

## **DELTA XI AKA ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

Interviewer: Briana M. Davis  
Interviewee: Mattye Jones  
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### **TRANSCRIPT BEGIN**

**Briana M. Davis:** Hello, my name is Briana Davis. This is an AKA Delta Xi Chapter all history. Please tell us your name and your role in the Delta Xi Chapter?

**Mattye Jones:** My name is Mattye N. Gouldsby-Jones. While I was on campus, it was, Mattye Gouldsby. The chapter is Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, Delta Xi, at The University of Texas, Austin, Texas.

**Davis:** What year and season did you pledge?

**Jones:** I pledged the sorority as an undergraduate student in spring of 1982. I was a freshman on campus in fall of '80. Then I pledged, it was my sophomore year at The University of Texas, and they had not had a line the semester before. So there was a line at that particular semester. I was number 7 on line. At that time, we had line names. The line had a name and you had a number, so I was number 7.

**Davis:** That's a lucky number.

**Jones:** That's a lucky number.

**Davis:** Yes. It's one of my favorites. Did you have a specific role in the chapter—were you an officer at any point?

**Jones:** Yes. There were officers. I guess the most prominent one was when I was a Anti-Basileus. In sorority, Basileus is president, and Anti- Basileus is vice-president. I was Anti- Basileus my junior year for the sorority and that is pretty much over programs. The activities—carrying out the initiatives, sorting some modules, and goals and objectives nationally. Then there's a regional network as well. But the sorority at each undergraduate chapter has the opportunity to do its own programs, activities, charitable work, and activities on campus to enrich campus life. I found that a very exciting role because we were doing some pretty fun things and we got that done. We had a very popular reputation. Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority women were very popular on campus. We were leaders on campus. A lot of the ladies—sorority sisters—were leaders in their own regard to their major. There were a lot of girls that were pre-med that became medical doctors, pre-law, and in various fields.

We also put on parties to raise money to do the charitable efforts and to do contributions and donations across Austin. Our parties were very popular, probably the most popular parties on campus. Everybody was looking forward to the AKA party, and it was just well attended, and with just a good way to gather all Black students on campus. White students came to our parties as well, and it was just a very good and fun time. During that time as antebaskless, one of the big programs that we did was a Greek show. North Texas was known for its big Greek show, super popular. Everybody across the state would make plans to go to this Greek Show at North Texas. I think it was in the spring. Well, we also began to have

Black parties that one of the other Greeks would have. For this particular year, we decided to do a Greek show at UT, because we never had a big Greek show. It was a big deal. We had the divine man, as we call it, from across the state, other states, it was huge. We used to wrap around the building. We had one of the big auditoriums. What I found to be so different for Black communities at that party was at the after party, there's always an after party, in the big after party that came with the Greek show was at the Texas Union Ballroom. Normally, Black students did not have parties in the Union. We had Soul Night which was popular, it was a campus time, the middle week, you would have a DJ, it was Soul Night.

But that was just in the area in the Union. But the Union Ballroom was a big deal because traditionally, The University of Texas had their big parties there with, say, the white sororities and those type of organizations. It was packed, it was amazing, and we had students in groups from several states. That was really, really cool and that was just a big statement for the unity of the cultural enrichment of what goes on with a step show, and it's just a way for networking and friends, those other schools. It was just really, really good. I wish we could find the tape. Didn't have the four-sided, the time to ask the right department at the university to video or run footage of the actual Greek show. There's some still pictures. I'm sure because there were cameras back then, that there's probably evidence of just what the parking lot the wrap around the building was that year. However, over time, when we became more wise about the resources of the university, then we began to have a way to memorialize some of the stuff that was really important to the Black community, Black student population.

**Davis:** Your experience sounds like it was so rich and so fun.

**Jones:** It was fun.

**Davis:** I'm lowkey jealous. But I love that for you. That actually reminds me of a time that I went to a date auction in the Union and they had an afterparty but I don't know where it was. I don't know. I just hopped in the car and went but it is a lovely venue.

**Jones:** Lots of history.

**Davis:** Yes, definitely. You said that Black people on campus didn't have access to the ballroom previously?

**Jones:** No, you had access to the ballroom but it wasn't the standard location for parties. There were parties in other parts of campus, but the ballroom is huge and that just wouldn't be a typical space that you would rent or check out, if you will, for a party. That was a very large space for very big events. I do believe we did have a couple other parties there over time because we would always do something for the next line with probate shows and that kind of thing. But probate shows were usually in other auditoriums on campus. There's a slew of auditoriums on campus, a zillion of them. But that was one of your bigger venues and we didn't have the events there. But that event was particularly important because of accessing that space for the population. It wasn't just UT. It was UT plus Prairie View, North Texas, San Marcos, other colleges and other states that we were very excited to see that we have people registered a step from other states. That was cool. While it was available because you're an auxiliary organization on campus, there were other spaces that made sense based on what you were having. But the event was so large, we definitely wanted to, one, have it there because it was the best venue on campus, and two, just expose, I guess, our contemporaries, our friends to this space at UT. I guess, my mindset was, let's do big, and that was considered big, hence the ballroom.

**Davis:** Wow. To be able to have a hand in organizing that, that is impressive for sure.

**Jones:** Yeah. We had a lot of help, lot of close friends were right there flanking the vision and giving the trophies, and dealing with the cash awards and the marketing. It was just such a big deal, the spell of it was just very eventful.

**Davis:** Amazing. Could you speak a little bit more about Soul Night? This is my second time hearing about it. I just want to know what it was like.

