

Albert F. Moncure, Jr. '69  
Dartmouth College Oral History Program  
Dartmouth Black Lives Project  
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Transcribed by Luis Hinojosa '24

**HINOJOSA:** [I'm Luis] Hinojosa. I'm a senior here at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, and I'm conducting the interview with Albert Moncure, Jr. Would you mind telling us where you're from?

**MONCURE:** Pardon me?

**HINOJOSA:** Would you mind telling us where you're from?

**MONCURE:** Originally or?

**HINOJOSA:** Yeah, originally.

**MONCURE:** I'm originally from New York, New York City.

**HINOJOSA:** And where you currently in right now?

**MONCURE:** Right now I'm in Western Massachusetts.

**HINOJOSA:** Oh, interesting, and today is October 29th, 2023. So, I'd like to go back to where you're from. So, you're from New York City. Were you born there?

**MONCURE:** Yeah, actually, I was born in Brooklyn, which is a borough of New York City. When I was about four or five, we moved to Long Island. We were there for about five years. And then we moved to the Bronx for three years and to the White Plains [NY], which is where I went to junior high school and high school.

**HINOJOSA:** And when were you born?

**MONCURE:** 1947.

**HINOJOSA:** 1947. So, what was it like growing up in New York City during that time?

**MONCURE:** Oh, what was it like? [Pause]. Not that much different from today. Although, I mean, there was a, I recall there were, I didn't live near gangs, but there was a lot of gang violence. I mean, I know that was a big issue in the news, was gang violence. And they would arrest kids who were gang members who had made zip guns. I just have to laugh at that now, because zip guns are just, they're such crude devices. It's just a stick with a rubber band on it, and it fires a .22 against a needle. And now these

kids have glocks and they have AR-15s. And they were worried about zip guns. Every night there'd be something on the news about a kid being picked up with a zip gun, you know?

**HINOJOSA:** [Laughter] That is pretty funny thinking about it now. So apart from that, what did you find yourself doing, hobbies or through school or anything like that?

**MONCURE:** Well, I did. You know, I had an erector set and I would make projects out of that. Do you know what an erector set is? No, it's a sort of a toy, and it's got different metal building instruments. It's got, there are girders, there are links and screws, and there are wheels, anything. You can make any number of different projects with the erector set. So, I did that. Now, that really didn't require that much imagination because they would show you a picture, a photograph of all the projects that could be made with the erector set. Now I also, I did a lot of projects on my own.

Like I made a telegraph set out of, this was something my fourth grade teacher explained to us to do, how to make a telegraph set and how to power it with a dry cell. And, basically, you wound a coil around a nail, and then you had a bent piece of metal over the top of the nail. And when you energized the nail with the dry cell, the nail would become an electromagnet and it would pull the piece of metal down and would make a click. So that's how it worked. That's basically how telegraphs were, that's basically how they were made, you know, back in the 1800s. You know, so, but I made one of my own. And then I also figured out how to make one that would send messages to another telegraph and receive messages from a telegraph. I made a robot [laughter]. And again, I have to laugh about this, because the robot I made was basically an empty turpentine can, like that, and then a smaller can on top, and then some like beer cans for legs. And I would, I put two, what do you call, light bulbs in the top can for lights. And that was the robot. And again, I laugh at it now. That was something I did. But now these kids, they make real robots that do all sorts of things. Like one of my colleagues at work before I retired, she had a son who made a robot, and it could do all sorts of things. It could walk, it could pick up things. Now they have -- I guess it's a change in the technology. There's just more technology now than there was in the '50s and the '60s. That was just available to people.

**HINOJOSA:** Definitely, definitely yeah, I mean it still sounds pretty cool that you made your own telegraph set, that they taught you how to do that. That's awesome. And, I guess kind of on that topic, I guess I want to ask about your family life. Did you grow up with any siblings, or were you an only child?

**MONCURE:** Yeah, I have an older sister who's about two years older than I am.

**HINOJOSA:** And so did you spend like a lot of time with family in New York or did you all kind of like do your own thing?

**MONCURE:** Well, you know, we ate dinner together all the time and we went to church together. My sister had a group of friends and I had a couple of friends. I am, once again, I am, at that time, I was very interested in the military and into war. And I was inspired by comic books. At that time, you could buy comic books, comic books cost a dime. And there were different types of comic books. There were comic books about superheroes, Superman, Batman, and then there were war comics about World War II. And it's really sort of ironic that I was so interested in that, because I mean I'm not a violent or belligerent person. But again, it was these comic books, they romanticize war and the military.

