

AS = Allison Shultes

NM = Noah Morrison

JB = Joyce Frisby Baynes '68

Interview with Joyce Frisby Baynes '68

Dr. Joyce Frisby Baynes '68 grew up in Springfield, Massachusetts and graduated in the top of her class before choosing to attend Swarthmore College in the fall of 1964. She was a co-founder of the Swarthmore Afro-American Students Society (SASS) and one of the original Seven Sisters of SASS. She participated in the Upward Bound program and was a member of the women's varsity basketball team while a student at the College. She graduated with a major in mathematics. The transcription is word for word with the exception of unnecessary conversational words such as "um" and/or stutter starts which have been edited for the sake of cleaner reading and clearer understanding.

AS: So we'll just start by introducing ourselves. I'm Alli Shultes.

NM: And I'm Noah Morrison.

JB: And I'm Joyce Frisby Baynes, Class of [19]68.

AS: Okay, great, thank you so much.

JB: You're welcome.

AS: So our first question: we were wondering if you could describe your perception of Swarthmore College before you arrived here and why you chose to attend Swarthmore?

JB: Well in terms of my perception of Swarthmore, I didn't know a lot about Swarthmore College before I came. I grew up in a working class family environment in Springfield, Massachusetts and was a pretty high achieving student so different colleges had come to my high school and were interested in, you know, recruiting some students for their various institutions. And when I read about Swarthmore, in terms of its Quaker background and it's kind of humble environment and basically kind of a peaceful, loving community, it really struck me as a place I'd like to go. And so my perceptions were that it'd be a very comfortable place: small school, you know, my high school was about the same size as Swarthmore College so I felt that it would be an easy kind of adjustment. My family had never been involved in college education before so I was first generation college. My older brother went to a historically black university in Baltimore, Maryland, but he lived with my grandmother so he didn't really experience a full college experience. So I was really going out there on my own in terms of first family member to go to a college. And I didn't even know that much in terms of the high quality of Swarthmore, academically. Some of my friends at high school said "Swarthmore! You're going to apply to Swarthmore? That's really tough!" And I was like "Oh really?"

AS: [laughter]

JB: [laughter] It's like "oh, okay." And what also struck me about Swarthmore was the Dean of Admissions¹ came to my high school and showed me pictures of the campus. And I have to tell you that was really one of the factors that I fell in love with. The rose garden, Magill walk going up to Parrish, just the whole landscape, the amphitheater, and I said "I love the way that place looks," once again not having an idea about what Swarthmore was in terms of the academic rigor, the competition and that kind of thing. But just I liked the Quaker background, I liked the campus, and I just thought it would be a nice place to go. I did have other choices. Smith College recruited me, but it was only like ten miles from where I lived. I wanted to go somewhere farther away. Also, I applied to and was accepted at Pembroke, which was the girls part of Brown — it's all Brown now — but I didn't really like Providence and so I said no, I didn't want to go there, and then some other schools like Drew University in New Jersey. I got into there, but Swarthmore kept in my head was this idea of this beautiful campus, so when my parents brought me here to take a look at it and I talked with the Dean [of Admissions] and I felt very comfortable and I said "yeah, this is where I'd like to go." And my father at the time was like well sure, "you can go here." I knew he didn't have the money for me to go, but he was like "sure, sure, anywhere you want to go, if you get in, sure, fine," so my family was pretty much behind me in terms of wanting me to go where I wanted to go. Okay?

AS: Great, thank you.

JB: Mhmm.

AS: So I guess in terms of those expectations, how did you find the college socially and academically when you arrived, from how you expected it to be?

JB: Mhmm. Well the thing is because I did do very well in high school, I felt that it wouldn't be a problem academically. But then of course, I graduated in the top five or ten percent of my class, but then I got to Swarthmore and everybody did. So it wasn't like I was anybody special, you see? So I was kind of taken aback somewhat by the expectations of the classes. In high school we may have had a week to read a book and Swarthmore you had three days and so it was quite a shock in terms of that.