**Jones:** Soul night was a night where, I'm trying to remember how frequently they were, but it was an open area in the Union, which is like the campus. I guess different universities call it different things, but it's the students center, if you will. There was an area that was like a little raised platform a little bit, and it was a dance floor. There would be a DJ, and it would just be Black music or music that the Black students listened to. It wasn't only just Blacks, but that was primarily what it was so it was soul night, and it was a break in the week really to go out, dance, meet people, just mingle because it was a pretty close Black community. Everybody was very cordial, friendly, hugs, kisses. When you ran into another Black student, it was an embrace. That was just the culture at the time, during the '80s when I was there. Everybody was very friendly, very supportive, studied together particularly, if you're major. Then when we pledged, we had these mandatory library hours. These mandatory library hours, it was one or two libraries that a lot of the pledgees would go to. To keep our grades up, there was mandatory study hours. Then there would be other pledgees, Kappas, Alphas or whatever, they would also have library hours. That was another thing that we would run into each other because we had these mandatory study hours. But the soul night, regards of whether you were pledging or not, you went to soul night, either as pledgees or just students during your experience, whether you were at that point in your college experience where you were a student that was on a pledge line. Then the line would go to soul night or you weren't pledging, and then you would go to Soul Night, so it was a time to socialize.

**Davis:** Thank you for that. We can move on to the next question whenever you're ready.

**Jones:** Sure, yes.

**Davis:** What high school did you attend and how did you come to be an AKA at The University of Texas?

**Jones:** I attended Hooks High School in Hooks, Texas. Hooks is in Northeast Texas, a relatively small town. I chose UT partially because of band. I had lots of college scholarship offers, and I knew where I was going to go. Then I was at an interview for a scholarship and there was this girl there from South Texas that asked me, was I going to be going to stay at UIL? I said yes, I go every year. She said, "Well, would you be trying out for Longhorn Band?" I said, "Well, I wasn't planning on it," and so she said you surely should try out if you're going to be at Austin anyway. Makes sense. I said, "Well, I guess it does make sense." The Longhorn Band at UT was not in front of mind at the time, and so I went down in Austin as I normally did with UIL, and I had signed up to try out. Then I got a scholarship offer to UT, so I got this full offer from UT and I had these other offers. I thought since I'm going to choose UT, then I might as well go ahead with this hell week thing. You get invited to try out for the band for what we call hell week. At that point, it's all competition. You want to win. But it was totally new to me, the hype and just what a big deal being in Longhorn Band was. I'd gone to Austin that summer—not summer, but the end year for UIL competition. Got invited to try out. Then I got invited to come back for hell week to make the band. It's hundreds and hundreds of kids, or students, and there's few spots and a bunch of

people trying out. My competitive juices kick in, of course, and so then that lands me solidly in choosing UT.

I have an older sister, who was Alpha Kappa Alpha, and she was at Stephen F. Austin. I have a brother that's an Alpha. But it was more of the opportunity to be in a organization that's of service in my background—in my household because my parents were teachers and my dad was a pastor. My mom was very active in so many mentoring relationships. The charitable work and volunteer work was just second nature to me. I was very attracted to the sorority's mission. That blended into my efforts to say, Ok I'll go through the process for consideration to be in the sorority. That's how I ended up looking at being in a sorority. Of course, I chose AKA. It worked out that I was accepted in that pledge class and the rest is history. But it was me being exposed to Greek because I have an Alpha Phi Alpha brother, my sister is AKA, but it wasn't like they were in my ear about it. But I did consult them—because we're a big family and very close—about the opportunity to pledge. Of course, my brother shared the timing to pledge and he was focusing on, "You make sure your grades are good" and it just came second nature that I knew to keep my grades up. It was just a great experience that there was AKA chapter on campus. Not all the universities had all the Greeks. I remember Baylor didn't have a AKAs, I think they had Zetas. Maybe another one, I'm not sure. But of course you know that the Alpha Kappa Alpha Delta Xi chapter had been there for some while. That's how I came to be a Delta Xi chapter member.

**Davis:** How amazing, so we have a fellow musician in the building. What instrument did you try out with?

**Jones:** Piccolo. I tried out with piccolo and I was mostly a flutist as they say. I played the flute, but I also played the piccolo in concert season because I was a twirler and drum major in high school. So as a twirler and drum major, you twirl during football season but you play your instrument in the stands. I enjoyed playing my instrument. I was very competitive throughout the years in high school and so I just thought I would continue playing in college—I just didn't know what college I was going to choose. When you go to try out for UT, they march only piccolos. Well, that was interesting because I was pretty good because I was the soloist or played first part and the solo parts in the concert season in high school. But when you get to college—everybody there is just incredibly, amazingly talented. While you're good, everybody was trying it out—they've been in state for four years and so you're good, but they're like, "You've got your work cut out for you."

I played pic. And actually I plan on going back for my 40th reunion for band sorority. I was selected in fall of '81 to be Tau Beta Sigma. I was the only Black woman on that line—it only had maybe one other Black person that ever—was even in the band Tau Beta Sigma before me, maybe two, but I think it was only one. My year was the second Black—as I understand the facts—and so I'll be going back in the fall in November for our 40th band sorority playing the piccolo. I've been practicing! I've been practicing so I can see if I can get my embouchure back up. But I can play Texas Fight backwards like one million times. I bleed orange. I love some UT, so I'm looking forward to that. It's going to be a lot of fun.

**Davis:** Wow, I played flute in middle school. I was never good enough to play piccolo, but that is so neat. I actually entered UT on an opera performance major path. I tried out and UT was the only school that I tried out for, and me and my twin, we both went to the Butler School of Music and so we love the musical creatives on UT campus. We have met some of the coolest people and it is insanely competitive for sure.

**Jones:** That's quite impressive that you are blessed with the talent of voice. I sang in the church choir because my dad was pastor. I could carry a note, of course, but opera is amazingly impressive, and you need to be congratulated to get into the program at Butler. That's a big deal.

**Davis:** Thank you. I'm pretty bad at taking complements, but I would say that my sister is a little bit better than I. So we can move on to Section 2, whenever you're ready.

**Jones:** Okay.

**Davis:** What can you tell us about the activities and service projects you've participated in, and how do they impact you?

