

Larry Dickson Transcript
9/13/2022

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

This is Sylviane Greensword. I'm here with Mr. Larry Dickson. Today is September the 13th, the year is 2022. We are meeting via Zoom, as Mr. Dickson is currently located in California. Mr. Dickson, thank you for joining the Oral History Project with the Race and Reconciliation Initiative.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Thank you for having me.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Absolutely. So today we're going to discuss your accomplishments before, during, and after your enrollment at TCU. And I know that you have some very interesting testimonies to share with us, and we're just looking forward to hearing them. So can you please tell us a little bit about yourself, where you're from, maybe memories from your childhood, any particular influences, spiritual influences, or any other influences that you'd care to share?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Well, I was born and raised in Dallas, Texas. My dad was pastor of a Disciples of Christ Church for 43 years, and therefore, we had some associations with other Disciples of Christ churches, both black and white. And quite naturally, he had some knowledge of Texas Christian University, being associated with that denomination, and so that's where I first heard about the school and learned about it. I had an older brother, who graduated high school in 1961 and tried to get into TCU and was refused.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Oh, on what grounds?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Well, I, at that time, I really didn't know what grounds he was refused, but we all assumed it was based on race. And so when that happened to our family, quite naturally, being a younger brother, I had no intention of coming to TCU after that happened. And also I have another brother that went to a historically black college, Prairie View A&M College in Texas, and he left, he was one year older than I was, so when he was a senior, I was a junior, and then when he graduated, he went to Prairie View, and so my intentions were to go to not necessarily Prairie View, but a historically black college.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Can we go back to your other brother, the one whose admission was denied? What was the official reason for refusing his application?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Because I was four years younger than he, I was never told what the official, quote unquote, reason was. We all knew he tried to get in and he did not get it, and so the assumption was that it was based on race, but I can't verify that.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

I mean it was before official integration.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

1961.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Yes.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

So well, more than likely

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Officially yeah it was 1964, so...

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Right. So well, he ended up going to University of Kansas. So he did quite well.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

I see.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

And so, anyway, that was my first association with Texas Christian and, of course, my dad being a minister, for such a long time, we knew about the school and we knew about the denomination and how it interacted with the school. And so after that happened, I really had no intention of attending TCU. And for some reason, when my other brother attended Prairie View, I went down there with him on his first day of school and was not too impressed with the campus or the school itself.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

I see.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

And so I decided I would look around, and I did, and that's how I ended up coming back to TCU or putting it in a pod of schools that I would consider.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

What were your expectations once you knew that you would come here to TCU? I mean, once you had decided that you would attend?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Yeah, I had a thought process back then and, you know, thinking back on it in the haze of 50 years or so I think what I had in mind was that TCU, the stature of TCU would be good for my résumé. In other words, it would be something that I could use once I got out of school to get a good job and support myself and my family. So that was one expectation. But other than that, there was very low expectation of anything that would change racially, because the schools in Dallas at that time, the high schools, they were segregated. So I was coming out of a segregated high school, into a school like TCU, with very low expectations that anything would change. Especially in my relationship to other races, especially the white race. But in the south, mostly, we were taught to see the black, white, we didn't have the, you know, there weren't Asians. I mean, they were there. People were Jewish, people were Asian, but they were *white*. And in the south, it was white, black, that's all it was. So coming out of a segregated high school, I took an SAT test at a white school in Dallas, and I was amazed at the campus as it compared to ours. So I really didn't have any expectations that anything was going to be any different. When I came to TCU, white people would still treat me the same way they treated me as a high school student, and as a, you know...

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

How did they treat you as a high school student?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Well, in the segregated sense. I mean, all my classmates were black, so we didn't interact with white students. So I expected that to be the same thing at TCU. And I knew there were going to be other people because the school was associated, for instance, like Brite Divinity School and, you know, it was associated with the Christian Church Disciples of Christ, so I thought I would run into some people who were decent people, and I did, you know, but I also ran into some racists.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