The other thing was there were very few Black students on campus, and even though my high school was integrated and my neighborhood where I lived in Springfield was an integrated environment, I found myself not being really totally embraced by various groups on campus, and began to see that I was indeed different from many of the students there. My roommate was from a fancy suburb of Philadelphia, and her parents would take me and her to dinner sometime, and I

¹ Fred Hargadon was the Dean of Admissions during Joyce Frisby Bayne's time at the College, from 1964 to 1968. He left the College in 1969.

wouldn't know why we would have all these forks in these different places [laughter] on the placemat, I was like "what fork do you use for what?" Because my background was just so very different, so culturally and socially I didn't expect it to be that way when I came in, but it was. And so that was kind of disappoint especially the first year, because the first year was when the Rockefeller Foundation gave Swarthmore money to diversify its student population,² and so coming in that 1964 year there may have been about a dozen³ of us, but there were probably only a dozen before my class in the whole college. So I just found that the dozen of us who were there, we all came from very different places also, so it wasn't as though there was any kind of bonding that took place. So I was feeling fairly alone and fairly uncomfortable with the situation, both culturally and socially when I came into Swarthmore.

AS: In terms of your experience of Swarthmore's social life, you said that you felt maybe you weren't accepted by certain groups, and I'm wondering if there were certain groups on campus that did feel more welcoming or certain ones in particular that you remember as being less accepting?

JB: Well I guess the thing is the administration, having taken a number of Black students, didn't really kind of check on us to see just how we were managing with the atmosphere. The thing is, I had never even been away to sleep-away camp, so this was my first experience of actually living in an environment like Swarthmore. And I think other students who came to the campus just kind of naturally met people and just naturally formed friendships and it just wasn't a natural thing for me, because I had not been in that kind of setting before, you see. So it wasn't as though people shunned me, it's just that they didn't embrace me, you see? So it was like sometimes I wouldn't go to the dining hall to eat because I didn't know who I was going to sit with. So it was not, as I said, the College itself didn't go out of its way to kind of say, "well gee, let's check up on these students, let's put them together at least and talk, in a focus group type of thing," or "let's see what kind of social activities they'd like to do," because you know we had different music, we danced differently. I mean one of the things that was so funny because was the assumptions that the college made about even things like swimming, that you go in, you jump in the pool and they see how many strokes you know how to do, well some of us didn't even know how to get in the water. We were afraid of the water. So for the first time, with my class, they had to start a beginner's swimming class. So it was kind of like they didn't even question some assumptions that they made about students coming to Swarthmore. They thought, "oh, well everyone knows how to swim, let's just see at what level they are," you see? It wasn't a matter of like, "gee, perhaps..." you know? So I think they just kind of once again thought that because we were academically prepared, everything else would fall into place as well, and it just, it didn't, it really didn't.

² The Rockefeller Foundation provided grant money to colleges and universities to increase the number of Black students in higher education during the 1960s and 1970s. Swarthmore College received grant money in 1964.

³ There were 14 Black students in 1964.

AS: We had another question, one last question explicitly about the social life pre-SASS founding and we were wondering if you were involved in any other extracurriculars or groups in your four years at the College and also just kind of about how the group that became SASS and founded SASS first got together and began talking.

JB: Well actually things got better the following year when the class that came in in 1965 came in and increased the numbers, probably doubled the number, and many of those students came from different environments from mine, where they had really experienced racism, inequalities in education, employment, housing, and so they came in kind of looking to see just what this place was all about and began to open my eyes. Because coming from my background, yes it was poor and working-class but it wasn't, in my eyes it wasn't based on race. It was more based on class, and so when I came to meet a lot of the students who came in in 1965 and '66, and they began to say "take a look, not very many Black students, no Black professors, this isn't fair," and once again it was kind of counter to what Swarthmore was supposed to be standing for, in terms of fairness and peace and justice and all that. And so that's when we began to do some things ourselves. We took the train into Philadelphia for a Negro history course at the University of Pennsylvania, we started doing some Black student recruitment weekends where we'd write to counselors in Baltimore, New York and Philadelphia, asking for high-achieving Black students. We brought them to the campus, introduced them to other students on campus — basically we were recruiting for Swarthmore, and a number of them did come. We also joined the Upward Bound⁴ staff where we had tutees who would come to campus and we would teach the math and the language arts but also kind of give them a little political point of view, in terms of looking around and seeing when things are not being done that should be done for them, whether they were getting the kind of education that they needed. They came from Chester, and the education system was very bad, and we wanted our students to really question the teachers in terms of why they weren't being more rigorous with their work, that type of thing. So we began to think about, "we need to form an association." And that's how SASS came to be because we saw things that were not happening on campus and we also saw some things we felt the College could do and that we could do as students and began to think "okay, let's form an organization, let's have strategy sessions, let's do things to show the College that we're here and we can make a difference."

