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CITY OF LAWRENCE, KANSAS

LAWRENCE FAIR HOUSING ORDINANCE
50th ANNIVERSARY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview of Homer Floyd

November 22, 2016

1 (10:55:14)

2 **MR. ARNOLD:** Today is November 22nd, 2016. I
3 am historian Tom Arnold interviewing Mr. Homer
4 Floyd at his home in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, for
5 the City of Lawrence Fair Housing Ordinance 50th
6 Anniversary Oral History Project.

7 At the time the ordinance passed in July,
8 1967, Mr. Floyd was the director of the Kansas
9 State Commission on Civil Rights.

10 To start off, how would you describe the City
11 of Lawrence at the time you arrived there in the
12 mid to late 1950s as a K.U. student athlete, and
13 in particular what were your memories of the
14 racial atmosphere in Lawrence at the time?

15 **MR. FLOYD:** Well, first of all let me say
16 that I was delighted to have the opportunity to
17 come to Lawrence to play football and get an
18 education at the University of Kansas and it has
19 certainly grounded me as it relates to my future
20 career and opportunities, but I think that some of
21 the experiences that we had of a racial nature
22 certainly helped to motivate me to want to see
23 opportunities available for all people as opposed
24 to just some.

25 When we came there my recollection is, first

1 of all, that there were certain restaurants we
2 could not eat at as African-Americans. There were
3 three theaters that I remember. We had to sit in
4 the balcony in two of the theaters and the other
5 theater didn't have a balcony so we had to start
6 filling up the theater from the back rows forward.
7 We had difficulty with housing, and certainly many
8 of the students off-campus housing,
9 African-Americans, they had difficulty.

10 Some of my counterparts explained that they
11 have had difficulties in the classroom with some
12 teachers and professors. I don't think that I had
13 that kind of experience. What I do remember is a
14 couple of the professors would tease us, the
15 football players, and basketball players as well,
16 about getting a free ride and, you know, things
17 like that, but my recollection of K.U. was very
18 positive.

19 Certainly the experience we had as it relates
20 to some of those incidents, though, we found out
21 that the track players had some of those
22 experiences, the basketball players, as well as
23 the football players, and it is in that context
24 that we decided to go to the chancellor and to
25 express our indignation and our concerns, both in

1 the city as well as when we played TCU in 1957 in
2 Fort Worth, Texas, after we had left Lawrence and
3 we found that the African-American players were
4 going to have to stay at a separate hotel, and
5 that was troublesome. We had to make a decision
6 as to whether to play or not and I know that at
7 first I was not going to play but coach pulled me
8 aside and talked with me and I finally decided to
9 go ahead with it, but that was a major experience,
10 I think, that we looked at.

11 But in the '50s there was just a lot of
12 racial segregation and this was just after the
13 Brown v. Board of Education and society was just
14 getting used to the fact that segregation was
15 illegal, but that's kind of what I remember about
16 the period.

17 (11:00:00)

18 **MR. ARNOLD:** Okay. Great. How would you say
19 that your impressions of Lawrence differed from
20 the experiences you had where you grew up in Ohio?
21 Was there a greater degree of segregation or were
22 you surprised when you got to Lawrence in what you
23 found there, particularly given that Lawrence kind
24 of had this reputation to be the front -- center
25 of the free state movement from the Civil War era?

1 **MR. FLOYD:** We were surprised. My
2 recollection, first of all, in Massilon, Ohio,
3 that was a steel mill town and a high percentage
4 of African-Americans and other minorities were
5 working in the steel mills and it was a good
6 living, and on Main Street, though, in the public
7 contact jobs there were very few, I believe, in
8 Massilon. I don't remember but when I was growing
9 up one or two persons in public contact jobs.

10 The community as a whole coalesced around
11 football. I mean, in those days the Massilon
12 Tigers were winning, regularly winning the state
13 championships and Paul Brown, who ultimately owned
14 the Cleveland Browns and later the Cincinnati
15 team, he was the coach.

16 **MR. ARNOLD:** Wow.

17 **MR. FLOYD:** And he was the coach during the
18 late '30s and early '40s and so he had already
19 built up a strong tradition. When I graduated we
20 won the state championship for the seventh
21 consecutive year and two of those years that I was
22 there we were national champs, so it was a town of
23 about 35,000 and on the day of a football game
24 stores closed for a period of time for the
25 marches, the rallies that we had and so forth, so

1 it was really a great place to grow up, but at the
2 same time there were problems, but not nearly as
3 much as we saw out in Kansas at that time.

4 (11:02:38)

5 **MR. ARNOLD:** Okay. So you were clearly
6 surprised, then, when you arrived in Lawrence and
7 found --

8 **MR. FLOYD:** Yes.

