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**An Oral History of Esther McCready
Conducted by David Terry**

Title: An Oral History of Esther McCready
Interviewer: David Terry
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Abstract: Esther McCready (1931-2020) was a Baltimore native and the first African American to gain admittance to the University of Maryland School of Nursing. In 1949 at the age of 18, McCready applied to attend the school but was denied based on her race. Following her rejection, she fought with a team of lawyers, including Thurgood Marshall, and gained admission in 1950. McCready graduated in 1953, and upon passing the State Nursing Boards, embarked on a career that included nursing, teaching, and public speaking. In this oral history interview, McCready describes the difficulties of her application process and legal battle, as well as her time as a student. McCready also touches on her lengthy career in nursing that followed, as well as her other careers in music and teaching.

Note on Oral History: Oral history is a methodology of gathering, preserving, and sharing the voices and memories of individuals and communities. As primary material, it documents personal reflections, commentary, and recollections, and is not intended to present a verified or “complete” history of events.

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An Oral History of Esther McCready
DATE

Mrs. Esther McCready was interviewed on DATE, by David Terry over the telephone.

Terry [00:00:23] Good evening, Mrs. McCready?

McCready [00:00:24] Yes.

Terry [00:00:25] Yes, this is David Terry.

McCready [00:00:26] Oh, yes. How are you?

Terry [00:00:27] I'm pretty good. Is now still a good time for us to have a talk?

McCready [00:00:30] Yeah, we could.

Terry [00:00:31] Ok. I'll probably—I'll keep it as short as I can, I promise.

McCready [00:00:34] All right.

Terry [00:00:35] All right, wonderful. Okay, I just need—

McCready [00:00:35] (unintelligible)

Terry [00:00:35] Alright.

McCready [00:00:41] Okay.

Terry [00:00:43] Okay. As I said last week, I'm doing some research on the desegregation experience in Baltimore City, and I'm concentrating on the period before the Brown decision was handed down. So I'm looking at different avenues and different areas of life, education certainly being one of them. So I wanted to speak to you, not just about your experiences of getting into the University of Maryland School of Nursing, but as much about your background, the neighborhood you came out of, and who were the people who made you the person that you were before you entered into the school. So, I should mention that I am recording our conversation.

McCready [00:01:21] Okay.

Terry [00:01:21] What I will do is at the conclusion I'll get your address and I'll mail out the release form. In order for me to use this in our research I have to have permission from the people to say, you have to know that I was recording you and everything like that. Okay.

McCready [00:01:41] A young lady from College Park gave her presentation (unintelligible) on my case.

Terry [00:01:42] Is that right?

McCready [00:01:42] I guess it was last year or the year before last. I went out there, you know, for her presentation, and it's very strict. You know, they make me nervous when (unintelligible)

comes in. I said, "You know, I might be of help to you, if you get nervous, call on me, and I said because I can talk freely." (both laugh) So they thought that I was a (unintelligible), you know? And I sat on the side and there were some other people before her who presented and when she presented she was playing a tape of us. She had taken me to lunch and she had done this tape. But then the tape was getting monotonous. So I was trying to give her a hard time to turn it off, and she caught it, you know, and she turned it off, and then she just probably got a little flustered as to where to go from there. So then she turned and she said to them, "Well, Miss McCready is here, would you like to—" They were shocked (both laugh). And she said, "Can she speak?" And they said of course.

Terry [00:02:48] (laughs)

McCready [00:02:48] So I told her afterwards, I said, "See, I told you. I might be of more help to you than you think."

Terry [00:02:53] What was her name—what's her name?

McCready [00:02:56] Huh?

Terry [00:02:56] What's the young lady's name?

McCready [00:02:59] Her name is Joy—I don't know, I have it written down.

Terry [00:03:05] Okay, I'd love to read her dissertation. Okay.

McCready [00:03:09] But the Dean knows who she is because she had contacted him to contact me. Yeah, so she did a big thing, you know, because she started out as—she was taking a course in women's studies and she said she was looking and she said my name kept coming up.

Terry [00:03:28] Mhm.

McCready [00:03:28] And she said then she decided to do it. And then her adviser said, "Well, this is—why don't you carry this further and do your dissertation?" And so she had a grant for all this stuff. And that's what she did. She came about, you know, really going in and getting all this material from every place.

Terry [00:03:51] Well, frankly, this is a conversation that I wanted to have for some time. I first learned about your case when I was looking at desegregation of higher education in Maryland. Specifically, I was—I graduated from College Park, and I did a master's degree at Morgan State University.

McCready [00:04:08] Oh!

Terry [00:04:08] And while I was there, I was helping them to try to—they were pulling together a more recent adaptation and more scholarly adaptations to this school's history. So, in the process of finding out how Morgan became a state school, I got introduced with the Murray case, and I followed the Murray case through all the other processes and it led me to individuals who were not only the first to be in the graduate school but even a gentleman who was, uh—

McCready [00:04:33] Parren Mitchell?

Terry [00:04:33] Actually, Hiram Whittle—the first undergraduate at College Park. And I got a chance to speak with him.

McCready [00:04:41] Do you know who Hiram was?

Terry [00:04:41] Uh, Parren was a graduate student.

McCready [00:04:43] Yeah, but Hiram didn't go to College Park.

Terry [00:04:47] Yes he did, actually. He was down there for, I think he said a year and a half.

McCready [00:04:49] He was in the Pharmacy School, I thought.

Terry [00:04:54] No, ma'am, I think you—Oh, I know the gentleman you're speaking of. But Hiram Whittle was—

McCready [00:05:01] Hiram Whittle? I know Hiram Whittle.

Terry [00:05:01] Okay. Oh, no! I didn't mean to insinuate that—

McCready [00:05:04] No, no, no, I mean—I know Hiram Whittle, but I thought he was in the School of Pharmacy down there.

Terry [00:05:11] He entered—

McCready [00:05:12] I was under the impression—The reason I'm saying this is because did you see actual information that he was out at College Park?

Terry [00:05:21] Yes, ma'am. I came across his name from a front-page story in *the Afro* before I actually spoke to him.

McCready [00:05:27] Because I was under the impression that when they did the—Donald Murray had integrated the School of Law, you know.

Terry [00:05:43] Yes ma'am.

McCready [00:05:45] But African-Americans could only attend the law school in the evening.

Terry [00:05:51] Mhm.

McCready [00:05:52] And then when my case came about, they had a case for—they had students who were applying for the School of Medicine, the School of Pharmacy, and the School of Dentistry. And that's where I thought Hiram was, for the School of Pharmacy.

Terry [00:06:11] I have a list somewhere. It would be too cumbersome for me to search it out right now.

McCready [00:06:15] No, no, no. No, but it would be interesting. I would love to read that.

Terry [00:06:19] Okay.

McCready [00:06:19] I could even ask (unintelligible).

Terry [00:06:23] Oh certainly, no problem at all.

