

Transcript of interview of Norman Spellmann by Callie Enlow, December 10, 2008.

This interview will become part of the Georgetown Public Library's oral history collection. This project focuses on people's memories of Marshall and Carver Schools and the issues and events of the 1950s and '60s that led to desegregation in Georgetown.

CALLIE ENLOW: So, you just asked me how long I've been in Georgetown. I've been here four months, so I bet you've probably been here a little bit longer than that.

NORMAN SPELLMANN: A little bit. Yes. We moved here in August of 1960. So we've been here a while.

CALLIE ENLOW: In 1960. And where did you move from?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: We'd been in Dallas for two years, where I taught at SMU and before that we were at Yale where I was doing my graduate work.

CALLIE ENLOW: And what was your graduate work in?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: American church history, it was called in those days.

CALLIE ENLOW: What would they call it now?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Oh, more like studies in American Christianity...something like that.

CALLIE ENLOW: And then how long did you teach at SMU?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Two years there and thirty-eight years here at Southwestern?

CALLIE ENLOW: Art you currently still teaching?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Oh, no! I've been retired ten years.

CALLIE ENLOW: Thirty-eight years at Southwestern...exactly what did you teach there?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Specifically—courses? I taught usually half of my time—we taught four courses—I would teach every semester a course in Old or New Testament. When I first came I taught courses in Christian education and that, as you would know, is not primarily my field—I'm a church historian—so after a number of years I persuaded the chairman of the department that I should be teaching church history, not Christian education. And after that usually a survey, you know, American Christianity from the colonial period up to the Civil War and then Civil War to the present—that sort of thing.

CALLIE ENLOW: And what did you think about Georgetown when you moved here?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Georgetown was an entirely different city. I must say--Betty and I both attended Southwestern. I came in the fall of 1945—we'd both been in Jefferson High School in San Antonio, where we started our courtship I guess you could say. She went to the University of Texas and after a year I persuaded her to come to Southwestern. So, I was here from '45 to '49, so I knew quite a bit about Georgetown before we moved back here in the '60s.

CALLIE ENLOW: So, did you both decide...did you make a decision to move back here and actively sought a position at Southwestern?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Well, we were very fortunate. While I was teaching at SMU I was filling in for a man who was on leave. I knew it was not a permanent position. And Dr. Finch, who was president of Southwestern, had known us when we were here as students, and he asked me to come teach at Southwestern. So, that was very fortunate. Very fortunate. We had a whole year ahead of time, so we built this house. So we moved straight into this house when we came to Georgetown.

CALLIE ENLOW: What was this neighborhood like at that time?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: This was the end of Georgetown...literally! We could sit in our dining room or back porch and watch the Katy trains come and go.

CALLIE ENLOW: And do you want to say what part of Georgetown you're in now...I mean, what is your cross street?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: We're on 18th Street between Louise and, oh, fiddle, I've forgotten the other one. This is called the Nolen Addition. Mr. Bill Nolen had two daughters; one was Louise and the other one I can't quite remember. Interestingly, our neighbors were the Wolfs—Jay Wolf turned out later to be one of the most outspoken members of the Georgetown School Board. So, that was a bit touchy.

CALLIE ENLOW: And he lived just across the street?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Next door.

CALLIE ENLOW: Oh, next door. Okay. And so was this neighborhood ethnically diverse at that time?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Oh, no. No, no, no, no. Georgetown was very segregated. This area was all white. The railroad track now that curves and goes over to Crushed Stone...that was the Katy track. It went right straight, went just east of Round Rock, came out of Austin...oh, it came out of San Antonio. Came right across where Rabbit Hill is and that later was angled over to the Crushed Stone. That area along the railroad track was known as Little Mexico. And all of the black people—colored people, as they were called then—they lived on what was called The Ridge, which was the banks of the San Gabriel, there, west of downtown. At one time there were three school systems—for the Hispanic children, for the black children, and for the white children. And I think in the '50s the Hispanic students had been integrated into the white schools.

