

Black Women's Caucus of Washington State Interview Transcript

Interview date: 02/24/23

- dindria barrow: 00:01 Hello, this is dindria barrow from the Community Archive Center of Tacoma Public Library at the main Tacoma Public Library Branch on Friday, February 24th, 2023. It is about 1:30 PM and it's a beautiful sunshiny day in the Murray Morgan room. I am with the Black Women's Caucus, and we are having a group oral history interview. I am with Dr. Thelma Jackson, Chana Lawson, Susan Alexander, and Wilma Jane Hughes. Thank you so much for being here, ladies. I appreciate your time, and I can't wait to learn the history of the Black Women's Caucus. Will you please introduce yourself, your role in the caucus, and why, or how you are committed to this group?
- Susan Alexander: 01:01 Okay, I'll go first. My name's Susan Alexander. I'm currently the Vice President. I'm the immediate past president of the group, and, you know, I've committed to the group. It's something that my mother got me into. And, you know, the idea that we as Black women have our interests and need to work together to make sure that those interests are protected and also, verbalized when, when it comes to making policy and is something that I think is very important.
- Dr. Thelma Jackson: 01:49 My name is Thelma Jackson, and I'm not a member of this Tacoma Caucus, but it is certainly an important group. My affiliation, with the caucus goes back to its original makeup in 1977, and it's been, a delight to see the Tacoma chapter of the Black Women's Caucus continue after all these years with the other five chapters that used to exist no longer exists. So this is a very special group, very special group of women, and I'm delighted to have been invited to be a part of this.
- Wilma Muse: 02:31 My name is Wilma Muse and I moved to Washington State, 1997, became a member of the Black Women's Caucus in early 2000 or a little bit later. And I was, well at first, uh we used to have a luncheon, and the luncheons were always really, really good. And had a friend, who is now deceased, Lawrence Joseph, that invited me. And it was just such a nice organization, and they didn't always want a lot of money. It seems like they just wanted you there. And I fell in love with Black Women's Caucus. I've been a member ever since I was secretary once, and then I was president, so now I'm just an old lady that's letting everybody else take charge. <laugh>.
- Chana Lawson: 03:37 I am Chana Lawson, and I'm the current president of the Tacoma Chapter. I was invited by member Caucus members, um, Karen Robinson and Sheila Bivins. I serve on political committee for the Black Collective. So it was a natural fit. The

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focus of women's issues and priorities really drew me in empowering women and supporting women. And also, the, um, support to the youth in our community. Things like the scholarship that's provided to, young ladies and to help them through college. So those were some of the things that drew me, but also some of these women had been mentors to me through other efforts in the community. One of those being Versa Alexander, I had come to know through a nonprofit that I was working in, and we actually supported breast health. And so she introduced me to some of those things. Just working with her and knowing, learning about her story, I did not know she was attached to this group. Sometimes women are just doing things in the community, and you see them, but so even the women now, I joined this group in 2019. I started coming to meetings and then the pandemic happened in 2020. So we've been riding this thing out. We never stopped, you know, and that spoke volumes to me as well.

dindria barrow: 05:14

Right on. Can you share a description? You've done this a little already, but maybe, share more a description of the Black Women's Caucus and what the organization does.

Susan Alexander : 05:34

I mean, I can say what, um, I think what, what things, what was done, you know, in the beginning. And we still are trying to do that now. And one of the main things when this group started was to get Black women involved in the whole variety of you know, boards, commissions, you know, every city county has boards and commissions that have a lot to do with how things are run. And it was just a matter of getting people, Black women to know about these commissions and getting them on them, you know, things like the Human Rights Commission in Tacoma. I know that there were some members who were, uh, in the Girl Scouts leadership, so I, when it first started, a lot of it was just making sure that Black women were taking part and having their voices heard. And there's also the political aspect of it that we have here in Tacoma anyway, whereas, you know, supporting Black women, uh, politicians because, you know, because they tend to be the last ones to get any kind of financial or other support when they're run.

dindria barrow: 07:03

Do you help to support campaigns as a caucus?

