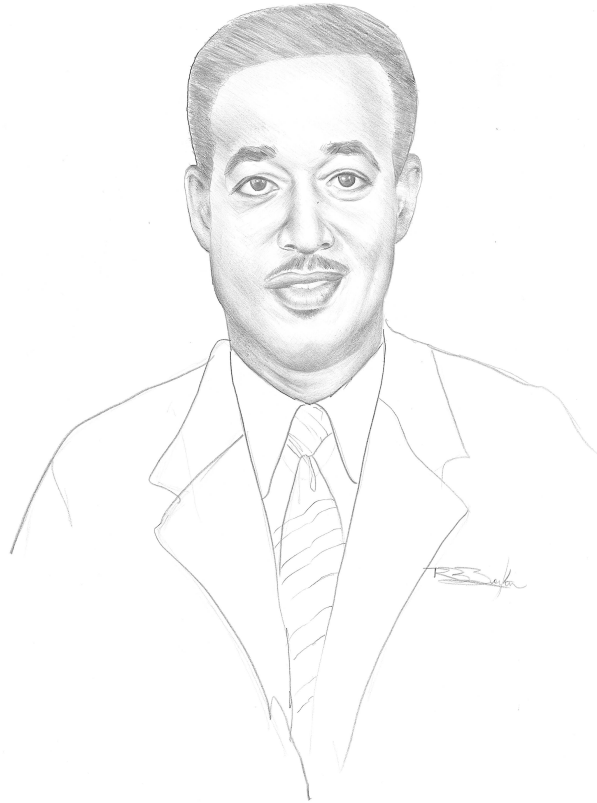


## Transcript



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# WILLIAM “BILL” TERRELL ORAL HISTORY

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**Prepared for:** The South Carolina State Department of Education

**Prepared by:** The Auntie Karen Foundation

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Dedicated the memory of SC House of Representative

**Joseph “Joe” H. Neal**

August 31, 1950 – February 14, 2017



## **Civil Rights Oral History Interview with William “Bill” Terrell**

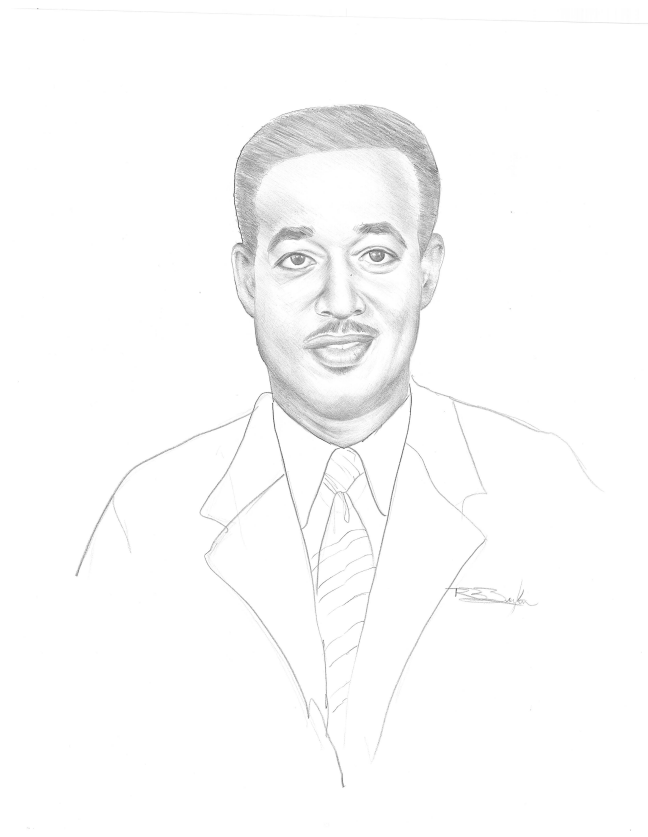
Interviewee:	William “Bill” Terrell
Interviewer (s):	Tre Tailor Karen Alexander Ricky Taylor Tony Kenion
Location:	Columbia, SC
Interview Length:	55:45
Supplemental Material:	Includes transcript, interview release form, select photos, video, art rendering by Rodgers Boykin, music by Byron Counts

## Transcript

### Abstract

William “Bill” Terrell was born in 1941 in Memphis, Tennessee. He finished the public schools in Memphis, and went to Fisk University. After college, Bill returned to Memphis to begin his radio career.

In the interview, Bill describes his entrance into radio in the sixth grade to starring in and producing the award winning show, The Job Man Caravan on South Carolina Educational Television.



