

Susan Hogan: *Racism Really Hurts*

Carrie Nobel Kline: Start by saying my name is.

Susan Hogan: My name is Susan Hogan, and I'm Executive Director of the YWCA of Wheeling located at 11th and Chapline. And the YWCA was founded here in 1906. In 1917 a million dollars was raised. Thirty thousand of the money, I believe, was raised by the African-Americans. The women. So in 1917 a five-story building was constructed on the corner of 11th and Chapline. The Blue Triangle branch, which was the colored people branch of the YWCA, was located across the street in kiddy corner. Which it changed locations. And finally, we integrated in 1954. You want to hear about our project on racism?

CNK: Well, yeah, you can start -- That sounds good.

(012) SH: Because historically the YWCAs of the USA have maintained an imperative which calls for 'the elimination wherever it exists and by any means necessary,' which is very powerful. And a lot of the smaller communities 'by any means necessary' has caused quite a lot of controversy because it's inferred that violence could be a part of it. But our mission includes the empowerment of women, equality, justice, peace and freedom. So it's kind of inclusive that it is by peaceful means. We have made a real commitment a year and a half ago to formulate a project on racism, took a lot of brainstorming with community members. What came of it was to work with students obviously. We had a statewide essay contest completely supported by the State Superintendent who wrote a letter which was included to all the teachers. We received 595 essays from 25 counties. And in some counties there are no African-Americans at all. But the children collectively made three very poignant statements. One, is that racism and prejudice is learned in the home. Two, that the students wanted multi-cultural classes starting in elementary school and going through high school. And finally, they asked that all people speak out when a racial slur or joke is heard, which

(032) was very special. And these essays ranged from the young man, Joshua from South Charleston, who was recruited by the area National Front from his high school, and he became a skinhead. He wasn't in sports or band and the area National Front gave him power and a sense of identity and treated him like royalty. But then he became friends with a black student at the school who kept after him, persisting. You know, let's talk, let's talk, and he kept shying away, no I don't, I cannot talk to you. And finally they did sit down and talk. And this student turned his head completely around. His essay stated to ask us to please stop the hate groups. We had the students in Wellsburg, Weirton area saying that they thought the Moose Club was just awful because they didn't let any black people in that club, and there was a very creative story of a student who put together a demonstration of French people and Indonesian and everyone to go and picket outside the club. It was a very creative thing. We even had an essay from a student where there are no African-Americans in that county, and he's a farm boy and he was so hurt because kids made fun of the way he dressed. So it brought out a lot of hurtful things. But the eight winners went to a reception at the governor's mansion, hosted by First Lady Rachel Worby. It was -- We broadcast portions of the essays over the *Tuesday's Child* program on West Virginia Public Radio's eight stations. From the essays, we took about 20 of them, and Hal O'Leary who's our wonderful in

(054) residence director and actor with Towngate Theater of Oglebay Institute -- Hal put together skits with these various essays. We had -- In order to find the students to perform in the theater group, we held a kid's forum, Kids Only Speak Out About Racism. We had a real nice gathering of about 30 students, and they really spoke from their hearts. And then from that, we got 13 committed young adults, black and white, male and female, to come and help form this wonderful theatrical performance. And we gave many presentations. After this theater performance really got started, we were invited to go down to Marshall University. Because of this horrible last winter, we

(065) didn't make it down. We formed a panel of black and white men and women, ages ranging -- Anthony's 26, Geneva, I hope she won't mind, is maybe 61, I'm not sure. But the panel was there to talk about how racism has affected each person's life. Ann Jones

would mention that when she was growing up with her Mayflower background --All she knew is that black people were maids and white people had maids. Geneva who was growing up on a farm -- Whenever she would take a bus through Alabama, knew that you never put your black head on a white pillow because the Klan members could find, spot you and pull you off the bus and beat you up. And throughout her speech the whole time, throughout the country, she said the only place she was ever allowed to eat with white people were YWCA cafeterias. And this was all during the 50s. Then we have -- Geneva's ending statement is 'I am not an African-American mother of African-American sons, I am an American of American sons.' Then we go to Anthony who was born on the date of Martin Luther King's assassination. So every one of his birthdays was synonymous with the celebration or with the assassination. Therefore, after that with people commemorating Martin Luther King, and the way he ends his five minute talk is 'I am an African-American male. I am Anthony Forte.'