Susan Alexander : 07:07

Yeah, I mean, campaigns, financial support. I know that, for example, when Rosa Franklin ran for Senator, that there, there was a lot of, you know, blood, sweat and tears from the caucus members in supporting her campaign.

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- dindria barrow: 07:29 Thank you for that example. How did the caucus get started? What is its origin story?
- Dr. Thelma Jackson: 07:46 Well, this question can tack onto the one you just asked about, sharing a description of the Black Women's Caucus. The Black Women's Caucus of Washington State, which was the mother organization, the parent organization, beginning during International Women's Year when it was legislated in 1975, and called for 1977 to be the international year of the woman. This was designated by the United Nations. And so, this nation set out about, forming state organizations leading up to a national conference. And when the activity began here in the state of Washington, it started with a planning committee that was put into place. I was fortunate enough unfortunate, if you would to be serving on that planning committee. We had about a year to plan this state conference that took in Ellensburg, Washington in July 1977, and the national conference was in November of that same year.
- Dr. Thelma Jackson: 09:06 And this caucus grew out of a need for Black women to have a voice, our issues to be as important to the agenda that the Washington State delegation was putting into place as it was so many other things. This was in the day of the Equal Rights Amendment, ERA, the Congress had passed an equal rights bill, but it needed to be ratified by at least 37 states in the nation, and only 35 had done so. And so that was one of the main pushes of that National Women's Conference was passage of the ERA when the planning began to happen for the state conference here in Washington, that was a strong push made from the very first meeting to make it representative of all the women in the state of Washington. And the elected chair of the state conference was Dorothy Hollandsworth from Seattle, another Black woman.
- Dr. Thelma Jackson: 10:18 There were four of us on that planning committee of about 21, if I remember. But we decided that the best way Black women could have a voice in what was going to be happening throughout that state conference, as well as that national conference, is that we mobilized Black women all over this state as best we could. And we actually formed, uh, six chapters of this Black Women's Caucus. And as I said earlier, Tacoma is the only local chapter still remaining, but we had Seattle, Tacoma, Thurston County, Spokane, Tri-Cities, and Yakima. And with the funding that came to the state for its year of planning, we were able to move around the state and organize and mobilize Black women in those various communities, because we didn't just

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want it to be a Western Washington woman thing. We knew we had Black women in the east side of the mountain as well.

Dr. Thelma Jackson: 11:27

And that strategy served us quite well because the direction of the planning and the positions being taken were really being driven by very strong white women who in that ERA, uh, time of life, they were driven by certain key issues for them. And it was a time where there was a bill up in the US Congress to make the Martin Luther King holiday a holiday. It wasn't a holiday yet. And so we found ourselves really struggling, to try to make our issues known and to say yes, we are women and we are for women's rights, but we don't necessarily refer to ourselves as feminist. We're not anti-male because our men are victims of racism and oppression the same as we are. So, we had all those kinds of things to fight within the women's core. And the racism we encountered within women was you know, an additional battle in an additional battle.

Dr. Thelma Jackson: 12:45

But we spent that year moving around the state organizing Black women in the jurisdictional caucuses, and coming back together that July in Ellensburg. So, in addition to the Black Women's Caucus, the Native American women formed a caucus, the Asian Pacific Islander women, the, I think at that time, lesbian women were just beginning to come out of the closet, with a very loud, forceful, aggressive voice. We had Jewish women, we had, you know, every category you could think of, but we don't have a this represented, and we don't have a that represented. So, by the time we got to the state conference in Ellensburg, in that July, a lot of progress had already been made as far as communication, coordination, learning from one another, respecting one another, becoming familiar with each other's, issues, if you will. And it became, a political training ground.

Dr. Thelma Jackson: 13:58

You had to learn negotiation. You had to learn how to deal with those sensitive issues with finesse, but at the same time, not let them lose sight of what the issues were for Black women. And, you know, yes, we had issues that related to equal pay for equal work and, and childcare and healthcare and the traditional women's agenda, but we also had some other agendas as Black women that other women of no other ethnicity had. So, we had to make sure we pushed for that, you know, well, if you want us to support this, well the one thing we want your support of all of you is, to help us get Martin Luther King Holiday approved. And so we learned a lot about, cause I had never been into that kind of internal political kind of action. So it was, very

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interesting that by the time we did get to the state conference, uh, and all of this really came in handy, and I'll, I'll touch upon that, later.

