



Jacksonville Public Library
303 N. Laura Street
Jacksonville, FL 32202-3374

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Edna L. Saffy

From: Jay Mooney

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Jay Mooney", written over the printed name.

Through:

Subject: Last year's transcript/DVD

Date: 10/8/2007

*Continue to type, text will wrap.

Dr. Saffy:

Attached is a copy of last year's transcript. I shall endeavor to get you a bound copy early next year when we do our next "binding run."

As to the DVD, I need to get another copy made by EasyEdit. As soon as I get that, I'll mail you a copy of it.

A Bold New Revolution: Jacksonville Before Consolidation
A Panel Discussion Commemorating 38 Years of Consolidated Government
October 21, 2006

Jay Mooney:

Good morning everyone. Ladies and gentlemen, you have been listening to the music of David Milam. In a moment David will sing another song and later, after our panel discussion, he will do a 1960's-era folk concert. I hope you will stay for the entire show.

My name is Jay Mooney and I am the coordinator for today's Main Library program entitled, "*A Bold New Revolution: Jacksonville Before Consolidation*". The centerpiece of this program is a panel discussion about the status of our city in the years leading up to consolidation of the city and county governments in 1968.

But before we get to the panel discussion, I am going to ask David to sing another song.

David was 2005 songwriter of the year for the Songwriter's Showcase of America awarded in Deland, Florida, and he is a Florida native and a Jacksonville resident.

The piece that David is about to do is a new song he wrote recently in honor of this special occasion; so, we're about to witness a world premiere.

Without further delay I present to you singer/songwriter and all around good Jacksonvillian, David Milam, who will sing "Consolidation Celebration".
[audience clapping]

David Milam:

Thank you.

I've got the words over here 'cause I just wrote this song.



Well sit right down and I'll tell you
About a wonderful situation,
An actual real live happening thing
That gives cause for a celebration.
It may not seem like such a big deal
For those of you without political zeal.
But there's a thing I'm about to reveal,
It's a great big celebration
Of the city's consolidation.

Consolidation, what does that mean, my son?
We took a bunch of little cities made 'em all into one.
Gives us the strength of numbers,
We're one of the largest cities in the land.
A place where folks can all live together
And give each other a helping hand.
Well it started back in 1968,
The river was a mess, racial tension was great.
Schools were discredited, the city was a mess,
And the government so crooked we needed Elliot Ness.

Now it's 2006, 38 years later,
Jacksonville just keeps on getting greater and greater.
We still have some problems but some work to do,
Consolidation paved the way for me and you.
Consolidation, cause for celebration.
Consolidation, it's a cause for celebration.
Consolidation, it's a cause for celebration. 🎵

Thank you.

Raymond Neal:

Hey, let's have another hand for David. [audience clapping] I want to thank him for crafting that song for us. As Jay mentioned, that was a world premiere for us. David is selling CDs of his music outside the auditorium here; so after the program, if you're interested, drop by and pick up one of his discs. And we will hear more from him later. He will perform a 1960s-era folk concert right after the panel discussion. And based on this little preview it should be quite good.

My name is Raymond Neal. I am the Senior Librarian of the Florida Collection, the part of the library that's bringing you this program today. The Florida Collection is part of the library's Special Collections area. We feature historical material and current information on this great state of Florida as well as the City of Jacksonville. We invite you to visit the fourth floor and take a look at what we have there. We're on the northeast corner, and we are largely defined by the Ansbacher Map Collection. It is a giant room filled with 244 historic maps, prints, and other items relating to Florida and the discovery of the New World. It's an amazing sight that you really should take some time to come up and see.

The Florida Collection is very proud to host this program honoring the 38th anniversary of Jacksonville and Duval County's consolidation. This year's event is part of a three-year library initiative to build momentum as we move towards the 40th anniversary of consolidation 2008. Next year we're going to address the political process leading up to the vote on consolidation, and in 2008 we'll have a program focused on the years since consolidation took place.

On your way in here you might have noticed a selection of library books in the corner. Those are available for you to check out if you're interested. They're books about consolidation, about Jacksonville history, and city government in general. We'll have someone stationed back there with a laptop to be able to check those books out to you.

In addition to the CDs for sale, Jacksonville Public Library's Booktique has set up a table to sell a couple of books by the panel moderator, Dr. James Crooks. Those are Jacksonville: The Consolidation Story, from Civil Rights to the Jaguars and Jacksonville After the Fire, 1901-1919: A New South City. Once again those are available just as you walk to the left outside of the auditorium.

Before I introduce our panel, I would like to point out that we have distributed questionnaires marked "Grant Program Evaluation" inside your programs. We encourage you to complete these. These will help us in our efforts to provide high quality events at the new Main Library. We received a grant from the Florida Humanities Council (FHC) and the information you provide will help let FHC know that we're spending its money

wisely. We are hoping to continue our relationship with FHC, and this could help us out in that regard. It's only a couple questions; if you simply take a minute to answer them, we would greatly appreciate it.

It is now my great honor to introduce the deputy director of the Jacksonville Public Library system, Carolyn Williams, who will say a few words and introduce our distinguished moderator.

Carolyn Williams:

Thank you, Raymond, and good morning. [audience: Good morning.] On behalf of the Library Board of Trustees and the staff of the Jacksonville Public Library, I welcome you to this morning's program: "***A Bold New Revolution: Jacksonville Before Consolidation.***" We would like to acknowledge and thank the Florida Humanities Council and the Friends of the Jacksonville Public Library for their generous co-sponsorship of today's event. Their support underscores the significance of what we are doing here today.

Allow me to set the stage pre-1968. President Lyndon Johnson announces he will not seek or accept a nomination for another term. Martin Luther King, Jr. is slain in Memphis. Democratic presidential candidate, Senator Robert F. Kennedy, is assassinated in Los Angeles. "60 Minutes", the news program, airs for the first time. The rock musical, "Hair", opens on Broadway. The Beatles win a Grammy for Album of the Year. Believe it or not the cost of a gallon of gas in 1968 is thirty-three cents. And on October 1st a new consolidated government takes affect in Jacksonville.

The consolidation of the city and county governments in Jacksonville, Florida, in 1968 was a watershed event for our city and has been described as one of the two most important events in Jacksonville history, second only to the 1901 fire.

In the years before the City of Jacksonville and Duval County became one consolidated government, our community faced many, many problems. Our public schools were unaccredited. Our river and air were badly polluted by unregulated industries. Coordinated garbage collection in outlying areas of our county was non-existent. Race relations were at a low point. Downtown was fast becoming a ghost town, and governmental corruption ran rampant.

In 1964 a concerned group of civic leaders got together under the leadership of Chamber of Commerce President Claude Yates and began the process that led to consolidation.

However, it is not my role here today to discuss the specifics of consolidation. That task belongs to our distinguished moderator and the esteemed group of panelists.

So, I will go forward with the introduction of our moderator, Dr. James Crooks.

Dr. Crooks served as Historian-in-Residence for the City of Jacksonville during Tommy Hazouri's term as mayor from 1987 to 1991. Based largely on that experience, he wrote two seminal books on the history of our city: Jacksonville after the Fire, 1901-1919: A New South City and the other book that has already been pointed out to you that will be on sale in the lobby, Jacksonville: The Consolidation Story, from Civil Rights to the Jaguars.

Dr. Crooks received his BA in American Studies at Yale University and got his Masters and PhD in History at Johns Hopkins University.

For 28 years Dr. Crooks was a professor at the University of North Florida serving as the chairman for the university's Department of History. He retired in 2001 and now holds the title, professor emeritus.

When we approached Dr. Crooks about doing a joint event with the library this year, he not only agreed to do so, he was the one who developed the three-year initiative to which Raymond referred. It makes our job easier when someone of Dr. Crooks' caliber not only agrees to work with us but actually fleshes out a program of this magnitude.

Needless to say, we really appreciate Dr. Crooks for not only agreeing to work with us but for his great initiative in providing the library system with a blueprint for celebrating our unique form of government leading up to the 40th anniversary in 2008.

It is my pleasure, at this time, to present Dr. James Crooks.

Dr. James Crooks:

A strong, nice, appreciative introduction. You stole some of my thunder ... but that's ok!

I'd like to spend a few minutes if we could, before we get started, refreshing the memories of older listeners and maybe introducing younger and newer Jacksonville residents to the 1960's even beyond what Carolyn Williams suggested or talked about.

The entire decade of the 1960's was tumultuous. You older members of the audience remember John F. Kennedy was elected in 1960, and he was the first person born in the 20th century to enter the White House at that time, and of course his term in office lasted only about 1000 days due to assassination in November 1963.