(086) Very powerful. There are so many different views, and Ann Jones, excuse me, Ann Thomas, who was the first African-American nurse in the Ohio Valley, has gone through -- Well, up here at Lincoln School which is now Youth Services System, she very much remembers the assembly when the principle called them in and said, 'we are going to now integrate and that means that our schools will not be going to our neighborhood. It will be -- You will be bused elsewhere.' And it was a very special time, that they were all very scared, of course. This panel brings out a lot of history of all these varied backgrounds. One woman was raised in a Mennonite community, and they used to do very special things, thought they were helping during the civil rights movement those poor black families. All the same while the institutional racist attitudes still were very deeply ingrained. I think we've all learned quite a bit. A

(098) lot of the women on the panel in the 70s were in on the Panel of American Women where they had a Jewish woman, a Catholic woman, a WASP, a couple of black women who would go out and talk. And one part of Ann Thomas' speech is 'I've had to take my notes out and dust them off.' It's the same problems again and again. I will get back to that because they're the people who have taught me more of the historical what has happened

all these years and why some of the people don't feel comfortable going to the banks, don't feel comfortable going to the department stores and other institutions. We invited Floyd Cochran, the former spokesperson for the Aryan Nations, and that -- The reason he left the Aryan Nation is his son was born with a cleft palette and the leader of this, it's also called the Christian Identity Movement, -- The leader told him his son would have to be euthanized because he was genetically imperfect, which caused Floyd

(113) to really think deeply, and he made this turnaround. It wasn't overnight. He lived out in the woods for three months and then -- Interestingly enough, it was a woman from the Southern Poverty Law Center who, and the Center for the -- Sorry, I forget that.

CNK: That's okay.

(116) SH: From the Southern Poverty Law Center really worked with him one on one to help bring him through a lot of the crises he was facing. But Floyd came, spoke to three high schools, Rotary, Wheeling Rotary Club, and then we had an open meeting here at the YWCA. And he showed a short video of the compound in Allentown, Pennsylvania, which he said is extremely armed and dangerous. This Christian Identity Movement or the Aryan Nation were responsible for Allen Burg's assassination. Randy Weaver was a part. Remember the FBI went in and actually -- Weaver's wife and child were killed through this. It was out, I believe in Idaho -- It was in the west. But, Floyd's whole point is that when he was the spokesperson he would go into a community and let all the media know he was coming, and he would instantly get front page, 6 o'clock

(130) news, et cetera, et cetera. The only time he would leave a community is when there were a group of people standing there. If he'd go into a meeting speaking about the Aryan Nation, and there were 30 or 40 protesters there, he thought nothing of it. But when 100, 200, 300 -- He just left. It was interesting through the Southern Poverty Law Center and Floyd, we learned about the activity in West Virginia. And a Dr. William Pierce has 364 acres in Pocahontas County, and he's one of the largest distributors of neo-nazi literature. He also distributes to Europe because, of course it's against the law for any publications of racist literature. I got a copy of his most recent comic book put out for students. He had taken it to a printer, and the printer sent a copy to the

Southern Poverty Law Center and they sent it out. It -- Second page has a cartoon. It's all about white will and it asks students to pass these around at school. It's completely anti-Semitic and racist. But Floyd also showed a four minute video of Gabriella Cartieras in the compound in Allentown, Pennsylvania. As she was met and brought into the house, they said, 'Look, we know you're a Jew and you're a child of Satan and you should really die.' Even the children came up to her and said, 'If I had a gun I would kill you if God told me to.' So there's a lot of activity going on. There's also Angels Action Gear in Morgantown, the university. It's a neo-nazi, skinhead equipment store. There's another publisher in Ready, West Virginia. So, we're a beautiful, gorgeous state and people can move in because we're pretty free and open. The First Amendment, of course, gives people the right and Dr. Pierce continues to publish this literature. We've learned quite a lot, and I think what's important is how the African-American community and, by no means am I spokesperson for -- This is

what I've felt and heard from them, is there's a real mistrust, and they want to get together. There's no doubt about it, but as in any community, no matter what ethnicity, you still have different socioeconomic backgrounds, and you have this clique and that clique. I don't think the African-American community as of yet, as well as the churches within that community and culture, have really gotten together. And I think that's going to be very special when that does take place, and a lot of people working towards it. So this whole project was videoed and reduced to about 20 minutes and it's introduced by the Governor, which is a real honor. It shows the various aspects of this project and the YWCA nationally may use this as part of the one imperative training for new executive directors and presidents. So it's a real honor. And we won the Racial Justice Award for 1993, excuse me, 1994. We just received that in Los Angeles

in June of 94. It was a real honor as a community association; there are 400 of us in America. Now a new project which won't be publicly announced until October, which is National Cancer Month, is -- We've received \$25,000 towards breast and cervical cancer screening programs for the African-American woman. West Virginia is now fifth in the nation for death by cervical cancer. And one of the highest instances is, of course, the

