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Princess Galloway

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Oral History Interview with Princess Galloway,
Conducted over Skype
Conducted by Meg Miner, Illinois Wesleyan Archivist

Princess Galloway: Princess Galloway.

Meg Miner: Hi Princess. This is Meg again. I really appreciate you volunteering for this project.

Galloway: I'm really happy you're doing it because, you know, he was such an extraordinary person and so it would be- I can't wait to read it, you know?

Miner: [laughs] Okay.

Galloway: And I can't wait to own- you know, what- what you're creating because- and to be able to share it with people because he was really eccentric and different and, you know, I mean, definitely a visionary. You know, and ruthless. He was ruthless when it came to execution, you know. [laughs]

Miner: Oh my gosh, I can't wait to hear it! [laughs]

Galloway: Yeah, and so he just- I mean, he just got things done, you know what I'm saying? Like he just really- I- I feel like he really executed things well. Whenever he, you know, set his mind on something he was a person who was extremely charismatic and business-minded, but also so artistic, and a- just a very interesting individual. I- you can't really use the word interesting too much to describe him 'cause that's what it was. It was like interesting and peculiar and you just wonder sometimes with some of the expressions that he made and the way that he walked like what- you know, like what was on his mind? But he was- in the way he would peer down at people over top of his glasses...[Miner laughs]...he was just funny. But I- I first actually met him when I was fourteen years old.

Miner: Oh my gosh!

Galloway: Yeah, I met him- so it's funny because when you sent- you sent an email, you know, asking people, "Hey, you know, would you like to be part of this project?" And we got- we got it through the- through the- I don't know if it came through like an alumni blast or what, but one of my closest friends immediately reached out to me and you know, forwarded the message again and said "So, you know, I want to make sure that you saw this and that you didn't overlook it in your, you know, four email accounts...[Miner laughs]...you know, make sure you see this because I know you're going to want to be a part of this and because, you know, you have such a, you know, a different story to tell about him," and so-

Miner: Well, that's very- [laughs]

Galloway: Yeah. So I actually met him for the first time when I was fourteen years old. So I don't know if you're familiar with at Wesleyan- I think they still have the connection with the Wade McCree program.

Miner: I was not familiar with it until you brought it up. So go ahead and tell us.

Galloway: Oh- okay. So- so the way the Wade McCree program is- it's actually called the Wade McCree Incentive Scholarship Program, and it's named after a gentleman that was from Detroit- I'm a Detroit native- called- his name was Wade McCree Jr. and Wade McCree Jr. was the first black solicitor general under- I believe it was President Carter. We might have to look that up, make sure it's the right fact. [laughs]

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: But- so- so Wade McCree was an important fixture, you know, in US government and- and the state of Michigan for sure and for metro Detroit. So he started, years ago, an incentive scholarship program and in order to qualify for this program you had to be a Detroit public school- middle school student. You had to be subsequently attending a Detroit public high school and, you know, at the time the requirements were, you know, you had to apply, you had to go through a summer enrichment process, and, you know, you had to sort of state your- your goal for yourself at- at fourteen...[Miner laughs]...you know, at the ripe old age of thirteen- really it was thirteen. Yeah, I was still in middle school when I applied to be part of the program. But with the program, it- it's kind of odd because the application is subsequent to a nomination. So every- every, you know, principal or- I don't know how it went back in the day. It was either the principals or some of the leading teachers at every Detroit public middle school got to nominate four boys and four girls to be candidates to apply for this program. So in my middle school at the time, you know, somebody just, you know, had the- the foresight to nominate me to be a part of this Wade McCree scholarship program. And so the program basically guaranteed that if you- if you graduated from a Detroit public high school and you had a little over ninety percent attendance, you had- you maintained at least a, you know, a strong B plus average, so you know, you know, at least a 3.0, 3.1 average and if you got a certain score on your ACT, and you know, met the basic requirements to the school that was sponsoring you, that you would get in return a four year- four years of tuition free.

