



Iva Allison:
WAACA Oral History

February 3, 2021 & January 19, 2022

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This interview is part of a series conducted with former members of the Windsor Afro-American Civic Association. The content of this transcript has been edited for clarity purposes.



Part I

Dr. Fiona Vernal: It is February 3rd, 2021, and I'm conducting an oral history with Ms. Iva Allison. This is Dr. Fiona Vernal from the University of Connecticut EPOCH project, as well as the Windsor Historical Society project to document the Windsor Afro American Civic Association. Ms. Allison, can you consent at the top of the interview that you, Iva Allison, consent to have this interview conducted?

Iva Allison: Yes, I do.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Thank you, and in order to understand the context in which the Association emerged, can you tell me a little bit of background about yourself and how you came to live in Windsor?

Iva Allison: I am Iva Allison. I came to live in Windsor because I married my husband in South Bend, Indiana, and he was a Rhodes scholar. He got a scholarship to the University of Hartford, and we moved here. He is since deceased. I [was] a teacher for the Hartford school system. I taught visual arts for 30 years in Hartford. I have, actually, three master's and a fifth-year certificate. I've taught history and political science. Also, I have three girls, all of whom went to HBCUs. I am a very proud grandmother of three – Akinsayo, Akinbayo, and Akintayo Olaoye. [...] Those are their [names]. My husband was Nigerian. My last daughter, Olusola, was Nigerian. Well, more Nigerian than American. She went to [an] HBCU, married Akin Olaoye, and [Akinsayo, Akinbayo, and Akintayo] are my grandchildren.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Okay. All right. Thank you for that overview. Can you attach some timeframes to moving and relocating to Hartford?

Iva Allison: I moved to Hartford in 1982. That's when I had my daughter, Olusola, and we moved not actually to Hartford. We moved to Windsor, and I started teaching in the Hartford school system and my husband started taking classes at the University of Hartford.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Okay. Thank you for that. Based on how you had grown up and what your experience was, does that put you in South Bend, Indiana, you said?

Iva Allison: Yes, I was one of 11 children. My mom and dad got married early [and were] very active in the town. [We are a] very large family, very known family. We come from a family of firsts in South Bend, Indiana. My uncle was the first African American fire chief in South Bend, Indiana. My dad was the first African American union leader for his plant. [00:05:00] My mom was the first African American to start in the Head Start program as a teacher. With all of that said, they kind of pushed me to get into politics and history and to know our history. When I married my husband, he was going to the University of Notre Dame. I had two children by a previous marriage. But when he got the scholarship from the University of Hartford, we moved to Windsor, and I wanted to stay active in social action and social justice programs. I was talking

one day at a program that was held in the town of Windsor, actually at the library, and a woman, Willie Graham, came over to me. I think she was President of the African American Civic Association at that time. She was telling me all about it and told me when their next meeting would be and for me and my husband to come and join.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Okay. Can you tell me a little bit about your activism in Indiana?

Iva Allison: Well then it was an offshoot of the Black Panthers. But it was an economic program to start things such as Head Start, meals for children, older adult meals, getting a senior center started in our neighborhood, getting a youth center. [I also] belonged to a program which provided recreation and parks for children during the summer.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: All right. Thank you for that. And in coming to the Hartford area, you and your husband had a couple of suburbs to pick from. Can you talk about the choice of Windsor specifically?

Iva Allison: We chose Windsor because we had friends that had lived here for quite a while, and they moved from Windsor to East Hartford when we got here. But we had already made arrangements to move into Windsor. [Windsor is] a very friendly town, so we decided to relocate right here in Windsor.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: The friends you were following, were they friends from Indiana as well?

Iva Allison: No, they were actually friends from London.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Oh, friends from London. Okay. And just briefly, what's the London-Windsor connection? How did they come from London to Windsor?

Iva Allison: [Our friend] was originally from Nigeria. He knew my husband. He moved to Windsor for a job. He was actually working at Pratt [and] Whitney, and he married his wife in St. Louis, Missouri and then moved to Windsor. Then after they had been here for so many years and loved the area, then they moved to East Hartford.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Okay. Thank you for clarifying that. In terms of your educational background and your aspirations, were you following in your mother's footsteps as a teacher?

Iva Allison: Not exactly because she had a three year degree. She didn't have the full four-year degree. So I kind of wanted to be a teacher, but my parents did not want me to be in the arts.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Oh. [laughing]

Iva Allison: In the arts, you could not make a living, and I was determined. I went to Kentucky State first. I was determined to be in the arts and, in fact, I had a scholarship to go to Kentucky State University for arts. When I got there, I wanted to kind of turn it around [laughing] because

I was more into politics and history. I didn't really follow [my mom's footsteps] because she wanted to teach younger kids. At first, I really didn't want to teach. [00:10:00] I wanted to do visual arts.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: [laughing] Can you tell me a little bit [about] when you first developed an interest in visual arts?

Iva Allison: I must have been in grade school because [at] Benjamin Harrison grade school, everything we did from third grade on up, I was just involved in the drawing or painting or something that had to do with the arts. When I went to high school, which was George Washington High School there, I ran into a professor at Indiana University [who is now deceased]. Plus, he also was teaching at Washington High School, and he just told me, "You need to be in the arts. You've got a gift; you've got a talent. You need to be in the arts."

Dr. Fiona Vernal: What was your specific gift? What was your medium?

Iva Allison: Painting. Oil painting.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Okay. Can you tell me a little bit about the transition to the Hartford school system once you were here in terms of teaching the visual arts? What did the arts scene look like?

Iva Allison: It was way more advanced than it was in South Bend. It was totally different. In fact, I met two gentlemen that more or less helped me out greatly. That was Jonathan Bruce, and he was running the CRT Craftery Gallery at the time. He just came over to me one Sunday. Me and my husband and daughters were there at the gallery. We were looking at a show, and he just came over to me and he said, "I saw you. I've seen you quite a few times." He said, "I know you're in the arts." And he said, "We're getting ready to have a teacher show. Would you like to participate?" And I said, "Of course." And he said, "[What] media are you familiar with?" I told him that my media was the paintings with oils. And he said, "Do you do any acrylics?" I said, "Very few, but I've got some." So, he said, "Please bring them by," and I brought them by and he loved them. He said, "There's more things for you to do in this neighborhood." He immediately signed us on to the Craftery Gallery and told me the artists that he was going to bring in and we just became good friends. He just kind of pushed me ahead [laughing] every time there was something going on. He said, "Oh, you do that. Oh, you can do that." And I did.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: You said there were two gentlemen. So, it was Mr. Bruce and who else? Who was the second person?

