Interview with Robert Goza
April 7, 2004
Interviewer: Barbara Dickerman

Dickerman: [I'm interviewing Robert] Goza of Springfield, Illinois on April 7, 2004. Well, good afternoon, Bob, and this should be an interesting tape, I think. I always hear your relatives are still in Kansas City. I kind of presume that's where you were born, but I'd like to hear more from you.

Goza: Yes. My roots are in Kansas City, Missouri. I was born there in 1930 and my family, brother and sister, are still there. I have three deceased siblings that are no longer with us but I'm very proud of Kansas City. I had a chance to see it change from a lot of the things that blacks couldn't do when I was there, after coming to Illinois and integration over at the schools. In Kansas City, we had our own black schools, because of it being a southern state, it was segregated, and my first encounter with the white students were when I came to Illinois, and I attended some classes at Lincoln Land. But by being born and raised in Kansas City, I appreciate the having to share the both sides of what I call the aisle, of being segregated and not segregated in the school systems. But I finished high school there, then attended college. I attended three years before I had gotten married and came to Springfield, and so that's how I met Marian, and I set up house keeping here with her, and out of that came my four siblings from Ms. Goza. But after arriving in Springfield, I got involved with the youths of Springfield. My first encounter was to organize a

basketball team under the Springfield Recreation Commission, and I was able to get some of the young men that were not on the high school teams to participate. So in 1954, I had a team they called the Larks, and some of the players are still here. One was George Tinsley. He's still living here, and I think two or three of them are deceased off of that team, and...

Dickerman: I want to get those years a little straight. The year you came to Springfield, you were married then. What year was that?

Goza: Yes. We got married. We got married in Jefferson City and I came to Springfield in 1952.

Dickerman: Oh, okay, and then this followed soon after, this basketball.

Goza: Yes, right.

Dickerman: Okay.

Goza: And so I have really been involved with the youth since I've been married. Most of my time was spent with the youth. Two years, as I said, in 1954, I organized the team with the Springfield Recreation Commission and following those, in 1955, I had another team and I think that year or after, Mr. Carey became Director of the Springfield Recreation Commission. Following those years, I got involved in the Cub Scouts at St. Paul AME Church and the leadership under the general leadership under Harrison Smith.

Dickerman: Now that basketball was probably other children other than your own boys, and then when you got into Cub Scouts, it was probably with your older son, or did you...

Goza: Yes. With my older son, that is correct.

Dickerman: When you said you had fundraisers at the Urban League, was that that old house at the end of Monroe Street?

Goza: Yes, that was the old house.

Dickerman: Yes, tell me about that.

Goza: Yes, when we formed our team, which was called the Larks—that's capital L-a-r-k-s—and the young men decided to come up with that name, we had some fund raising at the old, Fifteenth and Monroe, the old Urban League field was there, and it was the highlight of the city at that time because all the functions were held there. So we had a couple of dances and that worked out real well. And out of that I became very familiar with all the young men that were participating in sports.

Dickerman: Were they high school age or just out of high school?

Goza: Most of these were high school age. At that time, it was high school age. Another thing too, during that time, I was moonlighting on a second job at the Leland Hotel. I worked there prior to going to state government and I was Room Service. I did the Room Service at the Leland Hotel.

Dickerman: Oh, was Jack Pettiford there then? Jack Pettiford, was he there then. Does that ring a bell?

Goza: Well Jack was there...

Dickerman: At the Leland?

Goza: Yes, at the Leland, but at that time when I started there, Fay Brooks—Mr. Brooks was over all of the catering, all the parties they had, but I was working for the hotel and I was working as the Room Service, so I was able to meet most of the famous people that came to Springfield, and at that time, they were participating even at the fair grounds, or the Lake Club and some of the names were Humphrey Bogart. He was here in 1952 when Stevenson ran against Eisenhower.

Dickerman: I remember that.