So, I read them [comics] a lot, and I became interested in that. And in both Long Island and in the Bronx, I organized armies. I call them armies. I had four or five kids and we made guns. They were like zip guns. They didn't fire .22s. They fired bottle caps. I don't know if you've even seen the type of bottle caps I'm talking about, but they sit on the top of a bottle, and you need a church key or a bottle opener to open them up. And they have little pointed indentions on the other side. And what we used to do is, we would get a long stick and then I would go to a gas station, and I would ask for an old inner tube. I'd get the inner tube, and then I cut the inner tube laterally and make a rubber band out of it. And you attach one end of the rubber band to the stick. You pull the rubber band down, put tension on it. You would put the bottle cap in the rubber band, and then you would hold that in place with a clothesline. This was a, and again, I don't know if you're familiar with these clotheslines. These are clotheslines with a spring in them that they can open and close. And so you would put them in the, the...

Yeah, I am, I have to apologize. I am, you know, I joke with my friends, I have these senior moments. You know, my memory is not that good these days. Although it's, my long-term memory is better than my short-term memory. But still, my memory is not that good. But anyway, by pressing the...

**HINOJOSA:** The clothespin, the pin?

**MONCURE:** The pin, that would release the bottle cap under pressure, and it would go about maybe 10 or 15 feet. And I got my first taste of real combat one day when I was with my army. We were firing these at another group of kids, and the other group of kids had

rocks, and one of the kids threw a rock at my tooth and shattered my tooth. So, my parents, they took me to a dentist. There was a dentist in the neighborhood, which was in walking distance, and it was open late at night, and the dentist extracted the tooth. And eventually, I got a false tooth put there.

**HINOJOSA:** That must have been painful.

**MONCURE:** That was painful. And I guess the other thing is, I was accident prone growing up.

**HINOJOSA:** [Laughter] Yeah, kind of reminds me of my little brother.

**MONCURE:** Your little brother is accident prone?

**HINOJOSA:** Yeah. Very much so [laughter].

**MONCURE:** Well, when I was nine, I fell off a 200-foot cliff and fractured my skull, and I have the scar right here. This scar is from the, is from the fall off the cliff, and this scar is from an automobile accident I had when I was 17. So, basically that was it growing up, falling off the cliff, the rock in the face, and the automobile accident.

**HINOJOSA:** Those are some crazy injuries, actually.

**MONCURE:** Yeah. Right.

**HINOJOSA:** And, so it kind of leads me to ask, I do wanna know how your parents reacted, and also what was your parents' background, like how they grew up. Were they all from New York?

**MONCURE:** Well, no. Well, my mother was from New York. She was from Queens, New York. Queens is a borough of New York. She grew up there. My father grew up in a largely white community in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. And he was one of the few Black students in the school. And so, he, when he, after graduating from, well, let's start over again. This was during the Depression. And in his high school during the Depression, they just, the administrators decided which courses you were gonna take, based upon what your parents did for a living. And my grandfather did not live with the family. My grandfather was estranged from my grandmother. And so the family really had no real income of any sort. Which was not that unusual for the Depression 25% of Americans were unemployed during the Depression. So my father's family wasn't that unusual. But in this high school, if your parents, if the parents had a job, any kind of a job at all, they would put you in a college preparatory course, and you would study things like English and history and mathematics. If your parents did not have a job, they would put

you in a commercial course, and you would learn typing and shorthand and subjects like that. So my father was in a commercial course because his parents didn't have a job.

And one thing that was funny was that, you know, they were constantly getting these threatening letters from the town threatening to foreclose on the house, because my grandmother had not paid the real estate taxes. And like today, if you don't pay your real estate taxes, the municipality or the tax jurisdiction, they will repossess your house, and they'll sell it at a public auction. And my father said during the Depression, they just laughed at these notices and threw them away. Because, of course, there was nobody to sell the houses to. So they were just empty threats. Because if the municipality had repossessed the houses, there was nothing they could do with them. There was no, there was no market for houses. It was a depression. It was 25% unemployment.

So, my father grew up in the depression. And when he was about 18, he became aware that there was a college scholarship available from the state of Pennsylvania for a Black student. So, my father applied for this, and he got it, and it was \$65. And with that \$65, he was able to enroll in Lincoln University, which is an HBC [Historically Black College] in Pennsylvania. And so he enrolled in that. And then in 1942 -- why, I don't know -- he enlisted in the army. But I guess everybody was, you know, people were doing that in those days. The war was going on. There was a lot of patriotism, and that's what people did. People enlisted in the army. So he enlisted in the army and spent, well, I guess before that, while he was away at Lincoln [University], his college roommate was my future uncle.

