

## Interview Transcription of Dr. Frederick Gooding Jr.

September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### **DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD**

This is Sylviane Greensword, I am here with Dr. Frederick Gooding Jr. Today is September 17<sup>th</sup>, the year is 2021, and we are here in the Harrison with the Race and Reconciliation Initiative Oral History Project.

Dr. G, thank you for joining us this morning,

### **DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR.:**

Thank you for having me.

### **DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Alright so in this interview, we're gonna talk about some of the accomplishments you have made with the Race and Reconciliation Initiative since you have been the chair and we're also going to focus on the Oral History Project, that is part of the Initiative.

So, let's start with talking about yourself. Tell us a bit about your upbringing, where you're from, and what kind of influences did you grow up under?

### **DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

Sure. I'm from the city of Brotherly Love and that would be Philadelphia. And I'm very proud of the fact that I have a loving mother and father who taught me that it was really important to know where you come from. And so, I didn't realize it at the time, but the reason why my family was up in Philadelphia is because they originally had roots in the South but moved North in order to escape the vestiges of racism. Right? There's no other way to say it. In the South as we know, where so many African Americans were enslaved. When enslavement ended, the pain, the torture, the harassment did not end. And so, my great grandparents, my grandparents moved North in search of a better opportunity. It was still very much difficult. I mean just like we talk about Republican, Democrat, it's still the United States of America in terms of the racism that we deal with. And so, in the North it wasn't that much easier, in fact it was arguably more arduous in some ways as far as eking it out in the inner cities, but they still felt it was important that I know where I come from. And so, I think that curiosity always stayed with me. And low and behold, fast-forwarding I never thought I would actually be in this chair as a historian, I thought history was something that just did not concern me, it just wasn't relevant to me. I thought it was boring, I was fighting sleep, but I had the good fortune to go to Morehouse College, and- I have to stick my, you know, I have to, you know they tell us you have to inflate when you say Morehouse College.

So, I went to Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia; and that was likely the first time I saw...and that was likely the first time I saw...more to the story. Right? Because again, even though I'm African American, I'm still limited by what I see on TV or what's available to me at

my local library, or what is quote on quote, taught in school. So, obviously my parents did take it upon themselves to stimulate us with various conversations and trips and what not, but it was at Morehouse that I saw for myself that Blackness...is so beautiful and is so wonderfully complicated. This idea that Blacks are some sort of monolith being, I don't where this comes from. You know that we're all supposed to vote for the same candidate during election time, or something of that nature. I don't know where this comes from. Maybe racism. But the point is that I saw the diversity, the multiplicity, different styles, ideas, shapes and colors, backgrounds, and I thought that was just a very powerful experience because that allowed me to realize that I don't have to be any one particular type of Black person, I can be myself, and I happen to be Black and I'll be both of those. So, I think that experience, like the experience for so many people who have touched HBCUs was quite formative, and I think in so many ways still carries with me. And I don't think I'll be sitting here, you know with my hair in a bun if it weren't for this idea that I saw at a early stage of my life that it was okay to be me, and that being me was so very much part of this larger mosaic that we call humanity.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

So, Dr. G, how did you come to be affiliated with TCU?

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

(Sighs) That is a great question. Right, how do I end up in the state of Texas? Well, the way academia operates, you labor and struggle for years, right? I mean some PhD programs can run from 5 years to maybe even 8 years. And during the time in which I was in graduate school, I had a young family, right? And so, my kids didn't care about a PhD all they cared about "what's for dinner" right? And "are we going to the park?". And so, it was not what I recommend right? You know I keep joking I should write a book one day about how not to write a dissertation, but the kids are here, I love them, so you have to make it happen. But that being said, you labor for years to go through graduate school only you know- and you're focused on a specific topic or task, right? You're researching and everything's within your control, as far as your citations, your research methodology. Only to roll the dice and throw your whole career up to chance based upon what job opportunity are available when its time for you to quote on quote go to market. It is utterly ridiculous; I did not necessarily know this because why? I'm just a first individual to get a PhD in my family. I wasn't socialized, I didn't know the nuances and maybe had I known, maybe I'd have planned differently. But that being said, this was an opportunity that opened up and tenure track job are far and few between and so you obviously have to go where the opportunity is; and so being here you know we tried to make the most of the opportunity. And if it means anything, I think you know, I'm just one of the few Black males on campus with tenure and hopefully we can add to that number with respect to you know males and females.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

And what were your expectations before you joined the Frogs?

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

well, I mean just in general, as far as academia, you know, I don't know, I didn't realize how difficult it would be to find a tenure track position. You know and so many I good academics are still out there you know, you know with heavy loads as instructors, as adjuncts. You know that's how I started off right? And so, I'm very sensitive to that plight and so you know, but the bottom line is that because I'm in this position I don't want to take it for granted. And so, it's not a matter of I have tenure, let me rest my laurels, but if anything, I feel all the more motivated to do what I can to open up the door a little bit lighter for those to follow.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

But, what about knowing, I don't know if you knew that it was a PWI, predominantly white institution-

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

Oh.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Did you have any expectations, in terms of you being a minority, or the treatment of minorities on this campus, or the networking opportunities with all types of color? Did you have any knowledge or expectations regarding that?

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

No, it was since that for most of my life, at least in professional settings, to be a person of color is to live a solitary existence, right? I used to talk with my friend about the cold lonely walk, right? From the library to my car in the evenings in the East Coast. You know I can't say cold out here in Texas but we were cold in the East Coast, it's a solitary existence. So aside from the Morehouse experience, which was so very powerful, most all my professional I've been nothing but surrounded. Its not even uncommon for me to get on a plane and be the only Black male that I see on the plane and you know many people may not think much of it, but I think they would notice if the opposite were true. You know and so being here I didn't necessarily have any expectations in that regard, but it is a predominantly white institution. You might even wanna put an E on there, that it's an extremely predominantly white institution at TCU. So, there's a lot of areas of growth for TCU with respect to the student body representation cause it's not just a matter of, "oh we have Black students on campus," I mean I understand there's a large number of international students that's growing, but that different from Malik from Detroit.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Right.

