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The Letter from Leon County Jail: Patricia Stephens Due and the Tallahassee, Florida Civil Rights Movement

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THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION

THE LETTER FROM LEON COUNTY JAIL: PATRICIA STEPHENS DUE
AND THE TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

By

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To my Mom for being my first and most important teacher, my role model in patience, education, and my partner in prayer.

To my Dad for practicing a life of rich reward through service and concern for those less fortunate.

To my brothers, Mario and Marko: Still and always, my best friends.

To the 'footsoldiers' everywhere: gratitude. From a generation that owes you everything, knows little of you, and knows not, what it does not know. Watch over us.

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Mrs. Due, I know that you shun public appreciation for your sacrifices and efforts. I hope this modest report focuses new light upon just how extraordinary your life has been. Thank you for remembering, sharing with the world, and continuously working to tell the stories that must be told, to audiences who desperately need to hear the tales of the 'footsoldiers,' fallen and still among us.

To my dearest, K: This journey would not have been possible without my hard nosed, stubborn, mature, 'reformed' country girl behind me, at least part of the way. You're always just down the road, just around the corner (occasionally coming to the rescue), and for as long as I can remember, right by my side. For the next degree we'll get you more letters. This one is a down payment, and leaves something to shoot for. By the way, thanks for loving me.

Finally, I leave a footnote for Salisbury, the greatest kitty cat ever, March 1991-May 2005. His death on Memorial Day weekend shocked me. Pets have a way of burrowing into your heart and staying there so comfortably that you can forget that people generally outlive them. He was such a joy! A special pet that had personality, great self-esteem, and a passion for people that was most unusual for cats. He was born, under the Krishna Student Center in Gainesville, Florida during the week of a personal achievement I once cherished deeply. I would readily exchange that previous honor to have my Salisbury back.

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ABSTRACT

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) student Patricia Stephens sat down at the Woolworth's lunch counter on Monroe Street in Tallahassee, Florida on Saturday February 20, 1960 and attempted to order food. When she and a group of eleven others were ordered to leave the counter they refused and were arrested. This thesis examines portions of Stephens' correspondence during her forty-nine day stay in the Leon County Jail, from March 18 to May 5, 1960.

One letter she wrote strikes particular interest. This 'Letter from Leon County Jail' establishes the Civil Rights Movement's earliest known student refusal to pay a fine, and instead to accept a jail sentence, as a tactic against segregation. The content of the 'Letter from Leon County Jail' smuggled out by visiting ministers, was a public letter in the tradition of Martin Luther King's 1963 'Letter from Birmingham Jail.' According to Haig Bosmajian:

The public letter...has long been a means of persuasion used by reformers and politicians, writers, and prisoners.¹

This thesis argues the 'Letter from Leon County Jail' outshines King's 'Letter from Birmingham Jail' as a lasting artifact of rhetorical significance from the Civil Rights era based on its originality, intensity, and defining impact on Tallahassee CORE and the 'Movement.' This thesis conducts a critical interpretive analysis to: 1) Describe the program of Tallahassee CORE in 1960, as detailed in Stephens' Letter from Leon County Jail; 2) Unpack the overarching rhetorical themes in the discourse of Tallahassee CORE, as reflected in Stephens' correspondence, and, 3) Examine the relationship among these elements to demonstrate the overall persuasive effect of Patricia Stephens and Tallahassee CORE in 1960.

The Tallahassee Civil Right Movement of the 1960's makes its own claims to heritage among North Florida's history of resistance to oppression. Characteristics of that history were embodied in Patricia Stephens², a volunteer of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) born in nearby Quincy, Florida. A family friend invited Patricia and sister, Priscilla to attend a summer 1959 interracial, nonviolent, direct action workshop sponsored by Miami CORE. Following this meeting, the sisters started a CORE chapter in Tallahassee, on the FAMU campus.

¹ Haig Bosmajian. "Rhetoric of Martin Luther King's Letter from Birmingham Jail," *Midwest Quarterly*, Vol. VIII (January 1967): 127-143

² Patricia Stephens subsequently married John Due and is now known as Patricia Stephens Due. In this thesis, all references to Mrs. Due will use the name appropriate to the time period.

Tallahassee CORE planned two sit-in actions against segregated downtown variety store lunch counters in February 1960. The first event on Saturday, February 13 was held without major incident. The second event, of February 20 led to eleven immediate arrests, and eight sentences of three hundred dollars fines or sixty days in jail. Ultimately, five students choose to remain in Leon County Jail for the full sentence refusing to pay the fine. Patricia Stephens was one of these five students.

INTRODUCTION

THE ONE FLORIDA INITIATIVE OFFERS A LOOK BACK TO A TALLAHASSEE PAST OF RESISTANCE

On January 20, 2000, Florida Governor Jeb Bush met with Florida House Representative Tony Hill of Jacksonville, and State Senator Kendrick Meek of Miami in the office of Florida Lieutenant Governor Frank Brogan. The pair of legislative officials tried to convince the Governor of Florida that implementation of his planned executive order called the One Florida Initiative should be delayed until public hearings could be held, to give the citizens of Florida a sense that their input on the issue was being heard.

Florida's African-American community leaders, in particular, were concerned about three components of the One Florida Initiative: (1) the general concern that reforms to any affirmative action programs demonstrated a lack of sensitivity on behalf of the government in making compensatory actions for hundreds of years of official policies and laws which held African-Americans back. These policies had manifested themselves as uncompensated labor, state sanctioned racial discrimination, physical intimidation, and unequal access to state public health, education, and financial services; (2) the elimination of race and ethnicity as a factor in university admissions, and (3) the introduction of 'the Talented 20' program, which professed to guarantee state university admission to the top 20 percent of students in every Florida high school senior class, but which many in Florida's communities of color saw as fewer seats for black students in the state's institutions of higher learning.

The Governor's Office claimed that "even with the elimination of race and ethnicity as a factor in admissions, the Talented 20 program will result in a net increase in minority enrollment in the state university system."³ Such pronouncements flew in the face of demonstrated decreases in minority enrollments in California, Texas, and Michigan schools after the initiation of programs designed to ignore race in college enrollments. More significantly, the speed with which the governor was forcing the start of the program concerned many African-Americans who predicted decreases in minority enrollments.

³ Jeb Bush. 2005. *A Shared Vision for One Florida* [online]. Tallahassee: myflorida.org [cited 27 June 2005] Available from World Wide Web: (http://www.oneflorida.org/myflorida/government/governorinitiatives/one_florida/articles/shared_vision_one fla.html) At the time of the One Florida Initiative Florida Governor Jeb Bush was in the first of two consecutively elected terms as Florida's chief executive.

Hill and Meek were asking the governor for time to convince their constituents that although there were concerns, compromise would ultimately lead to a solution that all sides could be comfortable with. The governor was unmoved by the joint request for additional public comment on the issue, and told Hill and Meek that his mind was made up. He closed their session with the remark, “If you think you’re going to change my mind on this, you might as well send for some blankets.”⁴ Hill and Meek accepted the challenge. They refused to leave the Lt. Governor’s Office and began a sit-in promising to stay until some agreement was reached on public hearings.

According to Barbara Dianne Savage, “Hill and Meeks’ sit-in electrified African-Americans in Florida and drew national attention to Bush’s political difficulties. The use of an old civil rights tactic: however spontaneous, sparked a tremendous response.”⁵ Supporters of the legislators assembled outside the governor’s offices. The assembled included students from Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU), many of whom had attended Florida high schools and who understood the significance changes in university admission policies statewide could potentially have on African-American college student enrollment. Savage reported that “...On February 8, over a thousand students marched on and held a four-hour rally at the state capitol, where they were addressed by Meek and Hill (the initiators of the sit-in). Under pressure, the governor agreed to meet with several of the student representatives concerning his plan.”⁶

The Tallahassee Democrat’s headline on February 9, 2000 was “FAMU Students March on Capitol.”⁷ It was not the first time Tallahassee, Florida had seen FAMU students take to the streets. Forty years earlier, almost to the day, Tallahassee college students of that era had their own sit-ins and run-ins with state officials.

A veteran of the Tallahassee sit-ins of the Civil Rights Era flew in from Miami to attend a gathering in support of Hill and Meek’s actions. A FAMU graduate, longtime resident of nearby Quincy, Florida in neighboring Gadsden County, and a “foot-soldier”⁸ of the Tallahassee direct

⁴ Barbara Dianne Savage, “Telephone Interview with Florida State Representative Tony Hill.” In The Public Influences of African-American Churches. Vol. 2, Long March Ahead: African-American Churches and Public Policy in Post Civil Rights America, ed. R. Drew Smith (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 35

⁵ Ibid., 36

⁶ Tallahassee Democrat (Tallahassee), 9 February 2000

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Tananarive Due and Patricia Stephens Due, Freedom In The Family: A Mother-Daughter Memoir of the Fight for Civil Rights (New York: Ballantine Books, 2003) The term ‘foot-soldier’ is a reference used by Patricia

action student movement, Patricia Stephens Due brought her support, approval and passion to the solidarity gathering.

Due commented that she and her husband, John, had gotten on the plane for Tallahassee because she heard that Florida Governor Jeb Bush said in reference to the legislators' occupation of the office suites that capitol police officers should "kick their asses out." Due replied:

He (Governor Bush) said he was going to kick our asses out of there and we said, we were going to take our asses up there!" "When I heard about it, I was really annoyed. We called and made reservations to fly to Tallahassee. We just wanted to tell (Hill and Meek) how proud we were of them. When we got there, there was a press conference going on and we were invited to come and speak...and then they were meeting upstairs, so we were invited to go upstairs. That was when I publicly just told them how proud I was of them. Because here were some young people who knew who they were and didn't mind letting other people know it. And I started telling them the story of the struggle and I'm telling you, everybody was crying. Everybody was crying.⁹

The actions of Hill, Meek, and Due are representative of a centuries old tradition of resistance particular to North Florida that has been overshadowed and underreported in popular rhetorical history. Florida has a rich historic tradition of Black activism and resistance that has been left out of the overall history of America. It is a history shrouded in both inaccurate and non-reports of strength and courage against colonial repression in the far and recent past, by people of African descent on Florida's shores.

Stephens Due in her autobiography, Freedom in the Family. It refers to those who protested on the front lines of the Civil Rights Movement, and are mostly anonymous to history.

⁹ Patricia Stephens Due, interview by author, 22 December 1985, Quincy, Tape recording, The Florida State University, Department of Communication, Tallahassee.

CHAPTER 1

FLORIDA'S OVERSHADOWED AND UNDERREPORTED HISTORY OF RESISTANCE

The Conquistadores of Spain lived and died to claim the land and tame the people of what is today North Florida. When they arrived, Apalachee, Ays, Calusa, Ibaja, Jororo, Mocama, Ocute, Seminole, Timucuan and Yamassee people had already lived in Florida for millennia. These indigenous people knew the flora, the fauna, and the land. The Spaniards did not.

Spain had some beneficial, and some troubled early contact with the people of the land they called La Florida. Occasional disagreements became more regular, and led to organized resistance against Spanish interests among the widely placed native communities. Thus began a modern era tradition of struggle against oppression, by the people living in these lands.

North Florida is an historic home to a unique rhetoric of resistance, one overshadowed and underreported in the fight for civil rights. Characteristics of this resistance are found in the culture and histories of the people who still live near Tallahassee. As Spanish colonialists oppressed the native people of the area, these people became more likely allies of other people who also had troubles with Spain. According to Dr. David Colburn of the University of Florida:

Few readers are likely to realize that Africans were among the first nonnative peoples to set foot in Florida. The free black conquistador Juan Garrido arrived with Juan Ponce de Leon's expedition in 1513, after having served with other Africans in the earlier explorations and the conquest of Hispanola and Puerto Rico. Africans were, in fact, part of all of the Spanish expeditions to Florida.¹⁰

Africans allied with the Conquistadores, who fled Spanish yokes in Florida either by shipwreck or intentional flight found refuge and alliance among the native people of Florida. As they blended into these peoples, the characteristics of resistance and commitment to struggle and overcome against adversities became a joint tradition.

In Beyond Black and Red: African-Native Relations in Colonial Latin America, Jane Landers noted:

¹⁰ David R. Colburn and Jane L. Landers, eds. The African American Heritage of Florida. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995), 1

Native Americans, Spaniards, and Africans interacted in Latin America for over three centuries...Native Americans and African-descended maroons became adept at reading the geopolitics in which they were embroiled and astutely gauged their best options...Those indigenous and African maroons who stuck to the path of resistance were usually undone, although often not before long and costly guerrilla wars. Because of the uneven pace and directions of Spanish settlement, remote frontiers were available to shelter indigenous and African maroons well into the nineteenth century in some regions of the empire. Among these refuges were the Spanish areas of what is today the southeastern United States. The earliest alliances between Native Americans and African rebels in the Americas began at the turn of the sixteenth century in Hispaniola but shortly thereafter, Africans, free and enslaved, began abandoning Spanish expeditions trekking through what the conquerors called La Florida. The story of black-indigenous alliance in what became the southeastern United States is as old as Spanish history in the region. And even after the Spaniards finally ceded control of Florida to the United States in 1821, Seminoles and their black allies fought two more costly wars against U.S. forces in Florida.¹¹

This history of North Florida resistance documents that:

In 1645 Florida's Governor established a wheat ranch in the lands of the Apalachee, near present day Tallahassee. In violation of a royal prohibition, he employed black slaves from Angola...in 1687 the Spanish governor reported the arrival of the first fugitive slaves from Carolina...these newcomers claimed to be seeking religious conversion, and after lengthy deliberations, the Spanish king decided in 1693 to free them, 'granting liberty to all'.¹²

In response to the Spanish royal promise of freedom, a group of ten former slaves, who were betrayed by their military commander and treacherously re-sold into slavery in 1724, petitioned the Spanish government and local authorities for their freedom at every opportunity for fourteen years based on the 1693 declaration by the King of Spain. They were led by an African named Mandinga. In 1738 a new governor finally acknowledged their petition and all were freed.

¹¹ Jane Landers, "Africans and Native Americans on the Spanish Frontier." in Beyond Black and Red: African-Native Relations in Colonial Latin America, ed. Matthew Restall (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 53-54

¹² Irene Wright. "Our Lady of Charity", *Hispanic American Historical Review* 5 (November 1922): 709-17; quoted in Beyond Red and Black: African-Native Relations in Colonial America, ed. Matthew Restall (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 59

When the Treaty of Paris ended the Seven Years War in 1763 and Great Britain acquired Florida from Spain, many of North Florida's Blacks, along with Spain's European and native subjects evacuated to Cuba. The rich, fertile farm and cattle lands were abandoned, as for a time some of the participants in North Florida's overshadowed history of resistance left the prairies. But these lands were soon again occupied by indigenous people from central Florida who called themselves Seminoles. According to Landers:

These newcomers soon established flourishing villages in the interior savannas of northern Florida, where they grew plentiful crops of corn and vegetables and raised large herds of cattle. Runaway slaves who could no longer count on the protection of the Spaniards sought refuge instead with powerful Seminole chiefs such as Payne, Micanopy, and Bowlegs. In return for their freedom, black vassals provided the Seminoles yearly portions of their crops and their military services.¹³

After only a score of years, Florida's political map again changed as the American Revolution led the British to return Florida to Spain, whereby:

Land-hungry Georgians, styling themselves Patriots, attempted to seize Florida in 1812 and hand it to the United States. On that occasion, as before, the Seminoles and their black 'vassals' came to the assistance of Spain. The Spaniards stood to lose their colony, the fugitive slaves their freedom, and the Seminoles their rich lands and cattle herds¹⁴

Spanish colonial control of Florida stands out as an era of noteworthy historic resistance for Blacks inhabiting the lands surrounding Tallahassee, Florida. Following Spanish rule, the British, then Seminoles held dominion over the peninsula, by virtue of the size and influence of their cultures. The relatively small populations within the African descended communities of the region could not hope to stand alone in the face of colonies from even one nation. The survival of Blacks in Florida depended on their collaboration and intermarriage with other peoples. Florida's Blacks proved their worth in these cultures, time after time, as capable workers, allies, and mates, within each of the national spheres of influence they coexisted with, resisted and/or married into.

¹³Landers, *Beyond Red and Black*, p.64

¹⁴Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999; quoted in *Beyond Red and Black: African-Native Relations in Colonial America*, ed. Matthew Restall (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 66

The Seminole nation greatly valued their ties established with African descended Floridians and kept in close company with them. While the casual American or European observer might have believed that the Seminoles held their Black allies as slaves or vassals, a more careful scrutiny of the patterns of work and communal lifestyles which Afro-Seminole relations evidenced, reveals a deep core bond between the two peoples. After two extensive military campaigns, the US Army finally defeated the Seminole nation and began preparing to remove them to reservations in Oklahoma. Many of the Seminoles and their Black allies decided to escape the Army and travel to the Everglade swamps of South Florida. The combined military tactics and resolve of the Seminoles and their Black allies resulted in “the longest and most expensive Indian war the U.S. government was to wage,”¹⁵ and:

Ultimately the war for removal could not be resolved without a guarantee by Major General Thomas Jesup that blacks would be permitted to go to the West with the Seminoles rather than be sold into slavery. Obviously, the events leading up to the war were distinctly influenced by blacks sympathetic to Seminole resistance.¹⁶

America’s history with Black people in Florida is a story of cultures bound together. Through slavery, economic, political and social retrenchment of the minority population by the majority, people of color have come to be an inextricably merged piece of the patchwork outlining a joined past. At this point in our shared history, from the perspective of the historian, or rhetorical scholar, attempts to separate these combined cultures would be artificial and ineffective.

Native American people too have suffered massive social displacement, as their lands were taken by whites. Florida’s history records the destruction of towns and habitats in the name of progress. We have come to see that progress for one culture has been social reversal for others. Many of North Florida’s Blacks survived the invasion of Florida by Americans through both their own determination and their cultural alliance with native people in Florida. Though these cultures have lost frequent connection in the modern world, recognition of former bonds is a necessary component to assembling a proper and accurate account of North Florida’s past. These histories enrich our perspective of the more recent past.

¹⁵ George Klos. “Blacks and the Seminole Removal Debate, 1821-1835.” In The African American Heritage of Florida, Colburn, David R. and Jane L. Landers, eds. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995), 150

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 161

Native Floridian people and many Black allies left North Florida during the Spanish trade over to British control, although some Blacks did continue to reside there. Whites entering the area of North Florida in growing numbers came to share cultural values, and co-exist more positively, if not jubilantly with these people who remained. The descendants of these two cultures are today broadly defined as the same culture, yet the journey to this place in time has been fraught with dreams unfulfilled.

The search for communication pathways that contributed to the current state of life and living in the United States by all races, and particularly, the scope of that search in the American South, requires acceptance that whites and Blacks, throughout American history, traveled this road together. The African descendant sharing the journey through commonly built historic lands, with whites, and native, indigenous peoples has at different times seen relations with the white population alternate between idyllic and catastrophic. At different times along this journey, dreams have become nightmares.

CHAPTER 2

THE EMERGENCE OF A UNIQUE RHETORIC OF CIVIL RIGHTS IN NORTH FLORIDA

Alexis de Tocqueville once observed, “There is a natural prejudice that prompts men to despise whoever has been their inferior long after he has become their equal.”¹⁷ The Black Man and the Promise of America notes,

“One of the curious paradoxes in the history of the Afro-American is that he has contributed much to making the nation what it is and has at the same time been isolated---even alienated---from the culture of which he is an integral part. In some cases, Negro participation in national activity so closely resembles that of other assimilated groups as to appear unremarkable, and to ask for particular recognition of the Negro’s achievements may seem unjustified. It is justified, however, by the fact that no other group has been displaced, enslaved, set free, and then subjugated to a century of prejudice that has made achievement difficult. Though the evidence of the black man’s contributions to American culture is both visible and tangible, invisible and intangible, the denial of these accomplishments, or more frequently an impenetrable silence regarding them, has been the rule and not the exception.”¹⁸

This thesis will conduct a critical interpretive analysis to: 1) Describe the program of Tallahassee CORE in 1960, as detailed in Stephens’ ‘Letter from Leon County Jail’; 2) Unpack the overarching rhetorical themes in the discourse of Tallahassee CORE, as reflected in Stephens’ correspondence and, 3) Examine the relationship among these elements to demonstrate the overall persuasive effect of Patricia Stephens and Tallahassee CORE in 1960.

To provide a better understanding of Patricia Stephens’ role in Tallahassee CORE, this research will examine a letter she wrote while under arrest in the Tallahassee, Florida, Leon County Jail, in March 1960. This incarceration was a result of her active participation and leadership in civil rights activities in Tallahassee that will be further related over the course of this work. This thesis also incorporates portions of a December 22, 2003 interview with Patricia Stephens Due, at her home in Quincy, Florida, and relevant sections of Due’s 2003

¹⁷ Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy In America [online] [cited 8 July 2005] Available on the World Wide Web <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/de-tocqueville/democracy-america/ch18.htm>

autobiography, Freedom in the Family: A Mother-Daughter Memoir of the Fight for Civil Rights.¹⁹ These accounts are largely autobiographical. They indicate specific actions and they document, through “the authority of experience,”²⁰ motives that stem from the historic oppression of Blacks in North Florida. Examining historic resistance requires these texts as lens, in part, to uncover the nature of counter-narrative as a means to acknowledge identity, tell a story of triumph over evil, critique segregation, unmask class-ism, repudiate boundaries, and recognize age-old ties to the land, as a basis for claiming that North Florida is home to a particular version of civil rights rhetoric. These then are the historical accounts of patches of resistance in the area.

The ‘Letter from Leon County Jail,’ and its details are important, both because of the symbolic value of such public utterances from the civil rights period, and because, as an exercise in rhetorical practice, the critical observation and deconstruction of artifacts from North Florida’s civil rights past is a grossly underrepresented area in published historical and rhetorical scholarship. This is not to suggest that there are no significant moments of rhetorical substance to uncover during the period, or that no writer has ever attempted to document the Tallahassee Civil Rights phenomenon. This thesis would not be possible without the foreshadowing work of Glenda Rabby in documenting a history of civil rights activism in Tallahassee, Florida. The rhetorical mining of motive, practice, and process in civil rights discourses is a continuously growing field, and additional studies of Florida’s rhetorical past will illuminate the nature of rhetorical action during the era.

This thesis extends the work of Rabby leaving the purely historical and entering the field of rhetorical analysis. While I borrow extensively from her historical accounts and their rich well of side notes and motivational accounts, our foci are similar but distinct. This thesis is primarily interdisciplinary, combining history and communication studies. It closes a gap in multiple studies, in recognizing that Black people did not simply appear in Tallahassee to protest segregation in 1960. Black people have lived in the area for hundreds of years prior to the Southern sit-ins of 1960, and in that history they have struggled against oppression. This thesis

¹⁸ Lettie J. Austin, Lewis H. Fenderson, and Sophia P. Nelson, eds. The Black Man and The Promise of America. (Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1970), 341

¹⁹ Due and Due, Freedom in The Family

²⁰ (b)ell hooks. Quoted by Adetayo Alabi, In Telling Our Stories: Continuities and Divergences in Black Autobiographies, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 31 “[t]here is a radical difference between a repudiation of the idea that there is a black ‘essence’ and recognition of the way black identity has been specifically constituted in the experience of exile and struggle.”

explores the existence of a new rhetoric of the Civil Rights Movement, revealed in 1960, with traces to a history of resistance in the area of North Florida stretching back to the Conquistadors. In this thesis, 1960 is identified as a pivotal point from which to explore how a unique rhetoric of civil rights was created over time in North Florida.

My focus of study benefits from the passage of time. This work includes a December 2003 interview of Patricia Stephens Due, postdating Rabby's 1984 dissertation and the 1999 release of her book. The interview is unique in that it took place during the year Due's autobiography was released and she was studying and recently recalling memories of the civil rights period after a number of years where these thoughts sat upon the shelf as she explored other pursuits.

This thesis focuses on the 'Letter from Leon County Jail' as a heretofore unmined treasure of civil rights rhetorical scholarship. Rabby documents the same events, yet I extend the analysis to propose similarities and distinctions between Due's letter and Martin Luther King's 'Letter from Birmingham Jail'. I propose that while King's prose is an ageless example of rhetorical excellence, which brought the regional situation in Birmingham into clear focus on the national stage, and captured the essence of the struggle for racial equality through its' eloquence, it is only an addition to the history of the civil rights movement.

Turning to originating themes in documenting body rhetoric and authenticating an inaugural action in the history of civil rights, Rabby and others have missed the historic significance of Stephens' letter. The impact of the events in Tallahassee and this letter are decisive artifacts in civil rights communication studies, and they have been overshadowed, underreported, and ignored as such. The tactic of remaining in jail and not paying fines in support of the system of segregation shaped every 'sit-in', 'jail-in', march or meeting which followed, yet this contribution is largely unrecognized, even though it took place in North Florida an historic cradle of resistance and struggle.