African-American woman because they have not been detected early. It's not a genetic thing. I mean the female cancer is a genetic problem, but in the case of this ethnic group, that's not the sole problem. So we're hiring a woman, and I can't wait for her to start. She grew up here; she's African-American, and our whole approach will be through fun. Of trying to get three generations together: the grandmother, the mother and the girls. Through, whether it's the kids making puppets, whether it's through quilting, whether it's through having a go down and get mammograms and

(195) have a DJ and dance. It will be a whole different approach here. We have full support of Ohio Valley Medical Center and their new Women's Center and that auxiliary to help support this project which is funded through YWCA of the USA Women's Initiatives. But that has been supported by Avon with 4 million dollars for a three year period. We're just very excited about this whole new creative venture to bring out again -- And hopefully because of this institutional racism that is so deeply felt. The hospitals, and OVMC has been very open armed to people without medical coverage. They're always the ones who opened the doors. This is not just a low mod income problem. This is middle class, et cetera. So it will be an exciting year, and we're repeating the statewide essay contest. The topic will probably be *If Martin Luther King Came Back, What Would He Say?* And a new theater group because all our kids graduated and are going off to Columbia and West Virginia State and all over.

(211) So it's exciting.

CNK: A theater project that would again take off on the essays?

SH: Yes. And hopefully we will kind of get it together with the Martin Luther King celebrations so it's -- Even the statewide thing. So it's -- They have always had an essay contest in addition. So we might do something together this year. I haven't called them yet so don't publish this!

CNK: Well where did all this come from? Why are you doing all this work on racism?

(218) SH: It's just a little personal history. I was Executive Director of the Wheeling Symphony for eight years. One of the most meaningful things to me was our children's concerts, and I've always adored children. I believe this community is rich with children, and it is a

good place to live and grow up. Then my husband and I went to Peace Corps in West Africa for three and a half years. So I was completely integrated in a different culture, and I learned so much about the roots of the African-American person in where we were in Benin, West Africa was one of the largest slave ports. The French colonialist would take their Beninese over to their other countries and use them in governmental positions because of the intelligence factor. It was so fascinating. In a scrapbook here at the YW, I found a little black and white photograph from the '30s and the three little girls in there looked exactly like our landlord's daughters. It just -- I

(235) was so shocked, I couldn't believe it. Our landlord had five wives and 33 children. But we became so intimate with that society that, probably because our French was so bad and that we didn't come off looking like these American highly educated, very wealthy people -- Peace Corps doesn't portray that at all. But we really picked up the local language, Fon, which the word gumbo came from.

CNK: What is the word?

(242) SH: Gumbo. Do you know okra? Well, gumbo means okra in Fon.

CNK: Can you spell that?

SH: F-O-N. We would learn that. So I would sit at night with the women around little fires and I knew maybe 20 sentences, but we'd giggle and laugh and they would make fun of my Fon and it was really an exciting, very special time. But I understand more. The absolute difference of the culture of the Caucasian and the African-American. You have different socioeconomic levels, but as far as the wonderful food, you go to the jubilee and you'll get some good home cooking. There's so many similarities and things that they have brought and part of our Peace Corps training was on St. Helena's Island in South Carolina where the people speak Gwala, which is a melange of different languages, tribal languages. So that, I think, once I came to this organization and I became the executive director -- I didn't know about the mission or the one imperative until a few months into the job.

CNK: When did you come in?

(260) SH: October of '92. When I saw this mission statement and this imperative and went to a manager training and learned how much they are behind this elimination of racism, it went snap in my head and my heart and boom, I came back and just started thinking about what to do. And again, there were a lot of other people brainstorming. Again, I'll say I am not the one to know how it feels. I have some idea, and you cannot compare being one white person with 2,000 Africans. It doesn't matter; the white man is still the esteemed and revered, except by those who still remember the colonial times. I've never felt that discrimination. I have not. I can go to any store, any bank. And even if I'm in a sweat suit still feel very comfortable, and I don't feel any awkwardness from the vibes of a teller, et cetera. And again, I'm sure when you grow up in a community and you have connections, you can get along. I mean, it's a whole different world.

CNK: So you were kind of amazed and pleased to be here a couple of months and to realize that the YWCA had this mission that was so in line with yours?

(283) SH: Oh, absolutely. It was a natural progression. I've known about the drive-by shootings, the drug problems, and East Wheeling has such a stereotype now that it -- It was really frustrating because one of the first things when I came back is if I were over at Murphy's or wherever downtown and I saw a black baby in a woman's arms, I wanted to go pick him up and squeeze him and kiss him and start speaking Fon, and it was really very difficult to come back here into this community and not have all our babies and children. They were all over the house in West Africa. But, to see what's going on with the learning center -- I was so thrilled with that. We've become -- What I'd like to see happen here is to eventually, down the road, once the soup kitchen finds a good home of its own is to turn our cafeteria and big kitchen into a cooking school for inner city kids. Then also invest in -- This is through grants I haven't written yet of course, computer sewing machines. I mean boys and girls too. This is not just a girl thing in the kitchen and --

CNK: Computer sewing machines?