Dr. Thelma Jackson: 15:01

But by the time we got to the state conference, and we were inundated with a huge contingency of Mormon women who on a Friday afternoon before maybe a Thursday afternoon before the conference began on Friday, to be informed that that would be about 3000 unregistered Mormon women who would be attending the conference. So those caucuses came in very handy, very, very handy. Uh, because we now had formed relationships, understandings, could identify who were kind of the spokespeople for the various groups where you had to hurdle in a hurry, because we now had a, a common enemy, if you will, <laugh> any differences we had between us just disappeared. We now had this common enemy, that, that we had to attend to. So, the caucus got started in that kind of atmosphere. When the conference was over in July, the work began to prepare for the national conference that November.

Dr. Thelma Jackson: 16:19

And that was a big battle, because you can imagine that if you had 3000 Mormon women and of less than that of everybody else, so you had these conflicting agendas, and conflicting slates of candidates to represent the state in the national. It went right down to November, the early part of November through a court case and lawsuits before, the delegation, from Washington was, formally seated to represent the state of Washington. So, a lot of give and take, a lot of finger-pointing, a lot of blame placing. But we persevered, went to the national conference in Houston, Texas, and connected with Black women from all over the country. And the story we had to tell a lot of the other states found very intriguing. You know, they had a greater a degree of respect for us to even be able to make it there, not to mention what our work had been like for that whole year.

Dr. Thelma Jackson: 17:33

And after the National conference, the caucuses continued. We decided that the coming together and the organizing that had happened, uh, we didn't need it to, we didn't want it to come to an end just because the IWI conference had ended. So, for several years, the Black Women's Caucus as a state organization continued to convene and meet and have conferences. And then the six geographical caucuses, remained active. But, you know, leadership gets burned out. And I think the Spokane chapter was the first one to fold. We had the, the fewest number there, Tri and Eastern Washington, really. Then Tri-

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Cities, then Yakima. So that left Seattle, Tacoma and Tri-Cities, I mean, Thurston County. So, to make a long story short, Tacoma is the only remaining chapter of those six. And, that's how it all got started. And we're just really proud.

Dr. Thelma Jackson: 18:45

I'm proud of, the fact that you all continue to exist. And, uh, the person who had been the state, coordinated president and led our delegation to Houston was Dorothy Hollandsworth, who just passed some months ago at the age of 101. And, she was a delight to work with, uh, from the point of view of mentoring. And, so we had, a great deal of activity. We learned how to make public policy. We learned how to politic. We learned how to negotiate. We had to learn how to be succinct in statement of what we wanted, how to write proposals and resolutions. And so, it was a, an interesting time to be a part of, of all those activities. The group who went to Houston as a state delegation had a 25-year reunion back in Ellensburg, and a, used to be my road buddy, Virginia Taylor.

Dr. Thelma Jackson: 20:06

That was my road buddy. And so, we went back to Ellensburg for the 25th reunion. And was just interesting to catch up on who's been doing what since the national conference. And a lot of people talked about how that conference launched them into a different place and learned to be stronger women advocates for women's rights, women's issues, went back to their communities and had a better understanding of Black women, Asian women, Native American women that they never had to encounter or work with. So that was the beginning of the caucus. That was the beginning of the Tacoma Caucus. And they've been going strong since.

dindria barrow: 20:58

Thank you for that history. I have a question, but I wanna make sure that everyone is able to share their next part of the story. Because I'm very interested in knowing what happened with this. It seemed like there was a conflict with the Mormon women with 3000 Mormon women who were trying to come to the conference. And I gauged that, but I wanted to know more about that. That's my question that I'm trying to needle in. But <laugh>

Dr. Thelma Jackson: 21:33

Well, the Mormon women had been given a mandate by their bishop out of Utah, because these conferences were going on all over the country in each state, and they were anti ERA, they were anti women's rights. They saw no need for a woman to be working outside of the home. We stay home, we take care of our own children. We don't need federally funded or state

funded childcare. And on and on and on. And so, where there were large populations of Mormon women, they were organized. They came into Ellensburg, on charter buses with, with men with walkie talkies. And it was it just took over. It just took over where we had worked all those months, planning workshops and speakers and handout information. And it was in the summer. So, we essentially took over that entire campus at Central Washington University.

