



WINDSOR
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Iva Allison:
Share Your Windsor Story

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Interviewer: Patricia Bruhn
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Patricia Bruhn

So, if you want to tell us your name and where you live in what part of Windsor?

Iva Allison

OK. I can start now.

Patricia Bruhn

You can start there and how long you've lived here. And did you grow up in Windsor or not grow up in Windsor?

Iva Allison

I did not.

Patricia Bruhn

OK, so yeah. Go ahead.

Iva Allison

Yeah, my children did. OK, my name is Iva Chisholm Allison. I am a resident of Windsor now. I didn't always live here. I came from South Bend, Indiana, about 5 miles from Notre Dame. Yeah, 'fighting Irish'. Yeah, gotta put that in there. I have three daughters. We moved to the area because my husband got a fellowship at the University of Hartford. We have been in this community for about 40 years now. My daughters, like I said, went to school in [the] Windsor School system and later went off to college. HBCU's. I attend church at Archer Memorial A.M.E Zion. [00:01:00] I am the historian there. My daughter Monique is performing today. She moved out of Windsor and then she came back. But we are involved in Windsor. I was also a member of WAACA, Windsor African American Civic Association, and I was a part of that for 13 years until it disbanded. I belong to other organizations in Windsor also. I enjoy living here. I live at _____, Windsor present time and what else do you want me to say?

Patricia Bruhn

Do you have any funny memories of Windsor? When you first moved here or something?
[inaudible]

Iva Allison

Well, yeah, I don't know if it's a funny memory, but my husband had an accent and when he would tell people where he was living [00:02:00]and he would say 'Windsor', he said it kind of funny so they would think he was saying 'Wings Or'. They would ask him and they said, "That's not a place in Connecticut." And he said, "Yes it is." He'd have to describe how to get there and so finally he got tired of saying 'Windsor'. So he just wrote it on a piece of paper so every time they would ask, he would hold it up.

Patricia Bruhn

[laughs] I think that's a little funny.

Iva Allison

OK.

Patricia Bruhn

So, you say you've been here for 40 years. So why did you stay?

Iva Allison

About 40 years. Why did I stay so long? I found it to be a pretty nice community. Plus, I found a church home and my daughters liked it here until they were ready to move out of the area. And I just, I like the people. Yep.

Patricia Bruhn

How is Windsor different from where when you lived, you know, near the fighting Irish and other places that you might've traveled to?

Iva Allison

It's a whole lot less crowded on football weekends. [laughs]

Patricia Bruhn

[00:03:00] Ah, so you're big into football!

Iva Allison

Oh yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Patricia Bruhn

You know, I have to say I'm really [inaudible].

Iva Allison

Yeah, yeah.

Patricia Bruhn

Since you've been here 40 years, what changes have you seen? Good or bad?

Iva Allison

It's grown, it's grown. We've lost some places like the theater, but there are other places that kind of spot up. One of my favorite new places is the Sweet Shop down on Poquonock where I get all my snickerdoodle cookies from. [laughs] About the same friends. The same friends I've had for about the whole 40 years or so, yeah.

Patricia Bruhn

Let's talk about your daughters. They went to public schools here and you didn't.

Iva Allison

Yes, they did. No I didn't.

Patricia Bruhn

So why don't you talk about their education experience?

Iva Allison

They enjoyed the Windsor public schools. When we lived in South Bend, [00:04:00] they went to parochial schools. They didn't have the public school experience until we moved here and they liked it. There's small classrooms opposed to large ones. I was a teacher in Hartford for 39 years and we had big classrooms. So yeah, they enjoyed the -- I think my one daughter really enjoyed Sage Park because she wanted to stay there forever. My other daughter, my youngest daughter Shola, she actually went to England to school. So she didn't come back until Anne P. Ford was principal at Windsor High School.

Patricia Bruhn

Wow, she's very lucky.

Iva Allison

Well, my husband insisted.

Patricia Bruhn

Let's talk about community involvement. Do you want to talk a little bit about the community organization? I apologize, I forgot the name of it.

Iva Allison

WAACA, [00:05:00] the community -- it was one of the first organizations for African Americans in this town. It was started in Hartford and then it moved here. We had several presidents. We got a lot accomplished here in town. We were available for groups from Windsor High School. Anything that had to do with politics, we kind of participated in.

Patricia Bruhn

So were you like activists?

Iva Allison

We weren't activists but we --

Patricia Bruhn

Was it more educational?

Iva Allison

Yeah, educational and political things. We kind of stood up and made sure that we were represented.

Patricia Bruhn

Do your daughters still live here? Are they married?

Iva Allison

Only one lives here. One moved back to South Bend, Indiana. One went to school at [00:06:00] an HBCU. All three of them went to HBCU's but one stayed in Tennessee where she met her husband, who was also a Nigerian. My husband was a Nigerian. She met her husband, came back, had the wedding here, and moved back to Tennessee. In fact, she lives about 10 miles from Dolly Parton. And one day I'm going to crash the gate. [laughs]

Patricia Bruhn

Oh, I like that. I like that. Do you have anything else you'd like to add?

Iva Allison

No. Just --

Patricia Bruhn

Oh, I know. One good one. What's your favorite event in Windsor?

Iva Allison

Shad Derby. I love the Shad Derby. Our church has a fish and chips booth at the Shad Derby and I love it, love it, love it. I see old friends and meet new ones. I love it.

Patricia Bruhn

Ok. Anything else you'd like to add?

Iva Allison

Nope, that's it.

Patricia Bruhn

That was good. Thank you.