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Polk County Courthouse
Bartow, Florida

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MR. BENNETT: We want to get started with our program. Good afternoon.

On behalf of the Virgil Hawkins Bar Association and the Tenth Judicial Circuit History Committee we want to thank everyone for coming out for this wonderful and exciting program.

My name is Harold Bennett and I am the President of the Polk County Chapter of the Virgil Hawkins Bar Association. And at this time we are going to start our program. And we're going to have our Chief Judge of the Tenth Judicial Circuit, Judge David Langford, to come and give us our welcome and opening remarks.

JUDGE LANGFORD: Well, good morning everyone.
AUDIENCE: Good morning.
JUDGE LANGFORD: And welcome to this
presentation by our Tenth Circuit History Committee. And on behalf of the Judges and staff of the Tenth Circuit I bid you welcome.

I also would like to thank the History Committee for providing these opportunities that we have to come down and learn about the history of our Circuit. I'd like to especially thank the Virgil Hawkins Bar Association for providing the program today and the wonderful lunch that we have back in
the back.
I was also asked to introduce the Judges that are here. And we have quite a number of our members -- of our colleagues -- that are here.

Beginning over here on the first row, Judge Mary Catherine Green. Judge Bobby Williams. Judge John Kirkland. Judge Harvey Kornstein is seated there in the second row. Judge Bruce Smith a little further back there to the left. Our Court Administrator Nick Sudzina is seated in the back back there. On the right-hand side of the room here we have Judge Rob Griffin down here towards the front. Judge John Radabaugh I saw right here.

Judge Susan Roberts is here. Judge Charles Curry is here. Judge Don Jacobsen is here. And I believe that's all of my coll -- oh, Judge Dennis Maloney is here also. And I believe that's all of my colleagues. If I've overlooked any of you I'm going to apologize right now.

But on behalf of the Judges of the Tenth Circuit I bid you welcome. I thank the Virgil Hawkins Bar Association for providing this wonderful opportunity to learn more about our history in this Circuit.

And without further ado I'll turn it back over
to the President of the Association. Thank you very much.

MR. BENNETT: I would like to thank Judge Langford for taking time out of his busy schedule to join us today.

The theme of our program today is "AfricanAmerican Attorneys in the Tenth Judicial Circuit Looking to the Past to Guide Us in the Future".

Martin Luther King, Jr., said: "Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable ... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concerns of dedicated individuals."

Today we pause to recognize the progress and success of African-American attorneys in the Tenth Judicial Circuit. Today our panel we are in the presence of living history; men and women who have been trail blazers and helped pave the way for legal opportunities for African-Americans in this Circuit. It is an opportunity for us to share and learn from their experiences as we strive to create a more diverse legal community.

As my father once told me, the best guide you can have is someone who has already traveled the rugged terrain you seek to follow. So as we look

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back today at the accomplishments, trials, and successes, it is our sincere desire that the wisdom that our appellants imparts upon us will help guide us for a better tomorrow.

At this time we'll have the introduction of our guest panelists by Judge Karla Foreman-Wright, the Tenth Judicial Circuit's first African-American Circuit Court Judge.

JUDGE WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Bennett. Good afternoon everyone.

It's my honor to introduce to you some of the Tenth Judicial Circuit Civil Rights Leaders, lawyers, and barrier busters. They are accomplished men, and we have a woman, who represents what is great about our profession and our calling.

I want to thank the Tenth Judicial Circuit Historical Committee and Judge Mary Catherine Green for giving us this opportunity to memorialize the accomplishments of these outstanding legal leaders.

First we -- and I -- I toyed with who should I go. Should I go by age, go by -- how -- who should go first. So I elected to start with beauty.

Ms. Casandra Denmark is a University of South Florida graduate in criminology. She attended the Thomas Cooley Law School in Lansing, Michigan, and
graduated cum laude.
She's the Director of Legal Affairs for the Polk County Sheriff's Office and has been so since 2005. She was the first African-American hired in the legal department at the Sheriff's Office.

So she is the First General Counsel for the Polk County Sheriff. And as you can well imagine, those of you familiar with the Polk County Sheriff's Office, she's a very busy woman.

Attorney Denmark, in addition to her busy practice challenges with P.C.S.O., is a Trustee with the Lake Wales Charter Schools. Bartow Rotary. She's an officer of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. And she's also on the Judicial Nominating Commission for the Tenth Judicial Circuit. So those of you who have those inspirations you can come and suck up after we get done here.

We have Mr. Walter Kelly. He is a 1968 graduate of Florida A\&M University. And he graduated -- completed the U.S.A. JAG School as a legal clerk between the years 1969 and '71. He earned his juris doctorate from Florida State University College of Law in 1973.

Mr. Kelly, well-informed or otherwise, came to Polk County in 1973 and joined the Public Defender's

Office as the first African-American hired in the Public Defender's office for the Tenth Judicial Circuit.

He thereafter went to the Attorney General's Office for a two-year stint with them and then went on to the Florida Department of Transportation. And that's where our paths crossed. Mr. Kelly was one of my legal chiefs and supervisors at the Florida Department of Transportation.

He was there from 1979 until $2008 \ldots$ thirty years. And he was the Chief of Inverse Condemnation.

And for those of you who have some inkling of law understand that inverse condemnation is a very highly specialized area, very challenging. He's had many, many, many multimillion dollar inverse condemnation cases that he has handled for the Department. And $I$ understand he had a full head of hair when he went there. And so it -- he's definitely paid the price.

The Florida Bar has him listed as a Retired Government Attorney. And I told him that sounded like a large butt activity. But he has assured me that he's recently joined as an Associate with the Nelson Law Firm in Tallahassee, Florida, and he's
doing eminent domain for that firm.
We have the Honorable Timothy Coon. Judge Coon's a native of Lynn Haven, Florida. That's in the Panhandle for those of you who are not familiar with little places throughout the -- sprinkling throughout Florida.

