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Interviewee: Daniel Harris
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Vincent Sauchelli:

Okay. My name is Vincent Sauchelli, and I am a student oral historian at Monmouth University. Today is February 4th, 2021. We are here today with Mr. Daniel Harris. He has agreed to be interviewed for the Paradoxical Paradise Asbury Park Oral History Project. This interview is being recorded with the permission of all participants.

I thought I'd get us underway asking you a little bit about yourself. You're a Neptune resident, born and raised. How can you describe what it has been like being born and raised in Neptune, New Jersey and residing there basically all your life?

Daniel Harris:

Well, first, I'm born, raised in Neptune and I lived in Asbury. When I left home, to go to Monmouth College, I actually moved into an apartment in Asbury Park, on Bond Street.

Vincent Sauchelli:

Okay.

Daniel Harris:

But Neptune is a diverse community, but while I was growing up, it was pretty much a segregated community. I lived what we called down the hill, which was an area which early in time was populated by Italians. Then it became a mixed population and eventually, it was mostly a black town, black area, but there was still Italian stores. I remember we would go to the Italian grocery store down the corner, to the Italian candy store. We had a local junkyard in the area which was owned by Italians, but for all intensive purposes, we all got along.

Vincent Sauchelli:

Cool.

Daniel Harris:

One of those reasons is because we were all on the same economic scale. Okay? I'm not saying we were in poverty, but nobody was basking in sunlight, as far as money is concerned. Where I lived, we all walked to school. There were no buses for us, which was unfortunate, but we all managed to survive. From K through sixth grade, I basically went to a segregated school with very, very few whites. Some white teachers, but I think the one thing that I took out of my experience, and it was actually called Ridge Avenue School, same street I live on now, I grew up on Heck Avenue, is that the black teachers in that school, towards they were very, very negative [inaudible 00:02:35]. We knew the struggle that we would be up against.

Because of the struggle, they were extremely strict with us. It wasn't like you might see portrayed on TV with kids screaming, hollering and acting like a bunch of fools. It was strict. The beauty of it is, we got eighth grade education. I was part of the first class that was integrated in the seventh grade, when we went to what was called Neptune Intermediate School, which was the old Neptune High School. The beauty of what the teachers did for us was that we had no problem competing, and we had no problem learning. I think one of the things everybody thought we were going to come in and we were going to be a bunch of stupid kids, we weren't. We were just as well versed in the three arts, reading, writing and arithmetic, and we had no problems adjusting academically.

Now, socially, that was a different problem, because as much as white kids didn't know a lot about us, we didn't know a lot about them either. It took a while for us to actually learn how to get along, but the one thing that we did find out rather quickly was that we were more accepted by lower middle class and poor whites than we were by basically upper class whites. Why? Because we had more in common. We would wear the same jacket to school everyday. We might only had like three, four, five outfits. It wasn't uncommon to see somebody who had cardboard on the bottom of their shoes in gym class. Like, "Yeah, I'm okay." [inaudible 00:04:16] on cardboard.

We grew up doing something that a lot of people didn't do. We put taps on shoes to make shoes last longer. Whenever we got new shoes, the first thing that happened with those shoes, and my parents really cared about us and they did a wonderful job of providing for us, if you put the shoes to the shoe man and they put taps on them. Now, what taps did is that made sure that the bottom of the shoe lasted longer. The heel would not wear down as far.

There were lots of things about growing up in Neptune, we lived on the border of Springwood Avenue and Asbury Park. But actually, most of my friends were in Asbury. And everything that we wanted basically, in reference to survival, existed on Springwood Avenue. We had clothing stores, our main one was called Fisher's. We had a shoe store, we had meat markets, we had two drug stores, we had barber shops, we had pool rooms, we had liquor stores. All that existed in the neighborhood.

As far as having to go to a mall or to a great shopping center, it really wasn't necessary. And the thing that you had to understand about little corner stores, is little corner stores were necessary to the survival of the neighborhood, because that's where you could get credit before there were credit cards. I can remember we went to a store called Miss Jenny's, last name was Motrano. And we were going in to have a stack of paper bags and a pencil, and when you would go in there, you would buy something and she'd write it on a paper bag, and then on Fridays, you would go back and you would pay her.

That way, my mother did not have to constantly ask my father for money for groceries. Like, "Go get me a loaf of bread and a quart of milk and a half a pound of baloney." "All right, that's good, mom. I'm out of here." You go get it, you come back home. But the beauty was is we was good kids. We didn't go down there and buy candy on that, because we knew that that was for food, for us.

So that was cool, but we grew up in that area, and school was within walking distance. And I will say this, as much as people want to bust kids all over the place, and how they populate areas, like New Jersey, ain't nothing like a neighborhood with a school, because when you have a

neighborhood school, there's pride in the neighborhood. Young people who can walk to school, you know who you're going to school with.

There is a time where you have to step up and expand. High school is plenty good for that, but as far as when you're talking about young people, young kids, you don't need to be just all over the place because we were highly successful. We knew we were black. There were some white people we had to deal with, but they were places where you learned to deal with white people. The YMCA, the Boy's Club, et cetera, et cetera. It's all good.

Vincent Sauchelli:

You might say that the locality and the closeness of your life growing up with the convenience stores and grocery stores, school, everything being so local and close together kind of built what you might say, a sense of identity, street smart character amongst you guys, right?

Daniel Harris:

Yeah. We knew who we were.

Vincent Sauchelli:

Okay. Now, you talked a little bit about high school. You attended Neptune High School, correct?

Daniel Harris:

Yeah.

Vincent Sauchelli:

And what could you tell me about your time there? When you were there, when you graduated, and some stuff like that.

Daniel Harris:

I went to Neptune at the height of the civil rights struggle. Okay? Don't say the height, let's say during the civil rights struggle. There was tension between some whites and some blacks, okay? There were fights behind the post office, fights in basketball games. I can remember one year, we had a fight after the Thanksgiving football game, and some of the guys wanted me to fight against Asbury. It was between Neptune and Asbury, and I wasn't getting in the fight because most of the guys that I hung out with went to Asbury, and I didn't want to fight my friends.

Neptune also had a thing called the Red and Black Association for girl [inaudible 00:08:51], which was an athletic type association, where it had a game at the end of the year. Now, the funny part about that was the black team basically was composed of black girls and lower middle class white girls. The red team was white girls. Okay? And there was a very, very... I'm not going to say contemptuous, but it was really tough competition between the two when they had the red and black games. Okay?

I don't know if that was something that served to help things, because the thing that they should have done was that they should have mixed the two teams together, and made them play together. That would have brought about a cohesiveness and learning how to get along. I

remember when I was supervisor of a camp in the summer, I had a group of Spanish and Black students that came from Long Branch and we had them in a place called Camp Fender out in Wall Township. And there was the regular camp [inaudible 00:10:03] kids there, and then there was our group there.

