

George Spivey '68  
Dartmouth College Oral History Program  
Dartmouth Black Lives  
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Transcribed by Olivia O'Connor

**O'CONNOR:** Okay, so my name is Olivia O'Connor and I am at Topliff Hall in Hanover, New Hampshire, and I'm doing a Zoom interview with Brother George Spivey who is in East Falmouth, Massachusetts. Today is October 25th, 2023, and this is an interview for the Dartmouth Black Lives Oral History Project. Hi, Brother Spivey. Thank you for joining me today. First, I'd like to learn a little about your childhood. Can you please state when and where you were born?

**SPIVEY:** My childhood, that's a few years ago. I was born in the Bronx, New York City [NY], August 4th, 1946 and had a wonderful time there for at least four years until my parents moved out to South Jersey, little town called Mizpah [NJ]. M-I-Z-P-A-H. It started out as a Jewish community, but when we arrived in 1946, it was primarily some low-income whites, Blacks, browns, purples, blues, everybody. But it was a good -- country, in the woods, full of mosquitoes, flies, snakes [laughter], all kinds of good things. But it was a definite change from New York City where we were in the Bronx.

**O'CONNOR:** Can you tell me the names of your parents, by chance?

**SPIVEY:** My parents, okay. My mother is Beatrice Mullen Spivey and my father is Kirby, Kirby Spivey. K-I-R-B-Y Spivey. And yeah.

**O'CONNOR:** So, I know that you've been on the East Coast for some time now, right? How does it feel to be staying over here all this time, did you travel at all?

**SPIVEY:** Well, I've been on the coast all my life, just about. From New Jersey – from New York to New Jersey, to Washington D.C., to South Carolina, back up to Massachusetts. And I think this is where I'm going to be for a while. I am now, hmm, little over 77 years old, and I'm having a wonderful time working with the young people in the schools. And it's amazing. Neighbors would come by and says, "Mr. Spivey, you are the oldest person in the neighborhood." And I am, but it's good that I have a good relationship with everyone, and just trying to help out, just trying to help out.

**O'CONNOR:** Yeah, that's good. Speaking of the kids of Mass. [Massachusetts], what is the greatest motivator to continue motivating them, if that makes sense?

**SPIVEY:** Oh boy. I think of myself, in New Jersey. I'm growing up in the woods. And having the inspiration of my teachers, especially my second, third, and fourth grade teacher, Mrs. Kinzic, who [deep exhale] worked with the kids who are in -- just immigrated from Poland, Russia, Italy, Puerto Rico, all the African Americans were in this two-room school, you know people -- other people didn't think too much of it, but Mrs. Kinzic didn't play. She made sure that we were going to be prepared when we went down to the big school, seven miles away, Mays Landing [NJ], where no people of color lived. And she did a really good job. Because when we got down to Mays Landing school, we were the top kids in the school, not only from the fourth grade all the way through to the eighth grade, and I happened to be Valedictorian of the class, and the other kids were all the top, had the top grades in the class. Went on to the high school, Oakcrest High School and we were still doing very very well, very very well. So growing up in the country was a blessing, and I try to pass on to the kids now, the type of caring and love and understanding that my teachers had for me, because they knew my situation, which was just my mother, my brother, who was four years older than I was, and me! Living in hard times. So they helped out all along the way. So I try to do that same type of thing now, even though it's, hmm, almost 50, 60 years later, some of the home situations of the kids very very similar. But I still have the energy and people let me in their homes. They have mercy on this old man. And I can say basically what I want to say, and challenge adults, especially parents: do what they're supposed to be doing. And kids are crazy enough to be listening to me, because I can go from a very stern face individual to somebody very kind and can sing some songs and everything, and they say "Whoa, he's got it." And so it's been good. It's been really really good experience for me, and I'm doing that now.

**O'CONNOR:** That's great. I think that's a trend between teachers, that other teachers have inspired them, and to later become an educator, which is just amazing. It's like a never-ending cycle. I think that's beautiful.

**SPIVEY:** Yeah, and we need more educators, especially educators of color now. Okay.

**O'CONNOR:** Yeah it's a serious demand. Um you mentioned your mom --

**SPIVEY:** Mmm.

**O'CONNOR:** What was your relationship like with your mom?

**SPIVEY:** Ohh [laughter], woo. My mom was very very special. She cared for me, had very very high expectations for me. And if I didn't do the right thing sometimes, most of the times, and she said, "Go

over there and get me a switch. Don't get me no puny switch, get me a big switch." And she'd come and whip my butt from here to Kingdom come. After a while, I got the message that I better be listening to my mom, because she's trying to tell me to do the right thing. And I finally got it. My mom always told me, "Baby"-- and I didn't quite understand what she was telling me -- and then she said, "Baby, you've got to be twice as good". And I love school, ohhh I love school, even though I had a difficult time starting out, because I didn't start school on time. My father got very very sick, and somebody had to stay home with him, to care for him. So I started school late. But as I advanced into second grade, Mrs. Kinzic says, "No you can't go out for recess right now, you have to pull your chair up to mine while the other second graders go outside, while I work with the third graders and fourth graders," and sometimes I cry. But let me tell you something. Mrs. Kinzic helped me with my reading, so much so that, hmm, after a while, I could read. And by the time I got into fourth grade, I was number one in the class. And by eighth grade, I was still number one in the class. In this two-room school out in the country, and this is why I'm saying: If it can happen there, I can make it happen anywhere. So this is why I've devoted myself to education – helping young people of all different backgrounds. And I've had some, some kids have done well. Put it that way [laughter]. And some school has done well too, has done well too.

**O'CONNOR:** That's great. Other than your mom and Mrs. Kinzic, were there any other influences in your life?

**SPIVEY:** Oh God, yes! People in the church! Mrs. R.C. Harris, you know, and I didn't know until years later that she was Native American, up from out west. She was a Sunday school teacher. Okay, Mrs. R.C. Harris. And she had a certain accent to her. But she made sure that we get our lessons in Sunday school, and she challenged us to memorize things, and we had to pick – we had to perform for her. And that was a good thing because, I think about it, years later when I got into eighth grade, I was very used to reciting things. And my English teacher, Mr. Davis, who was also the principal, was very very challenging in the English class. He said, "Okay, I'm give all these different poems that you have a chance to recite." And at the time was like, "Who could recite the longest poem?" I said mm hmm. Let's see what we can do with that. So back then I said, okay hmm, "If" by Rudyard Kipling, maybe I can do that. "If you can keep your head, when all about you/ Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,/ If you can trust yourself when all others doubt you,/ Make allowance for their doubting too." Hey, and it went on and on, and then I said, hmm, "My Native Land" by Sir Walter Scott, "Breathes there a man, whose soul is so dead,/ Who never to himself have said,/ This is my own, my native land!"

I was doing that in 8th grade, and I was having some fun, Sister. Absolutely having fun. And it was my teacher, my Sunday school teachers, people in the community helped me along because they knew my home situation. They knew that it was just my mom, my brother, and me. Okay, so people would come along, drop off vegetables and everything, and offer rides to me. It's—people have their eyes in school, especially way back then. I had to hitchhike through school one time. 'Cause the daylight saving time, it was 4:00, the bus is already gone. So, I'm in Mays Landing, where no people of color live, where I went to school. It was only one brother of color [inaudible] who owned the store. And I'm hitchhiking, and here comes this policeman who stops by me and says, "Are you Spivey?" I said yes. "Get in the car." That policeman got me in the car, drove me eight miles out to the woods and dropped me off. Yes he did. People were very very caring and understanding at that time. And I try to pass on the same kind of spirit to young people now. Because even in the school where I was the elementary principal, almost 70% of the students were from single-parent homes, and we're talking about white, brown, Black, purple, blue. And it was only 20% of the students were students of color. Right? So, I had the experience of being in a single parent home and knowing how to make up that difference. Okay, so it's been, my upbringing is one of the things I've used to guide me in what I offer to my students and offer to my parents. And the parents have been — I guess they sort of like what I do, they like what I do. Yeah.