CALLIE ENLOW: Right. That seemed to go much more smoothly than the black integration. So when did you become involved with Committee for Better Schools?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Very early. What happened was, I mentioned this earlier, Georgetown, like everybody else, was severely hit during the Depression. Georgetown was very much a rural community or farm-oriented. When we moved here, whenever it was, the cotton season, all the cotton farmers brought their cotton into Georgetown, where it was ginned. And there would be cotton bolls lining Highway 29 as far as you could see. And we were more oriented toward Taylor than we were toward Austin in those days. When we moved here in 1960, there were 350 students in the high school, which meant a very limited offering for the students. But, what I started to say

was...in 1960 there had been no reevaluation of property since the Depression. And this put the School Board in a terrible bind. They had just built the school down here that's now called Annie Purl. That was called the East Side School. All six grades of elementary there. What is now called Williams Elementary was the high school and junior high—across from First Methodist Church—grades seven through twelve. And then there was the Carver School. I have no idea when it was built—it was a frame, wooden frame building, over on what was called the Ridge in those days.

CALLIE ENLOW: So that would be across 35 (IH-35)?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: No, no no. It was...the...that's the South Gabriel that comes almost due east and turns and goes up under University Avenue—you know where that is? And then it turns again and goes east down to the Park and so on. But on the east bank of the San Gabriel, that's where the black community lived.

CALLIE ENLOW: Okay. And that was a wooden framed building. So, was your involvement with Committee for Better Schools more tax...tax and evaluation-based?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: No, I can answer that two ways. One, I can jump ahead. After the...well, what triggered all of this was...the School Board finally decided...both schools were overcrowded, that is the elementary school and the high school-junior high school. They needed desperately to build a junior high. The equivalent of Texas Education Agency had condemned the Carver School as totally inadequate. I'm not quite sure when exactly that happened, but before we moved here. And they threatened to take away the accreditation of the entire school system if they didn't do something about Carver. So what the School Board wanted to do was to build a new Carver—a twelve-grade school, twelve rooms, for 144 students, roughly. Actually, the figures I've seen, there were two students in the senior class and then it got larger as you went down toward first grade. Well, in what was it...1954...the Supreme Court had declared "separate but equal" unconstitutional. I think somewhere in the 1890s "separate but equal" had been declared legal. So in about '54 the Supreme Court said, no, separate but equal is no longer constitutional. Schools must be integrated with all deliberate speed. In 1960 Georgetown had no intention of...

CALLIE ENLOW: Pretty deliberate! (laughs)

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Our aim, first of all, was that if they were going to build a new Carver, that's illegal. Because they were building...they were using public money, public tax money, to build a segregated school. And we believed that was contrary to the 1954 decision of Brown v. Board of Education.

There's another side to this. After we had formed the Committee for Better Schools, we met with our lawyer for the first time—Mr. Price Ashton, from Austin—in the home of Ed Harris. Do you know the Petersons, Ellsworth and Sue?

CALLIE ENLOW: Oh, I've heard of Ellsworth...yeah.

NORMAN SPELLMANN: The first house this side of the railroad track, on the south side, is where Mr. Harris and his wife lived then. Later the Peterson's bought it from them. Mr. Harris ran Troy Laundry. Troy Laundry I don't think exists any more, but they used to be all over the state. It was a dry cleaning business...some technical, because it was called Troy everywhere...whatever system they used for cleaning. And he had been formerly a member and president of the Chamber of Commerce. So, he was well known in town. He and his wife were members of the Catholic Church, St. Helen's. We met there and for the first time we had a group of black parents who were there.

CALLIE ENLOW: And, so, was this in the springtime of '62?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: I can look it up for you in a minute.

CALLIE ENLOW: Okay.

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Just to answer your earlier question—almost immediately the black parents said, now look, we're taking a risk here because we work for people in Georgetown and we could lose our jobs. We're really sticking our neck out. Why are you all funding our federal suit? And, without any prior discussion we just simply went around the room and almost in every case the people said because when I was growing up I was a member of the Methodist Youth Fellowship, or some church group. In our summer camps we were taught that all people are equal in the sight of God and segregation is a violation of that, so there was really a Christian motivation. But, you know, that's not in the courts. You can't go into the courts and say this violates my Christian faith.

