

*SPEAK NOW: MEMORIES OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ERA*  
RECORDING SESSIONS

*Judge Mary Libby Payne*

Moderated by Amanda Lyons

Tuesday, August 9, 2011

William Winter Archives and History Building

Jackson, Mississippi

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY  
Post Office Box 571  
Jackson., Mississippi 39205

AU 994

SN 021

Participant: Payne, Judge Mary Libby

Title: *Speak Now: Memories of the Civil Rights Era / Memories of Judge Mary Libby Payne, Tuesday, August 9, 2011/ moderated by Amanda Lyons*

Scope Note: The Mississippi Department of Archives and History in conjunction with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Freedom Rides and to complement the Department's exhibit "*Freedom Rides: Journey for Change*" conducted recording sessions with local citizens to gather oral memories of the Civil Rights Era. The participants were also given the opportunity to have their photograph taken in front of the exhibit. The recordings were conducted in the spring and summer of 2011 at the William F. Winter Archives and History Building in Jackson, Mississippi.

LYONS: This is Speak Now Recording number 21. My name is Amanda Lyons with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Today's date is Tuesday, August 9, 2011. Now sharing her Civil Rights Era memories is Mrs. Mary Libby Payne. Welcome.

PAYNE: Well, thank you. I have a hard time trying to decide where to start, but I, I think we need to set things in context somewhat. In 1954 I was a student at Ole Miss Law School. Of course it was segregated except for the fact that we had a good number of Puerto Rican students. And my moot court partner is from Puerto Rico. Years later at a reunion somebody said, "The real odd couple was not the one that was on television or in the movies. It was Mary Libby and Augustine," we didn't realize—I didn't realize—we were minorities, but anyway, I was a student studying Constitutional Law in the spring semester of 1954, and our Constitutional Law Professor had predicted how *Brown vs. Board of Education* was gonna come out. He's studied all the voting patterns of all nine of the Supreme Court Justices, and he had predicted that *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, that is the separate-but-equal rule, would be upheld by a vote of five to four. This professor's name was William Murphy. He was absolutely the best professor I ever had in my life. We just—he just—in recent years passed away but we loved him dearly. And he told us which five were gonna vote for and which four were gonna dissent and I was in class the day that that decision came down. And of course it was unanimous—zero—nine to zero. And it did not have any legal precedent, but they said that...discrimination—the rule was discrimination—I mean segregation is discrimination per se. And this was in the public schools, not as I had assumed from my paper I had written in Constitutional Development as an undergraduate that the issue was going to be integration in the colleges and universities. I got an "A" on my paper, but my professor thought that I really didn't believe that that was going to happen. But it seemed to me that that was what the decisions were moving toward inevitably that there would be integration in colleges and universities. But, you know, I couldn't even vote. Back then you had to be 21 to able to vote. But Professor Murphy told me then, and later, many years later, assured me, after I had also become a law professor, that he had given up predicting how the Supreme Court was gonna vote. But I was foolish enough, I guess, to think that that decision's coming down in May of 1954 would mean that for the school year '55-56 we would begin... integrating, that was before the word "desegregating" had been coined, I guess. Many things happened in my life before 1956, and I had thought well it might take us 'til 1956 to get all the kinks worked out, but surely by '56-57 we would begin. Well, I graduated from law school in the summer of '55, I married in December '55, and my father died in June of '56. I was gonna practice law with him. And I was not able to get anybody, any other lawyer or law firm to think that I was worthy of being hired as an associate or a partner. And the fact that I'd graduated number one in my class didn't really make any difference, because they wanted to know how many words a minute I could type. So I had real difficulty in trying to establish myself as a lawyer. Now I'm giving you all this, not to give you a sob story, but to let

you know a little about what society's thinking was, and I knew that there were, I didn't know that there were school districts where the budget for the white schools included money that was taken away from the budget for the black schools. And that in some parts of Mississippi, the black schools would have five months school and the whites would have nine. It—that—never occurred to me. I grew up on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. When I was in high school, the, a black high school had—was—newer than ours. They had electric sewing machines, and they had electric, I'm talking about in Home Ec. classes, they had electric stoves and ours were gas, and the sewing machines you did with your feet. And I kept doing it backwards because I'd been sewing on electric sewing machines. So it just never occurred to me that we were not...equal though separate. And I know that may sound ridiculous, but when you don't know any different, you know what you know.

So, anyhow when *Brown vs. Board of Education* came down there was a lot of hysteria... And I remember that Dean Bob Farley was the president of the Mississippi Bar, I think...in the convention of 1955 and he made a speech about, I guess, about jumping to conclusions and trying to allay everybody's fear that this was not going to be the end to life as we knew it. And his speech centered around, "I never saw a rabbit wearing glasses, therefore carrots must be good for the eyes." Well, you'd have to have lived—you'd had to been there to get the feel of what he was saying. He was saying, "Do, do not assume that because something is different that that means something else."

And then we had another speaker, and I can't remember his first name, but he was from Arkansas and he was, by the way, he was a senior member of the firm that...Senator Clinton was in, in Arkansas. But, anyway, it was somebody Rose Smith, and he made this speech—after dinner speech—about eating fried chicken. That there were the people who ate it with knife and fork. And there were those who ate it with their fingers, and licked their fingers. But then there were those in the middle who ate it with their fingers but with gloves on and they were called, could you believe it, moderates... and what he was helping us to see is that people were demonizing folks who were not on either extreme and yet that was the...the good compromise. Well, there were voices of reason, and yet this is what was sort of the fall-out from *Brown vs. Board of Education*. There were many things that happened in my life, and I don't need to go into all of them, but I did finally get a job as an associate in a law firm, and there was no such thing as maternity leave, so I got fired when I had a baby. And that wasn't mean that was just the way it was. But we were so poor, I talked 'em in to, ultimately I talked 'em in to letting me come back and train my replacement. And that was in 1959 and when I did that, I realized that they had more, we were in the Oil and Gas, our division was the Oil and Gas Division, and we had more work than two people could do when I was training him. He was smart. He was in law school with me. He graduated after I did, but smart man. He's senior partner of a law firm still to this day. But, anyway, I talked

'em into letting me work Tuesday, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. And I did, and then, I guess it was in the sixties the bottom fell out of the oil and gas business, and I became the research assistant to the senior partner. And I was back and forth with, between the office and the State Law Library because they had the library that had all of the stuff that I needed to do for nationwide research. It was in one of those meetings that I met a man named Kunstler. I'm trying to remember, is it Henry Kunstler?

LYONS: Robert, I think.

