

Interview of Grace Montañez Davis

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1. Transcript

1.1. Session One (January 22, 2013)

PARKER

This is Caitlin Parker. I'm here with Grace Montañez Davis, and it is January 22, 2013. So let's begin just by talking about how you came to be involved with Congressman George Brown.

DAVIS

I don't remember the exact year, but George Brown was running for Assembly, State Assembly, and Roybal was running for county supervisor. George Brown had a headquarters in Lincoln Heights and invited Roybal to share the headquarters, so we were working for Roybal. In exchange for sharing the headquarters, we did some mailings and things for him, but that's how we really got to know George Brown. So then after the elections, then he asked me to come and work for him. He had an office downtown. I could do this part-time since I had three children yet. Soon after, he even secured a chair and a desk and a telephone. You know, I'm just thinking, I think it was when he was running for Congress, because he had an office in the old Federal Building. So it had to be Congress. So I used to go in several times a week to his downtown office, and I handled all of the incoming calls and requests for help that had to do with Social Security, veterans, the military, or any of the government agencies. From there, I know since he was really not out of Lincoln Heights, but I guess Monterey Park, I really

didn't get to see him much, but working for him, the Economic—what was the—

PARKER

Economic and Youth Opportunity Agency?

DAVIS

Well, no, that was agency. I'm trying to think of the legislation, federal legislation that established the poverty program.

PARKER

Oh, the OEO?

DAVIS

They were in discussion of the legislation, and George Brown had me attend local meetings about the legislation and when it got implemented or, rather, when it passed and it was going to be implemented locally, the county and city formed an umbrella group that would oversee all the new programs under that legislation, federal legislation. In Los Angeles it was the EYOA, and I'm trying to remember the exact name. It didn't have to do with youth because it was an umbrella for all groups. I'll think of the name. Anyway, having known and been exposed to all those persons who became directly involved with the implementation of the legislation, which was in our case called the poverty program, there were people who were going to be running for—or, rather, not running, but directing the employment aspects of the program. I was asked to come and work for them. At that time there was a program called the Neighborhood Youth Program, which had both an in-school and out-of-school part to the program. The city was responsible for all the programs within the city. The County had the in-school and out-of-school, and I was asked to help with the in-school program. So there were so many school districts within the county, and it was my duties to work with the county superintendent of schools, who, of course, oversaw all of the county programs, so that I got to be exposed to the various counties.

Now, I didn't have anything to do with the actual operation, the county did, but what I did was oversee their implementation of the program to make sure that they complied federally. I got to show to the various districts all over the county. It was there when I was working for the poverty program that I met the director of the Los Angeles Department of Labor.

PARKER

Specifically.

DAVIS

He was at that time, at the beginning, the sole person, and so he had to hire some other people, and he hired Bruce Stark and myself. We had ten counties of Southern California that we were responsible for. We had to actually develop these programs within the counties, and we had an in-school, so we worked with the superintendent of education for each county. We had an out-of-school. The Department of Labor actually worked with communities within these counties to develop the out-of-school program,

and they were generally community organizations, nonprofit organizations, who then were awarded contracts to train so many young people. We also had programs for adults. There was one program which was kind of a general program that worked with just people in the community, but then we also had another what we called the New Careers Program, which actually developed training for people in specific careers so that they would be able to at, the end, have the ability to work in a related area.

Let's see. To begin with, I had San Bernardino and Riverside Counties that I was responsible for. When we first started, the director used to go with me to the individual counties like the supervisors of education and explain the contract, and what the requirements would be. And it was interesting. Well, if I can backtrack a little bit, I remember when I worked for the county, that I wasn't getting the response, the cooperation that I was hoping for and I should have gotten. So it was interesting, one of the county persons took me aside one day and told me that the reason I was getting this reaction was because they didn't know what my credentials were, educationally especially.

PARKER

I see. So this was the people at the schools weren't giving you the kind of response.

DAVIS

Yes. I said, "Well, like what credentials?" And they said, "Well, educationally. Are you a teacher? Have you ever taught? Do you have anything to do?" And I said, "No." And he said, "Well, do you have any degrees?" I said, "Well, I have a master's." He said, "Well, do you have a ring that you can wear from graduate school or something?" I said, "Well, yeah, I do, but I don't wear it." He said, "Well, I suggest you start wearing that," which, again, tells you the mentality, especially with a woman.

PARKER

Yes, I was going to say—

DAVIS

Although they should be accustomed to one because of all the teachers. But, anyway, I just wanted to share that experience with the county, because then in the federal level, I guess the director was afraid that I might have the same reaction. He was black, I was Hispanic, the other employee was Anglo, and it was interesting, especially in some of the more conservative districts, to have a black and an Hispanic woman walk in—this was back in the sixties—to really be in a position, of having the authority to tell the counties what to do. So we did have resistance at the beginning. We had the county supervisors telling us that they didn't have any poverty in their district. This was Riverside and San Bernardino and Orange County. Then it was still the director who would take charge and discuss and argue with the people until we got them to participate. With the schools, we would, of course, go to the superintendent and handle all the contracting with them.

For the counties, first we got overall approval from the county supervisors and then, the different schools district had contracts with the district. So with the young people in school we generally found training and employment within the schools. So mainly it wasn't so much training as it was employment of the young people so they can stay in school. With the out-of-school program, since I said we sought out nonprofit organizations, it was a contract directly with those agencies that the Department of Labor would have. What the Department of Labor would do was bring in all of the county directors of the program to the Department of Labor, and we would have to explain the contracting and their obligations. What I did was when we were involved in the contracting, I, of course, helped the organizations, not the school superintendent, but the out-of-school. I would help them with filling out the contract and everything. But then after that was I would then go to visit each of these nonprofit organizations and make sure that they were complying with the contract, going out to the different sites of where they would find employment for these young people, just to make sure they were in compliance. So it was really an on-hands, so to speak, relationship that I had with the agencies.

PARKER

Do you remember some of the community organizations that you were contracting with to employ people or train them?

DAVIS

Well, it would depend. There were just all kinds of organizations. They had different titles, of course. I just don't remember any of them, really. There were so many.

PARKER

Would it have been the kind of thing like TELACU or the Watts Labor Community Action Center, those types of—

DAVIS

Well, yes, that's a good example for Los Angeles, right. TELACU and Watts were labor-run organizations, one, of course, for the black and the Hispanic community. The UAW, the United Auto Workers, was the agency or the organization that oversaw them. I happened to oversee both of those. Ted Watkins really was a prime example of what was going to be done, and he really involved the community in all of the carrying on of these programs. I think he had—I can't think of the name of that middle program, but he worked, and this was with adults to get them trained. But he had more than just the Department of Labor, or I guess mostly it was because he developed the camp in Saugus where it had been, I believe, a probation camp, and he took that over and used all the facilities and used to be able to take young people out there to places that—well, he developed a farm, actually. He had cattle, not many of them, but one or two. Pigs I remember he had. They smelled horrible. [laughs] So he gave the young people really a good exposure. But he had more than just the young people. I know he had

senior citizens also and other kind of groups and federal funding from other agencies. I went from San Bernardino and Riverside to Imperial County, San Diego County. Yes, in San Diego County we had the Indian reservations that we worked with. Although we had the young people, I think the majority of our work was with the adult. We had another program called New Careers and I think mainly the counties that had, like, hospitals and things like that, where they could actually train people. I had one individual who worked with the county of Los Angeles who really had a real good vision of the program. To give you an example, he worked with the county hospital, and what he did is developed an entry-type position, which later, as they got through the training, were able to siphon off into respiratory positions, of course nursing, and some others. But he was able to take all of the technician-type of programs and positions—that's your phone.

PARKER

Yes. [telephone interruption]

PARKER

So you were talking about this program in the hospital that siphoned people.

DAVIS

Yes. As I said, the young men really had a very good vision, and he was able to develop entry positions for the various medical positions and technicians. We also had problems there in the hospital where they'd try to make their position sound, like, exclusive, that these poor people and maybe uneducated people couldn't possibly go through those routes. But we had a lot of convincing to do. But it was a very challenging program, and to think that we were in the development of the program and the implementation. They also had contracts with corporations in which they got them to hire so many and train specifically for whatever jobs they had. So that was interesting, working with CEOs of the different corporations here in California. It kind of just faded out, I guess, when Lyndon Johnson was no longer president.

PARKER

In terms of running into political obstacles, like you talked about the supervisors in Riverside and San Bernardino claiming that they had no poverty within their districts, how did you work through those kinds of challenges?

DAVIS

Well, you know, statistics on employment, we've had a lot of the unemployment statistics, and we just had to put our thinking caps on and try to get as many resources that we had on our side, which, of course, were never used by anybody, and we did in using the federal government and implementing the poverty program. This was all based on all that data.

PARKER

I don't really know much or anything really at all about the county politics in L.A. or the city politics in L.A., but at that time, the county board of

supervisors was fairly conservative, I think, and Mayor Yorty wasn't super supportive of the poverty programs, and I wondered if that affected your work at all.

DAVIS

Well, I didn't really have anything to do with the supervisors much. The director was the one who handled all that, so I'm not familiar as much with the L.A. County as I was mainly with San Diego, because San Diego, I would actually have to appear at the council meetings and negotiate directly with them. So I guess I was mature enough, experienced enough that my boss used to let me do that.

PARKER

I guess that was also a time of a lot of social protest during the sixties and a lot of community organization. How did that work with federally funding programs? Was there ever any tension there or conflict there?

DAVIS

Well, yes, I guess we met the usual oppositions. I think those years were the entrance or the beginning of what we see now is all the changes that have come out about—to begin with, we have the Brown Act, and then things began to evolve. Although they were here in Los Angeles, I'm sure they had the effect on other counties. Looking back on that, I guess, let's see, I was ten years with the Department of Labor, and, again, because people got to know me during that time, this was when Bradley asked me to come and serve with him, so it just seems like everything I've done it's been one thing has just led—

PARKER

Led to another.

DAVIS

—to the other, yes, because I really have never had to go out and look for a job. It was there. Let's see. I'm trying to think of—something crossed my mind, but I can't remember now what it was, but it's something to do with a program. Well, actually, do you want us to go into the Bradley now or wait?

