

Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions  
Oral History Documentation Project  
**Imelda Thompson Hardy**  
Interviewed by Alma Jordon  
July 28, 2021  
in her home in Valley Lee, Maryland  
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46 minutes, 47 seconds

Alma Jordon ([00:01](#)):

Okay. My name is Alma Jordon, and today is July 28, 2021. And can I ask your name, please?

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([00:11](#)):

Yes. My name is Imelda Thompson Hardy. I was born on May 4, 1949, and I am presently 72 years old or young.

Alma Jordon ([00:26](#)):

Can you tell me where you were born?

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([00:33](#)):

I was born in Valley Lee, Maryland, in a little house on Route 249.

Alma Jordon ([00:35](#)):

Okay. Imelda, what is your earliest memory that you can remember?

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([00:45](#)):

I think my earliest memory was living at my grandmother and grandfather's home, and I used to love to chase my brother Bernard. So I can remember chasing him all the time, and I can remember my aunt getting ornery about it. She would tell Bernard, "You got to hit her back," because I would chase him all the time. That's probably one of my earliest memories.

Alma Jordon ([01:13](#)):

Oh okay. Can you tell me about your people and where you were raised?

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([01:32](#)):

All right. I am the daughter of Turner Thomas Turner Thompson and Roberta Campbell Thompson and they had seven children, but my father had one child from a previous relationship. His name's James Franklin Thompson. And of my seven sibling... Well, my mother actually died when I was 15 months old and as a result, I have heard that while I was home, that my mother wanted to place the seven of us in good homes because she realized that my father, as a single parent, it was was going to be very difficult for him to raise seven children by himself.

[\(02:10\)](#):

So my brother Charles and my sister Marguerite and me were placed in a home, my father moved back to my grandparents' farm, that is Ella and Bunton Thompson and my sister, Ellen and my brother, Turner, Junior were placed with my Aunt Ella and Uncle Chester Blackwell. My sister Betty, or Elizabeth, was placed with my Aunt Helen and Uncle Micky Dickens. And my brother, which is my youngest brother, Bernard, was placed with my Aunt Jeanette and Uncle Fred Talbert.

Alma Jordon([03:16](#)):

Okay. Thank you. You sort of explained a little bit about how you lived when you were growing up, but what types of work did your family do?

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([03:17](#)):

Okay. From what I understand, my mother, or I should say my grandmother and my grandfather were teachers. I don't know whether Grandpop had a degree in teaching or not. That's Grandma Ella and Grandpa Bunton. But I know Grandma Ella did have a teaching degree, but they were teachers.

[\(03:36\)](#):

My father actually went as far as sixth grade, as far as I know, with his education and he worked for the Maryland States Highway on the roads and my mother died so young, I really don't know exactly what type of work she did.

Alma Jordon ([03:57](#)):

And how, do you remember how the money situation was when we were growing up?

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([04:01](#)):

Well, I don't remember a lot about the money situation, but one thing for sure, I know we did not have a lot of money. I remember my aunt and my father used to plant gardens. We had a lot of [inaudible 00:04:26] fruits and vegetables and so forth. We had fruit trees and so forth and we very seldom bought those kinds of things at the market. We had our own animals also for meat. We used to... I remember my father killing hogs and us killing chickens and so forth, so yes, we did a lot of money and I remember my aunt used to make me clothes and I don't know if you remember it used to be what they called a feed bag that people used to get their feed for the animals in. And those feed bags had nice patterns on the feed bags. The cloth was really, really, really nice. And my aunt would pick out her favorites and she would actually make me some nice dresses from those feed bags, but it wouldn't make you believe we didn't have a lot of money. We were poor. We did not realize it.

Alma Jordon ([05:19](#)):

Describe your relationship with your siblings.

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([05:20](#)):

You know, I feel, of course, close to my siblings, but because of the situations I had told you previously, that we grew up apart. We didn't grow up in the same house. I kind of felt like my siblings, especially Ellen and Betty and Turner, Junior. and Bernard were kind of like cousins instead of brothers and sisters, but as time went on somehow Bernard actually came back to live with us at the family home. And so did Turner Junior. But I feel that we grew up fairly close, regardless of the situation and I'm glad that I had

them, I really loved them more than words can say, because I do want to add to that that I have actually lost five of my siblings, so at this point, it's just Bernard, Ellen, and myself left.

Alma Jordon ([05:20](#)):

When you were growing up, do you remember any chores that you had around the house?