Miner: Wow.

Galloway: And you would only be responsible for room and board so it was an incentive scholarship program.

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: And it, you know, you went into this program as an eighth grader, you know, going into- into high school so this is- I'm a Christian. I believe very strongly in, you know, God creating opportunities in your life that would just otherwise would not have been present because there was thousands and thousands of kids in Detroit Public Schools, and I was a great student but there were- there were literally just thousands of other students. And I was one of four girls at the middle school that my middle school picked.

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: And there was a requisite sort of summer program to be considered for the scholarship program, and I couldn't even participate in that because I had a...I had a little summer job.

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: When I was thirteen, I had a little summer job with the city of Detroit. So I couldn't participate, and I thought for sure, you know, they're not going to let me in this program. But instead of just, you know, sort of bowing out, I wrote a letter about why I couldn't participate-

Miner: Mm-hmm.

Galloway: -and why it was very important for me to be in the program and my mother didn't write the letter. I wrote the letter.

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: And- and so- so they actually admitted me to the Wade McCree program and just, you know, a stroke of fate...you know, Wade McCree is a Michigan based program so all the Michigan public universities at the time were part of the program, including like, you know, the University of Michigan-

Miner: Oh wow!

Galloway: -Michigan State, Michigan Tech. All the great schools in Michigan were part of this program. And I had many friends who, you know, got scholarships to those schools, you know,

and went onto to Ivy League graduate schools, all kinds of things. But in the year that I joined the program, because of Minor, Illinois Wesleyan became the first out of state and the first private university to participate and sponsor somebody from Wade McCree.

Miner: Oh my goodness! What a-

Galloway: That's the convergence of how I came to even know Illinois Wesleyan. I probably would have gone to University of Michigan to tell you the truth-

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: -like, you know, all of my friends went, you know?

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: And...which it's not a bad school, but it's not Illinois Wesleyan. Sorry. So...[both laugh]-

Miner: Oh my gosh.

Galloway: I got that- I got that from Minor too. We were a little stuck up. [both laugh] He wasn't shy about his- his- his pride. So I think that's just like a Wesleyan thing, but it was- it was extraordinary. So I actually- they- they started to recruit me and introduce me to the school when I was fourteen years old. So Minor was partnered up with a- a gentleman who was an alum of- of Illinois Wesleyan, a guy named- named Robert- Robert Berg. And Bob Berg- I don't know how much you know about these politics, but Bob Berg was the former, you know, Illinois Wesleyan graduate. I want to say he is class of 1964. I hope that's right. His name is C. Robert Berg.

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: You can probably look that up better than me.

Miner: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Galloway: That's where- Bob- Bob Berg is class of 1964, I believe. And he- Bob Berg was Coleman A. Young's press secretary, you know-

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: -former press secretary. And then later- in later years, our disgraced mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, Bob Berg was Kwame Kilpatrick's press- you know, his first press secretary. So here I am, a little, you know, fourteen year old girl, and I have, you know, the mayor's, you know, former press secretary, the most famous mayor in Detroit history, you know, Coleman Young, I had his former press secretary calling me, asking me do I want to join him and a group of kids and go down to Illinois Wesleyan for homecoming.

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: And so I got to visit as a- as a high school kid. I got to come to homecoming at Wesleyan every single year that I was in high school.

Miner: Wow!

Galloway: And so- and- and on every visit- every visit when I came down, I got to talk to Minor, you know. I got to go to his office. I got to- you know, he was- he was interested in what I was doing in high school. But every year though, he- every year that I visited during my high school years, he took a very special interest in me and, you know, I was a different kid. I was, you know, I was- I was smart. I was a little cocky, very mouthy. [Miner laughs] And again, I was Detroit, I was urban. I was from the west side, so, you know, I- I had a whole handful of things to prove.

Miner: Mm-hmm.

Galloway: And the environment, you know, frankly given where I come from, the environment was uncomfortable to a degree.