**O'CONNOR:** Um, speaking of church and faith and things like that, how much has religion affected you and your daily life as a kid, as a young adult, and as an adult now?

**SPIVEY:** Wooo, Church. Sister, even before I was born, I guess I was in the church, all right. In the Bronx, in the Bronx, my parents were members of the Shiloh Baptist Church. And the minister was Reverend Wayne Wright, and I remember I was only four years old. He would come on, and have the radio on, or be in church. And he had "One way, one way to God, one way, one way to God" -- I remember that when I was four years old. Being in the church was always a part of me, helping others was always a part of me. So when we came out, to Mizpah, New Jersey, we joined the First Baptist Church. And one day we were in church and Reverend Wills, Joseph D. Wills, was a pastor, says, "Does anybody want to receive the hand of God?" And my brother gets up and starts walking up to the Pew. I said, oh my brother's going up, I guess I better go too. So, I followed him up to the pulpit, and I said, yes I want to join the church. And so I was baptized, and let me tell you something, Sister. I've been trying to follow the word of the Lord, the word of my mother: Help others. My mother always told me, "Baby, you help others, and if

they offer you something, don't you take it. It will all come back to you.”

And guess what? My mom was so right. So right, and just giving. That's why I have so much joy being able to continue working in the schools right now, because some of the kids are the grandkids of some of my former students. Okay, and it's really a joy, because I know what their needs were and still are, and I try to use what resources I have to help them out. Right, especially guiding them when they decide, I want to go on to higher education. I said, well maybe I happen to have a contact at Brandeis University. Well, it's a special program. At Brandeis University. And I said, well, let's go talk to the people. And so, there was a wonderful connection there, and six of my kids from East Falmouth School, where I used to be principal, had a chance to go to Brandeis University, full scholarships. We talkin a whole lot, you know, whole lot of money.

And I'm still trying to do the same thing now, because the need is great. The need is even greater, because when I was Principal at the East Falmouth School, we had, let's see, we were six people of color there now, right. Right now, [sigh] I go and volunteer and there is one person of color there. Most unfortunate, so I continue to try to help kids in all the different schools. And yeah, I want to send some people up to Dartmouth. Yes, I do. But we try to make all the opportunities available, and I still like to go knock on doors. I did this when I was principal. Kid would be acting up for something, you know, and then you go home, and I get out of school, I go knock on the door. Kid opens the door. "Mr. Spivey?!" "Hey, how you doing? How you doing? Let me talk to your parents." Let me tell you something, after talking to the parents, and the kid was right there, ain't have no more problems out of that kid. Perfect attendance, perfect behavior. And I just knocked on doors, and I greeted people, and it made all the difference in the world. This is your school. This is your school. Imma treat you the way my mom treated me. I have the highest expectations for you. And when you come into school, you better act right and participate. I want you to be the best that you could possibly be-- just like my mom told me to try to be the best. I could be-- she knew the value of education, because when she was not picking cotton back in North Carolina, she was only going, she had only gone as far as the sixth grade when she wasn't picking cotton. Yeah, so it's been a joy, it's been a joy helping young people, and I still try to do that. Now I'm at the Lawrence School, it's 7th and 8th grade school now, and taking notes on kids, and letting them know about educational opportunities and expectations. So, it's been good, life has been good to me, and I'm trying to pass it on. I'm getting old now, but I'm trying to pass it on, pass it on.

**O'CONNOR:** I think that's very special, some people take their story and make, and become their story rather than changing it, but think it's amazing how you flipped it around and doing it for a better—

**SPIVEY:** Yeah, because I knew how people helped me out, the community helped me out. They knew you before, they knew, they knew the needs of the people and the kids in the community, and they helped out. So, I'm trying to do the same thing now, and people like my knocking on the door talking to them. Looking after their kids, looking after them, too. Yeah, it's been good. It's been really good.

**O'CONNOR:** I have a question. Have you ever thought about going into ministry, or did you just make education your sort of ministry?

**SPIVEY:** [Laughter] Yes, Sister. I have thought about, thought about it, and I have a way of sort of delivering the message when I'm in school to my teachers and to my students. I may not do it in— I can't say it's a Baptist kind of thing, or it's a spiritual kind of thing— where I bring my message of my expectations for my students, my teachers, my parents, and the community. And believe it or not, people have sort of accepted it and have participated. Say whoa, yes, we can make something great happen.

And this is what happened at East Falmouth School, where my daughter went to school. Okay [deep sigh]. There was a problem. The teacher, the principal who's in East Falmouth Elementary School – ain't calling nobody's name out now. Before I was there, there was some difficulties. But I said, wait a minute. I know the teachers there. We got some great teachers. So, I said, I'm going to apply to be the Principal there. I applied, and I got in, and I had high expectations of my students, my parents, my teachers. I'll never forget the first staff meeting I had. It was standing room only, standing room only, bringing the message of how we wanted our students to perform. I had the best teachers, because our kids came from very challenging environments. Okay, so not only was it the education, but there's also the family type of support that we had to provide for the students. So, guess what? In talking with parents, East Falmouth Elementary School went from being number 7 in terms of parent participation. The parent-teacher organization. We went from number 7 to number 2, only behind North Falmouth School, which was in the very well-to-do district. And beyond that, East Falmouth way, East Falmouth School had a way of supporting people.

I was gifted with a teacher, special education teacher, who had been dismissed from the school up town, and she didn't even know anything about it. I said, oh, she was coming over to East

Falmouth School. And had a chance to meet her, talk with her, and our major concern was our kids. She said, "Well, I have this program, reading program that I was trying to introduce. Okay. May I do it over here at East Falmouth School?" I said, "Sister, okay, let's try this." We had a program so that we didn't pull elementary kids out of the classroom so the kids can make fun of them. We kept the kids in the classroom, brought the specialist, the title reading teacher, support teacher. Everybody came into the classroom to provide some support for the kids. And the kids did very well, and here's what happened. One of the scientists from Woods Hole [Oceanographic Institution] came to me and says, "You know what, that teacher is so good, I want to recommend her to be the Massachusetts Teacher of the Year. In fact, I want to recommend the teacher, the special ed teacher and the regular classroom teacher to be Massachusetts Teacher of the Year." Sister, guess what, yes, the special ed teacher had been kicked out of the other school. Right, but the parents, the scientists down in Woods Hole thought so much of her, they recommended her to be the Massachusetts Teachers of the Year 1995-96. Guess what? She was. From East Falmouth Elementary School, which was at the time [inaudible] the low rated school. But we brought that school up. The highest, best reputation ever. And it's still going [laughter], it's still going. So you take challenges if something is really easy, that's really not too much fuss. No, it's not too much fun. But if it's a challenge, and you're trying to talk about improving the education of the kids and of the community, bring it on, bring it on. I've had a lot of fun. I've had joy, I've had joy.