By tying together the history of North Florida's African past, with events of 1960 Tallahassee, and amalgamating these narratives with my personal, Florida based experience, I believe the elements examined in this thesis can provide a valid interpretation of what Patricia Stephens and the 'foot-soldiers' of the Tallahassee Fight for Civil Rights were experiencing and motivated by. Molefi Asante supports such analysis providing a criterion for its consideration in "The Future of African-American Rhetoric" when he suggests:

The principle categories are: 1) examine the principle characteristics of a new rhetoric for the future; 2) explore cultural themes, 3) suggest historical periods as a way of projecting the future, 4) make a brief excursion into postmodernity, and 5) discuss how classical connections are important as emerging issues.²¹

The 1960's was a time of transition not just in Tallahassee but throughout America. While some were willing to risk themselves, their health, their fortunes, and their sanity to enact social change, others were more circumspect. The perspective we view social location from greatly colors the reality that is reflected for the viewer. Bormann's Fantasy Theme analysis and its view on social reality helps the casual observer and the communication scholar look critically at the Civil Rights era and the social situation of Black Americans during that time period. The popular culture and media of the era was abuzz with hopeful and aggressive incantations against the powers that were, the tools of the state they used to repress ethnic and/or class challenged minorities, and the majority residing 'every (wo)man,' who either had justice in their hearts and wanted change, glorified in their advantage, or stood on the side lines. The movies and media of today reflect that reality and confirm its truth. Mississippi Burning really happened. The recent murder trial, and for most, the disappointing manslaughter conviction in Mississippi, in the real world reaches into our psyches to convince us once again that all truth comes in either black or white packages.

If the concept of the social movement, as it took place is to be fleshed out, the answer can not simply rely on mass reaction to stimuli. A more reasoned examination is called for. One of the reasons, this thesis focused on civil rights was to expose the raw nerve of the segregation experience vividly and without screens or filters. Murphy tells us we have always looked simply at the rhetorical strategies of movements,²² often to the exclusion of potentially more interesting concerns. Foucault, for example, according to Murphy's article, would have commented that the very structure of Western democracies such as ours, contribute to exploitation through promulgating insincere discourse on social change. A glaring example being the court of Tallahassee, Florida, in the Spring of 1960, where the rights of Blacks were marginalized, as they were in most other courts of a Jim Crow justice South.

²¹ Molefi Kete Asante. "The Future of African-American Rhetoric" In Understanding African-American Rhetoric: Classical Origins to Contemporary Innovations, Ronald L. Jackson and Elaine B. Richardson, editors (New York: Routledge-Taylor and Francis, 2003), 285-291

²² John M. Murphy. "Domesticating Dissent: The Kennedy's and the Freedom Rides." *Communication Monographs*, 59 (March 1992):61-78

The context of the comment is that in our society the judiciary regulates the discourse of power when conflicts in the interpretation of rights come into conflict. We expect the courts to redress grievances fairly. This is why the current anxiety concerning Supreme Court replacements in light of Justice O'Connor's resignation, and Justice Rehnquist's pending and expected resignation carry such water with such a wide range of people in our society. The courts can curtail our freedom through interpretations of law and precedents. Murphy again is asking us to look at the faith we place in those judgments and in the power of that discourse. What is being offered in exchange for our freedom, for our quiescence, for our compliance, is not justice but rather simply a form of social control.

CORE activists in 1960's Tallahassee had to face that same choice. The tenants of CORE required testing a discriminatory situation, not just attacking it. Even if inequity was found to exist, the creed of CORE required that an attempt to negotiate, to talk, to communicate, to exchange with an oppressor was preferable to taking action against them. Within that small space between hatred of what a person does and the compassion to attempt to persuade them that there is potentially a better way, in that space we find Tallahassee CORE's leadership in February 1960.

The fact that CORE believed in itself was critical to then and future success. But how was that success to be measured? Tallahassee CORE also had to tell its story. They needed to engage and counter the rhetoric of those who said they should be patient. They had to challenge those who said that integration was not an answer to economic inequality, or who said CORE was being destructive and prideful, not helpful.

This desire to launch a counter-narrative conforms to the narrative paradigm of Walter Fisher. After agreeing to what it was they wanted to say, Stephens and CORE had to tell the story. People had to be exposed to the comparison of the voices of segregation and the voices of CORE. From the CORE activists' perspective, the more people to hear their message the better.

As discussed, the historic resistance of Blacks in North Florida prior to the Civil Rights era has been largely excluded from seminal works on American and Florida history. Necessarily, in much the same regard, the activities of CORE in Florida have been overshadowed by other stories in the civil rights narrative. CORE, in 1960 was primarily a northern organization, started in Chicago in 1942. Outside brief mention in Lefever's work on

the protest actions of Spelman College students in 1959,²³ reference to the 1959 CORE summer workshop in Miami, Florida in Tananarive and Patricia Stephens Due's joint autobiography,²⁴ or Rabby's work,²⁵ CORE was little known at this time outside of northern cities.

Thankfully, much specific reference to Tallahassee and Miami CORE activities was carried by the African-American newspapers of the time. In particular, the Chicago Defender wrote extensively on the 1960s Southern sit-ins, and focused much attention on Tallahassee. This came as a result of Chicago being the birthplace of CORE. With respect to the introduction of CORE to North Florida, the attendance of Priscilla and Patricia Stephens at a 1959 Miami summer workshop was a catalyst that would change the overall lack of attention CORE received.

The Tallahassee CORE chapter was co-founded by Patricia and Priscilla Stephens at FAMU following their presence at the Miami summer workshop. From that participation, CORE was ultimately introduced to the campus of Florida State University (FSU) as well. Southern operations of CORE came to be based in Tallahassee for a time because of the dynamic activism of the students on these two campuses.

One of the difficulties that CORE faced in working in the South was that its philosophy mandated interracial actions to test and challenge segregation. This was more readily accomplished in the large ethnically diverse cities of the Northeast and Midwest. Tallahassee offered a unique opportunity in the South in which to engage the CORE ideals under conditions CORE could endorse and operate in. The dynamic synergy of two major institutions of higher learning: one for whites and one for blacks, operating in the same city meant that the aspirations of young, educated, and articulate youth from throughout the state, both white and black were in close proximity. This offered the opportunity for interracial co-campus student activities. This was rare, Southern, fertile seed ground for CORE.

The young people of FAMU and FSU in 1960 had different perceptions on racial issues than those of the previous generation, and they were also more open to the idea of being in closer

²³ Harry G. Lefever. Undaunted By The Fight: Spelman College and the Civil Rights Movement, 1957-1967. (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2005), 13

²⁴ Due and Due, Freedom In The Family, 39. Discussing the Summer of 1959 workshop, Due wrote, "The workshop we'd been invited to was officially called the Miami Interracial Action Institute, a meeting designed to teach the principles of nonviolent direct action." It is interesting to consider what might have happened to CORE in Florida if the Stephens sisters had not been offered a dinner at Wolfies restaurant on Miami Beach. According to Due, a family friend had promised "If you come with me (to a CORE meeting) I'll get you dinner at Wolfies." She later stated, "We never got our dinner, but our lives were changed forever."

²⁵ Glenda A. Rabby, The Pain and The Promise: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Tallahassee, Florida (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999). This book must be the starting point for any serious attempt to understand Tallahassee's Civil Rights history of the early 1960's.

social contact with each other than the previous generation. That these groups might influence each other is a rhetorically sound assumption. Further, such contact was more than a theoretical construction.

The interaction of Tallahassee's student bodies did occur in 1960, and today we may benefit from examination of the rhetorical action embodied in their discourses. Two large, state funded, land grant universities in Tallahassee allowed for the necessary number of students and ethnic composition appropriate for CORE missions. The proximity and synergy of the two student bodies was an added plus for CORE organization and community growth. Ultimately, these conditions were regional advantages to CORE's north Florida actions in the Spring of 1960, and these advantages were pivotal in setting the stage for the overall Southern strategy of non-violent, interracial direct action campaigns against segregation in 1960-1961 throughout the South, and in Tallahassee from 1960 to 1963.

The dimensions of Tallahassee's civil rights movement can be seen much like sections of individual patchwork cloth that ultimately become a quilt. Pieces of story are told, and in the same manner, pieces are added to a main body of patchwork. As portions of a narrative stretching back in history are added, the historical and rhetorical construction begins to appear.

Patricia Stephens and CORE are links to Tallahassee's rhetorical past, and add to the construction of the quilt. The history of direct action student-led campaigns to desegregate public accommodations are periodic renewals of the continuing struggle for justice and equality in North Florida, which reaches back to the apocryphal Mandinga and his quest for freedom under Florida's Spanish Colonial rule.

Within this past, we find in Tallahassee a successful citywide bus boycott in 1956 that led to "first come, first served" seating for all patrons without racially segregated placing. Then, in 1960, Patricia Stephens led the next phase of the Tallahassee Movement, the lunch counter desegregation sit-ins. Although considerable protesting, arrests, news accounts, and court records reveal that Tallahassee had significant public activity surrounding the question of segregation taking place in 1960. According to the 50 States Report, submitted to the Commission on Civil Rights by the State Advisory Committee in Washington, D.C., in 1961, Florida's summary was the shortest of all the southern states. The report read:

There was relative calm in Florida in 1960...No complaints or charges have been filed with the Commission either verbally or written...Florida has progressed in a sound and equitable manner on the state and local levels in the areas of public education, voting,

housing, employment, administration of justice and the use of public facilities.²⁶

Research compiled by Rabby reveals:

Tallahassee, situated in the middle of the Panhandle just eighteen miles south of the Florida-Georgia border shared many of the Deep South characteristics common to its neighbors. Like other places with substantial black populations, Florida's capital city maintained close ties to a past that encompassed a slave-based plantation economy, a racist ideology, resistance to new attitudes, and a distrust of change. Above all, Tallahassee was a dual society, built on the presumption of white superiority, with laws and customs designed to perpetuate racial inequality.²⁷

R. Drew Smith, adds,

Indeed, Florida has an often overlooked but long standing history of black political activism...African-American activism also has strong bases of local support in cities scattered across Florida's wide expanse, in other key population centers like Jacksonville, Tallahassee, Tampa and Sarasota.²⁸

Over the forty-five years since 1960, many scholars have contributed rhetorical analyzes on the period, if not on Florida specifically. By examining actions in Tallahassee, the state capital, as a primary focus, a unique dynamic may be spotlighted. Tallahassee was a small town in population, Southern in demeanor and location, yet as the state capital, leaders from various parts of the state, with larger ethnic and diverse populations, came to make laws and represent the people. The year 1960 was a time of rapid change in the civil rights era. According to Clayborne Carson,²⁹ few were ready for the monumental changes to come, but even fewer felt that the 1954 Brown decision had ended segregation or racism in America.

The burden of resistance did not fall expectedly however. Those who were the community leaders traditionally looked to in times of crisis did not respond. Instead, students and workers perceived the appropriateness of the times, and were nurtured to endure and challenge by the encouragement of the Stephens sisters, who had drunk deeply from the springs of CORE's ideology. Rabby explains:

²⁶ The 50 States Report, submitted to the Commission on Civil Rights by the State Advisory Committees, Washington, D.C., 1961

²⁷ Rabby, The Pain and the Promise, 2.

²⁸ R. Drew Smith, The Public Influences of African-American Churches, Vol. 2. The Long March Ahead: African-American Churches and Public Policy in Post-Civil Rights America

As in many other southern communities, new and more assertive black leaders emerged during the mid-1950's and early 1960's in Tallahassee to replace the black spokesmen who had personified the politics of black deference. Many new leaders were recent arrivals, and those who were longtime residents typically held jobs independent of white control³⁰

These new leaders and their examples of activism, in the face of danger, retaliation, and suffering were significant in drawing national attention to civil rights actions in Tallahassee.

Glenda Rabby confirms this premise reflecting that

Just as the Tallahassee bus boycott (of 1956) played an important role in the early days of the non-violent mass protest, students at Florida A& M were the nation's first sit-in protesters who chose to serve out their jail sentences rather than accept bail. Although the sit-ins originated in Greensboro, North Carolina, students in Tallahassee helped bring national attention to direct action as a significant, disruptive weapon against segregation. Their decision to go to jail in protest against segregation in March 1960 highlighted the harshness of southern race relations and helped fuel interest in the civil rights movement across the county. For the next three years, Florida A&M students led sporadic demonstrations against segregation in Tallahassee with a fervent belief that courage, faith, and reason could overthrow white intransigence. They were wrong. They nonetheless refused to concede defeat even after their belief in the goodness of America had been repeatedly shaken and their trust in whites nearly destroyed.³¹

Following the example of the February 1, 1960 Greensboro lunch counter sit-ins by North Carolina A&T students, these students affiliated with CORE, sat down at the Tallahassee Woolworth's variety counter on February 20, 1960. Following sentencing for that 'violation of the law,' these students from Florida became the first students in the nation to stay in jail rather than pay their fines. Greensboro happened first, but Tallahassee started the tactic of utilizing body rhetoric, by enduring physical hardship, confinement, mental torture, and permanent records of their civil disobedience being filed and shared with government agencies and potential employers³²

Of course, even an omission of this magnitude can be explained away. It can be argued

²⁹ Clayborne Carson, The Eyes on the Prize Civil Rights Reader: Documents, Speeches, and Firsthand Accounts From The Black Freedom Struggle (New York: Penguin Books, 1991).

³⁰ Rabby, The Pain and the Promise, 4

³¹ Rabby, The Pain and the Promise, 5

³² Due, interview with author, 22 December 2003

that these issues were not relevant to the focus of civil rights in particular texts, for example, those dealing with actions in Birmingham, not Tallahassee. If this is the argument, the question must follow, when will Florida's civil rights past come to be seen as part of the cloth of America's civil rights narrative? What sort of event would need to take place to evoke the desire for a comparison of experiences? Would it be interesting for example, and if interesting would it be of historical note, to have it revealed that the FAMU 'firsts' had a leader who penned her own jail "Letter." A letter sent, not from Birmingham Jail, but rather, from the Leon County Jail? And if it was of note, and if that 'Letter' did pre-date King's 'Letter' by three years, and if it could be supposed that King got the idea of going to jail and writing a letter from jail, from that unknown student's individual act, would that be worth rhetorical analysis, in the tradition of good civil rights rhetorical scholarship?

In order to examine some of what they thought about, and to explore that reality in a meaningful way, we'll need a guide. The writings of Patricia Stephens, from a Leon County Jail cell may offer more than shrill rantings against powerful bigots. Consider her mindset and the strength of her resolve for just a moment.

Starting with the trial of March 17, 1960 that sent her to jail, the prosecutor and the city officials testifying against them could not even compose themselves enough to refrain from saying 'nigger' on multiple occasions. The judge, the standard of society's investment in an equitable outcome, states that race is not a consideration in the matter before the court, even in the blaring presence of the sworn testimony being delivered. The prosecutor states the case is about Constitutional rights. The issue is property and what a business owner may or may not be compelled to endure in their private business. The judge admonishes the accused for being intentionally involved in a plot to hurt local business owners, and states for the record that in light of this type of conspiracy, he will not go easy on them.

All of that is being swirled around in the minds of the CORE members being held in judgment, and it is certainly swirling through the mind of Patricia Stephens. They were in court because they wanted to be served food, were willing to pay for it, and had spent money on other items in the same venues. These considerations help us to focus how to look at the situation from a communication aspect. These points also allow the observer critic to chew on why they think about and how they think about issues of discrimination. We have the benefit of time and current circumstance to mull over the outcome of the trial that sent Patricia Stephens and seven others to jail for trying having the audacity to try to purchase food in the same store they bought

other items in. If we allow the outrage to flow over us, we can get perhaps a glimmer of the willpower it must have taken to remain calm, dispassionate, orderly or cool if you will in the face of the hypocrisy of a trial.

Yet that trial had to take place. The verdict rendered had to come down as it did, for society to begin to look for opportunities to change itself. Outrage had to register, but control also had to be present. In each society, in the history of the world, there have been those who've sought to take life's bounty and happiness for themselves alone. All too frequently, the quest for personal gain has been at the expense of others deemed as less. The color of another's skin hue: a desire for the lands or goods others possess; the non-comprehension of a language a visitor does or does not speak, the observation of religious or cultural practices, which dissimilar others may participate in, or abstain from; promote occasion for communion or conflict.

Human conflicts are based on jealousy, greed, avarice, and/or lust to name only a few of the motivations that cause people to treat their sisters and brothers as less. The human condition has spawned pariahs from among both the privileged and the impoverished classes throughout time. When we discount war and violence, language and social order are the tools that have been utilized most often to tip the scales in human relations.

The power of communication in our society is such that words, deeds, actions, or gestures can change economic, political and social reality. Burke³³ agrees that with only symbolic references, humanity can nurture, uplift or destroy. Since humans can and have used these tools for good and for ill, the communication scholar studies and thinks about the conditions that allow symbols to convey meaning.

In the observation of civil rights discourses, we look to the past to try and determine why people began specific undertakings of resistance and struggle. We look at the actions of everyday people as they perform their daily tasks of existing, co-existing, feeding, educating and sustaining themselves and their communities. We also watch and acknowledge behavior, to more accurately report on stimuli that persuade and otherwise change the human condition.

It is one understanding to believe that a person is motivated to take some action. It is another understanding to comprehend how symbols make the necessary mental connections that produce a persuaded or motivated effect upon another, or a person's self. In the rhetoric of civil rights, we sometimes find it difficult to understand much of the past. How a society progresses,

³³ Kenneth Burke, Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature and Method. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966) 3-24

how that progress is transmitted to others, or how action and understanding as such, are acted upon by members of a society is the wonder of communication scholarship.

By examining personal narratives, a critic can feel the outrage of the past actors. Including the individual operating manual for each rhetorical scholar as they examine civil rights discourse, it may be possible to pull out larger chunks of the meat of the matter from time to time. Certainly being angry can affect judgments and taint scientific scholarship if these are the only tools ever relied upon. But I believe much in terms of point of view can be excavated from using autobiographical artifacts and pieces of historical moments, particularly events and locations with implications for study of social movements; and after combining the autobiographical and the historic, we then let go and allow personal narrative and experience; a mixture of good with the bad, to sweep over us. This test of judgment and experience will approximate what the nonviolent, direct action student, worker or volunteer had to appreciate before they walked a picket line, entered a march, or attempted to sit down in a Woolworth's to order a slice of cake that they knew would not be served. And yet there was always hope. Perhaps this would be the visit where the surprise, the change would occur.

Bormann's Fantasy theme gives us again a way to measure the experience of the CORE volunteer. They could visualize success and a changed world each time they met or contemplated an action. They were fighting for a better world, and they were determined to achieve the necessary changes within their lifetimes, or in the lifetimes of the children they did not yet have, but considered. Due's joint autobiography may reflect that desire to connect with a child that witnessed much, heard much, and sacrificed much, in the way of what some might call a 'normal childhood.'

These speculations allow for sufficient fruit to fall to the ground for the leisurely picker. The true test in climbing the tree, however, is to reach the choicer, pulpier fruit just out of reach. The effort in the climb makes the reward that much greater. In reaching for the 'Letter from Leon County Jail' we come to face with several now open points: 1) the 'Letter' was an appeal to the best in people; and, 2) the 'Letter' was a profound political statement that Stephens and CORE did believe in America, even in the face of intransigence like the full measures delivered by Judge Rudd, the Mayor of Tallahassee, all of the city commissioners, and owners of the businesses that practiced discriminatory policies as a matter of rote. They still believed in justice and justice to be delivered by the same people who were oppressing them, or at least in the short

term, people very similar to them. No immediate social revolution was on the horizon in the Spring of 1960.

Before taking that reasoned examination at the ‘Letter from Leon County Jail’ up-close and personal, I’d like to strengthen our available tools of discovery just one more time. Through autobiographical, historical, and personal elements, we’ve learned to think just slightly differently about what happened in Tallahassee in 1960 and why. I’d like to go one step further, by taking a step backwards, and into a variety of climates and environments both similar and distinct to Tallahassee, Florida.

Each of the writers expressing their upcoming discourses experienced the 1960’s and the question of race and privilege in a slightly varied manner. Where you plant a flag can have consequences for those who follow, as race colors the lens of social observation, unless the observer is conditioned to minimize the distinction, so too does locale. The following literature assisted me in deciding how best to study the Tallahassee Civil Rights Movement, CORE, and the ‘Letter from Leon County Jail.’

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review consists of 6 schools of scholarship: (1) articles describing the assumptions of communication theorists on the nature of human behavior, and deriving meaning from that behavior when groups seek out members for participation in social change activities; (2) books and resources documenting the period generally described as the Civil Rights era and described more closely as the ‘Movement.’ In my research, I found that most of the widely distributed and mainly noted texts on civil rights in America largely excluded Florida from consideration as an area of major impact; (3) recent texts of the past few years suggesting a proliferation in the publication of regional civil rights narratives. The stories all seek to fill gaps in the available literature of civil rights, yet most are concerned with narratives with close proximity to the publishing houses which produced them and largely exclude Florida history and events; (4) works specifically reflecting North Florida’s civil rights history. They come mostly from prior to 1995, and offer a focus on pioneering organizations of civil rights activism or the individual stories of the persons who joined these organizations and faced the dangers concurrent with resistance; (5) the scholarship of Glenda Alice Rabby and Tananrive Due and Patricia Stephens Due, which specifically address the areas of scholarship I seek to focus on; and (6) those authors emphasizing autobiographical study as a unique lens through which to explore the African and Black American Diaspora. These areas of literature are the basis of the critical interpretive analysis that combines the artifacts of Patricia Stephens Due’s life and the elements of comparison listed in this body of work.

(1) The communication theorists who contributed to this thesis are: Ernest G. Bormann, Kenneth Burke, Lloyd Bitzer, Marilyn Young, John Murphy, John Louis Lucaites and Celeste Michelle Conduit, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Herbert W. Simons, Dan F. Hahn and Ruth M. Gonchar, K.A. Ono and J.M. Sloop, Brock, Scott, and Chesebro, and Walter Fisher. These scholars input allowed for openings in small cracks or fissures of discourse to be turned upon their heads and re-inserted into the study of civil rights rhetorical scholarship.

Bormann’s Fantasy Theme Analysis allows for the discussion of group reality creation. Kenneth Burke in A Rhetoric of Motives reveals “the use of words by human agents to form

attitudes on actions in other human agents”³⁴ as a definition that sufficiently covers the concepts of rhetoric as we search for a rhetoric of civil rights. Lloyd Bitzer³⁵ refers to ‘a rhetorical situation’ controlled by an ‘exigence’ or organizing principle. This exigence required a “fitting response” from the presenter to the rhetorical situation. Marilyn Young³⁶ noted, with respect to Patricia Stephens Due and the Tallahassee Civil Rights Movement that the situation as it existed in Tallahassee required a response. The fitness of the response would be tested through the protests and their outcomes.

Murphy calls for the “critique of specific episodes within the evolution of a social movement.”³⁷ This seems reasonable to the formulator of the eclectic literature review, yet this technique would only seem of critical importance if each episode created changes in that movement and outcomes which might affect other rhetorical phenomenon. The examination of details should be based on looking at those artifacts which can be interpreted meaningfully. Lucaites and Conduit argue in similar vein as Murphy that discourse can be engineered to duplicitously mitigate legitimate challenges to social wrongs. By promoting “...’sameness’ and ‘identity’”³⁸ true resistance is stifled in a smothering ideological pampering that conceals the price of legitimacy for social constraint against lawful authority.

Campell and Jamieson concur that “...the value of all criticism must be tested heuristically, in application.”³⁹ This theme is consistent with my work. A systematic and historic summary of the analysis applied today could help criticism explore additional incidences of the public letter or utterance such as the “Letter from Leon County Jail.”

Hahn and Gonchar’s work tests the limits of social movement theory. It is true that the Civil Rights Movement was a social movement. It will be interesting to compare the work in this thesis to currently unfolding events and Due’s artifacts. These authors post that

social movements are built upon shared beliefs. So the student will want to discuss how the movement participants came to share beliefs.⁴⁰

³⁴ Kenneth Burke. *A Rhetoric of Motives*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 41

³⁵ Lloyd Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (1968): 1-14

³⁶ Marilyn Young, “Patricia Stephens Due and the Tallahassee Civil Rights Movement” (Miami, FL.:National Communication Association panel presentation, 2003, typewritten), 2

³⁷ John M. Murphy. “Domesticating Dissent,” 63

³⁸ John Louis Lucaites and Celeste Michelle Conduit, “Reconstructing <Equality>: Culturetypal and Counter-Culture Rhetorics in the Martyred Black Vision,” *Communication Monographs*, 57 (March 1990), 5

³⁹ Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, “Form and Genre in Rhetorical Criticism: An Introduction”

⁴⁰ Dan F. Hahn and Ruth M. Gonchar, “Studying Social Movements: A Rhetorical Methodology,” *The Speech Teacher*.