Dr. Thelma Jackson: 22:40

And those first workshops were to begin that Saturday morning at nine o'clock, where by 6:00 AM the Mormon women took over all those rooms. Took over. You couldn't get in. You couldn't move. They were everywhere. It was an attack. <laugh>, it was a war, so to speak. And that's what we were faced with. That's what we were faced with. And this is why I said earlier, it became very useful that we had these caucus structures, because we could grab those caucus heads and jump in a corner real quick and decide, what are we gonna do about this? What are we going, you know. But had we not had this structure that, that developed over the year we were planning, we'd have been dissipated all over the place. But they came and they had their issues and their proposals and their agenda, and the parliamentary sessions, I'll never forget, the men had a card.

Dr. Thelma Jackson: 23:53

One side said yes, the other side said, no. And when a motion was made, they just stood up and let them know which way they were to vote <laugh>. And that was that. And, it was towards the end of the day, that Sunday before we finally broke through to them, uh, their leader was a woman by the name of Susan Roylance. I remember her to this day. And we broke, we, we used parliamentary procedure and broke through the stalemate and broke through, the stronghold those men had on them. And, the agenda, 90% of it didn't get done. I don't think we got past the first three or four, items on the agenda. But we broke the stalemate. And they didn't walk out of there with the majority vote on delegates, nor did they get their positions approved.

Dr. Thelma Jackson: 25:01

They had the numbers, but they did not have the skill level. They did not have the skill level. And we beat them with a parliamentary procedure, with a lot of our sharp female attorneys, and we beat them with parliamentary procedure, and they weren't prepared for that. And neither were the men, you know? So, when they flipping the card, you know, kind of confused, like, what did we tell 'em to do? Yes, or no? Yes or no, you know, and we just, just rolled right through, that disruption.

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But the Mormon women, they did the same thing in Utah, same thing in Idaho, the same thing in there were about five states that they inundated like that. And it came to the attention of the national organization, the US Women's, department. They began to send out bulletins. You know, we're seeing this happen.

Dr. Thelma Jackson: 25:54

We're seeing that happen. Be on the lookout for this, be on the lookout for that. But we wanted the earlier conferences that, that were planned. So, we didn't get to get the warning <laugh> that they might be headed your way, get ready. But we certainly were able to tell the story, to help other states to know what to look for. But they showed up and they followed their instructions as their bishop had given to them. And they did their best. But they did not persevere. They did not persevere. And I don't know whatever happened to that faction of the Mormon movement. But after we won the court case and our slate of candidates were the ones ruled the official to go to Houston to represent the state of Washington, that's the last we saw them.

Dr. Thelma Jackson: 26:50

They'd fill up the courtroom, they'd had their attorneys, they had money behind them, the whole galore. But after they lost the, the lawsuit and the court trial, I mean, we're talking about locked boxes of ballots that we had to turn over to, what are those security guys in the trucks to pick up money from breaks? Oh, oh. I mean, it was unbelievable. It was unbelievable what we had to go through. But after that, I didn't hear very much more about the, the women opposition, the Mormon women opposition. I don't know if any of them, we don't know if any of them went back to their communities with the renewed appreciation for other women that weren't Mormon or, you know, and I mean, it was so bad. You could be in a building, and you encountered some of them, and they'd get up against the wall trying to go up or downstairs, like you were gonna bite them or something, you know?

Dr. Thelma Jackson: 27:52

And they traveled in packs, linked elbows, you know, and just, it was unreal. It was unreal. The propaganda, they must have been told about all other women other than a Mormon woman didn't care what color you were. So, we broke those, some of those barriers and, you know, managed to have some small conversations with different groups of them. But they were given the mandate to do it. And they followed suit, and they came. And, we had to make the case in court that, you know, we had pictures people, we were in the parking lot taking

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pictures of cars and license plates to show where these were not Washington residents. They had come in from other places, you know, I mean, I think back over it now, and oh my goodness, those were the days. Those were the days. But some, some things etched in your memory, you'll never forget, that prepared me for a whole bunch that came afterwards, <laugh>, that never would've been in my, cadre, my skillset, so to speak.