And we're going to talk about this in an instant. But first, let's talk about the kind of interactions you had, for instance, in your neighborhood, I assume it was a segregated neighborhood since you went to a segregated school?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Yeah, yeah, I grew up in South Dallas. And at that time, it was a particularly poor neighborhood. My dad was a minister. The first church he passed it was called Bow Street Christian Church, which was on Bow street, which was in near North Dallas, which today has been gentrified and rebuilt. Then we moved to South Dallas, to a church called Forest Avenue Christian Church and he passed at that church, and that church was on Forest Avenue, which I think now it's called Malcolm X Drive, I'm not sure. But, in the south part of the city. But it was a very poor area, our school, we'd love that school, because as classmates, we enjoyed each other a little but little did we know how much we were missing out on education-wise, culture-wise, all of those things. For instance, so you know, I took a typing class in high school, we had one electric typewriter in the whole class, but then when I went to take SAT tests at this white campus, they had one at every desk!

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Separate and unequal?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Yes, separate but unequal, and it was. They had cold running water. We didn't have that at our school. So you know, the school was just unequal, and it came through that education when I took that test. So going into TCU, I expected the campus to be nice. I expected everything to be nice, and it ended up being a lot as I expected, but again, I had very low expectations going in.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

I see. So when you decided to enroll TCU, what about your classmates? Your high school peers? What was their reaction? Were they supportive? Or were they like, "Oh, you're crazy." What was their reaction?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Both! Because, you know, I have a, I have a real good friend, his name is Anthony Cregler and he was one of the one of the classmates that went to TCU with me.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

All right.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

And so, you know, we grew up together, and we were friends, and we're still friends today, the same with Ronnie, Ronald Hurdle, you know, we're all friends, and we grew up together, and so we supported each other's decision. But like you said, there were people who thought we

were crazy, because they, you know, they knew the history of this, of growing up in a segregated society. And quite naturally, you know, our high school, as I indicated, we loved our high school, it was great, but we little did we know that how much we were missing out on, educationally and culturally.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Ignorance was bliss, huh?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Yeah! You know, I took a math class at TCU and half the stuff went, sailed right over my head, I mean, because of the background I had. That was not adequate enough for college prep. They just didn't do it in the segregated situations that we grew up in. So yeah, we had both reactions, "you got to be crazy to go over there," and others say, "hey, go for it." So it was, my parents particularly supported me, and wanted me to do what I wanted to do, and I was not an A student, I have to admit, you probably can pull up my transcripts, and know that but, I had to work hard for what I got, and I tribute that to a lot to the background that I had in high school... or didn't have.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

What about in high school? In high school were you distinguishing yourself as a particularly good student given the standard?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Yeah, you know, I was a good student. You know, I was not a popular kid. I, you know, we were in ROTC, you know, that type of thing, and I have a lot of friends and still have friends from that era. But again, you know, and we had teachers that we liked, and we had teachers that we didn't like, but again, you know, there were, you know, you didn't know what you were missing out on it until you left that school.

I think Dallas didn't integrate their schools until 1967. I think it was two years later. So it's kind of interesting, that's 10 years after Little Rock Central High School. So the schools in Texas were segregated 10 years longer than it was in Arkansas. So, we have that legacy of separation and unequal education as a background.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

And do you have any recollection of interactions with non-blacks during your childhood? Any particular memory of you meeting somebody who was not black? And how did it go? How did it happen?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Well, yeah, you know, particularly growing up as a preacher's kid, you know, my dad went to a lot of conferences, both white and black, and Disciples of Christ Church denomination had conferences, they had them for youth, they had them for adults, and so I attended some of those and met, you know, white kids from different parts of Dallas, and we enjoyed some really good, spiritually based interactions. But again, when we left those conferences, we went our own way because we were growing up in a segregated society so I you know, I never saw him again after the conference ended.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

So now you decided to enroll at TCU, and it is fall of 1964. Can you walk us through your first day? And, you know, to the best of your recollection? Of course, anything that stands out?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Well, actually, it was fall of '65.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Fall of '65. True, because you came here one year after. We're going to talk about '64 though. That's a whole other story.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Well, yeah, that's that was a year before I came to campus. Yeah, it was fall of '65. But again, I was excited. I was assigned a white roommate in Milton Daniel, and I don't know how I ended up with a white roommate. But anyway, I did. And, you know, the first few days on campus, well, it's a funny story about my first day. I slept through my first class, which was horrible. But so, I was going through a process of a, "hey, I gotta grow up and be responsible for myself." You know, I didn't have my mom to wake me up and say, hey, get ready for school. So, that was a personal thing. But I did have a...