Sloop and Ono's recognition of vernacular discourse is highly relevant for this analysis. In the same way the thesis picks parts of various communication theories and points of view to create new viewpoints, these authors specifically utilize concepts in the same manner, such as pastiche, the process of "...constructing a unique discursive form out of fragments."⁴¹ Brock, Scott and Chesebro⁴² further reinforce the previous authors through their support of eclectic methodologies to explore discourse. Finally, Walter Fisher's Narrative Paradigm⁴³ explains how competing stories persuade people to take actions. In other words, counter-narratives must be created when an existing way of looking at an issue needs adjusting. The narrative of the status quo in Tallahassee in 1960 was that Blacks were wrong for wanting to be treated equally. A new challenging narrative had to fill in the void of rhetorical silence and displace the old.

(2) Moving to an examination of the current stream of literature within the 'Movement,' Taylor Branch's 1988, Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-63 seemed to many scholars to have at last opened up new spaces in communication discourse, and appreciation for the rhetorical scholar in civil rights. By cursory glance, a Pulitzer Prize winning acknowledgement puts to rest any question suggesting the absence of critical inquiry on Jim Crow segregation during the 1950s and 1960s, or at any time. The award was the proof that historical and rhetorical scholarship had at last brought American society face to face with the demons of the past. Even Branch however recognized that point of view limits what is uncovered in our history,

Almost as color defines vision itself, race shapes the cultural eye--- what we do and do not notice, the reach of empathy and the alignment of response. This subliminal force recommends care in choosing a point of view for a history grounded in race.⁴⁴

Branch's concern is well founded for the miner/recorder/publisher role of the student of historical civil rights communication research. We cannot simply examine a published work, exclaim 'eureka' and declare that the search for understanding is no longer relevant. We

⁴¹ Kent A Ono and John M. Sloop, "The Critique of Vernacular Discourse," *Communication Monographs*, Vol. 62, (March 1995), 23

⁴² Bernard Brock, Robert L. Scott, and James W. Chesebro, Methods of Rhetorical Criticism: A Twentieth Century Perspective. 3rd (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990)

⁴³ Walter Fisher, "Rationality and the Logic of Good Reasons" *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 13: 121-130

⁴⁴ Taylor Branch, Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-1963. (New York: Touchstone, 1988), xi.

continue to excavate culture, speech, person, group and event for motive and meaning. When we have exhausted that search, we being anew to seek deeper meaning, in both what was previously found, and in what new subject matter the exploration of those mysteries then begins to uncover. This is the never ending task of rhetorical scholarship.

Dittmer won the Bancroft Prize in American History for writing about local struggles for civil rights in Mississippi.⁴⁵ S. Jonathan Bass reexamined King's Letter from Birmingham Jail in 2001 to emphasize the significance of King's rhetoric on the overall movement.⁴⁶ Bass makes reference to theological qualifications and visits to Florida by Pastor Earl Stallings, one of the white ministers King addressed in his 'Letter.'⁴⁷ This is worthy of note, and adds to the history buff's mining of unusual connections, and seldom known ties between seemingly unrelated events.

What is not mentioned about Florida, and I would argue, what is an even more valuable historical nugget to mine, is that Martin Luther King, Jr., the author of the 'Letter from Birmingham Jail' wrote a letter to a FAMU student named Patricia Stephens and several other persons who were in jail in Tallahassee, Florida in March 1960, because they were making a principled stand against segregation. Five students were voluntary 'jail -ins' at the Leon County Jail from March 19, 1960 to May 5, 1960. These FAMU students were a 'first in the storybook of the Civil Rights Movement!' A first, because in the history of the student struggle to that point, protesters had paid fines, were released, and continued to come back to protest again another day. This incident was however to be different. The group of FAMU protesters, convicted of remaining seated at Woolworth's lunch counter on February 20, 1960 had refused to pay any fines assessed to their conduct, and thus, remained in jail.

In text after text on civil rights and 'The Movement,' moments of bravery and defiance by Floridians are obscured or excluded, even when all manner of references to other places, and their moments of resistance are noted and distributed as historic events. In searching for good civil rights scholarship of the past, admittedly, the scope of civil rights history and all individual incidents of resistance during the era are far too numerous to categorize or reference in a rhetorical 'twenty-four hour a day, seven day a week' view of civil rights in every place, at all times. However, the accumulated weight of attention to other areas, and specifically, a current

⁴⁵ John Dittmer, *Local People*, cover

⁴⁶ S. Jonathan Bass, *Blessed Are The Peacemakers: Martin Luther King Jr., Eight White Religious Leaders, and the 'Letter from Birmingham Jail'*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 73

trend to examine regional accounts of civil rights rhetorical moments, again omitting Florida, are too profound to ignore.

Examining first the weight of attention given to civil rights events in geographic areas outside of Florida, we can initially note, Meier, Bracey and Rudwick's, Black Protest in the Sixties⁴⁸ which mentions no Florida cities, persons or events, although it does discuss CORE. Brisbane's, The Black Vanguard: Origins of the Negro Social Revolution, 1900-1960⁴⁹ indeed mentions Florida.

The text purports to denote the origins of social revolution in years including 1960, and states generally that "department stores and chains in dozens of Southern communities desegregated their lunch counters during 1960 and 1961."⁵⁰ The specific references to Florida however are disappointing from the point of civil rights era rhetorical research, as they discuss: in 1874,⁵¹ Florida is one of only four states that still have Reconstruction governments; 1879⁵² Reconstruction policies, an 1891⁵³ organization meeting of a civil group called the Colored Alliance, the birth of A. Philip Randolph in Crescent City, Florida in 1889,⁵⁴ a 1948⁵⁵ estimation of the total number of Black voters in the United States equaling the number of white citizens in seven southern states, with Florida counted among those, and the efforts of seven states, including Florida to thwart implementation of the Brown decision.

(3) When examining a current trend toward reports of regional civil rights event accounts, associated with regional university publishing houses, printing stories of resistance that manifested within the geographic region of said regional university publishing houses, we find several examples of the phenomenon. A trend in recent publications on civil rights has created a regional and individual state foci to a superfluity of local stories about 'The Movement' in the 1950's and 60's. Stories of civil rights activities as 'regional phenomenon'

⁴⁷ *ibid*

⁴⁸ August Meier, John Bracey, Jr., and Elliot Rudwick, Black Protest in the Sixties. (New York: Markus Wiener Publishing, Inc., 1991) 1-21. From the rise of The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in 1942, until the mid-60's, CORE emphasized interracial, non-violent direct action. This text documents some of this history of CORE's change in philosophy which excluded white participation came about with the rise of the Black Power Movement. The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) also adopted this posture.

⁴⁹ Robert H. Brisbane. The Black Vanguard: Origins of the Negro Social Revolution, 1900-1960. (Valley Forge: The Judson Press, 1970) 278

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 250

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 18

⁵² *Ibid.*, 21

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 144

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 235

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 245

worth of local study permeate published works on the genre in 2005. In Polite Protest: The Political Economy of Race in Indianapolis 1920-1970, an Indiana civil rights narrative, Pierce suggests that:

The African-American community developed differently in Indianapolis than it did in places further north. Instead of receiving the bulk of its African-American population during the World War eras, Indianapolis already contained a sizable African-American population as the city itself developed, and it maintained a significant population throughout the twentieth century.⁵⁶

This ‘regional phenomenon’ explanation of the presence of Blacks did not eliminate racism or acts of terrorism and intimidation against them in Indiana. It does serve to express the author’s opinion that in his area of the country, interracial negotiations and legal challenges combined, to allow gains for blacks within the existing white power structure to arise. Even with this suggested benefit within an asymmetrical power relationship, it must be determined if this type of relationship constitutes good civil rights rhetorical scholarship.

In addition to Indiana, the states of Georgia, Texas, and North Carolina, are also the focus of a 2005 publishing explosion of new texts which explore: the Civil Rights Movement, African-American resistance to segregation in the late 50s and early 60’s, and interracial efforts to expand the Black Freedom Movement. Lefever,⁵⁷ Sitton and Conrad,⁵⁸ and Greene,⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Pierce. Polite Protest, 3

⁵⁷The Crusader, Vol. 1, issue 2 (November 1959) 5, 6. A mimeographed copy is in the Woodruff Library Archives, Atlanta University Center, Atlanta; quoted in Harry G. Lefever. Undaunted By The Fight: Spelman College and the Civil Rights Movement, 1957-1967. (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2005), 13 Spelman actions with CORE in the Summer of 1959 add merit to the suggestions of the defense committee on this thesis that in further work in this project the role of women should be more clearly accessed. “In July 1959, sixty-five individuals gathered on Spelman’s campus to participate in the First Southwide Institute on Nonviolent Resistance to segregation. At the end of the three day event, which was organized by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Fellowship of reconciliation (FOR), and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the participants adopted a manifesto that emphasized the following points: (1) We seek full American citizenship with all of the opportunities and stand ready to assume all citizen responsibilities; (2) We pledge adherence to the practice of Christian love and nonviolence, not simply as a tactical measure, but to the best of our ability as an all-embracing way of conduct; and (3) We welcome with joy the opportunity to cooperate with all Southerners, regardless of color, religion, or background, in the building of a better south for all people.”

⁵⁸James S. Fisher. “Negro Farm Ownership in the South” Annals of the Association of American Geographers 63, no. 4 (1973): 478-489; quoted in Thad Sitton and James H. Conrad. Freedom Colonies: Independent Black Texans in the Time of Jim Crow. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 3 “Freedman pioneered independent landowner and squatter communities in north Florida, the Pine Barrens of western South Carolina, southwest Georgia, the Red Hills of Alabama and Mississippi, and other places.” Sitton and Conrad’s chapter endnotes claim that Fisher’s account was the only one they could find from a scholar who provided this type of regional overview.

⁵⁹Christina Greene. Our Separate Ways: Women and the Black Freedom Movement in Durham, North Carolina. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 5 “When direct action erupted in the 1960’s,

respectively in 2005 released a wave of biographic, auto-biographical, and protest action oriented descriptions of the activities of CORE, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and smaller lesser known entities, like the Southern Negro Youth Congress, the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC) and Southerners for Economic Justice.⁶⁰

These voyages into the contours of grassroots activism across the country provided multiple opportunity to pay tribute to the resistance of oppressed people in many places. In various regions of the country, intermittent tides of racism swept areas, and the lack of legal protection for the people of color facing the impacts of centuries of unequal access to: education and health care, graft, economic exploitation, outright theft sanctioned by law, intimidation, rape, and in many instances murder; manifested across the nation widely. When the appearance of these inequitable occurrences were finally addressed widely in the late 50s and 60's through the response of direct action campaigns, the true moral quality of the fight for civil rights, repressed for centuries was realized.

(4) Why is Florida so easily dismissed in the national view, as having suffered the indignities of racism, and being a unique, long established birthplace of opposition to unequal treatment of Blacks? Certainly recorded history does not bear out the claim of equal opportunity under law or custom for Florida's African-American residents. According to Richard Mohl, "...as late as 1962, not a single black held elective public office anywhere in the state of Florida."⁶¹ Over the years, some Florida civil rights authors have chronicled the dates and times of epochal events in civil rights history. Robert Saunders, field secretary of the Florida state conference of the National Association of Colored People (NAACP) from 1952 to 1966 described North Florida's 1956 to 1962 civil rights protests in Florida's capital city as 'The Seige of Tallahassee.'⁶² Florida State University professors, Maxine D. Jones and Kevin M. McCarthy jointly recognized the overarching, yet overshadowed significance of May 27, 1956, the day the Tallahassee bus boycott started when they wrote,

black women's organizational bases helped to sustain the movement." More fuel for the fire to direct scholarships specifically at the roles of women during the 'Movement.'

⁶⁰ Ibid., 361 Listings of multiple organizations associated with Southern civil rights.

⁶¹ Richard Mohl. "Race Relations in Miami Since the 1920s," In The African American Heritage of Florida. David R. Colburn and Jane L. Landers, eds., (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995), 348.

⁶² Robert W. Saunders, Sr. Bridging The Gap:Continuing the Florida NAACP Legacy of Harry T. Moore, 1952-1966. (Tampa:University of Tampa Press, 2000), chapter 9.

That spring afternoon was 428 years after the first African had stepped ashore with the early Spanish explorers. It was 200 years after runaway slaves fled South Carolina plantations for the freedom of Florida. It was 92 years after African-American soldiers had fought Southerners at the Battle of Olustee in the Civil War, a war that freed slaves throughout the South. The struggle that began in Tallahassee that afternoon in 1956 continues to the present day as African-Americans and whites try to establish a color-blind state, a society that does not judge people by the color of their skin. That struggle will continue long after all of us are gone from this earth. But it will go on.⁶³

(5) Rabby and Due echo the sentiments that the struggle will continue. They confirm that an historic struggle took place in Florida in 1960 and they were witness to it. Even with the great strength of Rabby's work, one distinction between this thesis and her analysis is my emphasis on a broader history reaching back to the time of the Spaniards. Rabby acknowledges my emphasis with a single sentence only, the first line in The Pain and The Promise.⁶⁴ She writes "Blacks first sought freedom in North Florida as runaway slaves in the mid-eighteenth century." What I would add to this, without impugning the remaining elements of her analysis is that by the mid-eighteenth century Blacks had been coming to Florida for so long, that it became a matter that whites had to resolve militarily in order to resolve it in their favor.

Due's autobiography chronicles sights sounds and emotions with crystal clarity. When asked how she remembered things with such detail, she confided during her interview that,

And I didn't count on my memory either. I wrote the outline. I had an outline. I know when this happened, when that happened. See, that's the problem I'm finding too. History gets turned around. When you write it correctly, and you send it your editor and send it to somebody else and you have to just read and re-read read and reread to make certain that what you've said is in fact what's on the final page and it doesn't always happen that way. I think most writers experience that but you do the best that you can do.⁶⁵

⁶³ Maxine D. Jones and Kevin M. McCarthy, African Americans in Florida. (Sarasota: Pineapple Press, Inc.,1993), 114. This book carries pictures from the Florida State Archives which show "Picketing of Tallahassee stores because of lack of progress in desegregating the lunch counters at Neisner's, McCrory's, F.W. Woolworth's, Walgreen's and Sears' stores, Dec. 6-7, 1960."

⁶⁴ Rabby, The Pain and the Promise, 1

⁶⁵ Due, Interview with author, December 22, 2003.

(6) The examination of text written by Due, as a student during the movement, and text reflecting her observations since, is recognition of the “continuities and divergences”⁶⁶ of the African-American autobiographical narrative. Alabi writes:

Black autobiographies share major continuities like the focus on community and resistance...The popularity of autobiography as a genre in contemporary Black cultures can in part be accounted for by its prevalence in traditional African societies. There, the genre, like other literary genres, was oral, and it served several functions in the storytelling traditions of various African communities. It was a record of the struggles for survival by many African societies. The need to teach the history of African societies to younger generations and the importance of learning from the activities of Africans who shaped African history in various ways motivated the genre in the past.⁶⁷

Rabby’s work suggests a dichotomy of pain and promise evident and originating in North Florida. This autobiographical analysis carries Rabby further into the Black Diaspora. She sees the significance of Tallahassee in 1960, but does not acknowledge the ties with Tallahassee, before it was called Tallahassee, when people with dark skins lived there in periods of alternating freedom and oppression. Such exploration is critical to laying bare the underlying pattern of resistance of slavery and its ties to segregation in North Florida. A means for this examination is the autobiography. Alabi explains:

As on the African continent, in the African Diaspora, autobiographies have been used as a form of counter discourse to the dominant discourses of slavery, racism, colonialism, sexism, and class-ism. In the Black Diaspora, as in Africa, the autobiographical genre is used by various writers to record their various activities toward the upliftment of Black people...Black autobiographies, therefore, function not just as a record of individual activities in the various Black communities, but as a record of the struggle for survival and equality with other groups by the various communities themselves. In fact, Black auto-biographies can be described as histories of Black societies, in oral and written literary form, created or narrated by some of the active participants in the events recollected.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Adetayo Alabi, *Telling Our Stories: Continuities and Divergences in Black Autobiographies*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), jacket

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 2

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

This critical interpretive analysis sustains and extends elements of social movement, narrative paradigm, rhetorical situation and body rhetoric theory. Admittedly, it is a messy and highly complex matter to flesh out of the artifacts offered, a specific and detailed documentation of centuries of oppression in North Florida, however, at least part of telling the tale of 1960 Tallahassee must recognize the history of racial discrimination and historic resistance to racial discrimination. Patricia Stephens' actions are but part of the cloth of local resistance, which in this case, expressed itself through body protest rhetoric and written protest. Stephens' letter was a clarion call for more strongly focused action from the national civil rights leadership.

To better understand the rhetoric of Tallahassee CORE in 1960, and how this rhetoric is illustrated in the selected texts, I initially analyze the 'Letter From Leon County Jail.' Stephens wrote the 'Letter' while serving a jail sentence for sit-in action at Woolworth's on February 20, 1960.

The process of staying in jail, suffering the indignities of incarceration, experiencing civic ostracism for being in jail, separation from family, friends, school and work, constituted a meaningful communication phenomenon, so much so, that other communities soon also began what popularly came to be called "jail-ins" following these events in North Florida in 1960. As Robert Brisbane documents:

Meanwhile, (African-American) college students in the South, easily the ones most impatient with the status quo, began to violate local segregation laws and mores deliberately and directly. Seeking to dramatize the injustice of these ordinances, the student demonstrators offered no resistance to violence and actually courted arrest. The chief target of this movement in the South were department stores which maintained segregated lunch counters while welcoming (African-American) trade in other sections of the store. Many of these stores maintained "white" and "colored" water fountains. (African-American) students also concentrated on segregated downtown restaurants. The first of these sit-in demonstrations occurred on February 1, 1960, in Greensboro, North Carolina. Within six months NAACP lawyers were busy representing sixteen hundred students who had been arrested all

over the South. The demonstrators had been spat upon, jeered, chased, beaten and even stomped. They were arrested for violating local ordinances, trespassing or disturbing the peace. But the movement continued and soon bore successful results. Department stores and chains in dozens of Southern communities desegregated their lunch counters during 1960 and 1961.⁶⁹

The ‘Letter’ chronologically outlines CORE actions in Tallahassee in February and March 1960, and is composed of one hundred eighteen sentences organized into twenty-three paragraphs. How I analyze these three artifacts is admittedly based on an eclectic system, because examination of texts of this nature requires the widest possible latitude of social, historical, and rhetorical perspectives to weave a meaningful critique. Alabi maintains “...counter-narratives from the Black communities become part of the resistance strategy of Black societies to the maintenance of their disadvantaged position.”⁷⁰ bell hooks adds that

Black people and our allies in struggle are empowered when we practice self-love as a revolutionary intervention that undermines practices of domination. Loving blackness as political resistance transforms our ways of looking and being, and thus creates the conditions necessary for us to move against the forces of domination and death and reclaim life.⁷¹

Sloop and Ono suggest that examining a wide range of artifacts from local cultures is an appropriate means by which to initiate rhetorical criticism. Such a mandate would appeal to the scholar studying the rhetoric of North Florida in 1960. Many accounts are still to be harvested, and expanding research outside the boundaries of what is currently published would be beneficial for future study. Sloop and Ono propose that vernacular discourses are most appropriately mined from within the culture itself:

If we limit our attention to such documents that shaped the ‘history’ of our society, then we are missing out on, and writing ‘out of history,’ important texts that gird and influence local cultures first and then affect, through the sheer number of local communities, cultures at large.⁷²

Sloop and Ono continue,

⁶⁹ Robert Brisbane, *The Black Vanguard: Origins of the Negro Social Revolution 1900-1960*, p.250
⁷⁰ Adetayo Alabi, *Telling Our Stories: Continuities and Divergences in Black Autobiographies*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 30

⁷¹ bell hooks, “Loving Blackness as Political Resistance” In Alabi, *Telling Our Stories: Continuities and Divergences in Black Autobiographies* p. 30-31

⁷² Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop, *Communication Monographs*, 19

Critical rhetoricians should by criticizing vernacular discourse, follow the path of those who have discussed the rhetoric of the oppressed. The critique of powerful discourse has broad 'historical' impact and therefore has been the primary mode of critique within rhetorical criticism. In addition to the critique of widely disseminated texts, critics should examine texts that profoundly influence vernacular communities and communitas. We conceptualize how a study of vernacular discourse could be carried out by defining vernacular, describing the critique of vernacular discourse, explaining the purpose of such criticism, and illustrating our approach through a brief study of one vernacular discourse⁷³

Finally, as Sloop and Ono recognize the validity of various discourses, the combination of the personal, historic, and autobiographic seem perfectly attenuated to mete out the underpinnings of discourses mired in distinct cultural origins.

At another level of rhetorical discovery, Ernest Bormann explores the power of imagination and belief to shape social reality. The followers of CORE and Patricia Stephens are organizing to bring into creation a Tallahassee that does not for them exist, but which could be. Robert Bales dynamic process analysis of group fantasizing fits well within Bormann's description of fantasy and rhetorical vision. When groups meet, such as the groups assembled by Patricia and Priscilla Stephens following their immersion in CORE philosophy in the summer of 1958, they share content from dramatic situations based upon dreams, ideals, goals, and beliefs. Following the Miami Interracial Action Initiative, the Stephens sisters felt they could convince others to join their cause. Bormann substantiates that:

Continued work with the category of 'dramatizes' led to the discovery of 'group fantasy events.' Some, but not all, of the communication coded as 'dramatizes' would chain out through the group. The tempo of conversation would pick up. People would grow excited interrupt one another, blush, laugh, forget their self-consciousness. The tone of the meeting, often quiet and tense immediately prior to the dramatizing, would become lively, animated and boisterous, the chaining process, involving both verbal and nonverbal communication, indicating participation in the drama.⁷⁴

⁷³ Ibid, p. 19-20

⁷⁴ E.G. Bormann, "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 58 (1972): 396-407

Patricia and Priscilla Stephens experienced this when they described how they felt following the Miami CORE workshop, and Patricia Stephens mentions these feeling just before the FAMU students marching toward downtown are stopped by police on March 12, 1960.⁷⁵ Although the marchers were stopped on that day, over one thousand people were caught up in a symbolic reality or rhetorical vision of freedom and justice that compelled them to follow Patricia Stephens to downtown Tallahassee. Bormann substantiates that the belief of a better world could have been a highly motivating factor to the actions taken by CORE followers, when he writes:

Individuals in rhetorical transactions create subjective worlds of common expectations and meaning' and that the rhetorical vision serves as a 'coping function for those who participate in the drama.⁷⁶

Walter Fisher's discussions on the Narrative Paradigm would also seem to have a place in the examination of the three artifacts in this thesis, and the three selected elements of critical interpretive analysis. Fisher offers new insights into communication behavior and directs our attention to democratic processes in the area of rhetorical criticism. Fisher contributes the lens that reveals peoples lived experiences as tales of courage and worth, and from this revelation, critics analyze rhetorical structures within the lived experiences of others. Further, the narrative paradigm helps us to see the nature of multiple logics at work in our communication encounters. Competing narratives produce valuable discourse and while in the past, the examination of these discourses was problematized by dichotomous barriers, Fisher in combination with other lens, such as those emphasizing the value of communal knowledge sharing and group challenges to segregation, decreased the problematic nature of examining such texts. In this manner, the Narrative Paradigm has made a substantial contribution to our understanding of human communication and human nature in general.⁷⁷

How the competing stories of Tallahassee CORE verses Tallahassee segregationist were sorted, weighed, prioritized, and acted on by members of the community at large; the authorities, and the CORE volunteers, is indicative, in part, of the effectiveness of public moral argument. When competing narratives meet in the public sphere, actions and words combine to

⁷⁵ Due, Freedom in the Family

⁷⁶ E.G. Bormann, "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 58 (1972): 396-407

⁷⁷ Richard West and Lynn Turner. "The Narrative Paradigm" Chapter published in 2nd edition: Introducing Communication Theory: Analysis and Application. (New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, 2004)

create unique meaning in the minds of the audience. Moral suasion is utilized to motivate or defuse reactions to discourses of oppositional nature.

In the minds of CORE followers and CORE antagonists, the rhetorical contests taking place through protests, sit-ins, tear gassings, and pickets would eventually have a side winning and a side losing. The ability to persuade the mass of the general public that their side was victorious would depend on which narrative was argued better in the public arena. Fisher puts forth that good reasons or reasoning may be found in all sorts of symbolic actions.

