

**Interview with Leroy Jordan**  
**February 20, 2004**  
**Interviewer: Willie Mitchell**

Mitchell: Today is Friday, February twentieth, 2004. It's approximately a quarter 'til six. We are at the University of Illinois at Springfield, in the cafeteria. This interview is for the Springfield African American oral history project. The interviewee is Mr. Leroy Jordan and I am the interviewer, Willie Mitchell, and we're about to begin. Mr. Jordan, what brought you to Springfield, Illinois?

Jordan: Well, actually, it was family members living here. My aunt moved to Springfield when I was a teenager. I used to come here and work at the state fair during the summer. So I always had an interest in, this city. After I finished my degree at SIU-Carbondale, with a bachelor's of science and education degree. I taught a year in Hopkins Park, Illinois. In my second year, I moved to Springfield to teach school. And so that's how I got here.

Mitchell: All right.

Jordan: Yes.

Mitchell: What school did you teach at when you first came here?

Jordan: I taught at Iles School.

Mitchell: Iles School.

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Jordan: It's located at the corner of 15<sup>th</sup> and Laurel. It's still there. Now it's a fifth and sixth grade center, but back then, in 1965, it was a K-through-8 center.

Mitchell: I see, okay. What grade did you teach?

Jordan: My first year there, I taught seventh grade, and then I taught eighth grade one year, and then the third year I taught seventh grade again. I taught at Iles from 1965 to 1969, and then in 1969, I took a job with the State Board of Vocational Education in their research and development unit. We were working on the statewide initiative related to vocational education at the elementary school level. I stayed with the State Board from 1969 to 1972, and then in 1972 I came here to Sangamon State University as the Assistant Director of The Applied Studies Program.

Mitchell: I see.

Jordan: And I spent twenty years here at the university, and when I left the university, I was the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs. I left to go back to Springfield School District 186, and I was the Assistant Superintendent for Research and Assessment. And then in 1998, I retired from the school district and the university.

Mitchell: Wow, it sounds like you've been really involved with the school system here.

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Jordan: I have. Not only that, but I served from 1976 to 1982 as a member of the Springfield School Board of Education.

Mitchell: Wow.

Jordan: And so, yes. In fact, I was the second black person to win citywide election to the school board. And ironically, the person that hired me, Dr. Edward Lee, was President of the Board of Education when I was hired here in Springfield. He was the first black person to ever have served on the Springfield District #186 school board.

Mitchell: Well, that's wonderful. Being a teacher, I guess, at the elementary school – it was Iles? What was the student body like as far as their ethnicity?

Jordan: At that point, Iles was in a state of change. By that I mean it was moving from predominantly white to predominantly African-American. In fact, there were several schools on the east side that were pretty much in a state of change. There was the Palmer School, which was up where the old John Hay Homes used to be. There was Withrow School, which is located over on Pope Street. Now it's an early childhood center. There was Lincoln School up on Capitol and Cook, Cook and 11<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and Cook. Yes, that's where Lincoln School is. And now it's Lincoln Magnet, whereas back then it was a K-through-8 school. So all of those old East Side schools were rapidly becoming predominantly black in 1965.

Mitchell: I see. Is there anything that you recognized that was leading to that change

in the demographics of the school? Like, was there any legislation passed or something or was it just people moving in and people moving out?

Jordan: People moving in and people moving out. It was sort of like the poor whites were on a white flight. And we moved in, they kind of moved out. But it was an interesting experience, and I have people here in town their children are going to school. They're grandparents and so they're often surprised. "You taught my grandmother?" (laughter) "Yes." Of course, nowadays, being a grandmother, you can be twenty-five and be a grandmother. (laughter) It was an interesting experience. That was before this whole issue of class size came up. I think my first class I had, like, thirty-five kids in it, so it was interesting teaching them.

Mitchell: It sounds like it. Is there anything that's most memorable about teaching from 1965 to 1969 at Iles?