McCready [00:06:23] Because I had—I know that college Park was still segregated at that time, and it would be interesting to find out exactly what year that was.

Terry [00:06:42] This was—

McCready [00:06:42] (speaking at the same time; unintelligible).

Terry [00:06:42] It may—It was, I want to say 1951. But the trick was, Curley Byrd was still following his policy of only letting one in at a time. So, just because one went in, didn't mean the next could follow. They would have to go through the whole litigation process again—

McCready [00:06:59] Well, you see, that's why I'm saying that when my case came along, they dropped all the others—the pharmacy, the dental, and the medical. They dropped those, they didn't have to offer those (unintelligible). The two medical students came the very next year in '51—

Terry [00:07:22] Is that right?

McCready [00:07:22] —plus three additional nursing students. But they managed to get them out of there, I mean, promptly. The medical students graduated, but the nursing students—because the dean was just horrific. But they managed to find some kind of way to get them out gradually, one by one. And so then no one else came in until I was ready to graduate, and then a young lady came in there at the end.

Terry [00:07:51] Well, I haven't spoken to Mr. Whittle since—I think it was '97 when I interviewed him, but he's right there in Baltimore, and I certainly can give you his—

McCready [00:07:58] He was in my high school.

Terry [00:07:58] Is that right? I can give you his phone number if you'd like.

McCready [00:07:58] (speaking at the same time) Yes, that's why I know who he is.

Terry [00:07:58] Mhm.

McCready [00:08:02] But we had never talked, you know. That's why I was, you know, not aware of that. Because we never actually talked.

Terry [00:08:11] Mhm. He went down—if I recall, and then I promise I'll move ahead here—He went down and, I think—if I recall the interview—he didn't get space in the dorms his first semester because he was so late in coming in, but—so he lived with a Black family near campus. But he says the next semester, they found space for him, and, you know, he was living on campus with everybody else, and he didn't experience in terms of, you know, segregated facilities and, you know, whatever everyone else was allowed to do, he was allowed to do. But again, you know,

there weren't any others coming to College Park until after '54, when the bar was finally dropped in the undergraduate programs. Okay, well, that's enough of that (laughs).

McCready [00:08:53] That's interesting, I'm glad I found that out.

Terry [00:08:57] Yes. As an alumna of the University of Maryland, all those things are just amazing to me because by the time I got there in the mid-to-late 1980s, you know, all of this—it was certainly remnants of things, but, you know, it certainly wasn't what it was from, you know.

McCready [00:09:14] No, you couldn't imagine.

Terry [00:09:14] No ma'am. All right, well, why don't we start by having you give me a little background information: who your parents were, what neighborhoods you grew up in, and if your parents weren't from Baltimore, when did they arrive in the city? Things of that nature.

McCready [00:09:27] Now, I really don't know exactly, but my mother was from Darlington—born in Darlington, South Carolina, but raised in Philadelphia. And my father was born on the Eastern Shore, I think in Crisfield, Maryland. And I don't know when they came to Baltimore, but I know I grew up on the east side of Baltimore on Dallas street. In fact, I always tell them over at Johns Hopkins, now, that where part of their garage is, is where my house used to be. And it was, like, right around the corner from Dunbar, so I went to Dunbar Elementary and Dunbar junior and senior high.

Terry [00:10:19] (unintelligible).

McCready [00:10:19] And I grew up on a small block with a very—it was just a warm neighborhood, everybody looked after each other. That one block was so different from all the other streets around us, we felt. Because, since it was a small block, everybody just—we just felt so close to each other. And it was—we were talking about it the other night, it was just, (background noise; technological issues) wonderful growing up. We were poor, and we were saying, we didn't know we were poor. We weren't comparing it with anyone else because we were just such a close-knit group of people, and everybody around us seemed to be in the same situation. So we—And we always had everything we needed. So we did not consider ourselves poor but were poor (laughs). We got up and saw the fact we were poor. But, as I said, because of all the love and the warmth, we grew up very comfortable and—and that's—went to church in the neighborhood. That was (unintelligible). We went to Memorial Baptist Church. And it was located on Bond and Jefferson Street, at that time, and then it got moved to Preston and Caroline street.

Terry [00:11:52] Mhm.

McCready [00:11:52] But, uh—

Terry [00:11:52] What were your parents' names?

McCready [00:11:52] Excuse me?

Terry [00:11:52] Your parents' names. What were their names?

McCready [00:11:58] John McCready and Elizabeth.

Terry [00:12:02] (whispers) McCready.

McCready [00:12:05] I had two brothers: Edward and _____ (??). Edward was an excellent musician: piano, organ—and I remember, as a little girl, he would have people come to the house to, you know, go over his music. And whenever—The young people of the church had a program on certain Sundays—in fact, every Sunday, different people had charge of the program. And I can remember when my brother would have the program it would be so packed, because they knew various high school and college kids would be coming and, you know, good musicians, and that they would have a good program. So, um, my other brother was (unintelligible) and one sister. My two brothers have passed, my mother and father have passed, and I have one sister who is living, and nieces, nephews, grand-nieces.

Terry [00:13:18] Mhm. What did your parents do for a living?

McCready [00:13:21] My mother was a homemaker and housekeeper for a priest.

Terry [00:13:26] Mhm.

McCready [00:13:26] And my father was a laborer.

Terry [00:13:28] Mhm.

McCready [00:13:28] And, um—

Terry [00:13:28] Was the neighborhood on Dallas Street predominately a working-class neighborhood?

McCready [00:13:39] Yes.

Terry [00:13:39] Was it all Black or was it interracial?

McCready [00:13:42] (unintelligible) all Black.

Terry [00:13:43] Okay. Alright.

McCready [00:13:46] Oddly enough, I mean, there were a few white people who lived in the community. You know, maybe one or two families. They probably were unable to—they could not move, maybe they didn't have the funds to move. They just stayed there the whole time. They were elderly people, you know, without children. There was one, I remember in the area of the community and they had this one daughter who was—who grew up sort of like with me, and it was amazing. While she was younger, they would let her come around to my house, you know, all the time and we would end up, you know, going shopping together down Gay Street. I don't know if you know the east side of Baltimore, where Gay street is. But all the shopping areas—that was the shopping area. And we would go down there, and I can remember she was blonde with long hair, and people would look at us as we were just going along, not even realizing anything. But as she got older I noticed that she stopped coming around, and I didn't bother to go looking for her either.

Terry [00:15:01] How did you come to understand—you know, looking back from this point in your life—how do you think you came to understand the sort of mores and the conventions of living in a

Jim Crow society? In other words, did your mom sit you down now and have adults talk about Jim Crow or something you simply absorbed?

