Sixth Session  
March 26, 1999  
TAPE XI- part of Side B;  
TAPE XII; TAPE XIII -  
Side A & part of Side B

Side B- TAPE XI

JR Good morning.

GW Good morning. How are you?

JR Ok. Well, when we stopped last time, it was at the point where Meagan and Karen had gone to the school board and for the first time all of this struggle that Barclay folk had been going through over the Calvert Curriculum hit the press, when Kathy Lalley made it public--

GW Yeah.

JR with an article after Meagan and Karen testified at the school board meeting.

GW Right.

JR One of the things about Kathy's article was her emphasis on the fact that we were expecting substantial funding from Abell for the Barclay Calvert project.

GW um uh

JR However, as the issue became more and more a public controversy, Embry of the Abell Foundation - Bob Embry - seemed to me to be backing away. He wrote me, for example - he wrote me a letter dated March 6, 1989 saying "the Abell Foundation has made no commitment to fund the Calvert School-Barclay project." He did say at the end of that letter, "if you are permitted to proceed we'll help you create an application." So what in fact was your understanding at that point regarding what Bob Embry had promised or not promised.

GW Ok. Bob Embry had met with Merrill Hall and me. In fact, he had met with me first, and he said, "if you're willing to take on the fight," he said "Abell Foundation will back you up." He said, "we have been trying to get someone who would be willing to try the Calvert Curriculum and," he said, "when I found out how you were interested in it..."-- because I had visited the school. And so he set up a meeting date with Merrill Hall and me and he talked about working together with the Calvert Curriculum and asked Merrill would he be willing. And Merrill said, "Well we'll talk with the teachers and so forth, and meet with Miss Williams's teachers at Barclay and our teachers and if they are willing, we will - we'll be glad to." And so Merrill and the teachers had met - the
Calvert teachers had gone and visited Barclay and Barclay teachers had gone to Calvert and they had really clicked. And we had gone through the total discussing and looking really at the total curriculum and looking at Barclay's curriculum and seeing whether or not the two could mesh. And we met one day and had a luncheon and so the teachers had come up—they did a force field analysis—and it was a plus like all the way except maybe one or two things that really would not stand in the way and could have some adjustment.

JR Did anybody from Abell attend any of those meetings?

GW No. See, one thing about Bob—he goes to very few meetings.

JR What about Sita—Kulman?

GW No, Sita hadn't been assigned to us. Sita was assigned to us once the project started. So Bob was gung ho and had met with us and talked—even talked about how much he would give us. And it would be a four-year proposal --- four year --- what would you call it?

JR Grant.

GW Grant, so that—to give it time enough to see whether or not it would work well.

JR So why do you think he seemed to be back-pedaling, or did you see this as back-pedaling?

GW Well, you know, Bob is a person who plays cat and mouse with people. And if it didn't go through he did not want to be hung out there. I know one time — what's the other person had gone—she died—Cathy something; I can't think of her last—[Cathy Pope-Smith]

JR Yeah.

GW But anyhow he played cat and mouse for awhile while we going through with it, because Merrill had seen it — an article or something in the paper. And Merrill Hall and I sat down together and wrote a letter and sent the letter to Bob. And then Bob confirmed, “Oh yes. Oh yes, Abell will work with Calvert and Barclay, if you can get it through the system.” Because Merrill and I were kind of feeling—Merrill Hall, that's the headmaster of Calvert — were feeling uneasy, because Bob has a way of stating something and then making it sound as though “I really didn't mean it for sure; maybe” But when he's talking to people by themselves he will state that. But he sent a letter back and confirmed it. So really — we were kind of sure that he was going to pay. But then we realized — Merrill and I both realized that Bob was a person who played cat and mouse with people. But we figured he would give the money if we could get through Baltimore City. Really, Bob wasn't our biggest problem, Baltimore City was.
JR   Right. Well, picking up on that – as our conversation last time made pretty clear, one of our biggest problems was Clifton Ball.

GW   Right.

JR   As we went down through the way things played out last time, you pointed out that he had been invited over and over again to those meetings that you were just talking about between the two schools

GW   Right.

JR   and he hadn’t come to any of them. Since we met last time I was digging more in the files and I – in one of these newspaper articles where Ball was challenged about that, he told Kathy Lalley, or some other reporter, that that was untrue, that he hadn’t been invited to anything having to do with Barclay-Calvert. So what kind of game was Clifton playing –

GW   Well, you know, I think – when I think about Clif Ball I think that he wanted to kiss up to the system. And he wasn’t sure which way the system was going to go and furthermore, if Clif had been the person to lead it and had come up with idea of these two schools working together to improve the quality of Barclay School, then he would have been all right. He would have stood up. But he didn’t want to rock the boat. But Clif had been invited each time we met, because I had said to Merrill, “he is our area director and we really need – he needs to give the approval before I move on. Now he had been invited to meet with us several times before it even became formal.

JR   Right, yeah – that’s what [inaudible]

GW   And finally a letter was sent to him. Merrill sent a letter to him requesting that he come and meet and in the letter he had written down all we had talked about and asked when he could meet. And each time Clif never showed up. So he was lying – out and out lying – the same as – what was the assistant superintendent who was supposed to meet and then he just out and out lied and said no, I wasn’t willing to discuss anything? So a lot of people lied at that time.

JR   Ok. Well, a few days after this whole thing became public, Clifton Ball spoke at a Charles Village Civic Association meeting.

GW   Right.

JR   Do you remember that meeting?

GW   Yes I do.

JR   Can you describe that?
Clif had been dodging and carrying on so and finally the Charles Village group—I think Trudy—

Trudy Bartel

Bartel had set up the meeting. And he came with a list of things that he wanted to say. And there we had—what is his name?

Wally Orlinsky?

Wally Orlinsky. Well, people kept asking Clif questions and he kept talking out both sides of his mouth everytime someone asked something. And then Clif started to be a little frightened, so he started kind of swinging toward Barclay—what was happening. And finally, Wally Orlinsky couldn’t take it anymore and just stood up. No—Hubble had gotten on him first.

Nancy Hubble?

Nancy Hubble had asked him, “are you going to deal with it? Are you working with it? What’s wrong? I know the Barclay School; I’ve worked with them and I usually don’t put my neck out, but I’m willing to put my neck out because I know Barclay. And I think Calvert will do quite well.” And then Clif really started hedging. Then Wally jumped up and went off on Clifton which really upset him so that he had to admit that he had not pushed the program the way he should have. And he swore that he was going to go back and deal with the Barclay-Calvert situation. He was really so upset. Because Wally really threatened him. [Quiet chuckle]

Well, at that meeting Mr. Ball said that the Barclay-Calvert idea had received a favorable recommendation from the curriculum specialists that he had consulted and that he had sent that recommendation to Dr. Howard who was then an associate superintendent in the system—

Right.

in Hunter’s administration.

Right.

After the meeting you and I asked Mr. Ball for copies of whatever had been sent to Howard. And he promised that he’d send them to us, be he never did.
GW  No. No. Because of the way that Howard acted to meet with us. And he — Clif had not sent anything. In fact, Howard— I guess he was taken off — off his feet by the direction questioning. And when we did what was he going to do with the Barclay Calvert project he then started talkin’ all around. He never said that — I don’t remember him saying that Clif didn’t meet with him. But he had another agenda when he came. He had — he wanted me to take — really to plagiarize — the Calvert Curriculum.

JR  Yeah, yeah, yeah.

GW  And I said I would never do that. But he wanted — But there was a group of them around —

JR  Yeah, yeah, somewhere along the line we’ll come back to that.

GW  Ok. But he didn’t know, or he would never have walked right into —

JR  Right. Well for the first time, on February 27, Dr. Hunter made a public statement about Barclay. He issued a press release. He claimed in that press release that he had been in constant touch with Barclay on this issue. Just before the press release came out, he paid a visit to Calvert, with 15 minutes advance notice — no it’s not; it’s after the press release —

GW  um uh — after the press release —

JR  on the March the 6th he paid that little visit to Barclay —

GW  Calvert.

JR  Yeah. Thank you. [Laughter]

GW  Right.

JR  Do you remember what your thoughts were at this point, as far as Hunter — did you think that he was devious, or did you think he was misinformed, or did you think he was confused, or what- what-how were you reading him at this point?

GW  At this time I knew he was devious from some of the things that had gone on, and things he had been saying and so forth. And what happened was, he had lied to the paper and said that he had been to Calvert; he knew about Calvert and so forth. And so — but Merrill had invited him to come to Calvert, but he never came. And so in order to make — so that it wouldn’t backfire on him by saying he had visited Calvert and so forth and that he knew that Barclay’s program was much better. That’s what he was saying at that time. Anyhow, Calvert — he never — when Merrill said, “Ok. That’s fine.” He cancelled a couple of appointments he had. And he was glad to have him. He stayed — his chauffeur stayed outside. And he would talk back and forward to his chauffeur while they were there. And then finally he says, “I have to go.” He never saw the school. He
just came in and, Merrill said, said a few scrambled things about "why do you want to work with Barclay?" and so forth and so on. And he did sort of hint around that Calvert was a rich school, for rich children. And that the type of students coming to Barclay were poor. But he didn’t say too much. Because he kept talking to the man on on — his chauffeur. And then finally he said, “I have to go.” He said, “I have a call. I have to go.” But Merrill said that you couldn’t hear what he was saying to him, but he knew that the chauffeur called him back. And he said, “I have to leave.” So that was just like five minutes.