Brock, Scott, and Chesebro note:

Fisher starts with the assumption that ‘humans as rhetorical beings are as much valuing as reasoning animals’ and that central to this process is the giving of ‘good reasons,’ ‘those elements that provide warrants for accepting or adhering to advice fostered by any form of communication that can be considered rhetorical. Fisher then defines ‘narration’ as ‘symbolic actions—words and/or deeds—that have sequence and meaning for those who live, create, or interpret them.’ He goes on to argue that ‘the narrative paradigm can be considered a dialectical synthesis of two traditional strands that recur in the history of rhetoric: the argumentative, persuasive theme and the literary aesthetic theme.’⁷⁸

Fisher’s presuppositions of the narrative paradigm are that: “(1) Humans are essentially storytellers. (2) The paradigmatic mode of human decision-making and communicating is ‘good reasons’ which vary in form among situations, genres, and media of communication. (3) The production and practice of good reasons are ruled by matters of history, biography, culture, and character along with the kinds of forces identified in the Frenztz and Farrell language action paradigm. (4) Rationality is determined by the nature of persons as narrative beings—their inherent awareness of narrative probability, what constitutes a coherent story, add their constant habit of testing narrative fidelity, whether or not the stories they experience ring true with the stories they know to be true in their lives. (5) The world as we know it is a set of stories that must be chosen among in order for us to live life in a process of continual re-creation.”⁷⁹

Maulana Karenga’s “Nommo, Kawaida and Communicative Practices: Bringing

⁷⁸ Bernard L. Brock, Robert L. Scott, James W. Chesebro, eds. Methods of Rhetorical Criticism: A Twentieth Century Approach, 3d. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990

⁷⁹Walter R. Fisher. “The Narrative Paradigm: An Elaboration,” *Communication Monographs* 52 (1985): 347-367.

Good into the World” also values the process of re-creation, and expresses the essential nature of community as a base from which to explore its rhetorical action. He states:

I will begin with a discussion of tradition and themes in African American rhetorical practice and then continue with a critical engagement of the conceptual construct *nommo*, its evolution in the 1960’s as a central category of Black rhetorical studies, and its usefulness in providing conceptual space not only for African-centered grounding in the field of rhetoric but also for exploring alternative ways of understanding and approaching communicative practices. Within this framework, the communal character of communicative practice is reaffirmed and rhetoric is approached as, above all, a rhetoric of communal deliberation, discourse and action, oriented toward that which is good for the community and for the world.⁸⁰

The building of a viable community was a central tenant of the teachings of CORE, and this philosophy was also a part of the childhood teachings of the Stephens sisters. Karenga and Molefi Asante’s Afrocentrism theory would both appear to provide fertile ground upon which to dissect the Tallahassee Movement’s participation and leadership by African-American students at FAMU based upon a communal approach to leadership. Five central measures undergird the approach:

- 1) People of African descent share a common experience, struggle and origin.
- 2) Present in African culture is a non-material element of resistance to the assault upon traditional values caused by the intrusion of European legal procedures, medicines, political processes, and religions into African culture.
- 3) African culture takes the view that an Afrocentric modernization process would be based upon three traditional values: harmony with nature, humaneness, and rhythm.
- 4) Afrocentricity involves the development of a theory of an African way of knowing and interpreting the world.
- 5) Some form of communalism or socialism is an important component of the way wealth is produced, owned, and distributed.⁸¹

Asante also contributes analysis on The Future of African-American Rhetoric when he suggests:

⁸⁰ Maulana Karenga. “Nommo, Kawaida, and Communicative Practice: Bringing Good into the World” In Understanding African-American Rhetoric: Classical Origins to Contemporary Innovations, Ronald L. Jackson and Elaine B. Richardson, eds. (New York: Routledge-Taylor and Francis) 3-22

⁸¹ Sidney A. Ribeau. “How I Came to Know” In 4th edition: Our Voices: Essays in Culture, Ethnicity, and Communication, Gonzales, Houston, Chen, (Los Angeles: Roxbury, 2004)

The principle categories are: 1) examine the principle characteristics of a new rhetoric for the future; 2) explore cultural themes, 3) suggest historical periods as a way of projecting the future, 4) make a brief excursion into postmodernity, and 5) discuss how classical connections are important as emerging issues.⁸²

These ideas are supplemented today by a critical interpretive analysis, blending many varied theories. Furthermore, with the identification of social movements as rhetorical practices, scholars also call for recognition of cultural factors that have previously avoided identification as significant forces, yet which may be present in many civil rights discourses. In seeking these, Branham and Pearce assert that rhetorical scholars:

who find their rhetorical situations problematic may fashion texts that attempt to transform the contexts of interpretation in which they operate, a process we have termed 'contextual reconstruction.'⁸³

Such contextual reconstruction provides another lens through which to examine narratives from Tallahassee's historic civil rights past. Lloyd Bitzer's seminal work on the "Rhetorical Situation"⁸⁴ is a mindful departure from such surface text analysis. Bitzer notes the audience as central to deriving meaning from rhetorical events. Marilyn Young extends Bitzer's theory of the 'Rhetorical Situation' to explore "the fitting response" to the exigency of ending segregation in public places through 'body rhetoric' and 'putting oneself on the line.'⁸⁵ Young states:

One of the lessons of the civil rights movement and the 1960's anti-war movement is that rhetoric cannot be confined to oratory, to verbal expression. The protests that were the life's blood of both movements taught us that 'body rhetoric,' 'putting one's self on the line for the movement,' is a legitimate form of public discourse...the totality of movement activity constitutes the constellation of movement rhetoric; individual speeches can be studied and assessed for their contribution to the national consciousness [and the national conscience], but the movement is much more than speeches, much more than marches, more even than sit-ins and other direct action tactics. In this sense, Patricia Stephens Due exemplifies the rhetoric of protest in 1950's and 1960's Tallahassee. Though she did not give speeches in the

⁸² Molefi Kete Asante "The Future of African-American Rhetoric" Chapter published in Understanding African-American Rhetoric: Classical Origins to Contemporary Innovations, Ronald L. Jackson and Elaine B. Richardson, editors (New York: Routledge-Taylor and Francis, 2003), 285-291

⁸³ R. J. Branham & W. B. Pearce, "A contract for civility: Edward Kennedy's Lynchburg Address," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, Vol. 73, 425

⁸⁴ Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (1968): 2

⁸⁵ Marilyn J. Young, "Patricia Stephens Due and the Tallahassee Civil Rights Movement," an unpublished paper delivered at a National Communication Association (NCA) Conference, Miami, November, 2003.

traditional sense [except for a nation-wide lecture tour], it was through her tireless efforts that a large chunk of the civil rights movement arose and survived in Tallahassee....it was the direct action strategy employed by CORE that represented the 'fitting response' to the exigency of ending segregation in public places. The situation in the 1950s and 60s American South was such that more mainstream efforts were unlikely to bear any fruit; rather, those attempts at reason simply reinforced the attitudes of the white establishment. Direct action, on the other hand, forced white citizens to deal with black citizens on their own terms.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ *ibid*

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS: THE LETTER FROM LEON COUNTY JAIL

“I am writing this in Leon County Jail.” This simply stated testament of eight words is the introduction of a call to action written forty-five years ago. “The Movement” manifested itself in many places and in a variety of ways. In Tallahassee, capital of Florida, the Tallahassee Civil Rights Movement was a student-led creation.

Stephens writes a work of sublime narration in civil rights event description. The letter’s composition is approximately 1,650 words, divided into 118 sentences composed within 23 paragraphs. Within this frame, Due articulates a compelling narrative. Her ‘Letter from Leon County Jail’ is not the only letter written or received by Patricia Stephens during her forty-nine day incarceration, but it is an instrument of defining discourse. This particular letter was published in 1962 in a work titled Freedom Ride.⁸⁷ It was later reprinted in a 1970 series of essays on the Black Experience, The Black Man and The Promise of America.

The symbolic effect for the region and the nation in a time of turmoil and change, is revealed as a causal force in social rhetoric due to its effect on the students and citizens of Tallahassee. The style and purpose of the letter bound the followers of Tallahassee CORE to their cause of demonstrating that Black people and White people could enjoy public facilities together, as Stephens put it, “without coercion, contamination, or cohabitation.”⁸⁸ This simple belief however was under assault in Tallahassee in 1960.

In ‘The Letter from Leon County Jail’ the author specifically describes a series of Tallahassee CORE sponsored events: 1) Saturday, February 13, 1960, a test sit-in at Woolworth’s carried out on a regional ‘sympathy sit-in day,’ to show nationwide solidarity for the better known, initial lunch counter sit-in students in Greensboro, North Carolina, on February 1, 1960; 2) Saturday, February, 20, 1960, when seventeen CORE activists returned to the Woolworth’s and arrests made that day led to the time served in jail, 3) the February 22,

⁸⁷ James Peck, Freedom Ride New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962

⁸⁸ Due, Freedom in the Family, 75

1960 arraignment, where the trial was set for March 3, 1960⁸⁹ and 4) the farcical March 17, 1960 trial for the February 20th sit-in.

‘The Letter’ succinctly arranges the actions of Stephens, her sister Priscilla and other CORE members interned at the jail into a readable chronology. This dual chronology-autobiographical account explained: what happened during the protests; what the students believed in that led them to serve their time instead of paying their fines when they did have a choice to avoid incarceration, what were the conditions of their arrests and imprisonments, what were people saying about the protests, what was Tallahassee CORE’s plan of action, who were the cast of characters and institutions that the protesters faced, what tactics were used by the segregationist system to contain the protesters, what happened during the protests and subsequent trials which followed, how did the leaders of the protests persuade members and followers to continue with the actions, and what would the protesters do when they were released?

Stephens’ letter from Leon County jail is a rhetorical attempt to convince African-Americans, whites in Tallahassee, and generally people everywhere throughout the nation, that they should be actively engaged in the pursuit of civil rights. The struggle against oppression is her mantra. Her narrative is an attempt to deploy the example of her detainment (as described in her letter), and the conditions of which she is subjected to while incarcerated, as a protest against segregation. Her story provides both good reasons, and a lens to let others see, as she colloquially expresses throughout her life that, “the struggle continues.” More specifically, Stephens suggests that a struggle must be made against the forces which imprisoned her, and even when she is eventually released she is prepared to return to jail, if necessary. She also intones that others should be ready to go to jail for these beliefs as well.

When Patricia Stephens wrote “Our first action in Tallahassee was on February 13,” the tone of the narrative seemed to imply that a peaceful scene would unfold itself for the watcher. Prior to this point in the letter, historical chronology and identification of players predominates. It is here however that the precise nature of actions by segregationists within the lunch counter variety stores is exacted.

⁸⁹ The original trial date of March 3, 1960 was changed when a week prior to the date the entire FAMU student body met and voted to suspend classes on March 3rd and attend the trial. Due notes, “The prospect of having three thousand students converge on the small courtroom was a fact, we believe, in causing a two-week postponement.” Due, Patricia Stephens as reported in *The Black Man and the Promise of America*, 359

There was dialectical tension as CORE members requested service at the lunch counter but service was denied. An initial seeming indifference in the public sphere was revealed as ‘the regular customers’ continue to eat. The hubris with which human indifference is manifested toward the sit-in participants is found in the form of the waitresses’ apology to an exiting white patron for “eating in all this indecency.”⁹⁰ The final retort, a come back from the exiting patron, “what did you expect me to do? I paid for it.”⁹¹ The public dismissal of courtesy through third person references, the apology, and a de factor demeaning of equal status is more than an implication of inferiority. The meaning of the waitresses’ comment is unambiguous. The students are not good enough, equal enough, or human enough to eat at Woolworth’s. The initial moments of the students’ public resistance to such treatment in asking for cake are filled with a rich sense of anticipation. The implications to refusal of service at the lunch counter are but prelude to the endorsement of these marginalizing actions by the state.

For the first time in the ‘Letter’ a white patron commends the students and is reported to have said to one of them, “I think you’re doing a fine job. Just sit right there.”⁹² As the narrative progresses, the first concern for the physical safety of one of the students appears, as “a young white hoodlum” and “a number of tough-looking characters”⁹³ commence to attempt to jostle a CORE member identified as Bill Carpenter. Due recalls of the moment in her autobiography:

It’s a strange experience to incite such negative emotions through such a simple, peaceful act. The longer we sat there reading in silence, the more incensed the crowd around us became, calling us hateful names, chiefly ‘niggers.’ The situation felt surreal. None of us could pay real attention to the words on our books’ pages. I even saw someone holding a small handgun—which was shocking—and no one said a word to him about putting the gun away, even inside a public store. Was he going to shoot us? We had entered new, dangerous territory. As the threats intensified, the store manager panicked and closed the counter. We stayed for a total of two hours. Curious reporters came to see what the excitement was about, and then we all left. Someone eventually called the police, but we were gone by then. That was our first sit in. Although we didn’t realize it, the second would catapult us into national headlines.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Due, Freedom In The Family, 47

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 47

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Due, “Tallahassee: Through Jail to Freedom,” The Black Man and the Promise of America, 357

⁹⁴ Due, Freedom in the Family, pg 48

National officials in CORE argue that Patricia Stephens was a special individual, whose unique ability to garner, faith, spirit, and the resolve to endure suffering, uniquely and specifically, galvanized the Tallahassee Movement, while simultaneously deflating segregationist by puzzling them with her innate character of coming back time after time in the face of their assaults. Reading the ‘Letter from Leon County Jail,’ the reader immediately retains a sense of a text which cries out for answers regarding the time served behind bars by these freedom fighters. Through her narrative style, the author almost literally brings the reader into the cell with her.

Examining the contents of the first paragraph, we find an initial explanation of what was happening, the condition of the students, and what they intended to do. Next follows an identification of the players, as if a stage is being set by the introduction of a scene. The author writes, “My sister, Priscilla and I, five other A&M students, and one high school student are serving sixty-day sentences for our participation in the sit-ins.”⁹⁵

Stephens’ letter was written to explain to the followers of CORE, students and ‘foot-soldiers’ in solidarity with the ‘Movement,’ her parents, and the citizens of the world, who was in jail and why. National black newspapers were carrying accounts of the Tallahassee sit-ins, and who was engaging in this struggle against segregation in the Deep South was significant information for those reading the reports. Stephens expresses germinal support of her belief in demonstrating resistance through their recognized suffering when she writes, “We could be out on appeal but we all strongly believe that Martin Luther King was right when he said, ‘We’ve got to fill the jails in order to win our equal rights.’”⁹⁶

The ‘Letter from Leon County Jail,’ articulates resistance to the dominant ideology that African-Americans were unequal socially, and unwelcome to dine or interact socially in public with decent people is turned on its head. The description of who decent people were, in the dominant segregationist ideology of 1960 Tallahassee, Florida was restricted to white persons only. This dominant ideology had been built up over a number of centuries regionally, and was reflected in the treatment of the descendants of Africans who had lived in the North Florida area. This is not to deny that discrimination against Blacks did in fact exist widely in all parts of the New World, including the balance of the United States. Rather, it does recognize that North Florida had its own unique history of resistance to race and class bias.

⁹⁵ Due, “Tallahassee: Through Jail to Freedom,” The Black Man and the Promise of America, 357

⁹⁶ Ibid

Such a literal interpretation of King's words 'to fill the jails' reveals a communal connection within Tallahassee CORE, and outreach to all people who believed as CORE supporters did. The ability to disrupt the normal operations of the system oppressing them, by overwhelming that system was a powerful ideal, consistent with the works of Gandhi, as taught in CORE workshops.

During their internment, as consequence of the second sit-in, the concerns of the Stephens sisters' parents, on their decisions to remain in jail, rather than pay their fines was profound. Considering the serious concerns of parents and friends, why these eight individuals (at the time the letter was written—eventually, only five would serve out the full prison term) including her sister, Priscilla, five FAMU co-eds, and a high school student, were willing to go to jail and pay the price for civil disobedience with their health, their bodies, and their freedom, is a question warranting strong and deliberate consideration.

For Florida high school and college students, subject to the educational policy oversight of the state Board of Control, serving or avoiding jail time was a serious matter, and one that was a choice. Legal consequences could include difficulties with future enrollment in the universities, conduct blemishes on permanent academic records, and missed time from the classroom leading to course failure, withdrawal, or suspension were very real potential outcomes of their actions.

An additional consideration for Patricia and Priscilla, and all of those in jail was that as word of their voluntary stay in jail spread, there would be residual consequences for their family members. It would be expected that parents could control the actions of their children and that by pressuring the families the students could be persuaded to end their protests. The potential consequences for Stephens' parents were true considerations. The fear of African-Americans to keep their jobs, when whites controlled them was quite recognizable, and for the families, retribution by white public officials and private employers was a salient concern. Patricia and Priscilla's mother and stepfather wrote⁹⁷ passionately to them in the Leon County Jail urging them to seriously consider their choice to remain in jail. Dated March 23, 1960, their letter read, in part:

One thing we want you to know and that is: We both love you very dearly and want nothing but the best for you. This, in itself, may make us seem pretty hard and objectionable to your ideas, since we

⁹⁷ Due, Freedom in the Family, 74

know where such may lead in the final analysis.... This is one of the reasons for the words that we feel sure you must still hear---Please count the cost. Cost does not always mean dollars and cents. Cost can mean anxiety as well. With Love,... Mother and Daddy Marion.⁹⁸

Patricia Stephens Due recalled her reaction to that letter, in part, writing:

As I reread that letter today, my eyes fill with tears because I realize how our actions, beginning in 1960, took such a toll on Mother. All of that worry may have shortened her life. At the time, as horrible as it felt that we might potentially be contributing to our mother's nervous breakdown or our stepfather's future lack of employment—as he'd mentioned in his previous letter, and such concerns were by no means unfounded—a bigger imperative was at work while we were in jail. All of us there knew it. But I must say, it is very difficult today for me to reread Daddy Marion's letter... Although I had no time for tears in the 1960's, now I wish with all my heart it could have been easier for my parents.⁹⁹

National CORE needed to appeal to Patricia and Priscilla's parents as an audience that did not favor their daughters' sacrifice of health and reputation, and, the family was facing intense scrutiny and pressure from the publicity of the arrests and continuing detainment. Many felt

CORE was using the students. Due recalls CORE leadership tried to reassure their parents with a letter. James Robinson, the executive secretary, wrote to them:

The faith shown in Tallahassee is a major factor in the growing pressure nationally to change Woolworth's policy. The chances are good that we shall win. If so, much of the credit must go to the Stephens sisters.¹⁰⁰

Due also shares that Richard Haley, her music professor and a CORE member, also wrote a letter to our parents on March 28, trying to reassure them that CORE was not a Communist organization and that our incarceration was not in vain:

It is pointless for me to express my feelings for these young people. Long ago I exhausted my vocabulary of words with the strength and breadth and depth equal to my admiration for them. I would be proud—and humble—to be able to say of any of them, 'This is my

⁹⁸ Ibid

⁹⁹ Ibid

¹⁰⁰ Due, Freedom in the Family, 75

child.’ It is my hope that this is your stand, and that you will not be moved.¹⁰¹

And so, for the CORE protesters, internal as well as external forces created a dynamic which tested their resolve. A strong buttress to the doubts of their parents came to the Leon County Jail in the form of a letter, which has arrived only a few days prior to the Mother and Daddy Marion letter. On March 19, 1960, the following correspondence reached Patricia Stephens:

I have just learned of your courageous willingness to go to jail instead of paying fines for your righteous protest against segregated eating facilities. Through this decision you have again proven that there is nothing more majestic and sublime than the courage of individuals willing to suffer and sacrifice for the cause of freedom. You have discovered anew the meaning of the cross, and as Christ died to make men holy, you are suffering to make men free. As you suffer the inconvenience of remaining in jail, please remember that unearned suffering is redemptive. Going to jail for a righteous cause is a badge of honor and a symbol of dignity. I assure you that your valiant witness is one of the glowing epics of our time and you are bringing all of America nearer [to] the threshold of the world’s brightest tomorrows.¹⁰²

These words from Martin Luther King provided purpose, as Patricia referenced them in her ‘Letter from Leon County Jail.’ An argument can be made that the students were: 1) strongly influenced by King’s contention that the jails would need to be filled for freedom to come; and 2) the public was drawn to the concept of self-imprisonment. The attention of remaining in jail was allowing Tallahassee CORE to tell its side of the segregation story. This suggests a purpose to the act. Purpose is a term cloaked with multiple meaning. Many people living in Tallahassee in 1960 would have argued that no purpose was served by remaining in jail. Jail-time placed upon the CORE student-inmate the stigma of incarceration. This was no minor point. To be potentially required to self-report their arrests on employment, housing, civil service and travel applications, for the rest of their lives, at such young ages, was a poignant consideration.

Already living in a society that greatly devalued the contributions of people of color was one thing, to now voluntarily place a stain of jail time next to their valued future educational and

¹⁰¹ Ibid

¹⁰² Ibid, 75-76

career status was a bold and brave choice. No one could have held it against them, if the students had simply decided to pay their fines, to avoid any jail time. Of the seventeen original Woolworth lunch counter sit-it protesters of February 20, 1960, six stood up from the lunch counters at the first official request by the Mayor of Tallahassee to leave the restaurant.

This second sit-in of Woolworth's is described over the course of eight paragraphs of the 'Letter.' These paragraphs document the tension between moral suasion and the power of the state. A determination of spirit versus the determination of segregation had come to its head. The students were committed to nonviolence and so when they were not served they decided to read at the counter, but not to leave. According to Rabby,

Seventeen black CORE members arrived at Woolworth's at about 2:00pm on 20 February. They ordered food, but the waitresses ignored their requests. The manager closed the counter. The other white patrons (except for the witnesses) quickly left. A few white onlookers gathered in small groups in the store. The CORE members began to read the books they had brought with them. After forty-five minutes the two witnesses left. Within minutes the police arrived, accompanied by Mayor Hugh Williams and other members of the city commission. Williams personally asked the demonstrators to leave. Six got up and left. The eleven students who remained seated were arrested and were charged with 'disturbing the peace by engaging in riotous conduct and assembly to the disturbance of the public tranquility.'¹⁰³

For those who remained seated, an historic series of events were about to be unleashed. Why did these FAMU students choose to go to jail? Why didn't they pay their fines? What purpose was served by remaining locked up? Stephens states for the group that they are in Leon County Jail and they intend to serve out the full time. She and her colleagues were blameless of inciting violence, and coherently presented the matter in a public letter. The last sentence in the first paragraph of the 'Letter' makes a statement for parents, students, members of CORE and the Tallahassee community alike, of the student's resolve to remain in jail, in writing, "We made it clear that we want to serve out our full time."¹⁰⁴

To become violent went against their teachings as CORE activists and would have stained the 'Movement.' Rather, than resort to confirming the underlying tone of accusations against them as promulgators of rash and ill-planned extemporaneous responses, they went to jail

¹⁰³ Rabby, *The Pain and the Promise*, 88-89

¹⁰⁴ Due, "Tallahassee: Through Jail to Freedom," *The Black Man and the Promise of America*, 357

in a righteous cause and wore the indignities of prison as badges of honor, as King had praised them for doing. Indeed, by remaining non-violent the ‘jail-ins’ (as they came to be called) could more effectively demonstrate the immorality of laws which arrested citizens for attempting to gain equal access to dining facilities. Each of them were after all in jail for trying to order slices of cake at a variety store lunch counter, which served cake to anyone who wasn’t Black without question or pause.

Suffering the voluntary indignities of jail, poor food, prison bunks, and being jeered by guards and communicates to audiences the seriousness of Due’s commitment. Her sacrifice in acquiring an arrest record, losing time from school, losing tuition, and placing her student status in jeopardy through civil disobedience actions that many other established Tallahassee residents and civil leaders should have been leading, had to ultimately have a public effect. The effect of having people know she was suffering with dignity and pride, suffering to rise up against the institutions which perpetuated hatreds and inequities, had profound resonance in the community. Such laws have come to be seen as written to no purpose, as they cannot stand the logical challenge to their immorality, inappropriateness, and recognition of their sole standing being to demean the human spirit.

It is interesting to note detailed similarities between ‘The Letter from Leon County Jail’ written by Due, and the later ‘Letter from Birmingham Jail’ written by Dr. King. While admittedly the style of the prose, when measured, greatly favors the highly advanced skills of a practiced theologian and expensively educated man in Dr. King, Patricia Stephens Due’s letter demonstrates the depth of her commitment and explains most clearly the purpose for her staying in jail. She confesses the influence of King, in part, in making this choice, but she also writes in a style that perhaps King recalled when only two years later when he was smuggling portions of script out of prison.

Richard P. Fulkerson sets standards for examining ‘a compelling argument’ and ‘a model of effective persuasive writing.’ Patricia Stephens Due’s letter can be examined as similar to King’s letter based on: the attention each author gives to the audience in their writing, the five assumptions of the narrative paradigm discussed by Walter Fisher, and the three criteria posited by Richard Fulkerson concerning, the structure, logic, and style of the King letter.

The concern for the audience in the ‘Letter from Leon County Jail,’ as compared to the ‘Letter from Birmingham Jail’ is strikingly similar. King was responding to a public letter posted in the local newspaper from eight Birmingham clergymen representing the Jewish and Christian

faiths. The letter suggested in approximately 700 words that Birmingham was not ready for civil disobedience and that the timing of the protests was inappropriate. Because King's response was also in the form of a public letter, according to Fulkerson "the letter has an apparent audience (the clergymen) and a larger, more diverse one (King's public reader), the question of audience is complex."¹⁰⁵ Likewise, the Letter from Leon County Jail was written for a local audience: the people of Tallahassee, segregationists, and Tallahassee CORE supporters; and for a larger one, the students and freedom fighters of the nation in the struggle against segregation. The words were probably also carefully targeted to the national branches of CORE.

