



Interview No. SAS7.8.02
Hugh Carey

Interviewer: Jessie McGee
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Carey: Yeah, what is that anyway?

Q: It's called a mini-disk.

Carey: It records music well?

Q: Yeah. It's really cool. Kind of expensive, but it's worth it. Okay. Why don't you state your name for the record?

Carey: I am Hugh Carey.

Q: Hugh Carey. No middle name.

Carey: Hugh W. Carey.

Q: W.

Carey: I don't use my middle name. My father loved it, but I don't love it.

Q: Okay.

Carey: But it's Wilbert.

Q: Wilbert. Okay. And what is your birthday?

Carey: March 22, 1945.

Q: 1945. Okay. Great. This is July 8th, today. Yeah. Good. All right. I'd like to go back to your childhood, and what I'm interested in, well, general childhood stuff and also how you got into music. You first musical experiences, training, memories, mentors.

Carey: Okay. I was born in Baltimore, Maryland. My father and mother are from the Eastern Shore of Maryland, but they moved to Baltimore in search of work. But after being here for two

or three years, my father decided that he was going to go back to the Eastern Shore to open a business.

Q: Okay.

Carey: And so I didn't stay. I wasn't here in Baltimore more than three or four years, but we moved to a town called Snow Hill, Maryland where my father was born, and my mother was born not too far away from Snow Hill, near Ocean City, Maryland.

Both of my parents were very musical. My father sang. He and his brothers had a quartet that even had a radio show in the '30s in one of local radio stations in Salisbury, and they had a quartet program that came on every week.

So I came up in a house where music was just something that you did. My mother played the piano. And while we were here in Baltimore, we lived in Cherry Hill, when Cherry Hill just opened, and my mother became the organist for the Methodist Church in Cherry Hill. And I am told that I was young, but I would go to the piano while she was playing services and help her play.

Q: Wow. What were your parents' names?

Carey: My parents. My father's name is Hugh Carey and my mother's name is Emma Steele Carey.

And so music has always been a part of my life because I heard it in the home all the time. We had a piano all of the time except when we lived in Baltimore, but as soon as we got back to Snow Hill my parents bought a piano. And so when I was five, we had a minister and his wife that came to our church, our local church, Ebenezer Methodist Church in Snow Hill, and he was a minister who was near retirement and wanted to get out of the city. He was a minister in one of the large churches in Newark, New Jersey.

And he and his wife came to Snow Hill because Snow Hill was a nice little town where they thought it would be nice to retire, and he served his last three years. But his wife was a choral conductor in New Jersey, and he was also. He loved music. He wasn't exactly musical, but he loved music. And his wife brought a new perspective to a little town on the Eastern Shore because she really organized the choir. She found out that people really could sing, and she started teaching people choral techniques, and we started choral liturgy that you hear in church.

Q: Right.

Carey: Because prior to that we were just singing hymns out of the hymnal and that kind of thing.

Q: What kind of a community was Snow Hill?

Carey: Snow Hill is the county seat of Worcester county, which is the county where Ocean City is.

Q: Right.

Carey: So Snow Hill was a, a very nice quaint town. In those years it was segregated, but you didn't know it was segregated because it was just a very nice place to be. My parents, my father opened a business, and it was, it was for all the people. We had Caucasians who were, he had clients who were Caucasian as well as Afro-American. And so you really never realized until you got into situations outside of Snow Hill that there was even segregation going on because it was a part of the structure, of the way things, you did things.

Q: So the church.

Carey: So the church, when the new minister came, I started to hear this music that I had never heard before. I mean, anthems, and they were just, I always found them so fascinating. And I was, being around music, my mother always insisted that we listen to symphonies, and we always had this kind of things.

Because my mother was a teacher, and she graduated from the Bowie Normal School. We talked about the Coppin Normal School prior to this. Well, she was a graduate of Bowie Normal School, which was the precursor of Bowie State College.

Q: Okay.

Carey: And so she was very much into the arts and into music and that kind of thing. And so in our home we listened regularly to quote classical music and orchestras and choral music. And my mother loved the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, so every Sunday morning we listened to the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, and then an Afro-American chorus, the popular chorus was then Wings Over Jordan. I don't know if you ever heard of them. But they were an African-American choir that sang arranged spirituals, and I just thought they were dynamic. And when Mrs. Jackson, the minister's wife, started teaching the choir in Snow Hill, of course, it was that type. I couldn't believe it. In a little town on the Eastern Shore, we had this kind of thing going on.

And it was at five my father went to her and said, look, I have a son who really likes music, and we're interested in having him take piano lessons. Do you give piano lesson? And she said yes. So I became her first piano student. I remember it was fifty cents, fifty cents a week, and I was so thrilled. My dad bought me a piano, a brand new piano. We had a little, we had a piano, but he bought me a brand new piano. And I was absolutely thrilled with that experience.

And so I grew up taking these piano lessons from Mrs. Jackson, and being involved in the church music program. She organized the choir system that we had never had. We had a junior choir, then a youth choir and an adult choir. And you went from one to the other, and I just said, this is just phenomenal.

Now at the same time, in the middle school, we all went to the same high school, went to the same school for secondary education. The entire county, there was only one Afro-American high school in the county. And you went there in the seventh grade, and you stayed until you graduated as a senior.

Q: What was that called?

Carey: It was called Worcester Junior-Senior High School. And there I met, as a music teacher, Mrs. Sutton, who was very young. She was just out of college, but she was the most phenomenal person that I have ever met. And I think, and I know she is the reason why I'm in music today. Because in my middle school and senior high school years, junior high school and senior high schools, I had the most fantastic, we all the most fantastic music experience, music education experiences. And we did things that we didn't even know were out there to do in music. Because it's Snow Hill is rural, and of course I'm sure you know that Snow Hill is either Ocean City or chickens. The poultry industry, the Perdues, because Perdues are there.

And so Afro-Americans in Snow Hill and people in that whole county just had never had the kinds of, and I don't want to say, well, they had never had the kinds of experiences that this woman was able to bring to the community. And I was so proud to be a part of it. And all of us were.

So she came and she established this choir at the high school and in the middle school. She had a junior high school choir and a senior high school choir. And she taught everybody in the high school. There were seven hundred thirty-five people in the entire school, and everybody got one week, I mean, one day of music per week. And she was phenomenal. She just opened horizons for all of us who were children of regular people.

Q: Like what kind of experiences?

Carey: Well, number one, the first thing I remember she made us like be aware of the orchestra.

Q: Okay.

Carey: And orchestral instruments. Because we didn't, we didn't have a band. Nobody in our town played anything except the piano and the guitar. And so we didn't even know. We couldn't, you didn't see it on television because there was no television.

Q: Right.

Carey: So you heard these instruments but you never saw them. So she, that was the first thing I can remember that she did. She gave us great examples of all kinds of music. Her classes were so interesting. We couldn't wait to get to music.

I remember she did, Young People's Guide to the Orchestra [by Benjamin Britten]. And that was, I don't know. She had friends who were in college with her who played instruments, and so she would bring them to our town. So we'd actually get these people. And the other thing that

was so exciting was that we dreamed that Afro-Americans did these. So these people were Afro-Americans because she went to Virginia State, she was a graduate of Virginia State, her bachelor's was from Virginia State. While at the school, she got her master's from Teachers College at Columbia, but.

And then she developed this choral, this choir, and I remember the choir like had a hundred and seventy kids in it. And they, we were phenomenal. Now, I don't know what we would think of them now, I don't know what I would think of them now, you know.

Q: Right.

Carey: But it was just. I couldn't believe it. We did all kinds of things. I mean just operatic things, and choruses from opera, and a great amount of Negro spirituals, arranged Negro spirituals that we have never heard. Pop music of the time. And she was very creative so we did things in costumes. So we got so popular in the county that people when we did concerts, we had a gym auditorium and I'll never forget and it sat a thousand people, and she would have all races in that auditorium. And it was just phenomenal. So much so that the county decided that they were going to build us an auditorium.

Q: Wow!

Carey: We were one of the first schools on the Eastern Shore to have a bona fide auditorium with lights and everything. And I still get excited thinking about Mrs. Dutton. Her name was Winifred Dutton.

Q: Dutton.

Carey: Mrs. Dutton. And she was phenomenal.

Q: What year was this?

Carey: This was. Let's see, I graduated from high school in '63. So it was from '63 and then six years from '63. '57. Yes. So I was in my secondary school.

And I remember my third year there she said we're going to do an opera. Well, no. The first thing we did was that she did a unit on the great operas of the. And, of course, we all kind of looked at her. [Laughter] And she made us study a number of the Puccini operas because she loved Puccini. Well, everybody loves Bocini because of the melody. But we did "Madame Butterfly". We studied "Madame Butterfly" and all of the Bocini operas, and then we did a couple Mozart. Well, we did of course "Magic Flute." And then she said, all right, now we're going to have opera night. And we all kind of looked at each other.