JR Well, the next day after he paid that little visit to Calvert, we all got our chance to size him up. He had called a meeting — actually his executive assistant, Jerrelle Francois, had arranged the meeting—at his office on March the 7th. That was a memorable day. It was snow day. Remember that day?

GW Yes. Ice! [Laughter]

JR [Laughter] Talk a little bit about what you remember about that.

GW The school was out because there was ice on the ground. But we were determined to keep our meeting with him. I think it was Tanya [Jackson, parent and teaching assistant]—

JR I think Pat Straus [PTO president]

GW Pat Straus, yes. You. Was it Trumella? No. Verna?

JR I don’t think so. It might have been Verna [Chase, asst. principal].

GW I think it was Verna, and me. Because when we walked in, they offered us coffee and Jerrelle sat there in the office, and she whispered something—I’ve forgotten what she whispered — something like “he really does care for you,”-- or something like that—“Trudy.” But anyhow, we went to — we sat down and after while he came in. And he said — which shocked us all — that “I’m tired of hearing about Barclay.” He said, “everywhere I go, people ask me why I won’t — why don’t I let Barclay have this program.” He said, “I want to tell you something. And he said, Gertie, you can understand this.” I think he said, “Gertie.” “That because of all the problems that has caused me, you will never have this curriculum.” That’s when Verna, who’s always quiet, says “never?!” You remember Verna, who was just shocked? Said “never have it?” And that’s when he started asking him questions. And he said “I will not talk too much when the typewriter...” What did he say?

JR The tape recorder

GW The tape recorder! He saw you taking notes — and he says, “while the tape recorder is here I will not talk too much and commit myself.” [Laughter] By this time we were all stunned. I know Pat said a couple of things. And then he said, “well, maybe
in a couple of years, we’ll have it.” I think that’s that he said. “Maybe in a couple of years,” or something like that. “But right now, Gertie” – I think he said Gertie, or Gertrude – “you understand my position.” And I said, “No I don’t.” And he says, “Well, we [inaudible].” And everyone was--

END OF Side B – TAPE XI

TAPE XII – Side A

JR    A terrible meeting. [Laughter]

GW    Yes, I think it was one of the worst meetings we ever had. Because we were invited there to have a discussion and we really were – as the kids said—“put down.” And in such an ugly way. Accusing us, because people had gotten on him for not letting us have that- the program.

JR    Well, even though Hunter had been very clear in that meeting that he wasn’t on our side, still we weren’t prepared for what he did next, which was issue another press release two days later.

GW    [Chuckle]

JR    And in that press release he said that any project at Barclay supported with Abell funds would be possible only if Abell gave four million dollars to the system to reduce class size system wide.

GW    Right.

JR    And he also said that anything Barclay did, we couldn’t use the Calvert Curriculum.

GW    That’s right.

JR    We could use materials and some peripheral stuff, but we could not use the Calvert Curriculum.

GW    Right.

JR    [Laughter] Do you want to comment on how we--

GW    Right, because, I think you saw it in the paper and came over--

JR    Well actually, as I remember it, Bob Embry called me and said that he had just gotten a fax from the Sun—
GW  Right.

JR  And he brought the fax over to the school and had called me in the meantime so that we all kind of were

GW  Were just shocked, but he looked ridiculous, because it was like, "what is he talkin' about? He can't get away with this." Because he had then just smashed the whole idea of the program. By then you knew he had snapped about it. Because to ask -- well, he was trying to blackmail the Abell Foundation.

JR  Um uh.

GW  Because he said if we got the program--it went on like, if we got the program--then the other third grade children in the city would not have a fair chance, and that-- but we weren't going to have that program, and in his administration we weren't even going to be able to use that program.

JR  This was an argument that kept coming up again and again -- that we were asking -- that in our trying to improve Barclay School we were somehow doing a disservice to the rest of the children in the city. How did you respond to that?

GW  Really in disgust, but none of his statements and his conclusions made sense. Because if Barclay succeeded in using that program, which didn't cost the city a penny--The Abell Foundation was paying the additional money--then it would help the total school -- whole system. Because it would give them a direction. But he couldn't see that. He had gotten so angry that he was determined to destroy that whole project. And --but he then became a laughing stock. Because then people just laughed about it, and realized how crazy he was when he made that statement.

JR  Well, after that we must have called an emergency meeting of our parents and steering committee and our community council. Somehow, anyway, we decided within a pretty short time that we were going to call our own press conference.

GW  Right.

JR  And this decision appeared to be pretty dangerous as far as you were concerned.

GW  Right.

JR  What situation were you in at that point, professionally. Was your job on the line?

GW  Yeah, because --it had started when I would go to administrative meetings. He just would carry on. He would talk about me being a traitor and when you --"what do you do with people who think that they're better than the system?" So he was really right there ready to fire me. And that's when you and the other parents said, "well, you need
to be out of this because he's waiting for you to be insubordinate and then he's going to have an excuse for you to fire me—him to fire me. But he had become very dangerous. The other principals had started looking at him. In fact, in one meeting he was so terrible one principal had called the mayor and said, "if he has a problem with Miss Williams, then he should go to her school or have her come and meet with him, and not carry on in meetings." Because they weren't having anything done. Once he saw me — I started sittin' way in the back so I wouldn't see him. And he would walk the aisle. And they'd say "Trudy..." He would walk the whole aisle until he would spot where I was — come off the stage, come all the way around, and spot where I was. And then started this horrible screaming and so forth and carrying on. So I knew he was crazy and on the border line and ready to chop my head and your head and all the other parents' heads off. [Laughter]

JR Well how were you feeling inside yourself at this point? Knowing that you could lose your job — were you—

GW I was really so angry, I would take that chance. I really felt that what he was doing was absolutely unfair, and that I wasn't going to step back. I really was determined, but I was upset, too. Because he was crazy by this time. He absolutely had lost all sense of balance, and the more people got on him the worse he hated what we were doing, because he was blaming us for upsetting his total program.

JR Well we went ahead with our press conference. You just happened to be sitting on the far end of the room in the corner doing some paper work

GW [Hearty laughter]

JR -- didn't have any idea that we were going to have a press conference. But we were joined by Tony Ambridge and Jackie McClean, who were two of our three city council people at the time.

GW Right.

JR And Pat Straus and I were the spokespersons for the school and community. And we had a nice little — newspaper clipping [showing it to GW]

GW Right.

JR it was a nice little group of people standing in the background from the community and from the school. And so we had our say, and then two weeks after that press conference, two spokespersons from Barclay again went to the school board. We're up to March 15th 1989 now.

GW Right.
JR Pat Straus and I spoke before the school board, and then you and I and Pat went to another meeting at the school system’s central office.

GW Right.

JR Now that school board meeting—this March 15th school board meeting—I don’t know, I’m not sure I was the one who spoke there; I don’t remember who did; I just know we had two people speaking—

GW You did. Yeah, you did.

JR But the school board meeting was packed. I remember most getting into an altercation with Denise—was her first name Denise?—somebody Jones. She was the community organizer from the Hamilton area—

GW Right.

JR who had ended up working in city hall.

GW Right. What was her first name? I’ve forgotten.

JR And she was out in the lobby, while this meeting was going on in the school board chambers, carrying on about how poor black parents at Barclay were being exploited and misled by the Abell Foundation and the white elite.

GW [Echoing part of JR’s words]—Right, that’s true.

JR And I remember I just wanted to choke her.

GW Right.

JR What do you remember about that meeting that night?

GW You had gone up and talked up about why we should have it and so forth and so. And then they called Mr. Howard up, to ask—you know, ‘cause he was supposed —he did meet with us prior to that.

JR Yeah. Actually he may—we may have had that meeting a little bit later. There were so many meetings here.

GW At that time—

JR ‘cause I’ve got him comin’ up later.

GW Coming up later.
JR  Yeah. We met with him –

GW  I know that the audience had gotten in to it.

JR  Yeah. It was a packed meeting.

GW  And they were really upset, because some of the principals and others had said – I had even teachers who wrote to me and said, “is there anything I can do to help? Because if Barclay can make the change then maybe we can do something at our school.” So the audience had really gotten in it and were being kind of rowdy – “let them have it.” And so forth and so on.

JR  Yeah, yeah.

GW  I don’t remember the exact words. But I remember you had talked to the board and I know they had started asking you different questions. But you were on target. I don’t remember the words. I have the copy at home.

JR  So there was that meeting. And then just a week later, you and Pat Straus and I went back to the central office. And that’s where we met with Dr. Howard, somebody named Dr. Stevens – whom I have no recollection of at all –

GW  A woman.

JR  Yeah.