## Transcript

Tre Tailor: Today is Monday, March 6, 2017. I'm Tre Tailor. We're here with Bill Terrell and we'll be talking about his life and experiences during the time period of 1950 through 1979. Now tell me about your educational experience.

Bill Terrell: I attended, of course I finished the public schools in Memphis, and I went for my first two years to Fisk University, which was an institution, a historical black college that was well known. I had the opportunity, while at Fisk, to stay in Du Bois Hall, which was named after, of course, W.E.B. Du Bois. Or DuBois.

I also had the opportunity, while at Fisk to have had some professors who were part of the Harlem Renaissance. Aaron Douglas was one who taught me art appreciation. He was a famous artist. I also had Dr. Robert Hayden, who was a well known poet, who taught me in an English class. Arna Bontemps, who is especially known. A writer, bibliographer, was the head of a library at Fisk University, but well known.

Tre Tailor: Do you think any of those influences made you more interested in theater, in the arts, and subsequently broadcasting?

Bill Terrell: Well, my interest in radio occurred in Memphis in the sixth grade. I was interested, along with my best friend, we became interested in radio. One day we decided to go to the radio station to see if we could get employment.

Now that radio station was WDIA and we really didn't know where we were going and we actually ended up getting off a bus much earlier than we should have and ended up walking in the snow for about two miles to WDIA. The program director told us that he didn't have an opening or it wasn't time for us.

What happened after becoming interested in radio I utilized the opportunities, wherever I could find them in school, to MC programs, take part in different programs. I would listen to different disc jockeys practice, I can see myself now, the pause that refreshes. They're referring to Coca Cola. And what I realized that I was doing I was

really preparing myself so when I got into radio I had been able to do some of the things that were necessary in order to succeed in radio.

Now, I broke into radio as a sophomore in high school. I mentioned WDIA because WDIA is a very significant radio station in the history of this nation. It was a station that was featured on Professor Louis Gates' "500 Years of History." WDIA was mentioned by Professor Gates because WDIA is the first all black personality radio station in the country. And the station also had a wide coverage area. It was at WDIA in the tenth grade, that my best friend and I went to the station with the proposal.

And the proposal was that a lot of young people watch, or rather, listen to radio and that it would be something that would be advantageous for them to hire some young people who spoke the language and related to what was happening with young people in the city and in the coverage area. So we proposed a program called "The Teen-Age Beat." They liked the idea and that is where the radio career started in the tenth grade and it lasted through high school.

I like to mention the fact that my experience at WDIA taught me some very important things that carried through throughout my career. The station believed in selling the sponsor's products, they believed that you had to be able to entertain, but most important, and the thing that resonated with me throughout my career, was community service.

WDIA was a radio station that did a lot of things for the community. It sponsored buses to help disadvantaged kids or disabled kids to get back and forth from school. It also supplied uniforms for over 200 little league baseball teams. WDIA's coverage area, people literally would utilize that station, for example, for things somebody lost. Their teeth, they were found somewhere. Literally. Because the station was a community oriented station that really wanted to serve the needs of the people.

It also brought people together. For example, there may have been an announcement that said some person from Hattiesburg, Mississippi, for example, is looking for, they would name the person, and they would try to reconnect. So the station helped to facilitate a lot of different things for the community. WDIA was also famous because

the people who worked there were some people who were well respected. They had been pioneers or people who worked on Beale Street. Beale Street is a famous street in the city of Memphis, Tennessee. The street was very popular because at the end of the Civil War the Union Forces located in that area so it became attractive for people all over the mid south to relocate to Memphis.

One of the people who relocated to Memphis for a time, and worked at WDIA, was B.B King. B.B King got his start at WDIA radio station. The people that I worked with, Rufus Thomas. Rufus Thomas was a famous entertainer.

Tre Tailor: Funky Chicken.

Bill Terrell: Oh yeah. Funky Chicken and The Dog and so many other things. Matter of fact Rufus Thomas swears that he was the first person to record a record for Sun Records. Sun Records is significant because of Elvis Presley. Elvis Presley made his first recording at Sun Studios.

I worked with a lot of people. There was the queen Martha Jean who was well known and later relocated to Detroit, Michigan. Rufus Thomas, as I mentioned. Nat D. Williams and many others. All of these were seasoned professionals, they had worked on Beale Street either as performers or introducing talent and those kinds of things. So, I learned a great deal from the people that I had an opportunity to work with at WDIA.

