lee Rogers opened the door of the courtroom. “How are you, George?” “Fine, Judge, how are you?” I introduced the lawyer. He knew the lawyer so he said to me, “George, are you and your associate here going to leave the building during the day while you are here in this area?” I said, “Well, I was.” “George, well, I’m going to tell you that you can’t. Once you get into the building, I’m going to appoint two state police officers to protect you and two state police officers to protect him. You can’t go outside the building because people are all up in tension because you came all the way from Chicago interfering with their execution of this Goldsby guy.” He said, “Don’t go out of the building. Stay here.” So we had four troopers protecting us from this unknown, undefined danger and that’s how I spent my day in that courtroom. Now, I gave you this answer to tell you that.

**CTF:** How long did that go for?

**GNL:** The hearing was during the day. I was through at night. We drove back to Jackson.

**CTF:** Was it a multiple-day hearing?

**GNL:** It was one day, as I remember it – nothing untoward occurred. The only thing that I noticed that I found amusing was that they conducted a search of everybody who came into that courtroom and, every once in awhile, I was seated in the courtroom and in the upper level where the troopers were conducting a search, every once in awhile you would hear something like this [the Judge is making a sound like something metal being dropped], that would be a gun that was being taken from one of the people and also the lawyer who was with me whispered to me during the time that we are in the small room where there were four big troopers. He said, “George, I’m more afraid of these troopers than I am of the people outside.”

**CTF:** How did you get down there? Did you drive down there?

**GNL:** No, I took a plane. I used to go by plane.

**CTF:** So you got over your World War II concern about flying.

**GNL:** Yes. By that time, I had become an avid user of airplanes. I enjoy traveling by plane. Now, I actually enjoy it. I go to Boston or Providence, Rhode Island. I don’t have any fear.

**CTF:** What was Medgar Evers like?

**GNL:** He was a very fine person. Amiable, nice guy, and as you know, well, they claimed to have found the man who did it.

**CTF:** The man who murdered him?

**GNL:** Yes.

**CTF:** Would Medgar Evers have been a politician if he didn't get thrust into it because of the racial situation?

**GNL:** I think so. In this way, through Thurgood Marshall's office and also people around would communicate with me – in the *Goldsby* case – he had kinfolk in Gary, Indiana, although he lived at that time in St. Louis, Missouri, and it was because of that he was traveling to Canton, Mississippi. I learned in that case something I didn't know as much as I studied African-American history and Negro history. I didn't know this, but this is true and I believe it is true today. On a holiday like Labor Day or Memorial Day but particularly Labor Day, African-Americans have a ritual almost. They go from wherever they are, St. Louis, wherever; they go back to different parts of Mississippi just to see kinfolk.

**CTF:** And the kinfolk are pretty extensive and actually you see reunion picnics – you know I live in Beverly Hills – I often see the signs for reunion picnics of families at Ryan Woods.

**GNL:** It's still good and that's how Goldsby got involved in that shootout with a guy named Nellums and I have always thought that if it was anywhere else, if the case had occurred in Chicago, he never would have been charged with murder because he was shooting at Nellums.

**CTF:** Nellums was shooting at him. It was self defense.

**GNL:** Yes. It was self defense.

**CTF:** What other cases did you take down in the South? Were there other ones before you became a judge?

**GNL:** Down there, I can't think of another.

**CTF:** What about up here? I think one time you talked to me at lunch when we had some African jurists over at the Union League Club and you told me the story about going down to Lincoln, Illinois, I think it was, which might as well have been in Mississippi.

**GNL:** Oh, that's right. I obtained a school desegregation order before Thurgood Marshall obtained the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Nelson Vorst, who was then president of the Chicago branch of the NAACP, got me to file a suit in the U.S. District Court – I believe it was the Eastern District of Illinois – to desegregate the schools in one of the communities in Southern Illinois and I was successful.

**CTF:** Do you remember who the judge was?

**GNL:** He later served, I think, for a short time on this court.

**CTF:** Walter Lindley?

**GNL:** Let me refer to that case. Let me look at it for a minute because I can be more precise. It may have been Judge Lindley. Let's see what I have here.

**CTF:** Timing wise when you practiced, it would have been most likely.

**GNL:** It was in Harrisburg, Illinois, that the desegregation order applied and it was in 1950. I represented Negro parents of school children in Harrisburg, Illinois, in a proceeding which we filed in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Illinois, and the defendants were the Harrisburg, Illinois, School Board and

several other individuals. An injunction was obtained ordering desegregation of the public schools of Harrisburg, Illinois. This was before *Brown v. Board of Education*.

**CTF:** Was that decision ever appealed?

**GNL:** No, they never appealed it. In fact, the lawyers for the school district down there, I remained friendly with them. I think the name of the lawyer was George Lee. They confessed in court that the school system segregated Negro children from white children. In fact, the segregated Negro school in Harrisburg, Illinois, was called Lincoln Elementary School and a railroad track ran through the playground of the school. Now all of the little colored kids, in order to play basketball, had to run around that railroad track and every time the railroad train came by, everybody had to stop. Now, not very far from that school, was a white school that was named, I think, Jefferson Elementary School. That had a gymnasium, a fenced playground, everything. I had pictures taken of the two schools and the lawyers for the defendants confessed in open court that the Harrisburg School District maintained racially segregated schools.

**CTF:** Was the leadership of the school district looking for the courts to tell them what they knew they should do so that they could take the political heat off them?

**GNL:** That's what it amounted to and now that you mention Judge Lindley, if I had to do some research which I could, I could find the case in the Eastern District of Illinois, and I believe now that you tell me it was Judge Lindley.

**CTF:** Judge Lindley sat in Danville. The Eastern District included East St. Louis, Cairo, Benton and this would have – was this in the Benton Courthouse – Benton, Illinois?

**GNL:** No, as I remember it, it was in Harrisburg, Illinois. They had some facilities. I understand that sometimes these district judges use the state court rooms.

**CTF:** I'm sure that was true at one time but I don't think that has been true in a long time – but you had mentioned to me about a case that took you to Lincoln, Illinois – and I always remember it because you said that you weren't allowed to approach the bench and the white lawyers were allowed to approach the bench. I thought that was the case.

**GNL:** I don't recall that – Lincoln. I don't remember but you see how varied my practice was. It was also through the NAACP because in the Harrisburg school case, I got involved in it because Nelson Willis, who was a very well-respected activist in the civil rights movement of the late 1940's, 1950's, asked me. Again like all of these cases, Collins, not a single one of them paid any compensation. This is why today civil rights litigation is so different. If the lawyer prevails, the lawyer can be well off with a substantial award of attorney's fees.

**CTF:** So some of the fees that you got that supported your work in the civil rights cases came out of the criminal defendants you defended?

**GNL:** That's right. I used to tell them and I've said this, that I made my income from which I supported my family from criminal cases and I made my notoriety out of civil cases; particularly civil rights cases, particularly when the *Harvey Clark* case came along. (see *Clark et al. v Sandusky et al. Appeal of De Rose*, 205 F2d 915 (7<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1953) ). That case involved the town of Cicero. That case was a cause celebre all over the country and all over the United States and all over the world. Pictures of the riots in Cicero only because Harvey Clark, a black man and his wife, were trying to move into an apartment in Cicero that had been rented to them by the owner. What I did was to advise Harvey Clark and his wife that under federal and state laws at that time, without the Civil

Rights Act, they had a right to move into their own apartment because the woman who owned the building rented the apartment to Harvey Clark; had accepted his \$50, but the Chief of Police of Cicero and all the police officers in Cicero wouldn't let them move into the apartment and that's what I did. I advised them that they had the right to go in. I went into federal court, the District Court here, and Judge John Potts Barnes issued the injunction restraining the police officers of Cicero, from the Chief on down from interfering with Harvey Clark moving into the building. I then escorted Harvey Clark, his wife and two little kids to Cicero and we had marshals. Judge Barnes ordered marshals. When we went there, they set the building on fire. That fire raged for several days. Governor Stevenson called out the National Guard. Harvey Clark never moved into the building. They had to come back to Chicago. Then John Boyle, who was State's Attorney for Cook County, assembled a grand jury to investigate how this riot started. I was summoned to appear before the grand jury and I went and the foreman of the grand jury asked me point blank, "Why did you advise this black man that he had the right to move into an apartment in Cicero?" I told him, "Because I believe the Constitution and laws of the United States protected that right. He had rented the apartment." Then the indictment came down and I was named a defendant in the indictment in a conspiracy to start a race riot in Cicero and I lived with that indictment over my head for a long period of time.

**CTF:** Who represented you?

**GNL:** Thurgood Marshall before Judge Wilbur Crowley.

**CTF:** What happened to that case?

**GNL:** I'm going to tell you. I don't think the grand jury in that case ever intended this. But that grand jury taught me something that I never would have learned. How it feels to be indicted for a crime you didn't commit because all I had done was advise Harvey Clark that because the owner of the building had rented the apartment to him and because he had paid \$50, he had a right to move into his apartment. I had many sleepless nights in that period from the date of the indictment until it was dismissed by Judge Wilbur Crowley. When Thurgood Marshall came from New York – there was Thurgood Marshall in the courtroom, William Armein, Jr., Charles Bellows, George Bieber, Michael Brodtkin – the whole criminal mob of Cook County was in that courtroom that day and the case was argued and the indictment was dismissed by Judge Wilbur Crowley. I then could rest easily because you know it occurred to me many times that even though I knew that I didn't advise anybody to start a race riot; I knew that but I felt the fear like a lot of defendants that I had represented that I would spend some time in jail for something I hadn't done.

**CTF:** Was there anybody indicted or convicted for the arson?

**GNL:** No. There were no criminal charges against anyone for the arson but I'll tell you what did happen. The federal government indicted the Police Chief and the police officers under the Civil Rights Act. The Police Chief of Cicero and some of his subordinates were convicted in the district court here. I had a telegram from Walter White because I worked on that. I cooperated with the FBI. I have a telegram from Walter White congratulating me about that because the NAACP thought that was a very important matter which had been accomplished.

**CTF:** It certainly was.

**GNL:** Yes. But I have said time and again, Collins, that I have sat on the bench in the state court and the federal court, and I have listened to defendants protest their innocence. I know what they are talking about. I know how it feels to go to bed at night remembering your own indictment. You might be convicted even though you are innocent.

**CTF:** Judge Campbell used to say that it's a damn poor prosecutor that can't indict anybody for anything at any time before the grand jury.

