

Raymond D. Jones, 1945-
Colorado College Class of 1967
Board of Trustees, 1984-1990

SIDE ONE - CASSETTE ONE

INTERVIEWER:

This is tape recording number 35 of the Colorado College Archives Oral History Project. Two Colorado College Students, Denise Minor and Laurie Ann O'Connor are interviewing Raymond D. Jones in his judge's chambers in the District Court, Denver, Colorado. The date is March 6th, 1980.

Ray Jones was born in Pueblo, Colorado on November 30th, 1945. He graduated from Colorado College in 1967, and received his law degree from Harvard University in 1971. While at Colorado College, he was the first Black president of the Beta Theta Pi fraternity. He is currently a judge of the Denver District Court, appointed by Governor Lamm. He also has served as a visiting professor in the Colorado College Political Science department during Block 6, 1980.

INTERVIEWER:

We're interested in how you got interested in Colorado College. Would you like to [can't understand] with that?

JONES:

Well, since I'm a native of Pueblo, I'd known about Colorado College for years, really, since I was a child. The first recollections I have of Colorado College come from reading about Dutch Clark, the great All-American football player, who was an All-American at CC and then went on to great fame in professional football. And from, frankly, driving to Denver on the old highway, U.S. 85-87, which was Nevada Avenue, which went right past Colorado College.

So I remember seeing the campus from my early days as a youth, when we went by there. And being curious about what kind of place it was, and who went there, and what did they do there. As I progressed in school, I heard more about the college, and as I considered colleges, I knew that Colorado College, because of its academic tradition, primarily, was a

school that I ought to consider, and I did. And in my senior year, I had occasion to come into contact with people from the school who encouraged my application. And I applied and was accepted.

When I was applying and I had the opportunity to go to numerous places, not all of which I wanted to go to. And some were academic opportunities, in that they were offering academic scholarships, and some were athletic opportunities, in that they were offering athletic scholarships. And in the end, Colorado College seemed ideal for me because of its academic traditions, and yet the opportunity to participate in athletics at a fairly sophisticated level without the burden and pressures of athletic scholarships or predominance of athletics over academics.

And so essentially, that's why I decided, in the end, to go to Colorado College. It was close to home, and yet it was far enough from home that I didn't need to worry about having pressure from my parents to be home all the time. And yet if I wanted to home for the weekend, I could do so. And I got home from time to time, and sometimes [chuckle] had some interesting experiences getting home! [laughter]

INTERVIEWER:

Would you like to go into that?

JONES:

[laughter] Well, I wasn't all that well off when I was a student, and I worked. I did what we then called "hashing," which I don't think students call it any more. It would be working in the lunch room and the dining room. And after the second semester, or during the second semester of my freshman year, I joined the Beta house, so I did my hashing in the Beta house dining room. And I did other jobs: I modeled for art classes, which was interesting for me, and some other people, I suppose. I did a number of things--almost anything to earn money that was legal.

But one of the ramifications of having little money was that there were times when I couldn't even afford a bus ticket to Pueblo and back. And so I hitchhiked quite a bit.

But one of the things that I found was more hassle-free than hitchhiking or anything else was to ride freight trains down to Pueblo from Colorado Springs.

I would go down into the train yards underneath the Bijou Street bridge, usually as the trains went through--passed--what was then the train station, but what is now Giuseppe's Restaurant. The trains would slow down going through the yard, and you could hop a train. I never

encountered a railroad detective, and find a corner in a boxcar or kind of brace yourself in an ore car, coal, or some other ore, and scoot on along. The freight trains at that time, because of the bad roadbeds, did not travel that fast, probably no faster than 40 or 50 miles an hour. So I never worried that much about getting hurt, what with the road. And [chuckle] when we got to the freight yards in Pueblo, I'd hop off and walk on home, or catch a bus or something. It was exciting in a sense, but in another sense, it was pathetic, because it is no fun not to even be able to afford a bus ticket from Pueblo to Colorado Springs, or vice versa.

And I used to reflect on that quite a bit as I was riding the trains, on, you know, "Why am I riding these trains?" But it was a way of getting home! [laughter]

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. What were your first impressions of Colorado College when you first got there [can't understand] You mentioned that, you know, you didn't have enough money sometimes to take the bus home. [can't understand] people at the college, or other students?

JONES:

I guess my first recollections are of being different from the others in almost every way. The fact that I could match them academically if I could remove a lot of other impediments to showing what I could do academically. I was a black person. In August of '63 when I arrived at Colorado College, as far as I can recall, there were only six other black people in the school--three American blacks and three African blacks. The African blacks were not always forthcoming to the American blacks, and I think there are some interesting sociological and other implications in that. So racially, there was a wide gulf.

Economically, there was a universe of difference between myself and the other students. When you're poor, you know immediately what the difference is between you and those who aren't poor, and I knew that. I could sense immediately that the student body generally was from a high socioeconomic class in America. That many of the people were from the East, from Connecticut, that many of them were what we then called "preppies"--people who not only had gone to private schools or prep schools and therefore really were preppies, but people who conveyed that image of Bass Weejun slipon shoes, the plaid sport jackets, running around with no sox on, even when it was cold.

You know, I used to say that you have to be rich to do that, because when you're poor, and sometimes don't have any sox to wear, there's nothing beautiful or fashionable about

not wearing sox. But I noticed those differences and took account of them.

I had a roommate who was really a fine person. His name was Lex Towns. He was from Grand Junction, Colorado. Lex and I had played football against each other in high school, and while I didn't know him very well personally, I knew him somewhat, and respected him a great deal. Lex is an anglo person, but socially and economically, his background was very close to my own. So Lex and I--it was very fortuitous, and not through the efforts of either of us--that we became roommates in Slocum Hall my freshman year, because we were able to help each other across the gulf that separated both of us from the student body at large.