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([05:20](#)):

Oh yes. I grew up with my Aunt Lizzie. She actually became my surrogate mom when my mom passed. I think I told you that we moved up, up there to the home place when my mom had passed and at that time, my aunt was there taking care of her Mom and Dad, because they had gotten up in age, so she raised me, also. And yes, I had lots of chores. I had to help to clean the house. I had to help to gather the vegetables and fruit in the summer time to get ready for canning and freezing. I had the job of feeding the chickens sometimes. I had the job of making sure the chickens and the ducks had water, during the day, especially during the hot weather. And also, pigs had water when it was really, really hot outside.

([05:23](#)):

Sometimes they had, they used to call slopping pigs. So yes, I had plenty of chores when I was a kid growing up on our farm.

Alma Jordon ([07:41](#)):

Do you remember what kind of games that you played when you were growing up?

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([07:50](#)):

We played ball. I actually remember playing softball a little bit with my family outside. At some point, I can remember we did not have a ball, but somehow we got a rag or whatever it was and balled it up and tied it, made it into a softball to play with the softball. And I can remember, of course, we would jump rope. And at that time, I loved to jump rope at school, because we had lots of kids turning rope and so forth. And I can remember not having anyone to turn that rope for me, so what my dad would do was take the rope and tie it up at the end of the barn, on the post, and then he would turn the other end of the rope, and that's how we could jump rope. I was glad my dad would do that.

([08:33](#)):

And we used to play, I don't know, I suppose we did a lot of tag, chasing one another. And we used to play a game called duck. I don't know where that came from, but what we would do is sit on the steps and we had a person in charge and they would tell us how many places to move or whatever. I don't know the significance of that, but we did play what we called duck. I'm sorry, I can't tell you a whole lot about it, because it's kind of slipped my memory, exactly what we did. What else did we play? And we played the usual board games, you know so we had Monopoly and checkers and that kind of thing. We played bingo, Chinese checkers. A lot of the games that they play today.

Alma Jordon ([09:14](#)):

Mm-hmm. Tell me about your formal schooling.

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([09:28](#)):

Okay. The first I'm going to say about my formal schooling is that I have a niece that lives in Washington DC and in Washington DC, they started school at kindergarten. Well, I wanted to start kindergarten, too,

but here in southern Maryland, they did not start school at kindergarten at that particular time. Started the first grade. And I actually started going to school at St. Peter Claver School in Ridge, Maryland. I went from the first grade to the eighth grade at St. Peter Claver and graduated from eighth grade and then went on to Cardinal Gibbons High School through the 12th grade, from which I also graduated.

Alma Jordon([10:19](#)):

How did you get to school back in those days?

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([10:20](#)):

Well, I'm glad to tell you that I didn't walk all these miles in the snow [inaudible 00:10:27] no we had a school bus and my bus driver, I would never forget it, was Mr. Buck Cutchember and he was a very good school driver but I tell you what, he didn't have a lot of trouble with us on the bus. Let's leave it at that. I actually rode the school bus to school, a big old yellow school bus.

Alma Jordon ([10:46](#)):

Okay. And what was your classroom like? Do you remember your classroom and your teacher? Tell me about that.

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([11:05](#)):

I do remember my classroom you know at St. Peter Claver. We had the old school building. There were four large classrooms there. I remember the first and second grade being in my room and I remember, and I think the third grade was in one room downstairs. And then the fourth grade in one and then the fifth and sixth grade in one. There was the four classrooms we had. And I remember, in first grade, I had Sister Cornelius I also had her in second grade, I believe. By the time I got to third grade, I had Sister Robert and in fourth grade, Sister Clarice and fifth grade, I think it was Sister Thomas. And in sixth grade, I'm trying to remember. I think it was Sister Gerard, if I'm not mistaken. And those were my primary teachers from first to sixth grade.

([12:04](#)):

Then, when I got in seventh grade, I had Sister Aquinas and when I got to eighth grade, I had Sister Paul. And those teachers are from The Oblate Sisters of Providence, and they were my teachers from first grade through eighth grade.

Alma Jordon ([12:07](#)):

Did you have a favorite teacher?

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([12:13](#)):

Not really. I don't think I really had a favorite teacher, as such. I think I had things I liked about all of them. I guess, the most impressive one to me, of all of those teachers, were probably Sister Paul because she was so very active. She was like an athletic direct in some ways. Of course, not only did she teach us math and science, but she was also the head of the basketball program that we had, the track program that we had, and she was extremely active.

