

Margarette Evans Murphy: My name is Dr. Margarette, M-A-R-G-A-R-E-T-T-E, Celestine, C-E-L-E-S-T-I-N-E, Murphy. And I retired from Chicago Board of Education June, 1993. And I also worked for Kennedy King College where I taught—well, in the high school, I taught Spanish and French and English. And then I taught for Kennedy King College on the campus of University of Chicago. I taught the English as a Second Language to Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Yugoslavians, Africans, Bulgarians, Romanians, Brazilians, et cetera, Koreans.

Margarette Evans Murphy: I relocated to Memphis because of the death of my aunt, Mrs. Eva Cartman-Martin. And she was very prominent as a hospital administrator of the Black hospital, which was founded by her husband, Dr. William Sylvester Martin, W.S. Martin. And the hospital's name was the Collins Chapel Hospital. After she left the hospital, they tried to operate it as a clinic, but I don't think the people had enough funds. So now it's operated under the auspices of the University of Tennessee.

Margarette Evans Murphy: I would come to Memphis. I was born in Chicago, but I would come to Memphis, oh, maybe five, six times per year. So as I recall about segregation, on the trains, the Blacks would be seated toward the end, at the back of the train. And some of the fountains had signs Colored and White. And in one of the dime stores downtown, five to ten cent stores, Kress's I believe, they only served Blacks just at the very corner, not the full length of the counter. And they served them in paper cups and served the Whites in glasses.

Stacey Scales: Did you go in there to get served?

Margarette Evans Murphy: Well, I don't think I went in to get served, but I observed that. And then the libraries were also segregated. The Black library was the Vance Avenue Library where the Blacks would get books. But then I think it was because of the efforts of Jesse H. Turner, who at that time was the president of the Tri-State Bank, the Black bank, and I think he also was director of the Memphis NAACP. Jesse H. Turner Sr. put in a suit against the library board. And the libraries were desegregated, I think in June, 1958. And now you can go to any of the libraries.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Also, there was a theater downtown that had the Blacks to climb just millions of stairs to get to the balcony, the highest balcony. And I recall having gone down there with some of my friends. Well these friends were mulatos, they could have passed for White. But we all went on upstairs in this loft at the Malco Theater, M-A-L-C-O. It's now called the Orpheum, O-R-P-H-E-U-M. So those are some of the things that I recall.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Now, my aunt's husband, Dr. W.S. Martin, set up medical practice in 1907, and he was a graduate of Walden University, and he attended Le Moyne previous to that, and then he received his MD from Meharry Medical College. He interned in New York City at the Bellevue Hospital. And he also studied

at the Mayo Clinic, which was quite an accomplishment for a Black back there in the early 1900s. And he built the only Negro home stadium in the South, which bore his name, Martin Stadium. It's since been raised. It's on Prop Boulevard. It was near Neptune, took up a whole city block, but now it's being operated as a Mac truck establishment.

Margarette Evans Murphy: I also recall that when we'd visit my aunt's husband's farm in Mississippi, Lake Cormorant, Mississippi. Lake C-O-R-M-O-R-A-N-T, that it was reported that there was another wealthy family down there. I think Doc's people had a farm about, must have been about 463 acres. And my aunt's husband's grandfather was a White man, and it gave Doc a little help, but my aunt's husband worked as a Pullman porter and did odd jobs working for a White doctor here in Memphis until he got on foot. And that's how he first got started.

Margarette Evans Murphy: But anyway, coming back to the farm, I understand there was a wealthy Black family living in Lake Cormorant, Mississippi, and the White people had dared them to sit on the front porch. They could not sit on their own front porch. Said, "You just sit in the back and just stay in the house." And they had a Ford car, but they also had a Cadillac. So the Whites said they would blast them off the front porch or blast them anywhere they'd see them if they caught them riding in a Cadillac. So you couldn't ride in that Cadillac, you'd have to use that Ford while you're down here.

Stacey Scales: So it was just the Cadillac car?

Margarette Evans Murphy: Just the Cadillac car. But they could ride in that old rickety Ford. So one of my friends told me that segregation was quite painful, but it didn't bother me so much when I'd come down here because I was Chicago and I could escape it by just going back home. And then my family, my grandmother was so fair. Her White father had a plantation in Midnight, Mississippi. He was Scots-Irish, and he helped her. He even came and lived in Memphis in the house with them. But when the Whites right across the street found out that he was actually a White man, someone tried to burn the house down, but the dog woke them up.

Margarette Evans Murphy: But we had a pretty good relationship with the Whites in the neighborhood. Some of them were impoverished, and they would knock on the door and come over and say, "Miss Anna, may we use your telephone?" They knew my aunt was a nurse and her husband a doctor, so they kind of looked up to us. So we didn't have such a bad experience. And being Creoles, and then my mother and aunt were practically octoroons because their father was French, was a White man from Monroe, Louisiana. So it really wasn't so bad. But I understand that some of my friends were journeying through Arkansas. I think they come from Chicago and they wanted some watermelon. So they stopped in at this store and the man said, "No, niggers can't come in the front door. If you want watermelon, you go around to the back door." So it was demeaning in many instances. It certainly was.

Stacey Scales: Did you ever feel like a second class citizen?

Margarette Evans Murphy: No, I never did feel like a second class citizen because I guess I had too much grit

in my craw, and I never did feel that way. I remember once I was walking, going over to this penny store there on Pennsylvania Avenue, I'd go over every afternoon and get a pint of ice cream and get some things for my grandmother. And a little White boy was sitting on the porch and he wasn't menacing. He said, "Hello there, a little chocolate drop." So I just laughed and said hello and went right on.