9 **MR. ARNOLD:** -- the conditions there and how
10 they differed?

11 **MR. FLOYD:** Yes.

12 (11:02:44)

13 **MR. ARNOLD:** You have already briefly touched
14 on the meeting, and I think it was in 1957. Was
15 it just --

16 **MR. FLOYD:** Yes.

17 **MR. ARNOLD:** -- at the beginning of the
18 school year in 1957 that you remember when you met
19 with the chancellor?

20 **MR. FLOYD:** I think it was after the Fort
21 Worth experience in which we had had that
22 experience, and earlier in the year the basketball
23 team had some experience as well, as I understand
24 it, so we all just got together and said let's --
25 that was more focused on some of the experiences

1 that we have had but also we took on the whole
 2 thing and the chancellor really, Chancellor
 3 Franklin D. Murphy, really stepped up, in my
 4 judgment. He threatened to make the theaters off
 5 limits to students, that he would purchase or rent
 6 the movies and show them on campus, and that
 7 helped with the theater situation.

8 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right.

9 **MR. FLOYD:** And then we had the issue of
 10 restaurants and he began to speak out on that, and
 11 there were others behind him, I'm sure, that was
 12 doing some of the negotiations in regard to the --
 13 I think, if I recall correctly, was it Phog
 14 Allen's son? There was a couple of lawyers that
 15 were involved in it as well. I don't remember.

16 (11:04:34)

17 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right. Phog Allen's son was the
 18 city attorney at that time, --

19 **MR. FLOYD:** Yes.

20 **MR. ARNOLD:** -- private attorney but also was
 21 acting --

22 **MR. FLOYD:** Right, right.

23 **MR. ARNOLD:** -- as the city attorney so he
 24 was probably involved.

25 **MR. FLOYD:** Yes, yes. So, but at any rate,

1 things got better. Things got better, and we were
2 just appreciative of the forthright steps that the
3 chancellor was willing to take, and as a matter of
4 fact, the following February he invited Thurgood
5 Marshall to be the Brotherhood Day speaker.

6 That's a February event --

7 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right.

8 **MR. FLOYD:** -- in which, you know, he had
9 argued the Brown v. Board of Education case.

10 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right.

11 **MR. FLOYD:** And he invited him to be our
12 principal speaker, and I know, I even have
13 pictures of that, and it was so enlightening as
14 well as kind of verifying what we were saying,
15 that we needed to go forward and that we needed to
16 take giant steps, and that was something I thought
17 was very positive that the chancellor did.

18 (11:05:53)

19 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right. Good. And based on your
20 observations at the time, as best you can recall,
21 did the changes in attitudes or policies of some
22 of the local business people, that not only
23 applied to African-American student athletes but
24 also just student body in general and even local
25 residents, that you remember?

1 **MR. FLOYD:** Yes, I think that more and more
2 African-American students were enrolling at the
3 university, so that in and of itself meant that
4 downtown their presence was more -- it's, on
5 campus I think that they were way ahead of, in my
6 judgment, at any rate, than the businesses
7 downtown, but at the same time you could see
8 incremental progress taking place. At one point
9 they couldn't stay at the hotel there and that was
10 an issue, I know, for when some of the parents
11 would come to town, yes.

12 (11:07:03)

13 **MR. ARNOLD:** But no real change that you
14 recall in that time frame in housing policies, it
15 still was difficult for African-American students
16 who were coming to town to find adequate places to
17 live?

18 **MR. FLOYD:** If they did off campus, yes.

19 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right.

20 **MR. FLOYD:** And as a result many of them were
21 able to stay in homes of other African-Americans
22 who lived in the community. That was, housing was
23 slow.

24 Employment with each other eight hours or
25 more but, during the day, in the community you're

1 living next to each other and so forth, and there
2 are all kinds of misconceptions, perceptions about
3 what will happen to your neighborhood if blacks
4 move in and, you know, things like that that you
5 had to overcome.

6 (11:08:01)

7 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right. Right. As we have done
8 the research for this project and been
9 interviewing people one of the things that really
10 becomes apparent is not only, besides the
11 influence that the university had in trying to
12 bring about change, many kind of grassroots
13 community groups were very involved, the churches,
14 both African-American and white churches, kind of
15 umbrella church organizations, the NAACP was very
16 involved, there was in Lawrence an organization in
17 the 1950s and early '60s which you probably
18 weren't aware of called the League for the
19 Promotion of Democracy and it had many not only
20 local African-American members but also a lot of
21 K.U. faculty who were, and I think the faculty
22 played a key role in a lot of these organizations
23 because of course you had people who were from
24 diverse backgrounds coming into Lawrence and
25 didn't necessarily like what they saw, but did you

1 have any, during that early time when you were at
2 the university, any interaction with any of those
3 types of groups, through maybe a church
4 affiliation or were you aware of their efforts to
5 try and bring about change as well?