Goza: He was there, and Lauren Bacall, his wife was with him. I served them. I was working Room Service then, so they had a special seating for them and they needed some dinner. They got in late, so I was able to serve her, and it was a funny thing about Lauren Bacall. When I came up to the room the day after the election, if you ever had Room Service, you know you have a table and underneath the table, you have a food carrier, and out of the carrier you have what you call Sterno heat that you light and it keeps the food warm. So the day after Stevenson was beaten by Eisenhower, well, the Hotel Leland was just packed, and they were in the Governor's

suite, and the funny thing about that, they were fussing because I wasn't getting up there fast enough. So when I got up there, Humphrey Bogart, he had his sleeping robe on and she was hollering, an' fussing, an' raising, saying it to me because I was so late, but he was real nice. He was very short. He was just about as short—you know the movies show you're kind of tall, but he was a really short guy.

Dickerman: Oh.

Goza: And so when I got there, she wanted to know where the food was. I never said a word, you know as a waiter, you have to be very polite to your patrons, so I never said a word. So I had to lift the table. They fold down, they fold you know, both sides of the table fold down, and underneath there is where your food is. So what I did, I didn't say a word, she was fussing why I was so late, so I raised the sides up and by that time, I pulled out the eggs and bacon and I was amazed that (chuckles) she didn't know the food was under there, and then after that, she got quiet. So that was one experience. But along with her and MCI, I think Mamie Van Doren was at the hotel and then she was at the fair grounds and James Garner. He was at the fair grounds. Christine Jorgenson, she was the first male that turned into a female. She was here. I got a chance to see her and she was at the Lake Club, Christine Jorgenson. That was back in the early fifties. Let me see, I mentioned Joe Louis and the Ink Spots and, oh I don't know, there was just so many. Anybody that came to Springfield came to

the Leland Hotel. A leading black actress came here and it just happened I wasn't there at the time she came, and her name was Dorothy Dandridge. Dorothy was here in town.

Dickerman: She's still living, I saw her on television the other night.

Goza: Yes, she was at the Lake Club and I had gone, I worked from seven to one, then came back at five, but she was in the hotel.

Dickerman: So then you said you were working two jobs at that time.

Goza: Yes, at that time I was able to gain employment in the State of Illinois, Department of Public Health and, I started under Dr. Sagen. He knew I was a college attendee and they had at that time what they called IBM accounting machines, IBM card, I'd never seen a card. I couldn't have told you anything about it. But he gave me an opportunity to learn that field since I was a math major, so I was able to work in the health and train on the accounting machines with the help of, we had two black employees that were very bright. There was Walter Phelps, he was one of the leading IBM operators and also my mentor was George E. Meek. He took me under his wings and taught me everything I knew about the accounting machines, and from that, I was able to test myself and I was sent to a couple of schools and I did so good that IBM's instructor recommended that I would become a full time IBM operator, so that's how I got my chance, so I was able to take the test, and I got on as an

operator. So the rest of it is history from running the accounting machines into the first generation computers of 1401. That was in the early sixties, and then they went into the 360s and all the other models there. But at the same time, I continued to work part time at the Leland until the hotel closed. And at the same time raising the kids and Cheryl, she was my first child and we continued to—and Marian got her in the scouts through the school and Marian started working on the PTA and I started working in the Little League with the late Oscar Richie. Now the Little League was at the Boys Club at that time, and...

Dickerman: Where was the Boys Club then? It wasn't where it is now, it wasn't?

Goza: Same place, same place. They tore down the old Urban League building and they put up the Boys Club. And prior to then, they had what they call the name of the League then was the Billy Flood. Now at that time there was very few blacks on the East Side. There were a lot on the East Side, but there were very few participating in the Little League program. And so when most of the whites started migrating from the east side, the League was turned over to Mr. Richie. And Mr. Richie needed some support so he asked Marian and I to help him run the League. So Marian became the secretary and I became the player agent, and Jimmy Lockhart became one of the Vice Presidents.

Dickerman: Was Mr. Richie one of Marian's relatives. I know her name was Richie. It was a different Richie.

Goza: It was a different Richie. They were Oscar, the moving company, Oscar, that's the family. So he became the president of the league, I guess when Mike, my son, was about seven, eight years old. He took over the league, and most of the Billy Flood, the white participants had all left this area, so we were able to secure some sponsors and continue to support the league, for better than ten years, I think we kept the league going.

Dickerman: But did the African American kids play in both leagues? I mean they played the white teams back and forth, or did they?

Goza: No, the way it was, all of the games were played among ourselves. We had four teams. And at that time, leagues were not, what am I trying to say, the teams were in one area; like Cy Young was in one area, and then you had Billy Flood, then you had Gale Wanless, they did four or five...