And we did a lot of things together that first year. We both played football; we studied together quite a bit; and generally speaking, I think we helped each other out a lot at that time. Someone like Lex was very valuable because there weren't enough--of course, there were no black women in school, and there weren't enough black people that we could get together and really call ourselves a gathering. So someone like Lex was very helpful to me in that sense.

Other impressions were with respect to the faculty that it was a very high level and high speed faculty, that they were really kind of no-nonsense people, which I was not used to in an academic setting, because while I loved Pueblo South High School, my old alma mater, it was not on the level that many people had in high school. And certainly the faculty had not prepared me either for the curriculum at CC or for the kind of faculty that we had at CC.

And I found myself very quickly having a feeling that I would have to kind of retreat into myself and take stock of my intellectual talents and reserves, because I would really have to dig deep to satisfy the faculty. And I sensed that as deep as I could dig, that there would be times that I couldn't come up with what they wanted, and I remember thinking on occasion very early in my freshman year, that that was regrettable, because I knew that somewhere in me was enough to handle the work, to handle the intellectual challenge, but that there were some people on the faculty who weren't going to give me a chance to really show that. They would not be imaginative in a way that they could bring that out of me; they wouldn't give me the kind of time that I might need to show I could.

And as I say, it was a hard pushing faculty and a hard pushing school at that time, full of bright students, and if it took you a little more time to show what you could do, you might just run out of time. And I think that on some occasions I ran out of time. That as a result, a lot of people never knew what I could really be capable of in

academic challenge. I don't know whether I blamed them or not. They just didn't see something unique enough about me to wait for me to respond to the challenge, and I didn't have enough guts, I suppose, or enough acumen at the time to explain to them why they should wait. So I think on occasion I was left behind. I think probably my--from time to time my academic performance reflected that, although generally, I think people at that time, and maybe now, are convinced that I could handle the academic challenge.

But those are some of my impressions. I remember falling in love with the campus, finding that the space was very nice, because I was a private kid--still remain kind of a private individual. And there was space to move around and be by yourself. The buildings were attractive to me, coming from Pueblo as I did, and not being kind of accustomed to unique, special and specialized architecture. The chapel--at that time, I was still very much tied to formalized religion, and I found the chapel to be very inspiring for me. I spent a lot of time in the chapel; I studied sometimes in the chapel, and meditated a lot in Shove Chapel.

But also, I discovered a lot of secret places on the campus that were really quite nice. At that time, there was an observatory at the location that El Pomar Sports Center is on. That was an intriguing building, and let me say that the area down the hill west of the Sorority house row was much more interesting then than it is now. It's much too thickly populated now, but at that time, you could go down there and really kind of be in your own world. And as a result, it was something of a lovers' lane on campus, which was nice! [laughter]

INTERVIEWER:

[laughter]

JONES:

If you could just find a lady to go down there with you! [laughter] But those are some of my impressions.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Talk a bit more about student life, socially, academic interactions--if there were any?

JONES:

There were. I was fortunate in this regard. I have to pay tribute to some members of the faculty, certainly Bill Hochman. Bill saw something in me, and recognized an ability to respond to challenge, and to my way of understanding it, was helpful in having me included in the Selected Students Program.

The Selected Students Program was a special program extant at that time, whereby approximately 21 freshmen who met some sort of presumably objective test concerning their intellect and ability, were put in a special program of freshman English and history, with a contemplated special course in economics in the sophomore year. Along with these special accelerated courses in history and English in the freshman year, there were special lectures; we had special lunches; and we were set apart as people who were truly selected students.

And I was a selected student, and that certainly was one of the best things that could have happened to me when I went to CC, because it in itself was a form of recognition, that you had been recognized by the faculty as being academically set apart of all, so to speak, because of the promise that you had shown before. That provided me with a lot of good academic interaction.

I had Neale Reinitz for selected student English; Bill Hochman for selected student history; my sophomore year I had Ray Werner for selected student economics. All those courses were tremendously challenging. They were, indeed, accelerated beyond the usual freshman and sophomore comparable courses. And they just provided a very good challenge and a very good academic interchange for the students. All of the students in those courses were very bright, and very quick intellectually. We wrote more papers than the other courses did, and that was very helpful to me, in terms of developing my writing skills, which had not been as well developed in high school as I wished they had been. And just the general meetings and special lectures we had were very, very helpful to me.

I think one of the things--let me just say here that one of the things that I think I have to reflect on whenever I think of me at Colorado College is of a rather raw and unsophisticated but intelligent person going through an incredible learning experience that probably wasn't fully visible to outsiders. At that time, I was just grasping learning, grasping knowledge.

I used to talk to people, and I could see the difference in myself, and really couldn't see or measure the difference in them. Many of them came to CC so well prepared that CC was no big thing for them in terms of learning experience, or knowledge acquisition. For me, there was a tremendous learning experience going on, and I regret sometimes that a lot more people couldn't see that. But that was kind of a process that was continuing through CC.

Let me just say for a moment, if you want me to talk about the life background [?]. Social life, at least in the first semester, was nonexistent, partly because there were no black women at the college, and I--there was a certain amount of nervousness on my part about dating white women, and I think a certain amount of nervousness on the part of other people associated with the college. So I just kind of contented myself with accepting the fact that there would be no social life.

But I did have a lot of good friends, and women friends. One thing that I remember very clearly, and it's very funny to me, is that I was very fortunate my freshman year, and I became a football star. I was a running back, and enjoyed some good success.

So homecoming was approaching, and homecoming then was still a big deal; they elected a queen, who really was a woman [chuckle]. You know, they had parades and floats and things. And I didn't have a date, and I wasn't going to get a date. For one thing, the dance was at the Broadmoor, and I couldn't--I didn't think I could afford to go to the dance and participate in anything.