But we had some very talented students in the choir, and what we did, she made these huge billboard type things, and she got an artist to paint some, just poster like things, and put the name of the opera. And each of us had to learn, all of the singers who were soloists had to learn an aria from one of the operas. I did "Vesti la giubba" [from Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*] in that clown

costume. And I sang that in a vocal competition and won second prize. They came to Baltimore because that was just something.

Well anyway, we had this opera night, and we did things from ten operas. And it was fantastic. I mean, it was just, it was just fantastic.

Q: Had you had any formal voice training at that point?

Carey: Never. She was our voice teacher. She gave us. Because she was a voice, piano concentrate and a music ed major. So then the next year she said, I have this opera that I want you all to listen to. Because at Christmas time the unit was the Amahl and the Night Visitor, by Menotti. And we produced the entire opera, lights, theme, sets, costumes. And, of course, we did it the first night, and the town, the town heard about it. And we did it three or four times. We did have a young lady who played Amahl. But we had a fantastic soprano. I don't know what she's doing now. I don't even know that she went to school, went to college for music. But anyway, she did the mother. I did Kasper. And two of my friends of course were Melchior and Balthazar. And then the high school choir, of course, with the hundred seventy singers were the shepherds.

And it was, I get excited thinking about it. And I have done it all the time. I've done it here. I did it at a couple of the high schools I taught.

But she opened all kinds of horizons. In addition to being a very masterful choral person. Because we, again, we had never heard a choral festival. She started the choral festival, the choral festival among Afro-American institutions, high schools on the Eastern Shore. She also started the all-county, no, it wasn't, it was the all-Eastern-Shore festival, where representatives from all the Afro-American high schools got together at UMES, and there were eight singers from each of them, from the bridge all the way down to the lower shore, and we were on the campus at University of Maryland, Eastern Shore. At that point it was Maryland State College. With a choral conductor, I don't know who it was, and I can't remember. And we had a mass, we were on the campus for three days.

And it was the first time anybody had ever heard of that. And a result of that, she took our choir to, the first time that anybody had ever been to the state choral festival. We entered the state choral festival and came back with an excellent rating.

So the choir was, the choir was phenomenal.

Q: Where was that festival?

Carey: It used to held at the University of Maryland, College Park. The state festival.

Q: Okay. Okay.

Carey: And I will never forget that either because we did a piece called Russian Picnic. Now I was also playing, I was accompanying the choir at that time.

Q: Okay.

Carey: I was the accompanist for the choir. So there were very few, very few choirs on the Eastern Shore that had a student accompanist also. Most of the time the teachers played for their choir and they directed from the piano.

Q: Right.

Carey: So, but we did a piece called Russian Picnic which was kind of challenging for the pianist of that age, of my age. And we did that at the festival. And I remember we did a piece called Madam [?]. Just some fabulous things. Hallelujah from the Mt. of Olives [Beethoven]. All of those kinds of experiences we had with Mrs. Dutton, and Mrs. Dutton is still living.

Q: Wow.

Carey: And I tried all kinds of ways to get her to come to [?], but she just had something to do that day. But I have taken several choirs back to the Eastern Shore to sing on several occasions, and she has attended all of them.

Q: Wow.

Carey: But she was probably the most instrumental person in my life in terms of being a professional musician. And so it's, and that led to a lot of things. Because I was torn in high school between being a musician or a mathematician because I was pretty decent in math. And now I can't add or subtract.

But those were some fabulous years, and, of course, again my parents. And my entire family was. Because I remember that we would always gather at my grandmother's house in the evenings, on Sunday evenings after everyone's dinner. And my father's relatives, my father's sisters and brothers and their children would always come, and I would play the piano, and we would sing hymns. We would sing. My grandmother enjoyed that so much. And we did that year after year until we started, until my cousins started to get older and go away to college and that kind of thing.

Q: Was Mrs. Dutton influential in your decision to go to Morgan?

Carey: Yes. Because at that point. Well, not, so. Well, yes and no. My parents were kind of more influential in my going to Morgan. One of the things, I wanted to go to Westminster Choir College.

Q: Where's that?

Carey: That's in Princeton, New Jersey.

Q: Okay.

Carey: And I wanted to go to Peabody. And Mrs. Dutton was kind of supporting those two because she thought that I would get a little more, little more experience.

Q: Right.

Carey: But my father was a very practical man, and he felt that because my background, my theory background, was not. Because with Mrs. Dutton we got rudiments of music in her classes, but we did not, we did not get a lot of theory, and my father was afraid that I would not be able to compete because I hadn't started early enough with the theory in institutions like Westminster where kids had had that kind of experience, or Peabody. And so he convinced me that I should go to a school that would be a little more nurturing, and where I could kind of learn some things before I got in the mainstream.

And I'm glad that he did that. But his, I don't know whether his thing was so much he wanted me to go there because he didn't want me to get become discouraged and not go, and quit, or that it was cheaper or what.

But anyway, I went to Morgan, and the Morgan experience was fantastic. I mean, I really learned to be a musician at Morgan. I learned what music was about. Because all of those years, even though I took the rudiments of stuff and could play, I was a really, really outstanding student pianist, well, and I'm comparing myself to people on the Eastern Shore, and you have to understand in the entire town there were about five people who could play the piano. But because I was so interested in it, I did excel at what I was doing. I mean I wasn't doing anything abnormally fabulous, but because I practiced a lot and that kind of thing, I was a little more up on it.

But when I got to Morgan, they were able to. Even though I played, even though I played the piano, I wouldn't know what key I was playing in. I mean, you know, I would know about key signatures and things, but I just didn't know anything theoretical about it. I knew that if I saw four sharps, that they were going to be those sharps that I would play them, but I didn't, you couldn't ask me what key I was playing in or anything like that.

So it was good that I went to Morgan because that's where I blossomed and learned the technical things.

Q: Did you take piano lessons there?

Carey: Yeah. I played the piano at Morgan, and I also sang. I was a voice major, voice concentrate, but I took. Morgan, when I got there, you had to, every music major had to take piano all four years. But most of the people who were not piano majors took rudimentary piano, but I took the piano major track because I could play. And, but I chose to major in voice because I knew that I could play, and I wanted to get, I wanted to learn some technique.

Because Mrs. Dutton, while she was not a vocalist, she was also a pianist. So she, the things that we learned from her vocally were things that she had learned just being around vocalists in her college. And so I wanted to see what the technical things that I felt like. I wasn't sure where I

wanted to go with music, and I wanted to have a balance of piano as well as voice, as well as those kinds of things.

Q: Right.

Carey: So my early years were great. My father, when I was about nine or ten, I got tired of practicing. No, I guess I was more getting into teenage. I don't think I was a teenager. But my father, I just didn't want to practice any more because my friends were all teasing me because I was, first of all I was the only male in the entire school that played the piano. That was number one. Number two, I just, you know, I just wasn't strong enough. I wasn't strong enough at that point. Peer pressure got the best of me, and I just said to my father I'm not doing it any more. I just can't do it.

Because I couldn't get any girlfriends, I couldn't. So I said I'm not doing it. He said okay. See my father was very, he was a smart man as I look back on it.

Q: Yes.

Carey: And he said fine. No problem. You don't have to do it. Don't do it. So that was fun. That was, and my mother said, Hugh are you sure, are you sure you want to stop playing? Yes. I don't want to. I want to go out and play basketball and baseball, and couldn't do that either.

But I said oh, oh, I can't go through this. This is not very good. So I didn't play for a year. I did nothing. Nothing. So one day my dad said we're going to Baltimore tonight. And when I came to Baltimore. I can't even remember who that was. See, I don't go back. I should remember these things. But there was a child prodigy pianist who was playing with the Symphony [Baltimore Symphony Orchestra], and I didn't even know what we were coming to see. But he was about my age, and when I got to the old Lyric [Theater], and we were accustomed to coming because we would come to concerts at least four or five times a year. So I was kind of accustomed to coming to the Lyric. But when we got to the Lyric, I realized that this was a kid pianist, a young man playing the piano with the Symphony. Father said nothing. He sat there. I don't even remember what he played. But all I remember is my father saying at the end of it, that's something that you could have been doing.

Q: Oh man.

Carey: And I was so crushed. I was crushed. I was crushed. So the next day I said to my dad, I said, dad, would you be upset if I went back to — He said, well, no, I don't think. I can't waste my. No. Nuh, huh. I said, mom, please, could you please kind of convince dad that I would like to take piano lessons again. So.

Q: Oh, that's a very funny story.

Carey: I went back to Mrs. Jackson and we continued. And so by this time I was sixteen and was going, you know. And Mrs. Jackson was very wise, and I appreciate this in her because a lot of people won't do this. She said to me when I became sixteen, she said, you know, I'm not really a

fantastic pianist. I can play the hymns and I can do those kind of things. And I've taken you as far as I can go, as I can take you because I think that now you're ready to do some other, for another teacher. And so my mother went to Salisbury, which was the big city on the Eastern Shore, and we found, she found, not we, she found a music teacher who taught at Salisbury State, a piano teacher, and her name was Mrs. Miles. And Mrs. Miles taught me piano, and then she was also an organist at one of the churches in Salisbury and so I began to take organ lessons in my senior year. And I just became very interested in the organ because at that point we were going to Philadelphia to annual conferences in the church in Philly.

