

12-16-2014

DISTRICT WITHIN A DISTRICT: De FACTO SEGREGATION AND WHITE FLIGHT INTO AND OUT OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF UNIVERSITY CITY (1967-1991)

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District within a District: De facto Segregation and White Flight into and out
of The School District of University City (1967-1991)

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A Dissertation Submitted to The Graduate School at the University of Missouri-St.Louis
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Of Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

November 2014

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Acknowledgements

Prior to jotting a single word of my doctoral dissertation, I imagined composing the acknowledgements section. There was never any doubt at the onset of this journey that my success would hinge upon the support of others. The support has come in different forms and it has served as both a solid foundation and a well-lit path throughout this process. While some of my biggest supporters are individuals who I have come to know through my graduate work, others were in my proverbial corner long before this process began. All of the individuals that I wish to acknowledge have helped to bring out the very best in me and their influence extend far beyond the scope of this dissertation.

My wife, Nafonwyck, was sincere when she encouraged me to pursue my doctorate several years ago. In my entire life, no one has believed in me the way she has. Her support remained solid even as I spent entire weekends and long evenings at the library while she tended to our two spirited children, Ana Lisa and Javier. No one sacrificed like she did during my coursework and writing. What's more, no one was a bigger cheerleader when I became discouraged or wanted to give up. Without Nafonwyck, this journey would have stalled long ago.

I am forever grateful to my advisor, Dr. Matthew Davis, who has been an amazing teacher and mentor during my PhD work. Dr. Davis ignited within me a passion to pursue and understand the topics upon which my dissertation work is based. His Saturday morning seminars generated the most fascinating and insightful learning that I have ever been involved in. Dr. Davis' natural ability to meld the academic work of published scholars with the complex and visceral experiences of his pupils created, for me, a bridge to my dissertation. I cannot begin to

express my appreciation for all of the advice and support he has provided throughout this process.

Also deserving of a great deal of appreciation is Dr. Lynn Beckwith Jr. In addition to serving on my dissertation committee, Dr. Beckwith has been a mentor and role model for me over the past two decades. His presence, leadership, and charisma have always been qualities that I have aspired to emulate. Dr. Beckwith's support has been consistent for a very long time. He gave me my first opportunity in administration, was instrumental in my post graduate work as both an instructor and advisor, and offered critical support and guidance throughout my PhD journey. I am beyond thankful for Dr. Beckwith's influence upon my personal and professional development.

I consider myself fortunate to have had such a supportive and insightful dissertation committee. In addition to Dr. Davis and Dr. Beckwith, I received a great deal of authentic insight and advice from Dr. Claude Weathersby and Dr. Carl Hogland. Both offered practical and theoretical awareness related to my study that proved invaluable.

My mother, Dr. Carol Diaz-Granados, earned her PhD while raising four spirited boys alone and on welfare many years ago. Not only was she my first role model, she was my first connection to the world of academia. Tagging along with my mother, I have fond memories of spending time on the campus of Washington University with my brothers. Though I could never have fully appreciated or understood the significance of her journey, I was certainly influenced by the standards that she set and maintained in even the most dire of circumstances. Her pursuit of knowledge trumped the countless obstacles that rested in her path. I am grateful that she instilled within me a love for learning that shines so brightly.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the spring of 1970, former director of the Office of Civil Rights, Leon E. Panetta, spoke at a rally in University City, Missouri in support of three candidates running for School Board. The platform that the candidates were running on rested squarely on one issue, de facto segregation in the School District of University City¹. Panetta had recently resigned his position in the Nixon administration in response to the relaxed stance the president had taken in addressing the proliferation of de facto segregation that continued to slow the progress of integration in our nation's public school system long after the landmark case of *Brown v. the Board of Education*, Topeka, KS. Around the same time that Panetta spoke to citizens of University City, President Nixon had informed Congress that the government would not attempt to break up de facto segregation. Instead, the government was to remain squarely focused upon those instances of de jure segregation ruled unconstitutional in the school setting back in 1954.²

In his address to citizens of University City, Panetta insisted that "Distinctions between de facto and de jure segregation are a fraud".³ It was this truth that motivated him to resign his appointed post from the Nixon administration. Panetta's condemnation of de facto segregation was also a condemnation of the government's lack of attention and effort towards school desegregation. His grass roots approach to addressing the interconnectivity of de facto and de jure segregation was tailor made for University City and its school district in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Exclusively White from its inception in 1911; the School District of University

¹ St. Louis Post Dispatch, March 22, 1970, p.3D Panetta to Speak in University City

² "U.S. Easing Pressure on Southern Schools." Saint Louis Post Dispatch, November 12, 1970

³ "De Facto Segregation Should Be Attacked, Panetta Says At Rally In University City." Saint. Louis Post Dispatch, March 26, 1970

City had played the role of spectator during the early years of court ruled school desegregation.⁴ The neighborhoods in University City, along with its public school system, remained almost exclusively White until the mid-1960s.⁵ In 1960, only eighty-eight of the 51,000 University City residents were Black. Also in 1960, there were no homes owned by Black citizens. Of the 260 city employees, thirty-five were Black and worked in the sanitation department in unskilled positions. A study undertaken by the League of Woman voters found that nearly half of the restaurants in University City did not serve Blacks.⁶

By the spring of 1970, the Black families who had found their ways into University City were residing predominantly in the community's third ward. Subsequently, the elementary schools located in the third ward; Pershing Elementary School, Daniel Boone Elementary School, Nathaniel Hawthorn Elementary School, and University Forest Elementary School, saw a steady increase in the enrollment of Black students while elementary schools in the district's first and second wards remained almost exclusively White. The board members Panetta had shown up to endorse on that early spring evening were Jack Kirkland, Robert Kubie, and Keith Elkins. Their slate called for the School District of University City to eliminate the neighborhood schools model in favor of a center base model in order to achieve racial balance in the district's classrooms. Panetta applauded this effort to neutralize the impact of neighborhood segregation upon the school setting and communicated his belief that such a model would benefit students across racial lines while punishing no one. Panetta reminded citizens attending the rally

⁴ Spector, A. (2011). *University City Schools Our First Hundred Years*. Reedy Press, Saint Louis, MO.

⁵ Lorenz, William. "The Changing Population of University City." In-Service Education Program for Teachers of University City, University City Senior High School, 1966.

⁶ Lubeck, Dennis, R., "University City: A Suburban Community's Response to Integration, 1959-1970," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Saint Louis University, 1976.

that “racial housing patterns did not fall from Heaven, they were fostered by discriminatory acts”.⁷

At the April, 1970 Board elections in University City, the Panneta endorsed slate of candidates failed to win any seats.⁸ Though their campaign reflected a great deal of vocal support in and around the community, they lost to an opposing slate that ran almost exclusively on a platform that promised to maintain the neighborhood schools model in the School District of University City. Details surrounding the events that led up to the April, 1970 Board elections and the district’s response following those elections are detailed in Chapter Three of this dissertation.

Among my primary interests related to the School District of University City is its prolific facilitation of de facto segregation. Though my initial research focused on the practices within the classroom setting, further research has taken me into the neighborhood politics that result in racial segregation in the school setting. While it is not uncommon to hear people refer to the School District of University City as a ‘district within a district’, it is also not difficult to see how this phenomenon is rooted in the configuration of its neighborhoods. Still, to focus solely on housing patterns as the culprit of de facto segregation in the school setting would provide an incomplete picture of a very complex system that hinges on the ubiquity of White privilege in a racial hierarchy. An exploration of practices that support de facto segregation within the school setting serves as the basis for Chapter 5.

As the most heinous vestiges of unbridled racism continue to fade, the impression of University City as a community with deep roots in the practice of de jure and de facto

⁷ St. Louis Post Dispatch, March 26, 1970, p.2D De facto Segregation Should be Attacked, Panetta Says at Rally in University City

⁸ Smith-Dawson, Karen. “Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization.” Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

segregation is often betrayed by its longstanding reputation as an exceedingly liberal and progressive community.⁹ According to one of my research participants, a 1966 graduate of University City Senior High School, University City developed into one of the largest Jewish enclaves in the entire Midwest during the Post-War era. During this period, Jewish families were unwelcome in many parts of the country. The Jewish families who made their homes in University City came from origins of strict relegation; blighted urban neighborhoods and eastern European ghettos. Shunned in even the most common settings, they found reprieve in University City with its world class school district and burgeoning synagogues.¹⁰ The establishment of Jewish families, businesses, and places of worship were instrumental in its reputation as a diverse and progressive community. The reputation for diversity in University City, while largely associated with its current range of class, race, ethnic, and religious representation, is based largely upon the concentrated settlement and acceptance of Jewish families and businesses in the community during the post war era.

While Jewish families have established themselves throughout the community over time, Black families have found themselves overwhelmingly relegated to the community's neighborhoods and schools located in the third ward between University City's northern border and Olive Boulevard. Olive Boulevard runs east and west through University City with the third ward to its north and the first and second wards to its south. Since the late 1960's, Olive has served as a racial marker separating the Black neighborhoods to its north from the White neighborhoods to its south. Because the School District of University City has maintained a neighborhood school model, racial demographics in each of its elementary schools has followed neighborhood patterns. These patterns are interrupted after elementary school as students

⁹ Spector, A. (2011). *University City Schools Our First Hundred Years*. Reedy Press, Saint Louis, MO.

¹⁰ Harris, N. (1981). *Legacy of Lions*. Published by The Historical Society of University City, University City, Missouri.

converge for their 6-12 schooling in the district. The convergence of students along racial lines at the secondary level has created and fostered practices of de facto segregation in the school setting that has gained its own momentum outside of neighborhood variables, which are covered more closely in chapter 5.

District within a District

White students who attend school in the district can expect to receive a world class education and successful transition to a four year college upon graduation from the senior high school. For White students in the School District of University City, academic achievement scores and graduation rates will rank well above the state average in grades 3-12. Black students who attend school in the district can expect to score well below the average on state assessments. They can also expect lower rates of admissions into four year colleges and universities. In addition to the academic achievement gap and the contrasting rates of students transitioning into four year colleges and universities between Black and White students, gaps exist in suspension rates, drop-out rates, special school district referrals, and enrollment in Advanced Placement courses.¹¹ Each of these gaps finds Black students in University City lagging well behind their White classmates.¹² Specific data can be found in Appendix B.

Several visits to the administrative offices in the School District of University City have yielded very little in the way of statistical data to illustrate the variety of gaps across racial lines. Board notes, which include strong narrative details, provide little in the way of data. The most reliable sources of data available in the administrative offices of University City are contained in the district's Annual Reports, which are made available to the public each year. In order to illustrate statistics related to academic performance and drop-out rates across racial lines, I was

¹¹ "Report Of The Task Force On Black Achievement University City Schools." University City, Missouri. 1987.

¹² School District of University City Annuals 1995-1998

able to review copies of the district's Annuals. The annuals, which are distributed to parents each year, include achievement data and drop-out rates as reported by the state. Copies going back as far as 1994 were available and include results from the Iowa Basic Skills Test along with drop-out rate (Appendix A).

The experience of Black and White students in the School District of University City is not unique. Most public school systems continue to deal with academic achievement gaps between White and Black students. Along with gaps in achievement, Black students lag behind their White peers in almost every measurable statistic related to the public school experience. J.J. Irvine points to the generally disproportionate suspension rates of Black students compared to their White peers.¹³ Still, the history of the Black White dynamic in the School District of University City does indeed offer a unique perspective.

Though considered an exceedingly liberal and diverse community, University City Senior High School did not graduate its first Black student until 1957, three years after the landmark decision of *Brown v the Board of Education*.¹⁴ There is anecdotal evidence that suggests Black students may have attended school in University City to some extent as early as the 1930's. The presence of Black students seemed to be rare and fleeting during the first half of the 20th century.¹⁵ After Genora Jones graduated in 1957, it would be another nine years before another Black student would be pictured among the graduating class at University City Senior High School.¹⁶

In speaking with former Board members, students, and staff members who were associated with the district as far back as the late 1940's, no recollection of protest against the

¹³ Irvine, J.J. (1991). *Black Students and School Failure: Policies, Practices, and Perspectives*. New York: Praeger.

¹⁴ Cohen, Robert. "First African American U. City High Grad Recalls Past with Pride." *The Jewish Light*.

¹⁵ "University City Beautiful: It's Your City Enjoy It." 1981.

¹⁶ "University City Senior High School Yearbook" 1966.

presence of Black students in University City were expressed. Genora Jones recalled her first day as a student in the district in 1956. “On the first day I walked up to the school and it just looked so beautiful. I went to Mr. Baker’s office, the principal. He was a Jewish man. I was holding my breath when I went in. He said, ‘Hello Genora. Glad to meet you. We welcome you to our school.’ That just took a load off my mind, that word ‘welcome’. I said thank you.”¹⁷

Unlike many other school districts, University City did not resist the prospect of integration on the heels of the Brown decision. Former Assistant Superintendent Glenys Unruh even claimed that the School District of University City had never subscribed to de jure segregation. During an interview with a student conducted in 1980, Unruh described how the district had seen Black students enroll decades before the ruling of Brown v the Board of Education with no opposition. This information, according to Unruh, was passed down by longstanding community members who recalled early integration anecdotally.¹⁸

Safe in the Shadows

What makes the School District of University City unique is intricately tied to geographical space. University City is as an inner ring suburb sitting in the shadows of St. Louis City along its eastern borders. Even after the vestiges of de jure segregation had long begun to fade in St. Louis City, University City remained almost exclusively White. Up until the late 1950’s and early 1960’s, Black students and neighbors could be dismissed as outliers rather than harbingers of an eminent racial tipping point; a benchmark suggesting that the steady influx of Black families into University City would continue for the calculable future. When the vestiges of de jure segregation finally did begin to erode in University City during the early 1960’s, racial transition was soundly relegated to the community’s third ward located north of Olive

¹⁷ Mannino, F. (2014, June 6-19). Breaking the Racial Barrier. *The West End Word*, pp. 8 & 12.

¹⁸ “University City Beautiful: It’s Your City Enjoy It.” 1981.

Boulevard.¹⁹ And, when the school district began to enroll increasing numbers of Black students, they did so almost exclusively in the elementary schools located in the third ward.

Schools in the district's first and second wards, located south of Olive Boulevard, remained predominantly or exclusively White. At the district's lone high school, where the confluence of all students occurred, exclusively White classrooms convened even as the percentage of Black students approached eighty percent in the early 1980's.²⁰ Appendix B1 illustrates the locations of University City's three wards.

Evidence that White privilege dictated the space that Black citizens and Black students would and would not occupy in the neighborhoods and schools of University City is at the heart of this research. One of the participants in this research project, a volunteer and co-founder of University City Residential Service, explained that "White neighborhoods in University City remained exclusively White largely due to unfair lending practices and even the refusal of owners to sell property to Black families. Black neighborhoods in University City emerged when real estate agents began to exploit race to play on the fear of White homeowners. Great profits were made as White families unloaded their homes in the third ward for a fraction of their value. These same homes were exclusively marketed to Black families at inflated rates".²¹

White flight in University City raged westward into and beyond the first and second wards during the 1960's and 1970's. At the same time, working class Black families looking to escape the overcrowded and decaying surroundings of St. Louis City found a suburban reprieve in the confines of the third ward of University City. Olive Boulevard blunted a confluence of the races in University City and marked the racial lines for a community within a community.

¹⁹ Henry, C.T. A History of Community Sustainability 1958-2011: University City, an Inner-Ring Suburb of the St. Louis Metro Area. (2012). The Historical Society of University City, University City, Missouri

²⁰ Data collected under the direction of Board Member David Harris (2006) and obtained with the permission of Superintendent JoyLynn Wilson for the purpose of this study.

²¹ "Blight: A Case Study of University City, Missouri", March, 1973.

As University City grew onward past the 1960's, the community developed within its highly defined racial lines. Strict housing codes, unfair lending, and the racial lines drawn by real estate companies facilitated de facto segregation in the neighborhoods. A confluence of the races, however, could not be avoided in the district's lone high school, two middle schools, or any of the elementary schools that were located in or around the third ward. As the district's racial profile transitioned from exclusively White to predominantly Black between the mid 1960's and the late 1970's, a range of practices began to define White and Black space within the school setting.

As a student at the high school in the mid 1980's, I observed entirely White classes despite an African American population that exceeded 80%. Stereotypes of White intellectual superiority were reinforced by their majority presence in challenge level classes. Rather than questioning the systemic factors that could possibly contribute to all White classes in a predominantly Black school setting, I simply accepted the racial imbalances as the norm. Though I cannot speak for any of my classmates, Black or White, as we never discussed the strange racial configurations during our time at University City Senior High School in the mid 1980's, I can say that I do not recall any level of protest across racial lines.

As a teacher in the district during the 1990's, I observed an impact of the de facto housing patterns playing out in University City. Teaching at an entirely Black elementary school, I noticed that male students were adverse to carrying books to and from school or even utilizing a backpack. My first impression of this behavior was that these students had no interest in studying or completing any assigned homework. I reserved a good deal of judgment for the parents of these students for not enforcing higher standards related to school work.

Aggravated by what I assumed was apathy, I shared my frustration with a veteran teacher who told me I should drive into the neighborhood after school to get a better impression of why books and backpacks were not making it to and from school with students. The suggestion was somewhat rhetorical as the veteran teacher explained the trepidation of younger students walking through their neighborhood with books. When I talked to some of my male students, all of whom were Black, they described the excessive harassment that older boys in the neighborhood would inflict upon school book toting students.

Having grown up and attended school in the district's second ward, I was never exposed to some of the elements that students and families in the district's third ward dealt with. Students who can freely transport their books to and from school have a profound advantage over those students who do not have this simple, unchallenged freedom. This advantage is one of many that may fall out of the periphery of school officials. Had my circumstances as a teacher not brought me into the third ward, it is not a variable that I ever would have factored into any equation dealing with racial equity. None the less, this experience opened my eyes to the possibility that a litany of related circumstances may exist.

Through the coursework that has led up to the research conducted in this study, I gained a more realistic understanding that the obstacles leading to underachievement had much more of a historical context than I could have ever imagined. My students, it turned out, were not the creators of their academic and social deficiencies. Rather, they were baptized into a set of circumstances for which they held no more control than their predecessors. Circumstances that manifest in the school setting are intimately connected with neighborhood politics. The neighborhood politics in University City have proven proactive in their response to the migration of Black families into the community. These politics have sought to limit the mobility of Black

citizens while putting a great deal of time, energy and resources into attracting and retaining White citizens. The neighborhood politics and their impact on school politics are covered in Chapter 5.

As an administrator, I gained another perspective into the prolific academic success of White students in the shadow of the academic failure of our Black students. When I was made assistant principal of the district's only middle school, I was put in charge of scheduling. It was in this role that I first saw the infrastructure of a system designed to perpetuate a racial hierarchy. A complex system of tracking and homogeneous grouping that began at the elementary level with culturally biased tests and preferential classroom assignments fed into the use of singleton classes.

In middle school and high school, these singleton classes typically determined the entire schedule of 'qualifying' students. By default, assignment to a singleton determined which elective and core content classes would make up the remainder of the schedule. This, combined with the finite number of students who could be placed in any available section, resulted in a common schedule for the students placed in a singleton class. At the middle school, for example, White students overwhelmingly found their way into singleton classes such as Latin and Advanced Jazz Band while avoiding other singletons such as Home Economics, Spanish, P.E. and Drama. Subsequently, schedules that included Latin and/or Jazz Band sent students into predominantly White classes while schedules that included Home Economics, Spanish, and Drama sent students into predominantly Black classes. Just as Leon Panetta insisted that de facto segregation does not fall from heaven, the placement of students across racial lines does not occur accidentally. Rather, a great deal of discussion and direction takes place well in advance of any scheduling taking place. These discussions, which involve parents, teachers, and

administrators, create circumstances that appeal to many White families who send their children to school in a predominantly Black district. While neighborhood housing patterns ensure de facto segregation at the elementary level, purposeful scheduling in grades 6-12 ensure a similar comfort level for White families when students from all neighborhoods come together at the secondary level in the School District of University City.

In addition to accessing de facto segregation through singleton selection, students could also access predominantly White classes by qualifying for advanced placement classes. While an academic edge also secured access to the singleton driven tracking of students in the School District of University City, I observed another effective measure for accessing this higher track. Savvy parents with knowledge of the system for tracking ‘high achieving’ students could appeal to certain board members, administrators, and teachers to bypass the academic requirements for the higher track. It was never unusual to see any number of students in AP or advanced level courses to have gained access through parent intervention. Small neighborhood socials – often referred to as ‘Coffees’ or Cottage Meetings – served as orientations for select parents into the complex academic trajectory that would allow their children to matriculate through schools along a de facto track that would take them through 12th grade.

According to a political lobbyist and longtime parent volunteer who participated in this study, these coffees have always been made up of families residing on the district’s more affluent, and predominantly White, south side of Olive Boulevard. The purpose of the gathering was to maintain an exclusive population; sometimes referred to as a “school within a school” for select families. This “school within a school” served two primary purposes; allow select students the best academic opportunities that the district had to offer, and attract and retain

families on the south side of Olive Boulevard in order to sustain a sufficient population to maintain an effective system for de facto segregation.

Prior to my appointment as the assistant principal at Brittany Woods Middle School I had not been privy to the parent requests made for student placement. As an assistant principal, and later as the principal of Jackson Park Elementary School, I received numerous written requests from parents insisting that their children; be placed with certain teachers, not be placed with certain teachers, be re-tested for the gifted program in order to qualify for advanced placement classes (singletons), forgo pre-requisite requirements for placement in advanced classes, and be placed in homeroom classes with students that they have “known all their lives from the neighborhood”. When requests were denied at the building level, they would be redirected to select board members.

While a strong contingency of families taking advantage of de facto segregation in University City were comfortable with the racial demographics of their neighborhood elementary schools, many opted out of the district before their children entered Brittany Woods Middle School. As the district’s lone middle school, many parents feared exposure to students from the north side of Olive. An annual mass exodus of families living on the south side of Olive was a common occurrence following the fifth grade. One of the participants in this project, a former parents and community activist, explained the fear that many White parents held as middle school approached in the School District of University City. The participant suggested that the last thing many of these parents wanted was for their White daughters to be around Black boys. He went on to describe how this fear resonated at the high school during the early 1970’s as Black boys would get in trouble for bumping into White girls and, sometimes, for just talking to a White girl. Chapter 4 of this paper includes details regarding the response of Black student

leaders to these types of disciplinary practices at University City Senior High School in 1970 and the subsequent response of the School Board, administration, staff, and parents.

Ronald E. McNair Sixth Grade Center served as a buffer between the last year at the elementary and the first year at Brittany Woods for district students. Serving as the sole option for sixth grade for district students in the same way that Brittany Woods served as the lone option for seventh and eighth grade, Ronald E. McNair did not generate a mass exodus as did the middle school. Former superintendent Dr. Lynn Beckwith Junior suggests that the retention of students at the sixth grade center was tied to the fact that most private school options started in seventh grade. Dr. Beckwith cited John Burroughs and Chaminade as examples.²² The sixth grade center had established a system for assigning students to their homeroom teams. Students would attend most core and elective classes with their assigned cohorts, of which, there were four: Challenger, Discovery, Atlantis, and Endeavor. According to one former student interviewed for this study, it seemed as though race was a factor in how cohorts were assigned. A second criteria according to former students, involved disciplinary records and presumed academic aptitude. Homerooms for each of the cohorts were placed strategically throughout the building with the predominantly White cohort classrooms nearest to the main entrance of the sixth grade center and the predominantly Black cohort located to the rear of the building. What's more, teachers were assigned based upon performance and reputation, with the top teachers placed with the 'White' cohorts. This system served as extension of the comfort levels families living on the south side of Olive Street Road felt in their neighborhood schools.

²² Discussion with Dr. Lynn Beckwith, Jr. on September 30, 2014

With the realization that de facto segregation does not just fall from heaven as Leon Panetta had pointed out²³, my interest in the phenomena was stoked while attending a graduate level course at UMSL in the mid 1990's. One of my professors made a reference to the School District of University City providing one of the most explicit models of de facto Segregation one could ever hope to find. While I had already begun to understand its role in University City, I had not yet begun to consider the unique set of circumstances that could make my district the model for such a dubious distinction.

Over the past several years as a teacher, administrator, and graduate student; I have had opportunities to reflect upon my experiences as a K-12 student and how those experiences play out on a global scale in every institution imaginable. I have had recent opportunities to reconnect with former classmates, staff members, and parents who have offered validation and insight into the practices that facilitate De Facto segregation. I have also gained insight into the multiple layers of racial and cultural dominance that extend beyond physical space.

I have found the role of curriculum design to be just as profound as segregation (de facto or de jure) in its ability to promote or counter the proliferation of a racial hierarchy. Glenys Unruh, the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction during the School District of University City's most turbulent years of racial transition, recognized the role of curriculum during the civil rights era. Her ability to see past the common misperception that social change was a ubiquitous element of the 1960's helped Unruh expose the exclusivity of public education while promoting curricula that included minority and woman's issues. In calling out the illusion of progress, Unruh suggested that "the innovative programs of the sixties were not based on comprehensive new concepts about the role of secondary education, nor about the changing

²³ "De Facto Segregation Should Be Attacked, Panetta Says At Rally In University City." Saint. Louis Post Dispatch, March 26, 1970.

nature of the student, nor about the larger social forces that were operating outside of the school”.²⁴

Unruh’s understanding of the need for curriculum to reflect the changing nature of students, as well as the larger social forces in play, were certainly inspired by the profound social changes taking place within the School District of University City during her tenure.

During her tenure as the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction in the School District of University City, Unruh was highly revered and respected. Her ideas were embraced by stakeholders and implemented with overwhelming support from the Board of education. Her contemporaries describe Unruh as an innovator and prolific grant writer who brought a great deal of national and international interest in the field of education to the School District of University City. These innovations were further promoted through her work as an executive member of ASCD. Her role as it related to racial transition in the School District of University City is covered in chapter 4.

Problem Statement

Starting in the mid 1960’s, the School District of University City began to experience a dramatic shift in racial dynamics.²⁵ During the decades that followed, the percentage of Black students attending school in the district rose from 16 percent to 85 percent. Conversely, the number of White students attending school in University City dropped from 84 percent to 20 percent. While the phenomena of ‘White Flight’ is well documented²⁶ much less has been written about White families who chose to remain in communities that experience the kind of

²⁴ Unruh, G. (1975). *Responsive Curriculum Development: Theory and Action*. McCutchan Publishing Company, Berkeley, CA.

²⁵ Data collected under the direction of Board Member David Harris (2006) and obtained with the permission of Superintendent JoyLynn Wilson for the purpose of this study.

²⁶ Henry, C.T. *A History of Community Sustainability 1958-2011: University City, an Inner-Ring Suburb of the St. Louis Metro Area*. (2012). The Historical Society of University City. University City, Missouri.

demographic shift that University City experienced between 1968 and 1987.²⁷ Along with the phenomenon of White flight during racial transition, this study explores the motives and responses of those White citizens who remained in University City during the transition.

At the heart of this study is an examination of the power and privilege retained by White students attending the School District of University City during the district's era of White Flight. Of equal significance to this study is the domination and marginalization through de facto measures of Black students as their representation in the district grew exponentially between 1962 and 1987. The sometimes implicit and sometimes explicit dynamics of racial inequity within the walls of its schools created what seemed to be a district within a district; a place where academic success and failure seemed to be almost exclusively tied to race.

The systemic implementation and presence of de facto segregation in the School District of University City has left Black students at a notable academic and social disadvantage when compared to their White peers. Like other inner-ring suburban districts, districts that had existed in White enclaves bordering predominantly Black municipalities, the School District of University City served an entirely White community until federal laws and regulations related to fair housing began to be enforced during the late 1960's and early 1970's. Though more than sixty years has passed since the landmark decision of *Board v. The Board of Education, Topeka Kansas*; Black students continue to find themselves struggling to attain the same opportunities afforded their White peers within the context of school desegregation. While this scenario is not uncommon, the focus of this study will remain solely upon the School District of University City.

²⁷ Data collected under the direction of Board Member David Harris (2006) and obtained with the permission of Superintendent JoyLynn Wilson for the purpose of this study.

Ingrained so deeply within its infrastructure; systems that support de facto segregation in the School District of University City remain camouflaged by a master narrative that supports a natural hierarchy of academic and social superiority along racial lines. There is an assumption across racial lines that segregation occurs naturally. As such, the grossly inequitable racial distribution of students in challenge level and foundations level courses remains a constant at the secondary level. Suspension rates, academic achievement gaps, graduation rates, and transitions from University City Senior High School to four year colleges are far less favorable for Black students.

According to data collected from The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the gap between Black and White students scoring at or above proficient on the Math and Communication Arts portions of the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) has measured consistently in the 45% range since the initial testing phase began as part of Senate Bill 319 in 2001.²⁸ Black students have lagged behind their White peers in the district in regards to graduation rates by an average of 18% over the last two years.²⁹ Appendix B2 further illustrates the racial transition occurring in the School District of University City from the late 1960's through the mid 1980's.³⁰

Purpose statement

This study will take a critical look at the historical acceptance of mediocrity for Black students in the School District of University City. This study will also explore the mindsets that assume and differentiate standards for White and Black students in the School District of University City. Jerome Morris speaks to a master narrative that frames “African American

²⁸ Harris, Douglas and Herrington, Carolyn. (2006). *Accountability Standards and the Growing Achievement Gap: Lessons from the Past Half Century*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois.

²⁹ Data collected through the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

³⁰ Data collected by former Board member David Harris and provided through the Superintendent's Office, School District of University City.

people and culture, as inferior and deficit oriented”.³¹ As a student in the School District of University City during the mid-1980’s; there existed little if any pushback from Black or White students regarding the racialization of course offerings. One could expect that Advanced Placement and challenge level classes would be predominantly or entirely White and foundations level classes would be predominantly or entirely Black. Within my research, I will seek out examples of how race played into the trajectory of students through the School District of University City.

The assumed racial hierarchy, a cultural norm experienced by the researcher as a student, teacher, and administrator, exists at the root of this study. A consistent gap in academic and social proficiency provides key elements of a master narrative that support a racial hierarchy. Variables such as biased curriculum, inequity of standards across racial lines, and de facto segregation exist in the shadows of these key elements. By delving deeper into institutionalized racism and related barriers, this research will provide a counter-narrative to the common assumption that racial dominance occurs on an even playing field.

Data kept in the K-12 setting is exceedingly summative. Graduation rates, high stakes testing, admission to four year colleges and Universities, and grade point averages offer a snapshot- a sliver- of a complex set of circumstances. Though the afore mentioned measurements far too often serve as exclamation points in a master narrative espousing racial dominance or subordination, the mitigating circumstances are often relegated to conjecture status. This research will define the trends which support academic and social inequity across racial lines in University City Schools and provide an explicit counter-narrative.

³¹ Morris, J. Can Anything Good Come from Nazareth? Race, Class, and African American Schooling and Community in the Urban South and Midwest. *American Educational Research Journal*. Page [69] of 69-112 (2004).

Exploring the School District of University City's complex systems, timelines, and practices that support institutionalized segregation in the post Brown era will be brought to the forefront in this study. Research will focus primarily on the time frame beginning with the service areas that experienced the first significant influx of Black citizens in the mid to late 1960's and ending with the stabilization of racial demographics in the early 1990's. This time frame; which the researcher will refer to as the "White Flight" era, saw a massive shift in the racial demographics of the district. Data collected by former board member David Harris³² shows that the percentage of White students attending public school in University City fell from 84% in 1967 to 18% in 1991. During that same period, the percentage of Black students in the district rose from 16% to 82%. The study will explore The School District of University City's history of De Facto segregation during the White flight era of its service area (1967 – 1991). It is important to note that this research extends beyond the specified time frame. The post war era leading up to the civil rights era saw a great deal of activity that ultimately fed into Black migration into the University City and White flight out of University City. Further, to assume that White flight ended in 1991 would be foolish. White flight is a perpetual phenomenon that is dictated by, amongst other things, changing neighborhoods and schools.

Research Questions

There are certainly factors outside of the school district's control that put Black students at a disadvantage. Unfair practices dealing with hiring, housing, and medical care are well documented and contribute to factors which impact educational prospects for marginalized groups.³³ This research assumes that unique factors within the School District of University City exist independently of other environmental factors that contribute to the marginalization of Black

³² Harris, N. (1981). *Legacy of Lions*. Published by The Historical Society of University City, University City, Missouri.

³³ Smiley, Tavis. *The Covenant*. Third World Press, Chicago, 2006.

students. In particular, the ongoing practice of de facto segregation plays a key role in the academic and social roles that exist between White and Black students in the School District of University City. This research asks the following question: what assumptions, policies, practices, discourses, and cultural phenomena have supported the presence of de facto segregation, and subsequent opportunity to maintain a district within a district, in the School District of University City?

It is important to note that the research takes into account that racial inequity in the School District of University City has not gone unchallenged. Even with the earliest documented patterns of White flight and post Brown segregation, there is documentation that suggests the School District of University City included strong proponents of integration and racial equity. In Karen Smith-Dawson's 1974 dissertation titled 'Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case of the University City Schools Reorganization Controversy, detailed accounts are given of groups forming across racial lines to contest the redrawing of district lines in order to establish all White and all Black schools.³⁴ Additional examples of effective and equitable integration are evident in the documented work of Glenys Unruh, former Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction during the late 1960's and into the early 1980's. In light of the documented work of Glenys Unruh, the recorded history in Smith-Dawson's dissertation, and the more recent activism of former board members such as Walter Daniels and Todd Gilliard, what counter-narratives, policies, practices, and discourses have countered the presence of de facto segregation, and the district within a district phenomenon, in the School District of University City?

³⁴ Smith-Dawson, Karen. "Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization." Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

Significance of the study

The story of the School District of University City cannot be told without juxtaposing the tremendous curricular success experienced by its White pupils and the dismal curricular failure of its Black students. While much attention has been paid, especially within the district, to the need and desire to boost the academic and social indicators for Black students, wide gaps continue to exist. This study will provide a counter-narrative to the common assumption that racial dominance occurs on an even playing field. Identification of trends which support academic and social inequity across racial lines will also be explored. This study will also explore the complex systems, timelines, and practices that support institutionalized segregation in the post Brown era. While there is a plethora of scholarship available which deals with de facto and de jure racial inequity in the school setting; studies that are unique to the School District of University City are limited.

Delimitations

It would be naïve to think that the School District of University City is unique in the context of this research. Countless inner-ring suburban districts developed systems that prolonged racial segregation to some extent, following the landmark decision of *Brown v The Board of Education, Topeka, KS.*³⁵ Though this study would undoubtedly benefit from comparisons to other districts, research will be limited to the School District of University City.

The researcher initially chose to focus primarily on a time frame spanning the mid 1960's to the early 1990's. This time frame begins with the district's first major influx of Black students and culminates with the leveling off of its shift from a predominantly White school district to a predominantly Black school district. During the initial phase of study, it became abundantly

³⁵ "U.S. Easing Pressure on Southern Schools." Saint Louis Post Dispatch, November 12, 1970.

clear that the time frames before and after the selected period include elements of great significance, research will be therefore extend beyond the noted time frame in order to grasp a full understanding of topics studied. These considerations have pushed the time frame studied as far back as the pre-war era and into 2014. Though this still represents a limited time frame, it is much less limited than initially intended.

A critical aspect of this study includes interviews with stakeholders who are able to offer first hand insight into the district's racial dynamics during the selected time frame. Time will certainly be a factor regarding the number of interviews conducted. In the interest of quality over quantity; a relatively small sample of former and current stakeholders in the School District of University City were interviewed for the purpose of this study.

Limitations

Due to the time frame chosen for this study, older board documents and historical data that could have supported this study proved elusive. Some individuals whose perspectives would have added depth to this research were unavailable or unwilling to participate. Former board member Walter Daniels, for example, passed away in 2008. From my recollection as a teacher and administrator, Daniels was the most vocal opponent of de facto segregation in University City schools during my time in the district (1993 -2008). In 2006, he filed a complaint with the office of civil rights and is on record as challenging the all-White and predominantly White challenge level classes in the district's predominantly Black schools. I have numerous memories of Mr. Daniels being interviewed by local media outside of University City Senior High School. He also spoke at virtually every Board meeting in order to challenge the status quo for racial inequity in the School District of University City.

During the process of interviewing participants, there were instances where I knew that facts were not being recalled correctly. In some cases, it seemed evident that time had caused memories to fade. In other cases, it is possible that individuals may have been more selective regarding how they presented recollections and accounts. Of the individuals I sought out to participate in this study, five refused my initial request. Of these five, one ultimately agreed to be interviewed with the stipulation that she be allowed to review and approve any transcribed notes. Three of the individuals who refused to participate made it clear that they had no interest in participating in the research or sharing information. On one occasion, an individual I contacted for the purpose of this research insisted that she had nothing of value to add to the study. Though the individuals who chose not to participate could potentially have added a great deal of depth to the scope of this study, I refrained from extending my requests beyond a cordial invitation coupled with an explanation of the research. Interestingly, none of the individuals who declined to be interviewed cited the research design as a deterrent.

Assumptions

A primary assumption of this study is that racial segregation in the School District of University City has been largely facilitated by the de jure segregation of its neighborhoods. School segregation was ruled unconstitutional in 1954 with the landmark case of *Brown v. The Board of Education, Topeka Kansas*.³⁶ The School District of University City continued to operate as an exclusively White district for more than a decade following *Brown* as it existed as an inner-ring suburb that relied upon the unregulated collusion of neighborhood associations, banks and real estate agents to limit housing opportunities for Black families prior to the passing

³⁶ Patterson, James T. (2001). *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and Its Troubled Legacy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

of the Open Housing ordinance of 1966 and the Civil Right Act of 1968.³⁷ Though Landmark cases such as *Shelley v Kramer* and *McGhee v Sipes* had previously ruled that De Facto segregation of neighborhoods violated the 14th amendment in 1948, exclusionary practices helped to maintain the status quo well into the 1960' in University City.³⁸

The illusion of progress masks the deeply rooted system of racial dominance in the School District of University City. Of the sixty-four board members elected through the early 1960's, all were White. Still, the district retained its reputation as exceedingly liberal. White Students at University City Senior High School were front and center in the local civil rights marches, sit-ins, and protests of the 1960's and 1970's. Karen Smith Dawson's 1974 dissertation (*Citizen Participation in Local Policy-Making: The Case of the University City School Organization Controversy*) documents the proactive involvement by White district stakeholders in support of the civil rights of Black citizens.³⁹ White families enjoy a rate of access to world class educational opportunities that are simply not afforded to Black families within the same school district. Ironically, the academic and social success of White students feeds into a cultural phenomenon that enhances the self-perception of White success when it takes place in a multi-cultural setting. This study uses a Critical Race Theory lens to explore the stakeholder claims of neutrality, objectivity, and color-blindness in order to reveal the self-interests involved in orchestrating the racialization of the district's schools and classrooms.

Critical Race Theory, also referred to as CRT, offers a critical lens to examine and analyze the cultural and social dynamics of race, law, and power. CRT suggests that racial dominance is preserved through a perpetual and complex system of social and legal norms.

³⁷ Massey, Douglass. "Racial Discrimination in Housing: A moving Target." *Social Problems* 52(2005): 148-151

³⁸ Darden, Joe (1995) "Black Residential Segregation Since the 1948 *Shelley v. Kraemer* Decision". *Journal of Black Studies* 25, (6): 680-691.

³⁹ iBid

Rather than focusing on the explicit evidence of racism, CRT is committed to examining the conditions of racial inequality. CRT recognizes that the fabric of racial dominance is intricately woven into American the culture. CRT purports that the normalcy of racism in America is grounded in White privilege and the marginalization of people of color.⁴⁰

There is no doubt that the avoidance of integration, and later segregation, has been a factor in the School District of University City, and its community, from its very origin. The dehumanization and marginalization of Black people is an inherent aspect of the dominant White culture. As the workings of *Brown v. Board* - and other civil rights related laws - began to catch up with the School District of University City, the concept of integration slowly became a reality. In Jerome Morris' work titled *Can Anything Good Come from Nazareth? Race, Class, and African American Schooling and Community in the Urban South and Midwest*, a counter-narrative to the mainstream notion that Black schools and students are endemically deficient is provided.⁴¹

Morris uses a historical perspective to describe the agency built by Black schools – and their stakeholders - prior to *Brown v. Board*. He deconstructs the marginalization of Black students and schools during the post-*Brown* era as they entered White spaces. Morris goes on to discuss his research of two contemporary, predominantly Black, school districts in low-income communities that have gained renown for the academic success of students. Morris' work correlates well with studies of University City in that the source of academic deficiency need not be assumed as part of an uncontested master narrative.

⁴⁰ Lewis R. Gordon (Spring 1999). "A Short History of the 'Critical' in Critical Race Theory". *American Philosophy Association Newsletter* 98 (2).

⁴¹ Morris, J. *Can Anything Good Come from Nazareth? Race, Class, and African American Schooling and Community in the Urban South and Midwest*. *American Educational Research Journal*. Page [69] of 69-112 (2004).

The trajectory of Morris' study is echoed by a study conducted by Derrick Bell in his earlier work titled *Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma*.⁴² In this study, Bell paints an unfavorable outlook for Black students to attain the levels of success in the K-12 setting that they exhibited prior to *Brown*. Bell points to the relatively small frame of time that allowed interest convergence to facilitate integration as something less than a step forward in the advancement of human rights and equal access for Black students.

Bell argues that, rather than integrating schools, we should focus more on fixing schools regardless of the racial demographics. While Bell's work helps to reinforce the important point that Black students are not inherently inferior to their White peers, there is minimal attention given to the repair necessary for schools that are hindered by their inability to meet the needs of Black students at nearly the same rates offered for White students.

Just as CRT purports that racism is a normal aspect of everyday life for all Americans, Douglas-Hartford conceptualizes the normalization of White space and Black space that transitioned almost seamlessly from the pre-*Brown* era to the post-*Brown* era. Though racialized space may not go unnoticed to Black students, it may go unchallenged in favor of the safety, both real and perceived, in maintaining racial lines both physical and mental. Douglas-Hartford's study, while calling out the manner in which White space is generally unsafe for Black people, seems to abandon the need to neutralize said space. Rather, his research favors a retreat into Black space and avoidance of White space for Black stakeholders. In University City, this theme begins to emerge as Black citizens defer to the political designs of White citizens, typically resulting in the status quo for sustained de facto segregation. A strong example of this phenomenon is detailed in chapter three as Black citizens exhibit a limited

⁴² Bell, D. *Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma*. Harvard Law Review, Vol. 93, No. 3 (Jan., 1980) (pp. 518-533).

presence in the political activities related to the question of whether or not the School District of University City should reorganize in order to achieve racial balance.

The value attached to race is also a common theme throughout this study. Though the phenomenon of value attached to race sometimes exists as much on the unconscious level as the conscious level, it remains a critical cog in any system that facilitates de facto segregation. In the case of the School District of University City, the proliferation of predominantly White classes in a predominantly Black school district serves as a key example. In addition to the exclusivity of AP classes, supposedly based entirely upon unbiased academic criteria, the creation of specialty classes requiring no prerequisite requirements began to pop up in University City Schools as the sustained influx of Black citizens was met with sustained White flight. These classes included Jazz and Latin as well as arbitrarily developed 'Advanced Level' classes designed to meet the academic requirements for AP English and AP Science. Examples of how these classes were used to regain White spaces in schools that were the population of Black students was growing exponentially are detailed in chapter 5.

Definitions of Terms

De Facto Racism: “images and messages that affirm the assumed superiority of Whites and the assumed inferiority of people of color (Tatum, 1997)”.

De Facto Segregation – Racial segregation, particularly in public schools, that occurs “by fact” rather than by legal compulsion. For example, often the concentration of African-Americans in certain neighborhoods produce schools that are predominantly black, or segregated in fact (de facto), though not by law (de jure).

De Jure Segregation – De Jure segregation refers to the lawful separation of groups in society.

Institutionalized Oppression - “privileged groups that have institutional power and the ability to systematically enforce their views” (Goodman, 2001).

Internalized Oppression – Acts of self-deprecation and self-destruction that stem from ones internalized self-hatred

White Space: Space dominated explicitly and/or implicitly by Whites. White space refers to those areas that honor and protect Whiteness at the expense and exclusion of other races and cultures. Endres and Gould describe White space as areas that “exhibit ongoing performances of White privilege through discourse and other practices”.⁴³

White Privilege –The patterning of racial advantage and dominance for White people imbedded into cultural norms. White privilege is facilitated through the tacit practices of White power holders and policy-maker. The condition of White privilege places the needs and interests of White people in the foreground while relegating the needs of interests to the background.⁴⁴

Iowa Basic Skills Test – Battery of tests administered to students in grades 1-11 through the late 1990’s. This test helped to establish academic benchmarks in Math and Language Arts prior to the implementation of state level common assessments used for high stakes testing.

Singleton – While most classes assigned to students in grades 6-12 are offered at multiple times during any given block of the school day, a handful are offered no more than one time during each instructional block. Due to the complex nature of scheduling a complete course load, students assigned to singleton classes typically share a common course load with the same group of students. This can intentionally or unintentionally lead to de facto grouping.

⁴³ Endres, Danielle and Gould, Mary(2009)“I Am Also in the Position to Use My Whiteness to Help Them Out”: TheCommunication of Whiteness in Service Learning',Western Journal of Communication,73:4,418 — 436

⁴⁴ Gillbourne, D. (2005). “Educational Policy as an Act of White Supremacy: Whiteness, Critical Race Theory, and Education Reform. Journal of Education Policy, 20, 4: 484-505.

Inner-Ring Suburb - “Community located in very close proximity to more densely populated urban setting” (Jacobson, 2013).

Critical Race Theory (CRT) - “Recognizes that racism is engrained [sic] in the fabric and system of the American society. The individual racist need not exist to note that institutional racism is pervasive in the dominant culture. This is the analytical lens that CRT uses in examining existing power structures. CRT identifies that these power structures are based on White privilege and White supremacy, which perpetuates the marginalization of people of color” (UCLA School of Public Affairs)

Restrictive Covenants - “Before the 1970s, these covenants were legally used for segregationist purposes. A covenant promised that only members of a certain race could occupy the property. However, many African Americans openly defied these covenants and attempted to “pioneer” restricted areas” (Journal of Urban History 36:4 (July 2010), 485-506).

Sub Group - A demographic group consisting of 40 or more students in a school or district setting. Examples include; Black, White, ELL, F/R Lunch, Asian, SSD. During the writing of this paper, the term ‘sub group’ was replaced with ‘super sub group’, which refers to the composite grouping of all students who had previously fallen into the sub group category.

Achievement Gap - Used to illustrate the empirical difference between the percentage of individuals from one particular sub group and the individuals from another sub group as measured by proficiency on high stakes testing.

ASCD – Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Brown V. Board of Education, Topeka, KS. – Supreme Court ruling that deemed racial segregation in the school setting to be unlawful.

Interest Convergence – Racial tolerance supported by a common interest that ultimately benefits members of both races involved in a particular situation.

County Teachers Association (C.T.A.) - Professional association designed to protect the rights of teachers in the work environment. In the School District of University City, the C.T.A. was replaced by the National Education Association (N.E.A.) sometime during the early 1980's.

Master Narrative – The mainstream assumptions promoted by the dominant group. The Master Narrative serves as the assumed reality and is a tool utilized by the dominant group to maintain supremacy.

Counter Narrative – A perspective generated by those outside of the dominant group. The Counter Narrative is a tool utilized by the oppressed to dispel and challenge the Master Narrative.

Pre-War Era – For the purpose of this study, the term “Pre-War” will refer to the time period between WWI and WWII.

Soldan High School – Soldan High School absorbed students from nearby Blewett High School in 1948 and was referred to as Soldan-Blewett until 1955. This research only refers to Soldan High School by its original name. Details regarding the significance of Soldan High School to this study are included in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2: The Changing Demography of University City

According to Gary Tobin, “The 1940-1950 censuses demonstrate the migration pattern of the Jewish community westward from St. Louis City. The number of Russian-born in the west end of St. Louis, the last Jewish enclave in that city, decreased from 5,500 in 1940 to 3,300 in 1950”.⁴⁵ During that same stretch of time, the Russian-Born population in University City nearly

⁴⁵ Tobin, Gary. *Ethnic Mobility in a suburban Community*, Berkley, California: University of California Press.

doubled from 1,300 to 2,300. By comparison, less than 450 people born in Russia resided in other parts of St. Louis County. By 1960, nearly 80% of students attending public school in University City were Jewish.⁴⁶

In 1963, there were four synagogues in the central west end of St. Louis City. Only 15 years earlier, there had been 19. Ten of the synagogues previously located in the city's Central West End had moved to University City.⁴⁷ In a speech titled *The Changing Demography of University City*, William Lorenz of The Commission on Human Relations, described the pattern that saw Jewish citizens migrate into and out of University City between the post war and civil rights eras. Echoing the migratory patterns that saw Jewish families move out of the city's Central West End during the post war era, Lorenz shared that more than half of the B'nai Amoona Conservative Congregation in the third ward had moved out of University City by 1966.⁴⁸

In his speech, Lorenz went on to explain that "University City became the one city in St. Louis County where Jewish people living in the city of St. Louis could move". This migration of Jewish families from their highly concentrated community in the Central West End down the central corridor constituted the changing population of University City and its school district during the pre and post war eras. The migration pattern also owed to a large degree the changing population of their old neighborhoods in the Central West End of Saint Louis City as well as the public schools located in those attendance areas. Appendix B3 highlights the neighborhoods that fed into University City following World War II.

