

Andre Churchwell
Equal Access Oral History Project

JOAN ILACQUA: And we're recording. Good morning.

ANDRE CHURCHWELL: OK. I'm Andre Churchwell. I am African American -- native African American of America. My family hales from Nashville, Tennessee. That's my mom and dad. That's where I was raised -- born and raised. My family -- my dad's family originated from a plantation -- which we found out about recently -- down near Clifton, Tennessee, which is in the southwest part of the state. As in many of those situations, the whole idea of roots with these giant plantations is erroneous. Most blacks were held on very small farms that were not true plantations, and that was the case of my great-great-great-grandfather. And the name of the gentleman, obviously, who owned that small farm was Churchwell. I think his name was John Churchwell. And we have uncovered my dad's great-great-grandfather there. So on there was my great-great-grandfather, [Isam?] Churchwell, who became a Methodist minister and worked on the river -- the Tennessee River -- on a branch of the Tennessee River down there. That's where my family came from. My mother's family -- my mother is a Buckingham and she came from the Bell Buckle, Tennessee area. Don't know

much about her family, but they were from there. But we were born in Nashville. I was born in Nashville on December 27th, 1953. I was the second child of Robert and Mary Churchwell. My parents were the -- met in the aftermath of World War II. Now, my father, a member of the greatest generation, came home after being in the European and Pacific theaters. Lucky him, for sure. And upon getting the GI Bill, came to Fisk University. And Dad had -- throughout his life -- this overwhelming interest to read and write. He was a bibliophile to the fifth power. And under the -- luckily, under the tutelage of the legendary Renaissance poet, Arna Bontemps -- who was the head of the library at Fisk -- dad learned how to write, and to be engaged in the discourse around the great writers and the great books at that time with Professor Bontemps and the other great teachers on the Fisk campus at that time. So dad began writing, and stumbled into a soda shop and met my mother, who was in college at that time. There was about a 13-year difference -- Dad much older. And met Mary Buckingham, and they got married on June 2nd, 1951. And so, Dad -- and so, they had five children, My oldest brother Robert, Jr. is about a year and a half older than I am. Then we had, after me, a sister [Mareesa?] who has been involved in education in most of her life. And then

we had the twin brothers -- the babies -- who were eight years my junior -- Kevin and Keith, who will figure into the story as I move along. Needless to say, they were around my feet and around my ankles, and are actually both physicians, too. Both engaged in academic mess like myself. Keith's at Yale right now, running the executive director of the Yale cardiovascular development. And Kevin, his older twin, is the chief operating officer of Harvard's Boston Children's Hospital right now. So, we'll come back to that part of the story. But I was born in the lower-middle class -- oh, hang on there.

JJ: Yep. No problem.

AC: Hello? Yes. Yes. Got it. Got it. Got it. Yeah. Yeah. Appreciate it, man. OK. Thank you so much. Bye. All right. You ready? Back to the story?

JJ: I am.

AC: If I'm too loquacious here, then let me know. I can move it along for you.

JJ: Oh, no. This is wonderful. Thank you.

AC: OK. And so, [00:05:00] yes. And so, Dad -- being the first black to write in a southern newspaper -- unbeknownst to us, at the time -- was not allowed to sit in the city room to write his articles. He had to write them at home, bring them in, and then to the copy editor for years, until

finally, some civil soul -- with some social conscience -- recognized they should let this man sit in the city room to write his articles. And so, he did that, not telling us of the consequences for the racist challenges he faced -- and being the great modeled life that he lived -- we learned all this subsequently. And Mom went back to school, got her degree, taught in the public school system for over 40 years. And so, that led to my brother going into public education in Nashville. He has taught for over 30 plus years. He's been a principal a number of times. He is now working as a legacy teacher at -- oddly enough, and thankfully enough -- the newly built and reconfigured Robert Churchwell, Sr. Museum Magnet School in Nashville, Tennessee, which is honoring Dad's memory and his role in advancing diversity in Nashville during that very stormy time. And with his great leadership at home -- mostly around the fact that the home we lived in was probably no more than a couple of thousand square feet. The largest room in the house was his library, that was maybe 200 to 400 square feet. All the books of the world seemed to exist -- at least in my mind -- as we were surrounded by these books. And his gentle imperatives about the importance of a life of the mind, and his brilliant inculcations and ways to get us to read -- which ranged

