



City of Alexandria  
Office of Historic Alexandria  
*Alexandria Legacies*  
**Oral History Program**



**Project Name:** *Alexandria Legacies-Living Legends*

**Title:** *Interview with Lynnwood Campbell*

**Date of Interview:** *March 10, 2011*

**Location of Interview:** *Kate Waller Barrett Branch Library, Alexandria, VA*

**Interviewer:** *Molly Kerr*

**Transcriber:** *Stacy Bowe*

**Abstract:** *Lynnwood Campbell was born in Washington, D.C. in 1947 and has been nominated as a Living Legend of 2011. During his life, Lynnwood has accrued many civil rights “firsts”: he was the first minority student in St. Mary’s elementary school, the first black cashier at a local popular grocery store, and even one of the first black speakers at a national accounting conference. An accountant by training, Mr. Campbell was born with an unquestionable duty to community which is evidenced by his tenure with the Urban League, NAACP, the Human Rights Commission and the Alexandria School Board. He successfully campaigned to increase early childhood development in Alexandria schools and raised academic requirements for athletes – a debate that drew national attention! He has witnessed the incredible changes within the city of Alexandria during the height of desegregation and discusses the positive and negative effects it has had on the local population.*

**This transcript has been edited by the interviewee and may not reflect the audio-recording exactly.**

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Lynnwood Campbell, Jr., 2011  
 (credit: Molly Kerr for Alexandria Archaeology)

**Biographical Overview**

Molly Kerr:	Today is March 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2011. This is an oral history interview on behalf of Living Legends 2011. The interviewer today is Molly Kerr, and being interviewed is...
Lynnwood Campbell:	Lynnwood Campbell.
M.K.:	Mr. Campbell, so, may I have your full name?
Lynnwood Campbell:	Lynnwood, Gregory Campbell, Jr.
M.K.:	And you do not need to wait for me to write this is more for me to just kind of cogitate. Fortunately, the tape is going to catch everything, so we'll get the rest of it later. Is there any address other than the one that I sent you the letter to initially to which we should have on file for you?
Lynnwood Campbell:	I have a post office box. P.O. Box 1984.
M.K.:	Any significance in that?
Lynnwood Campbell:	No.
M.K.:	Just by accident? [chuckles]
Lynnwood Campbell:	Yes.
M.K.:	And the zip on that?

Lynnwood Campbell:	2-2-3-1-3.
M.K.:	All right. And Mr. Campbell where were you born?
Lynnwood Campbell:	I was born in Freeman's Hospital, Washington D.C. April 28 <sup>th</sup> , 1947.
M.K.:	So you've been here your whole life.
Lynnwood Campbell:	Just about.
M.K.:	So where else have you been since it's not entirely?
Lynnwood Campbell:	I got married in 1968.  I lived in Washington D.C. while I was attending Howard University. And upon graduation, the Army sent me to Seattle, Washington. I never got there. They sent me back to Alexandria because they wanted an accountant with public accounting experience and someone familiar with the area. I could not find an apartment anywhere in Alexandria. I had to go to the Army and talk to the JAG Corps and they talked to some realtors and I found an apartment in Arlington. I stayed in Arlington from 1970 to 1975, and then I moved back to Alexandria.
M.K.:	Where did you live when you were growing up?
Lynnwood Campbell:	I lived two blocks from here, 425 North Alfred Street.
M.K.:	And so you're father is Lynnwood Gregory Campbell senior.
Lynnwood Campbell:	Yes.
M.K.:	What is your mother's name?
Lynnwood Campbell:	Dorthea.
M.K.:	And how do you spell that?
Lynnwood Campbell:	D-O-R-T-H-E-A. Middle name is Bentley. Last name Campbell.
M.K.:	Did you have any brothers or sisters?
Lynnwood Campbell:	I have two brothers and one sister.
M.K.:	And their names?
Lynnwood Campbell:	My sister's name was Wilma Anderson.
M.K.:	All right.
Lynnwood Campbell:	That's her married name too. My brother's name was Bernard Campbell. And I have another brother. Zachary Moore. He was our next door neighbor. His mother died in his sleep and my mother raised him.
M.K.:	And are all your siblings close by?
Lynnwood Campbell:	My sister is, passed away. Bernard lives in Alexandria, Zachary lives in Silver Spring.
M.K.:	All right, so you mentioned that went to Howard University, what was your degree?
Lynnwood Campbell:	I majored in accounting. My minor was economics.
M.K.:	And before Howard University what schools in the Alexandria area did you attend?
Lynnwood Campbell:	From the first grade to the seventh grade, I attended Saint Joseph's Elementary School, on North Columbus street. I attended Saint Mary's elementary school on Green Street for the eighth grade. I was the first

	minority student, or first black student to attend. I wanted to go to military school, but my parents couldn't afford it so I went to Gordon Junior High School in Washington D.C., in the ninth grade. They had ROTC in the neighboring high school. So, I decided I wanted to go to Western High School, which was the feeder school for Gordon. So I graduated from Western in 1965.
<b>Army Service/Early Military Experiences</b>	
M.K.:	Now just out of curiosity what made you aspire to go to military school? Most children run from it.
Lynnwood Campbell:	It was not a military school. In the District of Columbia, all high schools required two years of ROTC. I had a cousin who was in ROTC in a private school. I saw him become the top cadet, he was William Majors, also from Alexandria. I figured if he could do it, I could do it. So I joined, two years was required, the third year I volunteered.
M.K.:	Ok and I assume you did the third year.
Lynnwood Campbell:	Yes, I did.
M.K.:	You were in the service, what branch?
Lynnwood Campbell:	I was in the Army.
M.K.:	How long were you in the Army?
Lynnwood Campbell:	I was on active duty for twenty-one months, I was in the Reserves for, sometimes I can't remember, either four or five years? I was a US Finance Officer, known as the Deputy Finance and Accounting Officer for the Military District of Washington. That's on active duty. Then I joined the Reserves. It was called the 2290 <sup>th</sup> US Army Mobile Hospital, a MASH unit just like the one you see on television.
M.K.:	And after the Army, what did you aspire to be? And what have you been?
Lynnwood Campbell:	Well, even before the army, as soon as I graduated I went to work for Price Waterhouse, as an auditor. I worked four months, when I started, I already had my orders for active duty, so I started in January and then in April I went on active duty. I stayed on active duty for twenty-one months. I returned to Price Waterhouse and I stayed there – until 1977. I was a CPA, and I worked on the audit staff and sometimes did consulting.
M.K.:	And since 1977, what have you done?
Lynnwood Campbell:	In 1977, I took over a position as the Vice President and Controller of Capital City Wholesale. It was at that time the fourteenth largest black owned company in the United States.
M.K.:	Wow.
Lynnwood Campbell:	In 1980, I joined the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, as a policy accountant. I later became the manager of Accounting and later became the director of Accounting, then I became the director of the EEO office, and then I became the director of Internal Review & Quality control.
M.K.:	You've worn a lot of hats. [laughter]
Lynnwood Campbell:	Yes! And they all fit.