GW  Yes, you remember. She was in charge of the curriculum. She had been brought over from Washington to work with the curriculum. At the meeting where you were presented at the board, Dr. Howard was assigned then to work and meet with us to try to straighten out some of these things.

JR  Ok. Ok.

GW  You, Clif Ball was there.

JR  Clif Ball was there. There was a stenographer and Francois.

GW  A stenographer and Francois. And Pat.

JR  And Pat Straus and you and me.

GW  Right. And we were – and at this meeting, well Clif started out. And then I corrected him on that, because I had gone to him; we had gone to work, and he hadn’t come. So he was very uncomfortable and agitated at that meeting, too. But then the lady – Mrs. Straus was there. Well, Howard asked Clif Ball, “What have you done with Barclay and Miss Willliams and her parents?” And he said, well he had been meeting
with us. And then that’s what got us off, first. “No, you did not, Clif. You have not kept a meeting with us. We have invited you.” Then Francois jumped in and was saying, “Well you have a very good curriculum; I just don’t see—Why not wait til later?” Or anyhow, she’s trying to appease. And then Dr. — what’s his name?

JR Howard.

GW Howard said, “well why don’t you — you know the curriculum — why don’t you take the material and make a Balti” — a Baltimore City, or did he say a Barclay Curriculum?

JR Yeah, Barclay Curriculum

GW Then. Which at first kind of shocked me. And then I said, “that’s plagiarism. I will not, I will not do that.” And that’s when Dr. Stuart spoke up for the first time.

JR Dr. Stevens?

GW Stevenson. And she was saying, “I’m not quite sure what I’m hearing. I don’t think I’m hearing that you’re asking Miss Williams to take the Calvert Curriculum and turn it in to the Barclay Curriculum” And he was saying, “well, it was an idea.” But it was like hot and heavy. And then they had pulled Pat in, saying “as a parent don’t you think that — wouldn’t you rather go on the way you are?” And Pat was on the ball, because she knew Hunter from Richmond.

JR That’s right, that’s right.

GW And she was on target: “no I would like for my children to have this curriculum” and so forth. Now I can’t remember what they asked you. They tried to divert you — be away from you at first.

JR Yeah, I don’t remember. I remember chiming in on the plagiarism thing. That was the main thing that disturbed me.

GW Plagiarism, right. Main thing. Yeah.

JR And they tried to say, “no that isn’t what we mean.” But that’s what they were suggesting.

GW And you know, Dr. Stuart left after that. She was very disgusted with that — what was happening in there.

JR Yeah, she didn’t stay around very long.

GW She didn’t. She left after that.
JR    That’s why I don’t have much recollection of her at all.

GW     She left. She was a medium brown woman. I remember what she looked like.
      But she left.

JR    Well on the same date as that school board meeting we just talked about a minute
      ago, the head of your administrators professional association, Arnet Brown, published a
      commentary in the Evening Sun. He talked about Dr. Hunter’s efforts to promote school
      reform, and he asked, “why are we” -- this is a quote -- “why are we being distracted by
      groups and individuals who appear to be suggesting that they know better than Dr.
      Hunter how to improve our schools?” And he concluded it by saying, “Let Hunter lead.”
      As a member of PSASA -- which is what that association is -- how did you feel about
      having the leader of essentially your group take what was a position against what you
      were trying to do?

GW     Right. Well, you know it shocked me, because Arnet was always outspoken and
      was always behind the schools. And so when I called Arnet, it was like “he’s being so
      distracted he can’t get work done.” And I said, “he wouldn’t be distracted if he’d just say
      yes, Arnet.” I said, “we just asked to try a program. He wasn’t going to have to -- the
      city wasn’t going to put out any money.” And he said, “but he’s just so upset, we’re not
      getting anything done.” I said, “Arnet, it’s not our problem. It’s Dr. Hunter’s problem.”
      So, he said, “well, Trudy,” he said, “this is what I believe—that Dr. Hunter doesn’t
      have the ability to deal with this.” So I said, “well we’re not going to stop.” He said,
      “I’m not asking you to stop. But the whole city is upset about this program. If you could
      just back away for awhile.” And I said, “I’m not going to back away.” But Arnet came
      to rue what he had said, because he really found that Hunter was unable to lead. Like
      the mayor had said to me, “I want him to be a superintendent if he is capable of being a
      superintendent, so would you two work together — you and your parents.” That’s when
      we were supposed to start working—because everyone wanted to see him become a
      successful superintendent. Because when he started there, he was so nice. He used to
      come past the school, talk about things, and he seemed to be on the ball, for awhile. But
      Arnet soon found out. And he was one of the ones who wanted him to leave, finally.

JR    I have a vague recollection -- and I couldn’t track down -- I don’t think there’s
      anything on paper that would pinpoint it— but I don’t know if it was around this time or if
      it was later after Arnet had begun to change his -- his song a little bit. But I remember
      one night you and I were at a school board meeting and Arnet pulled us into another
      room. And I don’t even remember what he said, or what was going on there, but do you
      recall?

GW     Oh—I remember that. And it had to be — because I knew he had turned against
      Hunter. And so, I imagine that -- I remember he pulled us aside to talk. But I think at
      that time he was saying that Hunter wasn’t going to last and that he had learned what he
      was.

JR    Could well be what it was.
GW Yeah, but I remember that.

JR Well you’ve kind of addressed this already, but maybe you could expand just a little bit more – about how your fellow principals responded to this whole thing. You’ve talked about some of them calling the mayor, and so forth, but what was the overall—

GW But some at first really backed away from me. Because Hunter — they didn’t want any part of Hunter’s wrath. So I would go in a meeting; I would sit alone. And they would say “hi” and they knew better than to say something to me, because then I would go off on them. But they would say “hi”: I would say “hi”. But they wouldn’t sit anywhere near me. And I remember Marguerite Walker and Jimmy Walker — Marguerite had been so friendly and all. And we were at one of the administrator’s affairs and I started over to sit at that table. And Marguerite said, “Oh, don’t let her sit here, she’s gonna create a problem.” So I walked away. And she said, “oh come on Trudy I’m just jokin’:” I just walked away, and then — what’s his name — was it Curtis Lance or one in that group? — and said, “Come on Trudy sit at our table.” And Marguerite and Jimmy came over and I said “don’t even try it. Just go.” But after while, after the meetings just turned in to “get Trudy” a lot of the principals really then started being disgusted and so a few of them called the mayor and told Mayor Schmoke what was happening and said “if he has a problem with Trudy why doesn’t he go to her school or call her to his office? We go into a meeting and we start out something and then he sees Trudy and that’s the end of the meeting.” So Mayor Schmoke called me at school one day and asked would I come down. And I said yes. And he said, “tell me what’s going on in the meetings.” He said “are you having a problem” — that’s what he said — “with Dr. Hunter?” And I said, “I’m just not going back to any more meetings.” So he said, “what’s the problem.” And I said, “he goes crazy.” I said “he’ll come off the stage” — I said, “you know I’m a person that sits in the front of the auditorium. Well at meetings I go as far back as there are seats, and he will get up and walk off the stage and walk around ‘til he sees me. And then he just goes off.” And one day, Lewis — Lewis Richardson was sitting a couple of seats from me — and he said, “look, he’s almost knocked himself out.” He got so dizzy he just stumbled back. And Lewis said, “Trudy don’t say anything to him ‘cause he’s crazy. He’d get up and choke you.” [Laughter] But then that’s when the mayor said to me, he said, “well, Trudy, I’m going to have him—I’m going to meet with him. Have the two of him meet with him and the parents.” He said, “don’t go by yourself, meet with the parents.” And then he said, “because I want him to be a superintendent if he can be.”

JR Now was this discussion with the mayor part of the whole thing after you had spoken at the mayor’s forum and Schmoke had begun to change a little bit? Or had he been aware of Hunter’s behavior before that — as far as the way you were being treated.

GW I was trying — See, at first the mayor was sticking up for Hunter. And he — when a lot of this stuff started and people started gettin’ on him, then he said he supported his superintendent. Well, this was after that.

JR Ok. We’re still back in 1989. March gave way to April. And on April 5 Dr. Hunter was in the Morning Sun again. And this time — one of the things when we had met
on that snow day -- that icy day -- we kept asking him, what were his specific objections. Please give us his specific objections.

GW Right.

JR Well he did give 'em to the whole city on April 5th in the Morning Sun.

GW [Chuckle]

JR And this is this page that's down here

GW Right.

JR -- Can we look at each one of these and have you say how we would respond -- how we were responding to them? "Calvert materials are designed for parents in the home schooling program, not for professional educators."

GW Well, see. What had happened, he had gotten -- Dr. Hunter when I say he --- had gotten Nancy--

JR Gimbel?

GW Gimbel and Alice Morgan-Brown to get -- to go over—and Merrill not knowing what they were going to do -- to look at the books. But they hadn't gone through. The other thing which Merrill did not even discuss with them --- because he didn't even know what they were up to -- and Cliff had talked so ugly that same day, cause they had gone down -- Cliff Ball was there too -- that he—they did not know that we were using the same program that was in the school -- that the outline there was generally the same. But the curriculum was different in the school that you would use. And so they were ignorant of it and didn't ask. And so this was something that they thought -- ok this was a dumb program and parents could just teach their children at home. They also weren't aware of -- that the Calvert curriculum is the state curriculum--home schooling for people who go away.