⁴⁶ iBid

⁴⁷ iBid

⁴⁸ Lorenz, William. "The Changing Population of University City." In-Service Education Program for Teachers of University City, University City Senior High School, 1966.

While restrictive covenants prohibiting the sale of property to Black people were explicitly documented in the written language of most neighborhood and real estate policies in University City, there were no such written restrictions imposed upon Jewish people. Rather, discrimination against Jews frequently came in the form of a gentleman's agreement.⁴⁹ From very early on, University City has had Jewish citizens. Jews migrating from the Central West End were in fact the largest demographic among the 20,000 people who moved into University City during the pre-war era.⁵⁰ This 'great migration' helped to transition the mid-west's second largest Jewish enclave from Saint Louis City to University City.⁵¹ By the late 1920's, the north east border of University City boasted modern apartments and businesses owned by Jews. By the end of World War Two, seven of the seventeen Jewish congregations in the St. Louis area were located within the boundaries of University City.

Yearbooks from University City Senior High School help to illustrate the transition of Jewish families from the Central West End in Saint Louis City into University City. The high school of origin for each senior pictured in the University City Senior High School yearbook between 1927 and 1967 included both an inspirational quote and – whenever applicable – the name of whatever high school the pictured senior had attended prior to enrolling in University City. This piece of information proved invaluable in tracing the neighborhood roots of students at University City Senior High School during the pre and post-war eras.

While the representation of high school, and subsequently neighborhood, origins is broad for University City High School Seniors during the first part of the twentieth century, those who had been sophomores and/or juniors in another district were most likely to have come from the

⁴⁹ Hamilton, E. *Maryland Terrace: Its History and Architecture* (1998). The Historical Society of University City, University City, Missouri.

⁵⁰ *iBid*

⁵¹ Lorenz, William. "The Changing Population of University City." In-Service Education Program for Teachers of University City, University City Senior High School, 1966.

Mount Saint Cabanne Neighborhood in St. Louis City's Central West End. This is the neighborhood that fed into Soldan/ Soldan – Blewett High School. The graphic in Appendix D compares the number of recorded seniors coming from the Soldan neighborhood and all other neighborhoods combined for each year between 1927 and 1967.⁵²

Soldan High School opened in 1909 at 909 Union Boulevard in Saint Louis City. In 1948, it absorbed students from nearby Blewett High School, which closed that year.⁵³ From its opening, it was known for its wealth and predominantly Jewish student population.⁵⁴ During the 1930's and 1940's, more than 90% of its students were Jewish.⁵⁵ After the Brown v Board of Education decision of 1954, Soldan High School was said to have been among the most welcoming in Saint Louis City towards integration.⁵⁶ With national news coverage on the scene outside of the High School to cover the first day of integration, there were no reported protests or incidents.⁵⁷

Though integration at Soldan seemed to go very smoothly, the surrounding neighborhoods began to experience rapid changes. White families moved west in droves as more Black families settled in and around the neighborhoods feeding in to Soldan and a great deal of self-segregation was noted within the high school.⁵⁸ As White flight escalated through the 1950's, the political support wielded by the community waned. The enforcement of housing codes diminished and residential properties began to deteriorate. As the quality of the, neighborhood faded its residential properties became available to the growing number of poor

⁵² About Saint Louis Maps Mount Saint Cabanne

⁵³ Dillon, Dan (2005). So, Where'd You Go to High School: The Baby Boomer Years

⁵⁴ O'Neil, Tim (March 29, 1998). "St. Louis' Racial Picture at King's Death Had a Much Different Look - 60 Percent of the City's Population Was White, with Little Integration - Makeup of Schools Reflects Shifts". St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

⁵⁵ iBid

⁵⁶ Berger, Jerry (November 12, 2006). "The Vision of St. Louis". St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

⁵⁷ Giegerich, Steve (May 26, 1995). "Memories of Soldan: Equal - but separate". St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

⁵⁸ Todd, Cynthia (May 15, 1994). "Two Teen-Agers Who Embraced the Future". St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Blacks who found their options to rent or buy extremely limited in Saint Louis City and County.⁵⁹

By the mid 1960's, the majority of students at Soldan High School were Black and by 1965, only one White student remained.⁶⁰ During the 1950's and 1960's, many of the Black families that moved into the neighborhood surrounding Soldan High School had come from poorer neighborhoods such as Mill Creek Valley after "Urban Renewal" projects had displaced them.⁶¹

Prior to the integration of Saint Louis Public Schools and depending upon which side of Grand Avenue they resided in, Black families living in St. Louis City before integration attended either Sumner High School, Washington Technical High School, or Vashon High School. For the 4,275 Black students attending high school in St. Louis City prior to 1955, these were the only two options.⁶² When the Saint Louis Public Schools became partially integrated in 1955, a mere 591 students, less than 14 percent of the total population of Black students attending high school at the time, integrated. The vast majority of these students, 425 of them, left Vashon, Washington Technical School and Sumner high schools in order to attend Soldan High School in the Central West End.⁶³

Jerri Green graduated from University City Senior High School in 1955. Her family's move from the Central West End of Saint Louis City to University City in the mid-1950's, was

⁵⁹ Henry, C.T. A History of Community Sustainability 1958-2011: University City, an Inner-Ring Suburb of the St. Louis Metro Area. (2012). The Historical Society of University City. University City, Missouri.

⁶⁰ Dillon, Dan (2005). So, Where'd You Go to High School: The Baby Boomer Years 2. St. Louis, Missouri: Virginia Publishing.

⁶¹ Boyd, Gerald M.; Stone, D. (2010). My Times in Black and White: Race and Power at the New York Times. Chicago: Chicago Review.

⁶² Brantley, George D. "Present Status of Integration in the Public Schools of Missouri." The Journal of Negro Education 24, 3 (1955): 293-309.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2293459>. Accessed September 14, 2009.

⁶³ Heaney, Gerald W., and Dr. Susan Uchitelle. Unending Struggle: The Long Road to an Equal Education in St. Louis. St. Louis: Reedy Press, 2004.

indicative of the pattern that saw many Jewish families make that move down city's central corridor during the post-war era. Jerri was born at the old St. Luke's Hospital on Delmar in St. Louis City in April of 1938. For the first fifteen years of her life, she lived in a well maintained two family flat at 5059 Enright Avenue with her mother, an aunt, and an uncle. Another address in the Cabanne neighborhood, 5135 Kensington Avenue, served as the idyllic setting for the MGM classic Meet Me in St. Louis. Jerri described her experience living in St. Louis City during the early stages of neighborhood integration before migrating westward to University City.

I graduated from University City Senior High School in 1955. I started the school year at Soldan because my family still owned property in St. Louis City. We actually moved to University City in August of 1954. I wanted to continue attending Soldan but the administration there told me I couldn't when they found out that my family was actually residing in University City. So, in November, I enrolled at University City Senior High School. I was so far behind. University City was much more academically challenging than what I had been used to. Students who graduated with good grades could go to just about any college that they applied for back then. People certainly knew about University City; they had a really good reputation. But I was in over my head when I got there. The classes were well beyond anything that I had experienced at Soldan. The teachers [at University City Senior High School] taught like you were already in college. You were expected to come to class prepared and able to keep up with what the teachers were saying. Soldan was still a good school when I left. It was just not up to par with University City.

We had lived at 5059 Enright in the Central West End of Saint Louis City. 5059 had been a large and elegant home. Did you ever see the movie “Meet me in St. Louis” with Judy Garland? That movie was supposed to take place very close to where I grew up on Enright. It has changed so much over the years. The fire chief had lived at 5059 for a number of years. That was a big deal! At some point, the house was turned into a two family flat. It was still very lovely and the neighborhood was lovely as well. People really took pride in keeping their yards and streets looking nice. We lived upstairs and my aunt and uncle lived in the downstairs flat with their kids; my cousins. It was a very nice neighborhood when we first moved there in the mid 1940’s. Most of the people living in the two family flats were hard working Jewish families. Over time, we saw the neighborhood get more crowded. Some of the two family flats became four family flats. More and more people were crowding into the available space. The first Black families that moved into the neighborhood seemed nice enough. These were honest and hard-working families, the first Blacks that moved into the neighborhood. We didn’t interact much but when we did it was always cordial. Things were a lot different back then.

Over time, things started to go downhill. It got bad because more and more people were moving into these houses that had been intended for one family. Two families could live in these buildings without any problem as long as they were normal sized families. The first Black families that moved in were good people who cared about their homes and their neighborhoods the way you would expect. They kept up their yards and their areas. There were never any problems

with noise or police. But then, their extended family and friends started moving in to those flats. It became really crowded and noisy, even late at night. There were constantly people coming and going. Some of them were not very nice when they moved into the neighborhood. They would make very suggestive comments “hey White girl, you looking good”. They never did anything. It was all “White girl” this and “White girl” that. It just seemed threatening, menacing. It was not like it had been.

A Black family moved into the flat right next to ours on the other side of the alleyway. We had never lived that close to a Black family. That’s when my uncle and his family started making plans to move. Lots of our neighbors had already left, some without saying goodbye. The building that this Black family lived in was so close to ours, I could hear everything that they did. My bedroom was right next to their kitchen. In the summertime, I had an exhaust fan in my bedroom that ran constantly. Our neighbors, this Black family, would be cooking and that window fan in my bedroom would pull that foul aroma right into our flat. My mother said they were eating “chiterlings”. She said “that’s what Black people eat!”. Oh it was foul! I’m sure they would have said the same thing about whatever it was my mother or my aunt were cooking.

The ‘for sale’ signs started going up as soon as the first Black families started moving into the neighborhood. And when neighbors would say that they sold to a Black family, more for sale signs would pop up. I remember there being a big controversy because real estate agents wouldn’t even show properties to White families anymore in that area. If a new family was moving into the

neighborhood, it was a Black family. This was all going on while we were still living right there on Enright. More and more of our friends and neighbors were moving to University City and more and more Blacks were moving into our neighborhood. People want to be with their own. It didn't bother me, though. I didn't give a [crap]. I didn't need to be around other Jews. My family, they felt differently. They could not have gotten out of there quickly enough.

My mother called Blacks "somatine" and "schvartza", which means Black. She would always say it with such disdain. Any time there was a Black man in her line of site, she would clutch her purse. She would hold it so tight to her chest with both arms. She always thought they were going to try to rob her. They never did anything to her. She had no reason to behave that way. We have relatives who died in concentration camps because they were Jewish. If anything, my mother should have had some empathy and understanding. A lot of Jews were like that. My mother was no different. I would scold her when she did that and she would say that she wasn't taking any chances and that she did not want her purse to be stolen.

My mother, my uncle, and my aunt had already been talking about moving to University City. There were nice homes and good schools in University City that were reasonably priced and there were a lot of Jews in University City. So, that is where we moved in 1954. My aunt and uncle bought a house in the 7200 block of Cornell and my mother bought a house in the 7200 block of Princeton, one block over. I hated to leave my friends behind. A lot of them were still living in the old neighborhood when we moved. We weren't the last to move out. I was

midway through my senior year at Soldan when we moved and I caught a bus on Delmar to continue attending Soldan. About half way through the school year, I was called into the main office and told I could not attend anymore because we didn't live in the neighborhood. I was heartbroken that I didn't get to finish my senior year there.

When I got to University City Senior High School, there were no Black students, none that I can recall. There were no Black families in University City, none that I ever saw when we first moved here. The course load at the high school was beyond anything that I could have ever handled. Soldan was a good school at that time with a very good reputation. Still, nothing I did at Soldan prepared me for the work I was expected to do at the Senior High School in University City.”

When Ms. Green described the migration of Black families into her neighborhood in the Central West End of St. Louis City during the years that followed World War II, I had initially assumed some connection to such landmark cases as the 1947 decision of *Shelley v Kraemer*, which held that courts could not enforce racial covenants on real estate.⁶⁴ After speaking with other participants in this study, I began to understand that interest convergence was the catalyst that opened up housing options for Black families in areas that had previously been off limits. Landlords found that they could rent property to Black tenants without having to invest the time or resources necessary when renting to White tenants. Local government policy that enforced and maintained high standards for White citizens was virtually non-existent for Black citizens. As the city's finite number of Black enclaves saw their populations increase exponentially while

⁶⁴ Darden, Joe (1995) "Black Residential Segregation Since the 1948 *Shelley v. Kraemer* Decision". *Journal of Black Studies* 25, (6): 680–691.

their boundaries remained static, housing ‘relief’ was made available by landlords in nearby neighborhoods.

Black families had begun moving into the Central West End of Saint Louis City sometime after World War II when larger single family dwellings were converted into apartments and housing ordinances were relaxed in order to accommodate war veterans.⁶⁵ This first wave of Black families in the Central West End represented upwardly mobile strivers who could afford to escape the increasingly crowded and crumbling ghetto confines of Saint Louis City that had been designated for Black occupancy. Though options for housing began to open up following WW II, options for public schooling remained limited.

Black students living in Saint Louis City could only attend either Sumner or Vashon, the city high schools designated for Black students prior to the city becoming integrated in 1955 (one participant mentioned a third school). Genora Jones, the first Black student to graduate from University City Senior High School, recalled not being able to attend the elementary school across the street from where she lived in St. Louis City because it was for White students only. Rather, Genora had to make the trek into another neighborhood to attend one of St. Louis City’s segregated Black schools, Cote Brillante.⁶⁶ Though the Central West End continued to experience racial transition through the 1950’s, the borders of most city and county neighborhoods that were not designated Black enclaves remained virtually un-penetrated by Black citizens and other minorities.

White home and business owners created associations that upheld ordinances prohibiting Black citizens from moving into White neighborhoods. The United Welfare Association, in collaboration with the Real Estate Board of St. Louis, successfully protected racial lines in and

⁶⁵ O’Neil, Tim, (December 29, 2012). “A Look Back • Housing tight in St. Louis area as veterans return from World War II”. Saint Louis Post Dispatch.

⁶⁶ Mannino, F. (2014, June 6-19). Breaking the Racial Barrier. *The West End Word*, pp. 8 & 12.

around St. Louis City before and after the *Brown v Board* verdict was handed down.⁶⁷ The practices that successfully established segregated neighborhoods in St. Louis City worked the same way for University City, where the exclusively White neighborhoods fed into a local school district that would remain exclusively White for more than a decade following the ruling in *Brown vs. The Board of Education* and in spite of the close geographical presence of Black families just outside of its borders.

During Saint Louis City School District's first year of integration, 1955, twenty-five of University City Senior High School's graduates pictured were Soldan transplants. This number rose to thirty-one in 1956. Between 1957 and 1961, 71 more of the seniors pictured in University City Senior High School's yearbooks were transplants from Soldan. By 1961, the high school in Saint Louis City's central corridor that had been exclusively White and predominantly Jewish from its opening in 1909 was on its way to becoming exclusively Black. Of the 260 graduating seniors pictured in Soldan 1961 yearbook, all but 17 were Black.

While White families from areas outside of the Central West End's Soldan neighborhood also made their way into University City during the years that followed *Brown v the Board of Education*, their pace reflected the racial restrictions still in place within those neighborhoods. With the exception of Beaumont High School and Central High School, none of the other Saint Louis Public High Schools that had been exclusively White prior to *Brown* stood as close to Black residents as Soldan in the Central West End.

Though the influx of White families from the Soldan service area into University City seems to have spiked in the mid 1950's, school yearbooks indicate that this migration pattern had begun in earnest during the 1920's. The initial wave of White families moving from the Central

⁶⁷ Dowden-White, Priscilla (2011). *Groping toward Democracy: African American Social Welfare Reform in St. Louis, 1910-1949*. University of Missouri Press.

West End to University City were part of a growing trend citizens who found that owning an automobile afforded the convenience of city living with the comfort of an urban lifestyle.⁶⁸

My research suggests that three major trends motivated White residents of the Central West End neighborhoods to venture westward. While not unique to the national phenomena of White flight from urban areas during the first half of the twentieth century, this research remains focused on those trends that resulted in the racial dynamics that shaped the suburb of University City and its school district. During the pre-war era, a nationwide trend saw more city dwellers venture into the suburbs. This shift was certainly connected to the proliferation of automobile ownership and the accessibility of city conveniences without needing to actually live in the city.⁶⁹ The second shift that prompted White flight out of St. Louis City came during the post-war era, when the city began to ease up on ordinances related to housing and occupancy.⁷⁰ Supposedly, relaxing ordinances was intended to afford housing options to veterans returning from World War II. However, lower standards for housing regulations resulted in less upkeep and monitoring of properties owned by landlords. First-hand accounts obtained for the purpose of this study detail the rapid decline in the quality of city living. White and predominantly Jewish residents of impacted neighborhoods in the Central West End made their way westward down the central corridor and into University City, which supplanted the Central West End as the mid-west's second largest Jewish enclave during the 1950's and 1960's.⁷¹ The third and final wave of White flight out of St. Louis City came during the civil rights era with the landmark case that ruled segregated schools to be unconstitutional. When St. Louis City partially desegregated

⁶⁸ Harris, N. (1981). *Legacy of Lions*. Published by The Historical Society of University City, University City, Missouri.

⁶⁹ *iBid*

⁷⁰ Gordon, C. (2008). *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

⁷¹ Lubeck, Dennis, R., "University City: A Suburban Community's Response to Integration, 1959-1970," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Saint Louis University, 1976.

its schools in 1955, very little changed outside of the Central West End neighborhoods where both Black and White families lived in close proximity to Soldan High School. The racial lines established and maintained throughout the neighborhoods in other parts of St. Louis City kept their neighborhood schools predominantly White following orders to desegregate. The influx of Black students into Soldan, however, was enough to send a great number of White families scrambling down the central corridor and into University City.

Families that moved into University City following the federal mandate for schools to desegregate found themselves a safe distance away from the racial and political turmoil that continued to swirl in Saint Louis City. White families who remained in the city of St. Louis' central corridor experienced changes in the political and social dynamics of their neighborhoods that correlated with the racial shifts. By the late 1960's, the once picturesque enclave of White, upper-middle class neighborhoods found itself blighted. An article published in the November 15, 1970 edition of the St. Louis Post Dispatch detailed the plight of long-time residents of the Central West End and their efforts to deal with absentee landlords, houses of prostitution, abandoned buildings, and a sky rocketing crime rate. One of these citizens, Mrs. John W. Seddon explained "it was a lovely neighborhood when we were young. You could walk anywhere at any time" Mrs. Seddon described a major shift in the demographics of the Central West End when city ordinances related to occupancy requirements of the luxury apartment buildings in the 5500 and 5600 blocks of Waterman were relaxed during World War II. Mrs. Seddon recalled "There wasn't enough supervision when the landlords began to cut up the apartments to house war workers. First the apartments were cut in half, then cut again and

finally they just became rented rooms. The less responsible the landlords became, the less responsible the tenants were – it was a vicious circle”.⁷²

During the 1950’s and 1960’s, according to Mrs. Seddon, the area became a port of entry for migrants from the south as well as citizens uprooted by the Mill Creek redevelopment. Though she does not say so explicitly in the article, Mrs. Seddon is almost certainly describing the phase during which her neighborhood experienced a tremendous racial shift that involved the mass exodus of White city dwellers down the central corridor and into University City. A fellow ‘activist’ by the name of Mrs. James S. McLellan was a bit less sensitive to racial undertones when she suggested “If this becomes a jungle, I don’t see how either the city or the county is going to survive as a metropolitan area”.⁷³

Though resting in the shadow of blight as early as the late 1940’s, University City looked nothing like a community on the verge of racial transition.⁷⁴ When University City Senior High School welcomed its first Black student, Genora Jones, there were no worries that she represented the tip of a proverbial iceberg. She simply did not. Nor did the smattering of Black families spread evenly throughout the communities three wards. A member of the class of 1957, Genora is one of only two Black students pictured among the Seniors, Juniors, and Sophomores who attended her alma mater (Freshman in University City attended either Hanley Junior High School or Brittany Woods Junior High School at the time). Genoras' smiling portrait in the yearbook is represented solely by her senior picture, under which is printed “Beautiful faces are those who wear whole-souled honesty printed there”. Just under the quote, there is a note that she transferred to University City Senior High School from Sumner High School. It would be nine

⁷² “City Woman Fight Crime, Decay.” Saint Louis Post Dispatch, November 15, 1970.

⁷³ iBid

⁷⁴ Burke, Patrick. “Blight: A Case Study of University City, Missouri”, March, 1973.

years before another Black student would be pictured as part of University City Senior High School's graduating class.

Genora, received her high school diploma from University City Senior High School three years after the landmark decision of *Brown v the Board of Education* in which the Court deemed state laws that facilitated separate public schools for White and Black students unlawful. The judgment reversed the *Plessy v. Ferguson* verdict of 1896, which permitted state-sponsored segregation in the public school setting. The Warren Court's unanimous decision of May 17, 1954 specified that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal". Consequently, the practice of de jure racial segregation stood in direct conflict with the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution.⁷⁵

Ironically, the School District of University City never subscribed to any policies or regulations that excluded students based on race. In an interview conducted by a student for a project celebrating the district's golden jubilee, former interim superintendent Glenys Unruh offered her perspective on the district's stance on integration. She explained "University City never did have segregation, segregated schools by law, that is, we never had de jure segregation...University City never had segregated schools. When Black children came to our schools before the Brown decision or after, they came right into the schools. They were always welcome".⁷⁶ This sentiment certainly seemed to ring true for Genora Jones when she arrived for her first day of school in University City. Genora recalled Principal James Baker making it a point to personally welcome her. There were no protests and no angry mobs on that fall morning of 1956 in University City.⁷⁷ Genora's presence at the high school that year created no waves.

⁷⁵ Adamson, Erin. Breaking barriers: Topekans reflect on role in desegregating nation's schools, *Topeka Capital Journal* (May 11, 2003)

⁷⁶ "University City Beautiful: It's Your City Enjoy It." 1981.

⁷⁷ Mannino, F. (2014, June 6-19). Breaking the Racial Barrier. *The West End Word*, pp. 8 & 12.

She attended classes and little more. She was, as one of her classmates put it, “like a ghost in the hallways and classrooms of University City Senior High School”.

Sometime in the early 1950’s, Genora’s father, Luther, had taken a job as a custodian in University City. As a Black custodial worker in University City, he was required to wear a photo I.D. or face fines of up to one hundred dollars.⁷⁸ The new position provided living quarters in the basement of his assigned building and he moved his family into the space. Possibly, this arrangement would have been more favorable than anything a Black custodian could access for his family in Saint Louis City or County.

Genora continued attending Sumner High School in St. Louis City until a family friend suggested how much easier it would be for Genora to attend school closer to where she lived in University City.⁷⁹ This sentiment was shared by the wife of the man who was employing Genora’s father and providing the living space for his family. Though groundbreaking in her presence among the senior class of 1957, Genora offered no threat to the racial hierarchy that had long been established in the School District of University City. It is doubtful that her singular presence would have prompted any ‘for sale’ signs in the community’s quiet neighborhoods. Rather, her presence may have seemed more like a hallmark of diversity or a point of pride for liberal and open minded citizens. Similarly, her family’s residency in the basement space of that commercial building in University City was of no consequence to the residential racial lines that stretched around the perimeter of this inner ring suburb. It is very likely that Genora and her family failed to make waves in University City as they did not own property. Similarly, their circumstances as citizens in University City did not represent any type of trend that was slowly unfolding. Rather, their presence in University City was made possible by a unique set of

⁷⁸ Harris, N. (1981). *Legacy of Lions*. Published by The Historical Society of University City, University City, Missouri.

⁷⁹ Cohen, Robert. “First African American U. City High Grad Recalls Past with Pride.” *The Jewish Light*.

circumstances that was by no means seen as being permanent. It was not until almost a decade later, when Black families began buying homes in the third ward of University City that White citizens began to take notice.

Aggressive enforcement of restrictive covenants from the time of its incorporation in 1906 kept the neighborhoods in University City almost exclusively White through the early 1960's.⁸⁰ Like many other growing communities, racial restrictions were common place throughout University City. During its early years, new neighborhoods in University City such as Maryland Terrace, Parkview Gardens, and Ames Place were developed with strict covenants that restricted the sale or rent of property "to a Negro or to anyone other than of the Caucasian race". These restrictions often extended to include "any corporation acting on behalf of such person".⁸¹ Consequently, the school district, which was established in 1911, also remained exclusively White through the mid 1960's. Students like Genora could be dismissed as outliers and anomalies. The sporadic presence of Black families in the community and in the district's classrooms seemed innocuous, even after the Brown ruling. One longtime resident and former employee in the district told me that the first Black families that actually purchased homes did so in the more exclusive sections of the district's first ward. "These were upwardly mobile families. They were doctors, lawyers, and other such professionals who may have had a large number of clients in the Black neighborhoods in St. Louis City; really nice people. This was before Black families started moving into the third ward. They went to school in University City and nothing really changed during that time". As this smattering of upwardly mobile families with professional patriarchs settled into University City, it was 'business as usual' for the exceedingly liberal community. Outside of the North East borders of University City, however,

⁸⁰ Harris, N. (1981). *Legacy of Lions*. Published by The Historical Society of University City, University City, Missouri.

⁸¹ Hamilton, E. *Maryland Terrace: Its History and Architecture* (1998). The Historical Society of University City, University City, Missouri.

a firestorm of racial and political activity was swirling and the political mobilization of citizens began to take shape.

In 1967, the City Council of University City enacted three ordinances to protect against practices that facilitated blight in Saint Louis City during the post war era.⁸² Ordinance 4309 called for residents of University City to obtain an occupancy permit. The permit served two primary purposes. This ordinance assured that homes and apartments adhered to all local building codes prior to changing hands. This helped to guard against buildings falling into disrepair over time. The occupancy permit also served as a way for local government to police the number of people residing in any particular home or apartment, protecting against doubling up and general overcrowding. This ordinance also specified what parts of any home or apartment could and could not be used as a bedroom.

Panic Peddling⁸³, a practice used by real estate agents to get White homeowners to sell by playing upon their fears related to the racial transition of neighborhoods, was addressed through Ordinance 4312. This ordinance made the practice of blockbusting illegal in University City. In some neighborhood newsletters that circulated in the late 1960's, residents were encouraged to work with local police to capture real estate agents in the act of using scare tactics. Plain clothed policemen were made available to pose as relatives during real estate pitches in order to catch perpetrators in the act.

Ordinance 4301 made it illegal for agents to approach homeowners for the purpose of soliciting interest in selling. The ordinance specified that homeowners must contact real estate firms in order to initiate services. All three of these ordinances, 4312, 4301, and 4309, went into effect with a great deal of assiduity. The influx of Blacks into the community and its schools had

⁸² "Ordinances Adopted in Public Interest." Community News of University City Missouri, September, 1967.

⁸³ iBid

gained irrevocable momentum. Whether they claimed to be promoting racial balance in the third ward or protecting the status quo of their first and second ward neighborhoods, the support behind these ordinances reflected the thrust of an entire community have yet to lose the rigidity of their initial intention.

In order to encourage ordinances designed at the very least to contain the racial transition of University City and its school district, the City Council initiated and supported the organization of strong neighborhood associations in 1967.⁸⁴ With the support of University City's local government, the newly formed neighborhood associations were expected encourage neighborhood stability as the influx of Black families continued. Good neighbors were asked to compile a list of real estate agents who complied with local ordinances. This included agents and companies that would show houses to White families in the third ward. Because each neighborhood sustained its own association, participation varied across the community. As of December of 1967, the concentration of neighborhood associations was greatest in the third ward with 11. The mildly integrated second ward claimed 8 neighborhood associations and the almost exclusively White first ward claimed 5 neighborhood associations. The graphics in Appendix E are copied from the University City archives located in the archives of the University City Public Library. They literally and figuratively illustrate the attention that homeowners were focusing upon White flight and racial transition in their neighborhoods.

The introduction of University City Ordinance 4364 reinforced an already tough stance on occupancy. This ordinance quantified the minimum amount of space per occupant residing in University City and was certainly enacted to help guard against the transition of homes and apartments into the flop houses that had become common in parts of Saint Louis City.

⁸⁴ "Greater Neighborhood Association Officers". Community News of University City Missouri, December, 1967.

Ordinance 4364 specified that no less than 70 square feet be designated for any sleeping room in University City homes and apartments and a minimum of 50 square feet per occupant for general living space.⁸⁵

Ongoing support and attention was given to ordinances related to occupancy through the City Council and media outlets. In addition to the related memos distributed to citizens of University City, the community newspaper continued to justify the support of the newly enacted ordinances. In the March, 1968 edition of *Community News of University City*, Sally Olds reminded citizens that the threat of blight was always looming in University City.⁸⁶ In her article, Olds reminded citizens that protecting against neighborhood deterioration would help guard against overcrowding and added stress on the schools, sanitation, police, and fire departments. Clearly aware of the racial undertones of ordinances that were enacted to protect against the in-migration of Black families, Olds qualified the measures by explaining “the requirement for an occupancy permit grew out of requests by neighborhood associations, particularly where Negro families – who had fled the ghettos in a search for better housing for their families – were especially eager that their new neighborhood retain the high standards that had attracted them to University City”⁸⁷

While there was certainly truth in the suggestion that Black families in University City hoped to avoid the ghettoization that White flight seemed to accelerate, it was a convenient truth that masks the protection of White space with the illusion of a liberal agenda. The primary interest of enacting these ordinances was to contain or reverse the trend of White flight and the influx of Black families into University City. Yet another ordinance, 4433, was enacted in

⁸⁵ “New Ordinances.” *Community News of University City Missouri*, January, 1968.

⁸⁶ Olds, Sally. “Improving Residential Quality of U. City.” *Community News of University City Missouri*, March, 1968.

⁸⁷ *iBid*

September of 1968. 4433 was called the ‘For Sale’ Sign Ban.⁸⁸ By the late 1960’s, real estate agents had infiltrated the psyche of White citizens in University City. The presence of ‘for sale’ signs had taken on a new meaning. They were viewed as harbingers of racial transition in the neighborhood and its schools and fed into the panic selling that was spreading throughout the third ward like wildfire in the late 1960’s. University City’s Director of Planning, Al Goldman, explained that “laws like the ordinance banning ‘for sale’ signs are mainly psychological, meant to stabilize integration and stop the flight of White citizens”⁸⁹ Extensive communication with Shaker Heights and other municipalities that had banned ‘for sale’ signs to stem White flight helped to bring ordinance 4433 to University City.

In January of 1968, an article in the Saint Louis Globe Democrat related University City’s introduction of strict Occupancy laws and its issue of White flight. Once again, Black citizens in University City are described as being among the biggest supporters of the new occupancy laws. The master narrative held that “Although this package of laws was spurred by increasing racial integration in housing, University City officials deny there is any racial bias involved. In fact, it was predominantly Negro home owners that got the ball rolling toward adoption of the occupancy permit law”⁹⁰

While University City was the first in the area to enact such laws related to occupancy, other municipalities located in and around Saint Louis County that were sitting in the shadows of blighted neighborhoods followed suit including; Goodfellow Terrace, Beverly Hills, Hillsdale, Northwoods, Pagedale, Pine Lawn, Velda Village, and Uplands Park.⁹¹

⁸⁸ “For Sale Sign Ban, Commercial Controls in New Sign Measure.” Community News of University City Missouri, September, 1968.

⁸⁹ “U. City Occupancy Law Weapon in War on Blight.” Saint Louis Globe Democrat, January, 1968.

⁹⁰ iBid

⁹¹ iBid

While occupancy laws certainly impacted the racial tone in the neighborhoods located throughout University City, the establishment of University City Residential Service (UCRS) served as the community's most aggressive answer to White flight and the in-migration of Blacks. UCRS formed after reports that neighborhoods in the third ward were only being marketed to Black families. Real estate agents were operating under the assumption that it would be either impossible or improper to sell homes to White families in an integrated neighborhood. UCRS marketed itself as a champion of racial balance. Acknowledging the sustained influx of Black citizens into University City, UCRS focused on attracting and retaining White citizens in order to achieve their goals for racial balance.

UCRS was heavily supported by the local government. In 1973, the city of University City was paying \$3,600.00 per year salaries to the Executive and the Associate Directors of UCRS in addition to providing mimeo-graphing, postage, stationary and other necessities for the office. In their humble offices located on Olive Boulevard, UCRS maintained listings for all available housing and apartment units located within the borders of University City. Informational flyers were distributed on local college campuses with a primary goal being to attract White, college professors working at Washington University, Saint Louis University, and The University of Missouri Saint Louis. Services were provided free of charge and included guided tours of available listings. In order to ensure that all time, energy, and resources were being spent with White 'clients', the initial correspondence between UCRS and prospective home buyers/apartment renters had to take place in person. All subsequent correspondences could occur via telephone or through the mail.⁹² UCRS boasted that it had dispelled the myth that White people would not buy homes in racially mixed neighborhoods, citing their organization as

⁹² Glickert, Elsie. "Councilman's Corner." Community News of University City Missouri, June, 1970.

being instrumental in helping 1,500 White families settle in University City between 1968 and 1972.⁹³

While UCRS focused on bringing White families into University City, ‘New Neighbors’ focused on steering Black families away from University City. Established in 1971 by the same group of White community leaders and activists that established UCRS, New Neighbors operated out of an office at Concordia Seminary.⁹⁴ Much like UCRS worked solely with White clientele, New Neighbors worked only with Black clientele. A plug for the service in a local newspaper also served to let citizens of University City know that much was being done to slow White flight in the community. The 1972 plug printed in the community newspaper informed citizens that New Neighbors “helps Black families find housing outside of University City and contests the common notion that all Black people want to live together”⁹⁵ The plug specified that New Neighbors was working with 60 clients in their search for housing “outside of the University City School District”⁹⁶ Listed as potential destinations for clients of New Neighbors were; Glendale, Overland, Clayton, Bridgeton, Hazelwood, Bellfountain, Brentwood, Richmond Heights, Maplewood, Olivette, Creve Cour, Kirkwood, Florissant, Webster Groves, Ladue, and Ferguson.

One of the participants that I interviewed for the purpose of this research was a founding member of both UCRS and New Neighbors. In addition to her efforts with those two organizations, this individual helped to set up a trust that maintained a number of houses and apartments in the third ward with the sole intent that they be rented by White families with school aged children that would attend school in their neighborhood. Though she experienced

⁹³ iBid

⁹⁴ Glickert, Elsie. “Councilman’s Corner.” Community News of University City Missouri, April, 1972.

⁹⁵ iBid

⁹⁶ iBid

some degree of success in bringing young White adults into the third Ward, bringing families with school aged children who were willing to patronize public schools in University City proved exceedingly difficult.

A White woman who grew up in Clayton before moving to University City to raise her family, she has been active in local politics for the past 60 years with an emphasis on Civil Rights. The perspective that she holds as a founder of UCRS and New Neighbors underscores how powerful the Master Narrative is in shaping ones perception and motivation. UCRS and New Neighbors volunteers, Board Members, and supporters are propelled by concepts such as “racial balance”, “equity”, and “housing opportunities”. At the root of both services, however, existed the high value placed upon White citizens and the liability associated with Black citizens. My participant recollections of her involvement with UCRS and New Neighbors are as follows:

“I helped to set up the University City Residential Service to address the White flight that was going on at the time. Initially, our office was in an electrical company. We had a little office in that building. I worked there setting up files of what houses were available. Then, we moved to a Baptist church just a block or two north of Olive Boulevard. Ultimately, we wound up next to City Hall in the Senior Citizens building and I guess it doesn’t exist anymore. What I did, was to find out what houses were available for rent or sale and what apartments were available and we looked for White people to move into University City. I worked around the clock and we sent out monthly listings of available houses and apartments to faculty at Washington University and Saint Louis University. We included pictures and descriptions of these houses and apartments that were listed

in all three wards, not just north of Olive where the White flight was most pronounced. Now, the houses in the third ward appealed more to new families and families with lower incomes because they were less expensive. The houses in the third ward were smaller and newer than the houses in the first and second wards. So, families in the third ward would have less space and they wouldn't have to worry about the extensive repairs needed for the larger and older houses in the first and second wards. We worked with Black families, too. But our primary focus was to keep the neighborhoods integrated.

At some point, I set up a real estate trust with a board. We bought 35 houses north of Olive in University City to rent to White families and only White families. Initially we said we only wanted families that had children who would be attending public grade schools. Eventually we had to give up on that. We made sure the houses were in really good condition. Again, I went into a lot of these houses that we bought and it was like the people that moved out had fled overnight. These were mostly Jewish families. I don't know what percent of University City was Jewish at that time, but it was still known as a predominantly Jewish community.

Steering is a very important word in the field of neighborhood politics because real estate agents were steering Black people into University City. They did this because we were known for being such a liberal community.

A woman named Judy, I can't remember her last name, she got some of us together and asked what we could do about the real estate agents steering Black families into University City and steering White families out of University City.

So, we set up the University City Residential Service to keep the community integrated. We sought out White people to move into University City. The real estate companies wanted just the opposite. They were happy to get these houses on the market and then turn around and sell them to Black families. They were using fear to sell the houses and when Black families moved into the neighborhoods, the fear factor just sky rocketed. Panic selling – fear selling.

When I went into some of these houses that had been put on the market, I had a feeling that the occupants had moved out overnight. They would leave furniture and personal items behind. It was like they could not have gotten out of there quickly enough. The real estate agents were making a lot of money because the houses were selling for a fraction of what they were worth. For Black families who wanted to move into the county and send their kids to good schools, there were not a lot of options. University City was, at that time, one of the few areas in the county that Black families could move. I also set up an organization at Concordia Seminary called New Neighbors. We had to change the name because there was already a company called New Neighbors. So, we changed the name to County Open Housing and we only dealt with housing in the county. We worked with Black families who were looking for housing and were being steered into University City or St. Louis City. It took me about 40 hours per family to fight the discrimination. I would tell people “I teach lying at Concordia Seminary” because I would tell them to “use their White voices” to call and inquire about available houses and apartments. So they would get all of the information. Then, we had paperwork for them to keep track of all of the information and we kept

copies so if the landlords called us to inquire, we could support the information that these families had provided. In order to close the deal, we would have a student from Concordia go with the family to the house or the apartment. I had them phone from around the corner and say “I must have taken a wrong turn, can you please give me directions?” This way, the landlord couldn’t say “Oh, we just rented it”, which is what they would do if a Black family would show up. So, yes, I had them call from around the corner so when they showed up two minutes later, nobody could say that the space had been rented. Now, we only worked with families who we knew could follow through on their end of the bargain. These were families where dad and maybe mom had steady jobs and simply wanted fair access to housing that fit their means and their needs. I can tell you that once these families moved in, we never had any problems. I tried so often to get the Post-Dispatch and the Globe-Democrat to write an article about how well this was working. We never got them to write anything.

I really don’t think that there was a line drawn specifically down Olive. I really think it had more to do with socio-economics than anything else. The houses in the third ward were just more affordable than what was available in the first and second wards. All of University City was fair game for the real estate agents who would have wanted to market houses in University City to Black families. Clayton, now that was a different story. Agents would have never shown houses to Black families looking to purchase or even rent in Clayton. The first Black family to move into University City lived in the first ward near Flynn Park Elementary School. There was a man, George Murphy, a professor at

Washington University who lived in the neighborhood when this Black family moved in. He lived very near Flynn Park. When that first Black family moved in, there were some people in the neighborhood who put up for sale signs. George went door to door and talked to people and got them to calm down stay in the neighborhood.

My daughter, when she was in Kindergarten, there was one Black child in her class. This Black child drew a picture of boys and girls and they were all different colors together in the same space. And, you know, the teacher scolded him. My daughter was very upset about that. She came home and told me”.

What Does Our Past Say About Our Future?

When faced with the prospect of unpeeling the many layers that factor into the creation of a district within a district, I felt a bit overwhelmed. Where to start? 1967 seemed to be a good launching point as it represents the first year that the district began collecting data showing the percentage of White and Black students attending school in University City. I obtained this data from my good friend Julie Ward, who serves as the administrative assistant to the current Superintendent of University City, JoyLynn Wilson. Ms. Ward shared that the data showing the district’s racial demographics between 1967 and 1987 was collected by former Board member David Harris. The data collected by Mr. Harris brought me to the collection of yearbooks from University City Senior High School housed at the University City Public Library where I could get an idea of what the racial demographics were at the high school prior to 1967. In particular, I wanted to see how far back I had to go before all of the Black faces in the senior yearbook vanished.

What I expected to find was a gradual thinning out of Black faces as the years were traced backwards. With the exception of Genora Jones, who graduated from University City Senior High School in 1957, my expectations were validated as the stream of Black faces into the pages of the yearbooks began to replace the stream of White faces out of the yearbook in the mid 1960's. With the expected discoveries, I found something quite unexpected as I traced my way backwards in time through the pages of each yearbook. A large number of the graduating seniors, going all the way back to the oldest yearbook I could find, were noted as having started high school at Soldan prior to enrolling in University City.

During the post war era, and with a strong push during the post Brown era, it seemed that University City was largely shaped by the families moving in from the neighborhoods that had fed into Soldan High School. This phenomenon was further established as each of the White participants with whom I spoke for the purpose of this study indicated that they had settled in University City, or their parents had settled in University City, by way of the central corridor. The White flight out of University City that had been at the center of my study followed a significant wave of White flight into University City. The term 'White Flight' itself conveys a tone of freedom that is not found in the movements of Black folks. Rather, 'Black Migration' conveys obedience to the laws of nature rather than the ownership of those laws.

Working class Black families who, in most cases, raised the median income in the neighborhoods to which they were moving, were seen as the harbingers of Blight. When they began to settle in University City in the early 1960's as they had in the central corridor during the dawn of the post-war era, a great many White citizens spread their proverbial wings and flew westward to their new idyllic neighborhoods. Many who stayed exercised the potential carried by their privilege to draw their proverbial lines.

Chapter 3: The Reorganization Controversy

In 1980, students and staff at the high school collaborated to produce a book celebrating University City's 75th anniversary. The result of these efforts is titled *University City Beautiful: It's Your City Enjoy It!* The efforts of students and staff members who worked on this project resulted in a compilation of 15 units dedicated to important piece of regional history. Each unit begins with an overview, content objectives, and performance objectives. Unit 5 of this project is titled "A District in Transition" and includes the following excerpt from a letter that Superintendent Dr. Garrison received from the law firm of Sigoloff and Sigoloff in 1968.⁹⁷

De facto segregation has become the short way of describing the existing situation in northern cities. A school system which is marked by a very large proportion of Negroes in some of its schools and few or none in others, but in which this separation has taken place without the compulsion of state law or officially announced policy requiring that Negroes and White children be placed in separate schools.

The letter from Sigoloff and Sigoloff hints of the controversy that had long been brewing in University City by the late 1960's. As early as the mid-1960's, the School District of University City had begun to experience sustained racial transition in its neighborhoods. As the number of Black families moving into University City gained momentum, so too did the number of White families moving out of the community. The vast majority of this racial transition took place in the community's third ward with its less expensive and more modern homes.⁹⁸ In addition to being geographically closer to the border of St. Louis City where many Black folks were coming from, the third ward offered newer and less expensive housing options than the older, larger, and more upscale options in the first and second wards. One of my participants for

⁹⁷ iBid

⁹⁸ Henry, C.T. *A History of Community Sustainability 1958-2011: University City, an Inner-Ring Suburb of the St. Louis Metro Area.* (2012). The Historical Society of University City. University City, Missouri.

this study suggested that Black families had grown leery of the older, multistory dwellings that were common in Saint Louis City. These types of homes and apartments required constant upkeep and were not well maintained by landlords once White flight was in full swing. The homes located in the third ward of University City had been built to attract veterans returning from World War II. They were relatively new ranch houses and bungalow that required very little in the way of upkeep and proved to be exceedingly attractive to Black families who had the means to escape the blighted neighborhoods to which they had been relegated in Saint Louis City.⁹⁹ Homes located in the first and second wards were older, multistory structures very similar to what one might see in Saint Louis City. They were more expensive and, because they were older, required more serious upkeep.¹⁰⁰ While economic constraints certainly dictated were many Black families could and could not buy homes, there is no doubt that an appeal for the houses in University City's third ward existed for Black families who were trying to get away from the crumbling structures of Saint Louis City.

The initial push to address the growing racial imbalance in the community and its neighborhood schools came first from White families living in the third ward. The proliferation of Black neighbors and Black classmates awakened a liberal push for diversity throughout University City.¹⁰¹ The term "racial balance" was used widely and, for the most part, accepted at face value. The juxtaposition of "racial balance" groups and groups wanting to maintain the status quo create an interesting dynamic when viewed through a lens of critical race theory. While groups supporting the status quo were sometimes silenced by the explicit racist tone of their own endeavors, groups championing racial balance garnered a liberal slant. Ultimately,

⁹⁹ Goldman-Prince, V. *That's The Way It Was: Stories of Struggle, Survival and Self-Respect in Twentieth Century Black St. Louis*, The History Press. Charlotte, North Carolina. 2013.

¹⁰⁰ *i*Bid

¹⁰¹ Smith-Dawson, Karen. "Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization." Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

citizens pursuing racial balance in their neighborhoods and schools were seeking the same thing as those citizens who wanted to maintain the status quo.

By the late 1960's, there was no denying the racial transition that University City was experiencing. The community's third ward was well on its way to becoming a predominantly Black enclave. This pattern had played out enough times that anybody could have read the writing that was on the wall. To achieve racial balance in the third ward would require a concerted effort to stem and dissuade the influx of Black families from all points of greater concentration. To achieve sustained racial balance in the third ward would have required the political and financial leverage of White citizens.

Ad hoc committees emerged in the third ward seeking to drum up political support in getting the School District to abandon the neighborhood schools model in favor of a 'center' approach that would redistribute Black and White students evenly throughout the district's elementary schools. A group of active citizens created University City Residential Service (UCRS), designed to steer White families back into the third ward. Other local organizations, which are discussed later in this chapter, were created to help Black families find housing options outside of University City.

The push for racial balance was not well received by citizens living in the first and second wards of University City.¹⁰² Though the racial status quo of the communities first 50 years had all but slipped away in the third ward, White residents in the first and second wards could still clutch their racial exclusivity into the late 1960's. The neighborhoods and, subsequently, their neighborhood schools remained predominantly White as racial transition manifested itself in the third ward. Though not as vocal as the groups pushing for racial balance,

¹⁰² "University City Beautiful: It's Your City Enjoy It." 1981.

the groups pushing to maintain the neighborhood schools model gained a great deal of momentum through word of mouth and the distribution of political propaganda. Ultimately, the issue of racial balance and school reorganization dominated neighborhood and school politics in University City. When the board elections rolled around in 1970, there were no other issues that could have impacted who would ultimately be elected.

Though this chapter focuses squarely on the issue of racial dynamics in a multi-racial community, it also underlies the power structure that dominates. Citizens pushing for neighborhood schools wanted the same thing that the citizens pushing for racial balance sought – to protect and sustain White space. They were well aware of the transition, and ghettoization that had occurred just outside of their eastern borders in Saint Louis City. The liberal attitudes that patronized the random smattering of Black citizens during the late 1950's and early 1960's shifted as sustained Black migration into University City took hold. The first wave of Black families to move into University City did not pose any threats or generate any political agendas or civic action. The first wave consisted of households headed by doctors, lawyers, dentists, and other upwardly mobile professionals seeking refuge from absentee landlords who operated unmonitored in Saint Louis City's overcrowded Black enclaves.¹⁰³ These families found their refuge in the upscale and notably liberal neighborhoods of University City's first and second wards. They were good, upstanding citizens whose ethnicity simply punctuated the community's progressive nature. There may have been one or two such families in any particular neighborhood. There may have been one or two such students in any particular school. There was no threat, just the comfort of knowing that the community was diverse.

¹⁰³ Callier, Charles, *The Role of Community Organization in the Process of Racial Transition: A Case Study of the University City Residential Service*, p.2

Much like the first wave of Black families who made their way into University City during the late 1950's and early 1960's, the second wave sought to escape the crumbling, and overcrowded Black enclaves of Saint Louis City. This second wave¹⁰⁴ consisted of working class families who wanted better schools and better neighborhoods for their children. Their migration into University City signaled the beginning of the community's sustained racial transition. The appeal of homes located in the third ward was enhanced by the block busting tactics of real estate agents who found their niche buying 'cold' from White homeowners and selling 'hot' to Black families. For the White citizens who could not afford to move out of the third ward during this transition, access to privilege was channeled through political agency. The graphics in Appendix F illustrate ways in which citizens in University City sought to stem White flight.

Information in this chapter came from the Doctoral Dissertation composed by Karen Smith Dawson and published in 1974, archived School Board minutes taken between April 20, 1967 and July 18, 1973, Newspaper Articles from the Saint Louis Post Dispatch, Saint Louis American, the University City Pride (Student Newspaper), the Saint Louis Globe Democrat, district publications, and the accounts of individuals I talked with who were involved in discussions concerning the reorganization of the School District of University City in order to achieve racial balance. Smith-Dawson's dissertation, *Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case of the University City School Reorganization Controversy*, is first and foremost a study of school board politics in a suburban community.¹⁰⁵ When I spoke with Smith- Dawson during an informal phone conversation, she exhibited a keen understanding of the racial dynamics that were playing out during her research. While those dynamics are implied

¹⁰⁴ "Blight: A Case Study of University City, Missouri", March, 1973.