And my uncle, his roommate, introduced my mother to my father. So she came up to Lincoln [University] on weekends. I gotta go back again. Yeah, this is probably, you probably wouldn't know this either, but the school was an all-male institution. They did not admit women, as did not Dartmouth until about 1973. So, but my mother used to come from Queens, New York out to Lincoln [University] in Lincoln, Pennsylvania for weekends, which is pretty much the same thing I did when I was at Dartmouth, because women came up from other colleges to spend weekends. So that's how my mother met my father. And they got married in 1944. And after that, my father was deployed, first to the European Theater of War. He was stationed in England. They lived in a camp, in a park. And there was, they were subjected to German bombardments, not from bombers, because the Germans didn't have any bombers at that time, but what they had was they had V2 rockets. They had rockets, and they were very advanced at rocketry. So these V2 rockets would come over, and they would buzz. They'd make a

buzzing sound, and they called them buzz bombs. And once they stopped that buzzing sound, that would mean the rocket was getting ready to fall and explode. So they had to dodge that. And then after VE [Victory in Europe] day, my father was redeployed to the Philippines in preparation for the land invasion of Japan, which fortunately didn't have to happen because they dropped atom bombs on Japan, and so that alleviated the need for a land invasion. And then in about, I guess, about 1946, my father was discharged, and he came back home to Brooklyn, where we lived at the time. And they gave him an option when he was discharged. He could be completely discharged or he could decide to go into the reserves. And if you went into the reserves, you were on active duty for two weeks during the summer. But the good thing about it was that you got some sort of payment, and it couldn't have been much. I mean, he only got \$65 to go to college. So, the army could not pay him much for being in the reserves. And the only thing about being in the reserves was that, if war broke out, you got reactivated. But in 1945 and 1946, after the end of World War II, no one thought there was going to be another war. That was it. And of course, four years later in 1950, the Korean War broke out, and my father got recalled to active duty.

**HINOJOSA:** Oh, so he served, wow, back-to-back. That is actually really insane.

**MONCURE:** But that was not a good decision on his part. But he was able to get, he had enough dependents that he was able to get discharged. So, he only stayed in the Army for about six months, and he never did go to Korea.

**HINOJOSA:** Got it. And so, I guess during this time, what did your mother do?

**MONCURE:** She was just a homemaker. She did not work. During the war, she worked in a defense plant. She worked for Western Electric. She made crystals for shortwave radios. And you know, I don't know what the money was, but it was a lot of money at the time. And, you know, my mother and my grandparent, my grandmother, she was really excited about that money. So, whenever my mother got her check, she would just give it all over to my grandmother. My grandmother just took it. And that was what people did at the time.

**HINOJOSA:** And so did your parents push you and your sister academically or, because obviously I think it took a lot [of effort] to be able to enroll at Dartmouth. So, what was that [motivation that] kind of pushed you?

**MONCURE:** I think we were just, we were just intellectually curious. We were interested. Now, I know, I can remember in kindergarten, before I went to kindergarten, my mother taught me how to write my name. And she taught me how to write my name in cursive. And she said, when you go to school, you have to be a good boy. So that was in the back of my mind when I went there. I kept saying, I have to be good, I have to be good. And I paid attention to the teacher. And I did the homework and was basically a good student.

**HINOJOSA:** So, was this kind of like the case throughout all of elementary, middle school, high school?

**MONCURE:** Through high school. In high school, I was better in humanities and social sciences than I was in the sciences. But I was in a college prep course. I took English, I took four years of a language, took three years of a science, two years of mathematics. And my ninth grade geometry – no, my 10th grade geometry teacher was also my high school track and cross country coach. And he went to Dartmouth. And he was the person who got me interested in going to Dartmouth, and, basically, I went to Dartmouth because of his influence.

**HINOJOSA:** That's very interesting. So did you start running cross country and track in high school then or...?

**MONCURE:** High school, yes.

**HINOJOSA:** So that was also the reason that got you interested in Dartmouth. Was running and being under this coach.

**MONCURE:** Right.

**HINOJOSA:** That's really cool. That's awesome. And so, obviously, you did run cross country and track at Dartmouth. How did your parents react to you enrolling at Dartmouth? Did they think it was too far, or did they think they wanted you to go out there?

**MONCURE:** I think it was good. I mean, my father always wanted me to go to an Ivy League school, because he felt that people with Ivy League degrees got treated a lot better in the business world. He said they might not be smarter than non-Ivy League graduates, but there was a perception that they were better, that they were smarter, and having an Ivy League degree gave you a leg up in the business world. So, he was excited about that.

**HINOJOSA:** How did you feel about it? Were you also excited to be going to an Ivy League School?

**MONCURE:** I was, I really was, yeah. So, I got a, my high school coach used to give me copies of the alumni magazine, and I'd read them. I'd read them very carefully, and I really got interested in the school. And it just sounded like a really cool place to go to school. I really wanted to go there. And I was really happy when I got accepted.

