

Ken Hollin Interview
Tempe Historical Museum

Tape #: ????? (Side A)

Date of Interview: August 19, 2008

Interviewer: Charlene Shovic

Transcribed by: Charlene Shovic

Note: All names of people and places need to be checked for accuracy.

Begin Tape 1 of 1, Side A:

INTERVIEWER: My name is Charlene Shovic and I am here with Kenneth Hollin and we're here at Arizona State University in Charlene's office and this interview is being conducted for the Tempe Historical Museum for the Oral History program on August 18th ...I'm sorry, August 19th, 2008. Alright, Ken, do you have any questions for me?

HOLLIN: No. I go by Ken, though. You said Kenneth.

INT: Ken, sorry.

HOLLIN: Only my mom calls me Kenneth. (laughs)

INT: Ken, um, when did you first come to ASU?

HOLLIN: As a student? Or first visit here?

INT: First visit here.

HOLLIN: Well, I was brought up in Yuma, Arizona, and uh...I'll give you a roundabout answer. I'm the youngest of three kids in my family. My older brother and sister both went to U of A. When I was in high school I would go and visit them so I was a Wildcat fan growing up. And then in my junior year of high school, junior/senior year I was on the Yuma High basketball team. So every other weekend we'd have basketball...in the basketball season we'd have an overnight trip – played a game Friday then another game Saturday in this area. And so our basketball coach at the time, Bob McClendan (sp?) who was in the state legislature from Yuma for many years – he just recently retired. But he used to play basketball at ASU, and so on Saturday mornings before the game, to kill some time, he would bring us to ASU. So we'd walk around ASU, go to the MU, shoot pool and stuff, so that's when I started liking ASU.

INT: Now what year was this?

HOLLIN: This was '64 –'65, '65-'66. And then as a student, I came up here and started my career here in 1968.

INT: Okay, and what made you decide ASU over UofA? What made you decide ASU period?

HOLLIN: Well, you know, part of just being exposed to ASU, just like I just mentioned. I just started liking ASU better, it was probably better for me. I spent more time on the campus, so I liked it.

INT: And did you play basketball when you got here?

HOLLIN: No, just in high school.

INT: So 1968 is when you first matriculated to ASU as a freshman.

HOLLIN: No, I wasn't a freshman – I was a transfer student. I went to Arizona Western Junior College in Yuma for two years before I came here.

INT: Okay. And what did you study when you first got here?

HOLLIN: Well, I started out in Civil Engineering...no, I didn't, I did Civil Engineering when I was at AWJC. I chose engineering cause my brother was in Engineering. Thought if he could do it, I could do it. Except he was smarter than I was, so...Anyway, my freshman year, I changed to education. So when I came to ASU, I was a secondary education major.

INT: Okay. So before, tell me again where you were at?

HOLLIN: Arizona Western Junior College in Yuma, Arizona.

INT: Arizona Western.

HOLLIN: Arizona Western Junior College. Yes.

INT: Arizona Western Junior College. Okay, so then you did elementary education?

HOLLIN: It was secondary.

INT: Secondary education. And did you continue on to get your degree in secondary education?

HOLLIN: I did get my degree in secondary education. At that time, you didn't do your student teaching until your last semester, so you didn't really know what teaching was about until you were about to graduate, and by that time it was too late to change your major (laughs). So, uh, I did my student teaching, and I taught

my math and (inaudible) but I never really got in to education teaching-wise. When I got my degree I never really taught.

INT: Did you not like it once you had experienced that?

HOLLIN: Yeah, not really, because I didn't like being confined in the room all day long, and I didn't like doing the daily lesson plans, so yeah, it wasn't really for me.

INT: What was it like teaching that age for that semester?

HOLLIN: It was an experience. Student teaching back in those days, you had to apply to the school you wanted to student-teach at the year prior, and you may or may not get it because, you know, you're on the waiting list and so forth. But there's a special program. Wait, let me back up a minute because the teacher, I want to talk a little about the teacher that got me in to the program. Naomi Wamack.

INT: Wamack?

HOLLIN: Wamack. She's uh, don't know if she's still alive now or not. But anyways, she was a teacher. At that time it was Naomi Cohen was her name, but she got remarried to a Wamack.

INT: So Cohen to Wamack.