Jordan: Well, at Iles I think it was – Iles was sort of like an experimental school, a lot of innovations. During that time, there was a program called Project Capitol, which was supported through a federal grant, and it was supposed to be for the east side schools predominantly, black schools, and that was fun because it provided additional money. We hired teachers, we took the students on field trips or by train to St. Louis to the zoo. So it was a lot of enrichment kinds of activities, and it was fun getting into doing those sorts of things. And then the teachers, a lot of them were personal mentors. I consider some of them to be really the top teachers in the school district.

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Mitchell: Wow, that's fortunate, yes.

Jordan: Yes, and so it was really fun being mentored by them, and it was a really interesting – there was a lot Project Capitol called for, a lot of community involvement, so we had a lot of fundraisers with chickens and a lot of people participated and so that was really interesting.

Mitchell: Were there other, I guess, African American teachers at your school, or –

Jordan: Well, when I first went there, the only African American teacher there was Miss May Hammonds(??), and May Hammonds(??) had been the first teacher of African descent hired in Springfield.

Mitchell: Oh really? Wow.

Jordan: And ironically – well, not ironically, but she was hired by – either The Junior League or the League of Women Voters. The school district did not actually pay her salary, this was before 1954, and they were not interested in having any black teachers when she was hired, yes. So she and I were the first black teachers hired and I was the first black male elementary school teacher in the district.

Mitchell: Oh really? First black male elementary education teacher?

Jordan: I was the first black elementary classroom educator. The year before I was hired, Farries Morrison was hired as a P.E. teacher. So he was in P.E. and I was in the classroom. After the first year, – there was a, sort of

opening up the doors and – quite a few black teachers were hired by the district. Mrs. Georgia Rountree, who was also hired by the district a couple years before I was, she taught up at Edison Middle School. She took the initiative to recruit a lot of people to Springfield. The Betts, the Hawkins, the Joiners, different folks, so we had quite an influx then, I'd say from 1966 up to the 1970s, of black teachers.

Mitchell: I see. Things were changing. What inspired you to be a part of the State Board of Education?

Jordan: The excitement of being involved in something new and different. Because there had not been much work on having any kind of vocational information at the elementary school level. I felt it was needed, and part of the problem was, if we waited until middle school to introduce the ideas of careers and all that, it's a little late. So you could just develop and build career education into the elementary curriculum. So that's why I decided to go to the State Board.

Mitchell: Yes, that was very thoughtful for the children. I can see how that can benefit more so than waiting until, like, what, seventh and eighth grade to begin talking about careers. I assume when you were at the State Board, you didn't teach? That was just a separate – that was your new occupation at that point?

Jordan: Yes. In fact, I could be in Chicago in the morning and Cairo in the

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evening.

Mitchell: A lot of traveling.

Jordan: A lot of traveling. I ended up handling what they called Part D Funds, which is the exemplary funds, and my task was to identify exemplary programs across the state in vocational ed., then have driving conferences so all the teachers could come in and learn about these projects – and what made them exemplary and what kind of things, skills they could pick up and be involved in, which was a lot of fun. I've always been interested in innovation. I guess that's part of getting a degree, a bachelor's of science.

Mitchell: Yes, I can see the relationship. Were there any other functions that you performed while being a part of the State Board?

Jordan: Well, primarily dealing with the Part C research funds. We funded research grants across the State of Illinois, and people would write proposals and we would select those that were research, and especially those that had to do with new areas of research. So that was it, yes.

Mitchell: The statewide initiatives, can you explain to me more, too, about that?

Jordan: Well, for example, on the Part D, say, for example, Home Economics teaching was a big area of interest across the state, and it was still being taught as if it were back in the thirties. So we wanted to find projects that

could provide up-to-date information and techniques about teaching Home Ec. So we funded a Home Ec. project down in Salem because they had one of the most innovative programs. This is back in the days when there were self-paced modules. One did not have to wait for the instructor, but could go through the videotapes and that sort of thing and learn what you need to learn, which was a good use of materials and time. So it started that students were able to do independent studies in Home Ec., complete the modules and the teacher would grade them and you'd move on, so you didn't have to wait.

Mitchell: Right. That sounds like that would, I guess, really assist in learning, because the student can take initiative and learn him or herself, too.