Carolyn Williams mentioned the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's, which had begun in Montgomery, Alabama in 1955 with Rosa Parks refusing to sit at the back of the bus and the Brown decision of the U.S. Supreme Court. Here in the South, local residents particularly challenged changes prompted by the Civil Rights Movement, and the challenges that came with demonstrations, violence and the passage of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965. There were major changes, positive changes, but there were also, as Carolyn Williams pointed out, the assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and many other Civil Rights leaders.

Following President Kennedy's assassination, Lyndon Johnson became president and introduced his Great Society program in the mid-1960's, which included the War on Poverty, Medicare and Medicaid, federal aid to education, and other initiatives, many of which worked to the benefit of the quality of life for all Americans.

Also under LBJ, the conflict in Vietnam escalated into a major, controversial war with civil and uncivil protests to the extent that President Johnson in 1968 declared he would not run for re-election; his successor was Richard Nixon.

The decade also saw the rise of political radicalism on college campuses, a changing social environment with drugs, rock music, greater sexual freedom, and coarsening speech patterns pitting a younger generation against an older generation. This all undoubtedly played a major role in provoking the conservative movement that later elected President Reagan and Presidents Bush – father and son.

So you can see the 1960's was a very tumultuous decade.

In Jacksonville, a more conservative town than the nation, white opposition to the Civil Rights Movement was intense in the early years. Locals rejected the Great Society Movement in the presidential election of 1968 giving a plurality of their votes to

Alabama's George Wallace. And many churchgoers clearly opposed the changing social mores of the decade.

By and large Jacksonville residents supported the war in Vietnam – with our three Navy bases clearly involved.

We had our own controversies as Carolyn Williams pointed out. Civil rights and the quest for desegregated lunch counters, schools, better jobs and public accommodations were clearly the major issues for the city's African-Americans.

The discreditation of the Duval County public schools (due primarily to the lack of adequate funding) was another major concern particularly for parents of children who wanted to go to college.

Another concern was the increasing residential and industrial pollution of the St. Johns River and its tributaries along with the rotten egg odor...how many of you remember the rotten egg odor? A good number.

The failure of county government at the time to provide adequate services: police, fire, parks, public health, and garbage removal outside the old city limits was another concern.

And then there was the corruption at City Hall and the old city commission where two of five city commissioners and four of nine City Council members were indicted by a grand jury for various questionable acts.

Still, life was good for many residents. There were the beaches. There was a new shopping mall at Regency. Florida Junior College had opened at the Kent Campus and Jacksonville University would become a four-year institution. There were plans for a University of North Florida. There were new suburbs in Southside and Arlington, a new ballpark, coliseum, and civic auditorium downtown, a new library, the predecessor, of course, of this one, a new City Hall and courthouse and a new airport on the north end of town – the north end of the county really.

So, Jacksonville was not all bad odors and corruption, and this morning we have three long-time residents of Jacksonville who lived through the turbulent 1960's to come and share with you their memories and experiences and reflections about that decade. I'm going to introduce all three speakers now and then let them follow one after the other in the order that I introduce them.

Our first speaker is Alton Yates who was born in Jacksonville and educated in local schools. After high school he enlisted in the United States Air Force where he volunteered for high altitude jumps from balloons in the pioneer space program and risked his life testing the impact of rapid acceleration on his body in simulated lift-offs prior to the space program actually lifting off.

Alton returned to Jacksonville in 1960 from the Air Force, attended Edward Waters College and became active in the NAACP Youth Council under the charismatic leadership of Rutledge Pierson. He was one of the leaders in what is known as Axe Handle Saturday in 1960, one of the key events at the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement locally.

After consolidation, Mayor Hans Tanzler appointed Yates executive director of the Greater Jacksonville Economic Opportunity Program, the anti-poverty program here, and later as one of his mayoral aides.

Alton served under Mayor Jake Godbold as executive director of the Jacksonville Community Relations Commission. He later served on the staff of Mayor Tommy Hazouri and directed the city's Department of Environmental Protection under Mayor Ed Austin.

So, as you can see, Alton has been clearly involved in the city continuously since the 1960's.

His awards are really too numerous to mention. NCCJ's Humanitarian Award, the Mary Singleton Award for Peace, Justice, and Social Harmony, the Boy's Club of America, Keith Bronze Keystone, and a special award from Pope Paul 6th for outstanding services to the Roman Catholic Church, among many others.

This morning Alton will share with us memories and reflections of what it meant to be an African-American in Jacksonville in the years before consolidation.

Our second speaker is Dr. Edna Saffy, also born in Jacksonville and educated in the local public schools. She earned her BA and MA and PhD at the University of Florida and currently is professor of Speech and Oral Communications at FCCJ, Florida Community College at Jacksonville.

In 1970 Dr. Saffy became director and co-convenor of the Jacksonville Chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW). Two years later she did the same at the University of Florida helping to establish a chapter on that campus.

In the mid-1970s, Dr. Saffy became a strong advocate and leader in the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the U.S. Constitution, both in Jacksonville and at the state level. She twice served as delegate to the International Women's Conference in 1976 and 1977 and at the end of the decade was one of the founders of the Jacksonville Women's Network.

These are but a sampling of her activities on behalf of women locally, statewide, and nationally at the beginning of the Women's Movement in America.

But Dr. Saffy was more than an academic and a feminist; she was also a community leader in other fields. Mayor Godbold appointed her to the Jacksonville Area Planning Board. Mayor Hazouri appointed her to the Duval County Hospital Authority. Mayor Delaney appointed her both as an advisory committee member of the LaVilla Cultural Heritage Trust and to the Jacksonville Human Rights Commission.

Dr. Saffy has served on numerous boards and has received many awards including election to the University of Florida Hall of Fame, the Mary Nolan Award for Outstanding Women's Leadership for NOW, and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Florida Times-Union.

For today we have asked Dr. Saffy to reach back in time to her memories and recollections about life for women in Jacksonville and Gainesville in the 1960's before the beginning of the Women Rights Movement and consolidation.

Last but far from least is Mayor Lou Ritter.

When I began researching for my book on Jacksonville's consolidation, I initially believed that Lou Ritter was the forgotten mayor of Jacksonville. He followed the long-serving and controversial mayor, Haydon Burns. He served only two years, and he served before consolidation. Many folks believe that Jacksonville's modern history begins with consolidation in 1968 and Lou was BCE, that is, Before the Consolidation Era. Let me tell you differently.

Lou was first elected to City Council in 1951 at the age of 26. He was a graduate of the University of Florida, also with a degree in Public Administration, and at that time, there were not many college graduates on City Council.

Lou later was elected to the City Commission and when Haydon Burns resigned as mayor following his election as governor in 1964, Ritter became the mayor beginning the following January. Lou Ritter only served two years, but he packed as many achievements into those two years as some of the subsequent mayors did in four or eight years.

First, he accepted the changes taking place racially, locally and nationally (which Burns had not done), and appointed the first African-Americans to city policy-making and advisory boards.

He sought federal aid for urban renewal and welcomed President Johnson's War on Poverty with the formation of the Greater Jacksonville Economic Opportunity Program. His predecessor had spurned federal dollars for fear of federal controls particularly in the area of race relations. Ritter, by contrast, sought federal help for the Jacksonville area particularly in the federal Model Cities Program.

Ritter was aware of the disgraceful condition of the sewage-ridden St. Johns River and its tributaries, and he appointed an advisory committee for water pollution control and applied for federal dollars to expand Jacksonville's sewage treatment facilities.

In addition, Ritter was the first mayor to secure the city's first Minimum Standard Housing Code to upgrade some 20,000 substandard homes in Jacksonville. And he developed plans for parks, playgrounds, additional public housing, improved transportation, and a community college campus downtown.

In his race to be elected mayor in the spring of 1967, Ritter lost to Hans Tanzler in a close, hard-fought race. Consolidation was an issue, though both candidates supported it, but more important were the series of scandals that Carolyn Williams mentioned uncovered at City Hall and though Ritter himself was never touched by them, voter anger about corruption led to a nearly clean sweep of all elected officials including the incumbent mayor. Still, Lou Ritter's record as mayor was quite extraordinary, and he joins us today to talk about city government in the years before consolidation.

Our first speaker is Alton Yates.

Alton Yates:

Good morning. [audience: Good morning] From time to time I am asked to talk about what it was like growing up in Jacksonville, what my youth was like, what the city of Jacksonville looked like. And I often think that if I were perhaps the greatest artist whoever lived, I couldn't paint a clear picture of what Jacksonville looked like during the years that I grew up in comparison to what it looks like today. And when I tell people that Jacksonville is perhaps the finest place on earth where one could make his or her home, they tend to think that perhaps I need to have my head examined. But, let me try to give you some idea why I think that this is the greatest place on the face of this earth to raise a child, to live, to work and to play.

