

HAROLD FRANKLIN LECTURE

FEBRUARY 25, 1999

SB: ...and we are just thrilled to have the turnout that we have. This is an event that the library's Diversity Committee has planned. I really want to thank them for all the work they put into it. I'm going to be introducing to you Marty Olliff who is an archivist in the University Archives located right next door to this space. Marty has been doing a research project in looking at the events that took place at Auburn thirty-five years ago and he did a presentation to the library faculty this summer that was fascinating especially for those of us who were not from the south. It was just real interesting to hear what went on. He subsequently has done that presentation for the Alabama Society of Archivists and based on his efforts the Diversity Committee decided to ask Mr. Franklin to come. At this point let me turn it over to Marty.

MO: Thank you Dean Bentley and thanks in particular not only to all of y'all for being here today, but also for Mr. Franklin and Mrs. Franklin as well for agreeing to come and be with us for this event which obviously would not be taking place without them. We'd like to thank the Special Collections Department as well for setting up the room as you see it. Normally, if you have ever seen this room, it is full of tables and chairs but they have gone way out of their way today to set this room up as it is. As Dean Bentley said, the reason that I am standing before you is because I have done some research in the events that led up to the desegregation of Auburn. And even now it is still difficult to talk about the integration of Auburn because Auburn remains a desegregated rather than

integrated university, a fact that all of us are trying to work on and improve that particular situation. The thing that got me interested in looking at the events of January 1964, like many things in my life, was a happenstance, something that just simply occurred. I had occasion to be flipping through the, amazingly enough, fascinating notes of the board of trustees, the minutes of their meetings for 1963 and I ran across a passage while I was looking for something else that said that Governor Wallace, Governor George Wallace, promised not to stand in the schoolhouse door. I said to myself, “Gee, I’m a smart guy, I know there’s a story behind this somewhere.” When you have George Wallace promising not to do something then there is a story there. A little more researching those notes, a few research hours spent in the collections in the Auburn University Archives and in the *Plainsman* and some of the other local papers and I came to discover why he wasn’t going to stand in the schoolhouse door and what the occasion was. The occasion was Mr. Franklin’s arrival at Auburn University as the first African American student to be here, the desegregator of Auburn University. Now, there are some other ironies that have occurred in regards to this particular meeting that I would like to share with you and that is that it was thirty-five years ago this term that Mr. Franklin desegregated Auburn University. So this is the thirty-fifth anniversary of which I found pretty ironic as opposed to being maybe the thirty-third or the fortieth anniversary. Thirty-five is a—I was going to say a good round number but that’s why I’m in history because I can’t do math. It also happens to be this particular quarter and Mr. Franklin’s being here today was only moderately associated with the celebration here of black history month to begin

with but we are very happy to have made that connection as well with him. The last irony in which I think probably is the most important for some of the people here who are library staff people and faculty members is that Mr. Franklin was one of the first students to register in this building. January 1964 was the first registration that took place in the then unnamed library. It was referred to then as the new library and only in 1965 was the name “Ralph Brown Draughon Library” given to it. A further irony for Dr. Draughon was that at the beginning of Dr. Draughon’s career as president of Auburn University he had to face the prospect in 1948 of the desegregation of Auburn University. Auburn was able to avoid that happening. That was at the beginning of his career and at the end of his career finally Auburn was desegregated. It was only two years after—actually one year after, pardon me, that Mr. Franklin arrived that Dr. Draughon retired. And I find that as a historian a very appealing story even if it doesn’t lead anywhere. Mr. Franklin is quite frankly one of those people who we all know about, one of the, in my estimation, heroes of a movement that had well-known heroes and not so well known heroes. Thousands and thousands of people that we never hear about who made the entire civil rights movement go, made it what it was, made it successful, at least as far as it has been successful. And I’d like to tell you and I can tell you without any reservation on my part that I consider this man and Mrs. Franklin to be heroes, not only to the movement but to me. It took both of them a tremendous amount of courage to face down not only an institution the size of Auburn University but also the wrath of some of the people of the state of Alabama and other states who did not want to see the status quo changed. And

yet as you can see from some of the pictures in the display cases right over here, Mr. Franklin faced at the end of the process of desegregation, Mr. Franklin was alone when he walked up those steps, alone when he crossed the campus, alone when he walked into this building to be registered for history and political science. Who at that time knew what would happen every step he took across the campus? Well, he didn't know. His wife who delivered their first child seventeen days later didn't know. But we know now and it was with great humility that I present to you Mr. Harold Franklin.