**HINOJOSA:** And so then you, obviously, you went to Dartmouth. What was it like at that time, you know, it not being coed yet, being an all-male school? Were there a lot of Black people at Dartmouth at that time too? Or how did it feel?

**MONCURE:** No, there weren't. There were about – there were – in my class, I guess, there were about 15, 15 Black students in my class. And then that was in '69. And then the class before us in '68, there were about 10. And then the class before that, class of '67, there were three. And then if you go back to like, oh, I guess, the next largest class would have been like in 1958. There were about 10 Black students in the class of '58.

**HINOJOSA:** Yeah, so really there weren't that many Black people at all at Dartmouth.

**MONCURE:** No, there weren't, no.

**HINOJOSA:** I know you were a member of the Afro-American Society. So, was that something? I can't recall. Were you one of the founding members? Did that start your freshman year?

**MONCURE:** Yes. We were sort of founding members. Yeah, there were just a bunch of us that got together and decided to form this group. And we were actually, we were encouraged by the members of the DCU, the Dartmouth Christian Union. And they were, that was sort of like the liberal group on campus. The white liberal group on campus was the Dartmouth Christian Union. And they were, the perception they had of Black students at the time was that we were not that interested in Black issues and Black activities. And they hosted a reception for the Black students. And we got to know each other then. And they encouraged us to become members of the Dartmouth Christian Union. And we said, well, that's good, but I think we want to get together and decide whether we want to have our own group. And so we did. We got together, we decided to form the Afro-American Society, and I guess there were, there would have been about 25, 30 Black students on campus at the time. And I think all but a handful of the Black students joined the Afro-American society.

**HINOJOSA:** And what did you guys mostly talk about? I know I went through some archives, and I saw some of the meeting notes. But what was it like being a member, and how did it change your time at

Dartmouth for the better or for the worse? Or what kind of impact did it have in your Dartmouth career?

**MONCURE:**

It made it better, because I made a lot of friends. These were Black friends. The white friends I had were friends from the cross country team and the track team.

And my roommate, my college roommate, he was white. And we had gone to junior high school and high school together. And then we roomed together for all four years. And right now he's my best friend. He lives in Germany, and I just came back this past summer from visiting him in Germany.

But we [Afro-American Society] had a sit-in in the college President's office [President John Sloan Dickey], and we were trying to get the college to withhold its proxy in the Kodak Corporation. The Kodak Corporation, I don't even know if it exists anymore, because they don't have that type of photography anymore. Photography is all digital. But at the time, Kodak was an economic powerhouse in Rochester, and there was a grassroots group of Blacks in Rochester who were trying to get as many shareholders of Kodak stock as they could enlist to withhold their proxies and then give them to this group. And then the [grassroots] group would vote their shares in favor of socially responsible activities. So, we wanted Dartmouth to withhold its proxy, because it owned a certain amount of stock. And we petitioned the college and when they said no, we had a sit-in in President [John Sloan] Dickey's office. And then that lasted for about a day, and they agreed to meet with us. And we met with the administration, and they explained that they couldn't, this was something they couldn't do. I guess it was just so unorthodox at the time. And their primary interest in owning stock was to use it as part of Dartmouth's endowment. And they didn't wanna put that at risk by withholding their stock for socially active issues. And now, that would have been in 1967, I think.

And in the early '80s or '90s, I was president of the Dartmouth Lawyers Association, and a big issue on campus at that time was Darfur [Sudan]. There were a group of Blacks in Darfur, which was part of Nigeria, and they were being oppressed by Arab Nigerians. There was a big issue at that time. Darfur was a big issue politically at the time. So, a group of Dartmouth students who were interested in the Darfur issue, they approached the Lawyers Association, and they wanted to know if we would sponsor a resolution asking Dartmouth to withhold its proxy and only use its proxy, only to vote its proxy, only to own shares of stock in socially responsible corporations. And that was, I mean, I thought it was a great idea, but most of the members of the Lawyers Association, they said, "Oh no, we can't do this. We can't involve Dartmouth. We can't get involved

in Dartmouth's fiscal activities. It's horrible. We can't do this. We absolutely can't do this." But the resolution was put forward by Dartmouth students, and the Trustees voted unanimously to do it. They voted to establish an ethical investing policy. I guess it still exists today. That they invest their stock in ethically responsible corporations.

**HINOJOSA:** And so also, I think that brings me to my next question. Did you participate in the sit-ins, and also were you a social activist on campus with AAM [Afro-American Society] or just by your, by your own part? I know in 1967, there was the George Wallace protest in which he came to give a talk. Did you participate...?