He obtained a BA degree from the University of South Florida in 1975. Juris doctorate, Florida State University, College of Law, in 1978, after he completed three and a half years of active duty with the United States Air Force Vietnam era.

Judge Coon launched his legal career as an Assistant State Attorney in 1978. He thereafter returned to active duty at -- in the Air Force -where he served as a Captain in the Office of Judge Advocate General. Judge Coon retired from the United States Air Force Reserves with 23 years of active and reserve duty.

Judge Coon is a -- is Polk County's first African-American Judge appointed by Governor Lawton Chiles in 1995. He's been returned to the bench three times unopposed. He now sits at the Northeast Branch Courthouse presiding over all civil and criminal cases. He's my colleague and my friend.

Kenneth Glover is a native of Plant City,

Florida. He received his $B A$ and law degree from Southern University. He was a United States Air Force Staff Sergeant during the Vietnam era.

Mr. Glover has been practicing -- has been a practicing trial attorney for 32 years, practicing in the area of personal injury, wrongful death, probate, and family law.

Mr. Glover is a founding member and Past President of the Virgil Hawkins Bar Association, Incorporated, the George E. Edgecomb Bar Association of Hillsborough County. He's Past President of the Lakeland Branch of the N.A.A.C.P.

Mr. Glover is a tireless advocate for the less fortunate and a generous supporter of our Bar Association. Mr. Glover has been that man out on the point for many controversial challenges, to racial discrim -- racially discriminatory practices in this community.

He also hosts the best parties. Don't ever turn down an invitation from him.

Seated over to my right is Delano Smart Stewart. He is a graduate of Morehouse College for Men 1961. Howard University Law School 1964. He's been a member of the Florida Bar is it 44 years?

MR. STEWART: Be 45 in June.

JUDGE WRIGHT: 45 in June. Okay. I assume you'll make that. And ... I can do that.

He's a -- he was a member of the United States Air Force from 1956 to 1959.

Delano Stewart is a judge maker. Fate has directed the elevation of six of his law partners and associates to the bench. Now I don't know if that makes him guilty of stacking the bench.

But he was instrumental in the appointment of Frank White, Clearwater Circuit Judge Frank White, Clearwater. Judge James Sanderland, the first African-American seated on the Second District Court of Appeals. He's deceased. George E. Edgecomb, the first African-American appointed to the Tenth -excuse me. Thirteenth Judicial Circuit. Deceased.

And Judge Perry A. Little, Thirteenth Judicial
Circuit, retired. Myself, the Tenth Judicial Circuit's first African-American Judge. And most recently Ms. Lisa Campbell, elected to the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, Circuit Court.

He was the founder of the first integrated law office in the City of Tampa. He has a wall full of plaques, awards, accolades, for his tireless service to the community. And he told me that he's going to take all those to the bank and see if he can convert
them to cash.
Delano Smart Stewart is not a trial lawyer. He is a trial warrior. He's a lawyer's lawyer. He's a leader. And he is my mentor.

I'm going to take special liberty here with the introduction of our last panelist, Mr. Warren Dawson. Because Mr. Dawson is a native of Polk County.

Mr. Dawson is a veteran trial lawyer whose principal office is located in Tampa. He was born in a company-owned house in an area known as Prairie on the outskirts of Mulberry, the phosphate capital of the world, which most of us know, right here in Polk County.

His early education was at the $R$-- JRE Lee School, which was a six-room schoolhouse in a racially segregated school in Mulberry that housed grades one through nine. Six rooms grades one through nine.

For high school he attended and graduated in 1957 from Union Academy High School in Bartow. On the Monday morning following his Friday evening graduation from Union Academy he went to work as a laborer in the phosphate mines, International Mine and Chemical, I.M.C. Locally known as I.M.C.

In his first day at I.M.C. he was given a brand new shovel that still had the paper seal on the blade. He and two other laborers were then showed a mound of phosphate the height, according to Mr . Dawson, of a two-story building and were told to shovel it back onto the conveyor belt.

From early June till mid August 1957 Dawson labored in the phosphate mine and wound up as a groundsman on a dragline. The dragline had the name Tilly Power.

This is how life began for a young man who within ten years of leaving the phosphate mine became the first African-American lawyer produced by the public school system of Polk County, Florida.

That shovel toting phosphate worker from Mulberry went on to be inducted into the Lawyer's Hall of Fame in 2007 by the National Bar Association during it's 87th annual meeting in Atlanta, Georgia. This honor cited his significant contributions to the cause of justice. I was there and it was a most moving occasion.

Mr. Dawson has practiced 42 years. Mr. Dawson was for 27 years lead counsel on America's most -one of America's largest school desegregation cases, Manning versus the School Board of Hillsborough

County, Florida. His 27 years of legal work in that particular case served to enhance and equalize public education opportunities for countless thousands of children black and white in Hillsborough County.

Early in his career as a trial lawyer Mr. Dawson successfully challenged a racially discriminatory Grand Jury selection process here in Polk County. The case was State of Florida versus Nathaniel Sanders. That challenge resulted in a new Grand Jury being impaneled and the appointment of the first African-American to ever serve as the foreperson of a Grand Jury in Polk County.

Mr. Dawson received his undergraduate degree from Florida A\&M University, his law degree from Howard University. Polk County's native son and Mulberry's poster child, Warren Hope Dawson.

MR. BENNETT: Thank you, Judge Wright, for that interesting bit of history on all of our panelists.

At this time we're ready for our panel
discussion. And our moderator for our discussion
today is Chrystal Martin. She's an attorney with the Saunders Law Group here in Bartow, Florida. And she is also -- she's also been elected to be a Representative for the Tenth Judicial Circuit of the

Florida Bar, Board of Governors, Young Lawyers Division.

So at this time Ms. Martin will come and she will lead our panel discussion.

MS. MARTIN: Thank you everyone. Thanks for coming.

