



2018

Janine James Cromwell

Janine James Cromwell '75
Illinois Wesleyan University

Yemaya Jennings 2017
Illinois Wesleyan University

Recommended Citation

James Cromwell '75, Janine and Jennings 2017, Yemaya, "Janine James Cromwell" (2018). *All oral histories*. 141.
https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/oral_hist/141

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by The Ames Library, the Andrew W. Mellon Center for Curricular and Faculty Development, the Office of the Provost and the Office of the President. It has been accepted for inclusion in Digital Commons @ IWU by the faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.
©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

Interview with Janine James-Cromwell, Class of 1975

Summer 2017

Attention: This interview was conducted through three different skype calls. There will be a change in audio quality distinguishing the calls. Thank you.

Yemaya Jennings: Okay, so if you could please tell me who you are and what your affiliation is with Illinois Wesleyan University.

Janine James-Cromwell: I'm Janine James-Cromwell and I am a 1975 graduate of Illinois Wesleyan University.

Jennings: Great. So can you tell me where you're from and why you chose Illinois Wesleyan University?

Janine: Well, I'm – my home is Chicago, IL and I chose Illinois Wesleyan for a number of reasons. One, probably the most important for me, is that I had the understanding that Illinois Wesleyan students had a good record for getting into medical school and that's what I wanted to do. And so ... it seemed like a good choice. The other is that I had several classmates or persons who attended my high school, who went to Illinois Wesleyan and who seemed to like it so they had some good reports about their experience. And then there was an excellent relationship between a person named Silas Pernel who was with the Ada S. McKinney Counselling Service that directed a number of Chicago students at the time to Illinois Wesleyan. The reception that I had on my visits to the school were great and I was very impressed with how the persons involved in the recruiting were so attentive and, in fact, upon coming for a weekend visit, I was given a ride home myself and two other of my classmates back to Chicago, which offered some more time to talk about the Illinois Wesleyan experience. It must have been a good choice because I think eleven of my high school classmates also came to Illinois Wesleyan in the same year that I did.

Jennings: Wow, that's great. So all of you all coming from Chicago – was there any bit of culture shock once you actually started at Illinois Wesleyan, or were you able to start a community together?

Cromwell: Well, it may have been a plus or minus. Culture shock – I would say, yes, because it's ... well, Bloomington, in general, was just very different than the experience we had in Chicago ... and but it was a pleasant experience. It left me enjoying that atmosphere that was little more laidback, little more peaceful – wanting to ultimately live in a community like that. And I ultimately did do that and so I think Bloomington was helpful in giving me another sense of where people can live and enjoy it. I think it was helpful, though, to come with people that I knew so that if I was lonesome, I guess, I felt comfortable because there were people around me that I knew. May be that didn't allow me to be as ... as needy about looking to find new friends. But I did do that as well. There were other people that we met at Wesleyan, but the people that I came with were ... some were folks that I knew since I was eight years old -

Jennings: oh, wow-

Cromwell: - and so, we had gone to grammar school, high school and then came to college together and some of us also even went on to medical school. So I think it was a culture ... some cultural differences, yes. Cultural differences, perhaps, in another way noticed by other students who, frankly, had had little interaction with African- American students. So I think that they probably struggled a little bit more. It

was not as culturally different maybe in the community that I lived in but I got involved with enough city-wide organizations like the city-wide chorus, the science fair program so that I interacted with white students. But I don't think that was the case for many of the students that we came in contact with and I think particularly not only not being comfortable with African-American students but not being as comfortable with how academically prepared we were. And so both of us who came from Harland were at the top of the class, I was the valedictorian and so we held our own. And I don't think that was something that many other students were as prepared for and I don't think that was as a negative. I think for many of them it's a reflection of perhaps the limited experiences that we're seeing on TV or things that their parents had told them and so I think that it came to somewhat of a surprise that we did as well as we did at Wesleyan.