But there was a young lady who was a dance student, and she was younger than the students normally are. She was only about 16 years old, a young 16 chronologically; quite an experienced 16 socially. [laughter] Terrie Reeves was her name--a really beautiful individual. And she developed some understandings about me very early on that I will always appreciate her for. And she approached me and practically dragged out of me that I would take her to homecoming. There had been a lot of concern expressed about what if I didn't go to homecoming, and I was kind of a . . . football star, and I suppose some people were concerned that someone like me ought to go to the homecoming at least.

So Terrie beat me, so to speak, into taking her to homecoming, and because her folks lived in Colorado Springs, we could take their car. So I went to homecoming and had a very, very good time. I think that was my first date in college! [laughter] But otherwise I did--at least the first semester of freshman year, I understood that I probably wouldn't have much social life, and I was committed to that. I didn't really mind it too much, although sometimes I reflected, and bitterly, on the reason for all of that.

Later on, things got better. After I joined the Beta house, which, very frankly, I did partly because I realized that I could not go through four years like this, and that fraternities do have a built-in social aspect that removes,

at least for a person such as I was at that time, the search and the quest for social life. When I joined the Beta house, frankly, things got better in that regard. It was easier to meet women, and easier to meet women who were comfortable with dating a black person. It was easier to have people around who accepted the fact that you had to date black women [**SIC**] and weren't remonstrating and acting silly about it.

So really, the second semester of my freshman year, socially, things got much better. And thereafter, social life really was not a problem at all. Some might say that my social life became a bit too active thereafter! [laughter] I won't deny it! [laughter]

INTERVIEWER:

Would you like to go into it a little bit? [laughter]

JONES:

I'd better not, to protect the names of the innocent and the guilty! [laughter]

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Were there any important events that were happening around Colorado Springs that affected the CC campus, the people at CC?

JONES:

There were, but the things that I feel at least ought to have been impacting on the campus were not necessarily local things. People have to remember that at that time--let's see, John F. Kennedy was assassinated in the November of my freshman year.

At that time, we had so-called "advisors" in Vietnam and Laos, a very small number of people, but it was gradually increasing. For whatever reason, and I don't claim to be prescient, but I knew in my own young mind that we were headed for trouble in Southeast Asia, and that people ought to be concerned about what was happening over there. And I was concerned, and as early as 1964, I was expressing to people who were not at all willing to receive my thoughts on it, that we were about to be involved in a war, and that some aspects of it were going to be racial, that we always seem more inclined to rush into war against Asian or people other than European people. It wasn't a very well received view.

At that time, also, because of the fervor of just kind of coming off from a blow of having our president assassinated, and the throes of having young men in a foreign country anyway being killed, a patriotic fervor developed

that was, in my judgment, very unhealthy, and tending quite away from patriotism. And we all know then what happened. It became the Vietnam War, and it became very horrible.

But that began to impact on all college students, because as we increased the numbers of men in Vietnam, the demand for men became greater, and therefore, more emphasis was put on the draft. By mid-'64 and '65, it was quite apparent that a lot of people were going to be drafted and go to Vietnam. And that caused a very chilling effect on students in that era. Someone really needs to examine in great detail what the Vietnam War was doing to students at that time--not in terms of causing them to march in the streets and trash places, and try to bring down the administration, but in terms of what it did to them every day in their minds, on their way to class, on their way to graduation, after graduation--the fears and the terrible thoughts that people harbored about what was going to happen to them.

It's important because we have to remember that this was not, even when the great patriotic fervor was going on, was not a popular war. And it wasn't because we didn't understand what it was about. No one knew what we were fighting about. We manufactured fiction fairly easily that we were fighting in the interest of the United States of America, in the interest of democracy, but no one really knew at the gut level what the fight was about.

That had a tremendous impact on the campus and on me. At that time, because Colorado College is a land grant college [sic], the college was required to offer a four-year program in ROTC, and to offer reserve officer commissions upon graduation. The way CC was handling it at the time I was there was that the first two years of ROTC were mandatory; every male student had to take ROTC. That involved going to class and another beautifully euphemistic thing called Leadership Lab, whereby on one day--normally Thursdays, I believe--we would all have to go down to the football field and engage in things euphemistically called leadership exercises. We would learn to drill, and march, and learn to break down our M-1 rifles, and so forth.

Near the end of your sophomore year, you had to declare whether you were going to take the last two years of ROTC, which was voluntary, and then get your commission, or whether you desired to drop out of the program. It was a tremendous burden on young men at that time, because you knew if you didn't opt to take the last two years of ROTC, you were going to be drafted at the end of your college career, and there were no guarantees that you could get deferment for graduate school.

Now, at that time I was bothered by a massive ulcer problem. From my freshman year, and all the way through my

senior year, my ulcers hemorrhaged from time to time; I spent a lot of time in the infirmary; I was down and out quite a bit of the time. And it turned out that the decision for me was taken away because the Army had a regulation at that time that a person with a documented history of ulcers could not receive a commission. And at that time, I was torn, because I was not a conscientious objector. I was opposed to the Vietnam War. I knew that I could never fight in the war, but I was not opposed to the military, or to being in the military. That was a moral dilemma that I did not know how I was going to resolve.

Finally, it was resolved for me, because I opted to take the last two years, went out to Fort Carson to take my physical, failed the physical because of my ulcers, and thereafter my draft board gave me what was called a 2-F rating, which is--no, I was given a 1-Y; 2-F is a student deferment. I was given a 1-Y, which is a medical deferment because of my ulcer. So I couldn't be in ROTC, and didn't face being drafted, either. I was out of it. But that was one thing that had a tremendous impact on students at that time.

The civil rights movement was the other great thing that was having an impact upon the students at that time--not enough of an impact on our campus, I might say, in my judgment at that time. My interest in the civil rights movement stemmed from the fact that I read people such as W.E.B. Dubois and Marcus Garvey and other people when I was a kid, and kept up with the civil rights movement as much I could through the media, even though I was so far removed from it geographically.