HF: Thank you Dr. Olliff for the introduction, Dr. Bentley. To those of you who came to hear me I hope that we can both learn something from this experience. Don't pay too much attention what Marty—I'm going to call you Marty and you call me Harold, see—it's like liniment it may be good to rub down in but don't drink it. Don't worry about all that, I'm not a hero, not by a long shot. It was something that had to be done and I qualified, at least in Judge Johnson's eyesight. Because what we did, if you remember and I know a lot of you are young people, so forgive me if I say if you remember the '60s. I'm not trying to throw off. My kids used to get on me because I taught college for thirty years and I would get carried away by the '60s. One told me one day "You act like you are mad with us because we weren't born then." I don't mean to do that to you, okay? Sometimes I get carried away about the '60s because that's the most fascinating period as far as I am concerned, during my lifetime. I'm just glad I could be of some minute [hit] in racism. That's what I like to refer to as [hits] in racism. First of all, let me introduce you to my wife, [Nella]. [Nella] would you stand please? The two

ladies on both sides of her would you stand please? These are not my wives, now don't get me wrong. When I came to Auburn these two ladies and husbands and what not—mother and father and friends were my friends. They are the ones who looked after me. If I wanted somebody to talk to I would go there. Okay? These are the ladies. I asked Jean, the one in the red jacket, where was her husband Ralph, because that's my man. They are the Fosters down on Loachapoka Road. I still remember the road.

?: It is now Martin Luther King.

HF: _____ progress. Martin Luther King then. It was Loachapoka Road when I was here. I know we are limited for time. I know everybody wants to hear something but get out of here as soon as possible. We were laughing when we you came in, comparing this to a Baptist Church. We noticed some seats on the front row were available and nobody wanted to take them. Those of us who are Baptists can talk about our own religion, so you can't if you are not. But seriously though, my ambition was to become an attorney. That's all I ever dreamed about. I wanted to be another Thurgood Marshall. That was always my idol after Mom and Dad. That's what I wanted. Well, my lawyer, who was Fred Gray, those of you who remember the case, didn't think that my LSAT scores were high enough to get in. A thing I don't agree with but he was the lawyer so I... He said go get your master's and then try again for law school. That's how I ended up here at Auburn. I'm trying to make it short and get to the point. I really had never considered Auburn. That was the oddity to the whole thing. Me coming to a cow college? That's an old name for you young people who don't

remember. That's what they used to refer to it as the "Cow College." I wasn't coming to a cow college. I was born in Talladega in the rural area. I wasn't going to tell a mule to get up if he was sitting in my lap, you know I didn't want to come to a cow college. But anyway they talked to me and said "Why don't you go and try it anyway." So I said "I would." And, of course, we had to go to court and Judge Johnson rendered the decision in my favor. I think we filed suit in 1963 and I was admitted on January 4, 1964. It was supposed to have been January 1 but you all had to play a bowl game and they moved it. I remember that well. But anyway, I came here January 4. My wife and I were looking at some of the things by walking down the thing and all that. I'll never forget I got down right just about where the Union Building—what's the name of it?

?: Foy Union.

HF: Foy, yes, because Dean Foy _____. Let me go back there. Dean Foy and Mr. Reagan who was Dean Foy's assistant came to Magnolia Hall where I was. Let's go back a little further. Let's go to Auburn Methodist Church. We came to Auburn Methodist Church, my lawyer, ____ Fred Gray. We got there all the white ministers I guess in town, probably some Baptists weren't there, but Father Woodson down at the Episcopal Church, two brothers of the Methodist Church, I can't remember their names either. But I remember Father Woodson well. They were with the FBI and I wanted to know why. They told me that Lingo had promised that he would stay ahead of the State Troopers trying to pack a gun in my things so I would get kicked out of school the same day I registered. So to be on the safe side the minister said look, come to Auburn Methodist Church, we'll

have the FBI there to search Franklin's things and if we don't find a weapon then we are going to carry him on campus. In the meantime Lingo is getting angry I understand because somebody thwarted his plan, the ministers in particular. Joe Sarver, who was the secretary of the Alumni Association, I believe that's right, came over to the church and said let me carry him on campus. He said I can officially go on campus and he can't stop me. He said you guys are going to run into some problems with Al Lingo whose name by the way was Al Jennings. He said use Lingo because it sounded tough. Joe Sarver called me over to Magnolia Hall. So I registered there and I came down through the basement. Oh, by the way, you know I had a whole wing of Magnolia Hall. I was the only student here with keys to the outside doors. I'm serious. No student had keys to the outside doors but me because I was the only student living on three stories. I said, "Okay, that's fine," because I liked quiet anyway. On the way to registration Dr. Foy and Reagan were going to escort me. Lingo met us down in the basement of Magnolia Hall. The court order said that I was to be treated like any other student. You didn't escort the other white students and you weren't going to escort Franklin. That was fine with me. So I said "Now they are going to kill me." But anyway Dean Foy and Mr. Reagan showed me how to get to the registration. I got down by Foy and a State Trooper stopped me and wanted to see my student identification and I told him I did not have a student identification because I hadn't registered yet. And he said something smart to make me angry. I as getting angry all the while, it was raining out there too. So I said "Fine, I'll turn around and go back." Then another State Trooper came over and said