There were three things we had to do. One was a state law that said a school board may not integrate a school district without a vote of the community. We thought that the activity of the Supreme Court had made this moot, but our school board said no, it still holds. We cannot integrate the school system because we would be subject to fines. It's a violation of state law.

CALLIE ENLOW: Yeah. And was that...I think I read that that was in the initial petition?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Well, we went to court to challenge that law. That was one of our purposes. In the end of 1962 the Attorney General of Texas ruled that state law unconstitutional, but the Board continued to, as it were, hide behind that. So state law said that if they do it, they're subject to fine. They would be violating state law. If the Attorney General had acted earlier, the school could never have used that. But they used that for quite a while.

CALLIE ENLOW: The Attorney General...was that directly related to the suit that you brought, or was that just a different thing altogether?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: My memory was it was related. Of course, you realize the whole state of Texas was in the process of integration and there may have been other school districts where this question had come up. But it was one of our three purposes.

Another of our purposes was to stop the building of the school for segregated purposes. And the other purpose, of course, was in the federal courts to bring about integration of the Georgetown school district. So, those were our three purposes.

CALLIE ENLOW: So, one of them was a law suit that was filed at the state level and the plaintiffs were listed as taxpayers, and you were listed as one of the plaintiffs, is that correct?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Yep.

CALLIE ENLOW: Do you remember who else was actually named on that lawsuit?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Yeah. There were seventeen names. Ah...my wife was secretary of the Committee for Better Schools, so we probably have more records than anyone in town. So, in the 1990s, when we were celebrating Martin Luther King Day, we had no classes all day, but focused on things having to do with Martin Luther King. And I offered a lecture on the role of the Southwestern faculty in the integration of Georgetown schools. We had had a complete collection

of newspapers. Would you believe there were morning and evening newspapers in Austin in those days? It was the *Austin American* and there was the *Austin Statesman*. It was *Williamson County Sun*. We had a complete record of all three. Most of our collection is now in the Williamson County Historical Collection, downtown, across from the Courthouse.

CALLIE ENLOW: At the library...or, I mean museum?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: The museum, yes. I think there are three big packets of newspapers and things. The very specific Committee for Better Schools—most of that is in the Southwestern library, where I put it. So, there are two locations for those materials.

CALLIE ENLOW: So, you have said...you were talking about the role of Southwestern faculty. How many Southwestern faculty members were on the Committee for Better Schools?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: We were citizens; we were not acting as faculty members. Southwestern, as you may know, is a Methodist school. We were required to be Methodists to teach there. But it goes back...to answer your question earlier...I think at that time all of us who were at...on this, were Methodists, teaching at Southwestern. I only mention that because the Methodist Church was very outspoken about the matter of the Methodist Church through its General Conference...had said we must follow the Supreme Court 1954: segregation is no longer appropriate and Christians must oppose segregation.

CALLIE ENLOW: You're a church historian, so this is a little off the topic...sorry. But, hadn't Methodists been active abolitionists as well?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Yes, the Methodist Church was founded before...in the late colonial period...before the Constitution. They were active...eventually more active in the West than they were along the Eastern seaboard...but there were Methodist churches all over the country and, as you would expect, when the Civil War came, the Methodist Church, because it was a national church, divided like all the other churches did. There was a northern and southern Methodist Church; there were northern and southern Baptist churches, northern and southern Presbyterian churches, and so on. And if you see churches built before 1939, you can see that on the cornerstone. Methodist Episcopal Church South, or Methodist Episcopal Church was the northern church.

CALLIE ENLOW: Okay, sorry for the...

NORMAN SPELLMANN: The churches united in 1939 and a large number of the black churches were collected into what was called the Central Jurisdiction, so the Methodist Church was officially segregated.

CALLIE ENLOW: That's interesting.

NORMAN SPELLMANN: All of the black members...this was the south...the south said we won't come into a union unless you do that. So there were five jurisdictions for administrative purposes and (laughs) one jurisdiction for the black churches. In 1960...let's see...somewhere in the 1960s that Central Jurisdiction was dissolved and black churches just became members of their Annual Conferences, wherever they were.