**GNL:** He was right.

**CTF:** So do you assume that it was Boyle or somebody in his office that made the push?

**GNL:** Well, let me tell you the rest of it then since you asked me. When I was selected by Senator Charles Percy to be a United States district judge, my name was approved by the ABA. I got high ratings from all the bar associations supporting me. To the credit of the *Chicago Tribune*, I could say that even though they denounced me because I once made a decision in the Criminal Division that they didn't like, they supported my becoming a lifetime federal judge. So, my name was submitted to the Department of Justice and I was in my chambers in the Illinois Appellate Court one day in late 1975, because I was nominated around December 1975. As I remember it, a team of six FBI agents came to my chambers and I accommodated them. The man who was in charge, whose name was John Smith who was a special agent of the FBI, told me that they had investigated my background; that they found everything perfect except two things and they wanted me to answer these questions about these two matters. One was my indictment by the grand jury of Cook County when I was charged with conspiracy to start a race riot. I then told them the whole story like I told you and they put it all down.

The next thing they wanted to know was how did I get to be the lawyer for Sam Giancana, because I was. I represented Sam Giancana before Judge Richard B. Austin in the District Court for the United States here in the same court in which I sat. I said, "Yes, I'll tell you. I'll tell you how I got to be a lawyer for Sam Giancana." They were inferring from their questioning that I was a mob lawyer. Well, as a matter of fact, I had never represented anyone who had any taint of connection with the Chicago mob. In the first place, I didn't know anything about the Chicago mob and I couldn't care for anything about it. So I made all those general statements.

**CTF:** And third, they were unlikely in those days to hire a black lawyer.

**GNL:** Yes. So I said, "Now, before you take down my answer, I want you to put down in your report and say to your superiors that I told you that if ever a time came when anyone writes a biography of my career as a lawyer, I want them to know that the highest point of my career, in my judgment, was when I stood side-by-side to Sam Giancana before Judge Richard B. Austin and represented him against Marlin Johnson, agent-in-charge of the FBI in Chicago, and against J. Edgar Hoover. That was my highest point. Because I was protecting the basic civil rights of a man who, according to the news media and in accordance to people in your agency, was the world's greatest criminal, but I defended him in that case against the imposition of police power of the FBI

and Judge Austin agreed with me because he issued an injunction against the FBI.” (see *Giancana v Johnson*, 335 F2d 366 (7<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1964) and *Giancana v Johnson* 335 F2d 372 (7<sup>th</sup> Cir 1964)).

**CTF:** Is this a civil case? Did you bring the civil case?

**GNL:** Yes. It was a Section 1983 lawsuit.

**CTF:** This ends up in the injunction that says the FBI has to stay two golf holes away.

**GNL:** That’s right. Now let me tell you how I happened to represent Sam Giancana. I didn’t know him, never had anything to do with him, but I was called by a prominent judge who demanded that I come to his chambers and this was 1962. I said that there is a tradition among lawyers, at least there is one with me, if a judge calls me and tells me to come to his chambers, that he wants to talk to me about a matter, I go. I wouldn’t call him and tell him that I’m coming to his chambers but, if he calls me, I’ll go and I went. And you know who that judge was – Daniel A. Covelli. Now, I had appeared before Judge Covelli in many cases. The outstanding one was one in which I obtained the freedom of Earl Howard Pieu and proved in Judge Covelli’s courtroom that Earl Howard Pieu was beaten by a Chicago police officer to confess to a

murder that he hadn't committed and Judge Covelli remembered that. I assumed that Judge Covelli was remembering that and Judge Covelli also remembered the injunction I obtained for Harvey Clark against the police of Cicero, and he told me in the presence of a young Italian man, who turned out to be Tony Tisci, a lawyer. Judge Covelli told me that he had recommended me to Tony Tisci because he believed that I was a lawyer who would represent a member of Tony Tisci's family against J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI in Chicago.

So I thanked Judge Covelli for that and took Tony Tisci to my office and then Tony Tisci asked me to visit Sam Giancana at his home in Oak Park and I went and there I found ringed around the home of Sam Giancana unmarked squad cars of the FBI agents. Sam Giancana told me that every time he went outside, no matter where he went, to the mall, to a shopping center, to church, to the golf course, there were four agents of the United States following him right behind his heels. Then I asked Sam Giancana, "What do you do on Sundays?" He said, "I go to Mass." "Then what do you do?" "Then I go to the mausoleum where my wife's body is and there I pray and then I come home." I said, "Do these agents follow you to church?" "Yes, they do." "And to the mausoleum?" "Yes."

So I hired a camera company to photograph them and they did and that's how I happened to represent Sam Giancana. But Sam Giancana was a plaintiff in the civil suit that I filed on his behalf. Well, they put it all down. About a week or ten days later, they came back. John Smith came back. As to the indictment of me, they told me "Judge, we have finished our investigation about your indictment and we think you would like to know this – that we found the Assistant State's Attorney in charge of that grand jury." Remember you said someone in that office?

**CTF:** Right.

**GNL:** Well, Joe Brown was the Assistant State's Attorney. "We found Mr. Brown. He is retired and living in Florida and he told us that he and members of his staff argued with that grand jury personally, pleaded with them against returning an indictment against you, but they became what we call a runaway grand jury and they wouldn't listen to the State's Attorney's office and they returned the indictment." Later on I spoke with William Armein, Jr. and again we toyed as to why this grand jury returned this indictment. Bob Armein said, "Can't you see why you were indicted? You told the grand jury foreman in answer to his question that you told Harvey Clark that he had a right to move into that apartment and that grand jury wanted to show you that you shouldn't give that kind of advice to anybody." Now as to my representation of Sam

Giancana, there was nothing more than what I had told them and you know, Collins, that if they had found adverse to me on any of those points, I never would have been a judge of the United States District Court for 12 years.

**CTF:** Well, that's for sure. There is a case out of Chicago Avenue, a criminal case, involving a broken bottle? Can you tell me about that one?

**GNL:** I have told people that I fervently hope that my name as a judge would be kept in mind about something other than a broken beer bottle, but that was an important case. Again you see, Collins, having had 18 years experience in that 26th and California building taught me a lot. One thing it taught me and I kept that lesson throughout the time that I was a judge; any time a person, whether man or woman, is brought before me, bail having been denied, I want to know why. Because I happen to know that the public policy of Illinois is against denial of bail prior to trial and it was then in 1965. I took the bench on December 8, 1964. Early in 1965 while I am sitting at 26th and California as a circuit court judge in the Criminal Division, there were brought before me two Mexican-American young men in their early twenties and this was about January or February 1965. I was told that they were in Cook County jail and had been arrested the last week in October 1964 and they were denied bail and so I asked why and the assistant state's attorney leaned over to the bench and said, "Judge, (whispering in an undertone) they are being held because there is

heat in this case.” I said, “What do you mean by heat?” Well, he said, “Well, the complaining witnesses in this case are both police officers.” I said, “What difference does it make?” “Well, Judge.” That’s the explanation I got. I said “All right, okay. There’s heat, they are in jail, but I’m going to advance the date of this case and hear it and decide it one way or the other, or grant them bail.” So I put the case up for the trial with the understanding that if it didn’t go to trial, I would grant them bail. The case was called on March 5, a bench trial. John Branion, an assistant public defender – remember John Branion?

**CTF:** No.

**GNL:** He was well-known, respected by everybody. He had worked as an assistant public defender for 25 or 30 years. The two defendants were indigents and so the judge prior to me had appointed counsel for them. So I then heard the case and the evidence turned out to be this – the two young Caucasian police officers testified that early in the morning hours of a particular night; around 4:00 or 5:00 in the morning, they were off duty. They were out of uniform but they were at the Chicago Avenue Police Station and they walked out of the police station on Clark Street and looked south on Clark Street and across the street on the east side of the street they saw two men. One had a broken beer bottle in his hand and he was walking south on the other side of the street. They, the two young police officers, agreed between themselves that these two

men across the street couldn't understand English. So I said to myself as I listened to these two police officers testify, "Who are they trying to kid? How can you tell somebody across the street can't speak English without having spoken to them?" So because of that, they told me under oath, they each took their badges, put it in his left hand and then took the gun out and ran across the street hollering at the two men, "Policia! Policia!" and the two men looked around and saw them coming with the guns. The one with the broken beer bottle used some profanity. "You come and get this, you so and so." And the police officer barreled into him. He lifted up the broken beer bottle and he slashed his face. At that point, Collins, as a law trained person, the question that occurred to me: Was the conduct of these two police officers reasonable? And the legal question, which nobody has ever stopped to answer: Was the fact that this man had a broken beer bottle in his hand justification for the police officers, out of uniform, to come at him like that? In other words, was it a crime for a person to have in his possession -

**CTF:** An empty beer bottle?

**GNL:** A broken beer bottle. Well, I looked up the statute and it isn't. So I listened to the evidence, and came to the conclusion that the two Mexican-Americans hadn't committed aggravated battery on the police officers. By the way, one of the police officers was shot in the foot by the other one. So I ruled that they

were innocent and I wrote it out. I wrote a memorandum and I didn't have to, but you see, soon after I was elected to the Circuit Court of Cook County, I decided I wanted to be at the appellate level. I wrote memoranda, even though I didn't have to, and even though I was told at the orientation session with older judges, you don't say why, or you rule "grant it," "deny," "continue" or something and you walk off the bench. You see, that's how they do it in the state court in contrast with the federal court. As you know, federal judges are required to put in writing their findings of fact and conclusions of law. But I wrote this memorandum explaining why I found the men not guilty and I concluded that the police officers used excessive force under the circumstances and I discharged the two men.