McCready [00:15:20] No, I think it was just absorbed because, you know, Baltimore was a prejudiced town; prejudiced in that the buses weren't segregated—we didn't sit at the back of the bus in Baltimore. There were no Black, of course, bus drivers. In fact, there were no Black people who were clerks in the stores (unintelligible), but it was just something that you accepted because everything was—There were no white people, as I said, there were no children growing up in the neighborhood, so there were no white children who were attending school nearby (unintelligible). But that's why we had—You couldn't compare anything because there was nothing to compare. Everybody was sort of in that area, and we did the same things, same schools, same churches, (unintelligible). But it was just a working-class area. And we just knew that there were certain places—like downtown, you could not go into department stores and try on clothes. We knew that, they let us know that you couldn't try—if you went in there, they would say, "You can't try it on. You can buy it, but you can't try it on nor can you bring it back." So that was stated to you if you went in the store, and it was up to you whether or not to buy something (unintelligible) where you couldn't try it on or bring it back.

Terry [00:16:59] Was that something that you had personal experience with or something that other people—In other words did you—?

McCready [00:17:03] I had personal experience.

Terry [00:17:06] Ok. Alright. Is this something, like say, for example, you would go to Hutzler's or wherever you might go with your mom would—How did—I guess I'm trying to—

McCready [00:17:14] (unintelligible)

Terry [00:17:14] Or the sister.

McCready [00:17:19] (unintelligible) And if you—like, when my sister was going to buy something and say it needed to be fixed and tried on, at first we didn't know it when we went into the store. We didn't know that you couldn't try it on. But then they (unintelligible) then you know immediately. And this was the policy of the stores.

Terry [00:17:38] Alright. Now, you said you went to Dunbar Elementary, junior high, and senior. Do you remember the numbers for Dunbar Elementary?

McCready [00:17:52] Uh, 101.

Terry [00:17:52] 101, alright.

McCready [00:17:56] (unintelligible) 133.

Terry [00:17:56] 133. As a student going through elementary, and junior, senior high school, did you ever have a sense that there was something you were missing on if you were missing anything? In other words, was it the segregated experience where you just knew that there was something on the other side of the hill that you weren't getting, or did you have a positive experience?

McCready [00:18:19] A positive experience from elementary straight through high school, because we had very dedicated teachers. We had teachers who were—seemed like they wanted us to get ahead.

Terry [00:18:30] Okay.

McCready [00:18:31] And that was from, as I said, elementary straight—hardworking teachers, as far as I can remember, who really made sure you got a good education. And I marveled at the time—See, my whole thing is that I felt the *Brown vs. Board of Ed.*, that—I felt that desegregation of the elementary school—from elementary through high school—was the worst thing that ever could have happened. Because we got that—We had excellent teachers who were dedicated and there was nobody—I can never remember any teacher goofing off, you know, not doing her work or his work. They were on the ball all the time, you know: homework, checking it, checking this out. We had people who, for instance, who were interested in oratory, like I was. We had an oratory society, and you did all this recitation (unintelligible) get programming like, you know, debating club. And those who were interested in theater, you know, had the Drama Club. I was interested in music so I belonged to Glee Club, as we called it. So, it was just an event for Black History Week—or Negro History Week—we always had (unintelligible). I can remember when I was sort of like in the ninth grade (unintelligible). So, we always had, you know, very interesting people and—Now, I remember that we did occasionally have interactions with—when I was in high school—interactions with white schools when we did—like the debating society when we went and had a debate on something. On occasion, that happened, and then occasionally, on certain days, we would have (unintelligible), like—I can't even remember what was the occasion—but we would have Protestants, Christians, and Jews, you know, come to the school to speak. But I can remember that happening, you know, almost, like, every year. Certain times it would be a priest, a rabbi, (unintelligible), somebody else. So I never felt that—I never even thought about what was going on in white schools, just because, you know, we just didn't have any association with them. And then I remember we liked to go rollerskating, but the rink was not open at one point for us. And then they decided to start having it on certain days for the Black kids to come. And, of course, the ice rink never was desegregated.

Terry [00:21:55] Do you remember the name of this skating rink? The rollerskating rink?

McCready [00:21:55] No, I don't

Terry [00:21:57] Okay. Alright, fair enough. Now, how does it come about that you decide to make an application for admission to the nursing program at University of Maryland?

McCready [00:22:06] Well, it was, you know—Let me put it this way: I will always believe that I was chosen for that. When I say chosen, I mean by God.

Terry [00:22:17] Okay.

McCready [00:22:17] Because as a little girl, I was always a loner. I could be alone and it didn't bother me. I could play alone, with dolls. And every year I would—When I guess I got to be about eight years old, I knew I wanted to be a nurse, because at Johns Hopkins if you were born at the hospital or delivered by one of their doctors at home, which that's what happened to me, they followed you until you were about 16 years old in their pediatric (unintelligible) every year, getting physicals, getting all your shots up to date. So it was this yearly visit to the hospital, and I would see the nurses and the doctors, you know. So early on, I decided I wanted to be a nurse.

Somewhere along the way, like, maybe ninth grade, I became fascinated with the typewriter, and I decided that I'll get out of the academic area of study and go into commercial because I wanted to be a medical stenographer. It only took me a year and a half, I think, in commercial, to realize this really wasn't what I wanted. And I had to then go to summer school for two years to pick up the academic portions that I had missed and, you know, to be fully back into the academic programs at the school. And I—it might have been after a career day—I do remember in the classroom talking to other students who—I think there were several of us who wanted to be nurses. And one of them had already applied to Providence because that was the only hospital where Black students could go.

Terry [00:24:05] M'kay.

McCready [00:24:05] And I said to them, "You know, it's a shame that we can't go to any school we want to go to." And they said, "I know," and I said to one girl, "Why don't we write to some of the schools?" But she said, "Well, we know what they're going to say." And I said, "Yeah we know what they're gonna say, but let's write anyway, to see." And she said, "Well, what will we say?" I said, "Well, I'll write down what I'm going to say, and you can base yours on that. But the one thing we must remember to say is that we are Negroes, so they will know that we're not trying to pull anything off." And she said, "Well which schools will we write to?" And I said, "Let's get the phone directory." And we found hospitals, and I said, "Now, you take half." So she took the first half and wrote down the names and addresses, and I took the second half, and the University of Maryland was in my group. So we sent off, you know, to the schools, and then we started comparing them and laughing at their responses because they—some would flatly say, "We don't accept Negroes." Others would say, "We don't accept Negroes, but I can refer you to a small (unintelligible)." And then one day I got this application from—and the catalog, from the University of Maryland. I said to her, "I have a catalog and application (unintelligible) university. Why don't you write to them?" But she said, "No, I'll wait and see what happens to you." So I had to take my application form to—for the medical part—to a family doctor and to my family dentist. Going to the family doctor, he was shocked. He said, "Well have you called the NAACP?" And I said, "What for?" He said, "Well, you know, you're not going to get in there without their help." Well, now, that was just hard to be—I didn't even realize what he was talking about. And so I just didn't, you know, didn't respond to it. And I guess he said, you know, "She is not going to do anything about this." To this day, I don't know whether he—I'm almost sure he alerted them. But anyhow, I went to the dentist, who was a younger man. My doctor was Raynor Brown, and Maurice Walker was my dentist—

Terry [00:26:42] Spell Dr. Brown's first name for me?