M.K.:	That's good. That's good. So there are not many people I think that aspire to map specific careers so that's very inspirational.
Lynnwood Campbell:	As an accountant I wanted to someday go and see the FASB and it just turns out, by accident, the guy that hired me at Price Waterhouse ended up as the chairman of the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB).
M.K.:	Wow.
Lynnwood Campbell:	And I did get to go see him one day to talk about an issue. I went to Connecticut and I sat at the table to talk about the issue and instead of talking about the issue, he says, "Where have you been? I haven't seen you since you left for the Army!" [laughter]
M.K.:	Did you get a good tour and you got to see how it worked?
Lynnwood Campbell:	I got a good tour. I was there on business.
M.K.:	So eventually you did get to the business conversation.
Lynnwood Campbell:	Yes we did.
M.K.:	So aside from all those work related hats, what kind of civic-related hats have you worn?
<b>Involvement with the Urban League, Human Rights Commission and Alexandria School Board</b>	
Lynnwood Campbell:	Well, when I worked for Price Waterhouse I used to get home at eleven o'clock at night, and most of the time we worked on Saturdays, and I thought I was doing great if I worked half a day on Sunday. Once I stopped working for Price Waterhouse the Urban League was next door to my mother's house and they kept begging me to join, begging me to join, and I was like "No, no, no." They asked me to look at a capitol budget for the school system. I looked at the budget and gave them some recommendations on what to say before the school board and without me knowing, somehow I became on the Education Committee. [chuckling] And then I became the chair of the Education Committee. And then I became the chair on what was called the Northern Virginia branch of the Washington Urban League. And once I became chair of Northern Virginia Branch that automatically gave me a seat on the board of the directors of the Washington Urban League. I spent maybe two terms on the Washington Urban League board. We decided to open our own branch of the Urban League in Alexandria so they had a separate charter. So I was on both Urban League boards. And at the same time I was on the NAACP board in Alexandria. By being on both of them, the city, I can't remember who asked me, but I was asked to joined the Human Rights Commission. And I applied for the Human Rights Commission, I finished up someone else's term, and then I finished up a term of on my own. While I was on the Human Rights Commission, I had been the campaign manager for Nelson Green, senior. He was the first black Democrat to get elected to the City Council. Doing the campaign I met Jim Moran and several other people. Jim Moran asked me to come and serve on the school board. My daughter Robin, was attending Saint Mary's, at the same school where I

	was the first minority, Jim said I had to take my daughter out of that school in order to sit on the city's public school board. I said no. Jim came back to me the next year and said, "Let's try it one more time." I said, "No, I'm not taking my daughter out." And he said, "I'll try it anyway." So there were seven people on council, two said they would vote for me, the other five wouldn't talk to me.
<b>Immediate Family Details</b>	
Lynnwood Campbell:	Somehow at the night of the vote I got four votes and got on the school board. And my daughter, the <i>Washington Post</i> wanted to talk to my daughter about the school. She is now a journalist herself, and she said, "I'm not running for school board. I don't have to answer your questions. It's my school, I like it, end of story."
M.K.:	Right.
Lynnwood Campbell:	So she finished Saint Mary's. She later went to GW [High School] and graduated from TC Williams [High School], with the understanding that my dad's on the school board, and I don't want any special favors and I don't want anyone to know that I'm going to TC. No one knew she was going to TC. Some of the administrators knew, but others did not know until she was in the twelfth grade.
M.K.:	She laid low the whole time.
Lynnwood Campbell:	She laid low the whole time.
M.K.:	And I'm sure she made sure not to get in to trouble so that she'd get called out too.
Lynnwood Campbell:	We don't know where she got her smarts from, but she was a National Merit Scholarship semifinalist. She's very smart.
M.K.:	I think she probably got her smarts from both you and your wife, so...
Lynnwood Campbell:	I'd say my wife, not me. [laughter]
M.K.:	And what is your wife's name?
Lynnwood Campbell:	My wife's name is Deborah. D-E-B-O-R-A-H.
M.K.:	And do you have any other children?
Lynnwood Campbell:	No.
M.K.:	Just Robin.
Lynnwood Campbell:	Just Robin.
M.K.:	And is Robin close by?
Lynnwood Campbell:	She lives in a suburb of Philadelphia.
M.K.:	[taking notes] All right are you feeling warmed up?
Lynnwood Campbell:	Sure.
<b>Living Legends Nomination</b>	
M.K.:	Let's take a few minutes and talk about your nomination as a Living Legend. How do you feel about being nominated?
Lynnwood Campbell:	The living part is great! [laughter] I don't feel like I'm a legend. There's a lot of people here that I work with. At least six of the legends that were nominated this year are people that I have worked extremely