**MONCURE:** I didn't participate in rushing the stage. There were about five or six students who did that. And then what happened was, after, what happened was George Wallace, basically, once the students started rushing the stage, he got up. And he left. And he went out to a side door, and he got into his car. And about, there must have been 1500 Dartmouth students, most of whom were white, because there weren't that many Black students at the college, but there must have been about 1500 students. I was one of those, and we surrounded the car, and we prevented him from leaving. And eventually the state police came, and they pushed us away. And they made room for him to drive away.

But the one thing I did do is I participated in the Andover [MA] ABC program. ABC was a program called "A Better Chance," in which students from economically deprived backgrounds attended high schools in economically well-off communities. And these were generally high schools which had a more rigorous curriculum than the curriculum at their home high schools. And Dartmouth was involved in the ABC program. And they established a program at Andover High School, not at the prep school, but at the public high school. And the community purchased a big house as a dormitory for the ABC students, the students from these disadvantaged backgrounds. And Dartmouth sent down its students to be tutors in the program, to help tutor the students and also to work in that high school as student teachers and get college credit that way. I was down there for two terms, the fall and the winter term of my junior year. And then in the spring term, I came back to Dartmouth.

**HINOJOSA:** And how was that experience for you? I mean, obviously, it must have felt very enriching to be able to give back to the community.

**MONCURE:** It was great. I was an English teacher, and I really learned, I learned a lot. I mean, I learned a lot about... About analyzing literature. And by teaching those students, I learned an awful lot. And I was a much better student when I came back to

Dartmouth.

**HINOJOSA:** And what did you, what were you learning at Dartmouth? What was your major?

**MONCURE:** English.

**HINOJOSA:** English? I know you wrote an article for the Dartmouth alumni magazine, right? And you also, I think you were an editor for a poetry book that some Dartmouth students wrote. What was that experience like?

**MONCURE:** That was called *Blackout*, and I was actually a copy editor. Which means I proofread it, and I made sure that everything was grammatically correct. But yeah, we did about, I think we did about two or three issues and students wrote poetry. They wrote articles and we sold it on campus.

**HINOJOSA:** Oh, and did it sell well or like, was it...?

**MONCURE:** I think we sold all the issues we printed. We didn't print that many issues, but we sold them all. But my senior year, I spent most of my time on my English major. Just going to class, and there was a lot of reading involved, and there's a lot of writing. I just did a lot of reading and a lot of writing. I spent a lot of time on my English major during my senior year.

Now, one thing the white students did, they actually took over Parkhurst Hall. At that time, there were students at various colleges would take over college facilities, and they had demands. I'm not sure what all the demands were, but, basically, there were probably 50 or 60 white students who took over Parkhurst Hall, but none of the Black students participated in that. We just stood outside and watched, and we clapped, and we gave them our support. But we didn't join, because we didn't want, we knew they were going to get arrested, and we knew they were going to be suspended from school, and none of us wanted to do that. None of us wanted to get arrested. None of us wanted to be suspended. You know, we were all, this was our senior year. We all wanted to graduate on time.

**HINOJOSA:** Yeah, that is, actually, currently right now there are people out there in Parkhurst protesting. Asking Dartmouth to divest from Israel, I think.

**MONCURE:** Oh, okay.

**HINOJOSA:** It's kind of... Kind of weird and amazing that this sort of stuff has been happening since your time at Dartmouth. Uhm, but. I guess moving on, I also I really want to know what your

experience was like on the track team on the cross country team. Were you one of the only Black athletes there, or...?

**MONCURE:** There were... when I was there, it was me and another student, Julian Reeves ['69]. We were the only Blacks on the team at the time.

**HINOJOSA:** And what was that like? Did you feel out of place?

**MONCURE:** No, I didn't feel out of place, because, on my high school track team, there weren't that many Blacks. I went to an integrated high school. I mean, they were out of, there were about 800 students in the junior and senior high school. Probably 50 of them were Black. So, there wasn't that much of a cultural shift. You know, it wasn't that much of a big deal.

**HINOJOSA:** So what was it like being a student-athlete? Was it difficult to manage your classes and make sure you were going to practice? Was it hard to be committed to both things at once?

**MONCURE:** It was actually, and I, basically, I left the track team, because it was harder. I mean, to be really good at it, you had to spend a lot of time. You had to devote a lot of time. Ironically, our coach at the time, he was, Ellie Dois, he was a terrible coach. You know, in high school, my coach encouraged us to do a lot of running. Not just practice, not just during practice, but on our own. And we would get up before high school, a group of us, five or six of us. We'd get up, and we'd run maybe two miles on our own before high school. And then we'd have the regular workout after the end of the school day. And our coach encouraged us to do this. And the only way you could really be competitive in cross country, unless you had a lot of natural ability, the only way you could really be competitive was to spend a lot of time practicing, and put a lot of time into it. And I really wasn't able to do that and do the academic work as well. So, I stopped running. And my college roommate had the same experience. He was the quarterback on our high school football team. He was captain of the football team, the baseball team, and the basketball team. But once he got to Dartmouth, he basically just concentrated on his studies. And he found that, he said, that the curriculum was so rigorous that he didn't see how he could play football and be a good student at the time. So, as between the two things, being a good student and playing football, he opted for being a good student. And that's what he did.