HOLLIN: Cohen...C-O-H-E-N, and Wamack, W-A-M-A-C-K. She was Professor Emeritus here for a while...I don't know if she's still living, but anyway. She was a teacher that really...she was really a dynamite teacher. She really got you involved, was really interested in you. Um, but I took a couple education classes from her, and those were probably the best classes I ever had in college because of her, and how she was a teacher. She was just really a neat, neat, person. But she got me in to...there was a

special program at the Job Corps Center... Job Corps Center was a federal program that works with black students who have dropped out of school and tried to get them back in to get their GED, skills, trained, and employed. So there's a lot of at-risk kids, obviously. So there was special program ASU was running with Job Corps Center where you could get half your student teaching for a semester, well, half a semester I guess, at the high school and the other half was at the Job Corps Center. And so she wanted me to do that, and I said, yeah, I'll do it, so... as I mentioned, you had to wait a long time to get your application then in to the school, but she told me okay, what school do you want, and it was just automatic that I got in to it. I told her, I said, well let me do Phoenix Union High School, because Phoenix Union was highly minority at that time, and Phoenix Union was where the current ASU Downtown center is located, that was all Phoenix Union that area in there.

INT: Yeah, okay.

HOLLIN: And she said, well, yeah, you can do that, but let me give you a suggestion. She said - Saguaro High School in Scottsdale. And Saguaro was one of the richest high schools at that time. Kristen went there. Kristen...

INT: Nielsen. Hm-mm.

HOLLIN: She said why don't you go to Saguaro, because the only black people at that school are Lincoln Ragsdale's two kids. And Lincoln Ragsdale was a very prominent African-American person here in Phoenix and in Arizona at that time. So he had a lot of money - had a funeral home, and that's why his kids went to Saguaro.

INT: How do you spell his last name?

HOLLIN: Ragsdale. R-A-G-S-D-A-L-E. And Lincoln was his first name. He's also one of the Tuskegee Airmen. But anyway. So I went out there to teach because she wanted to throw some diversity out at Saguaro HS, so that's where I did my teaching. And really, it was fun. And I was teaching a Social Studies type class, and I remember my supervising teacher, he was there for the first class, and then after that he said, okay you're really on your own...he never really came back in. So I did what I wanted to do. And I brought in some books, my own books, that I wanted kids to read to do for book reports. And it was like "Soul on Ice", "Malcolm X", all these, you know, Chicago 6...8, whatever it is. All these radical type books, I brought in. And these kids ate it up, did reports on them and stuff.

INT: I bet.

HOLLIN: So the other part I went to Job Corps Center, and did the other half of my student teaching. It was a good experience, too. That's where I ended up working for a while, at Job Corps Center, as a counselor.

INT: Really?

HOLLIN: Yeah, but um, back to Naomi, she...I remember there was a time I was uh...I got kinda tired of school. It took me a long time to get my degree...because I dropped out, worked full-time, came back, was working full-time, taking classes part-time, finishing up my degree. And then the last semester, I did full-time, full-time work and full-time school, finishing up the last semester.

INT: While doing that internship teaching?

HOLLIN: No, this is after that. When I went back to finish my degree. I remember the first year or so when I was here, I just got fed up with school and whatever, and I just dropped out – stopped

going to school, basically. And that first week, she went to one of my friends who was in that class, found out where I lived, and came over one evening, and sat and talked to me, we sat and cried together, talked about what was wrong...so she basically got me back in to school.

INT: Wow.

HOLLIN: Got me back in to it. Thought I wanted to teach because she was just such a wonderful person in my life. Very first of my first role-models here. Very wonderful person. This little Jewish lady. So nice. About 4'6". (laughs). So dynamic.

INT: Why do you think she did that?

HOLLIN: That's just the kind of person she was. She said she saw something in me as far as some kind of potential to be a teacher, helping students. Kind of a natural thing I had, get up talking, feeling comfortable in front of the class. She did a tape recording...no, video tape of us, would have us do a lecture in front of the class so she could critique it and replay it. And so she said she wanted me to do the first one. So I got up and just did my little thing. It was like uh..interactive...not lesson, lecture.

INT: Okay.

HOLLIN: And she videotaped it, and the guy that was videotaping was a professor from ASU and the College of Education, and when we got through, he says, you know I thought Naomi just set this up that you were a teacher already and she just wants to show the class...she said, that's just him, that's just his natural abilities.

INT: Wow.

HOLLIN: And so she wanted to make sure that I didn't fall off the face of the earth, so to speak. And years later, when I was having some difficulties, years later, I decided to come back to the university, and she helped me job-wise, she was just a neat person.

INT: So you came over from Community College, from Arizona Western University, you came over in '68 as a transfer student, and so how long were you here, what year did you graduate?

HOLLIN: 1973.

INT: 1973, okay.

HOLLIN: As I mentioned, I dropped out of school, came back part-time to finish up my degree.

INT: Right. Okay, in the meantime, what was the progression after you graduate? You graduated in 1973, you said you worked at Job Corps? Right afterwards?