McCready [00:26:46] R-A-Y-N-O-R.

Terry [00:26:49] Alright.

McCready [00:26:49] And I went to the dentist, who was like a block away, for him to fill out his form. And I said to him, "You know what he asked me? Did I contact the NAACP." And he said, "Oh, you don't have to do that now." He was young too, you know. "Oh, you don't have to do that, you can do it yourself." I said, "Yeah, that's what I'm thinking." So anyhow, he filled out his part, gave it to me, you know, and I, you know, got them—I think, I had to mail them all together. But anyhow, that's what happened.

Terry [00:27:21] Not to interrupt you, were these certificates of your health or just vouchers that your—?

McCready [00:27:24] Of health.

Terry [00:27:24] Okay, alright.

McCready [00:27:24] (unintelligible)

Terry [00:27:26] Got you. Okay, sorry.

McCready [00:27:34] And then I sent these off. In fact, really, at the time, you were using straight pens with the little bottle of ink—

Terry [00:27:42] Mhm.

McCready [00:27:42] —(laughs) and I was filling out my application, had the bottle of ink on the stand, you know, writing, and I accidentally spilled the ink on the application. Oh my gosh, I thought I was gonna yell. My mother and father came running down the steps to see what was wrong. But my mother saw what had happened, and said, "Don't cry, don't cry, just write for another one." But when I did write, I just said that, you know, "I had an accident. Could you send me another application?" I didn't say who I was or that I was Negro (laughs; unintelligible) at all.

McCready [00:28:21] So I did send it within a couple of days—sent the application—and I completed it with the ink far away from me this time. And then, next thing I know I was hearing from—I don't know how slow afterward that I heard from the NAACP just asking me to come in to talk with their lawyer. They heard that I had applied to the University of Maryland. And so I went in to talk to Donald Murray and, you know, told him—he, you know, asked me, "How did this come about?" and I told him. And then they wanted me to talk to their chief counsel from Washington. He came another time, you know, and they wanted me to come talk with him. That was Charles Hamilton Houston. He really thoroughly interviewed me so (unintelligible) had like a cross-examination. He wanted to know who put me up to this. And I said, "No one put me up to it, what do you mean?" He said, "Who told you to do all of this?" I said, "Nobody told me to do this." I mean, he really, really put me through it, and he saw that I could stand up to it, he said, "You know, you're very brave." And he said, "Well, since you did this all on your own we'll let you continue to be on your own—writing to them whenever you have to. It was only this time you send everything certified that a return receipt is requested." And he said, "This way they can't say they didn't hear from you."

McCready [00:30:05] So then they let me go on and so when—I had wanted to go into the summer class of '49—August '49. And I don't remember exactly when I wrote to them, you know, but it was then time for them to have gotten into that class. But at the time here I kept, I wrote to them and said, "You know, I haven't heard anything, whether or not I've been accepted, and please let me know. There's things that have to be prepared before, you know, coming into school." And they would, you know, graciously answer it, saying that, "Your credentials are being reviewed." And I would always send return receipts like the lawyer said, and that would let them know, you know, that I had written, and, you know, what it was about, and what response I had to see. So this went on, I think several letters that I wrote, and several times they responded with the same thing, "Your credentials are being reviewed," until it got to be, you know, the time of August '49. And when they saw that the date passed, then Charlie Houston said, "Okay, they had no intention of admitting you, so we'll now take them to court." And so we went into the lower court of Maryland and, of course, the judge was solely for them.

McCready [00:31:45] They had, you know, Charlie Houston—let me see now. They had sent one of their chief medical doctors down to Meharry. The Board of Regents felt that I could get a good education down there, (unintelligible) paid, and wanted to send me there, and they had sent their chief medical doctor down there. And he came back saying what a "marvelous" school it was, so I could get this "excellent education." So when Charlie Houston had him on the stand he said, "Are saying that Meharry is superior to the University of Maryland?" And of course, you know, he's backing back (laughs). You know, I just think he said, "Well, you know, you're saying that she can go down to Tennessee and anything that she could do in Maryland, she supposed to be able to do in Tennessee because she's really a little piece of Maryland down in Tennessee now." But he didn't know how to back out of that. Then when he put the dean on the stand he asked her, "Have there ever been any Negro students who have written to the university (unintelligible)." He said, "Is this a policy that one has to state his race when they write to the school?" And she says, "Oh, no." He said, "Then you wouldn't know whether they had written before or not."

Terry [00:33:19] (laughs)

McCready [00:33:19] She'd never—She got so—that bothered her so, that every time she would see me, once I got into the school, she would say, "Oh, that lawyer was so smart, did you see how he questioned me?"

[00:33:28] (both laugh)

McCready [00:33:28] She would come up to me and say something like that. But anyhow, we lost and Charlie Houston had a heart attack and (unintelligible). And I remember going to see him and he said the strangest thing, he said, "Well, you are the last of the Mohicans." I said, "Oh, no you're going to get out of here." They let me come in to see him, although he wasn't supposed to have any visitors, and I said, "Oh, you're going to get out of here," I said, "and you'll be, you know, arguing other cases." He said, "No, you're the last of the Mohicans." And, um—So, anyhow, when the time came—he appealed—When time came for the appeal, of course, he was still in the hospital and they called Thurgood down from New York. And we all went to Annapolis, and it was—I was just—You know, I just couldn't get over how those people worked, you know, looking at Charlie Houston at the court, you know. And then with Thurgood and Donald Murray, because Donald Murray was assisting Charlie Houston too, and then he—when we got to the Court of Appeals, that was so interesting how they did it. The judges called on our side to start and Donald Murray got up and spoke for about 15 minutes. Each side has about an hour. And so I remember when he presented, he sat down and the judges said, "You know, you have more time." And Thurgood said "Yes." And then Maryland's lawyer got up and he talked, and they pressured, and he talked, and they pressured, and pressured, and pressured—and then his hour was up. Then Thurgood got up (laughs) and finished up, and, you know, just said everything about, you know, why, you know, this is wrong that we'd be denied, you know, admission to here and whatnot. But anyhow, you could almost see, you know, one judge was really not for us, but the others you could feel that they were in accord that this was wrong.

McCready [00:35:41] So anyhow, in April of '50, the decision was handed down that the University had to admit me. And when—I remember the first day my mother was so afraid for me to go. She wanted to know if I wanted to go with her—if I wanted her to go with me, and I told her "No." And Donald Murray came, he said, "You want me to go with you?" (laughs) I said, "I can go by myself, I'll be fine." So anyhow, I went on not knowing what awaited me, and, of course, when I got there, I

found out. I mean, you could cut (laughs) the tension with a knife. I remember stopping—it was like a gift shop at the beginning of the hospital at that time, and—Can you hold on minute?

Terry [00:36:34] Certainly.

McCready [00:37:22] Okay, I'm sorry.

