

## Tommie Smith

Interviewee: Tommie Smith

Interviewer: Courtney L. Tollison, Ph.D.

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### Transcript

PART 1 – 00:00:00

Dr. Tollison: My name is Courtney Tollison. Today is April 11, 2008. I'm having a conversation with Dr. Tommie Smith. You're here in town to speak to the Furman community tonight for The Blue Shoes Track and Field Fundraiser, and we're thrilled to have you here at the campus. This is very exciting.

Dr. Smith: Very nice being here, nice time getting here. I've met very, very friendly people already, so I'm looking forward to this evening.

Dr. Tollison: Wonderful, wonderful. Is this your first trip to Greenville?

Dr. Smith: Uh, I might have flown over it, but I think it's the first time driving through it, and I enjoyed the drive, so it's rather exciting. I love driving.

Dr. Tollison: Good, good. The campus is beautiful. I don't know ..., have you visited the campus yet?

Dr. Smith: No, no, we just arrived, and uh, we hope to see a bit of it before we take the trip back to Georgia on ..., day after tomorrow

Dr. Tollison: Gotcha.

Dr. Smith: So, we'll be excited to look at the university, since I spent forty years in the classroom.

Dr. Tollison: It's beautiful, it really is, so I hope you will enjoy that. Well let's get started. We've got about thirty-five minutes, or so, so I want to cover as much ground as we can. You are, by any account, an amazing athlete. The only man to hold eleven world records simultaneously. That's quite a feat. Do you love to run?

Dr. Smith: It's been a part of my life ..., a big part of my life, from the backwoods of Texas where I was born, all the way to San Jose State, where I finished my athletic career. At one time I didn't think running would be socially profitable, in terms of what I needed to do to equip myself with the human issues of survival, and equality. And it's been, sometimes, a rough road, sometimes a smooth road, and I shook them up and made it a strong road.

Dr. Tollison: Do you still run?.

Dr. Smith: I do. I have to, because I love to eat. I weighed about 190, 192, maybe even three, in sixty-eight, so, I'm about 213 to 215 now, so that's the weight I like to stay at. It's safe. It's healthy, and I can carry it without huffing and puffing too much. (Laughing)

Dr. Tollison: Sure, absolutely. So, how often do you run now?

Dr. Smith: Uh, daily, I run/walk. On Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays, I usually jog and heal work, and on Tuesdays and Thursdays I walk. And every once in a while, I uh, in retrospect it, and get a little high in the action there, and look at myself and say, "old man, you still got it, ... for at least ten yards, for ten meters, yeah." So, I can enjoy taking my body and doing other things with it besides sitting at a table and, you know, masticating food.

Dr. Tollison: I'm sure you're remarkably fast, even still. When did you first realize your speed, that you had this talent?

Dr. Smith: Gosh, ... specifically, ... oh Goodness gracious. High school era, eighth, ninth, tenth, when people began to tell me, "You're fast. You're going to win this race." I didn't think very much of winning. I just ran the race and hit the tape first. You know, I turned around and shook everybody's hand, and told them what a great race they had. I was a very, looking back in retrospect, generous type of athlete, and as long as the athletes finished, and felt good about their finish, I was happy for the entire number of people in a race, because it's not always winning that's important. It's finishing the race, and enjoying the ride en route. That's part of happiness which a lot of people miss, because they dismiss the reality of conversating physically.

Dr. Tollison: That's a nice thought. Thanks for sharing that. Can you tell us about the development of your consciousness, of your race consciousness as an African American, and sort of the development of this aspect of your identity, growing up in Texas, and then in California?

Dr. Smith: Texas was a big experience, because a child's mind is computerized spatially. Whatever it sees, it remembers, not necessarily then, but later, because the power of mind is the potency to understand in retrospect. That's what happened to me. Growing up, Courtney, seeing things, and not being able to speak on them. Number one, I couldn't speak very well, and number two, I was taught to, don't speak until spoken to. So, I had two strikes against me, and I didn't want to have a third one by doing both and not being very strong at either, so that would be the third strike. So, I learned to be quiet, learned correctly how to identify myself verbally, and be careful of what I say, though I can say it correctly. This didn't happen until my high school days, when I looked back and saw the things that happened to me, in the latter mind ..., uh, the before mind, did I begin to put things together constitutionally, and then I knew

that wrong was being done, because that computer mind of mine, as a child growing up, was not programmed with constitutional awareness. My father had a very small education, maybe the third grade. I said maybe. He said he did, but all twelve kids said, "Daddy, are you sure?" We know my mother had high school, maybe the eleventh grade. And our background was nonsecular, all the time, in church, or in the cotton fields, or in the grape fields, in San Joaquin Valley, and some of the people know San Joaquin Valley, the Fresno area, the Tulare area, the Kingsburg area, where [inaudible] Johnson, Bob Mathias, Tommie Smith, that area. We were farm boys, and we grew strong in that faith of work, of persevering, and continuing. So, my high school days was lived, again, I like this word retrospectively, and I grew from what I was programmed with, and it was a clean program, had no viruses. And I learned to continue the effort of treating people equally, and it worked out, although sometimes my equal treatment of others, they used it as my weakness, or my inability to be tough, but I think it's very necessary for the Neanderthal minded people to understand that if you have love in your heart, you can see it by the way you treat other people, and that's how my family grew all twelve of their kids.

Dr. Tollison: When did you move to California?

Dr. Smith: We came to California, uh, September, 1951. That's where we started doing the same thing as we did in Texas, ... farming. I wondered, but I was only six, so I wondered why my father and mother moved us from Texas to California to do the same type of work.

Dr. Tollison: What motivated that?

Dr. Smith: I think getting out, growing, because the family was growing. The family had grown. I had, uh, there was ten of us in all then, and the two were born in California, the two youngest, Eugene and Elizabeth, were born in California. I think it was the awareness that they had to move, they had to move up, even though the trials, tribulations, would be magnified by that move with so many children. I understand that my dad knew, once we got into California, because of his background, raising us the way he did, hard work, there was no other option.

Dr. Tollison: Were there more opportunities for African Americans, at this point in time, in California than in Texas?

Dr. Smith: Let's put it this way. There was more work, more labor occupations, because where we lived in Texas was definitely backwoods. I didn't notice white folks until I was four, five, or even six years-old, once we started moving. I just knew that some morning I saw a horse, that's how we got around in those days, ok. A horse passed in front of the house, we had a dirt road, with a little shotgun house, and the horse had two white kids on it. They passed the house in the morning, very eerie like, because the horse would be walking, couldn't hear the horse because it was walking on a dirt road, but here's the two little white kids

on it, and me and my brothers use to sit there and watch them. They would disappear down the road. They were going someplace. And surely the next day they would come back the same way, like magic.