Dickerman: They just played each other.

Goza: Yeah, played each other. You had your teams within your area and then in later years, the Khoury League was formed. They are the teams that would move from one area to another to play each other.

Dickerman: Then you would all play back and forth.

Goza: Play back and forth.

Dickerman: I see.

Goza: So we were able to maintain that end of the Boys Club and we were able to, under Mr. Minton, he came in from, he was hired and came and did some good things for the Little League down there in, I can't remember what year, but he became the Director. Then we were able to get a gated field and some bleachers and things like that. So between that and Mike, my son, playing Little League and then we started him in the scouts at St. Paul as a Cub Scout, and then Cheryl was with the Girl Scouts and she was with, I don't know who she started with, I don't know whether that's the Sacred Heart, one of the schools she started when she stayed in it.

Dickerman: And your kids went to Sacred Heart School, did they?

Goza: Well the funny thing—well, yes, my kids started off at... You're correct. Cheryl and Mike started at Sacred Heart Grade School and we were Baptists, we were Protestants, and we were able to get them in with a minimal fee. They didn't tax us as much as they did some of the parish people. But we were able to keep Cheryl in there until she went to middle school and they asked us since they needed room for their own parish people, they asked us to find another place for them, so Cheryl was on her way. She went to Washington and Michael went to Lincoln until they went to middle school.

Dickerman: Now, I was thinking, were you ever active in the Urban League particularly?

Goza: Not really, only just taking out a card membership. No. I wasn't on the board.

Dickerman: And at that time, were you doing these Cub Scouts and said you had already moved to this house, you had already purchased this house?

Goza: Yes, we had...

Dickerman: At 823 South Fifteenth.

Goza: Yeah, we moved here in the sixties but we lived on Monroe Street. We had been in really only three houses, and all on the east side. We started at Stuart Street, an apartment when we first got married. Then we had a house over on Monroe, right across from Monroe Christian Church, at 1224, then we moved here in about 1962.

Dickerman: Then we always try to ask a little bit about those neighborhoods. Was there a neighborhood grocery store or did you go to big or little stores.

Goza: No, no, we went to the neighborhood store, we went to Miss Schonbrun. We traded with her for from the time we got married until… . I don't know which one was the first supermarket, but we traded with her for a long time, then we started going to the, neighborhood store that was down here too. We used to have one, Bob's.

Dickerman: On Fifteenth?

Goza: Fifteenth Street.

Dickerman: Oh.

Goza: Yes, my brother-in-law got all his meat from him.

Dickerman: Was that Humphrey?

Goza: No, the one in the next block down here from me. It was Bob's Market, I think they called it, but my brother-in-law used to come over and get all his meat there. And then when we moved in this neighborhood, and I was explaining that to some friends of mine, most of our neighbors were white, but as their kids grew up and moved out, they didn't maintain the house. The kids didn't come back, and they sold the house. And so now we have a lot of family structures around here that are just boarded up, that they either sold it to somebody and they didn't keep it up, and so instead of demolishing them or razing the houses, they just boarded them up and that's a law that our East Side Neighborhood Association had been trying to change, so if they don't live in it, they need to tear them down. But the neighborhood has changed considerably.

Dickerman: And this neighborhood that went to Lincoln School or Iles?

Goza: We were at Lincoln School.

Dickerman: Oh.

Goza: When [was] the suit of Rev. McPherson *v. the Board of Education*.

Dickerman: In 1975 or 1976.

Goza: The boundaries changed. My side of the street went to Springfield.

Dickerman: Oh.

Goza: The other side of the street went to Southeast. So Cheryl and Michael went to Southeast originally. They changed the boundaries to get a proportional equal of the minority kids going to the other schools. My later two kids, Roger and Jeanette, went to Springfield, and they were still in.... Originally, they were in Lincoln School District, but when they changed the law, then the loss of the court decree came, this side of the street went to Grant.

Dickerman: Oh, Grant School.

Goza: Yes. They went to Grant Middle School, but I think Lincoln was still the elementary school they went to.

Dickerman: And did everyone feel that the integration went fairly smoothly in Springfield, did you feel with your kids?