6 **MR. FLOYD:** Well, there was student groups
7 that we coalesced with on certain issues as they
8 would occur. I was aware of some, or the NAACP, I
9 was aware of some of the churches. Probably not
10 as much involved in a couple of the organizations
11 you just mentioned, yes.

12 (11:09:36)

13 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right.

14 **MR. FLOYD:** Yes.

15 **MR. ARNOLD:** Okay. In addition to the just
16 general kind of conditions of segregation, and you
17 obviously did mention some of the incidents that
18 occurred away, but do you remember any particular
19 incidents that occurred within Lawrence that were
20 particularly influential in kind of prodding
21 people to start pushing for change or was it just
22 kind of general, the general conditions at the
23 time that were --

24 **MR. FLOYD:** Well, I think that at that point
25 in time people were just trying to get used to the

1 idea that there was a change at the Supreme Court
2 level of what constituted discrimination, because
3 segregation was just the law of the land prior to
4 that and so as incidents or situations would
5 occur, you know, you problem solve around what is
6 it that has occurred and the like, and sometimes
7 we felt as though whatever the issue was we didn't
8 have an entree into a receptive -- how can I say
9 this? We see situations that occur between let's
10 say two students, an African-American and a white.
11 Well, the African-American does not feel that I
12 can run to the administration and get justice --

13 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right.

14 **MR. FLOYD:** -- because of the social
15 distance.

16 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right.

17 **MR. FLOYD:** And that, I think, is what we
18 were really dealing with. It's the attitude but
19 also the social distance --

20 **MR. ARNOLD:** Sure.

21 **MR. FLOYD:** -- was such that an identical set
22 of circumstances can mean different things to
23 different people, depend upon your previous
24 experience and so forth, and sometimes we didn't
25 feel that we had the ear of the administration or

1 in, if it's, sometimes it could have been the
2 police issue involved. We didn't feel that we
3 could go to the administration or to the powers
4 that be and get a fair treatment.

5 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right.

6 **MR. FLOYD:** In some instance we'll end up
7 getting the charge, and at the time I think the
8 society was still beginning to know how to deal
9 with the whole business of integration and equal
10 opportunity.

11 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right.

12 **MR. FLOYD:** And, see, in those days they just
13 told you up front we don't rent to colored. I
14 want you to know that even after, even after
15 Kansas or after K.U. when I moved to Kansas City I
16 had been told that so many times until I started
17 to just over the phone in places that were open
18 for rent in the newspapers, I would say, "Do you
19 rent to colored?" Because that's the way it was
20 in those days.

21 (11:13:12)

22 **MR. ARNOLD:** Yes, the fact that you had to
23 ask that question is, you know, to people today
24 shocking.

25 **MR. FLOYD:** And housing was much more

1 difficult than some of the employment situations.

2 (11:13:23)

3 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right, right. Let's transition
4 from kind of that background to what it was that
5 then got you -- I mean, you obviously left K.U.
6 with opportunities to pursue a sports career but
7 chose instead to, you know, basically dedicate
8 your life to civil rights work. What really
9 motivated you? Was it some of those experiences
10 at K.U. that kind of led you down that path, and
11 how did you end up first I think working for the
12 City of Topeka in a civil rights position, then
13 ultimately becoming the director of the Kansas
14 state commission?

15 **MR. FLOYD:** Well, immediately after college I
16 had a year of professional football in Canada and
17 then I came down to Kansas City, Missouri, in
18 which I was married and had one child, and we had
19 real difficulty finding housing there and that was
20 really an eye opening experience, too, how
21 segregated Missouri, Kansas City, Missouri, was at
22 the time, but I worked for about a year with the
23 Recreation Department there and I signed a
24 contract with the Cleveland Browns and went up and
25 went through their training camp and I got cut, so

1 I came back to Kansas City, and when I came back
2 to Kansas City I was offered a job as an
3 investigator for the State of Kansas with the
4 Kansas Commission on Civil Rights and they had
5 just passed a fair employment practices statute at
6 that point in time, so with the experiences I have
7 had that was kind of a motivating factor to want
8 to see things change and be part of the change.

9 As you know, there were demonstrations and
10 all of those and I saw an opportunity for me to do
11 some good through the legal process and so
12 therefore I took the job and worked there for two
13 and a half years or so and took the position as
14 executive secretary of the Topeka, Kansas,
15 commission and was there for year and a half or
16 more, two years maybe, and then I ended up going
17 to Omaha as their director of their program and
18 then coming back to Kansas in I guess it was 1966,
19 I believe.

