

Eileen Cave '76
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Black Lives
October 26, 2021
Transcribed by Tamonie Brown '24

BROWN: Okay, my name is Tamonie Brown and I'm currently in the Shabazz Center in Hanover, New Hampshire. I'm doing a zoom interview with Eileen Cave. Eileen, where are you right now?

CAVE: I am residing in Hyattsville, Maryland.

BROWN: Okay, Eileen is in Hyattsville, Maryland. Today is October 26, 2021, and this interview is for the Dartmouth Black Lives Oral History Project. So, first of all, again, thank you so much for agreeing to do this with me. It means a lot and I'm excited to just get whatever information I can from you.

CAVE: Absolutely, glad to participate.

BROWN: Okay, so first, can you tell me where and when you were born?

CAVE: I was born December 21, 1955, in Brooklyn, New York.

BROWN: Okay, pretty close to Christmas.

CAVE: Yeah.

BROWN: This question isn't really related to the interview at all, just because I found out, were you one of those kids who, you know, your parents wouldn't give you birthday and Christmas gifts?

CAVE: Two separate days, and when a friend says to me, "Here's your combined Christmas birthday gift", I asked them, "What do you want on Christmas, your birthday gift or your Christmas gift?" You know what I'm saying, it's how you own it that drives that.

BROWN: So, coming from Brooklyn, can you talk a little bit about what it was like growing up there?

CAVE: Sure, I'm-

BROWN: Sorry, not to cut you off, but what part of Brooklyn are you from?

CAVE: Well, my location then was considered Bedford-Stuyvesant, Crown Heights, but it was between Eastern Parkway, Atlantic Avenue. So now, to

go on my block, in fact I was just home on the block this summer. It was an area that I just enjoyed growing up in immensely, it was inner city, I had a cousin across the street. My father was a dentist, his father was a doctor, and they were best friends growing up, so I just grew up in an area where I would be playing street ball and stoop ball during the weekdays and then we'd drive out to Long Island on the weekends and I'd go fishing and clam digging through the sandbar. So, I had a very interesting contrast of experiences when I was growing up.

BROWN: That does sound interesting. You don't really expect a lot of people from Brooklyn to talk about going fishing on the weekends.

CAVE: Much less baiting a hook and not being squeamish.

BROWN: Yeah. What high school did you go to? Was it in Brooklyn?

CAVE: Yes, I went to Wingate High School. It was shaped like a banjo, it is no longer standing, I forget what year they demolished it, but it was interesting because there were several of us from Wingate High School that were in the first class of women.

BROWN: And was this a public school or a private school?

CAVE: Public school. Yes, I was in public school all the time growing up before coming to Dartmouth.

BROWN: And how did you hear about Dartmouth? Or how did you get to apply?

CAVE: So, I guess I should back up and say I was sixteen when I was a senior in high school. I was looking for an opportunity to travel away from home, be a good distance away from home, I wanted to be off on my own, and recruiters, as I recall, came from Smith, Holyoke, Rutgers, Dartmouth, those were just the schools I can recall that I applied to and got in to, but Dartmouth was the most interesting to me when I heard everything about it. And that we would be the first class of women and I thought that that was a very interesting, intriguing, and challenging opportunity in itself, and then of course the school's reputation as an Ivy League.

BROWN: So, being in that first class of women, you mentioned that it was a challenge. Were you ever intimidated or did you take the challenge head on?

CAVE: I think when you look at it in the context of coming from New York and being so young, I would say that it was a naïve unawareness of just what it meant to be in that first class. Clearly there was a ten to one ratio, you knew that there were a lot more men than there were women. And so I

wouldn't say that it was ever necessarily intimidating. Being from New York up in Hanover [New Hampshire], the contrast of just what that small town was like especially in the seventies, Hanover in the seventies is nothing like it looks now. You almost have to dial back to coming into that situation, driving up there, through the mountains, through the granite of New Hampshire, and then getting to that small town and then into, I lived in the Choates [a Dartmouth dorm cluster] at the time, and it was more of an adjustment of extreme contrast, and I think that that would probably be the most accurate way to characterize every aspect of the experience from the very beginning.

BROWN: Dartmouth, it was originally an all-male school, so being in the first class of women, obviously you faced some challenges, like you said before. So, I wanted to ask, how were you treated by the men on campus?

CAVE: Because I was, interestingly, underage, sixteen, I had a few what I call big brothers at the time. So these were guys who were friends, and to this day remain close friends. And I felt more of that kind of a support than I did anything else. I had one guy that I dated the whole time up there, who I'm still seeing now, and it was more of enjoying the independence and freedom of being up there, and the resources, and at that point, I knew I wanted to be a visual arts major, the venues at the Hopkins Center [for the Arts]. For me it was more of almost like being in a free and expansive and enjoyable situation, and so my experiences, and I know that when I talk to some of my classmates years later, I almost feel like I was almost in a bubble because some of the things that people were dealing with that were a little bit more harsh or negative, that was not my experience.

BROWN: It kind of sucks that I have to say this, but I am happy for you that you didn't have to go through that even though a lot of people always talked about the rampant misogyny that was on campus.