Goza: Oh yes. I think the integration went well. I thought being integrated is a way of life that we all have to share each other's cultures. I grew up with all black people and I wasn't able to network with whites, only on the job,

but nothing in school, so that created a problem. And I say that because my sister and my brother were able to go through both phases.

Dickerman: They were younger.

Goza: They were younger than me, so they were born in the forties and I was married and living here, and I had all my kids of my own, but in 1954, when the *Brown v. Board of Education* came to be as a law, that the southern states had to integrate the schools, then there was war in Kansas City, and I laugh because I questioned how they endured the first two or three days at the school. So I'm talking to my sister, her name is Brenda, and she said, "Oh, they had a time." It was hard for the whites to accept them and she said they really had to fight their way from room to room. They didn't get very much encouragement from the teachers, so it was a new walk of life. All at once we were separated then all the ones who were together and yes, it's a hard thing to deal with. I was able to adjust by coming to Illinois and I had no problems. I think the black teachers prepared us for the day when the southern states would be integrated and we would have to take our place on the side of the whites, in all phases of work. We were limited to what jobs we could get. Most of our work was servitude work, and personally, I hated it. I hated it, and I thought...

Dickerman: How did you get your education?

Goza: Yes, I thought it was personally. We had to do the work that they weren't

going to do anyway and that's the way of life, but it was a way of raising your family. Now in Kansas City, they had what they called just regular unions for people doing day work, and they made very good money, and that was a way of life for black families, especially when the women wanted to go to work and help educate the kids and do all the good things and have the things that everybody had, they were working doing day work. I did some day work with my dad. My dad worked at a hotel. Most of his work was with the hotel but most of the parents when I came along were doing the… Kansas City was the railroad hub from the Missouri Pacific so most of the black males that migrated from the south, they got good jobs at the railroads. They were either doing the maintenance work, cleaning up the trains et cetera, then you had the packing houses where you had all your meat and food. Those were good jobs. I guess the best job was the U.S. Postal Service. They were good jobs. But my dad was doing hotel work; he was kind of a night clerk and he had a pretty good job. He knew how to do the PX switchboard during that time, he would call the rooms and all that. I used to go down and watch him do that. That was quite interesting.

Dickerman: That was a skill.

Goza: Yes, that was a skill. He'd call you in the room, you put the plug in here and do it. But then during the day, he would go and do the day work.

Dickerman: Oh.

Goza: So as I got older, he would bring me along to help him. Well I wasn't a very fast moving person and it's amazing that they characterized me as being a little too slow for the work. So they said I was never accepted for doing the work. Well personally, I didn't want to do the work anyway, see, but my brother, Herman, oh, they just loved him. He was a fast go getter, so I had a problem with that and so I figured that I needed to try to go to school so I was able to go and work, but I had done the best I could. But at that time, there was no scholarships. There was no loans, and if you didn't work or your people didn't have money, you just didn't go to school, and most of the young blacks in my plight, most of them went into the service. My brother went in. He was in Korea and he stayed 20 [years] and most of my classmates, they stayed during the Korean War and I was in college when Korea came on.

Dickerman: You were too young for World War II.

Goza: But I was just right for Korea, but I was in school.

Dickerman: So you didn't...

Goza: Yes, I got deferred. I got deferred. And so the ones that were in school got called in Korea and we lost quite a few blacks in that war. So from there, raising the family in Springfield and watching the change of integration. I was trying to say something about integration. Integration was good, because when you are not accepted and all at once you want to be

accepted, that leaves a problem in your mind whether you are equal to the white race and that was a problem, I think that a lot of blacks had. A lot of my students went on from Missouri and became great people in light of education and everything else by going to the all-white schools. One was KU, most of my classmates went over to Kansas and did quite well out of my high school. So they were prepared. And our teachers were not able to teach in the level that they should have. We had teachers in my high school that had Masters from University of Chicago, Southern Cal, and they were still teaching at the secondary level.

Dickerman: Oh, because they couldn't teach at high levels.

Goza: Because they couldn't teach there, that's right. They were not accepted there and just so many spots in the northern schools, that they were having the same problem. So I say integration had its place for our race and at the same time, we gain two blocks and lost a block because when we were segregated, we were a family. You know we took care of each other. When we integrated, we got so far apart from that family unity that black people just didn't have togetherness and I think anybody would tell you that in our generation that the families took care of you in the block. You didn't do anything wrong. They made sure you go to church, you went to school, and we didn't have all of the different things…TV I think is just the worst thing that could ever happen to everybody, but I love it because I watch it every day, but I think at that time when we integrated, then we

got so far apart and then, as Dr. King, we had to be prepared for these different changes that were out here for black people see.