- dindria barrow: 29:03 Thank you for indulging my question. I appreciate that.
- Dr. Thelma Jackson: 29:06 Sorry about the long answer.
- dindria barrow: 29:08 No, no, no. Sometimes we have to get detailed to understand what the nuances are of what occurred and how things are occurring now. Tomorrow I'm going to the Mormon Church, to the Family Genealogical Center to do the African American Family History event, and that is on Pearl Street. And so, it shares a context of history with me, and then it shows maybe the changes that have occurred. Okay. All right. Back to the questions. I think you have already answered this question. So, I think, you know, what's interesting about my questions is that they do overlap on and intermingle with each other. Why is it important for Black women to have their own caucus?
- Dr. Thelma Jackson: 30:03 I think that's been touched upon some too. Because we are female, and women doesn't necessarily mean we share the same points of view with other females and other women. From a cultural perspective, from a historical perspective, we've had a different existence in America than any other group. Native American women would come as close to it as anything. And so, if our points of view aren't a part of discussions and positions and advocacy kinds of efforts, then they are, they are left out. They're left out. And so, in those early days, you know, you really had to get courageous and, and, and rare your back up and, and, and tell some of the women, you don't speak for me. You don't speak for us. We are here to speak for ourselves. You know, you don't know anything about us. You know, you don't know anything about our journey. We're here to share our journey with you, and maybe you can learn something. But, even today, right, today, um, Black women have to assert themselves, because we can't just be lumped together with all women. And our differences, aren't made known. And so the, the voice of Black women, is still critically needed.
- Susan Alexander : 31:42 I mean, I would just add that this group grew out of the women's movement at the same time, within the Black

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community, we have a unique perspective as well. And, you know, we need to be able to bring that to our, to the Black community. And sometime, you know, it might take a group like a caucus to make sure that our men are also remembering that there's some issues that we have. As they're, you know, formulating their strategies and political strategies, things like maternal health and other issues that might not get quite, you know, the, the leader on maternal health as a young Black woman who's a nurse in Congress.

Dr. Thelma Jackson: 32:39

You have reproductive freedom and those kinds of things.

dindria barrow: 32:45

Okay, I'm gonna skip number five. Unless you have a story about a special project or event. You did bring programs, so I don't know if you wanted to share some of the activities that you've done. But we know about the origins and some of those, events and activities. So, I guess, if you have any stories to share about, the Black Women's Caucus that you'd love to put on record for people to hear, that would be probably a better way to phrase number five.

Wilma Muse : 33:26

Well, I would just like to say that, when Janice Martin was our president, we did Kwanzaa, we went to the People Center, and we did Kwanzaa for a lot of kids on the Hilltop that had never been done before. And we had great participation and all the little toys, and it was just enjoyed by all. And we did that a few times, but then it just kinda died out, I guess. The kids grew up or what have you, and finding a place, because we used to meet at, uh, Colored Women's Clubhouse, and that was not much big open space, but then we were able to get the People Center for that time, and it was great.

dindria barrow: 34:29

Number six, what are the next steps for your organization? What are you planning, or what do you want to plan <laugh>?

Dr. Thelma Jackson: 34:43

I would love to see a rebirth of a Black Women's Caucus of Washington state. There are so many more Blacks in the state now than there used to be so many more issues than there used to be. In a lot of senses, we are worse off than we used to be. We're back to struggling to keep the right to vote. And, you know, all these kinds of things, educationally, our children are suffering in our schools. I would love to see some fresh, young energy step forward that would be willing to, I don't if, I don't care if it's called a caucus or whatever, but a gathering, a coming together of Black women. It would be awesome if somewhere in the future we could have another state

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conference of Black women where our issues are the agenda. We are not an appendage or a tag along, on mainstream issues, like I see quite often.