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Right. A learning experience.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Yeah, I did have a white roommate who pretty much ignored me, and so I ignored him too. I don't remember his name. But he would get up and go to class, and I would get up and go to class and we barely spoke. So I didn't really get to know him that well. What I did know was that at the end of the first semester, he was gone, because he flunked out, or he left the school. So I, after my first semester, I moved into Tom Brown. With I think, yeah, my friend Anthony and I roomed together for a semester, that second semester in Tom Brown, and then my sophomore year, or after the first year was over, we separated as roommates, and then I was still in Tom Brown. But again, the athletes, the football players and basketball players

were in Tom Brown. They moved them all out of Tom Brown over to Milton Daniel because they had air conditioning. Tom Brown didn't have air conditioning. So all the athletes left and went to Milton Daniel. So my sophomore year, I got a new roommate, and he was white, and his name was Harold Rosen. He was Jewish. We became really close friends, and I really feel bad today because I don't know where he is or how to contact him. But we spent three years together, the last three years of my career at TCU as roommates, and Harold was an Honor student. So I remember many a night, you know, I'd be sitting in my desk studying and he would turn his lamp off and go to bed and leave me up studying because he was finished. So he could sleep well, while I had to study through the night just to pass a course. So, but we became really close friends, and he and I roomed, as I indicated. We were roommates for the last three years. So that tells you a little bit about how I got into TCU and how I got started.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

So there were, if my numbers are correct, there was 14 African American students that got into that class. From what I've been able to collect, it seems that all of you were kind of close-knit and that you knew one another. I remember Mrs. Sims who had indicated that you all had agreed, "we will graduate on time."

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Yeah, yeah. Well, back in those days, you know, in the 60s you are expected to go four years and that's it and then get out and get a job. You know, so the importance of not being in school beyond four years, it was important back in those days. Yeah, so that was, you know, part of our parents' instructions to wage. We'll pay for the first four, but that's it. So we, we were on their timetable too. But yeah, we did, we did. And, you know, we enjoyed each other's company, and we used each other really to persevere on campus because we really didn't have, didn't know anyone, we didn't have any friends who were white. So whenever, you know, it's like when you go on a supermarket or something and you see a black face that you don't usually see, I think that's how we were on campus, and we would run across campus to meet each other and find out about each other. So yeah, we were, you know, I didn't know all 14, don't get me wrong. There was a close-knit group of us that, yeah, that we hung out with.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Now, speaking of Mildred Sims, she had said, back in 2001, during an interview, that to her opinion, except for Greek life, she didn't really experience any racist bias. Now, if there was no racist bias, as per her experience, why do you think it took so long for TCU to integrate? Since it looks like the student population did not have that racist bias? Why wait so long?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Well, I don't know what TCU she went to. There was a lot of racial bias at TCU from my standpoint. I can give you some examples if you like. Let's see... Oh, Julian Bond came to

campus one time, I think he was a Georgia representative of something, but he came to campus to speak and we were responsible for transportation for him.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Okay, when you say “we,” who is “we”?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

The members of the group, the black students on campus. We were supposed to help him navigate from the airport to the campus and back. So he could make his speech, but there were death threats. On not only him, but anybody who was around him at the time, and I remember that distinctly, and you know, that was just one incident, as far as racism was concerned that I ran into on campus.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

You didn't know who was the author of those threats?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

No, no, we didn't know where they were coming from, or whether they were legit or not. That's just one instance. I mean, oh, when I was in Milton Daniel my first year, you know, I experienced the N word in the hallways. I don't think the kids knew that they were standing outside my room when they used it, but it was interesting. So I didn't answer the door, by the way, so but, the N word was used quite a bit in the hallway and say that and you know, they were saying, “hey N word, there's one in our dormitory.” So I didn't confront these kids. I don't know who they were. But those are just a couple of answers incidences that I ran into. And they were ongoing. I mean, that's why I was surprised when Mildred made that statement. I didn't know she made that statement. But maybe she didn't run into any incidences, but I did.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Do you think there might have been a double standard between black men and black women?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

I think there may... You know what? I really don't know. The black women that I knew on campus, well, first of all, I had a girlfriend from high school, who was two years behind me and our plan was to get married eventually. So I didn't interact a lot with the black women on campus from a social standpoint, because I had a girlfriend that was coming to campus, was coming to TCU two years later, and we were dating on going. So, but I don't know if there was a different standard or not, but I mean, I experienced quite a bit of racism, not only in the dormitories but in classrooms too.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

In the classrooms? Like from your classmates or from the instructors?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Both. And it depended on, you know, what course I was in. I'm thinking about I took a course on southern history.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Oh.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

So, you know, their view of southern history is a little different than ours?

