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Dartmouth College Oral History Program  
Dartmouth Black Lives Project  
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BRADLEY: Okay. All right. Well, Dr. Lee, it's a real pleasure to have you today. I don't think that students know how big of a deal it is that you're here with us. And so, I'm pleased to be able to share a little bit of time with you, especially after having read your name so many times in the Rauner archives over there. And so, I have a few questions for you today, ranging from your arrival here to when you decided to leave, and then some of the work you did with creating the Black Alumni of Dartmouth Association. So. But before I begin, maybe it would help if you could just give us a small sense of what your parents did for a living and maybe how you heard about Dartmouth College.

LEE: Yeah, that's the easy part of my story. So, I grew up in most of my life, I grew up in New Jersey, Plainfield, New Jersey, which is about a half hour south of New York City, a very suburban town. I grew up on a block in Plainfield. That was all Black families around the corner, that were all Italian families, and next was, you know, Jewish families. It was a very integrated but also segregated town that I grew up.

I went to one of the best high schools, I think, in the state of New Jersey, had an outstanding experience as a student in high school. My family, my father was basically a social worker. He was executive director of what was initially the Black YMCA of Plainfield, New Jersey, when the YMCAs right up until the 1950s were segregated. And then they combined the white and the Black, and so he became one of the executive directors of the YMCA. And a lot of my childhood experience actually was through the YMCA experience.

My mother was a clerk with the with the Social Security Administration, a very good clerk. Everyone always bragged about how good and how thorough she was with her work. And she actually won some awards for being for being a great, great employee. But we lived in a very modest setting. As I said, it was, all the families on the block were Black. Everybody took care of each other. I'm a product of that generation that really grew up in very, very supportive environment in terms of Black families. And my family historically has a lot of education. And one of my grandfathers was president of the Black H.C.U I had three uncles who were doctors, and that probably had some influence, although I can't validate that specifically. But I'm sure

because they were I got to know them that that was the attraction I had for medicine. And we were not rich, we were not poor. We always had food on the table. I certainly knew what it meant to be Black in the society growing up, and that actually was reinforced but took different directions once I got to college and saw what the world was like. But in the community I grew up, I felt very well cared for and enjoyed life. And as you, as you've already said, have had some success academically as I was coming through.

Lee: Yeah, yeah. I'm fascinated by that. I think one of the things that that happens in in discussions of African American history is we love to situate all Black people, as is the underclass and the downtrodden. But what do you do in a situation where you have you know, you were mentioning your grandfather going to an HBCU and then on.

LEE: To Yale.

BRADLEY: Onto Yale.

Interesting. So that's maybe where I want to shift the conversation to. You arrived at Dartmouth College in 64, correct? In 64, I think I read somewhere about a song that was playing when you came on the yard.

LEE: Oh, "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag." Yeah.

BRADLEY: Tell us about that.

LEE: Yeah, yeah. So, I, well, the story that's told about me — I think it's true because I generated the story — was that when I was younger, living actually in a different town in New Jersey, but a town called Red Bank. Before we moved to Plainfield, I had a babysitter that I later discovered, after I graduated from Dartmouth and met him that he had been my babysitter. Early on, he was a Dartmouth graduate, Gene Booth [Eugene Lane Booth '57], who recently passed, unfortunately. But I met Gene actually, at one of the founding meetings of the Black Alumni Association, and he asked me who I was. I told him I told him I'd been to Red Bank. He said, well, I'm from Red Bank and I know everybody in red and you could be from red because I was like, no, you. And I said, no, I do. So, he asked me my name. He said, I knew of Louis Forest really as my father. And he said, I said, That's. My father, he said, oh, and he says, well, I was your babysitter. And I said, Whoa, whoa. So, we called up my dad that night and my dad says, oh, Gene, how you doing? This is like thirty years since he talked to the guy. And so anyway, it turns out that Gene, as he now tells his story, actually it was his girlfriend that was my babysitter. And he was just visiting his

girlfriend. But it was what he said to my father. You know, Mr. Lee, I always wanted your son to go to Dartmouth, and you never called me to tell me that he went. And I'm sorry for that, but I'm happy to be home today. And it was it was really a wonderful moment in my life. It's like everything coming back.