Jennings: Oh, wow. Yeah, I'd say, as far as what you said, definitely, I think here on campus today, you still come across a lot of students who haven't had as much interaction with students who were just like them these days but definitely I can see how back in '75 that would ... you guys being so academically prepared would be such a shock but a good one, 'cause people needed to know that ... there were black students who were capable of the type of academic excellence that you all had to offer.

Cromwell: And I think that pretty much it was a common expectation that students coming to Wesleyan were fairly... well prepared-

Jennings: -mm-hmm-

Cromwell: -to do so. And I think even over the years as we – many of us encounter people in our workplaces and we talk about where we attended college and I think the reputation of Wesleyan has remained high but you'll see somewhat of a look of surprise when you say you attended Wesleyan or you graduated from Wesleyan, it's like they weren't expecting that. So I think there ... I don't know that that has changed greatly even over these years as people seem very surprised that these Chicago girls or Chicago boys would attend Illinois Wesleyan.

Jennings: Definitely. So with your group of Chicago- Chicago friends that you came with and you all were also academically inclined and involved in – very focused on your school work. Could you tell me a bit about what you all did outside of that, like what did you do in your extra time together? What sort of community did you all create together?

Cromwell: Yes, well, I think all of the things that people enjoy doing – social outings – I'm very grateful for the existence that we had at the time that was called the black house, not far from Gulick across the street and we came together to – for social times, listening music, dancing, or party, getting to know one another outside the academic setting, card playing – I never was much of a card player but a lot of them were and so people would do that until about six o'clock and then ... in the dugout and then they would disappear and they'd go to library and do whatever studying they needed to do but they have that social time. Meal time was another time for socialization and then many other things that the school had to offer – we were – there was a swim club synchronized swimming – which we did when we were in high school and that was available to us and hard to imagine in the little pool that was in Memorial Gym prior to the beauty – beautiful athletic center that has replaced it and then a lot of times if we did anything social might have included going to Illinois State and again going for parties and then one thing that played a big role for many of my friends was being part of the Interdenominational Youth Choir that was at –

rehearsed at Illinois State that gave us an opportunity to meet people on that campus, come to the campus and from there we would perform in churches not only in the Bloomington-Normal area but in various cities throughout central and northern Illinois.

Jennings: Oh, wow! That was probably a nice experience to be able to do some traveling then and get out of Bloomington.

Cromwell: It was. It really was. And then we enjoy – we had a – we formed a pep squad and ... and we would, I guess, boosters for the football and basketball team and we probably brought the energy that we had living in Chicago, attending school in Chicago and brought that to the games which I'm sure was probably interesting and ... and ... but still well received.

Jennings: Definitely, I'd say that's ... it's interesting you brought that up. I went to Morgan Park for junior high and there's nothing compared to the way we celebrate sport games in Chicago, for sure.

Cromwell: Mm-hmm.

Jennings: So that sounds like a lot of great things that you were involved in on-campus. I'd say Wesleyan students today still probably take just as much an advantage of the resources available at Illinois State University and the big pool of young people that we can also try to socialize with, which is great. But if you could... if you could go back is there anything that you wish you got involved with? Or do you think you took the best advantage of Wesleyan as possible while you were here?

Cromwell: I – I really think that I took the best advantage of it. I was involved in Student Government which was a whole another area of interest. And so I think that I got the best out of it. I think the only thing that I would do perhaps differently ... and that's only as a result of maturity, I probably would have looked at more ways to have interacted with Wesleyan students ... and I think that I was a little devilish in some ways that maybe I regret that I had been that way... not anything really mean but some things that were ... maybe my wisdom ... tells me I could have done differently.

Jennings: Okay. Like do you think that maybe there were some friends that you could've reached out to more or...

Cromwell: ...yes

Jennings: Okay.

Cromwell: Yes, I think so.

Jennings: Interesting.