And that didn't change when I went to CC, and I became very embittered by attitudes of people at the campus, and in Colorado Springs generally, about the fact that since it was all happening so far away, it wasn't something that we really needed to be all that concerned about. In my sophomore year, I left the campus around the time of spring break, such that I was gone over spring break, a little before spring break, over spring break, and after spring break. I went down and participated in the civil rights movement. I marched in Selma; I participated in voting rights campaigns in Mississippi and in Kentucky.

While I was down there, my ulcers hemorrhaged massively, and I found out very graphically how bad it was to be a black person, and to be very, very ill in Alabama. I couldn't go into a white hospital, and they had to put me on a plane and fly me to Louisville, Kentucky, where I had an aunt, and they put me in the hospital there. The doctors

said I almost bled to death internally from the ulcers, just from the hassles of not being able to be admitted to a hospital in Alabama.

At any rate, there was a civil rights march in Colorado Springs during that time. That would have been back in about 1965, at which time a group of liberal people on the campus--students and faculty--marched to the old City Hall and demonstrated. And there were speeches concerning the need to grant people their freedom, and everyone sang, "We Shall Overcome," which was really kind of the theme song of all that was happening at that time among people who truly had an interest in civil rights.

I remember participating in that, and being heartened by the fact that there was concern being expressed, and yet being disheartened also, because I knew that people would go away from that civil rights march in Colorado Springs, Colorado and feel that now they had done all that they were supposed to do, and they could now brag that they had participated in a civil rights march, that they had expressed their commitment to the cause, and could now--as we all did--go to Giuseppe's and drink beer and congratulate ourselves.

That whole era was a time of great dichotomy, of people having a commitment and expressing it, but at the same time, not really acting on the commitment.

INTERVIEWER:

Would you say that that's the same situation as, I believe in your sophomore year, when the little girls were killed in the church bombing in Birmingham, and then that resulted in a big reaction from the school paper and all?

JONES:

Well, it was, because decent people everywhere were, and ought to have been, outraged by that, and there were a lot of decent people at CC, and they were outraged, and they expressed their outrage. But the expression of that outrage did not take account of the fact that there were problems in Colorado Springs that ought to have been taken care of. There were places in Colorado Springs, even in the sixties, that were segregated, and that would look with disfavor on blacks.

I remember I dated a girl, a white girl from Palo Alto, California, named Laurie, and she and I were thrown out of several clubs, because they didn't allow mixed couples. And that was in the mid-sixties in Colorado Springs. The outrage was properly being expressed, but people were not moved to action. That was the difficulty, and how to move them to action.

When I was a freshman, there was a barber shop on Tejon, across Cache la Poudre from the campus. I went there

one day and sat for about two hours while they took people who came in after me, and gave them haircuts. Finally, the guy talked to me and said, "Listen, we don't cut black people's hair," and I was outraged. But then, typical of the liberal approach, he dug in his pocket and pulled out money and said, "Listen, I want to pay you for your haircut elsewhere." That was the response; that was the dichotomy, to recognize the problem, but then try to send the problem out elsewhere.

Harris Sherman at that time was the student body president--now a brilliant young lawyer, and former executive director of Natural Resources for the State of Colorado. He and some other people tried to get the Colorado Civil Rights Commission involved, but nothing was done. So, in my frustration, I threw a brick through the window of the place. Nothing still got done, but I swore there was going to be some action that took place. I don't recommend that people throw bricks through windows, but there are times when you just have to not only talk about commitments, but act on your commitment.

And that was what I found lacking in Colorado Springs and at Colorado College. There were a number of things that needed to be done in our city that didn't get done, and problems that people chose not to see. It was truly a problem at that time.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. You spent four years there, and we want to know what academic changes did you notice in the four years you were there?

JONES:

I don't think I observed any academic changes of any great moment. The college was very demanding at that time, and remained demanding during the entire four-year period that I was there. At that time we had the conventional or traditional academic approach. We were on the semester system. We began in August of the year, and completed the first semester in its entirety before Christmas. We then had a full month of vacation over Christmas and New Year's, and then began in late January, our second semester, and completed that semester in May. During each semester, you would be taking from five to six courses, and also at that time, you took courses on Saturdays, which seriously impeded my social life on Friday night, I might say. We will never know the damage that was done to generations of students' Friday night activities by virtue of Saturday morning classes! [laughter]

INTERVIEWER:
[laughter]

JONES:

I might say that I guess one signal thing that happened while I was there was that Saturday classes were dropped during that four-year period! [laughter] And people were turning back flips because of that.

It was a very demanding place, very challenging. President Worner had become the president in 1963, as my class came in, and that signalled--and this is not to denigrate in any way any previous administration--but that signalled a strong push academically to strengthen Colorado College. And I believe that in the early sixties, moving toward the seventies, that Colorado College may have experienced its strongest growth academically. I think, in other words, that it was a growing process at that time, reaching a plateau that was a very high plateau thereafter. The college was very, very demanding at that time.

I might say, too, that it was a more ascetic place. Not that we were hermits, but sometimes you did think that you were living in caves, especially if you hear women describe it, because at that time, women had hours, 10:00 on weeknights, midnight on Fridays and I think 2:00 on Saturdays, as a result of which you spent a lot of time studying, because after a certain time, you couldn't get to the ladies any more and the ladies couldn't get to you! [laughter]

INTERVIEWER:

[laughter]

JONES:

So it was very conducive, so to speak, to hermitage! I'm not saying that we didn't have fun, but there was certainly a sense of academia pervading the place. And it had only been shortly before I came to CC that they cut out mandatory chapel attendance, for instance. All of those things, which we may see as archaic and rather interesting now, were things that probably nevertheless contributed to a strong academic tradition, in that you were studying, and there wasn't a whole lot else to do at the time. Not as many students had cars; there weren't as many places to go anyway, if you had a car. So it just kind of became and remained a strong academic place.