WDIA in the coverage area, as I mentioned, was 50,000 watts. This is an AM station. Now for many people who were far back in the days, they might remember Randy's record shop. The station that it ... This was also a powerful radio station. I mentioned that because WDIA had similar coverage area and it would literally go throughout the mid south. So it was very influential and that's another reason it was mentioned by Professor Louis Gates as being very significant. WDIA became the all black personality first station in the nation starting in 1948.

Tre Tailor: Wow. Now being at such an influential radio station during this time, in the midst of the civil rights movement, I'm sure there were some

challenges.

Bill Terrell: Very much so. For some continuity, now, after high school I went to Fisk University, as I mentioned, continued my radio career at WVOL. Now another sidebar about WVOL is the station where Oprah Winfrey got her start while she was a student at Tennessee State.

I returned to Memphis for my junior year, transferred from Fisk to what was then Memphis State University. I continued my career in radio at WLOK. At the time I wanted to come back to WDIA, they told me there was not a slot open at that particular time. So, I worked at WLOK and I'd come to the point where I was doing morning drive. While at this time in Memphis, as it was across the nation, you still had the separate water fountains. It was segregation all over. And so, broadcasting was very important to connect people with what was going on and the different kinds of things that were important in their lives and for them to do as well as they could in those conditions of segregation.

Tre Tailor: So, tell me, I know, you're right, the role of radio broadcasting in general was the connector, was the town crier so to speak. Tell me, from your time in college to when you went to WDIA, how that role and your role, even as a teenager, as a young person, was formed to get the word out about different things that may have been happening in the community as far as the civil rights movement.

Bill Terrell: Well, it was an interesting time that I grew up in. In addition to what was happening in terms of segregation and all of those different things, this was a period where advertisers began to take note of the young audience and the buying power of young people. So this is one of the main reasons that once I was at WLOK ... Now, I quit WLOK. I had two kids but I did it because of a principle. People at that station had asked to meet with one of the owners who was coming to town. That sort of backfired and what happened is I was supposed to have been the culprit in just requesting a meeting. The meeting was for the purpose of how we were treated, we felt, by management, in terms of the disrespect or the lack of respect and also about raising salary, which was very important.

What happened was the manager and the owner told me that it had

been said that I was the one who ... The infraction was to have requested a meeting but to them that was something that didn't sit too well with them. They told me they said, "Well, you've been doing a great job and we want you to stay but in essence that we want you to keep your mouth closed." At that very minute I told them to give me my check. Now for me that was a principle. I had not thought this through because I've got a wife and two kids to feed and here I am quitting a job over the principle.

It just so happens that fate, I called WDIA, my mentor, which was, his name was A.C Williams, who was also a disc jockey at WDIA. I told him the situation, he said, "Let me talk to management and we'll get back to you." Within an hours time he called me back he said, "You got a job. You can go ahead and take your vacation," because I told him I was about to take a vacation from WLOK. The reason I was hired back at WDIA was because they were able, through my being on radio, being the youngest person in radio particularly doing morning drive in Memphis Tennessee, that the audience and the ratings were good. I was told, subsequent to their telling me that I had been hired, that they were getting ready to offer me a job anyway.

I've always been appreciative of that and happy that I stood by a principle and also pleased that I was able to land a job within an hour's time.

Tre Tailor: That's incredible. Mr. Terrell, before we move on I do want us to ask you something about the LOK because obviously it was an integrated staff. It was black and white on the staff. You were doing morning drive, which had to be unheard of for an African American to do the prime slot.

Bill Terrell: Right. I don't want to infer that that was my first job at WLOK. I'd worked my way up. I was actually, while in college, working a 4-7am shift.

Tre Tailor: Ok.

Bill Terrell: The first car I ever purchased, not knowing what I was doing, I'd get up on the cold mornings headed to the radio station and literally had to



push the car down the hill to get it started.

I was able to do radio and go to college at the same time, which I finished, and I'm thankful to say in four years I was able, and I ended up getting my BS degree in political science. It was an integrated staff and for the most part everybody got along well. I guess the bugaboo had to do with management and the lack of disrespect at that time.

Tre Tailor: Tell me about some of the things that you did encounter at the station, disrespectfully, because of your race.

Bill Terrell: I think the basic thing, for me, in terms of the disrespect is just not willing to listen to concerns that you may have had. Not willing to listen to, particularly after moving into morning drive slot, there should be more money accompanying that position. Things like that were dismissed. Those were the basic things that I confronted during my stay at WLOK.

Tre Tailor: Did you have any ... Were there are any advertisers who did not particularly maybe want you to cut a spot or didn't want to advertise because an African American was on the air?