¹⁰⁵ Smith-Dawson, Karen. "Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization." Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

throughout her work, Smith Dawson's focus is squarely on the social and political angle. She meticulously traces the trajectory of a volatile community issue from its neighborhood roots through the interworking's of the School Board.¹⁰⁶

Smith-Dawson's research demonstrated what happens when a School Board allows their power to slip into the hands of well-organized and well-informed factions of special interest groups in the community.¹⁰⁷ In the case of the University City reorganization controversy, the board fostered strong sentiments throughout their community by initiating committee work on the controversial topics of reorganization and racial balance in the school setting. The fires of sentiment had already been stoked by the profound racial transition that the district was experiencing. These tensions had gained momentum in the neighborhoods. In the district's third ward, the racial composition of neighborhoods seemed to be changing almost overnight. In the district's second and third wards, White citizens rallied to protect the status quo.¹⁰⁸ In some cases, upwardly mobile Black citizens rallied around the political armor that favored their presence in small doses. They knew that this armor would betray them should their presence exceed the comfort level of their conditional allies.

Black and White citizens living in the first and second wards of University City during the early days of the community's full-fledged racial transition shared a convergence of interests. White citizens could claim citizenship in a diverse community because their neighbor at the end of the block was Black. White citizens who sent their children to school in the district's first or second wards could boast that their children attended diverse schools because there was almost certainly a smattering of Black students attending school with their child.¹⁰⁹

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The Black families who lived in the first or second ward of University City could rest assured that their children were getting a world class education. Political support is as strong in White space as it is rare in Black space. Tavis Smiley, author of *The Covenant*, points out that Black students attending predominantly White schools are afforded superior resources in comparison to Black students who attend predominantly Black schools.¹¹⁰ Many of the Black families who were moving into University City had seen it before. They moved into good homes in St. Louis City only to see things crumble when their presence became too noticeable to sustain any semblance of the White space that afforded the safety, protection, and opportunity that had brought these Black families from the Jim Crow south.¹¹¹ Cruelly and ironically, bleeding heart liberals and even the civil rights movement had killed the Black archipelago that blossomed magnificently and independently of White space and in spite of White space during the pre-war years.¹¹²

Special interest groups took full advantage of the Board's willingness to delegate the decision making process to special committees and ad hoc groups. Because the issue of reorganization was explicitly tied to racial composition in each of the district's schools, the visceral response was overwhelming. Families in the predominantly White first and second wards feared that a reorganization of student distribution would result in their neighborhood schools absorbing poor Black students from the district's third ward.¹¹³ This fear was primarily demonstrated by White citizens, however, this research demonstrates the fears that upwardly

¹¹⁰ Smiley, Tavis. *The Covenant*. Third World Press, Chicago, 2006.

¹¹¹ Wilkerson, Isabel. *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. New York: Random House, 2010.

¹¹² Heathcoat, Joseph. *Black Archipelago: Politics and Civic Life in the Jim Crow City*. *Journal of Social History* Volume 38, Number 3, Spring 2005 pp. 705-773.

¹¹³ Smith-Dawson, Karen. "Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization." Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

mobile Black families living in the district's first and second wards held for the prospect of sharing their neighborhood schools with poor Black families.¹¹⁴

One of the participants that I spoke with, a former council member in University City during the late 1960's and early 1970's, provided insight into why Black families in the first and second wards would have wanted to maintain some distance from less affluent Black families. She explained the manifestation of racism that emerges in spaces that transition from White to Black. "Many of the Black families who moved into University City during the 1960's and early 1970's were among the first wave of Black families to move into transitioning areas of St. Louis City during the 1950's. They moved into neighborhoods, mostly in the central west end, that held all of the promise that White occupancy had left behind. As these neighborhoods transitioned from all White, to mixed, to all Black, they saw how quickly the landlords and the politicians and the local government disappeared. They learned a hard lesson about opportunity. They learned that opportunity is not stationary when it comes to race. Opportunity moves with White people, and White people can pull up stakes and move just about anywhere anytime".

For the Black families who had found opportunity in the neighborhoods and the schools in the district's first and second wards, the prospect of losing those opportunities was very real. They did not feel as though Black students from the third ward would ruin their schools or their neighborhoods, they had simply experienced the quick retreat of opportunity when presented with eminent racial transition.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Olds, Sally. "Improving Residential Quality of U. City." Community News of University City Missouri, March, 1968.

¹¹⁵ Olds, Sally. "Improving Residential Quality of U. City." Community News of University City Missouri, March, 1968.

In the district's third ward, Smith-Dawson noted an absence of political activity coming from Black citizens.¹¹⁶ Some of the possible reasons for this lack of political presence is detailed later in this chapter and are based upon conversations that Smith-Dawson had with participants in her study during the reorganization controversy. The crux of the political charge related to reorganization coming from the third ward came from White citizens who lobbied for "racial balance" throughout the School District of University City. During a School Board meeting on June 5, 1969, Lewis Fowler read a letter to the Board of Education urging the board to step up their efforts related to reorganization. Mr. Fowler's letter, which also implies a need for the process being carried out by the board to be transparent and inclusive, was presented on behalf of one of the Citizens Committee for University City Schools, one of the many ad hoc groups that emerged out of the reorganization controversy.¹¹⁷

Gentlemen:

The executive group of the Citizens Committee for University City Schools has instructed me to express to you our concern with the gravity and immediacy of the problem of racial balance in the elementary schools.

We recommend that the School Board schedule for the immediate future, well-publicized meetings at which the evaluation of the problem and of possible solutions would be discussed. These meetings could be at various locations in the district.

We understand that action based on the report of your advisory committee on this subject may already be on your agenda. If this is so, we believe that public hearings recommended would be a great benefit to community support of Board decisions.

Respectfully Yours,

Lewis Fowler

¹¹⁶ Smith-Dawson, Karen. "Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization." Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

¹¹⁷ "University City Beautiful: It's Your City Enjoy It." 1981.

During the mid 1960's, the historically all-White School District of University City was experiencing a spike in the number of Black families moving into the third ward.¹¹⁸ The influx of new Black citizens coupled with the exodus of White citizens sent many residents scurrying for a political reprieve from the racial hemorrhaging. Elementary schools in University City began to reflect the racial balance in their respective neighborhoods. White families living in the transitioning third ward began to push the Board for equal distribution of Black students throughout the entire district, thus reducing their Black enrollment at the 'expense' of schools in the first and second wards.¹¹⁹ White families living in the second and third wards pushed the Board to retain the current neighborhood model, thus blocking the influx of Black students from the third ward from being enrolled in their schools. Both sides of the argument were careful to avoid using jargon that might indicate racist undertones. For example, citizens in the third ward used the terminology "racial balance" to promote their interests in the equitable distribution of Black and White students throughout the district's elementary schools. In addition to shipping Black students to elementary schools in the first and second wards, this proposal would also seek to bring White students from first and second ward schools into third ward schools. Citizens in the second and third ward largely used the term "neighborhood schools model" to maintain the status quo and promote the system that would exclude Black students living in the third ward from attending elementary school in the first and second wards. The Neighborhood Schools Group tended to be less vocal in mixed company as the racist overtones of their rhetoric was undeniable.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ "Blight: A Case Study of University City, Missouri", March, 1973.

¹¹⁹ Smith-Dawson, Karen. "Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization." Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

¹²⁰ Smith-Dawson, Karen. "Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization." Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

When I spoke to Smith Dawson via telephone on June 17 of 2014, she indicated that Black residents were not well represented on the committees serving either side of the argument. While their visible presence on the front lines of the reorganization controversy may have been exceedingly limited, there is no reason to believe that Black families did not hold a range of opinions regarding the reorganization controversy. During the time she was conducting her research, Smith Dawson clearly recalled instances in which upwardly mobile Black residents held grave concerns regarding the influx of the Black families who were settling in the district's third ward neighborhoods and schools. Black families living in the first and second wards may have lamented the possibility that their predominantly White schools could potentially be impacted through the efforts and interests of citizens pursuing racial balance.

During our phone conversation, Smith Dawson suggested that White families tended to simply assume that Black's brought ghettoization with them wherever they settled in mass. The Black families that settled in University City had a deeper understanding of how ghettoization takes place as many of them experienced the transition of good neighborhoods into ghettos in Saint Louis City during the post war era.¹²¹ Many of the Black families who moved to University City in the mid 1960's had seen their neighborhoods abandoned by local government when the population transitioned from White to Black.¹²² They saw the culpability of landlords dwindle with their White neighbors. Black families had seen their nice homes, and the homes around them, slowly devolve into flop houses. They saw their schools succumb to this abandonment. They were fighting to hold on to the good homes and the good schools they had found in University City.

¹²¹ Olds, Sally. "Improving Residential Quality of U. City." Community News of University City Missouri, March, 1968.

¹²² iBid

Smith Dawson's work is both a clinic on school board operations and, more importantly for this study, a detailed account of how the School District of University City and its stakeholders responded to the shifting racial identity of their school and neighborhood space during the early years of racial transition in the community. The work contained in Smith Dawson's dissertation is also significant as it helps to illuminate the link that connects the White, privileged past of the School District of University City with its current reality as a predominantly Black system that continues to demonstrate quantifiable advantages for White students and their families.

Within the pages of Smith Dawson's dissertation is an untapped trove of information that requires a Critical Race Theory (CRT) lens in order to fully understand the profound scope of racial politics that played out during the reorganization controversy and helped to shape the School District of University City's racial identity. At the fundamental root of board policy, procedure, decision, and indecision is the durable foundation of a racial hierarchy. By examining her work through a CRT lens, Smith Dawson's research exposes the force of cultural capital, White privilege, internalized oppression, and the permanence of racism that played out before, during, and beyond the reorganization controversy.

Citizen Participation in the Reorganization of University City Schools

“There's a story about integration here—maybe you've already heard it. When the first black family moves on a block, everybody says ‘great’. They give you a party. They shake your hand. When the second black family moves in, they skip the party. Maybe it's just a coffee. And they shake your hand. When the third black family moves in, they stop with the handshake. When the fourth black family moves in, they realize they've got a ‘problem’, so they form a neighborhood

association” - Lucian Richards, former chairman of the St. Louis C.O.R.E. chapter and unsuccessful Board candidate in the School District of University City

During a School Board meeting on July 11, 1968, the Superintendent of the School District of University City suggested that a committee composed of staff, students, and citizens be appointed to study viable options for the redistribution of students in the district. At some point in the mid 1960’s, a board appointed Citizens’ Advisory Committee on Student Redistribution issued a “no change” recommendation in response to whether or not the District of University City needed to revisit its distribution of students to the elementary schools in order to achieve racial balance. The practices used by real estate agents and neighborhood associations to keep University City almost exclusively White had finally begun to break down.¹²³

The redistribution of students in order to achieve racial balance in the school setting would offer White families in the district’s third ward a chance to do for their schools what they could not do for their neighborhoods. While the first and second wards of University City remained virtually unaffected throughout the racial transition taking place in the third ward, a shadow now stretched to all corners of the community. White families north of Olive Boulevard sought to slow the transition and minimize the presence of Black students in their neighborhood schools via the redistribution of Black students throughout the district in order to attain “racial balance”. White families on the south side of Olive Boulevard fought to maintain the neighborhood schools model that would keep their elementary schools predominantly White, like their neighborhoods.¹²⁴

¹²³ Smith-Dawson, Karen. “Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization.” Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

¹²⁴ Smith-Dawson, Karen. “Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization.” Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

The School District of University City, which was virtually all-White in the early 1960's, would become 40% Black by 1970.¹²⁵ Students like Genora Jones were no longer considered outliers and anomalies. Rather, the sustained influx of Black students represented a fundamental shift in racial dynamics that had clearly only begun to take shape. By 1963, Real Estate Agents and neighborhood associations had set the tone for panic selling in the third ward of University City and the neighborhood schools on the north side of Olive certainly reflected the change.¹²⁶ Unchallenged White space was, for the first time in University City, irrevocably compromised. Much like the Mount Cabanne neighborhoods just a few decades earlier, the racial walls of University City's inner ring suburb had finally begun to erode along with its vestiges of de jure segregation.¹²⁷

The financial gains realized by the Real Estate Companies that bought low from White families and sold high to Black families were substantial in the modestly developed ranch, bungalow, and shotgun style homes of the first ward. For the typical Black family seeking to escape the decaying, overcrowded neighborhoods of St. Louis City, University City's third ward had an economic and geographical attainability.¹²⁸ Still, a de facto barrier remained sturdy around the more exclusive neighborhoods of University City's first and second wards. The larger and more expensive homes in these areas located primarily south of Olive Boulevard remained exceedingly unattainable for the working class Black families seeking to move up the social ladder.

¹²⁵ Data collected under the direction of Board Member David Harris (2006) and obtained with the permission of Superintendent JoyLynn Wilson for the purpose of this study.

¹²⁶ "New Ordinances." *Community News of University City Missouri*, January, 1968.

¹²⁷ "Blight: A Case Study of University City, Missouri", March, 1973.

¹²⁸ Henry, C.T. *A History of Community Sustainability 1958-2011: University City, an Inner-Ring Suburb of the St. Louis Metro Area*. (2012). The Historical Society of University City, University City, Missouri

Because the School District of University City had long established a neighborhood schools model for the elementary level, the racial transition of the third ward was matched by the racial transition of its elementary schools. As Black students became more prominent in the schools located in the third ward, White families exhibited a range of reactions. Some White families simply pulled up stakes and moved across Olive Boulevard into or beyond the second and third ward. Some White families stayed and either tolerated or embraced the changes taking place in their neighborhoods and in their schools. Other families stayed put and sought to change the school district's policies and procedures for distributing students to the various schools.

Citizen and Board support for and against reorganization had already begun to emerge by the late 1960's with persuasive and public arguments being made on both sides of the issue.¹²⁹ During School Board meeting, numerous citizens commented on the issue of reorganization.¹³⁰ Alfred Alberts, a resident of the district's second ward, criticized the potential transfer of any White student from a predominantly White school to a predominantly Black school. Another citizen, Sidney Hurwitz of the first ward, urged the Board of Education to recognize the severity of de facto segregation and adopt substantive structural changes to assure integrated schools.¹³¹ Victor Wright of the second ward stated that he would be able to support the Board in all efforts to pass a tax levy if the Superintendent could bring before them a plan which could be adopted to truly achieve racial balance in the schools.¹³²

¹²⁹ Lubeck, Dennis, R., "University City: A Suburban Community's Response to Integration, 1959-1970," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Saint Louis University, 1976.

¹³⁰ Smith-Dawson, Karen. "Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization." Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

¹³¹ iBid

¹³² Smith-Dawson, Karen. "Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization." Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

Though opinions of the Board were split, a general policy statement that racial balance was a necessary component of “quality education” was issued. Further, the Board charged the superintendent and staff to generate ideas for dealing with the growing controversy surrounding racial imbalance within the district’s schools.¹³³ By 1970, citizen groups for and against reorganizing the district were appearing at Board meetings, writing letters, circulating petitions, holding meetings, circulating propaganda and rallying anybody who would listen.¹³⁴ When three Board seats came available for the 1970 elections, groups representing a ‘status quo’ platform and a ‘reorganization’ platform vigorously pushed their candidates. Leading into the April elections, the question of whether or not to reorganize the district was an overwhelmingly critical subject for citizens in University City.

Between 1969 and 1970, the names of citizen participants in the reorganization process were collected by through the School District of University City using published lists and visible activity in discussions, forums, PTA meetings, League of Woman Voters meetings, political work, school board meetings, and other public meetings related to the reorganization controversy.¹³⁵ Ultimately, an estimated 2,000 questionnaires were distributed to citizen participants by the School District of University City.¹³⁶ In addition to the solicitation of feedback from citizen participants, 14 prominent players on both sides of the debate participated in taped interviews lasting between 2 to 7 hours. According to Smith-Dawson, “the publicity in the reorganization controversy attracted enough conflicting pressures to prevent the School Board from making any decision on the question of reorganizing the schools, thus leaving the

¹³³ iBid

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decision, by default, to a referendum in the School Board Election”.¹³⁷ To say that the reorganization controversy was a popular topic amongst stakeholders in the School District of University City would be a gross understatement. The interest and activity generated by the topic led to an unusually large turnout for the 1970 Board Elections.¹³⁸

In her 1974 dissertation, Smith-Dawson describes the phenomenon of ‘citizen participation’ as a means for individuals not holding public office to gain leverage in the act of policy making. Smith-Dawson’s work underlies the longstanding tradition by which citizen participation generates political power and ultimately influences policy. Additional examples of this process being used to maintain strong elements of de facto segregation in the School District of University City are cited in chapters one, and three of my dissertation. In Chapter four, first-hand accounts of this practice are shared through the oral histories of current and former stakeholders in the School District of University City.

One of the critical aspects of Smith-Dawson’s work, and of great importance to my own hypothesis, is her in-depth study of the citizens who actively participated in the reorganization controversy. Within my own study, I propose that the citizen participants on either side of the racial line are motivated by the allure of Racial Dominance, White Space, and White Privilege. On one side of the perpetual issue of race are those who wish to maintain, protect, and benefit from the mentioned components. On the other side of the issue are those who have historically been denied the privilege, and safety gained through racial dominance. Critical Race Theory, which helps to frame the inner-workings of race and power, is contextualized for this study in chapter one.

¹³⁷ Smith-Dawson, Karen. “Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization.” Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

¹³⁸ iBid

Within her dissertation, Smith-Dawson notes that citizen participants in the University City reorganization controversy are predominantly White. Smith-Dawson found that 73% of active citizen participants in the reorganization controversy had, at the very least, graduated from college.¹³⁹ Additionally, Smith-Dawson found that the average income of participants was above the average household income in University City according to 1970 census data.¹⁴⁰

Though Smith-Dawson cites more than a dozen additional variables that fit the profile of typical citizen participant, none resonated for this study more than that of “consumer perspective”. Consumer perspective refers to the desire of some citizens to gain access and leverage to an insider angle in order to obtain the ability to impact policy. This phenomenon is most prevalent in the politics of K-12 public schooling, where the opportunity for citizen participation in politics and policy is abundant. I propose that it is the consumer perspective that drives stakeholders in the School District of University City to vigorously protect or dismantle the racial hierarchy.

There is clear evidence that, in the early 1960’s, The School District of University City, with overwhelming support and very little pushback from citizens, served as a model district in its effective implementation of curriculum that embraced Black studies and Woman’s studies. Additionally, the inclusion of students in critical decision making was being practiced in virtually all aspects of district operations. Under the leadership of the District’s Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, Glenys Unruh, the burgeoning civil rights movement was being used as guide for the district’s goal to prepare students to be successful in a world free of racial and gender lines and limitations.

¹³⁹ Smith-Dawson, Karen. “Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization.” Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

¹⁴⁰ iBid

Preparing students for a world; much different from that of its neighborhoods, and neighborhood schools, was more than palatable for citizens in University City. It was a point of pride that enhanced the community's reputation as a liberal mecca. While the civil rights movement of the early 1960's blazed on television and in the newspaper, it seemed worlds away from the confines of University City. Even the most liberal citizens at that time had the luxury of being spectators or, at the very most, willing participants in such uprisings as the Jefferson Bank Sit-Ins,

By 1964, University City had become a part of the changing world that had previously been accessible in palatable doses through the media. Much like the migration patterns in the inner-ring suburbs of Detroit¹⁴¹, large numbers of Black families began move into the community around this time. The northern section of the community featured less-expensive, older houses and newer small ranch-style houses that appealed to citizens living along the Western border of Saint Louis City. A tipping point for this migration was certainly the dissolution long standing, de facto practices that had made the northern borders of University City virtually impenetrable for the lower-income Black families living just outside of its borders. In particular, the restrictive covenants, written and un-written, that had kept the entire community racially homogeneous for the first half century of its existence were rendered unenforceable as White families en mass sought refuge on the community's south side. Between 1963 and 1970, The School District of University City saw its Black population grow from less than one percent to forty percent.

I sat down with one former resident who recalled her neighborhood in the third ward being targeted for racial transition. My participant graduated from University City Senior High

¹⁴¹ Gordon, C. (2008). *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

School in 1949. In 1933, at the age of two, her family moved from Kossuth Avenue in the central west end of St. Louis City to Eastgate Avenue in University City:

“When I was at the high school, it was heavily Jewish. I’m Jewish, still, I mixed with everyone. I had a lot of friends that were not Jewish. I was more the exception; I even dated guys who were not Jewish! People socialized very much within their own little groups. It was very cliquish. There was a lot of class stuff along with the religious stuff. Even when I was in elementary school at Delmar-Harvard, there were the ‘house kids’ and the ‘apartment kids’. Rarely did they mix, even in elementary school.

My first child started school here in University City at Daniel Boone Elementary School in 1955. It was an all-White school, working class. The school’s principal, H. Hayes Hope, would go around telling the parents that we had one of highest school IQ’s in the district. He did this because he knew we were not situated in one of the more affluent sections of University City. We were, at best, middle income. We knew we were not Flynn Park Elementary School. There was this collective inferiority complex. It was there when we were all White. Mr. Hayes tried to dispel that.

My eldest son started at Brittany Woods Middle School in 1962. Even by then, there was not much of a racial tone in the district. There still were not many Black students at all. The district was right on the cusp of the racial transition. Now, in the neighborhoods, that was a different story. In 1962, we had three kids and a very small house. We wanted to put an addition on the house. We had lived there for ten years and had never been late with a mortgage payment. Still,

we could not get a loan to put on an addition. Why couldn't we get a loan? The banks and the real estate agencies knew that the neighborhood was going to change. There was a plan for the third ward, no doubt. Part of that plan would have been for us to move into the first or second ward, or further west. We lived on Birchmont Avenue. in the Belmont Hills neighborhood, which is north of Olive St. and west of North and South Blvd. in the third ward. We had to go through a bank in New York that my father had connections with in order to secure the loan for our addition.

In 1961, a brand new subdivision not too far from where we lived had been marketed exclusively to Black families. Forest Greens, right off of Partridge. Just to the east of where we were living. I don't think the builder had planned on selling those houses to Black families. The city must have tipped him off or hit him with a ton of restrictions. So he said 'forget it, I'll just sell them to Black families' – and he did. Now, the city did not have any problems with these new houses when they were being marketed to Black families. And then the block busting started.

Our neighborhood was about half Jewish and half catholic. Most of the turnover in our neighborhood at that time involved the catholic families moving further west into the first and second wards or out of University City into bigger homes. It made sense as their families tended to grow more quickly than ours. In 1961, there were 29 homes on our block; three bedroom, one bath, basements, nice yards. The real estate company hired one of the neighbors. The idea was to stir up fear and get the neighbors to move. The neighbor who was hired by the

real estate company would get a commission for each house that was put on the market. They would call these neighborhood meetings that would really generate a lot of panic and racial tension. They would say “you better get out now or your house won’t be worth squat”. They also would not show those houses to White families. Within a year, only three of the original twenty nine neighbors on our block remained.

A year after the block busting began, there were only three White families left in the neighborhood. In addition to us, there was an elderly brother and sister who lived across the street and two older sisters who lived down the street from us. Twenty six homes had turned over. They gave those homes away to the real estate company. The real estate company made a nice profit when they turned around and sold these homes to Black families. During this exodus of neighbors, people were saying “well, we have to move” and some of our religious leaders didn’t help matters. I had a neighbor who came over one day and started crying “I can’t afford to move”. So I told her not to move, I’m not moving. She said “But my rabbi told me I have to move”. I asked her if the rabbi was going to pay her bills. Another woman, a dear, older orthodox lady, would say “I have to move! I lived on Goodfellow and they came. Now I have to move again”. I’m not saying this in a blaming way, but there were several families that made it through the Holocaust. They too had the attitude “we have to go!” One of the early Black families that moved in said to me “you’ll be gone before Christmas”. I told him “I’ll make you a bet, I’ll invite you over for New Year’s in ten years”

and we did! We lived there until 1986 and then we did move because my husband wanted a garage and we had grand kids who would visit”.

In 1966, an anti-blockbusting ordinance was adopted in University City. Blockbusting refers to the practice of getting White families to sell their homes at a loss by implying that the influx of racial minorities was eminent and would result in exponential devaluation of property. As per the ordinance, it became unlawful for agents to solicit potential home sellers. It also became unlawful to display ‘for sale’ signs in residential areas. Another aspect of the anti-blockbusting ordinance called for an occupancy permit, which subjected occupants of homes and apartments to rigorous inspections prior to any residence being occupied. This avenue for strictly enforcing housing codes, according to Smith-Dawson, was designed primarily “to prevent the residential deterioration and overcrowding, which are feared by many as the consequence of racial integration”.¹⁴²

University City is known for having among the strictest of processes for housing inspections.¹⁴³ One of the architects of the housing codes, former councilwoman Elsie Glickert, explained the rationale. “The codes were not tightened up to protect against the ghettoization attributed to Black residents. The codes were tightened up to protect Black citizens against the ghettoization caused by absentee landlords”. Glickert went on to explain some of the common practices carried out by landlords in St. Louis City, just outside of the third ward of University City. “Landlords would take a single family house and chop it up into two or four or even six units. They were taking these properties designed for a single family and filling them with as many renters as they could. Black families moving to University City wanted to get away from that. They did not want to move to a place where they would be exploited and then blamed for

¹⁴² Smith-Dawson, Karen. “Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization.” Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

¹⁴³ “U. City Occupancy Law Weapon in War on Blight.” Saint Louis Globe Democrat, January, 1968.

ruining these neighborhoods. They did not want to move into a nice neighborhood only to see it abused and abandoned by banks and landlords”.

Where St. Louis City had lax enforcement and nominal fines to ‘penalize’ absentee and exploitive landlords, University City had a Housing Court.¹⁴⁴ Housing Court was established to reinforce strict reinforcement of housing codes. Violations that compromised occupancy limits, keep, and maintenance standards landed culprits in court to face harsh fines within weeks of the initial citation. While the strict housing codes helped to protect the citizens of University City from many of the practices that led to urban decay in St. Louis City, very little could be done to protect the community from the specter of racism.

As unscrupulous real estate agents fanned the flames of fear that lead to White flight in the mid 1960’s, and local government sought to create policies that would stem the tide of Black migration into University City, private groups emerged to promote local integration. While the efforts of liberal White citizens could be viewed as a progressive response to a changing world, the element of interest convergence may have also served as a motivating factor. Within the context of racial dynamics, interest convergence refers to the amends that Whites will make for Blacks when the former can somehow benefit. Integration, for example, may have been preferred over the economic ramifications that property owners in University City faced as unmitigated White flight became a reality. Embracing diversity instead of running from diversity offered a strong counter to the explicit and implicit block busting tactics of the period.

As the multitude of factors involving the changing racial dynamics of University City played out during the mid1960’s and early 1970’s, patterns of de facto segregation materialized. Black families moving into University City via Saint Louis City purchased homes primarily in

¹⁴⁴ Henry, C.T. A History of Community Sustainability 1958-2011: University City, an Inner-Ring Suburb of the St. Louis Metro Area. (2012). The Historical Society of University City. University City, Missouri.

the northern sections. Census data from 1970 shows homes purchased by Black family's decreases steadily as one moves west into the suburb. Census data also indicates that homes purchased by Black families in the southern section of University City between 1967 and 1970 amounted to less than one-fifth the quantity purchased on the community's north side and that all but 20% of the homes purchased by Black families on the south side of University City during this time frame were located in the School District of University City's two northern most attendance areas on that side of the community with the number of Black households decreasing exponentially as one moved further south.

According to district data, the percentage of Black students enrolled in University City Elementary Schools increased from 35% to 72% between 1967 and 1970 in the northern section of the community (Pershing, University Forest, Hawthorne, Daniel Boone, and Greensfelder Park). By contrast, Black enrollment rose from 10% to 24% during that same time frame on the community's south side (Blackberry Lane, Jackson Park, Delmar Harvard, McKnight, and Flynn Park). It is interesting to note that, during this time frame, the enrollment of Black students at the district's southern-most elementary school never exceeded 1%. By contrast, the enrollment of Black students at University Forest on the district's north side rose to 94% during the same stretch. A pattern of racial imbalance had become exceedingly present in the district's schools.¹⁴⁵

During the 1968-1969 school year, district elementary schools located north of Olive Boulevard had far surpassed the overall percentage of Black students at the district level, which at the time was 23%. University Forest Elementary School was 78% Black, Pershing Elementary School was 60% Black, Daniel Boone Elementary School was 51% Black, and

¹⁴⁵ Smith-Dawson, Karen. "Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization." Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

Nathaniel Hawthorn Elementary School was 41% Black. South of Olive Boulevard, Flynn Park Elementary School was 2% Black while fewer than 10% of the students at Jackson Park Elementary School, McKnight Elementary School, and Delmar Harvard Elementary School were Black.¹⁴⁶

Interestingly, there is historical sub plot that facilitated University Forest Elementary School's meteoric rise in Black enrollment. Sometime during the early 1960's, plans to erect rental properties in the northeast section of University City were prevented by neighborhood residents. Rather than pulling up stakes, the developer of the apartments built small, two bedroom ranch houses with no basements. When it became evident that these dwellings were of no interest to White home buyers, they were marketed to Black families living in Saint Louis City – just outside of the northeast borders of University City. While the Pershing service area is actually closer to the city border, it was the sudden availability of the two-bedroom, no basement homes in the University Forest Elementary School attendance area that garnished the heaviest flow of Black families from Saint Louis City.¹⁴⁷

Clearly, the patterns of de facto segregation that were established in the neighborhoods of University City were repeated in its school district. This pattern mirrors the migratory pattern of Jewish families into University City via Saint Louis City following World War II. During the 1950's and early 1960's, University City was viewed as a Liberal Jewish Community. The open-acceptance of Jewish families in its neighborhoods was seen as progressive for the time. Ironically, Jewish families were most susceptible to the blockbusting tactics and panic selling that took place in the mid 1960's as Black families displaced Jewish families during that period.

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¹⁴⁷ Smith-Dawson, Karen. "Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization." Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

On March 17, 1970, University City Senior High School was closed in response to racial tension and violent incidents that came to a head one day earlier. The high school would remain closed through March 20, at which time a week-long -boycott of the high school by Black students would begin. The unrest at the high school was indicative of the firestorm brewing within the school district's boundaries. The untamed progression of de facto segregation had been growing for nearly a decade and, responding to patterns of civil rights activism students sought voice regarding the glaring inequities of their immediate reality.

Ratcheting the tension levels were those who fought the status quo and those who fought to maintain the status quo. Much like the patterns of de facto segregation, the strong emotions that racial dynamics had evoked in the neighborhoods of University City were spilling over into every corner of its school system. The ubiquitous presence of White privilege was, for the first time since the district's birth in 1911, being called into question. Evolving out of the arguments, opinions, philosophies, and visceral reactions to the issue of re-organization were two representative groups consisting of concerned citizens; Citizens for Quality Education through Neighborhood Schools, and the Reorganization Group.

The Citizens for Quality Education through Neighborhood Schools group sought to maintain the status quo regarding the district's racial dynamics. Terms such as "bussing", "White flight", and "racial quotas" were used to imply the school district's fate if the board were to reorganize the distribution of students based upon race. The Reorganization Group sought to bring about a more equitable distribution of students based upon race in response to the glaring inequities that began to emerge in the early 1960s. The political momentum of these two groups –which are conglomerates of what started as multiple splinter groups – was spurred by the political climate related to the passing of a tax levy in 1968. The tax levy was introduced to

voters six times that year before voters finally provided the required 2/3 of the vote to pass the measure.¹⁴⁸

The efforts of stakeholders in the School District of University City leading up to the passing of the tax levy on April 29, 1968 offered throngs of citizens their first taste of political activism. The networks formed through these efforts are largely responsible for the effective and efficient mobilization of citizens who became involved in the school reorganization controversy. The seemingly random confluence of these discussions and the political mobilization of citizens on the heels of the 1968 Tax Levy served as the impetus behind the reorganization controversy.¹⁴⁹

Though the migration of Black families into the School District of University City had been going on since the early 1960's, serious discussions involving the Board of Education to address de facto segregation in its school district did not occur until 1967. The topic was finally put at the forefront during a non-racial reorganization of district schools which resulted in the establishment of a sixth grade center in the fall of 1967 to ease overcrowding in district elementary schools. It was during the community engagement process regarding the sixth grade center that a parent threatened to sue the district if measures were not taken to promote desegregation.¹⁵⁰

Though none of the sitting Board members had publicly indicated that the threat of litigation motivated action on de facto segregation, Marvin Levy issued an "Open Statement"¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Smith-Dawson, Karen. "Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization." Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

¹⁴⁹ iBid

¹⁵⁰ Smith-Dawson, Karen. "Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization." Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

¹⁵¹ iBid

by the President of the Board” during a public meeting on June 19, 1969 in which a declaration of the following objectives were stated:

- “Quality education for every student in the University City school system;
- Avoidance of de facto segregation;
- Compliance with all federal, state, and local laws

In accord with the district’s practice of appointing citizens to serve on advisory committees in order to investigate the trajectory of policy implementation, a citizen committee for racial balance was established. The task at hand, as presented by the Board president to the citizen committee at the first meeting, was simply to determine whether or not there was a need to address racial balance and/or the question of equity across racial lines in the School District of University City. With that, there is no evidence that any preliminary data or parameters had been established in order to begin the process. Thus, the Board largely forfeited their ability to influence the manner in which discussions would unfold.

According to respondents who participated in Karen Smith-Dawson’s study of the reorganization controversy, the Board’s selection of the advisory committee favored an exceedingly conservative perspective. One board member is quoted as saying “we chose weak progressives and very forceful conservatives” to participate in the citizens advisory committee. Ultimately, the committee consisted of very dynamic proponents of the status quo with limited ability or potential for meaningful pushback from those wishing to explore change.

Of the twenty-eight members of the Board appointed advisory committee, only four were Black. Though representation was representative of all district attendance areas, there were no Black committee members who represented the low-income demographic. The work of the committee began in September of 1968 and would continue for the next eight months. During that stretch of time, fifteen full-committee meetings were held along with countless sub-

committee meetings. The superintendent of schools alternated with the assistant superintendent of schools at the time to facilitate meetings and provide and resources needed to support the committee's work. The work of the committee was also supported through the involvement of two outside consultants; Matthew Feldman, Mayor of Taeneck, New Jersey, and John Letson, Superintendent of Schools in Atlanta Georgia. Both men had experience with school desegregation.¹⁵²

The eight month study yielded a sixty-eight page document on 'Distribution of Student Population'. The document, also known as 'The Majority Report' was endorsed by eighteen of the original twenty-eight citizens who made up the advisory council. The Majority', Report was countered by a 'Minority Report', which was endorsed by six members of the advisory council; a Black doctor, three White housewives, and the President of the County Teachers' Association (C.T.A.). Though it recognized the racial imbalance in the School District of University City, Majority Report recommended that no adjustments be made regarding the distribution of students. The report also recommends "that the Board keep the question of distribution under continuing study".¹⁵³

Smith-Dawson identified several primary factors at the forefront of the committee's recommendation: no evidence of inequity across racial lines was identified, no evidence that the quality of education would benefit from any plans involving redistribution, increased neighborhood instability resulting from reorganization of the district, the unpopular prospect of bussing students, and the financial burdens connected with reorganization of the school district. Based upon the recommendation of the committee, it is clear that they have found no amends

¹⁵² Smith-Dawson, Karen. "Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization." Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

¹⁵³ Smith-Dawson, Karen. "Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization." Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

worth disrupting the presence of de facto segregation in the school district's classrooms or neighborhoods.¹⁵⁴ The authors of the 'Minority Report' called out the implicit protection of the status quo, insisting that the comfort levels of White citizens regarding the issue of reorganization should not impede the attainment of equity. The six members of the 'Minority Report' insisted "we must work with those who fear social changes, but we cannot allow fear of flight to prevent us from being free of fear".¹⁵⁵

Pushback on the proposed maintenance of the status quo was most forcefully directed by White citizens living on the north side of Olive Boulevard. Ironically, the voice and presence of White citizens rejecting the status quo of racial imbalance plays into the liberal and progressive tone that citizens in University City have garnered over the years. However, it is hard to look past the convergence of interests that White and Black citizens living on the North side of Olive Boulevard experienced during the initial stages of the reorganization controversy.

For White citizens living in the district's north corridor, racial integration was the only avenue by which their schools could become less Black than they already were. The status quo meant more White flight, more Black neighbors, and fewer White classmates. Conversely, White citizens living on the south side of Olive Boulevard could afford to be exceedingly liberal without compromising the racial demographics of their neighborhoods. The migration of upwardly mobile White families in University City pointed to neighborhoods in the south and south west corridors. As these families sought housing, schools, and neighborhoods that offered the privilege of White space, neighborhoods in University City's northern and north eastern corridors became viable options for Black families possessing the means to escape the rampant

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urban decay of St. Louis City's western most borders.¹⁵⁶ According to Smith-Dawson's study, it seems that the most intense pressure facing the Board of Education on the question of de facto segregation came from White citizens in the communities northern corridors who were unable to afford the privilege of White space that had not so long ago seemed infinitely secure. The socio-political firestorm that had been reshaping America's cultural landscape for over a decade had finally made its presence known in University City.

Sometime during the summer of 1969, a politically active White citizen living in University City's northern corridor, obtained a copy of The Citizens' Advisory Committee's Report on the racial distribution of students. This citizen, a participant in Smith-Dawson's dissertation, composed a letter urging the Board President to redistribute students prior to the start of the 1969-1970 school year. She also organized a group of parents to vigorously campaign for reorganization and the disruption of trends that supported de facto segregation. Within five weeks of this campaign's initiation, The Board of Education directed the professional staff to develop an immediate plan to be considered for the School District of University City to attain racial balance in its schools. This charge fell in stark contrast to the Majority Report's suggesting no evidence that racial balance is a correlate of quality education.

On June 19, 1969, the superintendent along with five members of his cabinet argued for reorganization during a board meeting that was attended by five hundred patrons, an astonishing turn-out to say the least. As had been the case when the issue of racial imbalance was first explored, a strong contingency maintained its interest in preserving the 'neighborhood schools' model that had long been the standard. On the heels of the June 19 meeting, the Board called for the superintendent to continue the study. Subsequent meetings held over the summer took place

¹⁵⁶ Gordon, C. (2008). *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

in the high school gymnasium in order to accommodate the crowd. Citizens were invited to share their opinions regarding the redistribution proposal.

Ultimately, the proposal which the superintendent chose to move forward with included components from each of the five proposals drafted by an ad hoc committee appointed by the Board. This composite proposal, known as “Proposal 6”, was assembled in draft form by a team of staff at the request of the superintendent during the second week of July, 1969. Proposal 6 called for a set time line in the formation of four primary schools (K-2), four intermediate schools (3-5), two junior high schools (6-8), and a senior high school (9-12). The reconfigured schools would draw from areas larger and more strategically determined than the ‘neighborhood schools’ model. The transporting of students across the district would be a necessary component of the plans goal to balance the racial distribution of students.

In September of 1969, a committee consisting of the superintendent, the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction, four district principals, and eleven teachers was assembled. According to Smith-Dawson’s research, the teachers and administrators who served on this committee were charged with the task of gauging the “opinion climate” of the reorganization issue within their school communities and in particular amongst the staff. In addition to gathering a sense of how people felt about the reorganization of the district, committee members were also expected to make note of suggestions that could be incorporated into the final report. Perhaps most important amongst the tasks of committee members was the task of building consensus amongst the rank of teaching staff for what would evolve into the final report. The superintendent saw consensus-building as a critical component of any recommendation worthy of being presented to the Board. With the formation of satellite committees and task groups, teacher participation in the study exceeded one-hundred.

On December 18, 1969, the superintendent presented a report titled “Distribution of Student Population” during the School Board meeting. This report, which the committee had been working on since September, offered very little in the way of new information. A final plan for redistribution was not included in the presentation. Rather, a recommendation on behalf of the staff indicated that reorganization would be limited to the district’s elementary schools due primarily to cost factors. A final proposal was planned for the January 1970 School Board meeting. Smith-Dawson suggests that the superintendent feared the potential for backlash had the final plan been unveiled during the December Board meeting. This line of reasoning suggests that the superintendent believed that hostilities and differences could be resolved in an apolitical fashion prior to the plan for redistribution being formally presented.

If defusing the issue of reorganization over time was indeed the goal of the superintendent, he was to be profoundly disappointed. The looming April School Board elections, which typically offered two seats, found an additional vacancy as one sitting board member resigned for personal reasons. Candidates for both sides of the reorganization issue (Neighborhood Schools and Racial Balance) were being vigorously pursued. The sitting board found itself being watched closely by both sides of the issue as the replacement for the newly resigned Board member could easily have secured the necessary vote to favor reorganization. In the end, the Board chose a neutral candidate.

Within the community, the Racial Balance group changed its name to “Citizens for Centers” and vowed to back any candidate who supported reorganization.¹⁵⁷ On the other side of the issue, the Neighborhood group formed its own slate of candidates. It should be noted that a third group consisting of neutral citizens formed, however it seems that this group clearly

¹⁵⁷ Smith-Dawson, Karen. “Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization.” Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

overlapped with the “Citizens for Centers” group. On January 15 of 1970, three months before the Board elections, the Superintendent of Schools resigned effective on February 1, 1970. In his letter of resignation, he reiterated his support for reorganization. Shortly thereafter, the President of the C.T.A. went on record to say that the teacher’s organization supported reorganization – she then resigned her post. On March 16 of 1970, students set fire to the high school in protest of racial discrimination. The fire was followed by a Black student boycott, which was supported by both White and Black students and parents. Suddenly it became apparent that the decision regarding reorganization had shifted from the Board to the community.

Having previously dismissed the prospect of holding public referendums related to the racially charged issues surrounding reorganization, the board now began to hold open meetings at the high school in order to give stake holders on both sides of the issue a venue. No doubt inspired by recent events at the high school, the board took another step forward organizing committees to explore Black Studies and Discipline. Still, the matter of reorganization took a back seat as the board remained – like the community – split. Ultimately, the Board of Education’s reticence meant that voters would settle the question of reorganization at the April Board elections. Electing the slate of candidates running on the Neighborhood Schools platform would help to maintain the status quo on both the north and south side of Olive Boulevard. Electing the slate of candidates running on the Racial Balance platform would help to ensure the even distribution of Black students throughout the district. In both cases, the opposing platforms vigorously pursued outcomes that would protect White space to the fullest extent that circumstances would allow.

The Neighborhood Schools Group

The ‘Neighborhood School’ contingency was officially represented by an ad hoc committee called ‘The Committee for Quality Education through Neighborhood Schools’. This group connected primarily with White families living on the south side of Olive Boulevard in predominantly White neighborhoods that fed into predominantly White elementary schools. According to Smith Dawson, the founder of the Neighborhood Schools group rallied support among the more “moderate” citizens in order to avoid the possibility that this group may generate internal friction that would develop with the involvement of less moderate citizens. Using terms such as “moderate” to describe his constituents, and suggesting that the Neighborhood Schools Group wanted to avoid including citizens who may be “against tax issues” served as a codification to exclude Black citizens and citizens who supported racial balance from the Neighborhood Schools Group.

The exclusivity of this group is further illustrated in the limited distribution of propaganda throughout the first and second wards.¹⁵⁸ One such example of this practice involved a petition intended to keep the School Board from pursuing reorganization. The petition, according to Smith Dawson, was only shared in select areas. Most likely, the select areas did not include the third ward and various neighborhoods in the second ward. Initially, a Newsletter composed by the Neighborhood Schools Group was also issued only in select neighborhoods. However, it eventually was shared with all potential voters.

This committee, as you may recall from earlier in this chapter, previously shared their research findings with the Board of Education regarding the question of racial balance. Their presentation, referred to as the Majority Report, suggested that ongoing studies would be

¹⁵⁸ Smith-Dawson, Karen. “Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization.” Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

necessary in order to determine whether or not any reconfiguration of the neighborhood schools model would be necessary. On the heels of their presentation, the Neighborhood Schools group was stunned when the Board of Education expressed their intent to explore reorganization during the June 5 Board Meeting. According to Smith Dawson (1974), the Neighborhood Group's fear of a hurried resolution for reorganization was reinforced by the Staff's detailed presentation on how they could proceed under the reorganization model at the June 19th Board meeting.

While efforts were being made to divert attention away from the racist tone of the Neighborhood Schools Group, there is no question regarding the similar undertones of the Committee on Racial Balance group. When I spoke with Smith Dawson, she was clear in her recollection that neither group had any significant Black presence. Indeed, the political push coming from the third ward (The Committee on Racial Balance) was to reverse the influx of Black students into their schools by sending as many as them as possible to schools in the first and second ward. Though they had yielded racial space in their neighborhoods, there was still hope to re-establish that space in their schools.

The Neighborhood Schools Group, which served the interests of black and White citizens who lived in the first and second wards, used politics to buttress the racial status quo. They had not yielded White space in their neighborhoods and subsequently maintained that space in their neighborhood schools. A number of Black families that had settled in the first and second wards, according to Smith Dawson, were skeptical to say the least of any semblance of the ghettos from which they had worked so hard to distance themselves and their children.

Though there was little in the way of support for the promoting racial balance across the district shown by Black citizens living in the first and second wards, the same could be said for The Neighborhood School Group. Despite claims and attempts to promote their efforts as

coming from a multi-cultural perspective, Smith Dawson suggests that these claims lacked substance (p.85). The one prominent Black 'leader' involved with The Neighborhood Schools Group is portrayed by Smith Dawson as having "no real power within The Neighborhood Schools Movement".¹⁵⁹ By 1970, The Neighborhood Schools Group had given up on referring to their group as multi-cultural as they could not find any Black citizens who were willing to speak on their behalf.

While the racial undertones of their politics were being ignored, fiscal responsibility hovered as a crucial point of contention for The Neighborhood Schools Group. They questioned the logic behind pouring money into reorganization when there was no evidence to support the idea that the current system was not working just fine for students of all colors in University City. Prior to the previous two elections, the Board was forced to lower the proposed tax levy amount in order to gain citizen support. Both of those tax levies were tied to teacher salary.¹⁶⁰

The Committee on Racial Balance and the Reorganization Group

As its name implies, The Committee on Racial Balance sought a more even distribution of Black and White students throughout the School District of University City. The group's originated in response to the formation of The Neighborhood Schools, which had protested district reorganization during a board meeting on June 19, 1969 (p.91). The group recruited a White housewife who resided south of Olive Boulevard to chair the committee. This was a strategic move much in the same way that The Neighborhood Schools Group had recruited a Black chair for their group. Both groups wanted to give the impression that they were

¹⁵⁹ Smith-Dawson, Karen. "Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization." Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

¹⁶⁰ Smith-Dawson, Karen. "Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization." Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

representing the best interests of the entire school district. The involvement of citizens across racial lines was intended to promote this impression, regardless of the reality.

Within The Committee for Racial Balance, there existed two primary factions. A less moderate faction focused on race. This faction “cited moral imperatives” and pointed to the 1954 Supreme Court Decision ruling segregation in the school setting illegal. The less moderate faction also believed that federal authorities should be brought in if measures were not taken to bring about racial equity in the district’s schools. The more moderate faction of The Committee for Racial Balance was less inclined to involve any federal component. They also focused more on alleviating fears that citizens expressed regarding racial reorganization in the district. For the more moderate faction, racial quotas were not a principal focus.

According to Smith Dawson, The Committee for Racial Balance subscribed to more of a long term outlook when it came to the racial transitions taking place in their community. They wanted to build a successful model that could be emulated in other communities. Conversely, The Neighborhood Schools Group subscribed to a more reactionary approach. The Neighborhood Schools Group preached the risks of White flight that would accompany reorganization.

In order to publicize its position and keep the Board honest, The Committee for Racial Balance composed two informational flyers. These informational flyers were created with the help of district administrators and disseminated at PTO meetings. The flyers helped to describe the purpose and advantages of educational centers. The flyers also explained the difference between integration and racial balance in the context of the district’s current status.

Additionally, the flyers were designed to dispel fears and misconceptions about “mixing children of different racial and socio-economic groups”.¹⁶¹

Along with the flyers, The Committee for Racial Balance circulated a petition calling for the district to reorganize in time for the start of the upcoming school year. Smith Dawson questions the reliability and validity of the petition as it was likely circulated in a very concentrated area of the third ward. Along those same lines, a petition composed and circulated in the first ward by The Neighborhood Schools Group in 1969 drew similar reviews from Smith Dawson. In both cases the petitions were circulated within a favorable demographic and with very minimal explanation.

The Third Group

As the first two groups managed to polarize the community, it became exceedingly clear that a third group could capitalize on both the middle ground that had been created as well as the more moderate members of The Neighborhood Schools Group and The Committee for Racial Balance. Leadership of The Third Group initially sprang from members of The Committee for Racial Balance. The group’s Statement of Purpose read “We think that quality education for all is the goal of the issue in the current controversy involving the University City schools. We also think that quality education for all is neither necessarily nor exclusively achieved in the present school organization”.¹⁶² The two primary criteria set by The Third Group to study any proposed plan included; “quality education for all children”, and “the recognition that racially and economically heterogeneous schools can contribute positively and importantly to our children’s

¹⁶¹ Smith-Dawson, Karen. “Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization.” Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

¹⁶² Smith-Dawson, Karen. “Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization.” Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

education”.¹⁶³ The tone of the group’s statement of purpose and guiding criteria did left room to explore options outside of those strenuously promoted by The Neighborhood Schools Group and The Committee for Racial Balance.

Ultimately, the group settled on a plan that supported the center model as a means of achieving racial balance. Interestingly, The Third Group did not support a slate of candidates, or even a single candidate, for the upcoming Board elections. The reason for this group’s non-support of a candidate was tied primarily to the diverse range of views held within the group. Consequently, the political pull of The Third Group, unlike the other two groups, wound up being nil as the April, 1970 Board Elections approached. Ultimately, only The Neighborhood Schools Group and The Committee for Racial Balance had ‘dogs in the race’.