(302) SH: Yeah, these marvelous things. You push buttons and it monograms or does little elephants or whatever. But to then have the kids learn on the sewing machines also and

possibly set up a little monogram business and maybe work with Stone and Thomas or some other seamstresses in town so the kids could learn how to set up a little teeny, tiny business. Or take those proceeds and put it back into purchasing equipment for their, the up and coming students. That's down the road. And also the other thing is to really get a foxfire project going here where the kids downtown, and this not just an African-American -- These are downtown kids. We have, as you well know, in South Wheeling and Central Wheeling, there are so many different ethnic groups. But for the students to have their own publication; have them interview the grandparents. There's so much that's been lost. The military. We have our own African-American legion here. Post 89. It has had some negative connotations because it's where the men have gathered and partied, but the amount of history there, of their commitment to the wars of this country is phenomenal. Just to understand that history of the African-American in our military is also very fascinating. But the children should know that that older gentleman who walks down 14th Street every day served in our war.

(330) Whether it was the big one or World War II or even Vietnam. The kids need to know that history and get away from the television. And you have someone who learns to take photographs, you can utilize our professionals in town to teach the kids. Then they can be proud of a little newspaper. There's a lot to come. It's just time! And it will fall into place. It's just not right now.

CNK: It's amazing what you've done up to this point.

(338) SH: Well, it's not I. It's a lot of people and full support of the board. And I will say for the project on racism, Dr. Jones and the staff at the Ohio County School Board could not have been more helpful. The teachers opened the door. They invited our panel for the principal's meeting last August and from that stemmed the first multi-culture committee and the first multi-culture celebration at the high school ever. The panel made a couple presentations, and the students performed three times for their peers and they loved it. It was really an exciting day, and it will be an annual event. Again, that's step number one. We just have to start talking about things. The --

CNK: Who was that person's name? I'm sorry. The commissioner of schools, was it --

(351) SH: Well Dr. Larry Jones is our School Superintendent of Ohio County.

CNK: He's the one who arranged for the --

SH: The panel. Oh, absolutely. What we want to look at is -- Oh, I lost my thought.

CNK: I'm sorry.

SH: That's okay. What were we talking --

CNK: Well, you were talking about this was going to be an annual event at the high school.

(357) SH: So many people of this, the black community, are saying Black History Month is great, but can it not be in the curriculum. And then other people are saying well then why not have Polish history and Italian history and Irish history, et cetera, et cetera. But, our own insidious problems and the fact of the slaves coming over to this, a different culture coming here en mass like that and the struggle. And each ethnic group has had its own struggle, there's no doubt about it. But, there should be multi-culture classes. There just should be. And Black History Month is special because it does intensify and highlight, but at some point in our history in the future, I think it will be integrated so that it is part of a curriculum year round. Martin Luther King birthdays -- We've had schools in our neighborhood here who could walk to our theater, and we had a big birthday celebration. We had Officer Jim, the DARE officer and pastors, and we've had the rabbi and First Lady Rachel Worby just talking about Martin Luther King and

(378) prejudice and -- So it's really been quite a year and a half. And just starting. The panel's ready to go places, any place. We need to get them into the colleges. And we need to get some good hot intercourse going with the -- We need more participation. The panel is one thing that takes about 25 minutes to hear it. But then it's getting people to open up and talk; and I think once we get into some church basements, maybe we can get some things going. I showed the video to a childhood friend of mine who just happened to be in town and her mother. And when it came the part of the kids forum when Gloria stated that there were some teachers who were very prejudice, the mother of my friend said, 'I resent that. I was a teacher.' And I thought, and I said, 'Well, you aren't prejudice so you don't -- But please realize that there are people who are.' It just whipped right back to that past where people do respond personally to it. But there's

(397) one statement that one of our panelists ends with and it says, 'If we are not part of the solution, then we must be part of the problem.' And that's been quite important to me to understand that statement.

CNK: Well, if you can talk about some of the, just some of the different antidotes to racism that you see taking place in Wheeling. That would be interesting.