Dr. Thelma Jackson: 35:47

That's my dream. That's my dream. And they're out there. They're out there and looking for direction, looking for purpose, looking for, mentoring, looking for all of that. And so many of us women who went through that era in 77 and the eighties, there's so much that we can share. Our children, our teenagers, our pre-teens, we have some powerful young girls, powerful potential leaders in the wings, and we've gotta mentor them. We've gotta identify them. We've got to build them up. We've got to support them. And not just girls, but boys, I've seen a tremendous amount of deterioration of the Black community from the family point of view, so much we can do as women. We have a, a certain perspective as females that Black men don't. If somebody could come along and want to restart some statewide Black organization with, city or geographic kinds of subgroups, that would be, that would be awesome. That would be awesome.

Susan Alexander : 37:14

I know that when I was the president, my strong belief is that, you know, as Thelma pointed out, there are a lot of young people out there. Our group was very committed, but it was a lot of the people who'd been there from the beginning. And so trying to bring people like Chana in and we've got a Sherilla who's, you know, a ball of fire with a lot of ideas, you know, reaching out to people like that, being, and that meant that we needed to do things like get on Facebook and get on, you know, get a social media, media account and, and get on the internet, because that's where people, that's where young people are looking. That's where they're engaged these days. So I, you know, that's, and we've made some, we've made some progress, but I, you know, that's, I think, you know, we do need to, continue to reach out and, bring in the, you know, people who are coming up, who are involved in, in the community, and who are going to be the future, you know, to, to help them. Because, you know, as we said, this group started to make sure that because Black women realized that they needed to get their voices heard, and to the, you know, now it's, we need to try to engage our younger generations to, you know, look to groups like this, to, to be able to contribute in an organized and, and strategic way.

dindria barrow: 39:07

Right on. So, I was talking about next steps and possible future events or activities. And Dr. Jackson, you shared your dream of

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wanting to revitalize the Black Women's Caucus. What are some dreams of the rest of you? And it may not be focused on Women's Caucus, it might be a dream of your own, but I always like to end with dreams.

Wilma Muse : 39:40

I would just like for the time to come that we can get back together. Zooming is killing me. I, so when, whenever we can find a place and get back together as a group person to person, that's my dream right now.

Susan Alexander : 40:06

Yeah. I mean, I went out and got myself a Zoom account, <laugh>, and, you know, we were able to keep going, but we did lose contact with some of our members like Wilma. Who aren't into Zoom. I mean, it took, I know it took my brother and I to get my mom's computer and everything up to you know, so she can do it. So I know it's not, you know, for a lot of us, it just seems easy, but it's not easy. You know, the digital world and computers are not always that easy. And so you can lose people for everybody you gain, they're people that you lose. And so, yeah. That, I know that we were meeting with in one of the Tacoma Police Department, up on the Hilltop, and, but they haven't reopened to the public yet, so hopefully as the pandemic, you know, gets, looks to be more and more under control, we can start meeting in person again.

dindria barrow: 41:16

So that, so you would meet at the station on Hilltop?

Susan Alexander : 41:19

Yeah, the substation in the Hilltop. Okay. They have like

dindria barrow: 41:21

. Okay. They have like a community room?

Susan Alexander : 41:22

They do, they have kind of a conference room and it's available to the community.

dindria barrow: 41:28

That's neat. I didn't know that. And I'll give you a little plug that the library has meeting rooms spaces, so if you're interested,

Susan Alexander : 41:37

Oh.

dindria barrow: 41:38

I know that we try to make it so that it's accessible to everyone. So if you're trying to do like a series, then it might have to be like, spread out.

Susan Alexander : 41:49

Yeah. Now it's mostly like one, it's the first Saturday of the month All right. Is when we meet. So, but that's an ideal thing. And yeah, I know that the, the both Tacoma and Pierce County

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libraries do have meetings, so that may be something we think about.

dindria barrow: 42:10

Yeah. We just recently opened up without, having to wear masks, but then we encourage it for, you know. If you're, if you're vulnerable and stuff. Yeah.

Dr. Thelma Jackson: 42:20

And to Wilma's point, if I could you know, zoom has been fine. I think Zoom has worn us all out, but the human interaction is what's missing. And as Black women, we savor human interaction occasionally, at least, you know? Um, and that's, that would be a beginning, you know? Not all women are Black women are older, women are technologically savvy enough to be a part of Zoom meetings and Zoom audiences. And so trying to keep that idea of not leaving anybody behind, gotta eventually just get back to person to person every now and then.