	close with for many years. I never set out to do anything for personal gain. I've been asked to serve on certain committees and things. I've just done it. I've never been poor, I've never been hungry, I've never been without, so you have to give back to the community.
M.K.:	Well, what...you just gave several qualifications about why you should give back to the community, what, what or who instilled that in you?
Lynnwood Campbell:	I guess it was, I guess I have to say my mother. If I called my mother and told her right now that you didn't have enough food to eat, she would make sure you had lunch, dinner, today and some food for tomorrow. And I learned from my grandmother, she was very generous also.
M.K.:	One of the reasons why I'm, one of the lines of these questions, for me, is that, as I started, have started to talk to the Legends, I've realized that everybody has something in here that makes them motivated to be active in the community and whether it be something small or something very large, for me personally I'm kind of seeking out what some of those motivating factors are, um, with the hope of being able to help the city of Alexandria try to encourage other folks to potentially become more involved. Because there's lots of big things out there to be done and somebody told me, although I'm fairly new to the area, that the opportunities to, of boards and commissions and things that you can sit on with the city is about as tall as I am, and they're always looking for people to become more involved. So, maybe we can find a way to figure out what that piece is, to get more people inspired.
Lynnwood Campbell:	I like to do it myself, it's, sometimes it's kind of difficult to find young minorities that are willing to serve a bit of their time. They just don't seem to be interested.
M.K.:	What achievement in your lifetime are you the most proud of? What have you done so far that you're...?
<b>ROTC Campaign for Alexandria</b>	
Lynnwood Campbell:	Well first off, I haven't done anything by myself. Everything I've done on the school board and with United Way and with the other agencies that I've, boards I've served on, I've served on with some real good people. I sort of followed in their footsteps and continued on. Primarily a focus on what the mission is, what we need to do, get it done, get it over. So you know, I got on the school board with the understanding that I would stay for three years and I ended up staying for nine years. Because I went through ROTC and became a commissioned officer. Nelson Green was also on the school board [and] he was also a commissioned officer. He also went to Western High School. One night we went to Arlington and I saw they had ROTC in Arlington and I was like, "Wow, I didn't know they had ROTC in the public schools of Virginia." So I approached the Army and said, "How can I do it?" And they came to the school board and said, "It will take a minimum of five years to get it done." So the board voted that we would go on a list. I immediately went the next day to the

	Army and said, "Give me the money." [laughter] And they gave us the money, immediately.
M.K.:	Wow.
Lynnwood Campbell:	And we had ROTC the next September. It was an award winning program from the first year and it's been an award winning program ever since.
<b>Raising the Academic Average for Athletes</b>	
Lynnwood Campbell:	While I was on the school board, it was very controversial to some people. The state of Virginia changed the eligibility rules for athletes. When it was presented to the board, I said, "What a minute, it looks like it requires a 'D' average." The administrator says, "Oh no, no, no, it requires passing." I was like, "No it requires a 'D' average." I just asked the city council to give me extra money to improve the quality of schools. I'm not going to vote for something that only requires a "D" average. So I asked that, I made a motion that we accept the policy with a "C" average. All hell broke loose! [laughter] I was under the impression that there was already a "C" average rule. Some people said there was, some people said there [wasn't]. There was nothing in writing. Some cultures had required them, athletes, to have a "C" average but there was nothing for them. I lost; the only vote I got was Nelson Green, Junior's. The undertaker, who sat on the board with me. Lou Cook was the chairman of the board. She said look, "Wait, wait [until] next year, wait until we get some new board members. Try it again." I said, "I'm going to try it again." There were people on the community who told me, "Back off. If you don't back off, you will not be on the school board again." I added two words, "So what?" I'm going to do what I believe if they don't want me on the school board, ok, that's fine. I'll just go do something else. So I was at work one day and James Brown, the NFL sportscaster called me at work and said, "How about coming to the TV station because I don't like what you're doing and I want to interview you on television."
M.K.:	[chuckling] And that's how he asked? "I don't like what you're doing, so I want to talk to you."
Lynnwood Campbell:	Yes.
M.K.:	That inspires confidence.
Lynnwood Campbell:	Well James, guess what, [chuckling] if you don't like what I'm doing, don't expect me to come to you. So he said, "I'm going to get on television tonight and I'm going to say you refused to talk to me." I was like, "And guess what James, and tomorrow I will sue you. I did not refuse to talk to you. I refused to come to your station because you disagree with me." And he said, "We don't have the budget to come and talk to you." I said, "If you don't have the budget to come and talk to me, then you don't have a story." And I said, "By the way, you played basketball and you got a scholarship and you have a job. All I'm trying to do is get these kids that play sports and benefit the coach, that they have a chance at a career." And he said, "I'm very sorry, but we can't come."

	Ten minutes later he called me and said, "The trucks are on the way." They were not hand held cameras back then, they had to pull the cable into the building. So he came, he came in, and we did the interview.
M.K.:	Where were you?
Lynnwood Campbell:	At work. At work. [chuckling] It's the only day I didn't wear a necktie. Back then you had to wear them. So I had to borrow my boss' neck tie which was the ugliest tie, [laughter] in the world! I don't want him to hear this. And we did the interview. The next morning, I went to work and my boss said, "James Brown is on the phone again." I was like, "Well, tell him I don't want to talk to him." [chuckling] So I went and talked to him and he said, "I want to talk to you again." And I was like, "What about it? You want to beat me up again?" And he said, "No, I want to help you."
M.K.:	Ah!
Lynnwood Campbell:	I was like, "Did you get religion? [laughter] Overnight, James?" He said, "No, I got calls from John Thompson, we got calls from Joe Gibbs, we got calls from the Bullets' coach, we got calls from players." He said, "We got the most calls 15 minutes after you went off the air than the station ever got saying 'He's right, you're wrong.'"
M.K.:	Wow.
Lynnwood Campbell:	So he said, "I'm going to help you."
M.K.:	Wow.
Lynnwood Campbell:	I was like, "You, you really do have religion." [laughter] So we did the interview over. Channel Four, Five, Seven, and Nine, all did an editorial saying this is the way to go.
M.K.:	Wow.
Lynnwood Campbell:	I still couldn't get five votes on the school board, I was up to four. The cameras showed up at the board meeting, the night of the vote. I think school board members did not want to vote no on television. It passed seven to two.
M.K.:	Wow.
Lynnwood Campbell:	The guy that's a Living Legend that's next to me in the photo is Tim Elliot. Tim, at that time was the vice chair of the board. He was totally opposed to it. He voted no. One year later, he made the policy stricter.
M.K.:	Wow.
Lynnwood Campbell:	Yes. That policy has been in effect ever since and I think it was eighty-two or eighty-three, the coaches said, "We will never win another triple league championship." Like the one in the movies, <i>Remember the Titans</i> . One year after the "C" average rule was put in, they won the same championship game again. It kind of defeated all the things they were saying. The thing that was good about it was the students. I talked to the students, and they said, "If you have a 'C' average we'll get a 'C' average." And there were lots of administrators who supported it, but they couldn't support it publicly because they didn't want to lose their jobs.