The faculty, I might say, was rebuilding at that time, and had some young new faculty members who were very, very dedicated, and very, very committed to their fields of study.

So all of that together was making and developing a stronger academic tradition on a growing basis through the four years I was there.

INTERVIEWER:

Let me ask you, back to what we were talking about before. How did the faculty, were they as non-active in civil rights all of this time, and also, did you encounter the problems in the fraternity with social rules [can't understand] Did you encounter that when you were there [can't understand].

JONES:

Well, let me say first, with respect to the faculty that insofar as I was aware, the faculty tended to be liberal, and tended to be concerned and committed with respect to things such as civil rights, but they were not action-oriented. Many academics tend not to be. Their role in the ivory tower may be said to preclude the kind of concern that leads them to action. So yeah, they were typical of the college writ large in the sense of a strong commitment but very little active expression of that commitment.

But I'll say this; the faculty was out in front of the student body. The student body tended to reflect the attitudes of its parents. Its parents were rich, socially of high class, and politically, tended to be conservative, and the students as a rule reflected that. To say nothing of the fact that most of the student body was there to have fun. They were bright people, but they really didn't come to Colorado College to solve any world problems, and they let you know that. That wasn't their role, and besides, it got in the way of having fun. And I'm not criticizing the people there; that's just the way that they were. That was the programming that they had been used to, and they were doing nothing more nor less than expressing very well what it was they thought their role was.

So the faculty was out in front of the student body, I might say. The administration was tolerant. The administration never did anything which could be thought of or calculated to damage the reputation or the image of the college as a great academic institution, but really didn't discourage people, either. President Worner, in particular, was very good about remaining neutral in the sense that while you weren't necessarily encouraged, you weren't discouraged, either. It was just kind of a neutral, benign approach that if you have something to express, express it, but don't hurt anyone, and of course, the tradition of Colorado College put a great deal of emphasis on an intelligent, academic approach to things.

Now, with respect to the Greek life, I know that some of the fraternities, at least, at the time I was in Colorado

College, had policies in place that restricted their ability to pledge and recruit blacks and other minorities. For that reason, I was very surprised when the Betas expressed interest in me. In fact, I was so surprised that probably the surprise and the shock value of the expression of their interest pulled me to them as much as anything else.

There was a policy at that time that in the first semester, there was no contact between freshmen and Greeks. Rush officially occurred at the beginning of the second semester, and until that time, unless you had a class with a Greek, or were involved in an athletic competition or enterprise, or in some other legitimate way came in touch with them, you just could not be around fraternity men. As a result of which, I really didn't know much about the houses; I assumed without knowing that they were discriminatory in their policies. I had no qualms about not being in the Greeks because I knew that I couldn't be.

And then to my surprise, I was invited one evening, late in the first semester, was invited to a party by a young lady, which I was only too happy to go to, and it turned out to be what was called then a dirty rush party. Toward the end of the first semester, the fraternities would dirty rush freshmen who they were expressing an interest in, getting them ready for rush in the second semester. The party, to my surprise, turned out to be a dirty rush party, and the Betas were really expressing interest in me.

It really took me by surprise, and I decided to examine it further, and found out I liked some of the people there, and didn't really mind the Greek system so much, because they did speak in terms of fraternity and brotherhood and all of that. And so I allowed myself to be swept along and joined the Beta house.

But it was a well understood, although unsaid thing that at least three of the houses on the campus would not rush black people, because of discriminatory policies in the local houses and at the national level. It was during the time that I was at CC that the Sigma Chi house at, I believe Stanford, was thrown out of the national fraternity for rushing a black guy from Denver, and for pledging him. And I think that had a chilling effect on some of the other houses, which might have expressed an interest in black students if they hadn't had that kind of unspoken policy coming out of their national fraternities.

INTERVIEWER:

How did you feel becoming the president of Beta house?

JONES:

It's funny, because I was probably the most non-Greek Greek around the place. I probably didn't need the fraternity for the same reasons that many other people did. Socially, I was fairly well adjusted. I joined the house, basically, so that I could get a decent social life, and remove some of the frustrations that any human being feels from being left out of things.

But in terms of needing people to talk to, or needing to be around people, I didn't need the fraternity for that reason. I had friends all over the campus and in the faculty, and even in the administration. I felt welcome at least in most places on the campus. I had more friends, even when I became a Beta, outside of the Beta house, and outside of the Greek system, than I did inside. I think it all reflected the fact that my reason for needing a fraternity house was very specific and limited, and in that regard it operated well on my behalf, until those times that our house was put on social probation--

INTERVIEWER:

[laughter]

JONES:

--which happened quite frequently in my four years there, whereupon the fraternity was almost of no good use to me. [laughter]

INTERVIEWER:

[laughter]

JONES:

And without really criticizing the Beta house or the Greek system, there are people who need the concept of fraternity. they need a group of people who are all committed to a singular ideal, which is expressed in a few words written in Greek and so forth, and tied together with some mysticism and ceremony. There ought to be something for people who need that, and I think even there, I recognized that there were people who needed that, and that therefore the Greek system was important in order to provide that for them.

The fact that I became the president of the Beta house, and probably the first black president of a Beta chapter in the country, in the history of the fraternity, I think spoke to what was really happening there. I was a popular person; I was strong academically and athletically; and I guess the people just did what they tend to do when they encounter someone like that--they reward them with leadership

positions. So I became the president of the Beta house, I think, because I was just the kind of person who ought to be elected president of something.

At that time, I was also the student body president [s/b vice-president?] at Colorado College, so it was just another office that I held. To me, it wasn't all that big a thing, but in a way it was nice. For one thing, the president's dues were paid, and he got a little stipend on the side, and I would do anything to make money, even be elected president of the fraternity house. [laughter]

INTERVIEWER:

[laughter]

JONES:

But additionally, it was a leadership position, and most people that age, especially when they display leadership, appreciate the recognition of that trait by their peers in being elected to something. I must say I enjoyed my years in the Beta house; there were some good people there. I developed some friendships in that house that I wouldn't have developed otherwise, number one, and number two, that have persevered over the years.