By explaining the circumstances of her arrest, and why she was willing to remain in jail to cast light on the injustice of her incarceration, Patricia Stephens shared with King what Walter Ong described as a 'rhetorical problem.' Ong argued that:

The writer's audience is always a fiction,' since no writer addresses the audience at the moment of writing but must imaginatively project both the audience and its potential response.¹⁰⁶

Stephens and King also shared a similar set of circumstances. As Fulkerson points out in describing King' circumstances in Birmingham,

The situation called instead for an address to as wide a range of moderate-to-liberal, involved readers as possible; so much the better if a substantial number of them were also leaders of public opinion.¹⁰⁷

King and Patricia Stephens also shared another concern; that of motivating and organizing their followers from behind bars. As Fulkerson substantiates:

All social movements face the potential problem of splintering; and the civil rights movement, then in its infancy, was in danger of falling apart because of disagreement over the propriety of King's tactics. In addition to persuading a broad public, King thus needed also to unify civil rights proponents by persuading the more moderate among them that his course of action was the right one.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Richard P. Fulkerson, "The Public Letter As A Rhetorical Form: Structure, Logic, and Style in King's 'Letter From Birmingham Jail,'" *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 65 (1979), 121-36

¹⁰⁶ Walter J. Ong, "The Writer's Audience is Always a Fiction," *PMLA*, 90 (1975), 9-21

¹⁰⁷ Richard P. Fulkerson, "The Public Letter As A Rhetorical Form: Structure, Logic, and Style in King's 'Letter From Birmingham Jail,'" *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 65 (1979), 121-36

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 123

Much like the opposition King was facing in Birmingham, so too did forces gather to end the Stephens sisters' involvement in the Tallahassee Movement. One element was the failure of Tallahassee CORE to seize upon the momentum of continuous protests. In order to cool down public reaction before the trial of those arrested on February 20, the group decided not to have an action on February 27. The consequences of this decision were that both the media and the public momentarily lost interest in the story of Tallahassee CORE.

Attracting the attention of the public and converting them to the student point of view was essential, if the goal of changing public action was to take place in Tallahassee. A major obstacle facing changing the public mind on the issue of segregation was that a dominant narrative of why segregation existed was already in place. The students needed to assault, overcome that dominant narrative and replace it with their own if segregation in Tallahassee was to be defeated. Stephens believed this could only take place if the protesters inspired, explained, resisted and gave verbal and visual testament to their beliefs.

Demonstrating the ability to suffer physical injury or incarceration in the face of the power of the State of Florida, the students gave meaningful construction to a frame of resistance in active opposition to the voice of segregation as it manifested in restrictions in equal access in public accommodations. Going to jail even when the law was an unjust law provoked personal reaction in private and public awareness. As Patricia Stephens Due explained further in the 2003 interview, "...people could not understand how we could be in jail for sitting at a Woolworth's lunch counter."¹⁰⁹

Stephens knew that her actions could persuade others to act. Even before she wrote from jail, her experiences at the CORE workshop had instilled a confidence and preparation level that the qualities of the letter seemed to capture. An example of this is found in a passage from her autobiography where she wrote,

The workshop gave me and Priscilla a very strong conviction that we two could easily motivate other students in Tallahassee to take action against discrimination. Why should we have to attend segregated movie theaters with special balcony sections set aside for Negroes, or separate theaters although? Why couldn't we be served at lunch counters like Woolworth's and McCrory's, especially since those same stores were more than happy to take our money when we purchased other items?¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

King's prose has been listed among the finest written works of this century. You can find 'The Letter from Birmingham Jail' in almost any English, American Government, or political science text for college or high school. Each text will most likely list the work as an example of effective, persuasive writing of the highest form. Stephens is also weaving a persuasive tale to bring her audiences to action. Walter Fisher's elements of the narrative paradigm are exemplified in both texts for each tells a compelling story

Fisher's narrative paradigm states that decision making and communication are based on good reasons. Good reasons enable a listener to judge the worth of a story. Stephens' narrative delivers on this expectation, by pointing out from her cell that "there is plenty of time to think in jail and I sometimes review in my mind the events that brought me here."¹¹¹ This is frank, very candid, and it is the stuff of good story telling. The author is sharing a point of view which can be referenced by the reader, namely, there is a lot of downtime in jail during with which to consider personal matters. Certainly, Patricia Stephens student activist audience in Tallahassee would be receptive to this rationale. The students were acutely aware that they would be convicted and that they would receive jail time, in fact they were counting on it to demonstrate their resolve and sincerity. They had even discussed who would be arrested and who would stay out of jail as a basis to maintain eligibility for appeals of their sentences at a later date.

King explains through his narrative that his crusade is not ill-timed; rather, those who would call for delay, in particular, fellow members of the cloth, have lost their way. These comments rang true to many readers. Fisher notes that when the elements of a story represent accurate assertions about social reality, they have fidelity or truthfulness: a critical element for assessing narrative rationality. If a story 'rings true' to the audience it has this quality of fidelity. Both 'Letters' are examples of good reasons as warranted by the 2nd assumption.

For Fisher's third assumption, answering the call for sufficient history, biography, culture, and character in the narrative, Stephens provides a detailed chronology of the court's proceedings and rulings regarding the demonstrators. She indicated clearly in the narrative who she was and why she was writing. King was replying to comments directed at him, so his identity and general purposes for being in Birmingham were known.

Fisher's fourth assumption was that rationality is based on people's awareness of how internally consistent and truthful to lived experiences stories appear. The detailed description of

¹¹⁰ Due, *Freedom in the Family* 43

¹¹¹ Due, "Tallahassee: Through Jail to Freedom," *The Black Man and the Promise of America*, 357

the circumstances of her time in jail, in an organized progressive chronology, adds coherence to the story in the ‘Letter From Leon County Jail.’ ‘The Letter from Birmingham Jail’ likewise has logical coherence in that it is a rebuttal to a public challenge to leave Birmingham as it was, free of outside agitation. For King to acquiesce to such a demand without public challenge, would have undermined the reputation the ‘Movement’ had built under his leadership. This would have been the same as dissecting the coherence of struggle. Coherence refers to the internal consistency of a narrative. Fisher argues that:

Coherence is measured by the organization and structural elements of a narrative. When a storyteller skips around and leaves out important information, interrupts the flow of the story to add elements forgotten earlier, and generally is not smooth in the structuring of the narrative, the listener may reject the narrative for not having coherence.¹¹²

Fisher’s fifth assumption was that the world is experienced by people, as a set of stories to choose among. In telling two individual stories through these public letters, Stephens and King are hopeful, informative, and confrontational. They each clearly express that they have not been beaten down or defeated by jail. They acknowledge the experience as an ordeal filled with moments of long personal contemplation and the suffering of confinement, harassment, and poor diet, yet they are unbeaten and unbowed.

For Patricia Stephens, writing the ‘Letter’ appears to have been an opportunity to ‘re-create her life’ from within Leon County Jail. She is waiting and planning to continue her direct activism upon release. The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King’s concept that unearned suffering is redemptive is a ready companion theory for Walter Fisher’s Narrative Paradigm in analyzing the ‘Letter from Leon County Jail.’

Fisher recognizes that storytellers want their stories told. In the same vein as King in Birmingham, Stephens recognized that it was critical to counter the arguments of those who equated the actions of the civil rights movement with those of violent defenders of the status quo. The ‘Letter from Leon County Jail’ is a direct response to the contention that the arrest and detention of the CORE students was justified. Stephens uses specific documentation,

¹¹² Walter R. Fisher. “Narration as Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument” *Communication Monographs* 51 (1984) 1-22

chronological presentation, and a smooth flowing narrative to create this necessary perception of her 'Letter'.

In addition to similarities with their audiences, and narrative components, 'the Letters' addressed issues of comparison based on structure, logic and style within the texts. With respect to structure, Fulkerson wrote of King's letter:

The essay is actually tightly and elaborately structured. It combines the clarity, efficiency, and persuasive force of the classical oration with the personal warmth and associative structure of a letter to a friend.¹¹³

In many regards, Stephens' letter captures this same collegial spirit, however, there is a sense of urgency in action that King hints at that Stephens does not dance around. She makes plain her objections and brings plans for redress of grievances to the surface. In examining the logic of King's "Letter," Fulkerson states, "even more impressive than the overall arrangement of the 'Letter' is its internal logic in each refutative segment."¹¹⁴ Patricia Stephens is not directly responding to a letter from clergy or others, as King is doing. She none the less is refuting the conditions and circumstances which brought her to her cell, and is presenting those circumstances to her audience specifically and critically.

With respect to style, Fulkerson described "the Letter from Birmingham Jail" by saying,:

The essay's style is supple and sophisticated yet readable. An audience is likely to be favorably impressed without being overwhelmed. The stylistic manipulations both create an image of competence and sincerity and operate on the readers emotions.¹¹⁵

These descriptions concern King's Letter, yet Stephens demonstrates a flair, if not for sophisticated language, then certainly for powerfully, frank, plainspoken language. King is immersed in his cloth as a minister communicating to ministers. Stephens has upon her the trappings of a street preacher based on her strength or advocacy, or perhaps a 'jail house' preacher, an inmate that has learned 'the religion of the walls of confinement.' Without an appeal to religious doctrine directly, Stephens maintains reliance on the faith and belief of those persons in the Tallahassee Movement to sustain them. Absent that belief, she is asking them to believe in her, and to allow her strength and principle to sustain them.

¹¹³ Richard P. Fulkerson, "The Public Letter As A Rhetorical Form: Structure, Logic, and Style in King's Letter From Birmingham Jail" *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 65 (1979), 121-36

¹¹⁴ Ibid

¹¹⁵ Ibid

Perhaps another way to explain Tallahassee CORE activists' purpose in remaining in jail is the importance of telling their version of the storied events taking place around them. The specifics of the 'Letter from Leon County Jail' provided a ready canvas from which to paint the picture of oppression from segregation as it existed in Tallahassee.

As early as the second paragraph of the ¹¹⁶'Letter', Stephens reveals the sights and sounds of physical deprivations that await the jailed students. There are no comforts here and this realization is liberally shared:

Students who saw the inside of the county jail before we did, and were released on bond, reported that conditions were miserable. They did not exaggerate. It is dank and cold.

The condition of the physical surroundings, the absence of running water, the unpalatability of the food served in the jail, and the restrictions on visitations are documented, and while with the exception of the condition of the food, these circumstances are not offered to the reader as hardships, the stark descriptions serve this purpose far better than any list of complaints. Being in Leon County jail was clearly physically uncomfortable. It was reported as bordering pestilent. Disclosures in the evolving chronology of the 'Letter' allow the reader to unpack why in the minds of Stephens and the four others that these privations were necessary.

The 'Letter from Leon County Jail' documents the existence of Tallahassee CORE. The organization's plan of operations for basic protest actions and their preparations as known to Patricia Stephens are exposed:

There is plenty of time to think in jail and sometimes I review in my mind the events which brought me here. It is almost six months since Priscilla and I were first introduced to CORE at a workshop in Miami.¹¹⁷

The author is focused on how her actions and those of her sister led to jail. This would be essential history for her CORE audience both in Tallahassee and nationally for those in solidarity with the Tallahassee Movement. This thesis has already uncovered the rare and unique nature of CORE as it manifested in Miami in 1959. Now extrapolating this to North Florida, we can begin to understand that Tallahassee was another unique segment of CORE, and this primarily because of the leadership of Patricia and Priscilla Stephens in facilitating the creation of communal bonds among students working with CORE.

¹¹⁶ Due, "Tallahassee: Through Jail to Freedom," The Black Man and the Promise of America, 356

This letter is a brilliant expression of the work to tie the members together in a sense of shared history and shared action. As Due communicated in a 2003 interview:

Somehow all of us (in Tallahassee CORE) felt that we were, in a sense, family, not the entire community, but I would say a lot of the students involved. Sometimes you were shunned by others—and they didn't necessarily disagree with what you were doing, but they were afraid to be associated with you. So there was a group of us that spent a lot of time together, and we would go out into the general community.¹¹⁸

The communal bonding experience reinforces Sloop and Ono's belief that marginalization could be deflected through the recognition of vernacular discourse. Such discourse was created through opposition to segregation in the many forms that Tallahassee CORE expressed that opposition, whether through actions, writings, or speech. The very communication of the history of the organization itself, with its shared meanings, qualifies as a form of vernacular discourse, as

dialectical power relationships are smashed into head on, as the reasons students challenge and attack the system of segregation are shared within the organization and displayed to the world.

We must acknowledge that local people were aware of the results of CORE actions. These were covered in print and by radio and television. The correspondence of the Stephens sisters with their mother and stepfather indicates that many in the public were closely following reports in the news. Stephens acknowledged that following the protesters arrests' they were let out the backdoor of the jail in an attempt to confuse news reporters and deny the CORE activists publicity. The ultimate length of the voluntarily jailed groups' sentence was also affected by the court's desire to decrease news exposure, so instead of sixty days, they served forty-nine days, "five days off for good behavior and one day to avoid publicity."¹¹⁹

When we ask, for whom was the letter intended, Patricia Stephens Due gives a clue saying, "I was writing to CORE people, and others, just telling them what happened to get us where we were..."¹²⁰ The remainder of the third paragraph confirms the nature of the "testing' that CORE carried out in its actions. It was not enough to say that a place discriminated. Observers were sent. Observations were recorded, and an attempt to negotiate with management

¹¹⁷ Ibid

¹¹⁸ Due, "Tallahassee: Through Jail to Freedom," *The Black Man and the Promise of America*, 356

¹¹⁹ Due, Interview, 2003

¹²⁰ *ibid*

a cessation of discriminatory practices was always launched. The testing and negotiation phase of CORE work further strengthened the shared sense of purpose of the group and its actions by providing records and historical accounts. This construction of the organization through replicated action was building momentum toward the actions which would follow. Patricia Stephens reveals that while in jail she thought deeply about the Tallahassee CORE movement and what their plan of action should be. She reviewed in her mind the progression of actions taken by herself and her sister since being introduced to CORE and its philosophy, and she recounts what took place to formulate CORE in Tallahassee at FAMU.

She relates in the 'Letter' the preparations taken in anticipation of protest actions. As a careful and deliberate leader she understood that the members of CORE must have knowledge of what to expect during these protests. This understanding would have been a by-product of the summer 1959 workshop training in Miami. The 'Letter' also mentions the first test projects Tallahassee CORE enacted at Sears' and McCrory's variety store lunch counter.

An early paragraph of 'the Letter' stated, "...we were not totally unprepared when the South-wide protest movement started in February."¹²¹ Stephens is pointing out that Tallahassee CORE's leadership was aggressive, and in the fall of 1959, in anticipation of what she felt was to come, CORE members were not just standing around waiting for something to happen. They were actively preparing for the inevitable, from the outset of the Tallahassee chapters' construction.

The community remained, but some CORE members could not remain in Leon County Jail. Before the last CORE member was to be released on May 5, 1960, only five remained to serve the full term of forty-nine days on the sixty day sentence. The five who endured the entire sentence however made a demonstration that would serve as a model for all civil rights actions to follow.

¹²¹ Due, "Tallahassee: Through Jail to Freedom," The Black Man and the Promise of America, 356

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION: THE BLENDING OF THE PERSONAL, THE HISTORIC, AND THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL, IN THE SEARCH FOR A FLORIDA BASED RHETORIC OF CIVIL RIGHTS

I read Branch and several other 1990's era authors of the national civil rights struggle, in concert with a trip to the Mississippi Delta led by Florida State University professor, Dr. David Houck in the fall of 2003. The required reading preceding that trip strongly reinforced lessons and readings from my childhood. I found those readings compelling. Upon our group's return from the Delta, I became caught up in a nostalgic hunger for more of something. At this point, I could not isolate what my specific motivations were.

As a child of 'Children of the Movement,' some of my earliest readings were Eldridge Cleaver's Soul on Ice, Angela Davis' If They Come in the Morning, Dick Gregory's Nigger, and Haley's The Autobiography of Malcolm X. On special occasions, my Dad would bring out long playing albums ranging from King's "I Have A Dream" speech to Richard Pryor's "Is it Something I Said?" My mother would lead me in recitation of Dr. King's speeches, and on my own, I would memorize portions of recordings by Richard Pryor.

I really liked Richard Pryor. His verbal antics, characterizations, and social commentary were like candy-store candy to me. His album covers were always interesting. On the cover of 'Is it Something I Said?' he is about to be burned at the stake by a group of hooded figures (for something he said, I got it!) Even during those early years, my appreciation for social commentary (ironic, satirical, insulting) was high enough that I got the point of Pryor's album covers and punch lines. When Pryor said, "when 'we' go to the courthouse expecting to find justice, that's what we find...just us." I loved that bit. My parents instilled enough social inquiry in me that I searched for writings, not just on 'The Movement' but on 'The Movement where I lived,' in Florida.

When I attended Palm Beach College in the early 1980's I had a chance to meet and study local civil rights education history with some Palm Beach, Broward and Dade counties Black leaders in education. Dr. Melvin Haynes, the then Vice President of Student Affairs at Palm Beach Junior College (PBJC) invited me to a few planning meetings to create a pamphlet

the college could house in the library, and share with other institutions, on Florida history. Participating in those meetings were local legends in teaching: the late U.B. Kinsey; principal of my elementary school (Palmview Elementary in West Palm Beach) for so long, they eventually named the school, U.B. Kinsey/Palmview Elementary in his honor. When he passed away on April 2, 2005, several generations of leaders and communities mourned. Also on the committee was another legend of education, the late C. Spenser Pommpey, who was to education in southern Palm Beach County, what Kinsey was in the northern half.

Our group collaborated on the pamphlet titled, Like A Mighty Banyan. Since that time the pamphlet has been revised into a book, Like A Mighty Banyan: Contributions of Black People to the History of Palm Beach County.¹²² It was a book about Black Florida written by Black Floridians. After working on that project, I promised myself that one day I would study Florida's overall history of contributions by Blacks, and chronicle the history of resistance by Florida Blacks, but I was not finding published works, in the national civil rights tradition, that reflected contributions by Floridians, or events that took place in Florida. I began to ask, how could this be?

The authors I found who wrote on 'The Movement' mostly wrote about 'other places' not Florida. Branch, for example, mentions Tallahassee, Florida once in Parting the Waters. He wrote, when discussing why Jackson, Mississippi negotiations began to receive less media coverage, after stalemated talks with Jackson, Mississippi Mayor Thompson that:

The stalemate dropped Jackson out of the headlines during the first week of June, when Pope John XXIII died in Rome and President Kennedy made a political trip to Honolulu. Political commentators speculated intensely about the Administration's internal debate over what kind of civil rights legislation to propose. Tear gas and 257 arrests made news of continuing demonstrations against segregated movie theaters in Tallahassee, Florida.¹²³

This comments length, explanation of issues, attention to culture and persons, and priority in addressing Florida's civil rights history was similar to most literature reflecting the broad canvas of the Civil Rights era. Recognition of Florida was absent or minor: James Weldon Johnson passed the Florida Bar and wrote the Negro National Anthem; and Mary McCloud

¹²² Melvin Haynes, Jr. and Vivian Reissland Rouson-Gossett, eds., Like A Mighty Banyan: Contributions of Black people to the history of Palm Beach County (Palm Beach County: Palm Beach Community College), 1996.

¹²³ Branch, Parting the Waters, 817

Bethune knew FDR and Eleanor Roosevelt and built a school in Daytona. These achievements were by no means irrelevant, but they did not meet my personal standards for evidence of struggle and resistance against the system. Florida, in the civil rights lexicon was a side note, if mentioned at all. No defining activities were ever mentioned. According to the available literature on civil rights, it either happened in Mississippi, happened to King, or didn't happen at all, and it certainly didn't happen in Florida. I found this difficult to reconcile with my personal experiences of observing and being subject to the forces of resistance in my life and the histories of Black Floridians I was exposed to during my education.

From Peter Klingman's 1976 biography of Josiah T. Walls, one of Florida's Reconstruction era Black politicians, a United States Congressman, and Florida's most important Black political figure of the nineteenth century, I was aware of extensive political and military activity by Blacks who had served in the Union Army during the Civil War and who stayed in North Florida following. Walls' biography was a listing of promise, political intrigue, hardships, and much travel from Gainesville, to Jacksonville, to Tallahassee. In 1895, ten years before his death, Walls became director of the farm at what was to become FAMU, yet what is most interesting about him is the final passage of his biography:

There are no published accounts of his death, no will probated, and no death certificate filed with the state of Florida. Thus, in much the same way as he was born and spent his life, Josiah Walls died---surrounded by incomplete details and gaps in the historical record.

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That North Florida's most storied nineteenth century Black politician should himself be subject to what amounts to an unstated proviso or condition of being unrecognized in the rhetoric of civil rights in North Florida is profound circumstance. It further clarifies the need to expose the identifiable elements of a civil rights rhetoric, in an effort to provide more complete details regarding rhetorical phenomena, and to close in the gaps which exist in the communication record.

Through my personal narrative, and read in biographies of Black Floridians, I became aware of a need to employ my own methods to close the gaps and incomplete details in the historical and rhetorical landmark. I found examining my own childhood and young adult life solid components of measures to critically particularize and deconstruct the existence of a

¹²⁴ Peter T Klingman, Josiah Walls: Florida's Black Congressman of Reconstruction. Gainesville: The University Presses of Florida, 1976

Florida based rhetoric of civil rights; however, another element is required to completely form the benchmark. The additional element is the examination of Black autobiographies and their form.

V.P. Franklin stated in discussing the role of the autobiography, that it has been a pivotal tool in examining ideological issues and placing personal choices inside of larger political contexts. Franklin wrote:

From the publication of the Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave in 1845 to Lorene Cary's Black Ice and Brent Staple's Parallel Time: Growing Up in Black and White in the 1990's, the autobiography has been the most important literary genre in the African-American intellectual tradition in the United States.¹²⁵

Why the autobiography should become such an important evaluative mechanism in articulating their personal or family journey of resistance is further explained by Franklin:

The struggle for freedom is a core value in the collective experience of African-Americans in the United States and the autobiography provided a personal account of what freedom meant and how it could be achieved. African-American intellectuals and artists in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries wrote their autobiographies with the political and social circumstances for African-Americans in mind, and used their personal experiences as a mirror to reflect that larger social context for Afro-America.¹²⁶

Several scholars have made the connection that the Black autobiography serves as a nexus between personal interconnectedness and the power of experience to bring meaning to culture, the past, and the future. Further, these factors "draw attention to the power of experience to encourage communal resistance."¹²⁷

The life experiences of former FAMU student and Tallahassee Civil Rights Movement activist, Patricia Stephens Due are representative of the struggle to create and maintain community and culture during the Civil Rights era. Due's leadership in the Tallahassee Civil Rights Movement was unique and exemplary. She was a leader of the student movement. Her

¹²⁵ V.P. Franklin, Living Our Stories, Telling Our Truths: Autobiography and the Making of the African-American Intellectual Tradition. New York: Scribner, 1995

¹²⁶ *ibid*

¹²⁷ Adetayo Alabi, Telling Our Stories: Continuities and Divergences in Black Autobiographies. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005

actions were widely accounted for in the newspaper stories of the times, the local police blotters and arrest lists of 1960's Florida, personal accounts of witnesses, and the work of Glenda Alice Rabby on the Tallahassee Civil Rights Movement.

As a leader in CORE, Patricia Stephens needed to be aware of the nature of protest organization and communication. Leaders in political and social movements had to understand the power of oratory and the necessity to manage information presented to the public. The necessity for this understanding was absolute.

The public stage is an arena where visual cues and prepared comments are designed to be meaningful and lasting symbols in the public mind. No successful leader can endure missing the opportunity to send the public specific messages and instructions in a manner where they will be responded to favorably. The ability to shape, guide and control the public mind is therefore an indispensable tool to the successful leader today, in the future, and in the past.

Error or failure in achieving control of the public mind can lead to a slow, inexorable, and catastrophic collapse in a political moment. Lloyd Bitzer¹²⁸ describes such moments as rhetorical situations, however other authors have examined how leaders utilize language mired in political intrigue to motivate the public mind. In the world of 1960 Tallahassee, CORE under the leadership of Patricia Stephens was involved in a rhetorical war against segregation and the status quo. The available tools of war, crafted for use in war by Stephens and her compatriots, were the words of Gandhi, the words of Martin Luther King, the words of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and the very bodies and souls of those who could no longer live outside of the light of freedom. For the stakes at hand were the very freedoms of the students of FAMU, FSU, the followers of CORE, and the African-American community.