CAVE: Let me just say, and I also have to kind of paraphrase this, if you ever look at the photos of what I look like, I had these dark glasses that were shades, I wore them night and day. And because I was from New York, I was not used to speaking to people in the street. When I would walk, I really didn't notice people or when anybody spoke to me. So, I got a false reputation of being, "Oh, she's from New York, she thinks she's cool she doesn't speak to people." I think that I might have projected a much harsher, intimidating image than was my intention, I have to be honest about that. I think that that helped some of it, that helped part of it, and then my big brothers on the campus were like a third of the football team. So I also think that that helped as well. And I would look at it and say that it was more of an opportunity of—and you're spending most of your time on your academics, I mean you're going to the football games, you're going to the events that were at the Hop [Hopkins Center], and the parties. And

at that time, it was the year that the Alphas [Alpha Phi Alpha, a Black fraternity] were just forming their lines, so there were really no Black fraternities that were really active the way that it had really been established with multiple Black fraternities afterwards. I have never been on frat row [street where many fraternities and sororities are located], never attended a party on frat row. Think about the politics of the seventies. I really stress when we look at that time, that there was a militancy and advocacy, we had just gotten past the sixties. That kind of view, and coming into an institution like Dartmouth, was an influencing factor on how you looked at the world and how you saw the world. I knew Dartmouth was very different. Different from Brooklyn, different from New York, different from, certainly, the environment and the lifestyle I grew up in.

BROWN: I totally understand.

CAVE: And then, I also became fast, close friends with Judy Redding ['76] and with Karen Turner ['76] and it was kind of the three of us solidified, we just became fast friends. We joined the Black cheerleaders, the first Black basketball cheerleading squad, we were in that together, they were managers of the team as well. I think that those kinds of activities just really kind of filled the time and filled the void before we really got into the politics of things. I was the first woman to be president of the African American Society. So, when you talk about misogyny, I would say, "Hey, they elected me first president of the AAM [Afro-American Society]". I had brothers come up and challenge me and ask me why I thought I should be elected president, and when I responded, it must have been sufficient because I did have support to serve in that office and in that capacity. I looked at it as more of a time of Black feminism and empowerment than necessarily the negative attributes of pushback because it was also part of the pushback of the greater society outside of Dartmouth.

BROWN: I think that's fantastic. You mentioned being the first woman president of the AAM, that's already a huge feat in and of itself so I wanted to ask, what kind of work did you do with the AAM?

CAVE: I think that at the time we were looking to re-establish the organization and support for it, so that would have been the spring of '74. It was about holding the regular meetings, and the other thing that was happening around the same time is that the Black Alumni of Dartmouth Association [also known as BADA] was starting to formalize their activity, so there was a increasing presence on campus of the older Black alumni who, in my realm of understanding Dartmouth and the influence of Dartmouth, I would credit those alumni as having more of a formative influence and positive influence on me. When I say that that would be Garvey Clarke ['58], [Eugene] Gene Booth ['57], [Richard] Dick Fairley ['55] Fritz Alexander

[‘47], those were the Black alumni from the fifties, forty-nine, fifties, that first held the offices in BADA and also put on the first conference. I think that the whole focus was the Black community coming together to address the concerns of Blacks and Black students on campus. So, I think the AAM and the students having that focus, with the support of the alumni, that was the direction that the organization was moving towards, and that support was needed because there were issues with co-education, and I’m not gonna lie. There were some issues between Black men and Black women on campus and disrespect and the off campus women versus the sisters on campus. All the microcosms of young people in a social setting as artificial as Dartmouth was or as much of a contrast as it was to our communities back home, all those things were in the mix.

I think that the political activism—I also want to say it was also around the same time that divest from South Africa and the issue of divesting from South Africa that might have been part of what was playing around the same period as well. There were a lot of forces about dealing with the College, dealing with the College as an organizing group of Black alumni, and then the role of support that the Black students needed and wanted and our role in that process as well. Those things were kind of all happening from ’72, ’73, ’74, ’75, ’76, in that period of time.

BROWN: With the work that the AAM, Black students in general, and the Black Alumni at Dartmouth Association were doing, were Black faculty involved in that too?

CAVE: Absolutely, absolutely. This is the thing, again I’m turning back memories from 50 years, but I think of people like the Nelsons, Joan Nelson, Dean Nelson, and her husband, who was one of the professors of history. Erroll Hill was also a very active person, certainly with the Caribbean. Yes in the arts, definitely well known internationally, but also in supporting Black students on campus. [Nelson] Nels Armstrong [‘71] who was, at the time, on staff. Nels always had our back and made sure that we were trying to academically hold things together and stay focused. When I look at even the Black alumni who were faculty members at that time, they all played an integral part in really trying to making sure that we stayed focused with all the stuff that was going on and the fact that we were there to do well academically, and we got what we needed in terms of emotional support to graduate, to graduate on time, and to make sure that the support for the Black faculty as well was there when we had the focus and the voice of the Black alumni of Dartmouth as well. It was all related, is really the lesson of it.

BROWN: I’ve heard a lot of other alumni, and in some of the research I’ve done, the name Errol Hill comes up a lot, can you tell me a little bit more about him specifically?

CAVE: Professor Hill, his daughter Dega Hill was my roommate when I lived in Chicago for a period of time, so I know the family from that side, but he was just such a talented man in terms of what he did in the arts and internationally recognized in theater and dance and just the whole cultural aspect. So, because my family's history is from Barbados, my two grandfathers are from Barbados, I kind of look at the historical legacy and perspective of who we are and who we come from and where our families come from as a very vital story in identity. As we look to build our own sense of identity through what we know about our family. So, I looked at Errol Hill as somebody who was so respected and well known in his own work in the arts, but he also worked very hard at capturing, I think, and documenting the papers, the materials, of what that Black experience was like from his side as a professor, from the experiences of the students. Years later, decades after he passed away, I became aware of just his materials, the wealth of things that he really left to the College and left as his legacy of capturing what went into that experience. I was in the visual arts and not so much the theater and dance part of it, but certainly to appreciate when somebody is recognized on the global stage for their contributions in the arts that's something to be very proud of, so we all had a sense of pride for what his contribution and his talent brought to the Dartmouth community.