**O'CONNOR:** That's amazing. Speaking of challenges, did your brother, if mind telling me his name, did your brother turn his life around too? Like speaking of the circumstances, you guys were raised in? How'd that work out?

**SPIVEY:** My brother got into— he was my brother. He's fine. He didn't get into any trouble. Okay, he got more into construction trades. Okay, and he did very very well with the construction. Helping people in their church in Newtonville [NJ], where we grew up, to remodel the church. And he's been a pretty good father. His oldest daughter has her doctorate now. The son has a doctorate now. The eldest daughter has a Masters, and she's teaching. So, we were all out in the country. We all worked very hard and tried to be good, hard-working role models for our kids. Not only our kids, but the other kids in the neighborhood too. And it's a beautiful thing. You have a chance to communicate with the kids, and you have expectations, and they know — they can recognize: "Uh oh, I can't pull that mess on Mr. Spivey, he don't play that, okay." And it's just like the old days, when the old folks, before they whipped me, would give me that eye. Like, uh oh, you doing the wrong thing. I give the kids the eye. No, I can't

whip nobody today. All right. I give the kids the eye and says, "Oh, Mr. Spivey, he's serious. He ain't playing around." And the kids get in their seats, okay, it's time to get to work. We have play time, and we have work time. My expectations are the highest. Just like when I grew up, Mizpah school, school out in the woods. And when we kids left Mizpah School, went down to the big school, we had some of the best performance ever. Passing that on because the kids – all they need is the opportunity. And I have no problem talking to parents, because when you know you're right. I also investigate. I make sure I know what the home situation is like, too. I'm not going to go rolling up into somebody's door. They're going to say, "Hey, what you want, what you want to do." No. I understand exactly how to approach people, and they appreciate my helping them because life is not easy. School is not easy. Getting a good education is essential, and they know that, hey, this old man been here for a long time. And I have examples of people I have helped out. And those examples tell you, hey, Mr. Spivey don't play. You better get your stuff together. This is why I pray I'm not done yet. This is why I'm working now with the brother named, brother Ron Clark. He's a boatsman. He builds boats. And the brother has a Seafarer Program that we're introducing to the Falmouth Public Schools. Teaching the kids all the techniques, technical stuff of the boats. 'Cause he built his own boat and everything. And then teaching them how to sail that boat. And then looking at, hey, furthering your education, whether it's in Woods Hole -- one of the biggest areas in the world for hiring people on the water, in the water. Opportunities are here. So that's one of our goals, to implement that program right now, and it's going to work. It is going to work. So we getting old, trying to pass it on as much as we can. And it's been a good experience, a very very good experience.

**O'CONNOR:**

That's good, I was actually going to ask you about him later on in the interview. But to touchback about your family. I think that's, well, a comment on your family. I think it's amazing to see that you guys are all successful and all are living good lives. And I think that's something I want for my sister too. Being that, you know, just look at me and you know. You can, our family is not-- we don't have to be our family. You know. And I think I just want to show her that, and I think that your family is a great example of that. Um, what's your brother's name?

**SPIVEY:**

Kirby, K-I-R-B-Y. My late brother's name is Kirby Spivey, and his son's name is Kirby Spivey II. His son's son's name is Kirby Spivey III. His son's son's son's name is Kirby Spivey IV. So, it goes along. My father was Kirby Spivey. My brother's Kirby Spivey Jr., and little Kirby's is a minister, he's the third, and his son is the fourth.



**O'CONNOR:** Wow, that's crazy! Do you have any children?

**SPIVEY:** Yes. I have one daughter, Monique. And she has a daughter, Alexis. She is seven and a half years old right now. My daughter is involved with -- how should I say this? She works for an airport service down in West Palm Beach, Florida. She lives in Florida right now. And prior to her getting involved with the airlines, she did some investigative work with the government. She did some undercover stuff with the government. Okay, but she went to -- she made a, I won't say a mistake. I said, well, "Do you want to consider going to Dartmouth College?" And she went up and visited, and she decided, well, maybe it's country. She decided to go to University of Pennsylvania. Later on she said, "Dad. I made a big mistake. I should've gone to Dartmouth. I had a chance to go to Dartmouth, tried to do that." But she went to the University of Pennsylvania, she's got her Master's and her law degree from Boston University. And so she's trying to gather everything together. Sometimes it's difficult when you have a -- when you've been in a non-supportive situation with somebody who -- it was a divorce, put it that way. Yeah, okay. But she's still working hard and trying to help others. Trying to help others. So she's down in Florida, and I just came back from seeing her last week. And I just encouraging young people to do things that are fulfilling for them, but also so useful, helpful to the community. Because it doesn't take very much to satisfy our individual needs. We can take care of those needs very very quickly. But how can we use our other resources to help others? That's a significant thing in this lifetime -- how we can help others. How we can help others. And that's all part of my history, I guess you might say. Helping others, helping others. And my mother was one who always tried to help others. And my mother tried to help others, didn't take care of herself as well as she should've, and died on her 60th birthday, her 60th birthday. I never forget, at her funeral, three different ministers got up to talk about my mother. Reverend Wills, Reverend Harris, and then in the end, Reverend William McConnell. Brother McConnell got up. Simply said, "Sister Spivey was just trying to help somebody." Boom, drop the mic. I said, "Oh hallelujah. Oh Hallelujah." That was my mom. That was the training that my mom gave me and my brother: helping others. She said, you don't have to ask for anything. The good Lord will look out for you. And he has. He has looked out for me. Just trying to help others. I have no need to try to help my daughter. Crazy situation down in Florida right now. But yes, just trying to help others, and the good Lord has given me my good health back. I had some serious health issues at one time, but I'm up and running. No, I don't run anymore. I'm up and able to get around to help people. And as long as I can do that, the good Lord has answered my prayers. I just wanted a chance where I can help others. If I can do that, I'm okay. Whether it was at Dartmouth or

in the community. And like I said, it was a joy going to Dartmouth because we were trying to help each other out back then. I guess still doing the same thing, but it was like – Oh, this is our situation. How can we help each other out? And so this is why I continue what I'm doing. So happy that you're doing what you're doing, and helping others too.

So that's [pause] the spirit. Never lose that spirit of giving, of helping, of sharing. Because when you look at the basics, we don't need that much to survive to be happy. We have extras, let's share it, give it to others. It'll come back to you. My mom said, "Baby, you help others. If they offer you something, don't you take it. It'll come back to you." And my mom was right. Oh Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy, my mom was right.

**O'CONNOR:** I agree. My one motto is that I give out of my heart, the kindness of my heart, every time, anything that I do. Wait, I think I'm going to pull out this microphone. Sound better?

**SPIVEY:** You good. Okay, you're good. Now that was – you sounded good before. You good.

**O'CONNOR:** Is this good?

**SPIVEY:** What you did before was better. That's good, too. But it was louder, you were louder before.

**O'CONNOR:** Okay.

**SPIVEY:** Okay, I got you. You good.

**O'CONNOR:** Okay. It was some feedback, but what I was saying was, I love giving out of the kindness of my heart. So like, you know, that's the one thing that keeps me going, especially being at this school.