PARKER

I just wondered if we could back up a little bit, and this will segue us into the Bradley, I think. If you could talk a little bit about if you think it was through the California Democratic Clubs and council that you maybe first got to know him.

DAVIS

Well, I guess—I just don't really remember. I know that it was again during the poverty program that we were trying to coalition with the Hispanic and the black. There was the blacks who took the initiative through this Democratic Club to try to bring us together. Before that, actually, I guess politically I know that Congressman—god, who was—you don't know the other black guy?

PARKER

Gus Hawkins, congressman?

DAVIS

What did you say?

PARKER

Gus, Gus Hawkins.

DAVIS

Hawkins is black, yes, but he used to work a lot with George Brown and Roybal. So there were efforts certainly before that. But this Democratic Club, I guess, decided to try it at that level. So they issued—and I just don't remember, I guess it was by word of mouth— they contacted some Hispanic leaders and invited us to come.

Now, the only people that I know that responded was Frank Munoz, a lawyer, and Frank—what was his name—Arellanos or something. Anyway, he was a social worker, and then myself, and I guess I was with Labor at that time. Anyway, the three of us went, and I don't remember that we attended that many meetings, but we did go and Bradley used to come. He was usually on patrol or something, but he would stop by for a few minutes and see what was going on. So that was when he ran then for council the first time, you know, I remember supporting him and doing voter registration and doing precinct walking and stuff like that. The second time, of course, we really, I guess, got more involved because the efforts at that time became a little stronger. So, again, we worked with him to do precinct walking.

PARKER

This is when he was running for mayor?

DAVIS

For City Council.

PARKER

Oh, for City Council, okay.

DAVIS

Yes. Actually, when he ran for City Council, I don't remember that I was that active. I guess at the time I was either probably busy working, because I know that the Department of Labor was—and I don't remember the dates that he ran.

PARKER

He went on the council in '63 and then ran for mayor in '69 and then '73.

DAVIS

So it was in '73 that we really got involved that time, and we were visible, in our support, so that when he got elected, I was asked to serve on the committee that nominated people for different commissions. So it was a huge committee, not a small one. It was huge, which, of course, was necessary because of diversity of the departments.

PARKER

I'd like to talk a little bit more about that in a minute, the commission appointments, but going back to the elections, do you remember, when you said you were doing precinct walking for Bradley, what the responses were like?

DAVIS

I really didn't do that much precinct walking, but my husband and my three children did. They were little, too, and they used to go all around this area, the Lincoln Heights and surrounding neighborhoods. Every weekend they would go out. My children like to talk about that because they said that the response, especially after, he had run for council, but people called them "nigger lovers," and "Why don't you go back to the South," and it was really very open, very open discrimination here at that time. I remember having met Yorty at community meetings and it was unbelievable what people were like in those days. I remember one time—I don't remember why, but it had something to do with the fire department. He kept referring to them as boys. I said, "Who are you talking about?" And he said, "The firemen." I said, "Boys?" But just looking back on those days, everything was so open. They were so open, really expressing themselves with how they felt.

PARKER

In terms of racism?

DAVIS

Yes.

PARKER

In terms of the people, did you have neighbors or friends that did support Bradley that you got involved with?

DAVIS

Actually, I don't remember, like, the CSO or anybody, but the Democratic Club certainly did get involved, and we used to conduct a lot of our voter registration and precinct walking. Even if he didn't have headquarters, the Democratic Party had headquarters, and they supported those candidates that they endorsed. So it's amazing to me how we ever got through all of that and have come to what we have today.

PARKER

Yes. I know I read about there being some, like, Viva Bradley groups or they would hold dinners or things like that to fundraise.

DAVIS

Oh, yes. That was after he became mayor. I don't remember. Well, I know he had Viva Bradley groups and fundraisers for him. We had a lot more, like, for his reelection when he ran for governor. I think I told you about the one time when he was running for governor, that they had Menudo breakfasts at the different headquarters that he had in the Eastside, and I made it a point of visiting each one. At one place, I remember a very tall woman came up and told me did I know why she was there to support Bradley, and I said no. So she told me. She said that she had two or three brothers and that they

were involved in the gangs in the neighborhood, and that one time they went out on a Saturday and they suddenly came back home earlier than usual and rushed into the bedroom and told the father, "If anybody comes looking for us or asks for us, we've been home all night and we've been sleeping." So the father said, "Why? What's going on?" They said, "Just tell people that."

So she said that not too long after, the police arrived, and Bradley was the sergeant in charge, or maybe I figured he was the lieutenant by that time. But anyway, he was in charge, and there were quite a few police. The father answered the door, and Bradley asked if the boys were there, and the man said, yes, but that they were sleeping. Bradley wanted to know how long, and he said, "Well, they've been here all night." Well, this other officer wanted to break into the house to see for himself, and Bradley said, "Hold back. The man has said that this is what the case is, and you have to accept his word." He said that the officers all opposed that. They really wanted to break in. The woman said that she had always remembered that, that nobody, especially the police, had treated the father and the family with respect and accept them. She said she never forgot that. We used to hear other stories like that, many of them. After he became mayor, the stories were many—he used to have a monthly meeting in the community where he actually went out and walked the business district, attended any of the meetings that they had, whether they were local organizations or the Chamber of Commerce. He did this in every neighborhood, taking into account any particular thing that neighborhood was known for like he would either visit a nursing home or some other senior homes or organizations of seniors. So he made it a point to really contact the community. He had administrative assistants who were responsible for the various areas in the community, and he had one in charge of the Hispanic community, the black community, the Asian, and so on. So when he was going into these areas, the administrative assistants went with him and helped him. They helped plan the meeting in the first place. I remember when he would go into the Hispanic community, I would particularly—not always, but some of the times go with him.

There were a couple of times I remember. Well, especially one time here in Highland Park, there had been a parade of some kind. It was in the daytime. Sorry, I don't remember what the—and it ended right just down the street from here on York Boulevard. Art Gastelum and I had been walking with the car he was riding in. So the car went off to the park for him to get out, and for some reason I don't remember, we had stayed behind either talking to people or something. But then when we went to go see him in the car, nobody was there. We looked for him—because he always had a police escort and he was gone too. We looked all over. We went back to some of the businesses to see if he was there, and we couldn't find him. Well, all of a sudden, we looked up, and there he was coming out of the senior rest home.

Somebody told him that was a senior rest home when he got to the end of the parade, so when he got out, he went to see them. This was a surprise. Other staff members had told us of times when he would disappear and they couldn't find him, and he remembered that there was a particular person, either in a business or in a home, that had come to him previously for maybe some problem, and he had helped the person. He remembered that person, so he went to see him. He was just that way. It was contagious to the rest of us to be able to see him. I guess all these things must have been in his mind, and he just remembered them.

He also met once a month in City Hall in which people could come from the community and meet with the mayor, and what we did at the beginning was the administrative assistants interviewed the people who were there to see the mayor, asking what their problem was or something, and we had a sheet for each one in which we had their name and so on, and then we outlined a little bit about the problem so the mayor would have something to see. The amount of people that came to see him, sometimes it was impossible for him to see everybody, so I know there were times when I was assigned to see people that were over the limit. There were many people, as they used to call them, crazies, because they were obviously mentally ill or something and had problems, but he would see everybody. Many times the policemen that were guarding him, they would see people and, of course, being police, they would form some judgment, and they would say something about it, especially an occasion a transvestite would come or something like that, and they said "The mayor can't see them," or something, and he'd say, "Yes, I can." He actually developed a relationship with one person, I remember, because they used to come back sometimes and let the mayor know that either they were a success or they needed some more help or something like that. But it was interesting to see the different people. Unfortunately, he, I guess, just got more busy, but actually he didn't meet at City Hall but he still used to go out to the community.

PARKER

Going back a little bit, what was your sense of did he become—when he was first getting to know people here, did he have a much larger profile from the first mayoral race to the second when he won? Did you get a sense that he was at that point better known in the community?

DAVIS

I don't think he changed so much. It's just the fact that—well, you mean like the first time when he lost?

PARKER

Yeah.

DAVIS

Well, I didn't really see him that often, but I certainly didn't notice any change. When he actually made it, he was Tom Bradley. It was only after he got into office. I think that for many, many years it was only when he

decided to run for governor, which was a really—I think anybody could see that it really should not have happened, that he should have been governor. In fact, my neighbor, who is a history teacher, when I went to his Open House, he said, “You know, that was just a fraud. Those people really knew [unclear].” But it was really those of us who were politically involved, we could see that it was the Democrat Party themselves plus the other leadership, so that I guess there were enough people who followed.

PARKER

Who weren’t supportive of Bradley, you’re saying, [unclear]?

DAVIS

No. I mean people who were not supporting him. Actually, that’s what makes it so difficult, to know the number of people that were supporting him, the groups that were supporting him, the Hispanics, the blacks. You would expect the blacks to be able to get the Hispanics to support a black man, it was just the support was so obvious from people. The support was just so obvious from people. Actually, I know the Hispanics had the MAPA, the political organization. They endorsed him, they went all out for him, and he should have won.

PARKER

[unclear].

DAVIS

But, that really, I guess, was a blow or something to him, because I began to see some kind of a withdrawal. [interruption]

PARKER

So we were talking about—

DAVIS

When Bradley first got elected, he had to develop a whole system that was going to operate his Office of Mayor, and one of those things that he had to do was to appoint commissioners of the various departments so that they could oversee the departments. He then gathered, oh, just dozens, I forget, maybe fifty or eighty community leaders and people to submit to him names of people who had various abilities who would be able to fill various positions, and I was one of those many people. I was, of course, active in the community. There was a young man who worked with us in the organizations, Sol Monroy his name was, and I don’t remember where he was working at the time, because I know for a long time he worked in a pharmacy. I don’t know if he was just a clerk or what. Anyway, he called me, please meet him in the lobby of the Federal Building, and I thought it was strange that he didn’t just come up to the office. So I went down and met him there, and I remember had a briefcase with him, and that he held it up here, up around his waist somewhere. He wanted to know if I knew who the nominees were for the police commissioners. And I told him, “No, I don’t know nominees. We’re just submitting names for consideration. The

appointment will actually come later by Bradley himself.” “Well, are you sure you don’t know?”