“What’s the problem?” I said “He told me I’ve got to have a student identification to get on campus.” He said “Who are you?” I said “You know I’m Franklin,” just like that. ____ ____ _____. He said “Go ahead, man.” So I got there and got to register. When I came out of registration ____ ____ Dean Parker, Dr. McMillan, I can’t remember who all was there. Mr. Davis of the newspaper, they were all there. But anyway, Lingo came in and told them how much time they had to do what they were going to do. I was glad of it because the lights were bothering me in the first place from the cameras. On the way out I got registered on this side, I believe of the building. Two fellows whom I had met earlier, Bob Boettcher and Jim Dinsmore met me at the door and shook my hand and welcomed me to Auburn. Those were the two students that you read about that the State Troopers stopped and question only because they shook my hand. But anyway we went on and went on and things got pretty good. On my way back to Magnolia Hall after registration I got lost so the head of Security, Mr. Dawson, who was a man I really respected, showed me how to get back. He told me to look at that antennae on the building of Magnolia Hall and I would always know where I was. ____ ____ that as soon as things cooled down and get the state troopers out of town they could do what they were supposed to have done because the city police department, the sheriff’s department, and the campus security were angry with Lingo for coming and just taking over. They didn’t like that at all. So I felt pretty good they were arguing among themselves. I said if they leave me alone they wouldn’t have to worry about me. And this is exactly what happened. Chief Dawson told me, he said “Whenever you want to go

home,” he said “Make sure you call the city police department and let them know that you are on your way so they will be at the bus station to protect you just in case people want to bother you.” That’s what I would do every time I would go home because I didn’t have an automobile at the time. So things settled down and we went on, and, of course, I would go home and then two other young men came over here from Troy State University. I wish I could remember their names. They both quit Auburn because they were disappointed; they said, with the department—the history department. They would let me ride home with them to Montgomery to see my wife and kid because our kid was born seventeen days after I entered Auburn. They would call our history classes “read along with Bill classes.” They didn’t like it. They said we never _____ from anything, everything was straight out of the book. Both of them quit. One became a dog trainer and the other one went to Florida State or the University of Florida to pursue further studies. The dog trainer is still in Montgomery, I understand. I wish I could find the young man but I can’t even remember his name. So things weren’t as bad as sometimes it may have seemed. But I was glad because they taught at the Maxwell Airforce Base extension—the Troy State extension had a service over there and these two young men taught there and they would let me ride home with them and bring me back. So I got a chance to see my wife and kid sometimes two or three times a week. So that made it a _____, and also I learned a trick when I was in service. My outfit was sent on maneuvers to South Carolina—I was stationed in Washington State. My outfit was sent on maneuvers to South Carolina and I was the lone African American left in my outfit. I learned

something, think about a good joke, especially one the “brothers” can tell, and that got me through the whole six weeks we were gone on maneuvers. That’s what I did over at Auburn. I would think of a good joke when I got angry and that got me through. Also I think I helped some people when I came to Auburn. For example, a young man was following me one day somewhere down the street here and every time I would stop he would stop. So I decided to turn around and said, “Man, have you got a problem?” He said, “No, but can I say something?” I said, “Certainly.” He said, “I don’t like Bob Boettcher.” Bob Boettcher was one of the two friends remember I told you about. I said, “Why, I think Bob is a pretty nice guy.” He said, “Bob writes against state’s rights.” I was like, man, you’ve got to be crazy, now. But anyway, I said, “What do you know about state’s rights?” He said, “I don’t know anything about them.” He said, “I’m going by what mom and daddy told me.” That got to me more than anything else over here and I told him, I said, “Young man what you need to do, you’re in college now, it is all right to listen to some things mom and daddy tell you but what you need to do is—I used to call this the “big library,”—go to the big library read the _____ state’s rights and make up your own mind. That to me I enjoyed more than anything else because here is a young man in college talking about he _____ what mom and daddy said. But I bet when it was time to drink that beer he didn’t do what mom and daddy said. I’ve heard about those college beer parties but I’m not a drinker so I don’t know what’s it is about. But things like that I think I helped some people. I hope I did anyway. I think people began to learn that I was just as human. I bled the same blood that anybody else bled and I would cry if you made

me too angry, and I would curse you out if you made me too angry, and that I have a big mouth and I will argue with you until hell freezes over if I'm right, and if not, I will apologize to you, gladly apologize. And another thing, I think also, I felt I had a right to be here. I was born and reared in Alabama. I paid taxes. I've been working all my life, every since I was eleven or twelve years old, when Mom and Dad had the café. They made us work from like the time you got out of school in the evening until eleven and twelve, sometimes two or three o'clock in the morning. So I was paying taxes. So I felt it was a state-supported institution I had a right to be here. But I think as long as I felt like that nothing could change my mind. One student told me he said he didn't object to my coming here. He said I should have been from Auburn itself, the city of Auburn. I said, "What about all the foreign students you've got walking around campus, did you tell them the same thing?" Of course, he thought, "No, I didn't tell those students." I know what he was thinking, you see. Then I had a right; at least I was from Alabama, you see, to be here. But you found little things like this all the time around the campus. I only really got angry one time, one guy spit out the window at me. I'll be honest. He got me in the face. But if I could have gotten in that dormitory and found him I would have been in jail or hell. I make no bones about it; you don't spit in my face. I went after him, I really did, but I just couldn't find the young man. But don't do anything like that to me; I'm not going to do it to you. I stepped off the curb one day and a guy came around the car and said, "Step off here where I can run over you?" You get little things like that but you live through them. I drive twenty miles and back, forty miles roundtrip every day to