HOLLIN: Actually I started working at Job Corps Center before I graduated from ASU, that's where I did my student-teaching. So they said well, come back and be a math instructor, cause Job Center you didn't have to have your teaching certificate. (inaudible) weren't accredited by a state board. So I taught math for a couple months, and then a counseling position came up, so they said we'll move you to the counseling position. So I did counseling there for about two years, left there and went to Phoenix OIC – Opportunities Industrialization Center. Which is the same type of a program as is Job Corps Center. I was a counselor there for several years. And then I came to work for ASU in 1985 I guess it was. With Educational Opportunities Center – EOC, it was a federally-funded program. It was a grant that ASU had received from the government. So we were employees of ASU but we didn't recruit for ASU – we were

helping students get in to higher education in general. We did a lot of things like helping students fill out the Federal Application for Student Aid, or FAFSA, Career Interest Inventories, see where they wanted to go, application for colleges. Most of those kids wanted to go to Community Colleges. Again, we were working with low-income, first generation students, just get them anywhere. So I worked with EOC for a number of years, and then I moved to ASU Minority Recruitment Office. Back in the day this was a separate office, this was in 1980....I can't remember back that far, this was in the '80s...

INT: (laughs)

HOLLIN: So I went in to...and we had certain schools we targeted. We went to recruit at...schools, again, with high minority populations. So we were recruiting for ASU basically, but with the title of Minority Student Recruitment, we were obviously trying to get the minority students here to ASU. But all the schools we went to, because we were the rep really from ASU, they said one thing you have to make sure you work with is all the kids. So that was not problem, we worked with all the students as far as helping them get here. Then after that, ASU President John Russell, no, Russell Nelson...he was president of ASU back in the '80s...he decided to mainstream Minority Recruitment in to the Undergraduate Admissions Office. So that's how I started working at Undergraduate Admissions, and I've been working there since...since about '88.

INT: Okay, so in 1988, what was your title at that point?

HOLLIN: Assistant Director for Student Recruitment.

INT: Okay, so did you oversee all of the recruitment efforts?

HOLLIN: Not at that point, no, then much later on, probably in the late 90s, we got a new Director of Admissions. When I was working for Admissions, Christine Wilkonsen (sp?) was Director, before she became Vice President. And that's another one of my role models right there. I probably had more respect for her than any other person that's worked for the university. What was the question? (laughs)

INT: (laughs) I guess what was the progression from 1988 to the present. And you had said the late 90s that's when your role became...

HOLLIN: Right, overseeing recruitment. So in the late 80s...90s, we had a new Director of Admissions, he decided to break Recruitment in to two areas...three areas...what you call...out of state recruitment and then the in-state recruitment was broke up in to the Metro Team and Greater Arizona. The Metro Team was where we worked with the schools that are with highly populated minority students. Greater Arizona kind of did other schools. Most of our schools, matter of fact all our schools were in the Metropolitan Phoenix area. So the other recruiters were doing in-state but further out of Maricopa County, and all the reaches of Arizona. So I oversaw that group, there was about three of us matter of fact. Then later on they made another change and I took over as Coordinator of Recruitment for the entire state of Arizona for Admissions. So I had 10 or 12 people working for me.

INT: Wow. Okay, so did we skip anything there from the late 80s to the late 90s?

HOLLIN: Nothing of any importance (laughs).

INT: (laughs) But after you became the overseer of Recruitment for all of Arizona, what was the progression since then, because I know that's not your current title.

HOLLIN: Well, part of that doing that, not only were we at schools, but there was a couple of programs that we oversaw, dealing with minorities, first generation kids. One was called FOCUS, where we invited...these were selected schools that had high population of minorities, first generation, low-income, so we would invite them to campus to visit for a day, and go do workshops, and student panels, and campus tours just to get them indoctrinated in to the university and let them know that yes, you can be here. So we brought out, probably around 25- 30 selected high schools we brought out in the fall, seniors, and then in the spring freshmen and sophomores from those schools. And each school would send about 30 kids and so we'd have three schools a day. So we'd have between 60-100 kids on campus and we'd do workshops, a panel, campus tours, so we probably brought in close to a couple thousand kids a year.

INT: Yeah.

HOLLIN: The other program was called Early Outreach and was the same philosophy but was geared towards 8th graders. So we'd bring 8th graders on campus and there's another couple thousand a year we'd bring out, again from those selected schools. And this is just a one-day shot type of thing, probably things we'd regret that we couldn't develop something cause we'd work them constantly year to year, but it was meant just as an exposure. So the purpose of it...to get out on this campus. To a lot of these kids, they come out here, then live here, ASU is in their backyard all their lives, and they think well, ASU no, I've never thought about ASU, I don't belong there, it's not for me. So that was our whole deal – to try to convince them, yeah, it is for you, you can come out here, if you work at it and set your goals and so forth.