CALLIE ENLOW: So, some of the Methodists that were involved in this group might have been pushing for desegregation before the actual Methodist Church Conference?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Yes, sure, yeah. But, since you had asked our motivation, legally our motivation was to challenge spending public money on a segregated school. But when the black parents asked us...there's nothing official in the minutes of the Committee for Better Schools that says Methodist. We just simply said that our purpose is to improve education in Georgetown, to get the most we can for our money and anyone that wants to join us is free to join. It's nothing about Methodists. But, when you ask the question...or when the black parents asked why are you doing this...we said we'd been brought up in the Methodist Church and the Methodist Church is opposed to segregation.

The members of the Committee for Better Schools—those related to Southwestern were twelve: Graves Blanton was the vice president for finance, Jud Custer was professor of education, Eb Girvin was professor of biology--these were all full professors--George Nelson was professor of music, Wendell Osborn was professor of voice, I was professor of religion, Gordon Wolcott was professor of biology. And my wife and Mrs. Wolcott and Mrs. Osborn and Mrs. Girvin were all active.

CALLIE ENLOW: So, I'm sorry to jump back to the state lawsuit...and you were listed as a plaintiff...were some of those other names that you just read also plaintiffs?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Yes. Yes. Now in addition to that, there were thirty-two people, not related to Southwestern, who were members of the Committee for Better Schools. Do you want me to read off some of those?

CALLIE ENLOW: You don't have to read them off, but maybe if you know, if they were affiliated with any other groups or any particular businesses or schools themselves.

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Well, one of the things that I think is important, early on, before the Committee for Better Schools has been formed, the ministers in Georgetown had been meeting because they were concerned about segregation and they almost without exception were members of the Committee for Better Schools. First Methodist, St. John's Methodist, Lutheran church, Baptist church on Williams Drive...I don't remember the name of it, Father Joseph Paulicki. So, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Baptist, Roman Catholic. That left only the Episcopal Church and they didn't have a full-time minister at that time. But those ministers got together and they issued a formal statement opposing segregation and calling upon the citizens of Georgetown to integrate.

CALLIE ENLOW: Did they read that at their churches or was that just...

NORMAN SPELLMANN: It was published in the newspaper.

CALLIE ENLOW: Was it published in the *Sun*?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: In the *Williamson County Sun*. I can read it for you if you want.

CALLIE ENLOW: Wow! Maybe in a couple of minutes. That would be great.

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Some other people—Dr. Douglas Benold, who was long-time doctor here in Georgetown, still lives here, still very active. He had been a member of the school board in the '50s and had resigned because his sister wanted to teach here and that would have been a conflict of interest, but... He was on the panel. Did you attend the panel at the library?

CALLIE ENLOW: I wasn't here at that time.

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Okay, well, he was on the panel. He and I were the two representatives from the white community and we had Harvey Miller, who was of course, the federal case that was Crystal Ann Miller, his daughter, v. Georgetown School District, and a couple of other folks from the black community.

CALLIE ENLOW: Yes. Let's talk about how Mr. Miller became involved.

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Harvey was a good citizen. He had been the Scoutmaster, he had been pushing the school board for years to have a band, he contributed in many ways to the leadership of the community. I, for some reason, had the idea that he worked for the Wesleyan, which was a Methodist retirement home, but he corrected me and said that he worked for the L&M...does that ring a bell? L&M began in the '40s, around '48, when I was in school here. It was in a little place half the size of this room (laughs) and it later became a Georgetown institution. But Harvey was cook at the L&M Cafe, which is an important point, because it meant he was subject to pressure. That's an organization owned by the white community, attended by white citizens, blacks were not...see, before integration you couldn't seat a black person in a white restaurant.

CALLIE ENLOW: So why, out of all the black citizens, many of whom were upstanding, why would Harvey Miller been the one who ultimately got the lawsuit and became sort of like the leader of the movement...

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Frankly, you'll have to ask him. (Laughs) That's really about all I know about him. He was a very dedicated community leader.