**HINOJOSA:** Yeah, I could definitely see it being challenging. But I guess like you said, those pros that came from it. I mean, you made a lot of friends there. What was the social life at Dartmouth like during that time? I know you said women would come up during the

weekends, but...

**MONCURE:** Yeah, there... there wasn't much social life. I mean, I had a car, and we, some friends and I would go to women's, we'd drive down to Mount Holyoke [MA], and we would socialize with the Black women at Mount Holyoke. It sort of became like a sister school to us. But again, yeah, socializing a lot was the same dynamic as spending a lot of time as an athlete. You could do one or other, you could be an athlete, you could spend a lot of time socializing, or you could spend a lot of time on your schoolwork. And I spent a lot of time on my schoolwork. And I think in my class, that's what most of the guys did. Although some of them went out. Some of them, I remember one fellow, Tom, can't remember his last name. I just remember his first name was Tom. Yeah, he had a girlfriend at Mount Holyoke who he eventually married, and they stayed together. They're married to this day.

**HINOJOSA:** That's incredible. And I know like a big thing now here socially is the frats, obviously, they've been around since forever. Did you ever go into any frat scenes or...?

**MONCURE:** I did not join a fraternity.

**HINOJOSA:** Did you ever think about it, or what did you think deterred you?

**MONCURE:** It just wasn't anything I had an interest in. There were no Black fraternities at the time. There were just the white fraternities. And it just, I had no interest in being in a white fraternity. I don't know if I would have had an interest in being in a Black fraternity either if they'd had one there. Black fraternities started a few years after I graduated.

**HINOJOSA:** Could you dive deeper into why you weren't interested in joining these white fraternities? Cause I know, I believe some of them that had like maybe one or two Black members. So did you find them exclusive, or did you just find them to be just not interesting to you?

**MONCURE:** Not interesting. I mean, they weren't discriminatory. I mean, there aren't a lot of Blacks, but I mean, if you were Black and you wanted to join a fraternity, you could find one to join. And they would let you join. But you know the parties, the music, the parties, it just wasn't culturally appealing.

**HINOJOSA:** Got it. So did you spend a lot of time with different AAM [Afro-American Society] members, or were you really just spending a lot of time studying?

- MONCURE:** Well, with the AAM members and studying.
- HINOJOSA:** I know AAM, as a student group, you guys would get funds. Did you ever throw parties of a type, or like social events for each other, or stuff like that?
- MONCURE:** I'm trying to think... You know, I don't think we did. Yeah, I think in the four years I was here, I don't think we ever sponsored a social event. I know they do now, but in the four years that I was there, I don't think we ever sponsored a social event.
- HINOJOSA:** I guess going from that, I'm also curious about, I know you were a very studious student, so what was the curriculum like at Dartmouth? How were the professors, did they treat you the same as other students? I know I've heard in other interviews where there were some very vindictive professors who didn't, who were pretty blatantly racist, and people didn't feel comfortable going to class. So, I wonder what your experience was like?
- MONCURE:** Well, at that time, professors were very, they were very open and very, they were very supportive. I know the first term paper I had to write in History I, which was, that was the, oh, I guess it was "Introduction to Western Civilization." And we had to write a couple of term papers. And I know that the first one I wrote, I got a D on it. And I wasn't very happy with that. But I did not go to talk to the professor on my own, but the professor stopped me in class and said, "Mr. Moncure, I assume you want to talk about your grade on this paper." And I said, "Yes, yes, I do." I really didn't. But I said, "Yes, yes, I would like to talk about it." So, I came to see him in his office, and he led me through the things that weren't good about the term paper and the things that I could do to improve them. And the next term paper, the second term paper, I got an 87, which would have been like about a B plus, B minus, B plus. Got an 87. So, and I ended up getting a C plus in the course.
- HINOJOSA:** Did you find that to be a common experience throughout your time at Dartmouth?
- MONCURE:** Yeah, I think most of my, most of my friends were very serious. I remember Dennis Jones ['69]. Dennis, I can't, I'm having another senior moment, I can't remember Dennis' last name. But I remember him talking about having a thirst for knowledge. And I know he was a government major, and I know he had a very good relationship with the government professors. And he graduated with highest distinction in government. Well, I think he was, I don't think he felt antagonized or mistreated.