BRADLEY: And anyway. No, that's phenomenal, that's an incredible story. Yeah, I know.

LEE: There was another family member also from Dartmouth. So, for me, Dartmouth was like the place to go to and no one else from my school at that point was applying to Dartmouth. If I said, you know, great.

BRADLEY: I think that's fascinating to me because I think Dartmouth at that point had not an easy time recruiting Black students to come out here. And so, I'd be interested in knowing, though, maybe about class dynamics of the Black students who were here when you when you had arrived.

LEE: So yeah. So first-year experience was totally different from the second-year experience. First-year experience we recognized as we came in, number one, that there were almost no Black students on the campus. Ed Holley [Edgar Holley '66] who was a member of the football team, actually fairly famous member of the football team. He was Black and he was in a fraternity and literally the first thing I heard walking onto the green was "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag" — James Brown — and he was playing it from his window, blasting out across.

BRADLEY: James Brown!

Lee: James Brown. I thought this cool, I picked the right place after all. But I never actually talked to Holley, as you know, was well-known as he was on campus and so forth. He was a fraternity guy and he was a football player. And I was like, Oh, okay, okay. And there was one of the Black guys I knew about, but I rarely saw him, and I've subsequently learned there were maybe a couple others. One of them makes excuse that he was off campus for the whole first year. I don't know what was going on, but anyway, as far as I was concerned, there were only two other Black students, and I walked in with 13 other Black students. So, you would think we'd all see each other and, oh, brother, you know. No, no, no. It was like, you know, we all kind of went our own independent ways, not like not keeping apart from each other, but not coming together naturally. And it wasn't until the second year when another group of about somewhere between 20, roughly 20 Black students came, and then we had a substantial population. And — just tell the quick story of how the Afro-American Society was formed — there was a guy

named Jim Bopp [James Bopp '66] who was part of the Dartmouth Christian Union, and he's a very, very socially active guy and, you know, very forward thinking in his political and social views. He had gotten to know a few of the Black students, including me.

BRADLEY: And Jim was white?

LEE: Jim was white, yeah Jim was white. And one day came around to me and said, you know Woody, I'd like you to come to a meeting that I'm organizing over at the Tucker Foundation. You know, I forget what it's called now, but I said, Sure, I'd like to come, what's it about? You just come; you'll see. So, I got there. I went I there and got there a few minutes early. And I was one of the few students, a couple other Black students, and that over the next ten or 15 minutes, all the Black students that I knew were on campus, but I really hadn't spent a lot of time, wandered in the room and Jim gets up and says, okay, everybody's here. I'm glad you were able to join us. Gentlemen, I think this important time in our society right now and I think you guys probably have a lot to talk about. And so, I've invited you here to have that conversation, so enjoy yourselves. And he walked out the room and just left. He walked out and left the space open for us. And that's how the Afro-American Society was started

BRADLEY: Wow, that's how that's Afro-American Society was started.

LEE: And we, it turns out we kind of knew on each other, but that night we really got to know each other. And that's and that's when that's when it kicked off that.

BRADLEY: Very night, you decided.

LEE: And after that, my experience was it was a Dartmouth experience broadly, academically in terms of friendships and knowing people on campus. But my time and my interest really was focused around Black students and what we wanted to accomplish now that we got together and understood there were things to get done when we were here.

BRADLEY: Let's interest in. Just for the record, did you see many of these students as — were they first generation college students, the Black students?

LEE: You know, at the time? It is something that I noticed now, but I didn't kind of notice at that point. I just knew I just was amazed at how talented they all were. Right. Yeah. Really, really good people. I mean, people you would die for because they were good friends. But also they were capable. And anytime we wanted to do something, there was always somebody say I can

do that. I can do that. They were willing to be a part of where we were, where we wanted to go. And everybody, you know, a couple of Black students who by the time I graduated, there probably are 50 Black students on campus, and almost all of them were involved in the African Americans Society. There were no you know, like today there are like 12 different organizations you can draw on that have some identity with Black life and Black experience then was just, just the Afro-American society. And it was it was it was really, really impactful in terms of what you thought about your role was going to be once you left the college.

BRADLEY: All very interesting to me. Out of curiosity, I was wanting to ask, were you here when Malcolm X came to campus?

LEE: He came I think it was my first year.