He just tried every which way, and I kept trying to assure him that I just did not know. Well, it turned out, we found out later, was that he was an informant and used to, I guess—well, I don’t remember if we knew he was a policeman at that time, because what came out was that he was a policeman, and I think that’s probably why I met with him, was because we discovered later that he was a policeman. Then as a policeman was when he was asking me these questions. But he definitely was an informant, I guess for the FBI, I guess.

PARKER

Oh, my gosh.

DAVIS

Yes, because he infiltrated all of our community organizations. He was active in all of them.

PARKER

So like the CSO and things like that?

DAVIS

Yes, yes. He went to—I remember late in my first pregnancy that I really couldn’t go to the meetings anymore because I couldn’t drive, and he offered to come to my house and pick me up every time. So it was really—there were several people that came out as informants in the community. It was interesting. But he was the most surprising, the police.

PARKER

So the FBI then was kind of looking into who Bradley was going to appoint to the Police Commission eventually?

DAVIS

Oh, yes, I’m sure. Well, no, I think his purpose was not the FBI, but the police department themselves, because they would have to know who they were going to have to contend with in future activities, so that’s why they were probably trying to find out all they can about the people on the police commission.

PARKER

So it would have been William Parker and the police department.

DAVIS

Yes.

PARKER

Interesting. Do you remember who you suggested for some of those positions or what kind of people?

DAVIS

No. There were so many commissions that—

PARKER

Yes, it’s a huge—did Bradley—he really transformed a lot of those commissions from the Yorty era in terms of making them—

DAVIS

Oh, yes. Of course, the diversity of the commissions was one thing to be accomplished. Of course, neither the blacks nor Hispanics thought there were enough Hispanics or Blacks had been appointed, but that was a new thing for the commissions. I think we only had sixteen Hispanic commissioners. I forget all the commissions. I know the Police and Fire, Public Works, Recreation and Parks, Housing Authority, all the key ones were all covered.

PARKER

I was just curious. Since you went from working on War on Poverty programs and then into the Bradley administration, were there other people who were coming out of that same kind of background of either working for some of the community development corporations and then went in?

DAVIS

Oh, I'm sure they all had some connection with something that he—or had been identified as leaders in the community or activists and so on, yes. It was interesting. We could never believe who he was going to hire. Rosey Greer, I don't know if you know who—he was, I guess, a football player or something, but became very active in the community. Now, he was not hired as a full-time city staff member. He was hired through his office. He was able to get into different areas that he probably couldn't do with the city staff. Rosey worked with the youth and he worked with the young people who were probably most likely to get into gangs. You saw these people coming into City Hall, which was a new one for City Hall or any place. But Bradley also later on hired a Hispanic gang member, actually. Actually, Maury Weiner, who was his first deputy, he was the one who used to work with Camacho, is his last name, and he was a gang leader who lived just in the next neighborhood from here. I remember going to visit one time to his home. I don't remember what they were involved in and everything, I just went to see for Maury, I guess. We were sitting in the house, and I know he had steel shields on the windows. Lo and behold, it was Saturday late afternoon, and some opposite gang members or something drove by and shot into the house.

PARKER

Oh, my gosh.

DAVIS

I remember that he just said, "Hit the ground!" and pushed me down. He said, "Stay down." I guess he started shooting out the window, too. Boy, that was quite an experience and all that. But he wanted to bring people in who had interest that probably had never been looked into. I don't remember. It wasn't the same gang. It was another. There was a gang organization in Lincoln Heights, and I know they had applied for funding for whatever activities, probably training young people. I think they had been funded once before, and Councilman Snyder, who sat on the board of grants

with me, was the local district councilman. I don't remember what reasons were for not funding them. As it turned out, I guess he did not get enough support so that we did not fund them.

Then after then I remember I had gone to a swearing-in of one of Bradley's staff persons who was named a judge, and so I had gone across the street to the court buildings and see him sworn in. So I was not in touch with any of them of the grant board. When I got home—well, I went back to the office before I went home, but there were a zillion messages from the councilman asking me to call, and so I called, and what it was, that he was concerned that maybe that gang that we didn't fund was going to retaliate against him or me or those members, and so I found out that he actually went to Bradley and asked for police protection for me.

PARKER

Oh, my gosh.

DAVIS

And Bradley didn't allow that, which I'm glad. I could just see them. But he had the police come to my house anyway and just inspect it to make sure everything was safe and all that kind of stuff. Of course, all this went on while I was busy at the hearing of the swearing-in and all that. So when I got home, my kids told me, "Oh, my god, the cops were here." But that was the kind of person Snyder was. He was very protective, and he and I and the Councilman actually had very good—Councilman Farrell too. We had very good relationships and so on, so they were very supportive of me, very respectful.

I'm trying to think of what other—I know that Bradley developed a business, a small business office, too, which was different. Actually, there's another person that you might be interested in talking to. His name is Al Juarez, and he's a very active person in the community, still is, and he was hired in that office so that he would know where a lot of the things, probably the government initiatives that Bradley adopted were not aware of, but I know he got a lot of small businesses involved. Now, he had a more personal relationship with Bradley. Actually, it was just different. Not that I didn't have a personal relation, but he and Art Gastelum, both, maybe, and Jeff Matsui were many times with Bradley, in his car going to places, and they can tell you all kinds of stories about Bradley's humor and things that they've done, makes me laugh, things like—I know Al, I'm not sure about. I don't know that Art every wrote any speeches for him, but I know Al did on many occasions wrote speeches. So I don't know. He's told me stories about maybe there's a typo or something in the speech and Bradley did a play on it and so on. I have his phone number. Did you get Art's phone number, that I gave to you? [End of Session 1, January 22, 2013]

1.2. Session Two (February 5, 2013)

PARKER

This is Caitlin Parker. I'm here with Grace Montañez Davis, and it is January 22, 2013. So let's begin just by talking about how you came to be involved with Congressman George Brown.

DAVIS

I don't remember the exact year, but George Brown was running for Assembly, State Assembly, and Roybal was running for county supervisor. George Brown had a headquarters in Lincoln Heights and invited Roybal to share the headquarters, so we were working for Roybal. In exchange for sharing the headquarters, we did some mailings and things for him, but that's how we really got to know George Brown. So then after the elections, then he asked me to come and work for him. He had an office downtown. I could do this part-time since I had three children yet. Soon after, he even secured a chair and a desk and a telephone. You know, I'm just thinking, I think it was when he was running for Congress, because he had an office in the old Federal Building. So it had to be Congress. So I used to go in several times a week to his downtown office, and I handled all of the incoming calls and requests for help that had to do with Social Security, veterans, the military, or any of the government agencies. From there, I know since he was really not out of Lincoln Heights, but I guess Monterey Park, I really didn't get to see him much, but working for him, the Economic—what was the—

PARKER

Economic and Youth Opportunity Agency?

DAVIS

Well, no, that was agency. I'm trying to think of the legislation, federal legislation that established the poverty program.

PARKER

Oh, the OEO?

DAVIS

They were in discussion of the legislation, and George Brown had me attend local meetings about the legislation and when it got implemented or, rather, when it passed and it was going to be implemented locally, the county and city formed an umbrella group that would oversee all the new programs under that legislation, federal legislation. In Los Angeles it was the EYOA, and I'm trying to remember the exact name. It didn't have to do with youth because it was an umbrella for all groups. I'll think of the name. Anyway, having known and been exposed to all those persons who became directly involved with the implementation of the legislation, which was in our case called the poverty program, there were people who were going to be running for—or, rather, not running, but directing the employment aspects of the program. I was asked to come and work for them. At that time there was a program called the Neighborhood Youth Program, which had both an in-school and out-of-school part to the program. The city was responsible for

all the programs within the city. The County had the in-school and out-of-school, and I was asked to help with the in-school program. So there were so many school districts within the county, and it was my duties to work with the county superintendent of schools, who, of course, oversaw all of the county programs, so that I got to be exposed to the various counties. Now, I didn't have anything to do with the actual operation, the county did, but what I did was oversee their implementation of the program to make sure that they complied federally. I got to show to the various districts all over the county. It was there when I was working for the poverty program that I met the director of the Los Angeles Department of Labor.

PARKER

Specifically.

DAVIS

He was at that time, at the beginning, the sole person, and so he had to hire some other people, and he hired Bruce Stark and myself. We had ten counties of Southern California that we were responsible for. We had to actually develop these programs within the counties, and we had an in-school, so we worked with the superintendent of education for each county. We had an out-of-school. The Department of Labor actually worked with communities within these counties to develop the out-of-school program, and they were generally community organizations, nonprofit organizations, who then were awarded contracts to train so many young people. We also had programs for adults. There was one program which was kind of a general program that worked with just people in the community, but then we also had another what we called the New Careers Program, which actually developed training for people in specific careers so that they would be able to at, the end, have the ability to work in a related area.

Let's see. To begin with, I had San Bernardino and Riverside Counties that I was responsible for. When we first started, the director used to go with me to the individual counties like the supervisors of education and explain the contract, and what the requirements would be. And it was interesting. Well, if I can backtrack a little bit, I remember when I worked for the county, that I wasn't getting the response, the cooperation that I was hoping for and I should have gotten. So it was interesting, one of the county persons took me aside one day and told me that the reason I was getting this reaction was because they didn't know what my credentials were, educationally especially.

PARKER

I see. So this was the people at the schools weren't giving you the kind of response.

DAVIS

Yes. I said, "Well, like what credentials?" And they said, "Well, educationally. Are you a teacher? Have you ever taught? Do you have anything to do?" And I said, "No." And he said, "Well, do you have any degrees?" I said, "Well, I

have a master's." He said, "Well, do you have a ring that you can wear from graduate school or something?" I said, "Well, yeah, I do, but I don't wear it." He said, "Well, I suggest you start wearing that," which, again, tells you the mentality, especially with a woman.