([13:05](#)):

And she was teaching us how to play baseball. She was actually out there with us, show us how to get the ball and every time she'd run around those bases, her habit would fly off. We would think it was hilarious. So I guess, you might say Sister Paul was one of my favorites. (laughs) [inaudible 00:13:33].

Alma Jordon ([13:33](#)):

Well, what about your favorite subject in school? Did you have a favorite subject?

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([13:33](#)):

My favorite subject was actually reading. I always had a love of reading. And I think that started with my Aunt Lizzie who raised me. She used to read to me all the time and I remember on Sunday nights we would read the funny paper. And one of the cartoons in the funny paper was about this little, I think it's a little [inaudible 00:13:52]. His name is [inaudible 00:13:53]. I think that's his name. But anyway, [inaudible 00:13:56] was deaf and dumb and he really couldn't talk and so you could see the pictures of the things that he did. My aunt used to tell me, "You have to use your imagination to see what he's doing." And I had to tell her what he was doing in those pictures. And I think that help to created my loved for reading. And to this day, I still really enjoy reading.

Alma Jordon ([14:32](#)):

That's so interesting. What part did religion play in your life, growing up and now?

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([14:34](#)):

Religion played an enormous part of our life. I'm so grateful that my father was able to afford to send us for Catholic education, all seven of us, from first grade to 12th grade to graduation. And I feel that because we learned so much about our religion, our belief in God and how God loves us, and what God has done for us, how to pray, and so forth, religion's always been a very big part of our lives. I definitely believe in the power of prayer.

Alma Jordon ([15:04](#)):

And what about your teenage years? Can you share a little bit about growing up and how it was growing up?

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([16:16](#)):

Well, in my teenage years, I one of those people who just couldn't wait to go out and have a good time. And the thing about it is that we did not have a lot of places to go as teenagers. We found ourselves hanging out at the bar, but the bars are not as they are today. Most of the bars were owned by people that the family knew. And so we were allowed to go to the bar, but we really went to the bars to dance. I remember the guys I used to date, some of them used to drink, and they were underage, of course, but they used to drink. But the girls that I hung out with never did. But my teenage days were hanging out at the bars, especially dancing. I remember going to my Uncle Leroy's bar and my Aunt Ella's bar and I could not wait to put a dime in the juke box so we could dance or we could hear our favorite song, so that was pretty much summarizes it.

([16:24](#)):

And also, one other place we used to hang out at was Morgan's Beach. They had a place. And a man by the name of Kendall Morgan had built a little, I guess a little dance hall for teenagers there, so I always loved to go down there. It was an area with juke boxes (inaudible) We would also go to Smith's Beach,

which wasn't quite the same as, well they still had a juke box, put a little money in it. I think at that time it was a dime to play on record something like that. But those were good times.

Alma Jordon ([17:05](#)):

Do you remember a participating in any community activities when you were growing up?

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([17:09](#)):

Actually, I did not participate a lot, but I can remember joining the 4H Club where I learned how to cook a little a little bit and how to sew. And I've always enjoyed cooking. I can remember my brother... I'm not sure if it was the 4H Club or not, but I remember it at the county fair. And, of course, my father always had planted a garden stuff and my brothers would help and I remember them entering their vegetables or whatever at the county fair to see if they would get a ribbon for raising the vegetables, green beans or corn. My father raised pumpkins, watermelons, whatever.

([17:47](#)):

And I didn't participate in a lot of clubs, but I guess at school, we had lots of stuff. But I remember we had the choir and we did a little singing there. And I remember having a talent show at school, where we everybody participated in, and we were just doing learning how to do a little, they call it now line dancing, but it's actually what it was called back then. But I did not belong to a lot of clubs. But that was the 4-H Club, the one that [inaudible 00:18:10].

Alma Jordon([18:09](#)):

Okay. What did you dream to become when you grew up?

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([18:32](#)):

When I was a kid, I loved to play school or play teacher, that kind of thing, that little stuff I told you about earlier. But I really wanted to be a flight attendant, and at that time, they called them stewardesses. I really wanted to be a flight attendant because I always loved to travel and I thought if I could be a flight attendant or a stewardess, I could travel all over the world. And, of course, I told my aunt about my dream that I wanted to do and she kind of shut me down.