JR So that was just misinformation on his part.

GW That's right.

JR Ok. "The Calvert Curriculum is outdated."

GW They had looked at the dates on some of the books and the information in there was totally correct. They were not aware of the fact that Calvert would update whatever the materials they found in a book; they would update it. But the—they had looked at the history book. And it was written by Hilliar [founder of Calvert School]. The materials were the same because it went from the Stone Age to World War II and there was no need to update the book. And it's Calvert's method of only making changes when there's
a need to update it or make it better. And they’re very frugal. Where in the city we just throw away every year. It wasn’t outdated. The material was current.

JR    “The Calvert Curriculum pays insufficient attention to females and minorities.”

GW    Now that really sent Merrill off. He was so upset that he took the books and went through and put markers everytime there were females and males in there and it really was an integrated curriculum. But he was so angry when he saw that.

JR    I remember Walter Shook once saying, “if Trudy Williams and Jo Ann Robinson are using a sexist/racist curriculum the world has come to an end.”

GW    Right. [Laughter]

JR    “The Calvert Curriculum is designed for high achievers.”

GW    Now that was stupid. The children who use the Calvert Curriculum, if it’s used well, become high achievers, because the Calvert Curriculum really was — is just very well ordered, well structured, and starts with the children and each teacher is on the same page. So that you’re not jumping here and there. And in fact — it was — the children even learned the time tables and things like that. But they also went further than the school system goes, because the children become culturally literate. And where the school system brings them to a point, and then they stop. Well, the teachers have to be trained too. So it’s a well-ordered curriculum for children.

JR    Well Hunter continuing on with his list said that another objection was, “for Barclay to adopt the Calvert Curriculum would cause problems for students transferring in and out of the school.”

GW    And which we couldn’t prove at that time— but was disproved because once we started the curriculum, the children didn’t move. In fact, it stopped any kind of mobility. When the children graduated last year—the 8th graders — seventy-five percent of the children who had started in the curriculum were still there. So it really stabilized the children.

JR    Hasn’t there, though, been a problem with kids coming into the school?

GW    Yes there has. And what we did—when the children came into the school, we set up 2 classes for children who were coming into the school — and they were called— transition classes.

END OF Side A, TAPE XII
TAPE XII – Side B

GW Now some came out of the class soon because they were pretty good kids and could catch up. The slower moving children stayed in that class almost all year and may have been readjusted to a lower class.

JR Ok. And Hunter’s last objection in this particular article suggested that Calvert School was really exploiting the school system—the public school system—and was planning to use Abell Funds to update its own curriculum.

GW Well that was—that was stupid then. Because it still hasn’t—The Abell Foun—the purpose for the change then was to improve the quality of Barclay School and to make the kids stable. Now what happened—that with the success of the program—the Abell Foundation program, I mean the Calvert program—became so popular from all around the world—we had all those people coming in—that Calvert became—Calvert did prosper, but it didn’t change—well as they changed their books, they changed the books at Barclay, you know.

JR But they weren’t using Abell funds to do it.

GW No, No. They weren’t using Abell’s funds to do it—Abell funds all went in to Barclay School to help us develop the curriculum and do it well, to have a coordinator that would work with us, to have assistants, and to have teacher training, you know and get the materials that the school needed. But he just didn’t understand. And that’s the sad part. He was just angry. And he just used anything.

JR Well, as soon as we read that article, we hand-delivered a request to the school board to be heard again. And its next—its meeting was scheduled for the very next day, which was April the 5th.

GW Um uh.

JR That meeting was another great experience.

GW [Laughter]

JR You and I showed up at 200 East North Avenue, where they’d been holding the meetings—

GW Yes

JR and discovered that the meeting had been moved but nobody had bothered to call you and tell you.

GW That’s right.
JR  So we hurried over to Coldstream Elementary, where the meeting was held. And we picked up the agenda, and on the agenda it said there would be an audience hearing about Barclay. So I kept sitting there with you -- Carl Stokes [City Council representative] was with us that night --

GW  Right. That's true.

JR  --waiting to be called. I was never called.

GW  Right.

JR  Dr. Howard was asked to report and he reported on that meeting that you and Pat and I had with him and Dr. Stevens and Francois and Ball.

GW  Right, right.

JR  And you kept sitting there [Laughter] as he reported saying, "That's a lie!"

GW  Laughter.

JR  "That's a lie." And you even told a reporter that night that his report was "blatant lies."

GW  They were. [Laughter]

JR  Because he made it sound as if we'd had a meeting of the minds and that we were going to go off and do something that we were satisfied with, and everything was ok.

GW  Right, that's right.

JR  And so then the board voted, still having never called me; still never having had an audience hearing.

GW  Right.

JR  And they voted unanimously to reject the Barclay-Calvert proposal.

GW  That's right.

JR  What are your memories of how we responded? [Laughter]

GW  Oh, that was horrible that day. Because what had happened was that they played sneak ball, that's number one. But number two, Howard had said that we had discussed it and that he had promised me all these different kinds of things, and that I was unwilling to go along with these things.
JR  Ok.

GW  Right. And that he had offered other ways in which we could help the children at the school, and I was ready to go up there and fight. I was so angry. I guess you stayed angry during that time, because they were just so devious. And Mrs. Stuart was on there—on the board. You remember she got up and walked out. Do you remember? That night -- I guess you don’t remember her.

JR  I don’t remember that. No.

GW  Because she got up and just walked right out when he made the report. And then she retired. After. She just quit the board. ‘Cause he was lying.

JR  Oh, you mean Dr. Stevens, again.

GW  I mean Dr. Stevenson. She just got up and walked right out. And knowing that he was lying, and that’s when she quit the board. But they did. They went against us. But we said well we weren’t gonna give up. That they couldn’t do that. That he had lied. I think Lalley’s husband was there.

JR  Yeah, Will Englund wrote the article the next day.

GW  Will Englund --and put in there that I said

[JR and GW talking over one another regarding Englund article. Inaudible] blatant lies.

GW  [Laughter] But they were. I had never -- and knowing that I was sittin’ there. Maybe he didn’t know I was sittin’ there.

JR  Oh, they knew.

GW  They knew, ‘cause we came all the way down front.

JR  That’s right. We came in late and we walked all the way to the front. And we had Carl Stokes with us.

GW  That’s right. Just blatant lies. But then, it just only fired up people in the city -- in the whole state. ‘Cause we got letters from -- I’ll never forget a letter that I got from a -- she had to be an elderly woman. And she said, “I don’t have any children in school but I wish you well because I’m just proud of the fact that someone is willing to stand up and fight for a proper education.” But you just got letters that just made you want to cry. And then the number of teachers in other schools -- the teachers were more than principals -- trying to see what they could do to help us. And it just built up more once they denied it and it hit the fan.
JR Well because of that kind of support and just because you’re stubborn [Laughter], we immediately called a meeting at the school again for parents and community. And this time all of our elected officials showed up. I think part of that maybe was because Carl had been there with us that night –

GW Right.

JR and he saw what a dirty deal had been done. But all of our Annapolis delegates and all of our City Council representatives came.

GW That’s right.

JR And—where—as you recall it, where were we at that point, in terms of what we were thinking we would do?

GW What we needed to do next.

JR Yeah.

GW And I remember—oh, what’s his name, the light-skinned fellow who’s in—one of them was trying to say, cool it down and just let it stop now. And then, what’s the tall one’s name. He’s still out there.

JR From Annapolis or from the city?

GW Yeah, from Annapolis.

JR We had Ken Montague—

GW Montague had said, “whatever we can do, I will stand with you. Whatever you need to do.” But the other fella—short one; I see him now a lot, too—had said, “I just...”

JR Was that Curt Anderson?

GW Curt Anderson—he wanted us to calm down awhile. But Montague had said, “you have a good cause, and I’ll do whatever I can.”

JR And Anne Perkins was

GW Anne Perkins—

JR supportive

GW supportive, but—

JR but also not sure that it was going to do us any good to keep knocking our heads.
GW    She didn’t know whether it would work.

JR    Yeah.

GW    So, you know, they were there. But they didn’t give us that much incentive to keep on fighting.

JR    Right. Now at some point – and I failed to say anything about this, I think, in any of these questions – but at some point, that group of people did all go to the mayor. And

GW    Yes they did.

JR    And I think he discouraged them, too, from encouraging us

GW    Yes, yes.

JR    But they had gone on our behalf, to the mayor.

GW    Yes they did. They went to the mayor. And he then was still in the mode of – of trying to let Hunter be the superintendent.

JR    Well, when May came, we went trooping off to Taxpayers Night – which we’d done many times in the past.

GW    [Chuckle]

JR    But this year we had a special mission. Two people from Barclay – Paula Denney and Walter Shook [Barclay parents] – spoke at Taxpayers Night. And of course the mayor sits on the Board of Estimates so the mayor was there and there we were there in our Barclay T-shirts with our kids, and addressing him directly.