Smith-Dawson describes one of the candidates, a Black incumbent, as having shown marginal interest while serving on the board and minimal interest in running for re-election prior to the explosion of controversy surrounding both sides of the reorganization controversy. As the controversy moved to the forefront of district politics, he emerged as a beacon for citizens who favored reorganization. Smith-Dawson points out that this candidate’s commitment to reorganization made him “a hero and a symbol to the pro-reorganization forces”. She goes on to write that his commitment to reorganization “gave him for the first time real contact with the Black community”.¹⁶⁴ This is the first time that Smith –Dawson implies activism within the Black community. All previous descriptions involving race describe both sides of the issue as being associated with White citizens or controlled by White citizens. She includes instances in which Black citizens are recruited in order to soften any racist tone that may otherwise emanate from The Neighborhood Schools Group.

¹⁶³ iBid

¹⁶⁴ Smith-Dawson, Karen. “Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization.” Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

To fill the three vacant seats on the Board, The Neighborhood Schools Group settled on a slate of three White candidates. Though one White incumbent was offered a spot on the Neighborhood Schools Group slate, he declined. They were unable to recruit any viable Black candidates to run on their slate. The Committee for Racial Balance fielded two White candidates and one Black candidate (the incumbent). Smith-Dawson makes mention of a gap in the financial backing between the two opposing groups. She writes that the groups supporting reorganization were "less-well financed than the Neighborhood School people – who had some large contributors besides the small donations they received in response to their Newsletters"

While The Neighborhood Schools Group presented a unified front during the campaign, the same could not be said for their opposition. The Committee for Racial Balance was a conglomerate of moderate and extreme perspectives. The lone Black incumbent made it known that he saw University City not as an integrated community, but rather as a White community with a Black enclave. His commitment to reorganization called for true integration and the equitable distribution of school and community resources. In his words "U-City has the cream of the Black community. If we don't move that cream will curdle and we would have lost the opportunity". Smith-Dawson notes that the slate of candidates representing The Committee for Racial Balance rarely attended campaign functions as a group or sent out joint literature.¹⁶⁵

Leon Panetta, a former member of the Nixon administration who criticized the chief executives "go slow" approach to school desegregation, served as the key speaker for a rally organized by The Committee for Racial Balance.¹⁶⁶ During his speech, Panetta reiterated the notion that students of all races are deprived when they are racially segregated in their school community. He went on to insist student success is notably higher in middle class schools than

¹⁶⁵ Smith-Dawson, Karen. "Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization." Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

¹⁶⁶ "Panetta To Speak In U-City." Saint Louis Post Dispatch, March 22, 1970.

in less advantaged schools and that financial support does not even the playing field.¹⁶⁷

Comments from Panetta's speech reflected sentiments included in the Coleman Report of 1966 (Wolters). The Nixon administration's stance on school desegregation afforded a reprieve for the collective conscience of the Neighborhood Schools Group. Nixon's Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare lamented the court ordered push for segregation in spite of de facto obstacles. Finch made clear his belief that issues of de facto segregation stemming from neighborhood patterns should not be considered in the same light as the de jure measures specifically designed to keep schools racially segregated. Finch criticized the pursuit of racial balance for schools located in all Black or all White neighborhoods.

James Samuel Coleman is extensively referred to in the area of sociology of education. In the 1960s, the US Department of Education commissioned him to develop a study on educational equality in the United States. With more than half a million students sampled, Coleman produced the "Equality of Educational Opportunity", which is also referred to as the Coleman Report. In his report, Coleman concluded that Black students gained an edge in the classroom setting if their peers were racially-mixed. The Coleman report would have added credibility to the notion that Black students in University City could benefit by being placed with White students. In fact, the Coleman report is credited to a large degree with prompting the large scale bussing of Black students into White schools. Ironically, further studies conducted by Coleman showed that White parents tended to move away from districts that bused in Black students - a phenomenon is often referred to as "White flight".¹⁶⁸ This aspect of the Coleman Report was telling of the path that many White families took down the central corridor of St. Louis City to

¹⁶⁷ "De Facto Segregation Should Be Attacked, Panetta Says At Rally In University City." Saint. Louis Post Dispatch, March 26, 1970.

¹⁶⁸ Clotfelter, Charles T. (2004). *After Brown: The Rise and Retreat of School Desegregation*. Princeton University Press.

settle in University City during the first half of the twentieth century. It also foreshadowed the exodus of White families from the district and the community as the population of Black families and students began to increase in University City.

The irony of Panetta's involvement in the campaign to support racial balance is compounded by then President Nixon's strong stance opposing the busing of students for the purpose of racial integration.¹⁶⁹ Nixon's stance may have worked against the efforts of The Committee for Racial Balance as the busing of students was a primary component of their plan to redistribute Black and White students in the School District of University City. One member of The Committee for Racial Balance suggested that Nixon's views on busing caused and legitimized a kind of backlash. Before people might have been persuaded because in a way national policy seemed to be consonant with that seemed to be moral and right, and suddenly the president was saying perhaps we don't have to do this and allowed people to do what their guts were telling them to do."

The Vote

When all votes had been tallied for the April, 7, 1970 election, The Neighborhood Schools Group slate had received nearly twice as much support as the slate running on the Racial Balance platform. According to Smith Dawson returns from the Board elections clearly demonstrated that the issue of reorganization was at the forefront of the vote. The three candidates who ran on The Neighborhood Schools slate received similar amounts of votes in each of the district's three wards. Their heaviest support came from the exceedingly White and upper middle class first ward with less support in the second and third wards. Results for The Committee for Racial Balance reflected a contrary trend. Their slate of three candidates received

¹⁶⁹ Davies, G. Richard Nixon and the Desegregation of Southern Schools. *Journal of Policy History*, Volume 19, Issue 4, 2007 (pp. 367-394).

heavy support in the third ward where Black enrollments accounted for 72 percent of students, and moderate support in the first and second wards where Black enrollment accounted for roughly 24 percent of students (see table below). The two candidates who ran independently of the two slates received very few in any of the wards. Appendix G shows the breakdown by ward of Per Cent Vote Obtained by Each Candidate in 1970 School Board Election as reported by Karen Smith Dawson (1974). The second and third wards are combined in this data because their precinct lines cross-over at various points, which make it impossible to isolate their respective results.¹⁷⁰

Smith Dawson suggests that a number of factors would have minimized the impact of a ‘Black vote’ during this particular election. Least of these factors involved the proposal to bus students to learning centers. Having moved away from St. Louis City, where busing did not connote pleasant images for Black students and their families, it is not unlikely that Black families who had moved to University City would not have favored any proposal that involved busing their children. Black families moved from St. Louis City to University City in large part to upgrade the quality of education that their children could receive in their own neighborhoods. In that respect, there would have been little if any reason to become involved in the reorganization controversy.

Other factors that may have minimized the impact of a Black vote in the 1970 board election could very well have been due to the fact that many Black citizens were new to University City and may not have had a chance to register to vote in local elections. Further regarding community activism, Smith Dawson spoke with community leaders across racial lines who described “recently arrived Black families as having two or three jobs per family (mother

¹⁷⁰ Smith-Dawson, Karen. “Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization.” Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

and father), and not the time nor the inclination to attend meetings”.¹⁷¹ On a fundamental level, census data from 1970 shows that Black families only made up 16-18 percent of the population in University City with more than half of that population not having reached the legal age to vote.

On the north side of Olive, political support for racial balance was generated and supported by White citizens. While the pursuit of racial balance throughout the district is a noble goal, it would be naïve to assume that White citizens living north of Olive Boulevard did not push the issue in order to protect White space in their neighborhoods and schools. The White, liberal cause, which was quantifiably broader in the third ward, served multiple agendas on both sides of the racial line. Interest Convergence was certainly a factor that helped to enhance the appeal of The Committee for Racial Balance in neighborhoods that were absorbing a disproportionate number of Black families.

Derrick Bell argued that "Whites will promote racial advances for Blacks only when they also promote White self-interest".¹⁷² Interest convergence occurs when both Blacks and Whites can benefit from a single set of circumstances. Critical race theorists point out that the pursuit of such interests must be engaged by White citizens in order for significant headway to be made. White involvement is necessary to cut through the political and social obstacles that are often insurmountable for Blacks due to existing racism. When pursuing self-serving goals that will also benefit Blacks, Whites can operate as purveyors of social justice. The struggle of White citizens to bring more White students into their neighborhood schools while curbing the influx of Black students was pursued with social justice as the rallying cry.

¹⁷¹ Smith-Dawson, Karen. "Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization." Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

¹⁷² Bell, D. "Who's Afraid of Critical Race Theory?". 1995 University of Illinois Law Review. Retrieved 8 March 2012.

White families who were settled in the district's third ward during the late 1960's and early 1970's would have felt there to be much to gain in reversing the flow of Black students into their neighborhood schools. The real estate agents who preached of failing schools and falling property values helped to promote the notion of an economic disaster brought on by the increased presence of Blacks in their schools and their neighborhoods. In addition to the economic fears generated during the intense wave of blockbusting that swept through their neighborhoods during the mid-1960's, a great deal of panic was spread related to the physical aggression and criminal activities associated with Black neighbors and classmates.

There was a markedly increased showing of voters from the first and second wards for this election (51%) as compared to the previous election (38%). The increase of voters from the third ward was minimal when comparing this election (39%) to the previous election (37%). Citizens on both sides of the issue seemed to agree that the reorganization controversy motivated people to get out and vote. When asked if the tax item on the ballot may have served as a catalyst in getting more voters to the polls during the April, 1970 elections, One of Smith-Dawson's participants "No! No! Not taxes. Because the people who came out to vote don't vote for taxes anyway...it was fear and dedicated belief that the Black man is out to rape every White woman and girl; people on fixed incomes—older people in apartments—were also afraid of the Black man".

Reorganization Timeline

September 1967 – Sixth grade center opened in the School District of University City. A lengthy article printed in the district newspaper about the center does not mention any function related to racial balance.¹⁷³

¹⁷³ "Sixth Grade Center Planned for East Section of District." University City Schools, June 1967.

May 1968 – Redistricting the school population is discussed. No mention of racial balance is documented.

June 1968 – A Black parent living in the district’s third ward threatened suit against the School Board and called for the district to re-draw service boundaries in order to attain racial balance. The presence of de facto segregation in the School District of University City becomes a sustained topic of conversation in political circles throughout the district. The School Board issues a statement affirming their commitment to “Quality education for all students, the avoidance of de facto segregation, and compliance with all federal, state, and local laws.

July 1968 – The Board of Education appoints an advisory committee consisting of 30 district and community stakeholders to study (1) quality education in the School District of University City, (2) ways to avoid de facto segregation in the School District of University City, and (3) federal, state, and local laws related to school integration.

May 1969 – The Board appointed committee recommends no change in the organization and asks the School Board to keep racial imbalance under study

June 1969 – The Board appointed committee presents their report at the first Board meeting of the month. The Board expresses disappointment and suggests that the committee has dodged their responsibility. The Board directs then Superintendent Dr. Garrison, to have the professional staff develop a plan for racial balance.

July 1969 – District staff present a plan that supports educational centers in place of neighborhood schools. The plan calls for primary centers (grades K-3) and intermediate centers (grades 4-6). Centers would draw students from east and west rather than north and south. The east/west service areas would draw a racially mixed group of students and avoid the racial

homogeneity of service areas located either north or south of Olive Boulevard. This plan required a bussing component to transport students to their designated centers.

July – December 1969 – Ad hoc committees, neighborhood meetings, coffees, and other such gatherings that focused on the issue of reorganization and racial balance were plentiful throughout the community. Negative connotations associated with bussing generated involvement in the ranks of citizens favoring the status quo.

December 1969 – Dr. Garrison began to refine the plan to replace the neighborhood schools model with centers.

January 1970 – Dr. Garrison presented a plan that would designate Flynn Park, Delmar Harvard, and Daniel Boone as primary centers (grades K-3). The plan would designate Pershing, University Forest, Jackson Park, Blackberry Lane, and McKnight as intermediate centers (grades 4-6). This plan did not set well with citizens who favored the neighborhood schools model. Arguments between those in favor of the centers model and those in favor of the status quo increased dramatically.

February 1970 – Dr. Garrison resigns. With School Board elections approaching, a slate of three candidates who represent the status quo and a slate of three candidates representing the centers model gain political momentum.

April 1970 – All three members of the neighborhood schools slate are elected to the Board of Education. The slate representing the centers model is defeated. The two remaining board members favor the centers model. They both resign and are replaced by individuals who support the neighborhood schools model. The push for a centers model loses momentum and fades into the background.

The reorganization controversy ended with the reaffirmation of the status quo. Neighborhood schools would continue to dictate the racial balance throughout the School District of University City. For the calculable future, the neighborhood school model would maintain a system of de facto segregation. As the political architects behind both sides of the reorganization controversy, White citizens were destined to determine the outcome impacting stakeholders across racial lines.

The Banking institutions and real estate firms that leveraged race to propel their own capital gains in and around University City continued to shape the community and its schools so profoundly that political action represented nothing more than a secondary response. The surface level issue of reorganizing the school district reflected the interests of White citizens. Reorganization would simply inject the illusion of White space into the equation for citizens who were too stubborn or lacked the resources to physically relocate out of the increasingly Black sections of University City. The status quo would maintain the de facto patterns of neighborhood segregation that flowed seamless into the district's classrooms.

Banking institutions, real estate firms, and educational systems operated largely on the whims of the White citizens whose interests they served through the civil rights era. In the 1960's, Black students found themselves in a position that previous generations had not experienced. As students in recently integrated schools, Black students found themselves in position to take the struggle for equity beyond the point that their parents had reached. Their presence in post Brown schools made them insiders in traditionally racist institutions. Unlike their symbolic presence in other sectors, Black students found leverage as change agents in the school setting. Their presence in the School District of University City marked the beginning of a racial transition that extended beyond the mere occupation of space. One could argue that,

much like similar trends unfolding across the country, Black students at University City Senior High School attained the first demonstration of Black agency in White space.

Chapter 4: The Fire

By the fall of 1969, the enrollment of Black students in the School District of University City had risen beyond 20%.¹⁷⁴ The invisible boundaries that had kept University City almost exclusively White through the mid 1960 had finally succumbed to a combination of civil rights legislation and the exploitive practices of real estate firms. Black students no longer haunted the hallways of the senior high school silently like lonely ghosts; rather, they proudly walked with their brothers and sisters demanding to be seen and to be heard. The political firestorms that had once raged beyond the borders of University City were now ablaze within the walls of its schools.

In the late 1960's, Black students and their families no longer had to rely upon their southern roots to study the dynamics of racial dominance and post-colonial tyranny. Stones of racial oppression were now being turned over in the promise lands of Chicago, Detroit, and St. Louis. As the expectations for racial equity evolved, geographical arrival became a stop along the journey. Much like the pioneers of the great migration from old southern states and abandoned city's, the voices of great leaders began to show up in those promise lands. More than that, these voices were necessary in the promise land. And like the physical presence of their mothers, fathers, aunts and uncles, the voices of leaders gained momentum in familiar places and began to resonate beyond the printed and electronic media.

The rise of student activism as a reaction to racial inequity in the high school setting emerged in the 1960's. Black high school students who had "grown up with images of brutal

¹⁷⁴ "University City Militant Students Given Voice", Saint Louis Globe Democrat, March 18, 1970, p. 3A

White responses to non-violent Black protests” had grown exasperated with the slow pace of progress. The voices of Malcolm X, Huey P. Newton, and Stokely Carmichael resonated with this generation as they pursued more direct avenues of change than the traditional measures endorsed by the NAACP. Non-confrontational responses to confrontational circumstances had become passé to the emerging militant mindset of Black youths.¹⁷⁵

Black students attending integrated high schools in the 1960’s and early 1970’s utilized their newfound activism to establish safe space in an otherwise exceedingly White institution. Through their activism, Black students demanded that the staff, curriculum, and cultural nuances reflect the racial composition of their high schools. Protests, strikes, and boycotts ensured that demands were not falling upon deaf ears. Such measures certainly attracted the attention of school administrators, Board members, and local media.

Just north of University City, Black students at Normandy High School in St. Louis County were making themselves heard. On October 16, 1970, the St. Louis Post Dispatch reported that 200 Black students occupied Normandy High School had barricaded the entranceways to protest the alleged beating of a fellow student by local police following a football game.¹⁷⁶ Though the beating served as the principal complaint, students involved listed eight demands to be negotiated with then superintendent Mel Sheehan. Though the report indicates that discussions regarding the demands would continue until both sides felt comfortable moving forward, there is little evidence to suggest that any consensus was met.

Still dissatisfied with the gross racial inequities playing out in their educational setting, about 150 Black students at Normandy High School boycotted class on November 24, 1970 and asked to meet with Sheehan and their principal, Walter Bergmann to discuss grievances. Among

¹⁷⁵ Hill, S. and Rury, J. An end of innocence: African-American high school protest in the 1960’s and 1970’s. *History of Education*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (2013) (pp. 486 – 508).

¹⁷⁶ “Blacks Disrupt Normandy Classes.” *Saint Louis Post Dispatch*, November 24, 1970.

the grievances was the refusal of school administration to allow Black students to organize in a fashion similar to the operating student government at Normandy High School.¹⁷⁷ Though the concept of Black agency was by no means a new proposition in 1970, the concept of Black agency in White space would have seemed excessively presumptuous if not downright confrontational in the face of the status quo. Conversely, the permanence of White agency in White space or ‘shared’ space underlies the tenet of Critical Race Theory that points to the permanence of racism.¹⁷⁸

Though it had been more than 15 years since the high courts deemed racial segregation in the school setting to be unconstitutional, the Nixon administration was content with the tepid version of racial integration that had evolved on both sides of the Mason Dixon line by the late 1960’s and early 1970’s. So much so that the administration deemed public schools in the south sufficiently integrated and no longer in need of federal or state support to carry out legal mandates to desegregate. Despite the government’s stance, instances of de facto segregation within the desegregated schools continued as discrimination against Black students and teachers flourished. Instances of bias in disciplinary practices, extracurricular activities, teacher dismissals, and ability grouping were cited as clear examples.¹⁷⁹

On November 27, 1970, it was reported that Black students from University City joined students in Normandy to protest the treatment of Black students at Normandy High School. The article that reported this event offers narratives from both sides of the issue. “One White girl, 15, was reported injured” concludes a detailed account printed in the Saint Louis Post Dispatch of

¹⁷⁷ *iBid*

¹⁷⁸ Yosso, T. Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth *Race Ethnicity and Education* Vol. 8, No. 1, March 2005, pp. 69–91

¹⁷⁹ “U.S. Easing Pressure on Southern Schools.” *Saint Louis Post Dispatch*, November 12, 1970

Black students acting out aggressively for reasons unclear.¹⁸⁰ While the master narrative of the article frames protesting students as violent and inhumane, a counter narrative offers an opposing perspective. Cynthia Hamilton, a Black senior at Normandy High School spoke with reporters. She described the jeering by White students directed at the Black students for being “out of class”. She goes on to explain that much of the ensuing violence involved both Black and White students and was the direct result of the mutual escalation of those initial jeers. Hamilton goes on to explain that the initial protest was prompted when the administration reversed its decision to allow Black students to organize a student union and one of the student leaders involved in this endeavor was unjustly suspended.

The desire of Black students to gain agency, to gain a voice, was at the very center of demands being made. This desire conflicted with the racial dynamic that privileges White staff and students had come to expect. Any conversation dealing with issues of racism across racial lines is a violent proposition for Black people. These types of conversation, by their nature, cannot be pleasant and cordial.¹⁸¹ None the less, progress cannot be made without pursuing such discussions. Violence is a non-negotiable for one or both sides of the issue where racism is concerned. The issues in Normandy were not unlike the issues swirling in thousands of school buildings that were experiencing the early stages of sustained racial integration. The School District of University City was no exception.

A Tipping Point

On March 16, 1970, students at University City Senior High School were shown a film in the school auditorium about the Ku Klux Klan titled ‘Invisible Empire’. During the film, Black students claimed that inappropriate comments and laughter were heard coming from some of the

¹⁸⁰ “Blacks Disrupt Normandy Classes.” Saint Louis Post Dispatch, November 24, 1970.

¹⁸¹ Leonardo, Zeus. 2004. “The Color of Supremacy: Beyond the Discourse of ‘White Privilege.’” Educational Philosophy and Theory 36 (2): 137-152.

White students. Uhlon Wright, a Black member of the senior class in 1970 explained at the time “Grievances have been piling up. Then they showed this film about the Klan. Black people were getting sliced up with knives. And some of those, pardon my Chinese, those honkies around us were laughing”.¹⁸² A large group of Black students walked out of the showing of the Klan film and went directly to the office of Administrative Assistant Herman Shaw, the school’s only Black administrator, to express their concerns. Acting Superintendent E.E. Watson was called to meet with the students. Watson arranged for a formal meeting with the students to take place at 2:00 P.M. in the school’s auditorium.¹⁸³

No more than fifteen minutes after Black student leaders began their formal meeting that afternoon with the Superintendent, smoke began to billow through the auditorium. A small fire had been set just behind the stage area. The school was evacuated and no significant damage was reported. That evening, Board members agreed to sit with Black student leaders to discuss their grievances. Though it was never made clear how the fire started, there was a common assumption that it was directly related to the racial tension that had been growing at University City Senior High School.¹⁸⁴

Also contributing to the discord were the impending Board elections involving one slate of candidates whose platform was built on redistributing students across the district in order to gain racial balance at the primary and intermediate levels. Their opposition was represented by a slate of three candidates working to protect the Neighborhood Schools model that would maintain de facto segregation at the elementary and Junior High School ranks. One member of this slate, Board Candidate Neil Bernstein issued a statement to roughly 250 parents gathered to hear the candidates speak on March 18, 1970 at Delmar Harvard Elementary School. In his

¹⁸² “University City Beautiful: It’s Your City Enjoy It.” 1981.

¹⁸³ “University City Militant Students Given Voice”, Saint Louis Globe Democrat, March 18, 1970, p. 3A

¹⁸⁴ iBid

statement, Mr. Bernstein insisted that the plan for racial balance would result in the entire district becoming predominantly Black. He went on to suggest that maintaining the current neighborhood schools model would ensure a predominantly White student body.¹⁸⁵

How much the racial overtones of the upcoming Board elections contributed to racial tensions at University City Senior High School is unclear. What is clear is that members of the high school's Black Students Union felt that previous attempts to voice grievances had fallen upon deaf ears. The fracas caused by the showing of the Klan film coupled with the fire set that afternoon in the auditorium certainly attracted the Board's attention. The Board agreed to meet with members of the Black Students Union on the evening of the fire. A 'civil' discussion lasting two hours ensued between Black student leaders and members of the School Board and yielded very little in the way of progress. Though the reported fire earlier in the day had aroused a need for the Board to engage students, consensus among the groups did not seem to be close at hand. Black students involved in that meeting walked out and made plans to boycott school the following day.¹⁸⁶

On the morning of March 18, 1970, the day after the fire, a group of Black and White students locked arms and stood in front of the entrances before the first bell rang.¹⁸⁷ According to an article in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, White students, parents, and members of the media were able to gain access to the high school.¹⁸⁸ A similar article in the St. Louis Globe Democrat reported that Police showed up on the scene to break of the demonstration and allow White students access to the building.¹⁸⁹ The majority of individuals who entered the building made their way into the large auditorium directly across from the main entrance. Student leaders

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¹⁸⁶ "University City Militant Students Given Voice", Saint Louis Globe Democrat, March 18, 1970, p. 3A

¹⁸⁷ iBid

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¹⁸⁹ "University City Militant Students Given Voice", Saint Louis Globe Democrat, March 18, 1970, p. 3A

across racial lines met in the school auditorium with members of the Board, parents, teachers, and administrators to discuss “long standing matters of concern”. Though members of the media were present, they were asked to leave before discussions got underway.

Though the matters discussed were not reported at that time, Board members present for the meeting in the auditorium issued a statement saying that they were “committed to taking prompt action on the matters presented”. The lone Black Board member insisted that the student demands would be listened to with a “sympathetic ear” while a White Board member implored students not to turn the School District of University City into a “freak show” by discussing recent events with the media. As the meeting continued in the gymnasium, a small group of White parents met in a classroom to discuss matters in private.¹⁹⁰ University City had long cemented its “reputation as a leader in efforts to achieve and maintain racial balance”.¹⁹¹ For the dismayed White citizens of University City and neighboring counties in 1970, the term “racial balance” had not changed the way it had for the Black citizens during the 1960’s. The mere presence of Black bodies in the hallways of University City Senior High School contributed as much to the new definition of racial balance as the presence of maids quarters contributed to the integration of neighborhoods in the first ward during the communities first sixty years. Still, the ‘integration’ of University City was a great source of pride for liberal White citizens even the neighborhoods were exceedingly segregated. The relief of safe space had yet to be achieved in the promise land, and so, revolution became this generation’s great migration.

The morning after the fire burned inside of University City Senior High School, a second meeting between members of the School Board was called with Black student leaders in the high

¹⁹⁰ *iBid*

¹⁹¹ *iBid*

school auditorium.¹⁹² This second meeting came to order shortly after administrators announced that school had been canceled for the day. They decided that it just didn't make much sense to run the risk of agitating an already volatile set of circumstances. The parents, students, community members, and news reporters who had found their way into the auditorium that morning were encouraged to leave before the meeting began. Though the closed session was not recorded, the auditorium was reopened for all interested parties when a list of student 'demands' was read.¹⁹³ Among the demands were; a daytime Black studies program for all students, Black Holidays to be treated in the same manner that "Jewish Holidays are treated", more books dealing with Black culture for the school library, intensified efforts to recruit Black teachers and administrators, and more frequent use of Black guest speakers at the school.¹⁹⁴ An article in the Saint Louis Globe Democrat included "a demand of insurance against physical injury for athletes participating in school sports activities".¹⁹⁵ These demands were read by the School Board's lone Black member, Jack Kirkland. After reading the demands, Kirkland announced that the Board agreed to officially recognize April 4 as Martin Luther King Day at University City Senior High School as a sign of good faith.¹⁹⁶ In as much, Black students would be given the same considerations on April 4 as Jewish students were given on days that their Holidays were celebrated. Absences would not be marked and not exams would be given on those days. This particular demand, tied to the privileges of Jewish students and their families, rings of some sweet irony. Beyond the scope of attainable equity rests a loftier goal that underscores the possibility that Black folks and Jewish folks are intimate neighbors in the hierarchy of cultural dominance. Until the late 1990's, district calendars in the School District of University City

¹⁹² "University City High Is Closed After Fires", Saint Louis Post-Dispatch, March 17, 1970, p. 1A

¹⁹³ "University City Militant Students Given Voice", Saint Louis Globe Democrat, March 18, 1970, p. 3A

¹⁹⁴ iBid

¹⁹⁵ iBid

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noted that school was closed each year for “Easter Vacation”, which started with a day off on Good Friday.

On March 18, school was cancelled for a second consecutive day in order for teachers to participate in workshops designed to bridge the perceived communication gaps across racial lines between faculty and students. Interested parents along with members of the School Board also participated in these workshops.¹⁹⁷ Though no details were reported, it is very likely that the district’s Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Glenys Unruh may have organized and facilitated these workshops.

Certainly, Unruh’s tenure with ASCD and with the School District of University City coincided with a profound shift in the way that students perceived their roles as members of their communities. Unruh was an active member of the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) during the 1960’s and 1970’s. During this time, she challenged the status quo philosophy that maintained a substantial degree of momentum even after the post- Brown era. Unruh’s ability to see past the common misperception that social change was a ubiquitous element of the 1960’s helped her expose and address the exclusivity of public education while effectively promoting meaningful curricula that included minority and woman’s issues. In calling out the illusion of progress, Unruh suggests that “the innovative programs of the sixties were not based on comprehensive new concepts about the role of secondary education, nor about the larger social forces that were operating outside of the school”.¹⁹⁸ Despite the evaporation of paradigms and promises that followed Brown, students held an acute awareness of the hypocrisy that continued to thrive in most educational settings.

¹⁹⁷ *iBid*

¹⁹⁸ Unruh, G. (1975). *Responsive Curriculum Development: Theory and Action*. McCutchan Publishing Company, Berkley, CA.

In her work, Unruh recognized that teaching values that reflect current issues and social trends is of critical importance to the success of students and schools. She recognized the abundance of “gray areas” that impacted a system built upon a mentality of “Black and White logic”. Still, she noted the prevailing, traditionalist approach of most schools. In stark contrast to the profound social changes set in motion during the late 1950’s and on through the 1960’s, knowledge and values in our nation’s schools continued to be regarded as unchanging entities firmly rooted in the past. Unruh’s efforts pointed to the work of Francis A. Schafer in describing the drastic shift in how students began to perceive values during the second half of the 20th century.¹⁹⁹

The challenging of a status quo by Black students at University City Senior High School that culminated in the school being closed down for a period in 1970 is at the heart of Schafer’s drastic shift. The simplistic designations affixed to right versus wrong, good versus bad, and true versus false were no longer acceptable to Black students in the School District of University City in early 1970 as the rapid diffusion of information through electronic media profoundly broadened the range of values. Unruh’s work at the time place a strong emphasis on recognizing the critical disservice done by schools that subscribed to the same approach in ‘teaching and assuming’ values that permeated through the 19th century and into the first half of the 20th century when educators perceived few gray areas. In her book titled *Innovations in Secondary Education* (1974), Unruh frames the antiquated approach to values as tantamount to the absence of values. With a great deal of emphasis placed upon the role that social development plays in developing successful students, Unruh championed the efforts of schools to develop opportunities for student involvement in matters of value and decision making.

¹⁹⁹ Unruh, G. (1975). *Responsive Curriculum Development: Theory and Action*. McCutchan Publishing Company, Berkley, CA.

According to Unruh, “the development of student skills in decision making and value clarification are among the characteristics of modern programs in high school that are approaching social change and value conflicts in a constructive way”.²⁰⁰ the power structure in place in the School District of University City discounted the importance and the ability of students to productively impact the decision making process. The power struggle playing out at University City Senior High School in 1970 would have certainly spoken to Unruh’s philosophical approach to education and her keen understanding of the changes needing to occur in order for schools to operate successfully in contemporary society.

In a book Unruh published in 1975 titled *Responsive Curriculum Development*, she describes a suburb of St. Louis sometime in the early 1970’s (most likely University City Senior High School), Black students were calling for Black studies in the district’s curriculum. A committee of stakeholders was organized to work with the students on this proposal. During the committee work, students asserted that White teachers could not teach Black studies, resulting in the abrupt exit of several White committee members from the room. Later, during the same meeting, students asserted that some of their Black teachers were ‘Uncle Toms’, resulting in the abrupt exit of several Black committee members from the room. Following these initial setbacks, the committee reorganized and spent several intensive months to successfully bring the original proposal to fruition. This episode demonstrated the importance of committee members to “approach cooperative decision making with a determination to rise above prejudices and attitudes that lack respect for human worth”.²⁰¹

A contemporary of Unruh’s, and participant in this research project, had two very strong recollections; the facilitations of the kinds of workshops planned for staff, parents, and Board

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members after the fire certainly reflected an approach to decision making that Unruh promoted in her role as the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and overall support of the curricular issues brought by student to parents, teachers, and district administrators. Unruh's contemporary explained "it certainly did not hurt that someone as highly regarded on a local, national, and even international level as Glenys saw this type of process, as well as the purpose, to be worth everyone's time". Despite the rhetoric of the 1960's and early 1970's, student voice was not a considered a necessary component of schooling. Unruh's placement of student voice at the forefront of the school process flew in the face of the status quo.

On March 19, 1970, four days after the fire burned inside of University City Senior High School, the Board of Education agreed to establish an advisory committee of students, teachers, administrators, and parents to set up a Black Studies Program.²⁰² In addition to the immediate activation of the committee for Black Studies, the Board agreed to investigate the finding that many of the books relating to Black culture that were listed in the library's inventory were not in fact available. Of the more than 300 books on Black culture listed in the library's inventory, a student audit found only 30 to be part of the school's collection.²⁰³

LETTER FROM PRINCIPAL

This is a progress report to you from your principal on events at the Senior High School in recent days.

As you know, we telephoned every student and teacher that we could reach and also broadcasted on the radio an invitation to an open discussion of Senior High School issues last Monday afternoon. More than half of the students and faculty came. We divided into small groups, discussed problems, and exchanged opinions and suggestions. At the close of the afternoon, we gathered in the auditorium and each small group sent a spokesman to the microphone to report

²⁰² "University City Board Agrees To Black Studies Plan", Saint Louis Post-Dispatch, March 20, 1970, p. 5A

²⁰³ "Board Responds to High School Concerns", University City Schools (District Newspaper), April 1970.

what had been said. Each group also turned in a written report to me. Similar questions were asked of the Board of Education at its meeting on March 19.

In response, a number of actions have been taken and others will be planned with further help from you. The Board of Education has appointed to large and representative advisory committees (each composed of students, faculty, and citizens) to help the faculty and Board of Education formulate policies regarding (1) discipline, including grievance procedures, and (2) Black Studies in the curriculum. These committees are meeting on March 26 to organize and will be expected to recommend specific improvements and changes as soon as possible. Both committees will be asked to augment our efforts to recruit Black personnel for our staff.

The Board unanimously voted to permit two excused absences for students on Malcolm X and Martin Luther King days.

At the high school, we are adding books in the library that have been especially requested by Black students. If any student has suggestions for books we need, please give the information to Mr. Jackoway.

The high school staff is planning a series of in-service studies on human relations so that we can better understand the needs of both Black and White students. Also, we are arranging for continuing dialogue between faculty and students. Discussion groups will be regularly available so that we can improve our means of communication and find better ways to work together.

Many worthwhile things are being done right now to find answers to problems. If we all face issues maturely, we will be better persons because of the experiences of the past several days. Your personal assistance is needed if our school is to succeed. I look forward to seeing you next Monday.”²⁰⁴

According to information reported in the April 1970 edition of the district newspaper, *University City News*, there was swift and thorough follow through.²⁰⁵ The two advisory committees mentioned in the superintendent’s letter to students met on March 26 and went to

²⁰⁴ “Board Responds to High School Concerns”, *University City Schools (District Newspaper)*, April 1970

²⁰⁵ “Board Responds to High School Concerns”, *University City Schools (District Newspaper)*, April 1970.

work at once on their assigned tasks. The advisory committee on discipline was charged with five specific tasks by the Board of Education. The first task involved a review of present disciplinary practices and policies. The second task called upon the committee to recommend any adjustments necessary in existing policies and practices, including guidelines for dealing with situations that may require police assistance for the control of group or individual infractions. The third and final task to which the disciplinary committee was charged involved recommending the optimum manner in which information related to the dissemination, interpretation and review of disciplinary practices may best be carried out. A fourth task asked that the advisory committee recommend the type of general roles of supportive, non-teaching related personnel that may be appropriate for the application of suggested policies and procedures. The fifth and final charge of this committee involved the development of a recommended discipline policy for University City Senior High School.

A second advisory committee on Black Studies was asked to study and advise the Board of Education of potential for the development of curriculum related to Black studies. In her book titled *Responsive Curriculum Development*, published in 1975, Glenys Unruh describes an interaction that almost certainly occurred during a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Black Studies. Unruh is listed as a member of this committee in the April 1970 edition of *University City News*.

She describes in her book a suburb of St. Louis sometime in the early 1970's where Black students were calling for Black studies in the district's curriculum. Unruh explains that a committee of stakeholders was organized to work with the students on this proposal. During the committee work, students asserted that White teachers could not teach Black studies, resulting in the abrupt exit of several White committee members from the room. Later, during the same

meeting, students asserted that some of their Black teachers were ‘Uncle Toms’, resulting in the abrupt exit of several Black committee members from the room. Following these initial setbacks, the committee reorganized and spent several intensive months to successfully bring the original proposal to fruition. This episode demonstrated the importance of committee members to “approach cooperative decision making with a determination to rise above prejudices and attitudes that lack respect for human worth”.²⁰⁶ One of Unruh’s University City Contemporaries, a participant in this study, former teacher at University City Senior High School, and member of the Advisory Committee on Black Studies in 1970, recounted the episode described by Unruh. According to the participant, parent and future principal of University City Senior High School Earl Beeks and student Clem Cann organized students to address the exclusively White, European, male centered curriculum. My participant pointed out that there were very few Black students attending the high school at that time and even fewer teachers. Though my participant described the initial committee meetings involving; parents, teachers, administrators, and students to be “lively”, she also noted that discussions were productive. While many details from those committee meetings have faded over time, my participant had two very strong recollections; the facilitations of these kinds of meetings certainly reflected an approach to decision making that Unruh promoted in her role as the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and overall support of the curricular issues brought by Beeks and Cann to parents, teachers, and district administrators was strong. My participant explained “it certainly did not hurt that someone as highly regarded on a local, national, and even international level as Glenys saw this type of process, as well as the purpose, to be worth everyone’s time”. Despite the rhetoric of the 1960’s and early 1970’s, student voice was not a considered a necessary component in the

²⁰⁶ Unruh, G. (1975). *Responsive Curriculum Development: Theory and Action*. McCutchan Publishing Company, Berkley, CA.

review, design, and implementation of curriculum design. Unruh's placement of student voice at the forefront of the process flew in the face of the status quo and helped to garner support across racial lines for the kinds of discussions taking place in University City during the late 1960's and early 1970's.

At their June 4, 1970 meeting, the School Board accepted the report of the Black Studies Committee. A motion was made and unanimously accepted that the Black Studies program begin at the start of the 1970-1971 school year. Details shared at the time indicated that elective courses in Black Studies would be made available to all students and elements of Black Studies would be integrated into general curriculum. The report generated by the Black Studies Advisory Committee was made available, upon request, to any citizens who wished to obtain a copy.²⁰⁷

Underlying their commitment to follow through, the Board of Education introduced Fredrick D. Hobby as the district's Coordinator of Black Studies in August of 1970. Hobby would be responsible for coordinating Black Studies programs at the secondary level and for the development of Black Studies programs that can be utilized in all elementary grades. Another aspect of Hobby's job would be to assist teachers in the preparation of course materials that incorporate Black Studies. He was also asked to assist teachers in the appreciation and understanding of Black perspectives.²⁰⁸

Prior to being named as the Coordinator of Black Studies for the School District of University City, Frederick D. Hobby had spent the 1969 – 1970 school year teaching Black Studies courses at University City Senior High School. Before coming to University City, Hobby served as the first chairman of the Black Student Union at Kentucky State College where

²⁰⁷ "University City Board Agrees To Black Studies Plan", Saint Louis Post-Dispatch, March 20, 1970, p. 5A

²⁰⁸ "iBid

he also received a BA in History. As a student, he was invited to Columbus, Ohio to lead a workshop in Black History for High School students. During his time at Kentucky State College, Hobby coordinated Black Studies courses for undergraduates and taught Black History to youth living at a settlement house in Louisville Kentucky. In his role as the Black Studies Coordinator in the School District of University City, Hobby explained “I see myself as an educator, and for that reason, I am interested in the image of Black Studies. I am interested in trying to get both Blacks and Whites to understand the Black experience in America. The effects of those experiences, why they cause people to react as they do, and how we can deal with those reactions.”²⁰⁹

The 1970-1971 school year opened with a new superintendent, Dr. Gabriel Reuben. Reuben replaced Dr. Garrison, who resigned when the Board of Education failed to act on the recommendation involving reorganization that he presented the previous year. One of Dr. Reuben’s first actions as the new superintendent was to meet with representatives of the Disciplinary Advisory Committee and implement their recommendations.

Reuben directed secondary level principals in the district to develop grievance committees composed of staff, administration, students, parents, and other citizens. Rather than having administrators appoint representatives for these committees, Dr. Reuben asked that each group be permitted to select its own representatives. The superintendent authorized grievance committees to hear appeals on actions already taken as well as complaints of a smaller degree as well as considering suggestions for revising school procedures on a continuous basis. Dr. Reuben left it up to elementary principals as to whether or not they wanted to initiate similar committees in their buildings.

²⁰⁹ “New District-wide Personnel.” University City Schools, June 1970.

Black youth had long been involved in the Civil Rights Movement. In addition to being benefactors of its progress, they often participated in the endeavors organized by local chapters of the NAACP. Rebecca de Schweinitz points out that the presence of Black youth on the front lines of the crusade was a strategic measure to help rouse public opinion in favor of civil rights.²¹⁰ The visual of Youth placed in the path of White opposition frequently highlighted the violence of racial animosity toward Black aspirations.²¹¹

In addition to galvanizing support for the civil rights movement across racial lines, the presence of youth in the Civil Rights Movement “fostered a sense of efficacy in their ability to demand change”²¹². Black students attending University City Senior High School in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s found themselves stepping beyond their ancillary roles in the civil rights movement to become primary players. They abandoned the slow pace of their elders²¹³ and the self-serving agendas of White liberal ‘allies’²¹⁴ to cut an efficient and effective path towards racial equity.

The organization and movement of Black student leaders at University City Senior High School was reflected a common trend in the Civil Rights Movement.²¹⁵ It was also a sign of the times. I spoke with a Black graduate of the University City Senior High School Class of 1970 who helped to put things in perspective. He reminded me that protests were a common occurrence during his time at University City Senior High School. This participant suggested

²¹⁰ De Schweinitz, R. *If We Could Change The World: Young People and America’s Long Struggle for Racial Equality*. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 2009.

²¹¹ iBid

²¹² Hill, S. and Rury, J. An end of innocence: African-American high school protest in the 1960’s and 1970’s. *History of Education*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (2013) (pp. 486 – 508).

²¹³ Hall, S. (2007). Civil Rights Activism in 1960’s Virginia. *Journal of Black Studies* 38, No. 2:251-67.

²¹⁴ Hill, S. and Rury, J. An end of innocence: African-American high school protest in the 1960’s and 1970’s. *History of Education*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (2013) (pp. 486 – 508).

²¹⁵ Franklin, V.P.(2011). Black High School Student Activism in the 1960’s: An Urban Phenomenon?. *Journal of Education* 10. P. 3-8.

that the fire may have been viewed by most students as a way for Black students to make a statement. He mentioned that these kinds of ‘statements’ were not unusual during that time. As an example, he mentioned that one of the ROTC buildings was burned down by students at Washington University as a form of protest to the Vietnam War. This happened around the same time as the fire at the high school.

Regarding the events surrounding the fire, the participant recalled “After the fire, they closed the school down for the rest of the week. My White friends looked at it the same way you would look at a snow day or days...they knew there was racial tension at the high school. They just never felt like that tension involved them. They would tell you all of the White students were liberal. I would have said the same thing if you had asked me before my reunion. Man, I saw so many people that I didn’t even know. It made me think, I didn’t know all of those people – I don’t know if they were liberal or not. All I know is my circle of friends. They didn’t really care much about all of those things going on at the high school. Now, if you asked them about Vietnam or Cambodia, then you would get their attention. There were bigger things going on outside of the high school at that time. Even the ROTC protest at Washington University was more on everyone’s radar than anything going on at the high school. The fire and the closing of the school and all of the things that we were trying to gain as Black students were small potatoes to White liberal students. None of my White friends were upset.”²¹⁶

In the scheme of things, the demands of Black students may have had very little to do with their White peers. Rather, the demands were directed to the adults who wielded the power to change policies and procedures. Black students in University City, and across the country, found themselves in a position of leverage. They were insiders, now capable of initiating critical

²¹⁶ The entire transcription for interview #15 is located in the appendix.

changes in the long stagnant domain of public education. Their efforts in creating safe space in a historically White institution proved to be a game changer with fundamental impacts upon staffing, curriculum, and school culture. These fundamental changes set in motion the compromise of exclusively White space in the School District of University City and extended the acceleration of White flight from the community's neighborhoods to its schools.

As the once exclusively White School District of University City progressed towards becoming an integrated school district and, ultimately, a Black school district, a relatively small population of White families remained. Some stayed because they could not afford to move. Others stayed because they were stubborn. Many stayed because they saw the opportunity for their children to matriculate through White space as students in the University City by creating a district within a district.

Chapter 5: A District within a District

David Gillborn contends that structural racism mobilizes White supremacy. He suggests that “although race inequity may not be a planned and deliberate goal of education policy neither is it accidental”. Gillborn explains that “the patterning of racial advantage and inequity is structured domination”²¹⁷. In hind sight, and through multiple semesters of studying critical race theory, I have gained more of an understanding of how the presence of all White classes in a predominantly Black school can be easily viewed as an example of structural domination. The practices that have resulted in the bifurcation of opportunities and experiences for Black students in the School District of University City represents layers and layers of circumstances that extend well beyond the school setting.

Racism is so intricately woven into our daily lives that its presence is often difficult to notice unless you are its victim. As one participant explained “The real problem has been going on for a while and it’s something that White people don’t recognize. As Black people, we see it every day. We feel it. It impacts everything we do. That’s how many of us felt as students. There was nothing that White people were just going to do for us. They couldn’t fix the problem because they didn’t see it or they didn’t want to see it. As a Black man, you see how little the well intending liberals and Whites can do. Then, you see how much damage White racism does on a daily basis.”²¹⁸ Critical race theory begins with the notion that racism is normal in American Society.²¹⁹ Familiar environments, though rife with racial inequity, rarely place

²¹⁷ Gillbourne, D. (2005). “Educational Policy as an Act of White Supremacy: Whiteness, Critical Race Theory, and Education Reform. *Journal of Education Policy*, 20, 4: 484-505.

²¹⁸ Complete transcription of interview #15 is located in the appendix – Black male, class of 1970.

²¹⁹ Ladson-Billings, G. Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, Volume 11, Issue 1, 1998 (p 7-24).

racism at the forefront of our conscious thought. Instead, we look for symbols in order to determine when a line has been crossed.

As a student at University City Senior High School during the 1980's, I never questioned the presence of all White classes in a predominantly Black school setting. The Black population at University City Senior High School at that time that I was a student hovered around 80% with White students making up the large majority of the balance. Had I been asked why there were all White classes in a predominantly Black school, I likely would have said that I really never thought about it. Having not been a victim of the circumstances that made such instances of de facto segregation possible, the circumstances would have simply faded into the background of normalcy. There was, after all, a common assumption that White students were 'the best and the brightest'. This assumption, perpetuated through a master narrative, relegated the cause of racial inequity in the school setting into the background of normalcy for students across racial lines. The assumed superiority of White students, was explicitly and implicitly woven into the fabric of our culture in University City with no regard for the many layers of history and politics at play. Racism, after all, is typically associated with explicit acts or symbols. Gillbourne purports that "White supremacy is not the obvious and extreme fascistic posturing of small neo-nazi groups, but rather the take-for-granted routine privileging of White interests that goes unremarked in the political mainstream".²²⁰

In 1986, the Superintendent of Schools in University City, Dr. Harold Dodge, appointed Task Force of 14 Black stakeholders in the district to "seek answers, solutions, consensus, advice, recommendations, immediate and long range strategies" regarding the immense gap between Black and White achievement and achievement indicators in the School District of

²²⁰ Gillbourne, D. (2005). "Educational Policy as an Act of White Supremacy: Whiteness, Critical Race Theory, and Education Reform. *Journal of Education Policy*, 20, 4: 484-505.

University City.²²¹ The 14 member committee included administrators, teachers, parents, citizens at large, community activists, and professionals who lived in University City. Dr. Dodge posed the following questions²²² to his committee:

- Are Black students reaching their potential?
- Are there institutional barriers which inhibit Black achievement?
- How do we overcome negative peer pressure?
- What support systems are not in place?
- What do predominantly Black schools which produce merit scholars do that we don't?
- What can we do to increase parent education and support?
- What are the top 5 ingredients for success of students, parents, and teachers?
- How do schools teach kids without parents?
What can we do to increase motivation?

One of the first actions taken by the Task Force on Black Achievement was to compose a list²²³ of assumptions related to their charge. The list is as follows:

- All students can learn.
- University City has tried many techniques to increase the academic achievement of its students.
- The Board of Education in University City wants to restore the tradition of excellence
- As the population has changed in University City the teaching techniques have not
- University City residents are committed to improving the educational tradition
- All teachers want to be successful with all their students.
- Increased academic achievement of all students will enhance a more harmonious environment.
- The University City community has valued its multi-ethnic diversity.
- University City has the potential for becoming a model for quality multi-cultural education
- Positive self-concepts can be measured by the student's ownership for a clean, safe, school
- Parents send their children to school to learn and want their children to be successful
- Some parents can help their children learn academically and some cannot.
- All students want to learn and to be successful.
- Change is necessary in University City Schools.

Between October of 1986 and April of 1987, the Task Force on Black Achievement met 15 times.²²⁴ Members of the Task Force also met extensively with school personnel, visited

²²¹ "Report Of The Task Force On Black Achievement Univeristy City Schools." University City, Missouri. 1987.