Miner: Sure.

Galloway: But he- and I cherished him a lot, you know. And we- when I finally did come to Illinois Wesleyan as a- as a student, as an international business student, he, you know, he would check in on me to see how I was doing and I didn't- I never understood why I was getting all the extra attention but I- and he never told me that everybody else's future through that program was riding on me.

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: But he really nurtured that and- and- and I was a challenge for him because I was part of many organizations at Wesleyan. I was president of Black Student Union. I was a student senator. I- I was in all sorts of special interest groups. And- and we led a lot of the recruitment

efforts to attract more black and other minority students to Wesleyan. And I constantly got into arguments with the administration about- about programming, about equal treatment, about equal opportunity, about stepping up their recruitment efforts. At the time, I- I mean, it was very evident to those of us that were on campus that Illinois Wesleyan would normally actively recruit large populations or larger populations of black, Hispanic, and Native American students every four years, you know?

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: So when one class was going to graduate, you know, there would be another big effort and that was unacceptable and- and I made that very clear to Dr. Myers and I was very vocal about it. So he and I actually, believe it or not, got into a few arguments when I- I was in college because he would just tell me, you know, he would try to tell me how the world was, and yes, you can be aggressive but you have to be patient and you need to learn- that I needed to learn a little bit more about diplomacy and negotiation, that I could not just go in, you know, headstrong and attack a situation, that I needed to learn how to finesse people.

Miner: Hmm. [laughs]

Galloway: So I thought- I thought that was a fancy word for manipulate. [Miner laughs] So he taught me how to finesse-

Miner: And with-

Galloway: -people.

Miner: - and with retrospect, do you think that was good advice?

Galloway: Absolutely. It- it helped me personally. It helped me professionally. It helped me tremendously as a student. I learned how to stop taking a lot of things that...I was experiencing- I learned how to stop taking things personal. And I started to see the strategy behind everything.

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: And it really made me respect- I really respected the school. I respected- even as much as it cost, I respected that it was a tremendous amount of money and it didn't cost me, because remember I wasn't paying tuition.

Miner: Mm-hmm.

Galloway: This- this scholarship that I had earned covered my tuition costs for those four years so I was only responsible for room and board. And so I didn't- I didn't have the heavy financial burden so as a way to sort of contribute to the campus you know, I was constantly working. And so he just helped me to see the strategy behind the direction the school was going in, the strategy behind...beautifying the campus and diversifying the faculty and the student population. And he included me on a lot of things. I became, you know, like an admissions ambassador and I never even had a real job in the admissions office. I didn't even report to anybody in admissions...[Miner laughs]...but I- I did campus tours all the time and I was never on the admissions payroll but I got to do things like that. I got to talk to donors and different people who were coming to the school. One time- at one point, Wesleyan didn't have like a- there wasn't...a formal program or way for students to easily double major.

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: There was, you know, there were- there were- there were majors that were advertised as, you know, "If you were studying this, you might also consider pairing it with that." You know, there were obviously a number of people who who chose to double major, but I remember at one point he formed an exploratory committee to say, "Hey," you know, "I see a lot of people pairing up an international business with Spanish or international business with another language, do you think we should offer that as a formal, you know offering that, you know, offer students two degrees in a four year period or maybe longer- five year period?" And- and he would- he would engage the students and stuff like that and I was always there.

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: You know, and so it became a thing with me. I felt like I was not- I wasn't just a student, you know, at- at Wesleyan. I really did work there because as many questions as I had for him, and as many stories that he would share, and he was always asking me, "Well, what do you think about this subject?"

Miner: Oh.

Galloway: And "What do you think about that?" And "we're thinking about bringing this, you know, this faculty in from another country and you know, would you take this person's course?" So he really genuinely cared. As much as some people think that he didn't, he genuinely cared about the individual. I- I remember he told us a story about one student and she was before my time. But she wanted to play the harp.