([19:00](#)):

She said, "I don't think they're going to hire a little black girl to be a flight attendant." And so, not having that determination, scared to death, I said, "I'm sure she's right." So I gave up on that dream a long time ago. So meanwhile, I did enjoy playing school and so forth and being a teacher and when I enrolled in Bowie State University. That's where I got the major in, education. And decided to become a teacher.

([19:28](#)):

And I really enjoyed it, for the most part. I enjoyed it so much until after I retired, I had taught for almost 30 years, I moved back here to St. Mary's County and I thought, "I don't think I want to teach anymore." So there a, yeah, [inaudible 00:19:46]. But anyway, I could not deny the fact that I still loved teaching so I went on and I decided I was going to become a substitute teacher. So I applied for substitute teaching and I taught at Piney Point Elementary, substituting from 2007 to 2017. So, I guess teaching was in my blood. And I really did enjoy it. And I also decided to teach Sunday school at my church, so I think it was really a part of me..

Alma Jordon([20:19](#)):

Do you remember about your employment from the time you graduated from Bowie and your teaching experience and where you traveled while you were teaching?

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([20:28](#)):

I actually started teaching in Prince George's County, where I had done my student teaching, at a school called District Heights. And after I did my student teaching, I could not believe that a job became available in the grade level that I wanted, which was third grade, and so forth. I accepted the job and then I stopped for a year, maternity leave. Then I went back to teaching Elementary, the elementary school in Prince George's County. And I taught there for six to seven years, I think it was. And left for maternity leave. At that point, we were moving out of state. My husband's job transferred him to the Chicago, Illinois area. We lived in the south suburbs of Chicago in a city called [inaudible 00:21:24] Village. And there, I decided to, after Brian, my baby, got a little older, I decided to try to get back into teaching again and what I did was I actually substituted for a while, so I could try to get my foot in the door, try to get to know the different schools and so forth. And so, after I substituted for, I guess for about a year or so, they needed, the school where I was and my son was, they needed a teacher assistant.

[Begin second recording]

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([00:02](#)):

So, I didn't get the job there after all. And at that point, this is about 1984, and we moved to Evansville, Indiana, and when I went to Evansville, I thought, "Okay, I think I'll go and start substituting." We moved there in August, and I went on in to start to substitute in October, because I was so sure they were not going to hire me, it'd be like it was in [inaudible 00:00:27] Village, it's going to take time for them to hire me. Low and behold, they needed a long-term sub, and I was afraid to say no because I thought if I say no I'm not going to get a job any time soon if I went for it. So, I took the job as a long-term sub. This is in 1984-85 school year. And at the end of the year, the principal asked me if I was interested in the job. Again, I was afraid to say no because I wanted to have a job, for sure. So I started teaching again, 2nd grade this time, in the school where I was, and the name of the school is Howard Roosa Elementary. I taught at Howard Roosa for 22 years until I retired in 2006. And I have to admit that I learned a lot between those three different school systems in which I worked, and also with the substituting. And I have always felt that anyone who wants to become a teacher, I think, should substitute first, And I think they should substitute at all different levels, especially elementary schools, so they can decide which grade level they feel a need for teaching, because I learned a lot. When I was doing my substitute teaching, I substituted from pre-K on into junior high school, and even high school. So yes, I have lots of experience teaching.

Alma Jordon ([01:56](#)):

Well, in sharing information about your teaching and growing up, what was race relations like back then, and during your teaching?

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([02:10](#)):

Well, you know, I feel that the race relations were okay as far as I was concerned. I guess I was pretty fortunate that I had really good principals and I felt like they treated me like they treated everybody else on the staff. I never felt like I was picked out because of you know the color of your skin or whatever.

We would have our meetings, so forth, we all had a chance to express our opinions about different things and all of those principals were always trying to help us to treat the kids normally, to help the kids feel like, how do you say it, not to mistreat one another. Treat kids with respect and so forth. We had a lot of little programs we used to have just to make kids feel that they were not singled out because of the color of their skin or whatever. I felt like all the principals that I ever had did that along with the teachers and trying to make everything smoothly in the schools, at least I thought. I never felt single out because of the color of my skin.

Do you feel that race relations have changed now in relation to when you were growing up as a child?