GW    Right.

JR    You’ve already talked a little – you’ve made it clear that he was supporting the superintendent at this point. How did you feel about that? You’d all gone to his inauguration

GW    Right.

JR    from Barclay. You’d been really pleased – had supported –

GW    Had taken a hundred and some children down to – where did we go down to – all these kids goin’ down there, troopin’ down—
JR The Civic Center, or wherever--

GW Yeah. I felt like he had really let us down at that time. Because I had worked in his - worked for him in his campaign. And the first time I went willingly, the second time - see and that was at his - wasn’t that his first time?

JR Yeah, he was still in his first --

GW first year.

JR administration

GW Yeah. And I had all these hopes for him and here he had said he was the education mayor. And he knew that the education in the city was on the downward spiral and yet, I felt he was clinging to Hunter, because he had elected him; brought him in, and was not willing to say he had brought in a dud - you know, another dud. ‘Cause Alice had gone and then Hunter came after Alice. And he had just fired Alice. And the other thing was, before he brought Hunter in, there were - at the board meetings - there were a lot of people who had talked about Hunter and said, “you’re going to make a mistake.” And they talked about what he had done in Richmond. And yet the mayor brought him on in. And - but I felt he had been, really - was back-stabbing us. I couldn’t understand how he would not. ‘Cause he supposedly was liking Barclay so much. He had spoken at the school.

JR Right, right. He’d been at one of our graduations. In fact, he spoke at Joe’s graduation.

GW That’s right!

JR Commencement, when he was still States Attorney.

GW That’s right. He certainly did. So here we were.

JR Well, in addition to the newspaper articles that we’ve already talked about, the press and local t.v. just kept covering this whole controversy all the while it was going on. At the end of May Tom Chalkley published a particularly long and thorough article on the whole episode. Among the issues he raised was one that we’ve discussed in other contexts: how the activism and visibility of white parents and friends of Barclay tended to give the school an image of being much more white and well off than it ever was. This is what Chalkley said, and I’d like you to comment on it. “Viewed simplistically, a black elite - the mayor, Hunter, most of the school board and some elected officials—have taken stands against the Barclay-Calvert proposal, while a white elite—the Sun, the Abell Foundation, the Calvert School— is identified with the supporters. This is an unfair view, since where else in Baltimore would you find so many black and white parents with such an equal commitment to an integrated community school.” Was that an accurate read in some ways?
GW That’s true. Because we had been—I had been accused by Hunter—of trying to establish a private school for the white elites in the city, here—in Charles Village. He just out and out said that. But what he didn’t see—that even though—that you and a couple of the other whites that were up speaking, there was always some blacks. And the other thing was that there were—even though there weren’t blacks speaking out—they came and sat in the audience. But what he was saying was absolutely true. They couldn’t see the forest for the trees. And—example—when Francois came to visit Barclay after the program had started, she came downstairs and she said, “this school is mostly black.” And I said, “I told you that.” But of course she was believin’ that too. And so there was always a myth about Barclay School, anyhow. And you always had mixed staff. And then you had—well, the community worked for the school. So you had Wally and all the others who spoke up and then you had in the community not that many blacks who would speak out. I know we had had some training, but there wasn’t that many who really would get up and talk. We had Jenny one night—remember Jenny Funderburke?

JR Yes.

GW And we had gone over and over. And she did a good job. And then of course Pat was good.

JR Pat was excellent.

GW Yeah. But I don’t—but you didn’t have that many who were willing. Sharon Scott was good.

JR Um Uh.

GW And I think her sister.

JR Yes, Paula Denney.

GW Yeah. And so you just got a distorted picture. Because in Charles Village you had more whites than blacks. But the Charles Village fought for the school. So he’s right in that perception. And I believe, too, that that was what Hunter and the mayor thought too. That I wasn’t fighting for these poor black kids in the school, I was fighting for Charles Village. And you didn’t have that many children—after Joe and that group left—

JR Right. It became more and more a black school.

GW Thank you. And—

JR It wasn’t all that white a school when Joe was there [Laughter].
GW When Joe and them were there. It really wasn’t. It has been predominantly black for — ever since I’ve been in there.

JR Well, as a black person, how did you feel about that this charge that you were somehow being used as a tool of the white community, or fighting on the wrong side, or whatever.

GW Well, it made me angry. That’s number one. It was like I was being a patsy. And number two, it questioned my values and it was just untrue. And yet you couldn’t get them to see it. Hunter had been in the school, several times. And the Mayor had been in the school, but they still -- you know, when people are anti-something they just have in their mind whatever they want to think. And of course by you being such a profound speaker, that upset their nerves too, and they resented that. But you were my buddy and you were there for the school, and you fought more for the school than the people in the city. So they should be glad that they had the people who fought for it. But that’s not true. And it can be true today in a lot of things, you know. But it’s sad. It really is.

JR Well, kind of on the same theme, in that same article Tom Chalkley noted that the NAACP — the local chapter anyway — was opposing Barclay-Calvert. At least George Buntin, the director of the local chapter was. Buntin took the position that all special schools — and by that he meant School for the Arts and City, and Poly and so forth —

GW Right.

JR all of them should be done away with because they were discriminatory against African Americans.

GW Um uh.

JR Weren’t you and Buntin supposed to meet at one point, and—

GW Yes.

JR did you ever talk to him about it?

GW Well no, he never came. See Jerry Baum — I was still with the board, Fund for Educational Excellence — and Jerry Baum says, “Oh he’s a great” — ‘cause I was layin’ him out in a meeting. And I said, “I don’t even want to see him.” He said, “he’s a great person,” you know. And he says, “I’ll set up a meeting between you two.” He never showed. Jerry came to the school. He never came. I guess he knew I was ready for him. But he never came. And Jerry was a little disappointed. He says “well, I guess something came up.” But you knew he knew why he didn’t come.

JR What about the argument that special schools just kind of cream off the best of the African American students and force all the others down into the —
GW  Oh, no. See, that’s stupid. When you have exceptional children in the school – ‘cause I used to just send them – that’s how I knew so many of the private schools. I would just go there and say, “I have this child, or a couple of them, who really are doing a disservice to themselves and the kids in the classroom.” Because the super kids would answer all the questions and the other kids would just go back. So when – because those bright—super bright kids have a right to be challenged, just like the special ed. children. And in fact, that’s why they’re in the same mode. Because they’re special children. So anyone who believes that way is stupid. That’s why I used to cream classes. I would cream the top kids so that they could challenge each other. And then you’d find some children who were fair, at the top of fair, would move up to good, and would be freed up. But wouldn’t be that quiet in the classroom. I think we need more special schools for children. We need vocational ed. We need all of those because children are different.

JR  You don’t end up putting a stigma on one group or another by doing it that way.

GW  No. No. That’s stupid. I – in fact, I – when children who really, really were special ed children—a lot of the children who are in special ed are there because of behavior, because of lack of teaching or what-have-you. But the really, really special ed children, who really, really have serious needs—the classroom teacher can’t handle it. And the special ed teachers they have in the school—they can’t handle it. They need to be in a separate school with specialists who can work toward their strength. Because even those who can’t read and write and so forth, they’re able to make things, to draw, to do other things, to work toward their strength so they can become independent. No, I don’t think that that’s wrong. I think we need more specialized schools.

JR  But haven’t we ended up in Baltimore City with this terrible situation of the Northern High Schools and so forth where –

GW  Well, that’s true.

JR  have just become dumping grounds while a City College and a Western --

GW  Well, that’s true.

JR  and a Poly look so much better.

GW  But then – because that’s the way they deal with it. You have – in there you have each school sends a certain number of children – I guess that’s true in a way. But it still wouldn’t be if they had specialized schools, where they had vocational ed., where they used to have it before. Where children who were not that sharp or swift in reading or what have you, but could go and learn a craft in vocational ed. Well, they’ve taken that out. A lot of those kids that ended up in Northern – if they could go into a specialized school where they could deal with their strength, then they wouldn’t have that problem. Plus Northern has become a dumping ground for children who’ve been on suspension and things like that. And it’s gotten that way. And, in fact, there’s more than Northern in the city here. I think – it’s true that the top has a better chance. But we don’t have is
people that look at children as different individuals. You have people who make more than we'll ever make, who couldn't read a novel. But very good in basketball; very good in art, music. But they should be looked at that way. And I think that the schools just are made up in the wrong way. That's how you end up with the Northerns and the others. I'd just like to take the whole city and turn it around. And it's not child centered. These schools are not child centered. And that's serious.

JR Well, one more example of our opposition - Elijah Cummings, who is now our U.S. Congressman, but was then a state delegate, sent out a mailing in support of Hunter and took to task in that mailing those who were allegedly questioning Hunter's authority. How did that make you feel about Cummings? And did you ever talk to him?