And as you know, all hell broke loose in Chicago. The *Chicago Tribune*, the *Chicago Sun-Times* – at that time we had four newspapers in Chicago – *Chicago American*, *Chicago Daily News*, they all editorialized against me. They demanded at the least that I be removed from the Criminal Division. They said in articles that I was against law and order; that I hated police officers because I had been a defense lawyer all of my career and that I couldn't remember that I was no longer a defense attorney. They asked that I be impeached. They had my pictures in the newspapers every day from March 1965 until the end of the year. The Legislature of Illinois that was in session passed or at least entertained two resolutions for my impeachment because of

that. All the while, Collins, no one read the transcript that I had. No one read my memorandum that I had written. But they pilloried me in the press. Finally, I was called downtown and the same John Boyle who was State's Attorney when I was indicted was now Chief Judge with the Circuit Court of Cook County. To his credit, he and Thaddeus Adesko and several of the older judges, assured me that they were not going to bend to the news media pressure. They were not going to remove me from the Criminal Division. They were not going to recommend that I be impeached or anything. All I had to do was wait and I would be transferred to the Civil Division and I was. And the interesting coincidence is that at the time when I was transferred to the Civil Division and went to the Civic Center which is now the Daley Center, the room that I was given, the courtroom and the chambers that I was given, was on the 21st floor next to the chambers and courtroom of Cornelius Harrington. Remember the judge that I was in his chambers –

**CTF:** Sure.

**CTF:** George, you had mentioned a case that you handled that we talked about over lunch that involved a lease of land on south State Street – the purchase of land by the government for government housing which was your first case in federal court.

**GNL:** That's right. It was filed in the federal court. After I began practicing law in Chicago in 1946, I still had a lingering doubt about my ability to be a lawyer and I wanted to find a case in which I could represent someone who needed legal service and successfully obtain for that person through the law what he wanted. A man named Cortez G.D. Moraney came to me in my office at 35th and State Street in Chicago and told me that during World War II, the United States government had initiated a program called the Defense Housing Program. By this program the government either purchased or leased vacant land from private individuals, improved that land with housing facilities and then kept the property improved until the government obtained the income from the property and paid for the money of building the improvement.

**CTF:** Was this housing for government employees or general civilians?

**GNL:** Defense-employed individuals. People who worked in defense plants or anything related to national defense.

**CTF:** Was there a defense plant close to 35th and State, or was that built there because it was housing for African-Americans who worked at defense plants?

**GNL:** The latter. What you just said.

**CTF:** But was it segregated?

**GNL:** Yes. Even though the defense labor took place some distance from where the property was improved, Cortez Moraney entered into such a lease with the United States government for a parcel of land he owned on south State Street, around 59th Street. The government built a 24-unit building on his property and by the time that he spoke with me, this was around 1948, the government had had the land a number of years and had collected rent from the property and Cortez G.D. Moraney wanted to get the land back so that he could profit from the rental income that was coming from the improved property. I read the lease that he had signed and he told me that he had consulted a number of lawyers and hadn't been able to get any positive results and I came up with the theory that the lease was subject to attack on the ground that it gave the government the opportunity to cancel the lease but it didn't give the land owner similar opportunity. So I prepared a complaint against the United States Department of Housing and I might even have added the United States government as a defendant in this effort to get a case that I could go to court on. I filed the lawsuit in the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois and I invited my client, Cortez G.D. Moraney, to come with me to court and I made a motion for a preliminary injunction or a temporary restraining order all aimed at getting back the building from the government to Cortez G.D. Moraney. The government promptly filed a motion to dismiss on

a number of grounds – one of which was sovereign immunity and other legal theories the government lawyers had. The case was heard by Judge William Campbell. I did not know Judge Campbell at the time. I don't believe at that time that he was chief judge. This was 1948, 1949, something like that. I don't know when he became chief judge. He became chief judge afterwards.

So I appeared before Judge Campbell and the United States Attorney represented the defendants, and I was anxious to find out what the judge would say and it didn't take long. Judge Campbell heard me and heard the United States Attorney and he announced his ruling from the bench and his ruling was that the government had a valid ground for dismissal and that Cortez G.D. Moraney had no ground to get his building back. He made the announcement from the bench and, of course, I was disappointed. As I was walking away from the bench towards the door of the courtroom, Judge Campbell called me and the United States Attorney back to the front of the bench and said to the United States Attorney that although he was ruling in favor of the government, he wanted the United States Attorney to know that he had some thoughts about it that there was some merit to what Cortez G.D. Moraney was saying. He was the owner of the land; the government had leased it for the sole purpose of improving it and that the lease gave the government under certain circumstances the right to terminate the lease, but there was no such provision in favor of the lessor. He urged the Assistant United States Attorney to consult

with officials in Washington, particularly the Department of Housing, to see if there wasn't a possibility of some arrangement or agreement that could be reached under which the government could recapture its expenses in building the building and Cortez G.D. Moraney would get his property back. The United States Attorney told me that he was going to make such an inquiry and that he would call me. About a week later, the Assistant United States Attorney called me and told me that the officials in Washington were in agreement to an arrangement whereby Cortez G.D. Moraney would mortgage the property, get the amount of money that the government was trying to recapture from the expenses of constructing the building and pay the government and take his property together with the 24-unit building. Well, that made me happy and I called my client and told him. He agreed and we put the agreement in writing. I then negotiated a loan for him that was to be converted into a first mortgage and that was done. We set the matter for closing at Chicago Title & Trust Company and about two or three days before the closing, I talked with Mr. Moraney about the fee that I was entitled to receive and we discussed it. He agreed and I agreed that the fee should be \$2,000. Then he told me that he didn't have the money to pay me. I then called the mortgage broker, a man named George Gritchmacher, and I told him that my client didn't have the fee. He didn't know what to do and George Gritchmacher, without my asking him, suggested that his company loan Mr. Moraney the additional \$2,000.

So at the day of closing, the government got its money, Cortez Moraney got his building and his land, and I was paid the \$2,000. Now in 1948, that was a good fee for what I had done. I used that money to buy the first automobile that I had ever purchased and it was a Packard automobile, because at that time the sale of automobiles were rationed in this country. But the Packard Motor Company had been selling a new model of Packard which I purchased. That went some distance in convincing me that I had the ability to be a lawyer.

**CTF:** George, when the Korean War came along, did you ever get any notice from the Army that they expected to see you back again?

**GNL:** No, I never did.

**CTF:** I know some people did.

**GNL:** I know some people did but I never did. You remind me that I have as one of my treasured possessions a letter written to me in the month of December 1945 by General Jacob Deva, who was the commanding General of the American Armed Forces, in which he told me in beautiful words how he as Commanding General of the Army of the United States and all the people of the United States were grateful for the service that I had rendered in four years in the

Pacific Theater. I have documents showing that my service in the military was terminated on February 6, 1946.

**CTF:** You mentioned that the benefit of that is that you got paid through February.

**GNL:** That's right. Well, I was actually released from active duty in October 1945. You see the date of service began March 6, 1942. The date of separation was February 6, 1946.

**CTF:** I notice that they had you down initially as a Regimental Mess Officer.

**GNL:** That's where I started off.

**CTF:** So they were building on your culinary skills with steak and beef?

**GNL:** I was a platoon leader as a Second Lieutenant for two months. Then I was a Regimental Mess Officer for six months as a First Lieutenant. Then I was a Supply Officer of an Infantry Battalion as a First Lieutenant. Then I was a Post Exchange Officer for four months as a First Lieutenant. Then I was an Assistant Munitions Officer as a First Lieutenant. Then I was a First Lieutenant and Captain Munitions Officer for nine months and then I was a Regimental Supply Officer for two months. Also, something I feel pleased

about, Collins, if you turn that document on the other page, I think it's on the other page, where it shows the entry of the Bronze Star award, you see it there?

**CTF:** Distinguished service in combat infantry.

**GNL:** That was the award that was given to me for my work in supervising and executing the transportation of 7,500 military people from Finschhafen in the East Indies to Morotai in the East Indies. In this document it is called the Asiatic Pacific Service Medal, Bronze Star Medal, and it was awarded to me on July 3, 1945.

**CTF:** Now there is a reference in here, George, in your separation papers, to JAG (Judge Advocate General) to your duties entailing special attention to defense before general courts-martial and boards of inquiry. So, JAG duties came into play all the way through and I assume that they knew of your law school background.

**GNL:** Yes, that's right.

**CTF:** George, were you active politically? Your partner is a Ward Committeeman.

**GNL:** Christopher C. Wimbish.

**CTF:** Right. But another one of your mentors is Congressman Dawson.

**GNL:** Yes. Let me answer this way. As I told you earlier, when I met Christopher C. Wimbish some time around late October or early November 1946; we became friends. Christopher C. Wimbish had one of the most delightful personalities of any person I have known. Friendly, outgoing, a sensitive man. He took me under his arm. I was new in Chicago. I didn't know anyone in Chicago. He was then Ward Committeeman of the 3rd Ward. He was a close colleague of Richard J. Daley and Congressman Dawson, Senator Fred Smith, Representative Cornell Davis.

**CTF:** Did Wimbish serve in the Senate when Richard J. Daley served in the Senate?

**GNL:** I think they did.

**CTF:** So he also served at the time when Abraham Lincoln Marovitz did?

**GNL:** Most likely. All about the same time. He was Ward Committeeman and, of course, that's a very important position. He controlled the ward. He invited me to go to ward meetings and I went and I was struck by the influence of this one man over so many other people – all the precinct captains, assistant precinct captains of the ward. The ward meetings were always filled with

crowds – several hundred people. The office at the time that I did this was on east 47th Street; right near, almost at the corner of what is now Martin Luther King Drive. It used to be called South Parkway.

Not long after I began going to the meetings, Senator Wimbish told me one day that there was going to be a meeting at the ward office; that he wanted me to go and he said also that he wanted me to sit on the platform and that he told me that at a certain point in the meeting, I was going to be nominated to be President of the 3rd Ward Regular Democratic organization. He informed me of the routine and what was going to happen. He said, “You will be nominated. All you've got to do is stand up and say that you accept the nomination and a vote is going to be taken and you are going to be elected.” So I went. I have often criticized myself for not having appreciated the importance of what C.C. Wimbish was doing for me as president of one of the most powerful ward organizations of the Democratic party at that time – the 3rd Ward. So I went and I did exactly what I was told to do by Senator Wimbish. I acknowledged my nomination, said a few words of thanks, behaved like I should behave, and I was elected.