CALLIE ENLOW: Did he come to your group or did your group approach him?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: We...the word, you see, went out. This wasn't a 40,000 community the way it is now. Georgetown then probably at most 15,000 population, maybe less. It didn't take long for word to get around. But once we began talking about challenging the building of the West Side School and that we would support any black parent, Harvey came forward. The first time I met Harvey...back up just a little bit...when the school board announced that they were going to sell bonds to build the West Side School and also the new junior high...they were going to build a junior high on Williams Drive...out there where now is Raye McCoy School. When word went out that the school board was going to do that, this is what triggered the Committee for Better Schools. There were a group of us met at Professor Girvin's home and we decided that it was time for us to go to court...to get serious. So, we announced that there would be a public meeting in the basement of First Methodist Church on a certain Friday night, and at that time we would elect our officers, we would present our purpose for Committee for Better Schools and we'd get organized. And I have a very clear memory of Harvey Miller coming down the steps into the basement...I had not met him before...but obviously I knew who he was. Without Harvey there would have been no federal case.

CALLIE ENLOW: Why was your memory of Harvey so clear? Was it...

NORMAN SPELLMANN: He was the one taking the greatest risk! Our jobs were secure. Frankly, businessmen went to the president of Southwestern University and said get your professors off that federal case. And Dr. Fleming said they're citizens, their children attend the public school. They pay public school taxes. They're not acting as Southwestern. And he protected our jobs.

CALLIE ENLOW: How did you fund both of those lawsuits?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: What do you do for anything else? We were told by our lawyer we

needed about \$3,000 and we started raising money. That meeting I mentioned at Ed Harris' house, we had raised about \$1,000 by then, and we eventually had to raise \$3,000. Let me give you an idea of what that means. Ed Girvin was a full professor at Southwestern. His salary was \$8,000. He was the highest paid faculty member at Southwestern University. I came in as an assistant professor at \$5,000.

CALLIE ENLOW: A year?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Does that give you a better idea of what \$3,000 was? You could buy a car for \$1,500. You could build a decent house for \$13,000 - \$15,000. \$3000 was a lot of money.

CALLIE ENLOW: So, did you raise that money from among yourselves?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Yeah, yeah.

CALLIE ENLOW: Did you ever do anything in the public, like have any kind of fund-raisers or anything like that?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: No. It was just...this is a list that Bill Jones compiled. Do you know who Bill Jones is? He wrote a history of Southwestern University. It's a monster...I'll show it to you after a while. And because of the Committee for Better Schools being prominently associated with faculty, he included that in his history of Southwestern University. And in the process he had this list of 32 persons who he could be sure were involved. So, this 32 plus 12, 44 persons....

CALLIE ENLOW: Wow, 44 Georgetown residents....

NORMAN SPELLMANN: And doubtless there were others who gave money who were not members of our organization, but we had the president of First National Bank...was one of our members...we had Dr. Douglas Benold, who was a prominent physician here...we had businessmen like Ed Harris, but it was dangerous for businessmen. He lost his job because of this.

CALLIE ENLOW: Ed Harris?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Ed Harris. Can you imagine a dry cleaner, you know, you're totally dependent upon people of Georgetown to bring their dry cleaning to your shop. People quit.

CALLIE ENLOW: Wow. You know those must have been kind of dicey times between '62 and '64 when your group was active. Were there any other people who were members of your group that experienced some kind of negative repercussions?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Georgetown was very quiet compared with other places. To my knowledge there was no physical violence. Very little if any cross-burning. There were some rumors...this used to be one of the ways to warn people...this was the old Ku Klux Klan, they put a wooden cross in your yard and set it on fire.

CALLIE ENLOW: And there were rumors of that going on in the early '60s?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Yeah, but to my knowledge none of that occurred here. But what you could do was lose your job.

CALLIE ENLOW: So did anybody else, other than Ed Harris...

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Not that I know of. Doctors, president of the bank, you know (laughs). I'm not sure about some of these other folks. There were, on this list, to give you a quick count...Jesse Valdez...ah...there is under oath in federal court, I don't remember who, stated, in the record of the court, that some member or members of the school board had threatened the Hispanic people that if they supported the Committee for Better Schools they would be segregated again in their own system.

CALLIE ENLOW: Wow!