Margarette Evans Murphy: So it was sort of a—well, it was just sort of a friendly atmosphere prevailed. Because where we lived, not in this house, but 100 West DeSota, the neighborhood was mixed. Some of the Negroes lived back this way, but all across the street and down in that next block were all Whites. And so they all got along pretty well. The children played together. They just had different schools. So I really don't know too much bad about it, but they had separate schools, but yet the Whites and Blacks played together. So that was sort of a surprise.

Stacey Scales: So what type of things would you do for entertainment?

Margarette Evans Murphy: Well, for entertainment, I would have some of my girlfriends come over and spend the day. Now, there was a lovely girl by the name of Kelly Daniels who was very fair. You couldn't tell her from White. She had long blonde hair. And her mother lived somewhere off of Dunlap, and I think they owned a little property and so forth. She and another girl, Thelma Whitaker, whose stepfather, I think, no, was it her father? I don't know. Her father taught at Le Moyne College, taught music, and she was very fair. Then there was another girl, I can't think of her name right now, but they'd come over and they'd spend the day with me. And my grandmother would cook the best spaghetti.

Margarette Evans Murphy: She didn't prepare spaghetti the way people do it now, she put hers in the oven with a lot of chili powder. And we had frozen homemade ice cream. My grandmother was a good cook, good Creole cook. And so we'd go back and forth to one another's homes. And that's how we enjoyed ourselves. And I never did go to any dances with any boys because my grandmother considered dating as common. And I remember when I was 12 years old, Benjamin Hook's wife, Francis Dancey, her father was in the Post Office, Ben Hook, who was head of the NAACP, had a backyard party with Japanese and Chinese lanterns in the backyard. And I wanted to go so badly, but my grandmother said, "Oh, you see, it's raining. Even God doesn't want you to go out. And so the only way you'll go is if Doc takes you or if your auntie comes home from the hospital to take you."

Margarette Evans Murphy: So I got a chance to go. And Francis's mother had a lot of beautiful gardenias in the backyard and she had two or three gardenias in a corsage as a gift for every girl who attended the party. So we had these nice times. Black people enjoyed themselves in the home. They had beautiful homes and they really knew how to entertain. So really some of them didn't feel it so much, but I imagine people who didn't have any money or if in some way they just felt downtrodden from the very beginning might have considered themselves as a second class citizen. But I never did feel out of place because I wasn't too bad looking at the time. And I'm 68 years old now. I'm a little fat. So I got along very well.

Margarette Evans Murphy: I realized there were two societies, but there's almost two societies now. Everything is so divisive. But if you can accept yourself, then you can accept anybody else. That's the way I

feel about it. My daughter might want to say something. [indistinct 00:10:11], but they allowed her in the store. That's where you buy hats. But they allowed her because her hair was pretty and she didn't have a lot of grease in her hair.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Then I understand some of the stores wouldn't wait on you to buy shoes. But I bought shoes here in Memphis and I never had any trouble like that. I never had any trouble like that. I'd go in and they would wait on me. And then another lady said she would feel so humiliated. She's a very fair Negro in color. And she said she'd go someplace and they'd make her wait a long time. They'd wait on the Whites before they'd wait on her. But I never had that experience. When I'd go downtown, I could generally get whatever I wanted here. But I imagine some of the other Negroes were discriminated against. They probably felt as second class citizens and they just hover in the background. But I never did do that.

Stacey Scales: Were there other businesses owned by Blacks that wouldn't treat people like that?

Margarette Evans Murphy: Owned by Blacks? Well, now at the ballpark. Dr. W.S. Martin owned the concessions there. And even during the Depression, I remember Doc made about \$25,000 one month selling Falstaff beer and Goldcrest-51 beer and barbecue. He had a barbecue pit there. But now, right at the end of his ballpark, there was a Black barbecue stand called Uncle Joe's Barbecue. And they had the best barbecue. And he had separate entrances, said White entrance and Black entrance, and the White people really patronized him. And then at the ballpark, they had separate sections, my uncle's ballpark, the Martin Stadium. The Whites would just come out there in droves. And they enjoyed seeing these Black fellas play baseball. In fact, they were better than some of the big leagues. And they'd buy the barbecue and mingle all in the crowds. But they sat in separate sections.

Margarette Evans Murphy: And then the ballpark, they didn't have television way back then, or it was just starting out and people would leave church. Some of the church ministers would let that congregation out about 10 o'clock so they could come over to the ballpark about 11:00 or 12:00. And they didn't come so casual. They were really dressed to the brinks. They had on their silks and satins and they just looked beautiful, these beautiful Black people. And the Whites did too. They considered it quite an outing.

Margarette Evans Murphy: The Memphis Red Sox really had quite a following. They'd go all down in Mississippi, they'd go down in Texas, Oklahoma, just go all around, Kansas City. And every year they'd play that big classic game in Chicago called the East West Classic. And people would just come from all over to it. So some businesses did flourish like the funeral homes and the baseball parks and Black leagues. That was a form of entertainment for Black people since they didn't have all this television, all these other outlets. And I was just considering and recollecting this morning, I said, as far as my life is concerned, the '40s and '50s were about the happiest time in my life.

Linda Michelle Murphy: Can I just add just one other thing? And I do appreciate if you'd write this down. To be clear, because a lot of people have a misconception about it. The Martin brothers of course as a whole were very famous and very prominent. But the thing about it is you see W.S. Martin, auntie's husband was the patriarch family. He was the one, in other words, that paved the way for them. And this is what I want

you to write down. It was his money that paid for Martin Stadium. Not the other brothers, his. He paid for it, paid for the renovation of it, and he owned the team. The other brothers, BB was sort of involved in the public relations, but it was all W.S's money behind it. Make sure you put that down. I don't want to see that wrong. Because I've seen that too many times. I believe in the truth. What do they say? The truth shall set you free. It needs to come on out. And I assume that's why you're doing this because you want the truth, right?