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: And there wasn't a harp on campus, and you know, he went to some auction and he bought a harp...[Miner laughs]...for that one student.

Miner: Oh yes!

Galloway: And he would do that. He- if you told him you wanted to do anything and I felt- I felt like I was in a position of privilege but still, I mean, there were tons of students. It didn't matter who you were. You could be, you know, the young, you know, young black girl from Detroit or you could be somebody else from, I don't know, anywhere.

Miner: Okay.

Galloway: But once- once you got an audience with him and got that, he would do anything for you and you just had to get- you had to get around it, you know, the politics sometimes because, you know, like I said, you know, I admitted to you that we used to argue. [Miner laughs] And so I literally used to be upset with him and, you know, with scheduled meetings, I mean, who does that? Who schedules meetings- like tries to schedule meetings with the president...[Miner laughs]...of the university? But I did all the time. And I said he knew that I was going to show up in a, you know, in a wreck sometimes. [Miner laughs] And, you know, but he- I would say most of the time he listened to me and even if I said, you know, you're full of it, and I said that a couple of times...[Miner laughs]...and- but- but he did some things that I will never forget, some things that were very loving, and- and Illinois Wesleyan used to have back in the sixties they had black fraternities and sororities on campus. And at the time I was a student there- I know that that returned to the campus these days, but when I was on campus there was no black greeks on campus.

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: And there are nine traditionally African-American fraternities and sororities. And we didn't have anything like that and- anymore because all of this- the organizations were all defunct because you know, the limited population of black students and there was not enough to support it. And I remember that we- we decided that we would try to apply an appeal to the national organization on behalf of Illinois Wesleyan to reinstate our chapters. And even though in that time period, those four years that I was there, we got really close and we ended up- we were ultimately unsuccessful but it had nothing to do with the effort that the students put forth and with his effort. He- he said- he said to me, "If you can- if you're willing to do the work, and you can get black Greek organizations fully established on this campus, I will pay everybody to do- I'll pay that out of my pocket."

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: Because, you know- you know, there's dues you pay, anywhere from five hundred to a thousand dollars to join the org- these national organizations. And he said, you know, "Whatever you- whatever you would cost, we'll do it." As long as we can do it on our own. And what it- what it came down to was the national- the national organization for some of these black fraternities and sororities. They did not want to grant Illinois Wesleyan its own chapter. They wanted us to be linked-

Miner: Oh!

Galloway: -to be linked through the graduate chapters to other universities like Illinois State. And he would not have it. And- and he just wouldn't have it. He literally said- and this is so awful. He said you know, like, you know, and I don't know what to believe but he was just like "(unsure, 19:40 - 19:43??) at Illinois Wesleyan!" [Miner laughs] And he just went- went on this whole rant because he could not believe that this organization just would not give Illinois Wesleyan- what Wesleyan deserved-

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: And- and he was- he was really indignant. He was really upset. And that was my junior year of college, and that's the first time I thought to myself, "He really loves us." I'm going to cry saying this.

Miner: Oh.

Galloway: And...you know, before that I spent so much time challenging him and many others. I have so many- you call me when you want to write back on many...[Miner laughs]...on everybody. [laughs] I don't know if you're up for that. But- but he- I knew in that moment because he was so upset and it wasn't just the surprise thing because he saw our faces. He knew how bad we wanted it and he was literally willing to commit whatever resources but, you know, it- it was out of our control. It was out of his control, and at that time we just couldn't- we couldn't have it. We weren't successful and- and a coup- you know, my senior year of college, actually that same exact organization that rejected us- actually Illinois Wesleyan, I mean Illinois State was on the verge of losing their local chapter-

Miner: Oh.

Galloway: -because of the population of girls that were interested at the time and that- that particular organization. They did not meet the grade requirements. They didn't, you know, and

the service requirements and they knew that being linked to- to us, they would meet those requirements.

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: So they came back to us and tried to pair up with us again and- and by that time a number of us- we were just- we were seniors and we were over it, you know?