PARKER

Yes, I was going to say—

DAVIS

Although they should be accustomed to one because of all the teachers. But, anyway, I just wanted to share that experience with the county, because then in the federal level, I guess the director was afraid that I might have the same reaction. He was black, I was Hispanic, the other employee was Anglo, and it was interesting, especially in some of the more conservative districts, to have a black and an Hispanic woman walk in—this was back in the sixties—to really be in a position, of having the authority to tell the counties what to do. So we did have resistance at the beginning. We had the county supervisors telling us that they didn't have any poverty in their district. This was Riverside and San Bernardino and Orange County. Then it was still the director who would take charge and discuss and argue with the people until we got them to participate. With the schools, we would, of course, go to the superintendent and handle all the contracting with them. For the counties, first we got overall approval from the county supervisors and then, the different schools district had contracts with the district. So with the young people in school we generally found training and employment within the schools. So mainly it wasn't so much training as it was employment of the young people so they can stay in school. With the out-of-school program, since I said we sought out nonprofit organizations, it was a contract directly with those agencies that the Department of Labor would have. What the Department of Labor would do was bring in all of the county directors of the program to the Department of Labor, and we would have to explain the contracting and their obligations. What I did was when we were involved in the contracting, I, of course, helped the organizations, not the school superintendent, but the out-of-school. I would help them with filling out the contract and everything. But then after that was I would then go to visit each of these nonprofit organizations and make sure that they were complying with the contract, going out to the different sites of where they would find employment for these young people, just to make sure they were in compliance. So it was really an on-hands, so to speak, relationship that I had with the agencies.

PARKER

Do you remember some of the community organizations that you were contracting with to employ people or train them?

DAVIS

Well, it would depend. There were just all kinds of organizations. They had different titles, of course. I just don't remember any of them, really. There were so many.

PARKER

Would it have been the kind of thing like TELACU or the Watts Labor Community Action Center, those types of—

DAVIS

Well, yes, that's a good example for Los Angeles, right. TELACU and Watts were labor-run organizations, one, of course, for the black and the Hispanic community. The UAW, the United Auto Workers, was the agency or the organization that oversaw them. I happened to oversee both of those. Ted Watkins really was a prime example of what was going to be done, and he really involved the community in all of the carrying on of these programs. I think he had—I can't think of the name of that middle program, but he worked, and this was with adults to get them trained. But he had more than just the Department of Labor, or I guess mostly it was because he developed the camp in Saugus where it had been, I believe, a probation camp, and he took that over and used all the facilities and used to be able to take young people out there to places that—well, he developed a farm, actually. He had cattle, not many of them, but one or two. Pigs I remember he had. They smelled horrible. [laughs] So he gave the young people really a good exposure. But he had more than just the young people. I know he had senior citizens also and other kind of groups and federal funding from other agencies. I went from San Bernardino and Riverside to Imperial County, San Diego County. Yes, in San Diego County we had the Indian reservations that we worked with. Although we had the young people, I think the majority of our work was with the adult. We had another program called New Careers and I think mainly the counties that had, like, hospitals and things like that, where they could actually train people. I had one individual who worked with the county of Los Angeles who really had a real good vision of the program. To give you an example, he worked with the county hospital, and what he did is developed an entry-type position, which later, as they got through the training, were able to siphon off into respiratory positions, of course nursing, and some others. But he was able to take all of the technician-type of programs and positions—that's your phone.

PARKER

Yes. [telephone interruption]

PARKER

So you were talking about this program in the hospital that siphoned people.

DAVIS

Yes. As I said, the young men really had a very good vision, and he was able to develop entry positions for the various medical positions and technicians. We also had problems there in the hospital where they'd try to make their position sound, like, exclusive, that these poor people and maybe

uneducated people couldn't possibly go through those routes. But we had a lot of convincing to do. But it was a very challenging program, and to think that we were in the development of the program and the implementation. They also had contracts with corporations in which they got them to hire so many and train specifically for whatever jobs they had. So that was interesting, working with CEOs of the different corporations here in California. It kind of just faded out, I guess, when Lyndon Johnson was no longer president.

PARKER

In terms of running into political obstacles, like you talked about the supervisors in Riverside and San Bernardino claiming that they had no poverty within their districts, how did you work through those kinds of challenges?

DAVIS

Well, you know, statistics on employment, we've had a lot of the unemployment statistics, and we just had to put our thinking caps on and try to get as many resources that we had on our side, which, of course, were never used by anybody, and we did in using the federal government and implementing the poverty program. This was all based on all that data.

PARKER

I don't really know much or anything really at all about the county politics in L.A. or the city politics in L.A., but at that time, the county board of supervisors was fairly conservative, I think, and Mayor Yorty wasn't super supportive of the poverty programs, and I wondered if that affected your work at all.

DAVIS

Well, I didn't really have anything to do with the supervisors much. The director was the one who handled all that, so I'm not familiar as much with the L.A. County as I was mainly with San Diego, because San Diego, I would actually have to appear at the council meetings and negotiate directly with them. So I guess I was mature enough, experienced enough that my boss used to let me do that.

PARKER

I guess that was also a time of a lot of social protest during the sixties and a lot of community organization. How did that work with federally funding programs? Was there ever any tension there or conflict there?

DAVIS

Well, yes, I guess we met the usual oppositions. I think those years were the entrance or the beginning of what we see now is all the changes that have come out about—to begin with, we have the Brown Act, and then things began to evolve. Although they were here in Los Angeles, I'm sure they had the effect on other counties. Looking back on that, I guess, let's see, I was ten years with the Department of Labor, and, again, because people got to know me during that time, this was when Bradley asked me to

come and serve with him, so it just seems like everything I've done it's been one thing has just led—

PARKER

Led to another.

DAVIS

—to the other, yes, because I really have never had to go out and look for a job. It was there. Let's see. I'm trying to think of—something crossed my mind, but I can't remember now what it was, but it's something to do with a program. Well, actually, do you want us to go into the Bradley now or wait?

PARKER

I just wondered if we could back up a little bit, and this will segue us into the Bradley, I think. If you could talk a little bit about if you think it was through the California Democratic Clubs and council that you maybe first got to know him.

DAVIS

Well, I guess—I just don't really remember. I know that it was again during the poverty program that we were trying to coalition with the Hispanic and the black. There was the blacks who took the initiative through this Democratic Club to try to bring us together. Before that, actually, I guess politically I know that Congressman—god, who was—you don't know the other black guy?

PARKER

Gus Hawkins, congressman?

DAVIS

What did you say?

PARKER

Gus, Gus Hawkins.

DAVIS

Hawkins is black, yes, but he used to work a lot with George Brown and Roybal. So there were efforts certainly before that. But this Democratic Club, I guess, decided to try it at that level. So they issued—and I just don't remember, I guess it was by word of mouth— they contacted some Hispanic leaders and invited us to come.

Now, the only people that I know that responded was Frank Munoz, a lawyer, and Frank—what was his name—Arellanos or something. Anyway, he was a social worker, and then myself, and I guess I was with Labor at that time. Anyway, the three of us went, and I don't remember that we attended that many meetings, but we did go and Bradley used to come. He was usually on patrol or something, but he would stop by for a few minutes and see what was going on. So that was when he ran then for council the first time, you know, I remember supporting him and doing voter registration and doing precinct walking and stuff like that. The second time, of course, we really, I guess, got more involved because the efforts at that time

became a little stronger. So, again, we worked with him to do precinct walking.

PARKER

This is when he was running for mayor?

DAVIS

For City Council.

PARKER

Oh, for City Council, okay.

DAVIS

Yes. Actually, when he ran for City Council, I don't remember that I was that active. I guess at the time I was either probably busy working, because I know that the Department of Labor was—and I don't remember the dates that he ran.

PARKER

He went on the council in '63 and then ran for mayor in '69 and then '73.

DAVIS

So it was in '73 that we really got involved that time, and we were visible, in our support, so that when he got elected, I was asked to serve on the committee that nominated people for different commissions. So it was a huge committee, not a small one. It was huge, which, of course, was necessary because of diversity of the departments.

PARKER

I'd like to talk a little bit more about that in a minute, the commission appointments, but going back to the elections, do you remember, when you said you were doing precinct walking for Bradley, what the responses were like?

DAVIS

I really didn't do that much precinct walking, but my husband and my three children did. They were little, too, and they used to go all around this area, the Lincoln Heights and surrounding neighborhoods. Every weekend they would go out. My children like to talk about that because they said that the response, especially after, he had run for council, but people called them "nigger lovers," and "Why don't you go back to the South," and it was really very open, very open discrimination here at that time. I remember having met Yorty at community meetings and it was unbelievable what people were like in those days. I remember one time—I don't remember why, but it had something to do with the fire department. He kept referring to them as boys. I said, "Who are you talking about?" And he said, "The firemen." I said, "Boys?" But just looking back on those days, everything was so open. They were so open, really expressing themselves with how they felt.

PARKER

In terms of racism?

DAVIS

Yes.

PARKER

In terms of the people, did you have neighbors or friends that did support Bradley that you got involved with?

DAVIS

Actually, I don't remember, like, the CSO or anybody, but the Democratic Club certainly did get involved, and we used to conduct a lot of our voter registration and precinct walking. Even if he didn't have headquarters, the Democratic Party had headquarters, and they supported those candidates that they endorsed. So it's amazing to me how we ever got through all of that and have come to what we have today.

PARKER

Yes. I know I read about there being some, like, Viva Bradley groups or they would hold dinners or things like that to fundraise.

DAVIS

Oh, yes. That was after he became mayor. I don't remember. Well, I know he had Viva Bradley groups and fundraisers for him. We had a lot more, like, for his reelection when he ran for governor. I think I told you about the one time when he was running for governor, that they had Menudo breakfasts at the different headquarters that he had in the Eastside, and I made it a point of visiting each one. At one place, I remember a very tall woman came up and told me did I know why she was there to support Bradley, and I said no. So she told me. She said that she had two or three brothers and that they were involved in the gangs in the neighborhood, and that one time they went out on a Saturday and they suddenly came back home earlier than usual and rushed into the bedroom and told the father, "If anybody comes looking for us or asks for us, we've been home all night and we've been sleeping." So the father said, "Why? What's going on?" They said, "Just tell people that."