BRADLEY: Wow.

LEE: And I missed I didn't know. And to this day, I'm trying to figure out why. How did I miss that? So, I think it was kind of to a small audience. It wasn't broadcast widely. So yeah, I've talked to people since then who, you know, actually were involved in his visit and I was like, wow, I don't know. I just don't know how I missed it. I think it was 1965.

BRADLEY: 1964, 65. It was a matter of weeks before I think he was assassinated.

LEE: Assassinated. Exactly.

BRADLEY: All right. I think that's a good place to pick up. So, by '66, you all are forming.

LEE: The Afro-American Society.

BRADLEY: Afro-American Society. I understand that the Stokely Carmichael might have made a visit out here.

LEE: There was a picture of me and Stokely talking over in Shabazz Center. Yeah, yeah. You know, anything we wanted to do, we got done, basically. And that was at a time when.

BRADLEY: What was the platform, though?

LEE: Well, there were three things. Pretty quickly we decided there were three things that we needed to be involved with. One was making this a space that we could be comfortable in. And that meant bringing people in and bringing entertainment that was, you know, appropriate for how we would enjoy being a part of

this experience here. Then there was a political action group that was very in tune with what was going on, both on the campus and off the campus around issues of African Americans in the society. And then there was a group that was more involved in basically creating published documents. The *Black Out* was the first magazine that we published. So that was that was a group. And so, everybody sort of did you know what their core interest was all about. And you know, just some incredible guys that stepped forward and said, yeah, I'll do that. I'm going to do that.

BRADLEY: Know, that's remarkable.

LEE: I think I should say I don't think we came together because we said we don't like it here or we got a problem with what's going on here. We got together because we wanted to be together, period. And then once together we recognized that it was important for us to understand what was going on both here and in the world. And so, a lot of discussions. And that was a time where, you know, civil rights and so forth was it was bursting across the country. And so, we were very involved and would travel off campus and come back to campus to, you know, find out what other people were doing, what was going on in the world.

BRADLEY: I think one of the things in studying these Ivy League institutions and Black students at these Ivy League institutions, a theme that keeps popping up was idea that Black students in some ways had to welcome themselves to these spaces. You mentioned leaving campus. Did you have a car? I know that that was one of the things. We're out here in Hanover. We are out of here. So, so how did you manage to have, I don't know, a social life? Like how did you date? How did all that work? Am I being too personal?

LEE: No, no, no, no, not at all. Well, first of all, and this I say not because I believe this, but other people have told me this. The Black women who were at the other colleges in Boston and down and around Smith and Mount Holyoke, they loved Dartmouth guys. They said, well, you guys are the ones we really have fun with. We were kind of proud of that. There was no trouble. I mean, you to meet folks you would become socially involved with. But they enjoyed it. Dartmouth didn't have a bad reputation for that. They had very good reputation, at least for the Black students here. All the other things we did, we did travel. We did go down to Boston in particular. I remember guys sort of hanging out the window, you know, 'yo, what you doin?' like we'd never seen Black people or something before in our lives. It was really funny to be in a car as we came down. We went down to New Haven, you know, to Yale. We traveled

together. And then there was — I don't know what's it's called now — Colby Junior College. But there were a few Black students there who also would come up that we got to know and so forth. Unlike the guys who came in in the fifties where it was really a struggle socially, I don't think it was for us because there were a number of Black women, women of color that were at the schools in Boston and in the Amherst area. Your area. And that was a great trip. But we had a road trip down to.

BRADLEY: Yes, right.

LEE: Down to Smith and Mount Holyoke and so forth. So, you know, I don't I think it was always an issue, not to the point that I got to get out of here. I'm not never coming back, you know, there's nothing around here. It wasn't like that.

BRADLEY: Yeah.

LEE: The strong community here. Yeah. You probably get ten different stories on that question. So that was my own impression, you know?

BRADLEY: Yeah. I'm not trying to drag anything out of you, but I'm interested in it. It must have felt a way, being in one of the whitest counties, one of the whitest institutions in the nation at the time. Like, how was it?