**SPIVEY:** Mm hmm! [Laughter].

**O'CONNOR:** If you don't mind me asking, how did you meet your wife?

**SPIVEY:** Let me tell you how I met my wife. Well, she is from East Falmouth, where we live right now. Okay. She had three other sisters drive up to Dartmouth College. One of the sisters had a brother, Charlie Johnson, at Dartmouth. Okay. I was a senior, he was a sophomore. They came up to see Charlie Johnson. Okay? We were all in the cafeteria. So, I'm sitting over on this side of the cafeteria. And they're over there on the other side sort of like – and then here comes Charlie Johnson over and says, "George, some girls from Falmouth want to have a chance to meet you." So, okay, so I went over and met them. And then

Ruthie [Ruth (Perry) Spivey] and I got together and drove off in the car and went somewhere. That's how we met. Four girls came up to Dartmouth College to meet some boys, two of them married Dartmouth guys. Yes, from one Sunday meeting, that's what happened. But it's been a wonderful wonderful experience. In fact, we got married, woo boy, June 1st, 1968. Five days before my graduation from Dartmouth College. Yes, we did. Yes, we did. And it's been a very very good relationship. If it hadn't been, sho nuff we wouldn't be together now. We've been helping each other out. And more so, helping family out, you know. It's always all about giving and helping. And so, we've all had some health issues. But we've been very very supportive of each other. Like, in fact right now, she is over at her mom's, who lives right across the street, diagonally across the street. And this coming Friday, her sister, who's 75 years old, has some issues going on – she weighs more than I do, okay – is coming in to move with her mom over there. And so we're going to probably get as much supportive care as possible. So Ruthie doesn't have to run around here, to the nursing home, out of town and stuff. And so I ask your prayers, Sister. I ask for prayers for me and my wife, that we can take care of her mom and her sister and still have some time for ourselves.

**O'CONNOR:** Yeah.

**SPIVEY:** And when the good Lord provides, he provides. Because I have a joy of still teaching, without the pressure, three days a week. I'm a teaching assistant. And I go in and take care of classes, and I have myself a good time. I substitute teach now and, woo, don't have to worry about all kind of pressures. I can. And the kids maybe have a respect for old people sometimes, who can give them a certain look or tell them, "I know your grandparents. I know your parents." And they say, "Oh, you do?" And I say, "Go ask them if they knew George Spivey." And they come back, and they say, "Mr. Spivey, oh yeah they know you, yeah, uh huh." And it's a good thing. It's a good thing, being able to do what you love is so very very special. I love giving, I love helping. And, did I make a whole lot of money? I made all that I needed to. And the good Lord has provided for the rest. Provided the rest.

So I'm happy. I'm happy for you, that you are at Dartmouth. Sister, enjoy yourself. Express yourself. Don't think, I can't do this. No, no. You think it through. Don't tell yourself, I'm not smart enough. Oh no, no. You think it through, and you give it every chance you have. And don't be afraid to ask for help. You ask for help, Sister, okay? Because I want to see you do well, I'm wanna to see all my sisters and brothers do well. And it's an exciting time, because I have – I'm 77 now, almost 78. I plan to get to my 90's. So my granddaughter have a chance to come up

to Dartmouth. Hopefully have a chance to go to Dartmouth. 'Cause she's in second grade right now, so we got 10 more years, you know, so we'll see how it goes.

**O'CONNOR:** That would be amazing. She could say that my grandfather went here, he's an alum. That would be amazing. Speaking of coming to Dartmouth, before you knew you were going to meet your wife here, what was the thought process of applying here? Was it your first choice?

**SPIVEY:** Lets see. Hmm. I was going to go to Rutgers University in New Jersey. Because I knew that, during the summer, I can work on the trucks or I can work out in the fields of blueberries. I can make enough money to pay that tuition of six hundred and some dollars. Okay. I'm going to go to Rutgers. One day, as a senior, waiting in the lunch line, my principal, Mr. John Falsetta, came up to me and said, "Hey George, how you doing? Have you ever heard of Dartmouth College?" "Dart- what?" I had never heard anybody – Dartmouth College. He said, "Take a look at it." He used to teach in Atlantic City [NJ], and there were two brothers from Dartmouth College who were teaching with him. So, he was, "Take a look at Dartmouth College." And I looked, and said oh, this is up in the woods in New Hampshire. It's pretty up there. I said, wait a minute. If I – hmm. Academically, I'm good. Athletically, I'm good. Why are my guidance counselors trying to send me to some way-off school out in the Midwest? Hmm? Then I realize, okay, George, your good grades. You're president of the class, in this committee and that committee. You're All State football, too. Hmm, why not apply to Princeton too, and University of Pennsylvania?

Yes. I did that. Accepted to all three. And first sent my acceptance back to Princeton. Said, you know, there's a certain kind of atmosphere. I visited the school. I said, there's a certain kind of atmosphere at Princeton that just didn't sorta click with me at the time. Boy, did I love Dartmouth, the woods and everything. And I contacted the Dartmouth fellow, I said, look, I made a mistake. I want to go to Dartmouth, but I sent my acceptance back to Princeton. Here's what you do. You tell Princeton, go somewhere. Send ya stuff back to Dartmouth. One of the best decisions of my life. Coming up to the woods, the hills, the fresh air, the cold of Dartmouth College. It was one of the best decisions of my life. And I never ever will regret that. That's why I strongly encourage kids to, hey, take a look at Dartmouth College. This is why my – excuse me – my brother's, no, my nephew's son graduated from Dartmouth was it five, five years ago? Kirby Spivey the fourth. Yeah, Kirby Spivey the fourth graduated from Dartmouth, I think it was about 4 or 5 years ago now. But the environment there, I felt very comfortable there. Like I said, I grew up poor. You know, I ain't

had no fine clothes and stuff. I had some nice clothes. But back in the day, you better buy yourself one nice, real nice suit. And sport coat. And you better make it last a long time, you know. But it was the right environment for me. And people were sort of down to earth. And Dartmouth was accepting kids, brothers and sisters, well brothers back then. There was 12 of us in the class, 12 of us in the class. And it was a good time. It was a very very very good time. Very good time.

**O'CONNOR:** I think everybody who goes here has a similar general experience that Dartmouth is beautiful. Um, okay when you came here and got settled in, what was your thought process major?

**SPIVEY:** What was that now?

**O'CONNOR:** What was your thought process about your major?

**SPIVEY:** Uh, I didn't know in particular what major. But Government sounded like something I could enjoy and use. If I eventually, say, well maybe I want to go to law school. But that was the best choice that I had at that time. I liked the professors there. They participated in the ABC program, A Better Chance Program. Oh, my battery's going down to 8 percent. Okay. Let me – oh, shoot. Well, I got eight percent left. Oh shoot, I got five percent left. My wife –

[Recording paused].

Just kind of catch my breath here a little bit. I'm in good shape, Sister. [Laughter].

**O'CONNOR:** I guess we can talk about the social life at Dartmouth. I think that's a big thing, especially coming to this school. I've looked into a lot of stuff that I think will be good conversation topics for us to talk about. For starters, correct me if I'm wrong, when you applied to Dartmouth, or in the application process, I believe MLK [Martin Luther King Jr.] had recently gave a speech down in um –

**SPIVEY:** '63, right? '63 yeah, okay.

**O'CONNOR:** Around the time you were applying to colleges?

**SPIVEY:** Yes. Yes, because that was, yeah. April 1963, Washington D.C. Yeah, I was applying to schools. I was only thinking about schools at the time that I think I could afford to go to. Because I knew my father wasn't around, my mom was doing day's work. I only could make so much money during the summer. And I was not fully aware of available scholarships. And so this is why I

was just thinking locally. What I could afford state-wise was Rutgers University. And then, as I said before, it was my high school principal, Mr. Falsetta, who told me about Dartmouth College and the possibilities of going there. He opened up the world for me. You might say, 'cause I was not aware. I don't know if I'd ever heard of Dartmouth. I knew about Princeton, University of Pennsylvania, but I had not even heard of Dartmouth College.