And this was another person who made a great impression on me, and I really never had the opportunity to tell him, but I talk about him all the time.

Q: Who is that?

Carey: There was a large, large Methodist church in Philadelphia called Tindley Temple which was the seat of Afro-American Methodism. And Charles Tindley was a slave who, a freed slave who was from the Eastern Shore and who was a minister at my mother's church when she was a little girl. And he became quite a prolific minister as well as a prolific hymn writer. And he went to Philadelphia and established this Tinley Temple. And he also made friends with John Wanamaker, who of course was a great Philadelphia philanthropist. And John Wanamaker gave him the money or helped him raise the money to build this immense church. I mean it was just, it was like a cathedral.

And in this immense church was this huge, huge pipe organ that Wannamaker gave to the church. And, of course, they had one of the most fantastic church choirs that I had ever heard, and so again, I was just completely mesmerized. I think they had like fifty people on that choir, and they sang. I mean. And so Mr. Haughey was the music Walter Haughey was the, Edward Haughey, Walter, Edward, one of them, Mr. Haughey was the music director at that church. And whenever we went to that church, I would go and sit beside the organ. He would let me sit beside.

And it was just. Oh, he could play and because I think he had studied at Curtis.

Q: Wow.

Carey: And so that was when I got very intensely interested in the organ. And at that point in my life, I decided that at some level I wanted to be involved in church music and play the organ.

Q: Did he let you play that organ?

Carey: Yes. And it didn't sound like a thing, because I didn't know anything about registration or any of that.. But it was just. My mother had a picture of me at the organ, and I just thought I was fantastic.

Q: Wow.

Carey: But that was, he was a person that played a role in what I am today. Because I used to listen to how he played, and I would come home to my home church. Because on occasion I would play at church on youth day and that kind of thing. I'd be the organist for the Sunday, and I would do things that I heard him do. Would come home and practice them on the piano, and we'd have to sing the same hymns and that kind of thing.

So that was, he was very instrumental in my life also. And I don't think I ever I ever told him. I don't know if he's still living. I have not ever had any contact with him.

And so then it was the Morgan years, and you know, and I just became very excited about music during those years from eighteen to twenty-one. And Morgan was a great experience. I had some very fine teachers there, and very nurturing teachers. And they were teachers who understood where we were coming from, so they were very patient. And but because they were good musicians, they were outstanding musicians, we got, we got such great training and such great experiences too.

Q: Did you, while you were at Morgan, did you have any sort of opportunity to be in the Baltimore music scene outside of college?

Carey: Yeah. Yes. I was, the Baltimore Symphony created a college council in the '60s. And I was very much involved with the Baltimore Symphony, and I was the, and it was a council of students from all of the colleges in Baltimore. And we would, they wined us and dined us. We would get together twice a month, and we got tickets to the concerts reduced, but we were able to design youth packages and things we would like to see the symphony do and that kind of thing.

And I was elected president of that group, of that organization. And, of course, that was a big deal. My parents thought that was. I mean, I have an article. I should have brought that. I have this article that my mother finally put in the local newspaper, "Home Boy Becomes President of Baltimore City Youth Council, Representing all the Colleges" And I got so tickled because in the article in the editor of the newspaper said, Caucasian too. That was of course a big deal.

So yeah I did that, and I did some things with the Baltimore Opera Company while I was in college.

I was very much a part of the things that were happening in Baltimore because. As a matter of fact, that was when my popularity in Baltimore began. People knew that I was here.

When I graduated from Morgan, my first job was at Patterson High School, which is the place where I attribute my learning to teach.

Q: What, I'm a teacher too, and what was your motivation to have a focus in music ed too?

Carey: Because I wanted to be a performer, but my dad wouldn't let me. He said you have to become a teacher because we don't know how you're going to do in this music field. He was very controlling. And when you graduate, I want you to be able to be, to support yourself. And

one thing that we do know is that you have a degree in music ed, you will be able to teach, and that means you will be able to eat, and that means that you will be able to take care of yourself.

Q: Right.

Carey: Because my father and my mother, they were people who believed. My brother and I never had to work. All our job was was to go to school, and get the very best grades we could get. That was it. I mean, a lot of my friends were working in Ocean City and doing that kind of thing. And I did work in Ocean City a couple of times, but it was because I wanted to. It wasn't that we were required to help with the house or any of that kind of thing.

And that was even in college. When we came home from college in the summer, if we wanted to practice, if that's what we were going to do, that's what you're going to do. If you wanted to stay in Baltimore and do some things musically, you could do that. Nobody asked anything of us. But once you get that degree, my father would say, you have your degree, both my brother and I got cars for college presents, for graduation presents, and my father would say and we're going to serve Thanksgiving dinner at five o'clock. We'll see you then. [Laughter]

And after that we will see you for Christmas.

Q: Wow.

Carey: So we knew that we were not just coming back home to live.

Q: There was a point. Right.

Carey: And we would always be welcomed in our parents home at any time, but he gave us the opportunity and did the very best that he could to give us experiences that would make us self-supporting.

Q: Right.

Carey: And I never, and I always say that, I never slept in my parents home past two or three days once I graduated from Morgan. And I really like being able to say that.

Q: Yeah. So teaching wasn't necessarily a calling in the beginning.

Carey: Teaching was not a calling, but I think I am a teacher.

Q: Yup.

Carey: I am a teacher. Because I love it so. I mean, I am passionate about teaching. And when I got to, well, when I was at Morgan, what happened to me, I had this great experience. Because my junior year I did my praticum at Mervo [Mergenthaler Vocational Institute] because Mervo was real close to Morgan. And I said, I don't want to have to rely on transportation. I'll just walk to Mervo.

And I met there Esther Henderson and Jane Hart, and they were two teachers that were passionate about music teaching. And they were very instrumental in my life also because I had, I didn't think there was another like Mrs. Dutton. I thought there would never, I would never find another teacher who was like Mrs. Dutton. But those people ate and slept their music too. And they were a different kind of kid because number one those kids at Merville were vocational kids, and so music was just a means to, a requirement to graduate. So they had to make those kids really want and like to be in music.

And I mean Esther and Jane were phenomenal at it. They would just, and I just fit right in there. So I loved it, and Jane and Esther recognized something in me, and they were very kind to me and very good to me. I mean, they did things that they didn't have to do. I mean, invite me to their home, and take me to concerts or take me to things that they thought that I would enjoy. I mean, they didn't have to do that. Their only responsibility was back in their classroom. And so I loved that.

And then my senior year, I found out that I had to. No, I didn't find out. I knew I was going to have to do student teaching. But I also found out, and I was just talking about Dr. McGeer who was also a great guy. Dr. McGeer was a supervisor in music at that point in Baltimore City. He then went on to supervisor of music in Baltimore County. And he came to observe me because Jane called him and said, I want you to see this guy from Morgan. He's not supposed to be teaching, but I asked him to teach a class. And he taught this class and it was so good. And all it was, all I was doing was mimicking, it was on the orchestra, and I did exactly what Mrs. Dutton did. [Laughter]

And so she called Don, the supervisor of music, and he came out and watched me teach. And so he was very impressed.

And my senior year, Esther Henderson, who was the second vocal teacher at Mervo fell and broke her neck, and she was unable to teach. So Don came to Morgan and said, I have something to offer you. And I said and what is that? And he said, I tell you what, I want you to come to Merville and take Esther's place for the last semester. And I said, well, Dr. McGeer, I have to do my student teaching. He said, I tell you what I'll do. I will put you in a permanent sub, long-term sub position at Mervo. I will be your supervisor. I'll ask Jane to look in on you, and I will pay you for long term, but I will supervise you as a student teacher. So you will get paid as well as get your student teaching. So I said, well, you have to talk that over with my adviser. So he and my adviser worked out the terms of this agreement. And so my last year, my last semester at Morgan I student taught, got a fabulous salary. I was making more money because they were paying me, and I think it was nothing, but for those times it was a lot of money and it was certainly more than any of my peers were making.

Q: That's wild.

Carey: And so, and then my girlfriend at that point, who's now my wife, was also a music major, and we decided we were going to get married a year after we got out of college. And she was to go to grad school first just in case we started a family, she would not be able to get back. So she

was going to go to New York, to Teachers College, and I was going to teach in Toms River, New Jersey, which is right across, not very far from New York.

Q: Right.

Carey: And so that's what we did. I applied for a job and I took the interview and was accepted to teach in Toms River at the high school. And so we were going to be close to each other. But Don came and said, look. He said you come and teach in Baltimore City, I will promise you that you will have, you can have tenure in six months.