The faith and spirit these students disseminated to the rest of the country by their actions was quite palpable. Their example was deployed among fellow students, workers who joined the effort, and particularly, those committed to the non-violent, direct action, activities of CORE, in the same manner as were television pictures from Selma, Alabama at the Edmund Pettis Bridge on Bloody Sunday 1965, or during the riotous scenes outside the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago to repeated chants of 'The Whole World Is Watching!' Rabby agrees stating:

¹²⁸ Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," 1

Today, almost forty years after the sit-ins, it is difficult to imagine how virulent racism was in Tallahassee or how dangerous it was to challenge. Like their counterparts in other cities with a black college or university, Tallahassee students were the ‘militants,’ the soldiers in the local struggle. Although FAMU had an active student chapter of the NAACP, the city’s direct action protest strategies were initiated by CORE, established at Florida A&M in 1959. CORE’s foothold in Tallahassee was important. Few chapters existed outside of the North and the border states in 1959. The presence of a confrontational, interracial civil rights organization in North Florida, no matter how small, boosted the morale of blacks throughout the South.¹²⁹

The protest rhetoric of the Tallahassee Movement coincides with a period of national awakening. The national awakening took place for the general public, in the cities where lunch counter protests took place, as news accounts and word of mouth must have alternately and widely described what was taking place as audacious, revolutionary, terrible, and wonderful. Both the public and the protesters themselves sought to understand what drove the actions of these dissenters.

Young contributes these thoughts on the Tallahassee Civil Rights Movement:

The longer the line of history becomes, the more attenuated the content of historical memory becomes. Looking back from the vantage point of 44 years, it is easy to overlook the depth of struggle, the bravery of the protesters, and the duplicity of the white establishment that characterized the civil rights movement in places like Tallahassee, Florida. In fact, few people today probably even realize there was a civil rights movement in Tallahassee.¹³⁰

The very person whose actions have come to be the focus of this work agrees, that few would be aware of the existence of Tallahassee as a focus in the national struggle for civil rights, as Patricia Stephens Due writes on June 18, 2005:

It is good to know that you are documenting a part of our Florida history in the Civil Rights Movement. Many people have no idea that the first jail-in in the nation during the Student Sit-in Movement, took place in Tallahassee, FL, March through May 1960, where five FAMU students spent 49 days in jail for asking to be served at a Woolworth lunch counter.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Rabby, *The Pain and the Promise*, 5

¹³⁰ Marilyn Young, “Patricia Stephens Due and the Tallahassee Civil Rights Movement” (Miami, National Communication Association panel presentation, 2003, typewritten), 2

¹³¹ Marna Weston, marna.weston@comm.fsu.edu “The Struggle Continues,” 18 June 2005, personal e-mail (18 June 2005)

Young documents these protest activities further adding:

Tallahassee blacks, mostly students at FAMU, but including some local whites and some FSU students and faculty---staged lunch counter sit-ins, picketed the local movie theatre, instituted a vote registration drive, and generally agitated to improve the lives of black citizens.¹³²

Activists like Patricia Stephens, were noticed for their youth, fearlessness, and willingness to suffer physical discomfort, social indignities, and social ostracism to achieve social justice on their terms. Additionally, they endured these hardships, without reacting to their oppressors, in an effort to resist through confrontation of conscience. To make their oppressors see them suffer and acknowledge their complicity in that suffering was in effect, the articulation of a counter ideology to their oppressors.

This counter-ideology sought to play by some of the rules of the dominant culture, in that the protestors confronted the dominant ideology with its own terms, definitions, and stated creed of equality, and then launched a challenge to the existing structure, through body rhetoric and written response, thus, turning the dominant ideology on its head by demonstrating its complicity and hypocrisy, and then further, the counter-ideology demonstrated what it really meant to stand by these terms, definitions, and stated creed which the dominant culture professed, by accepting the indignity of prison over paying fines, thereby refusing to nourish or support the system, their suffering exposed the hypocritical.

The catalyst for the uniqueness of Tallahassee's protest movement was embodied in the personality of Patricia Stephens individually, and the joint drive of the Stephens sisters in tandem, who both attended FAMU. Through the actions and articulations of these two women associated with CORE, a unique type of protest emerged in Tallahassee. The 'official' unofficial strategy of state officials, in dealing with desegregation activists was harassment, embarrassment, economic sanction, public ridicule, incarceration, and in some cases worse, but the system could be stifled, and hope given to many, by those who would not bend in the face of such tactics. Such was the demeanor of the Stephens sisters. Their desire to be free and equal citizens under law, and to bring the 'Tallahassee Movement' with them, was beyond

¹³² Marilyn Young, "Patricia Stephens Due and the Tallahassee Civil Rights Movement" (Miami, FL.:National Communication Association panel presentation, 2003, typewritten), 2

inspirational. Rabby again comments regarding their development as recognized leaders in the struggle for civil rights that...

Two sisters, Patricia and Priscilla Stephens, both students at Florida A&M, quickly emerged as leaders of CORE and as spokespersons for movement activities and strategies at a time when women rarely served in either position. Virtually no civil rights activities in Tallahassee from 1959 to 1964 occurred without the participation of at least one of these two women. Remembered by a FAMU dean, as 'the bravest blacks, I have ever known,' the sisters kept the movement in Tallahassee alive even when jail sentences and school suspensions dampened the demonstrators' spirits.¹³³

Both Stephens' sisters were meaningful in the creation and maintenance of the Tallahassee Movement. From the onset of the movement however, Patricia Stephens' boldness put her in the lead, as a symbol of Tallahassee CORE. When Patricia's energies were tapped, or when she was not physically present in Tallahassee (as happened sporadically from 1961 to 1963), the leadership mantle temporarily shifted to her sister, Priscilla. Over time, however, the Tallahassee Movement's recorded progress recognized one leader as central to the progress of the CORE mission: that leader was Patricia Stephens. With respect to CORE activities in Tallahassee during the early 60's, Richard Haley, a national officer in CORE wrote this about Patricia Stephens:

To the segregationist she symbolizes unbending pressure, the puzzling willingness to suffer, then return again to press. To the Negro Community, she symbolizes their greatest hope for the future.¹³⁴

Today, Mrs. Patricia Stephens Due lives in Quincy, Florida, twenty-five miles from Tallahassee, in rural Gadsden County. Gadsden is the only Florida county where African-Americans make up the majority of the population. As a former FAMU student, field coordinator, and trainer for CORE, Due was initially motivated by the highly publicized, brutal rape of a FAMU co-ed by four white men in 1959.

Her introduction to CORE in 1959 gave specific guidance in how to effect change. She was an effective writer who chronicled her experiences regularly. This was a talent she cultivated and revised from her early youth. She wrote for the local newspaper when she lived in

¹³³ Rabby, The Pain and The Promise, 6

¹³⁴ Rabby, The Pain and The Promise, 6

Belle Glade, Florida; wrote to President Eisenhower to register her concerns on the government's inadequate response to the conditions affecting people of color and the poor; wrote and received letters from her parents throughout her life, corresponded with King and other civil rights leaders, and used her writing and activists skills to the benefit of CORE and the Tallahassee Movement. In response to a question about why writing was so important to her, she replied in 2003:

Well, I guess I've always written things. I've been a writer and I had almost actually forgotten that when I was in high school, I wrote for the paper in Belle Glade (Florida). I wrote about people. I wrote the good things. And of course, it was segregated. You were in a certain section like everything else. You were in those halves. You were in a certain section of the paper. But I did write. And I have always felt that writing is permanent. Writing is a record that you would always have. And today before you came, you may not always remember. I was rereading some of the letters from my mother, from my daughters to each other, from my mother to my daughters. Because these were things I brought up here to Quincy, so when they came here, they can take them. And it was interesting how much you can really forget, but once it's written, it becomes permanent and I don't think it was so much just the Civil Rights Movement.¹³⁵

Patricia Stephens wrote and received much correspondence as a member of Tallahassee CORE. The responses she received strengthened her personal resolve, and inspired many others to act to fund and support CORE's agenda of interracial, direct, non-violent desegregation. She served as a beacon for direct, non-violent, anti-racist advocacy, and during her confinement in Leon County Jail in March 1960, following arrest on February 20, 1960, for what authorities described as "disturbing the peace by engaging in riotous conduct and assembly to the disturbance of the public tranquility."¹³⁶ Patricia Stephens' noted:

My letter to CORE's executive secretary, which had been smuggled out of our cell by ministers who visited us each day, was one of dozens of letters I would write during my long jail stay. Serving out our sentence was only the first step. People had to know that in the United States of America, in the year 1960, peaceful Negroes could be jailed for asking for a piece of cake at a lunch counter. As absurd as it seemed, it was the reality of the South. The more letters I received from shocked sympathizers, the more I realized how ignorant people were about life in the South. I try to explain it to them, I wrote to CORE leadership, but my

¹³⁵ Due, Interview, 2003

¹³⁶ Rabby, *The Pain and the Promise*, 89

best letter is not enough...There are so many things happening that people are completely unaware of.¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Due, Freedom in the Family, 78

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have argued that rhetoric extends past speeches, constitutes a valid area of study, as exemplified by the artifacts examined in this paper, and that further, Stephens use of CORE techniques from her training and her personal leadership skills made for a ‘fitting response’ for the times. Patricia Stephens ‘Letter from Leon County Jail’ reveals through its text that the actions of the Tallahassee CORE activists told a competing story of what America was supposed to stand for in the face of segregationists rhetorical stands, and that the activists’ narrative transformed and subsumed that of the oppressive system.

The fight against the system of segregation strengthened the resolve and character of Stephens and the followers of Tallahassee CORE giving their actions a lasting context that has remained, even though the rhetoric of segregation as valid, has long since faded. By appealing to a moral framework of truth, sacrifice and endured suffering as revealed in the ‘Letter,’ and supplemented by the interview, and the autobiography, we can acknowledge that Tallahassee CORE created and sustained a unique form of civil rights rhetoric in North Florida linked with a historical past of resistance against oppression. Patricia Stephens, her sister Priscilla, and those others who remained in Leon County Jail of their own free will did so to expose Tallahassee’s white establishment as morally bankrupt and wholly hypocritical.

The FAMU and FSU students accepted imprisonment imposed by a Tallahassee court system that did not treat all citizens equally, although it professed publicly to do so. In fact, the system dealt with its Black citizens most unequally. As CORE was to demonstrate the law did not enforce equal treatment in public accommodations, except to protect the discriminatory acts of exclusion by white business owners, as endorsed and reified by state police power. These laws were unjust. Due and her followers believed that the only way to change these laws was through their incarceration and suffering; to make others see what could and was happening to them, and through that transformational process, to understand that if some citizens were denied basic rights, then, these rights truly existed for no one. It would be marvelous to conclude that the effort to integrate Tallahassee’s lunch counters came swiftly. Unfortunately, “by the late fall of

1962, Tallahassee, the state capital, was the only city of moderate size in Florida that had not desegregated its downtown lunchroom facilities.”¹³⁸

This thesis establishes an historic connection to a rhetoric of physical, written, and oral resistance against racism and oppression. This connection dates back to before the existence of the United States of America. In concert with this reconnection to the past, this thesis reveals a newly, rediscovered seminal work in the lexicon of civil rights rhetorical scholarship, ‘The Letter from Leon County Jail.’ When compared directly with the heretofore most relevant and articulate civil rights document before King’s ‘I Have A Dream’ speech (The Letter from Birmingham Jail), we find that the intensity, originality, and impact of Due’s ‘Letter from Leon County Jail’ is argumentatively more enduring, more persuasive, and ultimately of more lasting impact, since the tactic of staying in jail was created with the sentences handed down, in Tallahassee, Florida, on March 17, 1960. After Tallahassee, no leader could afford to stay out jail, if they were to be taken seriously. ‘Jail over bail’ became a rallying cry and unifying tactic of the Civil Rights Movement. Further, this thesis helps debunk the myth that all early civil rights history need have roots in Mississippi or to originate with Dr. King to have validity.

This story is by no means the sole valid tale of African-American connections to resistance in Florida. It is an interpretation of events that took place almost fifty years ago. It is an interpretation shaped by how a boy was raised in South Florida, with summers in Autryville, North Carolina, Plant City and Pensacola, Florida. It is a story shaped by the books that boy read as he matured to adulthood in a society that still measures people in the color of cash and the color of their skins, and in what elements of education were emphasized by his family and the direction of his life before he began to write this thesis. It is hoped that these explorations will serve as a valued addition to the existing historical and rhetorical literature, and promote a desire among rhetorical scholars to further document personal accounts of Africans and their descendants in North Florida.

My personal experiences led to a desire to discover a unique rhetoric of civil rights where I lived. From that desire, I found within myself seeds of discovery. Travel, education, and mentoring watered these seeds, but I was the fertile ground within which the seeds grew. We each have the potential for this growth. It requires that we prepare a place for the planting of these seeds. An immersion in history and culture is but one avenue to such preparation. Many

¹³⁸ CORE press release, 29 October 1962; “A True Tale of Tallahassee,” *CORE-LATOR* 99 (February 1963): 1-2; Miami Times, 26 January 1963, 15 November 1962, in CA, series, reel 40.

fields can be prepared, for example, the fields of music, dance, the sciences, medicine, athletics and law.

The African-American newspaper, the Chicago Defender covered the events from Tallahassee, and called attention to the Southern sit-ins with comment from its editorial page. The March 7, 1960 editorial page of the Defender carried the following:

The question of eating accommodations in public emporia is no longer a crusade for the right to sip coke and munch hot dogs or cheese-burgers at a table. It is the convulsion of a new generation which has shed the old ante-bellum psychology of 'watchful waiting.' It is the same old struggle for equality, for human dignity that was argued for on public platforms for nearly half a century by our forebears, but which the present-day generation is determined to resolve by action and not by vaporous rhetoric. The nub of the present outbreaks is the impatience of young people at the snail's pace of desegregation in the South. The participants in this movement have endured taunts, abuse and attack without striking back. They have proclaimed their readiness to go to jail, and some have already done so. This mass spectacle of 'turning the other cheek' may not trouble the consciences of the arch segregationists, but it is bound to array the moral forces of the outside world on the side of justice and right.¹³⁹

Florida is a land where the people have struggled for justice and right with vigor. A rich expanse of unmined, and undiscovered original stories of resistance reside in this land. It is up to the detective in each civil rights rhetorical scholar, to chronicle the tales that await discovery. Patricia Stephens Due and Tallahassee CORE are not a destination. They should be looked upon only as starting points. Prepare for planting season. Many fields await tending. Fertilize and harvest them with care.

¹³⁹ Chicago Defender, 7 March 1960, 10

APPENDIX A

TEXT: THE LETTER FROM LEON COUNTY JAIL

I am writing this in Leon County Jail.

My sister Priscilla and I, five other A&M students, and one high school student are serving sixty-day sentences for our participation in the sit-ins.

We could be out on appeal but we all strongly believe that Martin Luther King was right when he said, "We've got to fill the jails in order to win our equal rights."

Priscilla and I both explained this to our parents when they visited us the other day.

Priscilla is supposed to be on a special diet and mother was worried about her.

We did our best to dispel her worries.

We made it clear that we want to serve out our full time.

Students who saw the inside of the county jail before I did, and were released on bond, reported that conditions were miserable.

They did not exaggerate.

It is dank and cold.

We are in what is called a "bull tank" with four cells.

Each cell has four bunks, a commode, and a small sink.

Some of the cells have running water, but ours does not.

Breakfast, if you can call it that, is served at six-thirty.

Another meal is served at twelve-thirty and in the evening, "sweet" bread and watery coffee.

At first I found it difficult to eat this food.

Sundays and Wednesdays are regular visiting days, but our white visitors who came at first are no longer permitted by the authorities.

There is plenty of time to think in jail and sometimes I review in my mind the events which brought me here.

It is almost six months since Priscilla and I were first introduced to CORE at a workshop in Miami.

Upon our return we helped to establish a Tallahassee CORE group, whose initial meeting took place last October.

Among our first projects was a test sit-in at Sears' and McCrory's.

So, we were not totally unprepared when the South-wide protest movement started in February.

Our first action in Tallahassee was on February 13.

At eleven a.m. we sat down at the Woolworth lunch counter.

When the waitress approached, Charles Steele, who was next to me, ordered a slice of cake for each of us.

She said, "I'm sorry, I can't serve you," and moved on down the counter, repeating this to the other participants.

We all said we would wait, took out our books, and started reading—or at least, we tried.

The regular customers continued to eat.

When one man finished, the waitress said, "Thank you for staying and eating in all this indecency."

The man replied, "What did you expect me to do? I paid for it."

One man stopped behind Bill Carpenter briefly and said, "I think you're doing a fine job. Just sit right there."

A young white hoodlum then came up behind Bill and tried to bait him into an argument.

Unsuccessful, he boasted to his friends, "I bet if I disjoints him, he'll talk."

When Bill didn't respond, he moved on.

A number of tough-looking characters wandered into the store.

In most instances the waitress spotted them and had them leave.

When a few of them started making derisive comments, the waitress said about us, "You can see they aren't here to start anything."

Although the counters were closed twenty minutes after our arrival, we stayed until two p.m.

The second sit-in at Woolworth's occurred a week later.

The waitress saw us sitting down and said, "Oh Lord, here they come again!"

This time a few white persons were participating secretly.

They simply sat and continued eating without comment.

The idea was to demonstrate the reality of eating together without coercion, contamination, or cohabitation.

Everything was peaceful.

We read.

I was reading the Blue Book of Crime and Barbara Broxton, How to Tell the Different Kinds of Fingerprints---which gave us a laugh in light of the arrests which followed.

At about three-thirty p.m. a squad of policemen led by a man in civilian clothes entered the store.

Someone directed him to Priscilla, who had been chosen our spokesperson for this sit-in.

"As Mayor of Tallahassee, I am asking you to leave," said the man in civilian clothes.

"If we don't leave, would we be committing a crime?" Priscilla asked.

The mayor simply repeated his original statement.

Then he came over to me, pointed to the "closed" sign, and asked, "Can you read?"

I advised him to direct all his comments to our elected spokesperson.

He looked as though his official vanity was wounded but turned to Priscilla.

We did too, reiterating our determination to stay.

He ordered our arrest.

Two policemen "escorted" each of the eleven of us to the station.

I use quotes because their handling of us was not exactly gentle nor were their remarks courteous.

At four-thirty we entered the police station.

Until recently the building had housed a savings and loan company, so I was not surprised to observe that our cell was a renovated bank vault.

One by one, we were fingerprinted.

After about two hours, the charges against us were read and one of us was allowed to make a phone call.

I started to call Reverend C.K. Steele, a leader of nonviolent action in Tallahassee whose two sons were involved in the sit-ins.

A policeman stopped me on the grounds that Reverend Steele is not a bondsman.

I heard a number of policemen refer to us as “niggers” and say we should stay on the campus. Shortly, the police captain came to our cell and announced that someone was coming to get us out.

An hour later we were released—through the back door, so that the waiting reporters and TV men would not see us and give us publicity.

However, the reporters were quick to catch on and they circled the building to meet us.

We were arraigned February 22 and charged with disturbing the peace by riotous conduct and unlawful assembly.

We all pleaded not guilty.

The trial was set for March 3.

A week prior to the date the entire A&M student body met and decided to suspend classes on March 3 and attend the trial.

The prospect of having three thousand students converge on the small courtroom was a factor, we believe, in causing a two-week postponement.

Our biggest single demonstration took place on March 12 at nine a.m.

The plan was for Florida State University students, who are white, to enter the two stores first and order food.

A&M students would arrive later and, if refused service, would share the food which the white students had ordered.

It was decided that I should be an observer this time rather than a participant because of my previous arrest.

The white and Negro students were sitting peacefully at the counter when the mayor and his corps arrived.

As on the previous occasion, he asked the group to leave, but when a few rose to comply, he immediately arrested them.

As a symbolic gesture of contempt, they were marched to the station in interracial pairs.
After the arrests many of us stood in a park opposite the station.
We were refused permission to visit those arrested.
I rushed back to report this on campus.
When I returned to the station, some two hundred students were with me.
Barbara Cooper and I, again, asked to visit those arrested.
Again, we were refused.
Thereupon, we formed two groups and headed for the variety stores.
The seventeen who went to McCrory's were promptly arrested.
The group headed for Woolworth's was met by a band of white hoodlums armed with bats, sticks, knives, and other weapons.
They were followed by police.
To avoid what seemed like certain violence, the group called off the sit-in at Woolworth's and returned to campus in an orderly manner.
We asked the president of the student body to mobilize the students for a peaceful march downtown.
He agreed but first tried, without success, to arrange a conference with the mayor.
However, the mayor was not too busy to direct the city, county, and state police who met us as we neared the downtown area.
There were one thousand of us, in groups of seventy-five—each with two leaders.
Our hastily printed posters said: "Give Us Our Students Back," "We Will Not Fight Mobs," "No Violence," "We Want Our Rights: We are Americans, Too."
As we reached the police line-up, the mayor stepped forward and ordered us to disperse within three minutes.
But the police did not wait.
They started shooting tear-gas bombs at once.
One policeman, turning on me, exclaimed, "I want you!" and thereupon aimed one of the bombs directly at me.

The students moved back toward campus.

Several girls were taken to the university hospital to be treated for burns.

Six students were arrested, bringing the total arrests for the day to thirty-five.

Bond was set at five hundred dollars each and within two days all were out

The eleven of us arrested on February 20 were tried on March 17.

There was no second postponement.

The trial started promptly at nine-thirty.

Five additional charges had been made against us, but were subsequently dropped.

During the trial, Judge Rudd tried to keep race out of the case. He said it was not a factor in our arrest.

But we realized it was the sole factor.

The mayor in his testimony used the word “nigger” freely.

We were convicted and sentenced to sixty days in jail or a three hundred dollar fine.

All eleven had agreed to go to jail but three paid fines upon advice of our attorneys.

So, here I am serving a sixty-day sentence along with seven other CORE members. When I get out, I plan to carry on this struggle. I feel I shall be ready to go to jail again if necessary.

APPENDIX B

TEXT: MARTIN LUTHER KING'S LETTER TO TALLAHASSEE'S ORIGINAL 'JAIL-INS'

March 19, 1960

I have just learned of your courageous willingness to go to jail instead of paying fines for your righteous protest against segregated eating facilities.

Through this decision you have again proven that there is nothing more majestic and sublime than the courage of individuals willing to suffer and sacrifice for the cause of freedom.

You have discovered anew the meaning of the cross, and as Christ died to make men holy, you are suffering to make men free.

As you suffer the inconvenience of remaining in jail, please remember that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Going to jail for a righteous cause is a badge of honor and a symbol of dignity.

I assure you that your valiant witness is one of the glowing epics of our time and you are bringing all of America nearer [to] the threshold of the world's brightest tomorrows.

APPENDIX C

TEXT: LETTER TO PATRICIA AND PRISCILLA FROM MOTHER AND DADDY MARION

March 23, 1960,

Dearest Priscilla and Patricia:

One thing we want you to know and that is: We both love you very dearly and want nothing but the best for you. This, in itself, may make us seem pretty hard and objectionable to your ideas, since we know where such may lead in the final analysis. We, by no means, are letting you down. The fact is that we are stronger for you now than ever and will always hopefully be behind you and pulling for you.

We cannot come right out and say we are pleased with the whole situation, as we realize its worth and what such can do for the whole in general, but we are concerned as to how much you might hurt or suffer for such. Loving you as we do we can do nothing but be most concerned, anxious, and yes, worried. I am a bit more outspoken than your mother. There are things she wishes to say but puts up fronts with her heart being torn to bits. She has lived her life for Walter and you, and has felt no sacrifice too great for either of you. There could come a time when she may break down under the tension or under the mental strain and anxiety...

I came to the place on Sunday to see you, to tell you that I too love you both just as much as is humanly possible, but we were not allowed to see you. She buys every paper, listens to every broadcast, get the ideas and thoughts of other people, all in an effort to assure herself that all is well with you as she and I, both, want the best for you. This is one of the reasons for the words that we feel sure you must still hear---Please count the cost. Cost does not always mean dollars and cents. Cost can mean anxiety as well. Write us often and keep us posted on your situation and more about your welfare.

With love,

Mother and Daddy Marion

APPENDIX D

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW AT THE HOME OF PATRICIA STEPHENS DUE ON DECEMBER 22, 2003

Patricia Stephens Due (PD) Interview, Quincy, FL 12/22/03

Interviewer: Marna Weston (MW), Candidate for Master of Science

The Florida State University, Department of Communication

356 Diffenbaugh

SIDE B OF TAPE

MW: Side A Testing one, two, three. We were at the... the One Florida Initiative. I didn't know you at that time. I was in the crowd with my friends. I wanted to ask you what you thought of what Kendrick Meek did?

MW: Well, this is the re-continued interview with Mrs. Patricia Stephens Due taking place on December 22, 2003 at her home in Quincy Florida. I am Marna Weston, Graduate Student at Florida State University. Thank you so much for putting up all the shenanigans...

PD: Laughter

MW: ... and for letting me get the tape recorder and come back. That's a story we'll have to talk about later on. Let's go directly to the questions. My first question to you is that there seems to be a growing interest about the "Movement" – in quotes – in popular culture. Could you reflect on why you think there's a greater interest in the "Movement" today?

PD: Now when you say popular culture, what do you mean?

MW: Well, I mean it seems in vogue to talk about the...