BROWN: He sounds fantastic, sounds like a fantastic person.

CAVE: Absolutely.

BROWN: You brought up earlier that during your time, the Alphas just started coming to campus.

CAVE: They had to pledge their line in Boston, so they couldn't even pledge on campus.

BROWN: When you say they pledged in Boston, was it a chapter separate from Dartmouth or was that the Dartmouth chapter but they just weren't allowed to do it on campus?

CAVE: Now [laughing], I do not falsely give Alpha's history. I believe that because they were trying to establish the first chapter at Dartmouth, they were required to pledge in Boston.

BROWN: Okay.

CAVE: Interesting, and this is also my recollection of history, but the women wanted to start, I believe we were trying to start the AKAs [Alpha Kappa Alpha, a Black sorority], and we were actually discouraged because of the

three hundred Blacks, thirty were women in that first class. And they felt that it would be unhealthy for us to establish a sorority because it would further fragment the very small group of women that was on campus. I thought it was kind of interesting that while the guys went ahead and had their chapter established, and they did it successfully, and the fraternity was able to be established, that the women and the interest in our sorority and having a sorority was discouraged, so I never really got the full story when I would try to talk to Black alumni and faculty later as to who exactly was discouraging it and who actually was fueling that opposition, but I just know that when we got pushback, we just really didn't pursue it. But that, to me, was an interesting kind of example of, "Well, it was okay for the guys to establish, but yet women couldn't". Or were discouraged.

BROWN: Did you ever see any fragmentation with the men who pledged Alpha and with the ones who didn't?

CAVE: For me, at the time, the person I was dating at the time, Ben Bridges ['74] was one of the original chapter's founders. I saw their effort at trying to organize, to be of service, and I saw it more as something that the guys that were on that line had as a positive experience. The negative side of it, I wouldn't say I was aware of it, but then, because I'm not a male and was not in a group that may not have been part of it, I don't think that I really had the view to know what that response might have been from a male perspective. For me, as a Black politically activist person, I thought having a Black fraternity on campus was a great thing. Coming from New York, coming from a network of friends and family who all over the country, Black fraternities particularly at the time, family and friends at Howard University and other places, it was like a whole big thing. And so, to see that happen and be established at Hanover, I thought was positive, but I was also aware that there were negative aspects of it. I think you have to kind of look at it and say, for me the identity of Black political activism was more of the attraction. The African American society was bringing together the community, so I gravitated towards the value and importance of Black activism and political activism. So, a little less on the fraternities or sororities but I understand that they played a valuable role. And with that one chapter I don't think there was as much issue that there might have been in years after I was there where there might have been some friction, but that's not something I was aware of.

BROWN: To talk about more politically directed things, you, Judy Redding, and Monica Hargrove wrote "Institutional Racism and Student Life at Dartmouth". First, about that, I wanted to ask was there any specific event that kind of sparked you guys and made you think, "Enough is enough, we're gonna finally try to write something about this"?

CAVE: I kind of put the focus more on the course that Judy took. There was a visiting professor, and I couldn't remember where he came from, but he was teaching a class on institutional racism. And so, I always find it academically ironic that the class that the school offered was really the impetus for the training where Judy basically says, "Well, you know I'm taking this class and these are the symptoms of institutional racism, these are the things that are going on here", and we were sharing experiences plus we're talking to the fellas and the folks on the football team and we're talking to Black faculty, and our informal conversations with the various networks, because Monica, Judy, and myself, even though we were friends, I would definitely say that our network of friends was very different, because they were more interested in government, I was in the visual arts side. Karen, who was also close to us, was part of a group, just the network as well, so I think that we had a very eclectic mix of issues, concerns, and personal experiences with professors that—I'll never forget when I had one professor draw a bomb on my paper with a line going down because he said "Well, you know, you're writing style and this and that". And so, you were wondering well what are some of the experiences that I'm having when I'm in a class plus most of the classes were very small at that time. And you go through an experience and sometimes everybody would look at you and expect you to be the voice of all Black people or some of the experiences that we all had being in Hanover, we just had great conversations around the things that we were struggling with and really just trying to find solace and support amongst each other. It was almost like the perfect storm for us, saying we need to formally organize these concerns, we need to raise them. And I think there was, at that time, really a naïve assumption that in doing so in going through this process, there would have to be a response and things would change. Because think about what the seventies were like. Everything was being confronted, new systems of affirmative action was really getting challenged and even the whole admissions situation at Dartmouth and other schools, other Ivy League institutions was being questioned and challenged and the attrition, retention of Black students and Black faculty. All those things are going on, and I think that that was the mix that just made it necessary for us to move forward with that writing of that report.

BROWN: I understand, I definitely understand. So, the professor that Judy took the course with, did he ever assist you guys with this piece while you were writing it?

CAVE: To my knowledge, no. When I was working on it, it was more the research, the information that we would get in talking to administration, but I don't remember Judy ever describing or engaging that professor in the process that we were undertaking. The whole idea was we felt that if we researched it, if we gathered the data, if we summarized it, if we organized it, there was just not the thought that there needed to be a more formal

area of power and support to stand behind it. We didn't actively seek out or ask Black alumni to support us in it. I think that, in retrospect, and at that time, the Black Alumni of Dartmouth organization was in its fledgling situation, we just saw it as a group of students, concerned students, formally raising issues that, based on what we've articulated as the symptoms of institutional racism, is happening here. And hello, we just want to flag this out, and we want a response. I was sixteen, seventeen, they were eighteen, and so in our youth, in our enthusiasm, I guess we moved forward, and the wheels began to turn.