work and there are some nuts out there. If you ever get onto Highway 21 between Sylacauga and Talladega, buckle up. I've been in service and I've seen my best friend shot up, seen our aircraft crashed, and my best friends piled up, some dead. Those things like that weren't going to really get to me. In fact, I don't know whether I told my wife what happened. At that time we had more people killed on the aircraft in my outfit than in the history _____ . But when you see people die you learn something. That's why I'm glad I work in a funeral home. It doesn't bother me to death any more. It did then because I had never seen an airplane crash and kill 207 people. But since then it doesn't bother me. It's not because I'm hard hearted; it's because I learned to accept death. It is the only thing I know is inevitable. Until we accept it then we are going to have some problems. So coming to Auburn if I had died, _____ somebody killed me, so what, somebody else would have come along. If it hadn't been just me it would probably have been two or three more on down the line. So you are not going to kill a dream. I think Dr. King said it best, "You can't kill a dream." Had I not been from Alabama, I would never have considered Auburn. I would have found some other school to go to. I don't know which one, probably Case Western or Ohio State. Mom and Dad lived in Columbus, Ohio, somewhat. But I didn't want to go. Plus the fact, remember, I was what, forty miles from here to Montgomery. Me and my wife, and I think of those two young men, who were commuting to Maxwell Airforce Base, they helped me to see my wife. Like I said, I didn't have an automobile. The experiences here have been so long ago, thirty-five years ago. Certainly I remember it, I think I remember every minute

detail that ever happened. I found out one thing about the history department at Auburn I haven't found a professor yet that could say "Negro." That was common sense. I said all this education and they can't say "Negro." The word wasn't black in those days. You had that two syllable word—they could say hero, Nero—they just didn't say "Negro," and I always wondered why. I said the educational system failed somebody. But other than that I had very few problems. I had some good teachers and I had some bad ones. I had some that I considered to be tops and I had some on the other end of the spectrum. I had some who I thought were pretty decent other than they couldn't pronounce the word "Negro." I had one he was doing a lecture one-day and he made a mistake. It just so happened, you know how smart students are, they've got their hand on a page in the book—I had my hand on the page in the book and I was scared to correct him in class but I told him after class that he made a mistake. I thought the world of this man because he went back to class the next day and told the students that he made a mistake, I found it, and you needed to do a little retracting there, know what you are talking about. I'll never forget the man as long as I live and that was Professor Frank Owsley. I'll never forget that as long as I live because a lot of people would never have brought it up to the class. I probably never would in all the classes I've ever taught too. I probably would have skimmed over it and went on about my business. "___ ___ I may have miscopied that, I'm sorry." You know how we are—you know how we college educators are, we are never wrong anyway. But in all that I think these are things that I think really make life interesting. ___ ___ _____ wife and son, we only

have one kid—one son—he’s not a kid but he acts like it sometimes. But he is the joy of our life. Chief Dawson always asked me about him. That’s why I will always remember him. From the day he was born he would always ask, “Franklin, how is your son doing, how is your wife doing?” He was the only one on campus who would ask me that whenever he saw me. He made sure he saw me enough to make sure I was protected. I will never forget Chief Dawson for that. I will never forget the Foster family who really made me feel at home here in Auburn. They were not the only ones, I had a couple of other friends who became good friends while I was here at the university. One young man named Pulliam, I can’t remember his first name. He had the nerve to invite me to his wedding in Montgomery in 1964 at a church. You know I wasn’t going. A black guy at a white church in Montgomery in 1964! Are you crazy, you think I was going? No way! But anyway he asked me could he put his car in our yard—you know how people decorate your car when you get married. I told him he could do that but I wasn’t going to a white church in Montgomery in 1965, I didn’t care what happened. But anyway, we remained friends for a number of years and like most men, you lose contact with each other. But, you know, you have people like that. I had a young man from Asia; I can’t remember what part, which wanted to live in the dormitory with me. Mr. [Bivens] who was the head of Magnolia Hall at the time wouldn’t let him ___ ___ if something happened. The young man told him ___ ___ I’m not going to bother him. He said, ___ ___ have somebody up there with him. I was going to pull a joke on you too. I was going to tell you the guess is returning to the campus because remember the first six

months I was in the wing of Magnolia Hall by myself. The next six months we got the two kids from Tuskegee, Lee and Wyatt came over and they put us in the guess house. So I always say I'm a guest of the university. So the guess has returned. That's what I like to refer to as. Now you can look back and laugh. I was angry. I'll make no bones about it. "Why couldn't I be put with the rest of the students?" I wasn't going to harm them. The way Lingo would make it seem he was there to protect those 11,000 students at Auburn. What the hell could I do against 11,000 students? George Wallace said I was a thirty-one year old married agitator. But you know you take those things with a grain of salt and you move on. I see a lot of people who wallow in pity and everything else, things didn't work out for them. Things worked out for me. I didn't finish me work here as you very well know. The graduate school of International Studies offered me a scholarship so I benefited by it and that's where I went. I enjoyed out in Colorado. ____ ____ ____ but I never spent much time in Colorado and now I'm glad I did. My wife and I and my son all went out there one summer and we really enjoyed it. So good things work out for you in the long run. But I think one has to have a positive attitude about things if you are going to survive. Racism will kill you, no ifs, ands, or buts about it, if you allow it. The reason I'm sixty-six is because I won't allow it. And I hope I live for sixty-six more years. I don't know if my wife could stand me that long, but sixty-six more years. I'm determined and I'm going to do everything I possibly can to help eradicate racism. And you should have the same philosophy in life that I have. Last month I spoke down at the federal prison there in Talladega for Black History Month. I