Well, the next thing that happened was a man named Ralph Metcalfe came along. Well, I knew of Ralph Metcalfe. I knew he was an Olympic star runner and so I made friends with Ralph Metcalfe. Then it was announced, I

don't know whether it was by Ralph Metcalfe or someone else, that Ralph Metcalfe was going to run for the first time in his life for a public office. He was going to oppose Archibald Carey, who was a Republican and who was the Alderman of the 3rd Ward. Now, in Chicago politics, usually the office of Ward Committeeman and Alderman is held by the same person because the Alderman exercises legislative and representative authority but the Ward Committeeman sits in on many decisions within the county of the Democratic Party if he is a Democratic Committeeman, but Ralph Metcalfe was neither Alderman nor was he a Committeeman. He was going to run against Archibald Carey and it was very desirable at that time that a Democrat be elected Alderman of the 3rd Ward. Well, nobody thought that Ralph Metcalfe had a chance at all. First, he was unknown and he had never held public office. I was selected by the Committeeman and by the organization to be Campaign Manager for Ralph Metcalfe. I had never run a campaign before and didn't know anything about doing it, but nonetheless, since they wanted me to do it, I did. Kenneth Wilson and I ran this first campaign of Ralph Metcalfe to unseat this popular, powerful, very great-speaking Alderman.

In fact Archibald Carey used to say of himself that he was a son of a bishop; that was because his father was a bishop of the African-American Episcopal Church. Well, when the votes were counted however, Ralph Metcalfe beat Archibald Carey and became Alderman of the 3rd Ward. I

remained as President of the 3rd Ward organization for some time after that until I made that crucial mistake of resigning as Assistant Illinois Attorney General. Oh, I didn't carry through telling you why that mistake was so great a mistake and let me tell you why.

**CTF:** The mistake being resigning as Assistant Attorney General without talking to him? You did mention the reason was that they lost the patronage.

**GNL:** That's right. Here's where that became crucial. Most people hearing me tell this would say what difference does it make. Well, here's the difference – time went on. I returned to the practice of law. A lot of things happened to me. I became a member of the Board of Managers of the Chicago Bar Association. I was on the Character and Fitness Committee. I was President twice of the NAACP. I had many cases that hit the newspapers. I represented death penalty defendants. I had high profile cases. Then John F. Kennedy was elected President of the United States. During the campaign for the presidency of 1960, prominent African-American lawyers visited John F. Kennedy in New York City and in Washington, D.C. and he promised these African-American lawyers.

**CTF:** Jim Parsons also said that John Sengstacke was part of another delegation that went to talk to Kennedy and Sengstacke was the publisher of the *Chicago Defender*.

**GNL:** James Benton Parsons was General Counsel, at this time that I'm talking about, around 1959, 1960, of the Robert S. Abbott Publishing Company that publishes the *Chicago Defender*. That's how he knew John Sengstacke and that's how John Sengstacke got to know Jim Parsons. Well, let me finish telling this, connect this together. Not very many people know of this but John F. Kennedy made a promise to a number of prominent African-Americans – John Sengstacke, leaders of the National Bar Associations – that if he was elected President, he was going to correct the fact that never in the history of the United States had there been an African-American appointed as a United States District Judge in the continental limits of the United States. Now there had been a United States District Judge. It was William H. Hastie, the same William H. Hastie that I spoke to about going to Harvard Law School but he was a United States District Judge in the Virgin Islands, you see, not in the United States. So with that promise being made by John F. Kennedy, after he was elected they began looking around the United States for an African-American to be the first African-American to be a judge in the United States District Court in the continental limits of the United States. Word came to me from reliable sources that they had meetings in Washington; had meetings in

Chicago; had meetings in Michigan at John Sengstacke's home; and Jim Parsons had a home in Michigan, and when the final decision came, it was between me and Jim Parsons. And you know what turned the thing, the fact that I had been a traitor when I resigned my office of Assistant Illinois Attorney General without talking to Congressman Dawson and Christopher C. Wimbish and word came back to me and told me that. Well, here's what I did. I had conceded to C.C. Wimbish that I made a mistake and I confessed to him, "Yes, I was ungrateful." I didn't know until they told me all these things that they had selected me to be an Assistant Illinois Attorney General and hold this patronage job. I didn't know this was a patronage job. I thought it was a job I was being asked to do as a lawyer.

**CTF:** It just wasn't a patronage job, it was a black patronage job.

**GNL:** That's right. So you know what I did? I made careful plans and soon after Jim was selected, I made an appointment to see Congressman Dawson at his office near 35th Street. That building is still there and there isn't a time that I drive by the building that I don't recall the meetings that I went to in that building presided over by Congressman William L. Dawson. Those meetings were almost like religious encampments. The building was always filled with people and when the moment came when William L. Dawson walked onto the platform, everybody rose and clapped. So I arranged to see Congressman

Dawson in his office one Saturday morning and I went there and I told him how sorry I was for the mistake that I had made when I resigned that office and he accepted my apology and we remained good friends to the end of his life. And contrary to what you sometimes read in newspapers, even now, Congressman Dawson was not the demagogue that they tried to paint him to be. He was a kind-hearted and a decent person and I enjoyed that friendship. Then came the time when Mayor Daley called me. I believe, I strenuously believe, that when Mayor Richard J. Daley called me in August 1964 to ask me if I would be willing to be a judge in the Circuit Court of Cook County, he did it with the agreement of William L. Dawson. I was put on the ticket and I became a circuit court judge. After that, I was sent to the Civic Center. After that, I went to the Illinois Appellate Court – the first time that an African-American ever sat on that court and I believe also that Walter B. Schaefer didn't call me completely on his own. He had some understanding with other people about offering me the opportunity to be a Justice of the Illinois Appellate Court, but you see all these things were related in this way.

**CTF:** But your appointment to the federal district court comes through a Republican President and a Republican Senator.

**GNL:** That's right. You know you have to stop and think. I don't know if you remember this but in the election of 1976, that's when Charles Percy was

defeated by Paul Simon. Senator Percy had been severely criticized about the fact that he had made such good choices for judges of the District Court for the Northern District of Illinois and judges of the Court of Appeals. The Cook County Bar Association, however, was very critical of him because none of those selections had been African-Americans.

**GNL:** So in late 1975, around August I think it was, the American Bar Association had its convention in Montreal, Canada. In addition to having been active in Chicago in the NAACP, the ACLU, the various committees, having represented parties in high profile cases, I had a lot of death penalty defendants, I had handled cases in other states, I was active in the American Bar Association. Now that sounds almost like a contradiction because when I became a lawyer, I couldn't join the American Bar Association. They had a policy of exclusion.

**CTF:** So in 1946, they were still excluding people?

**GNL:** Yes. They had a peculiar adjustment to their policy. If a black lawyer was a member of a state bar that admitted black lawyers, he could be admitted to the American Bar Association. Now, if he was a lawyer in Chicago and the Chicago Bar Association didn't admit black lawyers, he was not automatically admitted to the American Bar Association.

**CTF:** Was the Illinois state bar also exclusionary at that time?

**GNL:** I am not sure, but my guess is that they had some kind of silent agreement. They didn't say much about it. At any rate, after I became active in Chicago, I became a member of the American Bar Association and I joined the Section of Legal Education and Admission to the Bar. Then in 1965 George Cotsirilos, a lawyer here in Chicago, came to see me at my chambers in the Criminal Division of the Circuit Court of Cook County and asked me if I would be willing to take his place on the faculty at John Marshall Law School and teach criminal law because he couldn't do it he told me. His brother had died and under Greek tradition, he had to step in and take care of his brother's children, widow and so forth, and he had a very busy law practice. He was teaching criminal law at John Marshall and he asked me to take his place. I then met Dean Noble Wishard Lee and Helen Thatcher and I became a member of the faculty of John Marshall.

At the same time, I increased my activity as a member of the Legal Education Section and Admission to the Bar of the American Bar Association. Noble Lee was personally responsible for my becoming a member of the Council of the Section of Legal Education. That is the accrediting arm of law schools in the United States. I became a Chairman and that year, 1975, when the ABA met in Montreal, I was the Chairman of the Council. Well, you

would think, or would ask, what has this to do with your being a judge in the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. Well, this is what it had to do. Charles Bain, who was a partner in Isham, Lincoln & Beale, was in Montreal and as I was crossing the street in front of the hotel where I was staying in the middle of the day, I heard a voice call my name. I looked around and it was Charles Bain. He called me and said, "George, I have something to tell you." I said, "What is it Charlie?" He said, "When you get to Chicago on Monday [this was like Friday], you are going to receive a phone call." I said, "Oh." He said, "Yes. Senator Charles Percy of Illinois is going to call you. He is going to ask you if you would consider being a United States District Judge. I would like to have you express an interest in that." Sure enough, when I got to my chambers on Monday, there was the phone call and it was Senator Percy. He invited me to his office and I went and we established a very nice relationship and he asked me if I would approve his submitting my name to President Gerald Ford.

Now, you said everybody who knows me knows that I was a Democrat and I was not a quiet Democrat. I had handled campaigns for several Aldermen. I knew Mayor Daley personally. He had appointed me to several important committees on which I served. He knew of my relationship with Congressman Dawson. He knew my relationship with C.C. Wimbish, Cornelius Davis, Frank Smith, all those well-known Democrats. So I told

Senator Percy – sure – after thinking it over and I will add a little humorous aspect to it. I wasn't so sure I wanted to be a federal judge because, at that time, Illinois Appellate Court judges received higher pay – not much more – but a little higher pay than the United States District Court judges. Well, what convinced me to take it was this. I learned that every United States District Court judge in this building had a parking space with his name on the wall and also I did some figuring. I did some arithmetic and found out that even though when you take the salary of United States District Court judges at that time and compared it with the salary of the Illinois Appellate Court judges, Illinois Appellate Court judges earned a little more. However, United States District Court judges weren't required to contribute to a pension, you see. So, when you took all that into account....

**CTF:** And the amount one gets after 10 years on the bench.

**GNL:** That's right. No sooner had I taken the job and I was nominated, I went through all the process and I was confirmed. Yes. I, a well-known Democrat, and I have said that I pride myself or think of myself as an unreformed, unrepentant, unregretting Democratic Party liberal; and I was confirmed by a Senate controlled by Republicans. And that, by the way, is a written thought and I'll add this too, Collins. Being a United States District Judge, in my opinion, is one of the greatest positions a person can have. Independence,

respect from everybody, and if the person has knowledge of the law, it is the greatest thing a person can be.

**CTF:** Did you resign as President of the 3rd Ward Regular Organization or was there another election and you knew that you weren't running?

**GNL:** I don't remember. Well, you know, you make me tell you something not too well known. Although Senator Christopher C. Wimbish and Congressman William L. Dawson to the public were colleagues, they were bitter enemies as a matter of a fact.