And one day they got into a fight, so I had to fix it. Everybody went, "Oh, we got to separate them, we got to separate them." And I said, "No, I'm not going to separate them." I said, "I'll fix this tomorrow." So the next day I came to camp, I had watermelons in the back of my car. And everybody said, "So what you going to do with the watermelons?" And I said, "Okay, well, the kids going to fight." And then they said, okay, [inaudible 00:10:26] Everybody was fighting.

So I lined them up, and I said, "Okay, I want everybody, all you white kids, count off one two, one two, one two, one two, one two." I said, "All you Spanish and black kids, come on back, count off one two, one two, one two." And everybody counted off one two. I said, "Okay, I want all the ones over there, I want all the twos over there." So then we had two mixed team. I said, "Okay, play soccer."

And they were mad, the white kids were mad because the Spanish kids were talking Spanish and I said, "Well, as much as they can't understand you and you can't understand them, now y'all got to learn how to communicate." We ended up playing soccer, and at the end of the soccer game, I said, "Okay, now let's sit down." And I cut a watermelon. And I said, "Anybody want to make jokes about black people eating watermelon?" And they all looked at me like, "What?" I said, "Ain't that many black people here, are they?" They said, "No." I said, "But all y'all eating watermelon." And they kind of looked at me like, "Damn."

So it's things like that, when you grew up like we grew up, you always came up with ways to calm situations down without having to fight. And that was the one thing that we learned, it was like, okay, a lot of times we could make jokes out of things but we'll never make jokes out of ourselves, because we took ourselves seriously. But we also learned how to fix things without having to beat each other up.

Now, to be able to fight was important, but it wasn't the only thing you did. A lot of teachers used to tell us, and I used to tell kids that when I became a teacher, "You are a greater threat to the enemy when he sees you with a book in your hand than if he sees you with a gun in your hand." [inaudible 00:12:14] I would say, "If a guy sees you with a knife or a gun or you may be a threat, you are what he expects. If he sees you with a book, and you're sitting on a bus reading, you are now a greater threat." And that's something that we learned in grammar school. It was good, because we took pride in being smart.

I actually remember winning a homeroom contest for current events, and when I won it, there were only two blacks in the entire school that placed in it, and I remember when they called my name, and I had to get up and walk out on the stage, all the black kids in the auditorium stood up and went crazy, screaming and hollering. And I looked at the other black kid, I said, "I guess we're kind of popular today." I ended up finishing second, and I never forget the question I missed, and I was in, I think, the seventh or eighth grade, was, who ran the Soviet Union? Who was head of the Soviet Union?

Well, I couldn't figure the difference between who was the head of the Communist Party and who was the president of Russia, but I knew it was Kosygin and Brezhnev, and because I couldn't break it down, I knew who it was but I couldn't tell which one was which one, I ended

up losing the contest. But a week later, I was walking down the hall, and I was acting like a seventh grader, and two teachers yelled at me. And one teacher yelled and looked at me and he said, "That's why you missed that question in the current events contest."

Now, me being who I am, I kind of looked at him and I said, "Hey, yo." He said, "What?" I said, "What about the 700 that was sitting out there in the seats?" And he looked at me like, "This smart ass." I went a-ha and I went on to class. But that's the only thing I did. Once again, that was a coping skill. How you cope. I'm not going to say anything to insult you, but I'm going to make you think.

In high school, same thing. Playing football, freshman year, coach came to us and I'll never forget, we were playing Middletown. And the coach sat us down and he told the black guys, he said, "I want you guys, when you got on the field, these guys are probably going to call you niggers. But I don't want you to go do anything stupid, I just want you to play football real hard." And here I go again and I looked at the coach and I said, "Look, coach, why don't you do yourself a favor?" He said, "What?" I said, "Why don't you call the other coach and tell them don't call us niggers?"

And he looked at me like, [inaudible 00:14:53] He was a white guy, I'm a black kid and I'm saying, why do I have to take an insult and then have to be less of a man and take that insult? That's how we grew up. We grew up questioning things. There was a demonstration in high school for black teaching, for all black courses, which they're still doing now. You still have [inaudible 00:15:26] in New Jersey, where the schools teach more stuff about black people. We weren't taught that. The only thing we learned about in high school about black people when I was in school, when I graduated in 1970, was when Lincoln freed the slaves.

And they didn't even tell us some things great, like Crispus Attucks was the first black person to die in the Revolutionary War. They didn't even tell us that. We were like, "You could have told us that." We didn't learn about Black Wall Street. We didn't learn about black inventors. We only were told that Eli Whitney developed the cotton gin. So what? What's that mean about us? We were the ones picking the cotton, we know that.

We learned in spite of ourselves, where some teachers were definitely prejudiced, but the beauty about that again was that the black teachers who taught us, and I give kudos, especially when I was seventh and eighth grades, to two teachers. Tonya Marshall and Sidney Wells. They were hard on us for a reason. And we survived because of that. Grammar school, a lady named Miss Easton and another woman named Miss Anthony. Nobody wanted to take their classes, but there was a reason we had to take it, because the one thing that I can still do today is I can write.

And when I went to college and I wrote some stuff, and I went to Monmouth, and I'll never forget, this teacher read my stuff in class, and after she read it, everybody was trying to figure out who wrote it. Now, this was back in 1971, 72. I was at Monmouth College. And all of a sudden, everybody turned around and it was the little black guy sitting in the back of the class who wrote it. Everybody looked at me like, "Damn, you wrote that?" I'm like, "Yeah." But it was only because while we were growing up, we knew how to write.

When I got to Monmouth, I was like, "All right, what? You want a story written? Yeah, no problem." And we knew how to do it. We give kudos to that, and it was a good part about going to Neptune high school because we learned how to get along, and that's one thing that here in the United States, you see some of, but right now, you see less of. January 6th, that's going to

live in infamy like 9/11. The day that America truly was divided and why was it divided? It was divided basically based on lies.

And that's the whole key about education, especially education of all children. I believe this so deeply in my heart, because I taught a couple years in a white school in Sparta, and then after that, I taught all black. Like in Newark, and I also taught at Job Corps. But in history, and in all education, if we shared our commonalities, our successes, and our failures, then we would learn that everybody has something good to share and something bad to share.

I can remember laying on the table with my massage therapist, and she started bad mouthing the Black Panther Party, and I said to her, I said, "Why you bad mouthing the Black Panthers?" "Well, they were militant." I said, "Whoa, whoa, whoa." I said, "Black Panthers, they had guns, right?" "Yeah." I said, "So did the NRA. Okay? That's the amendment, First Amendment. The right to carry arms." And I said, "The Black Panther Party had child care centers, and those childcare centers were free to the neighborhood and when they brought the young people in there, they fed them, they helped them with their homework, they taught them and they also taught them finding themselves as black people."