Margarette Evans Murphy: I imagine—

Linda Michelle Murphy: Sorry, I'm overpowering.

Margarette Evans Murphy: I imagine some people are very bitter about segregation, but I just remember it as something that was passed over. But it was very demeaning and very painful for some people. But I didn't feel so much pain because we had a car, we could go wherever we wanted to go in the car. And then we had the outlet of entertaining in the home and things of that sort. So we really didn't feel it. We knew there were two different societies, but it just didn't touch us so much. And then my aunt and grandmother was so fair in color that anywhere they'd go they could pass, but they never did try to pass.

Linda Michelle Murphy: Yes, I noticed a mention in the article where it said—some of your people said that they had had relatives that passed. Well, that wasn't the case. And as a matter of fact, I have a story about my auntie that she had said when she was at a nursing—oh, and I want to tell you something else about [indistinct 00:14:49]. Anyway. When she was up getting the rest of her nursing stuff on—

Margarette Evans Murphy: At Cook County Hospital.

Linda Michelle Murphy: Cook County.

Margarette Evans Murphy: It was in 1933 or '34.

Linda Michelle Murphy: She could have stayed in the dormitory up there and they couldn't understand why she went and she told them what she was. In other words, if she hadn't told them what she was she could have stayed in the dormitories. They didn't allow Negroes to stay in the dormitories with the other White girls. Now, she could have passed very easily.

Margarette Evans Murphy: This was in 1933 and 1934.

Linda Michelle Murphy: And then this is something else I want you to write down. This is very important. My auntie, you got that down, Mrs. Eva Cartman-Martin, E-V-A Cartman, C-A-R-T-M-A-N. It's one word Martin, M-A-R-T-I-N. She was the first female hospital administrator in this city. I'm talking about Black or White. Do you understand what I'm saying?

Margarette Evans Murphy: First one.

Linda Michelle Murphy: She worked with her husband side by side.

Stacey Scales: What's her name?

Linda Michelle Murphy: Her name is Mrs. Eva Cartman-Martin. That was my auntie. She passed last July. She was 90.

Margarette Evans Murphy: July 8th.

Linda Michelle Murphy: See, her husband, W.S. Martin, was 30 years older than she was. Boy, that shocks you. That's a real May-December romance, isn't it? He was eight years older, in fact, than her husband. I mean her mother was eight years older than her husband.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Than auntie's husband.

Linda Michelle Murphy: Now the thing about it is she worked side by side with her husband. And in other words, she was a woman of the '90s in the '30s and '40s. You know this stuff about how they're trying to do it now. They think, oh, they've got it all. They're the superwoman. They got the [indistinct 00:16:18], the family, the babies, the kids, the work. She did it all in the '30s and '40s. She was doing it back then when they were in the kitchen barefoot. See what I mean? She could do anything that—matter of fact, she was completely involved in every facet of his life. She was bookkeeper for the Red Sox. She was administrator of that hospital. She taught nursing. They had an old Collins Chapel Connectional Hospital before the new one was built. She taught nursing. Her husband was the head physician just over everything. He had a lot of houses, just loads of rent houses, just loads of them.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Had 72 pieces of property.

Linda Michelle Murphy: She would go with him. Now, get ready for a shock, to collect the rents. Oh, you're thinking, oh, nobody would do that. Yeah they would. They wouldn't do it now.

Margarette Evans Murphy: She went with him on house calls, visit patients.

Linda Michelle Murphy: Went on house calls. So in other words, she was involved with him on the medical front as far as his real estate property was concerned, in his entertainment part, which was the Red Sox. So in other words, I guess that's why they're married. They were very similar people. And this man, let me try to tell you. Because you might be getting a picture and I know probably what you're thinking. You're probably getting a picture of somebody well off that maybe this did not touch him. But let me tell you where his roots came from.

Linda Michelle Murphy: This is a true American success story in [indistinct 00:17:47] American life. He was a self-made man. I don't think he got any help from his parents. Parents had that farm, but W.S. did it himself.

And this is the main point. He was able to do this in the midst of all these other obstacles, which was segregation. Yet he was able to overcome that. Not only overcome, but use it to his advantage. Now that's smart. And that's probably what the White people didn't want. Not only was he smart but he was able to use it to his advantage.

Margarette Evans Murphy: And W.S.—

Linda Michelle Murphy: That's what the White people do, isn't it?

Margarette Evans Murphy: And then W.S. was very smart too. He never bought a new car because he knew that Whites would be jealous of so much ostentation. He bought a used car all the time. A used Cadillac, a used Lincoln.

Linda Michelle Murphy: And listen, this is another good point because this is kind of an unusual thing. I gather this is probably the first time you've ever come in contact with a family like this, right? That's what I figured. So this kind of give you a different slant or an additional slant. The point is this, this was not an ostentatious man. Be blunt with you. He had the wealth to do whatever he wanted, live however he wanted. But he didn't do it. What did he do?

Margarette Evans Murphy: Everything and lowkey.

Linda Michelle Murphy: No, he turned it back to the community. Now that's different. That is different. He did not live—as a matter of fact, he lived at that hospital most of the time. This man would be what you call today, a workaholic. He did not believe in vacations even for himself. He did everything for the patients. Matter of fact, when they didn't have food enough for the patients at the hospital, he took food that was on his farm and fed those patients himself.

Stacey Scales: How did he become the man that he was?

Margarette Evans Murphy: I don't know. His grandfather was a White man, but he didn't give him all that support. He worked as a Pullman porter and did odd jobs for White doctor here in Memphis. Was it Dr. Porter? I forget what that name—

Linda Michelle Murphy: I think so.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Dr. Porter. And he just saved his money and he was sort of, well, I won't say he was a miser, but he wouldn't spend too much money. But he never bought a new car, he said, because the Whites would object to that. And he always had a used car, used Cadillac or used Lincoln.