Terry [00:37:23] No problem.

McCready [00:37:23] Um—

Terry [00:37:23] You were telling me about the first day of school and the gift shop in the hospital.

McCready [00:37:27] Oh, when I got to the gift shop, I, you know, asked directions to the School of Nursing, and they pointed the way—And I mean, everybody was waiting, you know, you could see everybody was waiting for this person to arrive. So I went to the School of Nursing and I walked into the classroom, and I guess there were about maybe sixty students and no one spoke. I went straight to the nurse in charge, and, you know, gave what—I think we might have had to bring something with us, I'm not sure. Anyhow, she just said, "Alright have a seat," and nobody said anything. Nobody, I mean like, their backs were almost like, turned, you know? (unintelligible) Nobody said hi, nothing. And so we had orientation, so we were going—Nobody came up, nobody saying "Oh, hello," you know. And at one point—must have been some break—I was standing by the elevator. It might have been like after lunch—and I sat alone for everything and even in the cafeteria. But I must say the African-American people who were there working, oh, they were so proud. They were beaming, you know. And they'd call, you know, "Hi, how are you?" And I'm a very outgoing person, so, you know, I was glad to be saying something, you know. But I was standing by this elevator waiting to go, I guess, on to another area where we were supposed to be after lunch, I would imagine, and this nurse came up to me and said, "If you don't pray to God, you won't get out of here because nobody here is for you." And I said, "If God intends for me to get out of here, nobody can stop me." And she just turned on her heels and went away, you know.

Terry [00:39:33] (laughs)

McCready [00:39:33] But she was one who was kind the whole time I was there. She never taught me anything. In fact, I didn't even know what she did, but she didn't teach me anything. And there were times when—Oh, there was one doctor in one of the lectures would lecture to the side of the room where I wasn't sitting. You know, he would watch to see where I would sit and then he would turn his whole body to lecture to the other side of the room. And I pointed it out to one student I felt I could halfway trust, and she said, "Oh, you're getting paranoid," and I said, "No, I'm not." So she watched that—she couldn't believe it.

McCready [00:40:19] And they kept me out of the residence, pretending they didn't have any room. And of course, I've recently found out when I talk to students who—talk to adults, now, who I worked with at the museum sometimes and they say, "What do you mean when—I think, that we were listening to your tape and you said that there was no room?" She said, "They said there was plenty of room." I said, "I know that." But, you know, we were on a probationary period from September, I think until February. And you had all these sciences that you had to pass. And after that, you were capped. And it was after I was capped that they had me come into the residence. Now to justify the state made all of the Baltimore students which were—I guess, maybe three other Baltimore students—stay at home and gave us a stipend for traveling. But once the weather

started changing, those kids loved it because they loved the money, they told me. But as the weather started changing and their parents started complaining, and see they were gradually brought in, but I didn't know they were in. And as I said, I never got in there until I was capped. I mean, this dean was really something. So, you know, there were still—by the time I left, there were still people in the class that never spoke. But the majority of them, you know, started coming around and gradually talking and whatnot. Sometimes you'd be on the floor working with them, but if two of us were ever put on the floor together, the white one would always be put in charge. Always. So it was really a strange situation. And some people—some of the instructors tried to give me a hard time, but I just knew I could do my work and I just managed, you know, to get through it all.

Terry [00:42:38] At what point did you begin to undo some of the naivete that you had earlier about just applying to a school? When did you start to feel like, you know, you were doing something, you know, unique, in other words, or—?

McCready [00:42:53] You know what, I guess maybe I could never really (unintelligible)

Terry [00:42:55] Okay. (laughs)

McCready [00:42:57] You know, I saw all the write-ups. In fact, if my mother hadn't saved some things that people—hadn't saved some things cause I would read it and just put it aside, just—you know, it was just nothing that I considered, you know, that I was doing anything different from anybody; I did not consider that. I just didn't realize, (unintelligible) even though the lawyers were telling me, you know, how brave I was and whatnot. I just didn't see it like that. I saw it almost as a mission. And I don't even know if I saw it as a mission early on, but later on. And even psychologists would say to me, you must have some great inner strength to be able to withstand all of that you do. But it was something—It was like, when—I don't know. My mother was such a wonderful person that if I was upset about anything, all I had to do was to hear my mother's voice and anything that was wrong just went away. She was that kind of a person.

McCready [00:44:14] So whenever I felt—because there was one time when I was so thoroughly disgusted: I remember going to an army recruitment place downtown, and so—I think I had one more year—and I remember there was this white woman in this recruitment office. And so she said to me, you know, "If I were you, I would complete that nursing because, you know, you come in with a different rank when you're a registered nurse. So if you're interested in the service I'd, you know, complete that instead of coming out at this point." So there were moments when, you know, as I said, that were very trying. And there was one nurse, it seemed like her mission was to see if she could get me out. And she was one who was instrumental in getting some of the others kicked out. But she tried with me, she wrote this letter to the dean and I never saw that letter. The only thing I know, the dean was saying that she had received this horrible letter. Well, the thing is somebody had put an additional assignment up and didn't let me know about it and I had already copied my assignment down. So I didn't give these 12 new medications because you were in and out, (unintelligible; background noise).

[00:45:50] *pause in recording*

McCready [00:45:50] (unintelligible) on my floor came and had me come in for a conference with her, and she was telling me how I had done such a terrible thing and I had not given these 12 new medications and here are these patients who were taking this medicine, had a certain level of medication in the blood, and how, you know, now this level had dropped. And I looked at her and I

said, "Now when they go to X-ray and various tests and the doctor stops the medication, what happens to the blood level? Does it say, we're going to stay high because they've gone for a test or does it drop then?"

[00:46:28] (laughs)

McCready [00:46:28] Ah, that made her so angry. That made her so angry that I guess this is why she wrote this letter to the dean. I don't know what she said on it, but somewhere along the way, you know, when you keep your ears open and especially those people who work there, the Black people, were always letting me know what they were hearing. And I would say to them, "Don't get into any arguments with any of them because they're not talking to you at the time. If you're listening, you know, fine, and that is, you know, fine, but don't get yourself in any trouble by responding to what they're saying." Like, one is that, "I'm not going to ever call her 'Miss.'" And she was from one of the deep southern places, you know, because don't forget, University of Maryland attracted many, many students from the South: Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, North Carolina, West Virginia. Most of them came from those areas.

Terry [00:47:26] Okay.

McCready [00:47:27] Very few were from, like—I think a couple in my class might have been from Pennsylvania, but most of them were from the Deep South. And it seemed that way throughout the School of Nursing. But anyway, they heard all kinds of—people would come and tell me they heard all kinds of things. And it proved to be true what they heard. But somewhere along the way, I heard that the dean did not like this particular nurse who had written to him.

Terry [00:47:57] Okay.