Now, I did have one experience in sociology. My freshman year, I took a sociology course. And I remember, I don't know how the issue came up, but the sociology professor began talking about Black fraternities. And he made the comment that, "Well, there aren't enough Black students here to form a fraternity," he said, "and that's a good thing." And I didn't quite know why he thought that. I didn't raise my hand and asked him why, but I did wonder why. But that was probably the most negative comment I ever got from a professor. I know one of, I took three courses with Jeffrey Hart, who was a very conservative professor. He was a very good friend of Bill Buckley [William Frank Buckley Jr.] and was very involved in Republican politics. But yeah, I did well in his classes, and I never felt any discrimination. And hey, he gave me good grades.

And one thing they [the professors] were very concerned... at that time, the reading load was very heavy. If you were in a course on 19th century English literature, you had to read a 300- or 400-page novel every week. And to make sure you did that, the professors would give a quiz on the reading. And that quiz was about 20% of your grade. And I did all the reading, I got A's on all of the quizzes. And I think the professors, I think they gave you a lot of credit. I mean, that had a very, that made a very good impression on the professors that you did all the reading. Because a lot of the other students, I mean, yeah, Dartmouth was basically a jock school at the time. And a lot of the, most of the other students didn't do all the reading. If you did all the reading and got A's on all those quizzes, I mean, you got, you made a good impression on the teachers, and they thought very highly of you.

And I remember in the class on Shakespeare. And this was a big class there, it was in one of the bigger rooms. One of the bigger teaching rooms. And what would happen was that they would give you this quiz, a 10-minute quiz in the beginning of the class on the reading, and then you would hand the quiz in. And as soon as you handed those quiz in, about 20% of the class would pack up and leave. And I remember that really annoyed Professor Hunter. And he would say, "Why are you leaving? Aren't you going to listen to the rest of my lecture?" And the students would say, "Oh, I've got lacrosse practice," or, "I've got to get my motorcycle tuned up." And the professor, Professor Hunter, he got very, very discouraged. At one point, he threw up his hands in despair, and he said, "All right, I give up trying to tame the Big Green." But I think he was very favorably disposed towards me, because I did all the reading. And he could tell I was interested in the class. And you got a lot of credit for that. There's so many of the white students just weren't interested in it. So many of them were just playing lacrosse or working on their motorcycles or their cars. Yeah, but,

a lot of white students were not interested in the classes.

**HINOJOSA:** I do want to ask, like me, personally, I come from a predominantly Hispanic community, and so coming here to Dartmouth, it was very odd to me being like a, now I actually felt like a minority. It was mostly white people here in my classes and in school. What kind of community did you grow up in back in New York City? I mean, was your school mostly Black, white, or just a mix of everyone?

**MONCURE:** Well, I lived in a predominantly Black, middle-class neighborhood in White Plains, New York, called Parkway Homes. But the school was in a... The school district was predominantly white. So, I would say out of the 900 students in the school, about 50 of them were Black. And they were like the same two or three Black students in all of my classes.

**HINOJOSA:** So then going to Dartmouth was kind of, you were kind of used to school being that way, you could say.

**MONCURE:** I was used to it, yes. There was no culture shock.

**HINOJOSA:** Got it, got it. So, then I guess I want to ask, now looking back at your time at Dartmouth, how do you remember it? How do you view it formative wise?

**MONCURE:** Oh boy, I thought the place was great. I thought it was just great. I really liked it. I just liked everything about it. I liked being up there. I liked the location, being up here in the woods and skiing and working in the ABC program, doing the English thing and the Afro-Am. Just, I liked everything about it.

**HINOJOSA:** And I know you studied English, but I know after college, you went on to study law and you became a lawyer. Was that always always the plan?

**MONCURE:** That was always the plan. My father had told me before I went to Dartmouth, he said, go to law school, get a law degree, because there are a lot of different things you can do with a law degree. You don't have to become a lawyer. You can go into business. There are all sorts of things you can do. So that was his advice. And, actually, most of the people who went to law school went to government, were government majors. And I can see why, I mean, English was not a good major for law school. I think government was a better major for it.

You know, law school, I found law school to be harder than Dartmouth. And law school was a culture shock. There was a culture shock in law school, because I went there, I matriculated in 1970. And the group of, the Black students who matriculated

the prior year were very politically radical. And there was a lot, there were a lot of protests, and there was a very bad relationship between the Black students and the faculty members, the white faculty members. There was a very bad relationship. No other way I can put it. They really didn't like the Black students being there. They just didn't like the Black students being there.