I said, "Now, where do we do some of that stuff?" I said, "Basically, feeding and teaching and preparing them for school is part of Head Start. Head Start program." I said, "When you have young people that go to a Catholic school, what do they learn? They learn about school and they learn about religion. When you have kids that they go to Jewish schools, they learn about school, but they also learn about being Jewish." And I said, "Not just the learning, the faith." I said, "So you teach somebody that, not just to give them their A, B's and C's, but to give them a cultural and social foundation that they can be proud of."

When I was a teacher at Newark, and I taught auto body, young people still had to do papers. And I told them, when they did their papers, I said, "Okay, this month, we're going to do a paper on some inventor who did something." And they would look at me and they'd go, "Yeah, whatever." I said, "Don't bring me no white people. Find somebody black or Spanish who did something in this area. Bring it back to me." What that did, that fostered pride in one's self.

We used to have black history contests during Black History Month, and I used to get McDonald's and Burger King and everybody to donate lunch things from when if you got the ticket, you got to go there and get a free lunch, and then we had the black kids big question of the day. That was the hottest thing that happened for the whole month. And here, it was so big, we had to shift to the next month, Women's History Month. And get our stuff.

Now, what we were doing, and I don't care if the kids went on the phones and looked for the answer. What we were doing, we were educating young people in themselves, but we were having fun doing it. And that might be the key to things today. We are so hung up on tough tests and how do you do this, and how do you do that. We can teach all that stuff, but we can make it fun for them at the same time, and instill pride in one's self.

Okay, what's your next question be?

Vincent Sauchelli:

I guess we can move on. I want to ask you a little bit about your time at Monmouth College. What degrees did you pursue and what made you want to pursue those degrees?

Daniel Harris:

Okay. I went to Monmouth. Okay, I got my Associate of Arts in 72, and my Bachelor's in 74, and my Master's in 78. Master's was in business administration. My father had a body shop, and I said, "Well, I need to know how to run a business." [inaudible 00:22:23] At that point in life, I didn't want to be a teacher. I said, "I'll get that."

So I managed to finish through all three degrees. Now, it took me four years to get my MBA because I had to work. I had a body shop at that point. So I went to school in the daytime, fixed cars and painted cars, [inaudible 00:22:44] cars and at nighttime, I went to Monmouth University to get my Master's. It also allowed me to have enough money, because the financial aid that you got for a Master's degree was not the same financial aid that you got for a Bachelor's degree. So I had to save up enough money to go.

So, it might have been one time I had to miss a semester, but it was cool. I still managed to get my Master's degree in 78. That's alright with me. That's all I wanted to do. But I eventually shifted when I decided I wanted to become a teacher, but I had to go back to Rutgers because I was teaching at Job Corps and I had to jump the fence and go take classes. And that's how I got my teaching certificate.

And then eventually, I wanted to be an athletic director, so I went back to Rutgers and got my supervisor's paper at Rutgers graduate school education, which was cool, but the good thing about the Monmouth MBA, I got to wait for a lot of credits when I went to Rutgers, based on what I did at Monmouth.

It was cool, but Monmouth was all right. I had already been to Neptune, so I knew how white people were. Going to Monmouth and seeing white people, it wasn't no problem. But I was in it for a little different reason, I wasn't there for the college like all of them, because I wanted the degree. I would go to school from eight to 12, and then I would leave school immediately and go work at my father's body shop.

And eventually, he no longer wanted the body shop. He looked at me and said, "I'm leaving this business, but if you want to take it over, you can take it over. And that way you could still feed your family." And for a young guy, that was a big challenge, but I did it, and I can thank Monmouth for a lot of that business, not just the MBA but just the accounting and the management and all that stuff. I learned that. Now, I need to feed my family for another good time because I decided to become a teacher.

Vincent Sauchelli:

Okay.

Daniel Harris:

Yeah.

Vincent Sauchelli:

What was it like working for your father at such a young age, and what might have been the most difficult or challenging at running a business at a young age and balancing between school and work like that?

Daniel Harris:

I started work when I was 11 years old. I used to sweep floors, sand cars, learn how to tape and by the time I was ready to take the business over, I was good in everything except straightening frames, I ended up painting my behind off. I learned how to make money. There were times when I would have to go pick up paints and supplies, and I used to do it on a bicycle. And my dad, God bless his soul, put a basket on the front of my bicycle. And when I went to pick the stuff up, I used to put it in the basket, and then I would ride it back to the shop.

Not only did I learn about hard work, but I learned why I got to have supplies and you got to pay for them, and then I learned how to make estimates, and a lot of stuff that a lot of people would use the calculator for, I managed to do in my head because that's how you do it. And it made me smart. I don't know if it made me smart, but it made things easy for me. When people start talking figures, even now, it's easy to talk figures because I know how to do it in my head and I never, ever turned to a calculator or nothing like that.

But as far as math, the hardest part of being a business is managing people. The quality control and what you have to do, that's easy. Managing people is difficult, man, because everybody is different. And people have problems. A lot of people drink. I had one guy who worked for my dude, and then he worked for me, he was a Vietnam vet and he went through a lot of stuff. He's dead now, his name was Jimmy. Jimmy Goodridge, and I miss him to the day, because he used to tell me stories about Nam. I was like, "How the hell do you go through that, man?"

But the thing that he appreciated, when my dad died, he came up to me and said, "I'm thankful your father gave me a job when I came home from Vietnam." And I was like, "I appreciate that, man." And a couple guys did that. So I learned at a young age what these guys were going through, but I never had to go through the war. Now, why didn't I go to Vietnam? One, because my father didn't want us to go to the Army. But even though my father was the driver for General George Patton, and he didn't want his sons to go into the Army. He got a Purple Heart, but he said he thinks that the biggest word Patton ever used while he was driving for him was nigger. He said, "Based on the way he treated me, I did not want my sons to be treated like that."

So he told us, "I don't want you guys to join the Army." And he actually became the first black on the draft board in Monmouth County, and he told us both straight up, "You don't want to go in the Army." I said, "[inaudible 00:28:23] don't like it either." He said to me, "Then go to college and make sure you keep [inaudible 00:28:27] and there are other ways to serve your country and help your people."

And I was almost going to go into the Peace Corps. Then my girlfriend got pregnant and that was the end of that. I had to stay back. And I stayed, and we had a child, my daughter, Nicole. My wife's name is Emily and Nicole, right now, is actually, she's 40 and she's working on her Doctorate. So I guess we did a good job, as far as she's concerned. We still argue, "I have a Master's, you got a Master's, ha-ha." And now she's talking about, "I'm working on my Doctorate, daddy."

You know it was like one up. Who needs your papers? But the hardest part, like I said, being in business and going to college, the homework wasn't nothing, I could do that. It was just controlling your time. But dealing with people? People who were older than me, working for me. People who I had who had substance abuse problems, but I hired them anyway because I felt

sorry for them. People who would steal from me. "Okay, man, I'll let you go because you stole from me."

Customers who would come in and would say, "Okay, your car is \$300." And they would come in with \$200, then they'd say, "Would you please let me have my car and I'll pay you in two weeks?" And then you never see them again. So you're holding the car and then they'll actually try to steal the car so long as you didn't have a fence there.