Iva Allison: The other one was later. He was Alan Jones and he was head of the arts department in Hartford, which I thought was excellent because at that time, you didn't find very many heads of arts departments that were Black.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Right.

Iva Allison: And he said, “Oh, no. You’re going to start.” In fact, when I went to work with the Hartford school system, I was teaching special education. He said, “Oh, no.” He said, “That’s not the visual arts. That’s what you’ll be doing.” And I said, “Okay, that works.” That was my first love.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: How long did you have to do special ed before you transitioned?

Iva Allison: I did it for one year.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Okay. And then which school were you placed in in Hartford?

Iva Allison: I was at West Middle School on Albany Avenue.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Did you stay there for the duration of all of the times that you taught?

Iva Allison: Yes, because [laughing] when I got to West Middle and I started teaching special education, a teacher was retiring, and I just got put into that position. And then they just kept telling me, “You know what? If there’s anyone else that’s retiring, you can have their position.” But luckily for me, Alan Jones [00:15:00] was on top of it. And he said, “No you’re going to teach art.” And Mr. Harris, who was the principal, said, “This works out just fine because their art teacher had moved to Maine. And he said, “Nope, there’s a position open for you.”

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Okay. Thank you for clarifying that. Can you say a little bit about community life in South Bend versus community life in Windsor?

Iva Allison: It was very different. Community life in South Bend, you more or less had to have a family name. My family had been in South Bend [for what] seemed like forever. My dad came from Jackson, Tennessee, and moved there when he was like 14 years old. My mom came from Louisiana, moved right around the Chicago area, and then moved from that area. Well, actually, it was a little bit further down. She moved from Mound City, Illinois, to Indiana. They had been there for so long and my other relatives had places. My family, the Chism’s, owned a diner that was actually in the Green Book.¹ I didn’t know that until many, many years later. But when you traveled that route from the South to the North, if you owned a restaurant or a place to eat or sleep like a hotel, it was listed in the green book. I had no idea until later on that they were listed and that was due to my aunt, and it was Mom’s Diner. So we were accepted in the community where we lived, which was in the LaSalle Park area with mostly homes from men who had built them after World War II. It was a Polish and an African American neighborhood. We were accepted by the Polish, but you still stayed in one community. You didn’t venture out, you know, but our family could because we’d been there for forever.

¹ The Negro Motorist Green Book was an annually published travel guide utilized by African Americans between 1936 and 1966. It included a list of businesses that served African American customers to ensure their safety while traversing the country during the segregation era.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: When you say you had to have these deep family roots, did you mean that in of class?

Iva Allison: That was in terms of class and also race because in other words, you had to have something to go along with that race in order for you to be anywhere else in that community.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: While you were there, you said the community was Polish and African American. Do you have a sense of what it had shifted from to become Polish and African Americans?

Iva Allison: Well at that time, the Polish were not accepted in certain areas. The greater area of South Bend was Caucasian, and the Polish or German – well, we had some friends that were from France. It was basically a well-set community. Then Polish people moved from one area down to the other, and the area that they could afford was the African American community. So they moved in there.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: And then did you always know that you were going to leave South Bend?

Iva Allison: No, I was going to stay there forever.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: [laughing] How did you feel about leaving?

Iva Allison: I really didn't want to go. My relatives did not want me to go. It was just [laughing] one of those things that like, "You can go now, but you better come back."

Dr. Fiona Vernal: And you're still here.

Iva Allison: They told me when we were getting ready to leave, "Well, you know what? You can go ahead and find a house or an apartment or whatever, [00:20:00] and Iva can stay here." But he said, "No. Where I go, my daughter's going, my wife goes." We had to leave.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Did you think it was going to be temporary? Like he was going to go and do school and then you guys would come back?

Iva Allison: Yeah, I really thought it would be, but I didn't think that we were going to go back to South Bend. I actually thought we were going to go to London and then later move back to his home in Nigeria, but it didn't work out that way.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: All right. And then the Craftery was one of the sorts of networks you established and then your school network. Can you tell me a little bit about how you put down roots in Windsor?

Iva Allison: Well, what we did after we got here, because our girls were young, they were going to elementary school, and my youngest, Shola, had not started school yet. We decided that we

were going to become a part of the community because we were new here, and we didn't know that many people and the people that we did know, they moved to East Hartford. And he said, "No, we're going to live in this community. So therefore, we've got to get to know the people." So, we got to know quite a few people.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Okay. Where did that start? Church, school, other parents?

Iva Allison: It was actually our church. At that time, there were programs that First Church had, and we seemed to always go to most of their programs. My daughter's friends were always inviting her to go to either First Church or St. Gabriel's Church. We met their parents and the rest of their families, and we just became kind of intertwined within the community.

Dr. Fiona Vernal:

And then can you give me a sense of the impression that the houses made on you? I don't know of South Bend in terms of their housing styles, so can you give me a sense of how it appeared to you since that's where you had grown up?

Iva Allison: Yeah. Well, when we moved here, it was just a new house for maybe about eight years or so, and it was built from ground up. So I expected to get the same thing when I got here. When we got here, the economy was quite different. We ended up going into a townhouse apartment and I said, "Oh, no, we won't be doing this for long." It was like restarting. We had to save and make sure that our credit was good and everything, and then we later purchased our house. But when we first moved here, I didn't think we were going to ever get back into a house again.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: When you said the economy was different, do you mean it was more expensive in Windsor or the space had shifted since the eight years?

Iva Allison: It was much more expensive. Even though when we moved from South Bend, we sold the house, and then moved here. What we could buy there with the money that we sold the house for, we could not purchase a house here. That was almost like a down payment on a house here.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: I see.

Iva Allison: So we just had to work a little harder. [laughing]

Dr. Fiona Vernal: And how long did it take to transition to buying the house in Windsor?

Iva Allison: Wow. We moved here in '82. We did not get the house until my daughter was 12 years old. She was born in 1982, [and] she was 12 years old when we finally got a house.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Okay. I just want to make sure that I'm spelling your children's names correct. So is Shola S-H-O-L-A?