Dickerman: I was going to say someone in these interviews indicated that there were so many black businesses on the east side before the fifties, and then in 1952, it was about when the community integrated more and so many of those black businesses were no longer there.

Goza: Yeah. Right. And I think that was true of all cities. In Kansas City, there was an area that was set aside by the founders of the city which said it was incorporated as Kansas City and then I found out in later years they had the realtors that they called the red lining, that was the area that they were going to give blacks was from the Levee. The water in Kansas City started at the river, and we always knew the Worevella(??) Railroad but we were near the river, and that was on Ninth Street up to Twelfth Street, always here by Twelfth Street. Then they went from Twelfth Street all the way down to Eighteenth Street, and Eighteen to Twenty-seventh. Now that is it. Anything up to Twenty-seventh, you bet not even think about buying a house. The realtors would not sell you anything. Then they went from, that was going from north and south. Then from east and west, they went from, all the businesses were on Main and Grand and I would say about Charlotte Avenue, and they went all the way over to maybe two miles which is about Benton or—

Dickerman: This is Kansas City.

Goza: That was Kansas City, and then, out of that you had your black businesses. You had your stores. You had your eating shops. You had your grocery stores, everything was there. All the professional people there: your doctors, lawyers, social workers, hairdresser. Everybody was in that one area, and so once we integrated, then we moved out. We never did replace it and all of those buildings became boarded up, then we lost the businesses, and the same way in Springfield. Washington Street had quite a few businesses down there.

Dickerman: I heard Eleventh Street too, I heard.

Goza: Eleventh Street, you're right. They had the hotel, two hotels, they had the barbershop, they had a night club, you know, and all those things left and it was never replaced.

Dickerman: So that's a little bit of a down side.

Goza: Yes, that's the down side of it.

Dickerman: What led you to get involved in the NAACP... I know you've been involved in the NAACP for a long time. How did you get...

Goza: Well, when I first came here, I wasn't involved until let me see... (audio interference) Well after I left the scout program, Rudy [Davenport] was one of the first migrates that I met.

Dickerman: He was here then.

Goza: Yes, he was here then.

Dickerman: In the sixties?

Goza: Yes, in the sixties, yes, and I met him through his wife. My wife knew his wife so she brought him by and that's how I met him. Then we became friends then. Then he was involved, he and I think James White and a few more were involved in a session between the NAACP and another group out of East St. Louis. They were going to have a debate on some of the pitfalls of both organizations. So I was invited by Rudy to come hear the debate, and I think it was held at St. Paul's church.

Dickerman: Oh.

Goza: Yes, a debate between the NAACP and this group was out of East St. Louis...

Dickerman: Another African American Group?

Goza: Yes, So they were going to debate on some of the pitfalls of where we should be going as a group. And out of that, I came to the meeting, and then I think I took out a membership and then from there I went on and got elected to the Executive Committee. And from then on, I just kind of stayed with them and started helping Agnes become President.

Dickerman: And who was the President at that time?

Goza: Agnes was coming in.

Dickerman: Agnes Houston.

Goza: Agnes Houston, yes.

Dickerman: Oh, I don't think she ever made a tape. She might have, but let's talk a little bit about the kind of person Agnes was as a leader.

Goza: I really got trained under Agnes and Arnold Banks, let me see, Mr. Darwin and Mr. Barton, I think Ethel Gingold was in that group.

Dickerman: Was Mr. Osby?

Goza: And Simeon Osby, yes, and when she came in and I think her first task was to give me something to do and she made me ticket chairman of the banquet.

Dickerman: And to this day... (laughs) That's a long time.

Goza: That's a long time ago so I took over and at that time, Mr. Hale, it's a funny story. Now Mr. Hale had done a great job of being ticket chair.

Dickerman: Oh, Mr. Hale.

Goza: Yes, Mr. Hale. He was the ticket chair and Miss Jessie Rogers was the leading ticket seller of NAACP. That was the big affair. You had the Urban League and you had the NAACP. So that was a big, big banquet,

and whoever sold the most tickets, they sat on the dais and all that. So Agnes...