McCready [00:47:57] And I had heard it long ago from somebody. And when I went for my interview with the dean, who was thoroughly disgusted, he didn't want to hear anything I had to say to justify what had happened. And something just came into mind to say that I didn't know why this nurse had come to talk to me because she wasn't the supervisor on the floor. And that hit something in the woman. She looked at me, she said, "She wasn't the supervisor on the floor?" I said, "No, she wasn't." I said, "The supervisor who was assigned to the floor never said anything to me at all." "That'll be all," she said. I never heard any more from that nurse again. She never bothered me with anything again. She was the one who, everytime—When I was going to be supervised for medicine—the pouring of medicine—she came to do it and wouldn't be the supervisor on the floor. She took it upon herself to be the one, and I would always seem to be able to get her in some way. Like every medicine that I was pulling out—and other students told me that this never happened to them. (unintelligible) what effect did it have on the patient who was going to receive it? And I was really fighting to remember pharmacologically what this medicine was used for, you know.

Terry [00:49:21] Mhm. (speaking at the same time)

McCready [00:49:22] (unintelligible; speaking at the same time) because of such and such a thing. And—pharmacologically, yes. And, um, then the phone rang—at this particular day, the phone rang. And I'm getting ready to pull down a medicine that I knew nothing about. And she went to answer the phone and I feel, when she comes back I will beat her to the draw on this.

Terry [00:49:43] (laughs)

McCready [00:49:43] And when she came back I said, "Now, I do not know this medicine at all, can you tell me what it's for?" "Ah, um, we'll both look it up."

Terry [00:49:53] (laughs)

McCready [00:49:53] So then after that, she never bothered me again on medication. But she was always trying to find something to do, to be involved in with me, you know. So, anyhow, but throughout the time, you know, I had to be challenging people about grades sometimes, you know, and (unintelligible; background noise) reports on something. If I thought that I should have gotten a higher grade, I would challenge them and say, "You know, why didn't I get this?" And they could not justify based on some—some of them just could not give me what I knew I deserved. And it was odd because there was a student in one of the other schools, a white guy. And he happened to have been new in town, and happened to be going to the Church—the Catholic Church, where my mother worked—and the priest said to him one day that—he said—No, he was talking to the priest, he said, "You know, there's this Negro girl down at the University." (background noise; technological issues) He said "She walks with her head straight up," he said "She does not look at anybody, she just goes on about her way." He said, "I'm telling you, he said, she will never get what she deserves." And he said—the priest said to him, "You know her mother." He said, "I don't know any Negro people," (laughs) he says, "I'm from out of town I don't know anybody, I came to this church, but, um—" He said, "Yes, you do know her mother." And he was shocked, you know, because they right away wanted you to have parents who were professionals, if you were doing something like this. "Didn't you say your mother is a teacher?" I said, "No, I didn't say that."

Terry [00:51:51] Mhm.

McCready [00:51:51] You know, they just couldn't concieve that just hard-working people had a daughter who could come and face all of this criticism and still keep her head or her hair (both laugh). And it was because my mother really was a strong woman who taught us all, you know, like, "You can do anything that you set your mind to but you have to set your goals and stay focused and not let anybody make you stray from it and just know that if you work hard, you can achieve whatever you want to achieve." But she would always keep you humble by saying, "Never think you're better than anybody else, but don't ever let anybody make you think that they are better than you." And she said "Know too that you're not the only one who can do something. That somebody else can do it and sometimes better than you can do it." So she always made sure you stayed humble, you know? So that's how I went through the school, you know, challenging this, that, and the other.

McCready [00:53:01] And then when I got to psychiatry, you'd know it's going to be going through the same thing because they had never had any Black nurses at Springfield State Hospital where we had our psychiatric training. And, of course, the Director of Nurses was a male nurse from Boston, and he called me into his office and told me that he had spoken with everybody and that anybody who'd like to give me a hard time, he would deal with them. And so I said, "Well, I don't, you know, expect to have any problems." But he said, "Well if you do, you let me know immediately." And it was so funny, there was a white girl in my class who would get a very deep tan. So she went to psychiatry just before I did, and she came back and said, "Esther, they thought I was you." (both laugh) And she said, "I don't know if she's coming." And of course, there was an attendant, a great big woman, who said to me one day, "You know, they are asking, 'Well, why didn't you go to Crownsville?'" And I said, "Who's asking?" "I don't know. The people around here, not me." I said, "Well, tell whoever's asking whenever the University sends their students to

Crownsville I'll be there. If they're sending them to Springfield, I'm here." "It wasn't me!" I said, "Well, tell whoever asked you, you tell them what I said." So it was just things like this, you know, all throughout that I had to be dealing with: real kinds of prejudices, but—You know, I just would go on because I was so used to saying to myself, even in high school after I had to change that course—it threw me off from my regular class. A lot of times I was alone, even from them, so I would spend a lot of time in the library, so—One day I was in the library down there and I was so engrossed in whatever I was reading, and I heard all this commotion and I looked up and all of these white students were coming in and I said, "Wonder why they're here?" (laughs) I had transplanted myself back to Dunbar (both laugh), and I said, "I wonder why they're here," and then all of sudden, I said—I had to smile and I said, "Oh, I'm still wondering why I'm here." (both laugh) So that's about the gist of it—

Terry [00:55:33] (speaking at the same time) Wonderful.

McCready [00:55:33] —and um—

Terry [00:55:33] Well thank you so much—

McCready [00:55:33] And I can't, um—can't think of any particular thing other than what I've told you, but the various little things that happened—'cause there were many. Oh, one big thing, I know: this priest—another priest that my mother knew—he was the priest at Bon Secours, Father Sylvan. And he said to my mother, "You know, she has gone through so much, I think she should be rewarded." And he said, "I'm going to ask one of the doctors here—very wealthy doctor—what can he do." So this doctor said that he would give me a four-year scholarship to any university I wanted to attend, any place in the country, and all expenses paid, and I could come back home, I think, twice a year, you know, I think in addition to the summer. And so he was so happy, this priest was so happy about this and he gave it to the dean. And, the dean—One of the nurses told me that it was on the draft program for our big dinner reception and awards night, and the day of the affair, when the programs were printed, it had been deleted as it was the biggest award on there. And of course, he messed it up by telling me that they had wanted me to come to evening classes at the university. And I said, "That's not what I heard." I said, "I understood it could be any university in the country." "No, I think you ought to come here in the evening." I told her, "I'm not interested in coming in the evening and working during the day." And, uh—"Well, you should try this first and then, you know, come, you know, full-time." Well, I started, but I decided that I was not going to have her tell me how to do this. And it was not working out because I would get to class and I would be so tired in the evening. So I just dropped out. And I called the priest, and he was so hurt, he thought that he was doing the right thing by giving it to her. So he said, "Well, listen, I thought she would be the one to guide you in the right direction, but I'll get the award and you do, you know, go wherever you apply, wherever you want to apply." But by this time I was too annoyed, too disheartened, and I said no, but I told him that I was thinking about going into the service and I would, you know, further my education in the service. So he was really hurt, but I told him, "You know, I appreciate what you did." And then I went to join to the Navy Nurse Corps—wanted to get into the Navy Nurse Corps. Well, I went through all the business, and going to Washington to go through all the rituals that you have to go through, you know, to get into the service. And when I got to the last doctor, he said, "Well, looks like you're in." I said, "Really?" He said, "Yeah, everything looks fine to me." Well, I got a letter saying that I wasn't accepted because I wore glasses. (laughs)

Terry [00:59:03] Oh my God.