Panelists, are you ready?
PANEL: Ready.
MS. MARTIN: We've heard so much about your experience and the years that you have dedicated to the legal profession. Now we're ready to hear what's actually in your head, what you can inform all of us in the Tenth Judicial Circuit here about your experiences.

First I'll start off with Mr. Kelly. Could you please discuss your experience as an AfricanAmerican attorney here in the Tenth Judicial Circuit when you first practiced here.

MR. KELLY: Um, it's -- it's really unique. Because when I graduated from law school in -- when I was scheduled to graduate from law school in December of 1973 I had no intention of even coming to Polk County. I knew a few people from Bartow. I don't even think they knew where Bartow was located.

But I -- I sent out a lot of letters with my
resumé applying for a job at various offices. And one of the first persons to respond was Mr. Jack Johnson, who was the Public Defender at the time. And he wrote me a letter back and he said would you come down and interview for a position as an Assistant Public Defender.

So at the time $I$ came down with my wife and two young daughters. And Mr. Johnson took me to the ... I -- I guess at the time would be the Polk County Golf Club. Took me to -- introduced me to most of the Judges in Polk County. To the State Attorney. And I still wasn't quite sold on Polk County. But then Mr. Johnson said so when do you graduate from law school? I said well, I graduate on December the 14th, 1973. He said if you start working on December the 14th, 1973, at the end of the month you'll get a half a check.

So my mind was made up then. Because I -- I -I was getting the $G$-I Bill. And once I graduated that was going to stop and cease. And I had two young daughters that $I$ needed to take care of.

So I -- I took the job. And so on December the 14th, 1973, instead of marching across the aisles of F.S.U. and accepting a form of degree I started working in Polk County.

The only thing that was probably significant in Polk County -- there was a lot of things significant in Polk County. But one thing I remember
significant in Polk County, besides trying to start working in Polk County in December, was the opening of McDonald's.

And I -- Mr. Johnson insisted I give an interview. And $I$-- and I didn't want to give an interview. I wanted to sort of keep a low profile because my whole life $I$ had tried to keep a low profile. And -- but he insist that $I$ give the interview.

And I immediately got in hot water because I said something about criminal attorneys not having a good reputation. And -- and -- and of course the paper took it out of context. So the first criminal defense meeting $I$ have to explain to the criminal lawyers exactly what $I$ meant. But...

MS. MARTIN: At the time were you aware that you were the first African-American Assistant Public Defender?

MR. KELIY: Well, at the time when I looked around there was no (Audience laughter). So -- so I -- I wasn't aware of whether $I$ was really making any -- any significant pathfinder. But as I looked
around it -- it finally dawned upon me I was the only black lawyer in Polk County.

Um, I -- I was -- it was a rewarding process.
Judge -- Judge Maloney was one of the Assistant Public Defenders. And I was fortunate that a couple of the guys at the office was Florida State Law graduates. And -- and I was included in everything. So we was like a real cohesive young group of lawyers.

And it never really, you know, you had the idea that I was the first black. That I was black. But I did not focus on being the first black. I just focused on trying to be a good attorney.

And I had the opportunity to practice in front of Judge Stokes, Judge Oliver Green, Judge Byron Hunt. And so it was interesting. I got -- they gave me the opportunity to learn how to try cases early on.

I was what you call a Circuit Rider. I would have to go to Haines City, Mulberry, and -- and other places because they had -- Article $V$ had made a lot of the City Courts was now the responsibility of the County. And so it -- it made it strange because in order to save money they decided that they would let the Judge, the Prosecutor, the Public

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Defender, and the Clerk travel in one large vehicle. So how can you imagine when you -- you're a -you're a defendant and you see everybody get out of the same car. (Audience laugher.)

MS. MARTIN: Now during those -- during those -- during those van rides did you have the opportunity to ride in the van with Mr. Ken -- with Mr. Ken Glover? Because $I$ know he was the first Assistant State Attorney.

MR. KELIY: Well, the -- it was interesting. Because after working about a year being the only black that was around. I think Glen Darty was the State Attorney. And he called me into his office and he showed me Ken's resumé. And he was saying read this resumé and tell me what do you think of hiring him.

And I -- and I looked at his resumé. And I said oh, $I$ think it would be great. Because at the time if he had got anybody it would have been great just to have (audience laughter) black then.

And having Ken there $I$ was -- it took some of the pressure off me, at least in the style of dress. Because Ken used to walk around with yellow suits on (audience laughter). So it immediately made me feel... (Audience laughter.)

But I -- I -- I had the opportunity to try some serious cases. I represented a group of one young man who was charged with raping the clerk of ... clerk of ... in Polk ... in Tampa.

I represented ... they had a group of criminals. I'm going to call them criminals. That's what they are. That was pillaging Polk County. Because I think they referred to them as the Ski Mask Gang. And I was in private practice at the time. And the system, as was at this time, the compensation.

Now I was appointed -- asked to by one of the Judges to represent one of those individuals. But the pay was only like $\$ 750$ per felony. And these guys was charged with some serious crimes. It took up a lot of time. And some of the Judges tried to help make up for it, because they know it was a supreme sacrifice, by assigning these other cases. We call them conflict cases. But, unfortunately, some of those conflict cases turned out to be very serious, too.

But overall $I$ have -- and $I$ tell everybody -- I have a very strong good feeling about the time I spent in Polk County. And the reason I left Polk County was -- because my whole intention probably
was to move back to the Atlanta area. My wife's mother was real ill. And the idea that $I$ was going to move back to Atlanta. But her illness took precedence. And so we moved back to Tallahassee with the idea I would eventually move back to Tallahassee. She died during that period. So we ended up staying in Tallahassee.

But certainly Polk County gave me a lot of good trial experience. And so $I$ feel very positive and very proud that $I$ am the first black Public Defender in Polk County.

MS. MARTIN: Now, thank you so much.

Ms. Denmark.

MS. DENMARK: Yes ma'am.

MS. MARTIN: It's my understanding that you may be the first African-American Director of Legal Affairs with the Polk County Sheriff's Office.