The college invited a White South African to do a Collection speech once,⁵ and it was on the anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre,⁶ where lots and lots of South Africans were killed, and there were a number of us who said "we're gonna walk out, we're not going to sit there and

⁴ The Upward Bound program provides pre-college support for children from low-income families. Nearly all SASS members during the 1960s and early 1970s served as tutors within the program.

⁵ During Joyce Frisby Baynes's time at the College from 1964 to 1968, Collections were mandatory events for all students.

⁶ The Sharpeville Massacre of 1960 took place in Sharpeville, South Africa, when police opened fire on a group of protesters demonstrating against pass laws. The pass laws effectively segregated society in the country by restricting the movement of the Black African population. Approximately seventy people died in the shootings.

listen to this lecture.” And so a number of us came, sat and then walked out of that Collection lecture. So those kinds of things we did to make our mark. When we were all against the Vietnam War, and we didn’t necessarily want to be part of the SDS, Students for a Democratic Society,⁷ when we went to New York to march against the Vietnam War, we said “we Black students are going to take another route.” So we took another route and the police came on horses, stomped on us ... we were really pretty traumatized by that whole event because we wanted to show that we were against the Vietnam War but we didn’t want to be altogether, we wanted to show, “look, we’re Black students against the Vietnam War, there are a lot of Black troops out there who are getting killed every day, and we want to show our support for that effort.” Plus we didn’t think that it was a war that should’ve been fought anyway. So those are some of the kind of things we did. We actually went to Lincoln University, which is a historically Black college,⁸ and that’s where we met some guys that we dated, you know, and went to parties and things like that, because the social life on campus was not really conducive to what we wanted. Okay?

AS: Thank you.

JB: You’re welcome.

AS: I guess, just speaking individually, did you notice a difference in how the campus treated you after SASS was founded or how members of SASS were treated on campus after the group came into being?

JB: I don’t know if it was kind of particular treatment. I think we were acknowledged as a group that was formed on its own. It wasn’t a group that the College actually formed. The College did support us in terms of giving us funding for the Black student weekend, the meals and things like that that we served. So they weren’t like anti-SASS, no. And I wasn’t here for the takeover [of 1969], but as things began to progress toward the takeover, it became obvious that we were still not happy, that there still were not Black professors, and that the rate of increase in the Black population was still pretty slow, so I think the administration had a sense that we were still uncomfortable with the way things were.

AS: And the way you talked about SASS forming — was there a catalyst or a moment that you remember where someone said we need to sit down and write a constitution or was it something that kind of developed over a longer period of time while you were at Swarthmore?

⁷ A national student organization which developed in the mid-1960s to further agendas of the New Left on college and university campuses.

⁸ Lincoln University is located in Chester County, PA. It is the country’s first degree-granting historically Black university.

JB: Well it wasn't really a long period of time because I think it was probably around 1966, and I came in pretty much alone in '64 so it was like the group that came in in '65 kind of began to gel, and we began to have what we called strategy sessions and thinking about what we needed to do. That's why we went to Philadelphia for the course, and the Black student weekends. So it didn't seem like a moment that it happened. It evolved like just probably about a year to eighteen months, that the concept evolved of let's call ourselves something, you see? That's what I remember, it was a long time ago [laughter].

AS: [laughter]. Right, great. What was your role in particular in the founding and forming the group?