Bill Terrell: Well the thing about it is WLOK, even though we had an integrated staff, was considered an African American radio oriented station. So n naturally they wanted to people who could appeal to the audience, so it wasn't much of, or any, of that.

What many of us had to do to supplement our salaries, we were getting talent fees for doing those commercials. I am also happy to say, in retrospect, that I think in terms of the golden age of radio, I was lucky. Because at this time a radio was a personality driven industry, which relied on people to really utilize their talents and to really appeal to the audience and to entertain the audience. I also mentioned, at the same time, to be able to offer information and things that would be helpful to the community.

Tre Tailor: You're doing mornings LOK or maybe you were at DIA.

Bill Terrell: When I went to DIA, I went there in the afternoon drive slot, which probably was better for the younger oriented people who listened to radio.

Tre Tailor: Okay, so you're even doing mornings on LOK or you're doing afternoons on DIA. Give me a break. Do a quick break for me. How would you open up your air shift.

Bill Terrell: Well, at WDIA I was known as Young Blood. Now this was ... I didn't like nicknames. To state that, when I was at LOK they wanted the name because that was part of the radio industry at the time. They wanted to assign some nickname to you. At WLOK they had a regular slot or the person they called Honky Dory. Which they don't care if somebody new moved in the slot, it was Honky Dory. They wanted to, they called me Wild Bill Terrell. I never said wild on my show I would say, "Wow Bill," but of course the audience took that as saying wild. That was a part of radio in terms of many times when I mentioned Young Blood, this is what WDIA, this is a name they gave me because this is what they wanted to portray to the audience. That, "Okay, we got a young person in this time slot. We know the importance and the purchasing power of young people. We know that they make up a significant part of the audience." So they assigned that Young Blood to go along with the youth appeal.

Tre Tailor: Tell me about the role of black radio during that time in the community and how you all needed jobs and the station management dealt with what was going on for African Americans.

Bill Terrell: Well, at the time of course radio had news departments and the coverage of those things that were happening in the community and were of interest to the community, because there was a lot of turmoil going on. There was a lot of demonstrations, people were fighting for equal rights and this station would do a lot of covering of the events that were taking place. As a matter of fact I was on the air the day the James Meredith was shot. James Meredith was leading a march and that march was to go from Memphis to Oxford. You know, James Meredith, as I mentioned, was the first black student to integrate Ole Miss, so we had a lot of things going on that we covered that were happening in the community. Announcements about different

organizations, meetings, voter registration drives, a lot of those kinds of things were taking place and the station played an integral part in informing the public in terms of what was going on and covering the different things that were happening in our community.

I mentioned Beale Street. Beale Street was not only known for the entertainment, being an entertainment center, being a great hub for businesses, but it also housed what was Church Park. Robert Church was a millionaire and a very influential black person in Memphis. Church Park lead the community in terms of the meeting place to galvanize community, to push for different things during this segregated period so it was very important.

I mentioned Robert Church. Another famous person that came out of that family was Mary Church Terrell. She was a sister in the Church family, but they were very instrumental in terms of leading the fight, informing the public, and having a venue for people to meet, to discuss different plans and different things that needed to be done and to discuss different strategies to help to improve the quality of life for African Americans.

Tre Tailor: How did you get to South Carolina?

Bill Terrell: I came to South Carolina, I had met my wife at Fisk University. She was from South Carolina, had been born in Charleston but lived in Columbia, South Carolina. She had asked she had asked me if I had considered moving to Columbia, South Carolina once she finished school. And so I consented to move to Columbia, South Carolina. I actually had a job at WOIC, or job offer two years before we actually moved. I came to South Carolina in 1967. I started at WIC, first of all doing the afternoon drive, and shortly thereafter during the morning drive. A year after that, 1968, which I mentioned was a very turbulent time in this country. In this state, we had the Orangeburg massacre. Those were three students who were killed at South Carolina State. We also had, during that period, the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King. So people were trying to find out some of the ways that they could address the issues and concerns of the black community.

Out of that came Job Man Caravan. They approached me while at WIC if I were interested in auditioning for the host of the program. I

interviewed, got the job offer, and started Job Man Caravan, which was a program designed to help people who were unemployed and/or underemployed to help with employment. A television program, with that particular purpose, utilizing national entertainment, mostly, but national entertainment was really to motivate viewership. Then we could disseminate information about where jobs were available, the different training programs, and different things that were important in that area.

Tre Tailor: Whose idea was that to, because you said I guess it was ETV that approached you about doing Job Man.

