

Interview of Louis Randall M.D

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Interviewer: Could you state your name please?

Dr. Randall: Hey I am Louis L. Randall M.D. and I am very happy to participate in this historical or this history project. I am certainly surprised that I was asked but I am very honored to be here. I am a Marylander of many many generations. You pick the name Randall, our family name probably started, I guess you know how that started in slavery. Randall owned a lot of land here in Maryland: Randallstown, Randall Street and my parents, my great grandparents are from Anne Arundel County. The Mitchell area in the area of Anne Arundel County. We started in that area in slave days as one of the few plantations that had American Indians and African Americans as slaves and we grew tobacco, in that arena. As you can imagine over the years, this is all changed and the Randall name is... no one ever recognizes that I was probably one of the somewhat indirect descendant of somebody that started the colony of Maryland. So I am very honored to be here to discuss this.

Getting back to the current time my grandmother on my mother's side was born in Calvert County, Maryland... in the Prince Frederick area and her father was an English Sea Captain and his last name was Skinner. In some way we think we are related to the Otis Skinner family. If I showed you picture of my grandmother you would not notice that she had any African American blood. She married later an African American of Portuguese African descent. From that came my mother and all of my uncles, many of whom are no longer recognizable in their descendents of African Americans and we won't discuss that. So we have a long history of Calvert County, Maryland. My father's side was the Randall side which is how we got that last name and they were in the Anne Arundel County area. So we have my mothers side from Calvert County and my fathers side from Anne Arundel County.

I was born in April, April 3, 1932 in Baltimore City. I think I was probably born at home and interestingly enough the doctor that signed my birth certificate was named Novey. I did not realize the significance of this until I looked at my birth certificate to look at this project and I said "Novey?" that's the room in which I was a Med student, now I am getting ahead of myself, at the University of Maryland and it was the Novey Room and I had no idea that the man they named the room after when I was a Med student at Maryland was the guy who signed my birth certificate. But anyway we started out in lower west Baltimore. My family moved here and my father and mother were married up in North Baltimore which used to be called Oak Street now it is called Howard Street down 21st Street. That is where they were married and I was born in that area. Then we later moved to Southwest Baltimore, Cary Street. There I went to school 140 at Carrollton and Lexington Street and then WWII came. My mother had divorced and remarried in 1941 and we moved from Cary Street to East Baltimore on Ashland Avenue. That area is now the area that is being demolished for the new Hopkins project

with Ashland Wolf. That is how I left the Elementary school and went to Dunbar Junior/Senior High School and stayed at Dunbar and finished at Dunbar High School. I moved back to West Baltimore I guess in my Junior year of high school but I was reluctant to stay at Dunbar because I had done very well there. I was Valedictorian of my Junior High class and I have all this documentation if you need to see for future. I was Valedictorian of my Senior class at Dunbar I was just Mister Man About Town in those days and I really enjoyed it. So these were very pleasant memories and we were so active in school at Dunbar High, the teachers were so dedicated that we never realized that there was any outside world that would disturb us. So we had all sorts of clubs the Latin Club, the French Club, Spanish Club and I had to smile at this I had the nerve to believe that could act so I was in the dramatic guild and then I had even the greater audacity to believe that I could sing. So in Dunbar High one day we had this, we were signing the Micado, you know it is a Japanese little musical I guess you've heard it. I was on the stage, and at Dunbar auditorium they had these huge windows on the side, looked like a church or something, but anyway it was a lightening storm a thunderstorm while we were presenting the play. I had to sing "Only a Rose" to this young lady who hated me because she would not let me kiss her. She just hated me cause I was pimply and all of that, you know I told you ETish. Anyway so I had this word and I had to sing "Only A Rose" and as I went to the high note it cracked "ahhhhhew" so I just didn't know what to do. But I give you all of this history to tell you that these days before '68 were just very active days and everyone was striving to move up the ladder. You see the immigrants now and say "Oh those people work so hard" everybody in America is an immigrant the Irish, Italian, Germans all started this way from their community centers, jumping off the ship with one shoe up in Ellis Island, they all worked hard. I'll document this, you will see that the life was very similar to any immigrant, all of that higher aspirations and to top it off not only did I participate in these extra curricular activities and I was able to become the Valedictorian but I also worked after school on Thursday nights, the store stayed open until 9:00 on Thursday nights now they stay open every night I guess. I worked at a store on Utah Street called Hermans across from Lexington Market so I would zip from my rehearsal over across the viaduct and down Utah Street and work and get home at 9 or 10 o'clock. And then on Saturdays I worked and Mr. Herman was generous enough to allow me to work for him because I lied about my age and I told him I was 16 but I was really 14. That showed up when I went to get my social security some years ago, I'm 75 now. When I was 65 the man said "we can't find you in 1932" I said "oh God I know why they have me as 1930." So Mr. Herman clothed me, I was the only poor black kid in school that had argyle socks and with silk and whatever in those days and handmade shirts and suits and buttons. So they look at me "where do you get your money?" I never said. Mr. Herman clothed me and gave me a job so after that I worked until college. And then after high school I got a Senatorial Scholarship. In those days you took an exam and your Senate, your district granted you a four year scholarship to Morgan State University.