NORMAN SPELLMANN: That's in federal...either state or federal court. So that was under oath. Jesse Valdez was one of the leaders...St. Helen's was more predominantly Hispanic then than it is now. You know St. Helen's out here...great big church up on the hill?...very large white membership and I'm not sure what the percentage is now. It used to be down...you know where the Dollar Store is?

CALLIE ENLOW: The Family Dollar?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Yeah. St. Helen's was right in there. A little building and it was basically Hispanic in those days. But Donel and his wife...Donel Scroggins worked for Southwestern, so his job was safe. John Orgain worked for Southwestern...he was the chief cook at Kuykendall. Mrs. Moore I don't know except that she was black. Here's Harvey and his wife, Ara Bell Miller. Here's Ralph Lozano, that's Hispanic. Rev. Robert T. King was a pastor at one of the black churches. Clark Davis...let me tell you something about Clark. Clark was a very liberal member of the black community. Clark went to the NAACP and when we first got together with the black parents, they said no, we want to do this ourselves. We don't want NAACP coming in. But that had been raised. And the rest of these were white. But that gives you an idea....

CALLIE ENLOW: What about you? Your job was safe but you said your neighbors were the Wolfs and...was there...did you have any other kind of unsettling times?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: (Laughs loudly) Well, everything that involved us was legal. First of all, I'll say, neither my wife nor I were elected to anything in Georgetown after that. More specifically, what they did do was once we got into court the school board asked the judge to issue subpoenas for every one of us to come to court. That's pretty unusual and it doesn't happen to many people and it was intended to intimidate. Well, we were going to be there anyhow (laughs) but under subpoena we had to be there and answer "present." That was the only thing you could ever say specifically that was brought against us. Otherwise it was simply a matter of, well, you'll never get elected to anything in Georgetown (laughs).

CALLIE ENLOW: Before CBS had you been active in the community?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: We just moved here in '60, in August of '60, and you see this was already brewing. The school board had been struggling in the late-50's with what could it do, you know. Carver was condemned, they were going to lose the accreditation of the entire school system; they had to do something about that. They had this state law that said they could only borrow so much money. They had built Annie Purl School—they didn't have any money. First thing they had to do was to get a reevaluation and that was very unpopular. And the man who was chairman of the school board during most of this, Carl Doering, he ran on a ticket of cutting taxes, so that...this is an ancient story and I think it's a tragedy in the entire United States. The public school is one of the most democratic institutions that we have and it's tragic that we do not support our public schools the way we should. It really is. I mean, the school teacher...my wife taught in Dallas, she taught in Connecticut, she taught in Round Rock, ah, she never made the kind of money that she would

have made if she had used her degree, say, in teaching college.

CALLIE ENLOW: Was your wife teaching at this time?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: No, our fourth child was born in August; we moved to Georgetown in August. We had four children.

CALLIE ENLOW: Were they all in public school here? Well, not the baby...

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Immediately when we moved here, our son was in first grade that year. The next year our daughter, three years later our other daughter, and then about '66, our son Don. So yeah, Mark was immediately involved. The schools—you may know—the school board decided to integrate one year at a time, which meant that Crystal Ann Miller would never be a part of an integrated school system.

CALLIE ENLOW: Ohhh, okay.

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Now, Mr. Doering and others publicly said, we need twelve years for the community to get used to this.

CALLIE ENLOW: So they would start integrating like at first grade and then the next year they would integrate the first grade...

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Actually, I think it was one, twelve, two, eleven...and so on. The Civil Rights Act of about 1965 said no, you must integrate post haste. So, 1966, I would say, when Don entered first grade, it was an integrated school. First grade was integrated, and immediately. The other side of that is that we had some very fine black athletes in Carver and they, of course, were some of the first to want to get into the white schools so they could play big-time football. They were very good and Georgetown was very much a football community; I think it still is. And when they saw those black boys helping us win district, that changed a lot of attitudes toward integration.

CALLIE ENLOW: Really! What...around what time was that? About what year?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Well, it would be beginning when the first black students started attending. Obviously not first graders, but if I'm right about the twelfth grade, then about '63-'64, and then the whole system had to integrate completely about '65-'66, so....