20 (11:60:03)

21 **MR. ARNOLD:** Okay. At about the time you
22 came back Kansas was, and I think as early as '65
23 the Kansas Legislature had been considering a fair
24 housing law. How were you involved in that effort
25 to kind of push that through the legislature?

1 Which ultimately didn't happen until I think about
2 1970, but --

3 **MR. FLOYD:** Right. Yes, there was a big
4 movement during the year of '65, '66, '67 and we
5 thought we had fashioned a bill that was
6 acceptable to the legislators who were negotiating
7 with it but unfortunately we got it past the House
8 and I think it died in the Senate.

9 My recollection of it was that George Haley,
10 Senator George Haley, helped us as part of the
11 front of the movement, and we were -- much of the
12 push for the legislation was coming through the --
13 we had an advisory council. I remember Ruth
14 Shechter was the chair of the advisory council,
15 and it was a statewide group that was helping to
16 mobilize and it grew larger and more influential
17 and then finally we were able to get the passage
18 of the statute in 19--, I guess it was 1967 -- no,
19 1970, January of 1970, January or February, during
20 that year. But we had actually fashioned the
21 legislation the session before, it's just that we
22 just couldn't get it through at that point in
23 time, yes.

24 (11:18:00)

25 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right. What do you recall about

1 the opposition? And obviously the real estate
2 industry was one of the key opponents of putting
3 that kind of a law into effect, and I have been
4 told by some of my previous interviewees that
5 their impression was that the Lawrence real estate
6 industry was in particular one of the ones that
7 were pushing hard against putting a law because
8 they argued that they should be able to regulate
9 themselves and this both infringed on their rights
10 and the rights of property owners. What do you
11 recall about who the opposition was and what the
12 case, the arguments that they made against the law
13 that proved at least influential in the first
14 three or four years before you could finally get
15 it passed?

16 **MR. FLOYD:** Well, I don't recall the specific
17 individuals but certainly the real estate
18 industry, both in Lawrence as well as statewide,
19 was opposed to the fair housing statute and they
20 constantly were, through their legislators that
21 they worked with, were constantly putting up
22 amendments to limit the authority, to limit the
23 consequences of discrimination and so forth, and
24 we had to fight against that, and my recollection
25 in '66, '67, that's when a lot of the negotiation

1 was going on and we finally got something that was
2 acceptable and finally passed, you know, in 1970.

3 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right.

4 **MR. FLOYD:** But certainly Lawrence was able
5 to get theirs I guess in '68.

6 **MR. ARNOLD:** July of '67 they finally passed
7 theirs.

8 **MR. FLOYD:** '67, yes, okay.

9 (11:20:02)

10 **MR. ARNOLD:** In '65, and this may have then
11 been before your time back in Kansas, it may have
12 actually been while you were in Omaha, but Wichita
13 actually passed the first Fair Housing Ordinance.
14 Did you have any involvement in that or were you
15 in communication with people down there to talk to
16 them about how they managed to get it through to
17 help your efforts to try and push it through the
18 state legislature?

19 **MR. FLOYD:** That effort was going on at the
20 same time when I was in Kansas.

21 **MR. ARNOLD:** Okay.

22 **MR. FLOYD:** For a long time that effort was
23 going on. I left, while I left the State, I was
24 still in Topeka with a local human rights
25 commission and the state wide effort had an

1 influence on what they were doing in Wichita, and
2 I was aware that Wichita, which is, you know, the
3 largest city, were able to pass the statute, and
4 that gave some support for other cities to take up
5 the issue, and certainly Lawrence did and was
6 successful.

7 (11:21:16)

8 **MR. ARNOLD:** Do you recall who were kind of
9 the key advocates within Lawrence or any
10 particular people that you worked with at the time
11 they were -- and sort of the timeline, just to
12 refresh your memory or give you the background,
13 based on our research, there had been discussions
14 of it I think among local groups as early as '65,
15 because they formed what they called a Fair
16 Housing Coordinating Committee, which brought
17 NAACP, church groups, various other citizen groups
18 together under an umbrella to work towards that,
19 and really sometime in '66 they decided that they
20 wanted to push it up to the City Commission and
21 actually right at the beginning of January of '67
22 they went to the Human Relations Commission in
23 Lawrence, proposed it.

24 The Human Relations Commission had already
25 been quietly working with them so they weren't

1 surprised that it was coming to them and then they
2 drafted the ordinance and took it up to what
3 proved to be a fairly receptive City Commission,
4 which passed it in '67. But do you recall who you
5 may have worked with or groups you may have worked
6 with or how they may have coordinated with you at
7 the state level in trying to bring this forward
8 within Lawrence?