BROWN: Thinking about responses to it, how did the Black community at Dartmouth respond to the piece? And how did Dartmouth in general respond to it?

CAVE: I think that your question has a couple of stages in it to answer it, I mean. When we presented the report, it was a trustee committee that was formed that actually Karen Turner was a part of because they wanted to have a student on it. And when I talked to Karen, she would often share that there was almost a disbelief or a reluctance in their committee meeting to even consider that the things that we were raising and talking about in the report were even possible at Dartmouth. I had an interview after that with the Praxis [Black Praxis, a student publication at Dartmouth], and I very publicly said how disappointed I was in the response. They basically blew us off, "We looked into it, we really don't find any basis for these accusations or concerns", and that was that. Again, I asked, "If you read the report, and you look at many of the challenges that the school has encountered over the decades, how is it that similarities still exist?" If not, the patterns and the symptoms of institutional racism are pervasive. I think that things do change, things have changed, we've had so many different administrations since the seventies, but I just look at it and say that the experience I got from doing that report is, if you research something or you have concerns, and it walks like a duck and it quacks like a duck, it's a duck. And that kind of process of just being courageous and challenging and being an advocate just from that experience I always credit at such a young age, it became an ingrained part of who I was and who I've been as a person, regardless of what field or industry or profession I've been in. I do credit it for making my bones in that respect that it was an experience that I didn't really think about in those terms at the time, but I look at the patterns of the things that I've always been involved in and how I raised my children, even what my kids are doing, and I say it was in your blood and you found a group of friends and people that shared those concerns. I think it's interesting because only our three names appeared on the report. And it was not because we wrote it alone. We had other people who helped write sections. But when it came down to putting our names on the paper, I think that there were many who were older, and some might say wiser at the time, who said, "You know, we're gonna let you guys sign it and we're

not.” I’ve had alumni say to me, “Well, how did you feel?” When we stood on the steps of Baker library [Dartmouth’s main library] before we went to meet with the trustees and I have that picture kind of faded from the newspapers, we were supported by the community. And I think that the community rallied around us, I think they visibly showed that they supported what we were doing, the act that we were presenting this, these issues to the College. From that standpoint, I think when it counted, there was public and visible support for what we did. That’s really how I look at it in retrospect decades later.

BROWN: Near the beginning of the report, you guys wrote—sorry, I’m trying to remember where I wrote the quote—okay. “There are ways in which the traditions of Dartmouth have developed into patterns of discrimination”. I wanted to ask, do you remember any specific instances of a tradition transforming into discrimination on campus?

CAVE: When I think of the traditions—there were two pieces of it. There were the traditions established by an all-male school, I think that that had some of it and at that time, an all-male school that was predominantly white. I think at that time, we were looking at the organization, the societies, the network, the structure, the culture, and it was all those things that—we didn’t see ourselves in that tradition and in those practices. For myself, personally, I think that there’s always the challenge that Dartmouth has, and I say to this day, because something has been a tradition that began in a period of time, it doesn’t necessarily mean that that tradition should be continued, without really evaluating is it inclusive, is it reflective of the institution, of the values we now hold today. When I worked with the iconographic work group on campus and we were looking at public art, we were looking at some of the other issues that came up, even with the weather vane, that was another situation, so many times, and even meeting some of the Dartmouth alums, even when I came back to the Maryland area and you go to Dartmouth functions, I’m talking about general chapter functions, general groups here, there was an experience at Dartmouth that so many of them cherish and value, that was not inclusive, not diverse. But it was their love of history and love of the College. And I think that when we question the perpetuation and continuance of things that were exclusive, lacked diversity, whatever, that was when the rift and the rub began to take place. I think that with leadership, with a lot of things that are happening now, and also all the special interest groups that have formed on campus, that there is, things have evolved somewhat, but I think that there are students to this day right now on campus, and you can give me your view of it, that still feel that some of those traditions are not necessarily inclusive and something that you feel a part of. I think the whole challenge is, the institution of Dartmouth represents so much rich history and legacy and then it also has the issues that do not speak of a history of necessarily treating people

equitably. That's really why I look at this whole situation and say, "Well, we have to be that voice". I kind of see the patterns of things that still exist, but I also see that something's have changed. It's kind of an interesting situation because in 2022, we will have the fiftieth anniversary celebrations for the Black Alumni of Dartmouth, co-education, and it will just be interesting to see how, when this whole portrayal of the lens of history of Dartmouth and accountability comes forward, that the view, the presentation, and the collective experiences that are presented, really do represent the challenges and the struggle of those voices that are all part of it in consideration with that tradition. What are some new traditions, what are some new experiences of value that having a more diverse community at Dartmouth, how the College has benefitted? And when I look at what the campus looks like today, and the programs that are available that weren't even in existence when I was there from 1972 to 1976, I want to see as many African American students and students of color be able to utilize those resources and that opportunity, so I think that's really what we all are still working towards and working for.

BROWN: Definitely. Another thing that I wanted to ask about something that came up in the "Institutional Racism and Student Life" report was, you guys quoted the McLane Report which—actually, before I ask that question, can you give a recap of what the McLane Report was?

CAVE: Off the top of my head, that report, something that Judy had heard that—I think that what, and I would have to honesty go off the top of my head, I know that there were some concerns raised just about what was happening I want to say with students and their experiences, policies at the College, but off the top of my head, I don't recall. I would say that I would have to research that or look at it. I know that I was more focused on the climate we were in and the conflicts and challenges that the faculty was facing, that African Americans who played on the sports teams were facing, so that was more what I recall four decades later, five decades later. But I know that Judy had done more of the research on what had been revealed in that.