Bill Terrell: There was a citizens group, Black and White, made a proposal trying to address some of the problems and how who this state would respond to different needs of the African American community. A group of citizens got together and decided that a television program, which turned out to be Job Man Caravan, would be something that they would propose to the Ford Foundation. Ford Foundation liked it, it funded it, so in 1968, September of that year, we aired the first Job Man Caravan. Job Man Caravan really was not only a studio program but also a location program. We'd go all over the state of South Carolina with job availabilities, training programs that are available in the different areas. We also took the entertainment on the road to help to bring people to these different location sites.

I'm happy to say that this program was responsible for getting hundreds of people jobs. After, I guess, three or four years of really being basically job oriented in the approach, we turned to other concerns even though we kept the name Job Man Caravan. The program lasted 30 years. But the other concerns, of course, had to do with a myriad different things were happening in our community and how could we address those, how can we encourage kids to stay in school, how of we deal with maybe drug problems that people were having.

But any and all particular problems that we could identify, and people made known to us, we tried to address that in those different programs. I'm also happy to say that Job Man Caravan was the first television program to win an Emmy. As a matter of fact the first two Emmy's for South Carolina, ETV. Significance of South Carolina ETV, this was the first statewide public television network in the country.

Tre Tailor: And still the longest running, isn't it the longest running public affairs show?.

Bill Terrell: Well, the program lasted for 30 years and the reason it ended, I got an excellent offer to serve as assistant visiting professor in mass communications at Claflin University. That was a great relief for me, because you could imagine after 30 years it was time to move on. Almost on my thirtieth, and the reason that's significant, of course, it has to do with retirement. Right at the thirtieth anniversary I received that offer and I worked at Claflin in that capacity for three years until I got tired of commuting.

Tre Tailor: Was there any ever conversation about continuing Job Man even though you left?

Bill Terrell: It did continue, but it took on a different ... I mean the program in itself continued. P.A Bennett and I had worked together on Job Man for a number of years. When I left the program, in terms of its focus to the African American community and serving different areas and different issues that were important to the community, continued with P.A Bennett but under a new name and that new name was Connections.

Tre Tailor: So as an African American in radio and then in TV, as a creator of a show, a producer, were there any difficulties, any discrimination that you faced?

Bill Terrell: There were always, you could feel little under currents but in terms of it being overt or being something you didn't expect or couldn't deal with because there was a newness. I had a person to tell me at ETV, said, "I would have you for dinner but the neighbors may not approve." They were subtle and little things. For the most part of it was a great experience.

Tre Tailor: What led you to start For the People.

Bill Terrell: Now that's...Because Job Man had been so successful they wanted to

have another program. Now what was first proposed to me and ... Let me go through this. I was first a host of the Job Man Caravan, then assistant producer, and then subsequently became the Head of African American programming. The start of For the People, it was suggested we have another program. Now, they wanted it to be what I would call a high brow program. Classical music and those kinds of things. I felt we needed another program but certainly not in that vein. So we started For the People.

The significance of For the People, and we worked with a lot of people, Beryl Dakers, who was a part of this series, and I worked together. Listervelt Middleton, Listervelt Middleton and I had been friends, matter of fact I hired Listervelt at WOIC, and Listervelt Middleton, after a few years started with, and I was able to get him on at ETV.

Through his leadership, For the People really became a program dealing with African history. Now, I like to think of it as world history. One of the things I'd always ask myself, and a part of my indoctrination or what I took from WDIA was how can you utilize your platform in radio and television to serve the best interest, and in this case, the African American community?

So I knew and had studied know thyself so to know thyself you have to know your history. Under the leadership of Listervelt Middleton For the People really became known for the exposure of some of the greatest historians this country, and the world, has ever known. People, for example, Dr. John Henry Clarke, very respected person, Dr. Ben Yekerman, Ivan Van Sertiman and many other historians. Dr. Francis Crest Welsing, who dealt with white supremacy. This program exposed a lot of people and the purpose was is to give people some idea of their own legacy. Matter of fact, not only black people, but people in general could benefit from this information that many of us never heard of, even my experience at Fisk and at Memphis State, these things were never taught. I learned things about myself and this program was able to also help other people to really feel the void of knowing the legacy and different things that were left out of history and really had been almost wiped from the memory of African people.

Tre Tailor:           You moved to Columbia in 67 to work at OI C.

Bill Terrell: Yes.

Tre Tailor: And then ended up working at DM in 78.

Bill Terrell: Yes.