9 **MR. FLOYD:** Well, one of the things that we
10 would do at the state level is to share with the
11 local, other cities that have passed similar
12 housing laws and so forth, ordinances, to give
13 them some perspective of what they were to look
14 like, as well as whether it would be suitable for
15 their particular, and certainly we played that
16 role, and I do know that there was substantial
17 support from the city attorney's office and so
18 forth, and I think that there was influence also
19 from the K.U. leadership as well.

20 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right, and I was going to ask
21 you about that, in fact.

22 **MR. FLOYD:** Yes. There was considerable
23 leadership there because of the fact that many of
24 their students were complaining and having their
25 own difficulties, so it was a wide segment of the

1 population that was socially conscious about the
2 problems that really worked with each other, and
3 we had the statewide advisory council that also
4 played a role in supporting the local effort as
5 well.

6 (11:23:54)

7 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right. And you are bringing up
8 an important point when you mention that you all
9 at the state level were trying to make local
10 communities aware of laws that had put in place
11 elsewhere, because Lawrence very much looked at a
12 couple of the university cities in Iowa, Iowa City
13 in particular, as a model because it sort of was a
14 town with a similar demographic and so they very
15 much modeled theirs on Iowa City's, as well as
16 looking at Wichita as a model.

17 The university certainly played a role and
18 they had already gone through, both at the time
19 you were there and then afterwards there's some --

20 **MR. FLOYD:** Demonstrations.

21 **MR. ARNOLD:** -- demonstrations and later
22 football players, including a gentleman named Gale
23 Sayers, was involved in demonstrating against not
24 just discrimination in university housing in
25 particular, which I think they had already

1 addressed by that point, but one of the concerns
2 was housing in the community still being
3 segregated, opportunities not being offered to
4 African-Americans, and the university yet would
5 allow those landlords to advertise on campus and
6 so there was a big push for the university to ban
7 landlords who wouldn't rent to African-Americans
8 from being able to advertise on campus and in fact
9 they were successful with that, but when the
10 ordinance came up for consideration by the City
11 Commission both the vice chancellor wrote a letter
12 saying, you know, we very much support this, it
13 conforms with what is now university policy, and
14 then also, interestingly, Ted Owens, the
15 basketball coach, came forward and said, you know,
16 when I go out and recruit athletes I tell their
17 parents they're sending them to a town that they'd
18 be proud to have their son play sports in and, you
19 know, we need to make changes like this so that in
20 fact Lawrence will live up to, you know, a
21 reputation and be a place where people would want
22 their children to come.

23 So do you -- I take it, then, you feel that
24 the university, that influence was very important
25 in probably changing attitudes?

1 **MR. FLOYD:** Absolutely, absolutely, and also
2 the fact that the professionalism that the
3 university had in their professors and
4 administrators was very important. Now, I know
5 that there were demonstrations on campus for some
6 of those issues as well and I remember there was
7 one group took over the chancellor's office, if I
8 recall correctly.

9 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right, right, yes.

10 **MR. FLOYD:** So yes, the progress didn't come
11 without some kind of tension and some kind of
12 pushback, but at the same time it was good that so
13 many people were willing to get together, work
14 together, in order to push the community forward,
15 and I think this is a prime example of that.

16 (11:27:08)

17 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right. And in fact one of the
18 individuals I interviewed for this project told me
19 that frankly he didn't think Lawrence would have
20 been one of the first towns in Kansas to pass such
21 an ordinance if it hadn't been a university town
22 and kind of the diversity of points of view,
23 leading a lot of people to think this is wrong and
24 we need to change it.

25 **MR. FLOYD:** Absolutely, yes.

1 (11:27:30)

2 **MR. ARNOLD:** There was actually at the time
3 the Human Relations Commission in Lawrence was
4 working on drafting the Fair Housing Ordinance in
5 early '67, in the minutes of one of their
6 meetings, and I'll put you on the spot a little
7 bit here to see how good your memory is because it
8 was 50 years ago and you may not even remember
9 this, but according to minutes in the March, 1967,
10 Human Relations Commission it said that you had
11 met with the Lawrence real estate board to discuss
12 fair housing with them, and in fact Glenn
13 Kappelman, who was a member of the Human Relations
14 Commission and also a local realtor who supported
15 fair housing, was quoted as saying that you, Homer
16 Floyd, were well received and expected to be
17 invited to appear before the board again in the
18 future.

19 Do you remember meeting with the Lawrence
20 real estate board specifically on the Fair Housing
21 Ordinance and what their attitudes were when you
22 met with them?

23 **MR. FLOYD:** I do remember one meeting and
24 everything's a little fuzzy now in terms of some
25 of the personalities.