BROWN: There was a section of the McLane Report that you guys quoted that basically said to avoid prejudice between Black and White students, White students needed to be exposed to Black students. So, I wanted to ask, do you believe that exposure to Blackness helps White students at the College avoid prejudice, and have you ever seen that during your time at Dartmouth, where a White student learned more about Blackness and got over it?

CAVE: This is kind of what I think, or at least what I think we were getting at, is that there is an inherent assumption that what minorities come into a climate or community, where at that point, we're the minorities, we're

looking to assimilate into white culture. And I think that what we were really getting at is no, we want to engage in a collaborative sense in a community and have our cultural experiences valued. We want to have it recognized that we want to experience and retain practices in our cultural legacy, in our political values, in our shared experiences, and that even if you didn't grow up in a community with many Black people, as many of the white students that we had in our classes, that was just not their experience. Our point was that our culture, our holidays, our traditions, all that, it would now be infused and become visible in what that collective community looks like. And so, do I believe that there's a benefit to whites? I absolutely do believe it, and I'll make this point, there are programs that formally look to stimulate that engagement, because the workforce that the students are gonna be part of once they graduate is diverse. The global marketplace is diverse and multicultural, so I think it's a matter of pragmatic reality that if you're not taking the opportunity in the college community to foster that cultural diversity awareness and celebration beyond what you know and beyond what you're comfortable with, of course we have that to contribute, and that should be recognized and valued. So, I think that is part of what I think we were getting at there because we didn't see it there, because the numbers weren't there. If you take a look at the Black graduates, just the list, and then you see when the numbers really start to blow up in terms of the sixties and seventies, it becomes more realistic that that valuing of cultural experiences and visibility became a major issue when you're looking at thirty, forty, fifty Blacks being on campus versus three in this class, seven in that class. I think that that was a reality of intentional recruitment and just the progress that had been made in the seventies of what that Dartmouth class makeup looked like that really begs the question that absolutely it should happen, and it needs to continue to happen. And not just Black culture. Latino culture, Asian culture, that is the global workplace that we are in now.

BROWN: I know it might not have been very common given the time period and how things were in America at the time, but do you remember any white students who did openly show appreciation for Black culture while you were on campus?

CAVE: I think that the question that you asked is a reasonable question, but living in the moment, I could say Patti Labelle came up there, but the concert was sold out, it was packed. I look at just the events we had, the lectures we had, the controversy of some, I mean when Richard Joseph brought Malcolm X, which was before my time, up there, they had some very major and controversial, interesting things with Black leadership and Black political figures that predated when I was up there in the seventies. That said to me that Dartmouth was a location where the resources to bring the best, the brightest in African American minds, academic talent, whatever, the resources were there, but the greater community had mixed emotions

about its value and its importance. I think that Blacks knew it, and they pushed for it, and they fought for it, and we continue to do that. And we have to continue to do that because nobody's going to really have the love of, the need for our culture and our political sense of importance. We have to be the driver for that, we can never feel like enough has been done. We can never feel that when we've had a Black trustee serve as president or that we have a large number, this number of progress or success that we ever have to stop. We just can't stop because I think when we feel comfortable and feel that we've done enough, then we're not really valuing the challenge that there are forces out there that are pushing back. So, I look at that history and say, "Yeah, it's been fifty years of the organization BADA and fifty years of co-education in 2022", but I feel like to this day, the struggle continues. Certainly George Floyd and the situations that occurred of recent times, say that, and January sixth [insurrection at U.S. capital] as another example, that we just can't ever feel too comfortable that there's an acceptance and the value of what the Black experience is.

BROWN: Definitely. So, I wanted to ask, another thing that I thought about when I was going through the report that you guys wrote, you talked about how it was difficult for some people to leave Dartmouth without viewing non-White people and their cultures as less than, and that in turn that undermined the sense of community among Black students. Do you have any specific memories of that happening?

CAVE: I would have to say that my personal experience was more rooted and surrounded within the Black community at Dartmouth. I would say, between Monica, Judy, and myself, I was probably the most limited in how I looked at what was going on. In other words, between academics, being on an all-Black cheerleading squad, I found ways that my comfort level for what my culture, my identity was, even in the midst of being in Hanover, I was able to seek it out, and I was able to find it. So, I would say that if anybody—now, I will say I know one thing I can give you as an example. I know that when we wound up having an all-Black female basketball cheerleading squad, there was a pushback from the alumni. Some of them had issues, "Well, why are they all Black women on the basketball squad?" And it was because when we had that first squad who came out to try out their kinds of cheers or whatever, that team was all Black females. And so the response that we got, and I can't tell you what was the uproar because the feedback wouldn't have gone to us personally, it would have been more towards the College, but I was aware that there was pushback and issues raised about it. But I think if at the time the basketball team had been a championship team as the football team was, it would probably have been magnified even more. So that was an example to me of just that there were some issues that were in existence and I'm saying, well, we're looking at a lot of all white groups all white things by happenstance or whatever so here's a situation where there's an

all Black group, and now all of a sudden, y'all are freaked out. I think that those kinds of experiences just made me very aware that everything isn't fair, everything isn't a fight. But it certainly is an opportunity to make sure that you have your voice, you speak up, and you seek the transparency of facts and information whenever you raise your concerns. And I think that I can't speak for what different people's perceptions were in the larger community. I mean, I think if you look at the Praxis, if you look at The Dartmouth [Dartmouth's main student newspaper], or a lot of Dartmouth magazines or newspapers, if you look at some of the issues that were happening on campus at Dartmouth in the seventies, I think that that was really where your evidence of what was going on can really, you can really get a sense of it. But I was really on campus for three years, I spent my entire senior year off campus. So I had a very compact experience and view at Dartmouth. I was at UCSD [University of California San Diego], I taught a term in Chicago, at Pace Institute, Cook County Jail. So after I left Dartmouth, I know that they did a lot of tweaking of the Dartmouth plan and you couldn't just be gone for an entire senior year the way we were, but I think that for those three years, three and a half years, that I was on campus, it was a sense that Dartmouth really was a microcosm of the world and the country that we were experiencing and the time.