LEE: I mean, I remember that very vividly. I remember like we would drive through Vermont and people would see us coming through, like, who is that coming through? We very much felt we felt very conspicuous. You know, wherever we went, people noticed us. But that was different than being down south, getting noticed that that's you know, that's when you start getting fearful. It wasn't like you worried about somebody was going to come up and, you know, up in your face and, you know, start being nasty and stuff. But we just knew we were we were curiosities. And if, you know, it's Vermont and in New Hampshire, what did you expect? And unless you went down to that, you know, Manchester, one of the big cities, you wouldn't see Black people. There may have been one or two in town. Yeah. But it wasn't anything that ever got to us similar to, you know what, if you couldn't deal with that, there's no reason to come to Dartmouth. I mean, you were in a white institution, in a white state, in a white region of the country. It is what it is. So, I don't think anybody left here because they couldn't find Black people or Black experience, they found it, you know, within the group from there.

BRADLEY: Yeah. So, one of the things that I think you might know this, the Black students used to get together, Black students from the Ivy

League used to get together for something they called — today we wouldn't use the term — but "Spook Weekend" and so this was you know, Black students come from Penn and from all sorts of place, Columbia. Did Dartmouth student participate in any of that?

LEE: No, I don't think, I don't think. No. I mean, I heard about those later on, but I don't remember. We kind of had a feeling that there were Black students and there are Black students. There are Dartmouth Black students, and there was everybody else.

BRADLEY: I'm interested. Please fill that out for me, please.

LEE: You know, like going down to Yale, we just expected to find some uppity Black folks, you know who would put that in our face. And so, we were just, there was a sense of confidence about who we were and what we represented. And the community that we had here. We felt very, very powerful. We used to go to Cambridge where they were. I tried to recall this, but I can't remember. We used to go to these conferences where, you know, people would get up and they were very political. People would have a lot of sometimes outrageous, sometimes cool things to say about what they wanted to do in the world. But we felt like, you know, there was nobody out there that was being more effective at what they were doing, either at the campus level or beyond than what we were doing up here. So, yeah, we thought we were the bomb. Yeah. Yeah.

BRADLEY: Well, you know, in studying, all these different groups were things that that I noted in my own word was how you all had to depend on each other. Right? Like there was no Harlem community to come and help you. There was no West Philadelphia community. You all were all you had. And so, when you talk about that, that closeness, it's a fascinating thing, but also something that must be enduring for you.

LEE: Yeah, I agree. I mean, it was incredibly strong group. It's hard to for people today to really appreciate that. But, you know, it's kind of like we're all thrown in it together. And we said, well, you know, we're not going to sink, we're going to survive. And so, we came together and it literally, you know, by the time I graduate, exception of maybe two students, everybody was in the organization, and even those that were kind of skeptical of what this was all about and why they should join the Afro-American Society they came to love it too. Yeah. And those friendships endured afterwards, obviously. So, I don't know. I do know because it's locked in my head. Now, we did have an attitude about the other Black students in the in the in the northeast here in the Ivy League, but not negative attitudes, just like we felt, you know, like we had we had figured out how to do this college



thing and how to be true to ourselves and true to our communities, too. It's kind of interesting because everybody talked about going back to the community after we graduated. Most people went off and got their degrees and got more degrees. I actually went back to the community. I went down to Harlem, wasn't my community, but I spent a few years before I actually did go off and get some more degrees. But I remember being a little bit disappointed: Where are these brothers talking about they're going back to their communities?

BRADLEY: Oh, no, well that is a whole discussion for itself, you know! And so, when you read Michelle Robinson at the time, she had a thesis where she was, you know, is there a responsibility?

LEE: Right, to give back.

BRADLEY: So that's, that's, that's interesting to me. I'd like to shift this a little bit back towards what was going on with the Afro-American Society. And so by '67, '68, there had been a shift in kind of recruitment policies at Dartmouth College. It seemed like there was an increase in the number of Black students arriving on campus, but also a certain kind of diversity of the of the students that were coming in. So, students were coming in, I think it was David Dawes. He used to be with SNCC. This was a white student who had been with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in the South in Chicago and went out to Chicago and helped to establish a connection with, of all groups, the conservative Vice Lords. Dartmouth College happened to be a place through something called the Foundation Years .

LEE: Foundation Years project.

BRADLEY: You know, they brought young people, young Black men from South and Westside Chicago out here.