PAYNE: Robert? Anyway, whatever his name was, who engaged me in conversation. And at that time there were really all these groups that were trying to make a name for themselves, and it seemed to me that they were trying to disrupt the peace and harmony of the land. As I say, I was not party to what people were doing to folks. And so I asked him, "Why are you over here? Why, why did you pick on Mississippi?" And he said, "Well, because we think we can take it over." And I thought...as, by this time, of course, I was old enough to vote and I said, "I think that voting is how citizens should govern themselves." And he said, "Yes, but sometimes you need to have agitation." Well, I didn't know who he was, you know, and how he worked and all that other stuff. But now I realize that he was baiting...a girl with a Southern drawl...and I never did see him again, but of course his name came up much later. But in 19...that was in 1960. I was still working for that law firm in 1961 when I got pregnant. And I knew that I would be fired again, but my baby wasn't due until December, so at least I had some more months left. But, put, as my mother used to say, put a semi-colon there and leap forward to the Mississippi Historical Society annual meeting in 2011. And we had a wonderful panel of Freedom Riders. I learned a lot of stuff that even though I had—I'd—lived through it; I didn't know all of the things that they had to say. But it was such an atmosphere that it looked as if people thought that everybody was responsible, in Mississippi, was responsible for what the Freedom Riders had suffered. And that it was not only that we were responsible, but that there was malicious intent. And when we had the question and answer period, I just felt it was very important for somebody to say, when you're asking, "Why weren't we doing something?" What I was doing was trying to get over morning sickness; you know...I had all sorts of things going on that were affecting my life without my having to look beyond. But we had heard all these stories from the Freedom Riders coming in and we also had seen the billboards that had Martin Luther King taking training under Castro in Cuba on communism. And everywhere he had been or the Freedom Riders had been riots had broken out. And my concern, my immediate concern, after the afternoon came when I no longer had morning sickness was how was I gonna get from the law firm to the babysitter across the river to my home in Pearl without crossing paths with these people who were coming, as we were being told, with pitchforks and machetes and who knew what, to raise all kinds of rabble and trouble here in Mississippi. Well, the fact that we were being informed by people who were misinformed was unfortunate, but it still was a fact that we were

getting that kind of information. And I no longer had the information that was close to the flag pole, so to speak, because my daddy had died. He had been in the legislature for 20 years, and I had known what was going on in the Legislature and in the public arena through my father, but I was just in my third year of being...employed in the profession in—with—a salary. I had had some, I'd finished up my father's practice and I had some clients and stuff like that, but I was not in a position to know anything except the little bit of information that we got from the news media, I guess.

Well, anyway, as was pointed out in 2011, they chronicled what the Mississippi leadership had done. We were all, as citizens, told to get off the streets, and, you know, you go home early or whatever, I can't remember all of that, but I do remember that it was to protect the lives of everybody that the streets were empty, they came in the buses to the bus stations and then they were, when they entered the white waiting area, they were arrested and put on other buses. And I didn't know what happened to 'em after that except that I did hear that they had—that they were—taken to the fairgrounds where there had been areas fenced off or whatever it was where the miscreants were gonna...who were arrested were gonna be. And that's about all I knew at that time. But, we're gonna close; I should've said instead of semi-colon, I should've said editorial brackets. We're gonna close the editorial brackets, and we're gonna get back to 1960 and 1961. We need to look at the context of what else was going on.

This last fall, I had the privilege of being in Boston and going through the John F. Kennedy Museum and I was reminded again that the biggest... specter for fear that permeated our whole nation was the communist menace. We were afraid of communism taking us over as it had taken over the Iron Curtain nations after World War II. Russia had, we had lent Russia war materials during World War II under a lend lease proposition that they never intended to pay back, and, and that was taxpayer money. There were just all sorts of things that were in the atmosphere at the time. There was another thing that, that you needed to understand, 1961 was the centennial of the beginning of the War Between the States, and there was a lot of information about that. And there were still people who were unhappy about the South being defeated. I grew up in a home where my mother said, "And aren't we glad we lost because the nation is united and we're, all 48 states are together and under one government and isn't it good?" And that's how I had grown up. There were others who were still saving their Confederate money, I guess, but, anyway, that was in the planning stages and the forefront just as we are getting ready now for the...what, the centennial of Mississippi?

LYONS: The sesquicentennial.

PAYNE: Sesquicentennial, yeah, of Mississippi, right. And so all of that was stewing around, and we were, during the sixties, I really, as an individual, feared for the existence of our nation. There was, well, of course we're talking about

Freedom Riders, but in 1963 we had an assassination of a president. That hadn't happened since Abraham, well, yeah, I guess it had been one other assassination, but we were, this was, that was in the 1860s and this was in the 1960s. And fear began to grip our society about where does safety lie? And all that time there was all this frothing up of... agony and contention, and much of it looked as if they had to have a tragedy in order to be able to raise more money for SNCC and CORE and all of those other groups. I felt that Medgar Evers was doing the right thing. He was getting people registered to vote, and he was in charge of the NAACP in Mississippi at that time. And I did feel that that was the way they should be going. Now part of the reason why I thought it was very good that there was an organized group to be getting people registered to vote was that my mother and daddy were encouraging citizens to register to vote even though the constitution said that you either had to be able to read the constitution or explain when read to you, the constitution. And daddy would help get people ready, and then he would go with them to the Circuit Clerk's office, now this was in the forties. He would go with them to the Circuit Clerk's office to help them not only know how to answer, because, you know, he could nod his head, he couldn't tell 'em what words to say, but he could assure them that they were doing the right thing. But also, the Circuit Clerk would, if he were going to do something discriminatory, he would have to do it in Daddy's presence or Mother's presence. And so we just thought that everybody's duty of citizenship required that they vote. Now if the two dollars poll tax was the thing that would keep them from being able to vote in any particular year, although we never had much money, we tried to help with that, too. But some people think that because we weren't in the streets beating on a drum against the poll tax, that we were racists. Not we specifically, but I'm saying that's the, the brush with which Mississippians are still being painted. And I don't particularly care for that designation. Racism has never been a part of my life. And yet, I got in trouble, unbeknownst to me, before I started, got a law firm to take me in, I was representing a man in a divorce case, and I found out just before lunch that I had infuriated the judge. Well how? The bailiff told me, and he said, "Well you called those witnesses 'Mr.' and 'Mrs.'" "Well, they were older than I was." And I did say sir, and I did say ma'am, and I did use their title. She was married, he was a grown man. But all of the, all of the parties in this case were black. And he told the bailiff, the judge did, that he was not angry with me, he was angry at Ole Miss with what they were teaching me. Well, Ole Miss didn't teach me to have respect for my elders, my parents did. So, you know, it was just, I just kept stepping in bear tracks—traps—and I know that I must have lived a very protected life. But I know that I was not unique. And there were many of us who were horrified while Bob was a student at Mississippi College in 19, whenever it was, '56 or '57 when the Little Rock schools closed down. Governor Faubus, or whatever his name was, closed down the schools. And I had a friend who was from Little Rock, and she was humiliated at what was going on in her state. Well, I just could not understand how anybody would be that upset, but there were many things that I did not know. But I'm saying, what I'm trying to say is

the bulk of us didn't, we grew up in a segregated society, but I had no animosity and still have none for anybody based on the color of their skin, the amount in their pocket, you know, money in their bank account, or anything. And, so I'm overreacting, I know, but I would like for folks to know what all was going on that was good. And, I put in my notes, that Dr. Cora Norman who was the head of the Mississippi Council, it's now the Mississippi Humanities Council, it was Mississippi Committee for the Humanities, probably did more for race relations than any elected official because she got educated people of diverse backgrounds and races together, and we would talk about issues, public issues, but it was always from a perspective of respect. And I got some really good friends from that group, but primarily it was in the seventies that that was happening. But in the sixties we had other things. We had students doing sit-ins and taking over the administration. And we had hippies who wouldn't bathe and...who were casting aspersions on anything that was gainful employment, while their rich parents were supporting them when they were playing guitars and weaving flowers and there were many things that were going on, and, and they were taking dope. This, the drug era came into it's own in the, in the sixties. And there were so many things just being thrown at us that were not ordinary. And so I think that that has something to do.