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

That's different okay, because we have a significant number of African Americans on campus, but you know many people are socialized to believe they fall into one or two categories, either athletics or community scholars. And community scholars is a program started by Cornell Thomas many years to speak to this idea that access and opportunity were something that TCU was, you know, something it could improve upon. But even still with this community scholars' program there's a large gap, in terms of the Black middle class right? What you know about a good student with 3.2, I mean you know they didn't necessarily get a near perfect score on the SAT; but you know they want to go to college, they see the value in college, but can't afford the hefty price tag of which TCU's significant, right? I mean, at least at the time of this taping I want to say it's in the order of \$66,000. And so, some families are able to pay their way here and so that creates a different dynamic. You know I often times look with envy over at the student parking lot when I'm coming out, you know, from my humble Prius, and I see that the, you know, designer cars that are parked there. And so, I think that it's not surprising, you know that this is the institution, but at the same time I see opportunity. Many of these mostly white, affluent, you know, students that I'm dealing with, it's an opportunity for them to truly learn something before they go their ways, you know, after here. Whether they work for daddy or not, you know, the idea's that if they truly want to lead on, then I think it's incumbent upon them to be exposed and to have meaningful experiences in dealing with the realities of our world; and it's an increasingly diverse world. And so, I think while it is difficult being isolated often times, as a teacher at heart, there is an opportunity for me to plant some seeds and hopefully see them germinate and grow.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

In a recent interview with the Oral History Project, Chancellor Boschini stated, "there is room at the table for everyone," speaking about racial integration. How did this statement resonate with you?

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

I guess I don't know what the Chancellor means by that. Yeah, in theory, sure you know but you know there's room at the table but don't you have to pay a price to come in the door and to sit at the table? So, and I'm not sure what he means by that. You know, the fact of the matter is, I that for the last 148 years, theoretically there's been room at the table, but I mean here we are. We're still at a point where our campus is essentially segregated in many ways, you know visually and physically in terms of how the students operate and interact with one another. It's not to say TCU's evil, TCU's not alone in this, so many other schools across the country have very similar issues, right? So that's what were working on, but I don't know what I'm supposed to say with a statement like that, feel good and you know I guess maybe I should be filled with jubilee or something of that nature, but I don't know what that means. But you know my whole thing is, you know, if there's a space at the table for everybody, yeah. I guess I'm curious as to, you know, are we interested in what it takes for people to even to get to the table right? And I think that, you know, if we're being honest everyone's experience is not the same, you know, I mean

we're not all equal in that regard. I mean yeah you know and I think the theory is we know we all wish it were fair and equal, as do I, but the harsh reality is that it's not. And so, I think that's the difference between, you know, understanding equality and equity. You know how do we truly address or you know, yeah, how do we truly re-dress or address the differences that make it difficult for all of us to sit at the table and stay at the table.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Very good. Now you've done work with landscape and race. By the way congratulations for the work, you did this summer. What can you tell us about the current state of the campus racial geography and the landscape?

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

I believe you're referring to-I was fortunate to slip and tripped upon a fellowship with the National Gallery of Art, whereby I was studying Black statues. The premise was what did they stand, pardon the pun, what did they stand to tell us about race within the capital space because more than just mere art in a park, I used statues as powerful, political portraits that reveal much to us about the value and visibility of African Americans in society. Right? There was a lot of talk, in the aftermath of the George Floyd murder, about taking down confederate statues. And so, it just got me thinking as to well what remains, right?

And so, if you walk around this campus, for example I just walked through the library on my way over here, there's a bust of I believe I wanna say Plato. So cool guy, you know I read about the cave, I thought that was fascinating, and the idea of light and what have you, but is he the only intelligent thinker to ever walk planet earth? And so, there he is in white, right there in the middle. You know and I have to walk around him. If I ever walk in a straight line, I'm gonna run into him and injure myself. So, I have to literally-I have to make way for his presence. So that's fine, but either, why not-well first of all how did we settle on him? Oh, is it because he's Greek and, you know, Western civilization is the hierarchy of all civilizations, and they're you know the intelligent civilizations that we should copy and patterns ourselves after? I'm speaking in shorthand and being a little facetious, but this is essentially what our nation's capital did. If you look at downtown Washington D.C., the national mall, most of the buildings and federal triangle around the mall are what we call the neo-classical architectural style. And neo-classical essentially means we are trying to imitate, you know, the classical style of the Greeks and Romans because they were the ones who invented civilization as far as we're concerned, even though I think over in China or in Asia or something like that, you know we're inventing clocks or things of that nature and over in Africa you know they were like you know charting the stars and building pyramids. But you know how this story goes right? And so here we are in Texas far away from Greece and we have this bust. I mean okay, I mean and so if you wanna have him why not well, A. let's have the debate about why him as chose over anybody else, and then if you're really fixated on him why maybe adding to the number? I'm sure there's a number of other great thinkers that we've had around this campus. So, it's just something for us to think about. And again, if you walk and patrol our campus, you will find very few images that reflect the diverse student body that TCU claims that it wants, or at least it does say when its recruiting

from an admissions standpoint right? You know, it clearly wants a diverse body because more people applying, you know, is good for everybody, it's good for the brand. But at the same time, you know if I'm Latinx and I'm walking across the campus, do I see anything that reminds me that "I'm welcome and there's a space and place for me?", in terms of this hallow halls of higher education.

And so, I think you know that experience in Washington D.C., really analyzing and looking at the statues because they're very much coded. You know you may walk by them, but at least the people who created them, they very much were, you know, intentional, you know, about the symbology and "ohh no this represents Archimedes and ohh no this represents-", they were really much intentional about what they did, in terms of putting on a, you know, a display of power. If anyone comes to our nation's capital, they should be in awe over what they see. And so, the same thing goes with our architecture, you know I think TCU prides itself on how well it looks, and how clean it looks, how mafic- I think a \$900,000 gift that is dedicated just for the flowers and the foliage alone I believe and not to mention the white gold bricks. You know its quite nice, but in all of this if I'm not white is there is something else that reminds me that's there's a space for me too?

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Right, and in the same framework, of the same line of thought, if you're looking at the layout of the buildings, the distances, we call this proxemics, right? So the science of how space is organized, how do you think the geographic landscape affect interracial social encounters on campus, does it favor those encounters, or does it prevent it, or is it a hinderance; what is your perspective on that?