²²² iBid

²²³ iBid

classrooms to observe instruction, and took note of the physical condition of buildings and grounds. Throughout their work, members of the Task Force also conducted student interviews to obtain insight for the purpose of their study. Special attention was paid to programs that fostered student success regardless of race, gender, and/or socio-economic status.²²⁵

Research conducted by the Task Force noted the following points²²⁶ related to the instructional focus in grades K-12 noted the following points:

- Many Black students are not prepared academically for acceptance and to function adequately in challenge classes.
- Ability grouping is currently in place.
- Low expectations for Black students achievement persists at all levels.
- A perception that the University City School District provides two different and unequitable systems, (a public and a private school, challenge and regular classes) is pervasive.
- The racial composition of advanced level courses does not reflect the racial composition of the general student population.
- A high school student who takes Foundations of Math, Applied Math 1&2, can take, in effect, three years of high school math courses and yet not have taken one “real” high school math course.
- Students who are grouped during the primary grades into the lower track tend to remain there without the academic preparation which would enable them to become competitive in a higher track.
- At University City Senior High School, the Black population is 80% of enrollment yet only 18% are enrolled in challenge/advanced courses whereas the White student overall enrollment is 19% and 63% of the White students are enrolled in challenge/advanced level classes.
- There exists much flexibility in course selections, especially at the high school. Students tend to take easier courses.
- Each of the elementary schools seems to make an independent judgment as to what curriculum they will use.

Research conducted by the Task Force noted the following points²²⁷ related to climate noted the following points:

- The imbalance in ration of Black teachers to Black student enrollment denies Black students essential role models.

²²⁴ iBid

²²⁵ iBid

²²⁶ iBid

²²⁷ iBid

- The suspension policy results in too much loss of school time for students who need it the most (approximately 200 students received no credit for courses during the first semester due to lack of attendance).
- There is a perception by Black students that the school does not belong to them (i.e. , they do not feel ownership and think in “we (Black) and they (White)” terms.
- Black students are being suspended at a disproportionately higher rate than White students.
- A pattern of high incidence of discipline problems and drop-outs exists among Black students.
- Many in the community perceive the general school environment to be unsafe for students.
- Significant lack of role models particularly for Black males.

Based upon their findings, the Task Force on Black Achievement asserted that the Board must step up as leaders and assert its efforts and intent to serve the entire community. This was the first of many recommendations presented on April 23, 1987. As it stood, the Task Force found a wide spread feeling of distrust towards the Board. This distrust seemed to stem from the belief that the Board placed its focus squarely on White constituents in the School District of University City. Evidence of the Board’s inequitable distribution of their efforts and energy seemed to be manifested in the fragmented distribution of resources throughout the district and the “disjointed educational practices which have resulted in providing unequal academic outcomes for two different student populations rather than provide the leadership for academic success of the single unitary district”²²⁸

The Task Force on Black Achievement saw a need for the district to transition away from previous studies purporting that ‘family background’ stood as the primary determinant of student success in the school setting. This philosophy grew out of works produced by Coleman, Moynihan, and Jencks during the 1960’s and 1970’s.²²⁹²³⁰ The Task Force noted more recent

²²⁸ *iBid*

²²⁹ Jencks, C. et al. *Inequality: A reassessment of the effect of family and schooling in America*. New York: Basic Books, 1972.

studies conducted by Dr. Ronald Edmunds that found the school is the determining factor of academic achievement.²³¹ Edmunds, along with his colleagues, developed identified five correlates for effective schools; quality leadership, clear instructional focus, safe and orderly environment, high standards for all students communicated by teachers, and frequent assessment of student growth. Based upon their belief that it is the school and not the home environment that can have the most profound impact on student achievement, the Task Force recommended that all district schools in University City fall in line with programs that subscribe to the effective schools correlates outlined by Dr. Edmunds and his colleagues. This recommendation called for the training of all Board members, the Superintendent, district administrators and building level administrators, and teachers. Following training, the Task Force called for each school in the district to develop an action plan that would align missions and goals with the Effective Schools model.

In addition to bringing a consistent philosophy to all schools in University City, the Task Force recommended a more consistent curriculum. Within the context of their study, the Task Force expressed grave concern regarding the manner in which some students fall behind early on and are unable to catch up. They also noted the tremendous advantages that students have when they are able to matriculate through the educational setting in courses that provide more a more challenging curriculum. Based on the broad range of existing opportunities, some outstanding and some subpar, that students in the School District of University City could potentially experience, the Task Force recommended that one basic level be adopted for K-12 curriculum. This recommendation included a reduction in the number of course options in order to reduce

²³⁰ Coleman, J.S., Campbell, E.Q., Hobson, C.J., McPartland, J., Mood, A.M., Weinfield, D.C.: Equality of educational opportunity. Washington D.C.: U.S. Office of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, 1966.

²³¹ Edmunds, R. A Discussion of the Literature and Issues Related to Effective Schooling. Volume 6 CEMREL, Inc.,1979

offerings that did not promote mastery of curriculum. This recommendation sought to make sure that all students in University City schools have grasped a good, strong rudimentary curriculum in all areas and therefore have the essential skills and knowledge to move beyond the basic curriculum.

The Task Force strongly believed that much of the achievement gap between Black and White students existed as a result of poor teaching rather than the inability of students to learn. Along those lines, the Task Force suggested that motivation to learn is heavily influenced by how students are grouped. For example, being part of a class where high expectations are the norm is much more likely to motivate students than being part of a class where lower expectations are the norm. The prevalence of White students in high level courses and Black students in low level courses in the district could only serve to perpetuate this phenomenon.

Data collected by the Task Force during the 1986-1987 school year illustrated the proliferation of White students in challenge level classes compared to their Black peers.²³² Members of the Task Force, based upon their study, truly believed that students are much more likely to perform well academically in academically rigorous environments. Conversely, members of the Task Force found that students placed in lower tracks reduce the level of effort and ability put into academic achievement. Adding another layer to this concept, the Task Force found that the standards and quality of instruction tend to be higher in advanced level classes while the standards and quality of instruction in lower level classes often times fail approach any meaningful level of rigor. The lower rates of Black students enrolled in advance placement courses was therefore a serious concern for members of the Task Force (see Appendix H).

²³² "Report Of The Task Force On Black Achievement Univeristy City Schools." University City, Missouri. 1987.

The Task Force challenged the concept of a normal bell shaped curve distribution related to the academic range of student aptitude. Citing the work of Benjamin Bloom²³³ the Task Force described how teachers have come to expect that each classroom will consist high and low learners. The Task Force gained a similar perspective related to traditional grading. In as much, they suggested that students begin to see themselves as ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’, ‘D’, or ‘F’ students very early on in their schooling. The Task Force felt it was critical that all students see themselves as capable of earning high marks. The concept of a “J Curve” suggests that nearly all students can attain the kind of academic status reserved for a limited quantity in a traditional bell curve. The Task Force communicated the need to transition away from traditional perspectives that seem to label students academically from very early on and limit expectations for academic growth and potential.

The Task Force recommended that the district place an emphasis upon Afro-American Studies. In chapter 4, I detailed the district’s adoption of a comprehensive Black studies program in 1970. Based upon the recommendations of the Task Force, it would appear that the Black Studies programs had dissolved by the mid 1980’s. As a student at the high school between 1983 and 1987, I do not recall any curricular offerings that involved connections with Black culture or history. Within their recommendation, the task force describes Afro-American Studies as a “systematic body of knowledge based on the disparate histories of the people of African heritage and origin” with a “system of study that includes language, literature, humanities, social studies, and the behavioral and natural sciences”²³⁴ The intent of the Task Force was to include a curricular component that would examine the heritage and contributions of Black people throughout the history of the United States.

²³³ Bloom, B. (1980). The New Direction in Educational Research: Alterable Variables. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 49 (3), 337-349.

²³⁴ iBid

The Task Force felt that the inclusion of a strong Afro-American Studies program would increase the awareness of Black people about themselves and give them a greater self-image and self-concept. Even through the mid 1980's, district resources designed to support curriculum lacked connections to the Black experience. There was little in the way of evidence to show how and what Black people had contributed to the American culture.

According to one of the participants for this study who taught at the elementary level in University City from the late 1960's through the early 2000's, Teachers in the district largely relied on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to cover Black studies. There was general agreement with this notion when I brought it to the attention of other former students and teachers with whom I spoke during this study. As a teacher in University City, I do have some recollection of this phenomenon. Students could recognize Martin Luther King as well as his most important speeches. Still, if you asked a student who the first man to land on the moon was, they might reply "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." Though some found it cute, partially because it was so predictable, it was also indicative of the exceedingly narrow lane that the district dedicated to the presence of Black studies in the district curriculum. That this narrow lane existed in a predominantly Black school district is a detriment to students both Black and White and in spite of the Board rhetoric that occurred during the early 1970's related to a commitment to Black Studies across all grade levels.²³⁵

In addition to the expectation that a focus on Afro-American Studies would bring more self-awareness to Black students, the Task Force believed it would also help to address some of the many stereotypes and misconceptions of Black people held across racial lines. During the point in time that the Task Force made their recommendations, they felt very strongly that the

²³⁵ "University City Board Agrees To Black Studies Plan", Saint Louis Post-Dispatch, March 20, 1970, p. 5A

School District of University City had established a tradition of education that had remained a barrier to the achievement of non-White learners.²³⁶

The Status Quo

In researching Board notes, newspaper articles, memos, district correspondences, policies, and procedures; I found very little to indicate a blatant process for de facto segregation in the School District of University City. That's not to say examples did not exist. Rather, the proliferation of de facto segregation and racial inequity existed with very little in the way of explicit Board policies. In this section, I provide detailed examples of how the district facilitated compounded neighborhood patterns of racial segregation with the schools. The most telling accounts of de facto segregation, however, were provided through the narratives of former students, teachers, and administrators with whom I spoke during the course of this research.

In chapter 3, I spent a good deal of time describing events leading up to the Board elections of 1970. At the very center of that election was the issue of district reorganization. A contingency of citizens, mostly residents of the communities third ward, were soundly behind a slate of candidates who supported reorganization and the implementation of a center model for students that would be predicated on racial balance. Another contingency, mostly from the first and second wards, supported the status quo of a neighborhood schools model that would continue to extend racial patterns of the district's neighborhoods into its schools. The mere fact that these two opposing factions had generated such a great deal of support was indicative of how drastically the community was changing. Even more telling was the polarization caused by the prospect of reorganization.

²³⁶ iBid

Leading up to the 1970 Board elections, the third ward was well on its way to becoming a predominantly Black neighborhood. On the other side of Olive Boulevard, the first and second wards remained almost exclusively White. This created the first wave of explicit de facto segregation as first and second ward schools located south of Olive remained exclusively or predominantly White while third ward schools located north of Olive became predominantly or exclusively Black.²³⁷

As detailed in chapter 3, the slate in support of the status quo (i.e. neighborhood schools) prevailed. This set in motion the second wave of practices that supported de facto segregation. Board notes collected from the fall of 1970 report increased activity in the transfer of students from schools in the third ward to schools in the first and second wards following the failure of attempts to reorganize the district.²³⁸ Realizing that the prospect of racial balance had disappeared with the election results, transfer requests²³⁹ became a viable way for White families living in the third ward to send their children to school in the first or second wards.

At the December 17, 1970 Board meeting, the superintendent of schools recommended the transfer of two more students from schools in the third ward to a school in the first ward.²⁴⁰ It can be deduced that the transfers involved White students going from predominantly Black schools to a predominantly White school as one Board member, Mr. Kohn, is on record as saying that the students are in the minority and going to schools where they will be part of the majority. Kohn goes on to stress that the Board has not promised to promote re-segregation through its

²³⁷ Collins, John and Downes, Bryan. "Support For Public Education In A Racially Changing Suburb" U.M.S.L. Political Science Department, February, 1975.

²³⁸ November 5, 1970 Board Notes, School District of University City

²³⁹ "Parents, Students Can Choose Teachers, Schools", University City Schools, September 1970.

²⁴⁰ December 17, 1970 Board Notes, School District of University City

open-enrollment policy. Board members Bernstein and Reynolds added that the “very special needs of each individual child must be considered”.²⁴¹

During the February 4, 1971 Board meeting, a citizen noted that two of the transfer requests on the Board agenda involved White students seeking to move from a predominantly Black school to a predominantly White school. He called into question the Board attention to district goals related to de facto segregation. During an executive session, the Board voted not to permit the transfers noted by the citizen during the open session.²⁴² However, a review of subsequent Board notes suggests that transfer approvals were virtually guaranteed. Between February 18 of 1971 and October 7 of 1971, 70 transfers were approved, none were denied, and three were put on hold. The vast majority of the transfers involved students moving from predominantly Black schools to predominantly White schools. The most frequent transfer request involved students moving from Brittany Junior High School to Hanley Junior High School. While details regarding transfers were sporadic from month to month, rationale from the requesting parents showed up in Board notes in the April 8 and July 15 minutes as “so that child could attend school with neighboring children” and “all of her friends attend McKnight” respectively. In both cases, students were transferring to schools with larger White populations.²⁴³

In 1970, the district configuration included two Junior High Schools: Hanley and Brittany. The locations of these buildings coupled with the segregated housing patterns evolving in University City resulted in Brittany being referred to the “Black Junior High School” while

²⁴¹ *iBid*

²⁴² Board notes, February 4, 1971, School District of University City, Board notes, February 18, 1971, School District of University City, Board notes, March 4, 1971, School District of University City, Board notes, March 18, 1971, School District of University City, Board notes, March 31, 1971, School District of University City, Board notes, April 8, 1971, School District of University City, Board notes, April 22, 1971, School District of University City, Board notes, May 6, 1971, School District of University City, Board notes, May 17, 1971, School District of University City,

²⁴³ *iBid*, *iBid*

Hanley was referred to as the “White Junior High School”. While there was certainly racial overlap in both schools, the perception in the district was well ingrained. The vast majority of transfers during the year that followed the 1970 Board elections involved students going from Brittany Junior High School to Hanley Junior High School.

An ongoing theme in University City is the notion that educational opportunities matriculate to White space while escaping from Black space. Accusations of inferior opportunities in the district’s largely Black schools continue to be weighed against the perception that largely White schools have always received favorable treatment. During the January 14, 1971 Board meeting, the parent of a Brittany Junior High School student spoke up to express her concerns related to curricular inequity.²⁴⁴ Mrs. Charlotte Kleffner expressed concern for the curriculum coordination in the district. She stressed that Brittany Junior High School curriculum lags well behind that of Hanley Junior High School, creating academic gaps when students reach the high school. The Board notes indicate that Mrs. Kleffner asked if there existed a policy with regard to the minimum standard for schools in University City. She urged the Board to take a closer look at the problem. In response, it is noted that one Board member agreed with Mrs. Kleffner.

The privileging of White students, afforded the opportunity to transfer schools, was reinforced during the August 19, 1971 Board meeting when the School Board approved bussing for students who had been granted transfers. Previously, students not attending their neighborhood school in University City had been made to provide their own transportation.²⁴⁵ The Board’s willingness to approve transfers that further upset the racial balance drew the ire of White citizens living in the community’s third ward. During the June 1, 1972 Board meeting,

²⁴⁴ Board notes, January 14, 1971, School District of University City

²⁴⁵ Board notes, August 19, 1971, School District of University City

Ms. Gideon Raw expressed her concern, as well as the concern of parents in her neighborhood, regarding the growing racial imbalance of schools in University City.²⁴⁶ Mr. Ryweck urged the Board of Education to use the summer months ahead to study and find a solution for the developing racial imbalance in the schools.²⁴⁷ The Board had followed the elections of 1970 with a cavalier attitude regarding racial balance. They had run on a platform that subscribed to the status quo and were not faced with the reality that the status quo could not shield them from the outrage of citizens who, for a wide range of reasons, were fed up with widening racial gaps in their schools. During the July 20, 1972 Board meeting, the Board of education denied twenty requests for student transfers from Brittany Junior High School to Hanley Junior High School and five additional requests for students to transfer from predominantly Black elementary schools to predominantly Black elementary schools.²⁴⁸ Whether or not the Board retained their cavalier attitude towards the use of the transfer process to facilitate de facto segregation is debatable. Not debatable is the tightening up of their actions related to transfer requests. This may have marked the transition of de facto segregation from schools to individual classrooms in the district.

Among the most prolific facilitators of de facto segregation in the School District of University City has been its system of scheduling courses at the middle and high school levels. Former teachers, students, and administrators with whom I spoke, offered examples of how one could matriculate through the school system in predominantly White classes by virtue of the class schedule. As a student at University City Senior High School, the challenge classes were synonymous with the White classes and the foundations level classes were synonymous with the Black classes. This was the norm and there was very little in the way of discussion regarding

²⁴⁶ Board notes, June 1, 1971, School District of University City

²⁴⁷ iBid

²⁴⁸ Board notes, July 20, 1971, School District of University City

how things played out. None the less, aspects of internalized oppression played out as the handful of Black students who were enrolled in challenge level classes faced a great deal of teasing as they were accused of trying to be White. I spoke with a Black woman who had been a student in University City during the 1990's and 2000's. She recounted some of her experiences and perceptions related to class placement and the specter of self-segregation and de facto segregation in the school setting.

“If you were in Latin class, you were going to be with mostly White students. Latin classes were offered starting in 6th grade at Ronald McNair. There was only one section offered so if you were in Latin, there was a good chance you would be seeing your Latin classmates in most if not all of your other elective classes. Latin class kind of dictated what your schedule looked like. I didn't take Latin after 6th grade. I do know that it was also a singleton at Brittany Woods Middle School and at the high school. So, again, if you were in Latin class at Brittany Woods or at the high school, you were going to be in a lot of the same elective and core content classes. My recollection is that students who were enrolled in Latin classes were mostly White. There were always a few Black students in those classes, but as far as the class went, it was always mostly White. I never thought about it facilitating an option for White students to be in predominantly White classes.

Looking back, it is very interesting that there a this loop hole for this kind of option. What I did always think was kind of shady, and the main reason that I had to forgo Latin class in middle and high school, is that students in these classes would go on an annual field trip to Greece. This trip cost a lot of money – maybe a thousand dollars or so. Students who knew that they would not be able to afford the cost of this trip – there was just no sense in registering for the class.

At Ronald E. McNair Sixth Grade Center, there were more explicit ways that classes reflected the placement of students along racial lines. I was on the Discovery team during the 1996-97 school year. There were three teams that students were divided into, Discovery, Atlantis, and Challenger. These were homeroom teams in which students started and ended each day. Outside of homeroom, classes seemed about as racially balanced as you would expect in a school that was probably 85% Black. What I really had not thought about until now is how the homeroom classes were set up. Atlantis was the 'White team'. It wasn't all White, however, it was significantly more White than the rest of the general population of the school. The Atlantis teachers were also considered the best teachers in the building. They were popular with students and parents and rarely had disciplinary problems. If you were a teacher on the Atlantis team, your classroom was at the front of the building, near the main office and the main entrance. Team assignments helped to determine the group of students and teacher that would be encountered at the beginning and end of each school day. I don't think it really had much of an impact on which students and teachers you would encounter outside of homeroom unless you were registered for Latin instead of Spanish or French. I was the only person of color in my Latin class.

The Sixth Grade Center, a one story building, was just one long hallway. At the halfway point on your trek from one end of the building to the other, there was a slight bend and then a straight shot to the rear exit. Atlantis occupied the first third of the building. The remaining two thirds of the building housed Team Discovery and Team Challenger. There were maybe two or three White students between both of these teams. Racially, Challenger and Discovery looked about the same. Team Challenger, which was housed in the last third of the hallway, and past a set of fire doors that always stayed closed, included the schools most serious discipline problems.

The teachers of Team Challenger and Team Discovery were fairly balanced along racial lines. What they did have in common was that they did not tend to be the most popular teachers with students, nor were they known for having the best classroom discipline”.

Another participant that I spoke with for the purpose of this study served as a teacher in the School District of University City during the early 1980’s and later served as an administrator. As a Black male administrator, this participant offered a unique and telling perspective into the power structure in place in the district. Of particular interest are this participant’s recollection of the manner in which White parents sought to dictate policy and procedure. This participant, whom I was very familiar with when I worked in University City, describes his ability to appeal to both White and Black stakeholders, a skill that he felt were necessary in his role as a Black teacher and a Black administrator in University City.

So I had my first classroom at Brittany Wood’s middle school that fall [1981]. I taught social studies. Social studies is where all of the students came together, Black and White. At that point, there were no alternate social studies classes like there were for math or some of electives. What I noticed was that two or three of my classes were all White with maybe just a sprinkling of Black students. All of my other classes were almost entirely Black with just a sprinkling of White students. That’s when I knew, something is going on here. Those White parents, when they found out that their kids were in one of the all Black classes, they went crazy. The White parents would want to come up and observe my teaching strategies. They were alright with me as a teacher, but, then they had problems with the idea that their child didn’t have anybody in the class that looked like him or her.

The school was on its way to being predominantly Black. I think that is where the Board of Education was having problems with wanting to keep White families in the neighborhoods

and more importantly, in the schools. They were trying to figure out how to keep the influx of Black students from scaring off the White families. Now, I had a knack with all of the kids, Black and White. I was real. I conducted real conversations with the kids. I knew I was being watched very closely by White parents and students. I would do this, I would get up in front of the White students and say “Tommy, there is no doubt that you are White and that I am Black. So, there are some differences in our cultures. I’m going to help you learn more about my culture and I want you to help me learn more about your culture”. They loved that. I would tell them “Let me give you an example of what I’m talking about when I say culture. On Thanksgiving, the White culture has pumpkin pie for desert. The Black culture has sweet potato pie for desert on Thanksgiving. So you have to help me understand the difference”. And so the hands would go up and the kids would be amazed that I had never had pumpkin pie. So the moms would make pumpkin pies and the students would bring them in and we would eat pumpkin pie. I would bring in sweet potato pie and we would all have a slice. This kind of thing really helped to bridge that gap that allowed me to move past the issue of race. The parents and the students, they were able to see me as a good teacher. I would also say to the students, the White students, I would say “now, I know you’ve traveled extensively. I’ve only been to Mississippi. You’re going to have to teach me about Europe and I will teach you about Mississippi”. I would have White parents who would come up to me and say “You know, I was going to pull my son out of your class, but I’m going to leave him in. He really likes you”.

As we begin to move through the year and I start to get more familiar with the practices of University City, I am finding out that they had ‘Challenge Courses’. Only the best and the brightest could get into those classes and Black people were not seen as the best and the brightest. So they had Elements of Math, which they called EM. They had the G.A.T.E.

program for Language Arts. G.A.T.E. stood for Gifted and Talented. I can't remember what the 'E' stood for, maybe 'Education'. So then they started a B.R.I.D.G.E. program that was designed to ease the Black kids into higher level classes.

When I became an administrator at the middle school, I was the assistant principal. The middle school was a critical spot in the district because a lot of White parents were withdrawing their kids out of school when they finished at the elementary level. All of the students came together at the middle school so there were certainly issues that some of these White parents did not want to deal with. They did not have to deal a lot of these issues at their neighborhood elementary schools because those schools, the ones that were south of Olive, had large concentrations of White students. When I went to the McNair Middle School, things were out of control. The principal who had been there did not know how to work with Black students. You know Brittany Woods Middle School is across the street from McNair. I remember looking out the window of my classroom one day and seeing students on top of the roof. They needed a change.

I'm just going to tell you like it is, OK? Black principals will often say what is on their mind. That is how the new principal they assigned to McNair was. She had come over from one of the elementary school in the district and she was tough. She would tell parents exactly what she was thinking. You know she would hear all kinds of racist this and that. She would get into it with the parents. She didn't really know how to pick her battles. So I was there to kind of smooth things over with White parents. Eventually, the principal at McNair had to move on because she did not know how to maneuver in that setting. She was creating too much backlash and parents were withdrawing their kids and complaining to the Board. Eventually, the superintendent wanted to ease me into the principal position. I served as the Assistant Principal

under a couple of other Principals before they appointed me to the position. The assistant superintendent knew they would have to ease me in because I had served under a very unpopular principal at McNair. The superintendent had already spoken to me about making this transition to the principal position. He told me I could learn a lot of what not to do from that first principal that I served under at McNair. It was excellent advice and he really hammered it home. The assistant superintendent at the time conducted a transition meeting with parents to get everything out in the open and to make sure they knew that I would do things differently than that first principal. The assistant superintendent also made sure that parents knew I had the full support of central office. She really appealed to them to support me as well.

So I was the principal at McNair and we had White parents that would really push things. My assistant principal at that time did all of the scheduling. So, right off the bat we had a parent who demanded that her daughter be switched from one class to another so she could be with all of her “neighborhood friends”. This parent told my assistant “You’re going to make that switch!”. My assistant said “No I’m not; there is no room in that class”. So this parent comes to my office and all I can think about is how quickly things can unravel when you get into these battles. So I called my assistant principal to my office and said “look, you’re going to have to put this girl in the class with her White friends”. We had to pick our battles.

From McNair, students moved on to Brittany Woods. They had a principal, a Black woman, who would not back down. When they came up there wanting their kids moved to another class, she would tell them “I’m not moving anyone. If you don’t like it, you can go enroll somewhere else”. Oh, she was a tough sister. I can soft peddle with the White parents than many can. I was able to roll with some of the nonsense that we had to deal with. My assistant couldn’t do it. She would really let it get to her. She would come into my office and

say “Do you know what that lady did? She came into my office and sat her ass on my desk and said ‘you are going to change that schedule!’ and I said no I am not going to change that schedule!” People like that, people like those parents, I had to win them over. Once I could win them over, I could gain the upper hand. Once I had gained their approval, there were less demands and more trust.

One of the things that we heard a lot of complaints about early on was the bell schedule. A group of White parents complained that lunch was too early in the day for their children. We had three lunch shifts because we had a lot of students. There was just not a lot of flexibility to move any of the lunch periods. We had a policy at that time that students could not eat in the classroom. This group of White parents just insisted that their children would need a snack by later in the day. So I just said “look, if Adrienne needs a snack during challenge math, she can have a snack. She can pull out her fig bar or whatever she needs to munch”. So these were all White parents speaking on behalf of their White children. They were all pleased that I had made this exception to the policy. So when it was “snack time”, nobody pulled anything out of their back pack. Nobody was eating an apple or a fig bar. You know why? The kids didn’t want a snack. The last thing they wanted was to pull out a snack in the middle of class and look like a fool in front of everyone else. It wasn’t the kids. It was the parents wanting to run [things].

Then, they wanted me to change the mixture of the classes because they were all White classes or all Black classes with a few White students mixed in. All of the White students were in these challenge classes and the Black students were in regular or foundations classes. So, it was the curriculum that really drove the segregation piece. There was a system of tracking. And White parents would raise hell if their kids didn’t get into a challenge level class. They would go straight to the top and push the issue until their kid got in. Now, Black parents just didn’t do

that. They didn't know who to talk to. Our assistant superintendent figured out how to fix it. She created an elective course that went with the challenge math class. The elective class provided academic support for the challenge class. She called these elective classes "added value" classes. She would do the same thing for challenge Language Arts and other core content classes. This helped to get more Black students into the challenge classes.

We had homeroom teams at McNair. Parents were given carte blanche to observe the different teaching teams at the end of the year before their kids came over. Parents could observe and then request a particular team. They would come in when their kids were still in elementary school. I just gave them a deadline to let us know what class they wanted. They weren't just observing to see what team they wanted for their kids. They were going through the motions because they already knew what team they wanted. A lot of those decisions were made outside of the school setting. Parents would get together, White parents, and make sure they were all on the same page so that they knew which team to request. So team Atlantis, that was the team that was always that was always heavily populated with White students. It wasn't just random. The parents felt that team Atlantis had the best teachers. Now team Discovery; that was at the other end of the spectrum. Now if you were in the challenge math class, and Latin, and G.A.T.E., you were tracked. You were in in a group with other White students and maybe a couple of Black students.

Parents would begin withdrawing their kids after elementary school in University City. A lot of the ones that stayed after elementary school, they would pull them after McNair before they got to Brittany Woods for junior high school. They didn't want their White girls mingling with Black boys. They didn't want their White boys mixing with the Black girls. That's when those hormones were just taking off and parents were not taking chances. But you know, a lot of

those parents would bring their kids back for high school when those hormones had kind of settled down. Now at Brittany, the principal during that time didn't want to appease the White parents. Some people just can't do it. I could do it. I could probably go to west-county and do just fine.

The following account comes from a former principal who served at the district middle school during the 1990's and early 2000's. She speaks to the constant questioning by White stakeholders of a Black person in a position of authority. Also detailed in her recollections are some of the imbedded practices that facilitated de facto segregation in the School District of University City.

“Those were the two programs that parents wanted to have a school within a school; Latin and the advanced math class. They didn't care about the other classes. They only cared about the Latin classes and the math classes. The Latin teacher, he was younger and had a son attending school in the district. He had a vested interest in making sure that his son was part of this segregated community. He was out in the community, actively talking to parents. Now Fitzgerald, the math teacher, he didn't care. He knew what the parents were doing and he just thought they were silly. He could say anything to the parents. They loved him and would put up with any nasty comments he would make. It was considered a coo to be in his class and White parents were willing to put up with whatever. It was based in racism, absolutely based in racism. They would say that they cared about the community. They would say that they wanted the kids in their community to be in the same classes. I really thought they cared about the other kids in their community and their surroundings. Over time, I realized that it was just about their individual kids. They did not want their kid in the same class with a bunch of Black kids. Probably around my third year in is when I realized that the whole idea of “University City”

was by no means ‘diverse’. The elementary schools, some of them, I knew all they cared about were the White kids. She would say things at principals. Very clearly there was an agenda that privileged White students.

Parents would come to me every day about class placement. Maybe something happened in the classroom and they would insist that they needed their kid moved into a class that happened to have more White kids. I would tell them that we are not making a school within a school. Parents would insist that it had nothing to do with race. They would say that they want their kids around all kinds of kids. Still, the White parents would push to get their kids in all White classes. They had Mr. Fitzgerald for math and then Latin. Fitzgerald taught advanced math. Still, there were White kids who got into that class that could not keep up. They would get D’s and their parents wanted to keep them in there. They would pay for tutoring and struggle. Still, their parents wanted them in that class. So, they wanted their kids to have the same social studies, science, language arts, and P.E. classes. So the same group of White students would all be in the same advisory, they would travel together as a group. I made it a point to mix the kids up. If I couldn’t mix them up, I would have had to leave. There was not much I could do about Latin or Mr. Fitzgerald’s math class. I know if I were not the principal there, I am sure that that group of students would have been in all of the same classes.

Lynn (superintendent of the School District of University City) was aware of what was going on and he supported me 100%. He got the brunt of it all. Lynn was an excellent superintendent who really made principals understand what you had to do to uphold expectations and ethics. He would say “inspect what you expect”. Parents pushed for an advisory for all of the students who were in Fitzgerald’s class. They wanted to make it official. They pushed for it and I wasn’t having it and Lynn supported me.”

There is no indication that the School District of University City ever relied upon de jure segregation. Former Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Glenys Unruh explained “University City never did have segregation, segregated schools by law, that is, we never had de jure segregation...University City never had segregated schools. When Black children came to our schools before the Brown decision or after, they came right into the schools. They were always welcome”.²⁴⁹ As an inner ring school district, University City remained exclusively White following the Brown decision and did not see its first sustained in-migration of Black families until the early 1960’s. Explicit patterns of neighborhood segregation created White elementary schools in the first and second wards and Black elementary schools in the third ward from the mid 1960’s through the late 1980’s.

The racial balance of elementary schools in University City was acceptable for many White families. However, the convergence of students across races at the middle and high school levels was where most White parents drew the line. In 1973, the School District of University City created single options for all district students in grades 6-12. Elementary schools were reconfigured to house students in grades K-5 rather than the previous model that kept students at the elementary. Brittany Junior High School was reconfigured to house students in grades 6 and 7. Hanley Junior High School absorbed all students in grades 8 and 9. The high school continued to be the lone option for students in grades 10-12. As part of this reconfiguration, the district also closed two elementary schools, Greensfelder Park and Blackberry Lane, both located in the predominantly Black neighborhoods of the third ward.

²⁴⁹ “University City Beautiful: It’s Your City Enjoy It.” 1981.

Not surprisingly, the 1973-1974 school year marked the first time that Black students outnumbered White students in the School District of University City.²⁵⁰ While many White parents were comfortable keeping their children in neighborhood elementary schools, a mass exodus of White families out of the district was further spurred by the prospect of students converging across racial lines in grades 6-12. Open enrollment was no longer an option for students to avoid Black space once they moved past the elementary school level. White parents who remained in the School District of University City sought ways to maintain White space within schools that were predominantly Black.

While open enrollment continued to be utilized at the elementary level, scheduling was clearly the avenue of choice to create White space. As per the accounts of participants detailed in this chapter, select courses were targeted by White parents for their children in grades 6-12. Latin class, for example, is described as one of the classes that typically drew a predominantly White class list. With multiple electives available at the middle and high school levels such as home economics, physical education, French, Spanish, drama, chorus, band, and art, the vast majority of White students found themselves making up the vast majority of students in Latin. In doing so, options for their core content classes were further narrowed. This meant that the students they met with for Latin would more than likely be the students that they would meet with for math, science, social studies, and language arts.

Another class that was offered at both the middle school and high school level that further narrowed scheduling options for students was Elements of Math. Unlike other core content classes which were offered in the A.M. and P.M., Elements of Math was only offered in the A.M. at the middle school level and in the P.M. at the high school level. The limited

²⁵⁰ Enrollment data for the years 1967 – 1987 collected by former Board member David Harris

offerings for Elements of Math, which was considered an advanced placement class, further narrowed the scope of classes that students could possibly take. For students who were directed into both Latin and Elements of Math, the likelihood that their entire schedules would match was always very high. This trend could be maintained through 12th grade.

The clout wielded by White parents maintained the loop holes that facilitated unique opportunities for White students in Black schools. Not only was the space created through scheduling exceedingly White, it was of a much higher quality than typical offerings in grades 6-12. Though the School District of University City teeters on the edge of accreditation; its White students continue to far exceed the state average for White students on standardized tests. Black students in University City, on the other hand, hover just slightly above their Black peers in other districts.

The first chart in Appendix H compare Black students in University City to Black students across the state of Missouri in terms of percentage scoring at or above proficient on State Testing in Communication Arts in grades 3-12. The second chart in Appendix H compares Black students in University City to Black students across the state of Missouri in terms of percentage scoring at or above proficient on State Testing in Math for grades 3-12. The third chart in Appendix H compares White students in University City to White students across the state of Missouri in terms of percentage scoring at or above proficient on State Testing in Communication Arts in grades 3-12. The fourth chart in Appendix H compares White students in University City to White students across the state of Missouri in terms of percentage performing at or above proficient on State Testing in Math for grades 3-12.²⁵¹

²⁵¹ Data obtained from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Web Site

Conclusion

Racial Balance and Interest Convergence

This research started with the following question: what assumptions, policies, practices, discourses, and cultural phenomena have supported the presence of de facto segregation, and subsequent opportunity to maintain a district within a district, in the School District of University City? Within each component of evidence existed a master narrative that framed questionable practices with a liberal tone. The value placed upon White space in the neighborhoods and schools of University City were reflected in the assiduity of citizens as they mobilized politically at each level to limit the racialization of their community.

In each of my interviews with White participants, I felt satisfied with the degree of honesty and openness being shared. What surprised me the most after completing my interviews was the common theme of ‘community activism’ and ‘civil rights enforcement’ that ran through the responses and recollections. I knew that much of what I was hearing had profoundly racist undertones. I was also certain that my participants, the architects of de facto segregation, had bought into the liberal slants and martyrdom of their master narratives.

The steering of Black families out of University City and White families into University City was done in the name of “racial balance”. Justifying her efforts to reverse the in-migration of Black families into the third ward, one participant proudly reminded me that “contrary to popular belief, Black families do not insist upon living with their own kind”. The individuals with whom I spoke truly believed in what they were doing. I didn’t have the nerve to ask what they were doing about racial balance when there were no Black people in University City or its school district. The subscription to two different realities was clear in the feedback I received from Black participants as compared to White participants. These opposing realities have shaped a community within a community and a district within a district.

This research took me much deeper into the neighborhood politics of University City than I had initially planned. It seemed as though nearly every participant with whom I spoke could tie their experiences in the school district to what was going on in and around their neighborhood. White families living in the third ward during the initial transition in their neighborhoods did not sit still. They either moved out of the district or became actively involved in the politics of change.

Those who moved followed previous patterns that led them westward away from the shadows of what they considered the harbinger of blight. Ironically, the first Black families who moved en masse to University City's third ward raised the per capita income of their blue collar neighborhoods.²⁵² That first wave had the means to escape the abandoned enclaves to which they had been racially quarantined for so many years. A great number of White residents in University City had known these enclaves before they were abandoned – before their parents had abandoned them to escape the shadow of blight and move westward.

In the early 1960's, the shadow of blight encroached upon University City when a real estate developer found that he could not market a block of newly built bungalows to White families. In addition to being too small for even the most humble of White home buyers, these homes were built without basement levels. The whole operation, located in the western section of the community's third ward, was turned over to a Black real estate firm and University City saw the first influx of Black families that could not be labeled as outliers. The secure borders that separated University City from what lay beyond its eastern borders had been compromised. The normalcy of racism²⁵³ had left University City unquestionably middle class, safe, and

²⁵² "Blight: A Case Study of University City, Missouri", March, 1973.

²⁵³ Ladson-Billings, Gloria. Just What is Critical Race Theory and What's It Doing in a Nice Field Like Education?," International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education (1998) 11, 1:7-24

wholesome up until its first wave of Black families arrived. It was not the Black families that brought about this change so much as it was the prospect of racialization in an inner ring suburb.

Just as their parents had abandoned the central corridor of Saint Louis City in droves during the post war era, White families living too close for their own comfort to the newly arrived Black families in University City headed westward into the spaces that were still comfortably White. They took with them the Synagogues and fear that had once accompanied them down the central corridor. Spurred by the financial deficit that seeks out Black space, White flight was largely indicative of the valuation associated with skin color. Real estate agents capitalized upon this fear by reminding White homeowners in third ward that the decline in their property value would drop in direct correlation with the influx of Black families into and around their neighborhoods.²⁵⁴ Understanding that the shadow of blight had diminished the value of their homes, White families sold low and escaped quickly. Black families purchasing these recently abandoned homes bought high for the privilege living in one of the few White communities that would accept them. Many of the participants with whom I spoke also cited the school district as an invaluable draw.

Still relegated to the district's third ward, the sustained influx of Black families into University City during the early 1960's began to reflect in the school district. By the late 1960's, this had become of grave concern to White families living in the third ward as they projected the elements of neighborhood blight into their neighborhood elementary schools. As the population of these schools became increasingly Black, political momentum was generated in support of "racial balance".

²⁵⁴ Leonardo, Zeus. 2004. "The Color of Supremacy: Beyond the Discourse of 'White Privilege.'" *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 36 (2): 137-52.

White families living in the increasingly Black third ward proposed that the district move from a neighborhood schools model to a center model that would distribute students evenly throughout the district in order to achieve racial balance in all of its schools. While this effort was framed as a liberal and humanitarian cause, its purpose was to stop the racial hemorrhaging. According to one participant in this study, a White woman who had lived in the third ward before, during, and long after its transition, the White families who remained in the third ward were either too stubborn to move or they simply could not afford to do so. Regardless of their economic standing, their privilege as White citizens afforded the political clout to place their issue at the epicenter of district politics for a sustained period of time. This is detailed in Karen Smith-Dawson's dissertation "Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case of The University City School Reorganization".²⁵⁵ In her dissertation, Smith-Dawson explains that the involvement of Black citizens in the push for racial balance was minimal with many opposing the intention as it would require the bussing of students.

With race at the very center of proposals to reorganize the School District of University City, it is telling that the only politically active groups to emerge reflected White interests. Across the table from those seeking reorganization was a group wishing to hold true to the status quo. While the latter group kept a low profile in order to blunt its explicitly racist agenda, the reorganization group utilized a master narrative that framed their cause as a response to the progression of de facto segregation. They spoke openly, though mostly in the first and second wards, in order to gain support. Their narrative was devoid of Black voices or even Black perspectives. Still, it rested on a platform that purported to serve the best interests of stakeholders across racial lines. Smith-Dawson notes a counter-narrative in that that most Black

²⁵⁵ Smith-Dawson, Karen. "Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: The Case Of The University City School Reorganization." Ph.D diss., Washington University, 1974.

parents with who she spoke rejected the proposal for reorganization as the bussing component was like salt in the wounds of families whose recollections of bussing Black students in Saint Louis City Schools festered like open wounds.

The political mobilization of White citizens in University City to address the racial transition occurring in their neighborhoods and schools is literally unprecedented. Much of this information is detailed in chapters 2 and 3. The requirement of occupancy permits and rigid building codes were framed as ways to protect Black citizens from corrupt landlords. This kind of interest convergence²⁵⁶ did blunt the path of abandonment that followed Black families from Saint Louis City to the north east borders of University City. At the heart of these permits and codes, however, was the determined effort to stem White flight. A call for “racial balance” in the community’s neighborhoods and schools was a thinly veiled, yet widely supported, plan to attract and retain White citizens in University City. It also provided the School District of University City with a loop hole to investigate and expel Black families from the community. As the principal of Jackson Park Elementary School, I worked with the City of University City to invalidate the attendance of between 10 and 30 students per year based on occupancy defaults. All of these students were Black.

In the schools as in the neighborhoods of University City, Whiteness is paramount to status.²⁵⁷ For Black families moving into the Whiteness of University City from segregated sections of Saint Louis City, this status would afford better schools and safer neighborhoods. White families living in University City could measure their status according to the percentage of Black families represented in their neighborhoods and schools. Family’s living in the district’s first ward during the reorganization controversy, for example, strove to retain their status by

²⁵⁶ Bell, D. *Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma*. Harvard Law Review, Vol. 93, No. 3 (Jan., 1980) (pp. 518-533).

²⁵⁷ Harris, c. (1993). *Whiteness as Property*. Harvard Law Review, 106, 1707-1791.

supporting the neighborhood schools model that would sustain Whiteness for the duration of their children's elementary education. White family's living in the third ward attempted to boost their status by pushing for the district to redistribute elementary students in order to gain "racial balance".

Interview #7, which is detailed in the appendix, describes the actions of one White participant's efforts to achieve "racial balance" by purchasing properties in the district's third ward and only renting them to White families with school aged children who would attend school in University City. This activity was pursued in the name of racial balance. This same participant was instrumental in establishing the University City Residential Service, which was intended to steer White's into University City. Friendly Neighbors, another organization that this participant helped to found, was intended to find Black's housing options outside of University City. As detailed in Chapter 3, these endeavors were financially supported through local government and the donations of contributors.

The value of White space is a common theme in this research. As neighborhoods in University City experienced their first sustained transitions, mobilization was swift and purposeful. Neighborhood organizations were formed under the direction of the City Council to combat block busting. Though the relationship between city government and the School District of University City has been less than productive, the combined efforts to address racial imbalance in neighborhoods and schools within the community has provided a common focus. In one document distributed to neighborhood associations through the Mayor's office, citizens were asked to participate in sting operations designed to nab real estate agents who used race to scare White homeowners into selling. To stem White flight, neighborhood associations were also inundated with information designed to quell the fears of White homeowners regarding their

new “Negro” neighbors. On the surface, these endeavors could be promoted as beneficial across racial lines; a master narrative that viciously guarded White space. Where White space could not be guarded, it was created.

White space in an increasingly Black community and school district allowed White citizens to avoid becoming racialized.²⁵⁸ As the School District of University City transitioned from a White school district to a Black school district, a need for the status associated with White space was necessary in order for White students to avoid becoming victimized by racism. Ladson-Billings describes this phenomenon by suggesting that Whites can be racially othered through association with racial minorities.²⁵⁹ By associating with White classes in a predominantly Black school system, White students in University City could retain the status and privilege of Whiteness.

APPENDIX A

Interview #1: White female resident of University City (1954 – Current) and graduate of University City Senior High School class of 1955

I graduated from University City Senior High School in 1955. I started the school year at Soldan because my family still owned property in St. Louis City. We actually moved to University City in August of 1954. I wanted to continue attending Soldan but the administration there told me I couldn’t when they found out that my family was actually residing in University City. So, in November, I enrolled at University City Senior High School. I was so far behind. University City was much more academically challenging than what I had been used to.

Students who graduated with good grades could go to just about any college that they applied for

²⁵⁸ Delgado, R. (1995). *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press

²⁵⁹ Ladson-Billings, G. Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, Volume 11, Issue 1, 1998 (p 7-24).

back then. People certainly knew about University City; they had a really good reputation. But I was in over my head when I got there. The classes were well beyond anything that I had experienced at Soldan. The teachers [at University City Senior High School] taught like you were already in college. You were expected to come to class prepared and able to keep up with what the teachers were saying. Soldan was still a good school when I left. It was just not up to par with University City.

We had lived at 5059 Enright in the Central West End of Saint Louis City. 5059 had been a large and elegant home. Did you ever see the movie “Meet me in St. Louis” with Judy Garland? That movie was supposed to take place very close to where I grew up on Enright. It has changed so much over the years. The fire chief had lived at 5059 for a number of years. That was a big deal! At some point, the house was turned into a two family flat. It was still very lovely and the neighborhood was lovely as well. People really took pride in keeping their yards and streets looking nice. We lived upstairs and my aunt and uncle lived in the downstairs flat with their kids; my cousins. It was a very nice neighborhood when we first moved there in the mid 1940’s. Most of the people living in the two family flats were hard working Jewish families. Over time, we saw the neighborhood get more crowded. Some of the two family flats became four family flats. More and more people were crowding into the available space. The first Black families that moved into the neighborhood seemed nice enough. These were honest and hard-working families, the first Blacks that moved into the neighborhood. We didn’t interact much but when we did it was always cordial. Things were a lot different back then.

Over time, things started to go downhill. It got bad because more and more people were moving into these houses that had been intended for one family. Two families could live in these buildings without any problem as long as they were normal sized families. The first Black

families that moved in were good people who cared about their homes and their neighborhoods the way you would expect. They kept up their yards and their areas. There were never any problems with noise or police. But then, their extended family and friends started moving in to those flats. It became really crowded and noisy, even late at night. There were constantly people coming and going. Some of them were not very nice when they moved into the neighborhood. They would make very suggestive comments “hey White girl, you looking good”. They never did anything. It was all “White girl” this and “White girl” that. It just seemed threatening, menacing. It was not like it had been.

A Black family moved into the flat right next to ours on the other side of the alleyway. We had never lived that close to a Black family. That’s when my uncle and his family started making plans to move. Lots of our neighbors had already left, some without saying goodbye. The building that this Black family lived in was so close to ours, I could hear everything that they did. My bedroom was right next to their kitchen. In the summertime, I had an exhaust fan in my bedroom that ran constantly. Our neighbors, this Black family, would be cooking and that window fan in my bedroom would pull that foul aroma right into our flat. My mother said they were eating “chiterlings”. She said “that’s what Black people eat!”. Oh it was foul! I’m sure they would have said the same thing about whatever it was my mother or my aunt were cooking.

The ‘for sale’ signs started going up as soon as the first Black families started moving into the neighborhood. And when neighbors would say that they sold to a Black family, more for sale signs would pop up. I remember there being a big controversy because real estate agents wouldn’t even show properties to White families anymore in that area. If a new family was moving into the neighborhood, it was a Black family. This was all going on while we were still living right there on Enright. More and more of our friends and neighbors were moving to

University City and more and more Blacks were moving into our neighborhood. People want to be with their own. It didn't bother me, though. I didn't give a [crap]. I didn't need to be around other Jews. My family, they felt differently. They could not have gotten out of there quickly enough.

My mother called Blacks "somatine" and "schvartza", which means Black. She would always say it with such disdain. Any time there was a Black man in her line of site, she would clutch her purse. She would hold it so tight to her chest with both arms. She always thought they were going to try to rob her. They never did anything to her. She had no reason to behave that way. We have relatives who died in concentration camps because they were Jewish. If anything, my mother should have had some empathy and understanding. A lot of Jews were like that. My mother was no different. I would scold her when she did that and she would say that she wasn't taking any chances and that she did not want her purse to be stolen.

My mother, my uncle, and my aunt had already been talking about moving to University City. There were nice homes and good schools in University City that were reasonably priced and there were a lot of Jews in University City. So, that is where we moved in 1954. My aunt and uncle bought a house in the 7200 block of Cornell and my mother bought a house in the 7200 block of Princeton, one block over. I hated to leave my friends behind. A lot of them were still living in the old neighborhood when we moved. We weren't the last to move out. I was midway through my senior year at Soldan when we moved and I caught a bus on Delmar to continue attending Soldan. About half way through the school year, I was called into the main office and told I could not attend anymore because we didn't live in the neighborhood. I was heartbroken that I didn't get to finish my senior year there.

When I got to University City Senior High School, there were no Black students, none that I can recall. There were no Black families in University City, none that I ever saw when we first moved here. The course load at the high school was beyond anything that I could have ever handled. Soldan was a good school at that time with a very good reputation. Still, nothing I did at Soldan prepared me for the work I was expected to do at the Senior High School in University City.”

Interview #2: White female resident of University City (1933 – Current), graduate of University City Senior High School class of 1949, former Board Member in the School District of University City

I graduated from University City Senior High School in 1949. In 1933, at the age of two, my family moved from Kossuth Avenue in the central west end of St. Louis City to Eastgate Avenue in University City. When I was at the high school, it was heavily Jewish. I’m Jewish, still, I mixed with everyone. I had a lot of friends that were not Jewish. I was more the exception, I even dated guys who were not Jewish! People socialized very much within their own little groups. It was very cliquish. There was a lot of class stuff along with the religious stuff. Even when I was in elementary school at Delmar-Harvard, there were the ‘house kids’ and the ‘apartment kids’. Rarely did they mix, even in elementary school.