Those were tough things. People coming to work late, and when you have a business, especially when I was young, there were times, and I think that's one of the reasons I became a vocational teacher, because I had [inaudible 00:30:12] young people. But there were times when I would pay everybody else and I wouldn't pay myself. Now, when you do that, and you have a wife and a child, it's like, "Oh no, I gotta stop this." Especially when there's a huge shop down the street that's getting most of the insurance work, and I was surviving off of fixing the poor people's cars.

It was difficult. That's what was difficult, and that's when I made up my mind. A friend of mine named Cal Wilson, [inaudible 00:30:45] Cal Wilson. If you go to Freehold Regional High School, that's the name of the gym. The Cal Dean Wilson Memorial Gym. He told me, he said, "Look, young blood," he said. He was my sister's friend. He said, "Job Corps needs a teacher. Why don't you go there and see what you can do?"

So I got in my car one day and I drove to Job Corps. And I got a job and I was making 7.50 an hour. If you can imagine going to work, and I had gave my wife my car, so I had to catch a ride from my sister, who worked in East Brunswick, and then catch a train home. If you can imagine doing that to raise a family, it's like, okay. But it was probably the best decision of my life I ever made, because I'm retired. I'm 69 now, I retired at 61, with a pension, with social security, with income property.

The material things, yeah, it's cool. I got two nice cars and my wife and I go on vacation, except right now with COVID, we ain't going nowhere. Life is good. But growing up in a humble way taught me that I didn't have to have the best of everything. I didn't need the half a million dollar house to survive. You need a bedroom, you need a kitchen, you need a driveway and you need good transportation.

Also, the one thing that I skipped over when we talked about the neighborhood, is that in black neighborhoods, there's always a church. You come to Asbury, there's over 30 churches in Asbury. Okay. And I'll say 20 of them black churches. Okay? The rest of them are Catholic and that's about it, man. But those churches, going to Sunday school and being made to go to church and having the fear of God put in you, actually gives you a spiritual strength that nobody can take away from you.

If you look at Civil Rights struggles, the Civil Rights struggle started in the South, and in the churches in the South. So we were close to that, and I can remember during the Civil Rights struggle, marching on the boardwalk in Asbury Park. For rights for black people. Black people weren't allowed on the boardwalk in certain areas of Asbury, and then when you went to Belmont, we kind of had to hang out by 15th Avenue.

There were big things that happened down here that we don't like to talk about. It hurts to talk about it, but it made us strong people. Things like going to the movies and we sat here and they sat there. It was kind of rough, but we had great things. We had grown up in Asbury, if you

ever get a chance, get Madonna Carter's book about West Side Story. It's actually two volumes, and you'll see things that we shared in the black community.

We had drill team competitions in Convention Hall, where people came from all over the Northeast to drill at the Asbury Park Convention Hall. They still have a thing called Monmouth County Cotillion which was like a Debutante Ball. It was a big thing to be in it. Inside Convention Hall, we had track and field. People used to run around the top of Convention Hall, if you can imagine that. Those things were cool growing up there, basketball at Convention Hall. Those are things that we enjoyed and was part of our growing up process, but it was also things that we remember to the day.

I've been to Lakewood [inaudible 00:34:52] volleyball and track, and I was talking to one of the coaches, and he looked at me and we remembered each other and I said, "Remember when the teams would walk in the Convention Hall and they would walk past the stands and we'd all stand up and scream and holler and cheer?" And they were like, "Yeah, they were the good old days." And those were the things that we remember and we don't have anymore.

Identity based on where you live. In athletics, so many of our young people get pulled away to private schools and all that other stuff to play football and basketball, soccer has soccer camp, but when you have a community and a town which has a great deal of pride, not just in their schools but in their athletes and stuff like that, it just creates a closeness that lives forever. And that's not a black white thing, man. That is what it is.

Because we've been separated, now you got confederate flags, and people in Newark actually get mad at confederate flags. My wife's from down South. I've been down there where they all put confederate flags all over the place. I'm like, "This is South Carolina. What I'm going to do? Come take your flag down?" I can remember being in Charleston, and in the middle of Charleston is a statue of John Calhoun.

Now, you remember John Calhoun. He was vice-president of the United States, but his name was John Killer Queen Calhoun, and he was a slave owner. And it's right in the middle of Charleston. And you say, "Darn, how can they have this guy in the middle?" But that's their way of living down there. They're trying to change it. The younger generation is trying to change it, but that's who they are. And I don't know if we can ever change who they are as much as we can learn to say, "This is who you are, but this is who I am. And can we at least respect each other? And love each other? Because my daughter might want to marry your son one day."

We talked about the old body shop, on why did I want to become a teacher, right?

Vincent Sauchelli:

Yes. I was going to go into, you kind of alluded to it, what made you want to become a teacher? And if you could tell me about what it was like teaching.

Daniel Harris:

Being a teacher?

Vincent Sauchelli:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Daniel Harris:

It was fun.

Vincent Sauchelli:

Okay.

Daniel Harris:

It was fun. First thing I was teaching was the Job Corps. And that's when I learned that not everybody in Job Corps could read. That was at the end of the Vietnam War, we also had a lot of guys that came in from Vietnam, who were coming into the United States. We had a lot of people from the Virgin Islands. That's where I learned to call the Virgin Islands the VI. And it just gave me a well rounded thing of as poor as we are in the United States, there's poorer people than we are.

I left, then I went to Sparta to teach auto body. Sussex Tech, only black teacher in the school with about three black kids. Boy, oh, boy. Was that like, "Woo hoo." It was hard dealing with the prejudices of a lot of people. Hard, man. And it was even harder getting past the prejudices of some of the kids, because they brought the feelings that their parents had into the classroom, and they would say stuff to me like, "Yeah, just wait till I get home and get my father." I'm like, "Well, go get him. He ain't going to say anything to me."

But the thing that really blew me away, and this is what we talk about, differences in lifestyle. Because one day, I went to the principal's office and I see this dude just drove into the parking lot with a gun in the back of his truck, and he said, "Harris, it's deer hunting season. These kids carry guns all the time." I'll never forget, I came in the class one time and there was a teacher, his name was Dixon. And he was skinning a deer in the middle of a welding shop, because the kid, he got a roadkill, and he didn't want to waste the meat.

So that was my two years at Sussex Tech. From Sussex Tech, I went to Newark and that's where I spent 28 of 33 years teaching there. They're two different schools, and my last school was Newark Tech, where I spent 25 years, and I taught autobody and I was the VICCA advisor, and yes, I eventually became the athletic director and the attendance person.

Newark is like Asbury, only it's multiplied by 100. Okay? One thing you have to understand is black people are everywhere. In hard times, they're everywhere. But I had a good time in Newark. Okay? I enjoyed the kids. A lot of them are still my friends today. I have been to weddings, I have been to christenings and everything. I've stood in line, I've filled out applications. I'm still like, "I need a recommendation, just call me, tell me where to send it and you got it."