I majored in Chemistry there at Morgan State and joined the fraternity Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. I was a member of the Beta Kappa Chi Honor Society and I happened to then be I guess through hook or crook become the Valedictorian of my college class. So I was junior high, high and college class. Being the man about campus I don't know what this bug was that was in me but I kept striving and moving and this was not unusual

for many of us in those eras in that time before all of the riots in '68. So I finished Morgan with honors as a Chemistry major, I have several awards that I received, the Presidents Second Mile Award and I joined the ROTC at Morgan and then I became the Commander Lieutenant Student Cadet Commander of the entire ROTC unit and this played in good stead which I will discuss later. So I was the Commander and I have a picture of me receiving an award from the President of the University, a medal for outstanding whatever they did in those days. It was really make believe war but we thought we were hot soldiers.

After college, then I during the summers of course all of us worked at summer jobs. I started lock installator down at South Baltimore making these high tension wires that you see these... look like space ships hanging off of poles you don't see them anymore the electrical wires, you made those condensers. And then I sort of left that job and I didn't go back the second because the clay they made with then was so fine that if you aspirated you would probably get Silicosis so I left that job. I lied again and went to the Domino Sugar which you still see downtown. And the guy says "you look like someone who is going to go back to school, you look like a student." I said "no sir" I changed my accent "no sir" I don't go back to school I never heard of school. So ok I will hire you but he didn't want to hire a person that was only going to stay for the summer. But anyway I got the job there and a lot of school teachers worked there in the summer too which they made special arrangements for them because teachers didn't make a lot of money in those days, a lot of the black school teachers would be up there. So I worked there for about two or three summers. I was able to impress the man he later found out that I was a student but he gave me a job and I worked everything from the chemistry quality lab which determined the refraction of the sugar so we made it pure. I ran a spectrometer there and all to the filter tops where they filtered the sugar. They really wanted me to stay and work in the sugar industry but I said "no, no." So one day I came home with \$79, I had cashed my check and I threw \$79 on the kitchen table and I said to my mother "I am quitting college and I am going to become a sugar...whatever" and she said "I am going to kill you" so that ended that very quickly. I finished college as a Chemistry major and I don't know what possessed me but I wanted to be a physician or a chemist but I thought physician more. I only applied to medical school which was really...and I applied to a white medical school which we called in those days white/black schools because they were all segregated. So I applied to the University of Maryland because there were 3 other black students at University. The first black admitted to the University was a guy named Donald Stewart and Roy Charles, 2 of them in 1950 they finished in 1955 so they must have been admitted in whatever '51. So then there was another guy a friend of mine and these people are still living Ernest Brown, he was admitted the following year so I would have been the first black student admitted and I was the only one in my class of 102. There were 5 white women and 1 black male and I can show you the pictures of the so called need for the '68 bills because I think the Civil Rights Act freed you ladies as well as it freed a lot of the other minorities it helped them get more opportunities.

I started the University of Maryland and it was very difficult because I was there in 1953 it was my freshman year and some of the white students, being the only one in the class, they were cordial but not friendly but cordial. At lunch time I don't know if they did this to rid me or they really didn't know but I suspect they knew, they would go

down the street to a restaurant on Utah Street, it was a Greek restaurant there and they said "oh come on and have lunch." So they knew when I walked in the guy says they are not serving me, they were not going to serve me. I said "I know you guys, you didn't know that things are this way did you?" Cause you know in liberty for all, you know, for God, you know, save the king and all that stuff you guys believe, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness and all men are created equal... you really didn't know that they wouldn't let me eat here did you? And they said "no, no we didn't know. We are so embarrassed" you know so I never went with them again.