You came to Polk County and the Tenth Judicial Circuit after law school. Can you discuss your experience here in the Tenth Judicial Circuit.

MS. DENMARK: Well, $I$ can truly say that $I$ have had a great experience in the Tenth Circuit because we do have a great -- we have great attorneys here. And all these guys paved the way for me. So they made things much easier for me. And also my boss,
the Sheriff, he believed in me.

So it was scary at first because I had only been practicing for two years. But he's like you just got to get in there. You got to do it. You got to get out and join associations and you got to get out and go to different, you know, Bar meetings. You got to, you know, basically just let people know who you are. He's like but I believe in you. And I think you can do a good job.

But $I$ can truly say that Judge Wright was very supportive. Larry Hardaway was very supportive. And Karen Meeks. Because they immediately called me and said whatever you need we're here to support you. And you know when some of the defense bar Calls you, like Mr. Liguori and Mr. Kaylor. They give me a hard time. We don't always agree. But they've all been very supportive.

So this panel here made things much easier for me. And $I$ really appreciate $y^{\prime}$ all for that.

MS. MARTIN: In your experience with the Polk County Sheriff's Office and as the Legal Director, were you faced with any obstacles or any -- any issues that you had to overcome as an AfricanAmerican?

MS. DENMARK: Yes. Because when the Sheriff
appointed me many of the attorneys did not want to talk to me. They would call the Sheriff directly and ask the Sheriff questions, you know, pertaining to the Sheriff's Office, legal questions.

But he was very good. He would tell them, you know, attorneys, hey, you need to talk my Director first. And call my Director and talk to her first. And then she'll come and address any issues that you may have with me. And he was very supportive in terms of that.

MS. MARTIN: Now obviously we graciously heard Judge Wright say she thought it was beauty first. You're a female.

MS. DENMARK: Yes.
MS. MARTIN: Did that have any impact on your experience here in the Polk -- in the Tenth -- in the Tenth Judicial Circuit?

MS. DENMARK: Yes. But not more -- I mean not really with the attorneys. But $I$ work with men ... with deputies. So $I$ had to really, you know, kind of work with them and for them, you know, get out and actually go on search warrants and things like that for them to believe in me. Because I had to learn their jobs. And then, you know, when $I$ started getting out and going on search warrants and
working different cases with them they would believe in me. So that made it easier for me to work with the attorneys here in the Circuit.

So, yes, it's tough being a female though.
MS. MARTIN: Now as we celebrate this 100th Anniversary of the Polk County Courthouse I want to open it up to the panel. What changes in the law or the legal system have you observed or have been made since you have practiced in the Tenth Judicial Circuit? And I will direct this question to the Honorable Judge Timothy Coon.

JUDGE COON: Well, having come to Polk County in 1978, I can remember physically we now have a great edifice versus what we -- what we had back at that time. I can remember some of the buildings of course over in the old courthouse. And personally I was assigned to Winter Haven. And I think we were using an old Winn Dixie store or something of that nature. So I -- I think physically we have certainly come a long way.

As far as the -- the -- the practice. I can recall starting with the State Attorney's office that year in ' 78 under Mr. Yancey, Quillian Yancey. I don't recall how many other black State Attorneys were there at the time. I didn't really -- I
believe there might have been one other or perhaps two. But I was kind of shipped off to Winter Haven to work over there.

Um, but as far as the -- the -- the culture or the opportunity to practice $I$ had no difficulties in that area. And through the years I left Polk County for a while as Judge Wright indicated. And when I came back I did notice that we had several more black attorneys.

So as the years have gone by I think the opportunities have certainly increased for all of us African-Americans to practice. And we have come obviously a very long way when $I$ was appointed in 1995 as the first black Judge of Polk County.

I do want to note. I -- I did notice I think there was a change when I came. And I can remember one of the very first meetings that we had as Judges. There was a -- a comment. We were talking about things and meeting in our -- in our meeting. And one of the comments that was made made me very -- very proud of the fact that $I$ was now on the -- the bench in Polk County.

It was something to the nature of now that we have an African-American among us. There were certain things I think that may have been discussed
or thought of or viewed differently or said differently in -- in those meetings. One of our Judges -- and I can't remember which one it was -made -- made a comment that made me feel I am going to make a difference, even if it's a very subtle difference. We will -- we will think or we'll view our Bar, we'll view our judiciary, in a different light now that we have another viewpoint from an African-American.

So that's one of the -- one of the things that I -- I think I've noticed and I think has been very positive for Polk County.

MS. MARTIN: Now going from practicing law in Polk County and to the bench were there certain practice areas that African-Americans or minorities maybe focused on during that time period that you noticed a change in?

JUDGE COON: Well, I -- I think probably a lot of us when we were and -- and doing private practice. If you were in private practice generally you started out and had a lot of focus on criminal law. And of course we had criminal law practice, divorce, family law, those types of -- those types of cases. And as you -- as we noted that Mr. Glover was doing a lot of personal injury, um, started
doing that.
But from my -- from my standpoint I was a
prosecutor for a -- a brief period of time. And then $I$ went into an area that was totally foreign I think for most folks. And that was social security disability.

As a matter of fact, $I$ remember when $I$ had my interview to become a Judge. And they asked me what area of practice. They said well, you know, we don't know you. You don't practice in our courts before any of our Judges. What do you do? And I said well, $I$ emphasize social security disability. And they said what is that? That's a law practice? You can actually do that?

So -- and actually $I$ was doing quite well. I was glad to know that nobody else knows about it. Of course that's changed a lot now.

But I -- we were venturing out in different areas. And I -- I think that was just an example. We were allowed or trying to do different things.

But we did have a lot of general. You start off with criminal law, then some divorce, family law. But we spread out and did -- did some other things too.