Dickerman: They were together, they didn't have the banquet together or not.

Goza: No, I'm just saying those were the two big functions. So when I got in I wasn't too sure whether I could sell the tickets, and I was a young man, I wasn't as popular as some of the older pioneers of Springfield. So she said, "Well, Bob Goza, I want you to do the tickets. Life is a change and we're going to make a change," so I took on the challenge. Not without a fight because I really caught the devil for taking the tickets away from Miss Rogers, you know, and there was some other backlash, but anyway, that made me more determined to be the ticket chair, so from that day, so I started selling the tickets and then just started to get involved, and I think the key to me sticking with NAACP, finally she told me to attend the National NAACP Convention, and I went to St. Louis in 1977. That was my first one, and once I went there, I knew this was our relationship for me to stay with. Once you go there, the brightest minds in the world are in the NAACP, barring none, and I'm very sincere what I'm talking about.

Dickerman: I believe you.

Goza: We have everything that you need. We have all the committees that affect this government. We start with the legal redress, the housing, education, political, what is that political—

Dickerman: Is it responsibility?

Goza: No, the political action. I'm sorry, political action. So I was able to go down there and I think that was the last year for the Executive Director which was the one that died before...

Dickerman: That was the President and an Executive Director at that time?

Goza: Yes.

Dickerman: Was it paid staff then?

Goza: Yes, that was Executive Director at that time was, I can't think, I should be Roy Wilkins.

Dickerman: It might have been Comer Cox but that's the Urban League.

Goza: No, no, I was thinking about the National.

Dickerman: Oh, the National.

Goza: I was thinking about the National.

Dickerman: Okay, because we didn't have an Executive Director in Springfield.

Goza: No, no.

Dickerman: Okay.

Goza: But I was trying to say my first encounter with going to the National to

see just how they operated and attending the workshops and I mentioned the different committees that they have, so I went there in 1977. That was my first one; then skipped 1978, then I went to Louisville in 1979. The first time, I only stayed a day or two, and in 1979, I stayed the whole six days down in Louisville. I drove down, and the first person I met was one of my classmates from Kansas City. We graduated from high school together, and he was the official organist for the whole convention. And so every year, Mrs. Goza and I, we would meet him. He played for all of the general meetings.

Dickerman: Did you take your children with you, the kids on those...

Goza: No, no, we didn't take the kids to any of those. So out of that, I just continued to stay with Agnes and she was elected for things. She stayed in for twelve.

Dickerman: What were some of the issues that you worked on in those days, with the City Council, presumably or state or city level.

Goza: Well mostly we had a lot of some of the same things going on now. We had in our legal redress which was headed by Attorney Archie Lawrence. We had quite a bit of legal redress problems concerning jobs, and the way the employees were treated on the jobs. Now during that time, we had people like the late Arnold Banks, he was a journeyman plumber, very dynamic and Simeon and Agnes and you had Mr. Darwin, and these

pioneers would answer the call of any discrepancy or discrimination that was happening to any person whether they were carrying an NAACP card or not, and during that time, they would visit the employer without asking for an appointment. They would go unannounced. Now we got a little more professional where we go and ask for a meeting, and we found out during that training period that we were better off going unannounced so we would get a true picture of the problem before they could mount their ammunition against us before we got there.

Dickerman: That's good.

Goza: But we had, I had some questions about that even now at our workshops that this is more a courtesy to call the employer and say you will coming to address the problem with Mrs. Dickman here concerning some issues, but we found out that if we came unannounced then we could really sit down eye to eye and go over the problem. So that was one thing that I enjoyed going with them because I was frightened to death the way they (laughs) the way they have the issues, I mean they came and one other person that I used to go with was the late Arnold Moore.

Dickerman: Oh.

Goza: He was a retired Army captain, but boy, he was rough. He was very forward. He had that deep voice and boy it would scare you to death so I was more scared than the people we were talking to. (laughs)

Dickerman: And Agnes wasn't a shooting target.

Goza: Oh no, Agnes...

Dickerman: I remember her waving at me.