So I got married in 1954 as a freshman student and I think that was the thing that saved me because then I had a family. I got married so that gave me a focus and I wasn't chasing girls you know ho, ho, ho. I had someone to discipline me, a wife and I had my first child in 1956 who is now one of your Provosts Linda Randall, that's my daughter. So she was born in '56. I finished Med School in '57 and the "Novey Room," getting back to the Novey Room as a Junior no as a...med student I got a job at Sinai as a lab technician, I gave up the sugar refinery and I got a job at the next turn as a lab technician at Sinai during my med school years and I worked there in the evenings, holidays and we did all the emergency labs, cross match blood and earned a little money to buy my first 1950 Chevrolet which lasted about 6 months before the radiator blew but I was able to work at Sinai. In the summer of my sophomore year I met this guy Robert Bishop and he had been the guy that looked like a doctor. He was black but he was very light skinned and he had his hair like a British Professor to the side, long head and he would swear that he should be walking as an Oxford Don, but he and I had interviewed at the same time at University for admission and they didn't accept him. I don't know why the guy didn't like him but I know what I pulled on this Dean. The Dean was a Moorman I hope not anybody here is a Moorman and I don't care but the Dean was a Moorman and he did not like Bob Bishop but he liked me because I said "Yes Sir" and I was Lt. Col. Commander of the Cadet Core at Morgan and I "yes" and I was very military and direct with him because I knew that this was the discipline of the Moormans. So I said "Yes Sir." And he called it a term... and I won't use it on camera but I really impressed him, I'll use that word impressed him so he took me and I was the only black in his class. But I resented it because Utah did not have a Med School, ok, so they used because he was the Dean, he made sure that 7 people from Utah way out west, was admitted to the University of Maryland so I had a lot of guys named Stringham and Robinson. They had the same names and they were all you know...and one of them had the nerve to call me Uncle Lou and I called him Nephew and he didn't want to be related to me so he stopped calling me Uncle. Cause every time he called me Uncle I said "listen this is my nephew everybody" and then he stopped calling me cause you know he thought he was a light skinned guy passing as white. So he pulled that one off and he stopped that. But that's how I got into Med School by impressing the Dean with this military background.

The summer, the second year I met Bishop again he went to Howard, black school, and I went to Maryland and we were both externs at Sinai and Bishop for some reason loved OB...OB/GYN. He had this textbook Obstetrics and at lunch he would always be you know it's like a miracle somebody dropped me with this guy who studied OB you know loved OB as a sophomore student. So we would talk OB at every lunch. In September the junior year we were sitting in the "Novey Room" which is on the 6th floor at the University of Maryland department of Obstetrics and in comes this new chief