**Jones:** The activities were very fulfilling. You're going to have sorority sisters come and go as girls graduate, and new girls come in. So the beauty of it is that you get the benefit of the sorority sisters that are older, that have a platform of projects that they like and they have become the staple type of projects for the sorority in your chapter. Then as new sorority women come in, they have their ideas and it builds. And then behind you are women who had their ideas, and you want to embrace those. But some of them are, I guess signature projects were those that included going over to the east side of Austin. Austin's somewhat divided in what you say populous. Majority of African Americans or Black families were on the East side of Austin—the library, HT, is over there on the east side of the highway, etc. We did service projects related to the youth that was usually held at the library or the church on east side. Also one of the things I enjoyed is at some point we picked up and made this a routine project was working with battered women. So I really enjoyed that because we began to become a group that the staff expected to see, hoped to see. So then we start bringing things for the children and having time with the children who were pretty much displaced whereas their mother was trying to address all the challenges because of the unfortunate situation of needing to be in the battered women's shelter. So I really thought we made impact there just to be able to play with the children, bring games, leave stuff like socks, and know things like toiletries that you don't get a chance to really deal with as you're looking for refuge.

That became one that I really enjoyed as well, and then I think we also spent quite a bit of time on ensuring that there was a social life on campus, so hence the parties. Other organizations have parties as well, but I do believe that that was part of our goal, wasn't just to raise money to be able to have resources to do some of the charitable work, but I do believe it filled a void of just having connectivity. The university is so large that you can get lost at UT. I had the benefit of being in the band, and so when I was in the band, I had a big sister, big brother, and I immediately before school started, I had community. Even though there were only like nine Black students in the band, maybe 11 at the count, now that I remember but we were all very close or most of us were very close. Those are lifelong friends today are some of those friends that were Black students in band, and non-Black students as well because both my big brother, and my big sister are Hispanic. I started off with a little bit of sense community, and then at my dorm community. But you also have to realize that there were so many students, I think was 48,000 at the time, and the percentage of Blacks overall, including grad school was a little over 2 percent. That wasn't a whole lot and then you're spread out all over the campus based on wherever your major is. So if you're in B-school, you're on this side of campus, you're engineering, you were over there. If you were music as you know, you got to go up the hill all the way. That was a high. If you ever wanted to exercise be something in band or music, and you have a hike on your hand. It wasn't a bus that took you there, you had to just cross campus.

So there was, I think, a goal to have some socialization and a very fun, healthy chic way with these parties. If you look back on it, we probably were having more impact than we appreciated at the time and as I run across women, like I was at an event, a girlfriend was making her 25 years with Delta Sigma Theta. I was invited to attend and she's a good friend and I mentor her daughter, who incidentally pledged AKA UT. But I was at this event and then I ran into some women that went to UT, when I was at UT were undergrads together, and they chatted about the parties we gave, from AKAs gave these parties. So again, it just validates that those were not just parties. That was a way for people to feel connected, to feel a sense of community and that could have been, who knows, any number of things. People met the boyfriends there, etc. So we did a lot of good with that.

**Davis:** I love a good party. I love that you spoke to some of the social things that it fostered because there's a lot of times where I think people think parties are very pointless or they're not worth the organization. But if you really think about what a party is and what it brings to a college kid, it opens up a whole door of opportunities to meet people, to network, to feel a sense of community and pride for the college that you go to, and they're fun. College students want to have fun.

**Jones:** Good healthy fun and I tell you to this day, 40 something years later, I mean, even this morning I'd get a text saying, "Can you send me so and so's number," and he's a lawyer in town now. He's Alpha and it's just constant relationship building in different areas of our lives, careers. A lot of its volunteers were on each other's boards and these are just people that we became friends with over the years as an undergrad and of course, there were some that were great and some that weren't great. But I do think that there was a lot of kindredness that was built because of our collective goals to do well and to contribute to the larger community even outside of the college campus. It's just a blessing that Alpha Kappa Alpha isn't an organization, but definitely was at the time in your early 20's, that you're able to participate and then also just being able to manage and navigate so many different things in your walk of life. Of course, we had the regional conferences and those things, and that just expands on your awareness of all the things that you could and should be doing in the sorority.

**Davis:** So those regional conferences, I'm assuming that it's other chapters coming together to discuss what's happening in their chapters?

**Jones:** Right. So you have just a litany of areas of competition that you compete. Stuff like Soror of The Year. So you do this big old scrap book that talks about somebody that has a magnitude of strengths and contributions that they made on campus and in their life and etc. So young women across the region compete for these different awards, and that's just one. There's Chapter of The Year and so forth and so on. Deltas Xi won a lot of those awards during the time that I was on campus. There were different peoples. We had different people who had contributions on campus. Tracy Wilcox was NCAA cheerleader. She was an amazing tumbler. She, along with several others that did a lot of things on campus, we highlighted those things. Lot of scholarly efforts, sororities that we were in, Orange Jackets and different campus organizations, you culminate all that and then it gets graded—a competition at regional level, of course, there's national level as well. That was cool. A lot of us were way more of us in one room than we should have been because we were trying to put our money together to get to the conference. But that was all fun times. Then we would go and it was always exciting to win the awards. We were quite a competitive group.

**Davis:** Impressive recall. We can go ahead and move on to the next. This one might be a little bit of a repeat. But feel free to reiterate.

**Jones:** Okay.

**Davis:** Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority is the first Black organization at UT that was established by and for women. What are some firsts you've experienced or contributed to the organization?

**Jones:** The first for me personally or others? Me personally? Okay.

**Davis:** Yes. Basically initial experiences. This can be initiatives founded by your chapter at the time that you were there. It can be any first, even if it was a personal first.

**Jones:** Okay. Personal first—my experience in band. I did three years and the fourth year I was not in band. I was in band three years. What I found was that there were a lot of organizations and things across campus that Blacks had not really traditionally done a lot of. One, as I mentioned earlier was Tau Beta Sigma. To my knowledge, it was only one person before that in Tau Beta Sigma that was Black. Then you have big sisters and so forth in Tau Beta Sigma, just like you would in other sororities across campus predominantly white and predominantly Black. That was a new thing to be in leadership and be a big sister in the band sorority and we marched 367 students. Then it was pretty coveted to get into the band sorority and the band fraternity. That was a way for me also to, I believe, share my viewpoint on sisterhood and the type of, I guess, relationship-building I thought would be good for the band because at this point, I was continuing to be in Tau Beta Sigma and I also had at this point become an Alpha Kappa Alpha woman. I was somewhat infusing my viewpoints and thoughts about my experience at AKA into Tau Beta Sigma a little bit.