**CTF:** Why?

**GNL:** I guess animosity, conflict in personalities.

**CTF:** Jealousy?

**GNL:** Jealousy, yes. Dawson wanted people around him who stood under his thumb and Wimbish wasn't like that. See, I knew both of them. I got to know both of them very well and I remember once going on a fishing trip in Minnesota with C.C. Wimbish, and Congressman Dawson had Wimbish's headquarters raided by the police. In politics, I found out that things go in ebb and tide.

You don't know what time and what day. At any rate, I have told law students no lawyer who really wants to get a full grasp of his career as a lawyer should totally ignore politics. Politics is very important. Don't grovel into it, but don't refrain from it. For instance, I would urge any law student today who is finishing law school to join a political organization.

**CTF:** Let me make a statement about judges that applies to some other positions, and that is that a person that can carry a precinct often has a better understanding of human nature and makes a better judge.

**GNL:** Sure. And there is something else I found out. You hear a lot about politicians and so forth. That experience that I had in the Criminal Division about these two Mexican-American defendants in which I was lambasted on radio, television. Well, they took polls at State and Madison, "Should Judge Leighton be impeached?" Of course, everybody said, "Yes." They didn't know Judge Leighton. They didn't know what I had done or not done, but the newspapers hammered at me. The *Chicago American* published a Sunday edition with my picture on the front page telling the people of Chicago that I was going to be subpoenaed to appear before the Crime Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee to explain why I acquitted these two boys, and to explain why I represented Sam Giancana. It had all that. But in this midst of the furor, Collins, who called me to tell me that they supported me, that they

believed in me, that they had faith in my integrity and they didn't doubt my honesty? Because, you know, if those two defendants had been rich, had paid fees for the lawyer; they would have accused me of having been bribed, but they were represented by the Public Defender. But who called me late one night – Mayor Richard J. Daley. He called me one night after I had gotten home, ducking and dodging around television cameras and newspaper reporters. My wife Virginia told me that Mayor Daley was on the phone and I came to the telephone and I answered and answered like I always did when I spoke with him. “Yes, Mr. Mayor.” He told me, “I’ve been out of town. However, I’ve been reading about you in the news media and about this case you decided. I want you to know that those of us who worked hard to put you on the ticket and saw you elected have faith and confidence in your honesty, your integrity, your knowledge of the law. We want you to know that. Each one has delegated me to tell you this.” I said, “I thank you, Mr. Mayor. You don’t know how much I appreciate that.” Then he said to me, “However.” I said, “Oh, oh, what’s coming next?”

**CTF:** Good news, bad news.

**GNL:** He said, “However, George.” I said, “Yes, Mr. Mayor.” “I want to tell you that I think you are making a very bad mistake.” He said, “I have noticed from the newspapers that you have been talking with the newspaper reporters and

you have been saying things to them. For example, yesterday you had a conference with them and they asked you, 'Are you going to resign from the bench?' and you told them, 'No, ladies and gentlemen, I'm not going to resign from the bench. In fact, I'm making careful plans to die of old age on the bench.'" He said, "George, don't do that." He said, "Let me tell you the best way to handle the newspaper reporters." He said, "When you get them all together and they want to talk with you, don't say anything to them. Get them together, make them comfortable, and listen to them and make out like you are listening to every single word they say. Finally, when they get through, still not say anything. Just ask them, 'Ladies and gentlemen, do you have anything else to say?' And when you see that they don't, let a second or so go by, then say very quietly but firmly, 'Ladies and gentlemen, I have no comment.'" He said, "George, that always floors them. Try that he says and you will see your troubles with the news media will disappear." I tried it the next day and did try it after that and it is true. So what I mean to emphasize, Collins, is this. The lawyers of Chicago stood by me. Those who read the transcript stood by me, but the ones who really stood by me were the politicians. I think Ralph Metcalfe was living at that time. Alderman Kean, Dan Rostenkowski was then a Ward Committeeman – in fact Dan Rostenkowski was sitting in the room at the Morrison Hotel when I walked in to be interviewed by the Committee for the Democratic party that was deciding on the ticket – and I found out that they'll stick by you.

**CTF:** Are there any other cases as a lawyer, prior to you going on the bench, that you remember? You did handle some death penalty cases back then. Are there any that particularly stick out in your mind prior to your appointment to the Circuit Court of Cook County?

**GNL:** There are two important cases and I have touched on both of them, either one way or the other. I think as a lawyer one of the greatest contributions I made was in handling the Boswell Amendment case in Mobile, Alabama, because that affected all of the African-American voters in Alabama.

**CTF:** That's clearly an important case and the *Goldsby* case is clearly important.

**GNL:** *Goldsby* and the *Harvey Clark* case here in Chicago. That was an important matter. It involved housing. Because you can't avoid knowing, at least, that where a person lives largely determines what he is going to be and what he can do. How close he is to jobs, where his children go to school, where he can be safe at night after he finishes working. It is one of the most important things and the *Harvey Clark* case involved a question of housing at a time when it was a big issue in the Chicago area. I then handled another housing case against the Chicago Housing Authority. The *Don Moore* housing case that preceded the Trumbull Park rioting. It seems to me that every important case like that I had ends up in a riot. Don Moore was a black man who was

married to a woman who was so fair that she could be mistaken for Caucasian and she went to the Chicago Housing Authority to get an apartment and they rented to her. She looked like a white woman, so they rented to her. So the day came for her to move into the apartment and they assigned a home to her in Trumbull Park.

**CTF:** The Chicago Housing Authority at this time is making assignments based on race. Some housing is all black; some housing is all white.

**GNL:** That's right and in this one, they gave her a housing unit in Trumbull Park because they thought she was white. But when the time came for her to move into the apartment, here she goes and following her is Donald Moore, who is a light-skinned African-American but you can tell he is African-American, and some of her kids were either looking like white or they looked like black, but the Trumbull Park people started a riot.

**CTF:** Trumbull Park is out on Chicago's southeast side – all white and heavily ethnic.

**GNL:** Yes, on the southeast side. That's right. I stayed with them several nights just to find out what it is like to be living in a house where everybody around you was throwing bricks and everything else. So I went there. Well, that case was

compromised. The riot was quieted down and some people were arrested and finally it resolved itself. I don't remember exactly how, but it was resolved, but, again, it was a struggle about housing – basic fundamental civil rights.

**CTF:** Did you handle any Illinois death penalty cases, as a lawyer, prior to your going on the bench?

**GNL:** Yes. Since you ask me, Collins, yes. Let me tell you how it began.. Early in my career, I made myself available for appointment in cases and I represented a young black woman.

**CTF:** Was there any fee for that?

**GNL:** Yes, this was a fee case. Her husband hired me to represent her. She was arrested and charged with being an accessory to the murder of a Chicago policeman by a man named Harry Williams. What happened was that he had killed this police officer in Washington Park, and then he ran away and ran to her apartment and gave her the gun to hide for him, and she had the gun. When the whole thing unfolded, the police found out where he had taken the gun. They found out from him and they went to her home and arrested her and took the gun. However, I was able to convince the jury that all that happened was that this guy came running into her house and said, "Put this gun away for

me,” and that’s all she did. She was acquitted. The next day I read in the newspapers that Harry Williams was found guilty after I had left the courtroom the afternoon before. You see, the woman was acquitted and I left. He was represented by the Public Defender and he was convicted, and at that time the law was that the jury that convicted the defendant, at the same time, imposed the sentence. He was sentenced to death and the newspaper story went on to say that Harry Williams’s lawyer walked out of the courtroom, leaving him standing there. So I said, “Poor guy.”

I knew the facts. I didn’t think that this was a case that deserved the death penalty, so I went and talked with the trial judge and told him that I was willing to represent Harry Williams after his sentence and I did. I found out that the Illinois law at that time was that if a person was sentenced to death he did not have, as a matter of right, a review of his conviction. It could only be done by petition for a writ of error from the Supreme Court. So I took his case and it was affirmed by the Supreme Court of Illinois.

Then I petitioned the Supreme Court of the United States for a *certiorari writ* on the ground that this was discriminatory treatment between the one who is sentenced to death and the one who is given a life sentence. I gave the Supreme Court of the United States a hypothetical. Take the case of two men who go on a robbery, robbing a bank, and one of them shoots and

kills the clerk. The two men would be arrested right on the spot. They would be taken to the same police station; indicted by the same grand jury; tried by the same judge. One could be sentenced to death; the other sentenced to life in prison. The one who is sentenced to life imprisonment could get a review as a matter of right but the man who is sentenced to death could not. So I had this petition pending in the Supreme Court of the United States, working for Harry Williams, and by the way it was without pay because Harry Williams was indigent. But the law provided at the end of the writ of error proceeding, the Supreme Court would order the county to pay the lawyer \$1,000. That's what it was.

I was going home one night or early in the morning. It might have been 2:00 or 3:00 one morning. I was driving on the Outer Drive going south when I turned on my radio and there was an announcement. We interrupt this program to announce that Harry Williams, who was sentenced to death for the killing of a police officer, has escaped from Cook County Jail and he has escaped from death row and has gone to the roof of the Cook County Jail. He has killed a guard on the roof of Cook County Jail and he has escaped from the roof; scaled the wall of Cook County Jail. If you go there, you will see that wall. He is at large. I said, "Oh, my God. Here I am working to save this guy's life for killing this cop and here he goes..." But by the time I get home, however, Virginia was waiting for me. She said, "George, the State's Attorney of Cook County wants

to talk to you.” So I got on the telephone and I forget whether it was John Boyle or someone else. I don’t remember who the State’s Attorney was but the State’s Attorney told me that he was at 11th and State, and that they had Harry Williams in their custody but Harry Williams refused to talk to them unless I was present. We would like to have you come to 11th and State. Now mind you, at that time I was living at 5400 South St. Lawrence. So I got in my car again and I drove to 11th and State and there they had Williams in a chair like this [demonstrating his position] and he had a bible in his lap. At that time trolleys ran on State Street and that’s where they found him. He had escaped, was at large and was in this trolley with this bible in his lap. So I talked with him and I advised him not to say anything and they ended the session. Harry Williams later was denied *certiorari* and he was executed. Now, you asked me if I had cases involving the death penalty. Yes, beginning with the Harry Williams case.

**CTF:** He was executed for the first murder that he committed?

**GNL:** That’s right. The other thing that happened to me in that case that I always regretted was that there has been a lot of speculation since then as to how Harry Williams escaped from death row. You know at that time Cook County Jail had an electric chair, executions took place in Cook County Jail. A lot a people have asked and there has been some literature on it, some speculation. How did

Harry Williams escape from death row in the basement of Cook County Jail, go all the way to the roof of Cook County Jail, kill a guard up there, scale down, run across the open area of Cook County Jail, climb the wall and escape? Some people have said that he had an accomplice – somebody who helped him.