Tre Tailor: Tell me how you think the role of black radio and the African American announcer changed from the time you came to Columbia till the time you stopped doing radio.

Bill Terrell: Well, I mentioned early about the events of the Orangeburg massacre, Dr. King. As a result of the struggle and the loss of lives and those different things, things became a little better, yet the Voting Rights act in the Civil Rights Act. Those things occurred while I was at WOIC. By the time that I went to DM, of course it was a different atmosphere and some of the battles have already been fought and for the most part some people would say won, even though the battle continues even today in terms of some of the concerns that people have in terms of fairness, in terms of employment, in terms of advancement, in terms of pay and a lot of other things. It was basically at WOIC during that period is a more tense time but gradually, and by the time I went to DM, many of those concerns were no longer present.

Tre Tailor: Did your communication with the African American community change?

Bill Terrell: No, no. It was always the motivation as I mentioned before. How to use the platform to help people, so you continued. Even something as simple as reminding parents to hug and let their kids know that their love to encourage them. Also, at the same time, to utilize the platform to provide and to serve as a vehicle for people who were striving to make their communities better and different things that we could disseminate by using radio. So, I continued in just a different vein, but it was always how do you use it to make life better or to improve the quality of life for people.

Tre Tailor: Now you used Bill Terrell on the radio, you ended up not doing the nickname thing that you started out with.

Bill Terrell: Right, I wanted to drop that as soon as possible. Young Blood was okay with me because I knew what they were trying to do with that, but I was not enamored with some kind of nickname.

Tre Tailor: So can you give us a little of how you would open up your show.

Bill Terrell: No.

Tre Tailor: You don't know.

Bill Terrell: Which show?

Tre Tailor: Either one. OIC or the big DM. Can you do a sample break?

Bill Terrell: You caught me off guard. Our approach, of course, it was always up tempo, basically, but over the years it mellowed. Same way with Job Man Caravan. Even in radio you sort of mellowed and I guess it went along with the times.

Basically we had little sayings and different things that we did.

Tre Tailor: For instance.

Bill Terrell: About the Houserockers. That's The Houserockers son, I'll be your Wiggle till Your Wobble Comes, Oodles of Rock, Gains of Swing with Liquid Sound to Wash Them Down, and Carbonated Rhythm by the Pound. I might say that some original and of course some are not. One of the corniest ones that started in Memphis, able to leap tall grass in a single bound, faster than a speeding turtle, more powerful than Kool-Aid. And believe it or not the audience drank that.



Tre Tailor: They drank the Kool-Aid.

Bill Terrell: I mean, that little silly saying. But of course many of them were not, as what have you ... I also had the experience of serving in sports and sports was my first love. Baseball, had an opportunity to play professional sports but I didn't because I married early and I certainly did want a languish trying to make it to the major leagues and minor league baseball. But I got the opportunity in 1980 to serve as the play by play radio announcer for South Carolina State football and that lasted for 23 years. And that was a continuation because I had worked in sports even back in Memphis so that's something in the career that I feel very pleased about and proud of.

Tre Tailor: Last two questions. Tell me about your time working with the Columbia Urban League.

Bill Terrell: Working with Columbia Urban League was a part of what I mentioned earlier, community service. Not only to talk it, but to walk the walk. So, I was able to serve on the Columbia Urban League. One of the one of the first, I would say, in a group of people who served on the board of directors for the Columbia Urban League. Of course, the Columbia Urban League, like the Urban Leagues across the nation, set up to help to improve the quality of life of African American people. So I enjoyed that.

Also worked with the opportunities industrialization center and the James R. Clark Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation. All of these as a part of not only promoting these organizations on radio and television but trying to be a part, physically, with these organizations.

Tre Tailor: Did you have any favorite episodes of Job Man Caravan? Any notable ones?

Bill Terrell: There were a lot of different ones. When you think of the number of national entertainers who were location people or in studio, I mean the list is tremendous. I mean from James Brown to the Dells you talk about practically anybody you could have named. Delphonics back in the day, The Intruders, so we had a lot of people, The Sherells as a matter of fact a lot of these people appeared on location Ben. E. King.

So, those were good experiences because I knew that they were helping to motivate people to watch these programs.

Tre Tailor: What would you say to a broadcaster today based on your experience?

Bill Terrell: I would say that the most important thing would be the people who you would consider an audience. That's one thing that I learned and always felt was that I got opportunities but it wasn't kind of a thing where there was arrogance attached to it. I was happy to have the opportunity and so I would say to people today is to probably have a little more concern about what's happening, and then your spiels and what you do on radio, how can you utilize that opportunity to help people who listen to you through encouragement, through however you choose but to try to use it as a platform to help others more so than trying to be outstanding as a radio announcer.

