

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Jasmine McKnight

COLLECTION: 4700.0871

IDENTIFICATION: McKinley High School student and member of Magnolia Baptist Church

INTERVIEWER: Lavada Taylor

SERIES: McKinley High School Oral History Project – African American Churches

INTERVIEW DATES: June 19, 1997

FOCUS DATES: 1980s - 1997

ABSTRACT:

Tape 1249, Side A

Introduction; born March 23, 1982 in Baton Rouge; currently tenth grader at McKinley High School; has been in East Baton Rouge Parish Gifted and Talented Program for two years; is a visual artist, sold two of her painted chairs in art shows; relationship between geometry and art, her two favorite subjects; has been attending Magnolia Baptist Church as long as she can remember; importance of church and religion in her life; attributes her family's health and great-grandmother's longevity to God's will; new pastor, Roger Williams, organizes many youth activities, like a clean-up campaign; clean Christian fun at bowling alley and skating rink; ministering and evangelizing to others, telling the good news of Christ; feeling good about saving lives of adults and other kids via spreading the good news; how she would approach a down and out person on the street and invite him/her to church; McKnight is part of the youth choir, not the best singers, but they are sincere; also part of youth ministry and children's bible study group; she plans to use art talents in service of her church; also plans to follow in her mother's footsteps as secretary of church; Bible study groups have become popular since arrival of new pastor; plans for Bible display at upcoming Hope Fair; learning the basics in Bible study; importance of daily Bible reading; evangelizes wherever she goes, including during rest periods in her dance classes; McKnight is jazz dancer, currently co-captain of Pantherette dance squad; pastor's rapport with the youth of the church; importance of pastor to church's youth: "Without him we would be nowhere"; pastor's promise of eternal life if they accept Jesus; pastor solicits opinions of youth; McKnight's dream of being a business executive; plans to attend college out of state; visiting the elderly in her neighborhood; changes in way communion is taken at church; switch from crackers to wafers; communion delivered to sick and shut-in church members; McKnight's baptism at age eleven by late pastor; preference for baptism style of new pastor; decision to be baptized to avoid eternal burning in hell; belief that unbaptized people go to hell; trying to comprehend eternity, fear of spending it in hell; tears of joy when she chose to accept baptism: "I was going to have a better life when I died"; annual revival led by Ricky E. Carter of Good Hope Baptist Church in Lafayette, a popular single preacher; youth revival and vacation Bible school during the summer; participation in religious skit; church membership is growing because of popular pastor; clothing

and food ministries; pastor creates rapport with all age groups; physical description of Magnolia interior; church has old, ugly windows, but everything else is new; making visitors to Magnolia feel welcome; many families, including McKnight's, have been church members at Magnolia for generations; taking church-related classes out of town, then presenting learnings to congregation; description of typical church service at Magnolia; pastor expects members to tithe ten percent of their gross income; contributions of pastor's wife to church; Brother Fred C. Mathews, who knows the history of the church; Mother Sarah, mother of the church; importance of youth ministry;

Tape 1249, Side B

Using prayer to help do the right thing; drug use and sexual activity among her peers in South Baton Rouge; worries about AIDS; trying to figure out how best to act in difficult situations by thinking what Jesus, or McKnight's mother, would do; appreciates her mother's supervision, though she used to resent it; has two younger sisters.

TAPES: 1 (T1249)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 53 minutes

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 37 pages

OTHER MATERIALS: Correspondence; Interview data sheet; Interview index (2 pgs)

RESTRICTIONS: None