Jordan: Yes. She could. Yes. So that was what I was doing. Then I came to Sangamon State University in 1972 and worked in the Applied Studies Program. Then in 1976 or 1975 I ran for school board. Sangamon was my base, so to speak, and I won citywide, and then my second year I was on the board, we were in court with the desegregation suit here in Springfield.

Mitchell: Oh, they had a case with desegregation?

Jordan: Yes. Because Brown vs. Board of Education was the law in 1954, but Springfield did not do anything until 1976, and it took a court case – a group of community people filed in federal court – they're the plaintiffs, McPherson, et al., filed a case against the local school district. So we

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spent time going to court and finally ended up with a consent decree, which basically said that, yes, it looks as if the school district had purposely segregated the school system, having all the black kids going on the east side, all the white kids going to school on the west.

Mitchell: I see. It sounded like some of that was being put into motion, I guess, when you were at Iles, because you said the class was predominantly black.

Jordan: It was, yes.

Mitchell: I see. So later on, it was more like the legal issue, getting it off the books(??), yes?

Jordan: Yes.

Mitchell: Wow.

Jordan: Yes. So from 1976 to 1980, I was involved – or actually 1982 I was involved in implementing the desegregation plan while I was on the school board, and so we finally got that done, but District #186 is still under court order –

Mitchell: As we speak?

Jordan: As we speak.

Mitchell: That's terrible.

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Jordan: We still are because the judge said that the district will stay under a court order as long as there were objections by the plaintiffs. So the plaintiffs never signed off because there's still parts of the desegregation plan that have not been fully implemented, like inservice education for teachers. We had a program and then after a few years, it dropped. So the district, the only way it can make changes in the deseg plan is to file them with the court and then the court sends them to the plaintiffs' attorney, and then they say whether they agree with them or not. So you're talking from 1976 to 2004.

Mitchell: Man. So who were, like, again, the – what they called the defendants, then, in that issue?

Jordan: The plaintiffs, well, Reverend McPherson became the lead plaintiff. People like Cullom Davis and his wife were plaintiffs. Frank Price and his wife were plaintiffs.

Mitchell: And they didn't want the segregation, is that correct?

Jordan: No, they didn't want segregation. They wanted integration.

Mitchell: And who wanted the segregation?

Jordan: The school board.

Mitchell: Oh really?

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Jordan: There were a lot of racist people back in those days. And they were very up front that they didn't want the mingling of the races. That's why it took them from 1954 to 1976. "They don't need to be going to school together," you know?

Mitchell: That sounds like that was probably big headlines during the time, like, as far as the papers –

Jordan: It was. It was, like, constant meetings and being under pressure and crazy crank calls.

Mitchell: So it affected your personal life, too?

Jordan: Oh sure, Yes, it did. It's probably why I'm bald-headed today. (laughter)

Mitchell: Was there any damage to property or physical harm done to people?

Jordan: Well, fortunately we didn't have a lot of that. I mean, it ended up that part of the U.S. Office of Education dealt with community collaboration, so they were on the scene all the time to make sure that things went smoothly. So we didn't have a lot of that. Most of it would have to be confrontation, verbal kinds of things. And you'd get a few threat calls.

Mitchell: Yes. I get the impression that people knew those who were against segregation, and those knew who were for segregation. I mean, it wasn't like anybody was hiding behind walls or anything.

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Jordan: No, it was very up front. In fact, part of the whole implementation strategy was that the plaintiffs and the school board would sit down and come to an agreement about the plan, rather than the judge saying, “Okay, we’re just going to use this plan,” which he could have done that. But Judge Harlington Woods, I don’t know if you’ve heard of him, but he’s a federal judge now. He was our judge here in Springfield, and once he went federal, then Judge Waldo Ackerman became the judge. Both were fair-minded gentlemen.

Mitchell: Well that’s good.

Jordan: So we were very fortunate to get those two as our judges. And then there was a lot of community involvement, a lot of people, and a lot of commitment, I’d say sincere white folks that wanted to see the school system changed. That helped a lot, too. And we had a cadre of black community leadership. Velma Carey, the Careys, Leon Stewart – different people that were willing to step up to the plate and support our efforts.

Mitchell: Wow.

Jordan: So we went through all of that. I mean, I could sit down and talk for days just about my experience of being on the school board during that time, because it was very interesting.