I had written down here, now these are my words, so I don't have to worry about whether anybody repeats them. But there always—also—was such mass hysteria in the Capitol. I began working in 1964 for the Legislature when they were in session. It was, thank goodness, after the Ross Barnett administration. But, there, let me see, the reasonable majority voices were drowned out. I know this because I was there. Even though I had been busy having babies in '59 and in '61, I knew something of the fear. But when I started working for the House of Representatives in 1964 as a hired hand, I gave up my right to speak an opinion. In fact, they've said that a legislative draftsman, when I taught legislation, I found this term, but I like it, when I was a legislative draftsman, I was required to be an intellectual eunuch and an emotional oyster so that I couldn't be involved in anybody's agenda. But I did see that the people who were bigoted were not necessarily the largest group, just the loudest. And the media really fawned over the agitators and the demonstrators. The television cameras would be out there recording and placing on the evening news pictures of eight people marching around the Capitol with signs, while the hundreds of community ministers who met together to plan strategically how to work out reasonable solutions would not even be mentioned in the newspaper, much less the television. It was as if the, particularly television, people were the PR...agents for anybody who came to make a ruckus. Well, now I know from having read Dolphus Weary's book about *I Ain't Coming Back*, or whatever the name of it was, I can understand something of the pent up rage...that was down through the generations among people who had been mistreated. Now, my mother and daddy were in a position to do something about people who were mistreated and they did. Now of course, it was on a different level from what Dolphus wrote about or what happened to poor John Perkins in Rankin County. And

I'd been practicing in Rankin County, but I was working with the state by that time. But anyway my mother worked at the Employment Security Commission. And she worked at the Day Labor and Domestic help desk and she got maids jobs. And she was very conscientious about it. She would memorize all of the bus routes and she would tell each, she not only would give the woman that she was sending to this new job the address and the telephone number of the employer, employer, she would write down the bus routes and how that employee could get to the home of the woman who was hiring her as a maid. And she took great pride in matching the employer with the employee so that it could be an amicable situation. And it was not uncommon maybe two or three weeks later for this same woman who'd gotten a job as a maid to be back at mother's desk looking for a new job. And mother would say, "Well, what happened?" Because if they were doing bad things, she wanted to apologize to the person to whom she'd sent her. But if the person, if the employer were doing bad things, she wanted to take care of getting a new job for this maid, but she wanted to chew out that woman. And the most often statement would be, "Well, she didn't pay me after I had done the work." Well that infuriated mother. And so mother would call up the employer and say, "Don't expect us to ever send you another prospective employee if you're not gonna treat 'em fairly." And then there was one who was a stone mason. And he laid a patio for somebody in Edgewater Park Subdivision that was around a beautiful, Edgewater Park was a beautiful hotel. It's now a mall on the Gulf Coast, Edgewater Mall, I guess, but anyway, it was a beautiful area. And this, being a stone mason is a high skilled position. And he came back looking for more work and she said, "Well how did Mr. So-and-So or Mrs. So-and-So like the patio?" He said, "Liked it fine, but wouldn't pay me." So when mother couldn't have any influence over that sort of situation, she'd send them over to my daddy's office...my daddy was a lawyer, and he would take up the cause of the laborer who had been taken advantage of, and usually he was able to, without having to go to court even, was able to get the man the money that was, he was entitled to. These are just examples of what I thought life was like, and I found out it was not entirely that way.

But anyway, I think that there were some other things that had to do with context. The United States was embarrassed as a nation that Russia had gotten into space before we had. We were, we were afraid of communism and we certainly were embarrassed that they were making strides in science when we were still on the ground and they were in space. And they had Sputnik, and we didn't. The hydrogen bomb had been developed. And many people were trying to figure out how they could afford a shelter, an underground shelter. And I can remember, I don't remember the year, but I can remember wondering if it would be better to borrow money and build a bomb shelter in our back yard as opposed to getting a new car. We never had a really new, new car, but a new car for us, a used car.

There were all sorts of things that were happening. I mentioned the sit-ins on the college campuses, but there were riots in the sixties on the college

campuses. And I never quite knew why, but I know that there were people who were killed. And I don't know who was at fault. I think everybody was...but trying to tell the players without a program is really very difficult when you're, when you're not involved, and even when you are, I guess.

And another thing that was happening in the mid sixties was there became this great distrust of anybody over 35. Well, I had worked so hard to develop a few grey hairs in the front of my, they were actual grey when I was 30. And I was so proud of that little inkling of a streak because I thought, "Surely now people will think I'm old enough to be able to give good legal advice without my having to prove myself twice over." And then by the time I got to be 35, you weren't supposed to trust anybody who was any older. There were other things going on such as, besides the assassinations I mentioned, was the Vietnam War, which was a very unpopular war. And LBJ came in and accelerated it at the same time that he was doing this war on poverty stuff, and money was being wasted in strange ways. I'll give you an example, there was a school in the Delta that called one of the grocery suppliers wanting a certain number of tomatoes all of the same diameter to be able to have chicken salad in tomatoes at the cafeteria. And they had to all be exactly the same size. And the wholesaler said, "Do you have any idea how expensive it's going to be for us to have 'em exactly the same?" And this was for Head Start. And this person said, "It doesn't matter. We want for our children what privileged children have and no one is to have less than the other." Well, the order was filled, but of course it was so expensive because you had to have labor costs going through there and measuring those things. Now that's an extreme example, but when you're having that kind of stuff going on in the war on poverty when there are people who don't have any indoor plumbing, you know that's where we should've been working on things that would make a difference in their lives. And I had of course, I had no control over any of this, but I'm just telling you there were strange things going on in our society in the sixties. Well, I had my baby in '61. I tried several things to try to get back into the legal profession and finally by, well toward the end of '62 a friend said, "Let's do a partnership and you can work the same three days a week." And that worked out fine. Well, I made about enough money to pay the babysitter. And he moved out of town, and there I was back again paying the pavements in 1963. And I asked my husband, the rent was paid through the end of August which meant I had to have some other kind of job by the first of September, and this was in July. And I said, "I really can hardly wait until the end of August to see whether or not I'm a failure." And he said, "Honey, you're not a failure, employed or not." But that was...what was the over-arching concern of my life in 1963, not how I could be involved in social change. We needed an income, and it was getting, I had even tried in 1960, well, I had in 1962 made shell jewelry and sold it at the Baptist Gift Shop down at the Assembly down on the Gulf Coast. It was very difficult. And so, social change was not something that I was fighting, but I—we—were trying to survive. And yet Joe Bullock who was the head of the A & I Board at the time had an office in Brandon at the time and he said, "You