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

Well, I mean I wanna preface my comments by stating that I'm sure the best of intentions were at play, but let's also rewind (laughs). For nearly a century, 90 years, I mean our campus wasn't segregated, it was just all white. So, there was no racial problem to have for over 90 years, so that's A. B, now you start to have Black students, maybe a couple Latinx students, and again God help us if we're able to recruit any Native American students. The idea's that the way our campus is situated now, I think there is, there are some patterns that are in motion, for example Moncrief Hall is known as a hall that houses mostly student athletes. Let's do the math, when we say student athletes right, we're talking about a large number of football players and basketball players. Let's do some more math, a significant number of whom are African American, and let's do a little bit more proxemics, and Moncrief Hall just happens to literally border Stadium Dr. which is literally across the street from the athletic complex. So, I understand the thinking, the thinking is that "well given the rigorous demand of student athletics, we want our student athletes to not lose their way, and you know to be close to the facilities so that way they can be serviced." But at the same time, we need to think about how just making a shorter makes it more convenient for the athletic complex, but it also shortens their academic experience. I mean they are I think they're called student athletes, respect to the student part this may truncate their experience as far as just having them walk through, like taking a longer walk to campus and

bumping into God forbid, a professor or other students. But this idea of being shuttled across the street, you know, going to athletics and maybe only class then back to the dorm, that I think can be an area to reanalyze, right? You know as far as, you know how do we truly allow for the student athletes to be fully integrated in the student experience, right?

You know when we look at the idea that, you know, the intercultural center in the first floor of the Brown Lupton University Union, or the BLUU, I think it's a good thing that's it in, you know, the center of campus. But you know a couple details, it's behind this oval shaped desk which serves as an impediment. The desk was created as part of a gift, so therefore its difficult to move. You know because when particular funds are attached to buildings, it's difficult to move. But that being said though one of the questions I think we need to ask , is this truly going to be viewed as a place where all students are welcome, or will it be viewed as a place where Black Indigenous People of Color go and would it end up becoming ghettoized, right? Meaning that you know it's behind this impediment, it's you know, it's in the corner and no one goes over there. You know, and so, these are the questions we need to ponder in terms of how do we, you know, encourage traffic patterns whereby, you know, all these places are being visited frequently and frequented so that they're not just isolated and out of site out of mind?

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Right, right. So, there's like a whole psychological process that goes with the setting up, and the distances, and the angles of where everything is located. Now we're gonna switch gears a little bit and talk about the Race and Reconciliation Initiative and itself. Can you tell us a little bit about how it came into existence?

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

Sure. The Race and Reconciliation Initiative came into existence in the aftermath of the summer of social justice, the summer of 2020. And so, I think many good people on this campus have been doing a lot of good work for a very long time; but with so much agitation in the air, with so much social unrest, many institutions, TCU included, were thinking about how do we not appear to be flat footed, right? We want to make sure we're being supportive of our students, supportive of our faculty and staff, listening to the needs of our alumni, maybe we should do something. And so, speculating a bit, but let's just do the math, why not create the Race and Reconciliation Initiative in the summer of 2019 or the summer of 2018 right? I mean again, we have 148 years here where we're pretty much aware of the issues. So, I absolutely believe that that was a factor, right? The heat was on so to speak, I mean just the planets so aligned, where you know the pressure was such, where we need to do something. And so, the chancellor and board of trustees commissioned this initiative to study TCU's relationship with slavery, and racism, and the confederacy; or should I say enslavement, the confederacy, and racism. So that's what they did and they created the initiative, but necessarily didn't create any guidelines as to what was to be done or how it was to be done. So, on one level it was a good thing, and when I received the tap of my shoulder from the provost, I too was skeptical. You know and I remember telling the provost, "You know I'm so sure about this", and you know then she called back and was like, "well, you know I mean you know I recommend you should really think about this", and again I

just don't know where this is going and what does this mean? And so, after thinking about it, I came to the conclusion that there's really only one way to find out, right? And you know it's one to turn it down, then criticize it, you know, depending on what it does or doesn't do; but I figured well if I'm a part of it, there's only one way to find out just where this might go. So, what does that mean? Well, it was, we were very sensitive to this idea that RRI was quote on quote performative. Right? You know it's just another trinket, you know, that TCU, you know, totes out in front of the public, you know, that masses are, you know, allayed of their suspicions and apprehensions, and then it all goes away, and then life back to normal. So being very sensitive of that, the question was: what can we do that's meaningful and what's substantive, but again there was no template right? You know and so, in many ways we had to build our staircase as we climbed.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

So, there are no institutions to your knowledge that have a similar initiative?

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

Well, I mean there are in that there's a university studying slavery consortium of which we probably joined, and that was an excellent decision on our part. And so, were talking about a consortium of over 60 schools or so that have been taking seriously the task of looking at their full history. But in terms on our campus, there really was no template as to what our initiative looked like or what it was supposed to do. You know we had to create a deliverable. I mean there was no clearly definable task at the beginning as to what it would mean, so that's what I mean. But joining the university studying slavery consortium was definitely beneficial to us. University of Virginia I think was one of the first schools to get it started but they're a different animal than we are, enslaved labor was absolutely used in the building of their campus. And so, you know they took a good seven years or so to uncover the history find those names, and then find out a way to honor that enslaved labor of descendants of whom still live in that Charlottesville area. So, us being TCU, being founded in 1873 after the civil war and after the ear of enslavement had formally ended, we had to figure out what was going to be best for us. So, we learned very quickly that history could be quite painful, personal, and political.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Right.

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

Right? I mean history means something different to everybody. And so, there were many at the outset who felt as if we were not doing enough to tell the full story, and there were those who felt that we were doing too much, right? And so, that was something that we had to navigate the, oh you know, the immediate flood of questions, and what are doing, and how are we doing it. And so, we sought very quickly to manage those expectations. And so, the long story short we did come up with a definable deliverable, and that was a first-year survey report. The first-year survey report was based upon a brainchild I had entitle operation Triangulation. I knew, well after talking to the different universities and also just thinking about our campus and having a



number of meetings, it was clear that it was going to be very difficult to provide a comprehensive history spanning 150 years nearly in less than a year, with mostly volunteer labor.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

So, for the record when did the taskforce officially start?

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :** T

he taskforce officially began in early August. We had our first meeting in August.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

And the report was due at what time?

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

We delivered it on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020. And so, again it was one of these deals where the clock was ticking. At the time we did not know how long RRI would last and so, based on the presumption we only have one academic year, we need to make it count, right? And so, I think the two chief pieces that was focused on was some sort of deliverable to show that this is not performative, this is a work in motion, and needs to stay in motion. The work of reconciliation is ongoing. I mean what fool amongst is going to brush their teeth on Tuesday and say they're done for the rest of the week? It's a daily maintenance, right? At least I believe, you know, yeah, yeah, I believe right. Gospel of the toothbrush, as Booker T. Washington would say. And so, with operation triangulation the idea was to not take on the burden of doing a full 150 years, you know, we have other colleagues doing that with the sesquicentennial-

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Mhm

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

But rather to pick three key windows in time, that's what I called it, three windows in time. And by looking these three windows in time, they would give us an approximation so that we could survey the lay the of the land if you will and give an idea of where we need to go for the deeper dives. The first that was one there was from 1861-1891, and that was focused on the founding years. I knew that many people would have questions about did anyone who founded the university actually owned enslaved individuals, was anyone who founded the university involved with the confederacy, right? I mean I knew these were questions. And quick answer to those by the way are no and yes. No in that the founders, Addison, and Randolph Clark did not actually, should I restate, there is no evidence that Addison Randolph Clark actually owned individuals but there is evidence that their father did.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

So, their father is not included as one of the founders?