GW Yeah, I did talk to Cummings. And at that time Hunter had gone to all the black groups and had said that he was in trouble, using us as a point—that the white groups were trying to take over the city and take his authority. So they believed Hunter, you know. That this was not just a regular public school trying to get better; it became a group of people trying to take over the city. And these were the Charles Villagers [Laughter] who were taking over the city. Never thinking that ninety nine and forty four percent of the kids in Charles Village don't go to Barclay. You know? You have a few—what streets? Well Barclay is now included in Charles Village - that makes the black group. But before, when they were fussing, they didn't go? They either—their children were either grown or they went to private school.

JR That's right.

GW And if I had a child today, I'd send my child to private school. If I had to eat cake—I mean cheese and crackers every day—not because of being elite but because of the quality of schools in Baltimore City now. So Cummings said, when he talked with me, he said, "I really just saw my black brother being railroaded." And I said, "but you had a black sister out there fightin' too." He said, "well we didn't see it that way. We just thought you had been caught up with Charles Village and really were trying to ruin Dr. Hunter." So I said, "now did you see?" "Oh, yeah, we found out later." But - then I said, "you have to be careful what you write down, you know?" So he said, "yes."

JR So was that an apology of sorts from him?

GW Not really. Because Cummings really doesn't apologize. He says a lot of things that you have to get on him about. But he's friendly, you know. We've been places—haven't gone together—but been in different places. And I like a lot of what he does. But he never apologized and said, "I'm sorry." He just said, "I soon learned that Hunter was his own enemy. I guess you could call—

JR Yeah, at least it was an admission of not being entirely right.

GW Uh hu. But Hunter had gone to a lot of black groups.
JR  Oh yeah. Yeah. Ok. We had one final session with Superintendent Hunter, at his invitation, on May 18, 1989. Miss Chase – my notes say there were three teachers. And I'm sure who they were. I'm sure one was Verna Chase. I think maybe Jan French.

GW  Jan French and it wasn't a teacher, it was Tanya Jackson.

JR  Oh, ok.

GW  Tanya Jackson. She went as a parent.

JR  All right. And then Pat Straus, I think.

GW  Yes.

JR  And I.

GW  Right.

JR  And we went back down to 200 East North Avenue.

GW  [Laughter]

JR  And we found ourselves in a conference room with Hunter, with Farfel, who wasn't president of the school board yet but he was on the school board.

GW  Oh, yes!

JR  And with Ms. Francois. And I think actually this may be the meeting where I was called a tape recorder.

GW  That's probably so. I know you were called a tape recorder at the first one. He refused to talk.

JR  Ok.

GW  You remember, he said, "I will not talk anymore – because – as long as the tape recorder is here." And we looked, you know, thinking – and then we realized——

END OF Side B - TAPE XII

TAPE XIII - Side A
[continuation of "tape recorder" discussion not recorded]
Farfel, and Francois and our favorite superintendent. The only thing I remember about this is how patronizing Phil Farfel was. He was giving you all kinds of advice—

GW Yes.

JR about how you could get more community support and—

GW Right!

JR and so on. But beyond that I don’t have a clear focus anymore.

GW I think he was trying to appease us but still saying he couldn’t support us. But I don’t remember everything. But he did—I think in the end, he did say he would work with us. Because you remember, I called him—something had come up and he gave us the number where we could reach him. And I called him about—I called him at his business. He had given us—Susan was the other person down there.

JR Oh, ok. Susan Lattimore?

GW Lattimore. Susan knew him, ‘cause her daughter—remember they talked about her daughter going down and babysitting.

JR Ok, ok.

GW But it didn’t give us much except—

JR I think this is the meeting where Hunter said he was gonna go in the direction of magnet schools and maybe somewhere down the line we could become a magnet school.

GW That’s right.

JR And I think Farfel talked about how the school board was developing guidelines for how you can apply for money from—and that he would let us have that form when it was done—or something like that.

GW Right. Right. And he really had come there to get us off of Hunter’s back. But really was surprised at how determined we were. And in the end he said that we could call him. But he did talk about other things coming up and so forth and so on. But I think he really came there, because of who he was, to try to get us off Hunter’s back.

JR Well, I remember I was so angry at Farfel when I left that I sent him one of my famous letters—

GW [Laughter]
JR told him that before he was even born you’d been making contributions and how
dare he presume to give you advice on doing things that you’d been doing for the last 30
years.

GW Right. [Laughter]

JR Well, within days after we were turned down by the school board, there comes in
the newspaper an announcement that the school system is accepting $400,000 from the
Edna McConnell Clarke Foundation for Calverton and West Baltimore Middle Schools.

GW Right.

JR And some said it wasn’t valid to compare that grant with what we had been
denied because this one was gonna’ only be used for teacher-training and wouldn’t be
spent on materials and supplies.

GW Right.

JR Others said that Hunter liked the McConnell Clarke program because the idea had
begun with him and the bureaucracy and he didn’t like Barclay-Calvert because it had
begun with us and our community.

GW Right and we had gotten on him.

JR What did you think about – remember how you felt about –

GW Well, yeah. That they could take that. I just felt that they were against us then –
that it had become more of a personal thing – that it wasn’t just that they didn’t want --
that it was the curriculum. We had gotten on their nerves and—but then it gave us a
opening. Once they had taken and accepted money for the other schools then that gave
us an opening and we could start from there and say, “ok, you have this,” you know. But
that whole time was turmoil. And then you had the public—

JR Yes. I had skipped a question back here. You’ve addressed it in a way, but let
me raise it anyway. So many points along the way, most sane individuals – if you’re
looking at this objectively – [Laughter]

GW Uh hu

JR would have just said, “enough. It’s time to accept the decision. It’s time to just
get on with other things and just let this go.” Why didn’t Barclay folk and you do that?

GW Because we had the right to do it. And we had really studied why we wanted it
and why we needed it. And that we felt we had a right to change, that we had gone
through the whole process ourselves, by going through and saying why did we need a
change through the steering committee. We had talked about it. And then we had visited
Calvert and we thought this was a success. And I guess most of all I was just darn stubborn. And that the parents had become very angry when Hunter had said it was a rich man’s curriculum. And they wanted to know what a rich man should have that a poor man shouldn’t have as far as education. So everyone had gotten stubborn. And then each person was supportive. You know, when I would reach the point where I was like ready to crack, then the parents would support me. The staff, when they got too angry we would cool them down so that – and the parents – because we didn’t want them to explode. So I think we had become so determined that we weren’t going to turn back. And I think that’s why we kept it up.

JR Ok. Well, we got dejected, but we didn’t give up. So our next target became the mayor’s forum, which was scheduled for Saturday morning, June 3, 1989 at the Wyman Park Multi- Purpose Center. For the first time since this controversy began it was decided that you would be one of the public speakers. Why did you decide to take that stance then?

GW I guess I had just been so uptight and there were so many things happening that I – at first I didn’t want to. And then I said “well, I need to let them know how I feel about what they’ve done to us.” And that’s why I guess I went on and said to myself, “well I need to make a last ditch effort and let them know.” Because there’s been so much ugliness had gone on during that time and all we wanted to do was to better the quality of education at Barclay.

JR Now as I recall, Jerrelle Francois or someone about that level advised you not –

GW Not to.

JR to participate. That it wouldn’t be good for your job.

GW Several people. I know Jerrelle had. Jerrell had, and there was somebody – wasn’t it Rebecca?

JR Maybe so.

GW Yes! ‘Cause I – Rebecca—

JR Rebecca Carroll

JR we were in Lomans, and I was walking down the aisle and there was Rebecca yelling at me, “how dare you treat your brother like that.” You know, “your black brother like that.” And, which really upset me. And I said, “how dare your black brother treat me like that.” And she said, “after all he’s the superintendent and you are hurting his position.” And I said, “No I’m not.” And I said to her, “Don’t ever raise your voice at me again, Dr. Carroll, because,” I said, “I do what I’m going to do; you do what you’re going to do.” But I don’t think she knew about that meeting. I know Jerrelle had. But
somebody else had. I’ll think of it. Had told me that I shouldn’t because I would take
my chance—you know I’d take a chance of being fired. I don’t remember who.

JR      I do remember that we were advised that it wasn’t a good idea.

GW      That it wasn’t a good idea.

JR      Well, do you remember, by any chance, what you did that Friday night before the
forum? I remember that I had agreed that I would type up our written statements.

GW      Yeah.

JR      And I was going to take dictation from you and—because we were going to
submit something in writing, along with our oral statements.

GW      Right.

JR      And what I remember that Friday night is calling and calling and calling and—

GW      [Laughter]

JR      you not answering your phone until really late.

GW      Right.

JR      Do you remember what you did that night?

GW      I don’t know. I guess—probably—I really don’t know. I guess going through my
mind what I was going to say, what I was going to do. I really don’t—I don’t know. I
guess I paced. I guess I—‘cause I really don’t—I know I go out and speak at groups
about education and all. But this was something that I was so angry inside, and I just
didn’t want to destroy what we were working toward. But I don’t know what I did.

JR      Maybe you were driving. Because usually if you’re home you answer the
phone—

GW      So maybe I was driving around. ‘Cause sometimes I’ll do that. If I’m upset I’ll
get in the car and drive around and then I’ll go in the store and walk around and then
come back home. I really don’t know what I did that night. [Laughter]

JR      [Laughter]

GW      ‘Cause I really was on edge.
JR Yeah, yeah. Well, finally we made contact and we got the written stuff together and we arrived the next morning. Can you just describe what you remember about that Saturday morning and how you felt as you were talking to Kurt Schmoke?