And it's been fun watching these kids grow up, because now, a lot of them are teachers and successful businessmen. Two of them are playing in the NFL. One is playing for the Colts, matter of fact. I remember when he got drafted number two. I was like, "A-ha." But that was crazy. One of them is very close to me now. She's at Pitt, but she ran for Clemson. And one of the biggest things I had was going down to Clemson to visit her and seeing the show and watch them play football. Oh my god. Okay, we're going to a Clemson football game.

But when I taught, especially in Newark, and especially with athletics, I always wanted to take the young people to see things that they had never seen. I was a teacher when Obama got

elected. The first one, my church went to. We took the kids from my church to Obama's inauguration, which was fabulous. And then when he got elected again, much to the chagrin of Mitch McConnell, we had buses from the school go down to the inauguration.

But to understand where these young people at Newark came from, one kid looked at me and said, "Mr. Harris." I said, "What up?" He said, "Do you notice these people on top of those buildings with guns?" And I never paid attention to it. And I'm a pretty tough guy, but I looked up, I was like, "My gosh. Look at that." But they enjoyed the experience.

Now, we went to [inaudible 00:42:24] the second time around, and I'll never forget. They cheered like hell for Sotomayor when she walked out. They went crazy, especially the Spanish kids. Which means, hey, they're paying attention. They cheered for Obama. They booed for Clarence Thomas. Okay? Because he was Uncle Thomas. But they knew that Clarence Thomas was pretty much a Conservative who always said everybody had to come up the hard way and who forgot his trip. But they knew all that. And they knew it, and they respected the fact. And let's go to the Smithsonian. Let's check out the Smithsonian before we leave.

Those things, I enjoyed doing. I enjoyed being a VICCA advisor as vocational industrial [inaudible 00:43:17] because that taught us that not everybody's built to go to college. And they'll slap a trade competition, where kids went and they painted cars and they fixed engines and they did bakery and girls did beauty culture or guys too, and electronics and computers. And I always liked that, because I actually had beef with the principal one time. He wanted everybody to go to college and I said, "Everybody ain't built for college." 50% of the people in America are going to do what their parents do. Your daddy's a baker, you're going to be a baker. If your daddy went to college, you're going to go to college.

Now, my father didn't go to college but he demanded because his children did. He was the exception. Three out of four of us did go. Doing that teaching was fun. As an athletic director, taking those kids whenever I could take them on the East Coast, especially my track team. I went up to my basketball team and my baseball team, they're like, "The coach said that we skipped our game in Pennsylvania." [inaudible 00:44:25] Yeah, let's go.

We used to do stuff with Great Adventure to raise money, where they would pay us, and my kids were so street smart that they used to do this. They would give you free tickets to come back to Great Adventure, but my kids were like, "Okay, we'll do that." But when they used to get lunch, they used to go in, take off their work clothes, walk out, get their hands stamped, come back in with their hand stamps so they could hang out at the park when they got off work, and then they'd go back to Newark and sell their tickets. Which I said, "Okay. That's being an entrepreneur. I ain't mad at you."

What our teams, especially our track teams, we traveled to Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina. We were going to nationals at North Carolina A&T. We went to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina early in the season because eventually, we were good and we won five state championships, so I spoiled them. I said, "You don't have to run early in season in the cold, let's go down to South Carolina now." So they raised money, we went to South Carolina and ran.

But it gave them the opportunity to learn how to pack, learn how to live away from home for a week, and to see something they never saw before. A lot of schools on The Penn Relays, which is the largest track meet in America, a lot of schools just put their kids on the bus, take them down there, let them run, put them back on a bus and take them home. I would let my kids go down there for the whole three, four days. Stay at a hotel, get to talk with kids from other

colleges, make sure that college boys didn't try to take my girls to dinner or nothing like that, but I was making plans with chaperones.

But it gave them the opportunity to be at a great college, to see an abundance of schools from all over the United States, an abundance of track athletes from all over the world, and to realize that the world is a whole lot bigger than North New Jersey or Asbury Park, and to give them an experience that would live with them a lifetime. And the thing that really made me proud was going into a track in New York and seeing a lot of them run for different schools. Going to Penn Relays four years later after I retired and seeing a lot of them run. I was even prouder when I would see that they graduated from college, and they would send me pictures and say, "Ha-ha, I did it." And I'm like, good.

And that's the joy of being a teacher, man. Like I said, as a black person here, I have a tendency to want to educate black people. And as a white person, I don't get mad if y'all too want to educate white people. But if we could put all that BS aside and educate each other, we'd be a lot better off. Too bad it took me until after I retired to understand that.

Well, where we going from now?

Vincent Sauchelli:

I think I've followed that up. You did a good job explaining about what you did throughout the course of your career. Obviously, you were an advocate for showing your students things they couldn't see and giving them opportunities to do things that they wouldn't of been able to do by themselves. I wanted to ask, throughout that process, how did that make you feel and did you think about... You talked about the lifelong experience. Was that something that was in the front of your mind while you did all that kind of stuff?

Daniel Harris:

It was to give it to them. You don't realize what they give to you until after the fact. It's seeing them be happy, it's seeing them experience something that they never knew they experienced. I had a kid one time, I brought him down here to Belmar. I took him to a body shop called Joe's Garage. And the guy said, "Why you want to do that?" And the thing inside of me was I wanted them to see the ocean.

And the kid named Spud looked at me and he said, "Mr. Harris, how big is the ocean? And what's on the other side from here?" And I looked at him, and I said, "Portugal." And he said, "That's in Europe." I said, "Yeah. Okay? So it's a couple thousand miles, there's more water than you could drink, and I don't swim well enough. Okay?" So he was like, "All right, bro." He at least got to see the ocean, because he had never seen it before.

And then when I was the AD, I scheduled a softball game between my girl's softball team and Asbury Park's. Now, the reason I did is because my girls were the worst team in Essex County and Asbury Park girls were the worst team in Monmouth County. Asbury girls treat us like we stole something. I remember one guy, he'd tell Asbury scored to run, he'd set off and he'd get his horn. Well, these girls would make him run til his battery was dead when it was time to go home.

After that, what I did was I took them down to the beach and fed them pizza and stuff, and all of a sudden, a couple of the teachers saw the Stone Pony. They're like, "Wait a minute. Is that the Stone Pony?" Yeah. "That's where Bruce Springsteen and Southside Johnny..." Yeah,

yeah, yeah. That's where Bruce... yeah, the Stone Pony. I've been there to see Funkadelic and Clinton and that bunch, but they were so excited. Teacher was equally excited. Just to see that. Just to see, "Wow, we have [inaudible 00:50:11]."

But a white teacher asked me, she said, "Why in the hell would you want to live up in Newark?" I said, "I don't want to live in Newark. I want to live here. I'm a mile and a half from the ocean. I'm happy." But I ended up living in Newark because of the pension system. Once you in it, you don't leave it.