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

Technically not, I mean in terms of the folklore, I mean we look at the statue that we have on campus. It's the two brothers that received the credit for being on the ground and actually doing the day-to-day operations. The father was obviously an integral part in terms of his financial support and his guidance, right? But the Clark brothers I believe take that moniker as founders, right? And so, they're also you know, I guess earned the distinction of being one of the few coed institutions West of the Mississippi, right-

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Quite progressive.

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. : c**

I sheepishly say that (laughs). At the time it was, right. this idea that both women and men could get an education, right? But at the same time, we see that there's this blind spot, right, in terms of People of Color, right? And that barrier wasn't broken for nearly a century later. With respect to the confederacy, we do know that Addison Clark based upon the prodigious research of my colleagues, Dr. Sylviane Greensword included, you know, found Addison Clark absolutely did enroll and enlist in the Confederate armed forces. His brother Randolph did not formerly enlist but he did join them later. And in his book, *Reminisces*, he defends his position by stating that it was just a matter of defending the home territory; if anything, the peer pressure, if you would, from my neighbors was so great that I had to take up arms just to defend, you know, the area. But be that as it may, they were still very much supporters of the confederacy, after the war was over and supported Robert E. Lee. That's you know, I guess for us to debate about later; but the point is that it helped us clarify what we want to do going forward because at that time over summer social justice there's a lot of narrative about, we have a confederate statue on campus, right?

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Right.

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

That technically is not true.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Why?

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

Well, the reason why is because confederate statues were indeed erected all across our country most of them during the period of 1890 to around 1940 or so, right? And this is part of the lost cause narrative. this idea that, you know, we must revere, remember the South for what they fought for. And United Daughters of Confederacy were key players in this war of ideals, if you would, only because they had access to many classrooms and you know they were quite savvy as

far as raising funds. And so, they are responsible for putting up nearly half of the confederate monuments in our country, they put up well over 400 alone. But really, confederate monuments were explicit. They would have insignias, there would be wording or lettering, you know, making direct reference to the Confederacy. The statue we have was not: A, erected in that period, it was erected during 1990s, and B, there are no insignias that explicitly connect these two individuals to the confederacy. So, I think what's more accurate to state is that it's not a confederate statue but it is a statue of two men with confederate ties. And-

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

How is that relevant to TCU culture?

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

Well, its relevant in the sense of you have, going back to what I saying earlier, many political sates in this right? Are we a school that's turning a blind eye to, you know, individuals who advocated hurt and horror in our community right? You know and look at the city of Richmond, Virginia for example, you know city of New Orleans for example, who have attempted to reconcile with many of these figures prominently. I never would have thought Monument Avenue in Richmond, Virginia would only have a statue of a Black man remaining, and that would be of Arthur Ash. And that's the case now because what we find is that statues are not necessarily set in stone, they are built to last. But if there people who live in the environment and have to walk by and embrace it, if their ideals are not matching that of the statue or vice versa then that's when community is free and able to have a new discussion about, you know, should we alter this statue you know now that our ideas have been altered?

And so that's where this plays a key role in this conversation on our campus in terms of are our founders on the wrong side of history, yes or no, I mean everyone wants to be affiliated with good right? Everyone wants to be on the winning team so to speak and so I think it clarifies the history, but its still, in many ways, opens up the doorways for more honest and vigorous debate about how we should go forward, right? Because when we talk about the other two windows of triangulation, the second being the transition years from 1941-1971, and the recent but related histories from 1998-2020, what we're looking at is putting out relevant facts on the table so we can have an honest discussion about the whole truth that we wish to tell.

And so, let me just state this before I answer the question, the travesty is not necessarily that I'm here on TCU's campus there's of these two people that have this history that I disagree with. I don't think that's the travesty, I think because I mean there's a lot of things in the world I disagree with, I mean Justin Bieber being one of them, I mean I sorry (laughs). If someone comes on campus for the very first time, they take a tour and they walk by the statue and someone says, "oh these are the, here's the statues of the founders, you know, 1873 blah blah blah, you know isn't it pretty, it's a nice day outside, look at the trees" oh okay, "and our library's over there". And then someone says, " oh I think I like this place, this purple thing is kinda cool", they register and enroll, they pay all this money, they come down here and then if, I mean cause for some of us, history affects us differently, so for some of us, if the idea that taking up arms and fighting for the right to enslave and imprison another human being, and treat them

like an object. An object that can satisfy your sexual desires at any hour of the night, an object that can labor from can't see in the morning to can't see at night, an object that can almost like if you think about it, the enslaved Black negroes were like the modern-day robots. They looked like they were human, they spoke like they were human but they weren't quite human for whatever reason. I think it was like the size of their brains, you know the eugenicists at the time had all these theories, you know some religious, people as well, like the curse marker, you know ham.

But the point of the matter is, is that if these objects were mistreated, and sold, if someone fought for the right to treat people, I mean fighting for freedom to enslave others because, "I'm just a businessperson," right? "That's the most efficient way for me to make money is by having these people work for me," right? So, the fact that I wanted that and that you know, I don't know if you've seen *Gone with the Wind*, that's what the title actually refers to, you know land of Cavaliers fields, right? You know I mean these were the good old days, right? "These good ole days, I mean we had it made in the shade this is great, what's the problem?" So, if someone takes Umbridge with this position, right? Because I don't know, maybe they just believe in humanity, maybe they just feel sorrow or sympathy for the people who were treated like objects, or maybe they were related, right? Maybe they were related right? And I guess I can count myself among this number, I am a living descendant of the holocaust of enslavement, I'm a living descendant, right? My great grandparents were enslaved in this country, (pause) right? I'm a living descendant, right? I'm a living reminder that this was not a game. So, if you related to it, connected to it, and if you're bothered by it; I can see where you walk by the statue and you realize that these men fought for the confederacy, how there might be some cognitive dissonance-

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Right.