When the time came for Harry Williams to be executed, I went to him as I did in all death cases and I told him that I had done everything that the law provided for, that there was nothing else, and that he was going to be executed. In between the time that second killing occurred and the time that the *certiorari* was denied, I had adequate opportunity to have gone to Harry Williams to say “Look, tell me, how did you do this?” He would have told me or I would have gotten it out of him somehow. I didn’t do it and no one has found out yet how Harry Williams escaped out of death row in Cook County Jail, went to the roof, I think four or five stories, and killed a guard there, escaped down, crossed the open area, scaled the brick wall and escaped, but he did it. My experience in the Harry Williams case led me to be appointed in the Vincent Ciucci murder case. (See *People v. Ciucci*, 8 Ill.2d 619, 137 NE2d 40 (Ill., 1956) Judgment Affirmed by *Ciucci v. State of Illinois*, 356 U.S. 571, 78 S.Ct. 839, 2 L.Ed.2d 983 (U.S.Ill. 1958)) Do you know about that case?

**CTF:** No.

**GNL:** Well, Vincent Ciucci was married to a very beautiful Italian woman and they had three children.

**GNL:** I represented Vincent Ciucci for about 10 years, raising an issue that the United States Supreme Court granted *certiorari*. You see, Vincent Ciucci was first prosecuted for the murder of his wife. John Gutknecht was then State's Attorney of Cook County. The jury heard all the evidence and under the doctrine of *res gestae*, the circuit court judge ruled that the state could prove the death of the mother and the death of the three children on the ground that they all died together and that their deaths were related. Well, the jury heard all of that evidence; that he had killed the mother, his son, and his two daughters. They found him guilty and sentenced him to 20 years. John Gutknecht held a press conference, denounced the jury, denounced the judge, denounced the lawyer who was representing Ciucci. I was not the lawyer at trial. He said he wanted to try him again. So he did.

**CTF:** Well, how can they? He's already been tried for the murder of the wife and the three children.

**GNL:** No, he was tried for the murder of the wife.

**CTF:** And they just brought in the evidence of the other murders?

**GNL:** That's right, it's part of *res gestae*.

Now since they had indictments for the murder of the son and the two daughters, they could try him. John Gutknecht announced to the press that he was going to try Vincent Ciucci again and he did. He tried him the second time for the death of one of the girls and the jury heard again the evidence that the mother had been killed, the son had been killed and the two daughters had been killed. The jury found him guilty and this time they gave him 40 years in the penitentiary.

Gutknecht again cranked up his public relations paraphernalia and denounced the judge, the jury, and announced he was going to try him a third time. This time for the death of the boy. Now the evidence in the case showed that Vincent Ciucci loved his son. He lavished everything on his son. This time the jury found him guilty and sentenced him to death.

I took it to the Supreme Court of the United States when it was affirmed in the Supreme Court of Illinois, on the ground that this was a denial of due process; serial prosecution all on the insistence of the prosecutor. The United States Supreme Court granted *certiorari* and they remanded the case to the Circuit Court of Cook County. When the case was remanded I think it was Abraham Lincoln Marovitz (later a United States District Judge) who handled

the retrial. He was sentenced to death again and then he was executed. *Ciucci v. People of the State of Illinois*, 21 Ill.2d 81, 171 N.E.2d 34 (Ill. 1960)

There was a short period of time, and I think it was around 1960 perhaps, when I was representing all of the inmates sentenced to death on death row in Cook County, and that was because there weren't lawyers willing to accept the cases. I represented all of those people at one time and then, as lawyers came along and were appointed, I withdrew. I think by that time I had only one death penalty case, and that was Charles Townsend; and that's the case that became *Townsend v. Sain* (*Townsend v. Sain*, 372 U.S. 293, 83 S.Ct. 745, 9 L.Ed.2d 770 (1963)) in the Supreme Court of the United States.

That is the decision that Judge Posner of this Court has commented on several times. In fact, Judge Posner predicated an opinion of his that *Townsend* was some kind of judicial aberration. But in *Townsend*, Chief Justice Earl Warren established one of the most important principles in American *habeas corpus* law; and that is that a state-convicted defendant who could show that, as to a constitutional issue, he wasn't given a full and complete hearing would be entitled to a preliminary hearing in the United States District Court. I just finished lecturing on this subject at John Marshall Law School and I invited my students to look at *Townsend v. Sain* and the opinion of Chief Justice Warren and look at the amendment to the Habeas Corpus Act that went into effect on

April 26, 1996 and tell me if *Townsend v. Sain* survives the amendment to the Habeas Corpus law that President Clinton signed on April 26th.

**CTF:** Present litigation in anti-death penalty.

**GNL:** Yes, the anti-death penalty. That's the part that amended the Habeas Corpus Act. I just haven't had time to do the complete search. I let my students look at it. I think *Townsend v. Sain* survives that because all *Townsend v. Sain* really held is that if, a state defendant is convicted in the federal court and then, after exhausting state remedies, he files a petition for *habeas corpus* in the federal court and he shows that as to an important constitutional issue that he did not have a fair full hearing in the state court, he would be entitled to a full and fair hearing in the United States District Court. With this one exception, that he has to prove that the decision in the state court is inconsistent with established federal law set by the Supreme Court of the United States. I have mentioned *Townsend v. Sain* because I believe that *Townsend v. Sain* was perhaps the last death penalty case I handled before I became a judge. From the time that I represented Harry Williams, and the time that I became a judge in 1964, much of my practice involved death penalty cases; but death penalty law has changed a lot since that time.

**CTF:** You are elected to the Circuit Court of Cook County in 1964 so you take office in early 1965 or right away?

**GNL:** The custom in Illinois is if you are elected in the November election, in 1964 as I was, you get sworn in December. I was sworn on December 8, 1964.

**CTF:** So you are sworn in, assigned to 26th and California, which is unusual for a new judge but you have a lot of criminal law background.

**GNL:** Well, everybody knew that I had lived over there, so I made my home at 26th and California. I was there every day of the week almost. You know I used to get up in the morning; go to 11th and State; handle something there; go over to the County Building and handle something in the circuit court; then go over to the municipal courthouse; come over here to the federal court and then go over to 26th and California. That's how I lived.

**CTF:** You weren't in litigation, you were a trial lawyer.

**GNL:** That's right, I was a trial lawyer. Yes, sort of like John Kruk, that big fat guy who used to play for the Phillies. The newspaper reporters were asking about his shape as an athlete. He said, "I ain't no athlete. I'm a baseball player."

**CTF:** You get assigned to the Chancery Division. Do you remember any of the cases that you handled there that are particularly noteworthy?

**GNL:** One that comes to mind right away involved the issue of trade dress. One of the boutique companies had a copyright infringement suit or claim of a violation of a trademark or something like that. Oh, by the way, I wrote memorandums when I was in the Chancery Division even though I didn't have to. I wrote the memorandums, I forgot how I ruled but every once in a while I would meet someone and they would say, "You know I read that memorandum you wrote." Well, I wrote it so people would read it. I wanted people to know that I could write and it worked. That's how, I'm sure, Justice Schaefer thought of me.

**CTF:** Were you a Justice Schaefer appointment?

**GNL:** Well, it was Justice Schaefer who called me.

**CTF:** But I mean sometimes there has been, I'm not sure exactly how it works, George, but I get the impression that the Supreme Court Justices have a certain number of appointments.

**GNL:** Well, you know that is new. Collins, I know something. This is something they've come up with lately. As I understand it, because there are three Supreme Court Justices in Cook County – is it three or four?

**CTF:** Yes, it is three and then one from each of the other districts.

**GNL:** That's right. They have had a mutual understanding that when there is a judicial vacancy in Cook County, it's split among the three Justices. I am now serving on Justice McMorrow's commission. Just yesterday, or Tuesday, we approved a woman judge. By the way, there is something that is happening very subtly around us. More and more women are taking judicial positions particularly in the state system. You asked about Jacqueline Cox. I met her while serving under Justice McMorrow. I was really flabbergasted by her.

**CTF:** I think that's just a reflection, George, of the fact that for the last maybe 20 years, the law schools are 50/50. And they weren't, as you pointed out, when you looked around in law school. They weren't there.

**GNL:** I think it's a great thing.

**CTF:** It is a great thing.

**GNL:** I love it, the women, that female nature. It's a great thing to be done. I think it will round out her experience and my guess is that she will end up in the federal system some day. (Jacqueline Cox was later appointed as a United States Bankruptcy Judge.)

**CTF:** Let me go back a bit. Virginia has lived in Washington pretty well all of her life. You are out here in Chicago. She comes out. How does she adjust to life in Chicago?

**GNL:** Collins, you make me tell you something in confidence, I hope, or you can publish it. Virginia had a hard time. Virginia was a homebody and she came from a very good family, good people. She didn't want to come to Chicago. She didn't want to come, but she came because she thought it was her duty to come. She didn't like Chicago. She was a teacher by profession but she never really adjusted, and this is what I think. That brought on her arterial sclerosis and took her life. Even though she didn't like it, she tolerated it because of me and then our married life was accompanied by the stresses and strains of being married to someone like me who is active in a lot of things.

**CTF:** My next question is going to be, how does the family take your indictment?

**GNL:** I don't think they understood it.

**CTF:** What about the criticism about the broken bottle case?

**GNL:** Well, that they knew about but I don't think either Virginia or my two daughters really understood what it meant to be indicted, but they took it in stride. Fortunately for me after all that worry and everything else, on the day that Thurgood Marshall came from New York, he and a number of lawyers with him, and they had taken the case over, and he and William Armein, Jr. worked out the argument and Thurgood argued it before, I mentioned the name of the judge before, who granted the motion to dismiss.

**CTF:** Judge Barnes – wasn't it Judge Barnes?

**GNL:** Oh, no, this was in the state court. I forget the name of the judge, he was the presiding judge and had the case on his docket.

**CTF:** We put it on here earlier.

**GNL:** Yes. The case was decided at 26th and California. The worst part that they had – for example, my two daughters, neither one would ever think of being a lawyer; mainly I think because of what they saw a lawyer is required to do as I was doing, work hard all week, at night, holidays. They wouldn't have anything to do with it.