McCready [00:59:04] And the very next year—they had their quota for that year—that very next year, they're going to write to me saying, "Well, we are writing people who had just minor things, you know, asking you to come back." And I told them, "No, thank you." So that's the climate that we, you know, were living in at that time. They had a quota system in the service and they had a quota system—I think even at the university, I think they had even a quota system for Jews. It was really weird. Yet, now, I think they control practically everything down there. But that's about the gist of it, I can't think of anything else dealing with the university.

Terry [00:59:50] Just a few little things to clear up for me. When you say these are African-American people working in the hospital, were these like maintenance folks, or orderlies, or—?

McCready [00:59:59] Yeah. Or people who worked in the cafeteria—

Terry [01:00:02] Okay.

McCready [01:00:03] —they were the ones who were, oh, they were just so beaming when I came in there. But the maids, oh, they just—and the nurse's aids. That's the only—and orderlies, and—

Terry [01:00:13] Wonderful.

McCready [01:00:13] —maintenance people—those were the only positions that they held.

Terry [01:00:20] Wonderful. And—

McCready [01:00:20] There were no graduate nurses of color.

Terry [01:00:23] Wonderful.

McCready [01:00:23] I think in my second year, they hired their first African-American graduate nurse. And I can't remember whether—Two were close together, so I don't remember whether the one who graduated from my school at the same time I did, but she had her training elsewhere out of the city of Jersey.

Terry [01:00:51] Okay.

McCready [01:00:51] I don't remember whether she was the first one, she might have been. But then there was another nurse from North Carolina and I remember we were working—When you got to be in your second year, you were put on floors, you know, to handle at night by yourself or (unintelligible). So I was working the night floor seven to seven, and this nurse and I would, you know, take our break together. She was on another wing of the hospital—I was on one wing she was on another wing. And we would go down for breakfast in the mornings and we would just talk and just leave, and I guess maybe about three weeks later, she said to me (unintelligible). She was whispering it to me, she said, "You know what? I would like to meet the one who was first to come down here." (both laugh) And I said, "The first?" She said, "Yeah, the (unintelligible) first. I'd love to meet her." And I said, "It's me!" And she said, "It's you?!" (both laugh) And it's funny because she said, "Oh, I just thought you would be—that person would be, not down to earth." Isn't it amazing how we get these pictures? Because one of the maids said the same thing to me, that, "I can't believe that you are so down to earth." And I said, "Listen, I was brought up this way." And then when the three students came in behind me, she was pointing out to me how one—she said, "Now you see how you always talk to all of us?" She said, "They don't speak." (both laugh) She said,

"Especially one of them." And she told me which one it was, she said, "They don't even speak at all." And I said, "Well, you see, I just wasn't brought up that way." I would be speaking to everybody.

McCready [01:02:46] And when the medical students came sometimes—Now, that was Donald Stewart and Roderick Charles, they were the first two medical students to come. And Donald would come sometimes and have lunch with me. And it was funny, he would bring his sandwich, and I said, "Okay, now see, I didn't have to pay for food." They had to pay for like milk and dessert and stuff, and I would be busily going—We could have as much as we wanted, so I was busily going up getting him milk. (both laugh) He said, "I think you'll get in trouble." I said, "Nah, I'm not thinking about these things."

Terry [01:03:27] (both laugh) Wonderful.

McCready [01:03:27] So, occasionally, he would come, you know, and, as I said, have lunch, but I would just usually sit by myself because—There were times when I first got there I would go and, you know, like, the lunchroom would be crowded and I would come in, and I have sat down at a table like, with—there was a white woman sitting, she immediately jumped up and I just sat down, and I said "Ugh, these ladies. Jesus. Oh my God." So there were so many things that people today—students today, can't even imagine what went on for the people who "paved the way" as they say.

Terry [01:04:08] (speaking at the same time) Certainly, certainly.

McCready [01:04:08] Donald Murray used to tell me how there was a guy who would always whistle "Darktown Strutters' Ball," (laughs)—

Terry [01:04:17] Hmm.

McCready [01:04:17] When they were at the lockers, you know?

Terry [01:04:22] Mhm.

McCready [01:04:22] He would always be whistling this. I said, "Oh my God," I said, "It's amazing how white people in their jealousy," I said—because I consider jealousy. And I said, "They go through all of these changes and they miss out on so much by acting this way."

Terry [01:04:45] Mhm. Wonderful.

McCready [01:04:45] So, I still hold that I think the youth of today would be in better shape had the schools been (unintelligible), and if they had been segregated but equal. I think that we had, you know, supplies and things at Dunbar; I don't know whether we did or not, but it seemed like we did. But it just seemed like the—when the school integrated, all of the best teachers were taken out of the, you know, schools and put into these integrated schools. And then I think it left inexperienced teachers coming along to work with the kids who were left behind. And I think they weren't good disciplinarians, and—I don't know what happened. I just—And then a lot of the kids who went to the integrated schools (unintelligible; technological difficulties) happening with them. There were people telling them that they couldn't succeed. We never heard that at my school and (unintelligible; speaking at the same time)—

Terry [01:05:55] (speaking at the same time) Wonderful, wonderful.

McCready [01:05:55] —that you won't succeed (unintelligible) because you won't make anything of yourself or anything like that, but I know students have said that people have said that to them. And I've heard people on different shows say that they were told in these integrated schools that they wouldn't make anything of themselves and nothing would happen if they achieve and are doing well. So I just think that on a college level, you're old enough to sort of deal with it in a different way; that if you've had strong parents and strong teachers along the way, that by that time you have been shaped into something that—a strong person yourself, and you'll deal with it differently. And then sometimes they (unintelligible; technological difficulties).

Terry [01:06:55] Certainly.

McCready [01:06:56] And sometimes even like on jobs, people can't deal with it.

Terry [01:06:58] Certainly.

McCready [01:06:58] (unintelligible; technological difficulties) I know I was always trying to talk to my nieces and nephews and telling them, you know, that, "You're in these integrated schools, and you work hard to do your own work." I said, "And they're going to be asking you for your work." I said, "They did it to me." I said, "Don't give them your work because they're not going to share with you." And I know my niece come would up to me and go, "I didn't know they were so dumb!" (both laugh) So I said, "Oh, you know, we weren't around them, so we didn't know how they were, you know?" So I said, "They could always give us a whole song and dance." Like this nurse—a student nurse—said to me, "Why is it that so many Negro girls are pregnant without being married?" And I said, "Probably the same in your race, but," I said, "since they are coming to a white hospital you know about this." I said, "Now if they all went to a Black hospital I bet you probably would never know." I said, "And we don't know about how many of you come in that way." So it was always something that they were coming up with some, you know, generalization or something, so.