What you get out of it is what you give to the young people. If you teach for money, don't do it. Because you'll end up teaching day school, night school, coaching, just to make ends meet. I can remember seeing some of my teachers pumping gas when I was growing up, and I realized if they can do it, I can do it. But it's the reward when it's over, it's getting that. What the kids give you is just as important as what you give them. And I mean that.

The one thing about young Spanish people is that if you give them a ride home, they say, "Come in and meet my mother." And you do. And then you sit down and you have dinner. And all of a sudden, there's a bar. I'd work kids here in the summer, and had them work in camp with me just to get them out of Newark. And I see some of those kids today, and even the ones from Long Branch because when we did Long Branch, we had to hire kids from Long Branch too. And I see them now. I see them in churches, I see them as teachers and they still remember those times they did camp counsels.

You have to teach young people responsibility, but you have to let them enjoy the moment. And don't be so smart. The one mistake teachers make is they try to impress people with how smart they are. You can impress somebody with how smart you are and they're not going to learn a doggone thing. But if you can figure a way to teach them, then you can show how smart you are and how much you can teach them. By the time they leave, they may know more than you do. That's the beauty of it. Okay.

Vincent Sauchelli:

Okay. Now we can transition a little bit back to, I want to talk about your father. You said he was a black businessman around these parts of Monmouth County and he was the first black man to serve on the local draft board in Asbury. What could you tell me about his time doing that?

Daniel Harris:

I remember a lot of people used to call him up, and I used to sit there and listen to them sing their song about why they didn't want to go, and it had really little to do with the fact that they hated America, even though for a lot of black people, that was good enough reason anyway. But it was that they had stuff to do. They had a mother to support, they had a family to support. Some were conscientious objectors, but the biggest thing I remember about my dad was that he would give everybody a job.

At that point, you're talking Vietnam. Ain't nobody want to go to Vietnam. You had people running to Canada. Nobody wanted to go, man. I remember when I got out of high school, when the Marine Corps guy came in and then one of my friends asked how many Marines went to Vietnam, and the guy said, "90 something percent." And a bunch of us went down and made sure we had college prep courses. So we just stayed in college.

But what he taught me was, that man had me working for \$5 a week when I started out. Then I went up to 10, then I went up to 15, but that was okay, because it taught me how to save money. But the draft board, I can't give you a flowery picture because unfortunately, TV has painted it with draft dodgers and all this other stuff. Man, everyone was scared. They didn't want to go. They would tell you very simply... Muhammad Ali summed it up when he said, "I ain't have no problem with those Viet Cong, y'all treat me worse than they ever treated me." That was true.

That was the war that was on TV. Nobody wanted to die. I got to say, everybody want to go to heaven, don't nobody want to die. Nobody wanted to die. And people were coming back. In high school, there was one guy from Neptune, last name was Beady and there was another guy from Asbury, his name was Collin. Both of them died in Vietnam. I remember when the girl, the girl's name was Delle Beady, and when she was crying that day when they found out her brother got killed, and it was like, "Damn, man. This ain't right."

When dad was on the draft board, it was an honor in the black community for him to be on the draft board, because blacks weren't on the draft board. You just went in, you sat in front of a bunch of white people and tried to tell them why you didn't want to go without understanding there was a reason. Especially if somebody's trying to support a family, or some guy, 16 years old, got a girl pregnant and now he's got a baby, and now he gotta support her and the baby.

Back in those days, you didn't make a kid and run out. If you made a kid, you took care of it. That's about it. I can't give you plenty of stuff about the draft board, I just know he was on it.

Vincent Sauchelli:

Well, it seems like he did a good job and him being black on the board that was mostly made up of white people gave it a unique perspective as well. I want to talk about a little bit, you're obviously a man of service as well, I want to ask you what it was like during your time as the co-chairman of the deacon ministry at the Second Baptist Church in Asbury Park.

Daniel Harris:

I still co-chair as deacon currently.

Vincent Sauchelli:

Currently.

Daniel Harris:

Yeah. Right now, I'm not in church. We do virtual church, in Asbury Chapel. They're recording church right now tonight. I had the security make some phone calls because we pass out communion Saturday for people to come and pick it up, and then virtually do communion, but they want to have the bread and the grape juice, so we have to pass it out on Saturday. But it brings you closer to God.

The thing that you have to talk about, and you don't have to be a deacon to deal with that, but you have to talk about your relationship with God. Do I pray? Do I do devotion? Do I pray during good times as well as during bad times? Do I carry myself in a way where people know that I am a religious man? That's more important than being a deacon.

Being a deacon, yeah, we got benevolence, we help people out. People sometimes have rough times paying [inaudible 00:57:50] their electric bills, stuff like that. Recently, because we're not supposed to talk about a lot of things because you're supposed to be humble, but we fed a lot of people, helped a lot of people without getting into the particulars, and that's part of me being a deacon. Funerals and praying with people.

We have a one or two week break right now, but we have what's called 30 Days of Prayer. 30 to 31 days of prayer where we pray every night from 6:30 to seven o'clock. And people come in, and they ask us to pray for certain things and a lot of people, and sometimes we're done by seven and sometimes we're done by 7:30. I love that. I miss that right now, because it brings people closer to God. Some people don't want to do it, because they say, "Well, they're going to ask me to pray." We will ask you to pray, but if you can't, that's all right. We'll pray for you or we'll pray with you.

It just makes your spiritual connection that much tighter. Just realize that, and my daughter's a pastor, why people have a church. They have to learn that a church is just not the building, but the church is what [inaudible 00:59:21] in you outside the building. And you have to be proud of that, and you have to carry God wherever you go. Okay?

Vincent Sauchelli:

Okay. Now, I also read a little bit that you were on the Asbury Park planning board. Are you still on the planning board and what does that entail of?

Daniel Harris:

Planning board? You know what, I am still on it. You want to build a house. According to the city, that house can take up approximately 25% of that yard, that property that you're on, and you want to build a house and you want to bring it up to 30%. Your setback is supposed to be 15 feet, your setback that you have is 10 feet. You have to come in front of the zoning board and you have to put your points so that we can make adjustments or tell you what you have to do so you can build that house or rehab that house.

You want to take a one family house and make it into a three family house. You want to take a three family house and make it into a one family house. That's what we do at the zoning board. It gets a little crazy sometimes, because some people try to sneak stuff in and they lie a lot. Well, the thing that that's taught me is that Asbury is still a divided community. You have the Southwest Park [inaudible 01:00:49], which is basically the poor section where I live. Not saying that we don't have nice houses. I got a real nice house. Most of the houses on my street are pretty good, very nice houses.

Then you have people who come in, who try to beat people out of their houses. There's two types of land. You have a land baron, you have barren land. You have land barons who come in and make it barren land, for some strange reason, or they take a house and then they buy it for 10,000 and rip off the old lady who's living there and then they sell it 100,000 two weeks later. A lot of things, what are you doing with that house? I can't stop you from doing it but I can make you fix it up. I don't care what color you make your roof, as long as it's nice.