LEE: Yeah, there were two at least two — Dawes was one I forget the other guy's name — but they were in Chicago one summer and they were doing community-based work, working with community-based organizations, I should say, in Chicago. And they, of course, got introduced to the whole gang thing. You know the story in Chicago, which is you can't survive in Chicago unless you know about the gangs and understand that. But, you know, as I kind of explained it, they said, damn, these are some amazing guys and very bright, you know, very capable. They run these organizations, which are called gangs, and they propose to Dey [Charles Dey, Dean of the Tucker Foundation] at the Tucker Foundation here, that why don't we invite some of these fellows up to be students at Dartmouth College? I don't think any other college in the country would have said, oh, sure, why don't we do that? But Dartmouth did say yes, we'll give that a try.

They started off as a pilot program. They identified two leaders of — former leaders of not the Blackstone Rangers, but the Vice Lords. And invited one was Tiny Evans — Alan Evans, who was big but called Tiny — and then Henry Jordan. And so, Billy McCurine [William McCurine '69] and myself — Billy was the president of the Afro-American Society. I was the first president. We went down to Lebanon Airport to meet these two guys who had been recruited to come to Dartmouth and we're dressed in like moccasins and jeans and, you know, like you guys, basically. And we go down and Billy's from Chicago, so I figured, well, you know, okay, whatever is going to go down here, at least I got a Chicago dude with me to moderate the whole experience. But anyway, we go down and Tiny gets off the plane, this prop plane, and he's got like a three-piece suit on that he could walk down Wall Street and be welcomed at the front door. He looked great. Henry had a flannel [inaudible] on and this cashmere jacket on. They look like ready —

BRADLEY: Wow.

LEE: — to go. It was amazing. And we were like, oh my gosh. And so anyway, we introduced each other and so Tiny and Henry wound up living in Casque and Gauntlet with me and we would sit up — especially Tiny — we would sit up until like 3:00 every night talking about their experience versus my experience. It was mostly about their experience because it was really amazing. And I just, I can't say what lessons I learned or what I actually learned. It was just like a fundamental part of, you know, growing up listening to these guys talk about who they were, what they were. And they were just some of the best people I've ever known. And I feel like some of the best friends. Henry died, but Tiny and I still communicate. And it was just a wonderful experience. And anyway, one of the lessons they taught me, they said, Woody, you know, this is your turf we're on now and we enjoy talk with you and we let you get away with a lot of crap, you know, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. But next year we're bringing our boys up because we got our foot in the door. We're going to keep that door open. I said, okay, well, I'll be gone next year. That's cool. And sure enough, next year, next year eight or ten other of the guys from the gang came up. And that program lasted like three or four years. Tiny and Henry graduated, both of them. I think both of them graduated from Tuck too. They were they were amazing. And they also taught me a lot about leadership, basically how to maneuver politically in the world. They got everything they wanted from Dartmouth College. They would go to Dean Dye said, you know what? Wood's got books on his shelf. You know, we don't have any books. And so, you know, next thing I knew, they had books on their shelves, but they oh, you know, we want to go home and see our girlfriends. They get tickets back to Chicago to fly back. So, anyway, the

more important thing was they had that door open, and they got their friends in. And the program fell apart about three years after they left. But in that period when they were here and their friends came up, it actually was an interesting experience for them and obviously for Dartmouth. And I'm not sure why it didn't continue. I never got the final word on what happened.

BRADLEY: But yeah, fascinating, I think.

LEE: And only at Dartmouth could that have happened. Right.

BRADLEY: So, yeah, in looking at higher education institutions, there was a shift because of the 1965 Higher Education Act there were students coming from neighborhoods that perhaps, you know, wouldn't have come before. But to make the all-out push, to invite members of gangs to come to come through. I think that had to be inspirational in some ways, I think on two levels. Right? One is there's a diversity of Blackness that exists and that we could celebrate. But on the second part of the thing is, it's amazing what people can do if given the resources.

LEE: Yeah, exactly. I mean, the lesson was for me is as I later would say to students every once in a while, who had an opportunity to come to Dartmouth or Yale, I'd say you represent ten other people who could have been here, would have been competing for this position. But because of where they grew up, the circumstances of their life or whatever, they didn't get a chance. And that's a burden on you, but one that I'm sure you're going to, you know, carry with honor and respect. And it really works out to be that for every one of you we're sitting here today, there are 5 to 10 other people who could have been had committed equity throughout all experiences in our society as we grow up. And that's kind of what the Chicago experience taught me. These are some amazing dudes who in their own world rose to the top, you know, and actually came to Dartmouth and proved they could do it here also.