JB: Well I was actually one of what they call the Seven Sisters, okay? The oldest of the Seven Sisters because the others came in in '65 and '66. And so I was a quiet one, but a quiet strength, so that people would bounce things off me and I would kind of keep things in a reasonable vein, in other words, giving some advice, making sure that what we were doing logically made sense. I was a mathematics major also, so logic made a big difference for me. And also, kind of, keeping the timing right, not to rush to do things, but to really strategize and really make sure that we're pacing ourselves right. So I was kind of like the big sister, in fact I was Marilyn Holifield's Big Sister. We had big sister programs then. So I was kind of looked at that way, as a big sister.

AS: Great. You said that, while you were here, you were going to Penn, you were going to Lincoln — was there any coordination between students at Swarthmore College and Black students at either Lincoln or Penn in terms of founding groups or doing any sort of work off campus?

JB: Not at Penn because we were really there just for the course. At Lincoln because it was primarily an all-Black school, the students that we talked to, we let them know what we were very concerned about and angry about sometimes, just sounding boards for them, primarily the students that we interacted with were from the continent of Africa. They weren't African-Americans or Caribbeans. So their perspective was very different because they came from other countries — Kenya, Ethiopia, other countries. So they didn't really have the sense of America and racism in America. They didn't have that kind of sense. They really came for an education and many of them intended to go back to their countries. So that's why the relationship that we had with them was more political and social rather than really trying to get them to form any kind of organization at their school.

AS: Okay.

JB: Mhmm.

AS: So I guess back to SASS and the Seven Sisters — I'm wondering about how cohesive as a unit the Seven Sisters were, and kind of the dynamics within that group of women? And also the role of the Seven Sisters in the founding of SASS: what role gender played in who took what positions, and did what work for the group.

JB: Yeah — the Seven Sisters were really the core of SASS. We had lots of meetings in our dorm rooms, we were really a unit. More so than the African American men, the Seven Sisters were pretty solid in terms of wanting change and wanting change quickly, and we really kind of vented off of each other, then strategized, and tried to get things in terms that others would understand. Because not all of the Black students on campus wanted to have a group. Some were somewhat afraid of what their parents would say, what would it mean, would they get kicked out of school, that kind of thing. Not all of them walked out that day when the South African came. But the Seven Sisters I felt were very passionate. We were very passionate about what we were doing, and we wanted justice. Now see with my coming to Swarthmore not having race as a factor in my life in terms of looking at things through that lens, my eyes being opened kind of at that later age, you know, nineteen, twenty, kind of made me feel even more compelled to take a look at things. Look at things in this country, look at things at Swarthmore, and feel as though I should've seen these things before and I didn't but now I'm gonna kind of look hard for images that are in magazines, on television, images at Swarthmore when they have an alumni magazine, you know — who's on the cover, any blacks on the cover, ever. There's a group shot — where are the Blacks in that group shot? Are they on the fringes or are they center? Those kinds of things I began to look at much more carefully, and the Seven Sisters would be doing that too, many of them of course having had experiences in the past before coming, began to see things more clearly, but we kind of gelled in a very good way even though we came from very different circumstances outside of school.

AS: You talked about the Seven Sisters' passion for social justice and change, and I'm wondering how you would characterize then the men in SASS in terms of what their commitment to the same things were, or what role they played then, in relation to the Seven Sisters?

JB: I think that we had a couple who were pretty solid in their commitment, you know like Harold Buchanan⁹ — you know because we'd always said the Seven Sisters and Harold — [laughter]

AS: [laughter]

JB: — and because he was really integral to the situation, and then we had Sam Shepard¹⁰, who passed away, and we had then Clinton Etheridge¹¹ and Don Mizell¹². They came into the group

⁹ Harold Buchanan '69 was a member of SASS.

as well, and later on — this was after I left — Don and Clinton were made chairpeople, chairmen of SASS. And I don't know really why the women made them chairs, except they thought men should be the chairs, I don't really know, because I wasn't there when it happened, but it's interesting because Marilyn Maye¹³ in the clip on *Minding Swarthmore*¹⁴ says there's a difference between spokespersons and leaders, and the men were the spokespersons but the women were the leaders. Because I think we just felt it more. We felt the passion more, we felt the urgency more, we felt that the need to do something and to really work at it in a very strategic way, and that was really what was on our minds, you see? So yes there were men involved, but they were more on the periphery in my view. That's what I recall.