CALLIE ENLOW: During this time, when I was doing some research I noticed that the school board would say that we have this free transfer—we'll put in a free transfer. It seems great when you say it...what were the problems with a free transfer?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: First of all, this was not what the Supreme Court called for. The Supreme Court in 1950...what was it? 1954? said you shall integrate with all deliberate speed. It didn't say anything about volunteer. That's exactly the position Georgetown school board took--we will be glad to have a volunteer system--once the court told them they had to. Somewhere along in here, I've got the date somewhere, I think 29 black students went to the school and said we would like to enroll. The school board said no. So they did not budge until the federal court said you have to integrate. When the school board was told they had to integrate, then they came up with this 12-grade system. Now, we appealed that. We wanted a three-year system. Mind you, this is some eight years after the Supreme Court said you must integrate. Georgetown wanted to take thirteen years more to integrate. We appealed this. We won in a circuit court. We started here in Georgetown—Judge D.B. Wood—he said, no, you haven't...what did he say...you haven't gone

through all of the administrative procedures you need to. I throw you out of court. We appealed to him from a state district court and the state district court said Committee for Better Schools is right. The school board appealed that. And eventually we went all the way to the Fifth Court of Civil Appeals, which is this lovely document right here. This is a three-judge appeals court and this court ruled against us 2-1. And I would like to read to you, if I may, the dissent of the Chief Justice of this court. He wrote a dissent, a 2-page dissent...see three judges, two judges...so that's the way it went. He said:

The particular circumstances in the Georgetown Independent School District are: that there is a relatively small number of Negro students, 173 out of approximately 1300 in the entire school district. There was evidence of a report made by state accreditation committee which spoke of the serious imbalance between the Negro school and the white school. Some of the space in the white school is filled by 77 students who were nonresident who had traditionally been permitted to attend as nonresidents. There were 12 nonresident Negro students who were attending the Georgetown schools. It seems plain to me that any reading of the record before us must convince anyone that the sole reason for delaying desegregation in Georgetown school district beyond 1954 is a refusal of the white community to accept desegregation at a more rapid pace. This consideration was ruled out by the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954.

But that was only one judge of three. So, eventually they built the West Side School. Fourteen, ah...twelve small classrooms; an elementary school with a gymnasium? Show me another one anywhere else in the United States? Why did they do that? Separate but equal! See! The school board that followed...since we continued to live here...Myron Dees was chairman of the school board. Myron was athletic director at Southwestern. He was chairman of the school board that had to deal with the integration system. What are you going to do with a school with twelve small classrooms? They had to tear out walls so they could use it, so that all kids, black and white, started at Annie Purl...1, 2, 3...4, 5 went to what was called the West Side School. In order to do that they had to tear out all those walls to make it useable for those students. Then, after that they went out to what was called the junior high and then high school stayed where it was for the longest...before they finally built the one out north of town. You know now we're going to have two high schools? Have you seen this one out here? It is HUGE! They call it the 9th Grade Center but that will be...we will have two full high schools in Georgetown.

CALLIE ENLOW: Through all of this your kids were going to school. Did they see any tension? Did the students pick up on the tensions that their parents had about integration?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Sure. Ah, but kids have a different attitude. Just because parents are prejudiced doesn't necessarily mean kids are going to be. Kids got along a lot better than their parents did.

CALLIE ENLOW: Do you think that they got along a lot better than maybe some school board members, or some of their parents thought that they might?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: I'm sure they did. As I say, it was pretty tricky living next door to the Wolfs. Because we were on opposing sides in federal court and there was a very strong feeling about this. Incidentally, in 1963, I think I'm right, once we were into this, there was a school board election. There were four candidates, two said no to integration, two said yes. Guess who won? The two who favored continuing segregation. 64% of the vote. So, 64% of the voting citizens in Georgetown said we're opposed to integration.

CALLIE ENLOW: I read somewhere that some of the school board members thought people on the

CBS board were...you know...extremists, or you know, really heavy activists.