So she said that not too long after, the police arrived, and Bradley was the sergeant in charge, or maybe I figured he was the lieutenant by that time. But anyway, he was in charge, and there were quite a few police. The father answered the door, and Bradley asked if the boys were there, and the man said, yes, but that they were sleeping. Bradley wanted to know how long, and he said, "Well, they've been here all night." Well, this other officer wanted to break into the house to see for himself, and Bradley said, "Hold back. The man has said that this is what the case is, and you have to accept his word." He said that the officers all opposed that. They really wanted to break in. The woman said that she had always remembered that, that nobody, especially the police, had treated the father and the family with respect and accept them. She said she never forgot that. We used to hear other stories like that, many of them. After he became mayor, the stories were many—he used to have a monthly meeting in the community where he actually went out and walked the business district, attended any of the meetings that they had, whether they were local organizations or the

Chamber of Commerce. He did this in every neighborhood, taking into account any particular thing that neighborhood was known for like he would either visit a nursing home or some other senior homes or organizations of seniors. So he made it a point to really contact the community. He had administrative assistants who were responsible for the various areas in the community, and he had one in charge of the Hispanic community, the black community, the Asian, and so on. So when he was going into these areas, the administrative assistants went with him and helped him. They helped plan the meeting in the first place. I remember when he would go into the Hispanic community, I would particularly—not always, but some of the times go with him.

There were a couple of times I remember. Well, especially one time here in Highland Park, there had been a parade of some kind. It was in the daytime. Sorry, I don't remember what the—and it ended right just down the street from here on York Boulevard. Art Gastelum and I had been walking with the car he was riding in. So the car went off to the park for him to get out, and for some reason I don't remember, we had stayed behind either talking to people or something. But then when we went to go see him in the car, nobody was there. We looked for him—because he always had a police escort and he was gone too. We looked all over. We went back to some of the businesses to see if he was there, and we couldn't find him. Well, all of a sudden, we looked up, and there he was coming out of the senior rest home. Somebody told him that was a senior rest home when he got to the end of the parade, so when he got out, he went to see them. This was a surprise. Other staff members had told us of times when he would disappear and they couldn't find him, and he remembered that there was a particular person, either in a business or in a home, that had come to him previously for maybe some problem, and he had helped the person. He remembered that person, so he went to see him. He was just that way. It was contagious to the rest of us to be able to see him. I guess all these things must have been in his mind, and he just remembered them.

He also met once a month in City Hall in which people could come from the community and meet with the mayor, and what we did at the beginning was the administrative assistants interviewed the people who were there to see the mayor, asking what their problem was or something, and we had a sheet for each one in which we had their name and so on, and then we outlined a little bit about the problem so the mayor would have something to see. The amount of people that came to see him, sometimes it was impossible for him to see everybody, so I know there were times when I was assigned to see people that were over the limit. There were many people, as they used to call them, crazies, because they were obviously mentally ill or something and had problems, but he would see everybody. Many times the policemen that were guarding him, they would see people and, of course, being police, they would form some judgment, and they would say something about it,

especially an occasion a transvestite would come or something like that, and they said "The mayor can't see them," or something, and he'd say, "Yes, I can." He actually developed a relationship with one person, I remember, because they used to come back sometimes and let the mayor know that either they were a success or they needed some more help or something like that. But it was interesting to see the different people. Unfortunately, he, I guess, just got more busy, but actually he didn't meet at City Hall but he still used to go out to the community.

PARKER

Going back a little bit, what was your sense of did he become—when he was first getting to know people here, did he have a much larger profile from the first mayoral race to the second when he won? Did you get a sense that he was at that point better known in the community?

DAVIS

I don't think he changed so much. It's just the fact that—well, you mean like the first time when he lost?

PARKER

Yeah.

DAVIS

Well, I didn't really see him that often, but I certainly didn't notice any change. When he actually made it, he was Tom Bradley. It was only after he got into office. I think that for many, many years it was only when he decided to run for governor, which was a really—I think anybody could see that it really should not have happened, that he should have been governor. In fact, my neighbor, who is a history teacher, when I went to his Open House, he said, "You know, that was just a fraud. Those people really knew [unclear]." But it was really those of us who were politically involved, we could see that it was the Democrat Party themselves plus the other leadership, so that I guess there were enough people who followed.

PARKER

Who weren't supportive of Bradley, you're saying, [unclear]?

DAVIS

No. I mean people who were not supporting him. Actually, that's what makes it so difficult, to know the number of people that were supporting him, the groups that were supporting him, the Hispanics, the blacks. You would expect the blacks to be able to get the Hispanics to support a black man, it was just the support was so obvious from people. The support was just so obvious from people. Actually, I know the Hispanics had the MAPA, the political organization. They endorsed him, they went all out for him, and he should have won.

PARKER

[unclear].

DAVIS

But, that really, I guess, was a blow or something to him, because I began to see some kind of a withdrawal. [interruption]

PARKER

So we were talking about—

DAVIS

When Bradley first got elected, he had to develop a whole system that was going to operate his Office of Mayor, and one of those things that he had to do was to appoint commissioners of the various departments so that they could oversee the departments. He then gathered, oh, just dozens, I forget, maybe fifty or eighty community leaders and people to submit to him names of people who had various abilities who would be able to fill various positions, and I was one of those many people. I was, of course, active in the community. There was a young man who worked with us in the organizations, Sol Monroy his name was, and I don't remember where he was working at the time, because I know for a long time he worked in a pharmacy. I don't know if he was just a clerk or what. Anyway, he called me, please meet him in the lobby of the Federal Building, and I thought it was strange that he didn't just come up to the office. So I went down and met him there, and I remember had a briefcase with him, and that he held it up here, up around his waist somewhere. He wanted to know if I knew who the nominees were for the police commissioners. And I told him, "No, I don't know nominees. We're just submitting names for consideration. The appointment will actually come later by Bradley himself." "Well, are you sure you don't know?"

He just tried every which way, and I kept trying to assure him that I just did not know. Well, it turned out, we found out later, was that he was an informant and used to, I guess—well, I don't remember if we knew he was a policeman at that time, because what came out was that he was a policeman, and I think that's probably why I met with him, was because we discovered later that he was a policeman. Then as a policeman was when he was asking me these questions. But he definitely was an informant, I guess for the FBI, I guess.

PARKER

Oh, my gosh.

DAVIS

Yes, because he infiltrated all of our community organizations. He was active in all of them.

PARKER

So like the CSO and things like that?

DAVIS

Yes, yes. He went to—I remember late in my first pregnancy that I really couldn't go to the meetings anymore because I couldn't drive, and he offered to come to my house and pick me up every time. So it was really—

there were several people that came out as informants in the community. It was interesting. But he was the most surprising, the police.

PARKER

So the FBI then was kind of looking into who Bradley was going to appoint to the Police Commission eventually?

DAVIS

Oh, yes, I'm sure. Well, no, I think his purpose was not the FBI, but the police department themselves, because they would have to know who they were going to have to contend with in future activities, so that's why they were probably trying to find out all they can about the people on the police commission.

PARKER

So it would have been William Parker and the police department.

DAVIS

Yes.

PARKER

Interesting. Do you remember who you suggested for some of those positions or what kind of people?

DAVIS

No. There were so many commissions that—

PARKER

Yes, it's a huge—did Bradley—he really transformed a lot of those commissions from the Yorty era in terms of making them—

DAVIS

Oh, yes. Of course, the diversity of the commissions was one thing to be accomplished. Of course, neither the blacks nor Hispanics thought there were enough Hispanics or Blacks had been appointed, but that was a new thing for the commissions. I think we only had sixteen Hispanic commissioners. I forget all the commissions. I know the Police and Fire, Public Works, Recreation and Parks, Housing Authority, all the key ones were all covered.

PARKER

I was just curious. Since you went from working on War on Poverty programs and then into the Bradley administration, were there other people who were coming out of that same kind of background of either working for some of the community development corporations and then went in?

DAVIS

Oh, I'm sure they all had some connection with something that he—or had been identified as leaders in the community or activists and so on, yes. It was interesting. We could never believe who he was going to hire. Rosey Greer, I don't know if you know who—he was, I guess, a football player or something, but became very active in the community. Now, he was not hired as a full-time city staff member. He was hired through his office. He was able to get into different areas that he probably couldn't do with the city

staff. Rosey worked with the youth and he worked with the young people who were probably most likely to get into gangs. You saw these people coming into City Hall, which was a new one for City Hall or any place. But Bradley also later on hired a Hispanic gang member, actually. Actually, Maury Weiner, who was his first deputy, he was the one who used to work with Camacho, is his last name, and he was a gang leader who lived just in the next neighborhood from here. I remember going to visit one time to his home. I don't remember what they were involved in and everything, I just went to see for Maury, I guess. We were sitting in the house, and I know he had steel shields on the windows. Lo and behold, it was Saturday late afternoon, and some opposite gang members or something drove by and shot into the house.

PARKER

Oh, my gosh.

DAVIS

I remember that he just said, "Hit the ground!" and pushed me down. He said, "Stay down." I guess he started shooting out the window, too. Boy, that was quite an experience and all that. But he wanted to bring people in who had interest that probably had never been looked into. I don't remember. It wasn't the same gang. It was another. There was a gang organization in Lincoln Heights, and I know they had applied for funding for whatever activities, probably training young people. I think they had been funded once before, and Councilman Snyder, who sat on the board of grants with me, was the local district councilman. I don't remember what reasons were for not funding them. As it turned out, I guess he did not get enough support so that we did not fund them.

Then after then I remember I had gone to a swearing-in of one of Bradley's staff persons who was named a judge, and so I had gone across the street to the court buildings and see him sworn in. So I was not in touch with any of them of the grant board. When I got home—well, I went back to the office before I went home, but there were a zillion messages from the councilman asking me to call, and so I called, and what it was, that he was concerned that maybe that gang that we didn't fund was going to retaliate against him or me or those members, and so I found out that he actually went to Bradley and asked for police protection for me.

PARKER

Oh, my gosh.

DAVIS

And Bradley didn't allow that, which I'm glad. I could just see them. But he had the police come to my house anyway and just inspect it to make sure everything was safe and all that kind of stuff. Of course, all this went on while I was busy at the hearing of the swearing-in and all that. So when I got home, my kids told me, "Oh, my god, the cops were here." But that was the kind of person Snyder was. He was very protective, and he and I and the

Councilman actually had very good—Councilman Farrell too. We had very good relationships and so on, so they were very supportive of me, very respectful.

