

I was born in 1935 in Cushing, Texas, as the youngest of five children. My father was referred to as a "dirt farmer" in East Texas. Jim Crow was in effect at that time; the dirt farmers who were mostly black relied on the merchants to provide them with seed and fertilizer to farm. The dirt farmers had to pay them back at harvest time and usually had nothing left in the way of cash.

In all school districts in the country, you had to have enough students to make a school. Land was purchased adjacent to our land for that purpose. When the township dropped off the building materials, they dropped them on my family's property instead of the school's property. The two-room school house was built on our property, contributing to the impression that it was my school.

There were two teachers; one lived thirty-eight miles away, and she became a boarder at our house from Monday through Friday. I began attending Primer at four years of age. Having the school house in my back yard, the teacher living in my home, and the absence of distractions such as television, I was given the opportunity to pursue knowledge as a common pastime. My teacher answered my questions every evening by the fire. I became an avid reader of the Bible and the Sears, Roebuck & Company Catalog, which were the only two books we had in our home at that time. At eleven years old I made up my mind that I did not want to be a dirt farmer and even then, I knew that education would be my avenue to a brighter future.

Eventually the district consolidated our two-room school and the high school, which was 10 miles away. I was fortunate enough to be picked up every morning by the country school bus. We left East Texas when I was 14 years old. My dad was struggling and couldn't make any cash on the farm. We always had food and clothes, but we were cash poor. One day my father pulled me aside and said, "Son, we are moving to California." My two sisters moved to California several years prior and were sending money home to help the remaining family. My father, always a good steward of his resources, managed to build a new house with that money. We packed our things, said goodbye for now to our new home, and went to California.

Once arriving in California, my parents bought a home in Pacoima across the street from one of my sisters. I was going into the tenth grade that year. The high school that I would be attending had about 300 students in the tenth grade. I considered the idea of facing the challenges of a new school and realized I would have to reestablish my position as the "Man on Campus." The fact that I had left all my friends solidified my decision to face my parents with the request that I be allowed to return to Texas to complete high school.

I was 14 years old at the time. When I asked my folks if I could go back, they didn't respond. I wasn't sure if they had heard me or not. After about a month's time, my parents decided to let me return to Texas. I was allowed to live in our farm house in Cushing, Texas, because we had neighbors nearby. For the next three years, I lived alone in our new house as I completed high school. Each summer I went to California with my report card for my father to review. All through high school I wore a button-down shirt and tie.

The school that I attended was highly disciplined; the instructor regularly inspected our physical appearance for adequate grooming. The use of corporal punishment was in effect in those days and was used amply to dispel "Nonsense." At the age of sixteen I graduated Valedictorian, holding perfect attendance for all three years. After high school I moved back to California to be with my parents. In 1953 I started at Los Angeles Valley College (LAVC) majoring in Pre-Med. There I played

basketball. I was the only black player on the LAVC team and was received into the Hall of Fame. I transferred from LAVC in 1955 to California State University Los Angeles (CSULA) where I majored in biological science. I didn't have much money, so I worked my way through college. While attending CSULA I became a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity.

One of my earliest, most memorable positions was as a health teacher at George Washington Carver Middle school in South Central. In fact, this was my first teaching position after graduating from CSULA. Eventually I became the Chair of the Health Science Department. In 1966, as a result of attending an alumni dinner at CSULA, I was encouraged by Sax Elliot, my old basketball coach and then Chair of the Health Science Department, to return to my alma mater. I worked in administration for several years as Director of Student Affairs, Director of Associate Students, and Director of Alumni, before transitioning to the faculty division, beginning as an Assistant Professor of Health Science, then an Associate Professor, and eventually a Full-Time Professor. Throughout my years on the faculty, I worked with Sax Elliot to develop the Alcohol and Drug Certificate program.

I met my wife in 1961 and married her in 1966. She has been and continues to be the joy of my life. My involvement with CAADE began in 1966 as well. I was the coordinator of the Alcohol and Drug Studies program at CSULA. Dick Wilson and Bill Shilley were highly involved at that time. We held meetings at schools to discuss ways to promote better education for addiction professionals. Over the years CAADE grew as more educators began to support the development of the CAADE Mission of higher educational standards for addiction professionals.

As I look back over my life I wouldn't do anything differently. The only legacy that I would like to leave is that I liked to help people. My wish is that we would all be kind to one another.