<b>Implementing “Early Childhood Development” and All-Day Kindergarten</b>	
Lynnwood Campbell:	Before I got on the school board I worked with something called “early childhood development.” It was brand new. When I talked about it at the school board, meetings my first year, other school board members laughed at it. They said, “What do you want to do, have children born at Alexandria Hospital and enroll them in school the next day?” Answer was, “Why not? Why not?”
M.K.:	Right, right.
Lynnwood Campbell:	<p>I had done some reading while I was in the Army about kids [who] can read at two years old. I didn’t believe it. My daughter, when she was two years old could read. So I had been on a committee, with their belief, to change the standards from five years old to four years old. I said, “No, why not change it to two?” I presented that at the school board four years in a row before I got any traction. And there was a lady named Karen Mitscoff, she was a nursery school teacher. She came up and she said, “I’ll help you. I’ll help you if I lose my job.” She said, “You can teach kids how to start reading at age zero, not two.” So the school board gave us \$5000 to study the issue. My army buddy, who was a year ahead of me at ROTC at Howard [University], became the Secretary of Education in the state of Virginia, James Dike, while I was on the school board. So I went to James and said, “Hey, let’s make this rule age zero.” He said, “You’re crazy.” [laughter]</p> <p>The rule is age zero now. It has been ever since. And there were other things about the early childhood development that I wanted to start. One was all-day kindergarten. Kindergarten was a half day and nobody said anything. The teachers told me behind the scenes, ‘it’s a waste of time and money.’ By the time kids get here in the morning, you settle them down, it’s time to get back on the bus, so they’re not learning anything. The school board was totally opposed to making it all-day because of the cost. So I went to my good friend, Vola Lawson. She was the city manager. Jim Moran, who asked me to serve on the school board, was the mayor. Patsy Ticer was the vice mayor. Tim Elliot who was now the chair when I was the vice chair, I said, “I want to do this.” We thought the city would say no. Vola said, “If you can do it in a step process, I’ll see what we can do.” So she said, “Make two full day kindergartens this year, two next year, three years from now, the city can’t do it all.” And that’s how it got done. So that’s how we got full day kindergarten. The teacher that helped me, Karen Mitscoff, her boyfriend killed her.</p>
M.K.:	Oh wow.
Lynnwood Campbell:	He threatened her with a gun. She called the police. They arrested him, took him to jail, let him go! He went right back, took the gun and killed her. I was very unhappy. I went to see the police chief.
M.K.:	I would say so. I would say so.

Lynnwood Campbell:	I said, "We have to stop this. This is just absolute nonsense." And after that the city council immediately made a rule in Alexandria: You pull a gun on somebody, you're going to be detained for several days. You're not going to be able to go back. So, pull a gun on somebody nowadays you're going to stay three, three days, you may not be in jail but you will be off the streets.
M.K.:	Do you think that, your daughter is what inspired you to get involved with the early, age early, education programs?
Lynnwood Campbell:	I think more it was the article that I read. I didn't believe it. As a school, I can't think of the name of the church... Washington Street Baptist Church. My sister's son was four years old, he went to kindergarten there or daycare. They [taught] him how to read. She was two, she couldn't read. She cried because she couldn't read. The teacher came to pick him up, said, "How come the little girl doesn't go to school?" [because] she was big for two years old. I said she is only two and they wouldn't take them before they were four. She told the teacher, "I want to know how to read." The lady's name is Mrs. Carter and Mrs. Carter said, "I'm going to come and get you and I'm going to take you to school and I'm going to teach you how to read," and Mrs. Carter taught her how to read.
M.K.:	Well, children can inspire us to do all kinds of things. So...
Lynnwood Campbell:	And I know plenty [of] kids that are two years old and they can read.
M.K.:	What would you say, you've talked a little bit about some of the obstacles that you faced in terms of, getting some of those protocols passed, or whether it be this, we'll use the "C" average, what would you say was the biggest obstacle, aside from the school board itself, to implementing that?
Lynnwood Campbell:	The obstacles, the obstacles don't stop me. [laughter]
M.K.:	Ok, why not?
Lynnwood Campbell:	I think probably because the training [and] the things I learned in the military are [to] just go around the obstacle. I always found a way to get around it. Sometimes you just have to be persistent. When you figure out what you want to do, figure out a plan to do it, and do it. The walls fall down after awhile.
M.K.:	I have to say that that's been a common theme that I have picked up on with these conversations is persistence.
Lynnwood Campbell:	Yeah, you got to be persistent. [laughter] And you got to be willing to negotiate. You can't lose your temper. In the process.
M.K.:	Why has it been important to you to be persistent?
Lynnwood Campbell:	I don't know I guess, that's my nature. I don't know. I mean I didn't set out to do any of this stuff. My mother always said, "If the topic was small, if you're going to be part of something, go and make a difference, if you're not going to make a difference, stay home." [baby cry] And I do get upset when people get on boards, commissions, councils, and do nothing. I don't like that.