GW Other people – so many people had talked, you know. And I – I really was angry with him because he hadn’t supported us. And we had – But I was angry, that we were just asking for something that seemed so simple and we weren’t getting his support. Because I remember saying to him that he had pledged, when he came in as a mayor and had pledged for education. And I remember saying something like, “thirty years ago” – or so many years ago – “I pledged toward education.” And I just don’t remember what else I said to him. I was just so—

JR Did you have – do you recall if you had the feeling that he was taking you seriously?

GW Yeah. He was really – and then – ’cause they were cutting people off.

JR Yeah. We all had three minutes.

GW Yeah. And then he was asking questions. After I finished, he started asking. And one of the men on the side

JR Pete Pakis

GW Yeah, said “time up.” And he just snapped at him! He says, “I’m talking to Miss Williams!” And so he didn’t answer any more and then the mayor started. I think he started realizing some of the things that were going on in the city. I don’t know. But he started asking questions about different things that were happening. I remember that. And then he said, “will you meet with me tomorrow.” That’s what he said.

JR Um hu. Ok.

GW But he was listening. ‘Cause I could see that he was listening. But I knew I was just so upset with him. You know? The whole city. Everybody. [Laughter] But he was listening. And I didn’t know how well he was listening until he snapped at the person who said “time.”

JR Do you remember, as you stood up – well you stood up to speak and you got to the microphone and you introduced yourself and the minute that you said –

GW Oh right. [Laughter]

JR Do you remember what happened?

GW [Still laughing] And this great big roar in the back, and it shocked me so, I looked back --
JR Yes, the crowd just roared.


JR You were wearing a—your collar—because you had been having trouble with your back.

GW Yes, back, yeah. I remember that. But it just shocked me. [Laughter] It was just loud, you know. And he made a statement about that—he said something about it.

JR Yeah, he said something about it.

GW "I see your friends are here," or something like that he said. [Laughter] Yes. And Verna was watching Jerrelle and she said she swore Jerrelle was taking notes for Hunter.

JR Um. I'm sure that's probably true. We were surprised, 'cause we had done some encouraging of people to come to the forum. But it turned out that it wasn't our people who made the difference. But there were so many other people—

GW That's right--other people!

JR other people there with other issues, but they were all on our issue as well. Really supportive. Really supportive.

GW That's true. And they supported us. And it was packed in there. I remember they cut it off after 50 some speakers.

JR Yeah.

GW Yeah. And they couldn't have any more. But that—and I had to meet him at 7:30 the next morning.

JR The next morning. Well that was a Saturday, so you didn't meet him on Sunday but you did soon thereafter.

GW Yeah.

JR Well, do you remember how you felt when it was all over? When the forum was over?

GW I felt good that there were so many people there who were pushing for our program. And the first time, I think I felt like he heard us. He heard what we were just
crying out for, you know? Then of course when I met with him -- I guess it was -- maybe he called me.

JR Yeah, I think he did. I can answer that here [consulting file materials]. Ok he promised to talk further with you and he called you to his office on the morning of June 14th.

GW Ok.

JR Can you talk about that meeting?

GW Well, he -- when I got in -- he was waiting there when I got upstairs to his office -- or his secretary called and he said “send her right in.” And I went in and he -- it was before -- it was on a Wednesday, whatever June 14th was -- because we met before they have their regular meeting -- council meeting, or whatever it is; commissioners meeting. And we talked so long he was late and had to run. But he said—that’s when he said that he had been trying to make the superintendent a superintendent. And that’s when he said, “if you can—I will work with Dr. Hunter if you can quiet your parents [laughter] down; then you will have your program.” That’s what he had promised. I think I came back and told you all that. He said we would get the program.

JR How would you describe his -- I don’t know exactly what word to use--

GW His demeanor?

JR Yeah.

GW Well, he -- first he asked why did we want it. And I talked about the lack of structure in the city and the quality of the curriculum and teacher training — all those things we used to have that were gone. And something for brand new teachers or just fair teachers who really needed something in their hand to be able to carry on and follow until they can get on their feet. But then he asked me a lot about problems in the city and he said, “well you know I go to people and talk, “ and he said, “ few come out and tell exactly what they feel the problem is.” So, he said, “well,” he said, “I’m going to work on Dr. Hunter, then you will get your program.” But then he couldn’t work on Hunter because Hunter was just that stubborn. And he -- I remember the morning he called and said, “he has pissed me off…”

JR [Laughter]

GW [Laughter] “I told him he would either sign the letter for you -- your school to have the program -- or I want his letter on my desk. And he didn’t do either. [Laughter]
GW  I said “well, now you know what we’ve been going through.” So that’s when he fired him.

JR  That’s when we get his head on a plate [referring to a Sun editorial cartoon]

GW  [Hearty Laughter] Oh, lord.

JR  Well, when you came back from that meeting on June 14th, and you reported to the staff and I remember you called me on the telephone. But according to my old notes, there wasn’t any specific mention of Calvert Curriculum per se, in what you first were supposed to be talking about, at least with us. You told us when you came back from City Hall that you and the mayor had established a framework of two years. That’s what he had left in his first administration.

GW  Um uh. Right.

JR  And that in that framework, during that time, we’d get our class sizes capped; our staff—we’d get a promise that our staff would remain stable; we’d get sufficient materials and supplies on time. And we’d have what was called “maximum flexibility in teaching strategies and obtaining private funding for curriculum improvement.”

GW  Um hu.

JR  But there was really no mention of the Calvert Curriculum.

GW  Right.

JR  Were you told to stop talking about Calvert?

GW  Well, he just told me to -- it was better to be as low as I could be. Because if things sneaked out, that it could upset the whole problem. He then did talk to me about how split the—so many of the blacks believed Hunter. And ‘cause he had gone to different meetings and told them things. And I said, “Did you believe him?” And he said, “I want him to be a superintendent.” And I said, “well you know better. You know what Barclay’s like.” He said, “But a lot of people don’t.” And that’s when — but he did — that’s how I knew how many groups had gone to. And he had offered — so he had been talk—and Hunter had been lying to him. Oh that’s what — another thing. He said, “well Dr. Hunter has been saying that he has been meeting with you. And I said — I told him about the time he took me up to his office and then left the building. And I said, “Dr. Hunter just refuses to talk to me.” And he said, “oh he will.” But then that’s when he had had enough, because people had been on him. Everywhere he went people were saying to him, “why don’t you let them have that curriculum?” But he had asked me to cool things down. So...
JR And did he specifically say just stop talking—I mean as part of cooling things down—just stop talking about Calvert per se?

GW Yes. Yes.

JR And just go with these other things.

GW Right.

JR But did you—going back to the forum for a minute, I remember after you spoke Trudy Bartel spoke shortly afterward and she questioned the mayor about your safety—the safety of your job and your being harrassed by Hunter.

GW Oh, that's true.

JR And he said, "nobody is gonna' touch Miss Williams." You know, he said that, so—

GW That's true.

JR did you feel confident after that, and after this meeting with him that morning of June 14th, that now you had his support—did you feel then that you would probably begin to develop an amicable working relationship with Hunter?

GW No. No. I didn’t. Because at that time, when we talked that morning, he realized that Hunter was not going to—that it was difficult, and he was going to try, since he had told him to meet with us. He was going to try to meet with Hunter. And help him to try to change so that we could have the program. But—

JR But you knew Hunter better than he, in some ways.

GW Yeah. Yeah.

JR Well, what do you remember about how the staff and the parents and the community felt about your report from Mayor Schmoke.

GW Well they felt, they felt that something had happened. But they didn’t know how much, so they felt as though he had finally come on to our side and that he was going to work. And they understood, when I said “But I can’t say but so much ‘til it happens.” ’Cause sometimes—’cause I remember—[Laughter]—let me tell you. What’s the fellow from Channel Two came to the school the next day and he had said, and he was talking about the Calvert Curriculum, and so forth. And I said, “Well, I think we’ll eventually get it.” I said, “And I will let you know when and if it happens.” I was on the telephone talking to my sister and I looked at Channel Two. And he’s talking about the Calvert Curriculum—’cause see that was a big scoop that day—and that Miss Williams has said that the program will—she’s quite sure that the program will happen.” And when he said
that, I said, “all Hunter needs to do ..” And I know I looked like a bum. I had on this old plaid shirt. I jumped in the car. I said to Sarah, “I’ve gotta’ go.” She said, “what’s wrong with you, crazy?”

JR   [Laughter]

GW   I jumped in the car, flew up there, and the secretary was saying, “what’s the matter?” I said, “Get him down here.” I said, “You’ve gotta’ get him down here. I said, “he’s gonna’ get the whole school in trouble.” And she said, “what can I do about it?” Now who was the woman who was in charge at that time, because she came down and she heard me and she said, “I can guarantee you it will not come back on.” And it didn’t. I went, “oh, God.” [Laughter] Hunter would have just messed it up for good.