Now in my class, the next year, we were not that radical at all. But I think the professors, I guess I'd say they had a grudge against Black students. They had a preconceived grudge against Black students, which they projected onto students in my class. And then the class after mine was even less politically involved. There was a joke, one of the constitutional law professors was a guy named Thomas Emerson. And his nickname was Tommy the Commie. Because he was, I guess I wouldn't really call him radical, but he was liberal. He was politically liberal. And the joke that the Black students had was that the students who were in the class ahead of me, they would, when Emerson would say something in class, the Black students would say, "Right on, right on, Tommy, we're all with you, we're all with you, we're all with you." And then the students in my class would say, "Well, you know, some of what you say makes sense and some of it doesn't." And then the class after us, the Black students would say, "Oh, yeah, we agree with you completely." And the joke being that the level of political and social awareness varied among those three classes. It was greatest in the class before mine, it was a little greater in my class, and it was actually a lot less in the class after that. And that may have been, that actually may have been by design, now I think about it. I think the faculty may have looked for, after their experience with the class ahead of mine, I think they may have looked for more conservative... I guess that's what I wanna say. They may have looked for more politically conservative students in future classes. And I think in terms of admitting classes of future students, they looked for more conservative students. Like the class, and that class that I'm talking about, the class after mine, Clarence Thomas was in that class. Although he never really held himself out as being a conservative, but, obviously, we all found out after he graduated that he was a conservative.

**HINOJOSA:**

And so, I mean, obviously afterwards you became a lawyer. You mentioned how you became the president of the Dartmouth Lawyers Association, but I guess in that period, like in between those two, those two things, how involved were you with Dartmouth? I know I saw in some archives that you attended the Horizons program that Dartmouth held?

**MONCURE:** That was just like one weekend. I was, there was a... My senior year at Dartmouth, the President, because of everything that was happening in the country at the time, the political unrest and the racial unrest. And the college President, President [John Sloan] Dickey, asked the Trustees to establish a committee to examine how we, how Dartmouth admitted its Black students, how they recruited Black students, how they treated Black students. And that committee issued a report and one of the recommendations of the report was that there needed to be a greater presence, there should be more minority students at the college.

Then in 1975, the committee, that select committee was reestablished with, there were students on the committee, there were two students on the committee, and then there were alumni on the committee. There were younger alumni, and there were older alumni. I was one of the younger alumni on the committee. And, so, I was involved in policymaking. And there was, there were actually two reports. There was the committee's report, and then there was a dissenting report of two of the more conservative alumni on the committee, who felt that the other members of the committee were too negative towards Dartmouth and were not really giving Dartmouth credit for all of the outreach Dartmouth had done in terms of minority students. So, they felt the need to write a minority report. So, there was a majority report, which I was part of, and then there was a minority report, which I was not part of. But that involved going up to Dartmouth every week to meet on that. And also, at that time, I was involved in alumni interviewing. I don't know if they still, students are still interviewed by alumni. [Hinojosa nodded]. Okay. Well, that was something I did at the time. I was, I served on a panel.

**HINOJOSA:** When did you join the Dartmouth Lawyers Association?

**MONCURE:** Well, I joined it just about a year or two after they formed it. Would have been...when would that have been? The early '80s I think, they formed the group in the early '80s. Then I joined it a couple of years after they formed it.

**HINOJOSA:** And do you do anything now with Dartmouth, or are you more on the retired side?

**MONCURE:** I'm on the retired side now. I'm on the retired side. I went to my 50th reunion. I did that.

**HINOJOSA:** What was that like? What was campus like then? I mean, at that point, how was, how different did you see it, compared to like the Dartmouth that you attended?

**MONCURE:** Well, you know, I've been to, there was a reunion, and then I've also been to a couple of Black Alumni of Dartmouth Association meetings up at the college. And in each one of those, we got a chance to meet the students at the time. So that was fun. I mean, that was good. I enjoyed that. I enjoyed meeting the current students. That was a lot of fun. I don't think they were as positive or as enthusiastic about their experience at Dartmouth as I was, or as some of my fellow Black Dartmouth alumni were. I mean, we were just a few, just sort of a handful of Black students who were up there. And we were, for the most part, we were very close with each other. We were very friendly. At that time, even before we started the Afro-American Society, if you saw another Black student on campus, you would automatically say hi, you would automatically speak to them, and you automatically say hi. Now, when I go back to Dartmouth and I see Black students, I'm conflicted. I don't know if I'm supposed to say hi to them, or if they're going to be insulted that I'm speaking to them, because it is a form of reverse racism. I never know what to do when I see Black students now. I never know if I could speak to them or not. But when I was there, we all spoke to each other. And now even the two or three Black students who were in white fraternities, they also spoke to the other Black students, even though they didn't socialize with the other Black students. They still spoke.

**HINOJOSA:** Yeah, I mean, I... It is very different now, but I think it's also for the better. There's so many now that it's kind of like confusing as to what choice to make. But I'd like to thank you for your time and for doing this interview with us. It's been great, and I really appreciate it. I've definitely learned a lot. So, thank you.

**MONCURE:** Okay, you're welcome.