M.K.:	What was, you joined the school board somewhat reluctantly...
Lynnwood Campbell:	Yes.
<b>Views on the Gap between Poor, Minority Students and Other Students</b>	
M.K.:	What would you say when you committed to doing it, was the one thing you hoped to accomplish?
Lynnwood Campbell:	<p>Prior to getting on the school board, there was the article in the <i>Washington Post</i> every year. It was, I could summarize it and say “The reason for the low test scores [is] the poor black kids.” I saw that every year, every year I saw it, I hated it. I was poor, I was never without, I didn’t know I was poor. But I was never cold, never hungry, never went without food. But I wasn’t dumb. And I knew a lot of black kids that were not dumb that were poor. So part of my work on the Urban League, was [quoting] “let’s close this gap between minorities and non-minorities.” So when I got on the school board, sure enough, there was an article in the paper there were quotes from the top administrators that poor blacks were the cause of the test grades being low. I said ok, I want to see the data. Guess what, there was no data. So, the superintendent told me, “We don’t have the data that you want, it costs like \$6000 to get the analysis that you want.” The question was, “How did you make the statements?” “Well, we know that’s the case.” No you don’t! Ok, I was pretty forceful; don’t make those statements again until we have the data to back it up. Once we had the data, ok, I won’t, I’ll accept it. But you got to show me the data. So we ordered the data. The data showed a lot of things. [chuckling] Ok. And it also showed there were a lot smart blacks, and it also showed there were a lot of whites that were in the same boat, that the blacks were in, that caused the low test scores. So I set out and with the superintendents assistance, put together the minority achievement committee. I had to be persistent with school board members to say, “Ok minority achievement has to be a number one goal. It’s the only way to close the gap. Until you focus on that gap, you can’t bring it to closure. It’s not going to be closed. It’s not going to be closed in the short term. Because there are a lot of factors that go into it. You can’t take a kid who has never gone to school, put him in kindergarten and have them compete [with] the kid, like my daughter, who started reading at two, ok, test scores, they do it very well. Scores look very good, first two or three grades, but by the time you get to third grade, you start to see a huge separation. You don’t try to close that separation at that time. My opinion was, it wasn’t going to close. I was told that that wasn’t true. But I finally convinced the school board to say, “Alright, minority achievement is our number one goal. We’re going to focus on closing that gap.” That gap closed every year for the rest of the time I was on the school board. When I left, it got wider. It continued to get wider until we got our first elected school board. They began to close it.</p>
M.K.:	What do you think that was something that helped close the gap? What

	were some of things that you pushed for to help close that gap?
Lynnwood Campbell:	Well, the all-day kindergarten. Two, the fact you focused on the, it was a problem, you had to address it, people didn't want to say, "We have problems." We did. You got problems, be transparent, say you have them, try to fix them. There were several principals just turning the situation around at schools. Anyone asked, I asked, "Ok, what did they do different that the other teachers didn't?" The answer was, "They cared." That was the only answer that they cared. That they wanted to make a difference. So if they want to make a difference in Alexandria, we can do it. But you got to admit that you got a problem, and you got to admit that you got to fix the problem and you got to put the resources.
M.K.:	Very good. Well, I will keep my fingers crossed that folks continue to pay attention. So...well that is all I have about, your nomination per say, as a Living Legend, do you have anything you like to add?
Lynnwood Campbell:	That's what I do on the side. All day long I'm an accountant. [laughter]
M.K.:	You want to talk about being an accountant?
Lynnwood Campbell:	I can't. I can't talk about it, because I work for the government. I can't talk about exactly what I do, but I'm in charge of quality control for the entire agency. I make sure that the controls are adequate for every aspect of the Savings and Loan Administration. And prior to that I was a, I was in accounting, and not accounting like bookkeeping; I was in charge of mergers and public companies. And I've been around the country speaking at national conventions. In fact, I spoke at the AICPA conference fourteen straight years.
M.K.:	Oh wow.
Lynnwood Campbell:	And I was one of the first minorities to speak at a national conference. So if you want to talk about, you know, FASB 5, and derivatives, and credit swaps, and all this kind of crazy stuff.
M.K.:	Well I've got a friend in town who might be able to give me the language, because she's actually an economist by training and she works for the Corps, but, that's probably more something she'd get more excited about, I will confess. [laughter]
Lynnwood Campbell:	No one said accountants are very exciting. [laughter]
M.K.:	And sadly, my husband said the other day, "You know, you really should think about going back to school and getting an accounting degree, you really like to crunch numbers."
Lynnwood Campbell:	You can make money!
M.K.:	So, well that's...
Lynnwood Campbell:	While I was on the United Way board, I'm still on the United way board, the United Way had a lot of problems. A lady named Marie Johns, she ran for DC mayor and she lost, in the primary. But she came to United Way as a consultant, she said, "I want to help you to put things back together." So she did it free of charge, in fact she came to the board meeting to present

	her report and I was the chair and she came in and she said, “One of the things you have to do when you’re putting people in key positions, the last thing you want to do, is to put, like, a CPA in charge.” [chuckling]
M.K.:	And did you scowl at her?
Lynnwood Campbell:	So, I got out of my seat, and told her to sit in my seat, and she just kept going on, and the rest of the board members were holding their head, so that was her first recommendation. So when she finished, I told her that I would make absolutely sure that we never put a CPA in a top position and present them to the public. And then my cousin who is now the chair, said, “Marie, Lynwood is a CPA, and three other board members sitting at the table are CPAs.” [laughter] She’s apologizing a thousand times.
M.K.:	I suspect so. I suspect so. So, and what was her motivation, out of curiosity?
Lynnwood Campbell:	She told me, she said, “My ex-husband was a CPA and he was no good. [laughing] So we’re using him as an example.”
M.K.:	Ok, ok, so she was using practical experience but not necessarily...ok...ok. That’s funny.
<b>Childhood Memories as a Minority Student in Alexandria’s Segregated Schools</b>	
M.K.:	What are some of your earliest memories of Alexandria?
Lynnwood Campbell:	Alexandria was pretty small for me, there was no, so called, “West End”. The west end was Fairfax and it was, I think once you past the Masonic Temple going out Duke Street it was pretty rural. So I stayed pretty much on the north side of Alexandria. The south side, I was prohibited from going, my mother used to say, “Stay on the north side, don’t let me catch you on the south side, there’s bad people on the south side.”
M.K.:	What was the dividing line?
Lynnwood Campbell:	King Street.
M.K.:	Ok.
Lynnwood Campbell:	So I was told, “Don’t ever let me catch you on Henry Street,” because there were some bad bars on Henry street. And so I tell my mother now, “Now, I live on South Henry Street, I guess I’m in trouble every day!” [laughter]
M.K.:	Yes.
Lynnwood Campbell:	I grew up on North Alfred Street. On one side of the street there was a city councilman, a white city councilman, there were white families, [there were] black families. On Princess Street, there were the white projects on Oronoco Street, the families that were half black, half white, and so I grew up in a mixed neighborhood. It was somewhat strange when you looked at television, blacks and whites would fight and everyday I was playing with people who were black and white and it’s...We all went to separate schools. At the time, I thought nothing of it. When I was going to St. Joseph’s, that was the elementary school from the first through seventh grade, St. Joseph’s initially went through the first and the eighth grade.