I grew up about 11 blocks from where we sit today in a little village called LaVilla. You've often heard the African proverb: "It takes a village to raise a child." Well, in LaVilla that proverb was actually practiced. It was the only way we could survive. I was

the second of seven children born to two of the finest people this earth has ever seen, who did everything in their power to provide a meaningful lifestyle for the family.

I attended public schools here, and in fact, my elementary school was located on a part of the site where LaVilla's School of the Arts is located now. It was old LaVilla School. It was a two-story wooden structure that looked as if the wind blew, the entire building would fall in on the students. It was dilapidated when we arrived there and the only thing I can remember very vividly about that school is that when we were issued our textbooks, none of the textbooks that we were issued had the name LaVilla School. They were all from some other school. Pages were missing. It was very difficult to complete homework assignments without excellent help because half the work you were supposed to cover wasn't in the textbooks. The compensation for this discrepancy came in the form of some of the best teachers this world has ever produced. They made up for the shortcomings of a system that could not provide textbooks for the students who were a part of that system.

The LaVilla neighborhood that I grew up in was like most neighborhoods in Jacksonville at that time, extremely segregated. I say extremely segregated but there were some exceptions. These kinds of exceptions existed in most of the black neighborhoods around Jacksonville. There was a little corner grocery store on nearly every corner in the black community. These stores were never owned by black people. They were generally owned by people who were either recent immigrants to this country or the children of immigrants to this country. And when I say these were the exceptions it is because the people who ran these stores, who owned these grocery stores, generally would allow the youngsters who grew up in the neighborhood to make a few extra dollars to help with their school clothing and that sort of thing by giving them work after school in the stores. And these people almost became a part of these neighborhoods. You may recall there was a story recently in the Florida Times-Union about one such store that is still in existence on Florida Avenue where it has existed for many, many years and still operated by the Debs family. To work for these stores, you had to bring your report card so that they could be certain that you were keeping up with your grades in school. So these, the people who were really not members of the community but acted in a sense as members of the community, took an interest in the children. They took an interest in the families who lived in those neighborhoods. So, although Jacksonville was probably one of the most segregated and backwards cities in the country, there were these kinds of relationships that existed in different places.

I talk about the compensation that we received in public schools for the materials that didn't exist. I can recall the time when I really developed a love for the English language and for places that I had read about but never seen. And I remember to this day an English teacher who would perch herself on the edge of her desk, and she would read to us about far away places, about places that we didn't even have the ability to dream about until she made them known to us. And what I remember most is the fact that she and other teachers instilled in us the notion that we could in fact get the opportunity to visit some of these places; that we could in fact become the successful individuals that we wanted to be if we simply applied ourselves. We had good teachers who were able to leave a positive impression on those of us who came through a public school system that was later completely discredited. And you can imagine if the white schools in Duval County were discredited because of the poor conditions there, what was it like in the black schools?

Thank God for those teachers who took the time, who spent their own money to provide for us what the system refused to provide, but who gave us the opportunity to dream and to know that our dreams could come true. Thank God for them. They also gave us a new view on what our city could become if we equipped ourselves and if we got involved.

So I fell in love with Jacksonville at a very early age. Another part of that community that really helped us to develop and to realize our dreams was our church. I can remember very clearly a deacon in the church where I grew up who would take portions of the Bible and he would write plays based on the Bible and he would give each of us a part to learn. That's where I developed my first crush on my wife who was about eight years old, if I can remember correctly, because she had a part in one of those plays, and that's when I noticed her first. I don't know that I developed a crush at that time, but that's when I first noticed her.

But the village that raised its children, where the parents, the teachers, and the churches, and in many instances, the merchants who had stores there in that community, like to say that our parents insulated us for the life we were going to be living in Jacksonville. They protected us. They gave us an opportunity to avoid some of the many pitfalls that were readily available on nearly every corner in Jacksonville.

Jacksonville was extremely segregated. It was what you could really call a very hateful city. I can recall that just eight or 10 blocks from where I lived, where the fair grounds used to be, the Klan would often hold rallies. And these were terrible times because if you happened to be in the downtown area, and you were an adult black male who would refuse to step off the sidewalk when a white person approached you, then there was a good chance that you would probably get a visit from the Klan in the evening, late at night.

We were insulated because we were taught that we had a place in life, and as long as we didn't stray out of those places that were set aside for us, we would be all right. We could survive. Fortunately, or unfortunately in many instances, our parents also taught us that we could be and do anything we wanted to become and to do if we completed our education, prepared ourselves for a meaningful future, and for most of us young, black males, we were kind of edged toward the military. If the opportunity didn't present itself for you to go to college, then the military was a way for you.

In Jacksonville during my youth, many of the role models that I had lived in LaVilla. There were school teachers who lived not far from where I lived. In fact the first president of the Black Bar Association lived on Beaver Street not far from where I lived

So we had an opportunity to see people who were accomplished and who were accomplishing all kinds of great things. We had an opportunity to decide that we could do and become what these people had done and became.

I chose the Air Force. In fact I'm not so sure I did that because of my own doing. I can tell you that of the four boys that my father had, he told each of us we had to join one of the branches of service. We could choose any branch of service we wished, but each one of us had to serve in the military. I chose the Air Force, which was my way out of Jacksonville. I had to leave Jacksonville because there was no opportunity for me to go to college. You couldn't find a decent job. Employment was almost non-existent for young, black males, so the military was my way out. I joined the Air Force, was very fortunate in being assigned to the Air Research and Development Command and was very fortunate in

being able to become a part of America's effort to put a man in space. That provided me with an opportunity to develop all kinds of incentives for completing my education.

When I came back to Jacksonville after having served for four and a half years on active duty and developed a reputation for having risked death more than 65 times for science, on my way back to Jacksonville I was encouraged to get involved in the Civil Rights Movement. And let me tell you just briefly what encouraged me to do that.

I left Alamogordo, New Mexico, in my dress blue uniform headed back to Jacksonville and my first stop was at a restaurant that had a gas station. When I stopped in to fill my car with gas, they allowed me to do that, but when I went inside to get something to eat for that long journey back to Jacksonville, they said, "I'm sorry, but we don't serve ... (and of course they used the "N" word) ... in here." Now, here I am as proud as I can be having been cited nationally and internationally for contributing to the welfare of my country in the space program and told that I could not be served in a restaurant. Well, I didn't get angry. I think I got smart because I went to a store and I bought a loaf of bread and a jar of peanut butter, and I got in my car and I quietly drove back to Jacksonville, Florida. But I had decided all along the way that when I got home, I was going to do something about those kinds of conditions, to change those kinds of conditions. And that's when I joined the NAACP Youth Council and began leading sit-in demonstrations, one of the first of which was just a block from here.

I'll talk to you a little bit later and answer questions as best I can about further experiences leading to the consolidation of Jacksonville city government. [audience clapping]

Dr. Edna Saffy:

I had heard it said, "Women played no role in consolidation."

I had heard it said, "The Civil Rights Movement affected neither women nor the Women's Rights Movement."

But I knew whoever was making those statements was wrong.

Had they forgotten that in the midst of the battle for consolidation, the first women elected to the Jacksonville City Commission were two black women – Sallye Mathis ... Mary Singleton?

Had they forgotten the work for consolidation by the League of Women Voters?

Of course some women played no visible political role, for women then were not part of the power structure.

Before 1960 only five women had served in the Florida State Legislature.

In 1963, three women were elected to the Florida House of Representatives and for the first time in history, a woman, Beth Johnson, was elected to the Florida Senate.

The women were there, yet we too had our battles to fight. Perhaps, sharing with you today, it will become clearer the linkage of these two movements – Civil Rights, Women's Rights.

Come back with me to those years in Jacksonville before the 1960's. Come back and share a moment, a significant moment in my childhood.

Near the elevators at the end of the main aisle in Cohen Brothers, in downtown Jacksonville, there were two water fountains – one labeled "white" the other labeled "colored." I was five years old. I asked my mother, "Why?" As she took off her white gloves – ladies back then always wore hats and white gloves when they went downtown –

she answered, "That's the way it is, and if you want a drink I will hold you up to the one that says "white."

I would hear those words, "That's the way it is," for decades. And for decades I quietly would wonder why.

I had already learned about different worlds – that grown-ups had privileges and lived in a world different from children, men lived in a world different from women, just as boys had privileges different from girls, and now I was beginning to learn of what we girls did not have, and that day I began to learn the world of blacks was different from that of whites.