Mitchell: I mean, that would be fine. If it just comes to you, feel free.

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Jordan: After tonight I'll think more about it. Oftentimes I'll do presentations with classes out here to talk about what happened during those days. My thoughts about how it's going since then and that sort of thing.

Mitchell: I guess as far as the student body now, like the elementary school that you were teaching at, between then and now, do you feel that the teachings or they're able to learn better? Or have you recognized any improvements in things that still hadn't improved?

Jordan: Well, I think there's just a natural progression or improvement. Education has changed so much. I mean, you have so many more tools now that you didn't have in the past. I think that the gap between black and white students, however, has not closed over the years. It's still about the same as it was back twenty years ago, unfortunately. Well, there are a couple things. One which I think has really been problematic is the teacher inservice. There are still teachers out there that don't know how, or have a desire to teach black kids.

Mitchell: Oh, I see what you're saying.

Jordan: That's always been a problem. As far as I was concerned, they should have not moved students; they should have moved teachers.

Mitchell: I see.

Jordan: It wasn't kids that needed to be moved, it was how the teachers viewed

them, and saw them as learners, that needed to change. But unfortunately I did not prevail on that particular issue. That was what my thinking was. Each time I was president, we had a teacher's strike. (chuckles) They wanted money and I wanted more black teachers. It's still a travesty of education when you can go to school here in Springfield, from kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade and never have a teacher that looks like you.

Mitchell: Wow.

Jordan: And I think that's a travesty.

Mitchell: Yes, I can see that.

Jordan: The SEA [Springfield Education Association] wanted to fire teachers based on seniority, and I said we needed two lists: one for majority white teachers, one for black teachers. Otherwise you'd fire all the black teachers, because they were the last ones hired. And so you'd wipe them out, whereas if you had two lists, you could fire them in a percentage of the number, rather than the... Well, we had two strikes about that. (chuckles)

Mitchell: Yes, I mean, that seems only fair. That, I guess, wasn't about being fair.

Jordan: No. It was politics. It was kind of racist. Trying to hold onto the status quo and that sort of thing. So as a result now, one of the drawbacks I see is for

black east side students going to the west side schools, and usually it's the younger kids that are getting transported, you end up being almost a visitor. You never really feel that you are part of the school, because at 3:30 you get back on your bus and go back over there on the east side. That's always been a problem. And I just maintain that a reduced amount of travel by students will help teachers. You teach on the east side two years, and then you teach on the west side two years, or the north side, or the south side. Just move them around, which is the way I thought it should be done. So it's been an interesting time.

Mitchell: Yes. It sounds like it. I guess as far as the students, African-American students, Caucasian students, whatever, do you think there are needs as far as what they need from a teacher, to learn, is different between the ethnic groups?

Jordan: Well, I think that the teachers approach them different. If I'm a teacher and I look just like you, and I come from your culture, and I'm more apt to understand your learning needs. Unless there's some kind of intervention that'll get me to change how I perceive you. So if I'm different from you, and I say, you come from a poor background, and you're surrounded by poverty, and you know ... Well, poor thing. You're doing the best you can.

Mitchell: Oh, I see. They just let you walk on through type of thing.

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Jordan: That's right.

Mitchell: Okay.

Jordan: Pass you on. Pass you on. They find all kind of excuses. Well, I would have taught her or him that, but I just knew, that given their background, they can't learn, stuff like that. So you have a lot of that kind of stuff going on. That's just wrong. They changed the law, so that teachers could teach in the district but live in other communities. As for as I'm concerned, that eroded local involvement, because there's no reason to be in the neighborhood or meeting the kids. You just teach all day and you head back to your community. So there's really no commitment as far as I'm concerned.

Mitchell: So at one point there was that the teacher needed to be in the same school district? They need to live there where they taught?

Jordan: It used to be that way, and then they changed it.

Mitchell: Wow.

Jordan: It's been a lot of policies that I have not professionally agreed with, and I guess it's part of the reason why I got elected twice. Because some people were upset with the status quo.

Mitchell: Okay.

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Jordan: So ask me something else.