(405) SH: Well, I know that the banks are being, let's see, forced for the Community Reinvestment Act through the government to really take a look at how the various neighborhoods, the various populations are integrated into the banking system. I've been on the WesBanco CRA Committee, and it's been very interesting. We really were able, and especially the black citizens, were able to express and sometimes I would encourage them speak out. I'd say, "Diane, tell them why you don't bank in Wheeling." Just to get it on the table. And they have had then sensitivity training with some of their employees since then on cultural diversity. And they have started a check cashing with picture I.D. card system because a lot of our clients couldn't cash their welfare checks in town or -- I mean they didn't have a driver's license, and it was very difficult. I can see a start in various organizations to open the doors. What really frightens so much, so many of us is please let us not have to have someone murdered out

(429) in Woodsdale to have everybody come together and say what's wrong, what are we doing, what can we do. Right now, the shootings and, albeit not common, but one is enough thank you, are in the quote 'bad neighborhoods' unquote. So it's not a problem of everybody yet. But again, preventive medicine, preventive sociology, whatever you want to call it, it's there. It's just been swept under the rug, and that's evident. And there were so many things happened for a couple administrations that put civil rights really on the back burner. I think with the King issue, I know a lot of the students during the forum said it really wasn't just because of Rodney King being beaten. The gasoline was there, and the match just hit. The emotions had been boiling and boiling for a long time, and that was the impetus. So it can happen to the little community. I

(450) mean it is happening. The more the teachers -- That's what was interesting too with the principals after we met, they had good conversations. And I don't think a lot of us know

what all the stereotypes are. I mean at one part Anthony, a panelist, said he was told he wasn't like the rest of the black kids which he, was an insult. And then he was told you're different from all the black kids. I mean, he was very confused growing up in the school system when you had different people saying different things. So again, I can only be part of the solution as to be able to sleep peacefully and keep going. But that's through this organization, and it's been wonderful. But it's working with many other agencies, especially United Way agencies. We all have these various interconnections and bonds, and it's an exciting time. But you hope you don't lose a few generations by taking too much time.

CNK: What do you mean?

(470) SH: Well, we're just now starting to talk about it, and you can't look back and you can't say 'Oh I wish I had,' but you see the Anthonys that grew up and his father was a minister and he grew up in a Christian home. He never knew what racism was. He never heard the word. He was never told anything. And then he went to school, I believe in Cleveland, and bang, then it hit him. But with different generations -- It's like anything else, it's not just the cultural issue. You have your TV generation, you have your video generation, and we have all kinds and we have -- Luckily our children are now -- Thank heavens for the schools are more sensitive to the environment. And I

(485) think too to multi-cultures. I think it's a real start.

CNK: In Wheeling you see a big change?

SH: I do, I really do. Just the open door that we receive from the school board and the teachers. It's very meaningful. We didn't have to fight anybody, and I've heard in different communities it's not been that easy.

CNK: What are some other examples of antidotes that are happening around the city to racism or ethnic segregation? Do you see anything else going on?

(495) SH: Well, I think African-American Jubilee is marvelous. I think it's a first and it's time and I think we need to study more the history of the rich culture of this community. I know I have lots to learn of the different contributions. And just going along the river front, you know, you can feel the energy of the people before. And you know the 17 passenger

trains a day and you know where were the blacks working during that period. Were they in the dining car; were they engineers up front, who all had the -- Oh, I remember growing up with the different barbers and the beauty parlours that was for the black people and -- Up here at Piersons Printing, I think down in the basement where he has some printing equipment, there's a black boxer painted on the wall. And that used to be a club over there. And right behind it was the Blue Triangle YWCA colored branch. So this whole neighborhood was just full of life. I went to Triadelphia High School, and that's the first time we ever met black people.

CNK: When were you born, Susan?

(523) SH: In '49, and graduated from Triadelphia High School in '67. And we had a girl's football team. We -- Cleopatra Hawkins, whose twin brother, Leo Durocher Hawkins, became good friends and I remember going into a neighborhood, well bringing her home to our house and a couple of the neighbors had said I was a nigger lover and two of them were -- One was from Arkansas and one was from another part of the state, but -- It was just a different -- It was the first time we culturally came together, but as far as having a black person to your home, it just wasn't common at all. It wasn't common practice. All the black children I knew were from the Triadelphia area, not downtown.

CNK: Were you raised in Triadelphia?

(540) SH: No, in Woodsdale. Edgewood area, and I was very fortunate to have parents who are so unprejudiced and I was always taught with positive reinforcement and openness and to accept everyone. I think one of my biggest childhood traumas was when we drove down to, which was the Lower Market at the time, which is Centre Market now -- It was all open air and it was a Saturday morning. I think I was about four or five. And I saw a Chinese gentleman someone had hit, and he was sitting down and he was bleeding in the face. And I'll never forget that. I was so upset to see a person hit. And I don't know what ever happened or what the cause of this was for, but it really upset me. So I think I've always -- I don't know why, some people just grow up trying to help the little weak puppy or it's just someone who is less fortunate or different than a minority. Albeit, it could be all Caucasian, but if someone has less than someone -- I'm just very grateful

that I grew up the way I did. I don't have that baggage. I wasn't trained to be prejudiced and racist, and that's the most difficult thing. It's how we're taught and how do you deprogram that. And it's the same thing with the African-American and the Jewish separation right now. And that's been -- It's a big problem and you know in New York and that -- Hopefully we'll stop spreading.