INT: What do you think is the biggest roadblock in their minds from seeing this as a reality?

HOLLIN: Um...Just not being able to visualize themselves on a college campus. They don't feel like they belong. And there's the money issue as well. So you let them know how you can get scholarships, there's federal aid, so forth. They face a lot of challenges they face coming in, family obligations, you know the whole 9 yards, and there's probably not a real good record of kids. Even now, while I'm getting the other program, the Maroon and Gold Scholarship Program...So I'm getting Maroon and Gold Applications now, and a couple of them I see that they went through the Early Outreach as an 8th grader, and here they are coming in to ASU.

INT: How cool.

HOLLIN: But we can't really track it that way, but some of them did find their way here. Maroon and Gold is the other program that I'm running at the same time. As you know, it's a scholarship program for low-income students, first-generational students, minority students, and we got about 480 each year in the program, freshmen through senior year. So that's what I was doing, and since then I'm just doing the Maroon and Gold Scholarship now, plus the Advantage Program. Are you familiar with the Advantage Program?

INT: Not really.

HOLLIN: The Advantage Program is all part of President Crow's initiative, and I'm trying to think of the name of it..."Access to ASU" is one of them..."Sun Devil Promise" is what it's called. And the Advantage Program is ASU's guaranteeing students \$25,000 or less family income will have all their direct costs paid, through a combination of financial aid. So they just started that, and there was not a retention program for them. So they asked me a couple years ago, last year actually, to put together a program

similar to the Maroon and Gold for the Advantage kids. And both those programs have mentors they see once a month, and they have a monthly activity, just to keep track of them. So we put that together so there's another 200 plus students that will be participating this year. Last year, and it's not a mandatory program...it's kind of voluntary, they say you're expected to attend, but you can't force them...So last year, the pilot program, they told us July or June, they wanted to start something in August. We thought, "Yeah, right!" (laughs). So we did the best we could to put it together. Using community members from here, Poly, Downtown, West Campus, same coordinators that work with Maroon and Gold, too. But we put together a program – we had 30 students last year that participated.

INT: Out of 200?

HOLLIN: Well, out of 300 plus that were eligible. And this year we've had so far 217.

INT: Wow.

HOLLIN: We're doing peer mentoring, instead of staff mentoring. Maroon and Gold is staff mentoring. We're doing peer mentoring in Advantage. So we send out emails to ASU students, upper-division, who were 3.5 or better and have them complete an application. Not that 3.5 is any indication you will enter but at least you have some academic success. If you haven't been able to succeed yourself then you really can't mentor someone else, as far as our students. So we have them fill out an application and we read what they had to say and selected from them. So we have about 480 current ASU students who want to be mentors.

INT: Wow.

HOLLIN: So we probably have more mentors than we have mentees...so it's kinda neat.

INT: I bet.

HOLLIN: So me, and there's a committee that puts it together and there's all 4 campuses involved and I've got four people from the Multicultural Student Center. AJ, Alonso Jones, Marylee Coronado (sp?), Masanah Hoteh (sp?). Liberty Az (sp?) from our Financial Aid Office, Troy Melendez with the Learning Support Services, and Marilyn Mason with the Strategic Marketing component of Undergraduate Admissions, and that's at Tempe Campus, so there's 9 or 10 of us, we meet and try to put it together.

INT: Wow. That's really neat. So it sounds like you've been at ASU, and you've seen a lot of parts of ASU. One question – what are some of the changes you've seen at ASU?

HOLLIN: Obviously the physical change. The office I am sitting in now was a business parking lot when I was a student, wasn't built yet. Parking Structure 1 was Goodwin Stadium, the old football stadium, was still up. The baseball field was around here too. So all the physical building of the university, I've seen that change. I've seen what... 4 different presidents since I've been here...watch their progression. It's, you know, obviously going in a direction it probably needs to go. One thing I do miss about the good ol' days is...they were, I want to say more user-friendly, or, people-oriented. What's happening now is it's a business model, the way it's being run right now, which probably is the only way it can get to where it needs to get. But you know I do miss the good ol' days when we were not as numbers-driven. But you roll with the punches and go on...

INT: Mm-hm. What's been the biggest challenge you face in your position, doing what you do?

HOLLIN: Biggest challenge, huh. I would say getting done everything you need to do with very limited personnel. Because the way admissions is set up now, everybody is slammed as far as responsibilities, and spread thin, but basically I head the committee as I mentioned, working with the Maroon & Gold and Advantage, have tremendous help, but they have their other jobs, and so it's not like they don't have other responsibilities.

INT: Let's talk about ASU as a broad whole then, in your experience...what do you think ASU excels at most?