My first child started school here in University City at Daniel Boone Elementary School in 1955. It was an all-White school, working class. The school’s principal, H. Hayes Hope, would go around telling the parents that we had one of highest school IQ’s in the district. He did this because he knew we were not situated in one of the more affluent sections of University City. We were, at best, middle income. We knew we were not Flynn Park Elementary School. There was this collective inferiority complex. It was there when we were all White. It was there

long before any Black students enrolled. Mr. Hayes tried to dispel that by telling the students and the parents how smart we were.

My eldest son started at Brittany Woods Middle School in 1962. Even by then, there was not much of a racial tone in the district. There still were not many Black students at all. The district was right on the cusp of the racial transition. Now, in the neighborhoods, that was a different story. In 1962, we had three young kids and a very small house. I remember that we wanted to put an addition on the house. We loved the neighborhood and didn't want to move. With the growing family, though, we desperately needed the extra space and decided we would build an addition. We had lived there for ten years and had never missed a single mortgage payment. We had never even been late with a payment! Still, we could not get a loan to put on an addition. Why couldn't we get a loan? The banks and the real estate agencies knew that the neighborhood was going to change. There was a plan for the third ward, no doubt. Part of that plan would have been for us to move into the first or second ward, or further west. We lived on Birchmont Ave. in the Belmont Hills neighborhood, which is north of Olive St. and west of North and South Blvd. in the third ward. We had to go through a bank in New York that my father had connections with in order to secure the loan for our addition.

In 1961, a brand new subdivision not too far from where we lived had been marketed exclusively to Black families. Forest Greens, right off of Partridge. Just to the east of where we were living. I don't think the builder had planned on selling those houses to Black families. The city must have tipped him off or hit him with a ton of restrictions. So he said 'forget it, I'll just sell them to Black families' – and he did. Now, the city did not have any problems with these new houses when they were being marketed to black families. That neighborhood started a major migration of Black families into University City. And then the block busting started.

Our neighborhood was about half Jewish and half catholic. Most of the turnover on our block at that time involved the catholic families moving further west into the first and second wards or out of University City into bigger homes. It made sense as their families tended to grow more quickly than ours. In 1961, there were 29 homes on our block; three bedroom, one bath, basements, nice yards. All of the homes were owned by White families. The real estate Company hired one of the neighbors to help get things moving. The idea was for the neighbor to stir up fear and get the other neighbors to move. This neighbor would get a commission for each house that was put on the market. They would call these neighborhood meetings that would really generate a lot of panic and racial tension. They would say “you better get out now or your house won’t be worth squat”. It worked! There was already a lot of tension and fear. Some neighbors were on the fence, but when the real estate company new how to push them over the edge if they were teetering.

These real estate agents, they also would not show houses in the third ward to White families. There was a P.E. teacher at Daniel Boone, a young White fellow. He was interested in moving into one of the houses in our neighborhood. I told him that I would get the details from the Real Estate Company. Well, I checked with the Real Estate Company and they told me that the house had already been sold. I knew that the house had not been sold. It was still sitting there, vacant with a for sale sign in the front yard. They could tell by my voice that I was a White lady and they weren’t going to give me the time of day. They simply were not selling to white families. I had another friend at the time that was as disturbed as I was about what was going on. We spent a few Sundays going around looking at houses in changing neighborhoods throughout the third ward. They wouldn’t show us the houses, they wouldn’t answer questions.

They were very rude and unfriendly. I would ask sweet little questions like “how much are the taxes on this house?” and they would say “Oh, I don’t know”. These were very ugly times.

A year after the block busting began, there were only three White families left in our neighborhood. Can you believe it? In addition to us, there was an elderly brother and sister who lived across the street and two older sisters who lived down the street from us. Twenty six homes had turned over. They gave those homes away to the real estate company. Some of them didn’t even bother to finish packing. You would have thought that their lives depended on getting out of there as quickly as they possibly could! The real estate company made a nice profit when they turned around and sold these homes to Black families. I am sure that they charged well beyond the going rate. These were hard working and economically stable Black families. They didn’t have a lot of options to buy a house in or around St. Louis. The real estate companies really made a killing by taking advantage of the supply and demand.

During this exodus of neighbors, people were saying “well, we have to move” and some of our religious leaders didn’t help matters. I had a neighbor who came over one day and started crying “I can’t afford to move”. So I told her she didn’t have to move. I told her that I wasn’t moving. She said “My rabbi told me I have to move”. I asked her if the rabbi was going to pay her bills. Another woman, a dear, older orthodox lady, would say “I have to move! I lived on Goodfellow and they came. Now I have to move again!” I’m not saying this in a blaming way, but there were several families that made it through the Holocaust. They too had the attitude “we have to go!” As a Jew who grew up during the time that I grew up, I have a great deal of compassion for anybody who is struggling to fit in. I find it hard to have any tolerance for people who discriminate or persecute others based on their religion or their race. There are a lot of Jews who feel the same way I do and empathize with Black people. I would expect people

who have seen so much suffering to show so compassion and understanding for other people who are suffering.

One of the early Black families that moved in said to me “you’ll be gone before Christmas”. I told him “I’ll make you a bet, I’ll invite you over for New Year’s in ten years” and we did! We lived there until 1986 and then we did move because my husband wanted a garage and we had kids and grandkids who would visit. It was a delightful neighborhood!

Interview #3: White female resident of University City and former Board Member

Barbara Santoro served as a Board Member in the School District of University City from 1996 until 2005. Her daughters, Rebecca and Claire graduated from University City Senior High School in 1999 and 2005 respectively. She spoke more from the perspective of a parent, shying away from questions related to her duties as a board member and embracing any opportunity to talk about her role and perspectives as a parent. Both of Mrs. Santoro’s daughters did extremely well academically in University City. Both went on to attend Ivy League Schools.

I ran for Board because I wanted all students to be treated well and get the best possible opportunities in the school setting. My own children were treated differently in numerous respects. Their teachers had high expectations of them. My daughters had environmental advantages that many other children just don’t have. They have always been surrounded by books and by people who supported their learning. Not all students have this advantage. Many of our Black students, through no fault of their own, may not have had those environmental advantages. The teachers knew this, or they assumed that the home support was just not there. So, the expectations were lower.

I felt very comfortable being part of my own children’s education. I felt comfortable in the school setting as a volunteer and talking to teachers and administrators. So many parents in

University City were too intimidated to volunteer or show up for PTO meetings. Black parents, primarily, were not comfortable coming into the school. It wasn't just Black families. There was certainly a strong socio-economic component when it came to these parents feeling so uncomfortable in their children's school. The PTO's would reach out and make an effort to build positive connections with these families. I can't say that the efforts were met with much success. The lack of presence really compounded all of the problems that we were seeing with the lower expectations.

Other Board Members would say "these kids need teachers who look like them". That was supposed to be the answer. So, there was always pressure from the Board to hire Black teachers even if they were not the most qualified. There was pressure to hire Black teachers even if they were unqualified to teach. Maybe they had the credentials, but they may not have demonstrated that they could give students the kind of instruction that we would want for our own children. I remember that we would not get the list of teachers to approve until August, right before school started. We would get a stack of paperwork on these new hires. They were already in the classroom and teaching before the Board even had a chance to approve them. All it took was a simple majority for the board to approve a teacher. I was in the minority regarding my stance on the kind of teachers we needed to be hiring. I always thought we should hire the best possible candidate regardless of skin color. The students get over skin color very quickly. If a teacher is effective and knows how to build a strong rapport with students, skin color is not going to be a factor. A teacher who is ineffective and is unable to build a rapport with students is not going to be well received by students. Skin color is just not going to matter in those cases. I did vote 'no' on teachers who I did not feel were good enough to teach my children. It didn't

matter, I was always in the minority and we often missed out on the opportunity to bring in the best candidates.

The band program was almost exclusively Black and the standards were noticeably lower compared to other programs. For god's sake, they didn't teach the students how to read music. They just taught them how to go out and perform. The quality of the instructors was also not the best. There was no substantial transfer of knowledge or rigor. Staff members would be front and center at performances with the solos. The students would be in the background. The students should have been capable of doing solos.

Interview #4: White female resident of University City and former Council Woman

I was born in the third ward. I've lived here all my life. I went to Pershing for Kindergarten. Mr. Elgin was the principal at that time. When my son, Michael, went to Kindergarten at Pershing, Mr. Elgin was still the principal. I've lived in this house for 58 years and have seen a great deal of changes. I'll tell you; this neighborhood had been entirely Jewish when we moved into this house. When the Black families started moving in, the Jewish families fled. They didn't leave, they fled. These were mercantile Jews, not working Jews. They professed to be liberal. The minute that Black families started moving in, they dumped their houses for practically nothing. You could buy a two-family flat for \$9,000.00. This was in the mid 1960's or maybe the late 1960's when it started. Much of this was motivated by the real estate people. Here's my theory; the builders were putting up new homes in Creve Coeur. They needed people to buy these homes. At that time, life stopped at Olivette. There had been nothing there before that.

The first Black family moved into this neighborhood in the mid 1960's. People were fearful of their lives because a Black family moved in. Why? These were lovely people. I went

to visit them. They were nice people, very nice. They were sending their kids to Parochial school. I had to tell other neighbors that this family was no different than any of the other families in the neighborhood. It didn't take long for the neighborhood to transition. There are still some people who didn't move out. Those of us who did stay had deep roots in University City.

We had the first White family in 40 years bought a house up the street. This is the first White purchase in 40 years! For so long, they wouldn't even show a house to a White person in this neighborhood. Northwoods is all Black for the same reason. Black people were steered there just like they were steered here for so many years. You would be at home and here 'thump, thump, thump' and there would be three 'for sale signs'.

University City was redlined for open housing. We established open housing two years before the Supreme Court decision. A group of activists asking for integration had been pushing for it. The Johnson administration had the 235 program. It was one of these Federal programs that just backfired. This program pulled Black families out of really bad neighborhoods and plopped them down in a suburban home. We had these families in University City. These were people who had never lived in a home. They didn't have lawnmowers or any knowledge of how to maintain a home. They would live there for six months and the house would be repossessed because they weren't making payments. This predated Section 8 housing. It could have worked if anyone put any thought into it.

The Jewish families were like pigeons flying out of the neighborhood and away. We had all of these nice Kosher Deli's where they would congregate. If they were talking about a burglary that had occurred, by the time they were done it sounded as though there had been five burglaries. It was self-motivation. Other people moved during that time, it wasn't just the Jews.

Other people would say they were moving out because the Black people were moving in. They were honest about it. The Jews professed to be so liberal. They would say they were moving because they had varicose veins or that they needed a second bathroom. They would all of the sudden say that the schools were bad. They would never say they were moving because of the Black people moving in.

The Black people who were moving into the neighborhood were paying top dollar for their homes. They wanted the same discipline for their children that had existed here. That's why they moved here. Pershing School was built in 1911. No children had ever been permitted to play on the front lawn. As soon as the Black kids started attending Pershing, they were out front playing and throwing footballs. The standards that had been held for White students were not applied to Black students. Discipline existed for the White kids, so why not for the Black kids? There was a double standard. These were the administrators of the school allowing this. At the high school, there was a jazz band, they would always play the Star Spangled Banner before the basketball games. Some of the Black kids wouldn't stand. So what did they do? They stopped playing the Star Spangled Banner. The principal at Pershing started wearing loud colors. He would say "oh, they like that". You don't give to the minority; you let them absorb the existing culture. That's why they were moving here. You have some stupid liberals.

My son went through the schools in University City until Junior High School at Hanley. I pulled him out because the standards had declined so much by then. It would have been the late 1960's. I remember going to a PTO meeting and they were saying "we can't assign homework; the children have chores to do". Nonsense! The Black families moving here had the same economic resources that the people who were already here had.

White neighborhoods in University City remained exclusively White largely due to unfair lending practices and even the refusal of owners to sell property to Black families. Black neighborhoods in University City came into existence when real estate agents began to exploit race to play on the fear of White homeowners. Great profits were made as White families unloaded their homes in the third ward for a fraction of their value. These same homes were exclusively marketed to Black families at inflated rates.

The de facto segregation in the schools that you're studying, it all starts with housing patterns. A school district reflects its population and we were discriminated against. When I say 'we', I mean University City. University City was discriminated against. There were five thousand real estate dealers in Saint Louis and when we declared open housing two years before the Supreme Court Decision, we were redlined. Do you know what redlining means? They would not give mortgages to White people if there was a single Black family on the block. The entire community was redlined. When all of this started, I don't know. The real estate companies are responsible for neighborhood segregation. Community Federal Bank here in University City received a letter from the Federal Home Loan Bank Board. FHLBB was a Federal agency! The letter recommended that mortgages not be insured if there were any Black homeowners living in that particular block. This is a Federal agency we're talking about! Have you read C.T. Henry's book? It's called A History of Community Sustainability in University City. You can get the pamphlet version at the library or order the full version on Amazon. It's all in there. Maybe you should read the book and then come back and ask me questions.

We could very well have gone the way of Saint Louis City. There were gorgeous homes in Saint Louis City, then the Black families started moving in and everything went downhill. When the Black families started moving in, the landlords moved to other neighborhoods. All of

the landlords were White; Black people didn't own property in the city. Black people were at the mercy of the landlords. When the landlords moved out of these neighborhoods, they didn't care what was going on as long as they were collecting the rent every month. They would pack six families into a houses built for a single family.

As the Black population increased, more White families would take off. The landlords, the businesses, the home owners; they all left. Buildings fell into disrepair and the crime rate skyrocketed. Of course, when you have multiple families moving into homes built for single families, there are going to be problems with overcrowding. Sanitation is going to become an issue in those types of conditions. You've got six families where you are only supposed to have one. You're going to have six garbage cans on the street where you're only supposed to have one. The neighborhoods went downhill. That's how politics work. Local government is not nearly as enthusiastic about maintain Black neighborhoods as they are about maintaining White neighborhoods. Do you think those landlords could have gotten away with what they were doing if it was an all-White neighborhood?

Do you know where the Parkview neighborhood is here in University City? You could buy one of those homes for \$15,000.00 in the 1960's because everybody thought that neighborhood was in the path of the blight occurring in Saint Louis City. People thought those Parkview homes would be turned into boarding houses like the houses in Saint Louis City in the central west end. Now those houses, the ones in Parkview, go for upwards of \$1,000,000.00.

I was a Councilwoman in the 1960's. Every housing code that is enforced in University City was introduced in the 1960's. Code enforcement was the top priority for keeping neighborhoods in University City viable. It wasn't about skin color. We established the housing permits, electrical codes, plumbing codes, every code that exists today. And this is important,

very important; we had housing court one night a week. So, if the landlords didn't abide by the housing codes and the building codes, they were brought to housing court. The city wanted these landlords to put their money into the buildings and not into the fines. So, they would usually give these landlords a 'stay of execution' and tell them to get the problems taken care of within a couple of days. Saint Louis City has codes. They would just issue landlords a five dollar fine and move on. For the landlords, it made more sense money-wise to pay the fines than invest the money in their own property.

The people who asked for the strict occupancy laws in University City were Black people. I was on the City Council when they would come in and tell us that this is what they wanted. They would say "we pay premium prices for our houses and as soon as we move in, the neighborhood falls apart. Can't you do something to prohibit this?" They were the ones who requested the ordinances and it's all documented.

University City was a city of 51,000 people and there were no Black enclaves. Clayton had a Black enclave. This would have been 1960. We're now 35,000 people. Prior to the city council declaring open housing, in the early 1960's, the School District of University City offered 'scholarships' for students to attend school in University City. I don't know how many came. You can talk to Petie Karsh more about that. She would be a good person to interview. She was a School Board member. One of the important things is that the superintendent had to live here in Superintendent had to live in University City. When that changed, I can't tell you. It used to be a given. If you work here, you live here.

Interview #5: White female resident and current district administrator

Public Relations Director for U-City Schools and former principal at Flynn Park Elementary School. I ran into Deaun unexpectedly at central office in University City and

happened to mention my dissertation work. She seemed very interested and took time to give me a great deal of information regarding recent developments related to de facto segregation. In particular, she described the process by which the district planned to redraw the lines used to designate neighborhood feeding patterns for its elementary schools. The redrawing of lines was necessary as the district was in the process of closing two of its six elementary schools and needed to ensure the planned redistribution of students whose neighborhood schools were to be shut down. Deaun drew a basic map of University City, with Olive Boulevard running through the middle of her graphic. Olive runs east and west through the middle of University City and serves as a marker that separates traditionally Black neighborhoods on the north side of Olive and traditionally White neighborhoods on the south side of Olive.

I interrupted Deaun to relay that the symbolic and literal significance of Olive Boulevard as a racial line in University City is so prominent that it was the subject of a documentary. DeAun drew a line in her map that cut Olive Boulevard in half. One side of the line, she explained, would feed into Flynn Park Elementary School. The other side of the line, she explained, would feed into Pershing Elementary School. In essence, each school would draw students from both the north and south sides of Olive Boulevard with the proposed configuration. This would help to address the lack of racial balance that existed at Flynn Park, which held the district's largest White population and Pershing Elementary School.

When the proposal was presented to stakeholders, it was aggressively shot down across racial lines. The School Board, which had initially supported the proposal according to Deaun, withdrew their support in light of stakeholder reaction. A new proposal was approved by the Board prior to the 2011-2012 school year. The new lines of student distribution sent students on the south side of Olive Boulevard to Flynn Park Elementary School while sending students on

the north side of Olive Boulevard to Pershing Elementary School. A great opportunity to improve the racial distribution of students was lost.

Interview #6: Black female, former School District of University City Administrator

Those were the two programs that parents wanted to have a school within a school; Latin and the advanced math class. They didn't care about the other classes. They only cared about the Latin classes and the math classes. The Latin teacher, he was younger and had a son attending school in the district. He had a vested interest in making sure that his son was part of this segregated community. He was out in the community, actively talking to parents. Now Fitzgerald, the math teacher, he didn't care. He knew what the parents were doing and he just thought they were silly. He could say anything to the parents. They loved him and would put up with any nasty comments he would make. It was considered a coo to be in his class and White parents were willing to put up with whatever. It was based in racism, absolutely based in racism. They would say that they cared about the community. They would say that they wanted the kids in their community to be in the same classes. I really thought they cared about the other kids in their community and their surroundings. Over time, I realized that it was just about their individual kids. They did not want their kid in the same class with a bunch of Black kids. Probably around my third year in is when I realized that the whole idea of "University City" was by no means 'diverse'. The elementary schools, some of them, I knew all they cared about were the White kids. She would say things at principals. Very clearly there was an agenda that privileged White students.

Parents would come to me every day about class placement. Maybe something happened in the classroom and they would insist that they needed their kid moved into a class that happened to have more white kids. I would tell them that we are not making a school within

a school. Parents would insist that it had nothing to do with race. They would say that they want their kids around all kinds of kids. Still, the White parents would push to get their kids in all White classes. They had Mr. Fitzgerald for math and then Latin. Fitzgerald taught advanced math. Still, there were White kids who got into that class that could not keep up. They would get D's and their parents wanted to keep them in there. They would pay for tutoring and struggle. Still, their parents wanted them in that class. So, they wanted their kids to have the same social studies, science, language arts, and P.E. classes. So the same group of White students would all be in the same advisory, they would travel together as a group. I made it a point to mix the kids up. If I couldn't mix them up, I would have had to leave. There was not much I could do about Latin or Mr. Fitzgerald's math class. I know if I were not the principal there, I am sure that that group of students would have been in all of the same classes.

Dr. Lynn Beckwith, Jr. (supt) was aware of what was going on and he supported me 100%. He got the brunt of it all. Dr. Beckwith was an excellent superintendent who really made principals understand what you had to do to uphold expectations and ethics. He would say "inspect what you expect". Parents pushed for an advisory for all of the students who were in Fitzgerald's class. They wanted to make it official. They pushed for it and I wasn't having it and Dr. Beckwith supported me. Fitzgerald couldn't have cared less who he taught. Parents loved him. Now if one of the other teachers, especially one of the Black teachers had behaved the way he had, they would have had major issues. Both he and I got a kick out of it. The principal at the sixth grade center put up with a lot. There was a lot of pressure on him to attract and retain White families. I think he did as much as he could do to keep students mixed. He did as much as he could without being fired.

Interview #7: White female resident of University City, former parent of students in the School District of University City, and Civil Rights Activist

I was on a committee that was looking at racial balance in the school district. We decided that it would be best to close Hanley and send all of our students to Brittany for junior high school. Brittany was absorbing all of the black students while Hanley continued to absorb White students. So, we basically had a White junior high school and a Black junior high school. There was another committee member who agreed that we needed to combine the two schools. I can't remember his name. He was a White guy, an MD in the Psychology department at Washington University. We didn't think they would even consider our idea to combine Brittany and Hanley. At that time, there were some peripheral meetings taking place about racial balance and what the district needed to do. This guy, the MD and I, we were never invited to those meetings. We joked about climbing in the window to find out what they were talking about. At that point, the district had the sixth grade center, which was a good effort to integrate the students. However, when they moved on to junior high school, they would be segregated again.

I helped to set up the University City Residential Service to address the White flight that was going on at the time. Initially, our office was in an electrical company. We had a little office in that building. I worked there setting up files of what houses were available. Then, we moved to a Baptist church just a block or two north of Olive Boulevard. Ultimately, we wound up next to City Hall in the Senior Citizens building and I guess it doesn't exist anymore. What I did, was to find out what houses were available for rent or sale and what apartments were available and we looked for White people to move into University City. I worked around the clock and we sent out monthly listings of available houses and apartments to faculty at Washington University and Saint Louis University. We included pictures and descriptions of these houses and

apartments that were listed in all three wards, not just north of Olive where the White flight was most pronounced. Now, the houses in the third ward appealed more to new families and families with lower incomes because they were less expensive. The houses in the third ward were smaller and newer than the houses in the first and second wards. So, families in the third ward would have less space and they wouldn't have to worry about the extensive repairs needed for the larger and older houses in the first and second wards. We worked with Black families, too. But our primary focus was to keep the neighborhoods integrated.

At some point, I set up a real estate trust with a board. We bought 35 houses north of Olive in University City to rent to White families and only White families. Initially we said we only wanted families that had children who would be attending public grade schools. Eventually we had to give up on that. We made sure the houses were in really good condition. Again, I went into a lot of these houses that we bought and it was like the people that moved out had fled overnight. These were mostly Jewish families. I don't know what percent of University City was Jewish at that time, but it was still known as a predominantly Jewish community.

Steering is a very important word in the field of neighborhood politics because real estate agents were steering Black people into University City. They did this because we were known for being such a liberal community. A woman named Judy, I can't remember her last name, she got some of us together and asked what we could do about the real estate agents steering Black families into University City and steering White families out of University City. So, we set up the University City Residential Service to keep the community integrated. We sought out White people to move into University City. The real estate companies wanted just the opposite. They were happy to get these houses on the market and then turn around and sell them to Black families. They were using fear to sell the houses and when Black families moved into the

neighborhoods, the fear factor just sky rocketed. Panic selling – fear selling. When I went into some of these houses that had been put on the market, I had a feeling that the occupants had moved out overnight. They would leave furniture and personal items behind. It was like they could not have gotten out of there quickly enough. The real estate agents were making a lot of money because the houses were selling for a fraction of what they were worth. For Black families who wanted to move into the county and send their kids to good schools, there were not a lot of options. University City was, at that time, one of the few areas in the county that Black families could move.

I gave all my civil rights papers to the University of Missouri St. Louis.

The way I got into civil rights is because when my family moved into Clayton, when I was still attending Flynn Park Elementary School in University City, we were the only Jewish family in the area and I guess the neighbors were horrified. The kids in the neighborhood tied me to a tree and threw snowballs at me because I had “killed Christ”, who I had never heard of before. When I attended school in Clayton the following year, there were a few Jewish students, not many. They would call U-City “Jew City”. There was a lot of racial prejudice at the time. That was when World War II had started and I was hearing about the Nazi’s and how they were murdering my people. My parents’ family was in Germany at the time and I remember that we could put up money to have them brought over to the United States. We brought lots of family members here or had them taken to safer places. I remember one family member; we heard it was too late and that she had been killed. So, I grew up knowing about anti-Semitism and I have been fighting discrimination for a very long time. And my parents, they were very liberal. My dad had a tiny advertising agency. During World War II he had a woman working for him named Lilian Kabota and she was of Japanese ancestry. She had a desk and she would greet people as they

came in to the agency. Someone came in to my dad's office and saw Lilian there at the desk. So this man came in and asked my dad "how can you have a jap working for you". This was an important client. My dad said "there's the door. I don't ever want you back here again". So, I grew up with a family that was committed to fighting discrimination and prejudice. Even having Lilian working for him said something about my dad. Another thing about my dad, he went to a play and the whole production was poking fun at gay people. This was decades ago. He walked out and sat in the lobby until it was over. He just didn't want to have any part of it. I come from people who believe that all people are created equal. I consider my real field civil rights. These days I have focused more on environmental issues because it doesn't matter how we treat each other if we don't have a planet.

My parents moved to Clayton during my second grade year. I finished second grade in University City while we were living in University City. The reason my parents moved to Clayton was because they heard their superintendent speak. His name was John L. Bracken and they thought he sounded like such a wonderful educator. So, they wanted me to go to Clayton schools. So, I graduated from Clayton High School in 1950 and went to Washington University, I earned a scholarship. I could walk from my little house in Clayton to Washington University. I went there for two years and the kids who had graduated from University City Senior High School were light years ahead of everyone else. They had received a much better education than we had in Clayton.

At some point, and I don't know when this was, there was some talk of combining the School District of University City with the Clayton School District. I had been the head of this home rental trust and I on my own bought one or two houses in the Ladue School District and one or two houses in the Clayton School District. Clayton and Ladue did not have any Black

students, or very few. The families that rented the houses that I purchased, those were the only Black students at their elementary schools in those districts. At that time, when they started talking about integrating the two districts, Clayton parents were writing horrible letters to the editor of the Post-Dispatch. The mother of a child in one of the Ladue houses I had purchased called me and she was very upset. She asked “what is it with all of these violent, nasty letters in the Post-Dispatch?” These were very strong, racist letters. There were lots of shielded comments about how Clayton parents did not want to absorb University City students. I went to a School Board meeting in University City and I spoke about the prospect of combining the two districts. I knew about the hostility that Clayton parents were exhibiting. I was quoted in the Post-Dispatch as saying “I don’t care if we take in the Clayton children, but I don’t want their parents”. I’m still proud of that quote. That was one of the highlights of my life. I don’t recall what the year was. I can’t do the math, probably because I went to Clayton.

I believe in public schools. My kids got a wonderful education in University City. We have no regrets. When my youngest graduated, they had 24 National Merit finalists. We had a terrific chess club. I used to have a wonderful collection of articles from the Post-Dispatch. None of the good stuff going on in University City made it in to the Post-Dispatch. They always put stories and pictures of any trouble involving Black people. I had all of these examples from the Post and I gave them to a minister in the city. I never got them back. The Globe-Democrat was color blind. They were very neutral, not the Post. The Post was supposed to be the liberal newspaper.

I also set up an organization at Concordia Seminary called New Neighbors. We had to change the name because there was already a company called New Neighbors. So, we changed the name to County Open Housing and we only dealt with housing in the county. We worked

with Black families who were looking for housing and were being steered into University City or St. Louis City. It took me about 40 hours per family to fight the discrimination. I would tell people “I teach lying at Concordia Seminary” because I would tell them to “use their White voices” to call and inquire about available houses and apartments. So they would get all of the information. Then, we had paperwork for them to keep track of all of the information and we kept copies so if the landlords called us to inquire, we could support the information that these families had provided. In order to close the deal, we would have a student from Concordia go with the family to the house or the apartment. I had them phone from around the corner and say “I must have taken a wrong turn, can you please give me directions?” This way, the landlord couldn’t say “Oh, we just rented it”, which is what they would do if a Black family would show up. So, yes, I had them call from around the corner so when they showed up two minutes later, nobody could say that the space had been rented. Now, we only worked with families who we knew could follow through on their end of the bargain. These were families where dad and maybe mom had steady jobs and simply wanted fair access to housing that fit their means and their needs. I can tell you that once these families moved in, we never had any problems. I tried so often to get the Post-Dispatch and the Globe-Democrat to write an article about how well this was working. We never got them to write anything.

I really don’t think that there was a line drawn specifically down Olive. I really think it had more to do with socio-economics than anything else. The houses in the third ward were just more affordable than what was available in the first and second wards. All of University City was fair game for the real estate agents who would have wanted to market houses in University City to Black families. Clayton, now that was a different story. Agents would have never shown houses to Black families looking to purchase or even rent in Clayton. The first black family to

move into University City lived in the first ward near Flynn Park Elementary School. There was a man, George Murphy, a professor at Washington University who lived in the neighborhood when this Black family moved in. He lived very near Flynn Park. When that first black family moved in, there were some people in the neighborhood who put up for sale signs. George went door to door and talked to people and got them to calm down stay in the neighborhood.

My daughter, when she was in Kindergarten, there was one black child in her class. This Black child drew a picture of boys and girls and they were all different colors together in the same space. And, you know, the teacher scolded him. My daughter was very upset about that. She came home and told me.

Interview #8: White female, former resident of University City and former School District of University City Board Member

We had very small children and we wanted to bring them up in this diverse world – University City. I hate to think about how naïve we were. We’re Jewish so we are another part of the diversity. It really didn’t occur to me until later that nobody would show me a house north of Olive. This would have been around 1964 and my kids were still little and they were going to go to Flynn Park. Flynn Park had a few Black students. Anyway, this isn’t an integrated community. I remember when my son graduated, he was so mad at the Board member who introduced his class. He was mad because she was saying what a diverse group of students we had and how everyone got along. He was mad because she made it sound like it was just one big happy family where everybody was treated the same and had the same opportunities. If you looked out at the graduating class, the class of 1981, you would see that there were Black kids and White kids. He said “you can’t say all of those nice things. This is not an integrated community. We live parallel separate lives”. I became more involved with district politics after

talking to one of my neighbors. This was right after the big reorganization controversy and the neighborhood schools group was still on the board. The fight was over but, we still needed a voice for the University City that we wanted. The fight was over, but it was still ugly. I had long arguments with people, board members, who truly believed that not all kids had the same potential to learn.

When my son was a student, there were kids on both sides that crossed racial lines. There were not all White classes at the high school. There were almost all White classes. There were always one or two Black kids. I knew one of their father's. He would say "my kids are Oreos – they can walk on both sides of the racial line". I went to school here too. I went to Flynn Park. When I got to Hanley Junior High, I discovered that whole other world of cliques. It was all White, but there was a whole different value system. In the third ward, it was all about the east and the west. The east part was older and the homes were nicer. On the west side, that's where the housing boom took place after the Second World War. These were houses that were built for GI's who would not have intended to stay. These were small houses for newly married couples to get started. They would move on from there.

I used to think it was a very expensive venture to live in University City. We had to make our contributions and we certainly did when we lived there. We brought in a strong superintendent and she got run out, Irene Lorber. She really held principals accountable. She was Jewish, she was female, and she was genuinely aggressive. She really paid attention to how things were being done and we needed that. There was not a lot of consistency in how money was being spent from one school to the next.

We hired principals from the city. We hoped to make the kids more comfortable. We hoped we would make them leaders. These were people who had no leadership backgrounds.

Nobody from my camp wanted to see that happen. They didn't like to come down hard on poorly performing teachers or poorly prepared teachers. They had friends in the building or they didn't want enemies in the building. The 70's were a time of great flux. Houses were turning over constantly. At Flynn Park, there was a lot of turn-over but the kids were interchangeable. You would lose a high achieving kid and then you would get a high achieving kid. That was in the first ward. In the second ward, you would lose a high achieving kid and get a low achieving kid.

One of my sons was upset because he had a classmate, the only Black kid in his class, Daryl, who would always get picked last for activities. So, I went to the teacher and asked what we could do to make Daryl feel better about himself at school. I suggested that he would appreciate some multi-cultural materials in the classroom. This teacher just gave me a blank stare. I mean, this teacher was maybe in her 60's and it would be hard to get her to change her teaching style. The thing is, the district wasn't looking at multi-cultural elements in the classrooms. I think Glenys Unruh who was the curriculum director was very bright and I think she knew we needed to be more progressive in and around our classrooms. She just didn't know how to get them implemented. She would found these units or approaches that were fabulous. But, she could only get a handful of teachers on board. She would get things implemented in a handful of classrooms, but not ever district wide. She had her cohort of supporters.

When we hired Rosy Dowdy, there was a public vote. It was very uncomfortable. She was one of the candidates that were recommended by consultants. We knew that we needed Black candidates. We had looked at Black candidates when we hired the previous superintendent. But, there were public interviews to hire the new superintendent, so there was a mass scene. And then, there was a public vote. It was just very uncomfortable for me. It should

be a personnel issue, right? I don't know what we would have said in private. There was certainly no comfort level to have any meaningful discussion in such a public setting. Normally, this type of thing takes place during an executive session.

I was a volunteer with University City Residential Services. It's a Kay Drey institution. We all thought we could make things better. I mean, with real estate agents not showing houses in the third ward to White families, we thought we could combat some of those practices. You've heard of the Residential Services Trust Houses? There was a trust that bought some houses north of Olive and only rented them to White families who would use the public schools. OK, so it's reverse redlining. Kay Drey was behind that. Her husband, Leo, is the biggest landowner in the state of Missouri. They are the most unassuming looking people you would ever see. This was all going on in the 1960's. You'll need to ask Kay about it. MaryAnn Englebretson and the Bernard family, June Miller, they all lived in trust houses. That was the agreement. They would use public schools and be good citizens and by enlarge they did. We couldn't buy enough of the houses, we had a dozen or so. We were very naïve. We really thought that would fix the problem. We weren't hippies but we had that 1960's attitude that we could change the world.

When my own kids were attending school in University City, other White families would say we shouldn't be making a social experiment of our kids by sending them to school in University City. Send them to Country Day. Send them to Mary Institute. I went to school in the City before my family moved to University City. My elementary school was Hamilton in the central corridor.

Interview #9: Black female, former resident of University City and graduate of University City Senior High School class of 2002

“If you were in Latin class, you were going to be with mostly White students. Latin classes were offered starting in 6th grade at Ronald McNair. There was only one section offered so if you were in Latin, there was a good chance you would be seeing your Latin classmates in most if not all of your other elective classes. Latin class kind of dictated what your schedule looked like. I didn’t take Latin after 6th grade. I do know that it was also a singleton at Brittany Woods Middle School and at the high school. So, again, if you were in Latin class at Brittany Woods or at the high school, you were going to be in a lot of the same elective and core content classes. My recollection is that students who were enrolled in Latin classes were mostly White. There were always a few Black students in those classes, but as far as the class went, it was always mostly White. I never thought about it facilitating an option for White students to be in predominantly White classes.

Looking back, it is very interesting that there a this loop hole for this kind of option. What I did always think was kind of shady, and the main reason that I had to forgo Latin class in middle and high school, is that students in these classes would go on an annual field trip to Greece. This trip cost a lot of money – maybe a thousand dollars or so. Students who knew that they would not be able to afford the cost of this trip – there was just no sense in registering for the class.

At Ronald E. McNair Sixth Grade Center, there were more explicit ways that classes reflected the placement of students along racial lines. I was on the Discovery team during the 1996-97 school year. There were three teams that students were divided into, Discovery, Atlantis, and Challenger. These were homeroom teams in which students started and ended each

day. Outside of homeroom, classes seemed about as racially balanced as you would expect in a school that was probably 85% Black. What I really had not thought about until now is how the homeroom classes were set up. Atlantis was the 'White team'. It wasn't all White, however, it was significantly more White than the rest of the general population of the school. The Atlantis teachers were also considered the best teachers in the building. They were popular with students and parents and rarely had disciplinary problems. If you were a teacher on the Atlantis team, your classroom was at the front of the building, near the main office and the main entrance.

Team assignments helped to determine the group of students and teacher that would be encountered at the beginning and end of each school day. I don't think it really had much of an impact on which students and teachers you would encounter outside of homeroom unless you were registered for Latin instead of Spanish or French. I was the only person of color in my Latin class.

The Sixth Grade Center, a one story building, was just one long hallway. At the halfway point on your trek from one end of the building to the other, there was a slight bend and then a straight shot to the rear exit. Atlantis occupied the first third of the building. The remaining two thirds of the building housed Team Discovery and Team Challenger. There were maybe two or three White students between both of these teams. Racially, Challenger and Discovery looked about the same. Team Challenger, which was housed in the last third of the hallway, and past a set of fire doors that always stayed closed, included the schools most serious discipline problems. The teachers of Team Challenger and Team Discovery were fairly balanced along racial lines. What they did have in common was that they did not tend to be the most popular teachers with students, nor were they known for having the best classroom discipline.

Interview #10: White female resident of University City and graduate of University City Senior High School class of 1957

“I think her father was a maintenance worker at one of the buildings in the loop area. She was a lovely girl, pleasant, always dressed well. I feel ashamed to say, I never included her in anything that we did. I would say hello to her, but we never did anything socially. I don’t know what her talents were. I was in the dance club, I loved to dance. I don’t know if she did anything like that at school. I think she was probably very isolated. She was never at any event, I can only imagine how she felt – maybe like a ghost”.

Interview #10: White male resident of University City and graduate of University City Senior High School class of 1957

“The Bell’s were the first Black family to move into the heights (an exclusive neighborhood in University City’s first ward). This would have been in the early 1960’s. There was a house for sale and the owner would not sell to a Black family. Dr. Strominger, who lived in the heights for years until he passed away in the 1980’s, bought the house and then sold it to the Bell’s. My family moved from St. Louis City to University City in 1952. We were part of the post-war phenomenon of families moving from the city into the suburbs. We escaped to the Golden 70’s; anything at or beyond the 7000 block of Delmar in University City was considered a huge step up.

Do you know who Genora Jones is? She graduated with me, class of 1957. Genora was the first Black student to graduate from University City Senior High School. I didn’t know her very well. Matter of fact, I really didn’t know her at all. We were in different tracks and never really crossed paths. The alumni association has been trying to find her for years. She would be a good person to talk to, if you could find her. She was the first and I don’t think there were any others for quite some time.

Now, in the 1960's, maybe the last part of the 1960's, that was when there was more of a Black presence at the high school. And you know, that's when the quality of the district really started to decline. And don't get me wrong. I don't blame the Black students. I blame the district and the Board of Education. At some point, the district decided that hiring Black teachers would be a great way to address the influx of Black students. University City had been one of the most highly regarded public school districts in the entire country during the 1930's, 1940's, and 1950's and most of the 1960's. We attracted the best and the brightest in the way of teaching staff. The district looked for teachers and administrators who were capable of maintaining standards that were as high as any other district you would come across. We would have been much better off had the district maintained those standards.

When the demographics began to change, the board was split right down the middle. Half of the board wanted to maintain the status quo when it came to hiring staff. The other half of the board thought the focus should be on making sure the teaching staff looked more like the students. Both sides were right. In the end, there was a strong focus on hiring Black teachers. White teachers were being overlooked for positions that came available. The pool of quality teaching candidates for positions in University City shrank. I mean, they were just looking at candidates from Harris Stowe and I'll tell you what I think about Harris Stowe. The quality of that place was not any better than what you would find with most high schools. But, that's where the district was going to look for their teachers.

Interview #11: White female, former student at Brittany Middle School and Hanley Junior High School

I would guess that Hanley Junior High was close to 75% Black when I was a student there in 1980 and 1981. Latin class was probably 90% White. That class stayed virtually intact

through my senior year in high school. As a student at Hanley, I remember walking to the high school to take Latin classes. We had a lot of freedom considering we were in junior high school. I recall at UCHS that we signed up for our classes. We didn't need prerequisites at that time, none that I can remember. We signed up for whatever classes our peers were in. I found myself in a very high level math class during my freshman year. That class was mostly White. I just couldn't handle the curriculum so I dropped that class and moved into a lower level math class. What I remember about that lower level class was that there were more Black students. The more challenging math class that I had been in was almost entirely White. I probably signed up for that class because all of my friends were in there. What was most noticeable in that lower math class were the behavior issues and the slow pace of the curriculum. I remember that very vividly. I just figured it would be similar to the high level math class, only less difficult. There was just a huge difference in the tone.

Honors English, maybe there were 3 Black students and the rest of us were White. I really didn't think much at all about the racial imbalance in the high and low level classes. I didn't think about how White kids were generally on the high track and Black kids were generally on the low track. If someone had asked me why it was like that, I probably would have just said that White kids like signing up for the high classes and Black kids don't. I never would have thought about all of the other factors that created that kind of situation or why it was OK. I have to say that it makes me sad thinking how oblivious I was to the racial imbalance. Looking back, I think there should have been more initiative on everyone's part; parents, teachers, counselors, students. If a parent doesn't take the initiative, administration is not going to chase them down and make them sign up or push to get into these classes. But, it shouldn't all depend on the parents. We went through school just thinking that White kids are smarter than Black kids

– and that’s really not something that I thought about until right now. And now I’m thinking that maybe Black kids felt the same way; that the White kids were smarter and that was just the way it was. Oh my God, that’s...that’s terrible.

In 8th and 9th grade, I was one of only 2 White cheerleaders. The girls on the squad were very patient with me and helped me along with the complicated steps. I have really good memories. I never felt threatened at all. I had Black friends and White friends. For me, it was a really good experience. I look at the district now and feel like it has fallen off quite a bit. Really, it’s not much different from when I was there more than 30 years ago. I was just in a bubble and I was protected in a lot of ways, maybe because I’m White. I really have so many thoughts going through my head right now and this is really fascinating. I got such a good education in University City. I have so many wonderful memories. I took Independent Study Swimming with my friend Michelle who is also White. Independent Study Swimming for goodness sakes! We were both on the swim team and the coach worked it out for us. I don’t think there were any Black students taking Independent Study Swimming or Independent Study anything. It would never have occurred to me, the privileges that I had at the time.

Brittany Woods was culture shock for me. Coming from Fairview Heights, I was not used to seeing any Black students. I got busted staring at some of the hairstyles. The bus was loud. I pulled her braid and it came off.

Interview #11: Black male, former teacher and administrator in the School District of University City

You have what we call an informal register and your formalized register. Your formalized register reminds me of no more than your degrees and certifications that you went to a university to obtain. Your informal is that real person that is inside of you – your spirit being.

Moving back and forth between your formal and informal register is an art. You really have to be able to move back and forth in order to be successful. This is how I was able to be successful dealing with what I dealt with in University City. Now, as you talk to people for this research, you're going to come across individuals who operated at various levels of impact for the district. You have a circle of people that are somehow connected to the district. Then, you have your inner circle of people who are connected to the district. Then, you have your inner – inner circle. This last group is your movers and shakers. They made things happen and they are going to be less likely to want their names uttered in relationship to this study. They are still networking. By the time you get to a person like me, I'm not that inner-inner circle. I can talk freely and not really worry. So let's start with the classroom. You ready?

I was never brought up with prejudices and racism. I had heard about it as I moved along. I lived in St. Louis City in a middle class or lower middle class neighborhood. I attended St. Louis public schools in a stadium portable. You know what a stadium portable is? These were extensions of the main school. Benton Elementary School, which I attended, was a K-8 school. It had become very crowded so they had to build these stadium portables. There was a stadium right there on Benton and Kings Highway where they put the portables. So, they called them "stadium portables". So, my homeroom teacher was Mrs. Van Buren. Everyone was Black at that school. I didn't know any different. I never had White classmates at that point and all of our teachers were Black and mostly female.

So when integration came along, I was bussed to Malinkrodt in south city. I remember that Black students would have to bring brown bag lunches. Not the White students, they ate hot lunches in the cafeteria. We couldn't go through the lunch line. They just weren't ready for that. Things were different back then and I don't think I really gave much thought to why we had to

bring our lunch or why we couldn't go through the lunch line. The thing that I did think about in terms of there being a difference involved one of the privileges that White students were afforded. There was a White Castle near the school and White students could go there to get their lunch and bring it back for lunch. They did not let us leave the campus, not Black students. Now I don't know if they didn't serve Blacks at that White Castle or if it was a school decision. I just knew it was wrong that White students had that extra privilege and Black students did not.

I had a White male teacher. I adored him but he did not adore me. We had little reading groups and I would always raise my hand and he never would call on me. Not realizing it was racism, I didn't know what it was. I was probably one of the first Black students he had dealt with. There weren't many in my class. It shut me down. After so long, I didn't raise my hand and stopped doing my work. Eventually, they wanted to retain me because I wasn't doing my work. Well, no, of course I wasn't doing my work. Back in those days you would get a report card and there would be 10-12 categories. The categories I remember were Spelling, Language, Writing, Arithmetic, Work Habits, Conduct, and maybe some others. Everything on my report card was marked 'U' for unsatisfactory. Well, that just really alarmed my mother so she came up to the school to talk to my teacher. Now, I was a great writer and I knew it even at that age. I had great penmanship. My mother said to him "I don't know how my child can be unsatisfactory in all of these categories. Spelling and writing he is very good at, but he is marked unsatisfactory". Virgil Brinks; that was the name of my teacher. I'll never forget it. I don't remember the name of the principal at that time, but he told my mother that they would use the test we took at that time, the Iowa Basic Skills Test, to decide if I would move on or not.

I took the test and I scored off the charts. Then it came back to the teacher. How is it that I could do so well on this important test and have everything on my report card marked

unsatisfactory? I remember sitting there when my mother went back to meet with Mr. Brinks after the test results came in. He was so nervous. I remember him perspiring and maybe at a loss for words when he finally told my mother “I’ve never taught a negro student before. I don’t know how to teach negro students”. Well, that’s when the light bulb went off over my mother’s head and she just said “well we are getting up out of this school” and she took me out. I ended up going back to Benton.

My mother was the first Black woman to serve as an administrator at the Central Medical Center on Newstead and Pope in Saint Louis City. She didn’t have her college degree and she worked in the HR department there, just a basic job in that department. The White people who worked there liked her. They told her that if she went back to school and got her degree, they would make her the Director of Human Resources. They didn’t think she could do it. She went to Lindenwood and she got her Bachelor’s Degree. She did it. It wasn’t easy because she was working full time when she earned that degree. When she was on her death bed, she told me to get a pad and a pencil. She wanted me to write her obituary. She didn’t mention anything about getting that job. She said “that’s not important”. I told her how important that was. I told her it was history. What she did really shaped me.

I had a job at Monsanto, I was a computer operator for the main frame. I made good money, but I didn’t like the job. I had always wanted to be a teacher. So, I went back to school while I was working full time, just like my mother had done. I earned a degree in social work and then in social studies. When I got to the college level at UMSL, I had a teacher who taught school law – not Fazzaro. The exams were so difficult that we had to get together and form study groups to pass those exams. I could not do well on those exams to save my life. The White students would say he was racist and the Black students would say “he’s not racist”.

When we started to pay more attention, we really began to notice that there was a difference. He would give the White students more attention, more help after class. There were just a few Black students in the class, maybe 3. We would all get together and form our own study groups. Well, what came out of that is that we learned that the White students actually had a copy of the exam before it was given. They had all the answers and all the responses ahead of time. I don't know how they got it. Maybe the professor gave it to one of them for all I know. We never had the answers. At some point, one of the Black students found out and convinced the White students to give us the exam. I tend to believe that's why those White students would say that the instructor was racist. I think they felt the instructor knew that they had the answers. Again, it would not surprise me if he gave them the test ahead of time.

When I finished my certification, another teacher in University City told me to apply. The principal who hired me was Lois Hochtmeier at Brittany Woods Middle School. It was summertime when she met me. She had me teach one of the summer school classes to show her that I could do the job. It was an economics class. So I came up with a lesson on supply and demand related to McDonalds. I knew that the kids liked McDonalds. Everyone loves McDonald's hamburgers including me. I knew this would capture the students' attention. I also knew I needed to capture the attention of students who probably didn't do so well during the regular school year. It was a good lesson. The students received me very well.

So I had my first classroom at Brittany Wood's middle school that fall. I taught social studies. Social studies is where all of the students came together, Black and White. At that point, there were no alternate social studies classes like there were for math or some of electives. What I noticed was that two or three of my classes were all White with maybe just a sprinkling of Black students. All of my other classes were almost entirely Black with just a sprinkling of

White students. That's when I knew, something is going on here. Those White parents, when they found out that their kids were in one of the all Black classes, they went crazy. The White parents would want to come up and observe my teaching strategies. They were alright with me as a teacher, but, then they had problems with the idea that their child didn't have anybody in the class that looked like him or her.

The school was on its way to being predominantly Black. I think that is where the Board of Education was having problems with wanting to keep White families in the neighborhoods and more importantly, in the schools. They were trying to figure out how to keep the influx of Black students from scaring off the White families. Now, I had a knack with all of the kids, Black and White. I was real. I conducted real conversations with the kids. I knew I was being watched very closely by White parents and students. I would do this, I would get up in front of the White students and say "Tommy, there is no doubt that you are White and that I am Black. So, there are some differences in our cultures. I'm going to help you learn more about my culture and I want you to help me learn more about your culture". They loved that. I would tell them "Let me give you an example of what I'm talking about when I say culture. On Thanksgiving, the White culture has pumpkin pie for desert. The Black culture has sweet potato pie for desert on Thanksgiving. So you have to help me understand the difference". And so the hands would go up and the kids would be amazed that I had never had pumpkin pie. So the moms would make pumpkin pies and the students would bring them in and we would eat pumpkin pie. I would bring in sweet potato pie and we would all have a slice. This kind of thing really helped to bridge that gap that allowed me to move past the issue of race. The parents and the students, they were able to see me as a good teacher. I would also say to the students, the White students, I would say "now, I know you've traveled extensively. I've only been to

Mississippi. You're going to have to teach me about Europe and I will teach you about Mississippi". I would have White parents who would come up to me and say "You know, I was going to pull my son out of your class, but I'm going to leave him in. He really likes you".