**O'CONNOR:** I was wondering if the whole, you know, MLK and Malcolm X movement impacted your process in coming here? Because I know it's like, you're in the woods, at a PWI in the '60s. What was that like?

**SPIVEY:** Yes, Sister, I was in the woods. And I'll say this. March on Washington, 1963, things are starting to get exciting. Civil Rights, and [pause] I guess Dartmouth offered the opportunity, the outreach. So I figured, hey, that would be a good selection for me, plus it was in the country. Now, I'm a country boy. I was born in the Bronx, New York. But I am a country boy. As I mentioned earlier, Princeton had a certain atmosphere about it, which I said, yeah, I could go there, but I didn't necessarily feel comfortable given my first contact. I said, no, no, you go with your feelings. And that was the best choice that I could make. Was to go to Dartmouth. I had a chance to go to the University of Pennsylvania. I went to the city, I said, no, no, no I ain't no city boy. I can't do that. So, I made the best choice. And to this day, I still know that it was the best choice I could ever make.

**O'CONNOR:** That choice has led you to various of leadership positions and a part of publications like *The Blackout* and things like that. Were you here when Malcolm X visited?

**SPIVEY:** Oh, yes. I was. [Laughter]. Yes, I was there.

**O'CONNOR:** Can we talk about that? What was that like?

**SPIVEY:** When Malcolm X came, it was absolutely wonderful wonderful experience. Excuse me. We had a little march to acknowledge his presence. And I never forget, he came into the auditorium and gave this speech. There was a question and answer period. And, let me get the name here. Come on, George. You just wrote it down here. It was in the auditorium, and it was a question and answer period. And, oh boy. And there was a brother, who was taking care of the interview, had the microphone and everything. And offered it to one of the students in the audience. And the student came across with this long question, you might say. The brother was able to recite word for word the question that this kid presented. And Malcolm X pulled away, and said "Woo, who are you, Brother?" I mean this was a

long, long – and it was, Malcolm was just absolutely amazed at the memory of the brother who could recite – oh, Richard Joseph. And that was a wonderful wonderful time, because we were full of the spirit. It was the Civil Rights Movement. We didn't want to stand for any mess.

I'll never forget, somehow, somebody invited the Governor of Georgia, George Wallace to speak. And the brothers said, "What?" We got our placards together. It was in Webster Hall. We marched across the front, came down the right aisle. Crossed the front of the auditorium stage area, then back up to the back of the next aisle. Back to the back of Webster Hall, okay?

No problem whatsoever. Quiet as I don't know what in there. Afterwards, George Wallace came out and got in the car to go. Let me tell you, the brothers and members of the Student Democratic Society, SDS, got around that car, Sister, and we were rocking that car back and forth. George Wallace is in the back seat. He turned around and the lights were – and he was scared. Okay. They finally got the police escort him out of town. But that was a moment when people, Black, white, brown, stick together and says, George Wallace, get the hell out of town. Get the hell out of town. Being with the time with Malcolm X, precious. Very very precious moments. Having a chance to see Fannie Lou Hamer. Fannie Lou Hamer came up to speak one weekend. Stokely Carmichael was around. Those were precious – tense times, at times. But those that made us grow and understand and appreciate who we were, and that other people maybe didn't appreciate us as – we didn't get the appreciation or recognition that we should have. Yes, yes.

**O'CONNOR:** I'm happy you brought that up, because that's something I was gonna speak on. Because it even ties to your poem that you wrote, "For Non-Blacks Only," in *The Blackout*. But to comment on people seeing the growth of the community. What was the College's response to that whole protest and the riots and things like that? Was it positive? Was it negative? Was it supportive of the Black community there?

**SPIVEY:** The brothers, we were determined. You had some people, especially people who were in charge of the ABC program, A Better Chance Program. They supported us. As to, beyond. SDS, we had members there. Fair number of whites supported what we were trying to do, in terms of getting equal treatment and everything, you know. Probably more so then than now. That's the way it was. Even in the fraternity. I went to Chi Phi Fraternity, and we had people there from all over the country. From the South, North, West. We had supporters of the Civil Rights Movement there. And we had one fellow, he was in the

fraternity, he was on the football team. But there had been a challenging moment, you might say. Well, yeah, you may act like that here. But you come on down to Mississippi, and we'll see how we people treat you. And I said, "uh huh." Yeah, you can read the kids. Mm hmm. You can say that now, but you come on down to Mississippi, people get out their guns and tar you all up. Oh yeah that's – you can tell. But then again, you had so much support from the brothers, white, brown, everything, for the cause. For getting more equal rights to people of color. It was a very spiritual time. Very very spiritual time. I don't know what the atmosphere is like on campus now, but we had a fair amount of support for equality. Yes, we did.

**O'CONNOR:** Honestly, if events like that hadn't happened, and the people that you were with hadn't done what you have done, the community now wouldn't be what it is now. And so this is why I love to do this project like this, because you get to think and just appreciate the people who went before you, you know, and just laid down the pieces that needed to be put in the right spot.

**SPIVEY:** You can talk about walking across the Green, and some kids from town came by and yell out "N\*\*\*\*." Let me tell you something, we chased that car. That car didn't show up, we chased it out of town. We chased it. And they knew, hey, we weren't going to mess with them. The other good thing is, we came from all over the country. And having the chance to meet brothers from all over the country was exciting. I remember after one football practice, a fella named Jimmy Johnson came up and said, "Hey, I got to go back home to Philadelphia [PA]. It's going to be a big funeral. My grandfather who was the minister had passed away," Right? He was going to go home for the funeral. And so I said, "Well, what was your grandfather's name? And he said, "Reverend Lamb. L-A-M-B." And I said, "That Reverend Rolling C. Lamb?" He said, "Yeah." That's my cousin! I'm like, my mother's cousin! And that's when we found out we were related. He had to go home because there was going to be this big funeral in Philadelphia for his grandfather. And that's when I discovered that he was a – I'm the half back on the football team, and he's a guard, and we were related. So it was a very wonderful, joyful family time. Dartmouth was the best choice for me. Still is, still is the best choice.

**O'CONNOR:** Yeah. Can you speak on the Afro-American Society and what that organization meant to you?

**SPIVEY:** Oh boy. Yeah, we [inaudible]. Let's get our act together. We're up here. It's sort of funny how things happen. I recognized Dartmouth as a wonderful school, and then it didn't dawn on me until some time later. I said, wait a minute, George. Dartmouth is an all-boys school! I said, what?! And I'll have to tell you this.