Iva Allison: It is. Her name is actually Olusola. [00:25:00] It's O-L-U-S-O-L-A.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Okay.

Iva Allison: We just call her Shola for short because that's a lot of work.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: So O-L-U-S-O-L-A?

Iva Allison: Yeah, and it means God gave us riches.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Say that again?

Iva Allison: Her name means God gave us riches.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: God gave us riches. Oh, that's beautiful.

Iva Allison: She's the only one with a Yoruba name because Tiffany and Monique were from a previous marriage.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Okay. Did they get honorary Yoruba names?

Iva Allison: They did. One was Olufunmilayo. Her name means diamond in the rough. That was Tiffany's name, and Oluwakemi was Monique's name.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Okay. And how did your children adjust to Windsor since they were so young when they came?

Iva Allison: They loved it.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: What did they love about it?

Iva Allison: They loved [the] apartment townhouse. We were in a gated community in South Bend, and they liked the idea of the apartment because they considered that a gated community. I don't know how, but that was their thought. [laughing] Before they had [gone] to a parochial school, so they started going to school at Oliver Ellsworth, and they loved it. [They] loved their teachers and the other students. They just loved it.

Dr. Fiona Vernal:

And then were you able to make that specific meeting that you were invited to for WAACA?

Iva Allison: Yes, I was. Yes.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: And what was your impression?

Iva Allison: I thought it was well organized. I liked the way they introduced me and my husband. I liked the idea of them telling us that there was so much more in Windsor, and that they would help us succeed in finding it. I said, "Okay, that works for me."

Dr. Fiona Vernal: [laughing] What did they mean by so much more?

Iva Allison: We were involved in the library. We were involved with our church, which was Archer [Memorial AME Zion Church], and we were involved with their programs, girl scouts, and my one daughter was in the band and the other one was taking violin lessons. They asked us what our interests [were], and my husband at that time was saying that he worked and went to school. [laughing] So he didn't have that much time. So he liked stuff in the community than for us to have to go all the way to Hartford every time we wanted to do something. They assured us that we would be able to do that through WAACA here in town.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Okay. And what was your overarching role in WAACA?

Iva Allison: I was a recording secretary for many, many years. I was also historian. Other than that, I served on any committee that they would allow me to be a part of.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: [laughing] Was there any one event that was particularly memorable?

Iva Allison: There were quite a few. Oh, let's see

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Any [event] that you had to take the lead on?

Iva Allison: No, because we usually had the standard things that they had been doing before we joined. They [had] New Year's Eve programs, [and they had] scholarship programs. They [had] a couple of things that involved children, which I loved [00:30:00] because then mine could take part. They took part in working for elections and just a lot of things that before that I knew kind of existed in town, but I wasn't a part of. [WAACA] kind of allowed me to become a part of those things.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: All right. Can you say something about the kind of organization that emerged in WAACA and the challenges now in this time period? If you were moving from South Bend now, outside of the context of the pandemic, how would you integrate yourself into Windsor? What mechanism for integrating yourself is there now?

Iva Allison: Wow. Other than the church, I would say something like Democratic Town Committee or the Art Center. Other than that, there are really not too many things that I could become involved in.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Do you think that there's still the need for that compared to when you came in the '80s?

Iva Allison: I think there is still a great need for it. Probably now more than ever.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Why do you say now more than ever?

Iva Allison: Because we actually had like a couple of open forums and some other things that involved talks on community problems that had to do with race and they were excellent. I think that we need more of that now.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Do you think, from your perspective as the organizational historian, that these kinds of organizations routinely go through the process of growing and being really important and having a big membership and then declining? Or do you see some other patterns?

Iva Allison: I think with us we did because after a while, some people here in the town had the opportunity to join but did not want to join because of the age. They were saying that an organization such as WAACA failed to recruit younger people, which was not true because we were always reaching out for younger people. Younger people did not want to join in Windsor. They preferred to go to Hartford and other towns to join things such as WAACA.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Pardon. Why did they feel a disconnect?

Iva Allison: You know what? I really don't understand why because we were involved with education and with the high school. There were scholarships, there were a lot of things that we were involved in. But I guess they just weren't interested. They could go elsewhere and find those things. Billie Rogers was the president, at one time, of WAACA and she was very much involved with the Board of Education. We were in every aspect of the community which involved education. After she passed on, things kind of slowed up in that area. In other words, there wasn't someone that just came in and took that position. I mean, there were other presidents, but they weren't that involved with the education.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Do you think it has to do with the life cycle? Meaning if you have children, then you will be engaged in the school board and what's going on. But if you don't have kids in the school system, then maybe you're looking for a kind of social life, like you're joining an organization [00:35:00] that's more about your social life than maybe about advocacy.

Iva Allison: I think that's what happened because we all had children in the system. Some of the members of WAACA had come from Hartford. They had children in different systems, but a lot of them also had adult children. I mean, that's a double negative. Their children were now adults and they continued to work, like the Cicero's. They continued to work in WAACA to make sure that the majority of things that they had started at first continued. But then I think after a while, it just kind of dwindled.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: What would it take to resurrect WAACA for this time period?

Iva Allison: Good leadership [and] making sure that millennials were involved. Making sure that maybe even under millennials had good people that want it to work and had an interest, and it wasn't all social.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: But it wasn't all social before.

Iva Allison: No, it wasn't.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: So, do you think it needs to be social to attract folks? Or what are the pressing issues?

Iva Allison: I think it doesn't need to be social, but I think that people want to do more social things now. Why? I don't know. [laughing]

Dr. Fiona Vernal: What do you mean?

Iva Allison: Well, my middle daughter is a local preacher and she involves herself in everything.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: [laughing]

Iva Allison: I mean, anything you say, she's going to be there. She spoke at the Black Lives Matter rally. She did the one in Hartford. She does spoken word so she's usually at Rehoboth [Church in Bloomfield, CT]. Around the fall of the year, they have a program. She's on that program. She's very much involved, but then you take the other millennials [and] they want more social things. In fact, they tell her, "You do those things because you're a local preacher." They said, "If you weren't, you'd probably love the social things." And I think it's the way she was raised. I think she would still go for education and other things in the community. I mean she is social, but she's not looking for that. And I think that most of our millennials are looking for social things here.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: You also said that you think resurrecting WAACA would require good leadership. Do you think the leadership in the past [had] skills [that] were targeted specifically to those issues at the time in the [19]80s and then 1990s?