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Yes, because Georgetown had this long tradition of segregation and, you know, the school board is elected by the citizens. The school board was representative of the community of Georgetown. But this is why you have courts. If there is to be equal justice you have to have courts. And we ran into a lot of judges that were just flat prejudiced.

CALLIE ENLOW: Right. Right! Like maybe the very first judge on the first petition that you filed. Do you think that there was anything flawed in the argument that you presented to the state? If you could go back and do it again...

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Well, actually, what we wanted to be settled, the Texas Supreme Court said once that school system was ordered to be integrated your suit is moot. So the question of whether you can use public funds to build a segregated school was never answered, ultimately. See, because the state Supreme Court said the whole system is under order to integrate. So, they were allowed to go ahead and build the West Side School with public funds for twelve grades of black students, who could be integrated one year at a time for thirteen years. (Laughs) The school board wanted to talk about volunteer---not under court order—but that wasn't what the United States Supreme Court called for. The United States Supreme Court said wait a minute! Separate but equal is no longer legal. But that's exactly what Georgetown wanted to do here. And the members who...men who ran for school board in 1963 ran on that policy. We are opposed to integration—and they got 64% of the vote.

CALLIE ENLOW: What do you think, about ten years later—would they have gotten the same percentage of the vote?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: I think once the community...once it got going...there were no riots or great...and Harvey Miller had a story that was pretty shocking...about some football players, some black players for Georgetown who were deliberately injured...deliberately...by white kids.

CALLIE ENLOW: By their teammates?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Ah, this was an opposing team that came to play against Georgetown. So there were some things that went on, that never got in the newspaper. I had never heard it before, before Harvey talked about it at the panel at the library. So, there were some things that happened. But not like so much of the Old South where things were really bad. Where you had to have federal troops to come in and protect the students so they could enroll in the schools.

CALLIE ENLOW: What did you think about the media coverage during that time?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Well, frankly, and this is documented, Don Scarbrough was the owner and publisher of the *Williamson County Sun* and he was opposed to what we were doing, and he said so—in the newspaper. John Cardwell was a reporter from the *Williamson County Sun* and he was told he better get off of this thing or he was going to lose his job.

CALLIE ENLOW: Yeah, you're talking about the list of CBS members.

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Yes. John Cardwell was a reporter. John Cardwell was an old friend of ours. We had known John at church camp—back to that thing, see—we used to have, as early as 1941, at our all-white summer camp, where you have junior high, senior high. There would always be a representative, a rabbi, who would teach classes on Judaism. There would always be a black person who would talk about race relations or something of this sort, so John had grown up in that

same...he was a conference officer, the way my wife and I were. This is who John Cardwell was and he was writing articles...if you go back and look at the *Williamson County Sun* you can see John Cardwell was writing articles about what the school board did.

CALLIE ENLOW: I can't believe I waited all the way until the end to ask you this, and I'll ask Betty separately, but how did...did you wife get involved at the same time as you did?

NORMAN SPELLMANN: Yeah. The school board, oh, about 1961-62 said we would like to have a citizens committee to look at our schools to help us persuade the public that we need to spend money. We've got too many kids at Annie Purl; we've got too many kids in high school for the space. Let's have a citizens committee to actually go and look at these schools and then make some recommendations. You know, it's just smart. You involve a committee so it isn't just the school board struggling against the community, saying we don't want to pay taxes. It was the smart thing to do. And they laid out in detail organizations that would be represented. And my wife was active in PTA. She was a member of that citizens committee. You sure want to ask her about this because she was on the committee with Jay Wolf, Bill Lott, Bob Brown, and Betty. Bob Brown was a professor of physics at Southwestern. So she got to know Jay Wolf. Bill Lott was a lawyer for the school board. She got to know those people in a hurry! But that was the way she got involved. She had seen it for herself and, as I said, we had children in the school and we thought segregation was wrong, so yeah, she was elected secretary. The first officers, the pastor of the Presbyterian Church was president, black minister was vice-chairman, my wife was secretary. Those were the three officers. The Presbyterian Church was a very conservative church and they told their pastor to get off of the federal suit, so he had to resign. So, George Nelson was elected our chairman and he continued.

CALLIE ENLOW: That is pretty much all the questions...thank you so much!