But I don't in any regard fool myself into thinking that those are the only friendships I ever would have had at CC. That isn't true, and that isn't why I needed the Beta house, and I wouldn't have served the Beta house very well if that had been true. It would have been a symbiotic relationship, and I don't like symbiotic relationships. It was something much stronger than that, really.

INTERVIEWER:

You mentioned you were student body president.

JONES:

Well, vice-president.

INTERVIEWER:

Vice-president. Why don't you relate some of what happened the year that it was disbanded and you did work on the committee, also, to form the new constitution, didn't you?

JONES:

I did. Yes, I did. It's difficult for me not to have a touch of bitterness in my voice, because I would like to have seen if I could have been elected student body president. My junior year I was the vice-president of the student body, and it stood to reason that unless I became more offensive than maybe some people already found me, that I might be elected student body president. And that was a leadership position that I would have enjoyed. It would have helped me a lot, and I think it would have helped the student

body and the campus.

But we had an interesting student body president the year of 1965-66, my junior year, whose main platform agenda was to disband the student government, on the theory that no student government would be better than a student government that was struggling to provide services to the students. He and I disagreed bitterly about that, had some very strong disputes on that and other issues. But he prevailed, and the student body voted the student government out of existence, which meant that my senior year, there was a vacuum.

There was no legitimate way, really, to express student leadership. The Associated Women Students did a pretty good job with the women, but among the men, there was really a vacuum, and I think we all suffered from it. For one thing, some legitimate student activities were denied monetary resources to carry out their programs because of it, or else were denied the proper level of resources because there really wasn't machinery to examine just what they ought to receive. And that was true generally, I believe, in other aspects of academic and social and campus life.

So I wasn't very happy about that, and I readily admit that some of my unhappiness is personal and selfish. I had a lot to gain from there continuing to be a student government, and I think that I was hurt from there not being a student government. But I also think students as a rule were hurt from it.

I did participate in a movement to organize a new form of student government, but I have to admit to a certain kind of less than heartfelt approach. At that time, I was studying and was reflecting on revolution, and it seemed to me that first of all, the moves that the student body had made was somewhat revolutionary and nihilistic. And as often happens, whether you're in Cuba or France or England or in the United States or wherever, reaction and backlash sets in to revolution, and very often the leaders of the revolution are the first to be eliminated by those who survive the revolution and go on to convey the revolution.

And I thought that that was happening. I thought it very strange that the student body that had, with such glee, voted student government out of existence, should now be sitting down to write a new constitution. Certainly the history of the United States didn't prepare us for that kind of thing. When we wrote a constitution, we had a viable form of government that was in place until the new constitution came into being.

And all along, I had been claiming before the disbanding of the student government, that it was possible to

formulate a student government and an approach to student government that would be effective without destroying the concept and having to start from ground zero.

So I admit that at that time, I wasn't probably the strongest element in putting together a new constitution. I saw all of it of being part of the larger nihilistic movement in which destruction becomes the proper end in itself.

INTERVIEWER:

What were some of the things in particular that they felt was wrong with the student government at the time--the Associated Student Committee [can't understand]

JONES:

Well, I'm hard pressed now to articulately repeat their arguments, because I didn't think the arguments were very articulate at the time they were being made. You have to remember that that was an age of excitement on the campus, excitement in our society generally, of rebellion, of discontent--massive student discontent--but discontent generally, a time of war, and I think that in our own small way, and in our own pathetic way, when you consider the great issues that needed to be considered by students at that time, and young adults and adults at that time, and by the academic community, that we were talking about disbanding student government at Colorado College instead of talking about how can we bring our leaders to their senses, who are sending people like us off to die in Vietnam, or who are denying black people their rights in the South and around the country, including Colorado Springs.

And that was partly my approach to it. This is not, I was saying, one of the things we need to be wasting our time in. Forget the food in Rastall Center; forget the publications thing. We have some things that we really need to be involved expressing our concerns with regard to.

It was an issue that was typical of the kind of people who were there at the time, people whose concerns--maybe I'll put it this way: people who could afford to be concerned about those kinds of thing, because they might not be likely to fight the war, anyway, because they were in college instead of being where they might be drafted and sent off to the war. Because they were rich as a rule anyway, and these were the kinds of issues that could excite rich, upperclass students at Colorado College, and therefore we could spend a year worrying about putting together a new constitution while people like us were dying, and younger than us, were dying in Vietnam.

Well, those were my concerns. I think, for the kind of people who are making the arguments, the concerns there were legitimate. There wasn't very good food in Rastall Center.
[laughter]

INTERVIEWER:

[laughter]

JONES:

You couldn't have off-campus apartments at that time; it was a strictly residential college. There were some editorial policies with respect to student publications that perhaps did not take account of the First Amendment, and student government, they felt, was not properly addressing that.

There were other kinds of issues: the fact that students did not participate in curriculum development along with the faculty. The students had no voice in committees at all. As I say, for the kind of people who were expressing those as issues, those were great issues. I'm sorry that at the time, the really important issues of the day, and of the universe, weren't exciting students as much.

But as I analyze it, and as I analyze the sociology of it, it would be improper, if not unrealistic, to suppose that the greater issues of the day were the kind of things that those students desired to reflect on. That wasn't what they were interested in. The world could go to hell, and they were having fun at Colorado College. It was fun to be nihilistic for a day or a year, or four years.

And so I can't really put their argument, but I can express to you, you know, the concerns I had, and why I felt it was all a waste of time. You know, in all of it, of course, there runs my own self-interest in this.