When I came to Dartmouth, I was rather quiet. Rather shy, you might say. But between September and Thanksgiving, Lord have mercy. I found the spirit. I came home for Thanksgiving, I was jumping up shouting and dancing. They said, "What happened to him?" Well, the spirit found me at Dartmouth, and ever since that time, I said, okay, we going to have ourselves a time. This is when, meanwhile, we had formed the Afro-Am [The Afro-American Society], and we had selected another person to be the social chairman. The social chair, right? And get all the social stuff and activities and party stuff together. Well, this particular person was fairly – well, he's fairly well-to-do. He had his own car. He had his girlfriend. And he could give us a hooty dooty woody whatever about the other brothers. He had his girl. He had his car. So I said, I am going to become Social Chairman of the Afro-Am. Started visiting girls schools. Went down to Smith, Holyoke. And I said, look, we got some brothers up here. Can you sisters come help us? We will take care of you. And, apparently, the sisters from other schools, said, "Yeah, ain't got no brothers up here." We would have them up for the weekend. Girl, we had ourselves a time. Girls, and with so much respect, but we party like it's 1995. I mean it was a good time. A really really good time. The sisters appreciated us. We appreciated them. I was the – have to say this – I was the Social Chairman of the Afro-Am at that time. I didn't have a girlfriend, but I brought in the girls for everybody else. We partied. Oh, yes, we did, we par-tied. And it was a good time. If you have a chance to talk to any older sisters who went to Smith or Holyoke and are still around, ask them, did you have a chance to go up to Dartmouth to visit. Did they party back then? I guarantee they'll say, "Girl, party? Shoot." We knocked it out, Girl, we knocked it out. We showed the sisters a good time and respect, and they did the same thing for us. So, I look back and I say, hey, we lived in a challenging time, but we went out of our way to make sure we could find some comfort and love and support for each other. That was a wonderful time. Absolutely wonderful time. Haha, oh my God. [Laughter].

**O'CONNOR:** There is nothing like Dartmouth fun.

**SPIVEY:** [Laughter]. Mm-mmm. We had ourselves a time. We had 305. There was 4047 Hitchcock. It was called "The Top of the Cock." And we partied. Yes, we did. Yes, the 407 Hitchcock. Yeah, we had a good time. Yeah, we had a good time.

**O'CONNOR:** That's amazing. 'Cause that was me too. Coming to college, I was very very quiet. I was loud, but loud when I needed to be. But that first winter? Man, everybody was confused looking at me.

**SPIVEY:** 'Cause I came home, and they said, "What happened to George?" Even the old folks, they were like, "Man, he done broke out." Yeah, Sister. I gave the parties. You ask the brothers, who gave the parties? They'll tell you. They'll tell you who gave the parties.

**O'CONNOR:** But how was the football team parties though? That's the question.

**SPIVEY:** Well, the parties. I'll tell you, I played football but, my sophomore year, I pulled a hamstring in my right leg, and I hurt my left foot. But I was still able to make the team. I had one exciting moment against the University of New Hampshire. This guy – I was a left half back, and I got the ball. The guy came up to tackle me. I did a spin out, straight on. Another guy came to tackle me. Then another spin out, straight on. And the guy caught me on the 5-yard line. If I had had my [inaudible], ain't no way in the world he could have caught me! Ain't no way in the world. I'll tell you, using the words of someone else, not myself. I was on the JV team, and we played West Point, went to play at West Point before we went to play at Yale. And I guess I run the ball and I turned, go back up the field and I pulled a muscle in my leg again. Had to come out of the game. Don't you know, this fella from West Point came up to me afterwards and said, "You know, if you had been in that game, we would not have won." I said, "Wait a minute, I ripped a muscle in my leg." Honest to God Sister, this fella from West Point came up to me and said, "You know, if you had been in that game, we wouldn't have won."

**O'CONNOR:** That's respect.

**SPIVEY:** So this is why I strongly encourage young people. Yeah, get involved in the sports, but make sure you take good care of your body. Make sure you take good care of your body. And so I had fun. I had fun and people recognized that, hey, this boy is good. But if you rip muscles, you're in trouble. You're in real trouble. But I had a chance. It's on film there somewhere. It's on the film.

**O'CONNOR:** I'll look for it. I'm on the track team here, and I pulled a muscle in my wrist recently, and it's not –

**SPIVEY:** Take care of it, Sister. Have somebody take a look at that. Take care of it, because if you don't get it taken care of, it'll keep getting worse. And you'll hurt it again. And it will get worse. Take it from somebody with experience. I'll just say this. I was All State New Jersey. I was pretty good. I was pretty good. People have come up to me and says, "George, you were good, man." Whether in football or baseball. I was good in baseball, too. They expected to see me in the pros, couldn't do it. Ripped the hamstring muscle. Foot was bad, foot is still bad. My left arch is

still bad. Oh God. But I enjoyed the sport when I had a chance to do it, and I encourage young people now to, number one: you get the grades, play the sports. I have my list of kids just from today. From subbing today. Kids that I want to keep my eye on, you know, for their academic performance. They're in seventh grade right now, but I want to keep my eye on the courses that they're going to take. Making sure of their grades, making contact with their parents. I said, there are opportunities out there, different colleges, looking for your kid. You don't have to worry about the money. So, that's what I've been doing the last year, Sister. Just lining people up, you know. Yeah, so, I guess I feel very blessed to be able to do what I love to do. Not a lot of people are able to do that. And I can still get up and go. Physically, I can still go. Mentally, my body and my mind is there. Most of the time. I do have some issues with memory. Yeah, I have some [pause]. I can't recite poetry like I used to. Oh, no. But I enjoy good reading and being able to help young people along. Letting them know that there are opportunities out there for them.

**O'CONNOR:** Now, I'm not sure GDX [Gamma Delta Chi] was a frat in the '60s.

**SPIVEY:** GDX, with a G?

**O'CONNOR:** Yea. Gamma Chi?

**SPIVEY:** Gamma Delta Epsilon?

**O'CONNOR:** I don't know the Greek Letters, but –

**SPIVEY:** It was GDX? Gamma Delta Epsilon.

**O'CONNOR:** It's right across from the Library.

**SPIVEY:** Is that one of the Sororities?

**O'CONNOR:** No, no, no. That the football frat, a lot of the football players –

**SPIVEY:** Oh! The football fraternity is Gamma Delta. Gamma Delta. Yeah. That was one of the Fraternities that had a lot of the football players in it. Yeah.

**O'CONNOR:** And I know you were part of Chi Phi, right?

**SPIVEY:** Chi Phi. I was Chi Phi, way back when. It was one other brother. One other brother. Oh boy. Mmm.

- O'CONNOR:** What was that like for you? And how was the process of pledging and all of that?
- SPIVEY:** Well, let me see. There were two brothers. Three brothers in Chi Phi. And, at the time, hmm, there may have been – there was another, okay. One brother was in another fraternity, but Chi Phi was the one that had the brother from the football team on it. And that's the one that my cousin, Jimmy Johnson, and I went to. Yeah. It's right across from the Sports building, the big Sports building and the tennis courts down there. Yeah. Chi Phi. Oh my God. My mind has left me for a minute. It'll come back to me. It will come. But that was the fraternity to – that's where the two brothers were back then.
- O'CONNOR:** How was that like, being in a fraternity full of white people?
- SPIVEY:** Well, oh. What happened, most of the time, when they had the big weekends and stuff. Who did they bring up to play the music? Soul Brothers and Soul Sisters. Trust me. AD, Alpha Delta, they were known to have the soul brothers and soul sisters. We did the same thing over at Chi Phi. And, Girl. Mmm mm. We used to party now! We used to party. We had ourselves a knockout – we partied. That's one of the joys is we were very very natural. We had ourselves a good time. You know, we had ourselves a really good time. Edgar Holley [Edgar M. Holley '66] was a senior. And he was the line back on the football team. And so we had [laughter], we had ourselves a good time. Even when I couldn't play anymore, he'd go down to play Columbia. And he'd come back with a half gallon of wine and everything, it was funny [laughter]. We had a good time. We had a good time.
- O'CONNOR:** That's great. Especially now in the Greek culture, hazing is still a thing, and I wanna know, was hazing back then, was anything racially motivated?
- SPIVEY:** No. Sister, there was only 12 in my class, right? 12 in the whole class. To my knowledge, if there's any hazing, it involved everybody. It wasn't that you were a person of color, you know, That didn't happen. To my knowledge that didn't happen. No. No. It was a good time. It was a good time. No hazing, nothing. We stuck together, too. We stuck together.
- O'CONNOR:** I see that you're still close with one of your brothers from the pictures you sent. That was nice to see.
- SPIVEY:** Yeah, I'll tell you, we're all getting old, but we all have those wonderful memories from when we were very very tight. And we've had to look out for each other, and we plan for each other. Because we try to make things as much home as possible, so that we had a resource, someone we can rely on. You know, we

got to be pretty close, not only with the class of '68 but the guys from '69, from '70. We got to be really really close. Because they increased the population. Because there were only 12 of us in the class of '68. By '69, there was probably like 30. And then by '70, '72 there was at least probably 40 brothers. Now the sisters came in '72. I think, '72. Yeah. How many sisters are there now?