Tre Tailor: Okay, Karen, did you have anything?

Karen: This is Karen Alexander, Mr. Terrell. When you guys were traveling, how did that happen? Was it a van or a bus? Describe what the travel was like.

Bill Terrell: For the television station, Job Man Caravan, because of the Ford Foundation's funding, the station was able to purchase the first mobile bus, the ETV bus. And so we utilized that bus for a location tapings. We didn't travel on that bus. I think I did one, what they would call, intro where they had strapped me down in the front of the bus and this was in Sumter, South Carolina where we were introing the show. "Today we're in Sumter, South Carolina." That only happened one time so I think they thought maybe the liability might have been too great trying to do an intro traveling in a bus the way it was platformed.

Karen: And the my other question is what do you want your legacy to be?

Bill Terrell: If anything about legacy that I tried to utilize those opportunities to help to improve the quality of life for people in our community. I would say that, if anything, I would want to like I see to be one of community

service. Where you've helped people to get jobs, where you've encouraged people, and believe it or not you get a lot of feedback in terms of people saying maybe, "You helped me to get my first job." As a matter of fact two summers ago a grandson worked for the recreation department came home and told me that a person had told him, "If it had not been for your grandfather I would have dropped out of school."

So those are the kinds of things rather than some famous saying or this or that, but be for people who can recall something that we were able to help facilitate through utilizing radio and or television that helped them in their lives.

Tre Tailor: Is it out of your system?

Bill Terrell: Yes.

Tre Tailor: No.

Bill Terrell: It was three systems. Radio, I was out of it when I stopped. Television, it was out of my system when I made the transition to Claflin, and the same way about sports announcing. So, I can say that it was good to get out of my system before they were able to purge me from the system.

Tre Tailor: Okay.

Ricky Taylor: I have one question. If you could address this to Tre. What are your thoughts on the importance of having a program like yourself in South Carolina in the 60s with an African American program focused on African American topics and subjects and needs. 'Cause I know I grew up watching the Job Man Caravan, seemed to predated Soul Train and all these other shows and you had national acts coming in. Can you talk a little bit about the importance of having a show such as yours in South Carolina during that time.

Bill Terrell: Well, in terms of feedback as I've said the importance of, and I

mentioned, we were able to facilitate people jobs and other different things. I think in terms of a role model and I'm not saying that because I'm trying to toot my own horn as being a role model, I'm not saying that but I think for a lot of young people seeing that television program brought a lot of pride. I think it inspired other people that we have been interested in those particular areas of broadcasting to occur to them, "I can do that," or, "There's an opportunity to do that."

So, I think that platform, in a lot of ways, hopefully helped to serve as an inspiration for the community and to inspire other people and with the encouragement that came along with those shows to help them to focus on an education and preparing themselves for a job and being good citizens.

Tre Tailor: So you think that being in South Carolina kind of helped South Carolinians recognize that it's just not somewhere else that you can make it, so to speak. As if the show was taken out of Chicago or LA or New York, a larger city.

Bill Terrell: I think so. I think by being based here, now traveling all over the state knowing that this is our product, South Carolina's product, and as citizens or people in this state I think that had a very positive appeal and a very positive outcome I think in terms of helping people and seeing the different things were possible. We exposed a lot of people from a lot of different areas who also help to promote that you can become a scientist, you can become a mathematician, you can become anything you'd like to because you see people who are actually doing those different things.

And then for people who have thought maybe opportunities were limited, and surely they had been historically for African American people, that this was part of turning things around. Because in a way this was, perhaps for African Americans, one of the greatest eras in our history because doors began to open, people are able to get positions and jobs that they were never able to do before. I attribute that to the hard work of people who gave their lives, who marched and I've always considered myself on the shoulders of other people. So that takes away arrogance and you know that you got that job because other people made it possible and that you're not so much a much that somebody else couldn't have gotten that job but since I got that job how do I use it to best serve the public and that's what we

tried to do.

Tre Tailor: Did you guys ever, traveling around the state, did you guys ever face any racism. Did anyone ever do anything or say anything while you were taping any of those shows?

Bill Terrell: Not that I heard of. And not only that it was not only the state. We had an opportunity to travel all over the country, too, as I mentioned before exposing different people and reviewing different people. We were Washington, New York, LA, Atlanta, Charlotte, we went all over finding a different people with stories of interest or showing projects they were very successful in helping the community. So, it gave us that opportunity too to travel and to add to the things we were able to get from the state of South Carolina.