If you have a driveway, do you know that there's laws on how wide your driveway has to be?

Vincent Sauchelli:

Uh-uh.

Yeah. Okay. It's a minimum of 10 feet, but say you only got eight feet. Okay? Then you got to come to us and say, "Can I build a driveway?" And then we got to say, "Well, how close is it to your neighbor's neighborhood, and how close is it to the property line?" And we got to give out what's called use variances. Stuff like that.

You have to study that stuff, but it's all right. Now, my experience, the time I've been there, I've been pretty much the only black on there. That has been a struggle, because Asbury Park is over 50% black, and I consider it an insult that I'm the only black who's on the board.

It has afforded hard times. Me and the head of the zoning board have had really violent arguments. He and them are more [inaudible 01:02:43], but there used to be a time where I would say something and I would get interrupted. And sessions are recorded, and it wasn't until one night I went off and basically told the chairman, the vice chairman and everybody else who was sitting there, "As long as you live, don't you ever cut me off while I'm talking. Do all of you understand?"

And when I came out of there, people were like, "Way to go, man." I was like, "Really, y'all pay attention to that stuff on TV?" They were like, "Yeah." And we were like, "How much of that stuff you going to take?" But it was the difference between being nice and saying you got to respect me, and I had to fight like hell to make them respect me.

But then there are things that you can do for the community which are pretty cool. There's a mosque on the other end of Ridge Avenue, and they had been going back and forth for years to turn this restaurant-bar into a mosque. And when I came in, it was on the board. One night I came in and they were being heard. And all of a sudden, when I sat down, I saw these guy's faces light up. I was like, "What the hell?" But it was only because they felt that they finally had somebody on their side, who wasn't going to put them through the wringer.

So I made sure that I studied up on what the requirements as dictated by their religion for a place of worship, and what I found out was that their requirements were stricter than the city's requirements. So finally, once I studied up on them, I was in a meeting one day. I said, "I don't know why we busting their butts, because they cannot do our requirements because the requirements that they have not only satisfy what we want, but it's stricter than what we require. So why are we busting their humps?"

And it was nice to see these guys on the street and see them look at me and say thank you. Or one time, there was a beef... There was a big one, man, there was a big one. That one started on charter schools in Asbury. Now, being a public school teacher, all my life, I got crap for charter schools, but the kids, this whole program was so random. Stuff that they can get away with, I actually put this guy through the wringer, and I knew it was going to get approved, but I was all like, "You people ain't going to get approved until you do everything the school should do."

So it got approved and I was the only person that didn't want to deal with it, that voted against it, but when I see teachers from Asbury, sometimes on the football game or basketball game or I'm a referee official or a volleyball official, they see me, they still thank me for standing

up for them. Even trying to make me not hear it, they wanted me to recuse myself and I said, "Why? Because I know more about this than you do?" Now, if you can't recuse me because you bring in experts and I, too, am an expert. I'm just sitting on the panel, and I'm up here with you, so sit down and leave me alone.

It's been difficult being a black person, because when stuff comes up on this side of town, I'm the only one who knows about it. And then all of a sudden, some people try to throw in stuff like, "Oh, we want to make sure that flowers and this and this..." Man, these people are fighting to pay a mortgage. I don't care about the flowers. Let's make sure they cut the grass, the hedges. Don't make your reality, my reality. I want you to buy a house in the community. I don't want to bust your balls and chase you out and make it so difficult.

Once again, I'm on my social soapbox most of the time when stuff comes up again, but we reached a happy medium after three years. And now, I'm like, "Okay, I'm going to learn from y'all but y'all going to learn from me too." That's the cool part.

Vincent Sauchelli:

Yeah. [crosstalk 01:07:00] Yeah, I see a lot of the stuff you explained from your youth, trying to learn from each other and you can be different, but you gotta learn how to respect and accept each other.

Daniel Harris:

It's all good.

Vincent Sauchelli:

Yeah. All right. I thought I'd wrap up asking a couple more relevant questions to the time we're going through right now with the COVID pandemic. How have you seen the city of Neptune and Asbury Park and the surrounding cities and towns change over the time that the pandemic has been going on?

Daniel Harris:

Well, my people stay inside. Okay? You learn how to do things, my wife and I spend more time looking at each other than we did before when we've been together for over 40 years, so that's cool. Before [inaudible 01:07:53] I used to walk on the boardwalk. Okay? I used to run, but I've had a knee replacement, a hip replacement, I can't do that anymore. But walking on the boardwalk, especially when you mostly grew up in Asbury, black people put their mask on. Okay? White people, a lot of them, still talking about, "It's my right not to wear a mask." I'm like, "Go the hell away. You can kill yourself, but you can't kill me."

And until somebody dies that you know, it doesn't affect you. I lost one of my best friends, an Italian guy named John Constantino. He died early when COVID started. I cried like a baby, because when I started working at Newark, he was the first guy that walked in my room and said, "Hello, how you doing, bro?" And he was an Italian guy. We were friends up until the day when I found out he died. He retired a year after me.

The difference is the fact that with COVID, poor people know how to deal. People that ain't poor, they having a rough time. What I see right now, and this is something that's actually a national thing and we're working on fixing it here in Asbury, is that when they first opened up

the senior center for COVID vaccinations, I would ride and I said, "Damn, what is it? Did they have a white folks convention?" There were so many white people out there [inaudible 01:09:34] I looked at the sign, I thought, "Oh, they're doing COVID vaccinations here."

I questioned it. And I read an article in the Coaster, and in the Tri-City News, talking about the failures of the vaccination system. When how do you come into somebody's neighborhood and offer vaccinations to people who need a GPS to get to the building? Why can't they get one in their neighborhood? And that's still a fight going on right now, okay? I'm not involved in the fight, as much as... I guess I will have to be eventually, because a lot of people did call me, but I just asked, I said, "What would happen if somebody in Spring Lake or Deal saw a line of black people lined up out in front of the Jewish Y to take a vaccine? How would they feel?"

And they couldn't take it. So this is what we have happening in the black community. Now, the churches, especially my church, has tried to reconcile that by getting more blacks to take the test. I am a cancer survivor, I had congestional heart failure, and I'm 69. I qualified right away, but never got a phone call. And a woman told me, she said, well, I did get a phone call. My wife had two back operations, second for more than six hours, and she's still walking with a walker right now when she qualified. Why didn't they call her?

In America right now, you're looking at it as to we need a way to level the playing field where if 1% of your population can get the vaccine this week, 1% of my population also has to get the vaccine, especially if you do it in my backyard. And it don't look good. That's one of the things we're fighting.

The other thing we're fighting is there's so much mistrust in the black community in reference to government medicine. Black people won't take it because they think they'll kill us anyway. You know the Tuskegee Experiment? You know when they didn't even tell people they were killing them? We have to overcome that and the guy did ask me would I take a picture of them giving me the vaccine, I said, "Hey, I would have got it."