JR   Um hu.

GW   And that’s why I’m shy of reporters too much, you know. Because they can sometimes do you in.

JR   Well, as I remember, I was disappointed when you came back.

GW   Yeah. Yeah, ‘cause I couldn’t say.

JR   Right. And it sounded like a lot of compromises and Calvert being buried underneath somewhere, so there was a little tension there.

GW   Right.

JR   And I wasn’t very easy to cool down, either.

GW   No, you were really angry. And yet, I could understand what he was saying. Because Hunter was so volatile.

JR   Um hu.

GW   I remember you were really upset. [Laughter] But I really – I could have told you by yourself – now – but, he had said, “just calm it down and I will do my part.” So I said, “well, I’d better not. I’ll just go on and say...” ‘Cause you kept questioning me, which is why I said those statements.

JR   Right Right. I did. And I think even if you had told me, it probably wouldn’t have done any good. Because while I was – we all deal with anger in our different ways.

GW   Right.

JR   But once I get really opposed to somebody I never let go of it.
GW  Right.

JR   And I wasn’t willing to — I mean I just wanted to keep going after Hunter until he was dead — politically.

GW   [Laughter] That’s right.

JR   So I know I was a fly in the ointment there for a good while.

GW   But then the way the mayor had been was not really enough for you to trust him,

JR   That’s true.

GW   Because he had really not been supportive of us at all, at all.

JR   So did you have a feeling of being kind of on egg shells at this point?

GW   Yes. Because —

JR   The community wasn’t quite as —

GW   um?

JR   We didn’t have; we no longer had a — I no longer had a sense that we were necessarily fighting for Calvert. So all I wanted to do was kill Hunter.

GW   Yeah.

JR   And you were trying to do the negotiated —

GW   Yeah. And I just—well Hunter—you know if there was ever a person that I hated — I hated Hunter. Because he did things that were so vicious and so unnecessary that — I just, I just hated him. But then the mayor was our only hope of getting through all of this. Because the board had acted like they couldn’t stand up to Hunter. Farfel was on the fence. All of them except

END OF Side A—TAPE XIII

Side B—TAPE XIII
[completion of sentence from other side not recorded]

GW   there and here and there and really didn’t stick all the way through. You had some of the strongest people that you thought would stick with you would sort of like cool down. But then when I met with him—he just realized. Well, he knew there was something wrong with the system but he realized all we had been going through just for
something that was just so simple – that anyone would have thought – the system wasn’t losing any money at all. But we had been through, what – how many years of pure hell.

JR A couple of years we had been fighting by that time.

GW Yeah.

JR From the time it started –

GW Started, yeah—

JR to that point.

GW of pure hell. And so – he—there was just something about him that made me think, “Ok. He’s going to really try to deal with Hunter. And he’s not going to get anywhere with Hunter.” I knew that, because Hunter was just crazy. And I knew that. But I wasn’t sure enough that he was going to stand up to him. And that’s why I didn’t say then, “we got the program.” Because if he had backed back, I knew you were gonna’ go down and kill him. [Laughter] No ifs, ands and buts. We’d’a’ had a dead mayor. Because we had disappointed so many times. But when it came out that Hunter had been fired – I don’t know how I got the news – But he did call me that morning. But I don’t know how it hit the paper. I know he called me and he said, “He’s pissed me off.” [Laughter]

JR [Laughter]

GW ‘Cause he couldn’t do anything with him.

JR But before it got to that point, we had a whole ’nother school year where we didn’t have Calvert, where the mayor was led to believe that Hunter was working with you—

GW Right.

JR and where Hunter was doing things like the story you just told about calling you for a meeting and then walking out the back door and leaving you sitting there.

GW And Bob Embry was going back and forward.

JR Right, right. So there was a whole -- I remember that as one of the less joyful years at Barclay.

GW That’s true. It was horrible. And the meetings – the administrative meetings were just unbelievable. And Jerrelle, working on both sides of the fence, you know [mimicking] “girl, well he’ll do it; he’s a nice person” and all. And I’d just look at her.
And—but the whole—that was a whole year. 'Cause the year before was a battle with Howard and all—so it was two years of serious battles.

JR Yeah.

GW So finally—

JR Now that year, did we get the capped classes and the materials and supplies on time and those kinds of things? Do you remember? I don't remember?

GW I don't know—Yeah, because even,'cause one time I called and one time you called and the hall was just full of materials and supplies. And during the last year the Calvert teachers and Barclay teachers had become so close that they were bringing the lessons over to Jan and Rita and who were the first grade teachers—

JR Rawlings

GW Rawlings and —

JR Pat Bennett

GW Pat Bennett—no, Rawlings and— it wasn't Pat Bennett. Who was the first grade teacher—she left —

JR Oh, was it Michelle?

GW [inaudible] No She was second grade teacher. The first grade teacher was—she was a good teacher, but Peg hated her.

JR Maxine?

GW Uh uh. It wasn't Maxine. She looked something like – God, what's her name. I'll think of her name.

JR Ok.

GW I'll go back and get it. But she was a good teacher and Peg hated her. 'Cause she would talk back to her. But she did her work. The kids' work was there. She was an excellent teacher but she and Peg didn't make it. So finally at the end of the year she just said, "I can't work with her anymore." So she's out in Baltimore County now.

JR But the year that we're talking about—the year before we actually got the program—there was a lot of—Peg wasn't there yet—but there was a lot of interaction between Calvert and Barclay.
GW Yes. But the first grade teacher was—she was there. Because when we started she had been there a year and then the year that Calvert came in, she was there. Oh, no. You know what it was—those other crazy teachers were there.

JR The seven that you fired?

GW Yeah. And this girl came in the year that Peg came.

JR Well, looking back from today. What do you think now about the whole route that was taken to the Barclay—Calvert program—from that Saturday morning when you addressed the mayor in the forum through a whole ‘nother year of playing hide and seek with Hunter—

GW Yeah.

JR to the point where Schmoke finally fired Hunter and we finally got the school board to sign off on the Calvert program?

GW Yeah.

JR Was that the only route that we could have taken? Are you still convinced of that?

GW I think that we were fair. I don’t know what else—Schmoke—I felt at that time—there may have been something else. Schmoke had hired Hunter and was the only one who could fire him, really. And he had just been in Hunter’s corner all that time—now to get him to even start being in our corner—But I think it could have been better if he had brought Hunter in with me, and sat down with the two of us and said, “this is how it’s going to be, and, Dr. Hunter, either you do it this way”—or have him say, “I’m not going to work with her.” You know. And then he make his decision then. I think—when he fired Hunter they didn’t owe—yes they did. They paid him off.

JR Yes they did.

GW They paid him off. Yes they did. But I think when you look back there were shortcuts, you know? I think even when we started asking for it, I think the mayor could have been—come to see what the problem was and see himself what was going on. He never got into that. You know, he really never got into that.

JR Well, you know, at one point he had come to the school for a Reading Is Fundamental thing. He and Hunter were both in the school the same day.

GW At the same time.

JR And reporters and us asked him then and he just ducked us on the Calvert issue.
GW  He did. He ducked. That's right. And--

JR  And he got into Jet magazine for that day.

GW  Yes, he did. But he never—see, he—I don't know what his problem was. He did not want to stick his neck out. But neither did he want to act like a mayor. Because the average person would have dealt with it. I remember going up to Wisconsin and Tommy Thompson got in on it right away. You know, the parents and all were pushing. But he was an educator, Tommy Thompson was. But I just—well Schmoke does things like that anyhow, and I don't think of—I think we did a great job. We went according to the system. We put in everything. I think if Clif had not been such a pig, Edmonia—

JR  [Amused facial expression]

GW  He was a pig. What's-her-name—then, Dr. Silverstone was taken off the board. Because I think she would have pursued it then. Then Edmonia Yates was put back into—he just dropped her back. I think because she said something about it and they talked about it. And then she left and went to the state [board of education]. But there were all these little things that were just drawbacks. You know, you got excited when Dr. Silverstone said, "you will meet with Miss Williams. You will come up with things. How can you meet about a school and not have the principal there?" Of course Clif felt like two cents, but he never called a meeting. And of course things got all balled up and Dr. Silverstone was called from the board. And he had lied for almost a year.

JR  Now you know there's another board member we haven't mentioned yet. But as I recall—he—well let me ask you what you recall about his role in all of this. And that's Hollis—Meldon Hollis.

GW  I think Meldon—well I'm not sure—but I think Meldon was on the side of Hunter. And he was meeting with the black groups, too. And because he was a sneak. And I think he was crying out for Hunter in these groups, so he met with Hunter and gave some kind of legitimacy to what Hunter was saying, you know? But it was—he kept things going to. And see, he was a friend of the mayor's.

JR  Yes, yes.

GW  He really was.

JR  Yeah. I think that was probably a fairly crucial factor at certain points anyway.

GW  Right, right. But when you think of it—just to have a program to help the children. Then of course, when it worked. But Amrey never came in. And everbody was excited. But I'm jumping ahead of it.