As any child, I accepted what my parents told me as truths. That is until the day just a few years later when I found out I had been lied to. Lied to, not about the different worlds, but about something very important to a child and the child begins questioning all the times she has been told, "That's the way it is."

The first crack came, as it does for all children when we find, "No, there really is no Santa Claus." The river of doubt begins as a small trickle, a very small trickle. Now, as a child, I began to ask questions:

"Why do I have to do the dishes after dinner and my brother is allowed to go outside and play with his friends?"

"Why do I have to stay so clean and he can get dirty any time he wants except church?"

Simple questions that evolve as the river of time flows faster.

When I ride the Number Four bus (or was it the 30-Park Street or was it the Number Five-McDuff, I am not sure which) to West Riverside Grammar School, and I move to the back to sit, why does my brother grab me and pull me to the front? I hear him say those words, "That's just the way it is."

At West Riverside Grammar School, why can't girls ever lead the line to the cafeteria? Why can't we play dodge ball or catch with the boys at recess? Why do we have to play jacks?

Why did our wonderful teacher leave in the middle of the year? Later I was to find out why. You see, before 1965 when one of the married teachers in the public school system became pregnant she was fired.

Then the stream becomes treacherous. My family is almost washed away.

My father died. My mother had to go to work. She had only two choices: (1) sell perfume behind the counters at Purcell's as other widowed (or do I dare say it, "divorced") women did; or (2) become a secretary. All that kept my mother from the hardship of the perfume counter at Purcell's, Furchgott's or Cohen Brothers was that my father had known George Bloom, the former mayor of Jacksonville and then the current U.S. Postmaster.

For 30 years she worked in administrative services at the post office. Year after year as secretary she would train men (never were there women) who would become her bosses and each year she became more bitter.

My mother no longer wore white gloves and a hat as she went downtown to work each day.

And those women behind the perfume counters – many with children – earned less than 50 cents for each dollar a man earned. They were grateful yet also terribly angry. You see, they found upon the death of their husbands or their divorces, their income had decreased by at least 75 percent. And the ex-husbands of the divorced women had their

income increased by over 50 percent. (These figures are from the “Gender Bias Study of the Florida Supreme Court”).

Let’s move faster into the stream. My questions became more vocal. At the University of Florida, why did my counselor laugh when I told him I wanted to be a physician? Why were girls not admitted to medical school and, of course, not to law school? Why if I wanted to major in Business Administration could I only major in Executive Secretarialship?

I came home to Jacksonville. I read about a man who killed his wife, yet he was found not guilty because he caught her in flagrante with another man. Thus it was acceptable to kill her.

I learned of the first questions police often asked girls who have been raped, “What were you wearing”? “If you didn’t want it why didn’t you fight harder”?

I heard what the “rule of thumb” meant: that a man may beat his wife but he should not use a stick broader than his thumb.

I heard too that when the police were called to a home in which they found the husband enraged and the wife bloodied and battered, again, that first terrible question of her was: “What did you do to make him so angry”?

When I applied for a credit card at May-Cohen’s, I was asked if I was married. You see if I were, then by law I couldn’t hold a credit card because a married women could neither sue nor be sued. A married woman could not establish credit in her own name, which meant no credit cards or mortgages or other financial transactions without a husband’s agreement. (Louise Bernikow 1997).

One Sunday at my First Presbyterian Church downtown we were thrilled to learn that the Presbyterian Church on Laura Street had been the rallying place for young, black men to begin their march into town. We were not told of the brutality that was heaped upon them that followed.

I knew the world was changing, yet still I was unsure of my role, my place until Martin Luther King, Jr. figuratively “called my name.”

King was to march in Washington, D.C. I knew that was where I should be. My family forbade me. There was no way I would be allowed. Under no condition . . .

I obeyed. I did not go. I watched that day. I watched on a black and white Emerson television. I heard him speak those words. And as I watched my life changed. I saw with the “eyes of my heart,” and my heart heard him call my name. I swore that never again would I allow the world to keep me from doing what I knew to be right.

I went back to the University of Florida. I joined the Student Non-Violent Action Coordinating Committee (SNCC). I learned – not just the academic, but now the political.

I was ready when the call came for women on August 26, 1970. I was there. We rallied at the Federal Building on Bay Street. We marched in a large circle carrying signs. Remember, we were the daughters of the women who wore hats and carried white gloves. That day changed each one of us. On that day Jacksonville also began to change.

We walked from our rally, carrying our signs and in the coffee shop of Sears Roebuck, which I now believe is the site of the Omni Hotel, and at that location in the coffee shop, we formed the Jacksonville Chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW). We began. We sought to change what women needed the most – safety.

One of our members saw a very small house on Hubbard Street. That place became a sanctuary for abused women and their children. It grew from a tiny place in Springfield. Today, Hubbard House is a symbol of safety and hope.

We gained permission to place a trailer in the parking lot of University Hospital staffed by women to immediately give help to our sisters, the women who had been raped. Later, we were allowed to move our clinic into the hospital. These women founded the Rape Crisis Center of Jacksonville.

Two women from NOW wrote the federal grant that helped, through education, the so-called "displaced housewives" so no longer had they only two options for a livelihood. That grant created the Florida Community College Roseanne Hartwell Women's Center.

Each year we hold a rally at The Jacksonville Landing. The state attorney is there, the police are participants, and city-wide organizations are represented. Hundreds attend and listen to women who are survivors. We've always called our rally "Take back the Night" in the hopes that one day women as well as men will be safe in the streets of Jacksonville.

We have played a major role in changing our city. We have not done it alone.

Those terrible questions that were once asked of battered women, of raped and assaulted women have been replaced. Instead of being asked, "What did you do to make him so angry," or, "If you didn't want it, why didn't you fight harder," the police now say to our women, "We're here now. You're safe now. What can we do to help"?

When confronted with issues of inequality and unfairness, we no longer will accept what we were told in the 1950's and the 1960's. We no longer will accept being told, "That's the way things are." We now seek to correct that which we know to be wrong.

In the year 2006, we now move to make things the way they should be.

Lou Ritter:

For those of you who don't know me, I am going to take just a minute of my time to tell you who I am. Because I read and hear so much about people that thought they knew Lou Ritter, or Louis H. Ritter, as I was known as a kid coming up.

Hambone was my nickname. I went to Jackson High School, played basketball. Hambone Ritter. Let me just tell you and then maybe you'll understand where I come from and what I would see in this meeting today and what I would hope for this great city to become a greater city.

I would have liked to see this auditorium filled today, but it's a great crowd here. First, I would like to ask, I believe Ms. Kris Barnes is here from the Duval County School Board, would you please stand. [audience clapping] Former public official, Mr. Henry Rogers, who served on the Civil Service Board and his father, was on the City Council, Walter Rogers, [audience clapping] back in the 1930's, and I see a candidate, Bob Taylor, for the new City Council, 2007. [audience clapping]

I want to thank Dr. Crooks and the library staff for putting this together, Mr. Neal and Mr. Mooney, and library administrator Carolyn Williams, this is great. And Dr. Saffy and Alton Yates who've been very capable people of this community for years.

And I'd also like for Councilman Gwen Yates to stand. [audience clapping] Are there any other members of the City Council here? Any staff of the City Council? Anyone from the General Council's office here? Anybody from the Jacksonville Economic Development Commission, I think they call it, here? How about one of the... we got 68, 78

boards and commissions now. We used to have 12 when consolidation took place. We have 78, 528 appointees. Which one are you on? [woman in audience: The Jacksonville Human Rights Commission] Good. [man in audience: Jacksonville Human Rights Commission] Good. Two Jacksonville Human Rights Commission members.

How about the Jacksonville Electric Authority? How about the Jacksonville Aviation Authority? I believe that's their name this year. They've changed it three times in the past five years. Anybody from the Jacksonville Aviation Authority here? Nope. How about the Jacksonville Port Authority? Nope. Has any other member, any board or commission ...are you ...of the 528 appointees that could be appointed by the mayor here? No. Yes, sir? Please identify yourself. [man in audience] Good. Thank you.

Well, let me just tell you, thank you for coming. I have always been fan of Winston Churchill, and I remember reading once where a man was getting ready to go to college and had an opportunity to meet the prime minister and dance with the queen. And he asked Prime Minister Churchill, "How do you get into government or into politics?" And Churchill said, "Young man, study history, study history. In history lies all the secrets of statecraft." And that is such a true statement today, and I'm so glad that this organization is starting two years ahead of the 40th anniversary of consolidation to review the history of that effort. Hopefully I'll be around the other two years and could come back as a guest or be here next year to listen.