just go put your books in my office until some law firm hires you.” Well, no law firm ever has yet hired me...but I stayed there, and I began to work as a legislative draftsman in 1964. And Mr. Walter Sillers gave me affirmation that had been lacking ever since I graduated number one in my class in 1955. And he may have been beneficent despot, as some people said, but to me he was one of the finest men I ever knew. Now I did not agree with his politics in regard to race, but I do know that he had intellectual integrity, and he was an excellent Speaker of the House. He got things done and when he died after the session in 1966, in 1968, we were still in biannual sessions then, we had the longest legislative session in the history of the state of Mississippi because there was that vacuum. They didn’t have Mr. Sillers to come in and say, “Now gentlemen, we’re gonna have to get this resolved, and so let’s do it sooner rather than later.” But he was gone, and Mr. Junkin was of a different temperament. And so anyhow, that, those were things that my life was...defined by, not social change. But I had never, and still have not, ever used the “n” word. We had never treated people with disrespect, but I found out in the sixties after I was practicing in Brandon, something that was not readily apparent to me. I didn’t really know where my clients came from, but I never had a day that I didn’t have work to do. Lawyers who are willing to work usually get to work. And in those days, Wednesday afternoons all the offices were closed and the stores and everybody else, I don’t know why, that’s just the custom. But I was in my office. And then on Friday afternoon, the lawyers were out playing golf or doing whatever, managing their real estate or whatever else they had, I was in my office. And that was when laborers got paid, and so they would come looking for a lawyer and I happened to be the only one of the eight of us in Rankin County who was in the office. So I figured that’s how I got my clients. Most of ‘em were poor, and of those clients, I would say at least half were black. And anybody who had a problem that I could solve was my client. And my poor clients paid better than those who had more money. But I did end up making as much as a Circuit Judge before I left in 1968, so maybe I was doing a good job. But, anyhow I had this man, this client, to come see me, may have even been on one of those regular work days, I can’t remember. But he came from three counties over. And I was curious about why. And I said, “How did you get here?” Well, he said, “I took so-and-so, and turned at White Oak on Highway 18.” I said, “Now, wait a minute. I’ve asked the wrong question. How did you come to choose me to be your lawyer?” Because the business he wanted done didn’t take an editor of the Law Review to be able to...to do for him and he’d passed up, I said, “You passed up three county seats. Why did you choose me?” And he didn’t hesitate. He said, “They say,” he says, “there’s a lady lawyer in Brandon won’t let nobody take advantage of you.” And, I thought, “Wow! I have achieved my life’s goal, and I’m only 35 years old.” But that may be how I got my clients, I don’t know. But I tried to do my best for every client I had. And I assume that 95 percent or more lawyers try to do the best for every client they had. But I wasn’t out marching in the streets. Oh, another thing that started, that was going on about that time was the, by 1972 the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. And there was a lot more heat than light in

regard to women's rights in that amendment, but I was accused by my feminist friends of not being helpful. I was accused by my "Stop ERA" friends about not taking a stand. Well I was taking a stand. I was being the kind of woman who could be recognized professionally, and yet I had to come, when we had some, during the seventies we had a lot of governor's conferences on this and that and the other. And one of 'em was on the impact of women on the economy. And we were standing in line at lunch, and I said, "I am not interested in being called a feminist because I believe in wearing underwear and not burning it," you know...and one of my friends who, by that time, had gotten a supervisory position with the telephone company, said, "I'm not a bra burner either, but had it not been for those courageous women who went against the grain and put themselves in jeopardy, my company would not have let me be promoted up the ladder as it has." And I began to realize, well I do owe a debt to those women, and I think maybe that we do owe a debt in the Civil Rights Era to people who put their lives on the line because they didn't believe there was any other way. I guess I was foolish enough to believe that if left alone, freedom of choice would work. But also during the 1960s my son started school, and I was very much involved in PTA. And we had a desegregation lawsuit and, as everybody did, but in Rankin County, the superintendent of schools thought that everything was close down and we'd just rent those empty buildings to the private schools and we wouldn't have anymore public schools. Can you imagine anything more ridiculous? But anyway, I, by 1969 I was president of the Attendance Center PTA, and we did happen to be largest PTA in the state of Mississippi, at that time. And we talked about what we would do. And I said, "We will have quality education in the Pearl Attendance Center and we are going to cooperate with our administrators, and maybe I scared away the opposition, I don't know, because they were not, nobody...threatened to lynch me or any of that sorta stuff. And we did have a very smooth transition. We, we integrated the teachers first, and then second semester, we began the busing process. We ended up having to have 36, I mean 69, portable buildings on the Pearl campus, but the people in Goshen, Fannin, and North Rankin said it was worth being bused all that long way to be able to be in our school. And we did not have acrimonious transition, so I'm still not privy to the kinds of hateful interchanges that apparently some people have been. But I'm...I'm also saying, I am not unique. I was a member of First Baptist Church and I can look through the window and see it. I was there after the worship disturbers went deliberately into Galloway Methodist Church and just tore that church, that congregation apart. And I was there that Sunday night at First Baptist when the resolution, when the recommendation for a resolution was made and voted on that, "Until the current unpleasantness is over, we will withdraw fellowship from our black brethren," and it was with tears in my eyes that I voted for that resolution not because I had any hatred in my heart, but I knew that it would not bring glory to God to tear up public worship. But I'll also tell you that during, that after that resolution was passed, Sheriff Gilfoy died of a heart attack, and I don't know what the, all the dates were, but at his funeral, the balcony of First Baptist Church was filled with black friends

whom he had helped. So, then I was party to some of the folks who were saying, “Now that we’ve gotten past the early sixties, it’s time to repeal that resolution.” And there were discussions back and forth, and they said, “But they weren’t, but the, the...people who are coming to integrate our church are not coming to church for the right reasons.” And I shall never forget Sue Guernsey, whose husband was the Youth Court Judge, saying, “I didn’t come to this church for the right reason. I came to enhance my husband’s political career, but I found Christ as my savior at this church.” And, and so there were all sorts of people of good will who were trying to do the right thing and nobody writes about them. Nobody even acknowledges that the vast majority of Mississippians were not out to glorify hatred, and never had started hating, and never did, therefore, continue. And I’ve gotten off my track here...but I think that we have done in race relations what we were doing in presuming that carrots were good for the eyes because rabbits didn’t wear glasses. We have assumed that if some people were mistreated, everybody was mistreated. And those who weren’t directly mistreating them were guilty for not stopping the fight or whatever. And yet many of us were powerless. I was pregnant trying to get home safely.