But I think those people who knew me then, and who know me now know that while I may have been self-interested, and because I would like to have been student body president, for instance, that my concerns legitimately were for student leadership and for the expression of what students could do at Colorado College to meet some larger problems, not just problems at the college, but larger problems as well.

And that was the direction I wanted to take the campus in if I could get to that position of leadership. It wasn't a question of just wanting to be the president for the sake of being the president. It didn't pay any money, and therefore--[laughter]

INTERVIEWER:
[laughter]

JONES:

[can't understand] I don't want you to think that I was all that money-oriented, but the problem was I was a poor kid at Colorado College, and I needed money, and I had to look at anything that paid! [laughter]

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. I wanted to know what influence did your student years have on your life today?

JONES:

Well, I think they had some important levels of impact. I realized, for instance, from the reflections I did while I was at CC and after Colorado College, that for me it was not healthy to be always in a living situation apart from my own culture. And that's important to me today.

I think that all of us--whoever we are, or whatever we are--need to have a core to our culture, something that reminds us of from where we come. And I think that we operate better in the entire melting pot when we have a healthy view of our own culture. CC didn't have that. How could I blame the college for not having that? There were six black students when I went there. By the time I was a senior, there were perhaps 12 black students, including maybe four women. It would be unrealistic to require, under those circumstances, that CC could give a young black student a sense of that student's culture. But I understand that now, that I need that, and I must have it, that whatever situation I'm in, there has to be a connection to my culture.

But in a different sphere, a very important impact that CC had on me was showing me that I was an intelligent, good person, that I was really good, and that I was okay. That I could handle academic situations and other challenging situations, and handle them as well as anyone else could.

And that came as a surprise to me, the kind of surprise number one, that many young black people were experiencing in the early sixties, that kind of terrible lack of confidence, that you have to deal with, somehow I have to chip away on. And secondly, the question of gaining confidence in myself. And aside from the first one I made, about the sense of what I could accomplish for myself, this kind of notion that I could make it, it's different from the first one. But I'll have to let that go for a moment and come back to it.

The people that I met at CC, both faculty and students, were very important to me. Being from Pueblo, I had not met the kind of people who I met and befriended at Colorado College. Now, the people at CC did not necessarily become my

kind of people, but in order to have the full experience of life, in order to be able to examine my own life fully, I needed to have a connection with those kind of people--upperclass people, wealthy people, people who weren't necessarily struggling in life, not just academically, but economically or in any other way. People who really, really, did not have to struggle, which was something that I was just not used to.

Even people in Pueblo who were fairly well-to-do were still impacted on, for instance, by a strike at the steel mill, and had to struggle to some extent. All of us were going to the same school. The concept of a private school in Pueblo was laughable. We were all kind of struggling to get through on all of the levels. And to meet people who had no concern about struggle, who really didn't have a concept of struggle in the active sense, was a new thing for me, and a valuable thing for me. It taught me the necessity of struggle, taught me why I was going to have to always struggle, regardless of how good things got, that I could never lose sight of the value of struggling. And I haven't lost sight of it.

In a sense, it's a reverse approach, that by going to a school that shows you how good things are, you learn the value of recognizing how bad things are. And I'm committed to the notion that I want to always be moving upward socially and economically and culturally and in other ways, but that I will never lose sight of how bad things can be. And I don't think I have, and I don't think I will.

But also to encounter intelligent people, truly intelligent people, people who are guided, not just by the academic, but by a truly intellectual approach to things. The what could be called a high-brow approach was good for me. I was a fairly intelligent kid growing up in an environment, not at home, because certainly I may have been a lightweight compared to members of my family, but certainly my general environment, where an intellectual approach and intellectualism were not necessarily strong points. You might have to, you know, kick someone's ass because they thought you were a sissy for being so intelligent, and so you did. You had to be intelligent and capable of kicking someone's ass--I hope I can say that on the tape! [laughter]

And so you did; you became that; you became strong intellectually, and you became strong physically, and I still do that, and want to be able to do that. But it was nice to be in an atmosphere where you could let the intellectual predominate for a minute. It was just wonderful, and I

developed under that, I really did. The physical side didn't suffer, and the intellectual side blossomed. It was a great thing, and continues to be one of the things for which I am thankful to Colorado College, that there my intellect could blossom. And at the same time, the other, more down-to-earth sides of me didn't have to suffer. Because you can still be somewhat down-to-earth.

So there are some things that I still do cherish, to say nothing of the friendships generally with students who were there at the time I was, and with faculty people. I consider Lloyd Worner to be a good friend, you know, not because we go drinking together, because we never have, and we won't, but because he just had a good influence on me. We talk, we still talk; we were friends. He's the kind of person who I think I'll always be a friend to, and have as a friend. And that's a tremendous thing to be able to reflect on, that as long as we live, we're going to be able to talk and communicate. Those are some valuable things, I think, to carry away from the place.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. At another point, you have taught at CC; you've taught at other places, too, and I wanted to know what your philosophy of teaching is.

JONES:

It's terrible, because I know as a judge I have developed philosophies of justice, philosophies of politeness, philosophies of due process and equal protection, philosophies of, let's say, what is the proper way to elucidate the constitutional aspects of a value that's important to us, and to us in our society. But as to teaching, I don't know if I've developed a philosophy. If I do it badly, I'm going to blame it on that, but if I do it well, I'm going to let that take the credit for it.
[laughter]

I guess I haven't really developed a philosophy about teaching, except to the extent that I develop philosophies of life, and philosophies of approach generally. First of all, that when you walk in the classroom, you do not leave life outside the classroom. Life comes right in with you, and the world, and the universe, are in there with you. And I don't care if you're teaching physics, biology, human sexuality or political science, you better let your students know what the life aspects of it are. And I have tried to do that in everything I've ever taught.