didn't speak to the inmates because some things you know, you can tell the staff but you can't tell the inmates like go out and do something constructive. They can't go anywhere, you know. But I was telling the staff, you know, each one of us owes something to somebody somewhere to help dissolve our problems. Our local newspaper, the *Daily Home* _____ Talladega, Sylacauga, Pell City area, they raised holy hell with Congress—the House and Senate—for bringing impeachment charges and impeaching President Clinton. I wish you had seen the editorials. On the other hand they had five black brothers charged with having a half-gram of crack cocaine between them. Now, I've been trying to crack up a rock to get enough for one person to have. They put them under a hundred thousand dollar bond each. The paper said not a word nor even printed the pictures. It didn't make sense to me. Things right in there own back yard they can't resolve. They can talk about things that are far away. Like the old presidents used to do, the president didn't want to get on the good side with you, what would he do, he'd talk about foreign policy. You didn't know about it anyway so you wouldn't understand. But he knew if a domestic policy come by it is going to upset one group or another. That's why presidents like to play with foreign policy. You all know that 'You had history at Auburn. So what do you do? _____ black man's bond. Anything you do in Talladega County you've got to at least pay a hundred thousand dollars or above to get a bond. You beat your wife, a hundred thousand-dollar bond. You shoot you wife it's a hundred fifty thousand-dollar bond. I'm serious. Two guys killed a guy and it was a hundred fifty thousand-dollar bond. A hundred thousand-dollar bond for

five men who were supposed to have had one-half gram of crack cocaine between them. You can't crack it up enough to get enough for anybody to enjoy a smoke out of it.

...the banks finally admitted that they do redline us so we can't get loans to buy homes. How many of us are willing to go down and get on the bank and say, "Listen, we know you are redlining black people. Why not give them a break?" "At least you would have some property just in case we can't pay for the home that you can always sell." I was reading a story, I think, of the Johnson family, the president and editor of *Ebony* magazine. I think, it was one of the Johnson families, either the one that owns that company or own the sausage company. In Chicago, when he wanted to get started in business, went down to the bank to borrow five hundred dollars. The bank wouldn't loan it to him to go into business. He went right back to the same bank, borrowed five hundred dollars to take his wife vacation and they gave it him. That's how he got the business. See, we do a lot of things. One of the reporters asked me, "Do I think Auburn is really trying its best to desegregate the institution?" I told him I don't know because I never keep up with it. I really don't know what's going on over and I would be remiss if I said I did, but I can only tell you what happened when I was here, and what things were like when I was here. But I was determined, as I've said before, in those songs they used in the '60s, "I ain't going to let nobody turn me around." And I still believe in that whole-heartedly and I still struggle. For a while there when I got to Talladega, the size of Talladega, my wife would always tease me, the phone ringing all night somebody with a problem. I don't care what time that

phone would ring my wife can tell you I went to see about it. Most of them were job discrimination cases, etc., etc. I helped handle so many job discrimination cases. I should have gone and gotten that law degree. I could have made all that money for myself. But I just can't stand to see people misused and abused and I would never do it to an individual that I know of. Let me go back to the college days of the pledging fraternity. I have never hit a pledgee yet and I never will. I just don't believe in violence. But so many of us do and that's part of our plot—hatred, violence, and racism. It is still one of America's biggest problems. We can sit here and look back and talk about what happened thirty-five years ago when I can down that street out there and that's good, but I also want to know what's happening today on that street or the other street—what's happening to young people. Are they really committed? Do they really know what happened to us? That reporter I talked with earlier, no, they don't know what happened. I talked to a lady this morning at our county health department—I had to go and get some death certificates—I don't have any disease, now, before we get carried away. We were talking and I said I've got to get out of here by twelve o'clock. I said I've got to go to Auburn and speak. She said, "Why you?" I said, well, "I was the first black student that attended Auburn." She said, "You've got to be kidding." She is only thirty something years old. So I don't expect an eighteen or nineteen year old to know what's going on and I was born and reared there in the same town she lives in. So it wasn't that shocking to me that she didn't know and she admitted she didn't know. She said she would have invited me to be the speaker for African American History. I don't see what I did to be heroic. I don't