from "You don't have to cut grass. So if you want to make some money to go to college next year at Vanderbilt, Andre, I'll pay you the \$300 if you read these three books that Ernest Hemingway wrote. 'Sun Also Rises', 'For Whom the Bell Tolls', and 'Farewell Arms'." I said, "Well, I can do that." "But you also have to read this definitive biography that's about 300 pages, too. First." I said, "How much more will you pay me for that?" And so, that was his brilliance. And so, every summer, there would be a series of books from either Hemingway, or out of his library, or Freud, or usually the great writers -- Herman Melville, F. Scott Fitzgerald -- "Tender is the Night" and "Great Gatsby" you have to read. Almost always with an accompany biography or autobiography. And eventually, that became pleasurable. It wasn't initially, but that was probably the only -- the second room in the house -- in sweltering hot Nashville summers -- that had an air conditioning unit, too. So that made it easier to stay in that room and read. I think we only had two rooms in the house with air conditioning. One in their bedroom, and one in the den. And fans everywhere else. It would get about 95 to 100 degrees, with 100% humidity in the summer in Nashville. So that made it easier to read in that library. Oh, hang on a second.

JI: Sure.

AC: Sorry.

JI: Oh, it's OK.

AC: Hey. Yes, sir. Yeah. OK. Good. Good. Great. Great. Great. I appreciate that. Thanks, man. He can get out of there. Let him know we'll reach out to him later. Yeah. OK. Bye-bye. (pause) And so, that kind of interest was kind of seen -- I guess -- by the younger kids -- particularly the twins, who were kind of hanging around me, seeing that that seemed to be something I was interested in -- and Daddy was interested in. So they picked up the same habits, too. And so, I thought that math and science was really kind of my main sweet spot in school. And it took -- and so, I was looking more -- probably in high school -- this was around the time integration took place in Nashville, too. So we were in a segregated, small school in Nashville that was essentially the black school -- both elementary, junior high, and high school -- for kids that lived in East Nashville. The river -- the Cumberland River separated downtown Nashville [00:10:00] and the rest of Nashville from East Nashville, which lived on the other side of the river. And that's where we lived. And typically -- I don't know if you realize this, but the -- typically, in the south -- and in probably most cities in

the north -- but I can't comment on that directly -- they would build one black high school generally for the city. So the city of Nashville, for years, only had [Pearl?] High School. So every black student, and every black teacher -- that's where Daddy was growing up, and Momma -- went to Pearl High. And so, you can imagine the best and the brightest black teachers, in the 1920s and '30s -- brilliant minds who weren't given the opportunity to become physicists, or chemists working for Dow Chemical -- they were teachers. And so, those high schools were akin to junior colleges, replete with extraordinarily brilliant young African American teachers who doled out their love, and support, and brilliant teaching to these kids. And that's what Daddy was respondent, too. But by the time we came around, the population had gotten large enough in Nashville, that they built another school -- Meigs -- in East Nashville -- to accompany all the African Americans living over there. But it was one school that was -- one building, on one small campus, that had the elementary school, junior high school, and high school. Whereas the white schools would have separate schools, as it exists now. Elementary, junior, and high schools. And so, by 1970, when forced integration took place, we were moved from Meigs to East High, which was actually closer to where

we lived in East Nashville. That campus actually had two huge schools on it. Campus must be five acres big. Our little campus maybe was an acre. Maybe. If you count the basketball court next to the school. And on that huge campus -- which was within two miles of my home -- there was a East Junior High that was twice as big as Meigs, and East Senior High that was two-and-a-half times as big as Meigs. And so, that's what occurred in separate but not equal. That's what that term came from. Because the resources were not the same at all. But we came there, and met Oprah Winfrey, who was in my class at that time. And that's another story, too. But we finished in high school together there. So, in high school, I was very successful in science and math, and all my classes. And finished 3rd out of a class size of 310. And I think probably because the class was integrated, nearly 60/40 white/black, and I was so successful there, that probably -- I think that's where integration may have helped a number of us to recognize that we could be competitive in a mixed environment -- in an integrated environment. I suspect there's always a little lingering concern whether or not was our education up to par, as we looked over there and saw that huge campus. And it turns out, once again, those great Meigs teachers -- who were like professors, that