That was, I think, rewarding and also good because there are cultures everywhere. I think I was attempting to try to come up with a little bit more of a programming that I thought would be beneficial to the women in the band. Again, we are a service to the band, and so the service to the band is not just your sorority, it should be all the women in the band. That was my personal goal, is to say how can we be more beneficial to the band women and not just the women in the sorority. That was my one little personal attribute that I think I was able to accomplish. Then just being supportive of the other organizations on campus, so we had, I think they started the Black student group when I was an undergrad. I was not an officer because we already had good people that were officers, so I didn't need to be an officer. I got chastised a little bit because I didn't run for office, I'm like, we got good leaders, we don't need a leader. But when I went over to the law school and I saw that there was a void then I got active with respect to it was anti-apartheid. Those type of issues we're hot at the time in the 80s. So we had a lot of good leaders in the undergrad level and there's no need for me to run because there's no need, there's no void in my viewpoint. Then when I got to law school, however, it was totally different because it needed to be somebody to speak up and deal with what was happening at the law school.

But what also comes to mind—we had a lot of sorority sisters that did a lot of firsts. Barbara Dugas-Patterson was the Cotton Bowl Queen and so you've heard of that story, she's fantastic. They were just not thinking of all the sorority groups, but there were a lot of first, and as you know, you've heard this story how the sorority sisters, the one sore head integrated Kinsolving, you probably know that story. Yes, there was a young woman. And this was when LBJ—this is some of the storytelling that has gone on over the years when we've gone back for UT homecoming and so forth—I think it was our 40th year, this particular year, and we had this amazing event. Maybe we can find the footage to share with you. We did a lot of storytelling. This particular sorority sister, she shared how she integrated Kinsolving Dorm. LBJ was running for president, and it was becoming a big deal that UT was so segregated and that the

dorms were not integrated. There was a push, as the story goes, to have someone integrate Kinsolving because his daughter was living in Kinsolving, and you can't have someone running for president or maybe he had been running for his first school term and his daughter's in a segregated dorm. This sorority sister, much older, of course, was identified to integrate. No one wanted to be her roommate. She talked about all of the different alienation that she had, but she did well at the end and spoke positively about her experience, notwithstanding some of those things. But that's an interesting story. I always thought that was interesting because they chose her and she was willing to do it. She shared how she had her own room because nobody wanted a room with her, etc. There were a lot of firsts and I'm sure some of the other ladies can talk about some of the things that they recall. If I think of something else, I'll let you know.

**Davis:** Yes, I had no idea about that. I'm going to have to look into that a little bit further there. I think I did hear a story from another Delta Xi member who had a roommate that was a white girl. She went away for the summer and she came back and all of her stuff was moved into a different room with another Black girl. When she went to go talk to her roommate about it, her roommate told her that she thought that she would like that better. Basically, she moved her stuff so another white girl in that dorm could come in with her stuff into, which I thought was interesting. There's been some encounters on campus that I've heard about that are shocking, but not really. Especially in the dorms, in the dorm elevators, being intimidated by white people coming in to the dorm, elevators and then taking that as an opportunity to intimidate smaller brown women, Black and brown women, and so I've learned a lot about what UT use to be, and I know now that it's completely different. But one thing that hasn't changed is the ratio of Blacks to everybody else on campus, we still have four percent Black, and I believe in the 80s it was two or three percent.

**Jones:** Two and some change.

**Davis:** Two and some change.

**Jones:** Yes. There are various stories and there's just lots of different stories because of the roommate—because you were just basically signed up for campus housing and then you got assigned a roommate. My first roommate, she didn't live far from Austin. I'm going to say—I think it was Taylor, Texas or something. I forget now exactly. She was hardly ever there. Which was fine with me. I was hardly there either. I was at band most of the time, we rehearsed every night except Wednesday night because of the Baptist. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, games on Saturday, you're traveling. I was gone and I wasn't there. I was at the lab doing Fortran programming. I mean, I was hardly in the room, but it was communicated amongst our conversations that she just wasn't comfortable. She preferred not to have a Black roommate and that's fine with me. It was probably her orientation in life. That is probably not uncommon, particularly given those times and some people not being around other people other than their own race. What's funny is that I had all these white friends that were coming to my room all the time anyway. It was weird. Then my next roommate was a white female out of West Texas and she never left the room. We became very close. I mean, she was like one of roommates it's like, "Oh Mattye I'm going to do laundry. Do you want me to grab your laundry? No, no, I got it. Oh, I was ironing anyway, so I just went ahead and ironed your stuff. Okay." She was always in the room, so I was always encouraging her, "Hey, you're a good tennis player, go sign up for intramural tennis, and get out, go do stuff." She wasn't. She never left. She was pretty bad and she studied a lot, but she never left the room. My goal for her was to socialize and get out of the room. But we had a very good relationship.



It just is probably a very common scenario across the country when it comes to, what was it? Integration. Because at one point, all the Black housing was on the East side in boarding houses or something to that effect. There's a lot of Texas UT history about when the first dorms were integrated and Blacks were even allowed to live in the dorms. Then if you have the era of Black and white roommates because they just assign it like a lottery. Then you had private dorms literally on campus, but they were private houses like Dobie, so you had people been having choices about who they wanted to be their roommate. They would use in private housing and they got to room with whomever they wanted. But it felt like a dorm because it was right there on campus. Over time it got a more contemporary. I remember that my floor had men and women, and my dad came from the era of you can either be on the women's side of campus after a certain time and that was only on Sundays. When he saw that I was in a dorm where it was just wings—and this wing is a women's and this wing is men, but it was still the same floor. He held the day quite well. I was a little surprised that he wasn't more objecting because that was not his orientation, even though he had a zillion kids before me. But then that was more liberal than any of the other dorm life systems that any of my sibling had. That was new for him to have men on the same floor as women. That was new in 1980 for him anyway.