(574) CNK: What about here? Is there a problem here?

(578) SH: I don't know. I hope not. I hope not. I think everyone's struggling enough to get into the 21st century with a little more brotherly love. But who knows. Again, that's something that you would have to ask the Jewish community and the African-American community how they feel.

CNK: Well if this had not been a mission that was posed at the national level, would this have been a mission you would have taken on? Could you, if you had been able to set such a --

(591) SH: Probably. It may not have been as under the realms of the elimination of racism, but it would have been programs downtown with the students and -- Sure, where there are problems, it's just like we have the family violence prevention program. And we have a lot of battered women and their children here, which is devastating. So you make a priority or part of your own mission, what you see and you feel. It's like the breast and cervical cancer. That's now tied in to the African-American community. So one really doesn't know until you're -- It comes into your old brain, and it's an idea and then you make it part of your goals.

CNK: Well for someone who, who had never been to Wheeling, how, but maybe lived in this country -- What would you say Wheeling's major hurdles will be? What do you see here? What are some of the issues that people are dealing with?

(615) SH: What we're dealing with are stores downtown that are empty and self-esteem problem that always will -- When you grow up here, you say I'm so bored I can't wait to get out of Wheeling. Well I did. I went to San Francisco for eight years, came back home thrilled to be back to add to this community which was so good to me. But every kid everywhere always is bored when you're in high school. You think -- It's the grass is always greener, but remember it's AstroTurf! You don't see that at the time. This community has so

(641) much wealth of spirit. And there are magic people here. I think the churches are starting to get together, and I know our educational system is in excellent, just excellent here, trying new things. If we can get over the hurdles or start to confront the institutional racism which a lot of people don't even realize exists. It just does because it's a way of life. It's like the mural in our lobby we just had done of two beautiful nine foot angels. On Sundays we have a small but very wonderful black spiritualist church and the deacon lady -- I just like her so much. Well she came in Sunday, I wasn't here, and she told the receptionist, 'Oh, those angels really are lovely, but don't people realize there are black angels too?' Now, there we are in our lobby, the YWCA -- It's not that we have to have a black angel, but we didn't think about it. And the artist is one of the most sensitive, open, non-racist people I know. And again, it's just we grew up with ethereal, white angels in our thoughts. We have a long way to go. But I think this community, and I know our city management and council are trying. And our state's trying very much to get business in here. And with the Heritage Foundation -- Wow, what a start. And you get the Warf Garage down and you open up the waterfront just like so many other towns have done, is to develop that area. That's where our history started, so much of it. What's coming in and out and -- Remember moving back here in '79. I came home after nine years out west. I immediately saw Wheeling as San Francisco, a little teeny, tiny San Francisco with the ethnic neighborhoods. We didn't quite have a Chinatown, but the Island was like a little Sausalito and we had our bridges over to it. Of the potential and getting the streetcars back. And I mean I just left this wonderful place on the west, and I could just see all this happening, and that was a long time ago. But it's starting to happen.

CNK: What did you mean by Sausalito?

(687) SH: Sausalito was across the bay of San Francisco and it's this artistic community and a lot of -- Well, the Victorians are downtown San Francisco. But I could just see -- Geographically we were laid out like that here. And I'm just hoping the kids come home.

CNK: That was I just want our children to come home?

SH: Meaning the people who grew up here. We had very rich lives. Most of us did. Most of us who had peaceful, happy homes. So many people left town. And you have two ways to look at that. Those who stay here, who never leave town, maybe don't have quite a worldly view other than what is seen on television. Where those who've left town who can come back, gone to the bigger city and come back and say, 'Oh, is this a wonderful place.' It's so easy to get to work. It's so -- We've got the park. Who else has Oglebay? Most of us -- A lot of us worked there, 50 cents an hour checking baskets at the pool. The guys cleaned up cigarette butts and or were caddies. I hope that there's a social conscience to to pay back a community that was good to us. Whether you've spoken with various members of the community to know that there are -- I don't know

(End of side one)

(side 2)

SH: Or of huge factories and the mining industry, glass, et cetera, coal. We had the presidents of the companies and the founders and the board of trustees and the Sterling Drug, and the Weiss family and pushing the aspirin carts or whatever! Which history is. There's an enormous amount of money, and so many of those families live elsewhere in this country. And there are a couple of foundations who really do want to continue to help. The communities where the family money was made. We do have a very generous community. There is no doubt about it. I've seen it -- The United Way agencies, our cultural institutions, the symphony, the institute. We have a very giving community. I just -- When I said I hope the kids come home, it's just like I hope I'm in the 40s age bracket, and I would hope that there's some 30 somethings and some late 20s who can come back here and put something back into this community that was given to them, which is some confidence hopefully. But again, that's the wasp I'm talking