Dr. Tollison: And this is your first memory of seeing a white person?

00:10:12

Dr. Smith: This is the first memory I noticed a difference. I noticed at the store, the little town store, there was a white person running, in the back, and he was, "You boys get out of here! You boys come here? Where's your daddy?" you know? You know, I just walked in to buy a penny's worth of candy, and we got riff raff. But that was the most picturesque scene, the kids, and they never stopped, they never waved, or nothing. And one day, there was a great knock at the front door in the morning, a great banging on the door, and Daddy opened the door, and there was this little white kid standing there with blood on him. And he [daddy] said, "Boy, what's wrong with you?" He [the boy] was pointing down the road. His sister, that was the other person that was on the horse with him, couldn't have been no more than five or six years-old, and going into school. A buzzard, a vulture, in the road was, uh, partaking breakfast on prey, and he flew up in front of the horse before it got there, and the horse reared to the upwards position, and she fell off, broke her neck, and killed her right there. And he tried to help her out, and she was bleeding, and he just panicked and ran back to the house. I guess it may have been, oh, three hundred meters away.

Dr. Tollison: That's an awful story.

Dr. Smith: Yeah, I know, and I have never told that story before. This is something that ..., this moment, because of the question you asked, revived my memory of that, which is a sad moment, because my growing up was a sad moment, again, in retrospect, to combat whatever happy moment then, because that's all I knew. I had more friends that were animals, you know, a squirrel, or a hawk, or a snake, than I did human, because we were so far in the woods. That was my computer upload.

Dr. Tollison: Do you think your parents had an awareness that if you all moved to California that, as children growing up, you all would have more opportunities for education?

Dr. Smith: Oh of course, without a doubt. And Courtney, that was not identified directly to us, only the moving physically of them. I was always the sneaky ..., well Lee Evans, the great Lee Evans, the 400 meter champion, and the 200, and the 4 X 1, 4 X 4, rather, called me "Sneaky." And I asked him, "Lee, why do you call me

Sneaky?” He said, “Smith, Smith ...” I called him Evans and he called me Smith, “You never say anything, you just quiet, you don’t talk before the race, you don’t talk after the race. You don’t go to parties with us. You just sit around.” I said, “Yep, I just, I like to sit and watch and talk to people.” I don’t know why I said that, anyway that’s ..., that ..., I even forgot the question. (Laughing)

Dr. Tollison: Let’s talk about your interest in, or involvement in Civil Rights activities in high school, in college.

Dr. Smith: No acts in high school, whatsoever. My concern in high school was doing what my parents wanted me to do. That was work, and go to church. That’s it. Work and go to church, and that’s what I did, work and go to church. School was something that I had to do because someone else said I had to do it, not them. The survival in my family was work and church. That’s where my strength comes from, work, and the church. The ethics of work and the belief of non-secular ideals, which keeps me very strong.

Dr. Tollison: Did you keep up with ..., let’s see, you were in high school in the early nineteen-sixties. Did you ...

Dr. Smith: Very early nineteen-sixties, yeah.

Dr. Tollison: Did you keep up with what was going on in the Southeast, with all the civil rights activities?

Dr. Smith: Sometimes, yes, because radios were hard to come by then, for me, and televisions were very difficult, uh, although there were only a few channels then. I don’t think we had cable or satellite. Some folks might have had, but where we lived, seemingly there was no satellites around, or any in the sky. It’s unbelievable for me to sit here and reminisce about how big the world was then. Same size now, in terms of the escalation of the size of the world, but on the inside, the boiling magma on the inside of this earth, has boiled to a point almost of intolerance, ... from human to civil, from love to hate, from man to woman, you know, from animal to man, from gays to straights, it’s just so much is happening now. And I had the conversation not very long ago, in fact, about twelve hours ago, about how technology has assisted in the rush of ideas. I say rush of ideas because once an idea is put in the forefront, its immediately on the other side of the world because of the internet. Back in those days it would take months for it to get, you know, out of the community.

PART 2 – 00:15:35

Dr. Tollison: Do you ..., were ..., did any of your friends, I guess in high school, ... were they

involved in any civil rights activities or organizations?

Dr. Smith: Not that I remember, uh ..., because time for us wasn't as fast as times in the little city, in my ..., which was Lemoore, and it was a very small city then. I lived in the rural area of Lemoore, so I didn't get what most kids got, in terms of the need for civil understanding, or even for human understanding.

Dr. Tollison: What about college?

Dr. Smith: College is when, again, the reflection, or the retrospective ideals of speaking to someone about the past, I began to ... Remember, I had a very, very poor educational upbringing in grammar school. From kindergarten to fourth grade, I couldn't read. I had a hard time spelling "the." And the reason it was hard for me is because you could say it two ways, "thee," or "thuh." You know, and I didn't know which one to say, so I didn't say either, and the teacher thought I couldn't read. Well there was other simplicities like this and the teacher didn't understand how I would explain something in the book, when we wrote different stories, and I would get an "F," and I would ask her, "but why did I get an F?" She said, "This is not right," but it was a story that she asked us to interpret, and the way I interpreted it, she didn't understand that interpretation, because the way I saw the world was different than the way she saw the world being a white woman, ... an older white woman. I stayed in trouble, so I didn't say very much in my classes at all, and the first seat I took was the nearest seat to the door so I wouldn't have to be seen by the other kids in the class. And by the time the direction of the lessons got to me in the back, or the conversation of the teacher to the students got to me in the back, she was on another paragraph, and so I stayed behind, all the time. Sometimes I'd miss half of her lectures. I remember in the fourth grade, this is when I realized that oh my Goodness, I didn't hear anything, but it sure feels good to go out to recess first. That was my thought, you know, get in quick, sit down before anybody else sees you, because they won't see the holes in the butt of your pants, because that's all we had, and get out ..., quickly get outside so they won't see the same thing, and once you get out there, you show them that you're good at something. That was kickball, or basketball, or tetherball, or pull-ups, or playing marbles. All that stuff, I was good in.

Dr. Tollison: So you had quite a bit of success in high school and in college with track?

Dr. Smith: Yeah, with track, because that was my realization of my Goodness gracious, I have something that I can do for myself and my family. And, I didn't understand where it was taking me, because I did say my family, meaning my mother and my father, I would make them proud. I didn't know how to say that then, but as I grew older, even now, I have a hard time saying it because I hardly ever say it, and I certainly didn't say it back then, because you know if I'd say, "I'm going to make my mother and father proud," they would look at me and say, "Boy, I'm already proud, the Lord is on my side," and whoo, that would get me, because what am I going to say to that? My dad stood six feet, about one hundred and

ninety-five pounds, and could lift probably five hundred pounds over his head, so you wouldn't talk back, you know? My mother would sit there and look at him, you know, just look, and shake, and rock, and smile, with all that gold in her mouth, you know. She was something, yeah, ... gosh. I got a hanky so if I start to crying, you know.