Miner: Yeah.

Galloway: We were over the whole sorority experience. And- and we moved on. But I know for a fact today some of the young ladies who've come through the Wade McCree program after me. There have been dozens now. Because after I graduated with honors and- and, you know, I went on to be- to do really well, I mean they- it kind of opened the floodgates. There's been dozens of kids that come from Detroit through the Wade McCree program and have that experience, you know, the experience of studying abroad. He's one of the people who encouraged me to study abroad and to learn another language. I did all of that.

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: Yeah, he- he- it was just extraordinary and I think the single most extraordinary experience I had with him was he- it was my senior year because that's- that's the year the Ames Library officially opened and was dedicated.

Miner: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Galloway: And it was right before- it was right- everything happened right when I was graduating- the Hansen Center, all that stuff. But we- we got to enjoy it for a year-

Miner: Yeah.

Galloway: -before we were out but- but when Ames opened, he said, you know, he got- he got together a bunch of- a bunch of the black students and we're, you know, at the point it was kind of like a joke. Like what does Minor want, like what did he want? Did you get the email, did you get the email? Like yeah, we got the email. It must be like- I don't know what he wants. Maybe he wants the- maybe he's going to do some project and he wants to ask the black kids like "What do you think?" you know.[Miner laughs] And...so we show up and we're all tired and grumbling or whatever, like, "What do we have to do? What does he want to meet us for?" So he met us and I think it was in a () room in Ames. You probably know better than me. And it's that room- it's like a circular reading room.

Miner: Yeah.

Galloway: You know, I've only been up there a couple times so I barely remember it. But he took us- he took a group of us- there was just a few of us- up to that room, and he, you know, talked about being at an auction, a rare book auction and he said they were auctioning off a book. And what came it's so funny what isn't being significant to you as a memory-

Miner: Mm-hmm.

Galloway: -because I don't even remember the name of the book. I don't remember the author. I remember it was a woman and that she was a slave and somehow she managed to become published and I believe she was published I believe as a slave or it was either as a slave or just post-slavery. I can't remember, you know. But it- at- at that moment all those details meant the world to me (unsure, 24:15-24:17??). What meant the world to me was he- he said, you know, when he- when that was- when that item came up for auction, he immediately thought of us. And he said, you know, there's so many ways- there's no way- I can't teach you anything or give you anything. All these years I've struggled to try to get people things that connect them with their history and to give them an intelligent path, you know? Like have true intelligence, you know, like the way a military strategist would. You know, to have true intelligence and to have something that connects you to something that you came from is so beautiful. He said, you know, "I don't really care. I didn't know how much they were going to ask for it but I just knew I was going to buy it and I wanted you all to be here so that I could give this to you."

Miner: Oh my gosh!

Galloway: And I was just like- we were floored and I just- you know, we got to see this book and we got to touch it, and it was just like "Wow!" you know. It was one of those moments. It was like "Wow!" And he gave us, you know, his famous "Go forth and do well, but importantly do good." And- and he just- you know, he talked about, you know- you know, what an extraordinary person this author had been-

Miner: Hmm. Hmm.

Galloway: -and how we were no different from her, you know?

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: So that's why, you know, that's the kind of stuff- you know, I don't care what it costs to go the Wesleyan. I care- you know, you can't buy stuff like that.

Miner: That's amazing. That's a great-

Galloway: You can't buy- you can't buy that type of experience. And people can say that you know- that, you know, can say whatever they want and I said I even have my stories where I'm like (unsure/unclear, 26:16-26:17??), you know. So I- I can tell you twenty arguments we've had...[Miner laughs]...but that's the stuff I remember all these years later. I graduated in 2002.

Miner: Mm-hmm.

Galloway: I can't believe that was fourteen freaking years ago. I'm getting the experience of an old lady. [laughs]

Miner: [laughs] Yeah.