Cromwell: And I think that's on ... probably on both of our parts. And I've come to recognize that as I have met some of those individuals in later years and we recognize that we did in fact notice one another but perhaps didn't- weren't not as outgoing enough to respond [Overlapping]

[2nd call]

Cromwell: Something I was gonna tell you about... I was telling you something about... some things you somewhat regret and we had, of course, time within the dormitory or the residence halls, I should say.

And there were times when we recognized that we were being watched and ... by other students and we sometimes took advantage of that and we sometimes have a conversation amongst one another, amongst my girlfriends about our lives ... and it was a far cry from our real lives and I think that we were being that which we ... expected that our other Wesleyan students were expecting of us from Chicago and I don't think that unless you're from there, you recognize that it is a very diverse city that goes beyond racial diversity but social diversity among the races. And I think there was a TV program that may have been going on at that time called 'Good Times' and Good Times was set in Cabrini-Green Housing Project in Chicago on the west ... North-west side and one would probably consider it a fairly rough area. Now mind you – Harland high school from south side – you're being from there you understand that, just as when someone says I'm from Morgan Park that instills certain thoughts as well but when you say you're from Cabrini-Green that has certain thoughts. And we ... I guess you could say we were from a strongly middle-class residential area – few apartment buildings, most privately owned homes, and with parents that were working jobs, some professional, some para-professional jobs but not – not what I think some of the students at Wesleyan envisioned and so I think that sometimes we would play games that way. And that is I think about it, was my ... probably not so nice. I've seen my son do some of the same sort of thing, having them brought up in Milwaukee and he'll tell people that he's from Chicago and I guess this was to get some clout from that.

Jennings: Mm-hmm.

Cromwell: And he knows a little more about Chicago because he'd come with me to visit family. But he wasn't visiting anything that was treacherous or challenging in any way but again folks don't really know that-

Jennings: - Right.

Cromwell: So they were thinking he was a tougher guy that he really was. And we certainly were not tough... tough kids in that regard. So I think that that perhaps might have been a bit mean on our part to do that.

Jennings: Interesting. I wonder like ... 'cause part of it, you know, is wanting to not necessarily give them what they want but to explain it ... to try to give an example of where you're from but they think that you're from this place and you want them to know that, yes this place is like that but you're different... but maybe in that moment you don't care to tell them, but I think... I think I've experienced a similar thing... just you tell people you're from the South side, they automatically assume, "Wow, you must dodge bullets every single day"-

Cromwell: - yeah, yeah-

Jennings: - and it's like, no I actually don't. I'd rode the bus every day. I live in a family home, you know, it's a great place and I'm not dead but, you know what, it's fine. Just believe that because ... I don't... I don't exactly know why but I'm just gonna let you believe that... [giggles]

Cromwell: Well, I had an occasion in ... well... well not so long ago, I was working in El Paso, Texas and literally across the border which is like across the street is Juarez, Mexico. And I had a friend, actually from one who went to Wesleyan, lived in my community and she had an assistant working with her who is Mexican- American and she told her that she is gonna be coming to visit me in El Paso. And

so her assistant said, “Oh well you really need to be careful. If you go into Juarez because that’s the murder capital of the world.” So my friend tell me this story and I had to remind her we’re from Chicago [Jennings giggles] what could there be in Juarez that we have not seen already or heard of in Chicago and she said, “You know, that’s right. We’ll be fine.” ... [both giggle]... So I think that there are perceptions and... and as I’ve had those perceptions that probably, similarly are ... not accurate and ... and I think that’s what the beauty of ... of age and experience has allowed me to be able to at least get into conversations and to ask the questions that I’m wondering about and most often people will answer your question rather than presuming certain things and so that I would ... I would probably do a little differently.

Jennings: Wow. So we talked about what you wanted to do differently and I think you’ve offered some good insight into the fact that we do, you know, as we grow older, we do notice different things and we’re able to analyze things differently which makes me excited to hope that down the line I’ll have a new, fresh perspective on my time here at school but looking back, what do you think the university could have done differently ... to be a better place for ... for you while you were there or to be a better place for future Illinois Wesleyan generations?