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Yes.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

And it manifests itself in the class and so I got into some difficult situations when I challenged that. So, you know, I think it was a history of the south course or something. But anyway, there was a discussion about how happy the slaves were and, you know, I challenged the fact that they were happy, and it didn't go over well.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

How dare you?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

How dare me, yeah. So anyway, that's the way the course was taught.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Wow.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

And, you know, no one was supposed to challenge the fact that, I don't think they were very happy, you know, from the standpoint of the way you're telling the story. So anyway, that occurred in classrooms. So there were different incidents. Oh, and the biggest one I can tell you about is when my friend Ron Hurdle was elected a cheerleader. This is a dichotomy, because number one, the cheerleaders were voted on by the students. And he won. And he was the first black cheerleader at TCU. And the fact that they voted for him is encouraging.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Right.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

At least they voted for him, and you know, but the night he won, again, here come to death threats. All right and we sat up a bunch of us, went to his room and sat up most of the night waiting for those people to show up, because they said they were on their way to kill him, and so that was the biggest incident, and that happened to me during that time, and this was about two years later, because Ron, I think was two years behind me.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Right. He graduated in '71.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Yeah, yeah. So, but yeah, those are just some of the examples of the racism that I ran into on campus, and there were others too. So when it comes to Mildred's statement, I just don't know where that came from.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

A completely different experience.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Yes.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Now, do you feel like this racism, especially in the classroom, do you feel like this has hindered your ability to learn or that it has hindered your academic performance in any way? Do you think that you were graded differently or anything like that?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

I, you know, I don't think it hindered my ability to learn, or to discuss, or to debate. But yeah, I think it probably had something to do with how I was graded though.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Oh wow.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

You have to remember this 1965, '66 and you are not supposed to challenge, you know, most situations. You were to absorb the information and run with it as it is. So there wasn't a lot of challenging in those days when it came to academia, the way we have it today, or even 10, 15 years ago, remember, we're talking 50 years ago, and in the state of Texas, in the southern United States.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Right. Wow.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

People used to tell and they say, oh, Texas wasn't a part of the South. Well, I don't know about that. I grew up in it. So...

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Yeah, it does have a unique history, but at the same time, I mean, it's part of the geographic south and you know, it does have that legacy.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Yeah it has that legacy and of course, you know I lived in Virginia for a while, because my mom was from there, and my dad pastored there for a couple of years, and so I know the difference between Virginia and Texas, but again, I know the similarities too so... it was interesting. I remember when, I started elementary school in Virginia. So even before I went to school, we used to go back and forth from Texas to Virginia, because my dad was from Texas, and all his people were in Texas, and most of his people and my mom's were in the East or in DC, and I remember I used to tell everybody, yeah, sometimes we go north, we go to Virginia to visit my grandparents, and little did I know at that time, I wasn't going north. It was north of Texas.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

It was north of Texas. It was norther.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

It was norther, but it was not north.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Oh, that is interesting. I have another question for you most of those firsts, they stated that they didn't realize they were making history at the time, and this is something that we're hearing over and over that, you know, "for us, we were just, trying to get an education." But now that you know, how does it feel to know that you've been such a trailblazer?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Well, you know, as I said earlier, I embrace the legacy of it all. I don't think we thought of it that way at the time. We were hopeful and grateful for the opportunity to go to school, but again, I don't think we saw ourselves as pioneers or anything because there are other black students there. As I indicated, you know, the night school students the evening school.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Those that we don't see during the daytime.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

That we never saw, but yeah, so but it was interesting. For instance, like the relationship I had to James Cash who, you know, was a big athlete on campus, you know, and he lived in Milton Daniels.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Did he?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Yeah, with the athletes, so, but he was our hero. You know, he was a person that we looked up to and I and my relationship to him, you know, we were not real close friends. We didn't know each other that well. But, we had a lot in common. So, we could relate to each other and oh, yeah, he used to save my life a lot because he would, when my meal ticket ran out, he would throw some food out from the back door of the athletes cafeterias to keep us going. So...