**O'CONNOR:** Too many! [Laughter]. I'll tell you that much.

**SPIVEY:** Oh my. Oh my. We went to Colby College, went to Colby, there were a couple sisters over there. Couple sisters up at Vermont College. And we sought them out. We invited them down. They said, "Thank goodness." Come on down, we can party for a while. We'd put them up in the fraternity house and everything and took care of them. Those were the days. That was 50-some years ago. Oh boy, 55 years ago.

**O'CONNOR:** Yeah, it almost feels like the ratio is off between the brothers and sisters here now.

**SPIVEY:** Really?

**O'CONNOR:** Too much sisters for the brothers. Some sisters out here are left dry and lonely –

**SPIVEY:** Oh, that's sad. Oh my. So what you're saying is there are more sisters than brothers coming in for each class?

**O'CONNOR:** I mean for mine, I can only speak for my class. I'm not too sure. But, that's what it feels like.

**SPIVEY:** Yeah. Okay.

**O'CONNOR:** Lot of options for the men, but the women don't have much to choose from.

**SPIVEY:** Oh, that's sad. That's not good. That's not good. That's not good.

**O'CONNOR:** I know you mentioned your love for poetry. That only leaves us the option to talk about *The Blackout*. I just feel like, you know. I have a couple of questions for you, sir.

**SPIVEY:** Mmm. Okay. I wish I had gotten into the poetry a lot more, then and later on. Getting into the Langston Hughes and –. It's something I have a great appreciation – I used to teach a little course on Afro-American history. And the literature was part of that, you know. I had a joy. Unfortunately, now, I can share this with you, my memory isn't as good as it used to be. When I could remember, Girl, I could – "If" by Rudyard Kipling, "My

Native Land.” No problem, eighth grade. And now, can't do it. That's just the way the mind goes sometimes. Just can't do it, you know. But it's a good thing when I see things on TV. It's, oh man. I used to be able to do that. Oh, oh boy. But this is why I still encourage young people to learn about who they are through the literature, you know. And because if – I'm not saying other people don't do it – but if we don't do it, and make sure our kids understand the history, you know – we can't count on anybody else to do it for us. That's what I'm saying. Because they have these set curricular now, that you have to teach such and such and such. And they don't make space for a lot of other stuff. Yeah, but this is why I have the joy of being able to go into a school and saying a word here or there. The kids listen to me.

**O'CONNOR:** Growing up, especially in middle school, I used to write poetry a lot, and that's how I express myself. So reading *The Blackout*, I almost felt the emotion – like you told me you had a good time. But then I read this, and it's like, I felt the pain in the pits of my stomach. But if you can even speak on the excerpt that you wrote. I think it was Volume 1 of Number 2 of the series.

**SPIVEY:** I don't remember. Let's see. Volume 1, Number 2.

**O'CONNOR:** It was titled, "For Non-Blacks Only," and there was a quote in there that stood out to me. You said, "Black people are fighting to regain and maintain their status as human beings. Black-on-Black innocent crime, so much time, while being in the dark with one another, that we turned on each other in the light."

**SPIVEY:** Oh, wow. Wow, wow.

**O'CONNOR:** I sat on that for some time, maybe too much time because class did end. I just want to know what that meant to you.

**SPIVEY:** That's powerful. That's powerful, because especially when you think about how we treat each other and the respect or lack of respect or understanding we have for each other. That is troublesome. Back then, and still now, we aren't as familiar with the whole history of the struggle of people of color, that we don't understand the need to appreciate our history of who we are, and the struggle that we still have. This is why I am so blessed to be in the schools, because ain't nobody else telling about, "Hey, by the way this is the way things were." Okay? I'm here to try to ensure that you understand who you are, and making sure that you have some opportunities that other people may not even be aware of, with an education. Having that history of who you are, having that pride, standing tall. Trying to convince yourself, no matter what's happening in the home, what's happening in school, what's happening in the community. There's a lack of males. Brothers. Going on to school now. And

that's sad. That's very sad. This is one of the reasons why I'm in the school. Not even just for boys, but girls too. Because, if I don't speak up for them, who's gonna be out there doing it? Ain't nobody else in the school. I can't say that nobody else but, go out of their way to make sure that that person of color understands about opportunities. That I have high expectations. There are people that I am willing to go out of my way to help you. The good thing is this, we all old folks now, but we still have folks who are willing to make those contributions. To come and inform the kids about their history. To provide that financial support. Some people have money. Just connecting our kids to those opportunities. That's why I am still here, because if I don't do it, it ain't gon' happen. For a person to come into Falmouth right now, it's hard because it's so expensive to live here, to buy here now. You can't buy a home for no forty thousand dollars any more [laughter]. It ain't happening. Maybe four hundred thousand. It's a sad situation, so this is why I take every opportunity to go into the schools, to work with our kids. That's why we still have our youth groups trying to help the kids out. Otherwise, if we don't do it, it ain't happening. Also tying in with the Wampanoag Native Americans. If we don't help each other out, ain't nobody else in the world who are going to help us. That's sad, but the truth. That's the truth.

**O'CONNOR:** At the end of the day we only have each other.

**SPIVEY:** Hey. I'll say this. It's good to have connections.

**O'CONNOR:** Yes.

**SPIVEY:** Fortunately, I'm not bragging anything like – fortunately, I have been in town long enough that people will say, "Hey, George Spivey is all about helping other people, especially our kids." And if I go to them and say, "Hey, by the way, can you help a brother out, in terms of making donations for scholarships and everything." People show up. You familiar with Falmouth, we got Woods Hole, we got some rich people. At Woods Hole. Who are willing to say, "Yeah, I'd give you 10,000 or 20,000 dollars to help the kids out." Yes. This is why Ron Clark – he was the head of the Concerned Black Men. Yeah, we have friends down in Woods Hole right now, who wanted to donate boats to us, money to us, so we can help our kids out. So, it ain't over yet. But just trying to tie in as many young people as possible. But getting young professional people has difficulty, coming into Woods Hole, they make good money there. Coming into teach in Falmouth, we haven't had a new sister, brother come in here in a while. That's sad. Very very sad.

**O'CONNOR:** Speaking of helping the youth, have you stayed active with the Black Alumni Association here? Or even through the Afro-Am?