Linda Michelle Murphy: I can find out two things I could probably say if you look at it, which probably all great people have. I guess you would say he had vision and drive.

Margarette Evans Murphy: He was highly motivated.

Linda Michelle Murphy: And it's usually something like that. See, this is the picture. This is what I want you to know. You can keep this. This is very good. This is W.S. Martin. That's my auntie's husband. This is the only picture that I know of that exists of the South Memphis drugstore. And let me tell you something else—

Margarette Evans Murphy: Doc owned that.

Linda Michelle Murphy: He owned it. He owned everything.

Margarette Evans Murphy: But his brother operated it.

Linda Michelle Murphy: His brother operated it, but he owned it.

Margarette Evans Murphy: He owned the building.

Linda Michelle Murphy: He owned a stadium [indistinct 00:20:47].

Stacey Scales: Did you ever work for him?

Margarette Evans Murphy: Oh yes. I wanted to tell you. At the ballpark there on Crump Boulevard, I used to sell tickets for the Red Sox games, and then my grandma Anna would sit there behind the counter where the concessions were where they had Nehi, N-E-H-I, grape soda and cherry soda and strawberry soda, Coca-Colas and all that. And the beer. She would put the money in the cash register. And then my aunt would check up in the office afterwards, after the games to distribute the money to the owners of the teams. So I can recall selling tickets there at the baseball park.

Linda Michelle Murphy: See—

Stacey Scales: Was it self-segregated by—

Margarette Evans Murphy: Well, it was segregated. The White patrons came out in droves and they had a section for the Whites and the rest of it for the Blacks. And they got along beautifully.

Stacey Scales: So it was even a Black-owned business.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Black-owned business. The Whites patronized it. And they ate barbecue like barbecue was going out of style. What I liked about—

Linda Michelle Murphy: What you want to know is maybe when he renovated the stadium, did he consciously make the effort to deliberately segregate it? Is that what you mean?

Stacey Scales: Right.

Margarette Evans Murphy: No, segregation was in vogue at that time. So they just came on over there. But now one thing about that barbecue, a lot of times in Chicago and other places you can buy barbecue ribs. But Doc had pork shoulder sandwiches that we just have just like a pork roast barbecue. They were the best sandwiches. I haven't had any like that since that park closed.

Linda Michelle Murphy: I probably haven't—probably what's running through your mind is if he hadn't done that, what would he have done? I think you can answer that.

Margarette Evans Murphy: They wouldn't have supported it.

Linda Michelle Murphy: They would've segregated themselves. You know how they're always talking about in the paper, at least they have [indistinct 00:22:22]. Still, it's just how you get a group of Black and White people together in a social situation. They will tend to go off among themselves in their own group. Isn't that true?

Stacey Scales: I think so.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Yeah, they segregate themselves.

Linda Michelle Murphy: I think that's what they would've done. I think if you had not had an actual physical thing, a section that said that, my guess is they would've done that anyway.

Margarette Evans Murphy: They perhaps would've.

Linda Michelle Murphy: They would have gone off and congregated among themselves and then the Blacks would've done the same thing. I'm pretty sure that's what they would have done.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Even our lawyer who's a White man said that his father used to take him out to the park, to Martin Stadium to see the Black baseball teams and they [indistinct 00:22:57].

Linda Michelle Murphy: See, this is the point here that I want you to get. This is the whole point. Because I personally feel that the Blacks that have attained well today don't do this. And that's what the Black community is complaining about, how they get this wealth and then they don't do anything back. They don't turn it back for community. But this is what W.S. Martin did, the wealth he got, he used to help the community.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Let me give this one.

Linda Michelle Murphy: No, just let me finish this. Obviously he did. The point is this. Just by process of elimination, if he didn't put it on himself, if he didn't have an ostentatious lifestyle, then you ask yourself

what did he do with it? You have to do something with it, isn't that right?

Margarette Evans Murphy: Mm-hmm.

Linda Michelle Murphy: So he turned it into with the priorities to help these people, turned it into the stadium as far as entertainment. Okay, what this is, this is a downtown, this is not our Memphis magazine I told you about. This is a local publication called the Downtown Magazine. Also, this is not the Memphis magazine that I'm telling you about. This is a local thing, which is a free publication that's published monthly and they put it in a couple of grocery stores. Anyway, this was from—

Margarette Evans Murphy: Turn to the one—

Linda Michelle Murphy: I've got it, I've got it. This is from the November issue. And what this basically is, this is an interview with a pharmacist who worked at the South Memphis drugstore named Dr. George Irving. And he relates in here, this is an interview question/answer by this man. And matter of fact, I called him up a couple of months ago. Greg Gordon, he does a piece, this Beale Street Can Talk every month where he interviews various people that were on Beale Street. Now this drugstore was on Florida, but a lot of—now for instance, B.B Martin, his brother, had a dental office that was on Beale Street. What it is, he relates in here how the Martins helped him. And it has stuff in here about W.S. Martin. So I thought you might want—and this is W.S. Martin right here over the end.

Margarette Evans Murphy: And let me say this, Linda. Not only did Doc supply food from his farm for the hospital, but my aunt and doctor would go over to Mississippi and to Arkansas. And my aunt would sing on a program. And the people, if they didn't have money to contribute to the Collins Chapel Hospital, they would give sheets and pillowcases and things like that and produce, corn and whatever they could give. Preserves and jellies and jams to the hospital. Wasn't that lovely?

Linda Michelle Murphy: So you see, that's what I'm trying to tell you. So this is one family where it didn't go into—and that's the first thing, isn't that the first thing they think of? Gosh, you're going to get wealth. That's the first thing on their mind is ostentatious lifestyle. Otherwise why have the wealth? Isn't that right? Isn't that the way most people think?