**CTF:** Now I don't think we have on the tape that Barbara, your daughter, is a recreational therapist.

**GNL:** My daughter, Barbara, she is now Barbara Whitfield, married to Robert Donald Whitfield, who used to be General Counsel of the Chicago Housing Authority. At one time Barbara was the Administrator for the Chicago Housing Authority. They have one son, John Kenneth Whitfield. To show you the difference between the early generation and the present one, John Kenneth Whitfield went to Florida A&M in Tallahassee, Florida. Then, urged by his mother and father, he entered the MBA program at Florida A&M and he graduated two years ago, the summer before last. In the meantime, as part of his MBA program, he went on an internship all over the country. He went to San Francisco, New York City, did an internship for the Merck Company, and he was employed by Ford Motor Company upon his graduation. He is now working for Ford Motor Company. He drove all over the country as a trouble shooter. Now exactly what trouble he can shoot, I don't know. Then he went on an internship in Shanghai, China. Now I remember vividly when John Kenneth Whitfield was born in June 1976. That was the year that I became a United States District Court judge. He was so small that Virginia told me that she held him in the palm of her right hand. Today he stands 6'4" tall and he weighs about 210 pounds and he is on the track of becoming an executive at Ford Motor Company.

**CTF:** Very good. Is he up in Detroit?

**GNL:** Presently, he is in Chicago. He was in Kansas City a few days ago, and to give you an example, I own a Palm Pilot like this. Now this thing probably cost me a lot of money when I paid \$280 for it. John has one but it is so much more elaborate and I asked him a few days ago, "What did that cost, John?" "It cost \$800." I said, "John, I wouldn't be able to pay \$800." So he laughed.

**CTF:** Any other cases that you can think of while you were on the state trial bench, either in civil or criminal?

**GNL:** On the state trial bench, no, not really. Then I went to the Illinois Appellate Court. The Illinois Appellate Court handles just routine cases. It is very rare that you find a case that attracts public attention in the Appellate Court, although there was one recently that I saw involving the liability of gun makers and the opinion attracted attention all over the country. But it is very rare. I can't think of one. I wrote a lot of opinions. Ruled on a number of nice questions of law.

**CTF:** We talked about your appointment here already, your coming on board to the federal court, one of the questions about the appointment is obviously your age at the time of the appointment?

**GNL:** I was nominated by President Ford in 1975. I was then 63 years old. I was born in 1912, so I was 63 years old. I was beyond the usual age of appointment of federal judges, they told me. However, I was fortunate. I had served on the Illinois Appellate Court for seven years. I had served on the Circuit Court of Cook County in the Criminal Division, Law Jury Division, Chancery Division. I had written on legal subjects, published articles. I had taught at John Marshall Law School since 1965, for 10 years. And again, I go back to my being Chairman of the Council of the Section of Legal Education, which I think was an important factor and then, of course, Collins, I was an African-American. In other words, I was standing at the right corner at the right time.

**CTF:** And you had prepared yourself to stand on the corner.

**GNL:** Yes. Without seeming immodest, yes. Take for instance what I told you I did. As soon as I became a circuit court judge, I began deciding cases and I wrote memorandums. I used the same format in the cases of the district court. I wrote memorandums and I believe those memorandums that I wrote attracted attention. I wrote a memorandum when I had granted a motion to dismiss a series of indictments in the Criminal Division against publishers of magazines who were indicted for publishing pornography, in that they published nude female bodies. Well, I wrote a memorandum in which I quoted from Leonard Hand, from somebody else, that the nude human body had been the subject of

poems, poetry, lyrics; and anybody who looks at a nude human body and thinks that it's pornographic just because its nude, must have something wrong with his mind because the human body is a beautiful thing to look at. So I dismissed all the indictments and even invited them to appeal. They didn't appeal. Now, along the same line, here in this court, one of my best decisions was in the *Bee Gees* case. (See *Selle v. Gibb*, 567 F.Supp. 1173, 219 USPQ 268, 1983 Copr. L. Dec. P25,599 (N.D. Ill 1983)) There the Bee Gees were sued for copyright, infringement of the copyright by an ordinary, unknown, unpublished composer here in Chicago.

**CTF:** George, had you ever heard of the Bee Gees before you had that case?

**GNL:** Well, I knew of them.

**CTF:** All right. Just checking.

**GNL:** I had that case with the jury and all the Bee Gees came. At that time all of them were living. I made one of my best rulings, at least I think – the defendants at the beginning of the trial moved for the opportunity to play all of their platinum albums, gold albums and their argument was and their point was that they were above what they were being accused of. They wouldn't stoop to infringe the copyright of an unknown publisher. How they were above it and what would

prove it. They wanted the jury to hear their music and they argued that the jury-  
- if the jury heard all those platinum albums, the jury would agree with them  
that they wouldn't take time out to go and plagiarize this one composition. So I  
ruled that they could. So for about a week my courtroom rang out with the  
music of the Bee Gees. The newspapers published that I was there sitting on  
the bench, tapping my feet with the rhythm of the music. You know I have a  
background in music. I once played in a dance band in the 1930's and I like jazz  
and I like classical music. So I made that ruling. Despite that, the jury ruled in  
favor of the composer and then I wrote a memorandum granting the defendants  
judgment notwithstanding the verdict and I based it on the ground that looking  
at the heavens as a whole, there was no rational basis for any jury to find that  
the Bee Gees had access to this plaintiff's composition. They introduced  
evidence that every spring – by the way I learned a lot about the jazz musicians,  
springtime, this time of the year, they go to France. There is a place not far  
from Paris that is all set up to accommodate musicians and composers. They  
have wine and women and so on, and they sit somewhere nude and compose.  
This is what they were doing and they composed their songs there in France and  
this guy from Chicago who was here in Chicago with his composition. The  
Bee Gees claimed they never saw his composition, never heard it. I ruled that  
the evidence showed that they never heard it; so, therefore, they couldn't copy  
it. Then I quoted again from Leonard Hand, who said in a copyright  
infringement case that if two poets, one in England and one in Nairobi, Africa,

composed the poem Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" and they happened to hit the same words, finish the same poem; but one is in Nairobi and the other is in England, they never saw each other; each is entitled to a copyright to his poem although it is the same thing as Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard." One could not sue the other. So I quoted from that, and the case went up to the Court of Appeals and the Court of Appeals, in an opinion by Judge Posner, affirmed; although he did it on a lot of other grounds than on the one that I had used.

**CTF:** What other cases do you remember?

**GNL:** Well, I tell you one I was most proud and I would be hard put to find the citation. (*St. James Hospital v Harris*, 535 F.Supp. 751 (N.D. ILL. 1981)) I had before me a claim by a hospital chain for reimbursement of expenses under Medicare of the expenses they had incurred in furnishing patients with a telephone. The Secretary of Health and Welfare contended in that case before me that a telephone in a patient's room was recreation and not therapy and they had a case of a woman who had three children at home and she was washing the floor or something and she stumbled over the mop and broke her leg, broke her hip and everything else and the ambulance came and the neighbors came and they rushed her to the hospital. She was unconscious for hours and hours. They tried to get her to take some medicine but she wouldn't and then someone

thought to hand her a telephone. She was worried about the kids. And after one telephone call she had with the kids, she propped up right away and she began taking them. I ruled that the telephone was therapeutic and not recreational. The Court of Appeals reversed it. I think it was written by Judge Posner, saying they didn't say I was off my rocker, but anyway they reversed it. (*St. Mary of Nazareth Hosp. Center v. Department of Health and Human Services*, 698 F2d 1337 (7<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1983)) I still think that's one of the best rulings I made as a judge.

**CTF:** George, you also sat with the Court of Appeals?

**GNL:** Oh, yes, several times, and I enjoyed each time; and I sat in the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Now, Collins, since I've said this, let me tell you something about that experience. It was in 1986. I was sitting by designation with Abner Mikva and the woman judge whose name was prominent recently, she now -

**CTF:** At the Hague, the former Chief Judge Patricia Wald.

**GNL:** Patricia Wald, that's right. So, we finished early that morning, I think about 11:00, and she told me and told Abner, of course, that we were free for the rest of the day and that we didn't have to do anything until the next morning. So I

left the federal building in the District of Columbia and I walked somewhat aimlessly and I found myself, to my surprise, right in front of Union Station. They had just finished redoing it. It looked beautiful. Then I noticed where I was standing. I was standing right at the exit of Union Station, and when I looked, I recognized that this was the very exit that in August 1936 – 50 years before – I had walked out when I came to Howard University to seek an opportunity to get an education. On that day in 1936, I was confused. I didn't know where I was. I was doubting that they would admit me. I didn't know what was going to happen, but I found my way to Howard's campus. Now here in 1986, I was standing in the same place and what had happened in those 50 years is that I had finished Howard, finished Harvard Law School, became a lawyer, and that day that I was lost in 1936, I wanted to go to Howard, I wanted to go to law school. When I look back at those 50 years; a war, I had gone to combat, I had been shot at, bombed at, and you know, Collins, I couldn't help but break down to see what in 50 years all that had happened and here I was standing right there in the same spot.

**CTF:** Not just the 50 years with you, George, but the 50 years with the country.

**GNL:** Of the country.

**CTF:** You go to Howard and you can't get pie.

**GNL:** Yes, sure.

**CTF:** At least now you can get anything you want.

**GNL:** But all that happened. I stood there and pondered and I found myself and I went back to my hotel, and then went back and finished on the D.C. Circuit. By the way, when I came back to Chicago on Amtrak, that's when Virginia began showing her illness, arterial sclerosis.

**CTF:** I know that was a very tough time for you.

**GNL:** Yes, but that's how life is.

**CTF:** Now one of the cases that you had changed the way you lived a little bit. The FALN terrorist case.

**GNL:** Oh, yes, the Puerto Rican terrorist case. By the way that's another case in which I made what I thought is one of my great rulings. I wrote it out. It's all published, it can be read, published in the West Federal Supplement. (*U.S. v Torres*, 583 F.Supp. 86 (N.D. Ill. 1984))

**CTF:** This is the first time that video is used.

**GNL:**

I ruled that, under the Crime Control Act of 1966, there was no authority to authorize video interception. Audio, yes, because the law specifically authorized intercepting audio communications but there was no provision – nothing said in the Act about planting a camera. And I wrote in writing, in a memorandum that is published, that there is a difference between audio interception and video and Congress had not authorized video interception. Therefore the federal agent going into this apartment, over here on the north side and planting a camera – which they did – was not authorized by that statute. So I suppressed that part of the evidence.