HOLLIN: I would say just being a welcoming environment. People feel comfortable being here, people like being here, as far as...most of the time (laughs).

INT: (laughs).

HOLLIN: It's just a good environment to be in...it feels good, as far as students, the programs that are offered...there's so many and such a wide range, it's amazing. I think there's a lot of people here that work behind the scenes, they don't get the publicity and so forth...they work hard to make it a more personalized experience for the students. You hear a lot of that, from students, that coming here to such a big place I didn't expect to have such personal treatment. And not every student has the same experience. But a lot of students do and that's because of the dedicated staff that work here and they're in to that student experience and making it as good as it possibly can. People are the biggest asset at the university, and all the programming, where they're going now is important...but without people who are dedicated to make it happen, it wouldn't happen. So I see that as a challenge for the university itself - to recognize those people and make them feel appreciated, and make them feel like you appreciate what they're doing, and appreciate the effort you're putting in to it. I think

that's obviously a big challenge for a large university like this, but it's important you make that connection with your staff, the people that are working for you. The janitors, facilities people, teachers, they mean everything. Because one of the assets of this university is just the physical beauty of it...it looks very nice. That didn't just happen...it happened because there's some people that are working there butts off to make it happen. It's all tied together. You may have the most wonderful programs in the world, offerings in the world at a university, but if you don't have the people and the aesthetics to make it appealing, it's not going to work.

INT: So where do you see ASU going, say 2070 or something?

HOLLIN: I don't know, I don't even think that far ahead for myself, let alone for the university. (Laughs.) Seriously, though, I never think about it. That's why I'm not president of the university...because I don't have a vision, I just do my day to day thing, and year to year type of thing. So who knows where's it going to be in 2070...who knows where it's gonna be in 2020. Hopefully it will continue to grow, I just hope it doesn't get too big for itself...and not be able to handle its primary mission of taking care of the students. That's a real danger if you just kinda go crazy. One thing I noticed when I first came here in '68, there was what...35,000 students maybe. Somewhere in there. And there was a real, big growth spurt soon after that, '70s-'80s where it just took off...and it was like...was it really planned? It just kind of exploded. It's like we jumped ahead and had to go back to put the infrastructure together to make it work even better. I guess the university should watch that...grow, but also make sure that you're pulling everyone along with you.

INT: Absolutely. So...can you relate (I like this question...) a funny story from your time in office, in what you've been doing here. The examples it gives here is it can be anything like a public

address faux-pas, or a hysterical moment at a Board of Regents meeting. Something like that, where you've noticed something funny.

HOLLIN: Well, I had an embarrassing moment... We had these fall visit programs. Basically, all these reps from all the state universities, community colleges in the local area, military, and so forth, travel to just about every high school in the state of Arizona and make presentations to the seniors usually, in an auditorium or whatever... One year I went back to my alma mater, Yuma High School - that was one of the high schools I recruited from when I was in the recruitment part of it. So I was in an auditorium of seniors, 300-400 kids, and you'd get up and introduce yourself, and I said I'm a Yuma High graduate, and the crowd went wild..."ahhhh"...but right before they came in, I was on the stage and I was talking to a counselor, and I bent down because he was standing off the stage, and I bent down to talk to him, and my pants went..."Ripp!"...I thought, "Oh, great." So I ran out to the car... we just happened to be leaving that day coming back from Phoenix so I had my suitcases in the car. I did a quick change of pants, came back, and finished the program. That was kind of embarrassing... But luckily it didn't happen with all the students in there, it probably would have been more embarrassing.
(Laughs.)

INT: This is after they all left?

HOLLIN: This is before they got there. (Laughs.)

INT: (Laughs.) Oh, man. Oh, man. Alright...is there anything else you want to add about ASU, thoughts on ASU, experiences as a student and an employee.

HOLLIN: I think, you were talking about my experience as far as the diversity issue...when I was a student here, there wasn't a

whole lot of black students around. There wasn't much of a social thing at the university. When we'd go out to socialize, we'd go in to South Phoenix or we'd go to Mesa. There wasn't that much in Tempe itself. I was here during the times when the war, Vietnam was going on, Civil Rights. We took part in a lot of demonstrations, and so forth. It was just a good time to be here at the university, or any university. I mean, we did our little protest and things, but it was nothing compared to what was going on at San Francisco or those other ... We did alright, we held our own. There was an incident...I remember when... I don't know, it felt like, at that time, there wasn't a whole lot for black students here. And unless you were an athlete, you really weren't much. I'm sure a lot of the student body probably felt that, too. But the black athletes got taken care of, of course, but if you were just a plain student, there really was not much for you there. You just kind of made your own way, did what you could. But I wouldn't trade the experience for anything, it was a good experience. Definitely a good experience.

INT: How many, could you count them on one hand, other black students were here...