1 **MR. ARNOLD:** Sure.

2 **MR. FLOYD:** It was helpful that I had played
3 football and had had a name in the state, but --
4 so some would have, just on the matter of
5 courtesy, would have welcomed me, but I do recall
6 that there was some support in that group for,
7 particularly when we talked about how it would
8 function, how the ordinance would function, and
9 the kind of, the steps that would be taken after a
10 complaint would be filed and so forth.

11 I remember, you know, that kind of discussion
12 and asking for their support. Now, I have no
13 recollection of any vote or anything like that was
14 taken.

15 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right, right.

16 **MR. FLOYD:** But in that context I was well
17 received, yes.

18 (11:29:39)

19 **MR. ARNOLD:** Another interesting observation
20 that one of the people I interviewed made was, in
21 talking about the attitude of the realtors, that
22 some of the realtors they believed quietly
23 welcomed this because it gave them -- they really
24 wanted to bring about change, they felt that
25 change was right, but they felt like they needed

1 something, a framework that would allow them to do
2 it without necessarily it hurting their customer
3 base, whereas other realtors, whether through
4 prejudice, just innate prejudice, or the fact that
5 they were so concerned about the impact that it
6 might have on their business continued to be
7 opposed to it, but did you have that same
8 impression, that there were some who favored fair
9 housing but were reluctant to speak out because
10 they were afraid how it might hurt their business
11 but kind of quietly hoped that it would come to
12 fruition?

13 **MR. FLOYD:** Absolutely. There always was a
14 discussion if I do this so and so is going to use
15 it against me as it relates to whatever products,
16 you know, I'm selling or whatever, that it's going
17 to adversely affect my business, and of course our
18 position was simply that if you pass the ordinance
19 everybody will be under the same requirements and
20 the same process so therefore it is going to be
21 good for you. Said, "Yes, but I can't come out
22 and say that," and so there were that
23 undercurrent, in two ways, undercurrent to say
24 please do it, but there were others who was less
25 enthusiastic about it, yes.

1 (11:31:31)

2 **MR. ARNOLD:** Yes. And you wonder if that
3 same problem was even more pervasive just than in
4 the business world, because one of the interesting
5 things is, again, and much of the local Fair
6 Housing Coordinating Committee was very active not
7 only in pushing the issue up to the Human
8 Relations Commission but also kind of doing a
9 separate sort of public relations campaign in
10 favor of it. They had articles published in the
11 local paper in favor of fair housing and then they
12 also did a signature campaign and well over a
13 thousand people in Lawrence, and the City actually
14 sat down and mapped out the addresses of all these
15 people and found it was widespread all over the
16 city, not just, you know, in particular
17 neighborhoods, but there seemed to be pretty
18 broad-based support, but it does make you wonder
19 with that level of support were there a lot of
20 people who were just quietly in favor but
21 reluctant to speak out because they weren't sure
22 what their neighbors would think or whatever. Did
23 you find that not only in Lawrence but kind of
24 just generally in your civil rights work?

25 **MR. FLOYD:** Tom, that is a major problem even

1 today.

2 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right.

3 **MR. FLOYD:** Sometimes we use words and
4 phrases to stop our enemy or to block things
5 through scare tactics and so forth and it is -- we
6 are acculturated in such a way that the
7 experiences of whites growing up in their
8 neighborhood and their particular area, they are
9 acculturated along racial lines, as
10 African-Americans are.

11 We have our own situations that we have to be
12 concerned about, and nobody wants to get out there
13 and stand up and be the first to say this is not
14 right, we're going to stop this, and so forth,
15 because they don't want to be called names, those
16 dirty names that you get called when you're a
17 traitor, and so a lot of people would want to go
18 along with it but they don't want to be out front
19 leading it because of the consequences that they
20 feel they are going to have, and that is on all
21 groups, it's not just whites and blacks.

22 **MR. ARNOLD:** Sure.

23 **MR. FLOYD:** I mean, that's just the way it
24 is, and getting people to speak up and be
25 comfortable doing so is sometimes difficult.

1 (11:34:15)

2 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right. Yes, and again, many of
3 the people I have interviewed felt like that one
4 of the reasons it did pass fairly easily in
5 Lawrence is that there was pretty broad-based
6 support even if it wasn't necessarily apparent on
7 the surface, but once you put it forward very few
8 people, in fact during the actual hearings many,
9 many people from all different backgrounds came up
10 and spoke out in favor of the fair housing
11 ordinance and the only group that showed up was
12 one realtor and the lawyer who represented the
13 Board of Realtors were the only two who spoke out
14 against it and there seemed to be very little,
15 once it passed, consternation within the community
16 at all about that this major step had been taken.