The government appealed. I believe it was just about that time that Judge Posner came on the court and Judge Posner wrote the opinion for the panel reversing my ruling. (*U.S. v. Torres*, 751 F.2d 875 (7<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1984)). And Judge Posner said something that I had never learned, never heard of before. He said that a person didn't have a lot of expectations of privacy in an apartment he had rented to make a bomb. I didn't know that.

At any rate, the case came back to me and I then tried it with a jury. The defendants were all convicted and I placed one of them – the youngest one, who I thought was simply a kid going along with the others – the group had been dominated by the woman defendant, a woman named Fortes. Her last name was Fortes and I sentenced her and the two defendants, I think, each to 35 years

in the custody of the Attorney General and one among those who were pardoned or released or commuted by President Clinton. You know this large number of pardons, they were among them. And as to one of them, I wrote a letter to the parole board because he told the parole board something that he didn't tell me that he was mindful of what he had done and that he was cognizant of the injury that he had committed in what he was going to commit. In that case I said from the bench and I think I said in the memorandum, I saw the FBI doing the kind of work, most laudable kind of work that I could think of. You see, the FBI followed these people around, got these pictures, they were there around the table making the bombs and then following them when they were going to place the bomb. Just as they got to the place where they were going to place the bomb, the FBI arrested all of them and took all the bombs away. Just think what those people would have accomplished. They were putting those bombs in public buildings, armories and so forth.

**CTF:** Well, they had some explosions – one had exploded at an Illinois National Guard Armory.

**GNL:** Some time before, yes. The ones that this group was about to do, they never got to the point where they were going to put the bomb because they were arrested right there.

**CTF:** Now during that time, did you have extra security from the Marshall service?

**GNL:** I don't think I did, not then. I'll tell you what I did get, since you said that. I think it was after that case, after the trial of the case, two FBI agents came to my chambers and asked to see me in private and I consented. They told me, "Judge, we have information that the Puerto Rican terrorist group in Chicago is waiting for you to go play chess at the North Avenue chess pavilion." I used to go there quite often. I even go there now, once the weather gets good. "And they plan to kill you while you are playing chess. So we suggest that you not go around there." I said, "I don't know about that." So I thought since they came, I wouldn't go because it is a plausible thing. They could have whacked me off and I wouldn't know what hit me. So I thanked them and I didn't go.

**CTF:** You just want your king taken. You don't want anything else.

**GNL:** That's right. By the way, that is the greatest source of entertainment that I have. I don't go to movies. I don't like them. I go to concerts. But I have a computer, a GK2100 that is programmed to play like an American master and I play that computer several times a day, early morning hours, and I get the greatest lift playing with that computer.

**CTF:** You decide after taking senior status that you are going to leave the bench.

**GNL:** Yes, I did and I did it for this simple reason, and I don't criticize anyone. I don't blame anyone but myself. When Abner Mikva was considered for the vacancy in the United States Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, I was one of the persons being considered. I didn't make it. Abner did. Then there were several vacancies here in the Seventh Circuit and I applied for each one because my greatest judicial ambition was to be a judge of a Court of Appeals. I wanted that. When the Joel Flaum appointment came, I was one of those being considered and Senator Percy called me and he explained to me why he was making the decision and I could understand it. My age, and by that time you see, William L. Dawson was dead.

**CTF:** But those were also times when Senator Percy's recommendations weren't counting a lot with the Reagan White House, and so actually Judge Flaum was considered early on but didn't make it because he didn't pass the ideological test. So if he didn't pass the ideological test, George Neves Leighton could never have made it.

**GNL:** To explain to you what happened, Collins, is this. After I didn't make it, I then began thinking what to do. Frankly, I didn't know at first that there was a provision in the law where I could retire, keep my pay and other benefits like insurance which is very good and also practice law. When I found that out

clearly, I corresponded with the Administrative Office, looked at the statute, and then I decided to talk with three persons – George Cotsirilos, Burt Jenner and Earl Neal. I spoke with each one of them because I wanted them to express their opinion about my going back to the practice of law and they all thought it was a good idea. So I then retired from the office and Earl Neal offered me the opportunity to enter his office and that was 14 years ago.

**CTF:** Now one of the things, George, when that occurred, that gave you another reason as well to do that; that was the situation with Virginia – a need for a change for you in order to deal with everything going on.

**GNL:** Virginia died five years after I retired. She died in 1992.

**CTF:** But she suffered a long time from arterial sclerosis.

**GNL:** By the way, I learned from that. There are three general kinds of neurological impairments in the human being. One is called Alzheimer's and I think Alzheimer's is a more complicated kind of impairment. Then there is hardening of the arteries, arterial sclerosis. Then there is a third one, I forget which one. But sometimes a person suffers from both, a little Alzheimer's and arterial sclerosis. But I think arterial sclerosis can be easily diagnosed. It involves hardening of the arteries where the individual doesn't pass blood into

the brain and so forth. Dementia is a characteristic of arterial sclerosis, as it is of Alzheimer's.

**CTF:** So you go back into the practice of law. Are you back representing people on death row?

**GNL:** Yes, except that I have not had a death row client since I returned to the practice, just haven't had one. Also I have had very little state practice, very little. Most of my work has been in the federal courts. At present, I'm the attorney in that office responsible for representing the Illinois International Port District, Lake Calumet. I have represented them now for several years in a very interesting case. It went to the Appellate Court. It's coming back to the state court for trial. I get paid by the hour. I'm on my own. I work whatever rate I want to and it's pretty good.

**CTF:** What about private judging?

**GNL:** I've done some of that. I've done a lot of arbitrations and mediations. I've done that and I like it. I'd be willing to do more. Lately I haven't had any, although I had two or three inquiries recently but I have done that. Frank McGarr has mostly done that.

**CTF:** And Nick Bua did it.

**GNL:** Yes. Nick Bua has established an envious reputation for himself. They say he charges \$400 or \$500 an hour. Nick is a sharp jurist and so is Frank. Frank is a good lawyer. I am very pleased to see Frank and Tom Sullivan on that commission.

**CTF:** What we are talking about is the death penalty commission that has just come out with a report to make recommendations for changes in how we prosecute death penalty cases. It was appointed by the Illinois Supreme Court.

**GNL:** I approve of what they are doing and I am hoping that Governor Ryan commutes the present death penalty cases – and then let the system be changed, improved if they can – and then try out the improved system, see how it works.

**CTF:** Any other cases you want to talk about since you are off the bench. Case where you represented clients? You are back to teaching again, right?

**GNL:** Oh, yes. I am trying to arrange a retirement from teaching. So far I can't, but I'm going to try once more this semester. You know, it isn't easy but I have modified my working arrangement. On the day that I teach, I don't go to the office. I have a limousine service pick me up at my apartment, drive me to the

law school, pick me up at the law school and drive me home. It helps because it gets to be quite tough in the winter time. But let me say this, teaching is a great experience and I have done very well with students. I think that I told you that in my first Criminal Law class at John Marshall Law School were Fred Foreman and Blanche Manning.

**CTF:** Fred Foreman, former U.S. Attorney?

**GNL:** The one we met. Yes, Fred Foreman, Blanche Manning -

**CTF:** Who is now a district judge, after serving as a state judge.

**GNL:** Charles Norgle was in the same class.

**CTF:** Another district judge.

**GNL:** Yes. Arnett C. Hubbard, a circuit court judge. Thomas Fitzgerald, a Supreme Court Justice. Joan Acquino, who is now Joan Pacillo. She was my first law clerk. She is now a circuit court judge. There was a Gerald Bender, who is a circuit court judge in Cook County. He was in that class. Cook County Chief Judge Tim Evans was a member of that class.

**CTF:** Wow. Pretty impressive class.

**GNL:** Well, they told me at the law school, somebody around there is thinking – and now I can do it – have a dinner with all these former law students who are now holding important positions all over Cook County. At the time they asked me about it, I had a case before Blanche Manning. I hadn't quite finished everything. Now since then, that defendant has been sentenced. He is going to appeal with some other lawyers and I am free of that. I didn't want to be in a dinner with Blanche Manning while I had a case before her. Also, I don't think, Collins, you will find another judge who can say this. I was for ten weeks co-defense counsel in a criminal case before Judge Blanche M. Manning. She was sitting in Room 2125. Well, that is the courtroom that I had when I first became a United States district court judge in this building. So I'm co-counsel in a case and she is my former law student, and she is sitting in the courtroom that I occupied when I was a district judge.

**CTF:** Now one of the things that raises though, George, is the criticism and I'm interested in your comment about judges who leave the bench and come back and practice before the same court where they once sat.

**GNL:** I have been told that Judge Grady doesn't like that. Judge Grady doesn't approve it. I have never had occasion to appear before him. No other judge has expressed an objection.

**CTF:** George, what makes you tick? What motivates you? I have a good sense of it here, but how would you summarize it? You are 89 years old. You have done an awful lot with your life.

**GNL:** I think, first and foremost, I was by my parents endowed with a strong physical constitution. My father wasn't a well-educated man but he was a good example and so was my mother. I have said that throughout the time that I knew my mother and father, I never heard either of them ever speak a vulgar word. They were intelligent and moral. Never in my life, in my background, was anything sordid or illegal or improper ever permitted anywhere in our environment. My mother and father were both Catholics. We were reared in the Catholic faith and my father was an avid bible reader and he told me that he read the bible from cover to cover at least one time each year and he showed me how to do it. He wasn't an alcoholic or drinker in any way. I never heard or never saw anything about drugs or anything else. They didn't have any money. Never in my life did my mother or my father ever give me a gift, like a baseball bat, a pair of gloves, a football, anything like that, but they were good examples of the moral life and that has helped me.

I still go back to New Bedford to the house that we lived in. I go there quite often when I go East and I can ever recall the very place where I stood when I told my mother that I was going to go to school even though she and my father couldn't pay the expenses of my going by bus, and I went. I walked from 111 Acushnet Avenue in New Bedford to the Roosevelt Junior High School.

As I have said, I am 89 years of age. I don't have presently any of the ordinary ailments that affect the elderly. I make it a point to have two medical examinations every year in which I go through all the parts, all the tests they need, and no doctor has told me anything adverse. In fact, my doctor jokingly tells me that I should plan carefully to live to 105.

**CTF:** Good, good. Thank you.