Margarette Evans Murphy: Mm-hmm.

Linda Michelle Murphy: But that's not the way he thought. Because that I guess was not the top priority in his life. Depends on what the priority in your life is. And for him, that's not what it was.

Margarette Evans Murphy: So he was satisfied. I don't say he was satisfied, but segregation didn't bother him because he was prospering. He was making money, and not so much in the hospital, but with his baseball team and the concessions there and so forth during segregation.

Linda Michelle Murphy: But the point is—

Margarette Evans Murphy: And also during segregation, he paid Dan Bankhead, who later went to the Brooklyn Dodgers, paid him between 750 and a 1000 dollars a month. And that was during segregation. Now that was good money even now to get a 1000 dollars a month or something. That's what he was paying this pitcher.

Stacey Scales: So did your whole family benefit from —

Margarette Evans Murphy: From him?

Stacey Scales: Yes.

Margarette Evans Murphy: To a certain extent. My aunt did.

Linda Michelle Murphy: Oh my aunt. Well let put this back. You know how they say, "Behind every great man is a great woman?"

Margarette Evans Murphy: So my aunt was a great woman.

Linda Michelle Murphy: That's what she was. In other words, he put her on the map. She was—well let's see how to put it. What's the saying? How do you get it the old way? You marry money. That's what she did. She was not well off.

Margarette Evans Murphy: No, but let me say this, Linda. Doc left something in his will for her every month until her death and then her interest in his estate ceased. And so she'd been getting a little small check ever since 1958. So up to 1994.

Linda Michelle Murphy: That's another thing I want to tell you. See, which is a lot of times like White people do, because this is very rare for Blacks to do. After he died at the conclusion of his—

Stacey Scales: When did he die?

Linda Michelle Murphy: He died in 1958. May 17th, 1958, he had an estate called the W.S. Martin Estate, which existed from 1958 to last year.

Stacey Scales: To last year?

Linda Michelle Murphy: Last year.

Margarette Evans Murphy: 1994. Well, let me finish saying this. I want to say about W.S.

Linda Michelle Murphy: Is that a shock? This is a Black person.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Now Doc was a little jealous. He thought that maybe at his death my aunt might marry again. But she said she would never mar his memory by marrying anybody else. So he left the bulk of his money to his brothers. He didn't have the three brothers, but my aunt benefited some from that. But she received a small check, a stipend ever since 1958 up to 1994. So that helped her a little bit. But he gave the bulk of his estate to his brothers.

Linda Michelle Murphy: The point of it is this, and I want you to understand, this is another thing. My auntie, and I doubt it would've worked with a man like W.S. Martin. She could have as opposed to the wives of these other people. Well he was divorced, but AT and JB.

Stacey Scales: Who was divorced?

Linda Michelle Murphy: BB.

Stacey Scales: BB divorced from his wife.

Linda Michelle Murphy: As opposed to the other two. They were what you would typically consider—

Margarette Evans Murphy: Regular doctors' wives.

Linda Michelle Murphy: —upper class wealthy wives who sit and do nothing and they don't work. But my auntie wasn't like that. In other words—

Margarette Evans Murphy: She worked.

Linda Michelle Murphy: This is what I'm trying to tell you. This is what's important. It was choice. It was choice. She chose not to do this. She chose to work. And I mean she worked like a dog.

Margarette Evans Murphy: She worked 11 hours a day sometimes.

Linda Michelle Murphy: She wore her uniform. She was a registered nurse as well. She wore her uniform as administrator. And I'm talking about white dress shoes, hose, everything. And she didn't have to do that. You wouldn't get anybody to do that today. And as this other woman, that's the reason I'm trying to tell you about her being a first female hospital administrator in this city. Because people will tell you about this Lucy Shaw. Have you heard about her? She's supposed to be the president who resigned, under mysterious circumstances.

Margarette Evans Murphy: From the med.

Linda Michelle Murphy: From the med. And they seem to think that she is the first Black woman that was setting everything up. That's not true.

Margarette Evans Murphy: My auntie was.

Linda Michelle Murphy: That just ain't so. My auntie was. She had a small 50 bed hospital and I mean she took care of it. She had 70 employees up under her. And let me tell you something, this'll say it all. She told me last year, she said, "You know the reason W.S married me?" Other than love. I bet you can't get. Because he could trust her.

Margarette Evans Murphy: She was honest with the money.

Linda Michelle Murphy: You don't find people honest like that.

Stacey Scales: So W.S. Martin was a —

Margarette Evans Murphy: Was my aunt's husband.

Stacey Scales: He was a baseball team owner.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Baseball team. Hospital owner. Medical doctor.

Stacey Scales: Medical doctor.

Linda Michelle Murphy: Yes sir. And owned the team.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Now, when he died, he left about \$500,000 but he gave most of it to his brothers.

Stacey Scales: Did you ever go to the—

Linda Michelle Murphy: Well, he didn't give it. That's not quite true.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Oh yes. I used to go to the drugstore and get sundaes and ice cream sodas and we'd go there on Sundays after.

Linda Michelle Murphy: That's not exactly true what she's saying. He didn't leave —Let me try to explain it to you. The rest of what he had after his estate closed was put into a trust estate. His brothers and my auntie benefited off of that. In other words, when you usually close the estate, the money is usually divided up. That's not the case here. The money was put into a trust estate so that they could benefit off of it from years to come. Putting it in accounts and they could benefit off of it. Now I think that that is a very shrewd move. You know why?

Margarette Evans Murphy: No.

Linda Michelle Murphy: I'll tell you why that's a shrewd move. Because if you divide money and just give it out that way, do you think it would exist 30 years later? No. Absolutely not. Absolutely not.