BRADLEY: Yeah.

LEE: Yeah.

BRADLEY: Well, they actually went back to Chicago.

LEE: Exactly.

BRADLEY: And moved back to the community in a lot of ways. In the way that you did. Yeah, I'm interested, you know, everybody wants to know about activism. I'm going to ask you about that if we have time. I'm going to ask you about that a little bit later. But what I wanted to know right now, currently and for much of your career,

you've been a mentor and you've been a role model on campus for students. Did you have Black mentors and role models on campus at Dartmouth when you were here?

LEE: Oh, no, not at Dartmouth. No, none at all. The first Black faculty, I think that came — God, I should know this. I don't think there was a Black faculty member when I was a student. But the only ones I remember came after 1969, 1970. So, I missed the experience of having any kind of educational interaction with professors, Black professors, you know?

BRADLEY: Yeah. No, I mean, here again is that idea of having to welcome yourselves in a lot of ways. And the idea you could find mentorship outside of your race, but it would have been nice to have that option.

LEE: Absolutely. Yeah, absolutely. I think it's particularly you know, as there are more diverse students coming in, you need people who are more mature basically to help people navigate their experience at a place like this, not everybody is going to be on the same page like we were at that time because we were all thrown in together. It's kind of like you guys sink or swim kind of thing, but for you guys, you come here, you prepared already, you know? I think the faculty, the Black faculty experience is extremely important when you have larger number of students that you know. So, the Black faculty can relate to different people for different reasons, depending on their interests and so forth. We had no choice but to be together. You guys have many, many different choices about how you're going to navigate your experience here at Dartmouth.

BRADLEY: Mm hmm. At Dartmouth, you came in under John Sloan Dickey. And Dickey had been on the Truman Commission for Civil Rights. I think that was one of his claim to fame. And how did a A.S. [Afro-American Society] get along with.

LEE: Oh, I just saw his picture here, the Dickey Center's right here. And it kind of reminded me, I mean, he lived right down the street in the president's house. I don't know if it's still the president's house. And, you know, we would catch him walking up and down the street and we'd sit and talk, chat with him. And, you know, we had this experience with George Wallace when he came in and things erupted and, you know, got national attention to it. And college was pissed off at us, of course. And Dickey had to say the right thing to the world. You know, we don't condone this kind of behavior from Black students. This is a protest that took place when George Wallace came here [referring to 1967 George Wallace protest]. And, you know, we walked down the street with him, and he'd say, I understand what you guys did. I just don't agree with the way you did it. But

he understood why it was important for us to do it. And ultimately, there were no penalties ever meted out because of that.

BRADLEY: That's honest. That's honest. I'm interested in now that this is all past and gone and we're well beyond any, what do you call the statute of limitations? I'm interested, did you all plan to demonstrate in the way that you did now? So, I can only read about it. And it said there were students outside that were rocking Wallace's car and this sort of thing. Did you all plan the demonstration to go?

LEE: So, there was a 1967 visit to this campus of George Wallace. He was invited by the invited by *The Dartmouth*, the newspaper. And he had been here in 1963, in the prior presidential year, presidential voting. And he after he left here and other schools here in the Northeast, he kind of bragged about the fact that he went to New England and went to some of the, you know, cream, some of the best schools in the country. And was very well-respected, was well-received. So, we wanted to be sure he was not very well-received. But that's the word. That's what stuck in my mind. You come here and said everything was cool, you know? And so, we had, as I mentioned, we had the political action arm of the Afro-Americans Society. So, they did all the planning. We just knew something was going to come off. We didn't know what was going on. And it turns out they planned it. They organized two different groups that sat in different parts of the auditorium to make a big ruckus as soon as Wallace came on stage and, you know, tried to interrupt, interrupted, and ultimately to not allow him to speak while he was here. And if you talk to people about this, if you talk to ten different people, you'll get ten very, very different stories because different things happened depending on where he was standing. I sort of stood in the middle of it all, so I think I have a pretty well-rounded view of what happened. But it started off with, you know, with our Black students in two different locations making a big protest. And they essentially were kicked out of the hall. And the editor of the of *The Dartmouth* the newspaper came up to me like, what are you? Can't you stop these dudes? I said, why did you invite him? Why did you invite him? This is what you wanted really. And actually when our yearbook was written, they described this as one of the crowning, one of the best things that happened that the Dartmouth was able to do was to bring George Wallace and, you know, because he created a national attention to or whatever. But anyway. So, yeah, so that happened. They were kicked out of the auditorium. This is where Rauner Library is now. It used to be an auditorium, Webster Hall. I was with a date that night from Colby, a Black woman from Colby. She's from D.C.. And she let me know there was a group of Colby folks led by one of their faculty members,