Q: Wow. You must have been very impressive. [Laughter]

Carey: Wait one second. So I said to my wife, who was then my girlfriend. She said well I want you to come. I said, well, wait a minute now. Wait one second. Where can you do that? I mean here's, you have to be a professional for at least two years in some of these school systems. I said, oh no, I think I'm going to stay here. So I couldn't help it. We'll see whether this is going to challenge this engagement period or not.

And I said, look, plus I'll be making great money. I can come to New York every weekend. That'll be great. Just get on a train and go to New York. Which is what I did.

So I called the people at Toms River, New Jersey, and told them I wasn't going to accept the position. And Don gave me Patterson High School. I don't know if you know Patterson?

Q: Yes.

Carey: Well, Patterson in those years was a phenomenal place. First of all, it was huge. I liked it because it was very eclectic. I mean, I had never been around. Now you have to understand that up to, up to my graduation from Morgan, I had never been in a integrated facility. All my experiences except for the times when we kind of did things together with other colleges had been completely segregated. And I was so excited because I've always been a people person. And I always wanted to have friends of other ethnic groups and that kind of thing, but it just never, that was never part of my pattern.

So when I got to Patterson and saw Greeks and Italians, I mean it was like. Oh this is like I've been hoping for to happen. And not only was that so fantastic for me, but the department had seven people. It was a huge music department. It was huge, and everybody was phenomenal. And I attribute my Patterson years to learning how to teach because they were all crackerjack teachers.

Q: Who were they?

Carey: Helen Bush. Helen Bush is a Peabody grad. And she was the first music teacher at. I don't know if you know Baltimore at all?

Q: A little bit.

Carey: Do you know that there's a building that is now senior citizen. Well, now it's nothing. But it was called Broadway Junior High School, and it's right at the end of Broadway. You can tell that it was a beautiful building.

Q: Yes.

Carey: But she opened that building as the music teacher. She was the orchestra teacher, the band teacher and the choral teacher. But she was, she's a, she was a phenomenal teacher, just phenomenal.

Q: What did she teach at Patterson?

Carey: She taught vocal music. She taught general music.

Q: Okay.

Carey: The choral director was Jim Mitchell. Jim Mitchell was, had just come out of, he went to St. Olaf's choir school out in.

Q: I grew up in Iowa so I know St. Olaf's.

Carey: Oh, well he graduated from St. Olaf's and was in the St. Olaf's choir. And he had just come from Teachers College too, Columbia Teachers College, and had gotten his master's. And he was a crackerjack choral person. Because Patterson had a wonderful choir.

Clarence Rablesky was the band instructor and the band was good. Charles Bleefield, and I don't know where Charlie came from, but he was a phenomenal pianist. He had been, he had studied in New York and that kind of thing.

Who else was there? I can't remember the rest of them.

Q: Did they have an orchestra?

Carey: They didn't have an orchestra.

Q: What did you do?

Carey: I was a general music teacher. I taught general music. I was the low man on the totem pole, but it was just phenomenal to be around, be around musicians and educators like that. And they began, after my first month, they began to have great confidence in me. And so Jim would let me direct the choir, and I would accompany the choir. And so I started the first piano class there because I asked the principal, and the principal, his name is Abraham Granick. And all of us are still friends. We attended Mr. Granick's 90th birthday party about, about two or three months ago.

And I went to him, and I said Mr. Granick, I want to teach piano. And piano labs were not, they weren't even popular. They hadn't even, they weren't very popular. And they were very expensive. And so what we did, we just went and got seven pianos. We got ten, ten pianos. People wanted to give their pianos away and put them in the room. And I taught class piano. People wanted to give their pianos away and put them in the room. And I taught class piano. Because I had seen that at some MENC [Music Educators' National Conference] Convention, and I said well shoot, if you can do it with these labs that cost thousands and thousands of dollars, well you certainly can do it — of course it's going to be noisy.

But I had a ball teaching it. So finally Don found a deal and bought me a piano lab. So I had twenty pianos, state-of-the-art pianos. It was so fabulous.

Q: Oh my god.

Carey: And so I taught piano there. I started a course called Now Music. Because while I was at BU — I went to Boston University.

Q: Right.

Carey: I took a course at Hartt College in the now music, which was at that point rock and soul and all of that, and how to integrate that in the general music classroom because that was not what you were supposed to. I mean, you weren't teaching Bach and Beethoven, you were not to do that at all. But see the tide had started to change so we had to try to do things, and there was this workshop. It was a three-week workshop at Hartt College called youth music and how to integrate it into the curriculum. And I took that course, and I designed a course at Patterson called Now Music.

And just we, I taught the elements of music and all that just through. And it was a really popular course.

Q: What kind, what kind of music. Was this the early '70s?

Carey: This was late '60s, early '70s. Yes. Well, of course the Temptations were popular then, and Led Zeppelin was just coming out, and Yellow Brick Road, Elton John. All those guys were just coming on the scene

But anyway I taught chord progressions. I taught all kinds of things. So we started a guitar class. I convinced Helen to teach guitar. I taught piano, and we would make sure everybody knew how to play basic chords on the, one, four, five chords on the guitar and the piano. And we taught, they learned a lot about history, about the history of jazz and that kind of thing .

And it was a phenomenal course. And we even, when we started talking about soul music, we talked about the rhythm, and we talked about the jazz influence, and we talked about one of the things that is very interesting about that contemporary soul music was that all the groups are choreographed. And so we learned how to do choreograph patterns based on. We had to listen

for the beat, and we had to create steps that would go with the beat of the music. And I would have classes of kids just making up. We made up line dances. [Laughter]

And it was so interesting that because people would never do it. And we would do a presentation for the music teachers, and Mr. Granick would bring people down to see the kids. And they'd be jumping around, but they'd have to find the beat first, and they'd have to create a step that fit that beat. And if they heard an eighth note, they'd have to do something that would represent the eighth note.

But it was a really good thing. So Baltimore City then decided that they were going to teach Now Music. That was going to be part of the curriculum and so I was on the writing team. That was my first experience with a writing team for.

Q: You mean writing curriculum.

Carey: Writing curriculum for this course so that everybody could teach it in the city. So that was, that was a fun thing, and I enjoyed doing that. And then we discovered, we didn't discover, Patterson also had a Jim Mitchell, the choral person, and Bob Gunther. Bob Gunther was the drama person when I got there. And Jim also, while living in New York, did Broadway shows. I mean, professionally. And Bob Gunther had directed Broadway shows.

So the big thing at Patterson every spring was this huge spring musical, where I really. And I had never done musicals. I just didn't know that. My parents would take me to New York to see musicals, but I never, never, in my wildest imagination dreamed that I would do musicals. But at Patterson that was the big thing for the second semester.

In the spring, I mean, they, it was a huge thing. And they would pack the auditorium. The community would get behind it. The Kiwanis Club would sell tickets. The veterans would do this. All the fathers would come and build sets. I mean, it was a huge successful program. And so I learned to put musicals together there.

Q: What musicals did you do?

Carey: Well, at Patterson I did with them, the first musical we did was "Oklahoma". And then, oh we did a long list of them. I can't remember now. But we just did all the standards. We did "Music Man", "Hello Dolly", and because the school was so huge, we would have casts of thousands. I mean, just thousands. It would come out.

It would take us three weeks to audition. We would do the audition right after Christmas because it would take so long. Of course, we had stage door mothers. I mean, it was just, my daughter should be Julie Christopher. And it was just. And we would do them with huge orchestras.

And I remember we also did the Brahms Requiem. Well, see, I was too stupid to realize that you don't do Brahms Requiem with high school students.

Q: I guess you do.

Carey: Yeah. And it was phenomenal. It was phenomenal.

Q: That's amazing.

Carey: I couldn't believe it. Sometimes I look back and see, umm, that was crazy. And every Christmas we did "Messiah". We did huge "Messiahs". The Hopkins orchestra would come over and play.

Q: Was this like totally unique from what was happening in Baltimore with other schools?

Carey: Yes. I mean, all the programs in Baltimore at that time, all the music programs were good. I mean, you didn't, most of the senior high schools had great choirs, and they had very dedicated teachers, and the music was top notch in those schools.

Q: As far as the breadth.

Carey: But the breadth of the, I had never seen anything like that. I mean, it was just, it was phenomenal. I mean, they had a guitar class, they had piano class, they had. Then we instituted, as a result of these musicals because they got so unwieldy trying to rehearse them with all those kids, that we developed a course called Lively Arts.

Q: Lively arts.

Carey: And each of us took a segment of what you do in a music production, and we taught. We divided the kids that wanted to be on the stage craft, we taught those kids that wanted to be actors, and we were able to in the class, in this class, we were able to use the vehicle, the musical as a vehicle, but the kids got credit for it.

Q: Okay.

Carey: And so we were able to rehearse. We wouldn't have to do those rehearsals after school because we could rehearse the music in the room.

Q: And the administration supported all this.

Carey: Mr. Granick was phenomenal. I mean, he's a phenomenal, he's still a phenomenal man. As a matter of fact, his wife, both of them are ninety, they just got back from Mexico. And he's learned to speak Spanish fluently. And so they're still, they're traveling all over the world. But he was very supportive, very supportive and so were the administrators of the city because there was so much going on over there.