**Davis:** Right. We all know how dads are when it comes.

**Jones:** He was pretty cool with it. He was okay with it.

**Davis:** Good. That's great. I remember when I told my dad that there were guys in my dorm. He was like Oh, you know. Well, he's not super-expressive. But like I could tell that he didn't like that. He's just so chill, like any more chill and he really be dead like that's how chill my dad is. We can move on to this last question here and then I think it's a good stopping point.

**Jones:** Okay, that's good.

**Davis:** Please speak to the legacy of the chapter and its members. What would you like the community at large to know about the Delta Xi Chapter?

**Jones:** I think the Delta Xi Chapter are quite trailblazers. Just from chartering the chapter and the careers that those charter members sought and pursued and excelled in is always been impressive and inspiring to me. When I've gone back to the ringing, you don't get to go to all of them. But in the early years when they would have like the 40th and different ones. We were able to hear so many stories from the charter members and some have passed on. It was just incredibly inspiring, even though I was already into my career and begin to have children and that kind of thing. It was always inspiring just how brave they were to say, "We're going to charter our chapter. We're going to do these things." Their career choices were quite challenging majors and they were leaders on campus. I think that legacy carried on throughout the tenure of Delta Xi and continues to go today. I tried to go back to probate shows at different events, and even when we have what is the anniversary type meetings and Founders Day, I'm reminded of just how impressive and how impactful the activities of the sorority members have been, and to speak specifically to Delta Xi I think we've been incredibly supportive of each other and our children and anyone that needs something. If there's somebody in Delta Xi that has a friend that's not even in the sorority, that has a need, you can rest assured that they're going to call on another AKA Delta Xi member to help that person. It doesn't matter if they are in the sorority or not, you just do because they asked and you saw the need and you have a skill set or a connection or network to help. It is seen throughout Delta Xi.

I think the legacy to me to share is that it is absolutely within the constitution of Delta Xi members to do well and to help others. I think that's really the legacy and I'm really proud of that because I believe that has continued. I saw evidence of that when we were at Bula in Houston, and the organizers, Briana, were just so powerful and pretty much doting on the older sorors or sorority women. I just thought that was so beautiful because they wanted to make sure we were comfortable and honored and they're judges and doing really well and good moms or just citizens just caring about how they walk the walk. I think that would be the legacy and I hope and pray that continues ad infinitum.

**Davis:** Well, thank you so much. We will continue this shortly and I'll go ahead and cut. This is part 2 of our interview. We are back and we are continuing with Section 2. Please speak to your experiences courting, living, and socializing on or around campus?

**Jones:** Okay. Hello. Living and socializing around campus. Is that correct? The first year of my college experience, I was in Jester Hall. Jester is a very large dorm. It was called Jester East and Jester West. Jester West is where I got my assignment for buying dorm. I stayed in the dorm two years and then I lived off campus for two years. UT is so big that the way you basically get around campus and get to class on time if you're taking classes in different parts of the campus like if you're taking a class that takes you way across campus, you would catch the bus system and the buses lined up in front of Jester. Jester was like the central location for the buses and those buses would go out to the apartment community, which you had to have that because it's just simply was not enough dorms for all the students. People caught the buses in two campus that was like a central drop off, and then people spread from there to their respective parts of campus. Engineering, nursing, health sciences, music, business, etc. There was a lot of traffic constantly in and out of Jester. If people had time in between classes, they would go and watch the soap opera, so it was a big deal.

At some point, in Jester in the lounge, we were watching All My Children, which we called All My Kids. It was a thing. So people would just congregate, watch the soaps. All the seats would be taken, folks would stand around. I didn't really do that much, but that was really what a lot of people did and watched that particular soap and they went back to whatever they were doing, to the library, to class, or back to their apartment or dorm. So that was a thing. The culture and communication at UT was very socially collegial. Everybody was friendly. You would see somebody, not that you didn't just see them yesterday, you would still hug, embrace. That was just really the environment. Of course, there were probably some students, particularly African-American students, that may not have traversed on that side of campus or didn't have any reason to come to that side of campus, but would come to Jester because that's where a lot of the Black students hung out. If you were in a dorm, that was one of the more populated dorms because it was, I think, probably the largest dorm, even though they had dorms on the west side of campus as well. Socialization was friendly. It was fun. People studied together within your major with all races. I'm a friendly person. I'm quite social. If one might describe me being social or antisocial, I'm social, so I make friends easily. I had study mates of all races. Also, I was in band, so I had a group of friends there, and there was another congregation, if you will, of friends that the connection was that.

Plus we also did a lot of things by your major in that group, so it just was a natural thing. Oh, are you taking computer science class? Are you taking Fortran? You ended up having a network because of your organizations that you were in. Over time, I was in the business school organization and other groups and that was another socialization. Then there was a church network. Also, the church buses would come pick up the students at Jester. Athletes that lived on east side of Jester and anyone that wanted to catch the van to church, and that was on the east side of Austin, that was another socialization. If you

didn't have a car or didn't want to have to move your car because getting a park was not easy. It's probably still the same because I know when I come into campus, it's still a challenge for parking, then you could catch the van and go over to church. So that was great. I think there were probably two buses. I went to the Baptist Church. I think it was Greater New Mt. Zion, if I'm not mistaken. It was great because you got to go and sometimes they would do meals and stuff, but our goal was to get back to campus so we could have the meal plan. We can use our meal plan and, of course, in the afternoons there was no food on Sunday evenings. That's when everybody would either go out to dinner or pizza delivery or what have you. There was also a time when family and friends would invite you over and the sorority groups and stuff would also have events on Sunday afternoons. So the socialization was very positive. There were issues at some point though with, I guess, it was more of my senior year when there was an uprising on campus around apartheid. One might think, "Oh, how does that impact you?" But it really was impactful because here we are in the United States of America and these awful things are happening across the globe. The apartheid issue had just started getting bigger and bigger. Then there were friends on campus that really were involved with different committees and that movement.