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([03:44](#)):

Yes, definitely. Because as a child I can remember when we used to go to church, at St. George Catholic Church, the African American people had to sit in the back of the church. And I can remember when I made my First Holy Communion and Confirmation the way they had it set was that the little white girls would walk in first, then the little white boys, the little Black girls, the little Black boys. And I remember my brother and friend had decided, this had to be in the, I want to say late 50s to early 60s, that they were no longer going to sit in the back of that church. And so my brother and his friend decided once that they were going to sit in front of the church and they did. I don't know if I should say this or not, but the priest at the time at St. George was Father Smith, and he was very cooperative with my brother and his friend in doing exactly what they did. As a result of that I can remember some of the people in St. George Church, white people, decided to leave St. George and go to a different church because the fact that my brother and his friend sat in front of the church. That kind of opened it up for us as a people to take a stand and sit where they want to in the church. And I credit my brother and his friend for starting that.

([05:09](#)):

So yes, there were really present times when I was a kid. I can remember going to a clothing store with my aunt. She was trying to find a coat for me. This was in Leonardtown, Maryland. We walked in the door and the lady was coming down to meet us at the door, or so we thought, and she came down and met us all right. She told us, "We don't serve colored people in this store." That was one of my first experiences with race problems. So, my aunt just, out of respect for me we walked out of the store.

([05:46](#)):

And of course those kinds of treatments changed over the years, but I can remember [inaudible 00:05:53]. I remember my father saying that when he was a young man and had a up and coming family he would sometimes fall short of money. So what he would do is go to, I call it the convenience store now and they would sometimes let him get stuff on credit. And which he did. He would always pay it off when he got the money to do it. He said in one situation he had paid it off and he failed to get a receipt. He said that the store owner told him that he had not paid the store and my father said that he did. So, he taught us that whenever you get anything make sure you always get receipts. And I kind of feel that was a racial thing. I don't know, I have no idea if it really was or not, but there was a lot of race problems at that time when I was a kid.

Alma Jordon ([06:49](#)): coming

Tell me, as a little girl going to the store with your aunt being approached, how did that make you feel?

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([06:59](#)):

You know, as a little girl I really didn't know how to feel then. Because I was so young and I think I took on her action. She wasn't angry, and I was angry too. You know, because it really wasn't like the way we were treated. I'm sure I took on her actions.

Alma Jordon ([07:19](#)):

Another question that I'd be interested in is how old was your brother when he decided to move to the front of the church and do something different than the normal?

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([07:35](#)):

You know, I think he was maybe 18, an older teenager. I think he was 18 or 19 or something like that. But you know, back then we saw a lot of mistreatment of African American people on TV. I mean quite often it depicted the way people were treated down south. They couldn't do this, they couldn't do that, and I just think my brother decided to take a stand and they had had enough. And you know, as a people I think that was one of the greatest things that he could have done.

Alma Jordon ([08:16](#)):

Okay. Would you like to tell us what brother that this is?

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([08:20](#)):

Sure, this brother was my next to my oldest brother, Charles. And his friend, Charles Aloysius Thompson and his friend was Vincent Briscoe. Those were the two people that took a stand that day.

Alma Jordon ([08:34](#)):

Okay. How do you feel about times now? Do you think times have changed since the problems back then?

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([08:46](#)):

I felt that the times have changed. It's changed for the better. I still think we have our problems, but I think now it's a lot more subtle than it was back then. But I think unfortunately race problems still continue to exist when you think about what's going on in the police departments, how people are mistreated when they get stopped by the police. I think a lot of that continues to exist even in this day and time. The thing is, I'm not quite sure how to solve the problem. I would like to think that we could make some moves to change the problems, but I don't even know if that could be the answer or not. I'm thinking the fact that they decided to get cameras in the police cars and you know, cameras in different places I think that has helped communicate to, for people to see actually what's going on in our society as to the way people are mistreated. I think hopefully it's going to change in time so that people can see it in black and white what's actually going on behind the scenes.

Alma Jordon ([09:59](#)):

Do you feel that you've done almost everything in your life that you had planned as a young child growing up?

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([10:01](#)):

Well, like I said, initially one of the things I really wanted to do more than anything in the world was to travel. I didn't quite travel as much as I wanted to, but I still had some good experiences. My husband and I pretty much covered all of the states in the United States. We haven't spent time in all of them but we have actually drove through a lot of them. There's only four states that I have not been to or drove through. We didn't have the opportunity to travel a lot out of the country. We were able to go to Europe and go to a couple of countries there. We went to France. We also went to Italy. That was a good experience. We had the experience of going on cruises. Basically in the Caribbean and also to Mexico. We had the experience of going to Canada. So, we traveled quite a bit. It's been nice, but I've always wanted to travel. But at this point I don't think my husband's ever going to go with me out of this country after all what's going on this day and time. I don't think he will ever travel out of the country. If I go I'll have to go solo. But he did go with me out of the country when we went to Europe and to Mexico and to Canada.