drilled all the right messages in our little, small brains -- and so, I finished, I think, 3.964 -- or something. I just missed out salutatorian by a fraction of a percentage of points. But at that time -- and I'm going to be fairly transparent with you, too here, because I think it's important. It's a good thing for people to hear about this kind of stuff. I suffered -- at that time -- well, and from a child through a good chunk of my education -- with horrible stuttering. I mean, just terrible stuttering. And so, I was not all that keen about being the salutatorian, because you have to get up and give a speech in front of the populace of East Nashville, and all the teachers and stuff. So I was frightened out of my mind. And it turned out -- I didn't duck any courses, but the young man ahead of me -- Mike [Hudgens?] -- just happened to make one more A than I did. He beat me out by a few hundredths of percentage points. But I recognized that I needed to solve that. And my dad, once again, was instrumental in helping me figure that out. So I went on to Vanderbilt. I had initially gotten in to Notre Dame and Vanderbilt and a couple of other schools. At that time, the northeast seemed to be a very distant place. We certainly were aware of it through the reading in Dad's library. I was transported to every major capital of the

world [00:15:00] when I'd read Hemingway or F. Scott or Thomas Moore -- or anyone -- I could be transported -- or Shakespeare. But I wasn't so keen about going to the northeast. It wasn't a familiar territory. So I didn't apply to the northeast schools. The Ivies I applied to. I applied to Vandy. I applied to Notre Dame. I think Duke and a few other schools. And because of my grades and so forth, I was accepted everywhere. And I actually was going to go to Notre Dame, but my mother being the solid thinker in our family -- planner -- informed me that the scholarships between Notre Dame and Vanderbilt were the same, and that it would really be taking money from the kids coming after me to go to Notre Dame -- for the flights, and the rooms that they couldn't really afford. It would take the money they were saving for Kevin and Keith and Mareesa's education. And my brother, who was in college, too -- ahead of me. He was going to the local state African American university, Tennessee State University. And so, acknowledging Momma's wisdom, I stayed at Vanderbilt, which turned out to be the right thing. I came to Vanderbilt in biomedical engineering, because I was interested in engineering and science application -- kind of applied physics. And in the course of my time at Vandy, my favorite aunt -- my mom's oldest sister -- came down

with what I think -- and ultimately was Lou Gehrig's Disease -- and her slow, painful death, though was quite agonizing and a difficult thing to watch, it also stimulated me to read about Lou Gehrig's disease. And that kind of -- that was probably the catalytic event -- was to kick me into thinking about medicine, rather than engineering in medicine. And so, by the time I was in my junior year, I was pretty sure I was going to go to med school. And so, I applied to medical schools. And I had done very well at Vanderbilt, but I was finishing magna cum laude. I'd been inducted into the engineering Phi Beta Kappa society called Tau Beta Pi. I was the number one biomedical engineering student of my year, and was given the award as such for my research and my academics. And so, that was the path to Harvard Med School. I had decided, at that time -- after being at Vanderbilt and studying all the colleges and med schools -- and obviously having a lot more time for inward reflection -- I felt it was probably time to leave the south -- at least for a short period of time. And it was not -- there was no other med school in the country I was more interested in than Harvard, because it had all those great resources, all the opportunities to look at engineering in medicine and science. And I thought it would be best to sample another

part of the country -- the geography and the culture. Knowing that I was going to be a southerner for the rest of my life, there was no way -- I figured my bones would be buried in the south. But I at least needed to spend some time encountering other parts of the country. So I could either go west or northeast, and I was inclined to go northeast -- particularly with Harvard there. And I got into all the med schools I applied to, and I was -- luckily enough, through [Al Pusan?] and the admissions committee -- I interviewed with Dr. Pusan. I interviewed with [Woody Meijers?] as a student interviewer. Woody flew over Nashville. He was doing interviews and he stopped in and met me in Nashville, and encouraged me more to apply. So I went on and finished applying, and got in. And so, came to Harvard in the summer of 1975, after finishing Vanderbilt. And somewhat was a cultural shock, as one would predict. My father, of course, came with me -- as he always would -- and be there for all of us in great times, challenges, new adventures -- bringing his wisdom, and Momma's packed cookies and fried chicken along with us. And we landed in Logan, and got in a taxi. And I remember now, going over to Vanderbilt Hall and being surprised it was Vanderbilt Hall. I had just finished Vanderbilt University, so there was at least some calming effect that, oh, this is