Margarette Evans Murphy: But it lasted a long time.

Linda Michelle Murphy: This was a very smart, very shrewd man.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Well he was.

Linda Michelle Murphy: Obviously.

Margarette Evans Murphy: And everything he touched seemed to turn the money. He just had a knack for that.

Linda Michelle Murphy: He was just a great man and he was a decent, honest man. That's another thing. And a preacher man, that's another thing I think is important. A lot of times people were saying that maybe the Blacks that did get ahold of something at the time that it was from some crooked needs, but not W.S. Martin. That was not true. He made an honest living, earned an honest dollar and put it back.

Margarette Evans Murphy: And he was respected by White people. Whites would respect him.

Stacey Scales: Did Whites go to his drugstore?

Margarette Evans Murphy: I imagine they did.

Linda Michelle Murphy: They did. Now let me tell you about the hospital, Collins Chapel Hospital. Because that was another big part. Matter of fact, he died in his own hospital.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Died in his own hospital.

Linda Michelle Murphy: The White doctors would bring their Black patients there. See, during segregation, the med, or it was called John Gaston Hospital, was the only other place that Blacks could go. And you ask anybody in this city that's alive today will tell you that Gaston was just hell. They treated all those people just like they were cattle. But not at Collins Chapel. They will tell you that it was a decent, clean, private hospital that they could go. And nobody—

Margarette Evans Murphy: Be treated with respect.

Stacey Scales: How did they get their nurses and doctors?

Margarette Evans Murphy: Well they recruited them from the country, from up in Tennessee and Texas. We had girls from Texas—

Linda Michelle Murphy: W.S. would recruit them.

Margarette Evans Murphy: —and Mississippi.

Linda Michelle Murphy: And my auntie taught them. She taught nurses.

Margarette Evans Murphy: They had to sign a paper that they would be there.

Linda Michelle Murphy: This woman could do everything. She taught nursing.

Margarette Evans Murphy: She was wonderful.

Linda Michelle Murphy: She was a bookkeeper. Matter of fact, she skipped a couple grades. So she was very, very —She's smarter than I am. She's very smart. Math and figures and stuff. She could just do anything. She ran a hospital. There was just nothing —As a matter of fact, she was the executor of W.S's Estate, of all the brothers' estates.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Of AT and BB as they passed.

Linda Michelle Murphy: This woman was phenomenal. Phenomenal.

Stacey Scales: Where was the hospital located?

Margarette Evans Murphy: It's on Ayers.

Linda Michelle Murphy: It's 409 North Ayers.

Margarette Evans Murphy: A-Y-E-R-S.

Linda Michelle Murphy: 409 North Ayers.

Margarette Evans Murphy: And Ayers is A-Y-E-R-S.

Linda Michelle Murphy: A-Y-E-R-S. All you have to do is go down here to Dunlap and turn on Lane Avenue. Actually, W.S. Owned some property on Lane Avenue by the way. And it's right at Lane Avenue and Ayers. It became a nursing home. Well, let me tell you what happened. My auntie resigned in 1970 because of lack of funds. And that was during the time, the late '60s when integration was starting to flourish. And therefore the Black patients were starting to go toward the White hospitals where they had didn't shut out before and there just wasn't more money. It was a lot of stuff with the Black doctors turning. It was just a mess. So she resigned.

Linda Michelle Murphy: After that, William George took over as the head. He wasn't any good and it became a nursing home. And then he kind of messed it up. And now the University of Tennessee, where I'm sure you had seen, the University of Tennessee for the health sciences, which is right over there by Baptist Hospital. That's a big medical center there. We call that the medical center area. We have University of Tennessee Boes Hospital. Baptist Hospital. Baptist Central. You have Methodist down there on Union and Le Bonheur.

Linda Michelle Murphy: Anyway, I guess, I don't know exactly when, but the University of Tennessee took it over and I believe this is right. It's a free clinic now. I know it's a clinic, I think it's free. But they built an addition onto the hospital, which it kind of juts out onto the Lane Avenue side. Okay. Because before that it was just parking lot.

Linda Michelle Murphy: Now let me tell you something else that I didn't tell you. How I know so much about Collins Chapel. Now this I can tell you firsthand about. I was a little girl and I lived at that hospital all the time. Because when I went to school, see I came here in '65, and when I was at school, my auntie would pick me up and carry me back up to the hospital because she wasn't through working. And I would sit in her office. Let me tell you what she did, let me tell you how phenomenal this woman is. Listen to this. She taught me how to count money and sack money in her office. I was eight years old.

Margarette Evans Murphy: You were a patient in the hospital when she had an operation for a right inguinal hernia.

Linda Michelle Murphy: I was a patient in March, 1965. And this White doctor, she got him personally to do the surgery. And get this, she was in the surgery with me. Do you get what I'm saying?

Margarette Evans Murphy: Linda's crazy about auntie.

Linda Michelle Murphy: Now how many people can do that? But it was her hospital. She could do what she wanted to do. And she was in there and they moved in. I was in there a week and I did fine. So I was patient and I'm living proof that it was a clean hospital that had air conditioning. They had two floors. They had, I think it was two surgeries and one delivery room. I'm probably the only eight-year-old girl that ever saw a delivery room. Do you know what them things were for? The stirrups? I was eight years old, but I saw it. Probably the only eight-year-old girl that knew what a centrifuge was. We had our own lab and I could just walk around in there. We even had a pharmacy. My auntie would be in the pharmacy and I'd see all these drugs and stuff. They had this Black pharmacist, Mr. Billings, that would come from University of Tennessee that was trained over there and he would fill the prescriptions.

Margarette Evans Murphy: They had some White pharmacist. They had integrated staff.

Stacey Scales: Would most Blacks have babies there?