Mitchell: You were Assistant Vice President at SSU, Sangamon State University. Could you explain more about that, or elaborate on that a little bit?

Jordan: Yes. This was in 1987 when I became the assistant. Well, before that, I was Assistant Director of Applied Studies, and then I moved up to Director of Applied Studies. Then I moved over to Dean of The Innovative and Experimental Studies School. And from there I moved to Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs. I was responsible for off-campus education, both in Springfield, other communities, Peoria, [the] TV office, and telecourses, and anything related to innovative studies – women's studies, studies in social change.

Mitchell: So you were beyond just a campus, then.

Jordan: Oh yes. Community outreach, all of that was under my responsibilities as Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Mitchell: It sounds like your career has been based around a lot of travel.

Jordan: A lot of travel. Lot of community involvement.

Mitchell: That sounds exciting.

Jordan: Yes.

Mitchell: I guess living in the community, as far as the leadership and the unity

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among African Americans, is there any way that has changed since you first...up until now.

Jordan: Yes. And it may have been my perception of the change as I've gotten older. But when I first came to Springfield, that was a cadre of people, of young folks – professionals, that came around the same time. So you have that nucleus of folks that did not deal with just the status quo and got involved, so you had a lot of community involvement. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts. And if there were any issue in the community – like for example, at one point, they were going to run all the railroad tracks on the east side of Springfield.

Mitchell: Oh really?

Jordan: Oh yes. Railroad relocation. So we organized, and we stopped them from doing that.

Mitchell: Wow. That's wonderful.

Jordan: Because they were going to make overpasses on Laurel, and Ash – all those streets on the east side, which would mean they'd take out homes, and those areas where they didn't run overpasses, they were just going to run trains all day long. So we organized against that, and were successful in stopping it. But that was an example. We always had youth programs, and different scholarships, and activities for young kids. During that time, we made the city start the neighborhood youth center over on Madison,

where the Public Health [office] is, build a gym, and so forth. It was really a tightly knit, a lot of involvement and engagement, considering. I guess I don't see it as much as I used to. I think it's sort of just been a whole influx of people in, and those of us that were very active in those days have now began to kind of settle down a little bit. And there is, I think, a real leadership void here in Springfield.

Mitchell: I see.

Jordan: Because it's almost like the folks expect those active folks to stay active for the rest of their life. So they still call me, Mr. Jordan, can you do so and so? Wait a minute. Hold it. Why don't you do it? "Well, you know how to do that stuff." Aw man. So that was part of, I think, the failure of our community. So hopefully there will be changes.

Mitchell: I'm getting the impression that not many young people followed in step to replace those who have retired from doing that activity here.

Jordan: Yes, you're absolutely right. Part of the difficulty, I think, has to do with, those that have the leadership potential don't come up front, and a lot of it has to do with the racism. Meaning that the powers that be would rather have someone that they can manipulate, passing up the ones that got something going on.

Mitchell: Right.

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Jordan: And if you have something going on, then they figure ways to question it. This stuff like picking your leadership for you. That's what's happening in Springfield.

Mitchell: Wow.

Jordan: I just refuse to let them chose who's going to lead me. You know? Me and my family.

Mitchell: I hear you. That's right.

Jordan: So you got a lot of that going on. They glorify different folks that aren't about anything. And hey, if I were in power, I would do the same thing, probably.

Mitchell: Do you think the racism is as strong as it was then as it is now?

Jordan: Yes. The only difference is it's more subtle. There's more games. It's still there.

Mitchell: Oh, I see what you're saying.

Jordan: They're not as blunt about it, but it's still just as strong. In fact, in some ways, it's worse because you can't always identify it, and then sometimes you say, "Well, maybe it's just me." But it's not just me. It's racism. It's just gotten sophisticated. That's all.

Mitchell: Wow. I guess as far as a community, you lived here for that amount of

time. Have you noticed any changes that in terms of African Americans, they have been harmed, or they have benefited?