Dr. Tollison: That's ok, that's ok. I get ..., people cry on me all the time. No problem. Let's talk about the Olympics. Let's talk about this whole process. You were initially noticed as a college student, ... a college athlete? Is that correct? Qualifying, and noticed by the coaches?

Dr. Smith: Oh yeah, actually, Courtney, it was from grammar school into high school that I was noticed by the high school coaches ...

Dr. Tollison: Right, but the Olympic committee started, the Olympic coaches started ...

Dr. Smith: I held, in the end of my career, in fact in my Junior year, eleven more records, simultaneously, more than any man or woman in track and field has ever held, and still has ever held. Yes, I was noticed, quite a bit. Out of high school I received a scholarship to play basketball, football, or track on a full scholarship. So, I went in and played basketball, and I found out that my speed on the basketball court was quite ..., inept, well not inept, but quite a strain on my body, because once I get the speed up, being six feet four, a hundred and sixty, a hundred and seventy pounds, then it's kind of hard to fast break, do a layup, and stop before you hit a wall that was four feet behind the basket, because the gyms at that time was very small. So, I decided to talk to Stu Inman, who was the head coach, the varsity head coach. He, from San Jose, I think he went up to uh, oh, the Trailblazers, and became a..., their organization, but that was years ago. And that's when I talked to the coach at San Jose State, Lloyd C. "Bud" Winter, who passed some years ago. I said, "Coach, I'm not playing varsity basketball, I'm going out for track." He said, "Ok Tom Tom." That's all he said. But, I knew he was happy because he turned red, and I said, "Ahaa, I got him.," (laughing) and from then on, humanistically speaking, we were very ..., almost like father and son really.

00:21:10

Dr. Tollison: How did you get involved with the Olympics?

Dr. Smith: Qualifying. People passed the Mississippi didn't believe that there was a person in the North running world record times. World record times, that type of speed, so, I was invited to Southern colleges, or Southern track meets, and the one I remember most, indoors, was the Mason Dixon Games. I was brought in there to run the four hundred meters. I think it was a two-twenty track at the time, and one of my first indoor world records. After I left, not only the South

knew it, but all the way up to Maine and Rhode Island knew it also, that Tommie Smith was for real, and he will be on the scene. But even before then, yes, the U.S. Olympic Committee knew about Tommie Smith as a Freshman, because I was a, uh ..., I think a USAT..., USA ..., what is it, United States Track & Field, no, it wasn't, United States Track & Field wasn't then, it was IAAF, me and Jim Ryan, the great Jim Ryan from Kansas, were co-athletes, Co-Freshmen Athletes of the Year. He was a "miler," and I was a "400 meter," so I was known as a Freshman in college. I did have speed, and of course then you have to qualify for the Olympic Games through Olympic qualifications, and I exceeded all of those, and that's how you make the Olympic Team, by qualifying. Certainly not being picked because of the good ole boys, because I wouldn't have been pick on two issues, being black, and being a Civil Rights activist.

Dr. Tollison: That wouldn't be [inaudible] (laughing), to qualify that way.

Dr. Smith: No, no, you have to be as the Olympic code stipulates, qualifying because of standards set by committees of the world, the IOC.

Dr. Tollison: Let's talk about the actual Olympic Games. You're in Mexico City, and you're representing the United States, and this moment where you won a gold medal in the 200 Meter event, set a world record, and was the first person to run the 200 Meters in under twenty seconds. This must have ...

Dr. Smith: Oh yeah, good for you, you young'un. Boy, I say, young folks are alright nowadays (laughing).

Dr. Tollison: (Laughing) I do my research. This must have been such an emotionally charged moment for you. Lets' talk about the decision to raise the Black Power salute. How did you arrive at this decision? Were these done in conversations with John Carlos, and with the Australian runner...

Dr. Smith: Peter Norman.

Dr. Tollison: Peter Norman...

Dr. Smith: Correct.

Dr. Tollison: Before the event? Immediately after the event? Walk me through the steps of this.

Dr. Smith: Ok. Quick as possible, a minute and a half maybe. The Olympic Project for Human Rights was an umbrella platform. It started on the campus of San Jose State University about a year, year and a half, before. Very well organized, nonviolent, and opened to the general public really, not only to excite the thought of participating and conversating, but understanding what it was there for. No malice of intent, only the organization of the young Black athletes mind that there is a responsibility for them. They must exude the excellence within

education, and match that with the athleticism. The victory stand was an appendage of the Olympic Project for Human Rights because the proposed boycott is exactly what is was, a proposed boycott, if certain issues were not being heard by the U.S.O.C. and the American public, and the American justice system. And what we intended to do was not disrupt the living force of man in our country, only a cry for freedom in our non-secular ideologies of faith, a not hate. Because we were Black, Courtney, because we raised a Black fist, bowed our head in prayer, people view this as negative, ... very negative. First of all, because we bowed our heads in prayer. I bow my head in prayer any time before I look at the flag, because if you don't pray, then you don't have a flag in the first place. The glove represented power and freedom. Because I was Black, people call it Black power. They can call it Black power if they want, but the reason on the victory stand was civil rights, human rights. Human because you are. Everybody's doing it now because, you see, because the 200 Olympics with Tibet, Darfur, in the combination with the power structure of those, which is Beijing. Where are the Olympics in 2008? ... Beijing. So, you got the human issue, but the civil issue was the contingent platform which the Olympic athletes stood on in Mexico City. So, within the country, and people are asking me, "why don't you, or do you believe in human rights, that the athletes should, for the human rights sake, get up on the victory stand and do something?" I was on the victory stand because I was an American dealing with the American forces, with issues in my country, in a foreign country. And that was another problem for those who realized, that oh my Goodness, maybe there is something, because if there were not, there wouldn't be any reason for the athletes to be on the victory stand. There was some that said, "Oh my God, there is something wrong, but why do they have to take that to another country and air our dirty laundry? Why wouldn't they do it in Los Angeles at one of the pre-Olympic meets?" Those people did not ..., uh, they missed the point, because the platform that Tommie Smith needed was the platform where people would hear, and I believe, at that particular time, only people heard if other folks also viewed the need to be heard. They would have to have something to identify, and something to explain. It was a silent gesture heard around the world. Tommie Smith never said a word. Only showed the identification of unhappiness, with a cry for freedom. Because with my background of being non-secular, and my idea of faith and not hate, I can live with myself, and I was hoping that others could also see that realism, and give me a chance to identify that particular need, which is the identification of thousands of people within the United States.