Chana Lawson: 43:21

So, my dream is to empower others. I don't like to say come behind me, but beside me. And self-care is important while doing the work. Cause this work will it's a lot. Take a lot outta you. Even right now we're trying to plan a outing to get together and we have gotten together at least once recently, and two youth joined us. They wanted to follow me into the, and I told 'em about the Black Women's Caucus, what we do, and they're like, that's interesting. Can I come to lunch? So, I was like, yeah, you sure can. And they're like wanting to watch what we're doing and wanting to be involved and have those discussions. And these were college level youth that, joined us. So that was refreshing and kind of gave an eye view for like what you say is in person.

Chana Lawson: 44:21

Definitely made the difference. They wanted to go to lunch and be in person and see, let me see these women who are the Black Women's Caucus, let me see what they're talking about and what they're about. And so, and they told me, we're watching you <laugh>, you know, so <laugh> they are, that has lit a fire, to keep moving forward and start to move into action because the pandemic is easing. It's not completely gone. We're gonna be impacted and technology will always be there, but we do need to get in person and then we do need to caucus. We definitely do the, like Dr. Jackson said, it's a little worse than what, maybe a lot worse. <laugh>, even with us kind of unifying in the Black community has been a challenge on issues. And so, and we're seeing that. And, so that's, for me, my dream is to, bring them alongside us so that they can pick up and keep

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moving, you know, when we have to step back and let them lead.

Chana Lawson: 45:29 And so I'm looking forward to that. So, trying to figure out how to do that. Maybe it is a conference and then getting with others, it will be a challenge, but that is definitely, there's some strategies there where we can do that. And now that we have the technology piece, if we don't wanna travel, that's where we would do it, is kind of use that technology to bridge that gap of, oh, you're over there in DC but we need to talk you know, so that's my dream is just to further pick it up, keep it going, carry the water where I need to and bring some alongside me that are gonna be here for decades.

dindria barrow: 46:16 Yeah. Well, I feel like I have an understanding of where the Black Women's Caucus has come from as the ERA movement was happening in our country and how in Tacoma, we have the spirit and the strength to continue that movement. So, I'm just, I, I'm really excited to hear about any future events that are coming up. I have, gone to some of the Washington Tacoma Colored Women's Clubs events and, so I've learned about that and I've learned about the Black Collective. And what I think is just really interesting is that before I knew, I didn't know that Tacoma was such a hub for Black power and that excites me. So, I thank you for the work that you do and for, for telling your story. Last question, do you have any other things you would love to add in conclusion?

Dr. Thelma Jackson: 47:41 Well, I just applaud the library system for incorporating the activities and work of the Black Women's Caucus of Tacoma in your archives. The story is worth telling. It is worth documenting so that future generations, future young women, can know that, you know, these sister warriors existed and without the historical documentation, the archiving of it, future generations won't know that because as we die and pass on, we take that history to the grave with us where we haven't documented. So archiving it is awesome, and I applaud the library for taking this step and including this group of sister warriors. Yes. <laugh>.

Susan Alexander : 48:33 I think one of the things that I gave to Anne does include kind of, you know, the history, how it, how it came in written form as well.

Susan Alexander : 48:46 Yeah. But no, I mean, you know, the idea that Tacoma is, is interesting in that it does have these, uh, kind of institutions to, of concerned Black people who get together on a regular basis

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and do have some influence and impact on what happens here in the city and in Pierce County is a, you know, it's something that a lot of people have worked on for a, you know, 40, 50 years, you know, some of the leaders of the Black Collective.

Dr. Thelma Jackson: 49:24

Yes. And hopefully the Black Collective is being archived. Yes. Every Saturday for 50 years. What community in this country can coming anywhere close to that.

dindria barrow: 49:44

Well, thank you so much. Any final words? <laugh>. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much, Dr. Jackson. Thank you, Chana. Thank you, Susan. Thank you, Wilma. Um, and thank you to our listeners. Take care.

Dr. Thelma Jackson: 50:04

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.