Jordan: No. I think after the school desegregation, there was really a big calm. That's even after my being a part of it. If I had my druthers, I would have definitely insisted on no student transportation at all, because I think that kids are capable of – and I think a lot of the relationship stuff would have taken care of itself anyway. Like kids today, they don't see individual prejudice, and they are oblivious to racism. Racism which is the racial prejudice, plus power and control, equal racism. So they experience racism, but they don't see it as that's what it is. They're thinking, "Well, they must be right. I just don't have the qualification." Bull crap. You're as qualified as that next person that doesn't have a Master's degree or a high school diploma. Why are they getting the jobs, and you're not? Or why are they getting the job without a high school diploma, and you have a Master's degree, and they get the position. Racism. That's all it is.

Mitchell: Why do you think the youth today, African-American youth, feel that way, or are unable to see it or recognize it?

Jordan: Because the media, and the powers that be, keep telling everything's okie-dokie. We see these little shows on TV, where everybody's living one big happy harmonious thing, but under, that is that racism, so you don't see it. They think, "Oh, they got it made. Look at so and so. He's on TV. He's got his own show."

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Mitchell: Oh, they show one or two people.

Jordan: “We got Cosby. We got this one. We got that one.”

Mitchell: Right.

Jordan: “Look at them. They are making it. Man, you’re going to make it, too.” It never occurred to them that only that big pot was started like that and got narrower, and narrower, and narrower, and only just a few made it.

Mitchell: Right.

Jordan: And then the media, of course, they play up the one or two that make it, and make them seem like anybody can make it, well, anybody can.

Mitchell: Yes, I can see that.

Jordan: There’s a lot of that kind of stuff. And young people go into a state of denial, even in terms of their own existence.

Mitchell: I can see that.

Jordan: You’ve got people running around here now that were in high school, and thought they were going to be NBA pro basketball players. They’re still playing basketball, forty something years old. They’re thinking, “I’m going to make it one of these days” Well, that’s over. Get over it.

Mitchell: Right. Right.

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Jordan: “I might make it. I want to go try out one more time.” Get over it. But that’s the only dream, the only hope they ever had, so that’s why they keep holding onto it.

Mitchell: Yes. I guess you put that together with the teachers that felt pity for them, and didn’t really make them work to earn their grades, in the end, if they don’t make it in the sport, then they don’t have much to fall back on for anything.

Jordan: Yes, no self esteem, no fire, no pride. I put my life in basketball and if I can’t do that, I can’t do anything.

Mitchell: Wow.

Jordan: That sort of thing. And then school education is really a problem in this country for people of color, because basically now they’re just kind of trying to get you ready to go to prison. That’s the main objective, for you to become a part of that prison industry complex.

Mitchell: How does that relate? I didn’t quite get that.

Jordan: So you start off with first grade. The teachers can, at that point, tell you who’s going to end up going to prison and who isn’t, and so it’ll become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Mitchell: Oh, I see what you’re saying.

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Jordan: And you get expelled. Every year you're getting expelled for something that you may be doing that a white child is doing, too, but you get expelled for it. So eventually, you end up in the "go to prison track".

Mitchell: So it's like a subtle psychological reprogramming of some sort.

Jordan: Yes. I call it the new slavery myself.

Mitchell: Yes. I can see that.

Jordan: And that's why when you look at prison today, 75-80% of the prisoners are persons of color. It's no accident. They plan it that way from even when kids are babies, they're just starting school. We're not really cognizant of that, because we want to put our blinders and shutters over our eyes to reality. "I don't want to be like W.E.B. Dubois or Frederick Douglass."

Mitchell: Yes.

Jordan: I want to be like Ike.

Mitchell: Are there any words of instruction that you can give that would work to prevent something like that, something we maybe are missing as African American people, or people who are Hispanic, too, for that matter.

Jordan: Yes. I'm thinking our desire as a people to be accepted, that we let a lot of our heritage and things that are important to us, or to our survival, go by

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the wayside.

Mitchell: Okay. I see that.

Jordan: The whole integration thing for example, in terms of school, culturally, we had always seen the teacher as a very important person in our community, so we could trust the teacher is going to do the best thing for our \_\_\_\_\_(??). Well, we carry that same attitude into integration, whereas the main culture, the thing is, they don't trust teachers. They go and demand what they want for their kids from the teachers, whereas we trust them, so we lose out.

Mitchell: Ah, I see that.