You know when you get 81 years of age your time gets limited, but it is so true that we need to truly study history. And the closest I've seen to any real history of Jacksonville was a book written by Dr. Crooks.

Dr. Adam Herbert, who was President of the University of North Florida, chairman of the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce and also Chancellor of the State University System of Florida, had asked me before he left to go to Indiana University to come aboard and write a book about how things happened in Jacksonville – how they got there, the inside stories, and I intend to do that. I am trying to work out some things now to get it done, get some good historians and writers to help me. I am going to call it Jacksonville BC: Before Consolidation.

I was born here in 1925 in East Jacksonville, that's across the viaduct there. I had an older brother. Our neighborhood was what you call a mixed neighborhood. We had black people, white people. We had some people who were a little affluent. We had a lieutenant in the police department.

My great-uncle ran for the County Commission in 1932, and he won. But he died before he took office. His son was going to school up in the North, and he came home and won as the only write-in candidate in Duval County, W.R. Bill Ritter, Jr. Half the ballots had to be thrown out because some people couldn't write. They just put Ritter, some put Bill Ritter, but he won. That is how I first got interested in politics, and I've stuck with it ever since.

After graduating from Andrew Jackson High School in 1943, I entered the Army, qualified for the Army Air Force. I was so skinny and small at 118 pounds, I ended up as a tail gunner, received high marks and they sent me to aerial gunnery school. I served out my time there. I was in Alamogordo, New Mexico. We were the last group to go as a clean-up squad. When President Truman dropped the big bomb, we came home.

I went to the University of Florida, got a degree in Public Administration and was still interested in politics, having written most of my civic papers about political matters, making speeches when I was a kid on Jacksonville city government.

In 1949 there was a referendum. The people of Jacksonville voted to reduce the City Council from 18 members to nine members and required them to live in the ward but run citywide so that everybody could vote for them. Before that there were actually 23 City Councilmen in the 1930's – five at-large and 18 ward councilmen, then a mayor and then a safety commissioner. As I said, in 1949 the voters by referendum reduced the council, abolished the ward districts and went to nine council members and the mayor and commissioner jobs were combined and they had four of the city commissioners. That started in 1951 and stayed in effect until consolidation.

I'm the only person who served as a city councilman, then as City Commissioner of Highways, Sewers, and Airports and then as mayor/commissioner. They were 16 glorious years. I enjoyed every minute of it. We had our problems, which you heard about earlier, which I will dwell on slightly and try to give you some of the factual information on.

I was elected to the Jacksonville City Council in 1951. I won over four other opponents. One of the old gentlemen I defeated at the time had been a ward councilman. And I can always remember I hadn't been in council a week. I lived at 45 W. 22nd Street, the second ward. A fellow came by my house and said, "Councilman, I'm getting married next week. Can you marry us?" I said, "What?" I was a salesman for Gulf Life Insurance Company. The man said that the previous council member always married people in our neighborhood and that included the Brentwood Project. Well, he had a Notary Public's license, but I didn't think the City Council members were in the marriage business.

I served as president of the council in 1953. I was 27 years of age. Mayor Burns had taken ill and had to give up the job for about six weeks and actually that lasted eight weeks. I can tell you what, at 27 years old living on W. 22nd Street between Main and Laura, that's too much power for any young man to have ever had, but I enjoyed it greatly and it gave me more of a learning process.

As Highway Commissioner we had our ups and downs. We started the first master sewer plan and so forth.

When I took office back in the early 1960s, there was this opposition to about any integration. Well, it was a tough problem. The first instance came up about our golf courses. We had two great public golf courses, Hyde Park and Brentwood. I was a sorry golfer, but I played with Dan Sykes in Brentwood a few times, but the white golfers came and they didn't want any black people to play. Well, George McClelland, who was a Pullman porter and his wife, beautiful Mrs. McClelland, was a society editor for the Star section (which was the black section of the Jacksonville Journal) was a good friend of mine. We talked about it. But the city sold the golf courses. Then, they closed the swimming pools. Sold all that. So, the minute I had the opportunity to become mayor, I saw an opportunity.

I had the fortune of meeting John F. Kennedy in 1958 when I was the master of ceremonies of the Florida League of City's Meeting in Daytona Beach. And I introduced Kennedy, who was a U. S. senator from Massachusetts at the time. He made a great talk. And he said, "I can't get a plane back to Washington soon enough out of Daytona Beach." I said, "Well, come on, senator, ride with me and I'll take you to Imeson Airport in Jacksonville." That was the airport back then. So I called up and made sure there was a

plane leaving, and I drove him to Jacksonville. He told me he appreciated the ride, and I asked him if he had a card he could give me and told him I wanted it because I expected he would become president and wanted to be on his team. Well, I was lucky. I was one of the people who organized Citizens for Kennedy and we won.

Of course, I was interested in Kennedy's programs. I had also previously met Sen. Lyndon Johnson who, of course, became Kennedy's vice president. When Johnson became president and shepherded landmark civil rights legislation through Congress, I saw an opportunity to move Jacksonville in a new direction.

I was Police Commissioner at that time. I integrated the police department. It was an old axiom that if you were a black policeman, you couldn't have a new uniform. You got a hand-me-down. I put the first black officer downtown.

I think I'm the only mayor in the history of Jacksonville who was invited on three separate times to speak to mayors at the White House. President Johnson invited me there on three occasions to discuss how we were handling the racial problems in Jacksonville. I had the opportunity to meet Mayor Lindsay of New York City, Mayor Daily of Chicago, and some other really big mayors. Such connections helped lead me into the poverty program, which became GJEO, the first Head Start Program, the first anti-poverty program in the state and so forth.

And then when the voters retired me in 1967, I was called and was interviewed by Sergeant Shriver, who was then head of the U. S. Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) to become an assistant to work on inner city programs all over this nation. It was a real honor. In fact I stayed on under the Nixon administration. Someone said to me recently that I never knew any conservatives. Well, I worked for Donald Rumsfeld who was the first Secretary of OEO then under Nixon, and he had a little guy with a briefcase running around taking orders from him. That was Dick Cheney. [audience laughter] So I did have my opportunities there.

Of course, there were things that were bad about Jacksonville before consolidation, but remember the structure of government can't solve all the problems. It's the people you elect. I'm not responsible for a city councilman being elected; I'm trying to get elected myself, but I can tell you the mayor had no authority to suspend any public official. The governor had no authority at that time. Only the state attorney could do it. Because of my education and becoming a city guy, I was able to do certain things. When I became mayor, there's one thing I learned to do from my professors back at the University of Florida. I learned federal financing, state and local government financing, and all those rudiments of accounting along with taxation and so forth, and it helped me greatly.

We talk about the corrupt officials, and there were some. But how did they get indicted? Nobody has ever mentioned that story. They're just all corrupt. Well, as mayor, I could read budgets. I said, "Let me see those invoices from the Recreation Department." I looked at those invoices. Bill Sweisgood, a great political writer at the time came to me. I gave him the audit. He said, "This smells." I said I was going to turn this over to state attorney, and I did. Those fellows were all punished. My neighbors said, "I can't vote for you because you didn't fire so and so." I had no authority to. I asked them to resign, but they said no. Their lawyers said no.

Those are the little things that came about. But during that time, we were overcoming racial barriers. We started moving in the right direction. I appointed several black citizens to important positions in city government.

I remember attending the funeral of my good friend, the late Rutledge Pierson who was killed in an automobile accident. He was the head of the NAACP. We came out of the church together and I was mayor and right at the back of the casket. The following week I went to the Western Auto store on Main Street between 7th and 8th Streets to buy some merchandise. I asked the salesman, "Would you help me please?" He said, "I'm not helping you." I said, "Well, have I offended you?" He said, "Yeah, I saw you on TV last Saturday night at that funeral," and you know what the rest of his remarks were. I said, "Thank you." So I walked out and never went back again.

There are many myths about how consolidation came about. I would say to you, I endorsed it 1000%. I went out making speeches. There are several things that I think we could be better on.

I'm a little surprised at the newspaper recently took off on the City Council in a story entitled, "Unchecked City Council is a Threat to Consolidation". That was a little bit wrong I think for this reason. In the charter that was written, it called for a Charter Review Commission every 10 years to make specific recommendations on how to improve our government. I went before that commission about five years ago and urged it to consider non-partisan elections in this community. And the reason I say non-partisan ... you see the big money Republican side, you see the big money Democratic side. This one lady on the commission, she looked at me and said, "Well, I'm a conservative. I don't believe in that." Well, do the germs floating from septic tanks and the germs floating in the St. Johns River have anything to do with party politics? No.