Dr. Tollison: So, this was the Olympic Project for Human Rights that was established at San Jose State?

Dr. Smith: Yes.

Dr. Tollison: Uh, there were conversations about ..., before ever, if we win medals, etc., etc., this is what we're going to do?

Dr. Smith: Ok, very good, you did do your research. We had meetings, like I said, it was organized, the Olympic Project for Human Rights, or O.P.H.R., and one of the

last meetings was at Denver, Colorado, in route to Mexico City. The athletes had one of their last meetings there among the Black athletes, in fact, it was an open meeting, and it was decided, no boycott. We're not going to boycott. I was very happy, being a democratic type individual, I was happy that the vote was no boycott. I said, "Phew [sound of relief], man, now I can go win this 200 Meters real quick." But, it was said before we left, Ralph Boston, the great Ralph Boston, the long jumper, was the moderator, and he said, "The toils that so many have gone through, what are you going to do about the work that has already been put forth?" And it was decided by the group that each athlete, each athlete, would represent themselves according to a system that did not represent them. They would have that responsibility, and that's how the different, the different acts on and off the victory stand happened. Very quiet, very nonviolent, and in and out. Just so happens, Tommie Smith and John Carlos, who were so out, that people all over the world could see it because it was very, very visible. Now, gloves, we had gloves, we had socks, we had scarves, we had beads, we had simi..., sim... Give me that word. What's that word?

Dr. Tollison: Symbols?

Dr. Smith: Symbols of the idea to make plain what we were doing, and a necessity of people to understand. Some still don't, and I can understand that, because it was physical and not verbal. The black socks represented poverty, very simple. And they were black, because we were black people fighting civilly for hearings, for a platform, for hope, or some kind of affection in our country dealing with the civil rights, which was the law, which was unequal to us.

PART 3 – 00:30:46

Dr. Tollison: Ok, so we were talking about the socks. We were talking about the fist. We were talking about this.

Dr. Smith: The fist represented power. That's where people get the idea that it was Black power, or a Black Panther move, which it really was not. I'm not a Black Panther, and I had no indication of raising a Black Panther fist. But the symbolization represented freedom and power. I call it many times, a cry for freedom, and it was heard.

Dr. Tollison: This wasn't, ...This was an expression of the general sense of power, right? This was not affiliated, or associated, specifically with the Black Power movement. You were not specifically part of this Black Power movement.

Dr. Smith: No, dealing with Black Panthers, no. I was involved with a movement. It was an

athletic movement.

Dr. Tollison: The O.P.H.R.

Dr. Smith: O.P., yeah, O.P.H.R., the athletic movement. Very closely associated with Black Power, because we were Black, looking for the power of equality. When you're fighting something that's not, you have to have some kind of power, or force, to move on, and because we were Black, people denoted it as Black Power. But this is what it was, and I don't resent those who still feel that it was a Black Power move, because I'm not going to run away from being Black, and having the ideal of empowerment. I stand very firm on pride.

Dr. Tollison: Were these..., so, let's talk about the specifics of your conversations with John Carlos, and the execution of this Black Power salute, or this medal ceremony. This had obviously been discussed during O.P.H.R. conversations, but your, your..., did you and John Carlos have a discussion, "If we place, if we're in this medal ceremony, this is what we're going to do"?

Dr. Smith: No, it was an individual decision. I was a gold medalist. Still am, by the way (laughing). I asked my wife to bring me a pair of gloves. She was still in California, and she said, "Okay." She said, "Should I know something?" or "Is there anything I should know?" I said, "No, I just need black gloves. I intend to use them." She said, "Fine." So, she brought black gloves. You know, I don't know whether she purchased them in California, only she would know that, or whether she purchased them when she got to Mexico, but she did deliver a pair of black gloves to me at my request. In the dungeon..., and I hadn't talked very much about this, because this was my plan, not Lee Evans' plan, not part of the 4 X 1 relays, this was Tommie Smith's plan, because of the individuality of what was said in the meeting. And I didn't know, Courtney, what I was going to do. I knew something would have to be done, nonviolently, respectfully, I thought, later on I found out there was a lot of people out there that thought it was degrading, but that's their thought. And in the dungeon, it came to me, one glove, voice an opinion. It has to be high enough Tommie, so people can see it. The glove will make it very visible. It will make people think. I thought of all these things. It might be negative, probably will, because first of all, this is the Olympic games, Mexico City, you're supposed to go out and get your medal, and be quiet. But, since the..., because of the sixties, the murderous act by our government, civilly, and human, I had a need to react, and I needed the biggest platform I could possibly get. And yes, I was toying between not and yes, and the decision was made just as clear as day, as clear as I'm looking at you. You must. No death, but it is a sacrifice. Ok, I'm done. Finished talking to myself. I said, "John I'm going to use the glove, raise it to the sky when the national anthem is played, and my head will be bowed." And he said, "Okay." I said, "Here's the other glove. If you want it, it's yours, but just remember, it is individual, and I will be in front of you so you'll know by my raising the hand that I'm serious." And I'm putting this now..., because John will see this later. I'm putting this in my words the way it happened for me. Now of course John might have a different story, but so does everybody, have different stories, but I am