Iva Allison: I think that we had excellent leadership. Well, the reason they told me that WAACA had formed, I think that we had leaders that carried out those principles right up until the end. I think now, like I said, you would need a group of people with that type of leadership and a need to do things for the community.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Do you think that the family context or any other context has changed? I'll give you an example so I could be clear. I know that a lot of folks are sort of interested in social justice activities and that network of people is also their social life. [laughing] They work with

those people and they engage in [00:40:00] social activities. I wonder what it means to be a professional woman today, for example, and [if] raising children leaves room to be a part of those organizations. Or if anything has sort of shifted to make those pressures more difficult for professional women, for example, to belong to those kinds of organizations.

Iva Allison: I think that in some cases, it has changed quite a bit. But I belong to another organization that [has] professional women, and we still have the same goals that were set 75 years ago when the organization started. There is a social part that goes along with it, but the main focus is working to achieve things such as like scholarships, education, [and] overall community needs. I think that, like I said earlier, a lot of people when they are [professional] women, and I can't speak for men, it's kind of hard. I can remember back when I became a member of WAACA when my children were old enough, they could come. And the purpose that I would bring them was Ms. Rogers used to bring her children. Well, of course, my youngest one wasn't old enough, but my two girls would watch them while we had our meetings. And I think that some of the organizations now, some of the professional women, can actually call in someone to [babysit] or to free up that time or they have relatives to do it. But I don't know. I kind of still think that it needs to be that great leadership and not so much social. But like you said, a little bit more leaning towards that justice part.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: What do you think are the issues in Windsor? So, Windsor 2020, Windsor 2021. You guys were focused on education, especially, and political engagement. What are the issues for Windsor today?

Iva Allison: I think it is still education. I think it is still the economics of the community. I think it is still housing.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Housing, how?

Iva Allison: There's not enough middle-income housing.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: So would you say that the same issues that made WAACA relevant when you first moved here and joined are still relevant enough today to justify the existence of the organization?

Iva Allison: I would say yes. Definitely.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: In the meantime, while WAACA is defunct as an organization, have you seen any other organizations pick up some of the work or the vacuum that WAACA has left?

Iva Allison: I think the democratic town committee. I think some of the members in there still bring that forward. I think there are some. The church was one. I think the church is still a leading force in town and still takes care of several different things. Other than that, I really can't

say because I don't actually know of all of the [00:45:00] associations in Windsor anymore. After WAACA, I just sort of took my community work and such back into Hartford.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: To join which organizations? Or to work with which organizations?

Iva Allison: I am a member of the Greater Hartford Links Inc. I do volunteer work for different schools. I mentor students from the community that are into Girl Scouts [and] arts organizations.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: And you said that the church continues to lead. Has the church felt any of the same impact in terms of an aging membership and recruiting younger people?

Iva Allison: Yes. Very much so.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: What's the trend line? Is it getting better, stable, still on the downswing?

Iva Allison: It is on the downswing. My daughter has two youth groups at the church. Before the pandemic, she might have 11 kids in both groups attend. But when I was director of youth at the church, I would have 16/17 different [kids] in one group setting. But I don't know.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: One group would be 16 and another group might be 17? Or you mean in total?

Iva Allison: In total, yeah. And then we've had more than that at times, [but] I don't know.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Yeah. What's the lack of the appeal?

Iva Allison: I don't know. We don't have that many millennials either. I don't know. I have no idea.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Would you go as far as to connect it to the types of reports that we see about how, on the one hand, young people are connected on social media, but are reporting really high rates of isolation and loneliness and alienation? Not in the context of the pandemic, but just in general. Although they're connected socially [and] they're connected on social media, it's still not necessarily creating a sense of community for them in the way that maybe some of these youth groups would have in the past.

Iva Allison: I would say yes. They are more connected on social media than they are in the community because before the pandemic, I could usually [walk] seven and a half miles a day. Lately, I haven't been doing because it's cold. But even when I would walk when we first moved into this community, I would see children playing all over the place. Now, and it's not because it's the same families and their children have now become adults, there are new families that have moved in. I don't see children out playing. When it's warm out, I don't see them playing anymore. Every now and then, I'll see a young man with a basketball net shooting hoops, but I just don't see it. I used to see children riding their bikes. I don't see that anymore.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Right. But you're saying there are families with young children in the neighborhood, but you're not seeing the children outside.

Iva Allison: I'm not seeing them out. [00:50:00] In fact, this is pandemic [related], about three weeks ago as I was walking when it was warm, about three houses down from me the children were in the window waving at me. [laughing] They weren't out playing.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Do you think it has something to do with the ways in which parents would send kids outside to play without supervising them? Because they felt like the neighborhood was safe and the community would kind of collectively supervise, but an adult didn't have to be planted there at all times. Do you think that sense of safety has shifted?

Iva Allison: I don't think so for this neighborhood because around the corner where I see the young man playing basketball, his mom is sitting on the porch watching him. Down the street, there's another guy that's shooting baskets and there's no one around him. He actually looks younger than he young man that's on Alcott [Drive] that's shooting. Every now and then, other kids from another neighborhood, you'd see them three houses down playing on the grass in the fall or in the spring, but I don't see them in the summer. I think a couple of weeks ago, they were waving to me through the window and they knew who I was. They were calling my name and waving. [laughing] I thought that was so odd. I mean, like, what is going on here?

Dr. Fiona Vernal: You're probably like a marker of their day. Like, okay, here comes Ms. Allison on her walk. It means it's this time of day. [laughing]

Iva Allison: Could be. [laughing]

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Has the neighborhood composition changed at all since you've lived there? Are you living in the same house that you guys bought?

Iva Allison: Yes, I'm living in the same house. But the neighborhood has changed quite a bit.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Can you describe it?

Iva Allison: There were older adults around here and now I'm probably the oldest one. [laughing] I'm down around the corner there, but I'm probably the oldest person in the neighborhood. There are a couple down around the corner, but no.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: So you're saying that a lot of younger families have moved in, in the 30 years?

Iva Allison: Yes.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: And the people who were there before, is it because you were the younger family before and there were a lot of older families there? Or how is that transition?