Now as I have through the years grown, I’ve talked to you about Cora Norman. And then I’ve also talked about the fact, or maybe I haven’t, that I left the legislature to work for the Attorney General, for A. F. Summer. And he had a Federal Division that had to fight all of these cases that were brought against the state of Mississippi that were Civil Rights cases. And I remember asking him in regard to Parchman in particular, I said, “Why can’t we just say, ‘you know for what’ and run ‘Welch is right.’...” “The legislature has not done what it should have done for prisoners at Parchman. Why can’t we just admit that, and work toward correcting it.” And I got a whole new insight into this wonderful man whose name is—was—A. F. Summer. He said, “Libby, my job is to defend the constitutionality of the acts of the Legislature, whether I agree with ‘em or not. And only the Legislature has the jurisdiction to make the changes in the law.” Well, that was hard for me to swallow. But it is a defensible position, but by the same token, every chance I got to make friends with people who were of the other race, I tried to do that. And then when I was at Mississippi College and was very much involved in programs that the Committee for the Humanities had, I made some wonderful friends, Dr. Jessie Mosley from Jackson State, Dr. Alferdtina Harrison who was, has just retired recently as the director of the Margaret Walker Alexander Division of the African-American Studies, so many people that I would not have known had we not had integration. I did not like the way it happened. I think that the murder of Medgar Evers was more egregious than just, if there is such a thing, ordinary murders. I don’t mean that to sound callous, but I’m saying he was doing the right thing in the right way. And it really set back, it inflamed the agitators, and it silenced the people who wanted to take—to do—things within the system. And so besides the personal tragedy of anybody’s life being snuffed out, it really did...set off an explosion that we’re still trying to clean up from. And I know you should not use a preposition with which to end a sentence. But

we had those things that were going on, and there were other things that I'm almost hesitant to speak about. But there were...I had domestic help during that time because I had little children, and they were preschoolers and so I had to have a maid to take care of my children while I was at work. And they would tell me of meetings that they had had in their communities where a certain day was set aside where every maid was supposed to do something to break an appliance, put a fork down through a disposal, well I didn't have one. But, anyway, I never was the victim of those kinds of instructions that were circulating in the black community, but I knew the instructions were there. I never had mean things done to me, but there were, that was part of some of the strategies that were done. And what amazed me so much...now this makes me really sound naïve, but I guess I am naïve, what amazed me so much was until the late sixties, it never dawned on me that racism was not a one-sided issue. I thought racism abided in us, in white people, and there was no racism on the other side. And this is another thing that Dolphus Weary in his book, I don't know if you read that book or not, but you've got to read it. It opened my eyes and my heart. He said that one of the things that he had to deal with in his later years was the fact of his own racism. That he did not trust white people just because they were white, and, therefore, there is a real need for things like Mission Mississippi. And, of course, Dolphus didn't start it, but he, Jarvis Ward did, do you, do you have any information about Jarvis?

LYONS: No, I don't know about him.

PAYNE: Is that a name you have heard? OK, well we'll talk about him in a minute. But anyhow what Dolphus said was he had to recognize that his hatred was just as cynical as the hatred that had been aimed toward him. And that he had to deal with that in honesty with the Lord. And no, wow, that made such an impact on me because I really had not known anything except respect and helpfulness from the people of black community with whom I had had contact. Naïve, yeah; unusual, no. There is a wonderful program that was on Mississippi Public Television last year, I think, called...I don't know if it's Mississippi Remixed. Is that the name of it?

LYONS: I think that's the name.

PAYNE: And this woman moved away from Jackson. She grew up in Jackson. And then she had to reevaluate what her situation was, what her attitude had been. And the truth of the matter was, I guess, we were all just so tied up with our own lives that we didn't know about the hurts that other people had. We were not causing 'em, but we didn't know about 'em so we weren't doing anything in a major way. And, of course, she, I don't think, was here as an adult as I was, but in my very minor piece of history, one by one I was trying to give voice to the voiceless. And I still try to do that. And nobody wants to believe that we aren't all in Mississippi racist. We are still suffering from that sort of attitude. But people who come here to live, find that we really are the Hospitality State. And I will tell you this, one of my

greatest joys is to see how well my minority students are doing in their professional lives. Being associated with Mississippi College School of Law for 19 and a half years, I had a lot of students that I interacted with and tried to encourage. And Katrina Bibb Gibbs is one of 'em. I don't know if you know her or not, but she was a basketball star at Mississippi College in the eighties, I guess and...or it might've been as recent as the nineties. But, anyhow, she's from Pearl, and her name was in the paper about being on the All-American Academic Athletic Team because she had such high grades as well as such high numbers in basketball. She played at Mississippi College. And I wrote to her...or maybe I called her or something, anyhow, and I said, "I want to congratulate you, but now tell me what your plans are," 'cause she was majoring in Political Science. I said, "Are you thinking about going to law school?" And she said, "Well, I hadn't really thought about it." And I said, "Well, you come over to my office, and I wanna show you around the law school." So she came, and I talked to her about finding God's will for her life and doing it. You know whatever it was, I was hoping it was to be a lawyer and to come to school at MC. Well, she agreed to pray about it, and she did. And then not too long thereafter she got a call from the dean at MC offering her a full tuition remission scholarship. And she seems to think I had something to do with it, I honestly didn't...I'm just always recruiting good students, but I—I may have mentioned to the admissions folks that they needed to see if she wouldn't apply. But she herself, through her accomplishments got the scholarship. But I think that we all need to remember the turtle on the, what is it, the fence post? I wanna be somebody who helps put the turtle up there or get it down...and I have tried to do that. Have I always been successful? No. Have I always acted in a Christ-like manner that I would have liked to have said I have? No. But hatred does not define Mississippi. And one of the things that one of the Freedom Riders said, we're back in 2011 now, was, "We do need to acknowledge the great strides that have been made." And I thought that that was good because Mississippi, I don't know if it's true now, but when I was teaching Judicial Administration, one of my students was doing research on racism, and he said that in his research he had found that Mississippi in the mid nineties had more black electoral—elected—officials than any other state in the union, although we had a much smaller population overall than some of the states in the union. And I'm proud of that fact, but I was not proud of the fact when Judge Southwick, who was my colleague on the Court of Appeals, was up for confirmation for the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, and there were people who were complaining big time about the fact that another white male was being appointed by the governor. And I just felt I had to write a letter to the editor to answer some of this stuff to say, "Now, wait a minute. I agree with Martin Luther King, who looked forward, who dreamed about the day that we would be judging people on the content of their character and not on the color of their skin." And it was just flipped because he wasn't black, they thought he shouldn't be confirmed. And he was an excellent Mississippi Court of Appeals judge, and he is now an excellent Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals judge. But even in, whatever that was, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there are people who want us to

make decisions based on skin tone. And I think that's racism, no matter who does it.