Furthermore, I think it's important when you're teaching to develop a form of communication that, aside from

the fact that it ought to be understood by people, because that's how you convey learning, but that it ought to be accessible in the sense that people will grasp it. People will be challenged by it, and will want to learn. You don't take candy and flowers into the classroom with you, but you take some approach in with them that says, "This guy makes me curious, and I want to learn from him."

I have seen some beautiful teachers whose students couldn't learn from them, because while the teachers had a solid grasp of the subject matter, and were beautiful people, they didn't know how to reach into someone's mind and manipulate, and make this person be curious. And I contend that we are beyond the rote approach, that you write "1 plus 1 is 2" a hundred times, and then you know it. I contend that we now, our approaches, our successful approaches are those which incite curiosity and imagination.

And that's what I'm talking about when I talk about a communication--not just talking to people, but making them want to do back flips! And I try to do that in my teaching. It goes without saying that the better teachers will be those in my judgment who do have a solid grasp of their subject matter, and believe in what they're teaching--not a belief in the sense that all other beliefs are precluded.

I would want a religious person in the 1920s to be able to teach Darwin, not because they believe in Darwinism, not because there's something about their religion that blocks it, but just because it's something that people need to learn, because someone, some human being, somewhere in the human experience, observed it, or devised it, or equated it, and that therefore it's something that we ought to think about and reflect on, even if we can't accept it. That's the sense in which I mean that you ought to have a belief in what you're teaching.

You don't have to be a Marxist to help people understand that there's something important Marx, and something important about knowing that the man existed and that he's had an impact on the 20th century like no one else. You know, I daresay that most of the young human beings in America who have died in this century died over something having to do with Marx, either because we felt we were fighting communism, or we thought we were trying to save the world from it, or we were trying to establish something that would preclude it from coming in being. So it's important.

That's the mistake that the McCarthyites were making, not recognizing that the value of Marx was not that you believe in it, or that you espouse it, but that you need to

help people to understand it, and understand why it came about at the time it did.

So those are some thought I have on education. I don't think I'm a great, or even good educator, but I know that I like to excite people, and make people curious, and manipulate their minds in a learning sense, in a sense that something clicks and they say, "Gee! I want to know more!" And I think that that's a good way to approach teaching.

INTERVIEWER:

That's what you did in your last class!

JONES:

Oh, thank you.

INTERVIEWER:

Is there anything else that you want to add that we didn't ask you?

JONES:

No, not really. You know, there are so many experiences that I've had, driving up to the top of Pikes Peak and seeing who could drink the most beer--[laughter]--collapsing after two steps! [laughter]

INTERVIEWER:

[laughter]

JONES:

I had some wonderful experiences in athletics. I played football three of my four years there. My junior year, I had to stay out of football because the ulcer problems were so bad. I thought for me it was a tremendous accomplishment to have been selected as the most valuable player my senior year. That related in my judgment to something other than just the pure athletic symbol that many people may see it as.

I thought that related to--that was a recognition of an approach that I took to athletics which I thought was successful at CC. It related to leadership, and it related to intellect, because my feeling is that the people who succeed best at Colorado College in athletics are not just simply jocks; they are intelligent people who are strong in leadership characteristics, and tend to have strong approaches to every other thing that they do. I'm not saying that I, or I'm not trying to overly intellectualize the game as I played it, but I know that my approach was something other than just purely physical. It was an intellectual aspect that was very important, even while playing the game,

that I think helped me to be a more successful player.

I enjoyed athletics. It was all the more fun because athletics had been de-emphasized, and there were no scholarships, and you played because you wanted to play. We took some tremendous beatings, and we won some tremendous games. The game of my career, or the last game of my senior years, we beat, I believe it was Graceland in Kansas, something like 52 to nothing. I think I scored a couple of touchdowns, at least two, and it was a wonderful feeling. It was a great way to end it. We had absorbed some beating that matched those. I certainly didn't feel bad beating someone so badly. It was a really healthy part of the college career--it really was.

And there are other things, too; the characters around there. But I think the thing to leave it with is this, then. I regard Colorado College as a great college, a great institution of learning, and I appreciate its commitment to the liberal arts. We're in an age of specialization, and my view is that you have to have courage now to want to so to speak, learn the liberal arts, and to want to be a purveyor of the liberal arts, because all around you, people will be going by you with their specializations.

But to me, there is something very important about a broad knowledge of the sciences and the humanities. I hope that our world never becomes so complex in facts that there isn't time to reflect on the kinds of things that are conveyed to you through the liberal arts. I hope that none of us become so specialized that we can't appreciate good music or good art, or a fine rendering of history, or some good literature, whether fictional or non-fictional, or a new approach to science.

And I think that that's what Colorado College tries to help students with, and I see it as very valuable for that reason. I hope CC will not grow faint in its approach to the liberal arts, and I hope that there will always be intelligent, good people who will put demands on Colorado College to teach them the liberal arts, because even if they want to become professional, they'll take some time later to do that, but right now, they want to know about the universe--all of the corners of the universe.

And I did, when I was there, and it gave me some good insights into those things, and I hope others will feel that same way, will put those demands on the college, and that the college will serve them in that way.

I can't say that CC was the happiest period in my life;

it really wasn't. There were a lot of unhappy thoughts and experiences associated with CC, but on the other hand, some of the most rewarding things that have happened in my life up to now occurred during my four years at CC.

And in that sense, I guess you could say that it was a typical human experience combining both the best and the worst, but always there being a sense of me growing, developing, becoming better, and realizing better all of my talents. In that sense, again I say, I have a lot to be grateful to CC for. And I will say that I still owe CC a lot of money on my educational debt, even these 13 years later!
[laughter]

INTERVIEWER:

[laughter]

JONES:

So for at least a while, CC doesn't want to get rid of me, because I still owe them some money! [laughter] But it was a great college, and it remains a great college. I hope it lives forever!

INTERVIEWER:

Thank you.

THE END