Alma Jordon ([11:22](#)):

Tell me about your children. I understand your children and grandchildren are quite involved in sports and have done a lot things. Would you like to share some information?

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([11:47](#)):

I am so proud of my children. I have three. The oldest is our daughter Carla. Carla Milton. She is the CEO [inaudible 00:11:59] vice president of her company. She worked for a hospital in Clovis, California. At this time, I can't give you her exact title, but she is a Senior Vice President at her company. She has two children. The oldest is Kalon. He graduated from Fresno State a couple years ago, but prior to that he was playing college football and he completed his education at Fresno State, but then he had some more time to play football. He had to go to a different school to do that. And while he was he was attending college, I can't think of the name of it right now, he obtained his master's degree. So, he has graduated from college with an undergrad and graduate degree. His brother, Kendall is presently in school on a full ride football scholarship. He's going to the University of Georgia. He's into his sophomore year right now and his grandpa and I are looking forward to going to see him play sometime in September. Since, because of Covid we weren't able to go to any games last year.

([13:09](#)):

My second child is Kevin Lamont Hardy. He's the one that was the professional football player. He played for the Jaguars, he played for the Cincinnati Bengals. He also played for the Dallas Cowboys. His career involved all three teams. He has two children. His oldest is Winston, Winston Langston Hardy, and Langston just finished high school this year, 2021. He's attending UConn, University of Connecticut. He is also going on a full ride football scholarship and I'm looking forward to seeing him play football hopefully sometime this year, I think sometime in September if I'm not mistaken. And his little brother is Camden. And Camden is in the 11th grade and for a minute there, we thought he wanted to play baseball more so than football, but things have changed, he likes football as much as his older brother and his dad. So it looks like he's following in their footsteps. We're thinking that in a couple of years he's going to probably get a full scholarship to a university. We'll see. We look forward to seeing what his decision's going to be.

([14:35](#)):

My third child is Brian Hardy. And Brian has four children. His oldest is Peyton. Peyton went to college for a year and decided that it wasn't quite what she wanted to do so she decided to join the Air Force and she did. She's going into her, I think she is going into her fourth year being in the Air Force. And she

just recently got married and she has the cutest little baby boy, which is my first great-grandchild, which I'm very proud of. She married a young man who is absolutely outstanding. His name is Anthony Wallis. And Kevin's, I'm sorry Brian's second child is Dominique, and Dominique is also in high school. He's going into his freshmen year, no his going into his sophomore year. I'm not quite sure what Dominique wants to do, he tried football, but football wasn't for him, but he likes to sing. He has a pretty good singing voice. So we'll see what happens with that. Then Brian has two younger daughters. One is Cambree and Cambree likes playing softball, does well with it. And his youngest daughter's Kinsley and she's just a little sports person. She likes to playing softball, but her major thing right now is riding horses. So, I think we have a little equestrian in our family. We'll see what happens with her and she loves coming home and riding grandpa's horses, also. But I talk about those children.

Alma Jordon ([16:14](#)):

If you will, I would like for you to say a little bit about growing up with your dad and all of your experience with him and his kids and everything. So, I'd like for you to share some of that.

Imelda Thompson Hardy ([16:31](#)):

Well, you know, the point I made early on is that my father, Turner Thomas Thompson was born right in the middle of his family. There are 11 children altogether and he's number six. So, there's five older than him and five younger than him. Now, as I said earlier, when my mother died we all moved to the home place, at least Charles Marguerite and myself and Aunt Lizzie became my surrogate mom. So, I'd like to share a little bit about her. She was a pretty strict lady, but she taught me a lot. I think she might be the reason why I went onto colleges, in some ways because she actually went to Bowie, also. But when she went to Bowie, it was a normal school and she used to tell me what kind of chores they had to do back in those days. I think they had to feed the chickens and gather the vegetables and so forth. And I thought, thank God I didn't have to do all that when I went to Bowie. It was quite a difference. She also taught me how to cook. She was a fantastic cook. She tried to teach me how to sew but I wasn't very good at catching on with sewing. She ended up making quite a few outfits for me, just outstanding. I wish now I'd paid more attention to her and learned how to sew better. I could've saved myself some money I suppose. But now getting back to my father, he was a lot of fun growing up. I don't know where Dad got all of his energy from, but I can remember as a kid I used to love to run. And dad, evidently, he might have be a good runner too. I don't know. But we used to always challenge dad to race with us and I said dad I know I can run faster than you, beat you from the yard to the house. He must've been in his 50s then. So anyway, we would race and nine times out of 10 my dad would win the race. I'm like, you're too old to be winning these races. But evidently, he was really wasn't because he was really good. Another thing that dad used to do with us was take us to the drive-in theater. Back in those days we had a drive-in theater out on 235 above Lexington Park. They had a special night to go where it was very, very reasonable. It would cost \$1.00 a car no matter how many people were in that car, it cost \$1.00 a car.