MS. MARTIN: Now while we're on the topic of
different areas that minorities or African-Americans ventured into. Mr. Dawson. 27 years working on a Hillsborough County school case. Can you tell me what changes have you seen in ... whether it's the Tenth Judicial Circuit. There's been a lot of changes. You grew up here in Polk County. And in your practice now that have been made over the last several years.

MR. DAWSON: Well, thank you very much. I -I -- on the matter of my being on one case for 27 years. Very few lawyers maybe have that experience in the world to be on one case for 27 years.

Hillsborough County happened to now be the ninth largest school district in the United States. And they have more than 160 schools in their budget. Five to six years ago it was over $\$ 3$ billion. And that School District fought vigorously the notions of school desegregation. And we labored for 27 years to vigorously make sure that they understood that they had to desegregate.

It was of course during that time frame that I opened a branch of my law office here in Bartow in the early '70s ... before Brother Kelly came to the Public Defender's office and before Mr. Glover here
came to the State Attorney's office. I had a private law office right at the corner of Main and Broadway upstairs across the street from the old courthouse.

And I was listening and pleased and agree that these lawyers had good experiences in the Public Defender's office and the State Attorney's office, um, in the -- in those later years. But I'm a part of the -- the ram and bush so to speak that tried to knock down some doors to make it possible for them to come along. And it was not always pleasant or good or pleasurable to have to do those things.

MS. MARTIN: Can you expand on those.
MR. DAWSON: Yeah.

MS. MARTIN: Some of the things that you may have faced in private practice.

MR. DAWSON: I -- I am responsible for having any first degree murder case in this County, um, attack the system by which the Grand Jury was impaneled and by which the Grand Jury foreperson was selected. And $I$ didn't make myself very popular in this first degree murder case when I issued a subpoena for every sitting Circuit Judge in this Circuit, except for Judge Love who was the presiding Judge. And $I$ put them on the witness stand in a
murder case and asked them if they had ever exercised the authority by Florida Statute by which they rotate the responsibility to convene the Grand Jury and then ultimately pick the foreperson. That was the assignment or job of the Circuit Judge.

So we had the case styled U. S. Supreme Court. And we went back 35 years of records of every person who had ever served on a Grand Jury. Two of them a year for 35 years. And of course the Clerk's office was very upset with me because I had prevailed upon the Judge to require them to dig up all these records and give them to me. And the Supervisor of Elections was not happy because I had prevailed upon the Judge to have the Supervisor of Elections identify everybody who had served on a Grand Jury in Polk County for 35 years by race so that we could essentially establish that there had not been great participation by blacks on the Grand Jury in this County and -- or in the Circuit. And no person had ever served as a Grand Jury foreman.

Well, my client, Mr. Nathaniel Sanders, we ultimately -- Judge Love followed the law and threw out the indictment, the first degree murder indictment. And momentarily my client was just very happy and -- and so was his family. Only to find
out that they reconvened the Grand Jury about three days later and they chose a black woman who was the principal of a -- of a elementary school in Haines City. And they re-indicted my client for that. And Hardy Pickard was the lawyer on the other side of me in that case.

And -- but let me tell you there's been a lot of changes as you can hear. But it was not always that way in my good days of Polk County. But I'm -I'm happy to say and happy to participate in this to let you know that -- that we're making progress.

MS. MARTIN: Very good.
Now along those lines. You say we're making progress. Mr. Glover, have we made progress? Where do we go from here? Have the seeds that the panelists so far have discussed have those seeds planted come to harvest? Is there more work to be done?

MR. GLOVER: Yes, the seeds have been planted. The progress, question mark, and where do we go from here I have some comments.

Many years ago, after having served as the President of the George Edgecomb Bar Association through the nomination of Warren Dawson and the endorsement of Delano Stewart, I learned a lot over
in Hillsborough County after I had enough Polk County of being their first black prosecutor. I saw where they were progressing and what they were doing.

And I attended the Florida Chapter of the National Bar Association. I went to every one of their meetings. I was learning from great lawyers, African-American lawyers around the State.

And once we got about eight lawyers. And Judge Coon, Karla Wright, myself, Larry Hardaway, David Wilson, and Mr. Johnson, we organized the Virgil Hawkins Bar Association in my living room. And we set some goals. And those goals -- you asked me was the seed planted. Was that we needed to get some Judges. And we labored and we did banquets where all of the local Bar Associations participated.

But we also endeavored upon a political lever. We knew that the Florida Bar Association had an injust system. And that was I had applied for judgeship. Larry Jackson had applied for judgeship. And so did Larry Hardaway. And the Judicial Nominating Committee was all white nominating committee. And they used to ask us these stupid questions like what labeled them as being. Such things as how would you vote if a black man was
convicted of a capital offense. And I said I don't know, $I$ don't know the facts.

And we had that kind of thing. We knew that we needed to change the system. So we embarked and embraced our organization, along with George Edgecomb Bar Association and other African-American Bar Associations, on a quest to first of all get to the Florida Bar. And that was a long haul led by Justice Al C. Hastings and Henry -- the late Henry Lattimore and Del Stewart and Warren Dawson.

We partnershipped with the Bar. And we knew that those guys were running for President of the Bar Association and the Board of Governors. We got commitments from them. And they endorsed the idea that there needed to be African-Americans on the Judicial Nominating Committee.

We succeeded with that. But now we needed a real partnership. And as lawyers we figured we needed to change the law.

And as a result of that we had our home boy Lawton Chiles. And we convinced him that we needed to change this Judicial Nominating Committee. Because he had never asked any black lawyers in an area like Polk County that didn't have a majority population.

And he embraced it and he took it and ran with it. We would go around the State of Florida to various meetings, town shop meetings like they still have now, and convince those areas that needed to be done. He got the law passed. So now you had the Florida Bar. And now it's the law that you have African-Americans on the J.N.C.

Tim Coon and I were still with Lawton Chiles when he signed it. We say well, the work is not over. We got to go, you know, now and make sure we get the right people on the J.N.C. But Tim is the results of our having our first Judge.

And we continue to have. It's a job accomplished never.