consider it to be the greatest thing in my life. I would do it again if offered the opportunity. I used to be bitter. My wife can tell you that I used to be bitter when I would come over here to speak. Now it doesn't bother me. I was bitter about the way they treated me. They couldn't pronounce the word "Negro,"—but that's draining me. So, why should it drain me? I'm not going to let that happen. I put my head up and I went on and I'm going to keep on going on. The kids say "keeping on keeping on" until I die and I hope that somewhere down the line somebody can look back and say Franklin did something to help me because to me that's all life is about. I don't care if a Ku Klux Klansman is lying out in the street, if he is hurt I will stop and help him even though I know he might lynch me when he gets well. That's just the way I feel about life. That's all it's all about. What I did, I hope it didn't help me, it helped me to a certain degree, I'm not going to lie about that, but I hope it encouraged other black kids to come to Auburn. Not only athletes, you know, you always get your share of athletes. I don't have to worry about that. I'm talking about the black scholars who are missing out there. That's what I want to see. And you are talking about desegregation, you're right Dr. [Olliff], it is still desegregation. It will always be desegregation at least during my lifetime. Remember I'm going to live sixty-six more years. I would love to see a true integrated something. I don't care what it is and I'm still looking and I still haven't seen it. Even the athletic teams either go one side or the other, mostly black guys. So you see, you're still—that's integration—you just go to one side or the other. But I want to see more scholars. That's the only thing I'm concerned about. You see, I never played sports. I

played football my first, second year in college. I couldn't do it. You can't do it weighing a hundred thirty-seven pounds, not with those big guys coming at you. We used to call them those big corn fed guys and they came with terror in their eyes, you know, because they wanted to impress the coach. So I gave it up to hit the books. That's where I get my fortune now. Daddy would always say that I was the laziest one in the family. I had a twin brother and he... My twin brother was always the type of guy that would go out and cut people's lawns, you know they had this little old push mowers, and make him money. I would never do it. I wasn't better than him. I would be reading a book and when he came home I said, "How much money did you get man?" He said, "Three dollars." I would ask my dad for three dollars. Daddy would always say, "Son, you're good with the books but you ain't worth a curse when you come to you and your [buying]. I tried to work in the steel mill, I think I stayed there one night. So, I'm not going to do it. That's why I tried to get something up here and that's what I tried to tell the athletes. You know, in addition to be a good athlete you never know when an injury is going to occur, and if you don't have—I see too many of them. Over at the Birmingham airport throwing people's bags on and stuff like that, that's ridiculous. I think colleges and universities owe something to those athletes other than playing a sport and get on out—you've used up your eligibility go on about your business. I don't think that's right either. Do something. If they weren't qualified to get an education they shouldn't have been here in the first place playing sports. If they can't do both of them, let them alone. I strongly believe in that. I didn't go into much detail about me because it is not important and most of

you have heard about it or read about it at one time or another. So that's not important. I think the side figures, the byproducts of desegregation of Auburn were more important to me than the desegregation of the school. Watch Frank Johnson and how he acted in the court, watch the kids when they came and shook my hand, how the teachers acted and reacted, how the students acted and reacted. You have a lot of things that went on. A young lady came by the class one day and she stuck her head in and _____, she said Lingo told me don't shake that nigger's hand. She said I had to be sure that I come and shake his hand. Another one, Captain—I've been trying to remember his name, he was in the ROTC here. He was working on his master's. He came to class and he stuck out his hand and said, "I'm Captain somebody." I said, I'm... He said, "Everybody knows who you are." Those things really got me through and I think that was the greatest thing that ever happened to me. That despite the George Wallaces, the Lingos, and the others who really tried to avoid desegregation because they knew it was coming or delay it, it happened. If things don't change for the better we're going to have another black revolution because we see some regression in some of the progress that we have made over the years. At least I do. Like the attack on the Civil Rights Act of 1964, those who are now challenging the Voter's Rights Act of '65, all these things. That to me is what it is all about and I hope that you young people will make it up in your minds that you are going to make a change for the better. One other point and then I'm going to let you start asking questions. When I came downstairs from class in the administration building Dr. Draughon was out drinking water, the water fountain

was on the first floor, and he looked up and he saw me and almost choked on that water. I wanted to burst our laughing but, you know, you have to learn to laugh and survive. I'm going to cut it here so those of you that have questions you can ask me and I'll do my best to answer them for you.

?: Mr. Franklin, I believe you at one time taught at Tuskegee Institute, is that right?

HF: Yes.

?: History?

HF: Yes.

?: There bout the years 19...?

HF: I was there two different times. Sixty...

?: Sixty-seven.

HF: Somebody said sixty-seven? Okay, the young man knows so he must have been there.

?: Let me say that I was in that year's class of 1967 history also and I say that with 300 people in the class you brought fear during the times that you gave your exams.

HF: You know that I didn't do that to you all. Don't tell people that I might want to start teaching again.

?: Seriously, I became a product of Tuskegee. I'm very proud of that as a result of you and the other professors at Tuskegee in the school of engineering. I understand that you are an insurance entrepreneur, have you or were you able to gain any business from Auburn during your past or during your present?

HF: No, I'm not in the insurance business. I sold insurance when I first did my undergraduate work at Montgomery. It was those fifteen cents, those burials that Liberty National used to put out on black folks. I sold that but I was never really in the insurance business. I did that to make ends meet because I was married. I hate insurance. I hate it! I told my supervisor when I left I'll never sell insurance again as long as I live. I don't even want to be CEO of an insurance company because it is hard to try to walk around up and down those hills and wear out your car trying to collect a fifteen cent premium. No, I'm in the funeral business. That's who I'm work for, a guy in the funeral business. I love that now because your customers don't talk back to me. What's your name?