The choir had three hundred and seventy-five kids in it. And we were singing for, we did all the city functions. Mayor [William Donald] Schaeffer was very supportive of us. And it was just, it was just a phenomenal program, and I really learned, I learned a lot there. I was there for seven years, and by that time the Afro-American community had started to hear about me. Because I was so ingrained in that community that I was eating pasta and I was eating spaghetti. And I was

single too, and I would get invited to these homes. And they would just, the bread, the Greek salad. I just loved it. [Laughter] I loved it. I gained about 150 pounds.

But the people were so wonderful to me. I still have great friends in the Highlandtown community. And, of course, my students because I was only four years. The first group of kids, I was only four years older than they. And so many of them are very close friends of mine.

Q: That's great.

Carey: And so we're still in touch with each other. As a matter of fact, two of them were in the "Messiah". So then I left there, because I had become popular in the city and people had begun to talk about me. That's not an egotistical thing. The principal at Dunbar [High School] called me one day and said: look, why don't you come to Dunbar, and I will make you head of the department, and I want you to build a performing arts department.

Q: Where is Dunbar?

Carey: Dunbar is on Orleans Street not too far from Peabody. So I was at Dunbar for seven years too, and that was just phenomenal because I felt very accomplished because I had become head of the department. And I had seven people in the performing arts department. And it was the first time that we, in the city, that there was a department where we taught radio and TV broadcasting, radio broadcasting.

I had a young lady, her name was Barbara Gaunt from Virginia, who was a communication major, and we had a radio class, and the kids came and they took. And Bill Bleich was from New York, and he taught TV production. And that was when we just had simple cameras. I mean, that was just at the beginning of video, but they had their own TV studio. Dunbar, when they built that new building, they built it with, keeping in mind that they wanted a performing arts center.

Because if you notice, the Dunbar auditorium is fantastic. It is now in such disrepair because nobody really kept. After I left, they. Well, that's another story, but.

Q: Was it a newer school when you got there?

Carey: It was brand new. I was the first person in there.

Q: Okay.

Carey: And the people who designed the Morris Mechanic [theater] designed that auditorium. So it was a state of art.

Q: Wow.

Carey: It was the only school in the entire Baltimore system that had a fly system. So I took the, so I left, and so when I left Patterson, I had this great idea. I said, look Helen, you're gonna be at

Patterson, I'm going to be at Dunbar. Now this will be a fantastic opportunity to pull the two communities together.

Q: Two communities meaning what.

Carey: The Highlandtown community, which was white, and the East Baltimore community, which was black.

Q: Okay. Okay.

Carey: And I said, you know what we're gonna do. We're gonna go and find some money. And we're gonna get somebody to finance us, and we're gonna do "Oklahoma".

Q: With these two schools?

Carey: With these two schools. And so I went. In Baltimore in those days there was a thing called the Neighborhood Mothers Association. These were during the Kennedy years where there was just all kinds of money for the arts. And these mothers had gotten together to try to keep the kids off the street and on the straight and narrow, and they organized this organization.

And they got a grant that was phenomenal. And it was a grant for a cultural arts project which was headed by Norman Ross, who was a former Baltimore music teacher. And it was housed at Dunbar. That was the reason why they wanted this thing, this performing arts department.

So I went to Norman, I said, look, Norman, you have all this grant money, and I want to propose that we have a music theater site here this summer. And it was the first. And so Norman said, fine, good. I said okay. So I called Helen. I said, well, it's a done deal. What we're gonna do is do a show. Now what we have to do is convince the kids the Highlandtown that they will be safe coming to Dunbar.

And part of it was that was the parents trusted me because they knew me. So we made sure everything was in place. At that time, Schaeffer had just started this youth, what was it called? Youth corps. And he had gotten government money for jobs for kids. So I went to Mayor Schaeffer who has always been good to me. I mean, he's just been fantastic to me. And I said, Mayor, I said to him could we have some of that money to pay the kids. Give each kid a stipend. So he said yeah. So we paid every kid.

We had like a hundred and seven kids, and every kid got a paycheck every week. Now it wasn't that much, but I mean where on earth could a kid get a paycheck for doing a musical?

Q: That is amazing.

Carey: And it was, and those kids thought they had died and gone. They thought they were pure professionals. [Laughter] And so we did "Oklahoma" that first year. And then the next year we did "Guys and Dolls", and the next year we did "Music Man". I mean, it just continued and continued and continued and continued.

And then I left. I don't know, what did I do? Oh, I was recruited by Mayor Schaeffer to start a group called Citizens Celebrating Baltimore.

Q: Right. Tell me about that.

Carey: And that was just. I was there seven years with that. And we did the same kind of thing. I asked Helen [Bush] to come and join me as assistant director, and Helen did, and so we worked together. And that was a phenomenal. That was a phenomenal.

Q: Tell me again, just for our records, what that was and how it was conceived of.

Carey: Citizens Celebrating Baltimore. The mayor had some money. Mayor Schaeffer had money, and he wanted to do something cultural. You know, he was the mayor who was just interested in. I don't know how long you've been in Baltimore, but he was really interested in selling Baltimore. And that's why I love him because he was artsy kind of.

A lot of people didn't like that because they felt like the city should be about more than glitz. But I mean it was Mayor Schaeffer who, Governor Schaeffer, who got that whole downtown thing started in the harbor. Because I remember as a college student, and I tell this all the time. I remember college student days, we were talking about, we were learning about responsibility to the ecology, ecological responsibility, and when they started talking about Harbor Place, oh my class and I got signs, and we went downtown and we picketed: Don't destroy the harbor and nature and natural grass and the water. And I believe I was the first person that [laughter].

But anyways, Mayor Schaeffer, Governor Schaeffer was responsible for that kind of resurgence in Baltimore, and it just made everybody proud. I mean everybody was so proud to be part of a city that was doing those kinds of things, and arts were flourishing and all. So he came, had a pool of money, and he said to his chiefs: I have ninety-six thousand dollars. Maybe it was, I don't know what it was. But I have this pool of money, and I want a project, and I want you all to go back to your different agencies and I want you to come up with a project, and the person who comes, that will sell the city, and the person who comes up with the best proposal I'm gonna give all the money to and tell you that I need for this to happen within a year.

I wasn't on board then. I was still teaching in Dunbar. There were so many things at Dunbar. I forgot. Well, I'll go on with Citizens and then we'll come back.

Q: Okay.

Carey: So the CCB wrote the best proposal.

Q: What's that?

Carey: Community College of Baltimore.

Q: Okay.

Carey: And the proposal was for this choir that would reflect the city, and so they hired [Nathan Carter](#) ext. as a consultant for that project. When they started to write, and they needed the nuts and bolts and stuff. And so they thought that he was going to conduct. And at that point, he was just beginning to move that, the Morgan [State University] Choir into national status, and he didn't feel like he wanted to divide his time like that. So he suggested to the people there that they should ask me to head this project.

So I was very thrilled, but I didn't want to leave Dunbar because I had worked at Dunbar to build a choir there. And the choir at Dunbar became. It was a phenomenal organization too. I had, we were the first. I think I told you this, didn't I? We were the first high school choir in Baltimore to ever travel internationally.

Q: To Europe. You told me. And yes, that's really amazing.

Carey: And it was just, it was something, and most of those kids at Dunbar, well, none of them had ever been out of the country.

Q: Was this a mostly, this is a black community?

Carey: It was all. It was all a black community. See, I went from Patterson which was all white to Dunbar which was all black.

Q: Did you feel received differently in those two different communities?

Carey: No. One thing about.

Q: From the kids, I mean any perspective.

Carey: No.

Q: No?

Carey: From no perspective because I was well received at Patterson, and I was equally as well received at Dunbar. Because one of the things that I have learned in life is that if you do a good job, if you do the best job that you can and are sincere and let music do it, you're not going to have any problems. I mean, you're not really going to have any big problems except people are jealous.

Q: Yes. Yes.

Carey: And I mean, you know, those kind of people. Well, as I get old, I get bothered by them, but when I was young, it didn't make any difference. I mean, it makes me work harder if anything. So, no, I never had any problems with either of the communities. And still, one of the things that I love about it is that I have still great friends in both, and have been able to be the catalyst for continuing to bring communities together.

And I really like that because here at Coppin [State College] we have had strong ties with the Korean community, and you know that's been a real sore spot in Baltimore. I've been excited about those kinds of things. But I'm going back to traveling.

So the Dunbar choir just was phenomenal. I mean, we were the first choir that ever sang at the White House, and we were invited to sing at the White House. That was a big deal. That was in all the newspapers.

Q: Who was president then? Carter?

Carey: No. Nixon. [Laughter] Nixon.

Q: Wow.

Carey: And did I go. Yes, I did. I've always been very controversial. Because I don't know if you saw it in the paper. I'm jumping back for one minute. But I was severely criticized for singing at Ehrlich's campaign [Robert Ehrlich, Republican Governor of Maryland]. About three weeks ago there was a big article written.