We have I believe 35 judges in Polk County. The reflection of our population does not show that. We only have two African-American Judges now. We're trying to make the playing field even.

If you just -- and I know folks don't like to deal with numbers. But we don't have that here in Polk County. We haven't had an appointed or an elected Judge since the year 2000 when Karla was appointed to the bench. So we have much to do. And it's going to take the cooperation of those of you that are in our audience now that have a commitment
to equal justice under the law.
We are now a very diverse community. But we'll get more diverse. We have to speak out.

And when you go down to the State Attorney's office and you look at the number of prosecutors down there. And you only still see since 1975 when I became a prosecutor. And even when we look over to the Public Defender's office. We need more of a diverse community. We need Latin Americans to fulfil that void that we don't have.

And I recall I sued the County for a position of Assistant County Attorney. It took years for us to get our first County Attorney. Judge Wright. We -- it's a void over there.

We need to be reflected in all of our judicial positions within our lives. And we only have one homogenous society so that we can work together and make America as great as it ought to be. Thank you.

MS. MARTIN: Mr. Glover, I have a question. When you say that you want the playing field to be equal whose responsibility is that? Is it the playing field is not -- is the playing field not even because there are not African-Americans or minorities seeking out these positions in the State Attorney's office or in the legal -- legal
community -- or is it something else that you identify?

MR. GLOVER: I believe that in order to make it you have to eliminate the barriers. And the barrier is discrimination.

The laws are on the books, most of them, that to include it. But then we have the Judges. We have the legislatures. We have to do enforcement.

When we see that there are holes in there we need to plug those holes. And you can plug them by being creative.

We realized that on the J.N.C. we -- we targeted that -- that we ain't going to be Judges if you don't get those folks on those very, very important committees.

I use that as an example. But that's in all phases of government. We have to eliminate those so-called good boy barriers that are there for the few and the privileged and let it be there for everybody.

MS. MARTIN: Now, Mr. Stewart. Where do we go from here in your opinion?

MR. STEWART: Well, I -- I'm an historian. One of the things that Warren and $I$, and those of us who went to Howard were taught, um, the person who
established our law school taught us to be social engineers. That we could not afford just to pursue money. You had to pursue to take down and change every law that discriminated against your people.

And as a base premise there is nothing that any American has done or will do -- that $I$ have not done. My tax assessment, when they assess taxes in Hillsborough County, are the same as any other citizen. When April 15th come $I$ on the line that $I$ earned. When $I$ got eighteen $I$ got a draft card.

So every burden that America has is thrust upon me. And when $I$ was willing to fight and die overseas for the freedom, those freedoms and ideas of justice, nothing changed when $I$ became a lawyer. And when $I$ went to the first Bar meeting $I$ made it unequivocally clear to the Judges and to the lawyers that $I$ wore a uniform and that's what $I$ believed in. And just because my uniform was off $I$ still was willing to die for what $I$ believed in. And that's been always.

I believe in fairness. The reason that $I$ got to believe in my practice in 1970 I got a young man. I sought that person out. I asked the person who was a E.E.O.C., person who was a friend of mine and is still on that counsel, to find me a young person
who believed in the ideas of America like I did. And my lawyer, who it was a Vanderbilt and Browning graduate, came to practice with me. And that turned a lot of head -- heads.

Failure is a two-way street. I do not believe that you are going to give me anything other than the criteria. We must always be confident. But when $I$ go into a court I'm not going to win because I'm black and I'm not going to lose because I'm black. I believe I'm going to win or lose because of the fact I'm prepared and I'm a good lawyer.

In fact, $I$-- $I$-- $I$ was born in the Civil Rights Movement. In 1951 Harry Moore, who was killed in Memphis with his wife, were meeting at my home for the equalization of salaries. My mother and father taught. And Thurman was down there to bring a suit in behest. Moore was also President of N.A.A.C.P. But he was here to meet with them because black teachers are not being paid the same amount.

And so consequently after that meeting the next morning these two fine people that were friends of my mother and father, who taught, who were -- who were citizens -- were blown to smithereens because of the fact that they were fighting and exercising
the right that the constitution gave us.

And so until $I$ die $I$ believe -- $I$ believe in the instrument. But if you're going to believe in the instrument then the instrument must reflect what it says. Other than that it becomes rhetorical nonsense.

So consequently $I$ know that every war that we've had black men and black women have died. And we have participated in this society. And we loved it. And we have a right to demand to be every place where it is and where we are qualified to be. And that's been my quest. And that will be the quest until $I$ go to my grave.

MS. MARTIN: Do you believe now that the makeup of the legal community amongst the lawyers and the bench adequately reflects your vision?

MR. STEWART: It -- it -- it is an improvement. But all of us have an obligation. And as Ken says I -- I -- I got a note from Judge Roberts. Things change but they will not change automatically. Black lawyers have to participate. I went to every Hillsborough County Bar meeting because I was a member. I went to every Florida Chapter.

When $I$ was President of the black lawyers $I$ asked Steve Zak, who was President of the Florida

Bar, to permit me, before there was ever a black on the Board of Governors, to talk to them about some of the problems that we were having. And so even before a black was elected to the Board of Governors I went as a liaison if you will to discuss with the Florida Board Bar of Governors what we perceived as there were problems and they needed to be wiped out, ironed out, and discussed.

And -- and that's what a democracy is. I mean we are participants. And I demand full citizenship and I'm entitled to full citizenship. And I think that everybody's done that. And when you take advantage of people and do not permit them to participate then you are denying them equal protection of the law. Equal protection of the law means that.

And we've come a long ways. I mean, you know, you can go back to slavery, Dred Scott, and all that. We have made a lot of progress. But it will never be over because power is power. And people who have power and people who draw instruments.

The constitution was not a ideal document. It was a document of power. And every document -- you go to every Church. You go to any social organization. And he who drafts the instrument
keeps most of the power. And those of us who are lawyers understand that.