the gold medalist, and they were my gloves. After we walked from the dungeon, a very solemn moment, very solemn moment, one of the deepest moments I've ever had in my life, and I'm having trouble right now telling it without crying, because it meant so much in my life. Just comes to that moment. My father being tormented in the fields in the backwoods of Texas. Moving from Texas to California, the same thing happening. Going with him and my brother to pick their checks up from the white..., the white foreman, and the way they were taunting, "Goosey, Black folks supposed to be goosey." The way they were done, and just to get their check sometimes, you know? And that was of a racial tendency, "monkeyism," the "three fifths of a man" idea, or treatment. All this was in my mind. That's why it's so difficult for me to talk about it. But it was real, and it must be discussed. After I walked out, I knew then. I knew then that it was destined, because I was scared, and didn't want to do it, no way. Because I knew how big the sacrifice was. I just didn't know how big it was. Now, some people noticed a shoe in my hand. It was a Puma shoe. They reckoned with the reason why I had this shoe. I like to recognize help, and at that particular time there were really no monies given to athletes because it was what, "il-legal," but illegal sometimes, some folks left off the "i-l," and used the rest of the word, which was more profitable than using the "i-l." So, there were monies past, especially Adidas money. Puma came through, and I had a son in high school, I mean college named Kevin. Kevin is forty now. Kevin was born in February, so Kevin was about six months old when I was in Mexico City. I didn't have no money. I didn't have no job in San Jose, and Puma contacted me through one of my San Jose sources, and said, "We want you to wear Puma shoes, and you will be happy to wear Puma shoes," and I knew there was something. I said, "Oh my Goodness, they're going to give me a few dollars so I can buy Kevin some Similac," because Similac then was expensive. Probably is still now. You mothers out there know what Similac is. So, they helped me. Not only did they buy Similac, but they also gave me some shoes to wear. What was I doing before then? I was wearing Adidas, because everybody was wearing Adidas. I set, I believe, ten world records in Adidas shoes, and still, to this day, have not received one penny, ... one penny, from Adidas, and there were athletes receiving monies. You had the pole vaulters. You had the other white sprinters, and also some Black sprinters, but Tommie Smith wasn't courageous enough to confront anyone and ask them for money, or I will. That wasn't the reason I was running, but I needed help, and if someone else was getting money, hey, give me a little change too, you know? I need some, you know, milk for my son, or a dress for my wife. I took care of them on a daily basis. Puma came through, just with acknowledgements, and help, and they gave me some shoes. Jumping ahead real quickly, and then I'll fall back on why Puma..., why the shoe on the victory stand. I called Adidas. And I feel free by calling names because Adidas is Adidas, and Puma is Puma, Nike is Nike, uh, Reebok is Reebok, and on down the line. So, I call it like it is. I called Adidas in 1978 to help me with job organizations because I was just not rehired, or fired, by Oberlin college, of course I did not get tenure there. I spent six years at Oberlin. I did not get tenure, so I was on my way back to California. So, I was doing everything I possibly can to find a stake so I could move back..., with my family back to California. I called Adidas, and they said, "No." I said, "I ran ten world records in Adidas shoes. All I want to

be..., to be recognized for the work I've done for the company." They said, "Uh, well, you made one big mistake." I hear it..., I hear it now, just as plain as it was said to me in Cleveland, Ohio, when I called. "You ran the right race in the wrong shoe." I've only ran one world record in the Puma shoe, and that was the world record in Mexico City. So, that was a historical moment, and a historical shoe. I still have it. That's why the shoe was on my hand. Recognition of the help I received from people I didn't even know.

00:41:18

Dr. Tollison: I hope Puma has been good to you.

Dr. Smith: Uh, I just rejoined the family last year. That's why you see on my feet, Puma shoes.

Dr. Tollison: Terrific, I'm a fan of Puma now.

Dr. Harrill: Ok, good! (laughing). And if you're a fan of Puma I'll get you a pair of shoes, and you'll never have to put gas in it again (laughing).

Dr. Tollison: It's working. It's working (laughing). So, Carlos decided to do this as well.

Dr. Smith: Yes, it was a decision that Carlos also decided. A personal decision, not because Tommie Smith was doing it, because he had the option not to do anything, but he did it because he felt a need also. And by him doing it, and Tommie Smith doing it, uh, we thought that the understanding would be much clearer, and much more potent than just one athlete doing something, and the other athlete doing the thing that the 4 X 1 relay did, which is put their hand over their heart, I believe that's what they did, and look at the flag that would not represent them fully, totally.

Dr. Tollison: And Peter Norman encouraged?

Dr. Smith: Peter Norman was a humanitarian before he got there, and these are the lessons that we learned about Peter, because he told us how he felt about human rights, as he says, "human rights," (spoken with an Australian accent) in his, uh, uh...

Dr. Tollison: Aussie accent?

Dr. Smith: Aussie accent, yeah. But you see, Peter did not back Tommie and John. Peter backed Peter, like Tommie backed Tommie, and John backed John, and in unison we backed each other. We have to get this straight. People believe that

Peter Norman was up there backing those black guys because they believed in human rights, and he was backing them because he believed in human rights too. Peter believed in human rights before he got to Mexico. The one thing that he did which I didn't want him to do, or I pulled for him doing, because he was not part of the Olympic Project for Human Rights, is wear an Olympic Project for Human Rights button in the eyes of the world, instead of saying it verbally and letting it go at that, because I knew that his symbolizing that he was with us on the victory stand did not send a very proactive message to Australia, because Australia had their own problems. And they definitely had problems, uh, one of the only..., because one of their Aborigine people was a very powerful person, or strong athlete, so they didn't want to have anything to do with the American Blacks. In 1954, and before, American Blacks could not become uh, members of their governmental standards in Australia, so they had blocks against Black folks a long time ago. So, by Peter doing what he did, that classified him as pro-Black, and I don't believe they liked that.

Dr. Tollison: Gotcha, wow. How did the crowd respond?

Dr. Smith: Oh my Goodness. As we walked out..., as we walked out from the dungeon, across the track, and across a little piece of grass, and stepped next to the platform, I think in back of the platform, people were just cheering, and you know, because it was a world record race. First time under twenty flat, and of course it was identified..., of course there was a lot of people that knew about the Olympic Project for Human Rights, and the athletes did make a choice to compete, and not boycott, because of the need for some athletes to compete because they wanted a higher echelon once they got back to America in terms of making monies, but that didn't happen either. Although they did nothing when they got back, they were regulated still as second-class citizens. So, once I mounted the victory stand, there was applause of course, a lot of applause, because I think uh, I was the third one to board. I think the first-place athlete is always the last one to mount the victory platform. Then silence, then we turn towards the flags while they were being raised. And I, of course, I was R.O.T.C, Reserve Officers' Training Corps, in San Jose State, so I did all my turns militarily, left, uh right turn, then my left turn, then left turn again, and get off the stand.

PART 4 – 00:46:05

Dr. Smith: The crowd, and their response to the medal winners in the 200 Meters was about the same as most other events, only they didn't know what was about to happen, so there was really no reason for them to become excited positively, or negatively. But when we walked out from under the dungeon, across the track, there was a might of silence, because people recognized that we had no shoes on, and our pants' leg was rolled up just below the calf of our legs, the

gastrocnemius muscle of our legs.

[A door is opened to the room where the interview is being held and there is an interruption.]

Dr. Tollison: We might need to start..., we might need to start this one more time (laughing), after she comes in. Well, maybe that was a worker.

Dr. Smith: Yeah, uh, he's coughing on down the hall, so maybe so.

Dr. Tollison: Ok, um..., how did the crowd respond at the medal ceremony?