	When they decided to end the eighth grade for financial reasons, I asked a question, "Well, I guess that means we all go to St. Mary's?" No, it didn't. [chuckling] The nuns called the priest, told the priest I was asking these questions about the white school on the south side of town. I had to talk to the priest and he said, "Why are you asking about St. Mary's'?" I said, "Aren't they Catholics just like we are? Don't we all read the same stuff?" He said, "I don't know." That was unusual because growing up in the Catholic school you assume the priest knows everything about everything. That's the way it came across. So he came, the priest came to the house and told my father that I was asking the questions about St. Mary's, and my father was very blunt. "Well, why the hell can't he go?"
M.K.:	Ok.
Lynnwood Campbell:	Ok! So the priest came back and he said, "They said you haven't filled out an application." So we filled out the application. A few days later he came back and said what the uniform was, what it cost, when school started. We immediately told other families at St. Joseph's, they were told, "The school's full."
M.K.:	Ah!
Lynnwood Campbell:	Ah!
M.K.:	Ok.
Lynnwood Campbell:	So they accepted me and no one else. It was kind of strange, after the first week, I wanted to leave. I would walk down the hall people would turn around and look at me like, "That's an alien." [chuckling] The doors were solid, but there were little windows in the classroom doors. I would see kids jumping up trying to look in the window like I was the Sputnik.
M.K.:	And some of these were the same kids that you had been growing up with?
Lynnwood Campbell:	One or two.
M.K.:	One or two, ok.
Lynnwood Campbell:	So after a week they kind of stopped, but for awhile, some sang songs like, "Two, four, six, eight, we don't want to integrate."
M.K.:	Oh wow.
Lynnwood Campbell:	Yeah, and then they would sing, "Two, four, six, eight, we don't want to integrate, except for Lynnwood, he's ok." [chuckling]
M.K.:	Well, making headway, make a little progress.
Lynnwood Campbell:	I had a good friend, his name is Andy Barnett. He passed away just a few weeks ago. Yeah, but Andrew was very popular. He said, "You can be my friend. I want you to be my friend." And that's when everything changed. That's when people forgot I was black. I was a kid, but it didn't matter. And there was one incident, one guy called me the "N" word, one time. I hit him. [chuckling] It was before I understood Martin Luther King's non-violence policy. Today I understand, today I wouldn't hit him. But at that time, I socked him.

M.K.:	And how was the punishment doled out for that?
Lynnwood Campbell:	There wasn't any punishment.
M.K.:	Ok.
Lynnwood Campbell:	They called my father, he came to school, they talked to the kid, they talked to the kid's father, and said, "We can't have this." That was all of it.
<b>High School Experiences in Washington, D.C.</b>	
M.K.:	You said you ended up going to high school in D.C.
Lynnwood Campbell:	Yes.
M.K.:	And why was that?
Lynnwood Campbell:	I used to deliver a newspaper called the <i>Alexandria Gazette</i> . It had those stories in it on black schools being no good. And then after I went to St. Mary's, I did not want to go to segregated school. I wanted to go to military academy that my cousin went to. My parents said they couldn't afford it right now, maybe we could afford it next year. My sister worked for Otto Tucker and Sam Tucker. You know we had a school named after Sam Tucker. Sam Tucker was the person who had the first sit-in of blacks in this country and it was right here in this library.
M.K.:	Oh, I didn't know that.
Lynnwood Campbell:	You learned a lot of history today.
M.K.:	Yes!
Lynnwood Campbell:	It was the first non-violent demonstration. There were seven black men who decided they should be able to come to this library. And that's why the school was named after Sam Tucker, plus, partly, I was on the committee that named the school, [laughter] they said there's an option, you can go to school in the district. The state of Virginia at that time, did not want to integrate the schools. So, on the books, they had a law that if you would go outside of the state of Virginia instead of trying to integrate the schools in Virginia, they'd pay half the tuition.
M.K.:	Ah.
Lynnwood Campbell:	Ah.
M.K.:	Ok, makes a little more sense.
Lynnwood Campbell:	So they paid half the tuition. But if blacks wanted to go to school in Alexandria, Alexandria and Arlington, they're a little different than the rest of Virginia, they decided they didn't want any confusion. If you were black and you wanted to go GW or Hammond, you had to go to the school board with you parents and have a hearing and then the school board would decide when you could come. My buddy I grew up with a block away, John Sanders, and Nolan Darkins, who is now Judge Darkins, they were the first two black males to go to GW. And the young lady I went to kindergarten with, Gail Lee, she was the first black women to go to GW. And then a few went to Hammond, I don't know their names. I wasn't going to go through that process. Plus, they didn't have the ROTC.

M.K.:	Where was, you said this before we started the interview, but we're in the Barrett Library on Queen Street now, where was the black library?
Lynnwood Campbell:	The black library was on the corner on Wythe Street and North Alfred Street, it is now the black history resource center. But the little building in the front was the entire library. It was one room. I remember going to the library many, many times, there was one library, there were many, many books, all the books were old and raggedy. But that was it.
M.K.:	So, probably not a fond memory, per say...
Lynnwood Campbell:	No, I'd say it was fond.
M.K.:	Ok.
Lynnwood Campbell:	I didn't, when you're a kid, you don't understand...
M.K.:	You don't...yeah
Lynnwood Campbell:	You don't understand racism. You just don't.
M.K.:	What would you say are some of your fond memories of Alexandria?
Lynnwood Campbell:	God, the big parade.
M.K.:	Which one?
Lynnwood Campbell:	The GW [George Washington] parade. There used to be only one. No, there was a Christmas parade, there was always a big Christmas parade. King Street used to be decorated. They used to put the Confederate flags up, I didn't understand what they meant at the time, but they finally stopped doing that. You know, King Street was the big shopping center then, it's big, it died and it came back. There were no charge accounts, my mother would send me down, to Mich-Bach's, or, send me down to Rosenthal Clothing store and just go in and say, "My mom says, 'give me six shirts,'" and they would give them to you. I didn't sign anything, they just wrote in the books. You can't trust people like that nowadays. I mean I guess you could, but it doesn't seem to work.
M.K.:	The community was a little smaller. Everybody knew everybody.
Lynnwood Campbell:	Well, my mother was a beautician. Ok, we, I didn't call them, but my, one of my cousins, called them, her customers, the FBI, because everywhere we went, they knew us. Especially because we wore those Catholic uniforms. So if we did something, it was home before we were home. [chuckling] And, any adult could supervise you and tell you what to do, and you better do it.
<b>Early Adult Memories as the First Black Cashier in a Major Alexandria Grocery Store</b>	
Lynnwood Campbell:	My grandmother helped me get a job at the grocery store.
M.K.:	Which grocery store?
Lynnwood Campbell:	It was called the A&P. It was on Duke Street. And I can't remember, have you heard of Annie B. Rose?
M.K.:	[No.]
Lynnwood Campbell:	The Annie B. Rose House? Well, they named an apartment building after her. She was, but when she came in she screamed, "Oh Jesus, oh god, it's about time!" [laughter] But a man, his name was Victor Tripani and I used