Most major American cities have non-partisan elections. I advocated that in 1967. I went to the Young Democratic Club over the Mayflower Hotel and they booed me. I went to the George Washington Hotel the following weeks at the Republican Club and they booed me. I knew I was right then, and I know I'm right now. [audience laughter]

I would say to make improvement or begin talking about thought-provoking ideas, let's go back to what it was supposed to be, a strong mayor form of government. As a net result let's think about maybe reducing the council from 14 district members who they now call mini-mayors. That's why in 1949 we advocated for at-large councilmen – reduce it to 11, stagger terms, but do away with the damnable term limits because you learn in business or anything else, they say run it like a business. Well, how in the heck are you going to run a business when you're an apprentice the first four years? The people will tell you what the term limits are. They told me, "Ritter, you can go home, you're 41 years old now." They will tell you when it's time to go. That would help so immensely in this community.

Look at the money we're losing now because nobody has any control over how our money is being spent. Those of you who live on the Southside just down Hendricks Avenue right past the old city limits, people are still on septic tanks. They're getting ready now to start, and I bet it's going cost those people between \$10,000 and \$14,000. But where's the Jacksonville Electric Authority (JEA)? They're down in St. Johns County where Nocatee is. They're going to take your money, regular taxpayer money, put it down there. Let's bring 'em home. Let this money come back to give more money for the library where we can have the bookmobile and more downtown community centers and all that. [audience clapping]

In closing, let me just say this. I get locked up on this too much, but I believe that we need a strong movement to take on the problems that we face. There's a lack of

institutional knowledge in government today, a total lack. You can notice it at the federal level already. It's in the state level. It's coming down to our level.

There were a lot of things that happened in Jacksonville that made us a strong economy. The biggest asset that we have is the St. Johns River. When I was a kid, you had steamboats coming up and down, but that polluted the river. We have to take care of that river now. But New York Harbor was the same way. So was Boston Harbor.

One of the greatest deals we ever brought here was when Haydon Burns, as a one-man economic development taskforce, brought Prudential Insurance. They're still here. They didn't seek any Jacksonville Economic Development Commission (JEDC) money to come here. We have Swisher Cigar, one of the biggest cigar stores out there, and I remember when we're doing work on Prudential, Mr. Swisher called me and said, "How about paving 16th Street? I pay a lot of taxes." We were out there right away. Then Anheuser-Busch, I worked quietly with Anheuser-Busch for years to get them here.

Now we keep reading, "It's coming, it's coming, it's coming." We're running out of time. I'd like to see more activity downtown, more activity in the neighborhoods, and a cohesive government.

There are many reasons why consolidation came about. It's the right form of government even though no other city in America has followed our path. It's the right way, but we can improve on it, and we should improve on it.

Thank you so much.

Dr. James Crooks:

My thanks to all three speakers who I imposed upon to come today. I called each last summer and asked them would they please come and share their experiences, and I want to express my appreciation to Edna, Alton and Lou not only for coming, but for the excellence of their presentations. Let's give them another hand. [audience clapping]

Now it's time for questions and answers or comments. I would ask if you have a question that you would like to ask, there are two microphones up at the front because we're being recorded. Does anyone have a question for any of the panelists?

QUESTION: I'd be pleased to. My name is Pam Edwards Renee. I live in Springfield. I guess my question is for Mr. Ritter. I understand your support of consolidation. I moved here by the way in 1968 just as consolidation took over, but why do you think the people of Jacksonville and the county bought into it and voted for consolidation?

Lou Ritter: I think it was frankly a series ... can everybody hear me? ... a series of several factors involved. There was corruption in the government. The newspapers took a very forward step on consolidation as did Channel 4. At that time Channel 4 had the most power as a political television in the market area the size of our city in America. They were very, very powerful.

It was done at the right time, and it was a great strategy because actually consolidation failed in Jacksonville in the early 1930's.

But you had two things in the county government; there was no sewer program. In the city there were people moving to the county areas. They lost their vote in the city, and then they were paying two taxes.

Fire service in the county was all volunteers. We stepped over the line not once but many times and furnished fire service to the county, which was in violation of the law. I was Fire Commissioner, but we had to do it because they didn't have the protection.

I think it was a combination of those things that people wanted an urbanized government and the charter that they wrote originally that was passed by the voters was altered as it went along. Today the charter that they voted on that day has been totally cut up because each of those questions was answered by a yes or no vote. Do you want this? They have amended these authority's powers without ever coming except what you call a midnight bill of the legislature. They don't understand. The lawyers write it. It's done.

So we've lost the power that we had, but I would say this, it was a solid movement. It was the right time and the right place.

QUESTION: My name is Bob Taylor. I live at [REDACTED], and my question is for Mr. Ritter.

Mr. Ritter, this Charter Review Commission, does it have any teeth as far as bringing something to the voters for a referendum to maybe reign in these authorities such as the one you mentioned, JEA? I work in Nassau County, and a lot of the new subdivisions have JEA utilities and as president of the Heckscher Drive Community Club, we now have a zoning attempt to where a builder wants to put a drip septic system because we thought development wouldn't come to Heckscher Drive until we had water and sewer lines. Well, now with the drip septic system, which they're using on Black Hammock Island, here we are talking about getting rid of septic systems, and the drip septic system is just a super ... you know, it's an updated septic tank.

Lou Ritter: I would say this. That as an example, I don't know how many of you are aware that a large expenditure of millions of dollars is being provided by the Jacksonville Electric Authority on a joint venture to build a plant in Perry, Florida, in Taylor County. It covers a group of utilities in North Florida.

I still maintain my office in Tallahassee as a lobbyist. The people of Tallahassee had to vote by referendum whether they wanted to get that program. I doubt if a half a person out of 10 knew anything about that program in Jacksonville. So here again that utility provided 30% of the operation for years to the general government. All the things that we do – parks, playgrounds, now, they don't. It's separate. I don't read much about them in the paper except two years ago they gave everybody big raises without any permission of the council or anybody else.

The other side on the sewer and water, the JEA has also taken that over and it's my understanding the reason that JEA now has sewer and water is because the mayor at that time and the City Council wanted to abdicate their authority of dealing with sewer and water rates going up or down. As a net result, the easiest way was to turn it over to JEA. You don't see Florida Power and Light in the sewer and water business. It's strictly FPL, boom.

So here again, it's a lack of institutional knowledge, and I say, Mr. Taylor, we need a complete review of the Jacksonville Charter, which should have been done every 10 years, and it's not been done since it's inception.

QUESTION: My name is Kris Barnes, School Board member. Anyone that knows the answer to this is welcome to answer it. How, during the time of consolidation, I know this is leading up to, but my question's burning. How, during consolidation, was the school system, since it's a state constitutional body, rolled into being a city agency?

Lou Ritter: You still, you know that's all, every mayor that ran last time, he was going to improve education. Ain't one of 'em got any authority to improve education. It's just that simple. The only mayor in America that's got authority over education is the mayor of Chicago. It's worked very successfully. In fact he pointed Sergeant Shriver to the School Board there before he ever came to Washington.

To me that is a misnomer about what the city's charter is. I don't think it's fair. I personally think the school board is doing one tremendous good job for this community because at least you are beating on the head of developers, and I saw a bumper sticker the other day in Tallahassee that said, "If you want to leave Florida take a developer with you." [audience laughter]

Leading the school system is the toughest task other than being sheriff. I have never seen where the mayor had anything to do with the School Board, other than maybe trying to get more money if he could.

Kris Barnes: So do you think, because at the time as I understand it, and that's what I've tried over the years to figure all this out, was that at the time of consolidation, the City Council, City Commission, mayor controlled the school district's budget?

Lou Ritter: No.

Kris Barnes: They handed it out to them.

Lou Ritter: Yea, they did.

Kris Barnes: It was a pass through agency actually.

Lou Ritter: Right, no...you had your own School Board, your own County Budget Commission, your assessment and so forth. The City Council and the old government and the Mayor's Office had nothing to do with the School Board's budget whatsoever.

Kris Barnes: But didn't the money somehow pass through? Because there's a few editorials I found about saying to City Council back in like the early 1970's, "Let go of the school system's money. Let them control their own budget."

Anyway, let me just...let's go on to my other question. So, do you think through the years of the charter and all, that it's just been kind of nobody ever questioned it, and, you know, we as a school system in Duval County are the only ones in the state of Florida required to use a general counsel who works for the city? There are many times we're in conflict with one another. Other school systems in the state don't spend nearly what we have to spend because we're told by city law, yet we're a state constitutional body. So I just have ...we've all had lots of questions about that and I just thought maybe since you were there ...