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

You might feel, as they say, some type of way. So rather than be surprised on the backend like, like "oh I've been hornswoggled again." My whole thing is when you're taking a tour and you're talking about how nice the trees are and there's the library, why not tell the truth. I mean if it's true what do we have to hide. So, you say well here's the statue, "uhh listen I'm not proud of it but the facts are that they did enlist, they fought for the Confederacy, but as we know history's complicated. They were forward thinking and for fostering a coed institution. You know many wouldn't be here if it weren't for their inclination to want to teach people in general, I mean that was in their spirit, you know it shouldn't just be the province of the upper class," although our tuition might have something else to say about that. I think if you tell that story in the front end and I go home and I reflect and I say, "you know what that part I don't like but the purple thing is still kinda cool, I'm still gonna apply," no pasa nada. Right? It's a different conversation, it's something different all together. So, my whole thing is why don't we tell the truth from the very get go and tell the whole truth. Honesty is the best policy, at least that's what they told me back in third grade, that's what they told back in third grade. Then all of sudden when we're adults, all

of a sudden, we need to whisper and walk around and you know hunch shoulders and hallow tones, I'm a little confused, just don't know why we can't be a bit more consistent.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Right, right. And you know, being pro-TCU doesn't necessarily mean you know having to bury your head in the sand and deny the truth. You know it makes me think of when LaDainian Tomlinson spoke to the Race and Reconciliation Initiative last year. I remember the first words that he uttered "I love TCU," even though, you know, the rest of the speech was an honest discussion about the racial reality on campus, but it doesn't have to deny the fact he loves TCU.

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

No, I think it's an excellent point and I'll even go on further and say that he shouldn't necessarily have to even say that at the beginning. I mean if anything people should continue to love LaDainian Tomlinson for what he did for TCU, right? In terms of elevating their stature and profile, I mean it's not incumbent to tell people that he loves TCU its incumbent upon them, you know, to still honor him because he sacrificed his body in many that we may not be able to fully understand. And so, again I mean I just don't understand why it has to be an either-or proposition. Maybe, as I mentioned earlier, I am a parent and I love my children. Like nobody's business, I do, and listen and again, if my kids are watching, no seriously, I will take a bullet today without hesitation. If it's time for me go it's time for me to go because my children must stay. That's how much I love my children, it's a simple thing, but I love my children. That doesn't mean I'm not critical, "yo son what are you doing, you're my daughter you need to...", because I love them, I have something to say right? So, this idea, "oh I love TCU but I have to keep quiet." I don't understand where this comes from. So, my whole thing is this, I'm actually a reformist. Some people, who are actually no longer with us on campus, you know believe that we should blow up the whole ship, like "oh TCU's vile, TCU's racist." You know it might be true and I understand where they might be coming from, but I'm not interested in blowing up the ship cause I'm on it. So, I'm interested in steering our ship in a new direction, can we plot a course, can we get the coordinates? I mean that's my point. So, I'm not down on TCU, I'm not trying to tear apart TCU. If anything, the question is how can we influence the future so TCU can truly improve.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

So, in the same line of thought, what are some of your proudest accomplishments with the RRI so far?

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

Well, oh okay thank you. You know I'm asking my professor are these my points? So, the idea's that we talked about operation triangulation and wanting to produce that deliverable of a report, but answer to your question I also was like, cause I didn't get the brainchild, this brainchild till about October or so. You know cause it was early on and I said to myself, "self if we do this report, what's the point if it collects dust, it's just an email pdf link no on clicks on it," that is performative. So, I resolved very early on that I didn't want to be the bride who threw the

bouquet and there's nobody behind me. I didn't wanna be that individual. I'm married by the way, I'm not a bride, for 24 years. Alright but anyways, the point is that so in order for there to be an audience for the bouquet, we had to create community, right? We had to create community and so that I believe is one of the pieces I'm most proud of. This idea that a year later we can look back and I believe my colleague counted up, I didn't realize how many events there were but all we wanna do, especially in the Covid time as well let's not forget that detail, we wanted to create many access points so people could join in on the conversation about reconciliation. This is not just for Black Indigenous People of Color, this is for anyone who dares to wear the purple, right? So, we resolved to create community through various town halls, right, we had numerous town halls, we had done specialized webinars where we had a chance to learn about Charlie Thorpe and others you now from our historical past. We also had "Running the Race," which when we actually met the students, social distanced of course, you know on campus just to talk about race; and whether they talk about it in their classroom or not, we made numerous classroom visits. We even created a podcast; I and the marvelous and magnificent Mr. Marcellis Perkins created a podcast entitled "Reconcile This" right? So that we can reach additional audiences and Mr. Perkins will be proud to tell you without any advertising we had over 1800 listens within a three-month, four-month span cause we started in January.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

And this was just like local listeners?

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

Oh no, I mean well the way he tells it, it was like eight international countries as well.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Yes.

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

You know from Iran to Mexico to Iceland, I'm like who's in Iceland checking this out? So, but the bottom line is we wanna to create numerous contact points to create community, and finally I had the brainchild of us sharing the report publicly to be fully transparent on a day we now know as Reconciliation Day, and that was the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2021. It was a beautiful day, I think in all honesty it really was a good day, it really was a good day. The weather was nice and we had so many aspects of our community to, you know, receive the bouquet that was thrown. You know we created the report, of which I'm also proud of you know in terms of doing what we know within our expectations, what we said we were going to deliver an overview, so that we can get our appetites wet and figure out where we're going to go in the upcoming years. And I think as a result of that, that's what gave the provost and others confidence to say were going to commit to a five-year plan, right? So now we're now in year two of a five-year plan, and in year two were going to look at the first window and open it more horizontally. The first year we focused on African Americans, cause how can you talk about enslavement, the Confederacy, racism without talking about African Americas? I don't know, you gotta email the answer to that. But the point is that there is still some consternation over this idea that we're being exclusive. My answer to

that is listen we're all trying to get in the room but can we all walk through the door at the same time? I mean one of us has to walk through first, African Americans walked through first. And so now we need to get everybody in the room, open up the room, the window horizontally. Cause how can we be in the state of Tejas and not talk about our Latinx experience and our Native American brothers and sisters who were here first.

But answer to your question, I think creating community was what I think we absolutely feel good about. And the turnout exceeded my expectations. We had the dean of students come out and speak, we had the athletic director come out and speak, dean of admission come out and speak, provost, chancellor, and dare I say motherfucking chair of the board, came out to speak, right? And so, it's not about me, it's not about team RRI now it's about, I mean this is what you said, right? I mean you have, right, you have some sort of position on campus, you have some sort of visibility, you have a responsibility to your student body, right? And the campus community at large, right? So, it's time to continue showing up and deliver, right? I mean that's all we're asking, to continue being consistent, cause it's nice to send out a memo, you know, in august right? But you know, what's going on, and again don't talk to me about Juneteenth, talk to me about August-teenth, September-teenth, November-teenth, right? I wanna be consistent all year.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

How many people are on campus in June anyway?