Now I know you had some questions, and I have just blabbed on. But I will tell you, that had I not had, when I ran for the Court of Appeals, had I not had support of black and white voters, I don't know that I would've been elected. And I owe much to voters, period for having had that privilege. There is one other thing I was gonna say, I told you about Dr. Cora Norman but we've talked about, or maybe we haven't, I guess, I had talked with my friends about it, how Paul Johnson "Stood Tall with Paul," and he got elected. And then John Bell Williams came with some of his sort of race-baiting kind of rhetoric. And the first governor in my lifetime, well in my voting lifetime, 'cause I don't know about before that, I wasn't paying that much attention to their campaigns, but the first governor that I was able to vote for who did not have race as an issue in his campaign was William L. Waller. And he has never been given the credit that he deserved. He did not get elected by race. He did appoint, without any fanfare, he appointed Blacks on boards and commissions. He had governor's conferences on who knows what, lots of conferences that got people together of diverse backgrounds, and interests, and races, and lifestyles, got 'em together, talking about a single issue. And as a result, you not only understood each other's perspective better but you began to make friends. And this was in the seventies, from 1972 to '76. He had a lot of innovative programs that he started. And nobody seems to ask for his input when they talk about race relations, but he was the fellow who kept the Democratic Party from falling apart. Well, of course by that time I was already a Republican. But there are many things that Governor Waller did that nobody remembers much less given—giving—him credit for it. And I think that I've mentioned...John Perkins.

LYONS: Yes.

PAYNE: And I'm sure you're familiar with John. And he's, he's doing more about racial reconciliation on that side, or as much as Cora did with the Humanities Council on the other side to try to get us together. And John talks about racial reconciliation, one friendship at the time. And I saw what happened to my friend, Professor William Murphy. He got booted out of the faculty at Ole Miss by IHL because he was audacious enough to say that *Brown vs. Board of Education* was the law of the land. And so he went, had to go to another law school to teach, and I, I've always just felt really badly about that. But at our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2005, that was my law school graduating class, we had him and his family at our reunion, and we had a program and Chancellor Khayat made this statement, I hope I'm quoting him correctly, he said "Professor Murphy, I wasn't in a position to do anything about what happened to you at the Law School at Ole Miss, but I am in a position now to publicly apologize to you for the way you were treated." And of course that was important to Professor Murphy, but he responded, "But it wasn't Ole Miss, everybody at the law school and at Ole

Miss was kind and gracious and helpful to me.” And we all knew that he was, what he didn’t say was it was the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning in the sixties, or maybe it was the late fifties, anyway whenever it was that he was given the left foot of Christian fellowship...it was a beautiful act that Robert Khayat did that didn’t cost anything but meant the world to all of us who loved Professor Murphy so much.

Now I didn’t know anything about the Sovereignty Commission, I still don’t, and I hope I’m not in it. I was working for the State of Mississippi, and I certainly was not a member of the Citizens Council, but I do have a story about that, too. And that was, we were, I was married in December ’55. In 1956-57, and ’57, I lived in the student barracks at Mississippi College for married students because my husband was going to undergraduate school on the GI Bill for Korean veterans. And right across the hall from us was a young preacher boy. And he and his wife and Bob and I were really good friends. And one day he came over and talked with us about the fact that he was no longer pastor of this church in the Delta. And we said, “Why? What happened?” And he said, “Well, they wanted me to join the Citizens Council, and the, the whole purpose of the Citizens Council is to fight integration and really to perpetuate attitudes that I don’t think I can perpetuate.” And he said, “They told me, well, if it’s the money, we’ll pay your dues.” And he said, “No. I cannot adopt the philosophy of this group.” Now this was in the fifties before the Freedom Riders’ time. And they said, “Well, we’re sorry to hear that, pastor, but you can no longer be our pastor.” Well, it broke my heart that there they were left heartbroken by Christians. And they moved to California, and they haven’t ever come back again. They did Pioneer Missions out there, and are, I’m sure are retired now. But there were many people like the pastor at Galloway Memorial Church who said, “I cannot tell anyone he is not welcome in the Lord’s house.” And I understand that, and I also understand the tension of First Baptist’s situation, seeing what had been done there, trying to preserve a non-distracted focus on extending the Kingdom of God to people who are lost, not just to people who are different. And so there were, there were many, many tensions and pulls and fears and...opinions during that time. And I honestly, particularly when they had those riots in Watts and in Washington, D. C., I honestly feared for the survival of the United States of America. And now when people talk to me about the survival, because of economics or the war in Afghanistan or all the things that are going, swirling on around us, I have to just remind myself, who is the sovereign of this universe. It sure isn’t politics...although I have been involved in politics most of my life.

And I, I have taken entirely too much time, but I want folks to know that we are out there, too. After getting, now jumping back to 2011, after that meeting there were several people who came up and said, “I’m so glad you said that because nobody ever speaks up for the folks who are caught in the

middle.” And another thing I don’t really appreciate is all these people who left Mississippi in the sixties and have now come back and have enjoyed the benefit of the solutions that those of us who stayed had to work very hard to bring about. I would just like for ‘em to recognize that it wasn’t an easy thing without ‘em, and we didn’t get rich. Not all of them did either, I’m sure. Now, you wrote something down?

LYONS: Yes, I had one question. I was just curious because it seems like it was unusual in the sixties to be a working mother.

PAYNE: Oh, well, yes.

LYONS: I wanted to hear why you did that and just your perspective on being a trailblazer.

PAYNE: Well, you kinda have to know who my mother was. My mother married my daddy while he was still in law school. She had to get her bachelor’s degree first, that’s just been the law. Her father was Joseph Anderson Cook who was the founding president of what’s now the University of Southern Mississippi. And she went to Ole miss, and she majored in math. And she had to get special permission to, well to do two things, one, to register as a junior as opposed to a freshman because Ole Miss didn’t have a whole lot of use for State Teachers College or Mississippi Normal, I guess was what it was called back then. And so Mother went three years to that two year college, just to be sure that she had enough credits that when they started saying, “Well, we’re not gonna give you credit for this,” that she would still be a junior. And I had no idea how much spunk she had until after the ERA was passed. And it was circulating for states to ratify. And she would go to particularly these meetings of the Humanity—Committee for Humanities—and then those people would come and say, “Your mother is such a hoot!” “My mother?” But anyway, she went to Ole Miss to register, but before she went to the registrar, she’d done her homework. She had taken her transcript around to each of the professors who would have to decide what credit she would be given from her transcript, and then she knew that she would have the ammunition she needed when she went to register. And the registrar said, “Oh, no, we, we can’t approve any of these courses. They were not rigid, stringent enough to be university level.” And Mother said, “Well, here I have the signatures of these professors who said they would approve it.” “Well, I just, you’re just gonna have to register as a freshman.” She said, “Well, now the train to Nashville leaves at 3:00 o’clock today. I am gonna return at two, this was in the morning, I am gonna return to your office at two and either you will let me register as a junior, or I will be on that train and go to Peabody,” When she came back at three, she was registered as a junior. But she did have to get special permission to take advanced math with the engineering students, she was a math major. Well, then of course she made higher grades than any of the men that she was going to school with and Dr. Hume said, “Men, you shouldn’t let Miss Cook do this to you. You’re gonna need your, these grades in your