Dr. Smith: The medal ceremony was actually no different, starting from the beginning, as most of the other ceremonies, because the people didn't know what to expect at the medal ceremony of the 200 Meters. But as we walked out, basically the same happened. Crowd was applauding, but then there was a might of silence as we crossed the track because people recognized that we had no shoes on, and our pants' legs were rolled up to the bottom of the gastrocnemius muscle, or the calf muscle, on our legs, and we had a shoe in our hands. At least this is what I thought the crowd saw, the shoe. And they knew something was about to happen. I knew that the American athletes knew that, "Oh my Goodness, Smith and Carlos, two opposite personalities, but equally as fast as each other," and when the final call for the winner to step up on the platform, there was a mighty roar of congratulations. And even today I remember throwing both hands up, and I forgot that the glove was on the hand (laughing), but then the shoe was in the other. That's what I wanted, the shoe, more than the glove, so I raised both hands. Then the hands came down, then we made a right turn. I was in the R.O.T.C. program, the Reserve Officers' Training program, in San Jose, so all our military turns, I used them. And uh..., we came back to the front, after the national anthem was played, the fist raised, bowed head, in prayer. It was finished, we turned back toward the crowd, another military turn, then we turned to come down, which was not a military turn because I had to bend over and get my Puma, which I had put on the stand. And my Goodness, Courtney, coming off the stand, I was so afraid, because there had been so many threats on my life in my country, ... in my country, because of what I believed in. I had made no stands in America, none whatsoever. Very few speeches. I was too busy trying to get my degree. I spent most of my time, if not on the track, or in classrooms, in the library, you know. Yeah, yeah, yeah, I know, sometimes nodding a little bit, you know, you go to the library you got to get a little taste of sleep (laughing). But most of the time I was doing what I knew I had to do to keep me from going back to those fields in San Joaquin Valley to pick cotton, chop cotton, cut grapes, accept it like my father did, because he said, "Boy, you go on to school, because I don't want you to come back and do what I'm doing." Man, it took me so deep, so I worked very hard not to go back, but I did end up going back, but I ended up going back to my same grammar school which I had graduated from to teach, and that's a whole other story, a whole other story. Now, so we walk back across. We walked down from the stand, back across the track, and that's when the people started booing. It just exploded in applause

and boo's, and as I looked up, all I saw was a mass of animals, because I couldn't focus on anything, and probably tears in my eyes. And again, I raised my fist, and Carlos raised his fist, and we disappeared into the agony of society.

00:50:55

Dr. Tollison: The agony of society, wow.

Dr. Smith: Yeah.

Dr. Tollison: That's..., is that how you would characterize the end...

Dr. Smith: The end, yes, the agony of society, because everyone was in agony. I was in agony because I knew that inequality was a big part of the American system, and the other part of the agony meaning, for the fight, was them thinking that what I did was wrong, because it was communist, and we were militants, and we should be dealt with harshly. That's why I say the agony of society.

Dr. Tollison: Let's talk about the response from your coach, from the U.S.O.C

Dr. Smith: My coach, Lloyd C. "Bud" Winter, never said a word about anything. Courtney, not a word about anything. And I spent five years with this man at San Jose State. Four years competing for the college, and my fifth year, just there because I needed to stay there to finish my teaching credentials. Never said a word. Coached me like nothing had happened. And I knew that it was on his mind because sometimes when we were talking about your workouts, and knee action, and leg action, finger action, and the lean, and the elbows, all that. We were very technical. I knew that..., I could see it in his eyes that..., "Now, I don't want to say anything wrong, but if I do, just let me know." I could feel it. I could see it, but I never said anything to him, because he never said anything for me to correct him with the many..., uh, with the many..., there's a word I'm looking for..., with the many ignorant comments coming from people who thought what we did, and our mere existence was an insult to the great American culture. Ofcourse it's great, American culture, and it's one of the best cultures on the face of this earth, but that does not mean that one shouldn't work to try and make it better. Everything was changed.

Dr. Tollison: How did the U.S.O.C. respond to you after this? There's a myth out there that they took your medals away.

Dr. Smith: That's a myth. I still have my medal, and I do believe that John Carlos has his medal. They could do what they could do because they felt the need to reprimand. Because we did nothing jail invoking, that they could not take what

we had won. Righteously and legally, they could not take it, as a reprimand. They did call us to come to the U.S.O.C. office, I do believe, some place I do not know, I didn't entertain the fact at all. I had no reason to come to the Olympic Village, except that they wanted to..., me to identify what I did, and why I did it. I didn't know what they were going to do. That's one reason I didn't go. I did not want to be, again, reprimanded in a way that they knew something was going to happen. In fact, they sent a couple of people, including Jesse Owens, to us while we were in Mexico, and wanted to know what the Black athletes were going to do. And we asked him, "Mr. Owens, why do you know what the Black athletes are going to do," and he honestly said, "Because I would like to take it back to the Olympic Committee and they said they would help you in organizing any kind of stand you need to make." I knew right there, uh-oh, the man has a job, and he must do the job, like my father did. He understood what he was doing, and I think he liked what he was doing because him having competed in 1936, and the atrocities of 1936. Him there in Germany, with Hitler, and coming back here and found out there was a lot of "Hitler-likes" right here in this country, and he was kind of baffled. And he was very happy to have worked for the Olympic Committee, and I understood why. It's the same reason why they did not give me any kind of recognition when I came back.

Dr. Tollison: Did there..., were there any formal reprimands?

Dr. Smith: Uh..., yes. One, we could never compete internationally again. Number two, we were kicked off of the Olympic team. Number three, we were kicked out of the Olympic village. Just kind of, peep, go, we no longer want you. So, we got out there in the streets, but we did have enough contacts to stay in the El Diplomatico Hotel, which was the downtown. And four, it was said that they took our medals away. That's untrue, but the other three were very true.

Dr. Tollison: Did you stay for the rest of the Olympics?

Dr. Smith: No, we stayed for a period of time over the limits the Olympic Committee gave us to leave, just to make that a farce also. Uh, we did try to insult the Olympic Committee. We had a fight, just like they had a fight to keep the Olympic program clean, without injuries, and it was believed that we injured the product of being a worldwide freedom march, the Olympic games. It's political just like anything else. You have to deal with it on a political standpoint. Take a look at what's happening now. As I said earlier, same thing. Its human beings fighting politically to make any type of ending without injury, or prosperous. That's politics.

Dr. Tollison: Do you have any relationship with..., well, you do, because you've actually been asked to coach, right, subsequent Olympic teams, and work with Olympic athletes?

Dr. Smith: Not at all. The Olympic Committee has never approached me for anything dealing with administration, dealing with meeting functions, or coaching any

world class athlete in the United States.

Dr. Tollison: Really??

Dr. Smith: No way, no.

Dr. Tollison: I believe I read something about the um..., the games in Athens. Were you involved, or asked to serve...