HOLLIN: Student wise? I'm guessing a couple hundred. You know I could be way off there. That's my first guess.

INT: Yeah. Were there any clubs?

HOLLIN: There were traditional black fraternities and sororities. But there was nothing like today where there is multicultural programming...the clubs they have today, those didn't really exist.

INT: So you actually participated in your own movement here, in a way. What types of things did you guys do?

HOLLIN: The usual protesting of war, marching in the streets at night, we'd march once in a while. There'd be lots of people out in the streets marching.

INT: Really – here in Tempe?

HOLLIN: In Tempe, yeah. The one big march I remember we started here on campus, walked down to Saguaro Hall, circled around back to Mill. We came down University and back on campus. We'd have a police escort the whole time. I remember as we came down College Ave., coming south of College as you turn left to go down University...my buddies and I ran up ahead to the bridge, to the walkway there, got on top, and looked as people were coming around there. There were just thousands, there were people from one side to the other side, walking all the way down, wrapping around College. I mean, there were just a lot of people there. They were protesters for the Vietnam War. So it wasn't all black people – mostly all just young kids. But I remember we were walking down by the Tempe Police Dept., and of course there was worry if people were going to get out of hand, start breaking in to stores, whatever. I remember walking past them, looking down the alley, and there was a line of what must have been about 20 or 30 Tempe Police Officers in their riot gear, their helmets, shot guns, their vests and everything, just in case things got out of hand...they were ready to bust it all up. But nothing ever did. ASU – it was a typical laid-back demonstration. (Inaudible). It was exciting. It was kinda neat to participate in that.

INT: Yeah.

HOLLIN: And I remember another time there was a demonstration that had more to do with race at that time. There was a guy here that played...I don't think I'll use any names...but he came from Detroit. He was here on a football track...don't think he ever did, but anyway. He had an apartment over here

somewhere on the other side. Over where those apartments are across Rural. So he had an apartment there with his wife. We were up on the 6th floor...it was La Mancha then, it's Cholla now. We were on the 6th floor balcony, and we saw him coming up on the street there. We thought he had a shirt with white on the top, red on the bottom – two colored t-shirt. But when we came up there, we saw that it was blood. What happened was he was in the swimming pool with his wife at the apartment. And 3 or 4 guys started harassing him...calling his wife a “bitch” and you know...doing that type of thing. And he was a pretty big guy. So he got out of the pool, those guys got out of the pool, and they had a knife and stabbed him. So who goes swimming with a knife?! So this whole thing was planned. But that set off a series of demonstrations by African-American students and people in the community for the next two or three days were meeting with the police chief here and the president and so forth to try and iron out the problems. There was a “black house” it was called, over here. Just probably by the, oh what was that street...Lemon Street.

INT: Terrace?

HOLLIN: Terrace. Yeah, they were all houses. And there was a place called the “Black House” that where a lot of black people gather. So couple nights later we had hundreds of people, coming from South Phoenix and everything. Because we were going to demonstrate about what had happened to this guy. It got pretty tense. But nothing ever happened. I remember there was a police helicopter hovering overhead. Just to keep watch on things. I remember one of the guys he pulled out his .45 and took 4 shots and the helicopter took off. And it was interesting, because we left there to march, coming towards University. And two houses down there was a Jewish Fraternity that was living there. And so a couple of guys were picking up bricks because they were going to throw it through the window. And a bunch of us said, “no no...you don't need to do that.” So they didn't throw it. Years

later, in one of my classes, a year or two later...I was talking to this kid. He said you know what? I was in that house that night. That was his fraternity. He said our guys were in there, we were scared to death, and a bunch of them had guns, so if you guys would have thrown that brick, they would have started shooting, they were so afraid. So you know...just little things like that. That's not part of history that you may want to now.

INT: No, that is. I think it's really important history that...I think it's exactly what needs to be known.

HOLLIN: It's not like...(inaudible)

INT: Right. And that's fine. That incident, were those men who stabbed the other guy, were those men Jewish? Or was that...

HOLLIN: No, they were never caught. No, we never knew who they were – we just knew they were white guys. But again, they were there for that particular reason. Because this particular guy, he was kind of well known. Don't know if you ever heard of the Detroit Riots. Back in '60s Detroit burned down. He was real close to the leader of that. So this guy... they knew who he was. So they were trying to get him.

INT: Wow. Are there any other examples of how race played in to your schooling here, or just being a student at that time.