Iva Allison: I think that's it because my neighbors were an older family when we moved in. The ones on the corner were an older family, but they moved out and a young family moved in. Then when everybody was moving to Florida, it seemed like the whole neighborhood went. [laughing]

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Okay. So there's like retirement, people passing away, retirement to Florida. How has it changed? The families who are moving in, are there noticeable differences? Are there more Black and Latino families or any patterns that you can see?

Iva Allison: There are still quite a few Caucasians. In our group, there are probably [six] families. The rest down the street and my neighbors to my right, they're Caucasian. Down from them [is an] Indian family and down from them are two Caucasian families. On the corner, maybe a Black family and then a couple of Latino families, but the majority are still white.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: How did that strike you when you first moved to Windsor? The racial composition of your neighborhood.

Iva Allison: I had been quite used to it because even though we were living in a Polish and African American neighborhood, we were like [one of] five families. There were quite a few, like most of my friends when I was younger were Polish. So I was used to that, and that's why I said [00:55:00] my children were so happy because they were used to being in a gated community. And then when they went to Ellsworth school, they had more Caucasian friends and they were quite happy because that was basically what they knew, except for relatives.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Right. And when did you settle into the idea that you're probably not going back to Indiana or heading back into that direction [laughing] after your husband's education was finished?

Iva Allison: When his education finished, and my youngest daughter was getting ready to go into middle school. She went to middle school one year, and she had went to visit [her cousin] in London. She said, "I'm going to go to boarding school in London." I'm going, "What?" [laughing] "Okay, you're going to what?" She was about 11 years old, and she talked it over with her dad. We agreed and off she went. And then he said, "Well, you know what? We've got to stay here and work." So I said, "Okay." And then when she finished, she went there and she came back [in] her junior year from Windsor High School. My other daughters were already in college and finished. Well, one was finishing the year she came back and the other one was just going. And she came back, and we still had bills to pay, [laughing] so we stayed here. Plus my father was ill and we weren't going back and forth. So we said we needed a stationary thing [and] we decided that Windsor was going to be our home.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Where was your father at that point?

Iva Allison: He was in Indiana at the time, but he didn't want us to move back because he didn't want to be the reason for pulling the girls out of [school], even though they were in university

and Shola was going to Windsor High School. He didn't want to be the reason that we moved back. So he suggested that we stay here.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Okay, and you said your daughter spent two years in London then came back for Windsor High School?

Iva Allison: Yes, she spent two years in London.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Was she following her cousin to school?

Iva Allison: No. Actually, her cousin had moved back to Nigeria, and she went to Kent College. It was actually middle to high school.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: What fascinated her so much about London?

Iva Allison: You know what? She had traveled at that particular time. She had traveled to Nigeria. She traveled to London. She had traveled quite a bit, and she just liked the idea of going over there. Plus she had a uncle that was there, and his kids weren't old enough to go to school, but he was a professor and he was telling her how wonderful it was to go to school there. In fact, she went and spent most of the summer with them. When she came back, she said she wanted to go.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: [laughing] All right. Thank you so much. We're almost finished with the interview. Thanks for enduring the technical glitches. Can you talk to me a little bit about these considerations, but also what kept you rooted in Windsor? So for example, why didn't you guys join the snowbirds and head off to Florida or Georgia or some warmer place?

Iva Allison: Well, at that time, my youngest daughter went to Fisk University and she loved it down there. She brought home who she thought was friend. She told us it was a friend. She brought her husband home, and he was Nigerian. He wasn't her husband then. He was her husband to be, [01:00:00] and my husband was Nigerian. Akin was Nigerian and they just kind of clicked. Although he wasn't Yoruba, he was Hausa, and they clicked. [Shola] decided she wanted to stay in Tennessee, and then my husband had an import-export business. When she graduated [from Fisk University] in 2006, he went over to check on the business. He had a heart attack there and passed away.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Oh, no. I'm so sorry.

Iva Allison: Well, thank you. He had said that he was coming home, so I went through his uncle who was oba² or a head of a town or township or whatever you want to call it there. I had to ask permission for his body to come back. In fact, he's buried in Enfield in the Muslim cemetery. So

² 'Oba' is a term used in Yoruba languages of West Africa to refer to rulers.

I said, "If he's going to be there, I'm going to be here." And the girls all agreed that if they went away and came back, that we should be here. I said, "It works for me." So I said, "We're staying."

Dr. Fiona Vernal:

All right. And then can you give me a sense of what has happened in the arts community in the 30 years that you were in the school system and [the arts industry]?

Iva Allison: So it has grown, grown, grown. Oh my goodness. It changed around greatly. What is the name of the place right here in town? It was an arts museum.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Where they have all of the art premieres? I think where Stan Cromwell did his show.

Iva Allison: Yes. Well, his first show was at the other – gosh, escapes me. It sits right in the center of town. Oh man. You know what? I'll remember the name. In fact, I actually had a summer arts program that ran out of there.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: You'll get the transcript, and then we can add any of the names and spellings or anything like that.

Iva Allison: Yeah. Well, Mr. Churchill was actually the town [manager]. He was the person that orchestrated town events and everything. He was the town thing, and he decided that I should do a program there. **Dan Farina**, at that time, owned the arts museum there, and they asked me to become a board member. At the time, my kids were all in college and I couldn't really afford it. Shola was over in London, and I said, "I can not afford it." He said, "Don't worry about it because the amount that it takes for you to be on the board, I'm going to cover for you. But what I need you to do is to find me an African American curator." I'm going, "Oh my God, is this really happening?" And I went and I talked to Jonathan Bruce. He was no longer with CRT. He came and he curated the museum there. He brought in shows like Benny Andrews. Stan Cromwell was also a show that he brought in because they were friends too, and that place ran. I had the Summer Arts for All program, which I got to choose people to work for me. At the time, Jane Garibay's son worked there also. He was a person that was under me, and we had a marvelous time. Every summer they said, "Don't bother about getting a summer job because when you're not teaching, you're here." I thought that was awesome, and I met so many people and it was just fantastic. And the art center that is now here in town is an offshoot of that art museum. [01:05:00]

Dr. Fiona Vernal: It sounds splendid.

Iva Allison: Yeah, it was fantastic. So the arts in Windsor went up, up, up, up. [laughing]

Dr. Fiona Vernal: And how about your your teaching? Were you able to teach visual arts for the duration of your tenure?