Q: You sang personally?

Carey: No, the choir.

Q: The choir. Okay.

Carey: The Dunbar chamber group. I mean, not Dunbar, Coppin.

Q: Reported.

Carey: Well, the Afro-American leaders had a rough time with us doing it. But I just explained when the Sunpapers called, and I said, look, you have to say one thing about me. I'm about music. I'm not about personalities and politics. I am going to give my students the experiences. If you say I need for you to come and sing, and if you also say that you are going to give me the best food that you have and I wouldn't accept the best liquor because it was a school. But if you say that you're going to give me transportation and you're going to give me a little bit of money that is gonna help me buy music or clean robes or buy gowns, I'm going to sing. Because I am most apolitical person, not political person that anyone would ever know.

Because number one, who knows who I'm going to vote for when I go into the poll.

Q: Do you think, I mean, this is off topic, but do you think that his campaign asked you guys to sing because you were a black choir?

Carey: I don't care.

Q: You don't care.

Carey: I don't even.

Q: You don't speculate at all.

Carey: Oh I don't even want to say that.

Q: Okay.

Carey: All right. But I don't care about that. I don't. But I will say comically that when we got there they wanted us to sing under certain lights. [Laughter] And I said, no. We're going to sing right around the piano. It was funny, but they were very, I mean, very accommodating. Then after the newspapers, the Sunpapers didn't get satisfaction in talking to me so they called the President.

Q: President of Coppin?

Carey: President of Coppin. And the president told them, well, if you know Mr. Carey, he'll sing for anything. [Laughter] He'll take his students anywhere. So it wasn't even about politics for him.

So that's the history. So, no, I never really felt, I never felt any problems in any of those places.

Q: And the Citizens Celebrating Baltimore Choir was a representation of the demographics of the city.

Carey: Of the city. Now that was what Mayor Schaeffer wanted. After they wrote the proposal. We were just going to blanket, have auditions, but when he said that he wanted it to represent Baltimore demographically and percentage wise, we then had to go back to the drawing board and make sure that we had auditions in all of the communities. So the audition process was two or three, well, I guess it took about three months.

Q: Oh wow!

Carey: But it was really something that I loved. Because one of the things that I found out about myself is that I love building. But one of the things that is very, very hurtful to me is that once you build something, and once you. I'm always ready to move on once I feel like I've done all that I can. Then I'm ready for the next challenge. And usually it's been about seven years.

But things never last. And I don't know what that is. Everybody says, oh you know what that is. All my friends, my friends are very kind to me. But I can't believe that there are not people that could keep things going, but and I just don't know what it is. I don't know whether it's sometimes funding. I'd rather believe that it's that people get nervous about putting money behind people that they don't know. But many times I feel like it's for naught because the things don't last.

And I struggle with that all the time. I struggle so much within myself because sometimes I question whether it's something that I'm not doing that causes it. Because I think things ought to, ought to live once they're.

Q: Is this a reaction to, I mean, like the downfall of Dunbar in particular, or like just things in general that you've sort of established at a certain level and then left and seen them go this way?

Carey: Well, you know, my friends say that I get places, I move so fast to get so high, so quickly that there's not much. Unless somebody is going to come there and be. Part of it is not that the persons that follow me are not. None of it is that they're not good. It's that they're not willing to put in the same kind of time that I would, that I put into things.

You know, I try sometimes to move at a slower pace, but I just don't know how to do that.

Q: You can't stop a ball from rolling.

Carey: I can't. I just, that's one of the things that I don't, I don't do well.

Q: So that's a general, a general sort of life thing that you.

Carey: Yeah. And but that's still, that still is. I think about that a lot. That's something that I really am concerned about. I do get concerned about.

Q: Well, I mean, it seems to me like you'll leave a legacy, or one leaves a legacy more in sort of an individualized basis. On that scale, you know, if you see something grand falls, you still touched all those individuals.

Carey: And that's what it has to be. Yeah. And made a difference. I mean, I can see the differences that I made. But I would like to see it to stay. Well, anyway, let's not talk about that.

So anyway, Citizens was very exciting. But again, after it went, it went. It just completely was no more.

Q: Well, that was because of change of leadership.

Carey: Yeah, because of the change of leader and a change in philosophy.

Q: Was that upsetting to you?

Carey: Yes. I struggled with that. I really struggled with that because that was, that was such an exciting program. Well, everything I've done has been very exciting to me. I've been very fortunate, I've been blessed because I have worked with some phenomenal people. My Dunbar kids, a number of them have gone into professional careers.

One of the kids that did the Messiah, the soprano in the Messiah, was a freshman at Dunbar when I got there. Little puny voice. She went on to win a national competition, vocal

competition, and she's now playing Bess all over the world. She's leaving for Mexico City today.

Q: Really.

Carey: And she's going to do. And a number of those Dunbar kids are doing professional things. They're on Broadway; they're doing all kinds of things. So that's very nice.

So then after that I went to Lake Clifton. After the Citizens, I went to Lake Clifton and because the principal at Lake Clifton.

Q: Is that a high school?

Carey: That's a high school, a senior high school. The principal at Lake Clifton was an assistant principal when I was at Dunbar.

Q: Okay.

Carey: So as soon as, and one of the things that I really tickled at, I'm really honored, I feel very good about is that when they found out that I was leaving the Citizens position, my name went back into a pool of people for music teachers, and I had so many offers from principals all over the city to come to their school. Come to my school.

But I decided to go to Lake Clifton because the principal there, Oscar Jobe, wanted to, wanted a replication of the Dunbar program. He wanted to know if we could do that. So I went there and we started a performing arts department. But we, there was not a lot of money then, and so I ended up having to teach choir and drama. And I actually did music theater — I didn't get involved in straight drama. But we had a very strong program, did a number of musicals there. Very, very well done musicals.

I continued to work in the summers with that cultural arts program. And this is the first summer that we have not produced, where the kids got paid musical, because they lost their funding so.

Q: Well, where was this stationed at after Dunbar?

Carey: I brought it here. I brought it to Coppin. I took it wherever, I did it wherever I was working at the time.

Q: Were you, was it the same woman that?

Carey: Helen? No. Helen retired, and I was doing it by myself then. And it's very interesting. I do all of it. I direct the shows and I do the music, and I don't do the choreography. Usually I get someone to help me with the choreography.

Last year we did "Guys and Dolls", and the choreographer and I even did the costuming. So we were with the sewing machines and all of that kind of stuff.

Q: Wow.

Carey: See, people are not willing to do that. And I don't blame them because it's a lot of work. That's a lot of work. And sometimes I say, oh, you are so stupid. But it's in me, I can't.

So I was at Lake Clifton and very successful there. And then Booker T, the principal at Booker T called me and asked. They had what they were, they had created what they called an arts-centered curriculum.

Q: Okay.

Carey: That's what they were calling it.

Q: What year was this?

Carey: Let's see, I went to Booker T. I've been here four years. This is 2002. So I came here in '98. So I was at Booker T for four years. So I went to Booker T in '94.

They were groping with something to try to get kids to come to school. And they figured that the arts would be the thing they could hang it on. But their idea of art-center ed was infusing the arts in the general curriculum. Like trying to make a, pull together a correlation of the arts through math, and all of this kind of thing.

And, you know.

Q: You were skeptical?

Carey: Well, I think it's wonderful to do that, I mean, in reading and in literature, you can do things like that. But the trend, the educational trend, and see my colleagues who are pure educational folk would not agree with me. But I believe that the arts stand on their own. I don't think that you should try to justify one subject through music or through art. Because I think that is demeaning to the arts.

And I will say that anywhere. Sometimes they try to shut me up. Because they are just so anxious, the people are so anxious to try to get our students to achieve. And I can understand that because we are falling by the wayside. But I think that there are other ways to achieve it.

So anyway, when I got to Booker T, I decided that I didn't really like that approach even though I did not try to change it because it was something that the school was very proud of. And one of the things that my parents both taught me is that you don't go in somebody's house and start tearing down what they have created.

So we went along with that, and it was working. I mean, they were able to get kids to come to school, and they were able to interest kids to a certain degree. But my thing when I got there was to create an academy of arts. If you want to use a group of students and to give them arts experiences. And so we worked at building an academy, which was much this performing arts

concept that I started at Dunbar as well as Lake Clifton. And so we set out and we hired a dance instructor. And they also knew the value of the arts ability. I was very, very pleased to know that because they had put some things in place.

For instance, they had a professional dance floor put in. They had a dance studio with mirrors and everything.

Q: At a junior high school?

Carey: So they knew. They were on the right track. They were on the right track. And when I got there, the strongest part of the program was the band, and the band had a hundred junior high school kids, and he had, Shelton Barnes, had instruments that senior high schools didn't have. They had instruments that colleges didn't have.

I mean they had a piccolo trumpet, and they were getting ready to buy a harp. But anyway, they had all these instruments, and all these students that were playing, but that was just a small segment of it.