a guy named Arthur Haskins. He was a New Yorker and was the new chief of OB/GYN. But he would come in and say I want to see what you guys know about obstetrics and gynecology and he would ask all the students and I always new the answer. SO I am the only black in the whole damn class and in the room and I am always knowing the answer so I am thinking I better just... So it got to the point that Dr. Haskins would say "Lou tell them, tell them the answer." I am giving all these answers because Bishop had tutored me during the summer and it was just an accident. So he became impressed with my knowledge and through him I was elected into the National Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Society for all the doctors in the United States and I was probably one of the first blacks in the country to be elected into the National... I know I was the first in Maryland... there weren't that many at Maryland I was number 4. So Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Society because of his mentoring and tutoring. I didn't know how prophetic this was because I was in the "Novey Room" the guy that signed my birth certificate and meeting Arthur Haskins and meeting Bishop that later on when I applied for an intership, 1957-1958 at University of Maryland that was 10 years before any civil rights. So I was the only black doctor in the whole hospital down on Redwood Street and being the only black doctor we all wore those little barber coats, little short four pocket you know you see the doctors running around with four pockets and all looking like barbers and all of the orderly's wore them. So being the only black the white nurses would look at me and say "Oh would you help me move the patient?" They thought I was an orderly. I said oh fine I didn't want to get lynched and I stayed there and I'd help them move and then they later found out that I was Dr. Randall. So they were embarrassed and I developed some friendships by not having that chip on my shoulder and the reason I was about to tolerate this was because my family was very white. So I did not have a hate or fear or prejudice against because my grandmother and my mother and all were... and I will show you the pictures and you would say "hey they are not African you have to be joking." So I did not have that fear and that little resentment that many blacks would have had... "What do you mean calling me an orderly?" And I didn't fear her I would just say hey, hey you look like grandma... I didn't tell her that... like Cousin Uncle Russell's kids with sandy hair and blue eyes...I just didn't tell them. I realize now why I was able to survive because I had no fear I had no prejudice so they didn't pick up that sense that you know whatever that antagonism between someone that doesn't like you. So I was able to go ahead and succeed and I was a Resident there, the first black Resident in the OB/GYN and probably one of the few blacks in the whole country that finished at a major University Center. So I finished there in '61 and went on to join the Army. I thought I'd volunteer because in those days they were drafting people and gearing up for Korea and whatever wars we were getting into. So I volunteered and being an OB/GYN and volunteered for the Army in 1961 they didn't know what to do with me. Because of the new Dean, Dean Stone, the Moorman guy had left, praise the Lord, he left, and Dean Stone was an ex-Col a military man. He says "I know you are the Lt. Col of the ROTC" and all that history again...that really...I don't know who made me that but that really...anyway it was a good break. So he says "Okay I will look out for you cause I know that most of the white patients will not want you to exam them, so what I'll do is I will send you to Germany. 3 years over there in Europe and maybe you won't be lynched for looking at a white woman." So I said "Okay, fine." So I went home and told my wife, we had been married then since '54, we are going top Germany but it will require 3

years. "Oh I don't want to stay in the Army 3 years." I said "oh Germany is great. You can travel all over Europe. You'll have a great time." "No I don't want to go to Germany." So here I am they didn't want me in the Army anyway and the guys doing me a favor. I gotta go back and say "Dean Stone do you have any other place that you could send me?" He said he had Fort Raleigh, Kansas, nobody wanted to go to Kansas, it was nothing but a wheat field. There was nothing there to do but watch cows and count the stars. Then he says "Oh I know what I have. I have Fort McArthur in San Pedro California. You will be right on the Pacific Ocean and it is a retirement post. You have a lot of people there who are older and more mature and the naval station is right there so you will have a lot of people and you are in California so you will have a good time there and you have all of that racism problem." I say ok, fine. So by the grace of God and Col. Stone, Dean Stone, I was served 2 years in the Army, Fort McArthur, did OB/GYN in the Army, finished in '63. I just didn't like California, something about it, being Eastern I was more conservative and I just didn't like the lifestyle there. You know you would go to the movies and one guy would have one shoe on with his shirt on backwards and you know...pot and all that stuff...I didn't like it. So I met this guy William Hall and heard that he was looking for a partner in Baltimore cause my point was that I did not want to get up in the cold and in the snow and deliver babies so if I can get a partner, at least someone so I could get some time off, I am going to stay in California even though I didn't like it. So William Hall offered me a partnership, so in 1963 I joined Dr. Hall and we became Hall and Randall P.A and we practiced OB/GYN. We had an office; first it was in his house in Liberty Heights in a little corner area, in a little part off of his living room...probably not much bigger than this little space here. We delivered there for a long time and in those days in '63 it was hard for black physicians in Baltimore to get privileges. So we were first fighting and suing and it finally got through, as the first black physician to get privileges, I know it's the first in OB/GYN at Sinai. In those days the Jews were much liberal, liberal know...they were liberal and that is how I got the job at Sinai as an extern in the 50's. No place else would have me. So we got the privileges there and then we sort of fought and sued Bon Secour and Lutheran and GBMC in those days you had to sue everyone to be a citizen although you had been a citizen for 300 or 400 years. That's why I gave you my history, cause now you know you come off the boat and you have a baby and you're a citizen the baby is a citizen. But we were 400 years here and couldn't get all the processes of citizenship. So we had to sue to get privileges just to deliver a baby and make a living. So finally we settled that problem and then we had too many privileges. We had Bon Secour, Sinai, GBMC, Lutheran, Provident which was a black hospital in those days. So we were very busy and we looked at our little space and said we need a building. And was another man Shirley and Lawrence, they were partners and the four of us got together in my basement on Mohawk Avenue and we formed a corporation and we said that there was land available at corner of Garrison and Gywenns Falls, there is four houses there and there may be more. So we then arranged through a Jewish realtor, she arranged to get us the four houses facing Garrison Blvd and we were able to buy those and through the corporation we formed, now that's Garrison and Gywenns Falls the marriage Garwyn, that's Garrison, G-A-R and Gywenns Falls, G-Y-N so we called it Garwyn right at the corner. I happened to name it, just by chance I said lets merge those two names and that became the treasure of the corporation. Then we would meet and said that we were building this