PD: ... the past? [inaudible]

MW: Well, the struggle... civil rights... you know, what people mean when they say "back in the day." They almost make it colloquial without really talking about or understanding what the real details of what the events that occurred were. Or, to understand that people actually died

and made significant sacrifices. I guess to rephrase, I'm curious about why you think that this whole question of looking at these issues comes back, when people don't really seem to be talking about particulars, but just, well you know, the general nature of it.

PD: Well, it's funny that you asked me that question and in turn I asked you a question. Because I wanted to be certain that I understood your frame of reference. I just attended a conference on the civil rights movement and the cultural civil rights movement and the cultural movement...

MW: That was at Princeton?

PD: Yes, yes. That probably isn't the exact name but before we are finished I'll give you the name. And uh, our book *Freedom in the Family: a Mother-Daughter Memoir of the Fight for Civil Rights* came out in January of this year. It is amazing the invitations that we get. But sometimes even more amazing is the fact that they want to talk to Tananarive (her daughter and co-author, and author in her own right). You... you really do have to wonder, are they really interested [throat clear] – excuse me – in the people who really were there? Or are they interested in an intellectual way. And I've tried to observe in different situations so that I could come to some kind of conclusion and I'm not certain that I have all of the information. I think for intellectuals, they want to write about something. As you said, that happened a long time ago. And sometimes without a real feel for what it really was. And sometimes without really wanting to just reach out and touch those persons who were really involved. You see the historians called in. You see that other people have written about what others have done. But less frequently, you see the people, the foot soldiers, who really were there called in to give their testimony. And Tananarive, and I have talked about this often and whenever she gets an invitation and it doesn't include me, she says, "Mom, what are they thinking about? I wasn't involved in the Civil Rights Movement." And sometimes I'll say to her, "Well, maybe because you are younger. They feel they can relate to you in terms of how it really affected me." Now, they should realize they need to act soon... a lot of us who were actually involved won't be here to tell the stories anymore.

And, on Princeton's campus, there were mixed reactions. I must say I did hear some of the things I wanted to hear as I looked at some of the young people on the faculty and the law school

professors, one woman was only 31 years old, an African-American faculty member. They were all very young people. And after I spoke and was meeting some of them, some of them made the statement that “We can do this because of what you did.” So that gave me the impression that maybe they really did understand, those particular young people. But more often, I don’t see that. It’s almost as if it’s a fad now.

MW: Can I follow up briefly? This is a little bit away from the question.

PD: Sure, sure.

MW: I was reading your book about Ms. Young. Miss Daisy Young who was very close and very dear to you and I know it is very painful, of course, for you to talk about it. But I was reading in the book about how your husband reminded you, that you had to give words at the (funeral) service, and that you said that... you reminded the audience how they were standing on the shoulders of people like her.

PD: Yes, yes.

MW: Since you used those words, do you believe, based upon what you said, that you have always had that understanding that you have that obligation that people have to those that came before, and actually did make the sacrifices? Have you always had that understanding?

PD: I think so. And again, back to the Princeton workshop that question in a sense was asked, but it was put this way, “When did the Civil Rights Movement really begin?” In a sense, we don’t know. A lot of people say in 1955, but we know that’s not true - although that was the Montgomery Bus Boycott. In 1909, the NAACP was organized by both whites and blacks. And 1942, CORE – a group that’s not widely known – the Congress of Racial Equality, a non-violent interracial direct action group was organized and sat-in at University of Chicago’s campus so many years ago. And then we did have the bus boycott and we did have SCLC. And we did have SNCC and we can go on and on. But the thing is that there are so many people whose names we don’t know who did things and we stand on their shoulders. We have Harry and Harriet T. Moore, who have become a little better known in the last ten years...

MW: They were killed...

PD: They were killed right here in Florida. He worked for the NAACP – just being involved in teacher’s rights and voter registration. So it’s very dangerous. Although we may not know the specifics, we can go back to the 1800’s. There were always people who did things. Just think of times during slavery, the people who rebelled, who wanted to be free,...who had to be free. Some of the names – Harriet Tubman – some of the names we know but there were many more who did some of the same things and whose names we don’t know. So, of course, there have always been persons whose shoulders we are standing on and sometimes we don’t their names. Sometimes we don’t know it...it may be Miss Daisy Young, uh.. Mr. Richard Haley, Calvin Bess, um, Jim Harmeling, Judy Benniger Brown, Reverend C.K. Steele. Most people will not recognize those names.

MW: Do you recall any of the organizing stories from Miss Young’s house on um was it, Pinellas Street?

PD: Yes. I believe what 1316 Pinellas Street, or was it 1314?

MW: What? So, just with her being so supportive, would she let you come over in Tallahassee? Was this CORE that was basically working with her, at her house or...?

PD: Well, Miss Young was also the advisor for the NAACP college chapter and that chapter – and when you say college chapter that’s the only time you can say chapter, for the NAACP. The adult organizations are branches. The media gets it all wrong. They call them chapters all the time but we are not chapters. If it is an adult group, it is a branch. But Miss Young was involved when I got here. In 1955 the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Reverend C.K. Steel was a friend of Dr. King but of course, Dr. King did not start the boycott, nor did Reverend C.K.Steele in Tallahassee start the boycott. Rosa Parks and two FAMU co-eds started those events... but they (Steele and King) were involved after that.

MW: How did you get started in CORE and how did CORE come to Tallahassee?

PD: Well, it was really a fluke. In 1959, my sister and I were in Miami, FL. We were still living with our mother and stepfather in Belle Glade. But we were in Miami FL visiting our biological father and a family friend of mother’s and my stepfather’s saw us and he invited us to go to a CORE workshop. And we had never heard of CORE. It was the summer. So he bribed

us. We called him Daddy Combs. He told us if we went to the workshop he would take us dinner to Woolfie's on Miami Beach. At that time that was one of the few places that blacks and whites could go to eat together. So we were excited about the dinner but when we got to the CORE meeting, although we had been brought up to be involved in our community and my mother was a Democratic committee woman, and my father was very involved in the community. But this was the first time for us that we were involved in it in any official way, in an official Civil Rights organization. And we sat there, my sister Pricilla and I and we listened and I know I really felt so excited because I knew there were things that needed to be done but I had no idea of how to proceed. But just going to that meeting – and we never did go to that dinner – that meeting was the best thing that had ever happened to me.

Whites would go in and sit as observers. Because we did not take it for granted that things were segregated because you heard it. You have to go in and test by CORE's policies. Then we as Negroes, as we were called then or colored whichever occurred – people would say at the time – would go in and ask for service. And most times we would not be served and the whites, there, as observer were listening – and would stay and listen to what the comments were. And we would be doing this during the summer. And then when Pricilla and I returned to Florida A & M University in the fall we were still just so excited that the two of us organized a CORE chapter right in Tallahassee. And this is when I met Miss Young. This is when I met Reverend C.K. Steele and some of the other people who had been involved in 1956 and what had become the Tallahassee bus boycott. But when I got there in 1957, the fall of – it was over.

MW: Well, what kinds of things were happening to you in your life as you observed as a young woman that made you and your sister so excited about CORE work? Were you dealing with discrimination activities? Were you aware of any discrimination in Tallahassee? In Quincy? In Gadsden County? Or was it when you went to the meeting you were excited about what you heard? – What was it about your lives and experiences before that that made you so excited?

PD: Well, not Gadsden County, although you hear stories but as a young person at Florida A & M University during the first year that I was there, as a music major, actually in my own world – which was shaken when a FAMU coed was raped by four white men. And I was just so upset

that that could happen. Although it happened time and time again, not only in Florida but in the South. And not much was ever done about it. At the time, President Eisenhower was in office. And I wrote him a letter – knowing it was not a federal situation but feeling it was such a sense of hopelessness, wanting to tell the world what was happening in Tallahassee. And I got a response – just the usual political response from Morrow, you know, one of his aides.

MW: Did you save the letter?

PD: Yes, I have the letter. One of the many things we didn't use in the book. We had so many things. But yes, I still have it. I guess my mother saved everything, and that, of course. So we did.

MW: So you said it was the usual political response. So you didn't think it was sincere?

PD: Well, it was political in the sense that “Thank you for your letter concerning da-da-da-da-da” and “I'll make certain that it is passed on to di-di.” But indicating there was nothing they could do - which I knew. But the tone is really set at the top. You can come outside of your responsibilities if you really want to make a difference. So many other Presidents did and were forced to do so, actually forced to do so. It was that kind of letter.

MW: What about local officials or the governor or, you know, the mayor? You have instances in your book where you talk about the mayor being there, or somebody who was in civilian clothes. Later it came to be the mayor that told the police to arrest you all when you were at the lunch counter. Did you try to write a letter to the governor or to the mayor? Or did it seem like the President was where the letter needed to be sent?

PD: Well, well then. Then, this was actually before my official involvement.

MW: Ok.

PD: So, in terms of the rape, that was separate from my later involvement. I guess I wrote the letter and I watched to see what would happen. But beyond that, I didn't do too much more, then.

MW: You've written so many letters. We've talked about you writing letters from jail. When I looked at *The Black Man, and the Promise of America*, a book which came out in 1970 – by Scott Foreman, it has an essay from you. It's one of your letters from jail that you actually wrote

when you were incarcerated. What is it about the power of letters that made you feel it so important to put your words on paper, to write to people and to receive letters that has become a part of how you interpret the struggle?

PD: Well, I guess I've always written things. I've been a writer and I had almost actually forgotten that when I was in high school, I wrote for the paper in Belle Glade. I wrote about people. I wrote the good things. And of course, it was segregated. You were in a certain section like everything else. You were in those halves. You were in a certain section of the paper. But I did write. And I have always felt that writing is permanent. Writing is a record that you would always have. And today before you came, I recalled I wrote because you may not always remember. I was rereading some of the letters from my mother, from my daughters to each other, from my mother to my daughters. Because these were things I brought up here to Quincy, so when they come here, they can take them. And it was interesting how much you can really forget but once it's written, it becomes permanent and I don't think it was so much just the Civil Rights Movement. But when I was in jail— it was just we started getting letters. And nobody could believe that that could happen in this country. That you could be spending... we were actually sentenced to 60 days. So that's where that comes up a lot of times but we actually spent 49 days in jail – five days off for good behavior for each month and one day to avoid publicity. But people could not understand how we could be in jail for sitting at a Woolworth's lunch counter, so as they wrote to us. I, in turn, wrote back to these people who had all of these questions and there were people who also wanted us to write articles. I don't know what has happened to most of them. Maybe some of them were in papers. I just didn't follow it. But in terms of this particular article, I was writing to CORE people, and others, just telling them what happened to get us where we were... in the Leon County jail. And I was doing a step-by-step accounting of some of the things I've mentioned to you, you know, in Miami. Also saying how worried our parents were because we were in jail, talking about the actual sit-in on that particular day, February 20, 1960 – which was the arrest that led to our spending those 49 days in jail. And I also mentioned the fact that Dr. Martin Luther King had said that we needed to fill the jails in order to win our equal rights. Now, at this point, Dr. King and some others had not actually

served their sentences, so we became the first group, the FAMU students, became the first group in the student sit-in movement to serve our time rather than pay our fines... and we had a choice.

MW: Now this was in reference to the letter that Dr. King sent you in March of 1960?

PD: Yes.

MW: You mentioned him in the book and it was a really powerful moment, there were so many powerful moments in the book, but this was a really powerful moment for me when the jailer came in with his son, and you did not reveal who that was in the book – was that because you did not know ?

PD: You know why... it was just one of those things that happened. I'm sure I have his name written in my diary. And it's ironic that I can remember Miss Love, who was a matron who was very, very negative and very nasty to us. And Mr. Chaires, who was very nasty to us and can't remember the name of the person who didn't necessarily have much to say during our stay in jail. He wasn't the one coming in and cursing us out every night. He wasn't saying anything, to my knowledge, to the others who were. I have no idea what his role was during at that time. But he was just sort of hanging back and at the end of our stay – to bring this young boy – and we felt – we were thinking he was bringing this young boy to gawk at us. You know, this was the first thought. We actually didn't know him that well, you don't get to know any of them unless they overtly do something like call you names or threaten you and he hadn't done that.

But when he made the statement that he did – that the fact we were... that these were young people, you know, who he would need to get to know them, that we really made a difference. I can't place what he actually said. It was a great feeling because it meant that someone understood why we were there – someone inside actually understood, when we didn't have a clue that anyone inside understood.

MW: I appreciate you allowing me to deviate from the questions that we have here. It was interesting to me that there were pictures in your book bringing up the family – a mother-daughter memoir. Your daughter receiving an oratorical award, in the presence of Dr. Benjamin E. Mays. It is kind of at the almost middle of the story, at the beginning of the story that Dr.

Mays was in Tallahassee giving the commencement address at FAMU in 1960. I wanted to know did he ever share with you any of his reflections with you, about his visit in Tallahassee?

PD: No. No. In 1960, after we got out of jail in May, we were suspended so we left the campus and went home to Belle Glade for two or three days and then we headed to New York City, which was the beginning of our national speaking tour about the time that we spent in jail. Now if he mentioned any of us during that commencement speech, I do not know about it. I do not... Now my uncle, Ed Marion's brother, at that time, was registrar at Morehouse College. So they had discussed it.

MW: The theme of his speech at the time was the Negro in America should be dissatisfied, that the graduate should be dissatisfied with what was going on and the fact that they should be doing more. And he used some of the ironies in the speech to talk about how African-Americans were being treated, and how expectations and things like that were. Did you believe that? How did you feel that message was, in terms of the times and what was going on, why would he give that speech ?

PD: I have no idea. I have no idea. Now, if I was just trying, to remember when commencement would have happened. It was probably after May, if this was the major commencement. And I would be curious to see that speech.

MW: I'll copy the speech and get it to you.

PD: Because he wouldn't have had to be vague in terms of talking about it, except maybe as a matter of courtesy to Dr. Gore, who had just.... As one President of a Black University to another who had just suspended us because we were fighting for our rights and the rights of others. Because he could have made it very personal because right there on that campus and right there in Tallahassee was where a lot of that had happened. So I would be curious to know... but I was not there. My sister was not there. I don't know of any of the others who spent time in the jail who were present.

MW: Well, I'll get that to you. The reason it was interesting was because it brought up the point that many of the African-American officials, Dr. Gore, others, were beholden to the white

power establishment.... a lot of the teachers and business-connected people more so than the people who were the foot soldiers that you talk about.

PD: That's true. Um, as it is, as the state institutions are now controlled by white boards, or have been... Then it was board controlled, totally white for Florida A&M University, FSU and the University of Florida. But you still had a choice in terms of what your reactions would be to what the students were doing. And different university presidents made different decisions.

MW: Why do you think that Dr. Gore took that tact that he did?

PD: Well, I guess for a lot of reasons. I guess he was afraid. He wanted to keep his job. I never interviewed Dr. Gore. It may have been that he thought if he suspended us that would keep them from pressuring him to expel us. I have no idea. But there were some universities that in fact did expel students. Now, we were suspended but given an opportunity to reapply. That became my whole life, reapplying and reapplying and reapplying. It took me 8 years to get my undergraduate degree. Eight years! But I was determined. I had an opportunity to go elsewhere. I had scholarships that were offered to me. But I just thought if I left other students at state-supported institutions – or colleges, they seemed like institutions, but colleges and universities would feel that they couldn't participate. So I wanted to get my degree from Florida A&M University. And finally, four months pregnant with Tananarive, in 1965, I did it.

MW: In Dr Rabby's book,...well actually, first, she wrote a dissertation at Florida State University, *Out of the Past: The Civil Rights Movement, Tallahassee Florida*, she spoke very highly of you during her thesis dedication and then during the closing comments of your book, you also referenced her. She talked of a spiritual side of the "Movement" in Tallahassee. I wanted to know, did you also see that element in your experience? Did you also see a spiritual side of what was going on?

PD: Again, my frame of reference talking about a spiritual side, are you alluding to her dissertation, and you know she did *The Pain and the Promise*,... the book. It took her a long time, but she actually finished the book and I think she did an excellent job in terms of giving us the history of what happened in Tallahassee. And one thing I like about how she actually wrote the book, especially people who really weren't that involved or who did very negative things,

they told how they felt. Mostly how they felt then, after the fact and she included it in the book. Comments, such as, "This was a law and I had to follow the law." She included all this in the book. And then she went back and she actually told what they did. So you can't get a better read than that. You really can't. And in terms of the spiritual side, if she was alluding to the fact that somehow all of us felt that we were, in a sense, family, not the entire community, but I would say a lot of the students who were involved were. Sometimes you were shunned by others - and they didn't necessarily disagree with what you were doing - but they were afraid to be associated with you. So there was as group of us that spent a lot of time together. And when we go out into the general community, when we talk about the spiritual side, it could be we were talking about the fact that there were churches involved. One thing about our jail stay, and it was very spiritual; two ministers came to visit us every day. This was arranged by the community. This was a way of protecting us, making certain from day-to-day that we were okay. We also used this opportunity, including the letter, the essay, that you've mentioned, to smuggle written information.

MW: They were couriers.

PD: Yes, they were. They were. Well, everything we did was censored. So if you wanted anything to really get out, you had to send it out with the ministers.

MW: Do you recall which ministers they were?

PD: No.

MW: Now, did you pray as well? Was that part of the...was there a performance that went on? Or were you actually praying...

PD: What is a performance?

MW: Well, by performance, you mentioned that they were smuggling your letters out as contraband, and there might have been some overtones, conversations made loudly, or jailers would hear actual...

PD: No. No. No. Everything was very serious. And, of course, as ministers, I'm sure everyday they would say, we're praying for you and they would be holding your hand and thinking through that, for the ones who were religious or spiritual, you would gain strength through that

connection. So I imagine a lot of the spiritual part that she mentioned, was the fact that the religious community, not all now, but a lot of them got involved, and thought that since they were not the ones in jail, they should do what they could do. We were considered children then. A lot of the people who lived in the community just felt that at least they needed to do their part. And the community was never 100 percent behind what was going on. The Negroes were afraid. A lot of them worked for the state. Tallahassee and Leon County is a tight county in terms of jobs. Most people during those times in jobs stayed there forever. And people actually were afraid. And there were some who felt that the way it was, was better. And we were threatening the peaceful tranquility of their community – these upstarts from these different communities coming in to Florida A&M University. During our sit-in, there was only one so-called adult involved. Mrs. King, who worked in town. It was only so many, not many, years ago that I asked her why she was there. I said, “Did they call you and ask you to join us?” She said, “No. But if you children could come to this community and do that then I should join you kids.” And she really had a very difficult time. She worked for whites. She was fired. So when you hear nobody knows the trouble I’ve seen, collectively, there’s a lot of trouble. There’s a lot of trouble for individuals. So when you call somebody’s name who’s well-known, behind that person was standing thousands who were not so well known. But having as difficult a time, or more so, than the person you know.

MW: Were you and your sister really prepared to go to jail or did that just come about because of what occurred? Were you kind of surprised or did you know that you were going to jail and were you prepared for it?

PD: Well, we were arrested. We were fingerprinted. We were let out on bail. Then, a date was set for the trial, originally for March 3rd and that’s when the student body decided they would not go to class, they would go to that segregated courtroom to give us moral support. Now, not all of us had decided... [sneeze] not all of us... not all of us had decided what we would do if we were arrested but we knew the possibilities. And I think that once we were arrested it became clear to us we would have a choice. You either pay – and this is how I saw it, you pay to support segregation by paying your fine. We had a fine we could pay or you go to jail. We refused to

promote a then financial advantage by paying for segregation. And I felt very strongly about that. I'm sure some of the others did. Some did not feel that they could stay in jail. So they got out. There were eleven originally and three got out to start an appeal process and others later on. Eventually five of us stayed in jail for the 49 days of a 60-day sentence.

MW: There seems to be a suggestion from question number 10 on the second page.

PD: I'm just trying to see what I've done.

MW: You've covered a good deal of them and a number of other things that weren't actually anticipated. So that's pretty good. But um, there seems to be a suggestion that there was more work called for in the Movement in Florida. Literature does not seem to mention Florida. It's more of an afterthought. You talked about what happened to the Moores' of course. Could you describe in more detail your feelings about this gap in the available literature about the Civil Rights Movement in Florida?

PD: That was one of the driving forces that kept me going year after year after year. Because I knew if the people who were actually involved were not involved in writing the history, history would become what others write. And that's what had happened. You look at the Civil Rights Movement and it's not that it wasn't national... that people didn't know what was happening across the nation in Tallahassee because they did. Jackie Robinson was involved by sending all of us diaries and money to Tallahassee court... Harry Belafonte, who gave a gift together with James Baldwin,... A. Philip Randolph, and others in his department in New York,... Eleanor Roosevelt, who sent out letters telling people to get involved with us, to make a difference. So it wasn't that at some point people didn't know what was happening, but you know I guess it's just easy to forget if someone comes on the horizon, one person or a couple of persons and media. We choose... and I'm kinda thinking about what happened in Iraq between the two young women who were injured. What happened? The media chose the one they wanted to concentrate on thereby enhancing her ability to make a better life for herself.

MW: I saw the book in the bookstore last night [inaudible] they've got all of them.

PD: And.... And.. the young woman who was just as involved but did not fit the pattern of what America wants to look at... wasn't even getting her full pension. So...

MW: So you're making.....

PD: So what I'm saying is a lot of it had to do with the media. A lot of it had to do with our attitude about the person who was going to lead us. I think unfortunately too many coloreds, too many Negroes, too many African-Americans and Blacks felt that we needed somebody to lead us out of our... to lead us to the Promised Land instead of going ourselves. And then there were just things that happened when other things were happening in Florida that overshadowed what was going on, in Florida. But that should not have been a reason why what happened in Florida did not become a part of the story, or was not documented but as it is, that's what happened.

MW: I'm glad you mentioned the overshadowed because I got a sense of overshadowed history when I was reading your book. You pointed out that the Tallahassee bus boycott was overshadowed by what happened in Montgomery.

PD: Well, Tallahassee happened after Montgomery, actually grew out of Montgomery.

MW: Alright. And that St. Augustine was overshadowed by the discovery of the bodies of Goodman, Chaney and Schwartz. How has the telling of history been effected by the timing of the events?

PD: Well, it's affected as we see it written. Whatever seems to be more important is recorded and whatever is less important is not. Now of course, you know when people die, and when you are looking for those persons, people working in voter registration, and then those bodies are found. Media-wise and every-wise, that's a big story. That's a big story. But ah...I just think there's room for all of the history that we have. We just have to make ourselves responsible for writing it. I've had a person to tell me whose writing history that some things that I have said in my book are not correct. Some names are spelled maybe improperly. And these are basically people who were not involved. And I said, "Well, why do you say that?" Because,...It's done differently other places." And I said, "then, other places are wrong and those dates are wrong too." I was there. And I didn't count on my memory either. I wrote the outline. I had an outline. I know when this happened, when that happened. See, that's the problem I'm finding too. History gets turned around. When you write it correctly, and you send it your editor and send it to somebody else and you have to just read and reread and reread to make certain that

what you've said is in fact what's on the final page and it doesn't always happen that way. I think most writers experience that but you do the best that you can do. And I think – just thinking back to your question initially, cultural memory and all of that, that's what the [inaudible] thing was all about. I think we've depended too much on historians to write our history when they could give it a twist the way they wanted to. I've been amazed at the people who've written about what I've done and never bothered to call me to find out what I was actually thinking. They guessed about what I was thinking. And there are thousands of others. My big thing now is that we should use the resource persons that we have – even if you don't recognize their names. In every community in this state, there are persons who participated in the Civil Rights Movement as I knew it. The different communities need to find out who they are. There's an arrest list. I don't know how available it is now that will list the name of the person and the hometown. Whenever I do interviews throughout the state for newspapers, I take out my arrest list and see who from that particular place was arrested. And I say, why don't you try to contact this person, too? And see what they say.

MW: [inaudible]

END OF SIDE B OF TAPE

BEGINS SIDE A OF TAPE- interview starts at counter: 008

PD: When Dr. King was assassinated, I was living right here in Gadsden County, Florida. And it's coincidental that the street where I live now is called Dr. Martin Luther King Boulevard. It was then called Experience Station Road but my second oldest child, Jonita, actually she was the third, but my second child was born March 17th ...and he (MLK) was assassinated April 4 and I had had a Cesarean section so I actually could not do any traveling. It was just so traumatic just thinking about it. And, uh, I listened to my doctor because I was not doing well from the surgery and I did not go. I did not go to Atlanta at all.

TAPE STOPS AND RESTARTS

MW: A theme that carries through your book seems to be “That for the activist, our family suffered right along with us.” Could you comment on that statement and if there's anything for

the local area, Tallahassee or Gasden County that has an impact? If you could mention those things as well.

PD: In terms of family suffering... well, I think – uh, this was in general – because for some of the other foot soldiers, Mrs. Vivian Kelley, of instance who turned 84 just this December 16, who still lives here, who was a party to a suit to become a principal here in Gadsden County and actually won.

MW: You celebrated her birthday a few days ago.