Cromwell: I ... I would say that while I was there, there were some things that I thought could have been better done. However, again, hindsight tells me that... I think that... people as... and I say people meaning as the university, as a whole probably did the best they could for the time that they were in-

Jennings: Mm-hmm.

Cromwell:-and I... I say that the experience for the most part was a positive one and... and I encountered many, many people who loved their jobs and treated me in a very kind and a supportive manner. Now moving forward, though, I think there are a number of things that should have been learned that I would hope is being incorporated... in perhaps a different way ... and I see some signs that people did here... many of the things that we talked about... I’ve not had as much interaction with some of the more current administrative persons but during the time that I was at Wesleyan and shortly after... Minor... President Minor was there and I just thought he was a tremendous person -

Jennings: - mm-hmm-

Cromwell: -in terms of asking those questions, listening to the answers and attempting to incorporate them ... In ... in how the school did business and I think that ... not enough perhaps has been done to look at the profile, perhaps, of the students that were admitted in those earlier years and use that knowledge in such a way to help in not only the admission of students but also in looking at ways of keeping those students there and supporting them so that they can ultimately achieve their goals and I think more could be done to reach out to alumni to help current students and new grads... and I’ve had some experiences where I was called upon. For example, a Wesleyan grad is applying to medical school or who was looking at doing residency and I guess a lot of it has to do with how much communication is taking place on both sides and I had been asked to help and not just other African-American students ... and I think that is critical because we are all over and ... and we carry the mark of Wesleyan... I would like to think in as ... as leaders in our careers and may prove to be extremely helpful to current and future students. so I – I think more of that needs to take place and it’s something I tell my son in terms of his interaction and getting accustomed to interacting with different people... and I say to my son you need to learn how to

follow instructions from a woman... because the person who may be your boss may be a woman, and similarly, a person who may be your boss may be a person of color.

Jennings: Mm-hmm.

Cromwell: And so let this not be a surprise to you and that you ... because ultimately you wanna do well.

Jennings: Right.

Cromwell: - And the society that we live in is becoming more diverse. So I ... I teach and have taught at medical schools and I find sometimes when people are talking about going to medical school and I'm attempting to tell them things about the application process, the admission process and that they don't seem to be paying much attention...

Jennings: mm-hmm

Cromwell: ... because ... and I think that's their view that perhaps they don't see me as being in that type of a role but I have served on the admissions committee. I know what they're looking for. I know what the conversation is like. So if I tell you something about it, it ... it's coming from not just my opinion... so I haven't just gone to medical school, I'm not just a doctor, but I have been involved in that whole teaching role. And ... and I think that that is a lesson learned for many that we are in a variety of capacities. And those are I think the way to go. I'd like to think that ... that we are having some broad experiences and we're using, at least I know I've learned a lot from my interactions with people at Wesleyan to help me in the workplace knowing, kind of, maybe a corporate way of looking at things.

Jennings: Mm-hmm.

Cromwell: And it maybe has served to allow me to do better because of that experience.

[3rd call]

Cromwell: I had a more positive experience about that which we can accomplish and I think that that is a lesson that has been lost as to why it was important to invest in us because I would like to think that we've not just graduated from Wesleyan, we have all done an exceptional job as leaders and this is a message that needs to be taken not just from your ... perceptions but the proof is there. It's just nobody really is that much to highlight the fact that it was worth investing in us. It was worth going and picking us up and bringing us to campus and taking us home and ... it was worth to teachers spending some extra time if that's what it took because the result will have some exponential ... results in terms of what we've been able to accomplish in the workplace, what we've been able to accomplish in our communities and I ... I would ... I think to some extent, as pioneers, that we have not been able to do as well as I think we could have if there were enough people who truly believed that ... that we could do as well as we did.