(017)

about. We really had a good childhood here. Of course I'm speaking for myself. I had a really happy family and I know a lot of my friends, the minority -- Two girls in my class who were from divorced homes which was so rare. It was just not heard of and my son out in the West Coast, his age group, there are maybe two out of all his friends whose parents are the same. Have maintained the marriage. As they say in Africa, in a polygamist society, men mere, men pere. You have the same mother and the same father

because -- As in our landlord's family, 33 children, but with five different wives. So you're not exactly a cousin, you're really a brother and a sister. But I'm off on a tangent.

CNK: That's okay.

(027) SH: I'm an optimist so I keep seeing all this wonderful change going on. The Gee Building going up and the river front development and that Island. If we can do walking tours -- We've already started. The Victorian landmarks and the Victorian Wheeling Society are doing quite a bit here. But then let's include the Island and get other people involved, all the community and develop our own little parks. We have another little brainstorm here. And this was from Heidi Hopkins' friend who was talking about how Oglebay -- We were discussing playgrounds downtown and I know the city -- We don't have the children in the population figures like we used to. So we have a lot of playgrounds with not a lot of children playing on them. And I think the city would like to condense and really take certain playgrounds and make them very special. Heidi came up with the idea, because a lot of the playgrounds have the wood chip under the equipment, the EPA ruling, I think in 1995, Christmas, no more trees were going to the landfill. So why not have Oglebay's chipper go to certain playgrounds and then everybody in the neighborhood bring their Christmas trees to get all eaten up and put

(043) them down on the playground. And it could be an annual event. Again, that's working with any neighborhood, but especially our downtown playgrounds and trying to develop them. I'm hopping to so many subjects and it's this --

CNK: That's fine.

SH: Antihistamine!

CNK: That's fine. Everybody does. That's fine.

(046) SH: You can edit it.

CNK: Yeah. While we're on -- I'm sorry.

SH: Well, I'm just thinking of self-esteem. It's almost to the point where it's an overused buzzword phrase and it's not. It's so critical. And if you spend time at the Learning Center or if you spend time with some of the counselors from the schools -- And this includes every socioeconomic group that there is, and level. It's how you feel about

yourself. And when you have alcoholism in the family or drug addiction or a series of, history of mental abuse. Your father's father told him he was no good or vice -- The mother being told -- It's just -- It's what you learn at home. And the healthier we are with our different generations as a community and the more we offer, and as far as social services, this town is full. We have so many agencies and not duplicating. That's what's magical here. We all talk, and we don't duplicate services. Florence Crittenton, the teen pregnancy rate in this state's unbelievable. The agencies work

(064) together. There is even a United Way executive group, and we meet once a month and just talk about different issues. And, as I mentioned earlier, with the arts, I can call the symphony and get tickets for any group of kids. It's just a very working community, and everybody supports everybody else. And I understand it didn't used to be like that. That even the United Way agencies used to be very competitive and people are amazed at how we all get along and to us it's just the -- That's just the way it is. I mean we're all struggling and we're all competing for dollars, but we respect one another. And then Health-Rite, which is new, which is the clinic. At a time when the

(074) doctors have been taxed and we're up in arms about it, the clinic is still booming with doctors who work for nothing.

CNK: Can you say what the clinic is? How it works, what it does.

(076) SH: Health-Rite? Those who are uninsured or fall between the cracks can be seen and treated and their pharmaceuticals taken care of. The Homeless Coalition is wonderful, and this is an agency that's just been cut out. So now they have no rent money, and the office is now at Booker T. Apartments. HUD apartments. And we've been taking care -- When I say we, I'm on the board for Homeless Coalition, and there's a very small staff of case management, and director slash case manager. And they see about 100 clients a month. I think what has happened is that the people in the community have thought that why should we support people from out of town just coming through and all of that. But there's such intense screening here -- We're helping the

(088) people from this valley. It may be right across the river, people coming over from Bellaire, but that's the Valley. It is not someone coming from Detroit because we won't