who came up the center way and rushed up to the front of the auditorium to go up on the stage and confront Wallace. And they were both, cops came in there to kick them out. So that was stage two. And then it closed the doors. And then there was another stage where people tried to get back in and that had been outside. So, there was a big ruckus at the door trying to get back in. And then finally it was all over. And then Wallace tried to sneak out the back door and he got in his car with his driver. And this all was visible. And by that time, the whole damn campus had come down to Webster, all what was going on down here? Because somehow got out that something was going on. And Wallace tried to get out of town coming up the street here in front of Dartmouth Hall. And the car was just surrounded. And literally for 10 minutes, they were rocking his car. I don't know. I thought the car was going to tip. I was not rocking it. So, if ever I had to go to court, there was nothing there! But in fact, I don't think — there was one Black student there. I think it was mostly white students that were there, you know, jostling the car and almost tipped it over and they finally got out of town. And Wallace went down to Princeton a week later and said, damn, I almost got killed at Dartmouth College. And, you know, as soon as he mentioned the word Dartmouth, all the students go Boooo!!!

BRADLEY: Yeah

LEE: That time, the Princeton Dartmouth football rivalry was really intense. So, it was a big boos on that. And they had like a thousand students at their little thing. But yeah, but he was well received down there.

BRADLEY: Princeton with a different thing. Yeah. I'm so glad that you went into detail about this because I think people need to hear need to hear about this. And for the record, you know, George Wallace was the one-time governor of Alabama who was very proud to segregate. He was a segregation stalwart and then a later presidential candidate. And he was looking to propagate his ideas of segregation.

LEE: And he's the one that would, you know, barred Black students from coming into high schools and colleges there. And so, we grew up with these images of George Wallace being the racist manifestation, caricature, of what was going on in the South. So, he was the last person we wanted to see on this campus was George Wallace.

BRADLEY: Yeah. And he had been here in '63, a few years before. And I think students participated in like a silent protest of sorts. And so, so the fact that you all.

- LEE: Yeah. We didn't want that to be repeated. They just carried some posters around outside and actually didn't even go in.
- BRADLEY: Yeah. There was a lot going on in the nation while you were in school and so you must have gone home from break. You're from Jersey, shoot in Newark in '67 there were uprisings there. All that, all around the Ivy League, there's protests. In the northeast, there is there's all kinds of rebellions and uprisings. How did those affect you all? How did it affect you personally?
- LEE: Well, as I mentioned, I grew up, most of my formative years were in Plainfield, New Jersey. And that was actually the site of one of the major uprisings that occurred because there was a minor flare up, and the National Guard, came in and it became a major flare up when they came in. The National Guard actually went into people's homes looking for, you know, rioters and looters and so forth. Became a national story because the National Guard went in without rights of entry into people's homes. And it became a big court case. But I was here on campus when that was going on. And I'm thinking, oh my God, this is it. This is a community. People knew they were very, very, as I mentioned, incredible high educational system, public schools there. And it was about 20% Black at that point. And as all this was happening, I'm actually talking to people who were in Plainview and, you know, kind of watching real time. There's stuff going on, I just I felt awful. I definitely wasn't, like, interested in going down there. But it was on a smaller scale the same kind of thing that happened in Newark, in Harlem, you know, in Detroit and so forth. And it just really shook that community up. And five years later, that town became a predominately Black community. All the white folks just and this this is a town with very wealthy people, beautiful neighborhoods, and neighborhoods I never could have imagined would ever be significant Black ownership. It literally became a predominately Black town within five years after that. It really shook me up a lot. I don't know whether it created something inside of me that remained for the rest of my life. I don't know. But I definitely remember it in very, very painful ways.
- BRADLEY: I'm going to ask a personal question. Feel free not to answer. But you also had to be making grades, like other students didn't have to worry about there's an entire Black freedom movement going on outside. Did you ever feel like you were missing out on that movement outside of campus? And also, did you feel maybe an anxiety about like, I have to do the same thing that the white students are doing, plus I have to be an advocate of the movement.
- LEE: No, no, no, not at all. I think most student in that era you had to be at some level political. Either you oppose the people that