Vanderbilt, too -- to some extent. It turned out, Harold Stirling Vanderbilt gave money to build a dorm back in the late '20s. I would pass his statue almost daily on the Vanderbilt campus, not knowing that there was some connection between Harold Stirling Vanderbilt, and me, and Vanderbilt Hall -- that that was going to develop over a period of time. So I moved in. I was in the best shape of my life. I carried all those suitcases up the stairs. This was before there was any elevators in Vanderbilt -- and any air conditioning, I might add. This was in the heat of August, and I carried those suitcases and trunks by myself up to room 429. [00:20:00] And entered the room, and got settled in, and met some friends that are now lifelong -- which we'll talk in a minute about. And Dad was with me a few days, and then he left. And as I saw his taxi pulling off there, from the circle there at Vanderbilt Hall -- intersection of Louis Pasteur and Longwood -- I said, I guess this is it, buddy. And over a period of years -- those four years -- met some extraordinarily great friends, who are now some of my closest friends ever -- who I connect and talk to -- if not weekly, monthly -- for sure. [Harold Bursztajn?], who was in the room across the hall -- product of Polish-Jewish survivors of the Holocaust. We connected based on social justice. He and I

are a part of the UNESCO Biomedical Unit for America. Harold runs it and I'm on the committee. I bring all these great folks down -- who are now professors or leaders in medicine -- to give talks here at Vanderbilt. So, [Hal?] I met, Matthew Movsesian -- Armenian-American background, who is now -- at the University of Utah -- is professor of cardiology. Lifelong friend, Dave Gordon -- African American graduate of Amherst, who's a great friend. He's currently the dean at the new University of Akron, Ohio -- health sciences school and system. And Rich Payne, who's a double-chair professor at Duke in bioethics and neurology. And [Reesa Lavisa Morray?] and [Nancy Oreal?] and [Eve Higgenbottom?]. I could go -- as I said earlier, I can go on singing forever. But the most important aspect of Harvard Med School to me were the people connections -- more than anything else -- though I learned a lot of things there, and connected more to my cardiology -- I got really turned on more to cardiology because of my engineering background, and the work of being exposed to Cliff Barger's work in physiology, and then working with Tom McMahon in applied physics and research at Harvard University for about four to six months in my senior year. All that stuff cemented my career interest in cardiology, which I have sustained. The issues of arriving there as an African

American in 1975 aren't trivial. The death of MLK in '68 gave some voice to people like [Ed Firstspan?] and others, who were on the Harvard Med School faculty -- started pushing to integrate Harvard Med School, as many med schools did at that time in universities. And so, Harvard began opening its doors. And between 15 and 18 kids of color -- mostly African American -- were being admitted to the class -- which was helpful to have some folks around you that look like you. I didn't want to be Robinson Crusoe, so I had specifically looked at how many kids of color were being admitted to the med school, because I didn't want to come from the south and be the only black southerner in a class of 140 people, who were all from the northeast, who didn't know what I was saying -- couldn't understand what I was talking about. So, that was helpful. And because of the natural elitism that exists at Harvard -- and the provincialism around the northeast and the Ivies -- and the inherent, conscious and unconscious bias and racism that existed in Boston -- both in the Boston community, and -- to some extent -- at Harvard Med School, too, for sure. The black students banded together to create the Black Health Organization, which had been going on for a number of years before I got there -- which served as a community for us to sustain each other -- where we

would develop our internal resilient structures from our colleagues, and from our upperclassmen like [Fred S. Taylor?] and Woody Meijers and folks like that who would let us what lessons we need to be connected to to survive there -- both academically and socially, for that matter. And so, we developed a community of sorts -- which is absolutely imperative. Even as of now, you look at colleges and med schools or universities, kids of color band together because there is a likeness of a similar struggle that they're coming from or facing, that allows them to create a community of support, and a nurturing support of community. And you can clearly see that present at Harvard with us. And it didn't mean that we excluded like-minded souls like Hal and Matthew and kids who came from tough backgrounds in the northeast lower-middle class, and low socioeconomic status white students. We very much connected with them, too, because they were just as -- [00:25:00] views and similar fashion as we were about the predominantly aristocratic Ivy members of our med school classes at that time. And saw a number of things play out that were kind of unfortunate, and kind of unsavory -- but expected. And we saw the issues around [Bernie Davis?]. For sure, that was very painful. The Bakke Decision that came down that almost seemed to push the schools --