buy them a bus ticket here. The Salvation Army was gracious enough to put them up of course, but the homeless at the YWCA -- We have the homeless women's program where the women will come here and live. We have the adult basic education for the homeless in the building also. And we just got \$10,000 worth of computers and from a gift in-kind grant which -- There were like five cities: Chicago, New York, Wheeling -- We got tied in with some biggies which was exciting. But, we insisted our women go meet with the instructor and even if it's how do you shop to save a dollar, what do you wear for an interview. Let us help you learn how to write a resumé even if you're going to Porky's Restaurant to try to get a waitress job. It doesn't matter. Hand them this. And then to be computer literate. We've had more GEDs come out of this program than any other in the state. It's a very exciting thing. But there's also a CWEP program through DHHRA. CWEP, Community Worker Employment Program. And those are people who are on welfare who work. They receive no income, but this is a way of, yes I'm on welfare, I'm getting money from you to help support me and my children, but I want to work. And they will come to institutions and we have housekeepers, we're getting a secretary next week. We have an incredible maintenance person who's painted inside and outside this building, who's a professional. And these are people who really do want to give something back, and the agency then pays worker comp. So that's an excellent program, and there's been such a stigma to the homeless that people really don't want to help themselves and this is second, third generation and a lot of that might be true for a certain percentage, but the major problem is the mental illness of the homeless. And we're taking that on as the Homeless Coalition working with the AMI and that's the --

(104)

CNK: Amy?

(119)

SH: Alliance for the Mentally Ill. And people from Northwood Health Systems and their homeless program and it's a way of how do you deal with a woman or a man who is an alcoholic or drug addict, but is dual diagnosed who's mentally ill. We don't have the case management here. We have a counselor for abuse victims, not for this dual diagnosis. Northwood has a wonderful program, first step, to take care of the drug or alcohol addict

at no cost. I mean there's medical, I think it's Medicaid there, but no cost to the client so they can get help. The community has all this to offer, but we -- The problem of the homeless who are mentally ill is very, very big. And we have our two wonderful sisters at Catholic Community Charities who are literal saints. I mean they've had the men with the knives ready to strike them and little sister in there, probably five feet tall, just stand right up with them in their habits and say 'put that knife away. Go sit down and eat breakfast.' I mean they're amazing. But mental

(135) illness is something that we all need to understand; we really do. And we don't have that many people sleeping under the bridges and on the plaza because the Homeless Coalition found housing for them. And it's not just 'oh here take this, it's a freebie.' It's they follow through as best as they can with two people. I mean for a hundred clients a month. It's pretty amazing. But they'll go through the transitional shelters, and then they find housing. But there's a need for transitional living for families here. We don't have a place. Salvation Army can take a family temporarily. So we have some real fundraising that needs to be done, and I think eye opening. But people are becoming hardened with the homeless and with people on welfare, but there are good programs trying to help people out of it because a lot of the people really hate having to depend on subsistence. And then there's always the bad apple, if you can put that like that, someone who knows absolutely no different, that pulls the rest down with

(151) them because they do abuse the system.

CNK: Yeah, boy. I wanted to go back to one of the earliest things you said when you were talking about the panel. You talked about one woman who said I'm not an African-American mother, I am an American, and then another person who said I am first and foremost an African-American male. What's your --

(157) SH: It's the -- I think it's -- And you just need to talk to Geneva and Anthony because they -- I don't know if it's a generational thing. I think that Geneva is a human being first, and she's an American and this is her country. And she's raised her children here as Americans. And again, you need to ask them. But this is just my thought, that Anthony, because in his past he said he wasn't taught about the beautiful, cultural history of the

black people. Even in his home. That it wasn't until later in his life. So maybe this is all part of his growing up as a human being and being an African-American in this country. That he wants that identification; he's very proud of it. And it reminds me of a, I think there was a -- Was it Duke University? There was an excellent TV program interviewing the different students and the black kids were all saying, 'Look, we just really want to get together and relax and not worry about being someone else and someone else's group or clique. We just want to be ourselves. We're here on a big campus, and we're meeting each other.' And then the white kids were saying, 'We really want -- We all have a very open attitude, but all the black kids are staying by themselves. They're the ones who aren't entering our clique.' And there's no answer. I mean we all -- Everybody's different, but I know there's a willingness, especially with the youth. There always have been people with open arms and there have always been colorless people, color blind people. And of every -- Since the beginning of times, but I think en mass, in our universities there's a movement for a unification, but then at the same breath, there's a movement for let's just be able to be ourselves and be relaxed. Again in a white culture, let us enjoy our black culture. So I can't tell you how exactly. I think you need to ask Geneva.

(180)

CNK: Geneva ... ?

(189)

SH: Yes. And Anthony Forte about their definitions of who they are.

CNK: Yeah.

SH: There's one thing that Ann Jones, whose relatives came over on the Mayflower and all her, the males in her family fought in every war, and her mother would tell her all these things. Ann is in her early 60s. As it worked, she's been fortunate to be able to raise her children and stay at home. And her children are all grown now. But, she's the one who said that white people had maids and colored people were maids or blacks were maids. She remembers seeing a documentary of five year old black boys being taught of how to deal with hatred and name calling when they start school the next year. And she said it tore her apart because her sons didn't need to be men at the age of five. You're getting me upset.