But you have to try to make this as fair as possible. And -- and when human beings are involved, um, better left is the only way to be fair. Because people, and $I$-- and I use this nongenerically whether they are white or black -want to keep all the power they can. That's human nature.

MS. MARTIN: And at this time in our program what $I$ would like to do is open the floor for any questions that may -- that the audience may have of our panelists.

VOICE IN AUDIENCE: I have a question for Mr. Dawson.

Mr. Dawson, I'm curious if you can give us some -- some of your feelings about the effect of the fight for desegregation in public schools I guess in light of the rise of kind of de facto segregation, um, Charter schools, um, and just the -- the general feeling that, you know, at this point in time people have already decided whether or not they want to be part of a integrated system and, you know, moved -- move their group of folks either in or out of that system accordingly. I'm just

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wondering if you could give us some of your -- your feelings about it since you were at the frontline of that fight.

MR. DAWSON: Well, thank you very much. The question in the area of public school education, um, the Court system, the Federal Court system, decided ultimately that they'd had enough of overseeing school desegregation. They say, well, you know, the Courts weren't designed to run school systems. They were designed to decide cases and controversies and not actually administer school systems.

And so there may very well be only one or two or three or four cases in all of the United States now that's still left. Um, the Courts got out of the system.

Well, for the whole reason they got in was all the reason of why they should have remained involved. Because now the school systems are, in many places, are re- segregating. And of course the Courts, although they are spiraled by contributions or persons such as Clarence Thomas. Just to show you that it's not always what you get on the bench, it's who you get on the bench when you think about that.

But, in any event, the schools ought to be -- I
don't want to get too -- we can deal with that after -- after this.

But the schools are re-segregating. And that's not a good thing for America. I like to believe that one of the things that spending 27 years in a school desegregation case is about this. And I'll finish.

It's good now to introduce our children to each other long before they meet each other as adults. You can see a young man white and a young man black run into each other at the Mall. And they remember each other from third grade, high school, and so on. And they know each other as well as -- as you and I would have known each other back in so-called my day. Okay. That's the nature of our society. We've got to live here together. There's no need of waiting until you're eighteen before. And -- and I take my own life experience.

The first time $I$ ever sat down and had a meal with a white person $I$ was in R.O.T.C. summer camp at Fort Benning, Georgia. It was the summer of 1960 . I was already, what, twenty years old. I had never sat down to a table and had a meal with a white person in my life. Um, that's late in the context of current day times. And so, yeah.

And -- and there are blacks who say that -- who are not necessarily for school desegregation. Okay. They think that you send your children to schools where they are tolerated. You bus them long distances and the white teachers don't treat them right. And they're not interested in seeing to it that they set a standard. In other words, if they act out in any way they are sent to an alternative school. They don't feel loved, et cetera.

And so there are blacks who have points of view. But we think that -- that the idea of school desegregation in America is still a valid proposition. And, unfortunately, it's being reversed in -- in very swift order.

And let me mention this one final thing. In Polk County back in the day, Judge Langford, there were more black high schools in Polk County, Florida, than in any other County in Florida. Dade County only had three black high schools. Duval County had two. Hillsborough County had three -Middleton, Blake, and Marshall. There were five black high schools in Polk County. Union Academy in Bartow. Um, Rochelle in Lakeland. Um, Jewett in Winter Haven. Oakland in Haines City. And Roosevelt High School in Lake Wales. Five high
schools. And none of them now today are high schools. Okay. And that gives you some indications of what happened.

They have de-dignified or -- those schools.
And none of them now. And they're building new high schools all the time. It seems to me that somehow that they would rename one of them with five black high schools in this -- this state.

Now I like to believe that I made a contribution in Hillsborough County. All of the -two of the three black high schools are back in position as high schools now. Blake is still a high school now. Middleton is a high school now. But Union Academy and Rochelle and Jewett and Oakland and Roosevelt High Schools in Polk County, none of them are high schools today.

MS. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Dawson. We have one more -- another question?

MR. MASLANIK: Yes. I'd like to follow-up on what Mr. Glover said. I'm from the Public Defender's office. I'm the Trial Division Director. And I agree absolutely with what he says about the number of African-American attorneys both in the Public Defender's office and in the State Attorney's office.

Now in our office we have 60 trial attorneys in the Tenth Circuit. We probably have five AfricanAmerican attorneys. In the State Attorney's office, with an equal number, they probably only have two or three.

My question to you is this: Looking to the future and the present what can we do to get more graduates of law schools of African-Americans come to work in Polk County, dedicate themselves to public service, and work as either a Public Defender or a State Attorney for more than just a couple of years, when they get trial experience and then they move on. What can we do to develop a core of African-American attorneys in Polk County who are dedicated to public service in either the Public Defender's office or the State Attorney's office?

MR. GLOVER: Thank you for that question. And I'll address it.

When I was the President of the N.A.A.C.P. here in Polk County $I$ went directly to the bossman. I went to the State Attorney and $I$ went to the Public Defender. And the natural response was we can't find an African-American attorney that will come to Polk County.

And I heard that when I was doing the
desegregation case of not being able to find African-American teachers around the country. And then I'd say look, you're not looking.

We have predominantly seven African-American
law schools. The school I graduated from, Southern University, which is the second largest graduated. Howard, these guys graduated from Howard. Those schools alone graduate every year more than all of the white law schools -- just one school -graduated more graduates than all the combined white schools.

And I suggested and recommend. It just so happened the Dean of the Chaplin Law School is my roommate. I say hey, roommate. Down in Polk County, man, these kids got jobs they coming out. He say Ken, you know, a job's hard to find. I say tell them to contact the phone number 534.4000 and ask for the State Attorney or ask for the Public Defender and let them know that we have graduates. We are not recruiters. You got to go out and get the schools.

Just as you going around the world to recruit new school superintendents in haste. You do that with lawyers. You recruit. And don't be that if you are not a Gator, if you're not a Seminole, we're
not going to hire you. I'll -- I'll be blunt about it. Okay.