vocation, and she's not." Well, see I hadn't heard this story until the 1980s, when mother was 80 years old. But she said with great pathos in her voice, "But I guess Dr. Hume knew more than I did because when I graduated and applied for a job at a bank"...well, the way she said it is she said, "I said to myself, 'Dr. Hume you don't know what you're talking about because I'm gonna be a bank comptroller.'" And then she said with pathos in her voice, "But I guess he knew better than I did because when I went to apply for a job in a bank, the banker said, 'Why, no indeed. No woman could be expected to stand on her feet all day and operate these machines,'" the bookkeeping machines. Well, the thing about it was mother had been working in the business office of the college from age 14 forward. She knew how to do a lot of that stuff before she ever got to Ole Miss, but she couldn't get hired. And back, so then she did have her teacher's license. She did teach and it was hard to get a job if you were married, even as a teacher. But, as Mother used to say, "But if you were foolish enough to have children, you certainly weren't qualified to teach 'em, and you got fired." But Daddy was in the legislature, the Depression had come, and Daddy was in the Legislature and they didn't pay any expenses except mileage one-way to Jackson in January and mileage one-way back to Gulfport at the end of the session. And so anyhow we had, Mother ran a boarding house. Mother did all sorts of things too; she cut up a part of our house into apartments to rent. Then she got a job for the, with the Mississippi Employment Security Commission when she was, well she was interviewed when she was 40. Well, she was still 40 when she got the job. But anyhow she got number one on the register, and they wanted her to give up her position so they could get to somebody down lower. You had to have, be in the top five or the top three, whatever it was, and she said, "No, indeed." She was competing fairly for this job. Well, she got a job as a file clerk, and she made \$75.00 a month working in Biloxi and living in Gulfport. But then she did get some promotions 'cause she always was in that top figure. And the real promotions though they would offer her in Tupelo or Clarksdale or somewhere she knew—they knew—she couldn't transfer and go. But anyway my mother did work from the time I was in the third grade until she got to be 65. Almost 25 years she worked for the State. And in those days even during World War II, the general feeling was that working mothers so neglected their children that the children became juvenile delinquents. Well I guess I'm proof of the truth of that...but people would say ugly things, you know, about my mother's working, but she had to work. Daddy was a sole practitioner, and when he wasn't in the office, he wasn't making any money, but the, the overhead was going on. And we, we have always been very frugal, but the truth of the matter was my mother was a working mother. And the truth about me is I was taught that God has a plan and a place and a purpose for every life and it is our job to find that calling. And I know that God called me to the ministry of jurisprudence to be a lawyer. Now it wasn't easy, and it did not make any difference that I was an oddball as far as the norm was concerned. If that's what God wanted, then only choice I had was either to obey or rebel, and I was delighted to obey. I was not prepared for discrimination. I had always thought that if you worked

hard enough you could accomplish anything that you set your mind to, and in academia I had been able to do that. When I left the “W,” I had the highest grade point average of any student in my class. I transferred to Ole Miss, I graduated with honors, and then I graduated first in my class at law school. And I worked hard, it didn’t come naturally, well, I won’t say it didn’t come naturally, it did not come easy. People who are not “A” students think that “A” students don’t have to work hard. Garbage! It is a matter of commitment. And it may have something to do with IQ, too, I don’t know, but anyway, ‘cause I have no idea what my IQ is. Anyway, I do know that if you work hard, you get rewarded. Well, that’s not necessarily true. And my daddy died less than a year after I graduated from law school, and he had no notion that anybody would be fool enough not to be delighted to have his daughter work for ‘em. Now, that’s his prejudiced notion...I did not say that. But I was not prepared for discrimination. I am very familiar with it, but I do know that it did not have to define my life. God had a plan for me. And in order for me to fulfill that plan, I had to exercise a lot of spiritual muscle. And the only way you do that is when you’re faced with difficulty and...you have to depend upon the Lord. And so I’m grateful for the hard parts of my life. I am grateful for the delightful parts of my life. And I hope that I have made a difference for good in the lives of some people around here.

But I will get back to your question which was my being a working mother. When we were at First Baptist we were in a group, in Training Union, I guess it was, with a bunch of couples who were all having babies about the same time as we were, and were just really good friends. And we’d have Sunday school class meetings with the girls, and the men would have Sunday school class meetings. And so one day one man asked Bob, says, “How do you feel about having your wife working?” Because I may have been one of the only ones who was, I wasn’t very gainfully employed, but I was trying to be employed. And he said, Bob said, “Well, I’ll tell you one thing, she’s a lot easier to live with when she’s been practicing law than after she’s, when she’s been fightin’ with these boys all day long.” And so he was able by his good sense of humor to be able to turn what could have been a put-down into a perfectly acceptable non-defacing answer. And somebody else asked him, “Well, what are you gonna do when your wife gets to the point she’s making more money than you are.” And Bob said he thought a minute, and he said, “You know, she could make a million dollars a year, and it wouldn’t bother me at all.” ‘Course, I never did, but he, he had a lot to put up with, too. And how a fellow from Central Texas who’s daddy had a third grade education, and his mother had, maybe, a ninth grade education and who is the only member of his family who ever got a college education, came to Mississippi and became the renaissance man that he is, because if he had not freed me up to become all that God intended for me to be, I would be just as stifled as some of the women my age who were stifled by their societal place. Now that’s not to say that family was not ahead of work, but it wasn’t that family always got the first hunk of time. It was that we accommodated to make sure that we did parenting things and we do

husband and wife things, but we also fulfilled God's will. But Bob is the stabilizing force of my life. He worked for the Employment Security Commission himself, started three weeks out of college, and worked for them for 37 years before he retired. So during those times that were really lean times in my law practice, Bob had the stability that our family needed. Now I will admit that there're a bunch of people that I went to college with who went to college to get a husband, and when they got a husband, they quit college. And they lived very fulfilling lives. And I don't have, as one of my friends used to say, I'm not casting asparagus on anybody. But each person has to be accountable for what the direction of his or her life is. And it really, yeah, it did, it was cuttin' across the grain even in my generation to be a working mother. But I've got lots of friends who were at the "W" with me and other places who used their education wonderfully well, if not in gainful employment, but in community service and in leadership. My husband's brother's wife did not have a college education, but she was a banker's wife, and she made sure that the little town that, at which he was the president of the bank developed a library, you know, and she was doing the kinds of things, I guess, that the Junior League and others, Junior Auxiliary, I don't know what it is, Junior League,

LYONS: Junior League.