17 Did you have a sense or did you observe in
18 your position at the state level that once the
19 ordinance was put in place in Wichita, Lawrence,
20 and it may have been done in other communities
21 than Lawrence after that, that noticeable change
22 came about, or was change often more slow in
23 coming and enforcement required to make sure that
24 change actually started to happen?

25 **MR. FLOYD:** Well, certainly change is slow

1 and in housing, since you've got to have, you've
2 got to qualify for loans and that kind of thing
3 the purchase of housing certainly was a slow
4 process in that change. Rentals was a little,
5 nothing was easy, but a little easier because, you
6 know, first you rent before you buy generally.

7 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right.

8 **MR. FLOYD:** And so there were more people who
9 were willing to take advantage of opportunities on
10 a rental basis, but even at that it was slow, and
11 I think social change in certain areas doesn't
12 happen overnight.

13 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right.

14 **MR. FLOYD:** It's a gradual evolutionary
15 process, and I think that's what we've seen, yes.

16 (11:36:26)

17 **MR. ARNOLD:** Let me just take a look at my
18 questions here and see what I may have missed that
19 I want to make sure that I ask you about.

20 Do you remember any, and I had mentioned
21 earlier, for example, Jesse Milan, but do you
22 remember any, do you have any observations of his
23 work and do you remember any other particular
24 individuals in Lawrence who you recall from that
25 time frame who were particularly active and

1 influential in helping to bring about change?

2 **MR. FLOYD:** Jesse, Jesse Milan I knew very
3 well. We were close friends. He was so valuable
4 to that community. When I got there he and
5 Alversa were the first African-Americans I met
6 from the community and he was pushing his own,
7 because he was I think the first teacher,
8 African-American teacher in the system as well, so
9 he had his own issues that he dealt with, but he
10 was always willing to listen and always willing to
11 reach out to us as students at the university and
12 in the community.

13 When the civil rights movement began to take
14 shape he was always right there with sound
15 leadership and sound suggestions as to how to get
16 things done. I had just a great deal of respect
17 and admiration for him because he was a true, I
18 think, positive leader in that community.

19 (11:38:05)

20 **MR. ARNOLD:** Good. A number of people have
21 also mentioned, and I don't have any names in
22 front of me, but different ministers in some of
23 the churches, both African-American and white
24 churches in Lawrence, also played key roles, if
25 not necessarily always highly public roles, but at

1 least roles in encouraging their congregations to
2 be more involved to try and bring about social
3 change. Do you remember any or do you just have
4 any impressions of their efforts and how important
5 it was?

6 **MR. FLOYD:** I am having difficulty
7 remembering the ministers but I do know that there
8 was some church leadership that was supporting the
9 efforts and there were, I remember some meetings
10 that we attended in which they were trying to
11 organize and strategize as to what should be our
12 next steps and so forth.

13 (11:39:00)

14 **MR. ARNOLD:** Sure. And sometimes it's
15 important to think of the churches as the
16 conscience of the community --

17 **MR. FLOYD:** Absolutely.

18 **MR. ARNOLD:** -- and their attitudes often
19 playing a big role in bringing about change.

20 Do you remember, also according to, and I
21 think this was actually in a newspaper article
22 that mentioned who appeared before the City
23 Commission in May, 1967, when they held their
24 hearing in which the proponents made the case for
25 fair housing, but it mentioned that you had

1 actually appeared and spoken on behalf as,
2 obviously, the director of the State Civil Rights
3 Commission. Do you remember that and do you
4 remember what kind of reception you got and how
5 receptive the City Commission seemed to be on the
6 issue?

7 **MR. FLOYD:** I vaguely remember because there
8 were several other communities in which, and
9 sometimes things run together.

10 (11:39:58)

11 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right. You probably did that
12 quite often.

13 **MR. FLOYD:** But I do remember supporting the
14 ordinance and I do -- I don't think that there was
15 a lot of vocal opposition. I don't remember, in
16 those settings I don't remember a lot of vocal --
17 I mean, there could be two or three people
18 speaking against but the overwhelming was a
19 positive support for the ordinance.

20 (11:40:30)

21 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right. And were you surprised
22 at all when it passed in Lawrence or were you
23 expecting that? Or do you even remember?

24 **MR. FLOYD:** It's just hard to say because
25 there were times at the state level in '67 that we

1 just knew we had the bill passed and then all of a
2 sudden something happened and somebody decided to
3 vote the other way and -- or make a parliamentary
4 move to block it, you know, so you never be too
5 confident on something like this.

6 (11:41:03)

7 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right. I can understand.