You take a picture the second time, NBC has been in my church where my pastor is working on making sure that people in our neighborhood get to take the vaccine. We just equality across the board. It's not that I want more of that pie than you have, but if that pie is in pieces and you tell me that I'm supposed to get three pieces of that pie, I damn sure better get three pieces of that pie. And I better not have to stand in line two days after you stood in line to get my three pieces. I'm going to stand in line the same day you stand in line to get my piece. And that's what COVID has come down to.

I saw bobblehead Charles Barkley talking about how NBA players who get COVID vaccines before everybody else because they make more money. No. Old people. Frontline workers. What I said to a guy one day, he said to me in a conversation, he said, "Oh, you got to understand that that one site you were at, and Asbury has two sites, we were doing frontline workers." And I said, "Stop lying to me, man. I saw more retired white folks going in there than a little bit. Don't tell me they're frontline workers.. How you know? I was there."

In this organization that we use, we have a homeless shelter that we did up until this year because of COVID, they sent them to hotels now, where when I would go there, we would get nurses to come and give the homeless women physicals and healthcare every two weeks, because they didn't have doctors. This is a miracle, okay? Where they're going to give you free healthcare. But we would have them come. And then when we did something outside, they were

even inside, we would have them come, and the last one we did, we did COVID testing and AIDS testing the same day. And people were so happy that they could take a COVID test and not have to pay for it, because that was early on in COVID. And the AIDS test, it was all like, "Oh, man. I'm glad I'm going to get me an AIDS test."

But then when it came time to issue out the vaccine, the same agency, we felt was... I'm not saying turning their backs on us, but they were so into the protocol of trying to do what the government told them to do, that they forgot to speak up for us. The people that you're serving, that you're helping, when it hits the fan, still speak up for those people, because they have a right to have the same thing that other people have. Maybe they got to drive from Spring Lake to Asbury to get the test, but what about the guy who's living two blocks from here, who has the same health condition? How come he can't get the vaccine too?

And that's all. That's the only thing we might have to learn. We may have to, eventually, learn how to level the playing field all the way across. And that's all we talk about. I don't hate Jews, I think they cool people. They believe and they took good care. They make their kids go to school on Saturday and they make them learn about religion. I'm like, "Hey, [inaudible 01:15:42]." Catholics, they make everybody learn it and Muslims, you got to learn the Quran, but most Muslims know as much about the Bible as I do. So you're like, "Wow, man."

We share those things, and when we share those things, we usually learn to get along, because not only can we learn together, we can laugh together. And if we laugh together, we can cry together. That's the beauty of it. Okay?

Vincent Sauchelli:

I agree, I agree. [crosstalk 01:16:08] I like that. I think that's a nice way to conclude what we were doing here today. I just want to use this last opportunity to open the floor, hand the mic over to you, if there was anything else you wanted to add or bring up that you felt we didn't touch on or focus on enough today. If there was anything like that you wanted to add, the floor is yours now.

Daniel Harris:

No. Really, just let people realize that when we get to heaven, ain't going to be no black or white. Ain't even going to be no man or woman, because God made us in his image, her image, but it's just going to be us. But we gotta learn how to get along down here before we can learn to get along up there. If we don't get along down here, we ain't going to get there. That's what most people need to realize. They say, "When I get to heaven..." No, man. You ain't going to get to heaven, because you don't know how to act down here on Earth. And we can make heaven like here on Earth if we learn how to treat each other.

What you're doing is cool because I'm quite sure if you did this with Spanish people, you'd probably get the same answers. One of the greatest things that I learned was from my lawyer. His name was Ron Barrett. And he used to sit down and tell me how when we first came to America, he lived in Cleveland and how people had signs up that said, "Jews need not apply here."

The guy ended up living in Emma Lake and being my father's attorney, but he was always an attorney not just for rich people, but for poor people. And when he died, he had a

gospel choir sing. His family had a gospel, and I was part of that gospel choir, sing in the Jewish synagogue, because that's how his family wanted it because that's who he was.

The other thing was I had never seen how Jewish people bury Jewish. Black people, if we got the money, we try to give them heaven in a box. We do a wild casket, with stars and flashing lights. We take pride in how we put somebody away. I realized that Jewish people didn't do it like that. They just put you in a box and put you away.

And it humbled me as a person because I'm like, here's a guy who got more money than a little bit, this how they put him away. And it made me respect it, but it put me closer to God because they say naked we come into the world and naked we leave. That's true, man. And I think if we can learn that... Let's put it like this. You listen to rap music. You ever listen to rap music?

Vincent Sauchelli:

A little bit here and there. [crosstalk 01:18:57]

Daniel Harris:

Yeah. You know who Biggie Smalls is, right?

Vincent Sauchelli:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Daniel Harris:

When Biggie died, they had that big thing going down the street. It was out of respect for Biggie, but it didn't make any difference on how he got there. We have to learn how to humble ourselves. I don't know if you read the Bible, but you ever heard about Paul? Remember Paul, he was Saul?

Vincent Sauchelli:

Yes, I do.

Daniel Harris:

Okay. I hope one day Donald Trump has a Damascus moment, where he realizes that the people I am hurting are the same people that I should be helping. And if we all learn how to help each other... Monmouth was an experience to me, because it got me to work closer to white people. But what happened because of Monmouth, my daughter went to a historically black college, because it was necessary for her to learn things that I had missed going to Monmouth.

My sister went to Temple University, Tyler School of Art. She looked at me one time, she said, "The thing I missed the most when I went to Tyler was black music, and when I came home after four years, I missed a whole four years of music. I didn't even know songs." I'm like, "Yeah, that's what you get for going there."

We learned to be different. Because we learned to be different, we learned that we share those things together, and that's cool, man. You go to Monmouth, I went to Monmouth. 74, 78. 35 dollars a credit. The gym you have now is outstanding. I've been there to basketball games a

lot, but I remember when the gym was the other gym. You got a guy in the hall of fame named Ron [inaudible 01:20:56]. You might see him on the wall. He's a personal friend of mine from Newark.

It's good, young man. And I hope you learn something from this. Okay?

Vincent Sauchelli:

I have. It was definitely a pleasure talking with you and hearing what you had to say. Some very insightful things and beautiful things you had to say and to close things out, I just want to sincerely thank you on behalf of myself, on behalf of Monmouth University and the Paradoxical Paradise Asbury Park Project. Again, I want to thank you very much and hope that you have nothing but good fortune and God blesses you on your journey. [crosstalk 01:21:40]

Daniel Harris:

Bless you too, and I'm going to send in my alumni check. Okay?

Vincent Sauchelli:

Sounds good to me. You have a good night now, sir.

Daniel Harris:

Okay, bye. God bless you.

Vincent Sauchelli:

God bless. Bye-bye.

Daniel Harris:

All right, got it.