Lou Ritter: Miss Barnes, the only way that I think you're getting ripped off, to be honest with you, because I think the, and I've seen those sites have come from attorneys especially as it relates to the school bus transportation deal a couple of years ago. But I don't think, I think that this is one of the things that ought to be altered, to clarify the charter. And that's why we need a study to clarify it.

I honestly feel that you should have your own attorney and do what the other 66 counties are doing.

QUESTION: I have a question and I would like to get feedback from all three of you about this, and I hope I can state it clearly. I've been trying to write it clearly.

At the time, which is to say that period of 1964 through 1968, what is your assessment of the racial situation politically? Now I'm talking about political power in the City of Jacksonville and in the county during that period of time. That's the first part of the question. Secondarily, do you think that distribution of political power had anything to do with consolidation coming about?

Alton Yates: Fear of white flight. There was a tremendous fear throughout the city that Jacksonville was rapidly becoming a black city. Blacks comprised, I want to think, about 42/44% of the population. It was largely believed that the city was getting close to electing a black mayor. And in fact, during the debate for and against consolidation, the two elected local officials at that time, and in fact I'm not sure whether they had been elected, but Mary Singleton and Sallye Mathis were on opposite sides of that issue. Sallye Mathis was a very strong supporter of consolidation. Her belief was that if blacks were able to elect a black mayor they would simply be electing a black mayor to a bankrupt city and they did not want to see that happen to the City of Jacksonville. Mary Singleton thought very strongly that the tax base in Jacksonville would continue to remain fairly stable and that a black could be elected mayor and there would be no problems. But white flight as far as the tax base had already started fleeing to the suburbs. So, it was very important for the consolidation charter to pass in my opinion for that reason.

As far as black political power in the city at that time, it really was almost non-existent. There were blacks who were appointed to serve as representatives of their community, and in fact, if you wanted what little patronage there was available, you had to go to one of these black community leaders, I guess you called 'em at that time. And very seldom could you go to the elected representatives of the city. It was just a fantastic day when Mary and Sallye were elected.

Lou Ritter: Alton is right on target. Both Mrs. Mathis and Mrs. Singleton were elected prior to consolidation in 1967, and that was when you lived in the district and ran at-large. In fact Mrs. Singleton took the old ward that I had, Ward Two. She was a strong advocate.

The black vote they called it in those days, and some called it the Negro minority vote, some called it the block vote, it actually began for Democrats in 1948 (the first election in Duval County that saw a strong black vote coming).

In 1950 the overwhelming strength of the black vote showed in the Claude Pepper U.S. Senate race against George Smathers. Senator Pepper carried 80% of the black vote.

From 1964 on, it became more and more powerful, and I would give credit to the power of some black ministers, and the community clubs showed their power in the wards.

So they all had real power pockets to pick from, and as a net result, to show you how the community was in 1963, I got the highest number of votes for reelection to highway commissioner, and I got 90% of the African-American vote. And they said, "Well, you're buying it." No, we were building sewers, sidewalks and drainage.

Mayor Tanzler and I kid about it often. We had always been friends. He defeated me, but in the first primary I got 93% of the African-American vote. I fell short of getting a clear victory over him by less than 600 votes. I never regained because the following day the newspapers, the Jacksonville Journal and Florida Times-Union, ran a beautiful map of a black city versus a white city. They put Ritter's power in the black community. Second primary, boomp, I lost narrowly.

One of the main reasons why people overwhelmingly voted for consolidation is because they did not want to see a black man serving as mayor, and it split the community greatly.

QUESTION: {By a candidate for local office} As a response to your question about, you know, mayors, candidates for mayor talking about what they can do to help the school system, as a candidate I feel the only thing that we can do is to get rid of the fair share system which makes the school boards pay for road improvements where we create the problem by over zoning.

Dr. James Crooks: Is this a question you have or is it a campaign speech?

QUESTION: No, it's a comment, it's a comment about that. And also impact fees for schools, but I wanted to make a comment because I was not going to say this, but this is a personal story relating to what Mr. Yates and Dr. Saffy said.

In 1971 when the desegregation order came down, I was going to Ribault High School, and because I had lettered in football, I could have stayed at Ribault. Now my sisters were going to have to go to Raines. And so I went to the orientation at Raines, and Jimmy Johnson, the head football coach, approached me and Coach Johnson talked to me like I was a young man and told me where I would fit in in his program. And I was deeply impressed. He's a man that I consider my mentor now. And I went back to Ribault and everybody who's played football knows your coach is your god on a team. So I had to walk across that gym to that white coach and tell him I wasn't going to play for him. And there was another white man who went with me. And after I told him what I was going to do, as I walked across that room, I was called an "n-lover," and a "traitor," and every step across that room, I was sure I had done the right thing.

And if you watch the City Council now, we have a lot of people come up there from the African-American community talk about dissension in this community. It's still alive and well. There's gerrymandered districts to keep them one race or another, and I hope that as part of this discussion that we realize that there are still things we need to do in this city today, and that was just a comment I wanted to make based on what you had said.

QUESTION: Hi, I teach at Mayport Middle School.

I wanted to bring up a quick point before I ask my question. I've got two students of mine from Mayport Middle School here to attend this discussion and am very pleased by that fact. [audience clapping]

Two questions. Annexation, what areas were possible candidates for annexation and what issues for annexation, and also, my second part of the question is, were there any concerns that other areas of the county would be incorporated if there was no consolidation?

Mr. Ritter: Regarding annexation before consolidation, we hired a Political Science professor, and I got the other commissioners to go along to conduct the annexation. And in a little polling that we used to do back then (which was not as great as the polling they do now) we found there were certain areas of the county that just were completely against wanting to be a part of the city government. So we chose certain piecemeal areas and we were going to see which area we could furnish the sewers, get the services to first, and prioritize on that.

The area that I was confident that we were going to win was Riverview in West Jacksonville up past Lake Shore in that area. And we almost won it, but we lost it narrowly. I went out there several days after the loss and walked about six blocks, door to door to ask people why they opposed annexation. And the great majority said, "Well, we have chickens in our yard, we have a couple of horses, we have goats, and we have cows. And none of you ever mentioned what we were going to do about our livestock. And we thought sure that we would have to give them away because of the zoning laws in the city." As a politician, you can't think of all of it, but that defeated it. And I really think that seeing the city how it was, had we won annexation, we'd have gotten a greater interest because we'd have created some more positions and so forth, but that was the main defeat that they just did not want to come for urban services. They knew we got garbage collection, but they were satisfied with that Volunteer Fire Department, they were satisfied with the old Duval County Road Patrol, and they didn't want city services because you ain't gonna let me ride my horse.

QUESTION: I'm Henry Rogers, former member of the Jacksonville Civil Service Board and former member of the consolidated Civil Service Board.

A comment for Kris Barnes about the city's involvement in the finances of the School Board. The Civil Service Board had the authority under consolidation to set the salaries of each and every one of the members of school board staff other than the elected officials and the department heads. So, we were very heavily involved there. We set the salary for each and every civil service employee in the whole city. Also, on the question of ethics, we sat as a board of ethics and in fact did try four different City Councilmen in the first two years that I was on the consolidated board. We acquitted all four of them, but it was a curious episode to have, to sit there as a judge and jury and have the cameras on you while you were in the sunshine. We had to make our decisions in the sunshine.

QUESTION: Good morning Dr. Saffy, Col. Yates, Mayor Ritter, I welcome ya'll. Thank you for coming. This has been a very interesting discussion. I wonder ... my name is Al Dawson, by the way. I wonder if you could talk about the time that picture {on the stage} was taken, could you paint a picture of what it was like in Jacksonville as far as the issue

of homelessness was concerned? And my question is, are we going in the right direction in dealing with that issue in this day and age being the Bold New City of the South that we are? What's happening? What's going on? Because it seems to be an issue that everybody says is a problem, but you know, there really are no concrete solutions being practiced in this city. Your thoughts?

Dr. Edna Saffy: I'm appalled by what I see that the city is not doing for the homeless population. It's as though we can close our eyes, that we don't see it, that we've...the Sulzbacher Center is a very good beginning, but that's all it is. It is just a beginning. When I was growing up, we had very few homeless people and we didn't call them homeless then. They were, I don't even know what we called them. We knew that there were homes that had little marks in their sidewalk. Do you remember that? And they were, we would find them in our neighborhood and it meant that at this home, food would be provided. And these were private homes and that's all we knew of the homeless, but I think you, you know what is going on and not enough is happening in this community and not enough is happening in the United States to recognize that we have people who need our help.