Tre Tailor: Okay. Anybody else?

Tony Kenion: Can you describe what you saw when you saw our people as you traveled throughout the state? When you live in a given area you're used to seeing X. When you expand out of that area sometimes it's a lot broader than you ever imagined. Did you see anything that you didn't imagine, couldn't imagine, whether it was living conditions, or people being treated, the way people greeted you?

Bill Terrell: Not necessarily because what happened was that we basically, our basic interactions were with the African American community. And although you may have found yourself in different areas, we're the same all over. There may have been areas where you could recognize the difference between the rule from the urban areas and how people dressed or maybe even how they talked, but haven't been exposed to all of those things, they weren't new to me. It was something that each experience was something that I treasured, and able ... Well, let's see if we're right. Tony, I don't know if I addressed your question not.

Ricky Taylor: I guess your favorite, most memorable, national artist and why.

Bill Terrell: Of course that has to be the godfather of soul, James Brown. A matter of fact their record, Get On Up, they performed that in studio, James

Brown and Bobby Byrd. Bobby Byrd had been a member of the Flames in James Brown's earlier days. There were a lot of others. I liked The Dells, they were super cool. The Impressions, of course. All of those artists brought something to the table and they were outstanding in their own rights.

Tre Tailor: Was it easy or difficult, what was the process getting those acts to come on, really, a show like yours.

Bill Terrell: Well, for the first two years of Job Man, having been funded the first year and then subsequently the second year by the Ford Foundation, we had a little budget. That budget made it possible for us to bring these entertainers in. That's the only way you could really have a program and sustain the quality was to have a budget. Those first two years we were able to utilize some promoters and different people who were able to get contracts and get them in to the studio and or on location to perform for the program. Budget and money is always important.

Tre Tailor: So the promoter would just book them for the show?

Bill Terrell: Yes. We did a lot of booking ourselves. As I mentioned, being from Memphis and also having been a part, in terms of observing, Stax Records, which was a famous and one of the first what we would call black oriented record labels. I mentioned Rufus Thomas, Carla Thomas. Carla and I were in high school together we graduated from high school, but there were a lot of other artists in the came through, Otis Redding, The Bar-Kays, so we were able to utilize that to talk directly to some of the artists from Stax and other artists that we personally knew through the radio station to also add to the promoters getting talent for the program.

Tre Tailor: So after the act would tape the show would they ever do a concert?

Bill Terrell: Yes. Sometimes at different venues. Riverside Club was a club that was here and some other different clubs where they would perform. So yes, sometimes it was a dual function. They'd do the program, location or in studio, and also do some venue while in Columbia, South Carolina.

Tony Kenion: You talked about the turmoil, when your career began, that the country was in.

Bill Terrell: Yes.

Tony Kenion: And when your career kind of ended when you made the transition, your radio and television career, transitioning into academia. By the end of your radio and television career, we, as people, had to have progressed. Talk to young people today about what that progression is and what it meant and where we are.

Bill Terrell: I think, for young people today, it's always important, as we've mentioned, the importance of history. For them to have a sense of the things that have occurred over a period of time. As I mentioned, as I first started my career in broadcasting a lot of turmoil, segregated period, and everything accompanying what that meant. To see, through my lifetime, how things have changed because of struggle, because people were vigilant in really trying to level the playing field as much as they possibly can. So, I think it's important. I think the advice I would have for young people, I learned a long time ago I think, in retrospect, you could imagine that what you are tomorrow you're be coming today. As I look back all my career I could see myself, with the practicing during the talent shows, during the coronations and different things, that I was moving to what became my career.

So young people of today once you have a passion for something, once you think you like something, or you decide that, "This is what I'd like to become," I think the next step is for you to be active in finding out all the information you can. If you have a desire to become a doctor, see if you can spend some time with the doctor, or whatever field it is. But those kinds of things on your part, not only thinking you want to be something, but also striving toward that as much as you possibly can by doing everything you can to get information, to be exposed to the people that you'd like to become, the engineers and those kinds of things, I think is very important.

It's important at a young age to get an idea of some of the things you

like to do, or some of the things you like, which will help, many cases, determine what you end up doing in life. But it's going to be hard work. People who came before you worked hard to provide different opportunities. We also know, through history, that you're well equipped for the job you choose and when you think of anybody in the world who has succeeded they started with no more than you. Two eyes, two arms, two legs and a brain to use if you be wise. With this equipment they all began so a hold of yourself and say, "I can."