HOLLIN: Oh, just one little incident I can recall, back in Dr. Wamack's class. She would always have us sit around in circles and talk about what our plans were. One kid...and we were seniors at that point, he said, yeah, I wouldn't mind going and teaching at a "colored school"...I saw Dr. Wamack looking at me at the corner of her eye...I said, "what colored school (inaudible)?" (laughs). But it was, you know, in the late 60s, especially in Arizona, you didn't expect to hear that kind of thing. Maybe down

South, yeah, but not in Arizona necessarily. So there was a lot of bigotry and stuff going on here, it was more subtle. And this is Arizona and not out there, so it wasn't in your face type of thing. But that's just... I was thinking there, looking around. And not only him, but other people who were educators and getting ready to graduate with a degree. And I'm saying to myself, "Oh my god, how can some of these people be teaching someone's kids...Aaaah!. Help us." (Laughs).

INT: Oh, man.

HOLLIN: But I mean, that's a generalization. I mean, most of the people were probably pretty good. But there were enough that stood out that it got your attention. It's funny, there's a lady that works here, Pat Connington (sp?). She's been working here longer than I have. Probably 30 years in Admissions. And every once in a while, she talks about... "you remember when we were in the Moeur Building. (And this was back in '68-'69.) I remember there was a protest coming here. We had to shut the windows and locked the windows and doors and we were afraid those people would just come in and go crazy." And I said, "Pat I was probably one of those people you were trying to lock out." (Laughs). She goes, "oh." Yeah...(Laughs).

INT: (laughs). What about Tempe Beach? Did you ever go to Tempe Beach?

HOLLIN: It wasn't much of anything back then. Not like it is now. It was probably just a little, run down park. Back before they built it up. I didn't personally go there. I didn't personally go to a lot of stuff in Tempe. The people that I was around with, there wasn't much in Tempe...

----SIDE B----

INT: Okay, so...Tempe. You said you were born in Yuma. What was the date, if you don't mind me asking.

HOLLIN: 1948.

INT: 1948. Born in Yuma, and then you came out here initially to go, well, basketball a little bit, then initially to go to ASU in '68. But family life...this is probably a little bit non-related to Tempe. But did any of your family come out here and what was family life like when they came out here – what kinds of things did you guys do?

HOLLIN: Come to Tempe? Oh, no. My brother and sister were already in college. No, none of my family actually came out here. I had an aunt and uncle that lived in South Phoenix I'd go visit occasionally, just to say hi, that type of thing. But when I was student here, no, not the family.

INT: Okay, so who was the first member of your family to settle in Yuma?

HOLLIN: Probably my dad's...I don't know if my grandfather was here before my dad or if my dad came. I know my dad came...at the end, he was in the Korean War. So at the end of the war – it was actually fought in the Philippines. And the story my mom tells is that when he was in the Phillipines it would constantly rain and so he said when he got out of the army he wanted to go to a place it didn't rain. So he ended up in Yuma. So that's the story – they settled here in '44, '42, somewhere back there. And then our family, again, doesn't have to do with Tempe, but you asked about the family...yeah, as I mentioned, I was the youngest of three kids. And we were pretty involved in the city of Yuma. My dad and mom both had college degrees, and that was very rare back in the '30s and '40s for black people to have a

degree. And then have both your parents to have gone to college. They went to all-black colleges and got their degree. In Yuma, my dad was a postman, a mail man for many years. And he became the Assistant Postmaster General in Yuma, and then he died of a heart attack a few days later. He had worked hard to get there. But we went through a lot of things back then. You didn't think about it too much as far as being a racial thing, but there was a lot things going on back then, in those days. Like my dad was very involved in state – he was the school PTO president, a lot of community things. He was president of the state NAACP of Arizona. So he was well-known, pretty well-liked, respected.

INT: What was his name?

HOLLIN: James Thomas Hollin. The school we went to – Cardwel (sp?) Elementary School down in Yuma is still there. They named the library after him about four or five years ago so we go down – there's a little plaque there and see the James T. Hollin Library. Really neat to take the kids back to see that. But you know, there was some racism going on back then. I remember this friend of his was a ...I don't remember her name, but she was a state Republican, big Kahuna, and she was like Barry Goldwater's confidant...but anyway. My dad wanted to move to this neighborhood in Yuma. And the only black families were one each on the corner. And he wanted the house in the middle. And so he said they're probably not going to go for that. And so Mrs. (inaudible) said "no no, there's not racism here in Yuma." He said, "Okay, let's see."...So she set up a "sting." My dad went up to the realtor and said, "this is what I want –the house." And he said, "oh, sorry, we've got nothing." And the next day she sent a white friend of hers, asked for the exact same thing, (inaudible) and she got the house. She found out the neighbors were meeting because they wanted to know what they could do about us moving to the middle of the neighborhood. (inaudible). And so she heard about this meeting, she went in there, she kicked the door in and

said, “How dare you. Do you know who this man is?” So all that kind of stuff. We ended up living there. And the neighbors (inaudible)...my dad would work hard landscaping. So we went through some stuff like that. But from our dad we took - as far as just being involved in the community and from my mom, we took that, too. My brother - he was senior class president, and at Yuma High School, there were probably 300-400 people in our class. And there weren't that many black people in our class. So people liked us for who we were. My sister was Student Body Secretary – my brother was Student Body Vice President. Then two years later she was Student Body Secretary. Then two years later I was Senior Class President of the High School. Then I went on to Arizona Western Junior College and the second year I was Student Body President up there. A bit of Arizona history – I was the first African-American Student Body President of any college university in the State of Arizona. Nobody knows, it seems like no big deal – but I know.