I'm trying to think of what other—I know that Bradley developed a business, a small business office, too, which was different. Actually, there's another person that you might be interested in talking to. His name is Al Juarez, and he's a very active person in the community, still is, and he was hired in that office so that he would know where a lot of the things, probably the government initiatives that Bradley adopted were not aware of, but I know he got a lot of small businesses involved. Now, he had a more personal relationship with Bradley. Actually, it was just different. Not that I didn't have a personal relation, but he and Art Gastelum, both, maybe, and Jeff Matsui were many times with Bradley, in his car going to places, and they can tell you all kinds of stories about Bradley's humor and things that they've done, makes me laugh, things like—I know Al, I'm not sure about. I don't know that Art every wrote any speeches for him, but I know Al did on many occasions wrote speeches. So I don't know. He's told me stories about maybe there's a typo or something in the speech and Bradley did a play on it and so on. I have his phone number. Did you get Art's phone number, that I gave to you? [End of Session 2, February 5, 2013]

1.3. Session Three (February 19, 2013)

PARKER

This is Caitlin Parker. I'm here with Grace Montañez Davis, and it is February 19, 2013. So why don't we begin by talking about some of your work on homelessness issues for Bradley.

DAVIS

Okay. That was a big issue. We were getting more and more pressure to do something about the homeless, and Bradley, as a last-minute effort, opened up the City Council rooms to the homeless. He had them come in and just lie on the benches and the floor, wherever, and we had the City Hall policemen patrolling the halls, keeping good watch. But for some reason, I don't know why, the homeless just reacted in a way that they were able to go into the halls, and, of course, right across one of the hallways were some of the council offices. Well, they managed to get into the council offices and urinate on the furniture and floor—

PARKER

Oh, my gosh.

DAVIS

—and what have you, but do damage. They were there, and we knew we weren't going to be able to hold them there all the time, so Mike Gage was

working on trying to find a suitable place to have some kind of housing for them.

PARKER

How many homeless people were staying in City Hall?

DAVIS

Well, it was full. So there were probably a couple of hundred.

PARKER

Wow.

DAVIS

But, anyway, he was working on this, and, lo and behold, he was able to get permission from the railroad yards to loan us a piece of land that they owned that went under some of the bridges and the railroad tracks. What we did was ask them to use this as a place where they could all come together and stay. What we did was to put a fence around the area so that they would stay on the property, and then also talked to the Red Cross. This part was all done by Mike Gage. He was able to get cots from the Red Cross, and blankets and things, so that they had some kind of a camp in place.

We were able to get the Salvation Army, who does have a trailer, where they provide food, so they came into the campsite, and they had beef broth or coffee and sandwiches and things that they were able to provide the homeless. They seemed to take to the place, because the homeless gravitated to the camps, but we left it up to them to organize themselves. Ted—I can't think of his last name, but Ted was an activist within the homeless community, and he came forth and organized the homeless. What happened, though, not long after they got there, they were taking the cots and passing them over the fence to other people, homeless, that would take them and they would sell them.

PARKER

Wow.

DAVIS

So they eliminated that resource that we had had, and but the Red Cross lost the cots too. But they gradually did organize under Ted's—and they had a council of homeless that would govern the camp. By the way, after it was established, I was told that I was in charge and I was to deal with them and try to make this whole thing work, which is fine. I like those kind of assignments. Well, I spent a great deal of time with them to begin with, and then we had weekly meeting of the Homeless Council, and they discussed different things that they didn't like or things that they thought the city should be doing. Of course, we weren't able to respond to all of their requests. Some of them, well, they just weren't feasible.

But the organization really worked well. We got some kind of a shade over their beds. They had women, some pregnant women. The county was also with us there, and they were the ones that organized a Medical Day.

Actually, a doctor himself, who wasn't even from Los Angeles, he was from,

I think, back east, but he felt that he wanted to contribute, so he managed to get doctors of every discipline that they had. They had gynecologists for women, dentists, regular medical doctors. What they did was they got trailers that—the doctor himself did that. I don't remember his name. He got trailers that had little compartments, rooms, and so that the different doctors would have a place where they could examine the people. Of course, it was right in the camp, so we expected for the people there in the camp to flock to this, because this was a very good service. Also, the homeless from the outside who weren't staying in there were invited too. Well, I think it was a whole weekend, and, lo and behold, there was not a very good response to it at all. The homeless were right there, but they wouldn't come in to see the doctors. What we did was if they needed medication, then the county was given the prescriptions for the medication, and they took it to the general hospital and filled the prescriptions and brought them back to the homeless that responded.

I think we were able to get the women, especially those who were pregnant and hadn't seen a doctor at all, to respond, but there were just dozens and dozens who did not go in. As I said, it was frustrating because they were right there, and all they had to do was take a few steps and they would be in to see whatever doctor they needed. I believe this went on for the whole weekend, and we did get response, but nothing at all that we knew was benefitting the entire community there. But we did offer that. The Salvation Army also helped with the counseling of trying to get people ready for jobs. They kind of expected just to say, "You want this job or that," but it doesn't work that way. We felt that they had to be presentable, and the Salvation Army did a wonderful job in counseling and getting to know what it was really they were capable of. They provided clothing from their resources that they have, their stores. One particular case that always stands out in my mind, there was a couple, they weren't married, but they had been living on the street by getting flowers out of the trash and selling them, and they did. They sold them. I don't know how they were able to rescue those that were good enough to sell, but they did, and that's how they were living. Well, when they came to the camp, of course, they weren't—well, I don't know if during the day maybe they would go out and do that, get money and so on. But anyway, in talking to them and all, especially the man, I remember, the Salvation Army was able to get him a job with the Marriott Hotel down by the airport, and he was to go. I don't remember exactly which job he was going to do, but they found some work for him.

Well, they got him all ready by getting him the right clothes. They gave him lunch that they prepared for him. They gave him transportation money to get him to the place of work. The Salvation Army was there. They had several trailers in which they were able to provide these services. So it wasn't that he had to go anyplace. Anyway, we were all very happy to see what could be done, and they send him off. Well, I believe he worked one

day, but then after that, he was back to selling flowers. There was just something that they could not get accustomed to just like that. And we found a lot of them, of course, were mentally ill. Again, the county would try to get them to the mental health clinics. Many of them wouldn't go in. So it was really the frustrating thing was the refusal on their parts of the services that were being provided there by the city and others. I remember one thing that the homeless council had asked for was a city flag to fly over the camp, because they wanted to make sure that everybody knew it was a city camp. So the General Services, at that time we had a woman, Sylvia, Sylvia Cunliffe, who was the general manager, and she was very cooperative and able to generate resources that we didn't even know where there. But it was an interesting experience. I got to really know a lot of individuals, know their background, and I got to know some of their problems things like that. There were a lot of young people, very young people. Most of the people who were—they were just partners. They had gotten together with people just on the street or something, so they continued to be partners. The Salvation Army provided all kinds of classes for them, right there, so a few took advantage of them, some didn't. I have to say that I really was very, very impressed by the work that was done by the Salvation Army. I mean, they went beyond all kinds of things, and I know the city had promised them money, but they never did generate the funds for them. If I remember correctly, it was something like 82 or \$92,000 that they were owed, but we made some funds available, but they just were short all the time, but they managed to provide regardless.

PARKER

How big of a staff did they have working there?

DAVIS

Well, they must have had maybe eight that were on the grounds, because they did a variety of things, teachers, counselors, and then the staff that was there to feed them. But they just never quit. They were there constantly.

PARKER

How many people do you think, about, were in that camp?

DAVIS

Well, they would go and come daily, so there weren't that many constant ones that were there, but I would say if the camp was full, there was usually about two hundred in the camp. But going and coming, I would say several hundred actually utilized the camp at one time or another. I don't remember if we closed the camp because the railroad company just wasn't making it available or what, but I know that at one point after several months, the camp had to be closed. By the way, the thing I remember, Ted—did you see his name at all?

PARKER

Yeah, I seen it in L.A. Times articles. I can't remember now [unclear].

DAVIS

Anyway, he on his own had managed to get some Quonset huts, little huts, and I know he was given them by whoever was manufacturing them, and so he had several of those huts in the camp. He, himself, lived in one, and he had other people living in the others. But he had several experiences like that, where he just really worked on behalf of the homeless. I know at one time one of the homeless—I've forgotten all the details, but one of the homeless was suing me, and I remember we went through the whole process. The city attorneys was of course, representing me, and Ted and I think his wife was there one time, and this homeless person, who was suing me, I remember they used to come to my office and I remember the one time they took that position with me. Now, there was an incident because Ted was bringing all these people to the meetings with me, and when it came time for the deposition, I took exception to having all the people. I just felt that I didn't want everybody to become part of this and gossip, make it part of their conversation. I think it was the person who was suing me, his wife or girlfriend and also Ted's wife, that I asked that they not attend. I remember there was a big to-do about that, but it was my deposition and I could do what I wanted. Ted, I found, I was the person that even before we had that experience together, who started coming to see the mayor on these monthly meetings that he had, and so I got to know him and I got to see him several times. Later he came to me just anytime, so that we became, I would say, friends so that I knew him, very respectful, very nice gentleman.

PARKER

What was his background? What was he like?

DAVIS

He was an activist from Riverside County. I don't remember what background. I knew of him. I just knew that he was an activist before in Riverside and had transferred to L.A. County. But the closing, it was interesting, when they closed it, they took down the city flag and presented it to me. [laughs]

PARKER

Oh, wow.

DAVIS

I thought that was very nice. In fact, I still have it.

PARKER

The people at the camp did?

DAVIS

Pardon?

PARKER

The people at the camp presented the flag to you, is that [unclear]?

DAVIS

Yes, because I had a good relationship with them. I was there and was aware of so many problems that they had. That was a very interesting experience and one that the city was able to get credit for that.

PARKER

Yeah. I had a couple questions about that. In terms of the collaboration, I guess you were running a task force on homelessness under Bradley as well.

DAVIS

Yes.

PARKER

And I just wondered, in addition to attending the meeting, who else was involved?

DAVIS

I don't remember specifically, but usually that kind of a task force included some other either general managers. Maybe they would come to the first meeting and later on somebody representing them who was knowledgeable would come, but they would be there just to make their resources available for whatever the need. [interruption]

PARKER

Okay.

DAVIS

As I said, the homeless task force or any task force that we formed also included departments that in some way had something related to the issue. Like the census, I remember we had all kind of people on the committee. I don't remember specifically. General Services, of course.

PARKER

Who were you working with at the county level?