([19:07](#)):

So, dad used to take us to the drive-in theater every so often. Of course, we got there when we got there on a Tuesday night, everybody and their mama was there. We'd go to the snack bar and see a lot of our friends and so forth, but it was so much fun in those days to get to go to the drive-in to begin with. Another fun thing was as you all have heard, my father he was a really good, I call it a good poet. What he did was he recited other people's poetry. But the fact is, my dad learned that poetry when he was in elementary school. So, if you stop to think about that he had to be maybe in the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade when he was memorizing poems that he did and he would still recite it until the day he died. I

often wondered how he could keep that memory so well to memorize those poems. People loved when it when he use recite his poetry. He was a great storyteller as well. One of my favorite story he used to tell about [inaudible 00:19:25] cemetery guarding souls, I don't know the exact name of that story but daddy used to tell it to us all the time. He had a lot of other stories he would tell us too. I just can't remember what they are right now. I guess I'd have to talk to my brother Bernard maybe he can remember some of the stories. But dad was really good at storytelling and wonderful at reciting poetry. I don't think any of us picked up on that. I know we had a reunion back in 2014, I think, and someone wanted us to recite the poetry that Dad use to recite and I had thought about it. So I looked up the poem, I can't recite it, but I could read it. They had someone else to do it. So I didn't get a chance to read dad's poem that he used to recite back in the day. Let's see. I just think that my dad loved us so much because it wasn't cheap for him to send all seven of his kids to a Catholic school. Dad worked very hard on the farm raising tobacco and so forth and working on the highway on the road of Maryland to make enough money to send us to college, send us to high school. [inaudible 00:21:23] college [inaudible 00:21:25]. I was the only of his seven children that really wanted to go to college. He somehow found the money to send me, and I will always be grateful to him for that. Not only that, my last year of college I decided I wanted to get married. I didn't have two pennies to rub together. I told my father that I wanted to get married and he came through for me and paid for my wedding.

[\(21:53\)](#):

As a young person you don't realize how much money's involved in some things like that. So I'll always be grateful the fact that he paid completely for my college education as well as for my wedding. I know father's supposedly supposed to do that, but I just feel like dad [inaudible 00:22:14] what he needed to do and I will always be so grateful to him for all that he's done for all of us. Dad was definitely a lover of people. There's a lot of other people in the neighborhood too that he's helped. Bernard can tell you more about that than I can. But he definitely was a wonderful man and I think about him often and will always love him.

Alma Jordon [\(22:21\)](#):

Thank you. Is there anything else that you would like to share that we missed?

Imelda Thompson Hardy [\(22:49\)](#):

Well, I can't think of anything else right now. It's just for the fact that I'm glad that my mother had the, how do you say it, the feeling of what she needed to do before she died as far as us children. I think her whole thing was make sure we were in nurturing homes so that we would be okay. And I think we turned out all right, so I'm thankful to my mom for that. We definitely don't like to talk about death and so forth, but I also think about [inaudible 00:23:30] when I do leave this world is to get to see my mom because I've always wondered about what she looked like. We have a few pictures of her, but they weren't that clear. I remember giving a couple of her pictures that dad gave to me to my sister Betty. But unfortunately when Betty's trailer caught fire years ago the pictures were there and they burned up in the fire. So, that's a regret that I have is we didn't have any pictures to share of my mother. But as Christians we believe that one day we'll all be reunited with the people we love the most [inaudible 00:24:02] because we're all going to go that way someday. So, Mom I love you too.

Alma Jordon [\(24:16\)](#):

Thank you so much.

Imelda Thompson Hardy [\(24:17\)](#):

You're welcome.