**SPIVEY:** I know Woody Lee [Forrester "Woody" Ashe Lee '68] and guys who were in the Class of '68, '69, and '70, but beyond that, '71, I'm not too familiar with everyone. But we have different initiatives here to raise money through the Cape Cod group of Concerned Black Men. It's a national group. Concerned Black Men. We were able to raise some money for the scholarships for kids. That's how we mainly do it. Plus you have people of all different colors with a whole lot of money, Sister. I mean a whole lot of money. Who are willing to say, "Hey, by the way" – they know you're devoted to helping young people – and say, "George, do you need any help. Here's five thousand dollars over here. Here's ten thousand. And it goes to the kids.

**O'CONNOR:** Yeah.

**SPIVEY:** So, this is why having those connections in Woods Hole and throughout the town, and having a good name. That, hey, this person is continuing to make Falmouth a very very welcoming place. And the fact that I used to be the principal at the elementary school and the Equity and Affirmative Action Officer for the town, it makes a big difference. Having a chance to know people, and people to know you. You never know who has the money. But I'll say this. A lot of people got a whole lot of money here. And if you're doing some good things, they are willing to contribute. Especially as this is tax deductible. When you get a tax – you have a contribution, you know, and then you have a deduction. Donating to the Concerned Black Men, which is a scholarship program. But that's where we are, Sister. But that's why I do what I do. I try to stay as healthy as possible, because I'm doing what I love.

**O'CONNOR:** Yeah.

**SPIVEY:** I love helping our kids along. And we have all the older brothers, scientists out of Woods Hole. Ambrose Jearld [Jr.] is a scientist down there. [Inaudible]. We pull together to help our kids, because we know if we don't do it, it ain't gon – I'm not going to say it ain't going to happen – but if we don't initiate it, people don't know exactly who to contact.

**O'CONNOR:** Right. You mentioned Woody Lee. Was he close to you? A close friend?

**SPIVEY:** Well, he was in our class. He's from New Jersey, he's from North Jersey. I am from South Jersey. We weren't fraternity brothers, but we went through Dartmouth the same year, graduated the same year and everything. He's making a tremendous



difference. He has put forth resources, okay, to benefit the Black students. So that people know there's initiatives by Blacks to make the environment better for Blacks. To make sure the enrollments are good for Blacks. Yes. Brother Woody? Dr. Woody? Good people from way back when. Way, way back when. I'm not saying that New Jersey is special, but he from North Jersey, I'm from South Jersey. Jersey is special. That's all I'm saying, mmkay.

**O'CONNOR:** I hear that.

**SPIVEY:** Yeah. Yeah good people. Very very good people. When you get a chance to see him, tell him you had the chance to talk with George Spivey from the woods of South Jersey. Tell him that. He'll start laughing.

**O'CONNOR:** Let me write that down and take some notes. Remember. I have one last question for you. And this is something that not only means a lot to me, because I've had teachers or administrators that have told me stuff that has stuck with me for a while. I want to ask you: what is something that one of your students have told you that you would never, ever forget?

**SPIVEY:** [Pause]. Well. [Pause]. Students have indicated that if I hadn't gone out of my way to help at times, they wouldn't have made it. Whether they had to – [pause] you know, living with their mother. The rental people came by and put a lock on the door because the rent wasn't paid. And the kid goes off to college, just has a light jacket on and nothing else. And my wife and I see him, pick him up to come home for Thanksgiving. Because this kid was up at Brandeis. And we see that, where is all the clothes? They came in and took over all the stuff in the apartment where his mom was living, and his clothes were gone. So my wife and I said, "Hey look, let's go over to the shopping mall and buy this boy some clothes." The boy was very very smart, one of the brightest kids that came out of my school, East Falmouth Elementary School. When teachers would say, "George, I've been teaching for 30-some years. This is the brightest boy I ever had." Graduated with his Bachelors from Brandeis. He's got his Masters, and he is working to help youth in Boston right now.

**O'CONNOR:** That's the full circle that were talking about. That's exactly –

**SPIVEY:** That's joy, giving back, helping out. That's why I ask myself, "George, what do I need?" Whatever I need, I need to help my wife and my daughter and granddaughter. Yeah, my mother-in-law, too [inaudible]. But that's another story. But being able to help others, that's the most exciting thing. Because thinking of how people helped me out when I was growing up. There are difficult times now, especially when, to be very honest

with you, some fathers ain't around. While mamas ain't doing what they're supposed to be doing. Having a chance to help them make it through. Okay, that's the most rewarding. It's not for reward. It's just how people helped me out, when they said, hey, his dad ain't around, his mom is still working out in the fields and the canning factories, scrubbing floors. How can we help this young boy out? Just passing it on, Sister. Just passing it on. I don't need much. I got old clothes and everything [laughter]. I only go into the schools three days a week right now. I don't have any late meetings or anything like that. I have time just to devote to the young people. I've been going across the street to help my wife with my mother-in-law and everything. So God is good. I have no regrets whatsoever. And I'm just passing on what my mother told me to do. She said, "Baby, just try to help somebody. They offer you something? Don't you take it. It'll come back to you. It'll come back to you." And my mom is so right, so right. Just trying to help somebody. And what do I need? I'm old, Girl. I am old. I just want to say thank you for contacting me, and letting me share some of my experiences in life that hopefully will maybe tell other people, say, "Oh, yeah, I hear what he's talking. I'm going to try to the same kind of thing of helping our young people along." Because if we don't do it, it ain't going to happen. That's the sad part about it. That's the sad part. But the Dartmouth experience, it wouldn't have happened unless I had gone to Dartmouth. Trust me.

**O'CONNOR:** Telling you, nowhere else.

**SPIVEY:** It wouldn't have happened [laughter]. I won't say for sure it wouldn't have happened at Princeton, but it was a different feeling all together. And I wasn't a city boy, I was a country boy. So, my Sister, you continue doing your very very best. And I'll just say this, please let us stay in touch. Let us stay in touch. If I can help you along in any way, help you make connections in any way. Not that I know a whole lot of people, but I may know somebody who would be able to help you along in your journey. Okay? And that's my major role. Just trying to help somebody. That's what they said about my mom, Sister Spivey was just tryna to help somebody, Amen.

**O'CONNOR:** Amen.

**SPIVEY:** Amen, Sister. So I want you to have the best of days, the best of times. Enjoy your youthful experience, and keep on doing the right thing. Keep on doing the right thing. And I hope, somehow, someday, sometime soon, they'll have some brothers coming up to the school. You can say, "Uh huh. Yeah. Okay. Yeah, I can see this. I can see sum' happening." Okay?

**O'CONNOR:** Yes, Sir.

**SPIVEY:** You take care of yourself now, and contact me anytime whatever you need. And if you ever want to come down to the Cape [Cape Cod, MA] with some friends during the summertime, and you want to go over to Martha's Vineyard [MA] – that's where all the sisters and brothers are, at Martha's Vineyard. And you need a place to stay, you come down with your sisters, because I'm just here with my wife. She comes over in the morning, she's over across the street right now. And you need a place to rest your head, come in. Then I'll make sure you get over to Martha's Vineyard where you can see all the brothers and sisters over there. And you won't have to pay a thing. Okay?

**O'CONNOR:** Okay!

**SPIVEY:** Alright, remember that now? Okay.

**O'CONNOR:** I will, we have Sophomore Summer coming up.

**SPIVEY:** So, my Sister, love to you and everyone. Enjoy your youth, happiness. And just continue having an open heart, helping others. It'll all come back to you. It will all come back to you. Okay. All right, don't forget to say your prayers.