Goza: Yes, she would wave and she'd scream too. So I was scared to death. I wouldn't say a word, but anyway, they really got the job done and when we left there, we ended up in most of those legal redress problems, we ended up getting what the person needed, you know, and that's all we were there for, to make them satisfied, and so we try to do the same thing now, and we are having the same problems, but we don't have enough people and enough legal people in the organization that can do it unless it's a paid staff, and some of the issues will call for a lawyer, and I was talking to Archie even just recently that they need to address that at our convention about getting paid staff to address the biggest problem we have is in the legal redress area.

Dickerman: Are you talking about paid staff in Baltimore, or how to get staff here?

Goza: No, locally, you see, because all the calls come in are really job related or problems related with some harassment, and then to get any kind of legal advice, you call a lawyer, they start at 150 dollars an hour just to give you one good answer for some of your problems, and where we do this for nothing, we are fortunate to have Attorney Lawrence with us and he's helped many a person just by giving them satisfaction to answering their

problems over the phone, so that's an area that I told him just recently that we need to try to figure out what we can do about that.

Dickerman: I know that you from the beginning were in on the talks with the Police Department in Springfield, maybe starting five years ago or so. Is there anything you wanted to go into of that, or not a little bit?

Goza: Yes, I sat in with Carl.

Dickerman: Carl Madison.

Goza: Carl Madison, Rudy, and Ethel Gingold and myself and Archie. We met with John Harrison that was the Mayor's [assistant](?) during that time about the police and the recruitment. That was our area, and with our attorney out of Washington, Mr. Rose, Attorney Rose, and we were hoping—and what we did, we have a consent decree where they did make some changes on the exam, the way they scored that, and at the same time, the number of recruitment through the policemen and possibly the firemen to certain numbers that we were going to try to attain in a few years. But after the Frazier case came to be, I think things kind of set back and we lost the Mayor. We do have a new Mayor now, and I think they have met with him once about, I think I talked to Archie about the consent decree that how we can get these numbers and, I talked to Rudy, and Rudy said that there is a review committee that they have to report back to on what they have been doing concerning the consent decree, but right now, I don't

know where it is, and I don't even have a chance to really find out when they are going to meet with the city. But I was just reading as of today that the Black Guardians are trying to get involved in the recruitment of the black policemen to bring the numbers up, we only have I think they said twelve total. But we are hopeful that we can get them to continue to take the test, so I don't have any information on that, and I think they do have it somewhere that, and I don't know when they're going to take the test again, so I really not up to date on whether they are on this now.

Dickerman: I know it's been a slow process but it seems like it's beginning to work, and that's the thing of the NAACP, they don't quit.

Goza: Right, that's true.

Dickerman: Right. I talked to your wife Marian...

(End of Side One, Tape One)

Goza: My youngest grandson's involved in sports so as I was telling Mrs. Dickerman that I support him because, I know he's out there by himself and he has to learn to work with all of the kids and the coaches, so we get along pretty good and kind of wears me out though, because you got to go to all the games and you got to learn the plays. You got to learn the coaches and everything, but it works out pretty good. And I think kids

basically are good kids, but if they don't have any parental support then it's bad. I watch the kids in my neighborhood here and they tend to, probably a lot of the kids are not able to go and participate in a lot of activities because there's always a fee involved. If you're going to be on the swimming team, you got to pay something. You know you got to buy a uniform, if you're on a soccer team, you got to buy some shoes, so a lot of times kids are left out. But I try to instill in them to be happy for what you have and do the best job that you can, and so as I tell you, it is a challenge.

Dickerman: Oh I think maybe your life's been a challenge but a good one, and if you had it to do over again, would you do it in Springfield?

Goza: Yes, I would. I like children and I wish I could do more but it's... I don't know, my neighbor now, we do have a basketball goal set in one of the driveways so I was talking to my wife about that and I said, well they have to have a place to play, and you'd rather see them doing that than running down the street and getting in trouble. The only thing about it is that you worry about the litter, and all of that, but I have my team here, they do the community things for William and Marian, so they pick up all of the bottles and the glasses and things, but I think basically most kids are good and they have to be challenged and they have to be told what is good and what is bad, and I think as parents, they have to know that we've done some things we didn't have no business doing, see, and I think that's what