BROWN: I understand. I want to connect this to something you brought up earlier. You said a lot of your friends, a lot of your male friends were football players. And I wanted to ask, since there's a section in the report dedicated to athletics, did they ever talk to you about that and express how they felt?

CAVE: Absolutely. I mean, I think that a lot of the frustrations and challenges that they had—so, I guess I'll make this disclaimer. If you're not playing the sport and playing on the team, you're getting secondary information, rather than being the primary source of experience. But I did get the sense of frustration that they would identify and just opportunities and how things went on. A lot of it was tied to coaching, and again, not being in the locker room, not being on the team, and certainly not saying that I have a sense of sport strategy, because there are some women that loves sports and art into it, I am not one of them. But I did certainly feel and get the sense in talking to them that they felt that certain things should be happening in a different way than what they were experiencing, an opportunity for playing and starting time and that kind of thing. And so those sentiments and the interviews and discussions that we did have with the guys certainly went and were tied and put into the report, because we felt that there was enough of those feelings that it deserved to be included as part of what we saw as, again, the threads of institutional racism that we were trying to identify, that we wanted to have looked at and examined.

BROWN: I think one of my last questions regarding the report specifically, you guys talked about the College Committee of Standing and Conduct, and an issue that you had with it was it was pretty difficult for Black students who are put to the committee to be judged by a jury of their peers, considering that Dartmouth did not have a lot of Black students. So I wanted to ask, do you remember any Black students who had to deal with this, and did you ever talk to them about their experience?

CAVE: I specifically do not recall the students that might have been specifically referred to in the report. I know that there was just a general feeling in discussion that anytime you go before a group where it is not representative of you, I mean, the judicial says "A jury of your peers". If I'm going before any group and the peers are considered not to include anybody of color, there's some issues there. And the same patterns can be seen when you look at who gets tenure and how that determination of tenure is made. Karen Turner is now a professor, tenured professor at Temple [University in Pennsylvania]. And so, when we talk about these things, when we talk about who makes decisions when groups get together, it's the same old story when that group is not reflective in a broad sense of diversity that the decisions are made from a very small context that depends on what those attitudes and thoughts are of whites in power. I think that that's something that is just a timeless issue of concern. And I've seen it repeated in whatever industry you're in. Whatever business you're trying to run, applying for a loan at the bank, you're going before the board for an interview for a job, I mean, you know, the things that we've experienced. We usually get a feeling when we feel that perhaps that openness, that acceptance, that experience that we have is not consistent with somebody else's. There are studies that have been done where Shanique has her name on the resume and the other, the Caucasian sounding name gets the interview or gets that acceptance. So, there's enough scientific data that shows that the mindsets and personal prejudices that people have influence and limit opportunities for people of color. I think it was true back then, fifty years ago, and I think it's true today.

BROWN: I also think not much has changed in that department. But I guess my last question about the report specifically, so at the end, you guys outlined recommendations for how to remedy the problems that you brought up. Did you ever see any of those put into action before you graduated?

CAVE: When I think of the trustee committees response, I would answer your question and certainly say that article, which I can send you a copy of, says no. I think it was really, "We listened to them, we heard what they had to say, we established the committee, we found that their concerns were unfounded, and that was that". So, I don't think it was. I think that in retrospect, the fact that we didn't establish a task force, or we didn't have

a task force and counter their committee response with now a task force of the Black alumni of Dartmouth, made up of alumni, as I look at strategy and perseverance, I would say, "If you said what's the one thing that you would do over", it's really the understanding that don't expect that there's going to be change, that just presenting the information is going to resolve, that you've got to come back and say, "You've said this is unfounded, well let's dig a little deeper and see if your conclusion is valid." And so, that to me is if I could go back in time and do something over it would have been that that is one of several reports and maybe the report gets done annually. Maybe that the review gets established with a task force that pushes for certain recommendations outlined in it. I think that we moved on with life, like I said, I was off campus a whole senior year, so it was a moment of just our need to speak up and speak out. But I do see now in retrospect that this kind of issue, this kind of challenge is a continuing move of strategy and perseverance, because there's not going to be—it's very unusual for there to be people just accepting, "We looked at it, you're right, you got us. This is what we can do to fix it." It would be nice if it worked like that, but that's just unrealistic.

BROWN: Another thing that you wrote with Monica Hargrove and Judy Redding was "Open Letter to the Black Community", which was a poem in the Black Praxis magazine. First, did the three of you write a lot together? Was it more than just these two pieces?

CAVE: The reason why I chuckle when you say that is Judy recently shared that piece with me, and, you know, kind of passing back, and then we started talking and I said, "Well, Judy, I went back and I found a letter that you wrote to me," and she said, "Well, I have a letter that you wrote to me." So, I think that the opportunities for us to collaborate were not frequent, but when those two examples, I don't really recall that there were a lot more of those instances or occurrences, but I think that we probably in the whole process that was evolving as we wrote the report, as we felt the need to communicate, we all, then, after those few collaborative instances, we went on our own ways to personally pursue things or to be part of it, we became active when the Black Alumni of Dartmouth organization was formed, you know, we were part of those things. I want to say Karen Turner, I believe, was the first female who was president of the Black Alumni of Dartmouth. I look at that and say that when I ran for president of the African American Society, I think that those were examples of okay, we've raised the consciousness, our consciousness has been raised, what are we going to do? And I think that's really when more of doing and seeing results, getting results, because if we're not leading those results, it's not going to happen, it's not going to be done for us, there's not going to be an acknowledgement and a change. And I think that that's really when I would say the boots on the ground activism in our own different ways started to manifest.