HK: I'm Hale Kelly, retired colonel from the United States Army.

HF: Hale Kelly, you were in... Oh, well, I can't argue with a military man. I respect them, I really do. You went to Tuskegee also young man? What's your name?

?: [Curtis Rayborn].

HF: [Curtis Rayborn]? You were in that same class?

CR: World history. Actually Western Civilization.

HF: At that time you had to have that old Western Civilization to qualify for an education degree in the state of Alabama. I don't know if it is still true or not but our thing was we wanted to keep world history which had all races but the state of Alabama said you had to take Western Civ to be certified in education. But I really enjoyed it. You didn't get my African American history class? Man, you missed a treat. Colonel, if you think I was hard in that world history, man, you should have gotten my African American or west African. You had to read at

least sixteen books per semester in addition to your textbook. I always had a policy, I would open up the books and wherever my hand fell I made a question from it. I made sure you read it. Now, that's just terrible. _____ but I did it anyway. I was really trying to get the kids to read and I felt the only way to get them to read was to make them read. Are there any other questions?

?: Just a comment Mr. Franklin. You say that you are not a hero but you did something that took a great amount of courage from my point of view and I admire that and I think that's a great step on a great mile for lots of people. From my point of view I thank you for that.

HF: Thank you for saying that.

?: While you were at Auburn were other African American students admitted or enrolled during the time you were here?

HF: Yes, two more, remember I said from Tuskegee. Lee and Wyatt of the famous Lee vs. Macon, and [Willie B.] Wyatt. Lee finished school and Wyatt did not. Wyatt transferred to DeVry in Atlanta and graduated in electronics. He was in electrical engineering at DeVry. Lee was working at the Montgomery courthouse one time in child something. I can't remember what it was—youth development—something that the county has with young people.

?: Mr. Franklin who is you were talking about who put the gun in your things and continued to go out of his way to make trouble for you?

HF: Al Lingo, the head of the State Troopers. Al Jennings—I still like calling him Al Jennings because he didn't sound tough to me. He said he used that name because it made him sound tough. He was head of the State Troopers at that time.

I guess he called himself reforming because eventually he went over to Jefferson County and decided to run for sheriff. The first group of people he went to were black folks after all that. But that was his thing, you know. I don't live in Jefferson County so I didn't have anything to do with it. Any other questions?

?: When you went to court the judge said you were qualified, were you speaking academically?

HF: Yes.

?: Was that from your high school records?

HF: College records. You see, I came over here to graduate school.

?: Did you have any organizations that enabled you to attend?

HF: Certainly. The NAACP legal defense fund, yes. They were my attorney. You know I couldn't afford to pay those lawyers to go into federal court not the way it costs now. I went to get an injunction against a teacher one time at my school and that was \$700. That was a lot of money for us. In teaching, most of the schools that I've taught at like at Tuskegee and Talladega, you really don't make any money and I couldn't _____ so the legal defense fund handled all my cases. Fred Gray, who now lives in Tuskegee, was my attorney along with his staff.

?: Did you have an opportunity to meet Thurgood Marshall ever during your life?

HF: Never have. I always will regret that we were never in the same place. At one time I was directing what they call the Black Elected Officials and we would meet in Washington but I never got a chance to meet him.

?: When you were speaking you did say how you used to get by _____ by thinking of a good joke. But what advice would you give people now to get by?

HF: Always maintain a sense of humor, I don't care who you are. That's one thing I always believed in, maintain a sense of humor. The reason they have so much _____, everybody take everything so seriously now. If I walk by you and said hey, I don't like the way he said hey. You know how it just stay on your mind, your mind, your mind, and you say I'm going to tell him about it the next time I see him. So what? Just say hey back and keep moving. I'm serious because if you watch TV like everybody else does in here we suffer more depression than we ever suffered with. Our society is much more complex now than it ever has been. My wife is worried about Y2K. Every night I go home she asks me what's going to happen? I don't know. I might be dead before 2,000, you know, but she is serious about it. Every evening I come home she has to ask me something about it. I might not be living so why worry about something you don't know.

?: I just have a comment. Today I was at one of the local schools.... I was amazed that the children were not even aware of what went on in those days that they still see that or saw that as something ugly. I'm wondering how can we _____ that congressman to know that there was some out of that movement and it took that movement for us to be where we are today. I was just shocked. All they knew was they (Black Panthers) were black.

HF: What I think we have to do to get our young people to understand is that _____ is controlled by whites. I don't mean to be a racist but let's be honest about it. They are the ones who put their slant on every story, I don't care which story it is. What we have to do is go get some black [copy mix] or what not, an article or something, [*Ebony*] _____ and let them see a balance of

anything. The Black Panthers was one of the greatest groups, as far as I'm concerned in the state of Alabama, all they did was what—organize people in Lowndes County to become registered voters. That's where they first got started in Lowndes County, Alabama. They didn't have guns, they didn't have anything _____. "The best way to resolve our problems in Lowndes County, since we are a majority, is to register to vote." you had to be one of the persons who was doing.