	to take my grandmother to the store and once I learned to drive, my father would make me go to the store. He was like, "You can drive, you take the list, you go." So we always went to the A&P. I was in college, and my grandmother asked Mr. Tripani, she said, "Black people spend a lot of money in here, every Saturday, this place is full of black people, and you don't have anybody black working here. I want my grandson to have a job." And he just said, "Fill out the application." And he gave me a job and he said, "And I don't want any trouble." I said, "Yeah, ok." So I was the first black cashier. Betty Carter was the fastest checker. Everybody in town knew it. My goal was to out check Betty.
M.K.:	Ah, and did you?
Lynnwood Campbell:	Yes I did. I can type. So I learned the keyboard on the cash register. I could ring the numbers without looking at the keyboard. I memorized the prices so I would talk to the customers and ring up the groceries and sometimes they would say, "You're not looking." And I was like, "Let's check the tape." [chuckling] So in the summertime when I was not going to college, I went to all the other A&P's to teach people how to be cashiers.
M.K.:	Ok. Very good. How long did it take you?
Lynnwood Campbell:	What? To master the keyboard?
M.K.:	Well, to uh, beat Betty.
Lynnwood Campbell:	About a year. She worked full time. She was fast.
M.K.:	And, how long did you stay with A&P, just while you were through college?
Lynnwood Campbell:	Three years.
<b>How Alexandria has Changed</b>	
M.K.:	How would you say, what are some of the things, what are some of the ways Alexandria has changed the most since you were growing up?
Lynnwood Campbell:	There were a lot of poor people. Lot of poor blacks that did, I'd say, labor type work. They're gone for the most part. From where we are, down to the river, was mostly projects and run down, homes. On the south side, a lot of places were black, run down. [When] they started this talk about "Old Town," the blacks were moved out, or sold their houses for nothing and [the] "Old Town" theme took on and many of those families can't come back. They can't afford to live here. I live in a house because Vola Lawson and some members of city council decided, "Hey, we have to do something about this," and they set aside some land and they built houses. Sold them at cost, some were below cost to people that were displaced. There was a lottery. When they built my house, they built thirty-nine houses, and because I was making enough money to pay for it, I went into a lottery. I agreed to pay the cost of the house, the land was free. So, I signed the contract and I would pay \$55,000 if my name came up, and my name came up. But, costs had escalated, so they came back and said, "You have to pay \$70,000 for this house." If you were displaced, with low

	income, the house still went to you for \$55,000. And the city held a, I believe a \$25-30,000 mortgage that had no payments until you moved. So nineteen other houses went to the low income people. Vola said, "Someday that house will be worth \$200,000." I was like, "I'm going to take it because it's brand new, it won't have any maintenance." I thought it was too small, but I was going to stay, you had to agree to stay five years, I was going to stay five years, and then sell it and then we had the energy crisis, and then I decided... [gasp]
M.K.:	Maybe this isn't so bad after all!
Lynnwood Campbell:	Maybe it's not so bad after all! So I stayed, and I've been here thirty, thirty-two years, I have no intentions of moving and it's worth well over \$500,000. Even in this down economy with depressed interest. But I couldn't afford to move there, even if I sell it. Well, put it this way, I wouldn't pay that much money for it.
M.K.:	Correct, correct. I can confess, being new, relatively new to the community and having all of these conversations, I'm all inspired, and I want to live you know, closer to here. Everybody talks about the community and is so wonderful and so just for giggles went on to find out how much the houses cost and I decided that maybe I would just stay where I was. [laughter] Community is worth a lot, there is no doubt, I'm not quite sure it's worth going into that much hock over.
Lynnwood Campbell:	My wife grew up in Washington, and we first moved to an apartment. I bought a condo, she wanted a condo because she didn't want, she didn't like the idea of where we lived and we had to go to another building to wash clothes and the condo had its own washing machine. She was just 100% satisfied when I told her we were going to buy this house. She was like, "I don't want it." And now she loves it. [chuckling]
M.K.:	Why would you say Alexandria is important to you?
Lynnwood Campbell:	I don't know anything else. I don't. I've been here pretty much the whole time. Even when I lived in Washington while I was in school for a couple of years, I worked here, I would stop by my mom's house. My great grandmother was an ex-slave. Her owner purchased her freedom, she lived right around the corner, at 313 North Patrick Street, she lived to be a 105 years old. And her sister lived to be 103 years old. So I'm a fourth generation. I guess my brother's grandchildren make six generations. We've all been here. My daughter, one of the reasons she didn't like it here she says, "If I go some place, the police chief knows me by name. The drunks on the street know me." [chuckling] Everybody, my mother was a Bentley, everybody says 'You look like a Bentley,' she says, "I hate it. It doesn't matter where I go." So she says, "I don't want to live there." But most of my family is in Alexandria or in the beltway.
M.K.:	What, as you have looked at on the world and you've talked to people as they come and go within your offices where you work, and things like that, what makes Alexandria unique over other communities?