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

Hello, so yes creating community is something that I think I feel pretty good about. And I think as an antidote to that, the number one question I'm receiving right now is, "What's RRI doing for year two?" So, the idea that people are now looking for it; cause you have to remember when we first started, we only had a single landing page. We didn't even have a logo, there was no brand identity what have you, it was just initiative name and a whole bunch of questions, WTF-welcome to fourth, you know what's this about, right? And low behold after continuing to chop that wood, and just being consistent in creating community. We have a fully fleshed out webpage, or website if you would, multiple pages, you know You Tube channel. I mean you know social media; you know we even, you know, foster unity cord that was handed out at graduation, DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORDA president was involved. I mean, just there's a number of different tentacles involved here and the idea that, you know, people know the brand and then we have a logo.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Right.

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

You know it's not just the logo, but this idea that people know that it's something tangible and they want to know and they're curious, I think, is a good thing.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Mhm, okay.

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

Now again, it doesn't replace other good people doing good work on campus, such as the Office of Diversity Inclusion, or the Office of Institutional Excellence, right? Or Office of Student Identity Engagement, doesn't replace any of these things.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Right.

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

But we're looking to be complementary, right? Because of everyone can join in the conversation about reconciliation.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Absolutely, absolutely. So now you know, your team has laid that foundation and just have fostered that spirit of community. Where do you see the race and reconciliation heading, you know, after year two after year three, what is your advice for the next chair?

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

My advice for next year is to continue being consistent as possible, right? And so, in many ways last year was the booster rocket, right? We were hard charging again as I think we put over, I don't know if I said it earlier, but I think we put on over 90 programs and events totally, right? That was utterly ridiculous and insane, right? But at the same time, we just didn't want to take any chances. I mean, you know, I mean, we believe in this, and so you know, again, we were going to put forth maximum effort. That being said, I don't think that's a sustainable model in terms of that type of effort. So now I think the analogy holds that we're increasing altitude, so for years two, three, and four it's just a matter of continuing to, you know, open up these research windows, find as much as we can, and then in year five to gather a summer report. I think the ideal would be for RRI to eventually melt away. Alright, not to be sad, no but here's the reason why: there's no need for RRI if everyone is embodying or bodying the spirit of reconciliation in daily affairs, right? Again, going back to our toothbrush analogy; the point is that if everyone truly takes on the spirit of reconciliation, I mean it can be owned by no one but it can be shared by all. And so, I mean why have the stand-alone entity or body if everyone is simply doing this as part in parcel of their job, you know asking themselves the critical questions of you know, "am I thoughtful enough; being inclusive enough; what efforts do I need to make, you know, with the community, you know, how can I do better; how can I improve." I mean I think to the extent that if this is part in parcel of how we just do business, right? If that's part of what trustee Rob Parker calls the TCU secret sauce, you know this idea that reconciliation is just woven into the fabric, then I think that would be the ultimate.



**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

That's profound, oh wow. So now we're gonna do something that's a little meta because we're using the format to talk about the format, the Oral History Project. How did that project come into existence and what was the rationale, the *raisonnement*, behind such endeavors, and you know in that same line, what do you hope to accomplish through that project?

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

So early on when canvassing archives to see what we had to help us tell the whole story because again, it's not we think it's what we discovered and then merely relaying what we discovered and uncovered in archives. The archives tell us much, they don't tell us everything. I mean let's just think about going back by way of example to enslavement. It is I think a horrendously bizarre irony that much and most of what we know about the era of enslavement, is actually totally voices of white people, particularly those who are fostering the very evil that we're studying. Why? It's because it's through their journals, it's through their records. Remember, and it's hard for me as an academic to in truly wrap my head around this concept, but it was illegal for Black people to learn how to read and write. I can't even keep my eyes open when I say it. It was illegal, like does that make any sense? Like what are you afraid of? It was illegal to learn how to read and write. Wow. Because I don't know, maybe if I'm able to read and write I might understand that what you're saying is illogical. You don't even believe what you're saying.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Right.

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

You know, I mean clearly you think I'm worth something. You know, that's probably why you're tip toeing in my cabin late at night, never mind. But the point is that, if most of what we know of the African American experience is told through white voices, then what does that say about the people who actually had the experience? That's why we look at the story of Olaudah Equiano right? You know Gustavus Vassa, I mean it's one of the first, you know narratives of those who were- one who was enslaved is so very profound for us because it's so very rare to have an enslaved individual, you know, be able to read and write their own account. You know the same thing with, you know, Frederick Douglass, with two Ss, right? You know and so, there's so many nameless, faceless people who unfortunately went through this tunnel of oppression called enslavement, what have you, and we just don't know enough about them, or what they thought, they felt, right? And so, along those lines and, you know, looking at the records we have, you know minutes, we have journals you know, we have a number of pieces that that help us, but they simply don't tell the full story. So once again I said to self, "self how can we reconcile this?" And it occurs to me that we still have the benefits of living among them. For better or for worse, we still have people alive during an era of segregation here on campus. And so, it behooves us to move quickly to capture these voices. I'm saddened that time has moved on for some alumni such as Aline Jones and a couple of others, but we have, through

brilliant work of our postdoctoral fellow, we lobbied. Dr. Karen Steele and I, I need to include her, we lobbied against the provost to create this new postdoctoral fellow position; and we were very blessed to bring onboard Dr. Sylviane Greensword with her anthropological skills and be able to start an oral history project to capture the voices of people while they're still alive. And by grace we been able to capture the stories of Ronnie Hurdle, the first African American cheerleader on campus. You know Dr. James Cash, which I think in some ways is a victory, but somewhat embarrassing. This idea that it takes Harvard, I don't know if you heard of it, this little school in Massachusetts, but they named a building after this guy, right? Like building, not a tree shrub, right? Not a parking space but a building, and we hear about US News and World Report, we check them, we're top 100, I think we're in 80s or what have you. I believe Harvard is top of that list. That Harvard, right? That Harvard. And this same Harvard names that building after this brother and crickets on our end, crickets. So, it was time to reconcile that. We were able to connect with the brother who graciously allowed us to record his story, and that's so very important, so very important; and he gave us names of so many other individuals, and so that's so very important. And how could I forget being able to capture story of Jennifer Giddings Brooks, right? Dr. Brooks has the distinction of being the first elected homecoming queen back in 1971. And as a result of capturing her story and her coming back to campus, right? Because for some, who won't be named right now, who we've interviewed and the pain is so great-

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Right.