Jennings: All right. That's great. That's a great takeaway. I mean, I guess there always has to be that one person that tells you, you can't do it. And that makes you say even more, "You know what, I can and I'm going to."

Cromwell: Well... I ... I will hope the other way around where the student is saying, I don't think I can do it, and you have the teachers who have the experience that is now able to say, "Oh, yes, you can." And

we have a number of examples of former Wesleyan students who may have felt alone, challenged and they made it happen. And it may be just that type of communication from that teacher to that Wesleyan student that will make the difference. That's what my hopes are – that it is the other way around.

Jennings: And I ... and I hope that as I am ... as I'm leaving Wesleyan and I feel like I've had people do similar things for me and ... hold my hand in ways that I appreciate ... I appreciate now in the long run. There I can only hope the same there in the future is continues and that Wesleyan can live up to these sorts of standards especially with everything going on politically and lowering the amount of students that they take in every year – everything that's happening, going into the future – that's a great hope to have.

Cromwell: Well, we have ... I've had two experiences from having attended Wesleyan, so often people ask you in conversation, where did you went to school? And all of us have had this ... all of us, especially my African – American classmates that have experienced someone asking us, "Oh, where did you go to college?" And we'll say Illinois Wesleyan and they'll do double take and almost to the extent of 'No, you didn't, you're kidding' or you're telling a story, you didn't really go to Wesleyan. And so that always tickles us when that happens... but on one occasion, this is after I had relocated to Wisconsin – Milwaukee, which is where I lived and still live, and I was at work and we're in some light conversation and we're talking about where we went to school but without naming it, we're just describing different things about where we went to school and things that happened. And there was a nurse there who said, 'Wait a minute. Where did you go to school?' I said, 'Illinois Wesleyan.' She said, 'I went to Illinois Wesleyan.'

Jennings: Oh, wow.

Cromwell: 'When did you graduate?' 1975' 'So did I.' And then it turned out I did not know her but this particular person knew very well one of my friends from the high school. She used to color hair and so we became closer as we talked often about our Wesleyan experience. The second thing, also in Milwaukee, I meet another obstetrician and ecologist, and she comes up to me and she says, 'You probably don't know me but I know you. We both attended Illinois Wesleyan and I was in the class behind you and I always admired you.'

Jennings: Oh wow, that's great.

Cromwell: 'And I'm so glad that we are both here in Milwaukee.' While we began to... provide backup coverage for one another and at one point, she suffered a serious health challenge and she called me and she says, 'I want to just walk away. I need to be able to just walk away from my practice.' And as a result of her knowing me not just as a physician but when we were students of Wesleyan, she felt comfortable in doing that and I said, okay and she went about taking care of her needs and I went about trying to help with her practice

Jennings: Oh, wow.

Cromwell: ...and it helped me to see that sometimes people who see you and you don't know, they see you and you don't know that they're watching you and maybe not in a negative way, but in some positive ways, that perhaps we don't always know how to communicate our feelings and then don't understand the importance of being able to reach out to one another but clearly it taught me valuable lessons in that people are paying attention, people are watching you and do not assume that because they are not

engaging you that they are rejecting you ... and may prove to be a help to you down the road and this again is what I would hope happens in ways that I don't always ... that I'm not aware of but I think that Wesleyan grads go on to some pretty prominent roles and I would like to think that the experience that they had was particularly the African – American students serves to allow them to be more willing to accept diversity for all the positive that it can generate where they serve to give an opportunity to some of the persons that they have the ability, have the authority to support so that they can be promoted, be hired, be recruited, because they've had such a positive experience with students that they encountered while they were students at Illinois Wesleyan.

Jennings: So ... So that being said, and knowing that it takes that extra effort in ... all the benefits that come from just putting in that time and effort to finding students that are multicultural and African – American... I don't know if you all had MALANA at the time.

Cromwell: No.