So what we did was that we got a really good dance teacher who was the first premier dancer for Baltimore Ballet when Danny Diamond was here. I don't know whether you know that. But that was in the '60s, and Carl Pitts worked for Alvin Ailey, and he was a premier dancer for Baltimore Ballet, and he just had a number of experiences. And so we hired him as the choreographer, the dance teacher, and we hired two phenomenal art teachers from Baltimore City who were just kind of sitting and being utilized as art, general art teachers, but I mean, they had so much more to give. One of them was doing sculpture and ceramics. The other was just phenomenal at crafts and visual arts. And we hired a drama person. And we, and I, of course, did vocal music. And we had an instrumental program, and we were able to get grants to hire assistants, people who knew the arts and could take kids.

And then I asked the principal could we create this school within the school. So we, it was just like the Conservatory. I mean, the kids, I got the parents involved. The kids had to apply. You want to be in the art department, arts, we called it the arts academy. And we were going to take, we were going to have three hundred and fifty students. We made some arbitrary number of students. And those kids had to come and get applications to be in it. They had to get parental. They had to get five teachers to say that they, their academics were up to par. And they had to write a paragraph as to why they wanted to be, and they had to audition.

The artists were given instructions that anybody wanted to go into visual arts had to create a portfolio, a simple portfolio, just a little thing that they bound and presented. And that kind of thing. And so it got off the ground. The parents had to write, had to sign a statement saying that they would be supportive. I asked the principal if we could have a group of academic teachers that would teach only arts academy. So we had our own academic teachers.

We, the first year had three hundred kids in the academy. The sixth graders when they came to Booker T, took a thing called arts rotation. The first semester they took music, the second semester they took art, and the third semester they took drama, the fourth semester they took

dance. And from that, that was every sixth grader in the school. Then, when they got to the seventh grade, I don't want to be in arts at all, or I want to be in the arts academy.

And so then if they wanted to be in the arts academy, they would make application and we would start this whole process. Which was a three or four week process whereby they were interviewed and had to get letters from their parents, they had to get statements from their teachers, they had to do all that. And that first year was phenomenal. All the years were phenomenal. We were able to raise their test scores. Attendance went from something like forty percent to ninety-two percent. The kids came to school every day. They were doing their homework because during, we had times when they had to study. They were responsible for studying. We had people that were specialists. Their parents would come in and check work. We had our own little PTA. Because everybody said, oh, we've never had PTA here.

So I had an arts academy PTA. No, it wasn't even arts academy. I had a parent meeting of the vocal music students. And everybody said, oh, why are you doing all of this because nobody's coming. I mean, I said, let's not be discouraged. So I sent letters home and said, please come to the vocal parent meeting. Dinner will be served. And I went and got spaghetti. We made, I got my friends to come in. And we cooked spaghetti, and we made salad, and we had cakes. Do you know, that I had a hundred and fifty parents. They had never seen that many parents for a PTA meeting.

Q: That's amazing.

Carey: And the parents came, and they signed up for committees. And I mean, the choir, that choir became very popular in the city. And I was so proud, I'm so proud of those kids because a lot of them had never had any kind of experience. And we were doing all kinds of things with them, and they did a lot of traveling. And parents would travel with them.

They were so upset because we had planned, we were planning to sing at Disneyworld the year that I left to come here. Because this came, the job came and I.

Q: What has become of that program. [Laughter] Need I ask?

Carey: Well, they are still going, they are still trying. But it has not, it's not what it was. They're now. They have the art, some of the arts offered. The art teachers, one of the arts teachers left when I left. The other passed. The drama program has fallen apart. The instrumental program is still there because Mr. Garnes is still there. But everything else is pretty much.

But one of the things that's very good. I served on a charette there with some very fine arts educators, and the school system as a result of it had decided that it was successful, and they are going to turn it into a community performing arts based school. And it's going to be middle school and senior high just for students of that community.

But the students from Booker T go either to Carver. They go to any of the schools that they can get into. So I'm real excited about that because the School Board granted the money. So they're going to redo the entire school. They're going to make it an arts program, six through twelve,

and it won't be a program whereby students are being prepared to be artists or go to colleges to major in arts. It's just going to be the same kind of academy concept, but it will happen from the sixth grade to the twelfth grade. And the school system has bought into it. The School Board has approved it, and so I'm being recruited to go back. [Laughter]

I feel that this may be the one thing that's going to live on.

Q: What?

Carey: This, the Booker T. program.

Q: Okay.

Carey: Because the school system has gotten behind it. Now the only thing is that I hope, I'm hoping they will move so quickly before the present leadership leaves because they are the ones who have made the commitment.

Q: Present leadership of the school?

Carey: The whole school, the school board and the superintendent and the person who's in charge of curriculum. Because they are the people that make commitments. A lot of time once they leave, all those things are put on the back burner and they do other things with the money.

Q: Right.

Carey: And so I understand that the building is to be completely renovated by 2004, and the program will get off the ground in its entirety.

Q: That's great.

Carey: So, and here I am at Coppin.

Q: Yeah. I'm running out of tape, but I want to know about Coppin. How did you come here?

Carey: I was invited by the president to come to Coppin.

Q: Who is the president?

Carey: His name is Calvin Burnett. Dr. Burnett has been here for thirty years. He retired. He's retiring as of August 31st. But he, my predecessor resigned, and they needed somebody quickly. And because they, well, they knew me because I was working here with the music theater project every summer. And they had known my reputation and so I was invited to come.

But they asked part time. But I was ready to move on.

Q: At that time had they, were they, was it merely because someone was resigning or did they have visions of someone?

Carey: No, they didn't have a vision.

Q: No.

Carey: They. No. They just wanted someone to fill the space and fill the position. And it wasn't until I got here that I said, you know, this is not what's going on in all the rest of the world. It's not even what's going on at other Afro-American [colleges]. But see they also knew that because Morgan is right down the street, and Morgan is kind of the school that everybody looks to. So they knew that what was happening here musically was not what goes on and even in Afro-American institutions.

And so I immediately wrote a letter. I started writing letters saying this is my vision, this is what I'd like to do, this is what I need, these are my goals for this year, these are my goals for the next two years, and this is my goal for the fourth year. And everybody was supportive. And I was able to get some designated, some funds designated. And.

Q: All right. So lay out, lay out what your vision was?

Carey: Well, the first year was to create an organization that would be more in line with the music program, where the choir would be more in line with what is going on in academic institutions. Because at that point the choir was a gospel choir, and they sang in churches on Sunday afternoon. And I have nothing, there is nothing wrong with that, but that is not my idea of what academic institutions should be doing.

And I asked about travel. What? And they said they had been to Disney World. Well. I said, well, you know, I said this to the president. I said, you know, that's all very well and good, but there are very few outstanding academic institutions of higher learning that perform at Disney World. You usually have high schools, and that is not one of the things, high schools and middle schools. That is not one of the things that you want to point to as a pinnacle of success.

Well, then, you know, the eyebrows were raised. But then there were a number of people who understood what I was getting at. So we worked at that. Of course, when I first got here, I lost, the following of that choir was very large.

Q: Who was it made up of?

Carey: It was made of, it was the students, right here.

Q: It was the students.

Carey: But see, we don't have music majors. So it's just anybody who wants to come, whosoever will. And the program wasn't so challenging and so it was packed, and so I started out with a group of about ninety students, and each week it got less and less.

Q: Just because of the change in curriculum?

Carey: Because the change of philosophy and the changes of what we were doing. But what we didn't, what we did find out was that as a result there were a lot of singers on campus that weren't singing with that group because they were used to high school programs and churches, and that were doing other kinds of things.

So as quickly as it went down to nothing, it started to blossom. So that was my first, that was the first group at the top. That was that first year here. And we changed the repertoire, the kinds of repertoire we did. I mean I didn't turn my back on gospel music. And so we did, this was the first group.

And they did very well.

Q: Yeah. What are the students like here. In terms of talent, expectations. I mean, how they.

Carey: The students are wonderful kids. For the most part they are Baltimore City residents. The college mission is to serve that population. We have very, we don't have a lot of alumni out of the city. Coppin is basically a Baltimore City college. So the students reflect a lot of things that are going on in the city. But they are very talented, and they are very, very, the kids I have in the choir are very talented and they are very sincere, and most of them are academically very good. Because a number of the students in the choir are 3.6, 7, 8. I even had a 4.0 student in the choir this year..

And they're very interested. You can get them. They, in the beginning didn't have a lot of vision, because they come from choir programs in high schools that do nothing. Plus the music program in Baltimore City is absolutely the pits. I mean, I will say that to the superintendent of schools and have said it, and I will say it to the supervisors of music and have said it. But it's just pitiful what is going on in Baltimore City, and to see from whence it came is even more abominable.

And I am willing in any way that I can to help, but it's hard. It's just very hard. So a number of the students realize they have the talent. Now, we have a number of students also from the county. The out-of-town population comes from Prince George's County and from New York, and I have a number of those students in the choir. Because you know Prince Georges County has some of the best secondary school choirs in the country.