DAVIS

Not really. They only really came—they weren't involved with the day-to-day operations, but they became involved, and actually for that Medical Day, the doctor had approached them to help.

PARKER

Was there an effort to kind of get people in the camp, to the extent that they weren't already, on to general relief, county general relief?

DAVIS

They offered all kind of services, and they either didn't accept them or very few would accept any of them.

PARKER

I was wondering, you said initially when the city first—there's the effort to house the homeless in City Hall, you said there was a lot of pressure building to do something about the homeless, and I wondered where that pressure was coming from.

DAVIS

It was coming from people like Ted and the other people who had anything to do with the problem councilmen themselves, I'm sure were hoping that

we could do something. It was just a big issue, and I guess the city always responds to any issue that is so obvious. Certainly for the homeless that was something that was more than obvious.

PARKER

There had also been, I think, earlier in the eighties, other efforts to address homelessness or to use city resources. One of the things that I was looking at in L.A. Times articles was the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Healthcare for the Homeless Project that was run through the CDD.

DAVIS

They provided funds, I remember, and they made funds available through the different channels. There were other efforts, like for instance, on Skid Row where all the businessmen were impacted by the problem, they had meetings also of their own people, and I would go to those meetings, too, to see what they were going—of course, all this turning to the city to see what we can provide. So there was just a lot of pressure from agencies that already were responding to the homeless.

PARKER

There's also, I think, an effort in terms of creating more permanent housing, like the San Julian.

DAVIS

That was the other thing that the redevelopment agency, who was also working, and they had several hotels that they built. They were a big thing. Whenever they opened, the mayor was there. But it made housing available but to very few, maybe a half dozen of the homeless, and that doesn't at all really affect the problem. It affected Skid Row. I think, too, there was again an awareness, governments and people became aware of the fact that there were all these women that were homeless, too, and that was when the Women's Center started downtown. That was a big thing to get women off the street, too, because they had a harder problem than men, especially those who had children. So it was an awakening to many, many things.

PARKER

Was that apparent when you were running the camp, the city camp, that was there a lot of women and children?

DAVIS

Oh, yes, that was before then, because I think the other events in Skid Row had been happening way before. The interesting thing, the women who responded in establishing those specific centers for the women were very middle-class, and you wouldn't expect to see them. I remember this Para Los Niños, which the woman who started that—again, there's so many names, I can't remember them, but it was this young middle-class woman who came to me one day in my office and just told me what she thought, that there was this need, and that she wanted to do something. At the time I remember that all I could do was really encourage her to move forward with her idea, and she did a magnificent job.

PARKER

Yeah. That's an organization that's still going.

DAVIS

Yes.

PARKER

So after the camp closed, what was the next step that you took in terms of addressing the homelessness?

DAVIS

Well, in terms of the homeless, nothing specific, only to continue with the housing effort so that there had been quite a few hotels that had been built in Skid Row. Of course, continued funding of all of these agencies in Skid Row and wherever, because there were other places in the city that had homeless, as you well know.

PARKER

At one point I read Bradley also was attempting to—he had purchased mobile homes or prefabricated homes.

DAVIS

Those were the Ted—I don't remember what we called them, but they were more like igloos. But they were a round kind of thing and they weren't very big at all, because I remember seeing Ted in one when he was in the camp. Actually, when he had encampments in the downtown area, I often went to see him to see what was going on.

There was one time that we were approached, and, of course, they wanted the city to buy them, these homes, and they weren't cheap. I guess in the long run, really, it didn't benefit as many because, again, you're concerned with giving the homeless these things. They don't know the ownership responsibilities. It's not that they don't want to; it's just that they don't think that way. So to turn over these very expensive things, you just never know how they're going to act.

PARKER

Pause one second. [interruption]

PARKER

Okay. So we're going to talk a little bit about your role in Bradley's campaign for governor and the response of the Hispanic community.

DAVIS

What I remember, that there was a lot of enthusiasm at the beginning because—well, right through the campaign, because obviously we all felt that this was part of his dream. What's that song? The Impossible Dream was his theme, and he was accomplishing this, and we thought it was a perfect climax. I remember that there was just this enthusiasm everywhere for him for that and in the Hispanic community, particularly the MAPA endorsement, of course, is a very significant thing for our community and for the candidates. When Bradley was to be considered for endorsement, it was in—I don't remember the year, but the convention for MAPA was in Fresno,

and we were trying to get as many people that could vote to attend the convention.

I remember Art Gastelum and, well, everybody, Al Juarez, Art Gastelum, and then all the other Hispanic staff people joined in. We got hats and those buttons, Amigos of Bradley, and went to the convention there in Fresno. I remember there, one activist, Bert Corona, in the Valley, I remember he managed to get several buses of people in from the Valley to come to the convention. There was a lot of criticism about that, but I don't know whether he got help from the campaign or he did this on his own. I just don't know the details.

PARKER

What was the criticism?

DAVIS

Well, there were a lot of illegals in the group, but, of course, being members of MAPA didn't require that you were legal or not. But anyway, he did a wonderful job of taking—he had actually just organized maybe the year or two before the MAPA chapter in the Valley, so he was able to do that. We just hustled among all the members here in Los Angeles, particularly since Bradley was one of ours. I remember the Deukmejian people, they were out very strong, too, and I didn't realize so many Hispanics were Republicans then. We did then, and they put on a very good show, and they had many, many of their people there, too. I mean, they were just really out in front on everything. I don't remember. I guess Bradley did get endorsed, but it was just something that I remember being just busy every minute we were there and working around. The floor, too, it was real spirited participation. I remember I was keeping track of people that were assigned different roles at the convention. They were to contact each person no matter how many times you had done before, just to make sure that the vote was secure, and we kept tabs. Each person would come and report to us as to how many votes and so on. It was really a very spirited little convention. I've never seen anything like that. Good experience.

But, anyway, everything was falling into place. At the end, he was invited by Democrats, the big names, to participate in all kinds of activities that would help in the campaign. So we were sure, just sure that he was going to make it, but obviously it wasn't true that they were going to deliver all those votes.

PARKER

So I wondered if we could ask—unless there's more that you want to say on that.

DAVIS

Well, the other thing, I think that was the time that we had the Menudo breakfasts at the headquarters, and I remember attending each one of them at one time or other that morning. I don't know if I told you about the women, that this particular woman, the very tall large woman, came up to

me and told me that, "Do you know why I'm here to support Mr. Bradley?" And I said, "No." She said, well, her brothers were the men who had been involved in the Sleepy Lagoon.

PARKER

Oh, right, I think you—yes.

DAVIS

She told me that that night they had gone out and came back early, and obviously being chased, they were really rushing. They went to bed and told their father that if anybody came and asked, that they had been there all night and were in bed. So she said, sure enough, the police came about an hour or so later, and the father answered the door, and Bradley was there. He addressed him as Mr. L and said, "Are your sons at home?" And he said, "Yes." And he said he needed to talk to them. Well, the father said, "Well, they're in bed, they're sleeping, and they've been there for quite some time." And the other officers that were with Bradley wanted to immediately just break into the house, and Bradley held them back and said, "No. Mr. L said the sons are sleeping, and you have to take his word for it." The other officers were mad, disappointed that they couldn't go in there. But the woman said that she always remembered that, that her father had been treated with such respect. So she said she never forgot that. There was a lot of activity in the community for him. I know Art Gastelum was a big factor in all that. He really pitched forth with the leadership, and he brought all his resources to bear. So, yes, everybody put their best effort forth.

PARKER

I saw in your file some of the lists of all the things that Bradley had done for the Mexican American and Latino communities in Los Angeles in terms of education and—

DAVIS

Yes. Well, he supported anything. He did this for all the people. Really, whatever the needs, the Jewish community if they had an issue, the gay community, black community, he responded.

PARKER

I was wondering, looking back at your time in the Bradley administrations, what were some of your fondest memories or your greatest achievements?

DAVIS

Nothing particularly stands out, because I think that everything—and this is not just me. I think everybody responded to him with their best. Just everything that we did was always with the most effort, the best we had to give. Really, it was just the way he affected us. So there were just so many things. I mean, the opportunity to meet so many people that before I just would know the name, it was just exposed to so many, many things, not just in the outer world, but within our own community, the many places, restaurants, hotels, just places that you know are there that are a part of Los Angeles and all that. Hugh Hefner's mansion. It's just unbelievable. We

really reached out into many, many corners of Los Angeles and got to know the people. I remember one time we were at a fundraiser at Hugh Hefner's, and I was there, and, of course, was his guard. We were talking while Bradley was going around, and, of course, it wasn't hard to be on the lookout for him, because he's so tall so you could see him. Well, all of a sudden, he wasn't there. [laughs] We said, "My god, what happened. Where did he go?" We didn't see him, and start going all over looking for him and all that. And there he was, had stooped down to talk to somebody. I don't even remember who it was. It may have even been someone in a wheelchair. But it was interesting to see him.

Other times he would disappear because he saw something that he either remembered having heard from that person or having worked for that person. I know many times it would be maybe a barbershop where he had helped the man who had come to City Hall. He remembered, so he would just go over there, and it would be in a blink of an eye. You saw him, then you didn't see him. So you wondered where he went, and he was about his business. I know here in Highland Park he was in a parade. I don't remember what the occasion was, but he went to the end of the parade and we were just behind him. He, of course, drove over to the end, and we were walking, so by the time we got to the car, he wasn't there. We looked all over, and maybe he went back to the parade, but no. We looked there and we looked everywhere. Come to find out, there was a convalescent home just across the street, and he had seen this when he drove by to get to the end of the parade. So when he got off the car, he went over there to say hello to the senior citizens that were there, which was not scheduled, was not anywhere around there, but he thought it would be a nice thing to do. But that's the kind of man he was.

PARKER

Looking back to, I guess, what L.A. was like before he came into office and then to the end of his fifth term in office, what were some of the biggest ways that you think the city changed under the Bradley administration?

DAVIS

Well, one of the things was I remember Yorty, and I worked with him too. Being an activist in the community, we would approach City Hall on many issues, but his attitude about us was like children. When he talked about the firemen, he called them boys, or the policemen. The relationship there was totally different.