?: Why did you leave Auburn?

HF: It didn't look like I was going to graduate so why keep wasting my money. Now I'm serious about that. I say it facetiously but that's exactly what happened, we got to that thesis. I thought it was one of the best I had ever seen because I had been over to the thesis room and I read some of those over there. My major professor said it was one of the worst so we would always disagree. I'd write it one way and I'd take to him and say, "Okay, here you go." He would tell me to write it another way. I'd write it another way, come back, and he would tell me to write it the same way I had written it before. I made a statement to him one day, I said, "What you are telling me is that I'm not going to get a degree from Auburn," and I just left. That's exactly what happened.

?: Where did you go?

HF: The University of Denver. A good school, it had its problems too. I was telling one of the reporters that we didn't have any black faculty at the university _____ graduate school of international studies. We had some stink about that while I was there. We had a little strike or something like that while were out there about

that. ____ ____ ____ but I enjoyed it. I enjoyed the country if nothing else. I love Colorado. Any other questions?

?: What was your thesis on?

HF: Alabama State from [18[41] – 1873] or something. See I was told what to write on. I didn't have a choice. I wanted to write on something on the concept of civil disobedience, which was one thing I really loved. The people in history department, I don't need to call their names, you know who they were, told me that was too controversial to write on the history of Alabama State College because it had never been written before. Then he told me to go talk to... I don't know how many of you remember Dr. Amacher, Dr. Amacher taught English and he allowed one of the students to say something favorable about Dr. King. The university censored him for it. So I talked to Dr. Amacher, I'm sure he's dead by now because he was pretty old.

Aud: No, he's still alive.

HF: He's still alive! I wish I had known that I would try to get in touch with Dr. Amacher because he is one of the persons I'd like to talk to about that incident. That's why I wasn't allowed to write on what I wanted to write on and that's one of the reasons I lost interest in it. I could care less about the history of anything. I like concepts—concepts of civil disobedience. If I slap him is that an act of aggression, does that mean we are going to war—I like to look at things, you know, analyze things like that more than the history aspect. I love history, don't get me wrong, I taught it for thirty years, I love it. But if I get my kids to write when they were writing I'd always get them to write on conceptualizes. I could

care less the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor December 7, 1941. Was that an act of war is what I'm more concerned about. See what I mean? That's what I'm more concerned about because the facts will always be there. We need to do something else besides regurgitate facts, at least I think so because at one time in history that's all there was. Remember those tests they used to give you? Sometimes they had that old objective part, nothing but dates. I hated it. I thought there was more to history than just dates or causing the effect. That's a better term, I guess. The bombing of Pearl Harbor, the invasion of Germany into Poland in 1939 are causes of the effect of war. Let's analyze this thing. Let's think. You know, once you learn that two plus two is four there's no challenge any more. That's what I tried to get my students to do, I really did. I wanted them to _____ and read. They had to read first though. Anything else?

??: Mr. Franklin I'm from the north and I see at the University of Maryland, the University of Pennsylvania, many black students—many African American students in which I am very happy and pleased about. I don't see very many black students at Auburn. Can you tell me why you think that is?

HF: Well, I guess there's a number of things. Number one, the Universities of Maryland and Pennsylvania and what not, have a long history of black enrollment compared to Auburn. Thirty-five years is not long to some people. You also have to look at it in terms of what the Supreme Court said in Brown vs. People ____ Board. Do you remember the final, I like to call it the ending of that decision, "with all deliberate speed?" Now Marty might believe that deliberate speed is fifty-five miles per hour, you might believe it is sixty-five. I might believe it is

eighty-five. Do you see what I mean? This is exactly what it is. The Supreme Court in a unanimous decision let the south out of it by saying all deliberate speed. Everybody has a different concept on what deliberate speed is. That's all it is saying. Auburn has a long way to go I'm sure. Alabama has out done them by a long shot. ____ _____. One thing too is location. Like I said, had it been left to me I would never have come to a cow college. The only time I came to Auburn I think we drove through the campus one time after Judge Johnson made the school admit me. I had never been on this campus a day in my life. I had been at Alabama's campus but I had never given it any consideration. Then, of course, you might say, "Well, okay, the university is in the north and you are having some problems out of some of those I might add to right now in recruitment and what not. So here again it also depends where the school is located. That's makes a difference. For example, I had gotten out of the airforce and I stayed with my uncle. All of my family had gone to a private school, Talladega College, and he wanted me to go. When you come out of service, you know, everything looks so small, especially little towns like this, so he says, "well?" I said, "No, uncle, I'm not going to school at Talladega College." He said go look at Tuskegee. I went to Tuskegee. The school was nice but the town was too small. So I went down to Montgomery and looked at it. A nice size town and a nice size school. So I think all variables have to be taken into consideration to analyze why one is successful and one isn't. Then there's also the part of the heart of the school itself—is the school willing to make a commitment or is not.

MO: Ladies and gentlemen, Harold Franklin.