BROWN: On the poem and talking about results, what kind of effect did it have in the Black community, and did it have the result you were aiming for?

CAVE: That's a hard question because without taking a formal survey, where we took a measurement of attitudes preceding that action then the same survey to see if there were any changes. I think that I personally had a sense, and it was probably because of the formation of the formalizing of the Black Alumni of Dartmouth Association, that I felt that establishment of BADA was really the impetus for us coming together as a group, and also saying we always not just deal with the issues of Black retention and recruitment, but to also hear what these students are dealing with on campus, and there's so many of us now, we're in the thousands. Back then it was a lot less, but there was always a sense that whatever our experience was, because it was for very, very many, individual, that there was a sense of paying it forward and always making sure that whatever Black students were dealing with on campus, whatever Black faculty were challenged with, feeling that they needed to move on to become whatever, that the opportunities weren't really there, was always a sense that that was our mission. That to me was how I would say we came together, but if over the span of time, over the span of decades, there's, it's risen and it's been lowered in terms of what that activism level and the effectiveness of the organization might have been. I think that when you get very large in numbers, I always remember when taking some of the business courses that it's easy to be innovative and a small model and something that starts out but it's scaling up that's the hard part. Establishing those best practices and managing them in a much broader context that's where the devils in the details and I think that's some of the challenges we face now. We have so many phenomenal Black alumni that have had success and paid it forward and been part of the organization and been involved with students and mentoring and other things and it's just hard to manage the large network that it is now. And say, well, are we still being responsive, are we still being on task? So, I'm looking forward to 2022, I'm looking forward to the fiftieth anniversary, I've already got my hotel ticket squared away. Transportation's a little shaky at this point because Manchester car rentals are accepting gold bars as payment, but I'm looking forward to getting back there, and I'm also looking forward to just celebrating those of us who was still able to come together and share community and challenges with one another.

BROWN: That's absolutely something worth celebrating.

CAVE: Mm-hmm.

BROWN: And it's insane to think you guys are coming up on fifty years. That's just still so amazing to me.

CAVE: Because that means I'm at least fifty years old, right? [Laughter] Yes I am, yes I am, but okay.

BROWN: "Open Letter to the Black Community" was published in the Black Praxis magazine, so I wanted to ask, was this the only piece you published in the Praxis?

CAVE: This is the only one—no, I had an interview right after we had the meeting with the trustees. So that's the only two things that I recall that were in the Praxis that I was directly involved in.

BROWN: Now I want to talk more about your life after Dartmouth. So, what did you do after you graduated?

CAVE: Oh, I was a rolling stone. After I graduated, I moved to Chicago, I got a job with United Airlines in marketing and sales promotion. That was like a one span of one segment of my career, and I have to admit that I loved the travel benefits, I loved the art that you see that I've created on the back of the wall is really a reflection of being able to travel worldwide, I call it the celebration of life series. But my careers have always been, and I think this is one of the things that time at Dartmouth, and then also getting out of school at nineteen, I've had many different careers. I've been in the airline industry, I worked for a global travel management company, and then for the last fifteen, sixteen years, I've been an educator, a visual arts educator. I look at that experience and happily I'm going to retire from education July first of 2022.

BROWN: Congratulations.

CAVE: Thank you, because it's time for my next chapter, but I see my next chapter as going back to the art studio and traveling and joining my family, my friends, so my life has been just a series of enjoying the experiences and the opportunities, but also understanding that in the process of that success, you always have to play a role in making things better, in being a value, or being an advocate, of being a voice for those who may not be in the same situation or the position to affect change and transformation the way you can. And you do that, knowing that there are consequences, but I always believe, and I mean I've always experienced that when one door closes and nothing is on the horizon and you're like boy, this is it, bam! Another door is going to open. That's been my life experience, so coming to a point at sixty-five going on sixty-six, we're in some dark times that, I mean seriously, I have a network of friends, we're talking about citizenship in another country and what's going to happen with the 2024 election and is there going to be a civil war with the next election because fifty percent of the country is going to deny the outcome, but I look at it and say in one

sense, it's the darkest hour, but in another sense, I'm just excited about the opportunity in the short term of having my time and my freedom and flexibility back once again. It was kind of like that period right after Dartmouth where I wasn't quite sure what I was going to do career wise before I started working for United Airlines. And just really being grateful for that opportunity to experience the world and experience the culture and just what friends and family are about. That's been the life after Dartmouth.

BROWN: That sounds amazing. Did you do a lot of traveling before Dartmouth?

CAVE: Interestingly, I didn't. And because of the choices that I made, I did not go into any of the study abroad programs. I was a transfer at UCSD so in my senior year that fall term, I was out at UCSD, and then I was at Pace Institute tutoring, at Cook County Jail, and then back for graduation in June of seventy-six. It wasn't until I got the opportunity to work for United Airlines that I realized how much I love to travel. I worked for US Airways for a bit of time too and I literally—and let's face it, if you know anything about Chicago winters—I would get up early in the morning Saturday, and pack for the Bahamas and overnight it, and come back Sunday night. And I just needed that recharge from the extreme winter weather that Chicago is still known to have. So, for me, travel and just being able to go to some destinations is really—the only thing I've never done, which is still my like goal it, I have not traveled to Africa. I've been to Europe, Asia, South America, I have not made that trip, so that's kind of on my bucket list of things that I want to enjoy. I had a trip planned because there was an arts festival in Africa and of course it was in 2020.