Barbara Baker's over there. And they still have, they're still producing great choirs in that county. So a number of the kids come from there. And then we have a number of students from New York.

And we get students from Baltimore County who have had choral experience too. So I take back and we build. And like I said it has really blossomed. It has really, really been exciting to watch. And I think this is one of the hardest building experiences that I have had because I'm dealing with young adults.

See, it's easy to mold younger minds and get them to do what you want them to do. But when you have, and another thing about Coppin is that for the most part the median age of the student at Coppin is twenty-five. They don't come straight from high school here. They go into the work world and decide that they want to do something different, or they just hang out and decide later they want to get a college degree.

So that's one of the pluses of this school. There are many pluses about Coppin.

Q: So they're here more because they really want to be.

Carey: They're here more because, and they're very focused. And they don't have a whole lot of time for this. That's the other thing. If you really want to be in this choir, you have to make it because I have. You can't get them. They work during the day. They work at night. They have families. They have husbands. They have all these kind of things. So if you want them you have to make time.

So we rehearsed this, the singers, the touring ensemble rehearses at five o'clock in the morning.

Q: Oh my gosh.

Carey: We rehearsed from five to seven.

Q: No way.

Carey: Yeah, and that's what everybody says, but they're phenomenal. I mean, they're phenomenal because I would have rehearsals any time. But again, you have to make concessions. I mean, I had, I would have breakfast for them. Or I would plan to take them out to breakfast. Or one of the professors would give me money to take them out to breakfast. Because I mean, people who really realized where, what my vision was and really helped to buy into it, they were just really. They've been very helpful.

Because I do, I mean there were many mornings I would just, we would cook breakfast. And we would cook breakfast. I'd have some of my friends, my wife sometimes would come over when she was not busy, and we would just cook. And they would have, and they didn't go to class. So we had morning rehearsals as well as evening rehearsals, as well as Saturday rehearsals and Sunday rehearsals. So it was a lot. It was a lot. But it's been very rewarding because you have really watched, I have watched this choir grow into quite an organization and do some really phenomenal, phenomenal things.

And one of the things that we were talking about I've been able to build a bridge community. It is no secret that the Korean community and Afro-American community in Baltimore were not doing well. Now, I don't know whether that's pretty much par for the course in all urban areas, but here they were just having a rough time. It was just a difficult time for both ethnic groups. And the president had that feeling, and he took the leadership in trying to bridge that gap.

And I don't even think that it was self-serving in that he was trying to get Korean students to come here. It was just that he saw what it was doing to Afro-Americans. I mean because when you are at odds, everybody's in trouble. It doesn't matter who, how it's happening, just everybody's in trouble. And that's the kind of president that Dr. Burnett is. He's very human in the way he thinks, humane.

And so he seized the opportunity to work with the Korean community. And as a result, the choir traveled to Korea two years. We've been to Korea, South Korea, two years. And we did a series of concerts in Korea. That picture right there.

Q: Any Korean members in your?

Carey: No, but we have a Korean professor here. The bottom picture is with that. As a matter of fact, that's in a Korean church. We have a Korean professor who was very instrumental in helping us with the travel. And his wife is a music major from the University of Pennsylvania. She majored in music. And but she's having such difficulty. She was having such difficulty in the language that she could not teach in the public schools. So she's opened a flower shop.

But she's very. She's a good singer. And so when we went to Korea, she came and taught the choir two Korean choral pieces and taught us to sing the language. So we were able to sing the language. We sang "Amazing Grace" in Korean. And she brought us an arrangement written by, "Amazing Grace" arranged by a Korean composer.

So the choir has, so with all of that in mind, we traveled to Korea. And the communities have, even in here, it was so good for the students. Because one of the things that I did. This is, I'm a teacher, educator. And one of the things when we got ready to go to Korea the first time I thought that this was a great opportunity to educate everybody, the whole school.

So the week before we went, we had a series of workshops that the whole school could come to. And we brought in Koreans who talked about their customs, talked about their country, about their religion, just about everything. And then we even had food sampling. We got Koreans to come in and bring examples of their food. We had lessons on how to use the chop sticks. What not to do. Because Koreans have these customs that could be very offensive. Well, number one we understood that the Koreans, if you are offered alcohol and decline it, that's a real no-no.

And I, of course, was saying you will not go to Korea and drink and be alcoholics. Don't go to Korea and get drunk,

Q: Right. But they're all over twenty-one.

Carey: And they were so different when they said, oh, you can't refuse them. [Laughter] So we had to know how to refuse. You have to say, I'm sorry, I have a medical problem or. Well, we didn't run into that so much because we were in the community, in the religious community a lot.

But we did a lot of, we did concertize. The first time we went we did three concerts a day.

Q: How long were you there?

Carey: We were, both times we were there two weeks. And it was every day concertizing, and it was just grueling because we were all over South Korea. So we might sing in Seoul in the morning, and we were in Nam Pen, which is a hundred and fifty miles away, at four o'clock. So, it was a grueling, but it was just very, very rewarding. Very rewarding. And the students learned so much about Korean culture. And the whole, and their whole attitude. We could see attitudinal changes in how they thought and how they talked about.

Q: Did it make them more excited to be in the choir?

Carey: Well, yeah, I guess because travel always is very exciting. And we also, you know, the next year the choir was larger because they knew they were going to travel. And the thing that was wonderful about it that between the college and the Koreans, we paid nothing. It was all expenses paid for two weeks. No food. We had students that went to Korea had no money in their pockets at all.

Q: Oh wow.

Carey: And so it was really a great experience. And as a result, they became great performers I'm very proud of what these kids have. And we "Amahl and the Night Visitors" and we did Beethoven's Ninth with Peabody and that was a nice experience for them. Because most of them had never done anything like that.

Q: When was that?

Carey: That was two years ago. And that was the first time that they had really had an opportunity to sing with an orchestra. Which was another reason why they were so excited about doing Messiah.

Q: Was that the first sort of large scale orchestra thing that you had done here?

Carey: No, well, it was the first oratorio that I had done.

Q: Okay.

Carey: But on all the spring concerts I've done it. All of our spring concerts I've done with orchestra.

Q: Okay. And you have to hire people out.

Carey: Yeah. Or Jimmie Green hires. He does all the hiring, and I just get all the scores and all that kind of thing. But so from the very beginning, that first choir we did some things with orchestra.

But the thing, I mean, as a result things are paying off for me. But things have always paid off. I have no regrets. I think that I would like to have been other places in Baltimore at certain points of my life. But I have actually, people even say I know you're so glad that you're not in Baltimore City public schools, but let me tell you. Nobody ever bothered me. I was always very supported.

I mean, we had money. I mean, I was always given the support, and the kind of willingness that people had to help me. I never had problems. I never had discipline problems. I mean, I've just been very blessed. I don't know what that is, but I think that in all my years of teaching, I was in Baltimore City public schools for thirty-one years, and I think I've had one, I can point to two times when I just could have lost it because of some snippy kid.

But just, so Baltimore City public schools have been just, were just fantastic to me. And Baltimore has been very supportive. I mean, you just, I mean I've worked in the churches here, and people are just willing to, willing to work. They're just willing. And I just, you know. And as I said, in all the communities everybody has just been great.

Because I have, I've been getting letters of statements recently from people, and people are just willing. The other day someone called me, and said I understand you need a letter of recommendation. I'll write a letter for you. So it's just, it's just that it's been a great.

I've been working since '63, '67.

Q: Are you excited about retirement? You going to keep 'til. You go, go, go.

Carey: No. I haven't even thought about retirement. I am excited about retirement because I do like, I love leisure time.

Q: Do you have kids and grandkids?

Carey: Yeah, I have. I have three kids and eight grandchildren. My daughter is getting ready to start med school. She graduated from Fisk. And she's going, she was just accepted at University of Maryland Medical School. So she's gonna. She wants to be an OB-GYN.

Q: Cool.

Carey: My son graduated from Delaware State University College, Delaware State College, and was a business marketing major. And I don't, for the life of me I don't understand, but there are no entry level jobs in marketing. I felt sorry for him because he got depressed. I mean, he was a whole year doing little menial jobs because he could not find, and he did not want to, he didn't want to go into. He didn't want to do what you have to do to work up to the marketing job. He just wanted to do it. And, you know, and I just felt horrible for him. So he finally started substituting.

Q: Teaching?

Carey: Yes. He went back to Delaware and got a job substituting. And became, was remarkable at it. Just loved it.

Q: Genes. It's all in the genes.

Carey: Loved it. And so he's now working on his master's degree, his master's in education. And so his principal called me one day. I was sitting at my desk and she called me. I had to cry and shed a few tears. Cause she said, you know, I'm calling you because I want, very seldom do you get tributes as parents, do we get tributes as parents. I mean, she said, I was telling your son that we were very impressed with his lessons, and how in the world did he learn to teach like that if he was a business major? And he said, I watched my dad teach for years. And I said, oh I'm gonna cry.

END OF INTERVIEW