Linda Michelle Murphy: Yes they did.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Most of them.

Linda Michelle Murphy: Jesse Turner's wife had her children over there.

Margarette Evans Murphy: And then what I was going to say, they had mixed help because they had a White pharmacist and a Black pharmacist. And they also had a White dietary head over there too. Handling the kitchen.

Linda Michelle Murphy: That's true.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Ms. Wortz, W-O-R-T-Z.

Linda Michelle Murphy: We also had a cafeteria, very nice cafeteria for the employees to have their breakfast, lunch, dinner. I'm telling you it was a fine [indistinct 00:36:11]. I'm stressing it so much because the average person wouldn't think —

Margarette Evans Murphy: It was anything.

Linda Michelle Murphy: Yeah, wouldn't think it's anything. But I'm telling you, I'm living proof. And I can tell you that it was a clean, decent place. And my auntie ran — I'm telling you, my auntie must have had four and five bunches of huge keys. Do you know she had a key to every door in that place? Every door in that place. [indistinct 00:36:32] everything. And I would call, honey, I could tell you things are down in the basement. She'd have that locked up and they would get kits from the Johnson & Johnson, company that makes the little baby lotion, the baby stuff. And they would prepare kits and send them to Collins Chapel for the new mothers for infant care. Little miniature samples or the little baby products and would come in a little kit. Oh, and they had a nursery. Well obviously they got a delivery room. They got to have a nursery and they had a nursery up there with a glass on the second floor and you could see the little babies in the bassinets. And I'm telling you, it was a fine, fine place.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Yes it was.

Linda Michelle Murphy: Yes, it was a fine place. And my auntie, I'm telling you, she worked. So that's what I'm trying to get across to you because you may have a different idea.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Even the mayor of Memphis came to her when she retired. Came to her retirement party. The mayor of Memphis.

Linda Michelle Murphy: Well he didn't come to the retirement party.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Yeah, I think he did as I recall. That's what she told me.

Linda Michelle Murphy: What retirement? Are you talking about—

Margarette Evans Murphy: When she retired from the hospital, Linda.

Linda Michelle Murphy: No, but there were only two things. It was the thing at the church. Well not a party. That was a program.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Well maybe that's what it was.

Linda Michelle Murphy: Well maybe it was at church because it wasn't—

Margarette Evans Murphy: It was the church.

Linda Michelle Murphy: The point is this, you have a woman that was married to a very wealthy man, but she worked as hard as any kind of blue collar worker or anything like that. Now that you don't see.

Margarette Evans Murphy: You don't find such dedication. You don't find that Now.

Linda Michelle Murphy: That's what I'm trying to get across.

Margarette Evans Murphy: People are little frivolous. They want to be out at parties or playing bridge.

Linda Michelle Murphy: But she wasn't like that.

Margarette Evans Murphy: She didn't do that.

Linda Michelle Murphy: Now, the other wives were.

Stacey Scales: What made her like that?

Margarette Evans Murphy: I don't know. Her own father. Well her father, her White father in Monroe, Louisiana was a businessman and a politician. So she was more business gearing.

Linda Michelle Murphy: Like me. In other words, it wasn't any silliness in it. That's how we got along. See, she raised me. I'm very much like her. Not silly, frivolous, common. We are not —just no common. Not common to put down other people. Because I told you that she was trained that nobody's better than anybody else. And I told you that. But common meaning just frivolous, just anything different.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Carefree.

Linda Michelle Murphy: Very business-like. There would be no other way this woman could have handled what she did. This is not the average woman. You see what I mean?

Margarette Evans Murphy: She's phenomenal, she's wonderful woman, wonderful. All the Whites called her Miss Eva. And I remember she had courses in psychiatry and x-ray and all, she was an x-ray technician, all of that. And she went over to St. Joseph Hospital through Sister Fedalis and Sister —I forget some of the other names. And she took courses and she never did try to push herself up with the Whites. She'd get in the course and she'd take a backseat in the back of the room. She never did try to push herself on the others. And she took all these extra courses. She was constantly studying. She took work at the University of Colorado.

Linda Michelle Murphy: Well she did that up there in order to train to be an administrator. See, she was actually made administrator about a year before her husband died. He had cancer. He went up to Mayo Clinic and that's where they discovered it. And like I said, he died in his own hospital.

Stacey Scales: So you were from Chicago.

Margarette Evans Murphy: I am. I was ill for a while, but the reason Linda came here, I was sick in the hospital, so somebody had to take care of me, Linda. So when she came down here and my aunt took care of her, she said, "Well, mama, I don't want to just dash around from school to school." She said, "Let me stay here." And she finished. And so I did because Chicago was so dangerous. And so I knew eventually that I was coming down here.

Stacey Scales: In the '40s and '50s, or even before then, how would you compare your neighborhood here to living in Chicago?

Margarette Evans Murphy: Well, where I live in Chicago now, where my house is in a Polish and Mexican neighborhood in southeast Chicago on Colfax. You know where Colfax is?

Stacey Scales: Yes, actually.

Margarette Evans Murphy: I lived in Woodlawn before, it was 6159 Eberhart where I was going to University of Chicago. So that was all right in Woodlawn in the '40s and '50s was a lovely neighborhood. And here this is more a commercial neighborhood. Now that end down there is very poor. But my aunt said since we had so many cats and dogs and everything, that this was ideal for us. Now some of the rich people live out on Parkway. But my auntie didn't want any ostentation. She just wanted to live kind of country style.

Stacey Scales: So was this a Black neighborhood?

Linda Michelle Murphy: That's what I'm trying to get at.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Just wait a minute, Linda. This house was owned by some Italians and she bought it from them.

Linda Michelle Murphy: No, what is is now—

Margarette Evans Murphy: But she's had the house for about 30 some years.