particularly Harvard, too -- to reduce its commitment to Affirmative Action and African American kids and kids of color. And we had a massive meeting about that, and we met with the Harvard's lawyer, who was representing Harvard in the Bakke Decision -- Archibald Cox -- with his high and tight hairdo, his prim and proper J. Press suit and bowtie and Brooks Brothers button-down shirt -- came over to meet us in building A in one of the big amphitheaters. And he got an earful from the liberal white students who were with us -- particularly the Jewish students who stood with us all the way -- and the African American students -- and our very strongly committed liberal professors like Ed Firstpan, Dave Potter, and people like that -- Al Pusan -- who stood up with us, and turned back the tide -- so to speak -- to maintain that commitment that Harvard was making to diversity. And we're so please to see that kind of thing take place. We were worried that this could be the death nail of this, but not so. We actually saw the best of pepple come out who supported this. But we certainly saw -- in school and in class -- the way people aligned themselves during classes and during how seating took place -- that there were clear fashions there. There were the [Yalies?] -- the white Yalies that sat together -- and kids from Harvard that knew each other -- Harvard

College -- the African American kids, we sat with our buddies -- [Rich Masiars?] -- poor white kid from -- middle class kid from Middletown, Connecticut -- who sat with me -- was one of my best buddies, and we still keep up. We sat together, studied together, all those years, and have connected and stayed close. So, I think -- the way I look at this thing -- more than anything else -- I mean, Harvard offers such unique resources that are unchallenged by any medical school, whether it be in the United States or in the world. And I think it's valuable that people of all color have the opportunity to sample -- to use -- to learn -- and flourish with those resources, so that they can then bring that back to their communities. Hopefully that's what I've done coming back to Vanderbilt -- to Nashville -- and others of my colleagues who -- as we say -- have been ambassadors of Harvard out in the distant outposts outside of the Charles River geography. But I think that -- I think what I have learned the most is the value of knowing about people from all different backgrounds, and seeing the similarities and struggles that people have, and being able to connect with that. I learned a huge lesson about keeping the bridges open back to all those resources with your professors -- like Dan Federman. I've kept in touch with him over the years. Dr. Pusan over the years. Roman

Desanctis over the years -- chief of cardiology at Mass General who just stepped down -- retired. I'm a strong believer that those mentors and those bridges got to be sustained, because they offer us ways to help folks that we're trying to teach -- and learn outside of the Harvard environments. And so, I think that's really some of the key lessons. I think that I learned a lot of resilience. I learned that I could conquer stuttering. Dad worked with me a lot. I must admit, some of my worst -- most memorable, painful -- experiences was a time on the surgical rotation at the Mass General when I had to give a presentation to the really nice and legendary Jay Gordon [Scannel?], who ran the surgical clerkship. And I'd been up all night -- and I don't know if you know about that kind of studying with autism and stuttering -- but the worst thing to do is not get enough rest. So I was unable to deliver my presentation. Boy, he could have flunked me. But he didn't. He recognized that there was still some brilliance in this little, crazy mind of mine. And he helped me get through that. But with Gordon Scannel's support, I came back home here, and my dad worked with me and put me in a position of running -- during the summer, I met this youth fellowship summer course -- church group courses -- and I said, Dad, I can't do this. Yes you can.

So I sat there with him, prepared the lessons, [00:30:00] and read all night long, prepared the lessons, and over time, just by the pressure from Dad pushing me and supporting me and sitting there with me while I would do it, I overcame it. I overcame it. And it's been kind of one of the more remarkable things that I can give credit to him again for helping me get through that. And I give talks all over the world and the country, and it's not an issue. It's something I use, though, to help those students that I encounter that are challenged by stuttering -- in particular -- and offer ways around that are solutions. My dad was a remarkable man. I could go on with him forever. I think he helped -- I think we learned -- he kept a lot of things away from us about the terrible stuff he faced -- the racism he faced during America in the '40s and '50s, and during the World War. But he shared enough towards the end in his '80s that we were fortified enough -- and helped build our resilience even more, knowing what he had been through -- that we're trying to pass on to our generation and the next generation -- our families, our children, our nephews and nieces -- and I think my brothers who came after me, who went to Harvard and MIT for college, and then Wash U for med school. And then Kevin trained at Boston Children's and is now back

there. And Keith trained with me at Emory, and is now at Yale. I think we all have taken those important lessons of resilience to heart. And nothing like a great role model that lives a model life that you can think about and reflect on every day, and still take lessons and learn from. When he came to visit me at Harvard in Vanderbilt Hall -- once again, it wasn't air conditioned -- he came up -- I think in my third year, fourth year -- he wouldn't sleep in the bed. We only had one bed there. He slept on the floor because he knew -- he said, you have to go do work tomorrow morning. So he would not allow me to let him take the bed. So that's the kind of mentoring that, thankfully, Dad offered that we have learned from and tried to pass those kinds of lessons along. And so, it's brought me to where I am and what I'm doing now. And I guess, do you want to know about that?