Then you start seeing policy issues surface. Sometimes you can rotely go through your life and not pay attention to that, but I would say I was a little bit more involved. A lot of my friends worked on campaigns because its Austin, it's the capital. So there was a lot of vibrancy there with friends that would work on all levels of government campaigns, and a lot of people worked at the capital as well, and eventually I worked at the capital to when I was in law school. But you found that people were interested in issues. We weren't just a complacent group of students at the time. So that was invigorating because we weren't just students, we were citizens and trying to make a difference. I think it did impact a lot of people's decisions on, well I will go to law school or I'm going to go do this instead of law school, I'm going to go work in congressional spaces. There were people that started off on one career track and they ended up shifting that based upon their experiences, and, of course, you're growing and maturing as well and building mentors, and so then you start shaping what you think you might want to do with your life. Life was fun, we didn't have any crises other than there were some people that were at risk because of their positions in the movement to address apartheid, and that's a whole nother segment in and of itself which I'm sure you've probably researched. But at the end of the day, they survived it and have been very prosperous people in the community from the gentlemen, the guys that was friends with and women involved at that time.

But we had a lot of fun at UT, I enjoyed my college experience, lifelong friends, professors that I still keep in touch with. I enjoy coming back to contribute when I'm asked from time to time. I'm a Longhorn fan, I enjoyed the sports, I probably went to the Cotton Bowl 25 years straight without missing. I just didn't miss and because I was Longhorn band and then I have a sports family. My cousins and nephew went to UT after I was there, so very positive experience. I guess I was raised to embrace the positive and make the best of things, and so that's exactly what me and so many of my friends did. I think overall, even though it was clear that the access to stuff was not the same, let's be clear, it wasn't like roses at all times. There was classes that I took where I was the only Black in the class, and you had a professor that might say something that you know was intended to poke, and to make you feel indifferent or belittled bit but I came out of a household where that's not happening. It doesn't mean it didn't occur, but it wasn't for the faint of heart. I understood from just my household and being in the line of kids that I was at in my household, I'd heard lots of stories and my parents were in college in the '40s. So just all the stories that you could possibly, and from your older siblings, so I wasn't surprised by some of the little antics and stuff that professors did. I knew also how to navigate talking to the chairman of department or whatever.

One instance, for instance, I went on a call back for an interview. I was in the business school, finance major, had an invitation to what we called a fly back, to I think it was Houston or Ft. Worth but I can't remember which one. But I was in this commercial banking class I think it was, and he never even marked grades on a regular basis, and there's hundreds of us in this classroom, it's very few Blacks. So I had to miss a class to go to a fly back and all these kids are looking to get high, that's one thing UT recruits very well. So I did the fly back. I come back. I don't know what made me want to check grades because that's really not how it works. You get the syllabus, you have certain things that are posted grades and then you have a midterm, etc. That's not probably changed much, generally. But for some reason I checked in on something, there was a zero. I'm like, what the hey? So I go and I go to the department head because I actually worked as a work-study in the department and basically assisted an editor professor. There was an editor of a book, and so I basically was his assistant in his editor role. I was there with the grad school professors and was quite comfortable and enjoyed my job. I knew that that was not right. I was like, if that was the case, everybody would have zeros all the time because a lot of kids have more frequent flybacks than me. So I went in and expressed that and of course, they addressed it and it went away. But that silliness, like, how are you going to miss me? Oh, I know why there's only a handful of us in the class. But they're not little, they're big because that could impact my GPA. I had to speak up about it because it was important and it was also wrong because you're not even posting grades but you're trying to push my GPA down and I just addressed it. Little things like that, which I'm calling little but I'm saying little in the scheme of things but they're not little, they're big.

So just to be mindful and aware and not to be daunted by behaviors of people that have issues that are just crazy and then comments that a professor might say in a classroom that's not so big, just to point out issues that even your classmates know is crazy. You just have to have a certain temperament when you go into a certain environment. Because when I went off to school, I wasn't thinking, predominantly Black, HBCU, or what they call a predominantly white school. That was not in my mindset. I was thinking I'm going to college. I was aware of all of these issues, but I did not make decisions based up on that. Well, when I got to college, I saw that that was a big deal. I was picking a good college. But again, the socialization was very positive. I had good friends, I enjoyed campus life, I took advantage of the resources that were there. I played racquetball in college and law school. That was a fun pastime and I've played with athletes—which was really challenging because those guys were strong and it was all about ball placement because I could—I get there probably as fast as them because you know you're just there on the court. But I had to figure out how can I win because my gosh, they're much stronger than me. But that was a lot of fun and so I competed. Even in Gregory Gym right now, if you go, you know how they have all the different sports along the wall? Somewhere in 1983, maybe, and my partner and my doubles is a AKA woman and we're good friends today. But that was a lot of fun. I embraced the college opportunities and activities and I encourage kids today to go to UT. It was a good experience for me.

**Davis:** It seems like it was a very colorful experience just despite the microaggressions that you did face when it came to professors and when it came to people around you and some of the global issues that were happening. If I'm not mistaken, racquetball is that sport where you're in a room and you're hitting the ball. They have courts in Gregory Gym and I don't know how new those courts are, but I always wanted to play, so that's really neat.

**Jones:** The same court is for squash also. But back then in the '80s, there were courts that had clearly been there 10, 20 years earlier. They were just outside on the grassy area and they were almost like chicken wire. But that was one of the options. They were outside, open-air, and nobody wanted to play there because they were just awful unless you can get a court and then we would complain the whole

time. But then the area that's over by the stadium, I think it was basically called Belmont, it's been so long, they had the best courts. It was hard to get a court, so we had to figure out how the system works so you can make sure you got a court. Then, of course, Gregory. Gregory Gym courts are much nicer now because they had some nice courts and some really old courts because Gregory Gym is very old. There's gyms all over campus. But there's some students that never went to parts of the campus where they did not have classes. That's of course, because they've got a lot of cool stuff all over campus. They really do. There's lot of new stuff now, of course.

**Davis:** I used to love running on that track in Gregory Gym. I think it's on the second or third floor. I loved that gym, man. I miss it. We can move on to the next question if you're ready?

**Jones:** Sure.

**Davis:** Awesome. How has your experience with the Delta Xi Chapter impacted your skill set and how has it also affected your approach to the community? I know we talked a little bit about this, but feel free to reiterate.