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

We interviewed him last summer, and he did not tell us that.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

He didn't mention that though?

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

No.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Yeah, he'd hand us food out the back door. You know, we were starving students, but he was our hero. He really was.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Wow. Interesting to know. Yeah. More pieces of the puzzle. Do you know he's getting his statue?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

I know. I was so excited. I couldn't believe it. That's wonderful.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Race and Reconciliation Initiative efforts. These are some of the things that we do you know, giving you guys the honor that is due.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Well that's wonderful. I think it's great.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

So we're trying, you know, to do the best we can with what we have. That's what our Chair always says. So we can now talk about something that you may or may not have much knowledge of, but you enrolled in 1965, and although you are the first graduating class that was integrated, your group was not the first group of students of an integrated section after TCU decided to integrate. There was a wave of students, five students who enrolled in 1964 on the main campus, African American students, did you get to know any of them? Or have you ever been in touch with any of them?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Actually, I did not. I did not know that those students were there, actually, and if you say that they were daytime students, that they lived in the dormitory and they stayed on campus. I can't recall.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Well, the reason for that is because every single one of them enrolled in 1964, and decided not to remain another year because that's how intolerable the climate was at the time.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Not surprising, not surprising, and that's why, you know, I made a statement about, you know, I ran into plenty of incidents of racism in '65. But I don't remember, it's amazing to me to learn this now, because I didn't know about those students in '64. And none of them came back?

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

None. Yeah, they did not stay beyond another year, and the few comments that we have, are definitely not the most pleasant evidently. Mildred Sims even said that one of them warned her, there is no way you're going to last because you know, you need to get out of here as early as possible. I had the privilege to interview one of these students, and she confirmed that, you know, the climate was, it was impossible to bear. So one of the things that we're doing with the Race Reconciliation Initiative as an investigative Task Force is trying to see what did TCU do different the year after that allowed all 14 of you to be retained, while the other five did not. So this is a mystery that still needs to be solved. Clearly, you did encounter racism. So the racism was not gone overnight. But there must have been something else. What kept you there, despite all the discrimination and the racist remarks that you were a victim of?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Yeah, well, first of all, you know, as I indicated, there was a there, you know, my dad, being a minister, in the Christian church, Disciples of Christ denomination provided me with an opportunity to attend TCU at a discount. So the price was right. You know, if we didn't have that discount, I probably wouldn't have gone because, you know, my dad didn't make a lot of money at the time. And that's why, and he had four kids, and we all went to college. So, without that discount, it would have been out of the question. So, the finances worked out, number one. Number two, I went to the school with some friends that I already knew, and we decided that we would stick together and support each other and make this thing work. But it wasn't because TCU made it work for us. We made it work for ourselves, really, and so the fact that I probably learned more in Tom Brown than I did in the classroom when it came to people, and how to interact with others, and I had, like I said, I had some wonderful white friends at TCU. My roommate was white, so wonderful guy. There were others, too, that we became friends with, and so we made it but we had to work at it. I don't particularly know, or I can't put my finger on something that I can tell you that TCU did to make it better for us. I know because I was not aware of that situation in '64.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Yeah, and, as far as you can tell, between you and your friends, in all candor, was the racism one-sided?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Well, when you say one-sided, how do you define that? I mean...