Jordan: So we never changed our way of operating as it relates to education. The only chance our children have is that if they were to stay in the environment of our culture, then they would be successful. But since we're into the other culture things, then we're not. But this is America, see. We really want to be Americans, pass our African heritage. And I think that's been a big problem for us. And education has always been the primary mechanism for deliverance of our self-esteem, and so on, and so forth.

Mitchell: I believe you had mentioned, and correct me if I'm wrong, that desegregation hurt the black community. Is that right? And I guess looking back on things, would you have made things different or would

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you not?

Jordan: I would have definitely made it different. Yes. I would have had the doctrine of separate but equal, is not really all that bad, because what we're getting now is togetherness, but it's still not equal.

Mitchell: I see.

Jordan: I would have said give the same supplies, regardless of where you go to school. You are treated equally. You get equal opportunities to learn, and so on, and so forth. You get equal materials and that sort of thing. I think it hasn't really happened that way. And again, I would have insisted, or like to have seen, a court set up not only inservice for teachers, but a mandatory transfer policy.

Mitchell: They'd rotate the teachers?

Jordan: Rotate them out.

Mitchell: I see.

Jordan: Because see, naturally if I'm a teacher, and I go to school X, brand new school, brand new equipment, so on and so forth, where do you think I want to go?

Mitchell: Probably to that new school.

Jordan: That's right. And I'll stay there 'til I retire.

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Mitchell: Right.

Jordan: And if I wanted to punish, if I were an administrator, if I were the superintendent, or something, I didn't like somebody, where do you think I would send them? To the older schools.

Mitchell: Oh, okay. Right.

Jordan: And I'm likely to listen to those people that think like I think, and look like I look, in terms of where their kids go.

Mitchell: I can see it. Why do you think it hadn't worked previously, separate, but equal, or wasn't really...?

Jordan: Because I don't think there's ever been a commitment by the majority to see it work.

Mitchell: I see.

Jordan: A lot of America's pipe dream. It's the front stuff that sells good and looks good in writing, but there's really no real firm commitment to see it happen. It's sort of like the Emancipation Proclamation with slavery continued in the sense of Jim Crow and all that stuff. "We've got another 100 years."

Mitchell: Right.

Jordan: It's still going on in a lot of ways. Housing, public health, welfare, all of

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that stuff is still there.

Mitchell: Wow.

Jordan: You can't tell me that as a country as rich as ours could not find a way to eliminate poverty.

Mitchell: Yes. I really doubt that myself.

Jordan: I can't accept that. And you can tell that we can send billions and billions of dollars to other parts of the world, but we can't take care of this at home.

Mitchell: Right. That just doesn't make sense.

Jordan: It doesn't. I know it's a lot of stuff. I don't want to blame all of the evils of our country on racism, but it's the big one.

Mitchell: Yes.

Jordan: It's the really big one. Nine times out of ten, if you can say it is, it probably is – has to do with racism.

Mitchell: Do you still have some time? It looks like it's almost 6:30.

Jordan: Yes. I think I better give her a call, and see where she is.

Mitchell: Okay.

Leroy Jordan

Jordan: Let me think about it and I'll call you. You listen to that and see if that's what you want. If not, we can get together, and you can ask me some more questions.

Mitchell: Well, I'm sure this is exactly what we could use, and what I would like to hear. I mean, if you want to add more, you're free to do so.

Jordan: Yes. I think I will.

Mitchell: Yes. Okay.

Jordan: I could talk about people that I've known that have really been leaders in our community in the time that I've been here. Springfield is, of course historically in 1908, with the Springfield riot. I mean, there's some stand-up people here. A lot of sacrifice. We had a lot of black businesses.

Mitchell: I notice when I'm riding by South Grand, and 11<sup>th</sup>, I see the buildings up, but it just seems that at one point, it was much more affluent with people, and merchants, people of that nature.

[End of Tape 1, Side A]

Mitchell: Man. Well, I would definitely like to hear more of what you have to say.

Jordan: I got a lot more.

Mitchell: Well, feel free to give me a call.

Leroy Jordan

Jordan:       Okay. I'll do that.

Mitchell:      All right.

[End of interview]