McCready [01:08:17] And then, when I was out in Springfield, it was my last three months of work there. And one of the students said to me, "Esther, I want you to know that all of us stuck together because they were saying that the other nurses (unintelligible) were supposed to wear the graduate cap." We had a student cap and a graduate cap. The graduate cap was called the Blonde Nightingale or the (unintelligible) cap and gown of the University. And so here they were coming, saying that I wasn't going to join the Alumni Association because you had to be invited in that and that I was not going to wear the graduate cap. Well, they didn't know that one of the Black nurses, they had said to me, a long time ago, she said, "Oh, I heard them say that you weren't going to ever wear this cap." I said, "Don't you answer them. Don't answer them," I said, "because if I graduate from this school, I'm going to wear the graduate cap." So when these students said this to me out there one night, "We want you to know that we all stuck together." And I said, "Well, I'm glad you did, but tell me, whose cap would I be wearing?" And, you know, they didn't say anything.

McCready [01:09:35] And that same big affair that I was telling you about where the dinner/dance was held, I think at the (unintelligible; technological difficulties) hotel or something like that? Anyhow, I could not attend the dance because, although they had allowed integrated meals there—different functions of dealing with programs with meals—they did not allow integrated dancing. So I was not allowed to attend and when I called them, they said, "Your school knows our policy, and they still chose to have their affair here." So that's how that went.

Terry [01:10:33] Mhm. Wow.

McCready [01:10:33] So, it was something. (laughs)

Terry [01:10:36] Wonderful.

McCready [01:10:36] I know Reverend Bascombe (??) has always said to me, "Why don't you write down these memoirs?"

Terry [01:10:41] (laughs)

McCready [01:10:41] They know I've given an oral history at the university, and I said, "I tried to, you know, remember." He said, "You need to write this down." And the archives—the Maryland Archives—had wanted to—had said one time that they wanted to make these little history packets to give to high school students now. But they have not followed through.

Terry [01:11:09] Is that right? I will check up on that, because I actually work there now. I've been working there for the last six months.

McCready [01:11:09] Okay. Well, someone had approached me, oh, a few years ago and they had said, "You know, this is what we wanted to do." And I—it never materialized.

Terry [01:11:24] That was definitely (unintelligible).

McCready [01:11:26] He called somebody about it, probably about a year ago, and they said they didn't know anything about it.

Terry [01:11:34] Mhm.

McCready [01:11:34] I don't know.

Terry [01:11:34] Well, I will certainly check up on it. Just a quick question, what block did you live on, on Dallas Street?

McCready [01:11:40] 500.

Terry [01:11:40] 500 block.

McCready [01:11:40] 506.

Terry [01:11:40] 506.

McCready [01:11:40] Every time I see that number it registers something (laughs).

Terry [01:11:50] Uh-huh. Wonderful. Okay, well, thank you very much for your time. I'm sorry, I took an hour of your time.

McCready [01:11:58] (unintelligible) take an hour?

Terry [01:11:58] Okay.

McCready [01:11:58] (unintelligible) so much about that place.

Terry [01:11:59] I know, wonderful, yes, wonderful. You've been very, very helpful. I do have your address, it did occur to me as we were speaking that I do have it somewhere. What I will do to get this release out to you sometime this weekend. And you read over it and everything. It's only, like, two lines. It just says you knew I was recording and taking notes, so. I'll send a self-addressed stamped envelope with it so you can send it back to me.

McCready [01:12:19] Okay. And I must say this, that I feel that I've been very blessed because, from all of this, I, you know, worked at so many different places and worked in public health here for a while, then went to Massachusetts General in Boston and worked a little while, then to Cornell University of New York Hospital in New York and worked, and then finally to Harlem Hospital. And in all of that, I did undergraduate and graduate work in music. Music was always a part of my life and then ended up teaching school for, I guess, about 17-18 years. Two of those—two extra years I taught Raven Symone on *The Cosby Show*.

Terry [01:13:06] (laughs)

McCready [01:13:06] So, I mean—

Terry [01:13:07] The littlest child, correct?

McCready [01:13:09] The littlest one.

Terry [01:13:09] Yes, that's right. Okay.

McCready [01:13:12] And then I ended up traveling with different groups to Europe and doing musical things. Did community theater and television commercials, and all that. I really had a very interesting life.

Terry [01:13:28] Wonderful.

McCready [01:13:28] Mhm.

Terry [01:13:28] So you said to me in our first conversation a few days ago that you're going back to New York. You're moving back there?

McCready [01:13:36] I live there—

Terry [01:13:38] Mhm, okay.

McCready [01:13:38] —and I just came in today—

Terry [01:13:40] Okay.

McCready [01:13:40] —and I'll be back up there on Saturday because—I went up this past weekend because they had Women's Day at my church, which is at Abyssinian Baptist Church.

Terry [01:13:51] Okay.

McCready [01:13:51] (unintelligible)

Terry [01:13:57] Certainly, certainly.

McCready [01:13:57] (unintelligible) ministers it now. But they had Women's Day and I hadn't gone for a couple of years, so I said, "Well, let me make sure I get up there." And then this week they're doing *Porgy and Bess* at the City Opera. Well, I had been in it a couple of times at the Metropolitan Opera, so I just wanted to sort of see what these people were doing while it was going to be televised on public television—

Terry [01:14:19] Okay.

McCready [01:14:19] —on the twentieth. I wanted to hear it in the house, so I put out word that I wanted somebody to round me up a free ticket.

Terry [01:14:30] (laughs)

McCready [01:14:30] And they have—At the Metropolitan Opera, they have this big opera, *War and Peace*, that I must see. I went to a lecture about it, but then I thought it wasn't going to sell, you know, and then they said, it's the best-selling thing they've had (both laugh)! So it's really sold out now, so I'm really worried whether or not I can get a ticket. I'm going back to try and get into all of this stuff this weekend.

Terry [01:14:58] Wonderful, wonderful.

McCready [01:14:58] Well, I'll see what happens, and I'll be trottin' back down here.

Terry [01:15:03] Okay, wonderful. Well, good luck trying to get that ticket (laughs). It's no rush getting the release back to me, just whenever you can, it'll be fine.

McCready [01:15:13] Okay.

Terry [01:15:13] And if I have any other questions, I'll try to contact you, and—You know, there's no hurry, so, you know, if I do need to talk to you again, you know, you can get back to me when you can.

McCready [01:15:24] Okay.

Terry [01:15:24] Well, thank you so much.

McCready [01:15:26] Alright, thank you.

Terry [01:15:26] You have a wonderful evening.

McCready [01:15:27] All right, you too.

Terry [01:15:27] Bye-bye.

McCready [01:15:27] Bye.

[01:15:27] *end of recording*