Jennings: Oh, so ... If you don't know what it is, we have like a pre-orientation where we can come in and it lets us get adjusted to Wesleyan before all the rest of the students come. And so just with ... just with-

Cromwell: We had ... we had ... we had that weekend. Yeah, so ... all the names that it had.

Jennings: Yeah, like just ... with that extra effort that Wesleyan is putting in, would you say that at the time when you were there, even though you felt that there are people who are on your side like the admissions counselor that got you there, that maybe there were still some kind of events happening outside of the Wesleyan bubble that were against you in those ways or was there no effect?

Cromwell: I ... I'm not sure about that... I ... I ... think that Wesleyan invested time but they ... they had their pick of who their experience taught them would be successful. I recall few students whose names we kept hearing over and over again as kind of the fair-haired boys and girls in our classes and ... I ... I probably would not have been amongst them although I did well at Wesleyan but I think that kind of this perception that if you're not 4.0, you can pretty much forget it. And if there was that student who was 4.0, they were ... they're going to make it into whatever program that they wanted to enter. But while academics of a high GPA are desirable, that's ... that's not the only attribute that is required for a successful career and I think that for many of us, we were doing some catch-up... we were doing catch-up in our writing skills, in our verbal skills, in perhaps some of the organizational skills, a whole host of things

Jennings: Mm-hmm.

Cromwell: ...that ... that we did catch up and so I ... I ... I would like to think that we have gotten to the point where we're able to have a more candid discussion about that which is going to be essential for giving the most out of its students. And one of things I mentioned to Dr. Jensen, when I was there at homecoming is... ishe was doing pretty much the usual pitch for contribu...contribution for all the reasons that one would do that, I said but I don't see that we've progressed much further than where we were in ... in terms of the number of African-American faculty and administrators at the school. And I see that sends not the right message to your students of color, to your general student body ... that maybe

we weren't there in numbers to draw upon in 1970 but at this stage there are many of us who are would-be candidates for roles such as, at least, teachers at Wesleyan.

Jennings: Mm-hmm.

Cromwell: And being an academic and being in academic medicine one of the things that I see that while people talk about equal opportunity and non-discrimination for race and color and religion and all of these sort of things that we don't really know what that means and how to exercise that and so I have found nobody really recruiting ... me ... I wasn't recruited to medical school. I wasn't recruited to ... doing the advanced studies. I was not recruited to teach in a medical school and even when I was in a teaching role, I wasn't even taken seriously enough to be considered for a tenure-track. I didn't know what that meant, really, at that time to pursue it, to object to that decision – all of this was new to me. But as the years have gone by, I look back to it and I say... I did not get the best experience and so are we in our classes... let's just look at well, and ... are we saying to our students, you know we're looking forward to you being a teacher is not very Wesleyan some other institution, we're looking forward to you doing certain things. And what can we do to help make that happen? So I feel as though we were there. I don't think that again that this was done maliciously... and maybe it'd not done for... I know it is done for some students but put it that way. I won't say that it is not done. I know that it's done. I've seen it happen. And I've also seen it not happen and so ... this next phase has to be more than just admitting us to school and graduating us from school because also I think that there's not a lot this time to really help us graduate. I don't think that ... I think there's a lot of movement of people coming in and out of school for all sorts of reasons. But I think that we've got to do better job in helping people stay in school, helping us be successful and the rewards are great. Right now I'm not working. And it's kind of a strange circumstance that I'm not working, but when I'm working I make a lot of money. And when I make a lot of money and when I make a lot of money I spend a lot of money, which includes making donations to my school. So it really makes sense that it is something that Wesleyan can do, has been influenced to do maybe they don't see it as a role but it is a role and that you once use whatever influence that you have to help your family. And I would consider myself Wesleyan family. Whatever you need to do to see that I'm working so that I can give back, and I can't give what I don't have-

Jennings: Right.