Commented [SD1]: Spelling?

Iva Allison: I taught visual arts in Hartford for 29 years until retirement, and then I'd go in from time to time at the L.P. Wilson Center. At one time, we had kids from from [third to fifth grade. They would come in and we'd teach them crafts and things. And that went on for about two years and then it just stopped. Why? I don't know. But yeah, the arts community here in Windsor has grown. It's [gone] a long way. It's been great.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: And then in the town overall, have you seen any dramatic or gradual shifts in the racial or ethnic composition of the town?

Iva Allison: Oh, yeah. There are more Blacks and Latinos here now. There are many more.

Dr. Fiona Verna: What's drawing them to the town? There was a time where Bloomfield was the suburb of choice for folks. What's drawing people to Windsor now?

Iva Allison: I think they have many more programs now than they used to have because the holiday program. There's always something going on now. My nephew lives in Bloomfield, so I know. They have some pretty nice programs over there, but Windsor has some pretty nice programs also. And anything they don't have, you've got Mayor Trinks asking about it and trying to put it in place, or town council. I think they work pretty hard at getting things and getting people involved here in Windsor.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Do you think, in terms of property prices, is that welcoming more people in terms of having middle income? Do you know anything about that?

Iva Allison: I think it is. There is a lot more to choose from now, and we were talking about the younger families on the street. A lot of them have nice houses; the nice houses they wanted and they can afford them.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: And how about the tax rate? How has that shifted?

Iva Allison: Well, taxes went down, down, down because I'm older. But my oldest daughter was going to move back. She didn't get the position she wanted, so she moved back. Plus, there are more jobs here in town that they could do and get into because there are quite a few –

Dr. Fiona Vernal: What industries?

Iva Allison: Tiffany is a communication specialist. So she was going to get a job in communications here. Well, she had been away for a while, too, and she didn't get the job. So she moved back to Indiana and got a job in her field, even though there is a pandemic going on. So we were quite happy about that.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: Are there any particular new jobs that have opened up in Windsor or any new industries in Windsor that are drawing people?

Iva Allison: You know, I really don't know about the job market other than the one that she's in. Oh, Amazon. Even though it's considered Bloomfield, that's considered Windsor, too. People are moving. I know a family that moved not on the street but around the corner. He got a job at Amazon, and they were able to purchase a house around the corner. So I know that that area is I guess Amazon and a couple of other places. He was telling me about Konica. [01:10:00] I guess his wife was working at Konica Minolta, and then he got the job at Amazon.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: This is the last question. How optimistic are you about the possibilities of resurrecting WAACA? Like if you were going to give someone advice about the three things that you need to do to reestablish WAACA, what would those be from your perspective as a historian?

Iva Allison: I would say leadership. Find someone's interest. Leadership and interest in attracting younger members. That would be my three. No, I don't know if those would actually be goals, but that's what I would have done.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: What would you say [are] interests? The leadership is clear, but what do you mean?

Iva Allison: Social justice for now is a big thing. You've got people here that actually went to school with my middle daughter. I can't think of their names, but they've got other programs that they're working on and I think that that group would be a good group to start something like WAACA again because they're interested in the education here in town. They're interested in social justice. They're interested in just the town [and] the community.

Dr. Fiona Vernal: All right. Thank you so much, Ms. Allison, I appreciate this. I am going to run the transcript and then you will have an opportunity to review the transcripts so that we can put in some of the names and the places and make sure that it's reflecting what you said. So we'll definitely be back in touch again. And then, Mr. Shipman, of course, will be in touch and then we also have to send you the release forms. So I will talk to you very soon, but thank you so much for putting up with the glitches. All right. Thank you

Iva Allison: Okay. Bye-bye.

Part II

Sulema DePeyster: Okay. So I guess this is a different way to conduct the interview due to technical difficulties, but that's okay. I'm glad that you're here. I'm glad that you've agreed to speak with us again about WAACA and your involvement with the organization. So, you did have another conversation with Fiona Vernal about your history in Windsor and today, I wanted to kind of learn more about your specific involvement in WAACA and the roles that you had on the executive board. So because you have given us the release form and have already agreed to do the oral history interviews before, this is kind of an extension of the original interview that you did. So I guess my first question would be what was the exact year that you joined WAACA? Do you remember?

Iva Allison: Oh wow. I think it was 1984 or 1985.

Sulema DePeyster: 1985, and what was your initial reason for joining WAACA?

Iva Allison:

Me and my husband had recently moved here from Indiana and I needed a connection with the community because when I was in Indiana, I was very active. He had gotten the second portion of his scholarship to go to University of Hartford. So, we married in South Bend and then moved here. He switched from [University of] Notre Dame to University of Hartford, so we moved here. So we needed to know something about the community that we had moved into.

Sulema DePeyster:

Okay. Was there a specific person that introduced you to the organization?

Iva Allison: Stanley Cicero.

Sulema DePeyster: [How] did you meet Stanley?

Iva Allison: My husband had actually went to something he had to go and do at the town hall and he met Stanley there. Stanley sort of told him that there was an organization and he was new in the community and [asked if he] would like to be a part of and did he have a family. [My husband] came home and told me and we asked around and we found out that when they were having their meeting. Although, I think he had given him the information and he was unable to attend the meeting, so I went and attended.

Sulema DePeyster: Okay. And so how long would you say the gap was between joining WAACA and becoming a part of the executive board? Was there a long period?

Iva Allison: Oh wow. I was in WAACA probably for two years and then I became recording secretary.

Sulema DePeyster: Okay. For two years, and do you know what influenced your decision to become the recording secretary? Was there someone leaving the position, or did you think you were a right fit for the position?

Iva Allison: Well, actually Florence Barlow asked me what did I do, what were my skills, because I guess they needed a recording secretary. And I had come to the majority of the meetings, and she asked me [if I wanted] to work in the organization. I think that maybe she was recording secretary at the time. I'm not really sure.

Sulema DePeyster: Do you remember anyone else that was on the executive board during the time that you were the recording secretary?

Iva Allison: Stan Cicero. You mean the different ones? I was there from when Stan was president on until they disbanded.

Sulema DePeyster: Oh, okay.