parents fail to realize. I tell kids, “you got in trouble? I used to get in trouble all of the time.” I tell William, I say boys tend to get in trouble and kids will tell tales on you so you have to be honest and not do the things that they do. I am working with Rudy “at back to school, stay in school” and I’m not a very good model with him on that because I go to my workout for my cardiac rehab so I can’t make it on the days, but there’s a challenge there with a lot of kids that need so much support and we do have one of the pioneers that really does a good job and that’s Vesta Meek Nichols. She’s been a pioneer for the last fifty years in education. Her family is well thought of and I always laugh at migrates that come into town. I say there’s only one family I’m actually intent on introducing you to and that’s the Meek family. They’re very bright, they’re very brilliant and they are very aggressive, and so if you know any of the Meeks, you know they’ll get the job done, but she’s still doing her job, a tutor in a reading program and all that. So that’s a lot to be done but we just need bodies. The NAACP needs people to come forward and help, and it’s a lot of work and a lot of sacrifice. I know in the “back to school, stay in school” program, they have referrals that have to be signed off by the parents, and then once you get that referral, then it’s up to you as the overseer of that child and you might spend a whole week just trying to go through somebody’s homework or whatever they’re doing, and you find people are just not willing to give up all of that time if they have a family of their own and things they like to do too. But it’s a good program and

it's still going and we have Mr., I think in the "back to school", we have Mr. Betts is doing a tremendous job. I think Mr. Woodson is helping out now and then we got a new, I met the new leader, Miss Linda Dillon. I don't know if you knew her. She's the new...

Dickerman: I met her.

Goza: But yes, they still have referrals during the school year that they're trying to keep the kids in school, so it's a good program, and the main thing about this program, this is a program that sponsored by the NAACP and then it's one that's run by the grants that you can get. You can do it any way you want to and Rudy then wanted to, when he set it up, he wanted to do some of the things that the other programs were not doing and what he built what they called a foundation of not just tutoring but any needs that the family needed.

Dickerman: Right, it's one of these wrap around...

Goza: Wrap around, right, see, that was more of a wrap around which we're taking anything that it takes to get this kid above board, see, so that's real good, and he has all of the outlets for the wrap around, all of the good connection for the wrap around, so. But that's one thing that's going with the NAACP so that's some good things about the NAACP.

Dickerman: Oh, I think everyone believes that. I talked to Marian Goza about your church affiliation. I forget if it's been the same all through the years or

not.

Goza: Well, I'm born and raised Baptist in Kansas City, joined Union, but I've been affiliated as an associate member of St. Paul Church, and that really started when the kids got into the scout program and I was Cub Master over there, and I've been over there ever since. But after that, I'm not very much active in a lot of the church. I'm not on the board or anything like that.

Dickerman: And I know that you've had cardiac surgery and recovered from that and you're sticking with your rehab.

Goza: I had cardiac surgery and I had that in 1998. God's been good to me, so I meet with the regular cardiac young men, they're all seventy-plus and we meet Monday, Wednesday and Friday. We have our nurse and we do our exercises, and they call me chairman of the board, so I do all the talking, so we have a good time. We have a few women in our program so we all meet and it's really a good program.

Dickerman: At what hospital?

Goza: We started at the Baylis building, but they moved us out. Now we're out to the Fit Center South.

Dickerman: Oh, I see.

Goza: Yes, yes, so some of the doctors wanted that space set across from

Memorial, and they do have a program at Saint John's, but I started mine at Memorial. As I say again, the doctors wanted that space so they made a contract with the Fit Center, so we're on the second floor at the Fit Center, so it's a good program.

Dickerman: Well Bob, I think you have had an interesting life and it's been fun for me, and we've covered about everything, haven't we?

Goza: Yes, I think so.

Dickerman: Yes.

Goza: I just enjoyed it.

Dickerman: So...

Goza: Knowing you, I think.

Dickerman: We have, we've got to name your kids. Let's name the kids and the grand kids.

Goza: Yes... There's Cheryl Maureen Goza-Smith and Michael Robert Goza, and Roger Patterson Goza, and Jeanette Helene Goza. Those are the four in that sequence. Then the oldest grand child is Alexander Charles Goza, and my second one is Marian Toran Smith.

Dickerman: I know her.

Goza: And then the last one would be William Anthony Ferguson.

Dickerman: Yes, we've got to bring them in. They say it's a good batch of kids. Thanks so much. It's been really fun.

(End of Side Two, Tape One)

(end of interview)