Cromwell: -and so I know that there's been telephone...telephons and I've said sometimes that I can't contribute it this time at the level I have before, or I can't contribute and I'm not working. And the person who's on the other end, who's a student and doesn't understand quite the impact of that ... I mean, in general, they know what that means when somebody says that I'm not working, maybe they think that they're not working electively, they are not working because of health reasons, but this would be something that I would flag and I would send to the alumni office and there would be a follow up call to that person asking ... how are things going... and if the subject comes up, then explain do you think there are some ways that we might be able to help in that?

Jennings: Right.

Cromwell: and I'm not... my comments are not a criticism.... They are... because I recognize that sometimes, people just didn't think about it.

Jennings: Mm-hmm.

Cromwell: It really had not occurred to them. But then when someone says you know, I'm not doing well... I'm not getting the job where I'd like to get a job and that you... we've got, I'm sure, database that is extensive then allows us to look up all manner of things and figure out where else do we have friends out in the world just as we look for people who can serve to contribute money to build the library. Do we also have a way, and I think I had sent email to President Jensen and I said, you know, I'd like to ... I'm trying to get a job at medical college of Wisconsin. Would you give a call to the President at the medical college of Wisconsin?

Jennings: mm-hmm.

Cromwell: I never got a call back and ... I mean, he did respond and maybe thought it was a unusual request but when you've got two presidents and one president calls and talks to the other president, he's probably gonna take that call and while he can't make that other person do it, he at least brings light to that individual. Here's somebody where the president of their college thinks enough of them that they would send us a call... they would reach us, you know, that this person was just an outstanding student they've been continually involved and we really hope that there's something that you might do to bring this individual on because I think you'll be very pleased with that... that person joining you. And the result can be a positive. You perhaps gained a new partner, a new professional friend but you also have a Wesleyan grad who is again working, making some good money and can make some nice contributions back to the school.

Jennings: Right. So it's like a ... it's like a cycle that just takes a bit more care and consideration to ensure that these sorts of things are in place and that they can happen. I think that that's a great takeaway, especially for the Alumni Association, maybe something that career services can look into, being more of a resource for alums as well. I think those are great things and I guess, my last final question for you, is there anything else that you'd like to add? You've given some great insight so far and some advice.

Cromwell: Yes. I... I think that... Wesleyan was a tremendous source of ... of pride, having attended there. It provided for myself and those individuals that I grew up with, a broader view of the world and the people that we interacted with... because Wesleyan really was our first opportunity at having the doors open, literally, for us to just move about and grow.

Jennings: Mm-hmm.

Cromwell: And we weren't treated as though we were there to rob the campus, to do violent things, and that was refreshing... to be in that type of environment and I was reminded of that empowerment that Wesleyan introduced us to even when we were there for homecoming, that we were given the keys to go to, I think it was the Turfler room and we met there to discuss our Wesleyan experiences in the sorority, or the experience that we had at the library, that a room was made available and not only a room but some refreshments and so this is often reserved for family and that's the reason I would say we are part of the Wesleyan family and that has been clearly, clearly demonstrated that once there, we have been continued to be, I say valued... and I think that is a strength and I'm sure it is one that other students have felt, maybe not in the same context that I'm describing. I'll never forget doing some recruiting for Wesleyan

while I was a student and I was given a company car to drive to Wesleyan... I mean drive from Bloomington to Chicago to talk with students in high school. I just thought that was amazing.

Jennings: Yeah. That's great.

Cromwell: And that was the beginning of the kinds of roles that I had representing the companies that I've worked for. But Wesleyan gave me that first opportunity of that. So I think that there are many, many things that are done and have been done in such a positive, a warm, a loving way and what I hope is that my thoughts, the thoughts I'm sure of some others of their experiences would serve to be instructive in such a way that you learn that which was good, that which probably is not so constructive as a way to do an even better job with the current students and with other alums and helping them to continue to progress and continue along a successful path.