

Latricia Pritchard Interview
Interviewer: Don Daughrity
May 4, 2023

Don Daughrity: Hi. This is Don Daughrity interviewing Miss, can you state your name for the record?

Latricia Pritchard: Latricia Pritchard

Don Daughrity: Madison Senior High School. January, I mean February the 27th. This is the 27th.....

Latricia Pritchard: 2023

DD: I hope you feeling nice Miss Pritchard? Can you tell me a little about of how when coming up, how diverse was Madison?

LP: Okay, when I came here, which, I was in the ninth grade, I started here May, No I didn't, It was August, of 1966, a ninth grader. And it was pretty much, 85% white, 15% Black; maybe 80% white, 5% Hispanic, 15% Black. I am from a graduating class of 149 students from Madison High School on May the 26th, 1970. Oh, wow (Chuckles). And, uhm, it was during some trying times because you know, in the 60s, a lot of racial tension. Martin Luther King was assassinated. In my, I guess my junior year, I was in my sociology class. And, my sociology teacher came in, which, he was a white man. And he felt that all of the Blacks should have been out of the building because Martin Luther King had gotten killed. However, my mother always instilled in me and my brothers, uhh, I'm sending you for an education. I didn't move. And I think it was about four or five more other students that did not leave. But we had pretty much, uhm, it was pretty good. You know? In the 60s, we had, as I said, it was a lot of racial tension, back and forth. We had open lunch at that time; we had an hour for lunch. There were places nearby that did not, still did not allow Blacks in there. We've had a place right across the street here, uh, that did not allow any Blacks to come over. It was a little confectionery. They had a pool table, dartboard, and they sold like hamburgers or whatnot. But Blacks still could not go in there. We were bused from across the track. However, I think that, you know, there was nothing seriously done to any student. However, we had a lot of dismissals (chuckle). Then we had a seven-foot fence put here. I think that was my senior year, which they closed off where we did not have an open campus lunch, we could not leave the building. They put that up in 69'-70' school year. So my senior year, we were not allowed to leave the campus. However, we brought our lunch, so well, and the lunches were pretty decent back then. Pretty decent. So that's pretty much, you know, on that part with the issue of the racial, and the number of students we had as far as diverse Black, white, Hispanic.

DD: It's nice to know about diversity in Madison, but, prior to the year 2000, what were some of the hotspots that may or may not be around anymore?

LP: 2000! Whew, 23 years ago! As I said, I'm 71 years old now.... that are not around anymore? Like what hotspots? What do you mean?

DD: Like I mean, like, you know.. you would like, places that like we would like blow off steam, go to have some fun, you know, stuff like that nature. You know, like, if there was like you said the confectionery.

LP: Yeah, we couldn't.

DD: Yeah, well, we you know couldn't....,

LP: But now that, some of the hotspots that is not around anymore.

DD: They *can* be around just before 2000.

LP: Okay,

DD: Before 2000.

LP: Dairy Queen, we have a Dairy Queen ice cream shop, okay, I'm not understanding what you're asking.

DD: So let's say after, you know,

LP: After all of this racial tension and not being allowed to go in because of your color of your skin?

DD: Like you know, after, let's say, you had a long day at school, okay, you and your friends would go somewhere after school like after like a long day or something. Where would you go?

LP: Yeah, I left here in 1970. So, we would probably go to like, Dairy Queen, which was right there on McCambridge, uhm, ice cream shop, you know. We had recreational centers. I was a homebody, I'm sorry to say.

DD: [Cross talk]

DD: And then, No, but what I did, I worked, my years of high school, starting with my junior year. So, I didn't really go many places. And the kids just kind of hung out. They did their sports, and there were more sports because when I was in high school, we didn't have any girls' sports. We had GAA, which was just kind of meeting together, but we didn't have basketball, track, or anything. So, then the kids, they had tennis, and soccer, they had golf back in 2000. But, but it was really nice.

DD: It's nice to know.

LP: Okay

DD: So, what's your history with the city and County of Madison?

LP: What is my...

DD: Like, you know, history?

LP: My history?

DD: Do you have any roots here, you know?

LP: Well, my family moved here. I started school here, of course, you know, it was in the late 50s. We moved in Madison in 1959, on Market Street. That's basically all my, my father worked as, at the Krey and the, what was that other place (chuckle)...It's like Krey Packing Company, which they slaughtered the hogs and stuff. It was down in East St. Louis. My mom, she worked. She was a cook for two different places here. Two big construction companies. One was AAC Polling [?] Company, which was in Granite City. And then later she, after they went out of business, there was another company which was C. D. Peters Construction Company. I did not have any..., my parents didn't work for the school system, however they were active. My mother was, when I was younger in school with PTA and what-not, you know, supporting that. I myself was, I ran for precinct committeewoman back in the 80s. However, I came up short, a little bit and then I decided I'm not getting back into any politics anymore. It got kind of ugly. But that's basically it. I have two sons. And they also graduated from Madison High School. And it just so happened, and it's on the same day, May the 26th, I had one to graduate in 1989, May the 26th, I had one to graduate in 95'. And, so but I've been here since 73', seen a lot of exciting things. But that's basically it. Because as I told you, I'm writing a book and there's just so much I can give you.

DD: I hear you, I hear you. We don't want to take all your content away. So next question, if you could give me a quick rundown about the people, city, and county as if I was a tourists, what would you might say?

LP: I didn't understand your question when you say...

DD: If you can give me a quick rundown about the people, city, and county as if I was a tourist what might you say?

LP: The city and the county? The city, the mayor and what not. Oh, okay. It's pretty decent. I had my pros and cons personally about it, however, but if I was a tourist or had a tourist to tell about it, I just would tell them that it's, it's a friendly place; it's a place that they may want to consider to move in. But the mayor, which I know personally, way back, matter of fact, he was the one that suggested that I run for precinct committee woman back in the 80s... Everybody is like, really friendly far as you know, everybody knows everybody here, you know, with a population of under 5000 people in Madison and under 2000 in Venice, because you know, we are all connected here. It's just the railroad track that divides us. But however, there is some parts of places across the track that are called Madison too, but we don't have a lot, lot to offer but a lot of love and support. We are supportive neighbors here.

DD: Nice to know. I would consider checking it out if I was a tourist. So growing up and going to school in Madison what influenced you the most?

LP: Give me about, going to school here in Madison?

DD: When you were going through school, you know, growing up, what influenced you?

LP: You know what? it was just the people, the kids...it's because I basically went to school with all blacks until after the eighth grade when I came to the high school, and but, it was it was really, really nice. And it was very interesting you know to learn about the different cultures and how they lived in their little, you know, when we get in discussion sometime what did you have for dinner, this and that. I would say Black Eyed Peas, neck bones, where they may go like, Uhhnnnn, but I was influenced by... and then back then, far as educational wise. We were well equipped. I think we had probably five different languages here. However, now we only have the one which is Spanish. But one thing we didn't have were a lot of Black teachers here. So, I didn't get a lot of talking about Black history at that time. You know, we got history because we had to have history. But we didn't get into the deep Black history program. But...that's it. I have a whole lot but that's it.

DD: I'll take it, thank you, thank you a good thing.

LP: Okay, Bless your heart.

DD: That was so nice for you to make time in your busy schedule to speak with me.

LP: Okay, Bless your heart...

DD: This was Don Daugherty and Ms.

LP: Pritchard.

DD: Ms. Pritchard.

LP: Okay,

DD: Thank you, signing out.