As we begin to move through the year and I start to get more familiar with the practices of University City, I am finding out that they had 'Challenge Courses'. Only the best and the brightest could get into those classes and Black people were not seen as the best and the brightest. So they had Elements of Math, which they called EM. They had the G.A.T.E. program for Language Arts. G.A.T.E. stood for Gifted and Talented. I can't remember what the 'E' stood for, maybe 'Education'. So then they started a B.R.I.D.G.E. program that was designed to ease the Black kids into higher level classes.

When I became an administrator at the middle school, I was the assistant principal. The middle school was a critical spot in the district because a lot of White parents were withdrawing their kids out of school when they finished at the elementary level. All of the students came together at the middle school so there were certainly issues that some of these White parents did not want to deal with. They did not have to deal a lot of these issues at their neighborhood elementary schools because those schools, the ones that were south of Olive, had large concentrations of White students. When I went to the McNair Middle School, things were out of control. The principal who had been there did not know how to work with Black students. You know Brittany Woods Middle School is across the street from McNair. I remember looking out the window of my classroom one day and seeing students on top of the roof. They needed a change.

I'm just going to tell you like it is, OK? Black principals will often say what is on their mind. That is how the new principal they assigned to McNair was. She had come over from one

of the elementary school in the district and she was tough. She would tell parents exactly what she was thinking. You know she would hear all kinds of racist this and that. She would get into it with the parents. She didn't really know how to pick her battles. So I was there to kind of smooth things over with White parents. Eventually, the principal at McNair had to move on because she did not know how to maneuver in that setting. She was creating too much backlash and parents were withdrawing their kids and complaining to the Board. Eventually, the superintendent wanted to ease me into the principal position. I served as the Assistant Principal under a couple of other Principals before they appointed me to the position. The assistant superintendent knew they would have to ease me in because I had served under a very unpopular principal at McNair. The superintendent had already spoken to me about making this transition to the principal position. He told me I could learn a lot of what not to do from that first principal that I served under at McNair. It was excellent advice and he really hammered it home. The assistant superintendent at the time conducted a transition meeting with parents to get everything out in the open and to make sure they knew that I would do things differently than that first principal. The assistant superintendent also made sure that parents knew I had the full support of central office. She really appealed to them to support me as well.

So I was the principal at McNair and we had White parents that would really push things. My assistant principal at that time did all of the scheduling. So, right off the bat we had a parent who demanded that her daughter be switched from one class to another so she could be with all of her "neighborhood friends". This parent told my assistant "You're going to make that switch!". My assistant said "No I'm not; there is no room in that class". So this parent comes to my office and all I can think about is how quickly things can unravel when you get into these

battles. So I called my assistant principal to my office and said “look, you’re going to have to put this girl in the class with her White friends”. We had to pick our battles.

From McNair, students moved on to Brittany Woods. They had a principal, a Black woman, who would not back down. When they came up there wanting their kids moved to another class, she would tell them “I’m not moving anyone. If you don’t like it, you can go enroll somewhere else”. Oh, she was a tough sister. I can soft peddle with the White parents than many can. I was able to roll with some of the nonsense that we had to deal with. My assistant couldn’t do it. She would really let it get to her. She would come into my office and say “Do you know what that lady did? She came into my office and sat her ass on my desk and said ‘you are going to change that schedule!’ and I said no I am not going to change that schedule!” People like that, people like those parents, I had to win them over. Once I could win them over, I could gain the upper hand. Once I had gained their approval, there were less demands and more trust.

One of the things that we heard a lot of complaints about early on was the bell schedule. A group of White parents complained that lunch was too early in the day for their children. We had three lunch shifts because we had a lot of students. There was just not a lot of flexibility to move any of the lunch periods. We had a policy at that time that students could not eat in the classroom. This group of White parents just insisted that their children would need a snack by later in the day. So I just said “look, if Adrienne needs a snack during challenge math, she can have a snack. She can pull out her fig bar or whatever she needs to munch”. So these were all White parents speaking on behalf of their White children. They were all pleased that I had made this exception to the policy. So when it was “snack time”, nobody pulled anything out of their back pack. Nobody was eating an apple or a fig bar. You know why? The kids didn’t want a

snack. The last thing they wanted was to pull out a snack in the middle of class and look like a fool in front of everyone else. It wasn't the kids. It was the parents wanting to run [things].

Then, they wanted me to change the mixture of the classes because they were all White classes or all Black classes with a few White students mixed in. All of the White students were in these challenge classes and the Black students were in regular or foundations classes. So, it was the curriculum that really drove the segregation piece. There was a system of tracking. And White parents would raise hell if their kids didn't get into a challenge level class. They would go straight to the top and push the issue until their kid got in. Now, Black parents just didn't do that. They didn't know who to talk to. Our assistant superintendent figured out how to fix it. She created an elective course that went with the challenge math class. The elective class provided academic support for the challenge class. She called these elective classes "added value" classes. She would do the same thing for challenge Language Arts and other core content classes. This helped to get more Black students into the challenge classes.

We had homeroom teams at McNair. Parents were given carte blanche to observe the different teaching teams at the end of the year before their kids came over. Parents could observe and then request a particular team. They would come in when their kids were still in elementary school. I just gave them a deadline to let us know what class they wanted. They weren't just observing to see what team they wanted for their kids. They were going through the motions because they already knew what team they wanted. A lot of those decisions were made outside of the school setting. Parents would get together, White parents, and make sure they were all on the same page so that they knew which team to request. So team Atlantis, that was the team that was always that was always heavily populated with White students. It wasn't just

random. The parents felt that team Atlantis had the best teachers. Now team Discovery; that was at the other end of the spectrum.

Now if you were in the challenge math class, and Latin, and G.A.T.E., you were tracked. You were in in a group with other White students and maybe a couple of Black students. If you were not in the challenge level classes, it was the other way around. You were in there with Mostly Black students, maybe all Black students, maybe one or two White students. You were on that track for the duration. I mean, that was it.

Parents would begin withdrawing their kids after elementary school in University City. A lot of the ones that stayed after elementary school, they would pull them after McNair before they got to Brittany Woods for junior high school. They didn't want their White girls mingling with Black boys. They didn't want their White boys mixing with the Black girls. That's when those hormones were just taking off and parents were not taking chances. But you know, a lot of those parents would bring their kids back for high school when those hormones had kind of settled down. Now at Brittany, the principal during that time didn't want to appease the White parents. Some people just can't do it. I could do it. I could probably go to west-county and do just fine.

Interview #12: Black male, community activist and former parent of students at University City Senior High School

I was chairman of CORE, chairman of the employment committee. We had a boycott of Anheuser Busch. At that time, AB had about 5,000 workers and less than 50 of them were Black. They put up a hell of a fight. Ron Dillon, he was a congressman out of California. He was on the agricultural committee of the United States Congress. This would have been in the early 1970's. Ron helped a great deal because he got the government involved.

Norman Seay, Bill Bailey, Percy Green; they were all active with me in CORE. I had been in the service from 1954 until 1958. I was a supply clerk in the air force. When I came out, they had a job opening at Scott Air Force Base. The job was the same as what I had been doing in the service. The job paid 7 or 8 thousand dollars a year. That was a lot of money for back then. Well, I applied and they told me I didn't have enough experience. Can you believe that? They weren't going to have a Black man making that kind of money. I applied for a job at First National Bank. I had an accounting background because I took classes through the service. So, I applied for a job at National Bank. I was 31 or 32 at that time and they told me I was too old. At that time, CORE was having a problem with Jefferson Bank, so I got involved with that. At one time, Jefferson Bank was on Jefferson and they had all or almost all Black clerks. Then, they moved to Washington just two blocks from where they were. They got rid of all of their Black tellers. We asked them to hire four Black tellers and they said they could not find any. At that time, Bill Clay was an alderman, and he had done a study and wrote a report about the discriminatory practices of the banking industry in downtown Saint Louis. Laclede, Union Electric, and Southwestern Bell were also targeted by CORE.

They were having problems at the high school. At that time, I had a son and a nephew that were students there. Somehow, the school found out about my involvement in civil rights so they asked me if I would help out and I said I would. Maybe my son might have mentioned something to them about my involvement with civil rights. Students would just call me or stop by my house to discuss any issues that they wanted me to follow through with. I recall meeting with the principal at the high school and the chief of police. Students wanted the school and the district to recognize a day for Martin Luther King and they wanted more Black teachers. The students said they thought the district should hire more Black principals or assistant principals at

the high school and at the other schools. The administration was just moving really slow and the Black students were getting frustrated. There were also problems with discipline. Black students felt like they were really being singled out.

When my son went to University City Senior High School, it was about 90% White. If you bumped into a White girl, you would get suspended. If you were Black, you had to walk on the other side of the hallway if you saw a White girl coming down the way. A Black boy couldn't talk to a White girl without expecting some kind of trouble. My son got into an argument with a White boy and the parent of the White boy called the police and the police called me and said they got a complaint from this other parent that my son was harassing their kid. The police told me that this other parent wanted my son arrested. Nothing came of it because the police knew who I was. Now my daughter wanted to be a cheerleader. In order to be a cheerleader, you had to be picked by one of the cheerleaders. Well, all of the cheerleaders were White and everyone they picked to be a cheerleader were White. So, the cheerleading team was all White. Eventually, my daughter made a friend on the cheerleading team and she got picked. She was the first Black cheerleader at that school.

The school was shut down for three or four days. I was meeting with students at that time. I was telling them that they needed to go back to school. I told them that I would meet with the principal regarding the student demands. I really don't remember ever meeting with the Board of education. I met with the principal, a White guy. He was very nice.

We moved into University City in 1963. We were one of the first Black families in our neighborhood. We would have neighborhood meetings and White folks would say "we love it here and we plan on staying" and then there would be a for 'sale sign' in front of their house. They would say "We need more space" or "We need another bathroom" and all of a

sudden they had to move because they had outgrown their house. We knew why they were moving. It took two or three years for the neighborhood to become almost all Black. I don't remember why I moved to University City, maybe because my brother was there. We moved north of Delmar. I don't know if Black folks could have moved south of Delmar.

Interview #13: White female, former resident in University City and graduate of University City Senior High School class of 1966

I was at University City Senior High School in the middle 60's. I graduated in 1966. I don't remember any Black teachers during my time at the high school. Our class had about 650 students, I don't remember any of them being Black. Maybe there were a few. If there were, I don't remember them. I would have to look at my yearbook. We lived on 82nd street just north of Olive and closer to the western border. Our neighborhood changed dramatically after I graduated from the high school. Between 1966 and 1970 is when things really started to look different. We lived in a very modest section of University City. Our home was just a little bungalow, like the other houses in the neighborhood. There was a carport and we thought we were rich when we moved there. We moved to University City in 1952. The neighborhood was almost 100% Jewish. It was segregation, but, it was a kind of self-segregation. There were parts of St. Louis that Jewish people could not move. I remember my parents talking about that when I was very young. There were a lot of Jewish people in University City. It was affordable. When I was growing up, I really didn't know any non-Jewish people. It was just that everyone around us was Jewish. The schools were almost all Jewish at that time.

University City had one of the finest orchestras when I was a student there. I played violin through college and had really gotten such good training in high school. My daughter also played violin in high school at Parkway Central. She went to a strings camp in Cape and made

friends with a Black girl from University City who was attending the camp. This girl said that University City didn't even have an orchestra anymore. This would have been in the mid 1990's. It was so sad to hear this because the orchestra program was phenomenal when I was there in the 1960's. This girl desperately wanted to play violin and one of her teachers found a violin at the school and worked with her.

I don't think we realized how academic and challenging our school was back then. It was one of the top in the state. Almost all of my classmates went to college. If you were a student at University City Senior High School, you could put that on your college application and get into just about any school. They knew about us. many of the students were just brilliant and we had such good teachers.

When we moved in St. Louis City, I don't remember any Black families. We lived in apartments on Washington near the Delmar Train Station. I don't think my parents moved out of the city because of any kind of integration. They just wanted to live in a house and probably couldn't afford a decent house in the city.

Fogerty Park was right by our house. I had grown up playing there with my friends and my siblings. In the late 1960's, we started seeing gangs hanging out in the park. It just wasn't safe anymore. My parents were always worried that something was going to happen. If I was out late, I remember my mother waiting up for me and looking out the window to make sure that I made it into the house. It just got to the point where the neighborhood wasn't safe anymore. There were drugs, my parents were certain there was a house of prostitution across the street. The people moving into the neighborhood were not the same caliber as the people moving out of the neighborhood. That's not a race thing. I think it's more of an economic thing. Our neighborhood was very modest.

My parents moved out of University City in 1970. I was a senior in college at the time. My brother was in Junior High School, he attended Brittany. The neighborhood was changing during that time. They were having a school dance at Brittany and my brother was one of organizers for the dance. Well, there were some Black students who tried to crash the dance. These were not students at Brittany. My brother and some of his friends had to lock themselves in a closet. They had to call the police because these Black students were really causing trouble. That was pretty bad. There was another incident that occurred around that same time. One of our neighbors, a rabbi, was shot and killed near our home. He was walking Scholl and somebody just shot and killed him. They said it was a robbery.

I don't remember pressure from Real Estate agents. That may have been going on. It's not something that I recall. It just got to the point where it was not safe anymore. I was in college when my parents moved in 1970. They moved to Green Trails in the Parkway School District. They had enough. All of their neighbors in Green Trails had moved from University City. When my parents moved into that neighborhood, they were able to purchase a house that another Jewish couple from University City had backed out of purchasing. The reason they backed out of the purchase is because they found out that a Black couple had moved in across the street. When they found out about this Black couple, they said "Oh, no! We're not doing this again". And the Black couple, they were educated people. She was a high school math teacher and he was a college level professor. They were very nice people.

Interview #14: White female resident of University City and graduate University City Senior High School Class of 1968.

My father was born and raised here in Saint Louis and my mother moved here from Chicago when she was eight or nine. Her father came here to look for work. My father's family

had a furniture business in South Saint Louis. My father attended Roosevelt High School, which made him one of two or three Jewish students there at the time. My mom went to Soldan, which was the Jewish high school. My parents married in 1949. They moved to University City in 1952. Why they moved to University City in 1952 as opposed to 1954 or 1955, I can't say for sure. I can tell you that they moved to University City because it was predominantly Jewish and the schools were good. My mother's parents, who were both Russian immigrants, had also moved from the Central West End to University City by then.

I went to Delmar-Harvard Elementary School all through elementary school from Kindergarten to sixth grade. I can remember through the years that there were maybe three or four Black students. I was there between 1955 and 1961, so that gives you an idea of the time frame. You know, we were kids and we all played together on the playground. It was not a big deal because there were not that many of them. You probably have some statistics that suggest a tipping point for people to start becoming concerned. I don't think we ever came anywhere near a tipping point during the time I was in elementary school.

I went from Delmar Harvard to Hanley Junior High School. I really don't remember any Black students at Hanley. I do remember Black students at the senior high school. Not a lot, but they were there. People tended to gravitate towards similar minded people. On the outer circle of my inner circle, there may have been a Black student. I had friends from different socio-economic backgrounds. It really didn't matter. It's not something that we thought about back then.

I never in my life, until I took my masters level comps, took a harder exam than what I had become accustomed to in University City. My husband graduated from University City in 1967 and he'll tell you he never took a tougher exam until he got to the University of Chicago

Law School. Teachers in University City damn well knew the difference between a 94% and a 95% percent. Back then, it was 95-100% was an 'A'. I don't want to sound racially prejudice, but back then it was a Jewish thing. The high school was 85% Jewish and 95% of being Jewish is all about education. It's all about the education! In my house, you would go home and your test paper would say '97%', my mother would say "why didn't you get 100%?" My uncle would say "97%? Who got the other 3%?" That was the norm.

Teachers there probably thought they were in heaven. You had no discipline problems. You had kids that wanted to push and push and push to do their very best. There were no Jewish teachers, maybe one. It really didn't matter. When it was a Jewish school, there was no pressure to hire Jewish teachers. There were teachers that we liked and teachers that we didn't like. There was certainly tracking at the high school. Not everyone was operating at the same level. I'm not sure how many tracks there were, there was definitely an A track. There was also some intellectual snobbery. We knew we were in the high track. You know that it works better for teachers if they don't have to figure out how to teach the low kids while keeping the high kids challenged. It's not PC, but it works.

We live in University City and we sent our daughter to private school. And now, there are so many private schools to choose from in and around University City. My husband said to me "I'll give you a choice, either we move to Clayton or she is going to a private school" When we were students in University City, we were not aware of any private schools. There was really no need for them. I mean, you had Mary Institute, Burroughs and Country Day. That was about it as far as what we were aware of. If you lived in University City, you really didn't have to think about private schools in the 1960's or before that.

I know that the blockbusting started around the time that I was in high school. I remember hearing about it. My group was very intellectual and politically aware, just not at the local level. We lived in the first ward and there was not any of that going on in our neighborhoods. It was really confined to the other side of Olive back then. By the time I got married in 1978, most of University City was the pits. Had we not been so close in proximity to Washington University, University City would be no different than Wellston, Normandy, Riverview Gardens by now. Those places were really very nice and now look. The faculty of Washington University living in University City, it's the only reason we have survived. The professors from Washington University living here and Joe Edwards going to work in the loop. That's all that separates us from being another Wellston. I joined a ladies bridge club in West County sometime in the 1980's. We rotated houses for our activities and my house was never used. I asked my girlfriend who got me into the club why there were no activities scheduled at my house and she said "everyone is afraid to come to University City" Can you believe it?

When the transition happened, here is what I remember the clearest. There were between 6 and 12 African Americans in my grade level. In 1968, when I was a senior, there was an appreciable increase in the number of Black students in the grades below. As seventeen year olds, we could see what the problem was. It wasn't just University City because I think this is endemic in most school systems. It was clear as a bell to us that the administration and faculty were afraid of the Black students. They weren't afraid that a Black students was going to walk up and hit them or something like that. They were afraid that they would be called a "racist". We didn't have many Blacks in my class. So how did we know this? How did we know that the administration were afraid? Let me tell you. I can remember when the Cardinals were in the World Series and there may have been a student here or there who wanted to listen to the game

on a transistor radio. The games were played during the school day. If a teacher caught you with a transistor radio, it would have been ripped out of your hand and you never would have seen it again. No one would dare to wear a hat in the building. This was all before the transition. But now here we are in 1968 and here are the Blacks and they're wearing hats and walking down the hallway with radios in their hands and everyone thinks it's so cute. Nobody wants to say anything to object. And that, I think, sums up the whole problem.

As White students, this just infuriated us. There was this fear that if you went ahead and did things the way they had always been done, you would be called a racist. If you went on and tried to maintain your standards, which of course would mean flunking people or suspending people, you would be called a racist. So discipline and academics just went to hell in a hand basket. And that's the reason that my family left in 1970. There was just no more structure. I have two younger brothers. They were very bright and my parents really hadn't planned on moving. But then my brothers started slipping academically. Eventually, we found out that there were these acts of intimidation. Black students would take their lunch money. This was a big concern. The crowning event came when my brothers were rough housing and chasing each other around the house. One of my brothers yelled out "I'm funna beat yo ass, boy!" My mother said "that's it – we are moving – we are done!"

It's just fascinating to me that a bunch of high school seniors, 17 year olds, could look around and say "here's your fucking problem, man! Fix it!" and nobody would fix it. It's infuriating to just watch a world class school district going straight to hell in a hand basket right there in front of our eyes. You can't have the academic standards if you don't have the discipline. It was as simple as that. It's still a problem in lots of districts today. That's how things changed in University City, though. It's been tough to watch. The Black kids may have

had the IQ, but they didn't have the standards. Our hearts are all in the right place and we all wish it could be different, but, in the end you're going to do what is best for your kids. That's what my parents did when they say how things were impacting my brothers. They moved to Ladue.

I think the answer is a trade school system. I mean, not everyone needs to learn Shakespearean Sonnets and be an English professor at Harvard. We need plumbers and electricians. We have developed such a narrow view of what kids need when it comes to a good education. Not everyone needs the same thing. What a disservice we do for some of these students who we force into a traditional classroom setting when they have no interest or no desire to go in that direction. We fall over ourselves trying to be politically correct. This bleeding heart liberal attitude is not doing anything but making things worse. My friend was going on and on the other day about how they are finally getting air conditioning at the high school. She was so elated and was acting like it was the missing piece of the puzzle for fixing all of the problems in the district. Guess what? The high school didn't have air conditioning when it was considered one of the best in the country! It wasn't air conditioned when I went there. It's just the same thing. Everyone thinks that if we throw some money at the problem, everything will change. Everyone thinks that if there is air conditioning, the children will be able to learn. We had no air conditioning. So much of this boils down to the family situation. My husband is a great student of history and he traces the problem back to Lyndon Johnson's 'Great Society' when welfare came in but only if there was no husband. That encouraged the dissolution of the family unit and there you went.

Interview #15: Black male resident of University City and graduate University City Senior High School Class of 1970.

There was a movie that was being shown. It was upsetting to some people. Maybe things were already tense because of what was going on at the high school between some of the students or, maybe it had more to do with Black students just wanting to close the gap and feel like “yes, this is my high school, too!” I think it had more to do with things that White students benefited from, things that were more or less dictated by how the district was operated. The media always made it out to be about Black students vs. White students. I just think it was more about trying to change the system so that it worked for Black students the way it worked for White students. So, that created the tension, I think. But things were tense outside of the high school, too!

Most people who you talk to now that were at the high school when the fire happened will tell you how surprised they were. Everybody remembers how liberal the student body was. We were too liberal for there to be any tension between Black students and White students. That’s what people think. That’s how they remember University City and the high school. There were about 500 students in our graduating class in 1970. How many of those people did we really socialize with? I mean, my friends were all liberal. My White friends and my Black friends were all liberal. So, when I think back, I’m really just thinking in terms of my social circle. Most of us have maybe ten people that we socialize directly with. We socialize with people that are like us, for the most part. There were 500 people in our class and I’m telling you that not all of them were liberal.

So, when you show a movie about the Ku Klux Klan, there are going to be White people who think it’s OK to laugh or to make comments. There are going to be White people who feel a

sense of power when they see a movie like that. In a room full of people that are mostly White, maybe a hand full of Black students, there is going to be snickering. So then you have your true liberal White folks and liberals who think they understand the post of racism and they want to do something about it, but, they really don't know what the real problem is. They don't understand what the real problem is. The real problem isn't that some White kids made inappropriate comments or laughed during that movie. The real problem has been going on for a while and it's something that White people don't recognize. As Black people, we see it every day. We feel it. It impacts everything we do. That's how many of us felt as students. There was nothing that White people were just going to do for us. They couldn't fix the problem because they didn't see it or they didn't want to see it. As a Black man, you see how little the well intending liberals and Whites can do. Then, you see how much damage White racism does on a daily basis.

I'll tell you something else about U-City. When we first moved out here, my mother knew a Jewish family in University City. My mother worked for this Jewish woman when my family was still in the projects. This Jewish lady told my mother about University City and what a nice place it was. I think my mother felt a sense of comfort moving to University City because she knew there were a lot of Jewish people here. You know, people used to call University City "Jew City". Jewish people supported Black people. Mr. Fred had a store in our old neighborhood, an all-Black neighborhood. Jewish people couldn't set up shop in non-Jewish neighborhoods. They could set up shop in Black neighborhoods. We were treated like people when we went into Jewish shops. There has always been a connection there. But, this Jewish woman would hire my mother to do her cleaning. Her family hired lots of my relatives to do work for them. What I'm trying to say is that there is this connection between Black people and Jewish people. We have always been the outsiders and we have always recognized that.

All of my White friends at the high school were Jewish and I considered them to be liberal. But, when that fire was set, they didn't really think much about it as a statement or as a response to the way Black people felt like they were being treated. We don't know really who set the fire. I don't think that was ever determined. After the fire, they closed the school down for the rest of the week. My White friends looked at it the same way you would look at a snow day or days. They were liberal. They knew there was racial tension at the high school. They just never felt like that tension involved them. They would tell you all of the White students were liberal. I would have said the same thing if you had asked me before my reunion. Man, I saw so many people that I didn't even know. It made me think, I didn't know all of those people – I don't know if they were liberal or not. All I know is my circle of friends. They didn't really care much about all of those things going on at the high school. Now, if you asked them about Vietnam or Cambodia, then you would get their attention. There were bigger things going on outside of the high school at that time. Even the ROTC protest at Washington University was more on everyone's radar than anything going on at the high school. The fire and the closing of the school and all of the things that we were trying to gain as Black students were small potatoes to White liberal students. None of my White friends were upset.

The word around the school was that Black students had set the fire. Freedom of speech was huge back then. Every time you looked up there was a demonstration going on somewhere. As students, we just felt like we had a voice after Tinker. People were making statements with how they were dressing, what they were saying, and what they were doing. It wasn't just Black people. There were lots of causes and White people were making as much noise as anyone else. Some of them wanted to see more with race. Most of the issues were bigger than that. I mean, for White people, they were making noise about Cambodia and Vietnam and the ROTC building

on Olive. Man, all of the things that Black folks were going through, that might have just faded into the background. So, my White friends weren't scared or angry or really too concerned about anything going on at the high school. They were scared about having to fight over in Vietnam. There were people going to Canada. There were protests of some sort or another going on all of the time. We were all used to that kind of thing. You can look back from today's perspective and think "wow - that really happened?" They just saw it as another little thing that happened. There were lots of little things going on at that time. Little things and big things were popping up all of the time. We were all eligible for the draft. That was a big thing for White high school students and for lots of Black kids in high school.

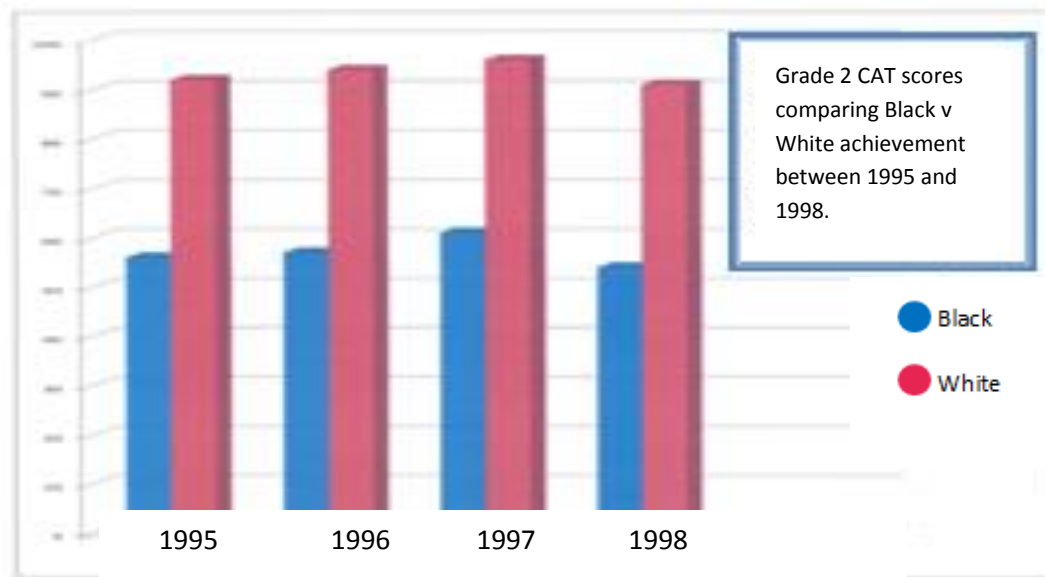
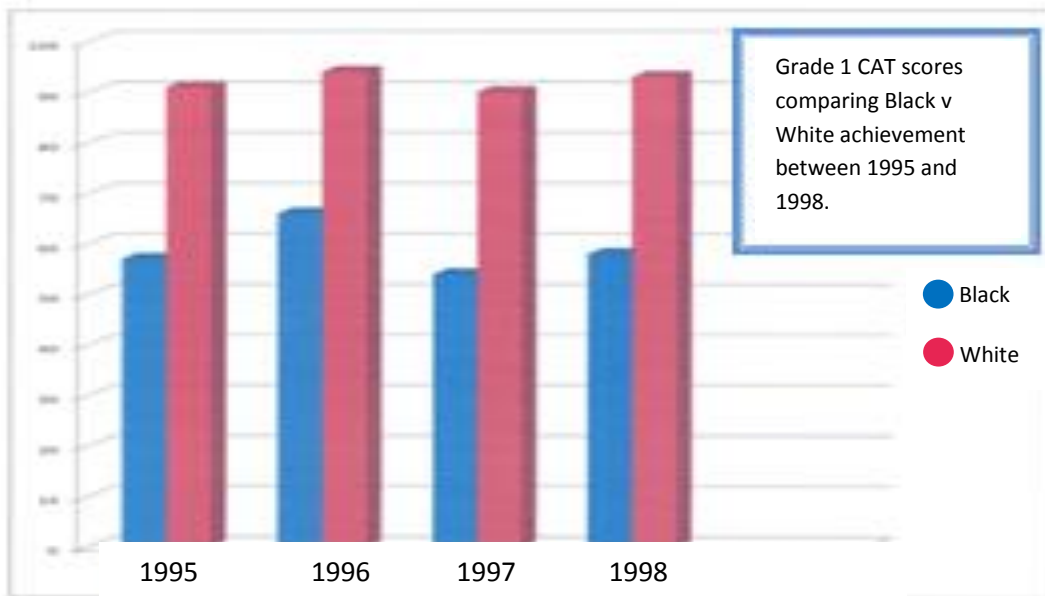
Now for us, for Black high school students, we wanted what the White students already had. We wanted to be represented and given the same consideration as White students had. I don't remember all of the hot button issues that were going on at that time. Black studies were important, though. Black studies were just a non-negotiable; it wasn't just a U-City thing. Black students weren't content with just being there. I mean, that used to be good enough. In the late 1960's and early 1970's, we wanted equity. If it was good enough for White students, we wanted it too. And why shouldn't we? They had holidays that the district didn't officially celebrate. If they were Jewish holidays, half the students wouldn't show up and the teachers wouldn't give any tests or quizzes. It was an example of the kind of courtesy that would be extended to White students. We wanted the same considerations to celebrate Dr. King and Malcolm X. We wanted our schools to recognize that there was more to Black history than the Slave story told from a White perspective. We were slaves and then we were free. No, we were "happy slaves" and then we were free.

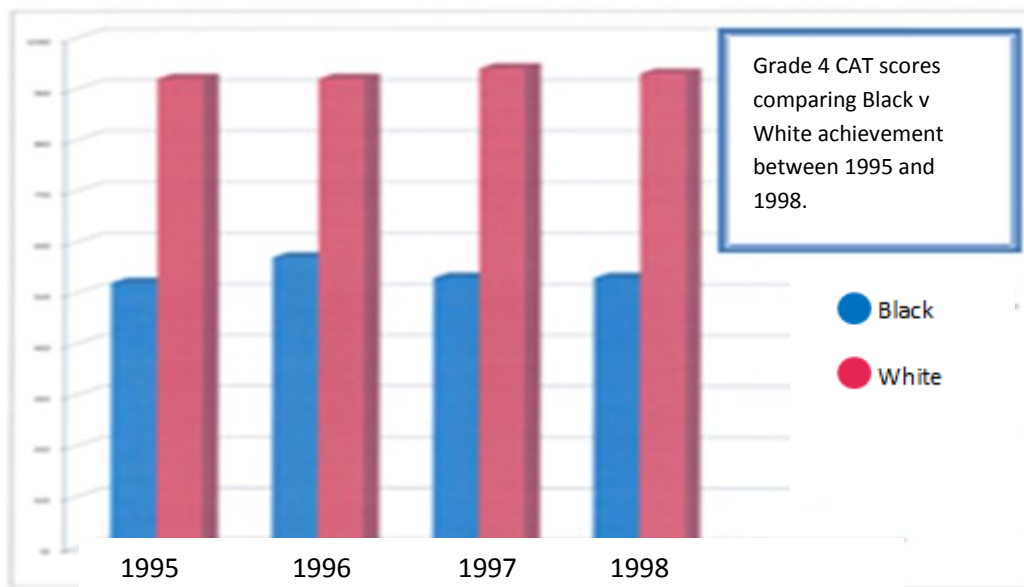
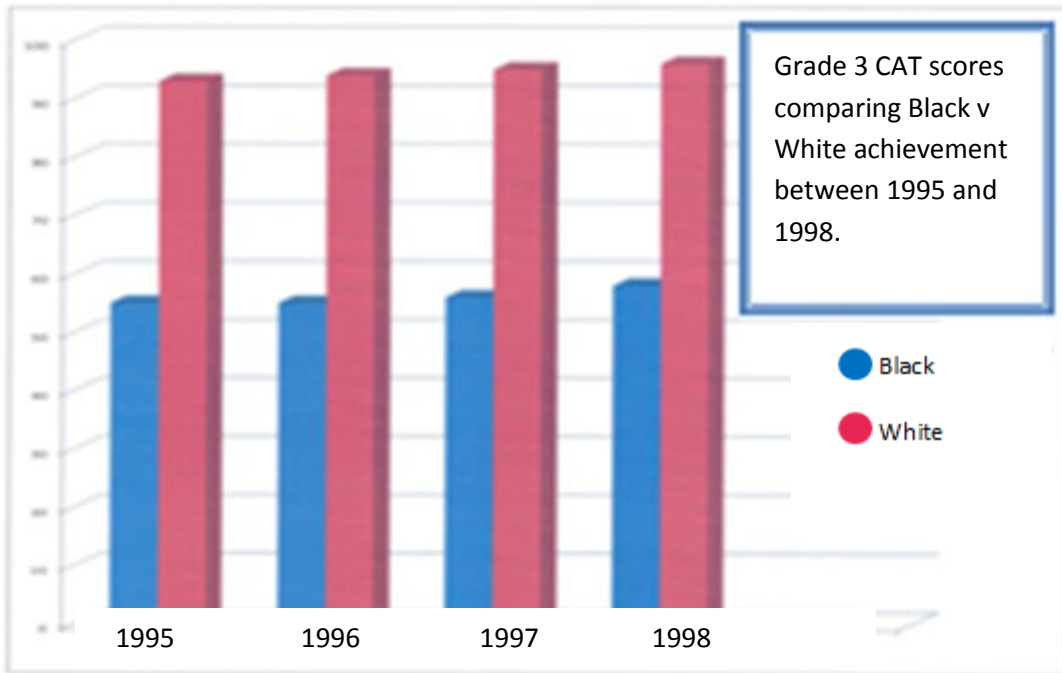
I have to say that the things we wanted, as students, we wanted things that we had to get from the Board and from the administration. They held the power to change things. We had to let them know what we wanted and how serious we were. I never had problems with White students. I never dealt with any animosity, never was called a “nigger” or anything like that. I never got hassled in the hallways. You hear these stories about how contentious things were at other high schools. There may have been some of that in University City. It just wasn’t my experience. I think people could look at how well students got along across color lines and just assume that we were OK. People could say “yep, that’s one ultra-liberal high school.” We were in many ways compared to other schools and school districts. I think that was kind of misleading to a lot of people because we knew from our perspective as students, Black students, that we could change what we saw as inequities. We saw this happening in the world all around us and we felt empowered. We felt like we could make a difference and change things. We felt like we could take things a step further than our parents had.

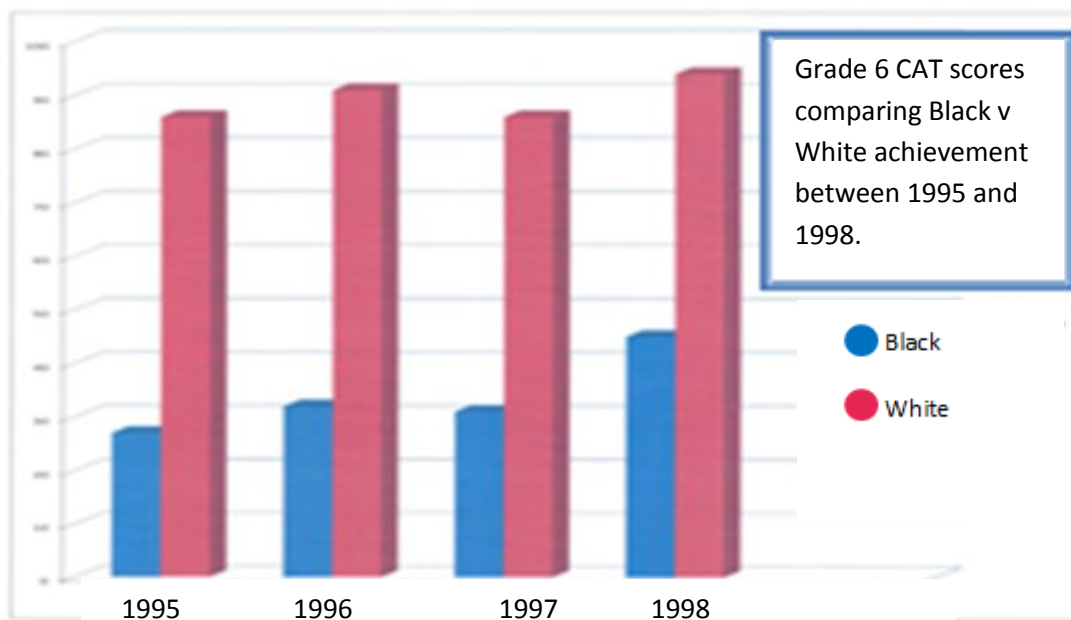
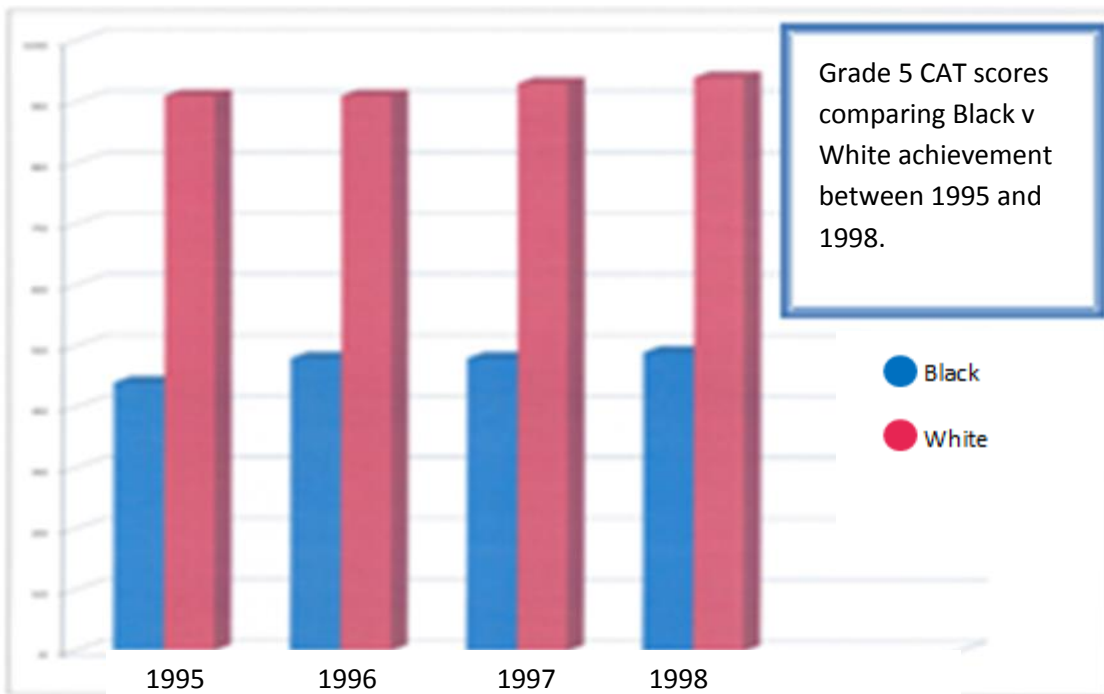
When we first moved to University City, I do remember one incident. There were White boys, twins that lived next door to us. I remember being in the back yard with my brother and one of them says “hey you, niggers!” I was laughing because his brother says “Oh, now you going to get it!” I think they lived in that house for maybe a few months after we moved into the neighborhood. They were gone within a few months. At school, I really got along with everyone and I loved my teachers. I felt like my teachers had high expectations for me. Mr. Shelton. Was Mr. Shelton still there when you were there? He would call me out if I didn’t get an ‘A’. He would tell me I could do better. Really, all of my teachers were like that. It didn’t matter if they were Black or White. I don’t remember any negative experiences with my teachers going back to when I came to the district and was going to Brittany.

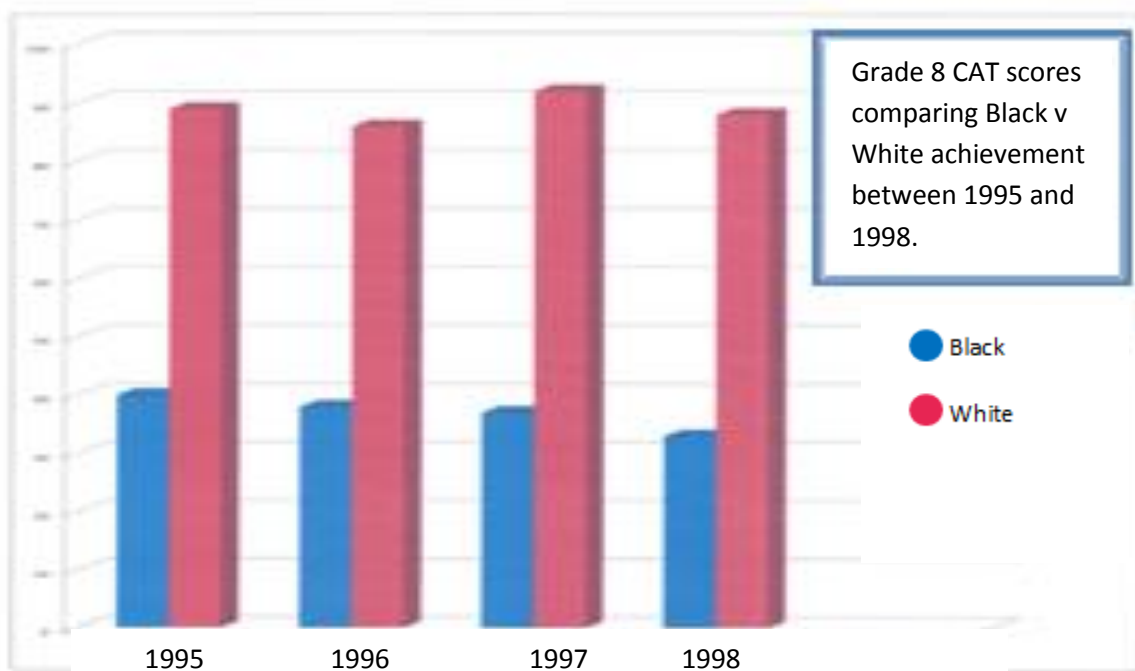
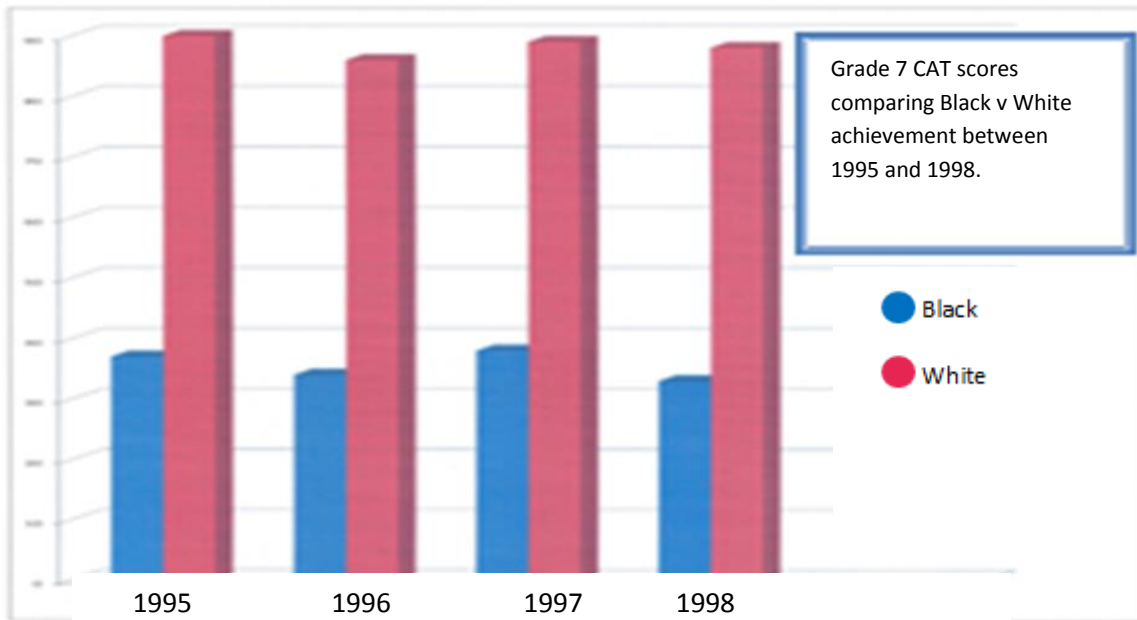
APPENDIX B

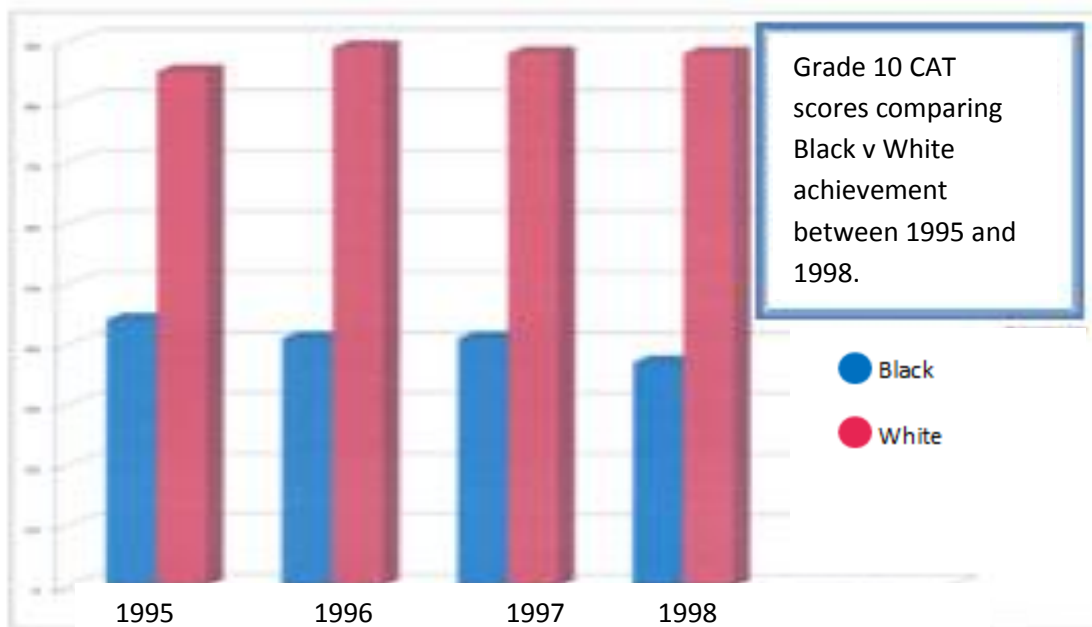
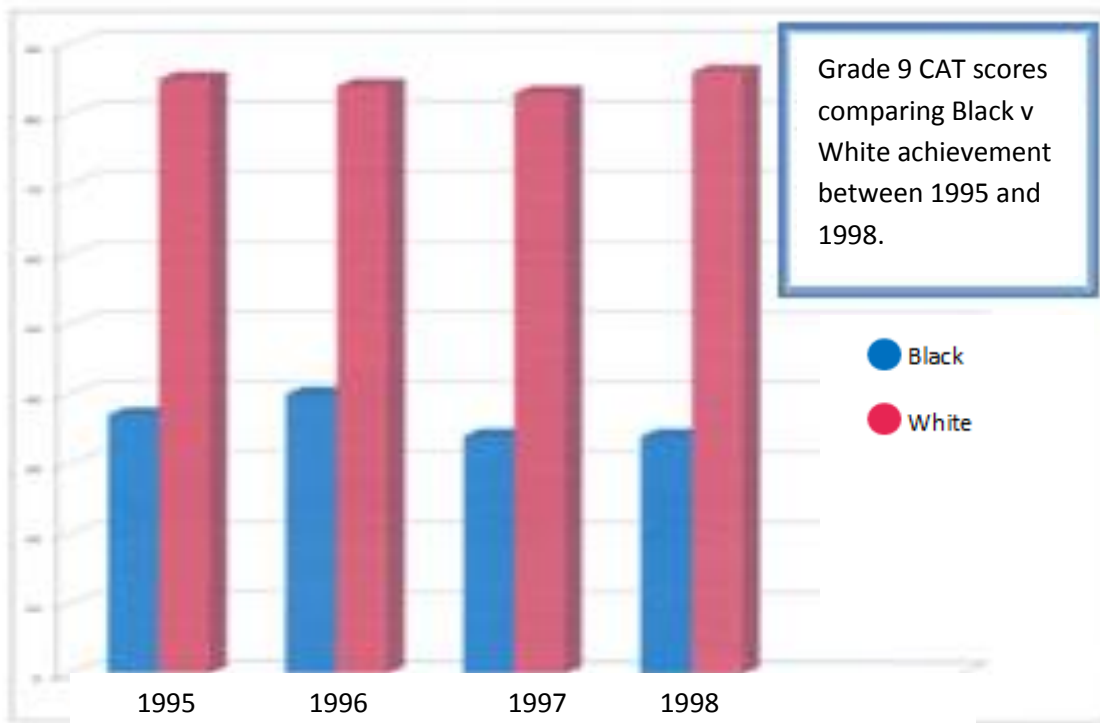
Data from District Annuals