AS: Great. You mentioned Sam Shepard, and I wanted to ask you about his presidency and how that came about but also just how you felt he handled his presidency as chairman of SASS, because we can't interview him so we are trying to collect as much information as we can about his role.

JB: Yeah, yeah. He was kind of a quiet leader, and he took on the leadership probably at our request, but he also felt the need to, and I don't remember his being with us in terms of lots of strategy sessions. I guess men weren't in the women's dorms that much or something, and we were mainly in our rooms. But I just remember that he was someone we could depend on if we needed something done, if we needed someone to go and talk with a Dean or something like that, we could depend on him to do that. So that's the way I would classify him, as a really dependable leader who was very consistent in his view. He was pretty unflappable, in other words, you know, he wasn't going to be wishy-washy about what he was going to do.

AS: Great. And then in terms of — we talked about how cohesive the Seven Sisters were, and I'm wondering in your time within SASS how cohesive you felt different members' political views were, how cohesive you felt their goals were about what they wanted to do at Swarthmore or in the surrounding communities or if you felt it was everyone had their own agendas and ideas?

JB: I mean, in terms of the Seven Sisters I felt we were pretty much on the same wavelength. We talked a lot about pluralism — that we felt that, in this country, there was too much hierarchical kinds of looks at things, and we felt why can't we have groups looked at in a pluralistic way? Why is it that when someone looks at one of us and sees we're black they immediately have

¹⁰ Sam Shepard '68 was a co-founder and the first chairman of SASS in 1968.

¹¹ Clinton Etheridge '69 was the vice-chairman of SASS during the 1968 academic year and chairman of SASS in 1968-1969.

¹² Don Mizell '71 was the vice-chairman of SASS during the '68-'69 academic year and the chairman of SASS from 1969-1971.

¹³ Marilyn Alma Maye '69 was a co-founder of SASS and one of the original Seven Sisters.

¹⁴ *Minding Swarthmore* is a documentary produced by Shane Lightner '87 on the history of Swarthmore College, which includes a segment on the 1969 admissions sit-in by SASS members and other Black students.

some stereotypes in mind? Why is it that people have that notion and can't think of us just as human beings which is what Swarthmore stands for, valuing human beings? And so the Seven Sisters were really quite clear in terms of their commitment to change. Others I believe were on the fringe because they didn't feel this is why they came to Swarthmore. They felt they came to Swarthmore to get an excellent education and to move their career further. And some of them also came from more affluent backgrounds, and had role models, so it was like those of us who didn't have role models who were super professional, we didn't really relate to that kind of personality because we didn't experience that. Whereas some of them who came not because they wanted to get involved with this, they wanted to just get their education and move forward. So we had in SASS the core group and then we had others who really wanted to be independent, to be able to — you know many of it had to do with pleasing their parents, wanting to move ahead and start a life of their own, and not have their reputation damaged at all. And some would join us for some activities and others wouldn't. So that's kind of the way it was. There were different points of view, but I felt very strongly that the Seven Sisters and Harold really were the core.

AS: Okay. When there were or if there were ever any disagreements in terms of really anything related to SASS, how were those kind of resolved? Did people kind of tend to follow one person's leadership or were there actual debates about how things should be handled or approached?

JB: Well I mean, being Swarthmore students, you know, we talked a lot. [laughter]

AS: Right. [laughter]

JB: There were discussions. And sometimes it was like we're just going to agree to disagree. That type of thing. Or it would be a matter of talking it out and kind of coming to a conclusion that we'll try this but not that, or we'll meet you halfway. We also felt that we didn't need everybody to go along with us because everybody didn't feel the passion that we felt. We didn't want people just coming into the group just because they thought they had to. I think that's what they felt in terms of the takeover too. That yes, they wanted all the Black students there. But, you know if somebody's afraid that their parents are going to get upset, we don't want to push them too hard, we don't want all of that stress on them. I'm sure they kind of felt, "okay, we're not going to have everybody, but we'll have a group of people." So that's the way that SASS worked too in terms of people who we knew had different perspectives than we did. And that they were going to be counted on to do a certain amount and not to go farther. It was not a lot of really pushing hard. We were Swarthmore students so... [laughter]

AS: [laughter] Right, after this we're going to ask you some questions about your academic experience. But, I was wondering if in your time, since you graduated in '68, if there had been

any talk before your graduation of direct action or of particular changes you wanted to see at the College that you really wanted to start pushing for?