JJ: I would love to know a bit about what you do at Vanderbilt. I had the opportunity to hear some of your talk at HMS this past winter -- which you're doing tremendous work. And I would love if you just talked about it briefly. We still have a couple minutes left, so.

AC: Yeah. So, after finishing at Harvard, came back south to get some real fried chicken. Because I wanted to work with Willis Hurst, the greatest bedside clinician I've ever

encountered, next Roman Desanctis. I spent 13 years with him as an intern resident in training, and learned enormous lessons from him. He's all over the walls of my office here, if you ever want to come to Nashville. There's two people that have clear penetration on these walls: Robert Churchwell, my family, and Willis Hurst. So. And so, I learned from him a lot of stuff about cardiology, and how to be a teacher. How to be a man, too, to some extent, along with that. And as I got into faculty, I was pulled in to become the first diversity dean -- or administrator -- at Emory, and so I thought that was important to do. That's giving back. So I learned some initial things about how to do that -- how to work with admissions committees. And I came home -- been back home since 1991, and have been working with Vanderbilt all along. I joined the head of dean -- became a dean of diversity involved in diversity since '07 -- almost 10 years now -- here, taking all the lessons I had learned at Emory -- and the lessons about the importance of diversity from Harvard Med School. Make it clear, I learned a lot about the importance of diversity, and the value of it. And taking all those network-connected friends I have, has helped me immensely in building and weaving a network, and supporting my diversity work here. If you were to come here, you'd look at the

wall of my other office. All the HMS classmates and friends who have given talks down here about various topics. And their lives -- living their lives, sharing their life stories with my students -- all our students -- white and black students -- it's done a lot to build a sense of culture and climate down here. And so, I started working on building diversity in the med school class at Emory -- started working on house staff diversity and faculty diversity, and learning a lot of to's about how to do that, with billing incentives and working closely with program directors -- building values, showing what our office of diversity can do to help you be successful [00:35:00] in that. So we interview the students, we have a [sec-u-live?] weekend that we use, that no one else has been doing -- at least for the last few years. And just building a reputation around being supportive and not being a protagonist, but being more a supportive person with the program directors and the chairs. And with the dean's help here, we've been very successful. And I've used all my Harvard connections over the years, as ways -- bridging their connections to help me be successful here -- whether it be using Reesa Lavisa Morray to talk to my dean -- whether it be having [Mitch King?] here to live his story out in [Levi Watkins Day?] to talk about his challenges,

which he was very transparent about -- which was fantastic. Having [Hal Burstein?] to talk about the tragedy of [Buh-loe-sh?] and Warsaw, and how positions either showed courage or knuckled under during Nazism, and anti-Zionism, in Polish -- in Warsaw -- in the ghettos, during the time of the Nazi Holocaust. So I'm very fortunate that through my father's urgings and teachings, I've recognized the value of friends and maintaining a densely woven and connected, and deeply enriched network of people to help me be successful. And that's the message I try to deliver to my students here at Vanderbilt the value of that -- and my kids at home. And I've been very blessed by having a wife, who I work with -- who I met in the emergency room at Grady Hospital. She was the head nurse when I was a senior resident, and she's been with me on this journey 34 years. I could not be in any way successful, in anything I've been able to do, without her help and her value system and her wisdom. So those are the things that I've done, and hopefully this story has been of some use to you.

JJ: This has been excellent. I just want to say thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me today, and for being a part of this project. It's been wonderful.

AC: Well, let me know what else I can do. And when you send that thing for me to sign, I'll send back the article. You can take a look at it and see if you have any use for that.

JI: Yeah. I think that would be excellent. I mean, to have your story on record is amazing. Again, thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me. But to have your input on who else to talk to about this project is also really tremendous, and thank you for doing that.

AC: Absolutely.

JI: Excellent.

AC: All right.

JI: I will let you go.

AC: Hey -- there's the phone.

JI: There we go. Thank you so much. Have a wonderful weekend.

AC: Thank you now. Take care.

JI: You, too.

END OF AUDIO FILE