Alton Yates: One perhaps, the most tragic things that ever happened in our society in the State of Florida, I believe, was the closing of institutions that provided mental health services to people who needed them and turning those people out on the streets of our cities. You would be absolutely surprised at the amount of need that exists out there. There are veterans out there. There are mothers out there. There are fathers out there. These people need mental health services, which unfortunately are not available to them. It's tragic. I don't see any effort toward a solution to that problem, but until those of us who are fortunate enough to have our right minds decide that we're going to say that we've had enough and demand services for these people, the condition is only going to get worse. And I hate to be the one to say that.

Lou Ritter: In further response, I think the government has drifted away, and Alton and Miss Saffy are certainly correct, from providing the quality of life that government was really ordered to do, going back to our Constitution.

We're not doing enough in the field of social services. The money's no longer there because the council doesn't have the money, the legislature is walking away from it because they don't care or the money power structure doesn't care.

I don't find too many people have any institutional knowledge about downtown. I still belong to the First Presbyterian Church along with Dr. Crooks. And we had up until the Sulzbacher, a feeding every Sunday, and I conducted one of the three feedings per Sunday. I sat at the head table and offered the prayer and so forth. I got tears in my eyes one day because one of the young men there looked up to me, he said, "Mr. Ritter, I don't know whether you remember me. I was in the 3rd grade with Nancy {Ritter's daughter}. I've been out of a job for months. I gotta feed myself, and I've got one of my kids here with me."

Now on the murder rate, this goes along with what you're talking about. They're accusing a lot of the homeless of being criminals. I don't think they are. I think many of them are mentally disturbed people.

Let's get our churches involved more. It was great to have a day of prayer, but I would think the Lord would put some intestinal fortitude down in people and let's do something.

I can remember going out, not to the churches, because the good people went to churches. The bad guys weren't. I wondered how we could get all these kids together. I held meetings every night for 30 days in that old recreation building, which was the old former library, the one before the second library, thirty days straight to get me the roughest kids that might do mischief. I had a deal with the taxi cab company. The kids couldn't get there for the meetings. So we met, furnished sandwiches, Milligan hamburgers. We'd sit there from 7:00 p.m. until 10, 10:30 p.m. at night and then take 'em back home. I learned more about what goes on in the community and how to reach the community leaders and what those people wanted that we solved in about six months. I suggest today that those of them who want to learn, they ought to have been in this meeting today. They would have learned something. [audience clapping]

Until you as a voter start telling your representative, if you don't get your fanny to that meeting at our community and listen to our need, don't send an aide out here. Don't send a spokesperson. You come yourself, then they'll learn about our city and that will help because we don't have enough jails to pick everybody up that you might see in downtown Jacksonville that might slumber at night, have a little pint of wine or whatever. If you've been sleeping all day, you gotta have something to kind of keep you going, too.

So, it can be done, but it's going take a movement and strength by the community itself to rise up in arms.

QUESTION: Hi. My name is Terri Lorince. I'm the executive director of Downtown Vision. In the six years I've been in Jacksonville, I would have to thank you all for your efforts at consolidation because I'm sure that the growth that we have here today in part is because of consolidation from 1968. But I'm not sure if consolidation was actually the best thing for downtown Jacksonville, and I would be curious to hear your thoughts on it. I think it's terrific for the overall growth, but somehow downtown got lost in the mix of all of this, and I would just like to hear your comments on it.

Lou Ritter: I'd like to be the mayor of downtown Jacksonville only. We missed the boat on downtown. Berkman Plaza, that's nice. Nobody can afford it, all those condominiums. Who's gonna buy 'em? We need to create a downtown for all the people. I offered a solution to Mayor Peyton and his staff and to Council member Susan Jenkins. When they closed the old library, that building's been sitting there for months. Nothing there at all. Why couldn't we take that and create a community center? We have a civic auditorium but the average folk can't buy a ticket at \$70, \$75 a piece.

So, take the old Main library and turn it into a community center for downtown. Put in there maybe a Maxwell House Coffee Shop advertisement, a Maritime Museum.

If you have kids, nothing to do downtown. We could have created small museum, a coffee shop, a deli in there and a little movie theatre showing historical movies, so forth, and try to start then, maybe provide a grocery store or a pharmacist. Those are the things that the workers downtown would like to have. They could shop before they went home. They do that in Washington, D.C. and in Boston, but the people who fostered

consolidation, I've talked to a lot of great people and their sons and daughters now. They say they are for downtown, but how many have been downtown?

But I think we need to have affordable housing downtown, and that's something that City Council can be gutsy enough about and provide housing down here. If they want to call it public housing, let 'em. And to create community fellowship work with our churches downtown and then hope that that would...otherwise I think that we're gonna see a downtown that will never add another hotel or a place for people to have leisure as other cities do.

Alton Yates: I do believe that consolidation was good for the entire city, Duval County. The reason our downtown, in my opinion is so far behind, there are two. Number one, when the rest of the major cities of this country were taking advantage of urban renewal monies that were available for downtowns, Jacksonville took the position that it did not want federal funds because there were strings attached to those federal funds that they didn't want to have anything to do with. And this was in the, and started in the administration prior to Mayor Lou Ritter being elected mayor. Fortunately for us in Jacksonville, when Lou took office, he brought greater Jacksonville economic opportunity and a bunch of other federal funds into Jacksonville, but the time had pretty much passed. We couldn't get in on the bulk of the model cities programs and cities like Newark, New Jersey, New Haven, and other major cities of the country took advantage of those federal dollars to beef up their downtown.

So what we had happened was shopping centers, regional shopping centers begin to develop in the suburbs and the merchants from downtown simply moved to the regional shopping centers. Regency and Gateway, I think, were the first two, and that's when we began to see the downfall of our downtown Jacksonville.

I can remember, and there are some other folks who are sitting in this audience that can remember with me, when one of the finest things that you could do, one of the finest ways you could entertain yourself was walking through the streets of downtown window-shopping. I mean downtown was the place for that sort of thing. And Christmastime, oh boy, it was awesome. But when all of that moved to the regional shopping centers, then downtown just ...the lights went out and, unfortunately, we haven't found a way to turn them back on. There is an opportunity. I think things are beginning to turn around now with the new housing that's coming up downtown, the high-rises and that sort of thing, but we gotta have, in addition to residential development downtown, we gotta have more commercial development. Things that people can walk to and from and enjoy close to where they're going to live because that's what they're looking for. They're looking for convenience, and I'm beginning to see that happen thanks to your great works and the works of others who believe in downtown and hopefully it will come about within the foreseeable future.

Dr. Edna Saffy: Well, I was going to say something, but I don't think I'm as knowledgeable as I should be on the subject, and I think we should end with what you have said, which is a very positive note. And we should end with all the wonderful history and political information you have given us today. And with your leadership, Jim, thank you very much.

Dr. James Crooks: Thank you.
[audience clapping]

Carolyn Williams: Let's give another round of applause for our panelists and our moderator. They took time out today to share with us their thoughts, their observations, and the history of Jacksonville. To recognize them for their contributions and participation in our program today, we do have a little token of appreciation that we would like to give them. Just a little plaque that reads – Presented to in appreciation for your participation in *A Bold New Revolution: Jacksonville Before Consolidation*, October 21, 2006 from the Jacksonville Public Library. I will come to you. [audience clapping] They can do “show and tell” after. And of course for our moderator, Dr. Crooks, [audience clapping] without your assistance and your agreeing to be a very pivotal part of this beginning of our three-year initiative, it would not have been possible. We certainly do appreciate everything that you have done for the Jacksonville Public Library in working with our staff.

So once again, thank you very much for all of your time and effort.

Dr. James Crooks: And we thank you as part of the rebuilding of downtown that the public library is here.

Carolyn Williams: We're very happy, very happy in our new home. [audience clapping] As they take their seats in the audience, I would once again like to recognize the staff of the Special Collections Area particularly the Florida Collection. Raymond Neal who is the Senior Librarian, Jay Mooney and Cathy Currier, who are Library Associates, and the supervisor for the department, Pat Morrison, who has left the auditorium. They all have worked very hard in producing this program and getting it together and we certainly look forward to the next two years of consolidation programming.

I believe that wraps up this part of our program. As was said earlier, we will have a presentation from our musical artist, David Milam. He also has his CD out front for sale along with copies of Dr. Crooks' books, and I believe that if you purchase one, Dr. Crooks will even sign it.

Thank you very much for coming. I hope you enjoyed the first part of the program. Please stay for the musical portion.

Have a great day!