INT: Wow. At Arizona Western. Wow.

HOLLIN: But there was another guy who was a Student Body President at Mesa Community College – a black guy. But Mesa had a thing where they had one person for the fall, and a second person for the spring. So he was President for the Spring – I was for the whole year starting in Fall. So by one semester! (Laughs.)

INT: (Laughs.)

HOLLIN: So coming up to ASU, it was like – we just learned how to get along with people, period, regardless of color. That's how my dad raised us. We took a person based on who they were, not the color of their skin or whatever. So I was kind of naïve in a lot of ways when I was coming up here as far as race relations were concerned. When I got here it was kind of eye-opening that it's not as peachy-keen as it was back in Yuma, sort of thing. You

don't have problems – there were no problems, at least not in my eyes. Coming here I realized there were definitely some racial issues, and you gotta deal with it. Overall, it was a good experience.

INT: Were there certain examples or certain incidents that made you realize, “Wow” ...here in Tempe?

HOLLIN: I remember one incident where Chile's is now...there was a Denny's or one of those types of chain restaurants. I remember walking in to the restaurant, and I was with my good friend from Yuma and his wife, and they're both white. So I'm walking in with her, and we're talking, and my friend is behind me. So I'm walking in, this black man with a white woman, and the whole place just stared at us – everybody in there was just staring at us because of that. And I remember yelling out, “What the hell are you looking at?” (Laughs). And everybody just started eating again. You know, I'd never seen that before, never though about it. It just kind of hits you in the face. But other than that, I'm sure there's something hanging back in my mind but I can't remember, that's all I can remember now.

INT: Did you live in this area, in Tempe, after you graduated?

HOLLIN: Yeah, lived on-campus for a number of years, then got a house on the south of University, on Wilson. There were three or four of us, and we'd pay \$300-400/month for the four of us. Yeah, then I moved out to Phoenix, lived there a number of years, then came back to Tempe. My kids were almost going to high school so it was about '83...moved back in '83.

INT: Where did you live at that point?

HOLLIN: Lived in some apartments over...north of University, and Hardy. Lived there then moved down to south Hardy, on Southern.

INT: Okay, so you lived around Tempe a lot...

(phone rings)

INT: How do you define your identity? How would you define Ken? After talking, reflecting, who are you?

HOLLIN: I'm a pretty simple person. I think the philosophy that I try to live by...but not only what my parents instilled in me as well...going back to Naomi Wamack, that teacher...after she had helped me a number of times, I told her one time you know, I sometimes feel guilty because I always come to you for help, asking for help. And she quickly said don't ever feel guilty for that. What you do, if you feel you owe me something, you do it for someone else, you help someone else. So that's pretty much what I've tried to do – help other people. As much as I can. That's why I enjoy the job I am in – the working part, not necessarily the other (inaudible) that goes with it. But being able to have an impact on people's lives and help them get to...to help them realize their dreams. As I mentioned earlier, when you asked where I saw the university in 2070...I said I don't really know. Because I don't. I don't think ahead. I just do day to day what I want to do day to day. Obviously a bit longer than that. I don't really set a lot of goals for myself – I just do what I can each day to the best of my ability. I don't get hung up on prestigious things... job titles, or legacy...I don't worry about that stuff. It'll take care of itself. I just do what I like doing. I'm very simple. People sometimes believe that, "oh you gotta have some goals." No, I don't. Just do what I'm doing. John Wilcon (sp?) he used to coach basketball at UCLA for many, many years. Won 10 or 11

National Championships. Don't know if you have ever heard of Crème da Buyeabar (sp)???

INT: No.

HOLLIN: He played basketball at UCLA... anyway, one of his sayings, I don't know if he came up with it or not, but he says, "Be more concerned about your character than your reputation. Because your reputation is merely what people think you are. Your character is who you really are." So that's kind of my philosophy. And helping other people. I probably didn't answer your question.

INT: Absolutely you did. Anything else you want to add?

HOLLIN: I'm good.

INT: You're good? Ken, thank you.

HOLLIN: You're welcome.