Lynnwood Campbell:	I can't compare with other communities because I've never lived in them. When I lived in Washington, it was like, I went there to go to sleep, after I came out of school to work. When I lived in Arlington, I pretty much [did] my daily chores and duties in Alexandria.
M.K.:	Ok, well those are all the questions that I have for you today. Is there anything else you would like to add?
Lynnwood Campbell:	One of the things you learn in the military, don't every volunteer for anything. [laughter]
M.K.:	Okay! Well that's a good lesson to learn I guess, well, thank you very much. [Tape 1 Ends] [Tape 2 Begins]
<b>Addendum – Traveling to Little Rock, AR to Learn about Superintendent Candidate: Paul Mason</b>	
Lynnwood Campbell:	When I was on the school board, we needed a new superintendent because Dr. Peoples had to retire for medical reasons. So we got down to the final three people, this time, they wanted to visit where they actually came from. There was a gentleman named Paul Mason who had been in Little Rock, Arkansas. No one on the school board except for Leslie Hagen wanted to go to Little Rock, and she wanted to go because she came from Little Rock, so I agreed to go to Little Rock with Leslie Hagen. My memories of Little Rock was of all the fire hoses and the beatings and the people saying that the blacks are not coming into the school and the Little Rock Nine, so I agreed I would go to Little Rock. I went to Little Rock and Leslie was a white female and I was like, well, here I was, in the back woods with a white female [chuckles] and these trees, are high and it's dark, this is not good. [laughter] So, the first thing we did, was we went to a Jewish law firm, who had filed suit for years in Little Rock to try and integrate the schools. I found out that there were hardly any Jews in the state of Arkansas and that they were one percent of the population of the state were Jewish and most of them lived in the city of Little Rock. So, they told me about Paul, when Paul came, Paul decided he didn't want to have all these fights and Paul wanted to integrate the schools and do it the right way and they were just totally surprised. So then I got to meet, the Little Rock Nine, not all of them, about six of them. They told me about Paul, the great things about Paul. So on the third day, Leslie and I went to see a gentleman who was, had been the chairman of the school board for years. He had originally hired Paul years ago. He was a doctor, a veterinarian. So Leslie and I went to his office and I told him, I said, "Look we've been here, I don't want to know the good things about Paul. I have an hour, I want you to tell me, everything bad Paul did." So you have to imagine this guy is about 350 pounds and he's got a two pound cigar [laughter]. And he said, "If you really want to know, I'll tell you." I said, "Ok, tell me." He said, "The first thing he did was he hired a black man and he made him, gave him the number two position. And that did not go over well here." So I said, "Well, where's the black man now?" He

	said, "In the next county." He said, "He sued us, he called in the federal boys on us." He said, "You know what?" I said, "What?" "Paul testified on his behalf."
M.K.:	Ah! [laughter]
Lynnwood Campbell:	I said, "Yeah that was real bad." So I said, "Well, what else did he do?" He said, "Well, he hired this white lady that was a Catholic." "Oh? And where is she now?" "Well Catholics ain't too popular down here but we kept her because she's doing all right." So Leslie's [laughter] "What else did Paul do?" He said, "Found out he was Jewish." I said, "According to the paperwork he gave me, he was here five years. Are you telling me it took you five years to figure out he was Jewish?" He said, "No, it took us four." [laughter] I said, "It took you four years, huh. So then what happened?" He said, "I called him in, I offered him some money. I told him that he and I were friends but we could not be friends in public. That just wasn't going work." And he said, "Paul wouldn't leave." [chuckling] I said, "He wouldn't leave?" He said, "Nope. So folks, not me, tried to make him leave but we couldn't find him." So I said, "What do you mean you couldn't find him? [Didn't] he come to work everyday?" "Yeah, he came to work everyday, but he disappeared in the black community every night." He said, "Nobody could find him, nobody knew where he was sleeping."
M.K.:	Oh wow.
Lynnwood Campbell:	"So you tried to run him out of town?" "Well, I wouldn't use those words." He said, "But, they started working on his wife." I said, "What do you mean they started working on his wife?" "Well, she would go to the grocery store, the cart would fall over, that kind of stuff. Nobody would ring her up when she go to the cash register. She got fed up and she left and then Paul left." I said, "Ok." He said, "I tried to get him to come back." [chuckling] I was like, "Why would you want Paul to come back, he had a black guy, he had a Catholic lady, now you know he's Jewish, why would you want him to come back?" He said, "He was doing the right thing." I said, "Doing the right thing?" He said, "We hired Paul and we told him that the state of Arkansas was fifty out of fifty when it came to reading and whatever Arkansas, and what Little Rock does, that's the rest of the state does. He said, "Paul was teaching those black kids too fast for us." I was like, "What?" He said, "We know now it was wrong to let him go. We should have kept him." He said, "But we doubled his money and he still would not come back. He will not come back." [chuckling]
M.K.:	It was probably his wife who said, "No, I don't think so honey."
Lynnwood Campbell:	Yup, and I met a school board member, from Little Rock, the year before, because Alexandria, we used to use Metrobuses for kids and Metro said, "We're going to change how bus routes become feeders into the subway stations. If you want us to continue busing kids, it's going to cost you a lot more because we're going to have to have dedicated buses." So we were

	in the process of looking for, trying to figure out whether to have our own school bus system or just pay Metro. I met one of the school board members from that school board and he told me, "I can solve all your bus problems." And I was like, "How will you do that?" And he said, "Don't buy any buses. Don't bus anybody anywhere. Let kids go to whatever school they can get too." And he said that the Justice Department will leave you alone. [chuckling]
M.K.:	And so did you end up bringing Mr. Mason?
Lynnwood Campbell:	We brought Mr. Mason here.
M.K.:	To Alexandria?
Lynnwood Campbell:	Yes.
M.K.:	And how long did he stay?
Lynnwood Campbell:	I believe about three years, maybe a little bit longer. He didn't quite fit in well. Alexandria is a sort of an open place. If you're the city manager or you're the superintendent, the public wants access to you. All the committees and stuff, they want access. Paul came here with the attitude, "I work for the school board. I don't have to answer to you." It did not go over well, and no matter how much we told him, it did not go over. He didn't feel that he needed to talk. He just wanted to talk to the board.
M.K.:	It's a good story. It's a good story, glad I turned the recorder back on. All right, I'm going to shut it back off now.
Lynnwood Campbell:	Ok.