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Did you purposefully stay away from any white classmates because they were not black?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

No.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Did you purposefully or exclusively befriend black people?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

No, no, I did not. Well, I mean, if you saw a black person, you tried to befriend him anyway.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Well, all three of them, right?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

All three of them. [laughing] But I didn't avoid any white people that, just because they were white.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Right.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

I remember, this is a funny story. When the athletes were still in Tom Brown with us, I remember a couple of the football players were down the hall from me, and so we went down to meet them, because they were stars. They were football players, you know. And so somebody said, "hey, you know, Norm Bulaich," whoever it was, "is in the room down the hall." I thought, "you mean the guy that plays football?" We go down and meet him. So we went down, and we met him and we talked and, you know, it was just a normal conversation. Not that we became friends, but you know, that that was a good indication of the fact that we weren't avoiding white people, right? We weren't trying to stay away from them and stay only with the one or two blacks that were on campus. That didn't happen. We did a lot of intramural sports, football, basketball, that type of thing. Of course, we were independents. You know, you couldn't play on a Sigma Chi team. But so we, you know, we did those types of things and most of the team was white guys, I mean, or girls, you know, so we didn't avoid white people just because we were black. I had some real good white friends and people learned, I learned from a lot of people in the dormitory, and like I said, we had a good situation in Tom Brown, where we got along really well, and I don't know, it seemed like it was a haven from what was going on outside on the campus.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Now, as you are probably aware, you know, that TCU's reputation has been smudged among reports of racism in the more recent years. Have you kept in touch with the TCU community or like the Alumni Association, or any of these organizations like, Black Alumni Alliance? Any of them?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Well, not necessarily kept in touch. But you know, I do get periodicals from the Alumni Association, and I follow those.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

So you are aware of the turmoil?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

I am, but I'm not actively involved in it, but I still wear my shirt a little bit.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Oh, I see there. Well, okay, Go Frogs. As far as you can tell, do you believe the stories that have been in the media, for instance, do you think that they bring in more transparency as to what really goes on behind the scenes? Or do you think that it distorts what TCU is really about?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

No, I think the school has come a long way. It's, you know, it's the transparency. When you say, transparency, I think you're talking you're more about today than you were about what happened in the past.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Right. I'm talking so, you know, if you have kind of kept in touch with the latest development at TCU with the knowledge that you have been there and then seeing the evolution of race relations. Do you think that like those stories that kind of were leaked in the media, do you think that they show what TCU, what really goes on at TCU, or do you think that it's a distortion of TCU given the progress that's been made?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

I'm sorry, I can't comment on that, because I'm not familiar with the day-to-day stories that are leaked or not leaked about TCU currently. So I wouldn't be, I wouldn't be able to comment on that.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

That makes sense. Very good. I do have a couple of other questions for you. So, what message as Larry Dickson, what message would you have for those people who work toward racial reconciliation? Do you have any advice for this generation?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Well you know, I'm driven personally by my Christian faith, and I tried to let that drive the way I approach people and how I interact with people, and it's interesting that you bring that that question to me today, because this past Sunday, our pastor had a sermon on fighting against principalities and powers that be and really, that's what you're fighting against, you're not fighting against individuals or people or you shouldn't be. And so I, you know, I tried to let that drive my interactions with people. It's important to give an individual a chance or approach an individual first, and then go from there, because you really, you know, you're fighting against media, you're fighting against politics, you're fighting against, those are the principles and, powers that be that you're fighting against, and not necessarily an individual.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

That's powerful.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Yeah, so, that's the way I look at it. Try to look at it.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Very wise. Okay, Mr. Larry Dickson, I have one last question for you. Feel free to be as brief or as elaborate as you want with that question. In your own words, what does reconciliation mean to you?

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Well, reconciliation really means that to me, and this is a personal definition, because I don't know what it means to other people, but it's important to understand what has happened, why it happened. If it was a positive thing to keep it going, if it was a negative thing, then it needs to be addressed, and it needs to be done by all people. So, reconciliation means to me first of all, understanding, acknowledging, and then moving forward in a positive direction.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Wow that's deep.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Well, I know that was your last question, but I just want to end the thing by saying, thank you for letting me tell you my story. It's a story that, you know, I don't really know if it means anything to anybody, you know, or if it will, down the road. I don't know how you're going to use this information or what but hopefully, it'll be something that will help your initiative and help TCU too because, you know, I am a part of that family. I consider myself a part of that family, even though I'm not up to date as I should be. But thanks again for inviting me and I appreciate it. I hope this helps someone and if not someone more than just the community itself.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

It will probably help more than you know.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Okay, great. That's good. Well, thank you, doctor. I appreciate it.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Thank you, Mr. Dickson, for your words of wisdom and your wonderful testimony.

MR. LARRY DICKSON:

Okay, have a good day.