Dr. Smith: Oh! My mistake, my mistake. I was one of the coaches on the Indoor Championship team in ninety-five in Barcelona. My mistake, yes, but nothing since then, and that apology is deep from my heart, because I was on that team. I was a coach on that team, an assistant coach. That's where I first met the young guy by the name of Maurice Greene. He was just rising.

Dr. Tollison: And I believe I read that you were asked to serve in a coaching capacity with track for the games in Athens, but that your teaching load at SMC kept you from doing that?

Dr. Smith: I do not remember that. If I did I would own up to it and apologize for it...

Dr. Tollison: No, no, no...

Dr. Smith: No way...

Dr. Tollison: I'll go back and look at it and make sure

Dr. Smith: Ok, good. No, no, I don't, I don't..., righteously speaking, I don't think that was..., oh, I would've taken that (laughing), my Goodness gracious.

Dr. Tollison: (Laughing) I remember reading it, I thought, "This was a great opportunity."

Dr. Smith: Oh wow. But, but, in terms of the Olympic Committee, the U.S.O.C., and my cooperating, or operating within that committee, I have not been asked, and I have not been named as one of their "Hall of Famers," but there were some names there I recognized, and..., and I just recognize them, and mine should be right there beside them. They feel it necessary to still make that reprimand and not recognize me for any Olympic initiatives, at all.

Dr. Tollison: You're in a lot of other hall of Fames.

Dr. Smith: Yeah, I'm in a few (laughing), a few, so..., but what I do, Courtney, I soldier in this country, dealing with young athletes, dealing with my church congregation, dealing with my grandkids, my wife, and speaking engagements that I do in the United States, and around the world. In the month of February, 08, I spent a total of two days at home. The other twenty-six I was moving around in the United States, teaching, lecturing, and of course Germany, and Italy, and uh,

uh..., one I really liked. What is it wife?

“Greece” (Dr. Smith’s wife answers from off camera).

Dr. Smith: Greece? No, there was another one also. Monte Carlo. Yeah.

“Monte Carlo, Beijing” (Dr. Smith’s wife can be heard saying off camera)

01:00:45

Dr. Smith: Yeah, and I also traveled to Beijing..., uh, in February. February wasn’t it? [asks question to wife who is off camera] ..., or was it uh..., it was in February, I do believe, that I went over with Puma to take a look at and see..., look at their runway show. Their runway show with their lifestyle apparel, and it was quite interesting. So, I’ve been quite busy, and I tend to stay busy. If I’m not dealing with some organization in Georgia, I’d love to become a part of some junior high or high school track team, just as an assistant coach, not a head coach, not dealing with the administration, the principal and all that stuff, just coming out, and helping socially with the kids, and with the actual training.

PART 5 – 01:01:34

Dr. Smith: So, so, in Georgia I hope to become part of a school, but right now..., I tried earlier, but I was not accepted, so I hope later on a school will see enough uh, uh..., academic background and athletic background to kind of pull me in and let me work with the kids.

Dr. Tollison: You’re quite a role model for a lot of young athletes.

Dr. Smith: I try to be, in terms of my educational background, number one. My belief in faith, uh..., honesty. I believe that there’s not many things worse than a liar, or a cheater, because you have to cheat to cheat again. You have to lie to come up with a lie that you already had lied about. And that’s a life of death to me. I like to uh, kind of look in the mirror every once in a while and find out that I’m ok. I wrote a note, “I like to look into a mirror and have a conversation with the person looking at you.” That’s what I tell my youth a lot. Look in the mirror and have a conversation with the person that’s looking at you. And the first question I’d like for you to ask that person, “Are you happy with yourself?”, and then discuss the answer with your conscience. It went over pretty good with some kids. Now some kids sit out there and they’ll be looking at me real funny. Then I say this, and they put their hand down and drop their mouths, because they say,

“Oh, that’s cool. That’s really cool. I might even try that.” I heard one kid say one day uh..., not very long ago, he said, “Say man, you got a mirror in your room?” (Laughing) These are the responses I like to hear, because kids are hearing me, and some tried it. I’m sure. I’m sure some kid has gotten up, looked at themselves, and talked with themselves.

Dr. Tollison: I hope so.

Dr. Smith: Including my son. (Laughing)

Dr. Tollison: I’m sure. That’s a great exercise

Dr. Smith: Yeah, it is.

Dr. Tollison: My father often told me, when talking to me about, just the kind of person you want to be, and etc., etc., that you are the only person that has to get up and look at yourself in the mirror every single day.

Dr. Smith: And speak to your conscience.

Dr. Tollison: Let’s talk about..., let’s go back to the Fall of sixty-eight really quickly, and just talk about what’s going through your mind as that Star-Spangled Banner is being played.

01:04:03 [Brief interruption to check camera]

Dr. Tollison: When the Star-Spangled banner was being played, did this go by quickly, did it seem like an eternity?

Dr. Smith: Yeah, about 40 years (laughing). The Star-Spangled Banner played forever. It was one of the longest prayers I’ve had. Of course because time was escalated, because of a fright I had up on the victory stand, and the hand in the air, and people, uh, their thought processes. Who knows, anyone could have had a malignant thought of assassination. It has happened before, so I wanted to get off and get under cover as quickly as possible. But I did hear every word of the Star-Spangled Banner. A very proud young Black man, though I was praying during the time, and I only saw the flag on its rise about three seconds, and that was the time when it started rising up, because my head was bowed and my fist was in the air, but I could feel it through my entire body, it rising above the one other flag anyway. I could say the other two flags, but one of the other flags was the American flag. But the one that represented me was flying high over the other two, and I felt that what I represented, and the hard work that I had been associated with. I say associated with because I’ve been associated with other

different types of work. That very back breaking field work in the San Joaquin Valley with my dad in the fields. And he became a janitor at the grammar school which I attended. I use to help him before school, before my eight o'clock class, and after my three-thirty class. He worked to six o'clock. I'd go out and help him cut grass, or scrub the floors, or move those heavy desks around. During my day, the desks were some of those desks..., the really heavy desk, with the flip top over it, you know, and it closes, and if the books are in there you might get a desk weighing seventy-five pounds, because of the books, and we'd have to move all those out of the way, and scrub..., it was tough, back breaking. But Courtney, I stayed in shape by doing hard labor work, and people asked me many times when I went back to school in the Fall, how did I stay in shape, what gym did I use, you know? I didn't know what a gym was, except the basketball gym, and there were no weights in there. But I realized during college that..., you know, because I went back down to Lemoore to help my father my first two years in college, that when I came back to school to compete in track and field, it was like I just left there. We came before..., because I was ready to run, uh, in uh, the first track meet was in late, later part of January, early part of February. And in fact, one of my first world records was the Mason Dixon Games in Kentucky, and gosh, I ran the world record which eclipsed the old world record by two or three strides, and I didn't think anything of it. You know? That's just what I did. I ran, and I ran fast, because it makes people happy, and that's what I like to do. Like my mother, she loved to make people happy, and that's what I like to do.