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

Of that isolation where it's like, you know I'm not stepping foot back on that campus, you know when I see purple, I see pain. And that's saddening, that's sickening, and what can we do to reconcile that? In this case with Dr. Brooks, she not only came back on campus, but brought with her artifacts, she brought pictures; and with those pictures that sparked the conversation; and then because I have colleagues who hold my feet to fire to make sure I'm not being performative, it made me take action and long story short: I'm proud to state that at the 50th anniversary of that event of her being elected, in 2021 this year's homecoming, she will be honored with her very own portrait in the D.J. Kelly alumni center. And I think this goes to show how in such a short period of time, how again we didn't revolutionize the campus, but change is indeed possible. In addition to the portrait which builds upon the portrait project that was started by other colleagues, in terms of trying to rectify the imbalance. This is- no, I guess in concert with that, we also are proud to state that there will be a statue of a black man on this campus, and that statute is none other than Dr. James Cash. And so that is also something that we're proud of. In addition, when you talk about changes, we're working with the Admissions office to look at how we can be more accurate and upfront and honest, you know, in the tours. You know, when the ambassadors undergo through trainings, so that's tangible change. The commencement program has been modified, again this is serious business, you're talking about thousands of alumni are coming back and parents are coming back, and you people keep these commencement books. You know it has your name in it, you know your major, school, your college and when you graduated. So typically, there is like a page explaining you know the history of the Clark brothers

and now opposite that page, we have a whole page that helps us flesh out the full story, again not anti TCU but this idea that here's the full story, right? And so, they'll let it be known for the record, so you know that's a material change. Not to mention when you look at, there's a mural right behind the Clark statue, which was done by the phenomenal work of Professor Dan Jian and her students. Showing the collaborative process of students working with faculty to add color to our campus plane. So, I mean, I think in so many ways that, you know there are ways in which we're looking to alter our trajectory of this big ship by degrees, because I tell people time progress is a process, right? I mean, you don't make a hard right turn in an ocean line of ship, but you make my little Prius.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

(Laughs). So, we're gonna talk about some of those alumni that you mentioned. Can you talk about your meeting with Dr. Cash this past May?

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

I mean I don't if you can- the camera is probably chest up, but they can't see how still like slightly levitating off my chair. I mean I'm still buzzing. No, I mean because I mean think about it, why do people go to concerts? They want the energy of another human being who is extraordinary. Now again it's not to say that musicians are perfect, but there's something that they're doing right and you just wanna part of that energy. And so again if I know Dr. Cash, you know, I think his wife might know of a flaw or two, or something of that nature and we had the good fortune of dining with her as well; but what a powerful individual, what a powerful individual, right? I mean wow! I mean his mindset was well the elevator's broken, I'm going to take the stairs. I mean, and he figured it out with no template. It's awesome to be in that presence and inspiration because everything is relative and, you know, we cry and lick out wounds as to our relative struggles, right? But then when you know that there's a Dr. James Cash thing, it's like alright well, okay, well I need to buckle up and, you know, get it together here because it can be done, right? So that was absolutely awesome. It was absolutely awesome; and he was gracious and so giving with his time. You know my hope is that that's not the last contact, and that we're able to do honor to his story because it's an absolutely phenomenal example of, dare I say it, the African American dream.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Right, right. Now some people have said that Dr. Hurdle is the image of the African American nightmare. Can you speak to that, why was his story so crucial to understanding the Black experience at TCU in the 60s and 70s?

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

Well, I mean I think that when it comes to change, I always try to explain to my students all the time, it's not a light switch, right? And the way they talk about the history, I mean you would think that on Tuesday there was enslavement; on Wednesday you know it wasn't the Emancipation Proclamation it was the passage of the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment in December 1865, for those keeping score at home, that officially. So okay, Tuesday: enslavement, Wednesday: 13<sup>th</sup>

amendment ratified, Thursday: what we doing? Walking hand and hand down the streets singing kumbaya, I don't think so, if anything hell had only begun for African Americans. Hell had only begun for African Americans, right? When you look at the rise of the KKK; remember Black bodies were valuable on Tuesday now they're a threat to the open market, free market, you know marketplace on Thursday, now Blacks were a threat, right? I mean when you at the Black Codes, again the vigilantism, you know just the real racism, if anything hell had only begun, right? I mean sharecropping, and so I say that to say it wasn't overnight. It wasn't overnight.

So, Ronnie Hurdle reminds us that, "oh okay, you know we're integrating this is great. Well, there's still a struggle. Yeah, he's the first Black cheerleader, but he's also- I mean he also had to deal with nonsense about the fear; the herring; and you know the pearl clutching over, you know, are his black hands going to touch, you know, these white females, you know that you know, that they throw in the air, you know for cheers. You know I mean, it's one thing to pick up the megaphone, but it's another thing to pick up a white female cheerleader, right? "Ahhh! What are you doing?" And so, you know he had to deal with a lot, you know that I, you know, I think it's not going to be found in the archives. And that's the whole point of the oral history project, is that we wanted to allow for people's voices to speak and fill in the gaps that, you know a printed article about, "ohh here's a picture of Ronnie Hurdle at the game." You know that picture of him smiling, that doesn't tell full story, "Oh if anything like that looks great. Integration worked like a charm. He looks happy, isn't happy, a happy brother, he's a happy brother." Yeah, yeah, just like enslaved people were happy too when they were singing, right? That was interpretation, right? So no, I think to hear Ronnie's story firsthand, it helps complicate, right? And it also helps us perhaps better navigate the future, you know for our students right now, right? I mean you know, just because there isn't a protest, right? Of which there was recently, you know, student demands in January 2020 and then before that in 2016, which helped found the Office of Diversity Inclusion by the way. But just because there was an absence of student protests that doesn't mean that there's an absence of student discontent, right? You know and disassociation, disillusion disconnectedness, right? And so, what do we do to reconcile, you know, the subtleties, the nuances, right? You know, I think if- for me in my classes I talk about this concept called Racism 2.0 and most of the time we focus on what I call racism 1.0, like it's obvious, overt, and offensive, right? So, the burning cross, the hooded Klan's person, you know you can see that from across the street. "Oh, I don't see any KKK, oh, we're good." Ehh! No, for me racism 2.0 is much more subtle, suave, and sophisticated.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Right, right.