Iva Allison: So I was under Stan Cicero. I was under Lee Ward. I was under Barrington Sibblis. I was under Florence Barlow. Let's see, who else was I under? The memory. [laughing]

Sulema DePeyster: That's okay. [00:05:00] It's very specific memories.

Iva Allison: I was under every president thereafter. But it wasn't as recording secretary, because I think I did that for maybe [eleven years]. Oh, and there was Rufus Battles and Mr. Jacobs. Let's see. We had probably about seven presidents. Oh, and Willie Graham. But I think that's all. Let's see. There was another. His name escapes me, but I'll think of it.

Sulema DePeyster: Okay. So I think it's really interesting because I was trying to get a clear picture of what the executive board looked like from each year and there are some missing gaps there and I'm trying to fill them, but I think having an idea of who was president for specific times also helps a lot. So thank you. But let's see. So how long were you the recording secretary for again?

Iva Allison: I was recording secretary for about [eleven] years.

Sulema DePeyster: And what made you switch to being historian?

Iva Allison: To tell you the truth, I wanted to do something else and I didn't have time to do all of the minutes all the time because when I started out with them, they didn't have a computer. It was typewriter.

Sulema DePeyster: Oh yeah.

Iva Allison: So then I was also teaching. I was going to school part-time. My husband was going full-time and we had three children. So it took up a lot of time.

Sulema DePeyster: Yeah, it's very time consuming. And so would you say the role as historian was better suited for you and your skill set along with the time that you had?

Iva Allison: Yes, I went to an HBCU and I majored in history and political science, and so my background was history. But when I came to Connecticut, most of the history positions were gone. They had started fading them out, so I had a master's in fine arts. So I started teaching art.

Sulema DePeyster: Oh, okay. Do you know what year you started teaching art?

Iva Allison: I started teaching art in 1986.

Sulema DePeyster: Okay, and what grade was that?

Iva Allison: From Pre-K to 8th grade.

Sulema DePeyster: Oh, wow. How long did you do that for?

Iva Allison: Wow. I taught art for about 28 years.

Sulema DePeyster: Wow, okay. That's really nice.

Iva Allison: A long time.

Sulema DePeyster: Did you do that until you retired, or did you do anything else after?

Iva Allison: Yes.

Sulema DePeyster: Okay. So I guess going back to WAACA and your role as the historian, did you fulfill that role until the organization disbanded?

Iva Allison: I'm sorry I didn't hear you.

Sulema DePeyster: Did you fulfill the role of historian until the organization disbanded?

Iva Allison: Yes. Well no, because what had happened was that we had started to fragment and we weren't meeting that often and I did keep records and stuff, but we weren't meeting towards the end. But I did keep the records.

Sulema DePeyster: Oh, okay. And so you're saying towards the end, there were less meetings and so were there still events going on but there weren't any executive board meetings? Is that what was happening?

Iva Allison: Yeah, we had stopped having executive board meetings because Stanley was ill. Willie Graham had passed away. The Battles had moved to another state. Guy Jacobs was having problems with memory. His wife [Anna Jacobs] was home mostly [00:10:00] to take care of him and then they moved to another state. And then the majority of us retired [and] moved to other states, so it just sort of disbanded.

Sulema DePeyster: Yeah. Okay. And when you were talking about keeping the records, what kind of records were you keeping? I did see the box that Florence had lent us and saw what I would describe as a scrapbook and there are a lot of photographs and let's see. The people who attended the meetings, things like that. So what else would you say you recorded?

Iva Allison: That was basically it because I turned over the materials that I had to her.

Sulema DePeyster: Oh, okay.

Iva Allison: And there were photographs and there were records of when we had scholarship meetings. There was an organization called One Voice that was here in Windsor also that kind of put together conversations on race. We had those and then we had fun things for children. We

had Halloween parties, Christmas parties, and we always had a New Year's Eve dinner type thing at a hotel or something for us to get together as members. We had informational meetings. We had meetings or a presentation that if you were new coming into town, we kind of told you about the town and the roles that different people played in the town. We had the mayors come in and speak. We had selectman. We had different people from the town and the surrounding area come in and speak.

Sulema DePeyster: Do you have a specific event that was your favorite to attend? It could be a singular event or a recurring event that happened over the years.

Iva Allison: What was my favorite? I think one of my favorite ones was a Halloween party. It was a Halloween party, but it was to get the community to come to L.P. Wilson. While we were having the party, our officers were there and different people in the community could come in and find out about our organization. We had pamphlets about the organization, and I think you should have one in that box if I'm not mistaken.

Sulema DePeyster: Yes, I have seen a few.

Iva Allison: [The pamphlets] talked about the organization and what we basically did in town. And it was informative. Plus, we got to bring in our children. [laughing] I still had one that was that was only in elementary.

Sulema DePeyster: Okay. What did the meetings for the executive board look like when they still happened?

Iva Allison: We would have them at different homes. We had them at the Cicero home. We had them at the Barlow home. We had them at the Battles house. We had them at Willie Graham's house, and it was split. We had them at the library also and then when we didn't have a home to have it at, we'd have it at L.P. Wilson.

Sulema DePeyster: Oh, okay. And then you'd be discussing fundraising events?

Iva Allison: Fundraising events [and] how could we get the town involved. I should say, how could we get African Americans in our town involved in the town. We'd speak about volunteer opportunities. We'd speak about the Historical Society and one of the members at that time, I think his name was Mr. Peterson, I'm not really sure. But in fact, he became a member. We discussed different things with him. He would discuss things with us and how we could become more involved in the town.

Sulema DePeyster: What were some ways that you, as an organization, got involved in the town?
[00:15:00]

Iva Allison: Some of our members joined the Junior Women's. We would go to meetings that would help select people that would run for the Democrat or Republican Party for town council and Board of Education. We would meet everyone from the Board of Education so we would know what was going on with that. The mayor, we would meet. We just sort of met everyone, and then plus we'd have Black History Month presentations and programs.

Sulema DePeyster: What did those look like?

Iva Allison: To my knowledge? I didn't get to attend a whole lot of them because I belonged to two other organizations by that time, and what we'd do is we'd get a speaker from the community to come in and they would inform everyone as to what was going on. We'd have presentations mostly [for] our children and different children in the community. Windsor High School, Sage Park and some of the elementary schools, and they would come and they would have presentations.