So when it came to Bradley, not only were minorities recognized as being capable of holding higher positions in the city, I know, of course, that a lot of these things were accomplished by the commissioners that he had appointed. But they wouldn't have been able to do it without him. I know the one fire commissioner that I know who was Hispanic, he did some incredible things. He used to drag me down to see the recruits when they were in training, so that I could see. I remember one thing he was trying to do was

to get the existing Hispanics that were in the department to help those recruits that were new and coming in. Of course they said, "Well, nobody helped us. Why should we help them?" and that kind of an attitude existed. [telephone interruption]

PARKER

Okay.

DAVIS

But I think the attitude there before was—and it's true—they had to do everything on their own, but now we had not only the leader but that worked for him but who was willing to try to change the system. I know under Bradley the personnel manager changed the rating system of how to pick the person who was going to get the job, like it would have to be number one on the list, and you couldn't skip down through the list and get other people, and this was a tremendous change for the city, not just for personnel but other departments. I mean, people who had been overlooked for years were now able to be selected. So that was a big change, and I'm sure there were other similar in other departments that helped.

PARKER

That was something that you were involved in as well, right, overseeing the enforcement of the affirmative action program in city hiring that Bradley had put in place?

DAVIS

The Bradley staff actually had the day-to-day contact with the department. They had different departments assigned, like someone—let's see. E.Z. Burke had the police, and I'm not sure if he had fire or who had fire. But there were different staff members who were aware of the daily activities of the department, so they were the ones who actually made sure that the department was following those guidelines.

PARKER

Right. I think I'd seen memos that you'd sent to all those people who were overseeing each department—

DAVIS

Oh, probably.

PARKER

—to coordinate the oversight, which, I mean, it's an important thing, not to just have those policies but to actually make sure that they would be enforced.

DAVIS

There was so many things that I was involved in. Many times it was an actual assignment from Bradley, but many times it was just I was responsible for a general area, and that included enforcing different policies in the department. I used to convene the monthly meeting that the mayor had with the department heads. The department heads had a committee that coordinated everything for them. I would be in touch with that

committee, and I don't know if they had meetings, I guess, with all the department heads, but they generally would have the issues that the departments were concerned with. So I would base the agenda on those issues that were their concerns, but then also primarily would be anything that the mayor needed to convey that particular month. So the managers came to the conference room, and I would generally greet them and then turn the meeting on over to the mayor and tell the mayor, of course, what the issues were.

So, yes, it was a good experience. I remember my knees shaking like hell the first time, but I got to realize that I belonged there. But that was an interesting experience that I enjoyed, hearing from the different departments what their concerns were. So the other place would be once a year when they had the budget hearings, and this would be, I think, April 15 is when the mayor presents a budget to the council. But beforehand, we would have a series of meetings with each of the department heads, and they would present their budgets to the mayor, and the mayor would then discuss it and eliminate, make certain cuts. It was always amazing to me that the mayor would be able to handle that. He displayed such knowledge of the departments. I wondered where did he get that. To me, it was a session that I invited myself to, because it was just a very interesting—the key person that was responsible for the actual budgets was Anton Calleia, and he prepared the mayor. Excuse me. [interruption]

PARKER

So if we could talk a little bit about just what it meant and what it meant to so many people, I think, that you were the highest-ranking woman and the highest-ranking Latina in Bradley's administration.

DAVIS

Okay. Yes. Is it recording?

PARKER

Yes, it's going.

DAVIS

Oh, okay. To me, I know I was the highest-ranking woman in Bradley's staff, but it amazed me, the national attention at that time, because I know since then there have been women all over, but at that time, I guess it was something different, because not only did my own community reach out to me, they wanted me to be a part, to be present, to be there. Just to give you an idea, I think it was the National Association of Latino Elected Officials, and that's a national organization that Roybal, who was our congressman here, was, I think, one of the founding members. But I know they once had a banquet back there, and I was invited. Manuel Aragon was also there. He had been the previous deputy. I think they introduced him and me, and that was it, and it was an incredible reception. That happened early on when I first had been appointed, so that that it really made a huge impression on me. The commissions that I was on also brought me a lot of

recognition. Even, for instance, the Federal Executive Committee, which was the heads of all the federal agencies here in Los Angeles and would be representative of California, even they had me sit and be a member of the board, just because—I mean, I had been a federal employee before, but now I really didn't have any connection, but I served for several years with them. I really appreciated it because I knew who the Federal Executive Committee or board was when I was working in labor.

It was just amazing the women organizations, whether they were Hispanic or not, Asian organizations, Korean, Chinese, people just—for some reason, I think, just the fact that I was a woman, I seemed to be more approachable, like a mother. I seemed to gravitate to these organizations. I remember the Chinese community one time, they had applied for funding from the Community Development Department, and they didn't get the funding, for reasons that their application either didn't have enough information or the right information. The young woman who was the director of the Chinese Community Center, I guess it is, she, of course, had prepared the application and presented it, and she broke down crying, and I could see that. They were trying to start the Center and were heavily counting on the city. So I went to her later and told her that I would talk to her because I could understand her grief. I told her, "Don't cry. That's one thing you don't want to do. You don't want to be weak or defensive in any way. You need to get the right kind of proposal, the right kind of answers." I don't remember how much I actually did on the proposal, but I maybe had some of the staff at Community Development help her so that she reapplied and was actually able to get funding. The Japanese community, I remember I had been invited mostly to their cultural kind of events. They have concerts, wonderful violin players. I don't know where they got them, I guess, but they were very good. Of course, Japanese to me, the pronunciation is like Spanish, so I didn't have any trouble. I think I used to surprise them and if I had to present them, I was able to read the names correctly because they weren't a problem for me and so on.

The Korean community also was really very naïve about any of these things not that they probably were not political in their own country, but I know particularly the women, they had several professional organizations that they invited me to come and meet them, and they were really working to develop their skills and to apply for different positions. I really enjoyed any of the— [telephone interruption]

PARKER

Okay.

DAVIS

Okay. I know the Korean community, I basically helped them with housing. They were very much interested in housing, but they obviously have done very well in the community. The two things I noticed about the—well, even all three of them, was they include their elders that were older people,

women and so on, older men and women, to work with them. They don't get excluded. The Jewish community, I worked very well with them. I belonged to a Jewish—I don't remember what we called it, but it was a dialogue between the Jews and the non-Jews, and so I know we met, I don't know how many times every so many weeks, to discuss the issues that related to both of us. As a result, different people, I think one person of the various dialogue groups in California were chosen to go to Israel, and I got to go one time. It was a wonderful experience. Well, I wasn't the only one who—I guess it was a Jewish-Hispanic dialogue. That's what it was, because all of the other members also spoke Spanish. But when we were in Israel, I got to speak on the radio that was worldwide, and especially we spoke to South America. So that was a very wonderful experience.

I think just being deputy mayor and being a woman, I don't know why I would be different, but that's the way it worked out. But I had just many experiences with women and just even men groups that just wanted me to be there and be part of it. So I was just surprised and very good. I was able to help many people, again because I was one of Bradley's staff members, so it was always you just never forgot that he was there, because he made it possible. The one thing that I always appreciated about Bradley was that he didn't really supervise every moment, that I was able to go forward and move and I knew it was in the right direction.

PARKER

He didn't micromanage but he—

DAVIS

Yes, nothing.

PARKER

—gave you the power to act. I guess, what did it mean for you, I guess, in terms of your own life or maybe for your kids to see you take on such a high government position—

DAVIS

Well, my children always reminded me that I was not deputy mayor at home. Of course I was always telling them you have to behave because you don't want to embarrass the mayor. So I don't know that there was anything really big and major, but that was just a constant reminder, but they enjoyed participating, my son especially. I would take him as an escort sometimes. For instance, the one time Bradley gave me some tickets for the Academy Award, I gave them to him to go, and he was thrilled. I don't remember if he was already in college or either a senior, maybe, but he really enjoyed it, and he surprised me what a gentleman he was. He fitted in very nicely. I remember I would worry that there were important people going to be around and how he was going to behave, especially, but he was a charmer. He got along with everybody.

But I sometimes wondered about—I didn't want to neglect my family, because I know I was terribly busy always, and I didn't have time like I

would normally have to spend with my family. So I tried to respond to as much of any family gathering that I was able to, because I didn't want them to think that I was no longer related to them or something.

PARKER

That was another one of the challenges of being a woman in that kind of position at that time—

DAVIS

Yes.

PARKER

—because it was so rare, was that you're really kind of doing two careers.

DAVIS

I never really stopped to think that, "I can't do this because, maybe, I'm a woman," or something, I just went ahead and did it, I mean, because I was asked, and so I went. Or if I saw the need for something, I would just move forward with them. I remember one time we had a parade downtown, and I don't remember what the occasion but there was a temporary stage that was set up in one of the crossroads there, and when the event was over, people started to move but without regards to where they were going. Instead of dispersing from the outer edges so people would not gather in the middle, people were coming toward the middle, and I could see, from the stage, I could see these people were all moving in, and there was a concern that was being expressed. So I just went up to the microphone and told people, "Please, you're moving in the wrong direction, and we're not going to have any place for you to go." But I guess I've been that way all the time, so, yes.

It was a wonderful experience. I'm very grateful for it. I got to go to Germany a couple of times, once for the city, actually. They wanted to know about transportation, and I forget what other issues. Councilman Ferrell was also invited, and he spoke about the arts and other subjects. I was really embarrassed and never said anything about it, but when we were put up at the hotel, I was given the suite of rooms, huge place, and he just had a little room. I never invited him to my room because I didn't want him to see, because I didn't realize—a big bouquet of roses in the room and fruit, the whole VIP treatment. I don't know why they thought—well, I guess in their country, I met the German deputy mayor, and that was a woman, too, and she was quite thought of. I guess her position was a little different from mine. I think she was elected, and so I guess they figured the same thing for us. But that was an embarrassment because here in Los Angeles, of course, the councilmen were a better—you know, the person who was more prominent than the deputy mayor. The deputy mayor was in an appointed position, but not in Germany.

PARKER

That's funny. I don't think I have any more specific questions, but if there's anything you'd like to talk about at the close.

DAVIS

I can't think of anything, but I know I have enjoyed reminiscing with you.

PARKER

Well, thank you so much. I really appreciate it. It's been great.

DAVIS

If I ever think of something, I'll let you know.

PARKER

Please do. [End of February 19, 2013 interview]

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