MS. MARTIN: Thank you. Any other questions?
Unless -- I'm sorry, sir. A reminder to the panelists that to limit our entire time in our response.

Okay, sir.
VOICE IN AUDIENCE: The concern I have though when -- when Austin is speaking that and your response here is there's no hiring. Okay.

If there is a position open for Assistant Public Defender or for Assistant State Attorney, lo and behold this year we get to hire one attorney. The problem from my side is is if we're going to say we need another black, another Hispanic, another Asian in the office, are you now basically suggesting that we should now only basically interview black possible attorneys? Hispanic possible attorneys? Because that's problematic from the white side. And now we're going to have our criteria. And if you're black you get a few extra points. And a white attorney or white law student is not going to have a chance to get hired for that one measly job opening either in the State Attorney or the Public Defender because he's white and he's

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not black.
MR. GLOVER: Well, they made it happen in 1975. I knew what was happening back then.

Um, Hillsborough County had hired AfricanAmericans -- a African-American over there -retired Judge Tom Stringer. Orange County had hired an African-American State Attorney retired Appellate Judge.

PANEL: Hamilton Thompson.
MR. GLOVER: Thompson. Polk County was now ready. They went out and found him. All right.

Same deal with Mr. Walter Kelly. You can find those folks when it's available. When you look at your numbers on paper.

Supposing you didn't even have the one or two that you have now. Something's wrong. Fix the situation. It can be fixable.

We talk about when diverse societies. And -and I used to look at a cartoon I got from Del Stewart. It had a -- a jury. It was a cartoon. All black courtroom -- prosecutor black, the Public Defender's black, the jury's all black. And you've got a white person sitting by and say boy, I'm in trouble.

But that is a perception that African-Americans
can have. Let's try to get rid of these problems. And you have to be creative in your thinking.

I know nobody likes to talk about ... you
don't -- you don't have to call it that. You say, hey, look, I'm putting my emphasis on going over here and make my office...

MS. MARTIN: Ms. Denmark, would you like to say something?

MS. Denmark: I think it goes back to the historic comment. Just give me the criteria. Don't give me anything because I'm black. But if $I$ can meet your criteria $I$ should be able to get and have an opportunity to get a job. Not because of my family, my -- my dad was a Judge or my mother is a Judge or $I$ know somebody -- uncle, cousins, brother. If I meet your criteria and I'm black and I'm African-American, $I$ should be given the same opportunity here in Polk County. Not just because Of my skin color.

So it's just, like $I$ say, give me the criteria. And if I can jump through the hoops a little then give me a job.

MS. MARTIN: At this time we're going to close our -- I'm sorry, sir. You had one more question.

VOICE IN AUDIENCE: Just a quick comment too.
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My name is Harold Stalls. But going with the panel at both stage.

We got a significant problem in Polk County is great, you know, serious and stuff. None that I can call a specific agency.

I can give you for example we got fire departments in our County have not had an African-American for fifteen years. Unfortunate with what Attorney Glover stated. It's the same thing. You know, they can't find people and stuff. They're actually not really looking for people either, too. It -- it goes on all over.

The thing about the school system in -- in Lakeland the -- in the elementary school. You got two Magnet schools. Rochelle and Lincoln are Magnet schools. You can have a African-American principal in Rochelle Magnet school but you can't have a African-American principal at Lincoln Elementary School.

But it goes all across all the board. You do the legal implication. Education. It's a -- it's a problem in Polk County as a whole. We're just -- we just not a progressive County in all many areas.

MS. MARTIN: Thank you, sir.
At this time we want to thank our panelists for
participating today. And I'll turn it over to our Master of Ceremonies.

MR. BENNETT: We want to thank our panel once again for ... this has been a wonderful session, wonderful panel discussion, a lot of insight. We want to thank Ms. Martin for moderating. And I hope that we all can walk away better informed and ready to make our Circuit a better Circuit, one diverse Circuit.

At this time we do have one presentation that we'd like to make. Mrs. Morris, Irene Morris, if you could come up for a moment.

MS. MORRIS: Me?
MR. BENNETT: Yes.
For those of you that don't know, Ms. Morris -I call her Ms. Irene -- she is the Director of our Law Library here. And she's dedicated her life to public service, to ensuring that anyone who wants an opportunity to -- to -- to inform themselves, to educate themselves, through the use of books has that opportunity.

And on behalf of the Virgil Hawkins Bar Association we'd like to present her a certificate of appreciation and recognition of valuable contribution to the legal community and the Tenth

Judicial Circuit, awarded this 25th day of February 2010.

MS. MORRIS: Thank you so much.
MR. BENNETT: Thank you all for coming out today. We're going to close our program and have our closing remarks and acknowledgements by Judge Mary Catherine Green.

JUDGE GREEN: I know all of you agree with me that this is one of the most historic and important presentations that our Circuit has ever had. And I want to thank Sclafani Williams Court Reporters for transcribing this historic presentation so that all of your comments can be preserved for posterity. It will be placed on our Web site and preserved for future students and lawyers and people who are trying to understand our history.

And I cannot thank all of you enough. I cannot thank Sclafani Williams enough for making that possible.

And I also want to thank the Virgil Hawkins Bar Association for sponsoring our wonderful lunch, catered today by Mr. Joseph Nelson of Smokey's BBQ Restaurant of Fort Meade.

I also wish to thank my Judicial Assistant Fran Walden, and Judge Kaylor and her Assistant Gayle

Sanders, Chief Judge Langford, Stacy Hawkins, and Court Administration and Court Technology for making all of this possible.

And I want to thank each and every one of you for coming, for your time. And y'all have a wonderful day. Thank you.

## CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

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I, Sandra J. Dale, FPR, do hereby certify $I$ was authorized to and did report in Stenotypy and electronically the foregoing proceedings and evidence in the captioned case and that the foregoing pages constitute a true and correct transcription of my recordings thereof.

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