**Jones:** Let's see. Experience with Delta Xi Chapter of AKA, what skill set. In the sorority, you are learning governance, you're learning how to manage projects, you are dealing with a budget, you're dealing with modules that are pushed down nationally, regionally, locally. The skill set that you build is 3, 4, 5 fold because you're learning how to be a good listener, how to set a platform, so when you have goals and objectives and you're in a leadership role. That was something I built on. Fortunately, I came out of a household that we were in a lot of stuff growing up. I was already familiar with Robert Rules and I got drilled in that in BTU when I was at preschool. My dad was really into that. I was very comfortable with those types of issues, how to run a meeting and set up agendas and have objectives. I was blessed in that way. Joining the sorority though, it's a different situation because you got all women and you manage personalities and you also manage just communicating effectively as a member and as a leader over time. Usually, you come in as a member, then you get to become an officer, and then you have responsibilities to deploy. I will say the skill set was one is that you're only growing and building on good attributes and you're getting tools to be successful and learning areas that you can improve on because you're interacting with members in a sisterhood. You really want to build on embodying a process that is healthy for everybody and trying to assist in some way for everyone to excel in their respective goals. I would say that that part is a skill set that you can take with you and it's transferable in so many ways, in the workplace, and in your home environment, with your siblings, and as you become a parent, a wife because you're dealing with just managing well and being successful and happy about it. When you're in something that you enjoy, then that stimulus is something that you want to repeat, and then you just take that with you. I say that would be a skill set because it was a positive experience and then you just take that and multiply it. That's the skill set part. What was the second part again?

**Davis:** Perfect. That answers my question. The second part of the question is, how has it affected your approach to community? What I mean by this is just how you view your role in your community? Do you feel you owe it, anything, or you feel like you're helping?

**Jones:** I think that's a good question because we could be bystanders in so many ways. Even when you have children, you can be the person that just complains because something didn't go well and you can be the person that identifies an opportunity and works toward a solution and not just assume someone else's responsibility is to make things the way you would prefer or make your kids happy or come up with programs and opportunities for your children. You have to jump in and contribute. I think that my

view on the community is that even in clubs, organizations, be it Jack and Jill, Alpha Kappa Alpha, organizations that are civic, the house assembly, real estate council, national boards, whatever it is. I think that when you are exposed to a objective and a goal and a mission that is in an organization, you're also evolving as a person and continually establishing, validate it for yourself what your personal mission is. I get a lot of joy out of working on solutions like City of Dallas, for instance, we have a lot of challenges and I work in the affordable housing community development space and so I feel if I'm working in this industry across the country and there's issues that I see or things that we can improve on, because we can always do a lot better, that it behooves me to agree to give some of my time in an area that I feel comfortable, that I feel like I can contribute, of course, learning all the time as well. My view on the world, and I think how this is a nexus to my experience with Delta Xi Chapter Alpha Kappa Alpha, is that there was just one more place along your growth pattern or along your maturity where you're learning in an organization whose mission is to give back to others and then that just, you build on that. You don't have to build on it, but if you're, I think for me personally, that was very profound for me in my experience as a young woman and then I just incorporated some of that in my decisions on how I spend my time. I just raise in my family. I saw fit to be in organizations that would not only help my family but also help the community, then hopefully the next generation, the next generation, because that's what I experienced from my parents and from my contemporaries.

**Davis:** Well, that's a beautiful, beautiful thing. To learn and to cultivate and create within yourself and to be the change that you want to see. It'd be cool.

**Jones:** I'll say this to just the friendship. Since we're really—the thesis here is Delta Xi and the impact that the chapter has made within the university as an experiences as an undergrad—and then also how that has evolved in contributions in so many other arenas is so beautiful that the sorority exists and then we have other sororities and fraternities. But I think one thing is true is that the purpose or the goal in these organizations is to do good. To have that on-campus, because now I read university or college has sororities and or all of the sororities. I just think that just the sustainability of it, because in organizations can fizzle and so I'm very proud to be a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated and see the great work that they do now that I'm a graduate, if you will, in a graduate chapter. I think that's great. I try to encourage the ladies or young girls that are considering sorority life to really consider it and choose something that they believe would work for them.

**Davis:** I see. That's a perfect segue into our next question here. Please talk a little bit about living on campus, both in the dorms and off campus, and how deltas are interacted with those experiences.

**Jones:** Okay. I shared earlier a little bit about I'd stayed on campus for two years and off campus for two years. My second year, my roommate was a Delta Sigma Theta sorority member. Again, everybody was very friendly. We had, I guess, seasonal stuff, everybody had their signature project on campus. On campus, basically there was a support because if you live in the dorm, our meetings were on campus. They're usually most people met on Sunday afternoons when you actually had a little bit of downtime and everybody was very supportive of whatever extra curricular activity you we're in, or if your particular degree just had extra time with certain things, and people were very supportive. I mean, even when I was marching in the band, there will be no banners and signs because again, it wasn't very many Black students in the band, and everybody went to the football games. That was just a lot of support, and people pitched. There was one friend, Natalie Durant, she's passed away now, loved her dearly. We always ate at her house because her mother was a great cook and she just doted over us, and so it wasn't just her line, it was other people as well from time to time, so just that support. Then as far as off-campus, we call it Riverside. Riverside was where probably most of us lived in, and I say us I mean,

the students that had decided they were no longer going to be in the dorm. Then of course there was apartments all over the city, but that was really more of a concentration of college student apartments, if you will. We just caught, even if you had a car and I had a car, you would catch the bus back and forth the campus because it was just easier for parking. That was a good experience. People would cook together. It was not just the sorority, but it was also the sorority, because the sorority was anchor that was always support when it came to sorority. Because all of us had friends that were not sorority members. But you would find that those non sorority member friends with the friends which were sorority sisters. We all socialize together. It was just really good because I think, again, the branding and I use that word in today's context of branding. You unknowingly we're representing and influencing other people on campus. You didn't even appreciate it then. I appreciate it more now because of the conversations that I've had with people that were on campus with me 30 years ago and just the reflections of things where you were raised to be a leader, but it wasn't front of mind how influential you were. The good news is that we were influential in a very positive way. That's a blessing that I can point out to a bunch of sorority sisters just come to mind. That would be very clear what I'm attempting to express there. Off-campus was not difficult, it was just a transition. Most people went from dorm to apartments, and then you have roommates, and then people went into houses and so forth. It was really, really a good experience that there was a community in the apartment area in addition to what you experienced in the dorm area. Because it was so many off-campus students.