Sulema DePeyster: Okay.

Iva Allison: Then we'd invite the community in to see.

Sulema DePeyster: So you mentioned that you had been involved in two other organizations at that time. What time was that, and what were those two organizations?

Iva Allison: That was 100 Black Women at the time, but that didn't last with me, and then the Links.

Sulema DePeyster: What is that? What does that stand for?

Iva Allison: Links was a friendship club started by two women in Philadelphia. They just celebrated their 75th year of the organization and by belonging to that organization, we could help more people. And then there was the Sister's Club that was in Springfield. The Hartford chapter of the Links broke off from the Links that were in Springfield. The sisters were Links in Springfield.

Sulema DePeyster: Okay.

Iva Allison: By joining that, I saw the opportunity to help more people in a wider community than just Windsor. Although I didn't, I was still helping Windsor too.

Sulema DePeyster: So you're also involved in Archer Memorial at this time, or is that later on?

Iva Allison: Yes, I had joined. Wow, I'd have to count back the years. Well, my daughter is going to be 39. I joined 35 years ago, and I was just a member going. My daughters were very involved in choirs and everything else. And then I met Alfred Narcisse and his wife Pat. We started doing a little bit more with the history from Archer and our minister at that time was Reverend Bernard Richardson and we started going back into the history. If you live here in Windsor, then you know we have a rich history at our church, and we started making sure that everything was correct. That we just didn't have a lot of stuff going all over the place. In fact, I am now the historian. [pause in audio] [00:20:00]

Sulema DePeyster: Would you mind repeating the last sentence that you said?

Iva Allison: About the Freedom Trail?

Sulema DePeyster: Yes.

Iva Allison: Now we have events that take place in September because for the state of Connecticut, that is Freedom Trail month. We usually have a run, but we didn't have a run this year. [The run is] three and a half to seven miles. Well, if you run down and run back, it's seven. We didn't have the run this year, we had a walk, and then we had a presentation on the grounds of Archer.

Sulema DePeyster: Okay. Would you say you kind of transferred your skill set from WAACA to Archer Memorial? Are you doing similar types of work for preserving the history?

Iva Allison: Actually, the history from of Archer is a little bit different because it was already there for me. All I had to do was make sure that it stays in order and that if anything happens, that I included it. Whereas with WAACA, we were building a history.

Sulema DePeyster: So are there already records like books and stuff in place for Archer Memorial? Is that how the history is preserved?

Iva Allison: There are. There are tons of books. I've put a lot of things on video. We have tons of photos. We have a cornerstone with things that were there when the old church was there, and that cornerstone moved to the church that we are in now. And then when we build, because I'm not going to say if, when we build, it's going to go there. But we mainly keep books [and] records as to when it started, who helped, the members of the town who gave like the Thralls' and Sandy Archer who our church is named after. I just continue adding things.

Sulema DePeyster: So would you say history preservation is a passion of yours? I think it's kind of remained constant.

Iva Allison: Oh, I love it. I love it. Well, I'm historian for the Chism family. My family.

Sulema DePeyster: Oh, so you have records of your family too?

Iva Allison: Oh, yeah.

Sulema DePeyster: Oh wow, can you tell me more about that?

Iva Allison: We go all the way back to slavery.

Sulema DePeyster: Oh, wow.

Iva Allison: I have the records of my father's father and his father's father, and we have all of those and we still add to those each year.

Sulema DePeyster: So, what kind of methods do you use to add to that collection of records?

Iva Allison: Well, right now I've got a brother that's working on [Ancestry.com]. But what we do is we have original records, like the records that when my aunt passed on, they would give them to my dad. My dad would keep them and pass them on to us. Different relatives in the family, different cousin, aunts and uncles, [00:25:00] they keep their own history. But then at one time during the year, we have a family reunion, and we try to get together and put all of the history together.

Sulema DePeyster: Wow, that's really incredible. That's really nice. I think preserving the history of your family, and especially as a Black person, it's harder to trace your history back to a certain point. So I think it's really important that you constantly work towards that. It's really incredible. Okay, so I think those were a majority of my questions [to get] an idea of what WAACA looked like and your participation in the executive board. I think it's also been nice to talk about the other organizations that you've been involved in. It might be good to [talk] more about 100 Black Woman. Is that what it was called or?

Iva Allison: Oh, yeah. But I'm not a part of that organization because it was not exactly what I thought it was.

Sulema DePeyster: Oh. What do you mean by that?

Iva Allison: Meaning that the Links, we were donors like bone marrow donors. I guess they make life better but to me, it was more of a – oh, how do I want to say it? It was more of a Christian type of thing, and I go to church to hear the word.

Sulema DePeyster: Okay, I see what you mean.

Iva Allison: Everyone tells me it's changed. It's changed quite a bit, but it's a pandemic, so I'm not going out to meetings. I guess they'll have them virtually, but you know. Plus I'm that much older now.

Sulema DePeyster: Yeah, it's harder to get involved. I think you've definitely left a great mark and not just Windsor, but in the Hartford area and I think that it will definitely be felt for years to come. [laughing]

Iva Allison: Wonderful, wonderful.

Sulema DePeyster: So you also mentioned Links. Am I pronouncing it right? Is it L-I-N-K-S?

Iva Allison: Yes, the Links.

Sulema DePeyster: Okay, and when did you stop being involved in that organization?

Iva Allison: Let's see. I started in 2001.

Sulema DePeyster: Okay, 2001. And what made you stop participating in that organization?

Iva Allison: Oh no, no. I'm still involved. That's when I went into it.

Sulema DePeyster: Okay, so 2001 is when you started. And what is your role there now? Are you a member or are you on the board?

Iva Allison: Yes, I'm a member. I'm getting ready to go to alumni now.

Sulema DePeyster: I think that's mainly everything, and it's been very nice speaking to you. Is there anything else that you'd like to mention?

Iva Allison: No, that's it. Thank you.

Sulema DePeyster: Oh, no problem. Thank you so much for speaking to me. So I suppose there aren't any extra steps to take since we have the release form and this is kind of an extension of the interview with Fiona. So, thank you so much.

Iva Allison: OK, you're welcome, and if I can find any more records for you, I will let you know.

Sulema DePeyster: That'll be great. Thank you so much.

Iva Allison: Okay. Bye-bye

Sulema DePeyster: Bye.