BROWN: Of course.

CAVE: I mean, seriously, I mean, somebody else was paying for it, that was the irony. And then I just said, "Okay, as another door closes, another one will open." But that just really kind of got me. I was like, "What? Are you kidding?" So that's kind of on my list of things I want to do still.

BROWN: Okay, so this is a little derailing, so the paintings in the back, did you do those while you were traveling or did you do them when you came back?

CAVE: A little bit of both. So I really got into the art and painting after I was at United and more kind of getting into the family, I have two sons, Jordan and Romare, so when I was suddenly more into the domestic mom thing, and I was anchored a little bit more, there was less travel and less desire to travel. But when I travel, I have lots of photos and I would say while I was at United, I did have our children, I was in Chicago, I did start my interest in the art business, but it was really more in the nineties. I live here in Hyattsville, which is part of the gateway arts district in Prince

George's county and so all around me are galleries. And I have done work as a consultant for the Prince George's arts and humanities council, so kind of where the merger of the classroom and the merger of my own interests, so I've been writing curriculum on social justice curriculum and dealing with art integration, with integration of social justice and global competency. My interest in leaving the classroom and retiring in the classroom is to continue as a consultant and really look to continue utilizing resources, programs, issues on immigration, broadening the knowledge and awareness of artists of color in a curriculum that is Eurocentric. So that's kind of my interest now and then also just to continue with my own painting and art, which really has [inaudible] last couple of years.

BROWN: I want to ask, how did you originally get into painting and just art in general?

CAVE: That was what my major at Dartmouth was in.

BROWN: How did you choose that?

CAVE: Studios down there, it was interesting, I majored in it there because it was a natural talent and it came easily to me, so I said, "Okay, well, I can be successful at that." But then the pragmatic side of me always sought out corporate jobs because I wanted that income level, so I always had two or more things that I was doing at the same time my entire career. That's why I always joke when people say, "Well, you know, you gotta do this or you gotta go after this," I just say whatever you're passionate about, don't let anybody sidetrack you or talk you out of it. Pursue your passion, even if you have to also do something else to help support that pursuit. But I've just been painting for, most of this work, I actually have them counted for insurance purposes, there were 100 pieces of art in my house. But my youngest son Romare, named after Romare Bearden, he is also a talented painter. And so, some of the pieces in here are his and I would not let him take them to his place yet. But the expression in the creation of art, collage, painting with acrylics, it's just really been my strength.

BROWN: That's amazing. And those pieces are really beautiful. I especially like the, I think it's on a beach, and a bunch of people on the sand there.

CAVE: Sorry, I was trying to figure out. This one?

BROWN: Yeah, that one.

CAVE: That was inspired by the [inaudible] in, well you can pick your island, of course Trinidad and Tobago will claim that that's the only place but the Bahamas, another place in Barbados, everybody has it. Those really are

more reflective of what I've done, these are some of the other pieces over here, I have collage pieces, let's see, these are some of my other collages. So you've got the tour here. The book club, the spot in California, the garden scene outdoors.

BROWN: Those are really beautiful. [Laughter] Thank you for the mini-tour.

CAVE: Sure, sure.

BROWN: I think my last question is how has your perception of Dartmouth changed from now versus when you were a student?

CAVE: Oh, okay. How has it changed? I'm not so sure that it changed. Let me say it a little bit differently. I think I, as an adult, a seasoned adult, a senior citizen, see and value the benefit and contribution that I've made to Dartmouth. And I think that I still look at it and have a love of the College because of the fact that it was such a formative and critical part of who I am and what I am and what I've turned out and grown up to be in pursuit. I recognize that, but I feel that possible the difference now is I understand how, how should I say this, how the need for me to be involved and to be part of the Dartmouth community and to make a contribution as an alumni, and it may not be in the financial numbers that some of my more lucrative fellow alum can do, but I can certainly be a voice, be involved, be on campus, be active in the Black Alumni of Dartmouth organization. And I think the sense of belonging and the value and importance of being part of that is greater now than it was back then. I saw it as something like I was there, we did the report, there issues of concern, and then I kind of got into life and being part of life. But now I look at that institution and I see that there's still a part of me that's connected and a role of value and influence that I also want to have. What I've gotten to and what I am now able to provide in that role and in that capacity. I mean, I love the fact that now you all are putting together courses that are looking at the history of what has happened. We had the Black Alumni of Dartmouth conference where we went to the graves of the slaves that were buried on campus. That was a piece that when I was up there, I wasn't even aware of. More astute alumni had known the history and researched the history of Dartmouth and African Americans at Dartmouth but that whole history has been more discover and learning as a lot of alumni have brought forward their documents, their evidence, and this whole issue of transparency, so I like being involved in the process of sharing that history, of promoting that history and encouraging our students to learn about really what has come before them that makes the institution what it is that you all are experiencing now.

BROWN: I think we can wrap up here, I want to say thank you so much, not only for agreeing to do this interview, but for what you've contributed to the

College, because I can confidently say without the experiences of Black students like you and Black alumni, my experience would not nearly be as enjoyable as it is now. So, genuinely, I want to thank you so much for that.

CAVE: Well, you're very welcome. And I also want to thank you for your courage and your interest because you know, you've made some decisions and made some sacrifices and even pursuing this that you should be commended for because realizing and being part of something at your young stage means that you've got nowhere to go but up and more success beyond here so thank you for your efforts as well.

BROWN: So, I'm gonna stop the recording here.

CAVE: Okay.