JB: Yeah, actually, talk about the fact that time's moving along and a core group of students was going to be graduating and something needed to happen. So that's why I wasn't surprised when, six months after I graduated, they had the takeover. Because there really wasn't a lot that the College was doing to remedy some of the situations. There was no Black Cultural Center, there were not a number of professors hired, and as I said, the number of students coming in each year was not really as significant as it could be. So that's why before I graduated I kind of felt that yeah, I think that things were going to keep moving and that something would happen. I didn't know it was going to be the takeover.

AS: Great. So, I guess I have one follow up question. When SASS started planning the takeover and when it happened, were you in touch with anyone in the group at that time or did you hear about it from?

JB: No, I just heard about it. I was in graduate school, and so I was working hard. I didn't even know the planning stages or anything, I didn't know what was happening until it happened.

AS: Ok. Thank you.

JB: Mhmm, sure.

Moving to the courses, I was wondering how relevant you felt Swarthmore's courses were in relation to your academic interests and how you felt Black students were treated in the classroom by professors and peers.

JB: I was a mathematics major, so I didn't really have the social sciences, where I could really say in that vein how relevant they were. I really always appreciated the mathematics I took here because Swarthmore always got to the core of the academics. In other words, there wasn't a lot of fluff. It was like really this is important and this is what we're going to talk about. And then you take the essence of the course and you can go lots of places with that without having been taught. And that's what I always appreciated about Swarthmore's academics, that it really taught what was really important in a course and not having to memorize lots of formulas in chemistry or having to do all these extra things in math. You really got to the essence of the course. Now, they didn't have courses that had to do with Black history, which I would have taken as one of the general requirements. They didn't in the fine arts department have artists who were African-American or Latino or not even Asian. So, in some of those areas I found it lacking. The professors, I didn't feel a sense that they were treating me differently. I do remember when I took German that the professor was surprised that I was doing well. I remember her saying, "Did you take German in high school?" And I was like, "No, I didn't." So it was sort of like that kind

of surprise. I guess I did have a slightly similar situation in high school when I took physics, but that was a gender thing because most of them were men. He was like, “Why are you taking physics?” And I was like, “Because I like math and I think physics is good.”

AS: [laughter]

JB: [laughter] So, that one experience with the German teacher kind of made me feel, ok, she doesn’t expect a Black student to be doing well in German. And I took German because a lot of the mathematics original manuscripts are in German and so I wanted to be able read them. But I didn’t really have any kind of other sense of discrimination among the teachers.

AS: Okay.

JB: No, I didn’t.

AS: Okay. Did you ever take a course in the Sociology/Anthropology Department with Asmarom Legesse¹⁵?

JB: No, I didn’t. And I don’t remember when he was hired. I was probably on my way out then.

AS: Right, so probably you had your graduation requirements.

JB: Yes. Right. Exactly, no I didn’t.

AS: Okay. Were you aware in your time here of any members of SASS who were experiencing difficulties academically or maybe voiced to you some concerns they had about the relevance of their classes?

JB: I think in general we talked about the fact that the curriculum was a little narrow in terms of multiculturalism, and felt that if we were really looking at pluralism as the way to go, we would expect the courses to be more relevant and be able to promote that concept. And a lot of it was just European focused. That’s what I think a lot of people thought. There were some students that were just struggling in terms of some of the courses. Not everybody actually made it through in four years. But, that was just an individual thing though in terms of not everybody can hack it. And that happens no matter what their race.

AS: Great. And I was wondering if you could describe your relationship with adults on campus, whether it was administrators, professional staff, or custodial staff. I guess just what did those kinds of relationships look like, where you felt you had support from adults on campus?

¹⁵ Asmarom Legesse was a Professor of Anthropology at the College. He was the only Black faculty member during Joyce Frisby Baynes’s time at the College.