Galloway: But that's what I remember though. I'm thirty-six, by the way, still young at heart. [both laugh] But- but that's what I remember about- that's the kind of stuff I remember- that's the kind of stuff that I, you know, when I tell people about what type of school Illinois Wesleyan was to me-

Miner: Huh.

Galloway: -and what the experience meant to me, how I couldn't have gotten that anywhere else-

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: -you know. It was- it was really extraordinary and I really- I really did have eight years of college experience and eight years of knowing him and seeing him and nobody really had that, you know?

Miner: Yeah. Well that's-

Galloway: So-

Miner: Well, anything else you'd like to add or- that's some really great insights. It sounds like- and it sounds like you had a personal connection but it sounds like your colleagues, your contemporaries in which you got to Wesleyan experienced similar things.

Galloway: I mean, we- we- we just had- we had a great- we had our ups and our downs, you know. That was a hard place to be as the young, black, urban female. That was a hard place to be.

Miner: Yeah.

Galloway: And the- and the late nineties, early two thousands, you just would not believe it was- and I, you know, I had never in my life- you know, I'm from Detroit. I have never experienced racism or anything like that and I just came- came from an environment where everybody was just like me so I did not, you know, it was- it was overwhelming at times. And there were times- you know, Wesleyan is a bubble. Like it creates such a- you know that phenomenon of the bubble. I mean, you would literally look up and say "I haven't walked across the street in a month." [Miner laughs] "What are they doing to us?" you know. Because it was- everything was so well contained-

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: - and that they put everything there that you could want. And for college campuses, the food was phenomenal, you know. I've been to other schools, and every- every- all the resources, everything that you needed was right there. So that was their way of kind of- almost like their way of trying to preserve the culture and keep everybody inside. But it was really like a bubble.

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: And, you know- but it was not a very pleasant bubble for some so of us. And- but he- but again, he- whatever I'm telling you, I- I don't... everybody- everybody else's experience, I don't know if it was exactly like mine, but because I felt like I had a lot of power as a kid, like as a- as a student-

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: -if I went to him and said, "Hey. This is a program that we want to do. This is the speaker that we want to bring. It costs this amount of money. What can you do? Let's make it happen." Like I started- the way he was- the way I saw him behave, I doing it, but to him. Like "Hey, you know, you taught me to be assertive. And I'm here. Like, I'm asking for the money. I know you've got it, you know." [both laugh] (unsure, 29:44??) But I'm talking about whatever, you know, we- we- we were there. We want, you know, Dr. Maya Angelou to come. We want the- we had everybody, literally. We had everybody from Dr. Maya- Maya Angelou to Busta Rhymes the rapper, you know. [laughs] Whatever we wanted to do, we can make a case for it,

you know, like this is going to make people feel more at home. This is going to make the (unsure, 30:13??) better, you know, he was with it. He made it happen. He- I don't know, you know, where he found the money- and we petitioned all the time and he taught us to be very bold and say, "You want it? Make a case for it." So we learned- we all learned how to speak really, really well, how to make a business case, and how to stick to the facts.

Miner: Hmm.

Galloway: Not coming in here being all emotional, what do you want? And- and you know what? In- in- in business today, I mean, that is one of my claims, you know, to fame right now is that being very no nonsense, to the point, very direct, but very effective. And that definitely- I learned that not in a classroom, you know, but I definitely learned it at Wesleyan, but not in a classroom.

Miner: That's phenomenal.

Galloway: Yeah.

Miner: Well, that sounds like a really great place to wrap it up. I mean, if you have more to add I'm happy to hear, but-

Galloway: Okay.

Miner: Okay. Well, thank you-

Galloway: Thank you for calling me!

Miner: Oh certainly! I really appreciate you participating in this and I- I promise to keep you posted on- on what comes out of it so-

Galloway: Thank you.

Miner: Have a good night.

Galloway: You take care.

Miner: You too.

Galloway: Bye.

Miner: Buh-bye.