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

Right? The monster we face is still there, but guess what, part of the problem is that there is no problem?

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Absolutely, absolutely. An. race blindness is one of them, you know, I don't see color. We have to embrace the neutral color-

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

No, yeah, and you know I don't see color except when it's time for me to pick out-

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Absolutely.

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

My outfit-

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Yeah.

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

On Friday.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Yeah, yeah.

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

Magically, I figure out where the purple is.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Mhm.

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

I ain't confusing purple with the orange, the burnt orange, right? Horns down, Texas, magically I didn't do that, right? But I don't see color, okay I get it. And again, I'm sorry I don't mean to be rude, or flippant, or what have you-

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Yeah.

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

But you know how it is, it's like throwing a snowball to the sun. And I'll say this on record. I'm not afraid I have tenure, I shouldn't be afraid, right? So Black men like me I think are not that common in academia, and part of the reason why is because you go through so much to get to this point, that by time get to this point you're just so exhausted where it's like, "oh yes sir, we can do this, whatever you say, I mean let's just go with it." And so, again, I'm very appreciative, I didn't say I'm the only one. I very appreciative of those who speak truth to power. I'm not the

only one, but I'm here and so I'm just going to call it the way I see it. I mean, what else am I supposed to do?

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Absolutely. I have a few ending remarks. What does it mean to be the captain of your ship and the master of your destiny?

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

Yes, so typically before I start any major public speaking engagements, I want to introduce myself. And so, I tell people my Dr. Frederick Gooding Jr. aka Dr. G, I am the captain of my ship and the master of my destiny, author of my script, father of my family, PhD history Georgetown University. It essentially means what maybe I was just speaking to, this idea that I'm very blessed to be in this position, right? I mean who else gets their summers off?

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

So, they can do more work.

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

Ha haha, that's true, yeah. No, I mean I tell people, you know I'm sitting there watching TV while I'm working. You know what I'm saying, I am, I am, I'm mentalizing I'm working. But no, I'm very blessed right? So, I don't want anyone feeling sorry for me, it's not a matter of "oh James there's no ice on the yacht! You know what a travesty." No, it's not that story, but at the same time I am captain of my ship, I mean what am I supposed to do? I spend years studying the pain in my people, only to obtain a position of prominence and potential influence and be quiet? Now I supposed to be quiet? Ge along, go along because I don't wanna offend anybody? And again, I'm not going out of my way to be rude, but again if it's true then what's the problem? What's the problem?

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Mhm, right.

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

I mean you know, cause again, you have no problem telling me the truth that I didn't have enough money for the mortgage loan. You didn't have no problem telling me the truth that you know, my application wasn't good enough, you know, to go through to the next stage. You didn't have a problem telling me, right? That my rent was late and so therefore I need to- right? You had no problem telling me that. That that's the truth, it's uncomfortable, it's awkward, you had no problem telling me that. Now all of a sudden, I'm supposed to feel sheepish. So, you offend me- no, no. I know how about this, (pause) when I think about the history, I am offended, but when I simply articulate how the history is offensive, I'm now offending the offender. Like okay, now it's my fault. No, it wasn't my fault. I didn't create this. I didn't create the embarrassing dark chapters of our American past right? Not here to condemn, you know, I know history is complicated and people are complicated. But at the same time when I say I'm captain of my ship

and master of my destiny it's just letting people know that I realize I have a life to live. No one's getting in the casket with me, plain and simple. No one's staying up late at night, thinking about how my kids are going to eat. It is just that simple, no one's getting in the casket with me. What am I supposed to do? Walk the earth scared of my own shadow? I mean come on; I mean it is a very simple situation. The sun shines, Black man has gone through a whole lot, the Black woman is gone through even more. so many of my People of Color on this planet have been oppressed and have suffered. It's wrong. Let's fix, let's talk about it. Are you really about the human race? Are you really about what's good? Just talk about it. Let's fix it. It's just that simple. I mean, I don't know what else to do. I just really don't know what else to do. So, when I tell people that I'm signaling to them that I'm not afraid, I'm willing. We don't have to fight about it, but let's get right about.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

So, what will be your advice for those who want to be architects of reconciliation?

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

It's never too late. It's never too late. There's so many good people in the world, but they're limited by what I call the three Es. They're limited by experience, exposure, and education. So, just like I was unable to put in a construction bid on the hospital I was born in, couldn't do it. It was already built it was already in motion, right? The bottom line is that this game has been in operation for a very long time.

You know, I tell my students all the time I didn't invent it, neither did you, but the same time we're in it. And you can't jump in a pool and not claim to be wet. We're in it, okay? We're in it. We're all connected to history. We're connected to one another. Let's acknowledge our connections. How can we say we're ready to lead on if we don't know the issues? So, we need to convert the three Es, we need more meaningful experiences, we need to continue to be committed to exposing ourselves. I mean what better place than university. I tell my students all the time, why not attend an affinity group organization? You don't have to, you know, sign an oath in blood and, you know, dues for life. No one said that, but at least expose yourself, right? And I tell Black Indigenous People of Color, why not go to the SGA, you know who said it's not for you? You know, find out what's going on, the parliamentary procedure might be a little dry, but find out what's going on. Just expose yourself, right? So, experience, exposure, and education in our classrooms, right? This goes to all my faculty who are listening, right? You're so smart, you gotta the PhD, you're so smart; but you can't figure out a way to inject a little truth and diversity in your work, in your classroom, you can figure that out? You're so smart, but yet you're so clueless? So, let's figure this out, we can do it together. We can do it together. I'm willing to help, I'm willing to help. And so, the question is, you know, it's not a matter of how we do it, but you know, answering the why. You know why do we want to do to this. If we decide that it's in our best interest to come together so we can move forward together, that's the key ingredient for me, for us being able to facilitate reconciliation for long term. We have to want it because the last thing I will say is that in my experience, limited perhaps, isn't it amazing how people often magically figure out a way to do what they want?

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Mhm. When there's a will.

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

And I want reconciliation.

**DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:**

Well, you heard the man. Dr. Frederick Gooding Jr. thank you so much for joining the Race and Reconciliation Initiative's Oral History Project. We appreciate your words of wisdom and this wonderful testimony.

**DR. FREDERICK GOODING JR. :**

Last thing I'll say before you cut off is, you know this needs to be known for records. Who am I but just a man? I mean beautiful curly hair, but I'm just a man, understand. But I just want it to that however a story is told, I just want it to be known that we did the best we could with what we had.

END