

UNIFIED COMMITTEE FOR AFRO-AMERICAN CONTRIBUTIONS  
Great Mills High School Oral History Project

Stuart Wayne Newkirk  
[DOB 02/28/51]

July 21, 2007  
Interviewed by Merideth Taylor  
At his home in Lexington Park Maryland  
Transcribed by Michelle Marsich on June 25, 2008  
Edited by Bob Lewis  
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Original format is digital audio recorder download  
30 minutes, 35 seconds

Audio CD 1 of 1

Track 01

- 0:00 Introduction, discussion of project. Great Mills High School students did about 15 interviews.
- 1:03 Lived most of his life in St. Mary's County. Retired when he was 52 years old – lives with wife and two children. Attended GMHS in fall of 1965, one year before the county closed the segregated “colored” schools.
- 2:49 School is so big now. There were about 800 students when he attended. The students who interviewed him were white and they were in disbelief when he described the discrimination and treatment that he received.

Track 02

- 3:54 Before GMHS he attended George Washington Carver School. His father wanted his sons to attend the “white” school to better prepare them for the real world. He wasn't anxious to go. In fact he was a bit frightened. All of those fear well well-founded. He was an A and B student at Carver. But his grades fell to D at GMHS. He realized that the “colored” schools got the used books from the “white” schools.
- 5:14 They went to the bathroom together because they were constantly picked on. They threw wads of paper at him. He was seated in the front of the classroom.

- 6:07 Teachers provided some protection. History teacher Martha Manly, who was white, was the first teacher to talk about black history – he never had that at Carver.
- 7:33 Cannot recall any bad experience with teacher. The negativity came from a small number of students – they were very hostile. They made it difficult to go to the bathroom, to go to lunch, to concentrate in the classroom. Not many students came to defend them.

### Track 03

- 8:38 By the end of that first year, they were beginning to be accepted and things had settled down a bit. The next year all the black students came to GMHS and he and his brother were “caught in the middle.” The relationships that they made with the white students were perceived as a threat to the black students. Loraine Bailey was another black student at GMHS during that first year.
- 10:07 He avoided all activities. He couldn’t wait to get out of there. His relationships with white students were very superficial – they would exchange greetings as they passed in the halls. They didn’t eat together or do anything together.
- 11:29 The students shoved them, verbally threatened them, call names. Vice Principal Moses would monitor the situation and not “let it get out-of-hand.” He took those threats seriously.
- 12:45 He lived in Carver Heights – saw his friends in the afternoon. He never told them about his experiences at GMHS. They never asked.

### Track 04

- 13:28 The many distractions and harassment at GMHS led to his grades falling to Ds. The level of the course material was above what he had learned at Carver.
- 14:42 He was angry at his father for sending his brother and him to Carver. His younger brothers went to the white school Frank Knox. His father didn’t give them any choice. “Deal with it.” Looking back, he understands his father’s motives: to prepare them for a white world. “Now when I look back on it, I’m glad that he did it.”

### Track 05

- 17:15 Racism has become very complicated. Youth today don’t know when they are being mistreated, or treated differently. His son in fifth grade learned about Lincoln and how he freed the slaves. But Stuart felt that the accuracy of that

history was suspect and he confronted the teacher saying he wanted his kids to get an accurate history.

19:52 He still thinks the US is “extremely racist.” But he thinks that it is time to stop making that an excuse. Minority parents need to be more engaged in their children’s education.

21:35 Blacks need to “buy in.” They need to take responsibility.

#### Track 06

22:03 Question asked what was lost by integration. He answers this with a call for all people to get along so that everyone can have an equal chance to succeed. When you are treated poorly, you detach yourself from that situation. Slaves had to detach themselves from their masters and the treatment they experienced. It takes generations to overcome that. It has hurt us.

25:00 Reconfirms that he had not learned black history at Carver School. He disputes those who say that they received the same education as whites.

#### Track 07

26:55 His perspective is different than others – he had a different experience being thrown into the white high school. He remembers the experience as if it was yesterday. They talked about their day at GMHS when they came home. “It helped make me what I am today.”

28:47 There was a time when he hated white people. He was part of a local black militant group. He grew out of it. He tried to understand why people felt that way. He shed that anger. His father always said, never make a decision when you are angry. “I even got passed my anger for my father.”