Dr. Tollison: Can I..., I don't want to get too personal, but what were you..., what was your prayer while...

Dr. Smith: Lord, I know you're omniscient. You're omnipresent, and you're omnipotent. Please use all three of those "o's" to get me off of here. (Laughing) Around that, my prayer, and it was thank you for your rising me, and letting me shine. Thank you for the strength that you gave me to unwind. Thank you for things, just thank you. And I prayed as long as the national anthem played. So, my prayer was basically, Courtney, around His strength, around His goodness, and that He delivered His son to us to die for our sins, and what I did on the victory stand was only because of His goodness. That's my life. Not a life of militancy. Not a life of communism, if that's what people thought it was. And because I did that to try to bring to the forefront the reality and need of equality, and the banishing of inequality, then you can label me any way you want.

Dr. Tollison: You knew..., wow, while planning this mentally, that this would have a major impact. That this would make quite a statement. But, did you have any idea of the extent to which this would determine the rest of your life?

Dr. Smith: No, I had no extent of the deepness of this stand. I know it was a stand, and I knew I had a responsibility to withstand, like so many before me have withstood, so I can still stand. Still water runs deep, and I was deeply under the wave of one of the most..., the biggest torrents ever, and it was called society, it was called man, and the evolution of our thoughts. Just so happens the

evolution of thoughts of my country was not equated with justice, only the word spelled correctly, and my book, "Silent Gesture," that was G-e-s-t-u-r-e, not associated with "justice," and it came from the silence of that resound on the victory stand in 1968.

01:10:28

Dr. Tollison: We've talked a lot about education, and your education growing up, and your commitment to education since, and your desire to continue to work in an educational environment. You earned your PhD several years ago and...

Dr. Smith: No, I'm a new kid on the block. Two years ago.

Dr. Tollison: Two years ago?

Dr. Smith: 05, yeah.

Dr. Tollison: 05, ...three years ago.

Dr. Smith: Three years ago. You see, I told you. (Laughing, pointing to his head like he is forgetful)

Dr. Tollison: (Laughing) I do this all the time..., thinking it's not...

Dr. Smith: You're a college professor, so you forget also, right? (Laughing) Senility folks, senility.

Dr. Tollison: (Laughing) I live in the past, but in 2005, three, two, three years ago...

Dr. Smith: Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Tollison: That must have been quite an accomplishment.

Dr. Smith: Well it was. It was. All the years that I had worked and put things together. Kept things moving, and kept things rolling. San Jose State reviewed it and noted to the other nineteen, twenty colleges in that college system that there was a need to honor excitement and humanitarians. I had received my master's degree in the late seventies, and I hadn't really..., I had entered a PhD program but because of all the things that was happening, I had to drop out before I had paid the money. You know, you don't want to pay the money then drop out afterwards. I had investigated that and it was a little too steep, because I really couldn't find a job strong enough to go to a PhD equipped college. So, San Jose State stepped up, and that's why I received my PhD there, and it was uh..., yes,

it was great, especially walking across the stage with all that garb on, you know? You got tassels, you know? I felt kind of like Tina Turner, you know, just let me get on across the stage, you know? (Laughing)

Dr. Tollison: How many years were you..., did you study towards the PhD?

Dr. Smith: Forty. (Laughing) Yeah, really, because it was an honorary degree because of the things that had happened. People know what an honorary degree is.

Dr. Tollison: Sure, absolutely, you spent your life really, I guess, educating yourself.

Dr. Smith: That's what it was, an entire life. It took forty years for the school to give back what I tried to instill, and there's a twenty-foot statue standing in the court outside the stadium. The biggest statue I've seen..., oh, it's a huge statue. When I stand up under it my head touches my crotch. (Laughing) That don't mean nothing folks, ok (laughing), but that's how big it is.

Dr. Tollison: It's of you, and then Carlos is right behind you?

Dr. Smith: Uh-huh. Peter Norman's spot is vacant, because he felt that uh..., in his own words, he felt that it should be vacant so other people could stand, so other..., he said..., the way he said it was so African Americans could stand and view the need to be a part of a stand of which they will probably never have..., probably will never have a chance to do in their lives. But this stand is for everybody.

Dr. Tollison: It's a symbolic space.

Dr. Smith: Yeah.

Dr. Tollison: That's really nice.

Dr. Smith: That's what it is. I even stood in that space myself and took a picture. (Laughing)

Dr. Tollison: (Laughing) That's wonderful. It's got to make you feel very proud.

Dr. Smith: Oh of course. Now the school, San Jose State..., and it was prompted by a white male in an African American class. The teacher was uh..., Professor Harris, and I had Professor Harris' son, as an athlete, at Santa Monica College years and years later. And it was a very powerful class, because a white kid got the idea from Professor Harris to do a project, and that was the project he did. A world-wide project, and it cost about half a million dollars for that thing to happen.

Dr. Tollison: Wow. Last question because I know we've got, you've got to go get ready for your big evening but, uh..., frequently I, when I'm interviewing, you know these interviews are hopefully going to be around for a very, very long time, and they'll be preserved as part of the Furman oral history repository, but I often times ask what you want people to know about you. It may be, you know,

respond..., what question would you want someone to ask you, or what kind of thought would you like people to remember you by? What do you want us to know? What do you want people, in history..., fifty, sixty, seventy years to know?

Dr. Smith: I'm a very simple person. I've been simple all my life. I just love academics. I love education, because inside of education grows strength and the ability to relate. It's education. There is no option to education. You must get an education no matter what you're doing. You must be educated in what you want to be. You just cannot be something, and all of a sudden, the next morning you wake up and say I'm it. It's the idea of being faithful to your need to be, which is the substance of things hoped for. The evidence of things not seen. You must keep hope alive, not only in your community, but you are a community that's investing in your surroundings, and together with your strength of being a community, and being a part of the whole, like I was on the victory stand, then you will be positive in your message to people around you, especially the young people. So, maintain faith, maintain hope, and I would like to be remembered as a non-secular, idealistic person who knows from which I came, and who..., those who strived before me, are being honored by my will to sustain proactivity in a culture that always needs improving. So, you must work, and you must be productive, and proactive.

Dr. Tollison: Great, thank you very much. Thanks so much Dr. Smith for spending some time talking with me today. I really do appreciate it, and thanks for being here at Furman.

Dr. Smith: Thank you. I enjoyed it.

Dr. Tollison: Take care.

Dr. Smith: Take care.

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