Linda Michelle Murphy: Where my mother lives now is not, that's the difference now.

Margarette Evans Murphy: It's mixed.

Stacey Scales: When you first came here, were there places that you wouldn't go?

Margarette Evans Murphy: Yes, there were places. I wouldn't go to any of these dives, these taverns and things like that and nightclubs. I'd never been to anyone like here because they weren't so fine. But where I lived in Chicago, I lived in good neighborhoods, all good neighborhoods. Lived in Woodlawn when I was going University of Chicago. And then I lived on Colfax before I came down here.

Stacey Scales: Would there be places in your community where you wouldn't go?

Margarette Evans Murphy: Oh yes. I have never set up to a bar in my life. I always consider that common women sitting at a bar, drinking. If they want to drink something, drink at home or in someone's home. But not just get out and corral and drink and fall out.

Linda Michelle Murphy: We're very moral people.

Stacey Scales: So did that come from your parents?

Margarette Evans Murphy: My parents and upbringing. Then I was a minister there toward the last, at the St. Clotilde Catholic Church. I couldn't give the sacrament, but I could go in the home and offer prayer, administer praise. So my religion and all of that. I couldn't allow myself to frequent some of the places where a lot of ordinary people would go. Not ordinary, but I mean where they're just, shall we say, unbridled and carefree. I don't go in those places now.

Stacey Scales: So could you tell me about your grandparents and parents?

Margarette Evans Murphy: Well, yes, my maternal grandmother was Mrs. Anna Cartman. That was my auntie's mother. And then my father's mother, Mrs. Emma Elizabeth Collins, was born in Memphis. And her White father, she had a White father, was named Mr. Hunt. He owned coal yards and lumber yards. And then her mother was part Cherokee Indian. Her mother's name is Francis Turner.

Margarette Evans Murphy: So I lived with my father's mother in Chicago. But as soon as the schools would let out, I would come south and stay with my mother's people. So I never really was hanging around the city of Chicago to get in trouble like a lot of people. And I was an only child and my people never sent me to a summer camp because they thought I might get an overturned canoe or something like that.

Linda Michelle Murphy: Well they never had any summer camps for Blacks, did they?

Margarette Evans Murphy: No, I'm talking about in Chicago, they had the YWCA camps, all kind of camps. But I never went there because my people thought I might get hurt, might die swimming or something like that. So I stayed with my father's mother in Chicago when I was going to University of Chicago and all of that. But then in the summer I'd come down here and be with my mother's people. So I never did have a chance to run the street. And I didn't have any boyfriends. I met my husband out on the campus of the University of Chicago. That's right.

Stacey Scales: Your grandparents were from?

Margarette Evans Murphy: Well, my mother's mother, her White father was from Midnight, Mississippi. And Grandma Anna, Miss Anna Cartman was born in Egypt, Mississippi. And she had blonde hair as a child. But then her hair turned kind of reddish brown kind of henna before she died, dark brown.

Stacey Scales: Did they ever share stories with you about their views on segregation?

Margarette Evans Murphy: No, they never did share it. Because I asked what her mother looked like. She said her mother was light and had coal black straight hair. So I had a feeling that maybe Grandma Anna's mother might have been mixed with some of that Choctaw Indian or something.

Stacey Scales: Or their views on slavery or anything?

Margarette Evans Murphy: Well no. They never did talk about slavery because they didn't know anything about it since they weren't slaves. And her mother wasn't a slave. But I did hear my father's mother say something about her mother's mother who was —well no, my paternal grandmother, Ms. Emma Elizabeth Collins, her White father was Mr. Hunt. But her mother, Ms. Francis Turner, said that some of her people, I think had been a slave and that the White man would've killed her. But he said she was such a darn good slave when she got to fighting and was hitting somebody.

Linda Michelle Murphy: Now let me tell you something else that we haven't brought up. Because my auntie and her sister looked like they did, it seems to me that it would occur to you a lot of Blacks didn't exactly like that. But let me tell you what they would do. See, my auntie and her sister had hair —

Margarette Evans Murphy: They could sit on.

Linda Michelle Murphy: —they could sit on. That didn't go over too well with other Black people. And now it didn't upset my people, but it upset the other people. And when she said when they would be on their way to school, she said the little Black children were pull their pigtails. They'd have them in braids and just pull them and just making hell for them. And she found that all throughout her life. So in other words, but this would be an interesting point, which I feel you've never addressed. I didn't see it in those articles, but you sort of caught hell from both sides. Now that's something I've never seen in those articles. You caught hell

from both sides. Now that's something different. You did. Sort of from both sides.

Margarette Evans Murphy: The Blacks were kind of jealous because they had the long hair.

Linda Michelle Murphy: The Whites hate you because you got that little Black in you and the Blacks hate you because you're too White.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Yeah, that's the whole story.

Linda Michelle Murphy: So then where does that leave you? Somewhere in limbo land. It's a very, very hard thing, especially for her to come. And especially when she was in that position, she had a very hard time. And let me tell you, that's probably why she did what she did. Which she was a person who kept a very low profile. She didn't like any pomp about anything. Even though she was Mrs. W.S. Martin.

Margarette Evans Murphy: Just dangerous to be too ostentatious too. It's just best to be low key. And nobody'll bother you.

Linda Michelle Murphy: She believed that. So everything she did was very low key. The way she treated her employees. And in other words, she sort of, I guess what you would say is took low.

Margarette Evans Murphy: She did.

Linda Michelle Murphy: Because otherwise being the way she looked, and in other words you would think—

Margarette Evans Murphy: She was very humble.

Linda Michelle Murphy: She'd just be real bossy, sort of like I am.

Margarette Evans Murphy: But she was more humble.

Linda Michelle Murphy: She's very aggressive, but she wasn't like me and she couldn't be.