PD: Yes, yes, I did, I did. But her oldest son couldn't get a job here in the school system because of her involvement. And Reverend C.K. Steel who was so involved, very involved, but his wife puts years, this was Mrs. Loise Steel, could not get a job in Leon County. It was really much, much later that she was able to get employment. This was not the exception. This was the rule. A lot of people who were involved, including us, were harassed by the IRS. I mean if they couldn't find another way, they used the federal government. You see people call it being old, 'You're so paranoid, you think people are listening in to what you were saying. You thing that the government...' Well... I didn't think, I knew that. When we left Gadsden County, the last of 1968 and went down to Dade County and our IRS file followed us, we got a black person there from IRS and he looked at the file and he said, I don't know why you all are paying. He said, "I don't see anything in your file that says you should be paying." But guess what, we did – he didn't have the courage to take that to his superiors. He just told us. Well, we knew what was going on. They were using an arm of the government. And right here is Gadsden County, one of my cousins was involved, Delton Banks, his nephew now is a city manager in Quincy. He was punished so severely. He was in construction. They made it so difficult that... Then it was mostly whites who were hiring. And they would not hire him. The IRS hounded him to death and it's no wonder he died so many years ago. And they were just so many things in Leon County, Florida. Sometimes we think of just black people but there was George Lewis, the second, who was president and whose family owned the oldest bank in the state of Florida at the time, Lewis State Bank. George Lewis had been president of the bank and long before I got

here, he was lending money to black people to buy homes against the wishes of his family and the people of the bank, that he worked with because this was not done.

MW: Mr. Lewis was white?

PD: Yes. Mr. Lewis was white. His wife Kristin Lewis still lives over in Leon County and they suffered. Their children... but as George Lewis became more involved, his family punished him for his feeling, they booted him out of the presidency of Lewis State Bank and made him chairman of the board – now that sounds big but you have no authority to do anything, no power.

MW: They gave the control of the operation... [inaudible]

PD: Yes, yes. And uh, his son shared a story with us of how he was taken by gunpoint from school, high school, and told he would be shot if he didn't call the blacks who were walking along over there in school – the few blacks – nigger.

MW: What school was this?

PD: It may have been Leon High School – I'd have to check. It's included in the book. And we may not have used all of the interview but I didn't even know that until I talked with him. I don't think his mother knew either. A lot...

MW: Did you have a relationship with his mother? Did you have dialogues with each other?

PD: Oh, sure. Sure. But not that kind of dialogue during those days. We have remained pretty close um, because it's kind of like a family. Like fellows who go to the army or to some form of armed services, someone you're in the trenches with – day in... and night and day. You become like an extended family. So, yes, I mean I have been concerned about all of them all of these years. And the one thing I wanted to do was to write their story, write some of their stories so they could see that I appreciated what they did so others would know that ordinary people could do extraordinary things, that regular people can really make a difference.

MW: You mentioned that in your book. You talk about um, we talked about the foot soldiers... but you talked about the foot soldiers who told their stories those who died before they could tell their stories, the ones whose names not included. Is that the summation of what you are telling the audience? Ordinary people can do extraordinary things or is there something else, as well?

PD: Well, that's a large part of it, to encourage people to do what they can do in their own way. Even during those times, we didn't ask everybody to go to jail, or to go sit in, or to march and be tear gassed. Do what you can do. If you can help get out a newsletter, you do that. If you can baby sit, you do that. I remember in 1968, after Dr. King was assassinated, months later, I was in St. Pete and my husband was stationed out of Tampa – he worked then with the AFL-CIO. They were trying to organize people and the people asked me to work with them because the sanitation workers were treated so differently. And this was what Dr. King was concerned about in Memphis. As in Memphis, in St. Petersburg, Florida sanitation workers only worked on the back of the truck, made less money. The whites drove the truck. So the community wanted to change that and I went there to help. And because they started driving very early, some persons from the community would come to the hotel where I was living, the motel, Kent Motel where I was living and baby-sit. I had two children by that time. And I, in turn, would go and sit down in front of the trucks to keep them from moving so they would realize they we were willing to do whatever we had to, to change the ways things were there in St. Petersburg.

MW: I spoke with Dr. Ed King, who was on the state [inaudible] of Mississippi and he was involved with some of [inaudible] activities...

PD: Now you mentioned that this man was white....

MW: Yes, yes. He was white.

PD: Okay, so when we talk about the Ed King the one I know, he very well was black.

MW: Okay. Well, this Ed King said they knew when they went out sometimes that their lives were literally on the line. Did you feel that way?

PD: Yeah, yeah. Of course. But I also felt so strongly about what I was doing that it didn't matter. And in 1990, when I was doing an interview, in the beginning of the 90's, I had said that I didn't understand why this country did not understand the terrorists, you know. Because I know in the 60's, I felt so strongly about what I was doing, I felt so strongly that it was right for me to do what I was doing. And I felt that a physical death couldn't... wouldn't mean anything to me because in a way, I'm already dead. If I don't have my rights, if I'm not free – I'm not a whole person. So nothing you can do, shooting at, throwing tear gas in my eyes, or trying to

destroy me in any way, will make a difference. Because I had to be free and I was willing to do whatever it took in terms of being free. So it was just amazing that when they started talking about terrorists doing things, I understood why they would do it. I didn't agree, you know, not with all that violence. But, I was just thinking, why doesn't our country understand this? Why is all this happening? We take so much for granted. Even Rosewood, that was a time when I went into the hearings in Tallahassee. And I felt, and we had never heard of Rosewood. I had never heard of Rosewood but finally it was coming to light. I couldn't understand how the guard could be standing there smiling and being polite. Didn't he see the rage I felt? Couldn't he see it?

MW: Hmmm. In the 2000 elections in Florida is something you have uh, talked about a little bit and I wanted to know if you saw any parallels with what happened in 2000 with the result and there were so many questions about whether people were challenged fairly or unfairly in the polls, whether people were intimidated by having police officers outside the polls, where votes were counted, where actual votes for Al Gore were actually counted. Do you see similarities between that situation in 2000 and the voting registration drives that you earlier tried to put together?

PD: Well, there were some differences and there were some things that were similar. I was here in Gadsden County for that 2000 election. I had voted by absentee ballot in Dade County and I was staying with Mrs. Kelley, who was the first black chair of the Democratic party here in Gaston County. Around 2 am, we got a call.

MW: Election night.

PD: Election night... well yeah, election night. And one of the persons that met us there at the supervisor's office, the Supervisor of Registration was Brenda Holton, who is now county commissioner. They were not counting all of the ballots. They called, and said, "Oh Miss Kelly, you better get out here. You better get out here and see what's going on." So, Miss Kelly got me up and we went to the elections office.

What we found were several boxes of ballots that had not been counted, just sort of pushed aside and 99% of them for Al Gore. And the Supervisor of Elections was saying, "Oh, oh.." as if they

didn't know anything was amiss, pretending this was an accident. "Oh well, thank you – we're gonna take care of everything now, you all can go on now."

MW: That was a Democrat or Republican?

PD: [inaudible] Hey, they were all the same here Gadsden County.

MW: [Laughs]

PD: It was Hutchinson, and many, many years ago, that same relative that had been the one who ran the Gaston County Times and was the supervisor of elections, in the same office, a way of intimidating people. All I know is, in the 60's, as they shot into my house here is Gaston County, a house called the Freedom House – on loan to us from the Good Shepards right here in Gaston County, Rick Campbell was the chair of it, the president. Vivian Kelly was the secretary and they shot into that house and we went out into the community, cooling probably right around here. Because the tobacco farms were right here, where dogs were set on people, including Mrs. Kelley. All I know is that we promised people that if they registered, if they voted, their votes would be counted. Then all of these years later, in 2000, the votes are not counted. All of these years, after all of the pain and the agony of trying to get people to register, to be informed about the issues, and then to vote – the votes are not counted. So Bush stole this election. And because of that bell, the clock is turning back so rapidly that it is going to take all of us to make it stop. Otherwise, you won't have to sit here and ask me what happened in the 60's or the 50's, you'll be living it. And that's what so many of our people don't understand. Some have jobs, they have nice houses and they think that's living. Well, under the worse situations, people have jobs, some of them, and nice houses but that's not what freedom is all about. That does nothing to your self-esteem to talk about [inaudible] and then turn and get in your Cadillac or your Mercedes. Freedom is the ability to be able to go and come, to be able to have available to you everything, including jobs, health care, college education, respect that is available to other people. So in 2003, we aren't free. Right here in Gadsden County, I'm not here a lot – I come in every month or so. And I see the whites and the blacks in the stores, and some of the fast food places, sometimes I get the impression that this is still two... that this is still two worlds. Still. And I want to ask this golf club up here if it's open to everybody. But they've got a steep fee,

and you pay a monthly fee. The school system is about 99 percent black. But you have the white teachers who are making money. See if they choose to maintain a segregated system. We have charter schools; we have private schools. And I get the chance, I want to see how much money is flowing into those schools. It may be 2003, but the clock has really been turned back. And as bad as it gets for whites, it is ten times worse in terms of jobs. They're talking about the employment rate has gone up. It's always been high for us. It's been twice as high for us as it is for whites. So whites may be satisfied that it might be down to what? Five percent? But for us it's still 10 or 15 percent. Thirty percent of our young people live in poverty, of our children. Did you know that according to Price's Magazine and a few other magazines, that 70 percent of our African-American babies are born out of wedlock. What does that say? What have we done? Have we gone for more than just the good equipment, the up-to-date books? Have we assumed a culture that was not ours? We have so many things to offer and to share. Integration was never about sitting by a white person, or just doing everything that whites did. It was about having the same kind of opportunities. Our discipline has gone by the wayside. Now you have young people you can't speak to. I mean they may have a knife, a gun. You have parents who are saying they can't do anything with a two-year-old. You have young people who don't want to learn to read. But our ancestors, tell them our history, died so that they could learn to read. See that's why history is important. Young people need to know that we are from a great people. Enslaved as we were, we did things to change that. Some of them were willing to take chances and learn to read so they would know. They would be able to read some of those things that were around then, make them pass to write. This history is lost and that's when it's really sad. You have a lot of us saying, "Well, I don't want to talk about slavery." Well, how can you not? If we don't talk about it, we gonna head right back there. And people won't be saying, "All black people..." it's going to be a matter of finances. And if you look at it, we are going to be the ones with less money because we are going to have fewer jobs, we are going to have fewer young people in a position to take the few that may be available. So we have a lot of problems.

TAPE TURNS OFF AND COMES BACK ON

PD: I met Dan in 1963 and didn't get to know him that well. But Dan and Judith Benniger according to them, according to Dan, had been reading about what we were doing in Tallahassee. So he and Judy came over during one of our demonstrations at the Florida Theatre and Dan said he had heard me talk and I had told them they could be arrested and this could happen and that could happen. But everybody participated including Dan and Judy and got arrested. So...

MW: What year was this?

PD: 1963. In the fall of 1963. The reason I started with that and talked about the building is because Dan realized many years later (1992), that his teacher's building, FEA United Building was the old Florida Theatre. So he pushed through a resolution to have it declared by this union as an historical site. Putting a plaque on the outside – which they did but you can hardly read it because it's small. And blowing up some of the pictures, really huge pictures, which during the demonstration in front of the theatre, which they were supposed to keep in the lobby but Pat Tornillo was too busy spending the theatre money from everybody because I don't think those ever went up and stayed up. But the important thing is that did happen. I think it was February 22, 1994. But we had the official dedication. I was there. I spoke. Some politicians from the 60's, and Dr. Evans, I believe, president of the NAACP in Leon County, at the time... and Governor Chiles. He attended it. George and Kristen Lewis were there. So some of the foot soldiers were there. He hadn't invited a lot.

TAPE TURNS OFF AND BACK ON AGAIN.

PD: Saunders [inaudible] I had known from the time that I was a child. Her sister, Evelyn Mitchell was one of my mother's best friends in Belle Glade. Miss Mitchell was a principal – there, I believe in South Bay, and had been a principal for a lot years. Todd, as I called her, as a young woman but she would bring her children for her sister to keep. And I think – but one is an actress now and one is a lawyer, I believe. So I've known Todd for a long, long time and I never tried to, I guess, get anything from that relationship.

MW: The Meek family must have had a perspective on the sit-in that happened then.

PD: The big family?

MW: No, the Meek family.

PD: Oh, oh, oh.

MW: You said you knew Congresswoman Meek. They must have had some feelings about the sit-ins. Her son was a senator at that time, Kendrick Meek in Lt. Governor Brogan's office....

PD: Well, it's not just because he was her son. It was because of Jeb Bush's attitude. When I heard about... god, I really annoyed. We called and they made reservations to fly to Tallahassee. We just wanted to tell them how proud we were of him. And when we got there, there was a press conference going on and we were invited to come and to speak and you know, [inaudible] just enjoying this [inaudible]. And we didn't, [inaudible]. And then they were meeting upstairs so we were invited to go upstairs. And, that was when I publicly, just told them how proud I was of them. Because here was some young people who knew who they were and didn't mind letting other people know it. And I started telling them the story of the struggle and I'm telling you, everybody was crying. Everybody was crying.

MW: It's the same thing as when the governor had said, get there asses out of there.

PD: Yeah, yeah. Exactly.

MW: So how did you feel about that... the governor saying that...?

PD: Well, for me it was a mistake. I don't care what you would think. You don't make those kind of mistakes. We called Tananarive, and I think what we said, [inaudible] Tallahassee. We said he was going to kick our asses out of there and we said we were going to take our asses up there.

MW: [laughs]

PD: [laughs] So, we did, we just hopped on a plane and I don't like these little planes that go between Miami to Tallahassee either. But I don't even remember thinking about it at that time. I was just so incensed that he was so arrogant first of all, not to see them. And, then secondly, to make that statement. People like that are dangerous and we are not thinking people when we don't realize it. What always amazes me is that someone can say that and then pretend that they have... and pretend that they have something else. How can you believe a politician when they are doing things to destroy you? And then they decide, "Oh, I guess I need to do something to get these people here, I guess I'll give them 10 cent." And people forgive everything. I have a

long memory. We all ought to have long memories because it's important. It's not that you don't ever forgive someone something. But you have the responsibility of knowing when they are serious and knowing when they are playing a game. And in 2003, comparing this year to other years in the past, in the past they were wearing the sheets over their head. This is why it is much more difficult to get at racism and discrimination. The white and the colored signs are now gone. And the people who were once wearing the white sheets now are the ones wearing the mask of the two piece and three piece suits but who are doing just as much damage to destroy our people as the ones who were parading around the streets with those hoods on.

MW: Do you feel this is because our society has become so much more depersonalized and we all have cell phones and computers and the internet? Does that contribute in any way to the strategies of racism instead of being out in the open?

PD: Well, the signs are gone and that wouldn't have anything to do with the signs. And if you were saying that you think that most of us have cell phones and computers, I don't think we do. I just think people are so busy paying attention to themselves that they don't realize the total picture. They don't realize that if they are in fact involved, maybe they could make a difference for themselves as well as for others.

MW: You made a statement in the book that you were committed to living a life that is doing what is right for everyone, not necessarily for yourself.

PD: Well, a lot of things I did, I did not benefit me, personally. A lot of the decisions I made I knew would not benefit me personally. But I chose to do what I did. So I have to be accountable for my choices. You may sometimes say, look, it might be nice to have a pension. But I chose to basically volunteer in the community. That was, you know, my choice. So I have to live with that choice. It is ironic though, as you live with those choices, sometimes you find that your own people are the ones who are trying to really rip you off. You know sitting out here, living out here. I try to find people who are not only competent but black, you know, to do work that I have to have done. And not only now but I've found in the years past that when I try to find blacks to do things, they end up charging us more than they charged whites who have much more than we have financially. And you wonder why... why do people do that?

MW: Is that part of what you mean when you say the struggle continues?

PD: No. That wasn't even it but certainly that should be a part of it. Certainly. Mrs. Kelley is 84 years old. She lives alone. Somebody should be going there doing her yard for free. Oh, it's not that when you do things, you expect what I expected in the past year when you come to my house to do some work. But for someone like that, at that age, the community should be rallying around her to make sure that she is taken care of. Not only Mrs. Kelly, but other people who might be in that age group. We need to that they have heat going. We need to know that they food coming in. Where is the respect for old people anymore? Where is the respect for elders? That's something else we've lost. This was part of our culture. We no longer have that. We have parents. Most African-American – Blacks, whatever we want to call ourselves, do not have parents who are formally educated but what we did have were parents who were willing to give up everything to make certain that we did receive an education. And I've heard time and time again how some of these people who have achieved because some of their parents mopped the floors and did everything else they could, are ashamed of their parents. I mean, who are we? Why, why is our self-esteem so low that we either have to isolate our parents or grandparents or be ashamed of them? People, who had the good sense to know, that you're going to need more than I have to make it in this world, and I'm going to make certain that you get it – at a very personal cost to our parents. But uh, we don't have the respect as a whole, I don't see it.

MW: Is that uh, is that what was the cost of integration?

PD: I see it. It's probably a total community situation but I probably see it more in us. I think that may be one of the causes. I think instead of carrying the good parts with us. We abandon everything we have been and we had done, in the name of integration. And I think that was wrong. That was never what it was meant to be about. Never. I've tried my best to teach my children simple things. No, you don't call me Patricia. You have respect for adults, you know. And you have a responsibility no matter what you have personally. You may be lucky, talent, whatever way. But you have a responsibility to give back to your community. You have a responsibility to help other people and this is what I learned when I was growing up. And it's not the same kind of attitude, "Oh those poor people" because we are those people. We are not

better or worse because we have more education, or less education. We are just those persons that need to feel a responsibility for others based on what we can do. And I think that's important. I think that's one of the things we don't have. I know when Jonita went away to school, she went to Harvard. And she said, "Mom, Mom. So many of these young people don't know who they are. Don't know how they got here." And that's unfortunate. And I think a lot of that is what we have lost in the process of integration. A lot of that is what we have lost. And if we don't regain it, we'll find ourselves reliving our past. Reliving our past. And it's not just those of us who don't have money. Look at the test scores of these so-called middle class blacks in these white schools. I mean, we have to... everyone is going by a number but if you separate them out, you see that those children aren't doing that well either. So you can't think because you are in a different financial situation that you are being treated any differently than everybody else... I remember when we had our first black superintendent of schools [inaudible] in Miami-Dade County. Everybody was always asking him are you the busboy, are you this, or are you that? You know, it didn't matter that he had on his suit and that he was superintendent of schools, he was black. All with his PhD and everything else, people felt the same way about him that they did all of us. And my mother was working at a school, in Oviedo, and the white teachers would write terrible things – "nigger" – all over the bulletin board against her, in the teacher's lounge. That may have been years ago but we have not gone far beyond that. People may do a better job of hiding it. You almost need a lawyer to prove you've been discriminated against, if you do, you try to get one. And there should be some available without charging you a lot of money, willing to give you that time as part of what they can do. That's their talent so we all have a responsibility to do what we can do, when we can do it.

MW: Mrs Due, I thank you so much for letting me come to your home today and listen to this part of history and I know it is just a small part but I really have appreciated it and I thank you.

PD: You're welcome. I need to write this.

MW: What note?

PD: Is there any left?

MW: Just a little bit on there. I wanted to know if there was anything you wanted to say – in free form - because I'm just in awe of your sacrifices and your struggles. I haven't had to go through...

PD: Many people sacrifice, many people struggles. The difference is that you recently heard my name but many of those who did so much, you never hear their names. But that didn't make it any less important.

END

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Curriculum Vitae

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Education

Thesis title, “The Letter from Leon County Jail: Patricia Stephens Due and the Tallahassee, Florida Civil Rights Movement”

Master of Science, Policy and Political Communication, The Florida State University, August 2005

Bachelor of Science, Telecommunications, University of Florida, August 1994

Bachelor of Arts, History, University of Florida, August 1994

Current Employment

Graduate Teaching Instructor in Communication, Florida State University, January 2003 to present.

Recent Employment

Graduate Assistant & Policy Debate Coach, Florida State University Debate Team, January 2003-April 2004

Graduate Teaching Assistant, SPC 4516 (Evidence), with Dr. Marilyn Young, Florida State University, for two semesters, stand alone instructor, Summer 2005

Graduate Teaching Instructor, SPC 3513 (Argumentation), stand alone instructor, Summer 2003-Spring 2005

Graduate Teaching Instructor, SPC 2600 (Public Speaking), stand alone instructor, Spring 2005

Instructor of AP History, & General Social Studies (6-12), and Director of Forensics, Wellington Community High School, School District of Palm Beach County, August 2001-January 2003.

Instructor of Debate and Public Speaking and Director of Forensics, Buchholz High School, School District of Alachua County, August 2000-August 2001.

Instructor of American Government, American History, and Economics, and Varsity Girls Basketball Coach (FHSA, Class 2A), Newberry High School, School District of Alachua County, August 1999-August 2000.

Instructor of General Social Studies (6-12) and Director of Forensics, The Trilogy School for Learning Alternatives, Gainesville, Florida, August 1997-August 1999.

Campaign Coordinator, William Ogle for Florida State House, District 22 (1998)

Campaign Coordinator, John Martin for Alachua County Commission, District 3 (1996&1998)

Recent Presentations

Panelist, National Forensic League (NFL) Final Round Judge in the National Championship Debate for Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, June 2005

Scheduled Panelist, National Forensics League (NFL) Final Round Judge in the National Championship Debate for Policy Debate, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, June 2005*

Lecturer, Valdosta State University (VSU) Summer Debate Workshop, “Debate Theory and Application: “Acknowledging Who You Are, What You Believe is Important, Why you Debate, and What Are You Trying to Say---Offense and Defense versus ‘The Louisville Project’,” Valdosta, Georgia, June 2005

Lecturer, Valdosta State University (VSU) Summer Debate Workshop, “Debate Theory and Application: “Evaluating the Debate Round Holistically---Flowing, Issue Selection, and the End Round Game,’ Valdosta, Georgia, June 2005

Panelist, National Catholic Forensics League (NCFL) Double Octo-final Round Judge for Policy Debate, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, May 2005

Respondent, Southern States Communication Association Convention (SSCA), Competitive Papers, Political Communication Division, “Toward New Dialogue and Community: Web Sites, Democracy, and Media Coverage,” Baton Rouge, Louisiana, April, 2005

Panelist, Southern States Communication Association Convention (SSCA), Rhetoric and Public Address Division, “Political Campaigns as Theatre: The 2004 U.S. Presidential Campaign in Perspective,” Baton Rouge, Louisiana, April, 2005

Presenter, Southern States Communication Association Convention (SSCA), Political Communication Division, “Fracturing Communities and Stifling Dialogue: Communication in

the 2004 U.S. Election Campaigns,” Presentation: “Gender and Ethnicity in Conflict: Communication in the 2004 U.S. Senate Race in Florida,” Baton Rouge, Louisiana, April, 2005

Panelist, Southern States Communication Association Convention (SSCA), Southern Forensics Division, “Technological Innovations in Policy Debate: Community Development, Argumentation and Trends,” Baton Rouge, Louisiana, April, 2005

Scheduled Panelist, Southern States Communication Association Convention (SSCA), President and Vice President’s Division, “Around the World We Go: Celebrating the Academic Career of Professor Marilyn J. Young,” Baton Rouge, Louisiana, April, 2005**

Panelist, Florida Forensic League (FFL) Final Round Judge in the State Championship Debate for Policy Debate, Orlando, Florida, March 2005

Presenter, National Communication Association Convention (NCA), Public Address Division “Moving Forward While Looking Back at Pivotal Moments: Public Discourse and the Struggle for Identity in Relation to Civil Rights and Abortion.” Presentation, “The Struggle Continues: Patricia Stephens Due’s Reflections on Contemporary Implications of the Civil Rights Movement in Florida,” Chicago, 2004

Panelist, National Forensic League (NFL) Final Round Judge in the National Championship Debate for Policy Debate, Salt Lake City, Utah, June 2004

Panelist, National Forensic League (NFL) Final Round Judge in the National Championship Debate for Policy Debate, Atlanta, Georgia, June 2003

Moderator, Florida State University, Black Student Union, Executive Branch Candidate Debate

Presenter, Florida Communication Association (FCA), Public Debate Exhibition, A Mock Debate Between the 2002 Florida Gubernatorial Candidates. St. Petersburg, Florida, October 17-19, 2002.

Panelist, National Forensic League (NFL) Final Round Judge in the National Championship Debate for Policy Debate, Charlotte, North Carolina, June 2002

Panelist, National Catholic Forensic League (NCFL) Semi-Final Round Judge for Policy Debate, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, May 2002

Panelist, The Barkley Forum for High Schools, Emory University, The Blue Ribbon Rounds, Semi-Final Tutorials for Policy Debate, Atlanta, Georgia, February 2002

Presenter, Florida Communication Association (FCA), Public Debate Exhibition, Topic; “Slow, Public, Lay Audience-centered debate versus Fast, Collegiate, Expert Audience-centered debate: Which is Preferable? A Stylistic Comparison.” Ft. Lauderdale, October, 2001.