**Davis:** I see. Amazing. Very influential in a positive way. I think that speaks a lot to how everyday work impacting the people around us, and we don't really know our impact until someone opens up and tells us. That's a nice memory there.

**Jones:** Yes, it is. If we have fun stories of third parties and just events, festivals. We had a lot of great live music in Austin, and I assume it's probably still good, but it was fantastic. Blues was great. One of my favorite artists was Stevie Ray Vaughan. He would play at Antone's. Then of course they had, like Austin had a lot of loud music. It was just a lot of vibrancy during the time that I was in Austin, so that was a lot of fun.

**Davis:** I'm going to have to look him up. I actually performed at Antone's a couple of weeks ago and I love that venue. I love that venue.

**Jones:** Yeah, I love it too. It's been a while since I've been back. With Stevie Ray Vaughan passed away, his brothers still performed. Jimmy Lee, yeah. Anyway, I like all kinds of music. If there's music, I just love it.

**Davis:** Amazing. Well, we can go ahead and move on to Section 3 when you're ready.

**Jones:** Okay, I'm ready.

**Davis:** What was it like being a Black woman in the 80s after desegregation at The University of Texas?

**Jones:** Black woman in the 80s after desegregation in Texas. I guess basically, once you are on a campus that's predominantly white, and you may or may not be thinking, "Oh, I'm headed to predominantly white campus." That was not the front of mine at all. I was not in any way thinking, "Oh, I'm about to go at this all white campus." That was not my viewpoint, I'm just going off to college. Of course, there were some people whose experiences were very comfortable with lot of different races, and there's those that weren't. I think we chatted earlier a little bit about how some folks did not want to have white

individuals that don't want to have a Black roommate or different stories that we've heard and read and know about and you manage around. But I had a very positive experience, you saw some racist activity from professors sometimes and how they ask questions or why they asked you a question. You have to manage people's cultural differences. But I will say, the majority of my experience, I had no episodes of overt conduct that was deterring me from staying at UT. Now, I will say that there are some people who I know as a freshmen, there were a couple of girls who were really trying to decide between predominantly Black school or white school, and they did not find UT to be a good fit for them. A couple of people come to mind that we were freshmen at the same time. They just did not enjoy UT. One girl stayed, one girl left. But for me personally, I was involved with organizations pretty much before the school started and was very busy. I was very busy all the time. Made a lot of friends of all races, different nationalities, different religions.

At that time, dorms were integrated. The dorms on the west side of campus, not what we call West Campus, which is across the drag. But just like probably ABC dorms, Kinsolving. If you looked that per capita, the number of students and of those how many were white versus Black, they didn't have as many rooms in the dorm as you would Jester, which was 14 stories or more—I can't remember now how big. That sounds right. Versus the dorms that I just mentioned were probably, 3 to 6 stories or something like that. The different experiences as far as their orientation to campus and their friend groups are probably very similar, but a little different because my dorm had a theater in it, and it had more things than say, the more traditional style college dorm. But at that point, a lot of things have probably already occurred that were profoundly unique with Black athletes being able to play ball. Because at one point, there were no Black athletes. Then over time, they integrated the campus, etc, etc. By the time I got there in '80, the whole issue about, I think it was—Mama Duren—and the role that she played for so many that were living on the east side of town because they couldn't live on campus. That was tapering off, although I think at that point she was still on campus. But that was a little different challenge that they were addressing versus when I got there in '80.

**Davis:** I see. I hear a lot about Mama Duren. I have scheduled a time to visit and look through her papers because there's just so many people that speak so highly of her. She's definitely going to be in my blog post, I know that's right.

**Jones:** Good. The role that she played was not something that I experienced, I know exactly where she was on campus. But I think her role and the impact she made was in the era before when she was so instrumental in ensuring so many things that she was charged to address, which we're grateful that she was there and able to do that. I know now they have a dorm and the different ones have contributed to, I think it was a chair or an endowment, I don't remember now. But again AKA says, "Send money." We will. We wish we could send more, but I think that's beautiful that they were able to do that. Someone took leadership and made sure that that happened.

**Davis:** I agree 100 percent. This just brings us to our last question, this is question 3B.

**Jones:** Okay.

**Davis:** Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience and the Delta XI chapter?

**Jones:** The last thing I would share is simply that Delta XI chapter is a beautiful thing, that that chapter was established in hats off and all the honor to those charter ladies, who had the vision to charter at The University of Texas at Austin. I will tell you, the sisterhood is beautiful and it's a wonderful day to



witness when you go back for reunions. I took my daughter with me when she was in middle school to a reunion. It was just great. She's now Alpha Kappa Alpha woman, she pledged at Drake University. Just having her witness the sisterhood and the relationship from the women that I am very close with in Delta Xi, I think, was exemplary for her with respect to the sorority. Of course, my mother-in-law and my sister in law, AKA. It wasn't a first blush for her by no means, but I believe that just the ability to have been a part of an organization that was positive, that was poised, that was contemporary. She just trailblazing in so many ways and committed to their scholastic in professional goals has just been very worthwhile. I want to applaud you for going through this exercise with so many women to have the time to visit and find it important. That gives me all the joy in the world. With that, I wish you all the success in your career. If there's any way that we can be of help, just give us a ring.

**Davis:** Thank you so much, you're making me blush so hard. It has been a pleasure getting to know each and every Delta Xi that I had the blessing to encounter. I think that each and everyone of you all are doing such unique and important things in this community. I couldn't be prouder to know you guys, thank you so much.

**Jones:** Thank you, All the best. Okay, bye bye.