8 Do you have a sense of whether the passage of
9 the ordinance in Lawrence had any broader
10 influence within the state? Did it help with the
11 effort to get the state law, continue pushing
12 forward with getting the state law passed, did it
13 influence other communities, that you remember, or
14 do you have any recollection of that?

15 **MR. FLOYD:** Yes, I think that because Wichita
16 and certainly Lawrence, that helped for
17 legislators at the state level, for those two
18 communities, and I don't know of anybody else at
19 the time, but --

20 **MR. ARNOLD:** Topeka may have passed theirs, I
21 have to go back and look, before the state one was
22 passed. I know they were working on it at the
23 time that Lawrence's was passed.

24 **MR. FLOYD:** Right, and I just don't remember.

25 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right.

1 **MR. FLOYD:** But certainly for legislators
2 from the areas we could always point to that fact,
3 that it's already a law in your community so
4 therefore why wouldn't we want to make it for the
5 whole state?

6 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right.

7 **MR. FLOYD:** And that was an argument that
8 we've used, and I do think that there was an
9 influence, a positive influence to be able to
10 point to Lawrence and to Wichita, yes.

11 (11:42:34)

12 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right. Great.

13 Reflecting back on the roles you played in
14 the pursuit of civil rights in Kansas, what would
15 you say you are, what accomplishments are you most
16 proud of?

17 **MR. FLOYD:** I think the single most has to do
18 with the passage of the statewide fair housing. I
19 mean, that was just such an issue for a number of
20 years that we put a lot of emphasis and a lot of
21 attention to, because we had seen the positive
22 effects of the fair employment practices law, we
23 had seen the positive effects that it had, and we
24 just knew that if we could get the state passed it
25 would not only provide more opportunities but it

1 also would put people, give opportunities to
2 people who never had it before and put people into
3 communities, as well as in schools, that haven't
4 had contact before.

5 When I came to the University of Kansas as a
6 freshman some of my teammates from Kansas or rural
7 areas had never had contact with an
8 African-American in their lives and we went from
9 not knowing anything about each other, playing
10 three years, and then the fourth year, or playing
11 three years together, and I was elected co-captain
12 of the football team. That was, that was a long
13 ways we had come.

14 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right.

15 **MR. FLOYD:** And I think that the whole idea
16 of people having experiences with each other is so
17 important to breaking down the barriers.

18 (11:44:45)

19 **MR. ARNOLD:** Sure. Right. Absolutely.

20 **MR. FLOYD:** Sorry.

21 **MR. ARNOLD:** That's all right. One final
22 question. As we look at all the progress that's
23 been made but the obvious challenges we still
24 face, and we've seen, and I won't get into
25 politics here, but just in the last two or three

1 weeks people out in the street concerned about
2 changes that may come forward, but if young people
3 came to you as someone who's dedicated most of
4 your life to pursuing social justice and civil
5 rights what kind of advice would you give them as
6 to how to continue making progress and hopefully
7 keep us from slipping backwards?

8 **MR. FLOYD:** Well, I would say that we have to
9 recognize the importance of supporting diversity
10 and recognizing that people from different
11 cultures, different backgrounds, their major
12 objectives in life are pretty much the same, you
13 know.

14 We have families. We want to see our
15 families do well, and at the same time we want to
16 see our community, our nation, move forward, and I
17 think that the best way we can do that is
18 recognizing the value in each of us and respecting
19 that just because my experiences lead me to this
20 conclusion doesn't necessarily mean that I am
21 evil, I'm doing something to damage somebody else,
22 but also keeping in mind that we all should have
23 at least the same opportunity to whatever it is,
24 and some are going to fail, many will succeed, but
25 just recognizing that.

1 And, as I think I said earlier, an identical
2 set of circumstances can mean different things to
3 different people. It's what you've learned, what
4 your background has been, and also how these
5 events have shaped our history to some extent and
6 how -- and look at ways in which we can overcome
7 the nastiness of our democracy, and sometimes that
8 is difficult when you are in the storm, but at the
9 same time we've got to step back sometime and just
10 take a look at where we are and what is it that we
11 would like to be and whether or not we can be the
12 vessel to be able to carry that forward.

13 (11:48:08)

14 **MR. ARNOLD:** Right. Very good. I have come
15 to the end of my questions, but I wanted to give
16 you an opportunity if there's anything we didn't
17 cover that you think is important that you would
18 like to add.

19 **MR. FLOYD:** I think that the questions were
20 extensive.

21 **MR. ARNOLD:** Okay, good. Well, thank you
22 very much for your time.

23 **MR. FLOYD:** That's all right.

24 **MR. ARNOLD:** This was very worthwhile and
25 another great contribution to our project, so I

1 really appreciate it.

2 *****

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