were trying to be political, or you were with them. I think everybody was engaged in one way or another and we would take trips off campus. We went to Rochester, New York, to join up what was going on there.

BRADLEY: Kodak [protests against the Rochester-based Kodak Company]

LEE: We went down to Boston a couple of times. Yeah, no, you very much felt a part of it. And you didn't feel like you had to be, but it's what you wanted to do.

BRADLEY: Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. I'm interested in you were a progenitor of the Dartmouth, the Black Alumni Association of Dartmouth. Or what is it>.

LEE: Black Alumni of Dartmouth Association.

BRADLEY: Black Alumni of Dartmouth Association. Yes. And do you all call it BADA or BADA [hard or soft vowel]?

LEE: Both.

BRADLEY: Okay. I would call it BADA [soft vowel]. This is in my mind also aspirational and inspirational. You could have very well gone on and had a great career. But what made you come back and start this organization?

LEE: It seemed like the next logical step. We came here and we said, you have to have more students, Black students like us, in this campus. By the time I graduated, I was the class of 1968. By the class entering that became the class of '73, there were 90 Black students coming in every year. I remember being in New York City at that point and reading the front page of the second section of the *New York Times* saying Dartmouth is 10% Black. I said —

BRADLEY: Whoa.

LEE: Whoa. And then reading the story, there were just smiles all over my face. I'm sure I just said, wow! Because we had said, this is what has to be done. And it was done. I mean a lot between saying it and getting it done happened. But it did happen. And I just you know, I said that I was at that point in Harlem, working in Harlem, and I said, we've done our job. And I really felt like we've done our job. We've made sure that these school like Dartmouth are opening their doors to Black students around the country. And everything will take care of itself after that. How wrong I was, it turns out. But I really felt, I really felt like I could now go do whatever I want to do. And we solved one of the problems. Black students have a chance to be educated



at some of the best schools in the country in large numbers. Didn't work out that way. I mean, they continue to come but access beyond to careers that would be meaningful careers in terms of making an impact on changes in society. The careers may have been there, but the opportunity to make it through, to create institutionalized change in the society just wasn't there. We didn't realize it at the time. We thought we had turned everything upside down and made it go in the direction that we wanted it to. I was on the Yale faculty. I joined with one other colleague from my Yale graduating class. Ten years later, we were the only two Blacks on the Department of Medicine at Yale, and we had no idea that ten years had passed and there were no other Black folks. We realized in the sense we didn't see anybody. But we figured once we looked at the list, we will identify people we had missed or whatever. We were the only two. That was a whole decade, a whole decade when National Institutes of Health were throwing money at places like Yale to do things, you know, can't you guys use some money? You know, the funding was there, the faculties were expanding. And, you know, we weren't there. We weren't filling the shoes. It's a complex story of why that was so. But, you know, ultimately, the way we think about the problem of race in the society today is what was dominating is it's an institutional, structural problem. And you have to be aware of that as you're chipping away at your little problem, that there's a bigger problem, that the structure that you're working at is still standing and very, very impactful in the way it influences people's lives.

BRADLEY: Mm hmm. Well, I'd like to say personally, thank you for your service. And, you know, you allowed me to interview you in 2013. And so, I'm thankful for that. I'm thankful for today. But most of all, I'm thankful for the model that you've created. You know, for so many students and young people, this idea of you do go back to your community, it may not be the one you grew up in, but the one you can help. You create access for others through the alumni association and through your constant work along those lines. You're creating new avenues for people in STEM. We should be so lucky as to be able to speak with you and to lay hands on you. So, thank you again for being here.

LEE: You know, thank you. This is an amazing guy too!