building and brought in other doctors and the way that I did that as Treasurer I would say to this one doctor "You know John just bought \$10,000 worth of the corporation." "John bought it?" "Yes" "Ok give me 10." Then I would use your name and say "Jerry just bought \$10,000 John." So we developed into a group of almost 16-20 doctors and had all the specialties at Garwyn Medical...I have the original plans here and the dedication, Garwyn Medical Center and we moved in in 1967. In Garwyn Medical Center, brand new building, it was beautiful.

Interviewer: All African American doctors?

Dr. Randall: All African American doctors, 100%. No federal and financing. The financing was interesting. S.L Hammerman had a relationship with New York Life Insurance he was a mortgage broker in Baltimore City and S.L hammerman got us construction financing through Maryland National Bank. And then he got us permanent financing through New York Life Insurance and I have the original... its interesting you build this brand new building for half a million dollars you would never believe it but the contract is in here. So we were able to build this without any federal funding and what had happened prior to that, it was quite a turmoil at the time when we were about to build this building because there were some riots and I don't know the exact dates of the starting of the riots but around that time I was delivering a baby at Provident on Division Street and all of the sudden we heard this noise and we looked down the street and they were setting buildings on fire on the next block. Just massive fire all of these people running up and own the street. And then there was the usual bunch of people taking advantage of looting and you know...what we did was we... I ran home because I had built a home before that in West Baltimore, bought a lot and built a home and I ran home and attached my hoses and got permission to buy a gun and I was going to hose my hose down because they were attacking anybody who looked like he had money and it was part race and part just chaos. Finally the National Guard came into West Baltimore and stationed themselves at Mondoman, because Mondoman sits at a high point you can look down, Brown's Hill it was called, Alexander Brown the banker it used to be his estate, you could get a panoramic view so the National Guard station there so we felt a little safer because Hall's Home was up the street and our building was not to far on Garrison so we felt that we were somewhat protected because these guys were sort of attacking anyone who had a nice car you know then you would have to put a sign on your door saying black owned business because otherwise they were going to burn it. It was a chaotic time and I'll never forget it, carrying this gun, I couldn't shoot a gun, I was in the Army years ago and I had forgotten all about shooting...I did get a sharp shooters medal but don't ask me how I got it...probably the target was there and I just guessed it...but anyway I had been running through the halls of Garwyn Medical Center with my pistol and I said "Boy I hope nobody shows up cause I swear I don't want to shoot anybody." Those were probably some of the vivid memories in places like East Baltimore, they were wrecking Gay Street and burning...and all sorts of protests and when Martin Luther King was killed it just all went berserk, cause they killed the man. But we were so busy creating a life for ourselves in a normal so called American way that I think that is a part of the history that gets lost. People think that you see all this rapping and confusion that you see today you know the drugs and the bee bop and the baggy pants that was not us.

We were very very conservative. We wore shirts and ties and to see all this rioting going on...what was all of this...why are you...because we were making some progress in kind of a quite way. We had in the financing of the building because of the times changing the American Insurance Industry had dedicated \$1 billion to build and to reconstruct buildings and properties in urban areas, black areas, so we hooked into S.L. Hammermans New York Life Insurance so we got part of that. But S.L. Hammerman was a tragic character because he was the one who carried the money in a brown bag to Agnu's office and bribed him in Washington and he helped us, but he was the one who was responsible for Agnu, which was Nixon's Vice President to resign because he was caught accepting money through the Mortgage Industry, S.L. Hammerman, our man. So S.L. Hammerman, I think he is out of business now I don't know if he went to jail or not but that was just a little side history but we were so sad because Hammerman had helped us. We thought we could help Hammerman but it was too obvious, so he resigned and Nixon was later impeached so that was part of the chaos that happened but that was a little bit later...