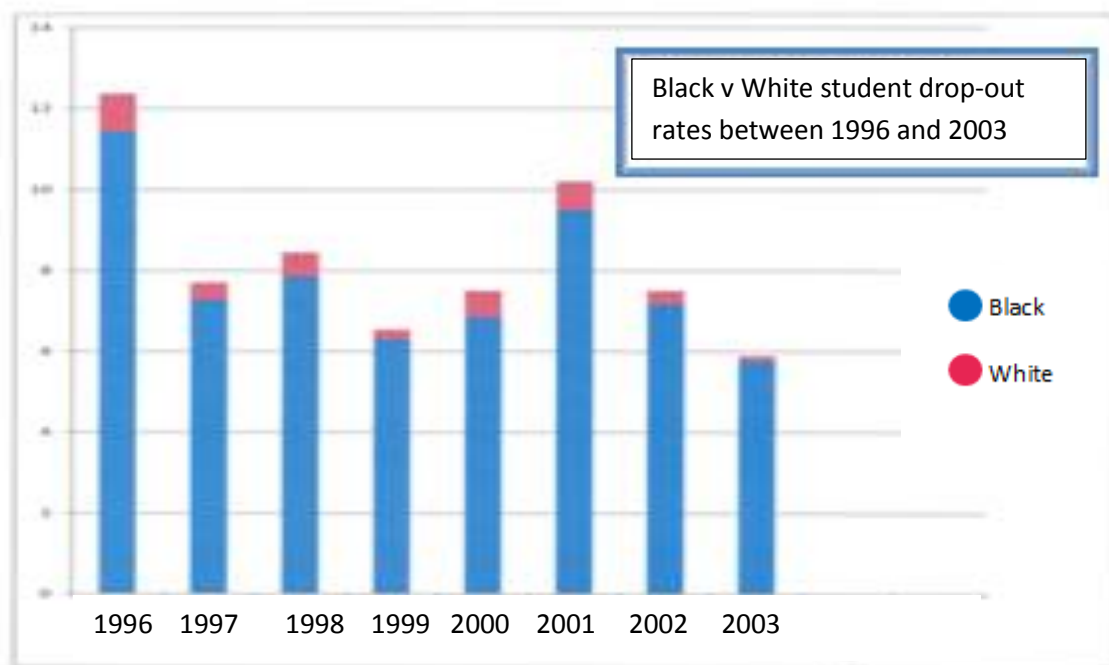
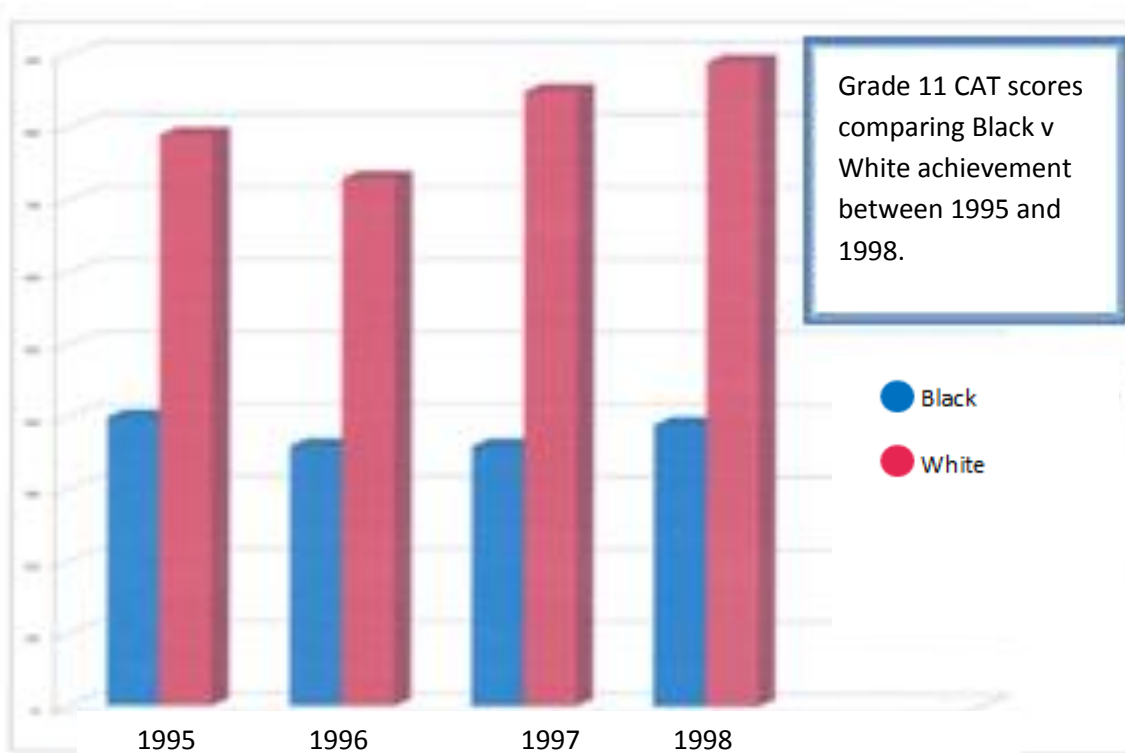




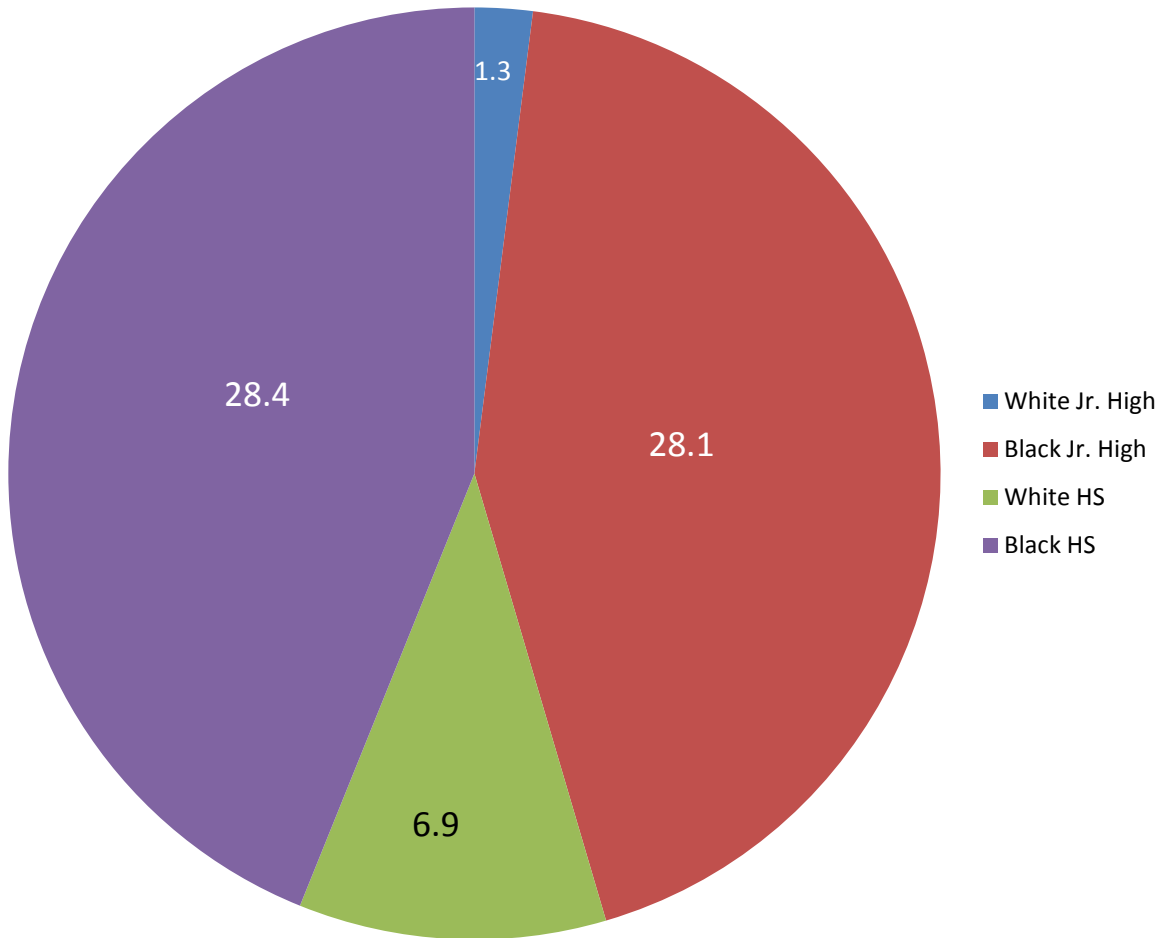




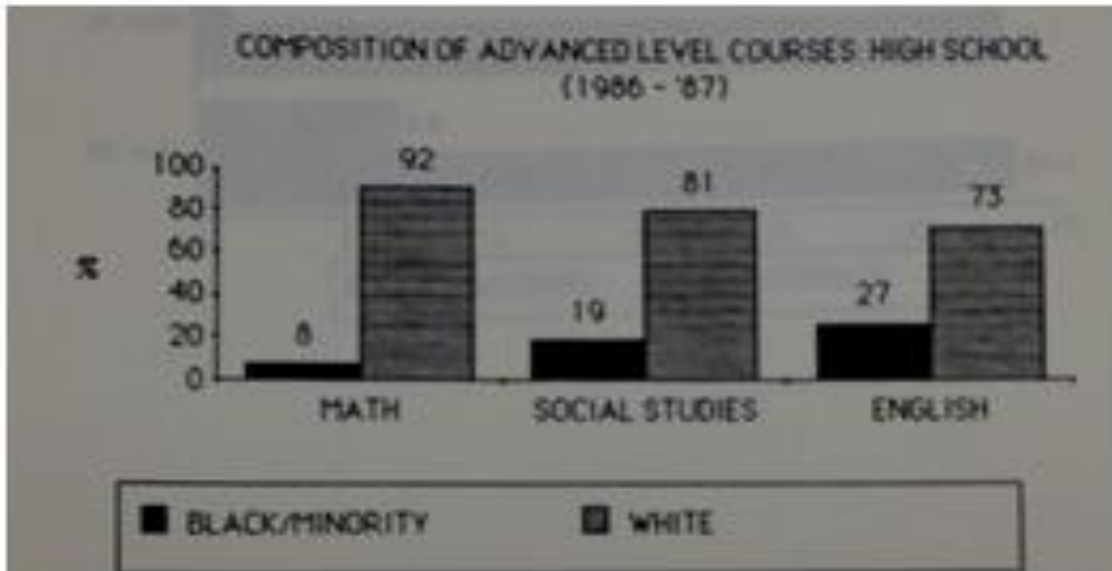




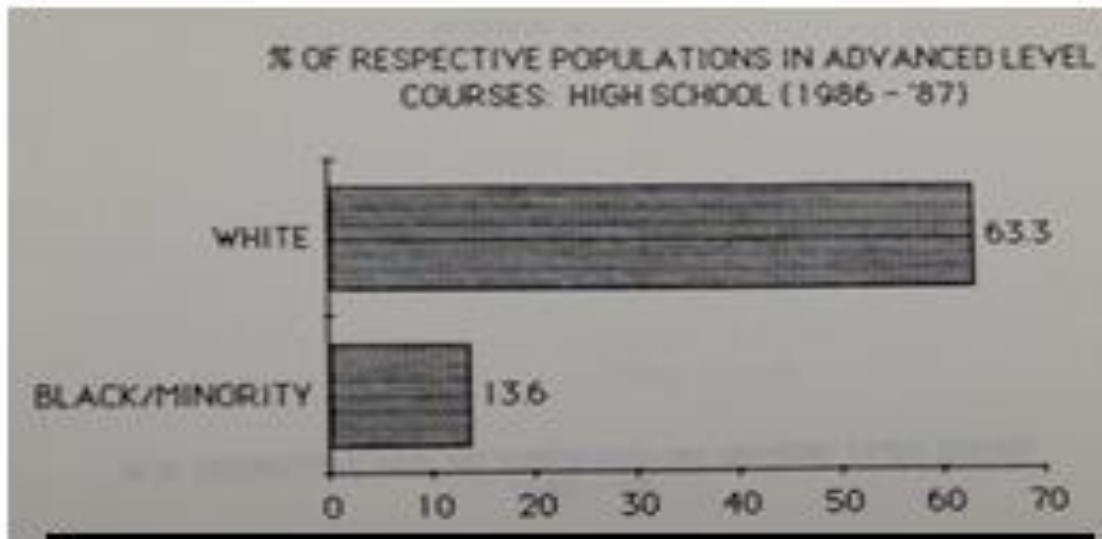
The pie chart below illustrates the percentage of students suspended according to race at the Junior High School and High School levels in the School District of University City during the 1985-1986 school year. This data was collected by The Task Force for Black Achievement



Appendix B (continued)



This graphic from the 1986-1987 school year reflects data gathered by the Task Force on Black Achievement. Along with the illustration below, it is the only hard data uncovered during this research.



Above is a breakdown of students enrolled in advanced level courses at University City Senior High School during the 1986-1987 school year.

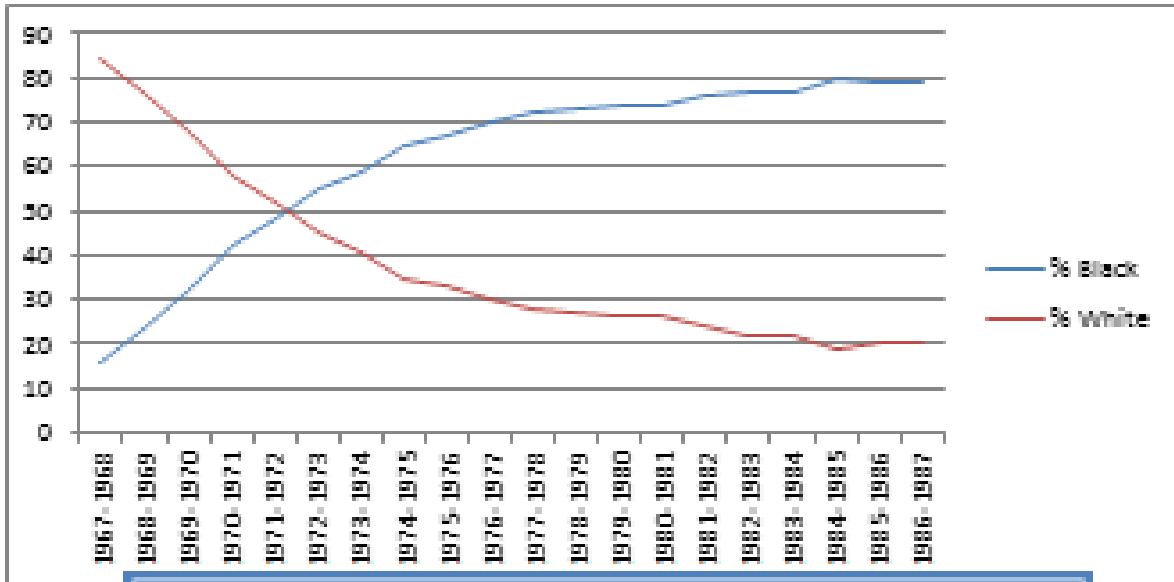
Appendix B1

The Black population in University City has historically resided in the third ward located north of Olive Boulevard. The Second ward rests between Olive and Delmar. The third ward is located primarily south of Delmar.

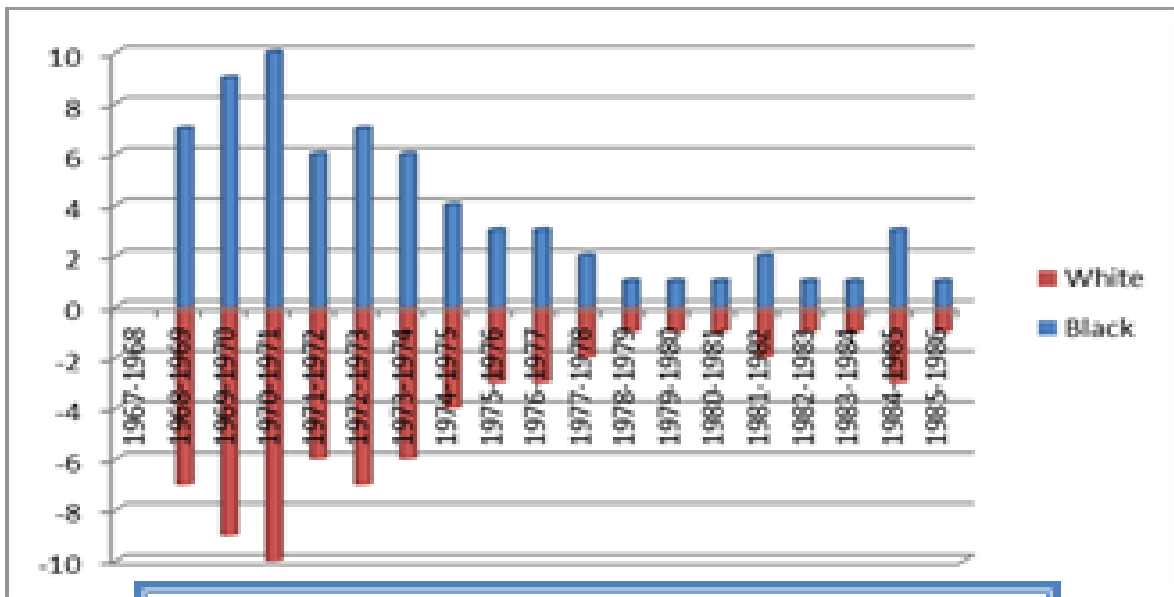


Racial boundaries are largely connected to major streets in University City. The Third Ward, which is predominantly Black, sits north of Olive Boulevard. The First Ward, which is predominantly White, sits south of Delmar. The Second Ward is located between Delmar and Olive and is home to a mix of Black and White citizens in University City.

Appendix B2

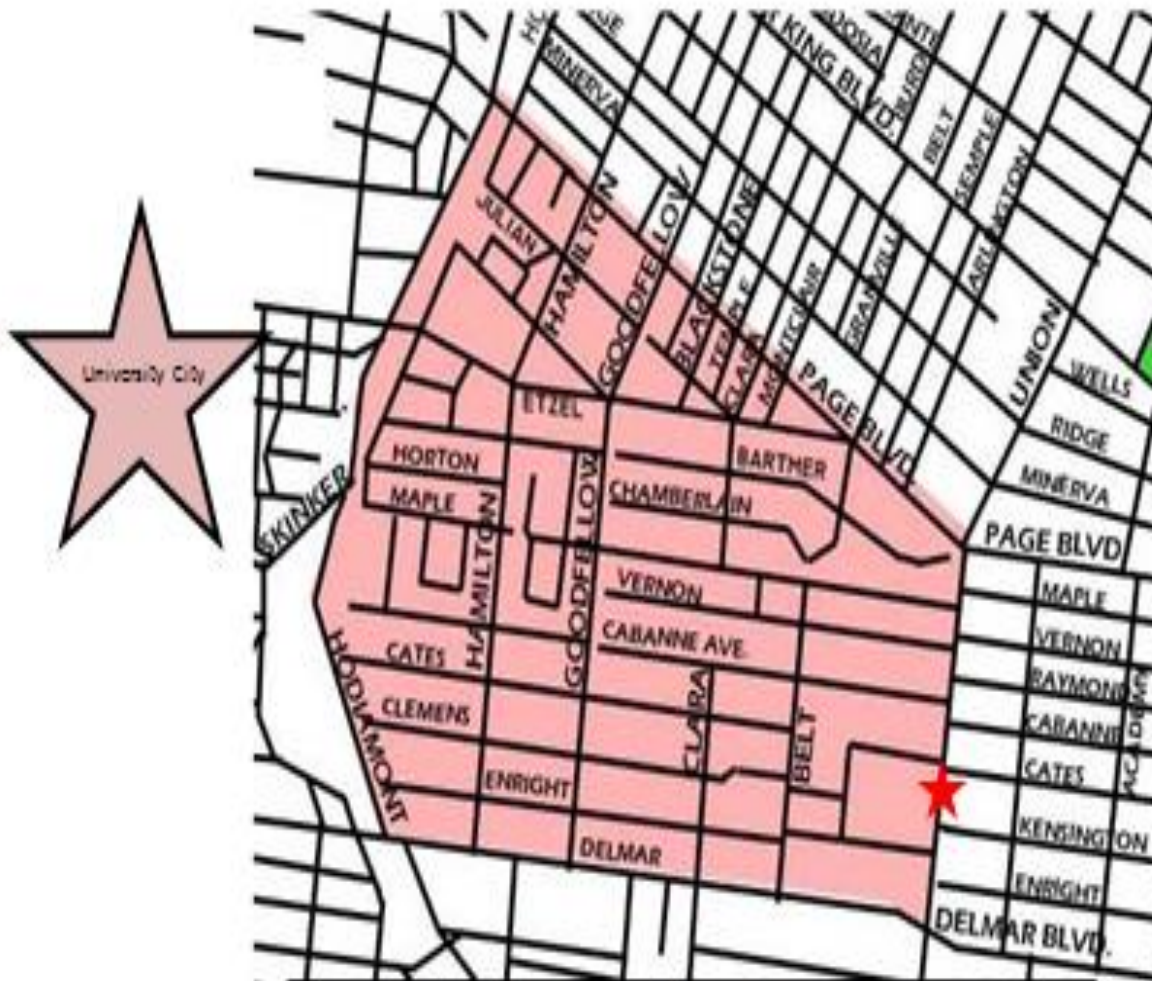


This graph (above) illustrates the percentage of Black and White students at University City Senior High School each year between 1968 and 1987.




This chart demonstrates the % change of Black and White enrollment at University City Senior High School between 1969 and 1986.

Appendix C



Prior to WWII, the Mount Saint Cabanne neighborhood was among the finest residential areas in St. Louis. During the post war era, many of the citizens who had resided in and around the Cabanne neighborhood headed west down the central corridor and into University City.

 = Location of Soldan High School

Appendix D

Seniors at University City Senior High School who started high school in the Soldan neighborhood compared to all other local neighborhoods

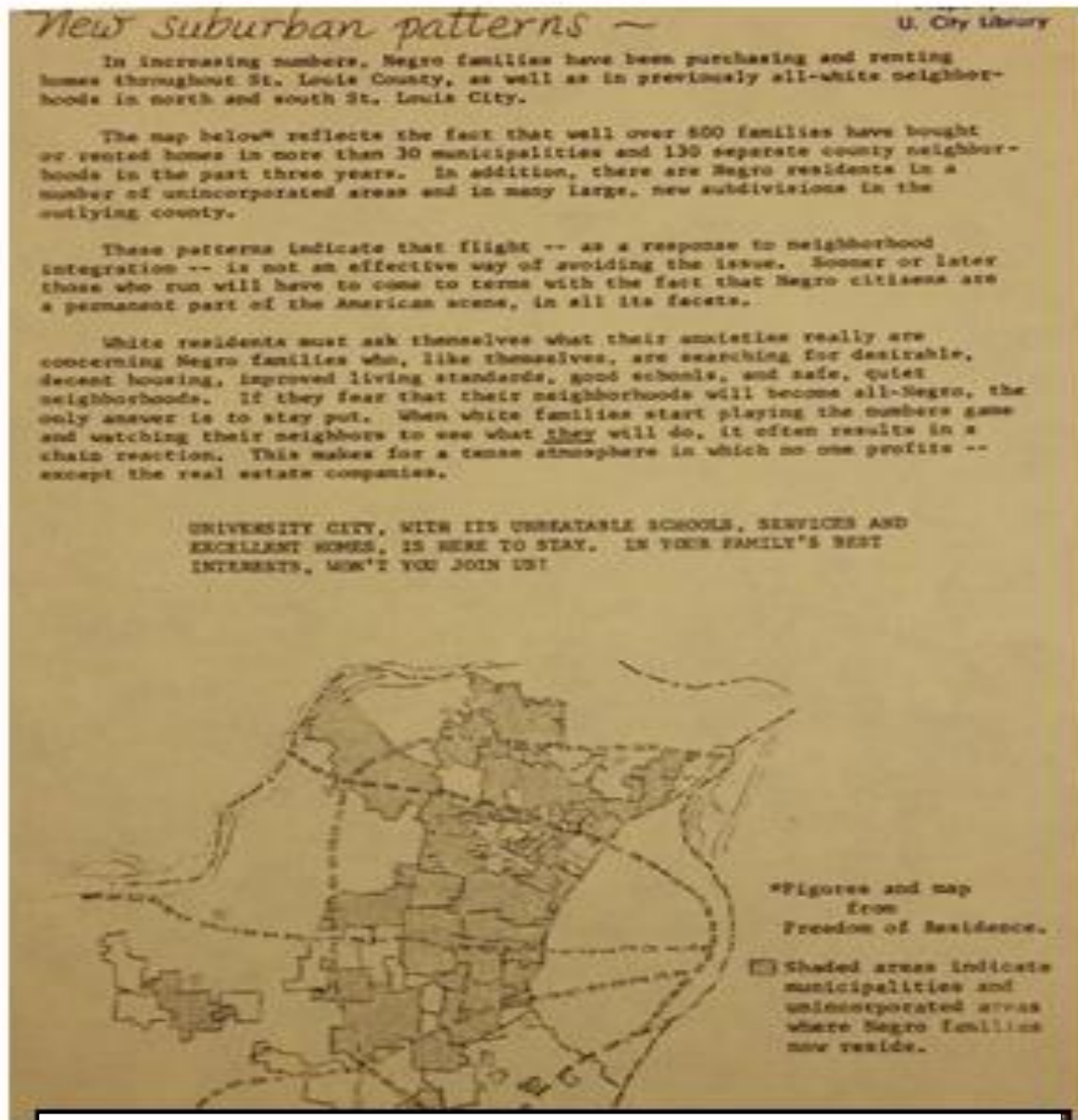
Year	Soldan - Blouett Soldan/Blouett	Roosevelt/McKinley/Boument Sumner/Roosevelt/Cleveland/ Southwest
1927	8	1
1928	10	2
1929	12	3
1930	10	6
1931	3	3
1932	7	7
1933	14	0
1934	8	6
1935	-	-
1936	10	5
1937	11	6
1938	10	3
1939	12	4
1940	8	1

1941	16	4
1942	9	2
1943	11	2
1944	10	4
1945	6	-
1946	14	3
1947	9	1
1948	14	1
1949	10	2
1950	10	3
1951	18	2
1952	9	1
1953	10	2
1954	17	1
1955	25	1
1956	30	3
1957	28	2
1958	22	-
1959	8	-
1960	13	1
1961	5	-
1962	-	3
1963	1	2
1964	-	1
1965	-	1
1966	-	1
1967	-	2

Information in the above chart was obtained from University City Senior High School Yearbooks from the years 1927 through 1967.⁴²

Appendix E

Flyers circulated through Neighborhood Associations addressing racial transition in University City during the late 1960's



This flyer is an example of information produced and distributed to citizens in University City by the local government. The intention of this flyer is to stem White flight by framing integration as a widespread reality that cannot be escaped. White citizens are encouraged to “stay put” in order keep their neighborhoods from becoming “all-negro”.

A RELEASE FROM THE OFFICE OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS:

Property of
City Library

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. John J. Harris
FROM: Mayor Kaufman and Members of the Council
RE: Enforcement of Ordinance 4351 (Section 23-4) of Municipal Code
Prohibiting Solicitation of Listings for Residential Property.
Copy to: James F. Jones
William G. Lorenz

Violation of this ordinance is to be reported to the Police Department immediately - (PH 1-4210).

There are two possible forms of violation:

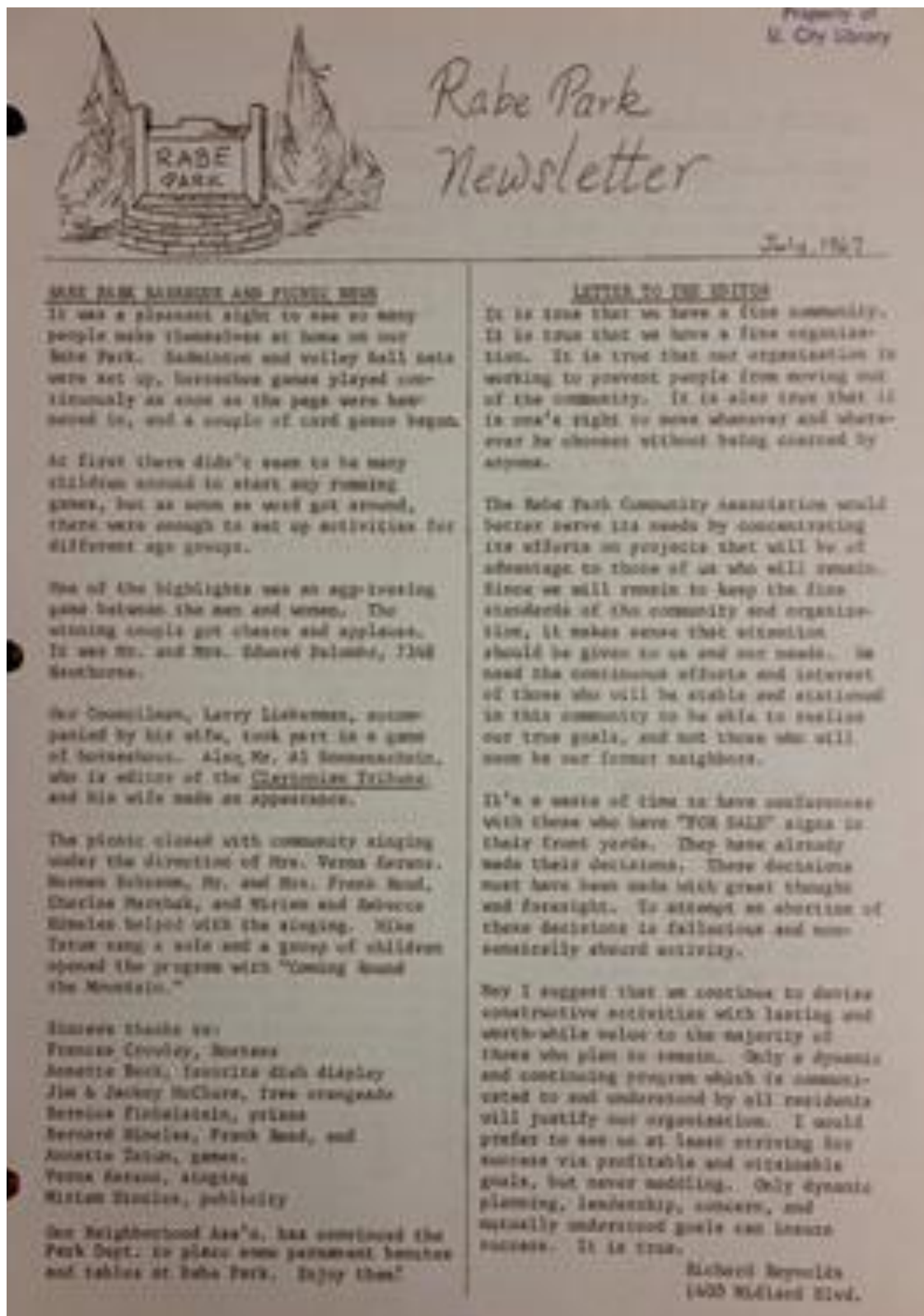
- (1) A personal call at the door.
- (2) A telephone call.

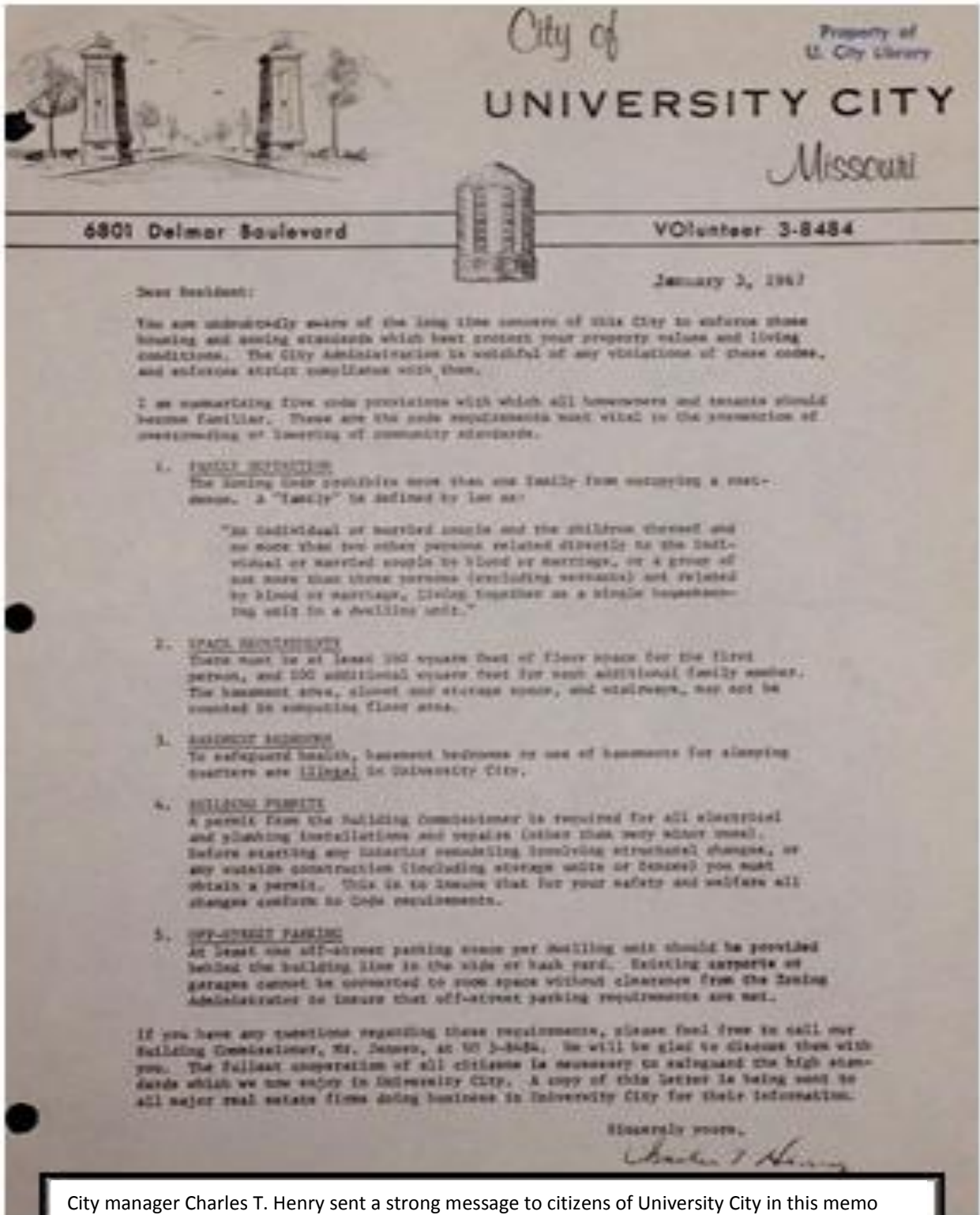
Solicitation of a home-owner to buy or list his house for sale or rent is a violation of this ordinance. No escape tactics need to be involved. Just the simple solicitation is illegal.

Here is the best way for University City residents to handle both solicitation possibilities:

- (1) A call at the door: Ask for the man's card. Be sure you get a good look at his face for later identification purposes. After the solicitor has left, call the police immediately. Give all details to the police as soon as they arrive. If the solicitor is still in the neighborhood, identify him to the police.
- (2) A telephone call. This is the most difficult to prove. Just getting the name of the salesman and his company is not enough; he can always say that someone else called using his name. In order to get a case that can be proved in court, the following procedure will have to be used:
 - A. Get the name of the salesman and his firm.
 - B. Set up an appointment for the salesman to come to your home to talk over the possibility of your listing with him and his firm.
 - C. Call the police to make arrangements for a plain-clothesman to be present in the room at the time the salesman arrives. It is important to have this plain-clothesman with you at the time of the appointment because he has the skill necessary to gain the type of information that will be admissible as evidence in court. (This is not entrapment. The offense has taken place at the time of the phone call. The appointment is merely set up in order to make a positive identification of the person making the phone call.)

In this memo distributed to citizens through City Hall in University City, specific procedures for catching real estate agents in the act of panic peddling are explicitly outlined. It is unusual for citizens to receive detailed updates on ordinances. It is even more unusual for citizens to be encouraged to assist local police in sting operations.

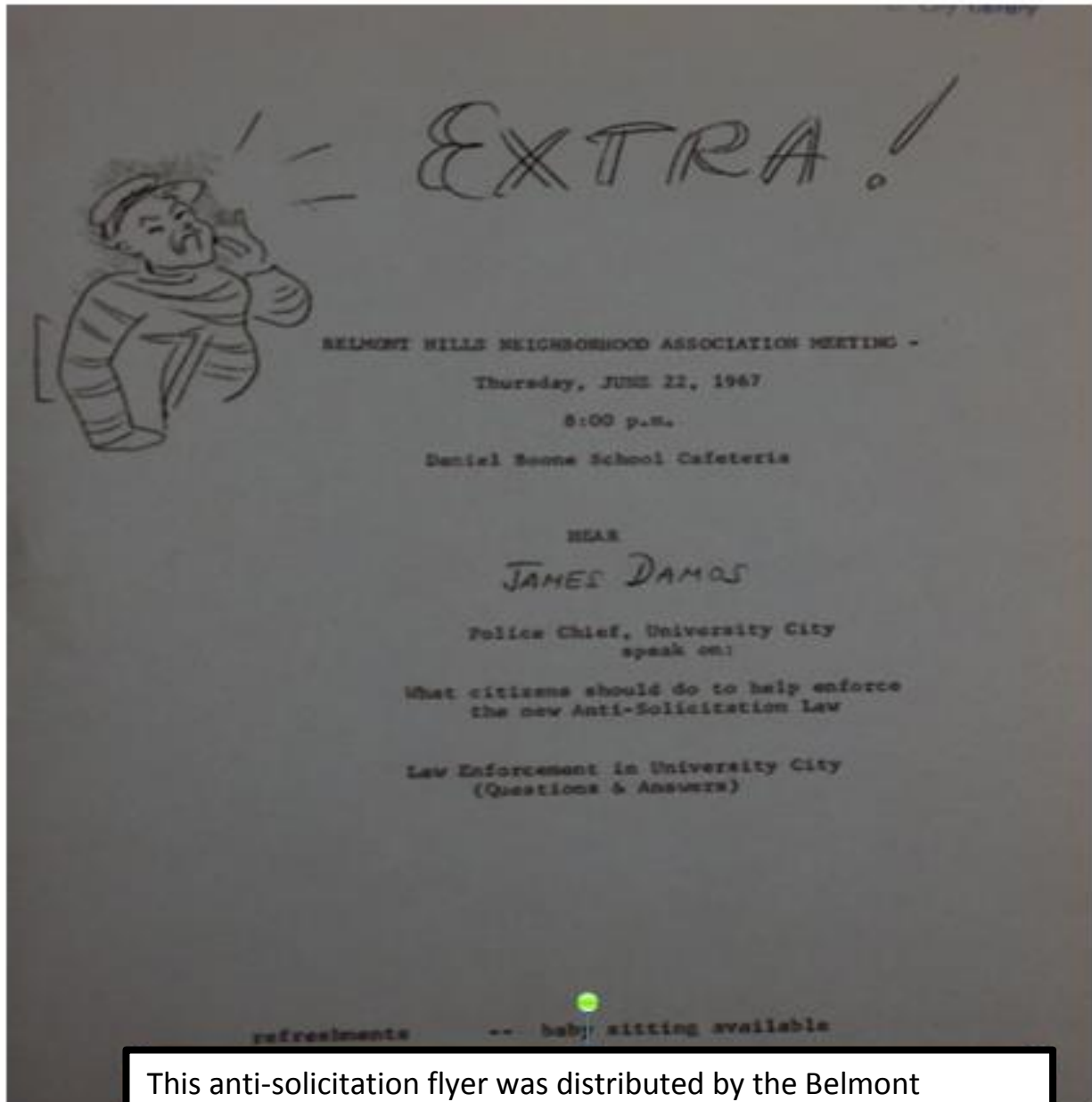




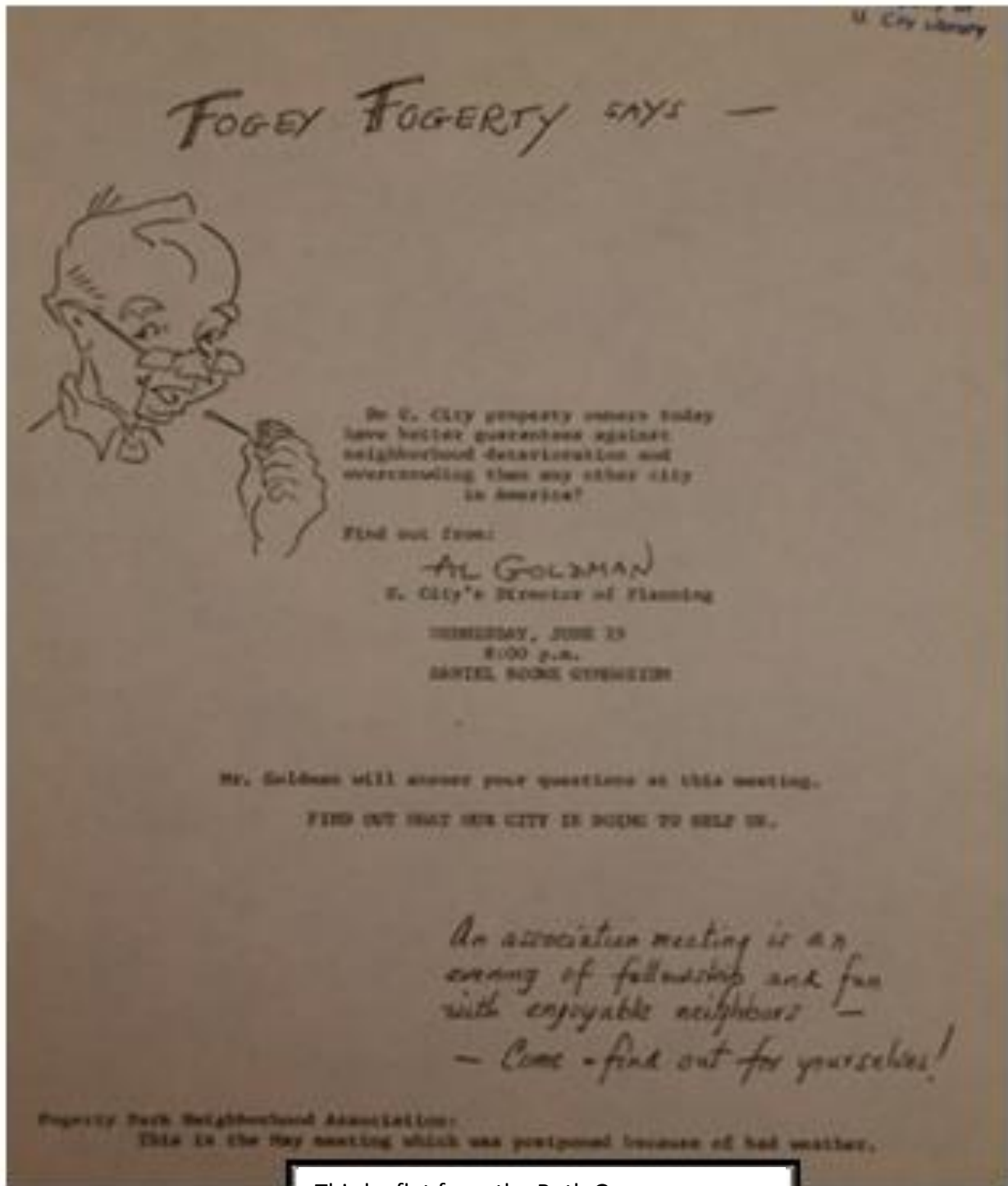
City manager Charles T. Henry sent a strong message to citizens of University City in this memo dated January 3, 1967. This memo also served notice to anyone contemplating a move to University City. Based upon practices employed in the Shaker Heights community of suburban Chicago, housing ordinances in University City are among the most strict to be found.

Appendix F

Flyers designed to stem White flight and 'educate' fellow homeowners in University City during the late 1960's



This anti-solicitation flyer was distributed by the Belmont Neighborhood Association in the third ward of University City.



This leaflet from the Roth Grove Neighborhood Association in University City's third ward encouraged neighbors not feed into panic selling.



REPORT IT -
DON'T
REPEAT IT!

Rumors regarding the sale of houses and activities of realtors seem to float about from time to time. Two rumors regarding houses in our area were checked out by our Real estate Committee and both proved to be groundless.

Don't repeat real estate "gossip!"
Report it to your block captain or to the chairman of our Real Estate Committee, CON BRESNAHAN.

Any solicitation by realtors or individuals should be reported immediately, with names, dates and facts.

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Mrs. Eleanor Thomas	-	PA 1-3786
Mrs. Grace Clooney	-	PA 5-9028
Mr. Charles Wells	-	VO 3-2268

Leaflet from the Roth Grove Neighborhood Association encouraging home owners not to feed into real estate gossip.

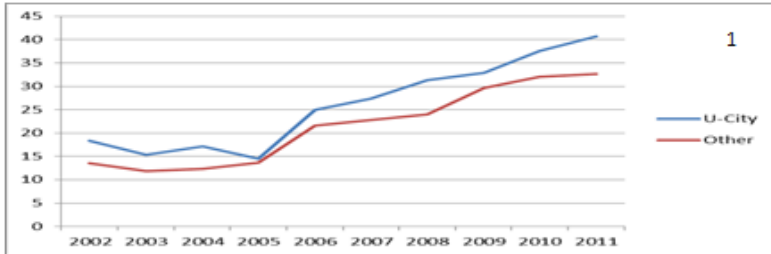
Appendix G Breakdown of ward participation in the 1970 Board elections



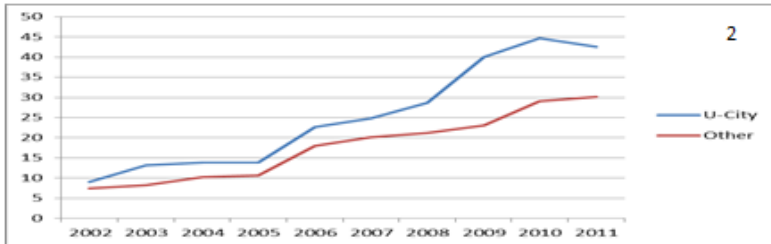
Candidate	Neighborhood School Slate			Committee for Racial Balance			Independent	Independent
	1	2	3	1	2	3		
Third Ward (9,662 Votes)	18%	18%	18%	13%	16%	12%	3%	3%
First and Second Wards (26,281 Votes)	22%	22%	22%	10%	11%	9%	1%	3%
All wards combined (35,943 Votes)	21%	21%	21%	11%	12%	9%	2%	3%



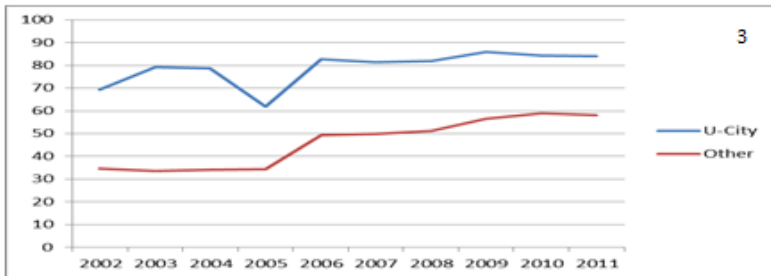
Appendix H



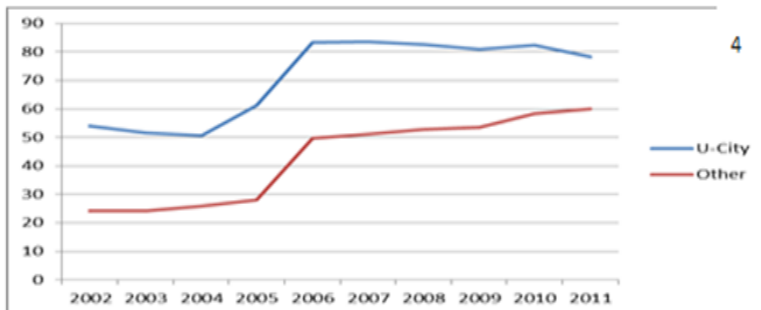
The first chart in Appendix H compares Black students in University City to Black students across the state of Missouri in terms of percentage scoring at or above proficient on State Testing in Communication Arts in grades 3-12.



The second chart in Appendix H compares Black students in University City to Black students across the state of Missouri in terms of percentage scoring at or above proficient on State Testing in Math for grades 3-12.



The third chart in Appendix H compares White students in University City to White students across the state of Missouri in terms of percentage scoring at or above proficient on State Testing in Communication Arts in grades 3-12.



The fourth chart in Appendix H compares White students in University City to White students across the state of Missouri in terms of percentage performing at or above proficient on State Testing in Math for grades 3-12.

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