

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAMES: Ivy and Leonard Beauregard

COLLECTION: 4700.0683

IDENTIFICATION: McKinley High School graduates, class of 1940

INTERVIEWERS: Carmen Posey, Shanta Jenkins

SERIES: McKinley High School Oral History Project – History of McKinley High School

INTERVIEW DATE: July 3, 1995

FOCUS DATES: 1930s-1980s

ABSTRACT:

Tape 1010 Side A

Leonard Beauregard born March 20, 1921 to Solomon and Gladys Alice Beauregard in Baton Rouge; Ivy Smith Beauregard born to Levi and Irene Smith February 1, 1924 in Baton Rouge; both graduated McKinley in 1940; students were punctual; most students walked to school, except those who came from Scotlandville, Louisiana, or across the Mississippi River; no cafeteria at school, so packed lunches; Ivy went home for lunch because she lived close to school; snack concession near school; Leonard fooled around and failed his junior year; Ivy and Leonard wound up in the same grade, though he started a year ahead; football was the most important sport at McKinley; McKinley never lost a game during Leonard's time at school, from 1935 to 1940; Leonard was too scrawny to play football; Coach Kraft was quite a personality and the players were disciplined; during senior year, Ivy was class secretary and Leonard was treasurer; Ivy's only sibling, a little sister, born when Ivy was a high school senior; her whole senior class was excited about the arrival of Ivy's little sister; their early courtship consisted of dates at the movies and occasional visits on porch swing; parents were stricter then; Leonard worked, so always had money for candy bars; Leonard didn't study hard; Ivy was an honor student; both attended Reddy Elementary School before McKinley; students came from as far away as Port Allen, Louisiana, because McKinley was only black high school in region; Ivy looked up to her favorite teachers; Leonard lacked role models; Ivy's favorite teacher was Maggie Nelson; Nelson expanded her mind with reading and tales of travel; admired Mrs. Ivy Boswell, who later became her close friend; Leonard's favorite was his Latin teacher, Mr. J.M. Frazier; Frazier's father was principal and was much tougher than the Latin teacher; after graduating, Leonard continued to work at Chicken Shack restaurant while attending Southern University; they both left college after one year and got married; had first baby; later, Ivy attended beauty school; had two daughters total; Leonard served in military from 1944 to 1946 during World War II; after service, took night courses and got job at postal service; retired from postal service after forty-year career; Ivy opened beauty shop in their home; Leonard had second

job at night doing accounting; Southern University didn't have night classes then; applied to finish accounting degree at LSU, but turned down for being black; LSU somehow got Southern to add night classes so they wouldn't have to admit a black student; opened up his own accounting business while keeping postal job; became first black postmaster in Baton Rouge; Ivy went back to school and got a business degree from Southern; became secretary at McKinley High; Ivy went back to school for education degree; Ivy hired to teach English and social studies at McKinley Middle School; student teaching at Southern University Lab School; Ivy got master's in administration and supervision from LSU; took guidance courses at Southern University; Ivy received grant to go to guidance institute at Atlanta University; worked as guidance counselor at McKinley Middle, then assistant principal for instruction; Ivy appointed supervisor of personnel at school board office; Ivy and Leonard both retired in 1986; Leonard retired as postmaster in White Castle, Louisiana; Leonard graduated with his accounting degree from Southern in 1968; many McKinley graduates continued to college; great influence of McKinley on Baton Rouge; McKinley's influence on African American political life; Ivy participated in civil rights meetings during Baton Rouge Bus Boycott, even though it could endanger her job; Leonard has served as treasurer of Baton Rouge NAACP branch for more than thirty years; Ivy brought food to support civil rights demonstrators; Ivy is secretary of Baton Rouge NAACP; McKinley is now bigger and has better facilities; earliest black who did work for school board was Maggie Nance Ringgold; later, Audrey Boykin worked with school board.

Tape 1010 Side B

Changes in school board and administration; recent Supreme Court setbacks; advances in technology; many more opportunities now; Leonard's experience returning to school after twenty-year absence; not so many adults going back to school then; Ivy now works one morning a week at St. Paul Center helping adults study for their GEDs; being interviewed for Catholic Life Center radio program on marriage; benefits of helping others; recommends additional people to interview.

TAPES: 1 (T1010)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1 hour, 4 minutes

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 30 pages

OTHER MATERIALS: None

RESTRICTIONS: None