JB: Yeah, it's hard to remember any real support from adults on campus. When you mentioned custodial staff, I know some of the others who were here remember them very dearly, fondly. I remember one or two who were very happy to see more Black students on campus. So that was very comforting. I had a Big Sister who was maybe a Junior or Senior when I came in. But she didn't really meet with me regularly, see how well I was doing, see if I needed any help. I don't remember any of the deans or any of the other staff members reaching out and having any kind of relationship with me, no.

AS: Do you think your relationship with your Big Sister influenced how you handled yourself when you became a big sister for some of the — well for the Seven Sisters really in general, it sounds like you were kind of the Big Sister.

JB: Yeah, the thing is that I liked that concept of Big Sister. But I felt more in common with the Little Sister I had because she was Black and even though she came from the South and experienced a lot of things that I didn't experience, I still felt that I could be there for her and she felt comfortable with me. See, a lot of it was about the comfort level, and I think that's what the Black students felt. They weren't comfortable in the general atmosphere. We were looking for a tighter kind of involvement with students and with faculty. But we didn't get it much with adults at all.

AS: Great, thank you. And then we were also looking through the old yearbooks and we found a picture — it seemed like you played for a little bit on the basketball team?

JB: Yes, I did.

AS: I was wondering what that experience was like for you in terms of just that group of people and the coaching and just what your experience was.

JB: In addition to taking swimming because I couldn't swim. [Laughter]

AS: [Laughter]

JB: I did play basketball in high school, so I said I'd like to play basketball. And of course at Swarthmore, you can play anything you want to play.

AS: [Laughter] Right.

JB: [Laughter] So, I said ok, let me play basketball. It was really a nice outlet. I always remember when we beat Bryn Mawr, it was so exciting to beat Bryn Mawr in basketball. So, it was one of those things that I felt very good about because there was even this senior on the team who felt I was good and I was a freshman. It was an outlet that was very important to me, that I

was able to play ball, have that kind of camaraderie with other students on campus. And it was a mixed group. We only played basketball together, we didn't take it outside, we didn't do things together outside of the basketball. But it was nice to be able to feel included in something, and I thought I was pretty good. I think we only did the half-court thing then. Only one person could go the whole length so you did the half court, you know. And I remember getting frustrated when I would throw the ball and the person was supposed to run to get the ball and they didn't run to get the ball. I was like "but don't they understand when I pass the ball, you run to get the ball!" So it was a very positive experience, it was a very positive experience.

AS: Did you do that for all four years?

JB: At least three. Yeah, it was really nice, I enjoyed it.

AS: Ok, so I guess, our final — no actually we have two more questions — but, your relationship to SASS and the college after you graduated, what has that been like in terms of following the events right after you graduated, I guess you've already spoken to that, but also just up until now, if you've been back or if you've kept in contact with ...

JB: Unfortunately, I have not. I went to graduate school, then I got married. My husband passed away shortly after we moved to Teaneck. He went to medical school, and then we moved to New Jersey, had three children, and then he passed away. So, it was pretty much a struggle just trying to keep everything together in terms of a house, a job, a car, the kids, and all that. So I was not really in touch with Swarthmore much after that. I think I came back for my twentieth reunion and saw some people then, talked with some African-American students then. Then, of course, I was here in March when they did the filming¹⁶ and also talked with Dr. Dorsey¹⁷ at that time. So, I guess the thing is sometimes people say "why didn't you go back and help them, and why didn't you keep in touch with them?" I guess my feeling was, "well they're Swarthmore students, they'll make it." I had other students that I was more concerned about. First of all I was a teacher for eighteen years, then I was an administrator for eighteen years, I was superintendent of schools for four years — seven years actually. So there were lots and lots of students that I had to be concerned about. Then after I retired, I mentored a grandmother who had two students — two grandchildren — with special needs, and so helping them, helping her with them. Then other students who would just pop by for help with college applications, mathematics tutoring. Lots of things like that. I just felt that I was helping students who really needed me, and I didn't feel like Swarthmore really needed me, because, as I said, they were going to make it. SASS has lasted this long, it's been because they really have a passion for it. So that's why I really haven't been in touch.