PAYNE: Yeah, those kinds of things that I, of course, was not involved in. So women have always worked. Now whether or not they've been gainfully employed and whether or not the things they worked at were that important, you know, I don't know, but I'm saying that women have always worked. And now I think it is even more, well, I don't know if it's more difficult, but there's still discrimination and it's more subtle. With the economic situation that we've got now, I'm confident that women's jobs are gonna be eliminated more than men's. Upward mobility still is not as high. Women still don't make but, what 79 cents for every dollar a man makes. We've made great strides, but this is a whole new ballgame to talk about, the Women's Movement. But during that period of time there was, right after the Civil Rights Movement was kinda cooling down, was when the Equal Rights Era came on. And there was such acrimony among women who thought that they were being devalued because they were not pulling in a salary, and therefore they had to fight against those women who were, that there was no unity as there was in the Civil Rights Movement among African Americans. And I remember Bobby Henley asking the question, "Where are the churches when it comes to injustice against women? Where are the churches which were the bulwark of encouragement for African Americans?" They are like mine, they are regressing in regard to women. When I was young, we had women who were educational directors, we had women who were choir directors, but when they got to being ministers of education and ministers of music and got to making real salaries, you had to be male. And that's, don't get me started on the Southern Baptist Convention. I am a Baptist, but I was a Baptist when Baptists were true

Baptists. And one of the things that makes me a Baptist is the priesthood of the believer and not that I have to be agreeing with somebody else in order to be right. But, see I have just been involved in so many fights I can talk to you about anything...not fights, situations.

LYONS: Okay. Well, thank you.

PAYNE: Well, I have taken entirely too much time.

**END OF RECORDING**

INDEX

Agitation – 7, 12  
Assassinations – 5, 8, 12  
Barnett, Ross - 6  
Bomb shelter - 8  
Brandon, Mississippi - 10  
Brown vs. Board of Education – 1, 2, 15  
Bullock, Joe - 9  
Busing - 11  
Castro, Fidel - 4  
Circuit Judge - 10  
Citizens Council – 15, 16  
Civil Rights cases - 12  
Civil Rights Movement – 10, 20  
Civil War – 4, 5  
Committee for the Humanities – 12, 17  
Communism – 4, 8  
Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) - 5  
Constitutional Law - 1  
Cook, Joseph Anderson - 17  
Cuba - 4  
Democratic Party - 15  
Demonstrations - 7  
Desegregation - 1  
Difficulty getting hired at a law firm – 1, 2, 9  
Discrimination; gender – 2, 3, 4, 17, 19  
Domestic help – 7, 12  
Drug era - 6  
Edgewater Mall - 7  
Edgewater Park Hotel - 7  
Edgewater Park Subdivision - 7  
Equal Rights Amendment – 10, 17, 20

Evers, Medgar – 5, 12  
Family – 1, 6  
Father's law practice – 1, 2, 4, 8, 19  
Faubus, Orval Eugene - 6  
Fear – 6, 16  
Feminist - 10  
Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals - 14  
First Baptist Church, Jackson Mississippi – 11, 16, 19  
Freedom Riders – 3, 4, 5, 14, 16  
Galloway Memorial Methodist Church – 11, 16  
GI Bill - 15  
Gibbs, Katrina Bibb – 13, 14  
Gilfoy, J. R. - 11  
Governor's Conferences – 10, 15  
Great Depression - 18  
Guernsey, Sue - 11  
Harrison, Alferdteen - 12  
Henley, Bobby - 20  
Hippies - 6  
Hydrogen bomb - 8  
Integration – 1, 11, 12  
Iron Curtain - 4  
Jackson State University - 12  
John F. Kennedy Museum - 4  
Johnson, Lyndon Baines - 8  
Johnson, Paul B. Jr. - 14  
Junior Auxiliary - 20  
Junior League - 20  
Junkin, John - 9  
Khayat, Robert - 15  
King, Martin Luther Jr. – 4, 14  
Korean War Veterans - 15

Little Rock, Arkansas - 6  
 Margaret Walker Alexander Division of the African-American Studies - 12  
 Media - 7  
 Mission Mississippi - 13  
 Mississippi Bar - 2  
 Mississippi College – 6, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16  
 Mississippi College School of Law – 13, 14  
 Mississippi Committee for the Humanities - 6  
 Mississippi Court of Appeals - 14  
 Mississippi Employment Security Commission – 7, 18  
 Mississippi Employment Security Commission Day Labor and Domestic help desk - 7  
 Mississippi Gulf Coast – 2, 9, 18  
 Mississippi Institute of Higher Learning - 15  
 Mississippi Historical Society - 3  
 Mississippi Humanities Council – 6, 15  
 Mississippi Legislature – 4, 6, 7, 9, 12, 18  
*Mississippi Remixed* - 13  
 Mississippi State Law Library - 3  
 Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission - 15  
 Mississippi University for Women – 18, 20  
 Mosley, Jessie - 12  
 Motherhood – 3, 19  
 Murphy, William – 1, 15  
 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) - 5  
 Norman, Cora – 6, 11, 12, 14, 15  
 Oil and Gas Division - 3  
 Parchman - 12  
 Parents – 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 17, 18, 19  
 Payne, Robert (Bob) – 6, 9, 15, 16, 19  
 Pearl, Mississippi – 11, 13  
 Perkins, John - 15  
 Plessy vs. Ferguson - 1

Poll tax - 5  
Pregnancy – 2, 3, 4, 6, 9  
PTA - 11  
Public schools; black - 2  
Public schools; general – 2, 10  
Public schools; white - 2  
Puerto Rican students at University of Mississippi - 1  
Racism – 5, 6, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16  
Rankin County, Mississippi – 7, 10, 11  
Republican Party - 15  
Riots – 8, 16  
Russia – 4, 8  
Segregation - 6  
Sillers, Walter - 9  
Sit-ins – 6, 8  
Southern Baptist Convention - 20  
Southwick, Leslie H. - 14  
Sputnik - 8  
Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) - 5  
Summer, A. F. - 12  
United States Supreme Court - 1  
United States Supreme Court Justices - 1  
University of Mississippi – 17, 18  
University of Mississippi Law School – 1, 6, 15, 18  
University of Southern Mississippi - 17  
Vietnam War - 8  
Voting – 1, 5  
Waller, William L. - 15  
War in Afghanistan - 16  
Ward, Jarvis - 13  
Washington, D. C. - 16  
Watts riots (California) - 16

Weary, Dolphus – 7, 12, 13

Williams, John Bell - 14

Women ministers - 20

Women's rights – 2, 3, 20

Working mother – 2, 3, 4, 9, 16, 17, 18, 19

Working women – 2, 3, 10, 17, 18, 19, 20

World War II – 4, 18