¹⁶ Joyce Frisby Baynes is referring to the filming of the *Minding Swarthmore* documentary, which features interviews with SASS members from the time of its founding through the sit-ins in 1969 and 1970.

¹⁷ Dr. Allison Dorsey, who established the database and taught the course Black Liberation 1969 in the fall of 2014.

AS: Did any of your teaching experiences through some of the programs Swarthmore had influence your desire to go into teaching after graduation? Or was that something that you knew even before you came to Swarthmore that you wanted to do?

JB: I think I always had wanted to teach, and I always loved mathematics. So I put the two together. And I think my experience at Swarthmore in terms of really looking at the whole racial inequality piece carried over to my teaching and my role as administrators because I just had an eye for things where I could see when things just weren't done in an equal fashion. And I'd always want to remedy that. When I became superintendent and I'd go into a classroom and if I'd see the Black students on the periphery and the teacher there looking at the white students and they were raising their hands and he really wasn't paying attention to those on the outside, I'd just say to the principal did you notice such and such — the principal never noticed. I said, "could you find out, or let the teacher know that this is observed." Apparently, she said, "well I let the students choose their own seats." And I said, "maybe she shouldn't do that. Maybe there should be another way." Alphabetize them or something. But, I think my experience at Swarthmore in terms of really getting involved with the Black movement and looking at things in all kinds of situations helped me in terms of my positions as a teacher, as a supervisor, as a superintendent so that I was able to advise others. One program we had, every teacher was given a camcorder and they would have another teacher basically tape their lesson, and then they would look at it. I wouldn't have administrators looking at it, I just wanted it teacher and teacher and making observations about what they saw. The whole concept of wait time—who do you wait for longer when you're asking a question? Do you wait longer for a Black student or a White student? Do you wait longer for a low achiever or a high achiever? And they began to notice things that they did. They would wait longer for a high achiever because they really felt that the high achiever would get the right answer if they waited long enough. And they would wait longer for a White student because they didn't want the Black student to feel bad if they had to take so long to get an answer. You see, there were all these different dynamics that were going on in classrooms that once they began to look at themselves, they began to say "ah, I better question what I'm doing." So, I think the Swarthmore experience kind of carried over to my career in terms of having people examine themselves and think about their prejudices and never wanting them to feel that they were bad people, but just, maybe you need to change your behavior because it may be affecting the students that you want to benefit from your teaching.

AS: Great, thank you so much. Those were the questions that we had prepared. But we were wondering before we end the interview if there is anything that you want to talk about that we didn't ask about or any stories that you have that you think would be valuable to the students to share. Just to kind of just to give the time to you if you want to take it or if you don't that's totally fine as well.

JB: Yeah, I think that current students need to learn from what we did by keeping their eyes open to things that are going on around them. Students don't always do that, they're not always aware

of what's happening, but if they get that kind of education in terms of looking at images that are projected, looking at the media, looking at the ways people are treated and really being a little bit more courageous in terms of addressing it and not being self-centered in terms of "well I'm going to just go do what I need to do and I see this happening but I'm not going to really do anything about it." So that's why I'm feeling that we need to get more people involved because the gap is widening in terms of achievement among poor Black and Latino students and those that are more wealthy. It's widening and it's not going to be very helpful because we're not going to have more productive citizens in this country unless we begin to really take a look at what's going on and speak up about it. Because I think that's what Swarthmore would want us to do. That's kind of what we're charged to be here, agents of change.

AS: Well, thank you so much for your time. It was really lovely to get the chance to talk to you.

JB: Yeah, I'm glad I was able to come. You never know with schedules and all that what's going to happen. I think six out of the seven of us¹⁸ were able to come. And that's good. And then you've got several of the guys here too, right?

AS: Yeah, several of the men we even interviewed a couple of weeks ago are back again. So, it's great.

JB: No its good. So you really should get some good footage right?

NM: Thank you so much.

AS: Right, thank you so much.

AS: You're quite welcome. Nice meeting you Allison. Nice meeting you Noah.

(End Interview)

¹⁸ All of the original Seven Sisters were interviewed in October 2014. In addition, six of the Seven Sisters were interviewed in a group session on November 2, 2014 for the database.